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OF POLISH PARTICIPATION IN HEADQUARTERS
EUROCORPS IN THE ISSUE OF MULTINATIONAL
MILITARY ECHELONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

Bohnsack, Heiko

Monterey, CA; Naval Postgraduate School

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**NAVAL
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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**EUROPEAN ARMY OR FORT TRUMP? THE CASE OF
POLISH PARTICIPATION IN HEADQUARTERS EUROCORPS
IN THE ISSUE OF MULTINATIONAL MILITARY ECHELONS
IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

by

Heiko Bohnsack

June 2019

Thesis Advisor:
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Donald Abenheim
Uwe Hartmann

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PARTICIPATION IN HEADQUARTERS EUROCORPS IN THE ISSUE OF
MULTINATIONAL MILITARY ECHELONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

As a NATO member since 1999 and an EU member since 2004, Poland contributed to several military endeavors of both organizations. Participating with the status of “Associated Nation” already since 2009, Poland applied to become a “Framework Nation” (FN) of Headquarters (HQ) Eurocorps in 2011, seeking to share greater responsibilities and enjoy equal prerogatives with the other five FNs (Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, and Luxembourg) by 2016/2017. Poland invested significant resources in the HQ and its support units. In December 2016, however, Poland declared on the working level, that it no longer sought FN status and would instead reduce its contribution. It confirmed this in an announcement on political level in 2017. Based on qualitative research, the case study presented examines Poland’s decision, which unfolded amid a discussion about the need for better defense capabilities to strengthen the European pillar of NATO and visions of building a European Army. Although Warsaw cited scarcity of resources as the official reason for the reversal, the author examines competing explanations, including renationalization and a shift in threat perception and in preferences for alliance relationships, which culminated in the proposal to build “Fort Trump” for a permanently stationed U.S. armored division in Poland, as the real trigger for the highly symbolic decision to reduce participation in HQ Eurocorps.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
BMDS	Ballistic Missile Defense System
CHOD	Chief of Defense
CoCo	Common Committee
COMEC	Commander Eurocorps
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
DCOS I&A	Deputy Chief of Staff Influence and Assistance
DCOS Plans&Ops	Deputy Chief of Staff Plans & Operations
DCOS S&E	Deputy Chief of Staff Support & Enabling
ECC	Eurocorps Committee
ECFR	European Council on Foreign Relations
EDA	European Defense Agency
eFP	enhanced forward presence
EU	European Union
EUBG	European Union Battle Group
EUTM	European Union Training Mission
EUROGENDFOR	European Gendarmerie Force
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRF	Graduated Readiness Force
HQ	Headquarters
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan)
KFOR	Kosovo Force (Kosovo)
LCC	Land Component Command
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NRF	NATO Response Force
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
PfP	Partnership for Peace

PiS	<i>Prawo i Sprawiedliwość</i> (Law and Justice Party)
PSC	Political and Security Committee
RAP	Readiness Action Plan
RCA	<i>République Centrafricaine</i> (Central African Republic)
SFOR	Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
WEU	Western European Union

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis details a case study of sovereignty, national interest and military organization amid the present transformation of European defense. It is a subject that unfolds in an atmosphere of a putative U.S. retreat from Europe and the imperative for the European Union to grapple with an unsettled defense horizon. In particular, the renationalization of politics, society and culture collides with the ever more closely integrated military echelons upon which, in the last resort, peace in Europe and beyond resides.

Specifically, the Polish decision not to become the sixth Framework Nation¹ of Headquarters (HQ) Eurocorps² in Strasbourg (France), announced in the end of 2016, and finally confirmed by the Polish Ministry of Defense in early 2017, left Poland's allies in the EU and NATO wondering about the causes of the new policy. The Brussels-based blog *Bruxelles2*, which regularly reports about security related issues, doubts that what has been portrayed as the official reason—scarcity of human resources and the necessity to employ them in headquarters in Poland—is the actual reason. Rather, the blog assessed that the genuine reason is rancor within the Polish political class upturned by nationalist revival at home and abroad that began to operate especially since October 2015.³

As this study aspires to develop, there is a variety of possible reasons in the international system and in domestic politics that may be the cause of this retrograde development from a European perspective. This thesis aims to shed more light on the varied political and strategic motives behind the Polish decision, especially because Poland had, within its efforts to strengthen the EU Common Security Policy,⁴ formerly made

¹ Framework Nations of HQ Eurocorps are, in alphabetical order, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Spain.

² “Headquarters,” Eurocorps, 2018, <https://www.eurocorps.org/>.

³ Nicolas Gros-Verheyde, “La Pologne claque la porte de l’Eurocorps, par rancœur politicienne. Une erreur stratégique (V2),” [Poland slams the Eurocorps door out of political rancor. A strategic mistake], *Bruxelles2* (blog), March 28, 2017, <https://www.bruxelles2.eu/2017/03/28/la-pologne-claque-la-porte-de-leurocorps-par-rancoeur-politicienne-une-erreur-strategique/>.

⁴ Marcin Zaborowski, “From America’s Protégé to Constructive European,” *Occasional Paper 56* (December 2004): 17.

considerable efforts to attain the status of Framework Nation of the highly symbolic Eurocorps.

Beginning in the late 1980s with the Franco German brigade, the Eurocorps has been the focus point of an integrated European military force for decades. The process of European military integration in general, and this entity in particular, may provoke a degree of misunderstanding in the strategic community of the United States. In the wake of 9/11, the U.S. focus has shifted to what the allies do bring to the table in U.S.-led operations and, as an easily presentable (and thus exploitable) ‘indicator’ of that complex issue, the respective percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) spent on North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) force goals.⁵ The Eurocorps has in the year 2019, in the face of lingering doubt about Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, become an organization that has gained new prominence in the midst of calls by France and Germany for a “European Army,” while at the same time being a valuable contribution to transatlantic efforts. This dialectic of transatlantic orientation and provision of an instrument for strictly European endeavors through one entity, the Eurocorps, occasionally eludes professional soldiers without experience of such entities, and the public alike.

The present study arises from this author’s repeated practical experience in combination with the turbulence of the years 2014–2019, and serves to address both a policy and a scholarly need. Therefore, the major research question is this: Why did the government of Poland in 2016 choose not to become a Framework Nation of HQ Eurocorps in spite of the former Polish intention and an eight-year preparation period? Based on the answer, further research beyond the scope of this thesis may examine what implications this event offers for the question of renationalization in Europe in the 21st century and for the durability of multinational defense and military forces upon which security relies today and tomorrow.

⁵ Donald Abenheim, “Germany and the United States in the Age of Terror—Ideas, Domestic Politics, and the International System of States,” *Naval War College Review* 56, no. 4 (2003): 73; 76.

A. A SECURITY ENVIRONMENT CALLING FOR AN INCREASED EUROPEAN EFFORT

When one casts an eye to the issue of European security policy, one observes a host of developments with impact on the security situation. The decision almost a decade ago to decrease the number of NATO troops in Afghanistan,⁶ which was supposed to reduce the strain on the alliance members, coincided with the emergence of the “Arab Spring,” beginning in 2011. In its undesirable repercussions, parts of the African continent and the Middle East experienced a massive destabilization,⁷ leading to a sharp increase in terrorism by religious extremists, terror, famine, misery, and as a consequence of all that, refugee migration that peaked at the height of the Syrian conflict circa 2014–2015.

Probably not in the focus of U.S. defense circles, a longstanding goal of a European security policy and defense posture has been the fate of security and peace in Africa. With the climax of the NATO operation against the Gadaffi regime in 2011, European nations redoubled the projection of stability to Africa unilaterally, as well as within the NATO alliance, and in the framework of the European Union⁸. The next issue of war and peace arose in Europe itself by 2013–2014, a sign of great power competition awaking from its decades-long slumber in what many had wrongly dreamed was Kant’s Perpetual Peace that was destined to endure despite the growing upheaval in the world after 9/11.

Russia’s lightning annexation of Crimea in early 2014 sent shockwaves through Europe and NATO. The Russia of Putin is in many ways the heir of the West’s Cold War opponent, the Soviet Union. The Russian aggression first against Georgia in 2008 and then in Ukraine, a country willing to join NATO, and also a Partnership for Peace member, and

⁶ David S. Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2014).

⁷ Laurence Aïda Ammour, “New Security Challenges in North Africa after the ‘Arab Spring’” (Geneva Centre for Security Policy, 2012), <https://www.gcsp.ch/News-Knowledge/Publications/New-Security-Challenges-in-North-Africa-after-the-Arab-Spring>.

⁸ Frank Hagemann, “Strategic Planning for Comprehensive Security in the European Union’s Military Operations: EUFOR RD Congo, EUFOR Tchad/RCA, and EUNAVFOR Somalia” (Naval Postgraduate School, 2010), <https://apps.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA524653>; André Dumoulin and Nicolas Gros-Verheyde, *La politique européenne de sécurité et de défense commune: Parce-que l’Europe vaut bien une défense* [The European security and defense policy: Because Europe is worth defending], (Paris: Editions du Villard, 2017), <https://www.decitre.fr/livres/la-politique-europeenne-de-securite-et-de-defense-commune-9782956001300.html>.

a direct neighbor to several NATO allies, reminded a new generation of Europeans and Americans that the security order on the continent remained as prone to force as it had been in the past. This anxiety was especially deep among those countries that formerly were under Soviet control and since 1999 and 2004 had become NATO members. The fear that Russia might behave aggressively against them led to the development by NATO of the Readiness Action Plan (RAP).⁹ In solidarity with the nations who have heightened threat perceptions, beginning in 2014, NATO planned and staffed newly formed headquarters in the Baltic and Black Sea regions,¹⁰ intensified air policing by multinational NATO air forces on Russia's borders, and implemented the enhanced forward presence (eFP),¹¹ which constitutes a stationing of rotating multinational battle group sized units in Poland and the Baltic States.

While the Obama administration had made an attempt to bring NATO burden sharing to the fore in the Libyan episode of 2011, as its predecessors had done in former times, Barack Obama, John Kerry, William Gates and Leon Panetta as well as Jimmy Carter cleaved to the custom of collective defense, which the United States had followed since April 1949.¹² In a *retour de la manivelle*, a change of guard in the White House in 2016, however, brought the issue of alliance cohesion more abruptly to the fore. Republican skepticism, or custom of doubt about the politics of collective defense, affects the current atmosphere to the effect of upsetting European states' confidence in the credibility of NATO solidarity.

With the diplomatic revolution that a policy of "America First" in its 21st century form portended,¹³ during the 2016 presidential election in the United States and even after

⁹ "NATO - Topic: Readiness Action Plan," NATO, September 21, 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_119353.htm?selectedLocale=en.

¹⁰ "NATO on the Map," NATO, accessed September 3, 2018, <https://www.nato.int/nato-on-the-map/#lat=55.052382&lon=24.37863200000004&zoom=2&layer=4&infoBox=537>.

¹¹ "NATO - Topic: Boosting NATO's Presence in the East and Southeast," NATO, January 21, 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136388.htm?selectedLocale=en.

¹² Donald Abenheim and Carolyn Halladay, *Soldiers, War, Knowledge and Citizenship: German-American Essays on Civil-Military Relations* (Berlin: Miles-Verlag, 2017), 94-147.

¹³ Stefan Klein, *America First? Isolationism in U.S. Foreign Policy from the 19th to the 21st Century* (Berlin: Miles-Verlag, 2017).

taking office, now-President Donald Trump stated that NATO “is obsolete,”¹⁴ which he later eschewed. Nevertheless, his public pronouncements effected a sharp break with past statecraft either out of conviction to return to pre-1938 policy or as a tactic in the rhetoric of burden sharing in NATO. His first visit to NATO HQ, in May 2017,¹⁵ was a kind of donnybrook of misstatements and crossed purposes, which heightened old burden sharing and extended deterrence anxieties. Such views were thought to be museum pieces. In fact, they bore a striking similarity to what Donald Abenheim and Carolyn Halladay, in their essay on the United States being a European power, reported about the transatlantic wrestling for burden sharing since the beginning of the alliance.¹⁶ Although the president revoked his extreme verdict on NATO in April 2017,¹⁷ many European nations had understood that they needed to play a bigger role in their own security and defense without the Washington Treaty. Famous in this regard was the statement in May 2017 by Chancellor Angela Merkel to the effect that the epoch of low-cost security for continental Europe, and especially for Germany, had come to a close and greater self-reliance was the motto of the time.¹⁸

As of 2019, European security community mainstream thinking suggests that the general scarcity of resources and the scale of the challenges require common policy and strategy answers and solutions to strengthen the European pillar of NATO. This desire to make more of the efforts of sole nations for collective defense is older than the alliance itself, and the friction between this policy and institutions that aspire to be chiefly European

¹⁴ Ashley Parker, “Donald Trump Says NATO Is ‘Obsolete,’ UN Is ‘Political Game,’” *New York Times*, April 2, 2016, sec. Politics, <https://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2016/04/02/donald-trump-tells-crowd-hed-be-fine-if-nato-broke-up/>.

¹⁵ Nolan D. Mccaskill and Cristiano Lima, “Trump Reverses on NATO: ‘It’s No Longer Obsolete,’” *POLITICO*, accessed August 2, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/04/donald-trump-nato-not-obsolete-237166>.

¹⁶ Abenheim and Halladay, *Soldiers, War, Knowledge and Citizenship*, 123.

¹⁷ Mccaskill and Lima, “Trump Reverses on NATO.”

¹⁸ “Kanzlerin trotz Trump: ‘Wir müssen unser Schicksal wirklich in die eigene Hand nehmen,’” [Chancellor defies Trump: ‘We really have to take our fate in our own hands’], *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 28, 2017, sec. Politik, <http://www.faz.net/1.5036287>; “Bierzeltrede in München: Merkel sieht in USA keinen verlässlichen Partner mehr,” [Bierzelt speech in Munich: Merkel does not consider the United States to be a reliable partner anymore], *Rheinische Post online*, May 28, 2017, https://rp-online.de/politik/deutschland/bierzeltrede-in-muenchen-merkel-sieht-in-usa-keinen-verlaesslichen-partner-mehr_aid-17843695.

is also a continuity of great seniority—a fact overlooked by journalists, politicians, and newcomers to this field of study. This line reaches from the Dunkirk Pact of 1947 through the Western Union of 1948 and European Defense Community of 1950 to the European Pillar of 1962¹⁹ and onto the Franco-German brigade in 1989, as the pre-history of the Eurocorps.²⁰

As an example, in 2017, a full 25 European Union states (including Poland) developed and launched the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). Another example is HQ Eurocorps. In an article dated 10 March 2017, Spanish Lieutenant General Alfredo Ramirez, then-Commander of the headquarters, summarized how HQ Eurocorps epitomizes the response to the current challenges:

The question that arises ... is this: How can we improve European military instruments? The Eurocorps' model can provide some good ideas about how to achieve this. ... Consequently, Eurocorps is the perfect tool for EU military ambitions, but at the same time, it keeps its NATO patterns and duties. This duality confers this exceptional status to Eurocorps, and this is why it has often been identified as a potential model for the progressive integration of European military forces.²¹

Against this backdrop, and fueled by mounting renationalization at the end of 2016 Poland came up with the jarring and particularistic decision to reduce its contribution to the project of HQ Eurocorps significantly. Prior to that decision though, Poland had duly followed a roadmap to become the sixth Framework Nation of that headquarters over a number of years, involving the investment of substantial resources. The well-informed Russian platform Sputnik points out that Poland will reduce the bulk of its 120 military

¹⁹ Desmond Dinan, ed., *Encyclopedia of the European Union* (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publications, 2000); RUSI, "The Western Union and Its Defence Organization," *Royal United Services Institution* 94, no. 576 (1949): 519–35; Edward Furdson, *The European Defence Community: A History* (New York: St. Martin's press, 1979); Alastair Buchan and Philip Windsor, *Arms and Stability in Europe* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963).

²⁰ Julian Lindley-French and Katja Flückiger, *A Chronology of European Security & Defence 1945-2005* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for Security Policy, 2005).

²¹ Alfredo Ramirez, "European Defence and the Eurocorps Model," *Euractiv* (blog), March 21, 2017, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/opinion/european-defence-and-the-eurocorps-model/>.

personnel in the Eurocorps “over NATO obligations.”²² If it is common sense among the European nations that under the given conditions, cooperation is extremely advisable, such a decision under such circumstances requires an explanation rooted in policy analysis. It also requires an explanation in terms of cause and effect—to inform future endeavors about possibilities and limitations of multinational military integration. This question is relevant also amid the domestic political dynamics of renationalization versus federative tradition in Poland, France, Germany and other continental nations that, to varying degrees, mirror the upswing of nationalism and a beggar-thy-neighbor external policy that has afflicted the United States and the UK—two nations that had been at the forefront of the integration of Europe since the 1940s. The reappearance of blood and soil nationalist parties, unseen since the 1920s and 1930s, has added a factor to security and defense that was unknown during the Cold War or which existed in a fully different security and defense alignment.

B. RANGE AND CHARACTER OF SOURCES FOR THE STUDY

Poland’s decision to eschew the role of Framework Nation of HQ Eurocorps in 2016 has been a rather recent event, but it is no less important to assess its policy meaning. The event came at a time of other spectacular news about politics and security in Europe, the United States, Asia, and Africa, each of them attracting the attention of journalists and a public that has little patience for the policy details of military organization or multinational organizations. Only a few reports, press statements, interviews and comments have emerged specifically about the Polish decision regarding its new plans of contribution to HQ Eurocorps. Scholarly literature about this particular Polish decision is scarce. The few articles that exist on the topic have been used in this research. And yet, the decision is a fact and now the subject of a thesis. This author was a personal witness to this event, and the present study arises from that first-hand experience, joined with the opportunity for advanced study in California to reflect about these events amid the renationalization manifest in the maritime democracies. For instance, the Polish example

²² “Poland to Reduce Participation in Eurocorps over NATO Obligations,” Sputnik, March 29, 2017, <https://sputniknews.com/politics/201703291052077336-poland-nato-obligations/>; “Guessing Game: Will Warsaw Withdraw Forces from Eurocorps?,” Sputnik, March 30, 2017, <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201703301052108154-poland-eurocorps-withdrawal/>.

stands alongside the calls in the U.S. public to withdraw the U.S. forces from NATO. At the same time, the Brexit fiasco has hardened into an unending spectacle of failed policy and domestic political paralysis with troubling promise for the core values of what still is a transatlantic alliance of values.

The existing sources, however, do provide insight into facts, conditions, opinions and theory, which allow the necessary research to find answers to the question at hand, which, in its brief form, is this: Why did Poland refuse to become a Framework Nation of HQ Eurocorps? Scholarly articles and books, official documents, think tank and conference reports as well as published political statements all provide for an analysis that encompasses more than what is portrayed as the official reason by several newswires.²³

C. POLISH STRATEGIC CULTURE UNDER DIFFERENT GOVERNMENTS

The point of departure here is the strategic experience of Central/East Europe, that is, the nations that are caught between Germany and Russia in modern European history.²⁴ In the case of the lands between the Baltic, Elbe and Vistula, the Polish case is aggravated by the horrors of World War II and the legacy of the Cold War.

Considerations about Polish strategic culture resulting from the experience of being the victim of aggressions from the West (Germany) and the East (Russia/Soviet Union) keep reappearing in the spectrum of available publications.²⁵ Rooted in the Polish

²³ “Poland to Reduce Participation in Eurocorps over NATO Obligations,” Sputnik; “Poland to Reduce Involvement in Eurocorps: Defence Ministry,” Radio Poland, March 29, 2017, <https://www.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/300145,Poland-to-reduce-involvement-in-Eurocorps-defence-ministry>; “Poland to Withdraw Troops from Eurocorps Force: Official,” eNews Channel Africa, March 28, 2017, / <https://www.enca.com/world/poland-to-withdraw-troops-from-eurocorps-force-official>.

²⁴ Ivan T. Berend, *History Derailed: Central and Eastern Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

²⁵ Marcin Terlikowski, “Poland,” in *Strategic Cultures in Europe: Security and Defence Policies across the Continent*, ed. Bastian Giegerich, Heiko Biehl, and Alexandra Jonas, vol. 13, Schriftenreihe des Zentrums für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013), 269; “Interview: Dr. Andrew A. Michta on NATO’s Defense of the Baltics,” Public Broadcasting of Latvia, September 14, 2018, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/defense/interview-dr-andrew-a-michta-on-natos-defense-of-the-baltics.a292328/>; Andrew A. Michta, “Europeans in Search of Themselves,” *American Interest* (blog), June 19, 2018, <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/06/19/europeans-in-search-of-themselves/>.

constitution (Article 4) is the “fundamental principle guiding Polish foreign policy ... reflected in the motto “‘Nothing About Us Without Us.’”²⁶ Yet, this motto maintains tradition; as Laura Chappell emphasizes, it is significant for Polish policy in 2010,²⁷ the time when the Polish government made the first practical steps toward becoming a Framework Nation of HQ Eurocorps. Strategic culture is in the background also when Wojciech Lorenz, Senior Analyst at the Polish Institute of International Affairs, shares the Polish fear that

NATO is not prepared to deter a determined state adversary because after the collapse of the Soviet Union and dismantling of the Warsaw Pact it perceived the threat of a conventional attack against its territory as highly unlikely. Most of the European members of the Alliance have significantly decreased defence spending below the 2% GDP level advocated by NATO, cut the number of troops and replaced heavy armour with lighter expeditionary capabilities.²⁸

The statement demonstrates a deep mistrust of Poland’s European allies, which can equally be found in other sources.²⁹ Based on the experience of World War II, when Poland’s European allies did little to prevent Germany and Russia from attacking Poland, the United States is considered as the only partner capable of giving satisfactory protection to Poland, hence the dominance of the orientation toward the United States.

D. INFLUENCE OF THE UNITED STATES

Strengthening the European pillar of NATO, seen by many as the way ahead to create a better balance in transatlantic burden-sharing and thus making it stronger, could, in the opinion of others, undermine the transatlantic relationship. Then-U.S. Secretary of

²⁶ Jacek Czaputowicz, “Minister Jacek Czaputowicz on Polish Diplomacy Priorities in 2018,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Poland, March 21, 2018, https://www.msz.gov.pl/en/p/msz_en/news/minister_jacek_czaputowicz_on_polish_diplomacy_priorities_in_2018.

²⁷ Laura Chappell, “Poland in Transition: Implications for a European Security and Defence Policy,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 31, no. 2 (August 2010): 243, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2010.491312>.

²⁸ Wojciech Lorenz, “2016 NATO Summit on Strategic Adaptation,” *Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych* 790, no. 58 (June 9, 2015): 2.

²⁹ See, for example, Terlikowski, “Poland,” 271.

State Dean Acheson already faced this conundrum of alliance cohesion and threat perception at the time of European re-armament circa 1949–52 and the founding of NATO after World War II. His problem proved to be more durable than he imagined, when the United States had to anticipate that a too strong alliance, bringing “forth concessions on the part of the adversary, [would lead to the result that] the coalition tended to fall apart.”³⁰ This points to two interlinked facets of the handling of the security situation and alliance cohesion: the role of the particular government in power, and a leading power’s role of leadership. While the Warsaw government in power until 2015 made large efforts to prove that Poland is a reliable partner in NATO and the EU, Poland in the year 2019 is at loggerheads with the EU in several respects—the decision concerning Eurocorps may have been just one expression of its discontent. This point is where U.S. leadership could come into play. The U.S.-Polish scholar Andrew Michta’s plea for the United States to boost its bilateral relationships with European allies is above all a suggestion to provide the guiding light on the way ahead for its partners, whose efforts, in his words, tend to be “defined by the progressive regionalization of individual nations’ security optics”³¹—either toward Russia or the MENA³² region. Michta is a partisan of the Polish-U.S. relationship, who looks with skepticism on the EU and especially on German policy.³³

E. REALISM IS NOT ENOUGH

Ryszard Zięba’s claim that realist motives determine the Polish policy toward NATO and the EU and his conclusion that “along with the growing divergence in the Euro-Atlantic security system there has been a return to a traditional, militarized approach to security, in accord with the premises of the realist paradigm”³⁴ is certainly convincing, but

³⁰ John Lamberton Harper, *American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan and Dean G. Acheson*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 281.

³¹ Andrew A. Michta, “The US Needs to Boost Bilateral Relationships in Europe,” *American Interest* (blog), February 12, 2018, <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/02/12/us-needs-boost-bilateral-relationships-europe/>.

³² MENA stands for Middle East and North Africa

³³ Michta, “The US Needs to Boost Bilateral Relationships in Europe”; Michta, “Europeans in Search of Themselves.”

³⁴ Ryszard Zięba, *The Euro-Atlantic Security System in the 21st Century: From Cooperation to Crisis* (Bonn: Springer, 2018), 11.

must be complemented by other factors, because changes of foreign policy occurred in the wake of the elections in October 2015. Individual assessment or, respectively, a government's collective assessment of the situation apparently play a part, indicating that the effect of "the inter-subjectively constituted structure of identities and interests in the system,"³⁵ as Alexander Wendt phrased it, should be taken into account.

What Polish Deputy Defense Minister Tomasz Szatkowski suggests in an interview published 6 April 2017,³⁶ which is about ten days after the Polish decision not to become a Framework Nation of Eurocorps became publicly known, confirms that resource constraints played a role in the decision, but goes beyond this fact. Szatkowski also claims that Poland would have had no say in the decisions about Eurocorps—if true, a possible concern that corresponds with what Chappell as well as Adam Balcer et al.³⁷ have identified as an obstacle for Poland's cooperation in common endeavors. The argument that Poland had not been given enough influence in Eurocorps, however, is groundless. As soon as Poland would have attained the status of Framework Nation, it would have had its vote in all future decisions, unanimously taken by representatives of all Framework Nations.³⁸ This interview is an interesting source, because it is a rare document of direct statements from Polish officials about the Eurocorps decision. As such, its contents warrant an especially thorough examination. The unknown interviewer twice uses the telling term "dead structure" to characterize Eurocorps in his questions. Although Deputy Minister Szatkowski does not expressly confirm the interviewer's assessment, he equally does not make any effort to correct the use of such language. Instead, he holds that "Eurocorps is a

³⁵ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 401.

³⁶ "Poland's Future in Eurocorps," Poland Current Events, April 6, 2017, <http://www.currenteventspoland.com/analysis/eurocorps.html>.

³⁷ Adam Balcer et al., *In a Clinch: The European Policy of the PiS Government* (Warsaw: Stefan Batory Foundation, September 2017), 27.

³⁸ Parties to HQ Eurocorps, "The Terms of Reference for the Eurocorps Steering Bodies" (unpublished internal document December 9, 2010), clauses 16 and 36. See Appendix of this thesis for an extract of the document.

political symbol, rather than an elite military unit.”³⁹ In his view, the predecessor government had sought Framework Nation status merely for prestige reasons.

Laura Chappell⁴⁰ and Marcin Terlikowski⁴¹ identify Poland’s motivation for considerable contributions to NATO and EU missions especially between 2003 and 2009 as the desire to appear as a reliable partner and to receive security guarantees from the allies in return. Tomasz Paszewski’s analysis of the Polish 2008 *Vision of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland—2030* does not find such motivations. Instead, the document simply describes how Polish Armed forces would participate in remote international operations, assuming that any threats to Polish security would be dealt with in the Alliance if they came to materialize.⁴²

F. CURRENT POLISH SECURITY POLICY AND ITS POSSIBLE IMPACT ON THE BIGGER PICTURE

In an article warning about the risks of decreasing cooperation on the European level, Marcin Zaborowski states that formerly, “Warsaw also signed up to Eurocorps and participated in numerous EU operations in areas from Africa to Georgia. However, since the election of the Eurosceptic Law and Justice Party (PiS) government, Warsaw’s attitude towards European defence initiatives has been at best lukewarm and on occasion openly hostile.”⁴³ Matching with this statement, the former U.S. ambassador to NATO Ivo Daalder and others point to an ongoing re-nationalization of defense efforts in European countries.⁴⁴

³⁹ Poland Current Events, “Poland’s Future in Eurocorps.”

⁴⁰ Chappell, “Poland in Transition,” 235–36.

⁴¹ Terlikowski, “Poland,” 272.

⁴² Tomasz Paszewski, “Can Poland Defend Itself?” *Survival* 58, no. 2 (March 3, 2016): 117–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2016.1161907>.

⁴³ Marcin Zaborowski, “Poland and European Defence Integration,” European Council on Foreign Relations, January 25, 2018, https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/poland_and_european_defence_integration.

⁴⁴ Ivo Daalder, “Ghost of European Re-Nationalism,” POLITICO, February 17, 2017, <https://www.politico.eu/article/ghost-of-european-re-nationalism/>; Daniel Keohane, “The Renationalization of European Defense Cooperation,” Carnegie Europe, March 22, 2016, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/63086>.

Poland's security policy has ramifications that clearly reach far beyond the Polish policy in a strict national sense. Of course, the decisions made by the biggest partner on its eastern rim influence the assessment and subsequent decisions of other, smaller EU and NATO partners. Although the Polish decision not to become a Framework Nation of Eurocorps after a long preparation phase has not resulted in extensive press interest, it has certainly not gone unobserved. The contrary can be assumed, and the relative silence about it may indicate that Eurocorps (and the idea behind it) is considered as "not a factor."

The Polish proposal to invest up to \$2 billion to enable the stationing of a U.S. armored division in Poland has gained much more attention. As Michael Kofman asserts, "an armored division in Poland is an answer to a question that's not being asked."⁴⁵ The related discussion about the nature of effective deterrence, apparently triggered by a RAND Corporation Wargaming exercise in February 2016,⁴⁶ and now brought back to the fore by the Polish initiative, refers to issues of threat perceptions, strategic cultures and fundamental orientations. This issue also illustrates how the U.S. defense establishment is wrestling with the revival of continental and maritime defense in Central Europe as a matter of policy and strategy. A debate has ensued between the RAND analysts David Shlapak and Michael Johnson on the Army, Article 5 side, and the U.S. Navy Center for Naval Analyses and Wilson-Center research scientist and *War-on-the-Rocks* author Michael Kofman on the maritime and also skeptical off-shore side. It is neatly developed in a *War-on-the-Rocks* article series, and revolves around deterrence by denial versus deterrence by punishment, flexibility versus entrenchment.⁴⁷ The debate is also emblematic of the alliance cohesion versus maritime or even off-shore and anti-alliance schools in U.S. strategy, all of which have a bearing on the issue of the posture of Polish defense and its

⁴⁵ Michael Kofman, "Permanently Stationing U.S. Forces in Poland Is a Bad Idea, But One Worth Debating," *War on the Rocks*, October 12, 2018, 3, <https://warontherocks.com/2018/10/permanently-stationing-u-s-forces-in-poland-is-a-bad-idea-but-one-worth-debating/>.

⁴⁶ David A. Shlapak and Michael W. Johnson, "Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank: Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics" (RAND corporation, 2016), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1253.html.

⁴⁷ Michael Kofman, "Fixing NATO Deterrence in the East, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love NATO's Crushing Defeat by Russia," *War on the Rocks*, May 12, 2016, 6–7, <https://warontherocks.com/2016/05/fixing-nato-deterrence-in-the-east-or-how-i-learned-to-stop-worrying-and-love-natos-crushing-defeat-by-russia/>.

relation to the Eurocorps and to NATO. Also, the debate includes some assessment of tactical questions, and is fueled in no small part by individual beliefs about whether a security dilemma already exists or would be created in the first place or aggravated by the permanent stationing of significant numbers of U.S. forces in the Baltics on the pattern of classic forward defense as it existed from the 1950s until the 1980s, most conspicuously in Germany. The contents of the discussion are only of secondary significance in this paper. What needs to be recognized, though, is that decisions pertaining to national security can, and in this case do, touch vital interests of more nations than the one in question.

G. HYPOTHESES

This study initially intended to test an economic hypothesis, stating that the scarcity of resources in the given situation forced Poland to take the decision to significantly reduce its contingent in HQ Eurocorps. The official reason that Poland gave for the move was the need to employ the invested resources in the implementation of NATO's RAP. After all, the 120 soldiers it provided included among other ranks a large number of field grade officers, highly trained and experienced specialists necessary for various functions in the command and control of an army corps. Some of these specialists are indeed rare resources, others, with more common skills, are in greater quantitative need in units of the Polish armed forces. The majority of these officers will stay with Eurocorps until the end of 2020. Therefore, resources may have been a factor tipping a balance, but not the reason for Poland's decision.

Next, a political hypothesis stating that deep differences in the assessment of core matters of security led to the decision has to be examined. This hypothesis holds that the current Polish government is convinced that certain European endeavors, one of which is the "Eurocorps project," on its current perceived trajectory, endanger the transatlantic link, and therefore, Poland opted to play a much lesser role in it. Indeed, much points to the accuracy of such a hypothesis. Given the contrasting policies of the predecessor government until 2015, that hypothesis cannot stand alone, and necessitates an additional element to explain its significance.

Therefore, the thesis probes a psychological hypothesis, centering on the personality of individual leaders, in this case the influential Jarosław Kaczyński, as a kind of overarching mechanism. The values he (and the PiS party) embodies lead to the re-assessment of resource constraints, threat perception, and the assessment that the risk of a transatlantic rift is real, emerging because of strengthening European cooperation.

The thesis concludes that the reevaluation of factors, which by themselves do not dictate a specific outcome, led to changes in Poland's foreign policy that also pertain to the country's participation in Eurocorps. From the perspective of the PiS party's nationalist and historicist perspective, faced with the perceived risk of declining NATO solidarity and set against the backdrop of recurring historic experience, the country's government prioritized the quest for securing a U.S. security guaranty for Poland—valid within or without NATO, and if necessary at the price of detaching from its European partners.

Other motives, even if unsubstantiated as the thesis suggests, appear as factors. After the reevaluation of the security environment in accordance with the PiS party's beliefs and orientation, such factors counted in favor of not becoming a Framework Nation of Eurocorps. The discussion among the Eurocorps Framework Nations about the headquarters' orientation to NATO and/or EU operations serves as an excuse to justify Poland's decision to a Polish public uninformed about the details of collective defense and mobilized by renationalization. In fact, the truth is lost that a Framework Nation enjoys excellent possibilities to control the Eurocorps' employment in crisis and war. From the resources point of view, admittedly, a multinational headquarters such as Eurocorps is more expensive than a merely national headquarters in absolute terms, but in relative terms, each participating nation reaps substantial savings due to the partners' contributions adding to one's own. Such facts of the virtues of alliance cohesion and the pooling and sharing that comes from collective defense are more and more orphans in an atmosphere of nationalistic frenzy and generalized threats of war in Central and Eastern Europe obtaining since the Crimean annexation.

The scholars at Clingendael, the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, are quite accurate when they assert in their conclusion of a Eurocorps case study that “multinationality is never easy and sometimes even far from it,” and that the Eurocorps-

typical “pendulum-like switch in focus on NATO or EU employment” creates difficulties.⁴⁸ Indeed HQ Eurocorps, on behalf of its Framework Nations, while advertising its value for military operations of the European Union,⁴⁹ upholds its motto “A Force for the EU & NATO.”⁵⁰ Going further in their analysis, Clingendael inadvertently anticipated trouble coming from what has been perceived as a “French-German initiative to reinforce the EC [Eurocorps] in its EU role.” Nonetheless, decisions about the employment of HQ Eurocorps are being taken unanimously among the Framework Nations, and as such, Poland would have had a clear say in it, and the possibility to advocate a smaller amplitude of the said pendulum.

H. A WORD ABOUT THE SCHOLARLY METHOD

The thesis does not use quantitative methods to develop its argument and expose its evidence. Instead, it focuses on the qualitative analysis of context, actual behavior and the scholarly as well as the public interpretation thereof via sources in the literature of contemporary defense affairs in its variety.

A description and brief history of HQ Eurocorps is necessary, as well as the principles laid down in specific Eurocorps documents, in order to demonstrate the contribution Poland had agreed to make, and how accurate claims of no influence are. The used documents are not classified.

The core of the thesis analyzes and compares reports, claims, decisions, and actions from 1999 to 2015 and from 2015 to the present. Why 1999 and 2015? Poland became a NATO member in 1999 after almost a decade of much diplomatic exchange that climaxed in the NATO campaign in Kosovo and the successful accession of three Central European nations to NATO. And although 2008 is the year when the first traces of a Polish desire to

⁴⁸ Dick Zandee, Margriet Drent, and Rob Hendriks, “Defence Cooperation Models: Lessons Learned and Usability” (The Hague, October 2016), 18.

⁴⁹ Ramirez, Alfredo and Pfrengle, Franz, “A force for the European Union and NATO,” (presentation given to the European Parliament) February 4, 2016, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/96804/Presentation%20General%20Ramirez%20and%20Pfrengle.pdf>.

⁵⁰ “A Force for the EU & NATO,” Eurocorps, accessed August 26, 2018, <https://www.eurocorps.org/a-force-for-the-eu-nato/>.

participate in Eurocorps as a Framework Nation can be found,⁵¹ a brief analysis of the Polish security policy from 1999 to 2008 may forestall criticism of too selectively choosing the reference frame. Twenty-fifteen is the year after which Russia invaded Crimea. More than a year later, we witnessed an upswing of widespread anxiety about European security. And, 2015 was the year in which changes of policy occurred. The annexation of Crimea would have triggered any re-orientation of security policies in Europe, especially in the countries neighboring Russia. The thesis demonstrates that the change of objective conditions and of perceptions did not occur immediately, but within an interval of 18 months—as happened elsewhere in Europe in the wake of this critical event. The Russian annexation of Crimea certainly changed objective conditions, but for Poland, Russia always has been the biggest threat. The Crimea annexation did not directly change policies. A new government did.

Facing anxieties about the future of NATO, Poland was also confronted with U.S. criticism of European integration and defense efforts. At the same time, confronted with European criticism of Polish domestic violations of the rule of law, Poland opted to advocate for what was considered an algorithm to secure a U.S. security guaranty. To that end, Poland aimed at convincing the United States to create a U.S. military presence in Poland and sacrificed many of its ties to European defense integration.⁵²

Poland's decision not to become a Framework Nation of Eurocorps in 2016, in spite of its former intent and an eight-year preparation period, remains illogical on its own merit, but becomes more comprehensible with the findings of the thesis.

The thesis follows a “golden thread”: The security challenges pointed out in the introduction set the scene for the obvious question about possible solutions for Europe. Eurocorps is a model of how European nations could handle their common burdens.

⁵¹ “Polish Troops to Join Eurocorps,” Warsaw Voice Online, May 28, 2008, <http://www.warsawvoice.pl/WVpage/pages/article.php/17938/article>; Jean-Dominique Merchet, “La Pologne va Rejoindre l’Eurocorps, de plus En plus Otanisé,” [Poland will join the Eurocorps, more and more NATO-ized], Secret Defense (blog), May 6, 2008, <http://secretdefense.blogs.liberation.fr/2008/05/06/la-pologne-va-r/>.

⁵² In fact, what Poland wants goes beyond enhanced forward presence: It reflects what had been built especially in Germany during the bloc confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Indeed, commentators frequently played with the idea of making Eurocorps the nucleus of common European forces⁵³—which would be a long way to go. Yet the decision of Poland not to become a Framework Nation of the headquarters has a contrary effect in terms of strategic communication and the facts of force structure.

Chapter II provides information about conditions in and for Europe, and what Eurocorps is. Against that backdrop, Chapter III portrays and analyzes the Polish Security Policy 1999–2015. Chapter IV then analyzes Polish Security Policy from 2015 to the present, including and culminating in the Polish proposal for Fort Trump. The change of policy after the 2015 election, together with the findings about the character of Framework Nation status in Eurocorps, forms the basis of the argument.

The annex comprises an extract of the Eurocorps Terms of Reference for the Steering Bodies. The document is unclassified, but not a publicly available source.

⁵³ See, for example, von Wogau, “Eurocorps as a Pilot Project for the European Defence Union,” accessed November 20, 2018, http://www.wogau.de/de/presse/mitteilungen/160707_discussion_paper_eurocorps.php.

II. HQ EUROCORPS

European security faces several challenges, among them a perceived scarcity of resources, the question of sovereignty of the individual European states, and old and new external threats. A new quality of transatlantic relations—widely perceived by North Americans and Europeans as deteriorating—adds urgency to the need to find suitable European answers for security and defense issues.

Currently, a much-discussed European answer to the challenges in the security realm is known as the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO): In 2017, the newest move of what began in late 1950 with the European Defense Community, 25 European Union states developed and launched PESCO, aiming at a closer cooperation in security and defense matters.⁵⁴

A middle-aged example from the 1990s, albeit smaller in its reach and aspiration, is Headquarters (HQ) Eurocorps—an existing military headquarters on the army corps level. This entity can be seen as a model of how European states can share benefits and burdens in the provision of military capabilities. While the Eurocorps certainly is a European response to a range of security challenges, it is important to note that Eurocorps is not what it is sometimes referred to, *the* European Corps. It is *a* European corps headquarters, “owned” not by the EU, but by its Framework Nations of Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Spain.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the body is open to new members from Europe, and beyond.

At the end of 2016, Poland decided not to become the sixth Framework Nation of Eurocorps, despite an eight-year preparation period⁵⁶ that included the investment of

⁵⁴ “Defence Cooperation: Council Establishes Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), with 25 Member States Participating - Consilium,” Council of the European Union, December 11, 2017, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/12/11/defence-cooperation-pesco-25-member-states-participating/>.

⁵⁵ “Multinational in Every Sense,” Eurocorps, 2018, <https://www.eurocorps.org/multinational-in-every-sense/>.

⁵⁶ “Security and Defence MEPs Visit Eurocorps,” European Parliament, January 28, 2008, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+IM-PRESS+20080121STO19279+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>.

significant resources in this headquarters. In a 2017 interview with Deputy Defense Minister Tomasz Szatkowski, he revealed the Polish rationale for abstaining from participation as Framework Nation: a judgment that the Framework Nations have steered Eurocorps in a direction that is not desirable for Poland.⁵⁷ He added the opinion that the headquarters yielded too little operational value to justify the resources invested, repeating criticism and scorn from outside occasionally heard at the time of its founding.⁵⁸

This chapter aims to demonstrate that this scorn is unsubstantiated. Instead, the HQ has proved to be a versatile military instrument in numerous commitments for NATO and the EU. The model of Framework Nation governance guarantees influence for each Framework Nation on equal terms.

To this end, a brief review of current European security challenges serves as backdrop for the discussion of Eurocorps. What follows comprises a historical section dealing with the circumstances of its foundation in the 1990s. The operational and standby commitments of the headquarters, conducted for NATO and the EU, and mandated by the Framework Nations, provide a powerful argument for the model represented by Eurocorps. Its orientation as a tool for NATO and the EU, sometimes portrayed as mutually exclusive alternatives, is the subject of another section of the chapter. Finally, the chapter analyzes multinational decision-making and influence in, and the execution of governance over, the headquarters by the Framework Nations.

In the writing of this study, the author has used open sources that are not classified. These items include sources such as news articles, military publications and official reports, as well as unclassified parts of original documents, together containing sufficient information to get a comprehensive picture of this chapter's subject.

⁵⁷ Poland Current Events, "Poland's Future in Eurocorps."

⁵⁸ "Einmalig in der Welt," [Unique in the world], *Der Spiegel*, November 13, 1995, 131.

A. OLD AND NEW SECURITY CHALLENGES

No country can afford to act as a lone rider in the face of the risks emanating from a profoundly changing world.⁵⁹

The challenges for European security originate from many sources in the realm of ideology and from many points on the compass. Obvious external challenges are compounded by a new uncertainty in transatlantic relations. To this problem is joined the gravest risk, that the European powers will cease their decades long cooperation in the European Union as exemplified in Brexit and the demands voiced by anti-EU nationalist parties, alive across the span of the confederation.

One can begin with the threat from the south, which in the view of Spain, Italy, and France posed a danger to the peace and security of Europe from an early date. In the wake of the 2011 “Arab Spring,” the political and humanitarian situation deteriorated in parts of the African continent and the Middle East.⁶⁰ The accompanying increase in religious extremist terrorism, famine, and misery resulted in a massive refugee migration that peaked at the height of the Syrian conflict in 2014–2015, in a challenge to European security policy and defense posture. The so-far theoretical contingency of mass migration became a reality.

Russia’s annexation of Crimea in early 2014 stirred up European and NATO security assumptions. The Russia of Vladimir Putin, seeking recognition and influence regionally and beyond, is in many ways the heir of the West’s Cold War opponent, the Soviet Union. The Russian aggressions against Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014, countries neighboring and willing to join NATO and the EU, conjured up Cold War fears. This anxiety was especially deep among the new NATO countries that formerly were under Soviet control and now see themselves as part of “the West,” like the Baltic States and Poland, as well as those around the Black Sea.

⁵⁹ Author’s translation of: “aucun pays [...] ne peut se permettre de faire cavalier seul face aux risques générés par un monde en profonde mutation,” quoted from: Alfredo Ramirez, “Le modèle du Corps européen,” [The Eurocorps model], *La Libre Belgique*, March 27, 2017, sec. Débats, 44.

⁶⁰ Ammour, “New Security Challenges in North Africa after the ‘Arab Spring.’”

The fear that Russia might behave aggressively against them led to the development by NATO of the RAP as of 2014,⁶¹ including measures such as the foundation of newly formed headquarters, intensified air policing on Russia's borders, and the implementation of the Enhanced Forward Presence,⁶² constituting a rotation of multinational battle groups in Poland and the Baltic States.⁶³

Nonetheless, despite this new task for the alliance, during the 2016 presidential election in the United States and even after taking office, now-President Trump stated that NATO "is obsolete."⁶⁴ His first visit to NATO HQ, in May 2017,⁶⁵ heightened old burden-sharing and extended-deterrence anxieties. Although the president revoked his extreme verdict on NATO in April 2017,⁶⁶ many European nations understood that they needed to play a bigger role in their own security and defense. German Chancellor Angela Merkel's statement, as mentioned in the introduction, captures the prevailing mood of the time.⁶⁷

From a European security community point of view, scarcity of resources and the scale of the challenges require common policy and strategy answers and solutions to strengthen the European pillar of NATO. Several attempts to achieve a strengthening of a European pillar of NATO have been made from the Treaty of Dunkirk of 1947 through the Western Union of 1948, and from the European Defense Community of 1950 to the European Pillar of 1962, and on to the Franco-German brigade in the late 1980s,⁶⁸ in a premonition of the Eurocorps, which was founded after Germany's reunification. In a 2012

⁶¹ NATO, "NATO - Topic: Readiness Action Plan"; Douglas Lute, "From Wales to Warsaw: NATO's Readiness Action Plan," *Ambassadors Review*, 2015, 31–32.

⁶² NATO, "NATO - Topic: Boosting NATO's Presence in the East and Southeast."

⁶³ NATO, "NATO on the Map."

⁶⁴ Parker, "Donald Trump Says NATO Is 'Obsolete,' UN Is 'Political Game.'"

⁶⁵ "Trump Tells Nato Allies to Pay Up," BBC, May 25, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40037776>.

⁶⁶ Mccaskill and Lima, "Trump Reverses on NATO."

⁶⁷ "Kanzlerin trotzt Trump: 'Wir müssen unser Schicksal wirklich in die eigene Hand nehmen,'" [Chancellor defies Trump: We really have to take our fate in our own hands'] *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

⁶⁸ Lindley-French and Flückiger, *A Chronology of European Security & Defence 1945-2005*.

speech at the Paris office of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR),⁶⁹ then Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski stressed the necessity to strengthen European security cooperation, stating relief over the end of a debate that depicted Poland acting as a “Trojan horse of America in Europe.”⁷⁰

Nevertheless, at a moment when the European states need to find clever ways to mitigate risks caused by the changes in the security situation, a new and dangerous challenge has emerged: Discord, of which Brexit is currently the most prominent example, seems to be growing among the members of the European Union. As long as the members manage to adhere to common standards, this diversity is a strength. Failing that, in the face of existential threats to liberal democracy, the same diversity may become a weakness, and a source of aggravation of normally constructive disputes even over routine issues. Common policies become increasingly hard to find.

With these challenges in mind, Spanish Lieutenant General Alfredo Ramirez, then the Commander of Eurocorps, argued in 2017 that in European defense efforts the headquarters epitomizes the response to the current challenges: “Eurocorps is the perfect tool for EU military ambitions, but at the same time, it keeps its NATO patterns and duties. This duality confers this exceptional status to Eurocorps, and this is why it has often been identified as a potential model for the progressive integration of European military forces.”⁷¹ In other words, if the Eurocorps had not been founded in 1992, now would be the moment to do it.

B. BRIEF HISTORY OF EUROCORPS

In October 1991, at a time of uncertainty about the posture of forces in a now peaceful Europe in the wake of the German reunification, France and Germany agreed to create an army corps headquarters and a core of support units necessary for its operation—

⁶⁹ The European Council on Foreign Relations is a think tank with headquarters in London, and offices in several European capitals.

⁷⁰ Radosław Sikorski, “Poland: Fully Engaged in Europe,” ECFR, April 12, 2012, https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_poland_fully_engaged_in_europe34271.

⁷¹ Ramirez, “European Defence and the Eurocorps Model.”

made up of soldiers of both its armies. This measure was a step building on and beyond the Franco-German brigade of the late 1980s.⁷² The so-called La Rochelle Report, written on the occasion of a French-German summit in La Rochelle (22 May 1992), expressed the aims and scope of the initiative.⁷³ The French-German initiative did not go unopposed. Already at the time of its founding, as Giovanna Bono reveals, Eurocorps was the center of a debate around the question of whether this strengthening of the European pillar of NATO would undermine or vitalize the alliance.⁷⁴

The name of the headquarters and the support units would be Headquarters Eurocorps. As had been the case with the Franco-German brigade some years earlier, initially the political symbolism was deemed more important than the military prowess of such a headquarters, but this has evolved over time. As the next section of this paper demonstrates, the headquarters has become a frequently employed and versatile instrument for the implementation of a range of military tasks throughout the spectrum of security and defense.

The desired symbolism of international defense cooperation comes at a price that has to be paid in the coordination of practical matters and policies that baffle an outsider. Yet these are actually classical challenges that are amenable to remedy with hard work and good will. Language barriers and different military-cultural backgrounds cause some friction.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, right from its inauguration, the Eurocorps attracted more European states to become “shareholders,” or, in the military terminology of the headquarters, “Framework Nations.”⁷⁶ Belgium joined in 1993, Spain in 1994, and Luxemburg in 1996.

⁷² Lindley-French and Flückiger, *A Chronology of European Security & Defence 1945-2005*, 159.

⁷³ “The Eurocorps - Historical Events in the European Integration Process (1945–2014),” Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l’Europe, accessed October 12, 2018, <https://www.cvce.eu/en/recherche/unit-content/-/unit/02bb76df-d066-4c08-a58a-d4686a3e68ff/1399861c-7b2e-4cff-b508-9a59aae89ba9>; “59ème Sommet Franco-Allemand à La Rochelle (22 Mai 1992)” [59th French-German summit at La Rochelle], France-Allemagne.fr, accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.france-allemande.fr/59eme-Sommet-franco-allemand-a-La,2262.html>.

⁷⁴ Giovanna Bono, *NATO’s “Peace-Enforcement” and Policy Communities’: 1990-1999* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2003), 56.

⁷⁵ “Einmalig in der Welt.” [Unique in the world]

⁷⁶ Eurocorps, “Headquarters.”

The five countries provide contingents of different sizes to the headquarters, share the financial and administrative requirements, and control its activities on equal terms.⁷⁷ In addition, Greece, Italy, Poland, Romania and Turkey have each attained a status as an “Associated Nation.” They contribute military contingents in symbolic numbers, the political importance of which remains uppermost. Poland currently provides a significant contingent,⁷⁸ because until 2016 it intended to attain Framework Nation status. Between 2003 and 2005, non-NATO EU-members Finland, and between 2003 and 2011, Austria equally joined Eurocorps as Associated Nations.⁷⁹

Already in 1993,⁸⁰ the “SACEUR Agreement” opened the possibility to put the headquarters under NATO command.⁸¹ Since 2002, Eurocorps has featured on the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe’s (SHAPE) list of Graduated Readiness Force HQs (GRF HQ), sharing tasks and responsibilities in turn with the other corps headquarters in Europe.⁸² As the SHAPE website states, “Eurocorps has a different military status than the other ... headquarters”⁸³ but can also be committed to NATO missions on the basis of a technical arrangement with SHAPE in Mons.

Since 1998, the headquarters’ history has been characterized by operational deployments and standby commitments for the EU and for NATO, a fact often overlooked by pundits and the public.

⁷⁷ Eurocorps, “Headquarters.”

⁷⁸ As of 6 April 2018, the Eurocorps website counts 99 Polish officers and enlisted personnel in the headquarters and support elements of the headquarters.

⁷⁹ “Eurokorps begrüßt Österreich und Finnland,” [Eurocorps welcomes Austria and Finland], BMLVS-Abteilung Kommunikation, accessed February 24, 2019, <http://www.bundesheer.at/cms/artikel.php?ID=358>.

⁸⁰ A move triggered by U.S. fears that the Eurocorps might be used as an attempt by France to shoehorn Germany out of the SHAPE structure.

⁸¹ “The Eurocorps - Historical Events in the European Integration Process (1945–2014),” Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l’Europe, Eurocorps; “Headquarters.”

⁸² “NATO Response Force,” NATO, accessed February 26, 2019, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49755.htm.

⁸³ “High Readiness Forces and Headquarters in the NATO Force Structure,” Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) accessed August 25, 2018, <https://shape.nato.int/page134134653>.

C. NATO AND EU COMMITMENTS

Eurocorps has participated in operational deployments and standby commitments for NATO and the EU to an impressive degree. Mission deployments and standby commitments for the EU and NATO since early in its existence underline Eurocorps' operational value and prove that a headquarters can indeed be employed for NATO and EU operations, avoiding the need for a duplication of force elements.

Figure 1 shows the mission deployments and standby commitments in which the headquarters was employed in significant roles. Individual augmentation of deployed units and HQs is a constant service and is not depicted here. Deployments and standby obligations reflect developments in the bigger security environment. In the wake of the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, the EU launched several training missions in Africa. This does not directly tackle Russian aggression but can be understood as a sign of an increased awareness of the necessity to provide military capabilities to parry risks—at best before these turn into crises and threats.



Figure 1. Eurocorps in Mission Deployments and Standby Commitments for NATO and the EU⁸⁴

Eurocorps was responsible for four European Union Training Missions (EUTM), and in parallel for two European Union Battle Group (EUBG) standby phases.⁸⁵ In 2015, HQ Eurocorps provided the core for EUTM Mali, led by the then German Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Franz Pfrengle.⁸⁶ In the second half of 2016, and throughout 2017, the headquarters provided the core for three consecutive tours of EUTM RCA (Central African Republic), led by flag officers from Eurocorps: French Major General Éric Hautecloque-Raysz,⁸⁷ then Deputy Commander Eurocorps, was succeeded by the corps' Deputy Chief

⁸⁴ Adapted from: Eurocorps, "Headquarters."

⁸⁵ "Shaping of a Common Security and Defence Policy - EEAS - European External Action Service - European Commission," European External Action Service, July 8, 2016, [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/5388/Shaping of a Common Security and Defence Policy](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/5388/Shaping%20of%20a%20Common%20Security%20and%20Defence%20Policy).

⁸⁶ "EU Training Mission in Mali: New Mission Commander Appointed - Consilium," Council of the European Union, June 16, 2015, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/06/16/eutm-new-mission-commander-appointed/>.

⁸⁷ "Delegation of Eurocorps visited EUTM RCA - EEAS - European Commission," European External Action Service, December 11, 2016, [https://eeas.europa.eu/csdp-missions-operations/eutm-rca_sk/16937/Delegation of Eurocorps visited EUTM RCA](https://eeas.europa.eu/csdp-missions-operations/eutm-rca_sk/16937/Delegation%20of%20Eurocorps%20visited%20EUTM%20RCA).

of Staff (DCOS) Support & Enabling (S&E), Belgian Brigadier General Herman Ruys.⁸⁸ Following his posting to become the new Chief of Staff, Spanish Major General Fernando Garcia Blázquez⁸⁹ took over the third rotation entrusted to Eurocorps. The two successive EUBG standby commitments in the second half of 2016 and the first half of 2017 made use of Eurocorps for the provision of the command element. The force elements were created around a German and a French core, respectively.

The NATO Response Force (NRF) role foreseen for 2020 will be different from the former standby phases. Eurocorps' mission will be to be ready to deploy and operate as the Land Component Command (LCC) of the enhanced NRF.⁹⁰ In order to avoid interfering with the demanding preparation and certification process for the NRF LCC role, the headquarters has no preplanned operational task in the two years preceding 2020. Such a role contrasts with the overblown fears of 25 years ago that a continental European defense entity was a “dagger in the heart of the Washington Treaty and an attempt to expel the United States from European security or drag Germany into oblivion.”⁹¹

D. ORIENTATION TO EU OR TO NATO?

In the founding document for Eurocorps, the La Rochelle Report,⁹² the two founding states, France and Germany, stress the organization's character as being European as well as Atlantic. Nonetheless, throughout much of its history, but especially in recent

⁸⁸ “Central African Republic: New Mission Commander Appointed for EUTM RCA - Consilium,” Council of the European Union, January 10, 2017, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/01/10/rca-new-mission-commander/>.

⁸⁹ Leonor Hubaut, “Un général espagnol va prendre la tête d'EUTM RCA,” [A Spanish General will take the lead of EUTM RCA], *Bruxelles2* (blog), June 1, 2017, <https://club.bruxelles2.eu/2017/06/un-general-espagnol-a-la-tete-deutm-rca/>.

⁹⁰ “NATO - Topic: NATO Response Force,” NATO, January 10, 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49755.htm?selectedLocale=en.

⁹¹ Interview, Prof. D. Abenheim, who in 1992 did temporary duty from the Naval Postgraduate School to NATO HQ to address this issue which was a point of discord with the Bush administration and European nations at the time.

⁹² “Déclaration sur la création d'un corps d'armée franco-allemand à vocation européenne (La Rochelle, 22 mai 1992),” [Declaration on the creation of a French-German Army Corps of European vocation], Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe, October 22, 2012, https://www.cvce.eu/obj/declaration_sur_la_creation_d_un_corps_d_armee_franco_allemand_a_vocation_europeenne_la_rochelle_22_mai_1992-fr-a1cbc2bd-51da-4ef8-b7e5-07b1bc86e978.html.

years—when optimization was the motto of the hour—the Framework Nations discussed the question of whether to orient Eurocorps toward NATO tasks or toward tasks in the framework of EU operations as described in the so-called Petersberg tasks.⁹³

Article 3 of the Treaty of Strasbourg specifies that missions to be given to the headquarters may include UN-type missions, Western European Union-type missions, NATO-missions, missions in the context of EU security and defense policy, as well as other missions, decided upon by the Framework Nations. These missions may range across the spectrum of military operations.⁹⁴ The idea behind this is to make the best possible use of the headquarters and the resources invested in it for the Framework Nations.

Mission assignment to Eurocorps can take different paths. One of the Framework Nations, or the headquarters itself, may make a proposal. Likewise, a third party, say, NATO, through the North Atlantic Council (NAC)⁹⁵ or the EU, through the Political and Security Committee (PSC),⁹⁶ may address Eurocorps and propose the employment of the HQ for a specific task. The mechanisms of assessment and response to such a request from a third party are discussed in the next major section.

While Eurocorps follows a balanced approach regarding the orientation toward NATO and the EU, that balance is the subject of a constant discussion, most of which is

⁹³ “Shaping of a Common Security and Defence Policy - EEAS - European External Action Service - European Commission,” European External Action Service, accessed February 23, 2019, [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/5388/Shaping of a Common Security and Defence Policy](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/5388/Shaping%20of%20a%20Common%20Security%20and%20Defence%20Policy)

⁹⁴ “Gesetz zu dem Vertrag vom 22. November 2004 über das Europäische Korps und die Rechtsstellung seines Hauptquartiers zwischen der Französischen Republik, der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, dem Königreich Belgien, dem Königreich Spanien und dem Großherzogtum Luxemburg (Straßburger Vertrag),” [Law on the Treaty dated 22 November 2004 on the Eurocorps and the Status of its Headquarters between the French Republic, The Federal Republic of Germany, the Kingdom of Belgium, the Kingdom of Spain, and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg] Bundesgesetzblatt online, 2008 II, no. 17 (July 10, 2008), Art. 3 http://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&jumpTo=bgbl208s0694.pdf.

⁹⁵ “NATO - Topic: North Atlantic Council (NAC),” NATO, October 10, 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49763.htm.

⁹⁶ “Political and Security Committee (PSC),” Council of the European Union, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/political-security-committee/>.

ongoing in non-public circles of politico-military meetings.⁹⁷ It becomes visible to the public through the efforts to advertise Eurocorps for EU missions, which at the same time stress that this does not mean to exclude NATO missions. Articles written by Ramirez, cited in this paper, and the presentation, given by the Commander and the Chief of Staff to the European Parliament in February 2016⁹⁸ illustrate the ongoing debate.

Despite the ongoing discussion of the future orientation, the Framework Nations have so far managed to agree on a balanced orientation, meaning that both possibilities exist in parallel without a given preference. To focus merely on NATO operations would not be tolerable for France (despite its having rejoined the SHAPE integrated military structure) and might discourage non-NATO European states from joining the headquarters. A focus merely on EU-tasks might frustrate such non-EU partners as Norway and Turkey, the latter being an Associated Nation of Eurocorps, or such EU partners who attribute greater importance to NATO, such as Poland. Both options would deprive the Framework Nations of opportunities to make use of the Eurocorps assets for certain missions. The balanced option has its drawbacks, too. As Dick Zandee et al. conclude, the “pendulum-like switch in focus on NATO or EU employment,”⁹⁹ may create difficulties in that switching back to the respective other focus usually creates friction and some—temporary—loss of efficiency. To re-adjust after a period in a different setting costs time that is often in shortest supply and requires considerable effort. To justify the continued existence of a headquarters and to avoid cuts in personnel, it must warrant the investment of resources to its sponsors. Given the comparatively small peacetime establishment of Eurocorps, even small cuts in personnel would inevitably lead to losses in ready and rapidly deployable Command & Control (C2) capabilities.

⁹⁷ André Dumoulin, “L’Eurocorps : socle d’une défense européenne intégrée ?,” [The Eurocorps: Basis of an integrated European defense?], Sécurité et Stratégie (Brussels: Institut Royal Supérieur de Defense, April 2018).

⁹⁸ Ramirez, Alfredo and Pfrengle, Franz, “A force for the European Union and NATO” (presentation given to the European Parliament), February 4, 2016, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/96804/Presentation%20General%20Ramirez%20and%20Pfrengle.pdf>.

⁹⁹ Zandee, Drent, and Hendriks, “Defence Cooperation Models: Lessons Learned and Usability,” 18.

That the headquarters is not available, due to a task coming from a different entity, may as well disturb the planning in NATO or the EU. Examples of temporary exclusive use are the period of 2015–2017, in which two successive tours as the headquarters for the EUBG coincided with four tours in which Eurocorps provided the core of EUTM Mali or RCA. For 2020, Eurocorps is the dedicated NATO Response Force Land Component Command (NRF LCC) headquarters—a mission at a scale that does not allow additional tasks above the level of provision of individual staff for specific ad hoc issues within NATO or the EU during the preparation, certification, and standby phases of the NRF period.

E. GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING

The Framework Nations share control over Eurocorps in accordance with the *Vertrag über das Europäische Korps und die Rechtsstellung seines Hauptquartiers*¹⁰⁰ [Treaty on the Eurocorps and the legal status of its headquarters], in short often referred to as Treaty of Strasbourg, and the Terms of Reference for the Eurocorps Steering Bodies.¹⁰¹ Both documents have been formulated by and agreed to among the Framework Nations. The documents arrange their governance over the headquarters and provide the basis for a multinational share of influence within the headquarters.

The Framework Nations’ governance over the headquarters is ensured through a system of steering bodies. The chairmanship of all steering bodies and the role of “Secretary Nation” rotates annually among the Framework Nations.¹⁰² The Chiefs of Defence (ChoD) [the European fellow leaders approximating the level of the U.S.

¹⁰⁰ “Gesetz zu dem Vertrag vom 22. November 2004 über das Europäische Korps und die Rechtsstellung seines Hauptquartiers zwischen der Französischen Republik, der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, dem Königreich Belgien, dem Königreich Spanien und dem Großherzogtum Luxemburg (Straßburger Vertrag),” [Law on the Treaty dated 22 November 2004 on the Eurocorps and the Status of its Headquarters between the French Republic, The Federal Republic of Germany, the Kingdom of Belgium, the Kingdom of Spain, and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg] Bundesgesetzblatt online, 2008 II, no. 17 (July 10, 2008).

¹⁰¹ Parties to HQ Eurocorps, “The Terms of Reference for the Eurocorps Steering Bodies” (unpublished internal document, December 9, 2010), *see* Appendix of this thesis for an extract of the relevant clauses.

¹⁰² Parties to HQ Eurocorps, clause 18.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] of the Framework Nations represent the military aspect. The foreign ministries equally participate. Their Political Directors represent the political dimension of the cooperation.¹⁰³ Together, this group formally prepares and implements the decisions of the Framework Nations.¹⁰⁴

Bearing in mind the level of the CoCo, the significance of the system of steering bodies becomes obvious. All steering bodies are made up of national representatives of the Framework Nations and HQ representatives in accordance with their functions in the headquarters, regardless of nationality. Moreover, in preparation for Framework Nation status, Polish representatives participated in all steering bodies, albeit in an advisory role, not yet with a full vote. The most relevant steering body in practical terms is the Eurocorps Committee (ECC). For the CoCo and the ECC, the consensus principle applies for the decisions they make concerning the employment of the headquarters.¹⁰⁵ This does not mean that the expert groups, working to inform the ECC, have to achieve consensus, but, as revealed by David Yost's interview with former Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General James L. Jones, committees tend to overstretch the consensus principle.¹⁰⁶ For Eurocorps, although much smaller in number, the expert groups strive to deliver ready-made consensus decisions: The expert groups usually take care of technical, very detailed issues. The expert group results and contributions are very valuable because the quality and number of these issues present too large a spectrum for the ECC-level to exercise qualified Sherpa-work in preparation for the CoCo.

A request from a third party to mandate Eurocorps with a mission would be addressed through the "Corresponding General/Officer," appointed by the Secretary Nation, serving as the point of contact between Commander Eurocorps, Framework Nations and external agencies like NATO or the EU.¹⁰⁷ The Corresponding Officer makes

¹⁰³ Parties to HQ Eurocorps, clause 11.

¹⁰⁴ Parties to HQ Eurocorps, clause 7.

¹⁰⁵ Parties to HQ Eurocorps, clauses 16 and 24–36.

¹⁰⁶ David S. Yost, "An Interview with General James L. Jones, USMC, Retired, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), 2003-2006," *Research Paper*, Research Division, NATO Defense College, no. 34 (January 2008): 3–4.

¹⁰⁷ Parties to HQ Eurocorps, clause 20.

sure the request becomes known to the appropriate Framework Nations authorities, and to Eurocorps, to prepare for a qualified discussion at an upcoming ECC meeting. Based on national positions, and a military assessment by Eurocorps about the feasibility, and the requirements to be provided to the headquarters for an implementation of the task at hand, the CoCo makes the decision about the request. If the CoCo decides in favor of a mission, the headquarters sets a tailored exercise and preparation schedule in motion.

In the decisions about the employment of Eurocorps, it is not possible for the Framework Nations to overrule a veto of any of them. Consensus is required for the conduct of a task for the headquarters, but the Framework Nations have adopted pragmatic solutions. They have found a way to endorse tasks without requiring that all Framework Nations participate in the actual endeavor. In his article on NATO decision making, Leo G. Michel has dubbed this approach “Option 3: Empowering ‘Coalitions within NATO.’”¹⁰⁸ EUTM RCA, mentioned earlier, is such a case. In three successive rotations, Eurocorps provided the core and bulk of the command element of EUTM RCA. For different reasons, German and Polish members of Eurocorps did not participate in the EUTM RCA. Nevertheless, both countries voted in favor of tasking the headquarters with this important mission.

For decision making within Eurocorps, and, once the headquarters has been given a mission, between the headquarters and superior or subordinated echelons, military decision-making processes and hierarchical procedures apply.

Internally, the allocation of the right to appoint incumbents for the posts in Eurocorps and its support elements defines influence opportunities. While all posts have been subjects of a negotiation process among the militaries contributing to the headquarters, the level up to which a member may occupy positions depends on the size of the contingent and on whether the member is a Framework Nation or an Associated Nation.

¹⁰⁸ Leo G. Michel, “NATO Decisionmaking: Au Revoir to the Consensus Rule?” *Strategic Forum*, no. 202 (August 2003): 6. www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ndu/sf202.pdf.

The Flag Officer positions (see Figure 2), most influential, together with most of their aides and military advisors, rotate among France, Germany, Spain, and Belgium.¹⁰⁹

In acknowledgment of the resources contributed to the headquarters, Poland held the post of DCOS S&E between 2011 and 2015 and again since 2017. In preparation of its Framework Nation status, between 2015 and 2017, DCOS Plans & Ops was a Polish officer. Had Poland become a Framework Nation as planned, in 2017 it would have been able to appoint the Chief of Staff (COS), and in 2019 the Commander (COMEC) as well as the DCOS Influence and Assistance (DCOS I&A).

The exception is Luxembourg. Due to the size of its military, the contingent in Eurocorps is small, and Luxembourg is not included in the rotation of the Flag Officer posts. Instead, as Figure 2 shows, Luxembourg retains the permanent right to appoint the Military Assistant to the Chief of Staff—thus guaranteeing that a Luxembourgian officer gets to see all relevant issues passing the table of the COS. To fully understand the significance of the permanent Luxembourgian post, the reader is advised to bear in mind that the COS's role is in accordance with the German model—that of the chief executive officer of the headquarters.

¹⁰⁹ “Gesetz zu dem Vertrag vom 22. November 2004 über das Europäische Korps und die Rechtsstellung seines Hauptquartiers zwischen der Französischen Republik, der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, dem Königreich Belgien, dem Königreich Spanien und dem Großherzogtum Luxemburg (Straßburger Vertrag),” [Law on the Treaty dated 22 November 2004 on the Eurocorps and the Status of its Headquarters between the French Republic, The Federal Republic of Germany, the Kingdom of Belgium, the Kingdom of Spain, and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg] Bundesgesetzblatt online, 2008 II, no. 17 (July 10, 2008), Art. 6 (5).

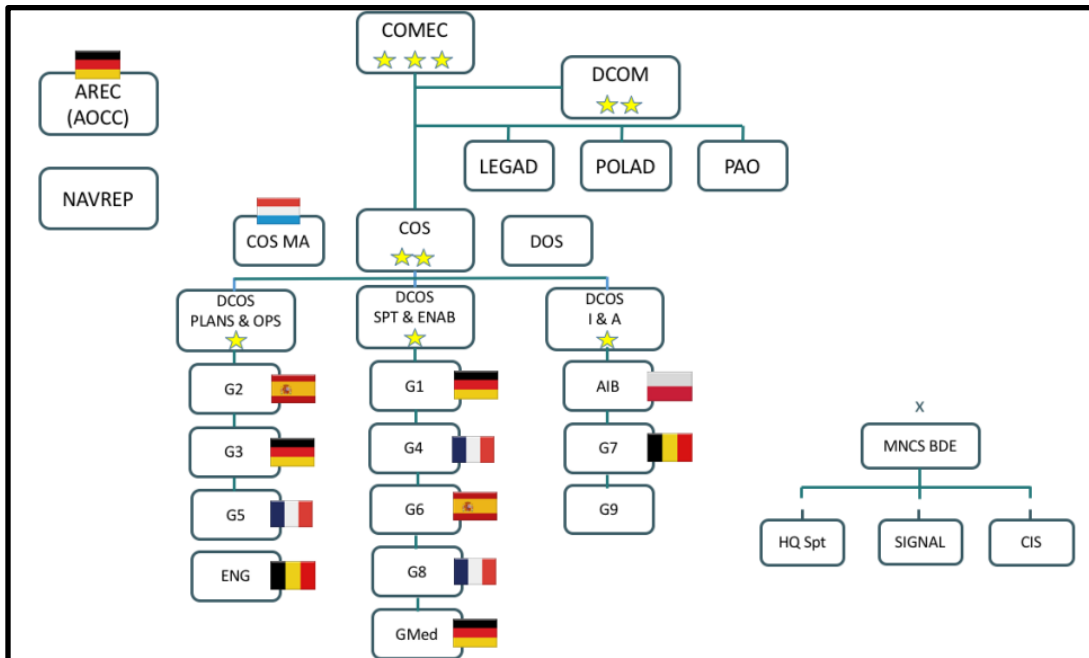


Figure 2. Key Positions Repartition¹¹⁰

The branch chief posts (level: full colonel) in Figure 2 are permanently allocated to nations in accordance with the results of the latest review of the peacetime establishment.

The posts of the commander of the Multinational Command Support Brigade (MNCS Bde), Director of Staff (DOS), Public Affairs Officer (PAO), and Political Advisor (POLAD) are exceptions to that rule, in that they equally rotate. While the nation providing the Commander also provides the Public Affairs Officer and Political Advisor, the posts of Commander MNCS Bde and DOS fall to other nations.

F. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter assesses that the claim that Poland did not have enough influence in Eurocorps clashes with reality. Thus, this assertion cannot constitute a real reason for Warsaw not to become a Framework Nation. Equally, the view that the headquarters is a merely symbolic unit lacking operational value has also been assessed to be untrue. The contrary is true for both claims. The COS Eurocorps as of summer 2017 would have been

¹¹⁰ Source: Eurocorps, “Headquarters.”

a Polish general, and as of summer 2019, Poland would have occupied the post of Commander Eurocorps for the next rotation. Vital to Polish interests in the Baltic, this role would have occurred during the important NRF LCC standby period. Although Poland did not yet have full rights in the steering bodies, Polish observers and advisors participated in all of them, and in anticipation of Poland's becoming Framework Nation, the utterances of the Polish representatives were well heard and considered.

The operational record of the corps headquarters is second to no other European high readiness headquarters. Since the inauguration of Eurocorps, all nine NATO high readiness corps headquarters in Europe¹¹¹ have included contingents of other national militaries in their peacetime establishments. That demonstrates that the political symbolism of multinational military integration plays a significant role in the making of policy and strategy in contemporary conflict. Multinationality has become the norm, thus shifting the emphasis on the actual capabilities of forces in crisis and war. Eurocorps is special in both respects. No other corps headquarters in a national or alliance structure is “owned” and controlled by five Framework Nations on equal terms. And yet, its record of operational deployments and standby commitments tells a tale of strategic and operational effectiveness. The sequence of flag officers *in command* of EU Training Missions in Africa, all four coming from the same headquarters—but from different nations—speaks volumes concerning the potential of truly multinational units. Flag officers from across the Framework Nations consecutively shared command responsibilities in operations. This signal fact should dispel all doubts among many loud critics as to the opportunities for the Framework Nations to make their influence felt within the headquarters.

It is fair to say that when more partners are seated around the table, challenges do arise. Zandee et al., in their report, point out that in balancing the pros and cons of the Eurocorps model, they come to an overall positive assessment.¹¹² Poland would have been the sixth partner at the table, and probably consensus by six is harder to achieve than by five. Not everything is easy, but Eurocorps is an example of how to overcome those

¹¹¹ “High Readiness Forces and Headquarters in the NATO Force Structure.” Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe.

¹¹² Zandee, Drent, and Hendriks, “Defence Cooperation Models: Lessons Learned and Usability.”

difficulties, and at comparatively low cost for each Framework Nation, even if it requires constant effort on the part of the members of the headquarters, and even more so on the part of the policy makers and planners in the national staffs.

A project like Eurocorps is a chance to address many of the challenges of war and peace facing Europe that can be handled with military means to advance the ends of policy and strategy, and also to extract the sweet poison of integral nationalism that infects soldiers especially. It has accomplished commitments across the spectrum—admittedly with the exception of actual shooting war deployments.¹¹³ The headquarters is, first of all, a capable command element for military operations on the tactical level and, with the addition of certain core functionalities to the peacetime establishments, it could also assume responsibilities on the operational level. Moreover, Eurocorps is an answer to the question of the compatibility of NATO and EU military efforts. The successful completion of missions alternating between NATO and the EU is evidence that the provisions in the Eurocorps documents are effective.

European nations demonstrate their commitment to common security and defense in it, and, with the upcoming NRF task, especially in a NATO role. The existing plans for possible employments in the NRF LCC role are not available for a paper like this, but it is safe to assume that they apply to all of NATO's areas of interest.

As long as they are able to accept compromise, Eurocorps is a versatile instrument at the disposal of its Framework Nations, which together decide about actual tasks as well as about the future orientation and capability of the headquarters.

¹¹³ Fortunately, none of NATO's nine GRF HQs had to conduct such operations.

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III. POLISH SECURITY POLICY ORIENTATION AND DETERMINANTS UNTIL 2015

Until 2015 Poland, with a view to the transatlantic link as indispensable for its national security, steered a balanced path between transatlantic reassurances and signaling of loyalty on one side, and inclination to participate in the integrated development of European capabilities on the other side. In this respect, Poland followed the example of its allies as they have done for decades.

To put the Polish reversal of its desire to become a Eurocorps Framework Nation and the ensuing decision into perspective, the path since the country became part of “the West” is of considerable interest.

This chapter examines Polish security and defense policies since the end of the Warsaw Pact in 1991 until 2015, focusing on the time since Poland’s NATO membership began in 1999. Against this backdrop, Chapter IV then accentuates the policy changes marked by the government in power since fall of 2015—of which the decision not to become Eurocorps Framework Nation is one example.

Since the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, Poland’s security policy has been influenced by a strategic culture that revolves around its historic experience, of a central position between hostile great powers and the evolution of the European system in the period of modern war. As scholars repeat, this world view results in a focus on the defense of Poland, and, of considerable significance, in a skepticism as to the capabilities and inclinations of its European partners, who in the past have either gobbled Poland up or slaughtered Poles in horrific numbers, or both. Poles in large numbers emigrated to the United States as a result and play a not minor role in U.S. domestic politics, and this diaspora has its role in the story here, as well. Hence, Poland puts a strong emphasis on the transatlantic link, and the desire to maintain, strengthen, and benefit from it.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Terlikowski, “Poland,” in *Strategic Cultures in Europe: Security and Defence Policies across the Continent*, ed. Bastian Giegerich, Heiko Biehl, and Alexandra Jonas, vol. 13, Schriftenreihe des Zentrums für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013).

Poland complemented its focus on national defense by consideration of elements that do not directly improve the immediate Polish security. Apparently, factors other than narrowly defined defense of Poland's security have come into the equation. Proof for a wider understanding of security and a multilateral perspective can be found in Poland's participation in multilateral security and defense activities. Some scholars find the Polish approach to security policy is dominated by an instrumental sense.¹¹⁵ According to that view, Poland participates in multilateral activities to portray itself as a reliable ally—in anticipation of the reciprocal provision of support against Poland's most pressing security issue: the Russian threat.

Nevertheless, as a consequence, Poland has participated in a large number of multilateral activities in the evolving European security structure from the 1990s onwards. As early as 2000, Amy Mcauliffe even attested to Poland's desire to “punch above its weight class in NATO,”¹¹⁶ and in 2004, Andrew Michta repeats it with respect to international affairs in general,¹¹⁷ thus attenuating the verdict of a strictly instrumental *quid pro quo* orientation of its security efforts on the international scene. This participation is not limited to NATO operations, since its accession to the EU, the country has also been an important player in several EU (and United Nations) endeavors.¹¹⁸ Poland has played an active role in the maintenance of international security and stability. As Zaborowski claims in an instructive article, written as early as 2004, Poland has developed “from American protégé to constructive European.”¹¹⁹

Illustrative of the state of Polish security policies prior to the autumn of 2015, Poland's 2014 Security Strategy portrays a comprehensive approach to national security.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Terlikowski, 272.

¹¹⁶ Amy Mcauliffe, “Poland, Trying to Punch above Its Weight Class in NATO,” *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 13, no. 4 (December 2000): 1–28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518040008430458>.

¹¹⁷ Andrew A. Michta, “Polish National Security Policy: Regional Cooperation and the Limits of Transatlanticism,” *Polish Review* XLIX, no. 3 (2004): 916.

¹¹⁸ See Chappell, “Poland in Transition”, and for the quick overview in the table on p. 235.

¹¹⁹ Zaborowski, “From America's Protégé to Constructive European.”

¹²⁰ Republic of Poland, “*National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*” (National Security Bureau, 2014), https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/NSS_RP.pdf.

A brief analysis of the document at the end of this chapter demonstrates the general orientation of the Polish security policy until 2015.

A. GEOGRAPHY AND “STRATEGIC CULTURE”: *NIC O NAS BEZ NAS*

Poland’s strategic culture is determined by lessons drawn from a violent and often unhappy history. While the Polish Kingdom was formerly linked by dynastic bonds to Saxony and was a dominant force in Europe in the early modern period, it fell victim in the Pentarchy to the rise of Prussia and Russia in the wars of the cabinets in the 18th century. Since then, Poland has oftentimes been the victim of aggression, for instance, in the Polish-Russian war until 1920, and also in the Europe of Timothy Snyder’s *Bloodlands* with Germany and Russia, especially in the summer of 1939.¹²¹ In the wake of diplomatic collusion of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, Hitler’s Wehrmacht attacked Poland and the Soviet Red Army marched into Poland.¹²² Its Western European allies were neither able to prevent nor to stop this aggression—which has left its mark in the Polish collective memory and security maxims. Adding insult to injury, at the Yalta conference in 1945, the Soviet Union gained acceptance of a postwar setting in which Poland would belong to the Soviet Union’s sphere of influence.¹²³ From a Polish perspective, this decision blended in with how Poland had been treated on the international scene throughout, and Poles to this day harbor a deep-seated wariness about foreign powers deciding over issues relating to Poland. As a consequence, the motto “Nothing about us without us” (*Nic o nas bez nas*), while dating back to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of centuries ago,¹²⁴ has remained the bottom line of Polish sovereignty expression throughout¹²⁵ until this day. Chappell shares that Polish policy makers emphasize the motto, and, indeed, in 2018, referring to Article 4

¹²¹ Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

¹²² R. Craig Nation, *Black Earth, Red Star: A History of Soviet Security Policy, 1917-1991* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992), 102.

¹²³ Terlikowski, “Poland.”

¹²⁴ George Weigel, “Nothing About Us Without Us,” *First Things*, January 16, 2019, <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2019/01/nothing-about-us-without-us>.

¹²⁵ As an example from 1938, see: Kazimierz Smogorzewski, “Poland’s Foreign Relations,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 16, no. 48 (1938): 571.

of the constitution,¹²⁶ the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Jacek Czaputowicz called it “the fundamental principle guiding Polish foreign policy”¹²⁷ in a speech on the country’s diplomacy priorities. To put it briefly: The past is present in the Polish political consciousness.

While German war crimes and atrocities will be remembered for quite some time into the future, the reconciliation between Germany and Poland, and their cooperation in a range of dimensions, including in the military,¹²⁸ should put active concerns about German aggression to rest. Michta portrays the Polish-German cooperation in the 1990s as the motor for Poland’s eventual accession to the West.¹²⁹ Paul Latawski, in his 1994 RUSI article about Germany’s relationship with Poland and the Czech Republic in the wake of the Cold War, argues that Polish-German relations have become a reassurance to Poland since the early 1990s. He considered the “discussion of setting up joint Polish-German military units [...] premature” but foresaw that “Polish units joining Eurocorps seems [...] a possibility.”¹³⁰ Latawski almost got it right: Indeed Polish and German (and Danish) soldiers served together in the headquarters of Multinational Corps Northeast in the Polish city of Szczecin as of 1999,¹³¹ before Poland became an Associated Nation of Eurocorps.

¹²⁶ “The Constitution of the Republic of Poland,” accessed November 10, 2018, <http://www.sejm.gov.pl/prawo/konst/angielski/kon1.htm>; the Article reads “1. Supreme power in the Republic of Poland shall be vested in the Nation. 2. The Nation shall exercise such power directly or through their representatives.”

¹²⁷ Czaputowicz, “Minister Jacek Czaputowicz on Polish Diplomacy Priorities in 2018.”

¹²⁸ “‘Revolution’ in the Cooperation Between the Polish Army and the Bundeswehr,” Defence24.com, January 24, 2015, <https://www.defence24.com/revolution-in-the-cooperation-between-the-polish-army-and-the-bundeswehr>.

¹²⁹ Andrew A. Michta, *The Limits of Alliance: The United States, NATO, and the EU in North and Central Europe* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 23–25.

¹³⁰ Paul Latawski, “Germany’s Reconciliation with Its Eastern Neighbours,” *RUSI Journal* 139, no. 6 (1994): 65–69.

¹³¹ Throughout the 1990s, the three countries’ militaries created occasions for a grass-roots development of relations between members of both countries’ armed forces. The author had the privilege to participate in a number of them.

Poland and Germany have become partners, first through bilateral efforts, and later institutionalized in international organizations, but the relationship with Russia has remained strained and the country has been perceived as a possible threat by Poland.¹³²

Allegedly, Poland's geography is a compounding factor because of how World War II ended in Europe in stages, and its end unfolded at the expense of Poland in a manner akin to how peace was established in Central Europe in 1918–1919—to say nothing of the instances in the epoch 1945–1991 in which Poland was the sight of Soviet power in Europe against national striving. Paul Taylor, in his analysis of the Polish desire to secure a strong U.S. military presence on Polish soil, quotes and confirms Averell Harriman's report about Stalin's view that “ ‘[...] the plains of Poland were the invasion route of Europe to Russia and always had been, and therefore he had to control Poland,’ ”¹³³ thus presenting the rationale for the said Polish aim. In his entertaining essay about geography as a factor in security policies, Tim Marshall's description of Poland's geography and relative position in Europe corresponds with Taylor's quote of Harriman. Referring to Poland, Marshall and Taylor both explain Polish concerns over the proximity to Russia, and Poland's geographic features that must be in Russia's focus.¹³⁴

Poland has never given up its quest for preparedness against a Russian aggression. Certainly, this has been even more so in the wake of and ever since the Russian aggressions against Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014. Likewise, the firm expression of a vested interest in the strengthening of the partnership with the Allies across the Atlantic Ocean, again, to attain security against possible hostile Russian intentions, is an indispensable

¹³² Andrew A. Michta, “Polish Hard Power: Investing in the Military as Europe Cuts Back,” AEI, December 19, 2013, 6, <http://www.aei.org/publication/polish-hard-power-investing-in-the-military-as-europe-cuts-back/>.

¹³³ Paul Taylor, “‘Fort Trump’ or Bust? Poland and the Future of European Defence,” Peace, Security and Defence Programme (Friends of Europe, Winter 2018), 25, https://www.friendsofeurope.org/sites/default/files/media-files/2018_foe_sec_pub_poland_web.pdf

¹³⁴ Tim Marshall, *Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Explain Everything About the World* (New York: Scribner, October 2016), 100–101; Taylor, “‘Fort Trump’ or Bust? Poland and the Future of European Defence,” 25.

element of Polish security policy.¹³⁵ The following section deals with Poland's view of the transatlantic link.

B. THE TRANSATLANTIC LINK AS THE CENTRAL IDEA

An essential facet of Polish security policy is the emphasis on the transatlantic link. This section deals with its significance until 2015. Poland sought membership in NATO to satisfy its fundamental security requirements. Accession to the European Union meant economic opportunities for Poland rather than a plus in security.¹³⁶ As developed in the previous section, the experience of being left in the lurch by its European partners Britain and France in 1939, when Germany attacked Poland and just a little later the Soviet began its occupation of Polish territory, has left its mark. From a Polish perspective, only the eventual entry of the United States into the war in 1941–42 changed the balance in a way that Germany was defeated and—in spite of the Yalta result—Soviet power checked, at least on a global scale. That has led to an unshakeable conviction that only security guarantees issued by the United States are credible and of real value to deter, and if necessary, repel a contingent Russian aggression. As Zaborowski holds in his 2004 article, “unsurprisingly, there remains a strong preference in Poland for an American-led NATO which is able to honour its commitments under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.”¹³⁷ In other words, membership in NATO is especially important for Poland because it offers an institutionalized format of cooperation with the United States in security matters. Or, as Chappell puts it, “in hard security aspects [...] the Poles rely on the Americans.”¹³⁸

Indeed, Poland goes out of its way to tie the United States to Poland (and Europe). This encompasses a range of domains from defense spending through participation in operations, arms procurement decisions, political support, invitations to base forces, and finally the offer to cater for the stationing of a U.S. armored division. The country is one of few European NATO countries that honors the 2%-of-GDP-for-defense-budget

¹³⁵ Zaborowski, “From America’s Protégé to Constructive European,” 12.

¹³⁶ Terlikowski, “Poland,” 271.

¹³⁷ Zaborowski, “From America’s Protégé to Constructive European,” 9.

¹³⁸ Chappell, “Poland in Transition,” 240.

(political) benchmark agreed on in NATO and reconfirmed at the 2014 summit in Wales.¹³⁹ Especially recently, Polish sources like, for example, Minister of Foreign Affairs Czaputowicz pointed out that fact in his speech mentioned previously.¹⁴⁰ Likewise, international and Polish commentators stress the significance of Poland's participation in the Iraq campaign of 2003, coming at the price of a rift with Poland's European allies,¹⁴¹ in particular France and Germany, but intended to be a "demonstration of Poland's loyalty and ability to be 'America's model ally.'"¹⁴²

Poland's participation in the Afghan International Assistance Force (ISAF) mission should primarily be seen as a contribution to multilateral security endeavors. However, Poland started its participation with its own contingent to ISAF not earlier than when the row of European generals in command of the mission ended with David Richards, and command had been turned over from European generals to U.S. generals for good, which was in 2007.¹⁴³

Arms procurement is a field in which countries can pledge their allegiances, while serving more than the military domain. The sensitivities become visible in statements like the recent quip by the French Minister of Armies that the NATO solidarity clause is in Article 5, as opposed to "Article F-35," of the NATO treaty.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, Zaborowski asserted 15 years earlier that "Poland's choice of procuring US rather than European defence systems was a firm expression of Warsaw's Atlanticist credentials."¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹ See for example: Niall McCarthy, "Defense Expenditures of NATO Members Visualized [Infographic]," *Forbes*, July 10, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2018/07/10/defense-expenditure-of-nato-members-visualized-infographic/>.

¹⁴⁰ Czaputowicz, "Minister Jacek Czaputowicz on Polish Diplomacy Priorities in 2018."

¹⁴¹ Michta, "Polish National Security Policy: Regional Cooperation and the Limits of Transatlanticism," 910.

¹⁴² Zaborowski, "From America's Protégé to Constructive European," 12.

¹⁴³ "International Security Assistance Force," Wikipedia, accessed March 18, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=International_Security_Assistance_Force&oldid=883833038.

¹⁴⁴ Romain Mielcarek, "La clause de solidarité de l'Otan s'appelle article V, pas article F-35 (Parly)," [The NATO solidarity clause is named article V, not article F-35], *Bruxelles2* (blog), March 20, 2019, <https://www.bruxelles2.eu/2019/03/la-clause-de-solidarite-de-lotan-sappelle-article-v-pas-article-f-35-parly/>.

¹⁴⁵ Zaborowski, "From America's Protégé to Constructive European," 7.

Over the years, Poland has welcomed any increase in U.S. military presence in Poland. Apart from permanent participation in a number of multinational headquarters,¹⁴⁶ U.S. military force elements are stationed in Poland on a rotational basis, meaning that while there is a constant presence, the very forces rotate in accordance with their own rotation cycles and get replaced with another, but generally similar unit. Since 2012, the U.S. Air Force provides an aviation detachment on a rotational basis.¹⁴⁷ In a June 2015 paper, the Polish international security expert Wojciech Lorenz demanded an enhancement to the initial RAP package to be concluded at the 2016 NATO summit in Warsaw.¹⁴⁸ And indeed, at the summit the allies “agreed to further strengthen the Alliance’s deterrence and defence posture with an enhanced forward presence”¹⁴⁹ (eFP). Out of the four NATO eFP battle groups in the Baltic States and Poland, the United States provides the one deployed in Poland.¹⁵⁰ Surely, that choice is not a mere coincidence.

As the former member of the U.S. embassy in Warsaw and Naval Postgraduate School student Marek Strosin explains, the decision not to deploy a missile defense system in Poland in 2009 constituted a severe blow to the Polish perceptions of U.S. trustworthiness,¹⁵¹ especially in the light of the Polish expectations and assumptions about the bilateral relations in the epoch until Russia’s Crimean adventure. In 2004, Zaborowski claimed the existence of an “‘instinctive’ Atlanticism”¹⁵² on the part of Poland. He offered evidence in the form of an account of an unusually courteous diplomatic exchange and very obliging conduct between both countries’ presidents on the occasion of a series of meetings

¹⁴⁶ A few examples are the Joint Force Training Center, and the NATO Force Integration Unit in Bydgoszcz, Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin, Multinational Division Northeast in Elbląg.

¹⁴⁷ Ryszard Zięba, *The Euro-Atlantic Security System in the 21st Century: From Cooperation to Crisis* (Springer, 2018), 176.

¹⁴⁸ Lorenz, “2016 NATO Summit on Strategic Adaptation.”

¹⁴⁹ NATO, “Readiness Action Plan.”

¹⁵⁰ “NATO Battlegroups in Baltic Nations and Poland Fully Operational,” NATO, August 28, 2017, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_146557.htm.

¹⁵¹ Marek Strosin, “The Politics and Policy of U.S. Bases in Poland: A Political-Military Analysis” (Master thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2012), 44, <https://apps.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA574672>

¹⁵² Zaborowski, “From America’s Protégé to Constructive European,” 7.

between 2001 and 2003.¹⁵³ Strosin and Zaborowski both list similar experiences in history, dating back to 1776 in the U.S. case, and the shared love of freedom, as particularly unifying characteristics.¹⁵⁴ Whatever the actual accuracy of the historic parallels and the courteous exchange between heads of state is worth, that authors reason with Polish support to the 1776 U.S. struggle for independence from Britain to underline today's special relationship between the United States and Poland indicates that a narrative exists. Asserting that to “accept a hegemonic international system [...] as long as the hegemon is liberal-democratic and is not a nearby state,”¹⁵⁵ is easy for Poles, Zaborowski sums up an important characteristic of the “instinctive Atlanticism.”

Inspecting the bilateral relations between the United States and the European countries, it is fair to say that all or most of the latter see reasons why they hold their own special place in U.S. esteem, and that all or most of them welcome a U.S. leadership. Since about a decade ago, more or less seriously with the U.S. “Pivot to the Pacific,”¹⁵⁶ and once again heightened by the wakeup call which the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea constituted, the European countries have strived to complement their dependence on transatlantic capabilities with a noteworthy “European pillar.” To that end, the phase of definition of a common security and defense policy is ongoing. Moreover, we currently witness the efforts to implement such a common policy. The aim is to create European capabilities without sending signals that would jeopardize the transatlantic partnership.

C. POLAND AS A “CONSTRUCTIVE EUROPEAN”

Poland plays an important role in the maintenance of international security and stability. Poland has, as a member of NATO (1999) and the EU (2004), throughout contributed to endeavors of both entities to guarantee freedom and common security. One can also surely say that Poles did a great deal to make the new security order after 1989 by

¹⁵³ Zaborowski, 7–8.

¹⁵⁴ Strosin, “The Politics and Policy of U.S. Bases in Poland: A Political-Military Analysis,” 10.

¹⁵⁵ Zaborowski, “From America’s Protégé to Constructive European,” 8.

¹⁵⁶ Mark E Manyin et al., *Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration’s ‘Rebalancing’ Toward Asia*, CRS Report No. R42448 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, March 28, 2012), 33. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf>.

the impact of two Poles: Karol Józef Wojtyła, who became Pope John Paul II, and Lech Wałęsa, co-founder and longtime leader of *Solidarność* (Solidarity). In the spirit of CSCE, both men chipped away at Soviet power in their respective spheres in the 1980s.

Yet, it is important to note the country's oscillating record of external orientation, swinging between a European/U.S. balance, and an approach centered on the role of the United States, or, in other words, in practical terms emphasizing NATO's significance. That said, and as developed in the previous section, Poland does not want to have to choose between transatlantic and European bonds, but if necessary, will consider its transatlantic options as closer to its requirements.

Terlikowski, in his 2013 analysis of the strategic culture of Poland, portrays a realist policy, arguing that "Poland set two genuinely self-defined foreign and security policy goals: NATO membership and EU accession. In a strategic context, both reflect a compelling need to guarantee the country's security."¹⁵⁷ This, he suggests, points to a narrow definition of Polish security policies. Thus, Poland was mainly interested in NATO membership for existential reasons. EU accession was a secondary effort, "perceived as an opportunity for socio-economic advancement and an affirmation of Poland's place in within [sic] the Western civilization; the Union itself was denied any strategic relevance."¹⁵⁸ In other words, "tasks other than territorial defense have been granted conditional approval in Polish strategic thinking"¹⁵⁹—provided those tasks do not undermine NATO's ability to act in accordance with Article 5 of the NATO treaty, and they are instrumental to an aim furthering Polish interests.

In 2002, Paul Latawski and Martin A. Smith stated that although "since the early 1990s, integration into the major western institutions—NATO, EU and WEU—has been the cornerstone of Polish foreign and security policy,"¹⁶⁰ the country is cautious to make

¹⁵⁷ Terlikowski, "Poland," 270.

¹⁵⁸ Terlikowski, 271.

¹⁵⁹ Terlikowski, 275.

¹⁶⁰ Paul Latawski and Martin A. Smith, "Plus Ça Change, plus c'est La Même Chose. CESDP since 1998: The View from London, Paris and Warsaw," *Journal of European Area Studies* 10, no. 2 (2002): 223, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1460846022000040328>.

sure that its integration in European structures cannot lead to a detriment of the transatlantic ties.¹⁶¹ In 2004, Zaborowski described a “rather ambivalent position towards multilateral security institutions,”¹⁶² and in 2010, Chappell characterized Poland’s orientation as “sceptical multilateralist.”¹⁶³ The skeptical view toward multilateral structures exists presently forth, as Poland’s chief diplomat Czaputowicz demonstrated in his March 2018 speech, arguing that “the European Commission is not a supra-government, and the European Parliament is not a supra-parliament empowered to instruct national governments and parliaments,”¹⁶⁴ pointing to the limitations of the Union’s competences in accordance with Article 5(2) of the treaty of the European Union. The current state of affairs, the pendulum swinging clearly to an unbalanced transatlantic orientation, is the subject of Chapter IV.

Against that background, Poland has nevertheless gone to great lengths to demonstrate solidarity and contribute to common efforts. Chappell explains the Polish conduct, referring to two interconnected concepts. According to her view, strategic culture shaped the Polish policies and determines that Poland remains skeptical about multilateral structures, while role theory explains why Poland participated in a number of activities outside its original sphere of interest. Chappell specifies that change occurs when “external factors challenge two or more aspects of a country’s [framework of] role conceptions,”¹⁶⁵ expectations and behavior which then come in conflict with each other. These role characteristics provide orientation for and reflect “beliefs, attitudes, and norms displayed by the ruling elite,”¹⁶⁶ leading to policy outcomes. She suggests considering 9/11, the resulting international expectations (NATO’s Article 5 has been summoned in the wake of 9/11), and, later, the newly acquired quality of EU membership as events that have

¹⁶¹ Latawski and Smith, 227; Michta, “Polish Hard Power,” 6.

¹⁶² Zaborowski, “From America’s Protégé to Constructive European,” 9–10.

¹⁶³ Chappell, “Poland in Transition,” 237.

¹⁶⁴ Czaputowicz, “Minister Jacek Czaputowicz on Polish Diplomacy Priorities in 2018.”

¹⁶⁵ Chappell, “Poland in Transition,” 226.

¹⁶⁶ Chappell, 226.

constituted such challenges to the historic position in the early 2000s and led to a new policy, which acknowledged a wider security definition.

Poland became a NATO member in 1999,¹⁶⁷ following a preparation period of several years, initially in the framework of the Partnership for Peace (PfP).¹⁶⁸ Even earlier than the first NATO-assigned headquarters in Poland, HQ Multinational Corps Northeast, was founded, operations in Kosovo began—including NATO’s new members who had entered the alliance a few weeks prior to the start of the air campaign, on 12 March 1999. Even if Poland was primarily interested in the NATO security guarantees—because NATO means involvement of the United States and Canada—membership nevertheless meant participation in and contribution to its operations.

Although NATO’s operations in Afghanistan had their origin in an invocation of Article 5 of the NATO treaty following 9/11, on 12 September 2001, most of NATO’s operational missions were non-Article 5 missions, thus not directly defending a NATO country, but in the interest of a common security. The Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) was sent to the conterminous United States in 2001 for air security. And although obviously not everything matched with purely Polish security interests, the country contributed to several multinational security endeavors.¹⁶⁹ NATO’s current actions to reassure eastern allies are much more in line with Poland’s primary security requirements.

Likewise, with Poland’s accession to the European Union, it merely continued participation in its military missions, but as a member state. In the process, Poland had its share in the development of the Union’s security and defense policies, including participation in peacetime structures and operations. Zięba informs that as of mid-2009,

¹⁶⁷ “Poland’s Road to NATO,” Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accessed March 15, 2019, https://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign_policy/security_policy/nato/polands_road_to_nato/; “Member Countries,” NATO, March 26, 2018, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52044.htm.

¹⁶⁸ In early 1996, the author participated in a trinational PfP exercise “Baltic Cooperation” at the Polish military training area Drawsko Pomorskie. The generic exercise scenario dealt with a UN peacekeeping mission in a fictitious state. The Polish hosts had kindly arranged that the exercise grounds for this PfP exercise were covered in NATO flags.

¹⁶⁹ Chappell, “Poland in Transition,” 226.

Poland unexpectedly took increased ownership of the European Union's defense policy.¹⁷⁰ The timeline coincides with the cancellation of the Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) on 17 September 2009, a symbolic date because, as Strosin points out, it marks the "70th anniversary of the Soviet Russia's invasion of Poland in 1939."¹⁷¹ A disappointment about the U.S. cancellation of the BMDS may have played a part in an increased orientation to European partners. Likewise, the 70th anniversary of the start of World War II may have been a more general incentive to seek deeper European integration in security and military matters. Point of fact though, the Polish intent to become the sixth Framework Nation of Eurocorps was announced in 2008,¹⁷² indicating an earlier adoption of a policy of European military integration. Joining HQ Eurocorps is not much more than a detail in the Polish "European" military posture, but it represents Poland's inclination to support a deepening of multinational military integration also in areas where U.S. participation remained a very remote possibility.¹⁷³

Poland also joins the European Gendarmerie Force (EUROGENDFOR), whose headquarters is in the Italian Vicenza. EUROGENDFOR is a multinational unit comprising police forces with a military status. Since not all police forces have a military status, the number of possible participants is limited. Poland participates with its military gendarmerie and currently holds the position of deputy commander of the headquarters.¹⁷⁴

Following initiatives from earlier decades at the divisional echelon of land forces, in 2014, the Polish and German defense ministers agreed to start an integration of the Polish and German armies, with a cross-attachment of combat battalions to the other side's

¹⁷⁰ Zięba, *The Euro-Atlantic Security System in the 21st Century*, 200.

¹⁷¹ Strosin, "The Politics and Policy of U.S. Bases in Poland: A Political-Military Analysis," 44.

¹⁷² Merchet, "La Pologne va Rejoindre l'Eurocorps, de plus En plus Otanisé." [Poland will join the Eurocorps, more and more NATO-ized]

¹⁷³ Indeed, negotiations between Eurocorps and the United States about a U.S. participation in the headquarters lingered for a number of years. Allegedly, especially the peculiarities of the legal status of the Eurocorps personnel, subjecting them to legislation of the French host nation, were an obstacle which the United States was not inclined to overcome.

¹⁷⁴ "European Gendarmerie Force - Official Site - English Homepage," European Gendarmerie Force, accessed March 20, 2019, <http://www.eurogendfor.org/>.

brigades as a centerpiece.¹⁷⁵ Subsequent to the German defense minister von der Leyen's announcement of a "trendsetting milestone for the development of European integrated military structures,"¹⁷⁶ the German army prepared to establish a cross-border partnership following the success model of the French-German cooperation. The French-German cooperation amounts to the sensitive issue of sending officer cadets to receive their officer training in the partner's institutions.

To round it off, a brief examination of Poland's 2014 Security Strategy is instructive. Adopting a "global, regional and national dimension,"¹⁷⁷ and the result of "historical experience, existing political and structural conditions, as well as the state's capacities,"¹⁷⁸ the document demonstrates a comprehensive approach to national security. Addressing global challenges, risks, and threats,¹⁷⁹ ranging from weapons proliferation and authoritarian order through international terrorism, organized crime to cyber, and environmental issues,¹⁸⁰ it leaves no doubt that Poland understands that security lies not only in territorial integrity. The document frames its provisions to address external threats in a European context, pointing out the uncertainty created by Russian military power and unfathomable intentions.¹⁸¹ The national dimension of the document deals with risks and challenges from within the society, remarkably starting with the demographic situation of an ageing population and its ramifications.¹⁸²

With respect to actions, the document states that "national interests and strategic objectives of Poland [...] indicate a need for sustainable internationalisation and autonomy,

¹⁷⁵ Monika Sus, "Germany in Polish Security - An Irreplaceable Neighbour but Not an Irreversible Partner," in *Perceptions of Germany in the Security of the Baltic Sea Region*, ed. Andris Sprūds and Elizabete Vizgunova (Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs, 2018), 167, <http://www.liia.lv/en/publications/perceptions-of-germany-in-the-security-of-the-baltic-sea-region-748>.

¹⁷⁶ Sus, 168; "The German Path to an EU Army (I)," GERMAN-FOREIGN-POLICY.com, October 31, 2014, <https://www.german-foreign-policy.com/en/news/detail/6458/>.

¹⁷⁷ Republic of Poland, "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland," Art. 2.

¹⁷⁸ Republic of Poland, "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland," Art. 4.

¹⁷⁹ Republic of Poland, "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland," Art. 21.

¹⁸⁰ Republic of Poland, "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland," Art 24-33.

¹⁸¹ Republic of Poland, "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland," Art. 34-50.

¹⁸² Republic of Poland, "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland," Art 51-63.

as far as the security of Poland is concerned [...].”¹⁸³ Further down the text, it describes concentric rings of priorities. At the core, with first priority, is Poland (Art. 66), second priority goes to “NATO’s defensive function,” and “EU integration processes in the domain of security.”¹⁸⁴ Although Zięba critiques the document as “very general, even academic, [...] a not very useful guide for security policy,”¹⁸⁵ it indicates a multilateral orientation and an idea of a division of labor in the field of security, corresponding to earlier findings in the section about the transatlantic link as a central idea.

D. CHAPTER SUMMARY

In the period following its independence from the Soviet Union until 2015, Poland has started and increased making commitments that are becoming of a full-fledged member of the international community and significant member of NATO and the EU. Poland is the biggest and most successful of the now not so new members of NATO and European Union. The historic experience and resulting strategic culture certainly are an important determinant of Polish security policy. Nevertheless, while Poland may be a skeptical partner, it has established itself as a reliable partner in many common endeavors. The assessment of a merely instrumental approach to the participation in them is as accurate as it would be toward any other country. Sharing control over Eurocorps as one of six Framework Nations was part of Poland having “a foot in the door”¹⁸⁶ of European military integration.

The event that for many changed the game in the recent years was Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the not too ambiguous role Russia plays in Eastern Ukraine, where it supports pro-Russian separatists in an insurgency against the Ukrainian government, just short of an open leadership. While the Russian operations have certainly heightened a sense of alarm, in their essence, they did not come as a surprise to Poland, and orientations did not fundamentally change until 2015. Instead, the Russian move

¹⁸³ Republic of Poland, “*National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*,” Art. 64.

¹⁸⁴ Republic of Poland, “*National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*,” Art. 67.

¹⁸⁵ Zięba, *The Euro-Atlantic Security System in the 21st Century*, 113.

¹⁸⁶ Balcer et al., “In a Clinch: The European Policy of the PiS Government,” 25.

confirmed Polish assumptions and gave them some authority in renewed claims to strengthen endeavors for collective defense in accordance with Article 5, as the attention to NATO's eastern flank had—demanded by Poland—received a fresh impetus in the wake of the 2008 war in Georgia,¹⁸⁷ and had caused Poland to refocus on territorial defense in 2012.¹⁸⁸ Poland's inclination to contribute to multinational integration has not waned in the immediate wake of the Russian annexation of Crimea. If anything, Poland's being a member of NATO and the EU, the measures taken in the RAP, and the more serious commencement of European security cooperation demonstrate the utility of multinational participation. Poland and its Western allies have upgraded and stood up headquarters on the eastern periphery, including and mostly so in Poland.

If no external challenge has led to a change in course by the Polish government, including the question of what may have caused the decision not to become a Eurocorps Framework Nation, then internal developments have to be examined for answers.

¹⁸⁷ Zięba, *The Euro-Atlantic Security System in the 21st Century*, 171–72.

¹⁸⁸ Paszewski, "Can Poland Defend Itself?," 125.

IV. A NEW POLISH GOVERNMENT SPARKS UPHEAVAL

Emerging from the October 2015 parliamentary elections, a new Polish government repealed several decisions its predecessor government had made.

With the example of Viktor Orbán's anti-democratic steps in mind, the new government's "collision course with the European Union"¹⁸⁹ has received much attention in its attempts to control the media and especially in actions aimed at streamlining the Polish judicial system in favor of the ruling party's views. As part of a renationalizing and authoritarian blow back, both moves threaten liberal values and for that reason constitute a concern for the European Union, which started to monitor the rule of law in Poland as early as January 2016.¹⁹⁰

With the focus on the arena of the military, this chapter aims to demonstrate that the PiS government has re-evaluated Poland's security situation and has come to different conclusions than the predecessor government. Big external changes did not occur: Admittedly, Russia has annexed Crimea and supports a militant separatist movement in Eastern Ukraine. Yet all that has been a fact since 2014, when the former government saw no reason for the drastic change of course. Plus, Poland has always viewed Russia's policies with a wary eye,¹⁹¹ and it did not take the Crimea aggression to convince Poland of a risk posed by Russian policy toward its neighbors. Scholars' and public opinion about Russia's capabilities and intentions is divided. Michta warns about "Russia's military build-up along the eastern flank,"¹⁹² while Renz argues that even if the build-up of conventional capabilities is undoubtedly going on, it does not allow for the conclusion that Russia seeks war with its neighbors—despite impressive new capabilities, they do not match those of "the West."¹⁹³ Apparently, the new government has reevaluated the facts

¹⁸⁹ Piotr Buras, "Europe and Its Discontents: Poland's Collision Course with the European Union," *ECFR Policy Brief*, September 2017, 14.

¹⁹⁰ Buras, 3.

¹⁹¹ Michta, "Polish Hard Power," 6.

¹⁹² Michta, "Europeans in Search of Themselves."

¹⁹³ Bettina Renz, *Russia's Military Revival* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018).

and has come to different conclusions, with ramifications for Polish society and Poland's European outlook.

This chapter first sketches theoretical approaches to the Polish security policies since 2015. Against that background, and detailing the analysis, the chapter then analyzes the election itself and its immediate results. The convictions, beliefs, and actions of the government in power depend on the PiS party attitudes, which in turn are largely influenced by its leader. They include a reevaluation of Poland's role in Europe and the world. The renewed exclusive focus on the United States, and the charm offensive to establish "Fort Trump," a synonym chosen by the Polish president Andrzej Duda for a garrison of a U.S. armored division in Poland, are part of the PiS policy outlook. Last, but not least, the reevaluation of European integration and 'pivot to the United States' have been accompanied by decisions in the sphere of the military. The discussion about the necessity of a permanent significant U.S. military presence in Poland and the government's policies toward European military integration are interlinked.

A. A THEORETICAL SKETCH

In a 2018 article, Zaborowski, who had written about Poland becoming a "constructive European"¹⁹⁴ in 2004, points to a "stark contrast"¹⁹⁵ between the behaviors of the PiS government in power since 2015, and its predecessor government in respect to their orientation toward European integration. While from 2008 to 2015 Poland had acted as a "Europhile nation,"¹⁹⁶ the new government does not share the eagerness for European integration, and instead cultivates nationalistic, unilateralist and anti-EU convictions.

Zięba gives the reason that Russia's suspension of the Conventional Forces Europe treaty provision in 2007 led to a decreased interest in the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) in the Central European states, and Poland followed this turn after the October 2015 elections. He concludes that "in the case of Poland, this was a decisive

¹⁹⁴ Zaborowski, "From America's Protégé to Constructive European."

¹⁹⁵ Zaborowski, "Poland and European Defence Integration," 13.

¹⁹⁶ Zaborowski, 6.

turnaround in relation to the policy of the previous liberal-people's government."¹⁹⁷ His claim that realist motives determine the Polish policy toward NATO and the EU, and his conclusion that "along with the growing divergence in the Euro-Atlantic security system there has been a return to a traditional, militarized approach to security, in accord with the premises of the realist paradigm"¹⁹⁸ has a point—but with regard to the relation to Russia. For the explanation of the Polish change of behavior within the multilateral structures of NATO and the EU, the observed timelines challenge a merely realist interpretation. It must be complemented by other determinants.

The changes of foreign policy studied in this thesis occurred in the wake of the elections in October 2015. Individual assessment or, respectively, a government's collective assessment of the situation apparently have played a part, indicating the relevancy of an element of construction. As Alexander Wendt has phrased it in his famous article about the social construction of power politics, and anarchy being the product of choices states make, "the intersubjectively constituted structure of identities and interests in the system"¹⁹⁹ demands consideration. As is obvious in the case of Poland, the role of individuals has a strong influence.

Although a gap of eight years between cause and effect for the policy change appears rather long, the role theory mechanism, with external factors challenging the role framework, thus influencing decision-makers beliefs, ideas and convictions, may help to support and expand Zięba's claim. Looking again at Chappell's suggestion of the application of role theory in Chapter III, section C, "Poland as a Constructive European" of this thesis, Poland had apparently digested the challenges that 9/11, and membership in NATO and the EU constituted. The country had found its role prior to 2015. In the absence of a new external factor that would explain the course change after 2015, which among other things led to the reversal of the decision to become a Framework Nation of Eurocorps, an alteration of the model is necessary: What has been an intermittent variable in the initial

¹⁹⁷ Zięba, *The Euro-Atlantic Security System in the 21st Century*, 202.

¹⁹⁸ Zięba, 11.

¹⁹⁹ Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," 401.

model, namely the characteristics of the decision makers, has taken the function of an independent variable—in lieu of the external challenges to the role framework foreseen by role theory.

B. THE OCTOBER 2015 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN POLAND, THE PIS, AND INDIVIDUALS

In a first for the Third Polish Republic, the October 2015 parliamentary elections resulted in a one-party government.²⁰⁰ The Law and Justice Party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) had come back to power, forming the government without having to rely on a coalition partner.²⁰¹ In a former stint in power from 2005 to 2007, the party had to form a coalition with two smaller parties, both of which frequently blocked PiS initiatives, in traditional-nationalist-conservative-populist roles.²⁰² Based on a 37.6%²⁰³ share of the vote of a 51% voter turnout,²⁰⁴ since October 2015 the PiS enjoys the prerogative to implement several changes in accordance with only the party's special views. Scholars categorize its policies as “Eurosceptic”²⁰⁵ or “nationalist-populist,”²⁰⁶ following a “sovereigntist”²⁰⁷ policy. The party appeals to public grievances and fears, advocating supposedly national values as the appropriate answers. External influences, especially from Brussels, Germany, and France, avowedly stand in contrast to the correct

²⁰⁰ Radoslaw Markowski, “The Polish Parliamentary Election of 2015: A Free and Fair Election That Results in Unfair Political Consequences,” *West European Politics* 39, no. 6 (May 4, 2016): 1311–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2016.1177305>.

²⁰¹ Marcin Goettig and Barteczko, “Poland’s Eurosceptics Win Outright Majority in Parliament,” *Reuters*, October 27, 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-poland-election-idUSKCN0SL1XH20151027>.

²⁰² Carl Ek, *Poland’s New Government: Background and Issues for the United States*, CRS Report No. 22811 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, February 15, 2008), 2. <https://fas.org/spp/crs/row/RS22811.pdf>.

²⁰³ Markowski, “The Polish Parliamentary Election of 2015: A Free and Fair Election That Results in Unfair Political Consequences,” 1311.

²⁰⁴ Markowski, 1314.

²⁰⁵ Balcer et al., “In a Clinch: The European Policy of the PiS Government.”

²⁰⁶ Markowski, “The Polish Parliamentary Election of 2015: A Free and Fair Election That Results in Unfair Political Consequences,” 1316; Buras, “Europe and Its Discontents,” 1.

²⁰⁷ Buras, “Europe and Its Discontents,” 11.

Polish way to live.²⁰⁸ In a 2019 publication of the Austrian Society for European Policy (ÖGfE), Péter Krekó et al. assert that the party's behavior goes beyond populism and describe it as "tribalism."²⁰⁹ As a remedy, they propose more debate as opposed to an exclusive prerogative of interpretation for the government or its representatives.

A recurring theme in the publications about the PiS government's actions is the role that Jarosław Kaczyński, former Polish prime minister, co-founder and chairman of the PiS party, and twin brother of the late Polish president Lech Kaczyński (who died in a 2010 plane crash near Smolensk) plays. Now classic International Relations theory does not give individuals too much influence. Opposing this, Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack argue that "personal idiosyncrasies and human error"²¹⁰ shape international relations. Quoting former U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, they point out the relevancy in practice, even if most theory sees no place for it. In other words, in theory, personality does not matter, but in practice, individuals make the difference. How can individual personality be a factor when theory says it is not? A brief digression into the literature may assist to reconcile the contradictory claims and explain how personality can at the same time be a factor while it is not.

The category of distance plays an essential role: Poet, flight pioneer, and philosopher Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, most famous for writing *Le Petit Prince* (The Little Prince), brought the role of the individual and the blurring effect of distance together in his 1931 novel *Vol de Nuit* (Night Flight). The story plays out in 1920s South America, where flying mail by night—and, given the state of technical development and aeronautical infrastructure at considerable risk—secured a crucial advantage for air mail over mail sent by ship. In its plot, one individual, the main agent of the air mail line, insists on a takeoff despite possibly unfavorable weather. Another individual, the pilot, eventually loses his orientation in a storm and runs out of fuel and hope above the nocturnal ocean. The tale

²⁰⁸ Balcer et al., "In a Clinch: The European Policy of the PiS Government," 32–33.

²⁰⁹ Péter Krekó, Attila Juhász, and Csaba Molnár, "How to Challenge the Tribal Zeitgeist?," *ÖGfE Policy Brief* 1, no. 2019 (January 28, 2019): 7.

²¹⁰ Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men," *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001): 108.

demonstrates the importance and role of individuals. That said, close to the end of the novel, when the airline has to confirm the loss of the pilot, plane, and mail, the author writes that “*sur quinze mille kilomètres, le frémissement de la vie aura résolu tous les problèmes*,”²¹¹ [at fifteen thousand kilometers, the tremble of life will have resolved all problems], thus subtracting the individual from the equation. Geographic and certainly emotional distance render the role of the individual negligible in the novel. Apart from a very few exceptions, cognitive/intellectual, chronological, or geographic distance usually renders the perception of the role of individuals negligible in world affairs. In other words, while from the distance of theory, states make decisions and implement policies, from the proximity of actual practice, that state behavior consists of the actions of individuals, imbued by their personal preferences.

In the case at hand it seems obvious that the personality of PiS leader Jarosław Kaczyński, who has been around in politics since the early 1980s and has even occupied the central position of prime minister from 2006 to 2007,²¹² holds considerable sway, despite not being in government office. Opponents and supporters attest to him being a strong character—proven through his influence over the policies of the PiS—albeit differing in their assessment of his adeptness. In a 2016 *New York Times* article a year after the election that brought the PiS party to power, James Traub held that “neither allies nor enemies doubt that Kaczynski runs Poland.”²¹³ Corresponding with that, Taylor, in a not very favorable characterization, stated in 2018 that Poland “is led by a reclusive politician haunted by feelings of national insecurity and historical grievance.”²¹⁴ Emphasizing the impact of the party leader’s personality on Polish policies, Taylor later added that “Poland’s reclusive de facto leader, Jarosław Kaczyński, who pulls the strings from the shadows as PiS chairman but holds no state office, sees threats and conspiracies almost

²¹¹ Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Vol de nuit*, ed. Alba Longa (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), 83.

²¹² James Traub, “The Party That Wants to Make Poland Great Again,” *New York Times*, November 2, 2016, sec. Magazine, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/06/magazine/the-party-that-wants-to-make-poland-great-again.html>.

²¹³ Traub.

²¹⁴ Taylor, “‘Fort Trump’ or Bust? Poland and the Future of European Defence,” 13.

everywhere—from Moscow to Brussels and Berlin—and safety, if at all, only in the tightest possible bilateral military embrace of the United States.”²¹⁵ In a 2019 essay, assessing the odds of PiS winning the next elections, Jo Harper accentuates the role of Jarosław Kaczyński, whose ageing is listed as the first factor of relevance. Under the heading “1. Identity strains,” Harper contends that “PiS leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski is getting old and has been sick. PiS was made in his—and his twin brother's—image and it is far from clear how the party would shape up without him.”²¹⁶

Jarosław Kaczyński undoubtedly plays a significant role in the decisions made by the current Polish government.²¹⁷ Given his important influence in the PiS party, looking for the reasons behind government decisions, we must take Kaczyński’s personality into account.

The views, convictions, and preferences represented by the party, largely influenced by its chairman, determine the reevaluation of Poland’s international role framework and the resulting policy outcomes.

C. “EUROPEANIZATION,” REEVALUATION, AND DE-EUROPEANIZATION

After a successful development in the 1990s and 2000s, characterized as Poland’s “Europeanization” after the demise of the Soviet realm, the PiS has now begun to push back against influences from its European partners.

Following the breakup of the Warsaw Pact, Poland made considerable efforts to “Europeanize”—in other words, to become part of “the West” and enjoy liberal democracy and prosperity, two conditions largely seen as two sides of one coin. In the process, Poland has distinguished itself as the most successful of the post-communist states formerly under Soviet rule.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Taylor, 22.

²¹⁶ Jo Harper, “Three Reasons Poland’s Ruling Party Could Lose In 2019,” *Forbes*, December 19, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joharper/2018/12/19/three-reasons-polands-ruling-party-could-lose-in-2019/>.

²¹⁷ Balcer et al., “In a Clinch: The European Policy of the PiS Government,” 2.

²¹⁸ Traub, “The Party That Wants to Make Poland Great Again.”

Poland remained rather unscathed during the financial crisis of 2008.²¹⁹ As spelled out earlier, the 2014 annexation of Crimea and subsequent interference in east Ukraine had raised the already existing apprehensions about the Russian Federation’s behavior but had not led to a fundamental policy change. Also, in the European refugee stress test of the summer of 2015, the Polish government, if grudgingly, accepted to play in concert with its European partners.²²⁰ And, even if a minute detail, Poland carried on its preparations to become the sixth Framework Nation of Eurocorps.

Even with the PiS party forming the government, Poland is not against EU membership per se. In fact, Piotr Buras contends that the contrary is true, since Poland depends on the Union’s support to sustain its economic development. But the new Polish government has reevaluated facets of its European integration chiefly in accordance with two impulses.

The first of these associated motives is an aspiration to shake off their partners’ influence and for an increased feeling of sovereignty.²²¹ In a passionate and *Istituto Affari Internazionali* prize-winning essay, the Italian Sara Candido deplored “the emergence of a block of countries in the East who consider Brussels a sort of new Moscow.”²²² Even if the context of the essay leaves no doubt that the statement particularly reflects a lack of solidarity in stemming the influx of refugees over the Mediterranean Sea, especially straining Italy, the quote catches the mood well. The PiS Euroscepticism manifests first and foremost in its resentment of the EU’s resistance against tendencies to hollow out principles of liberal democracy in Poland. Most notably this is the case in the issue of the PiS’ measures to bring the judiciary in line through dismissals of judges and replacing them with persons selected by the PiS—leading to mass protests in Poland against the actions of the government. The European Commission started to monitor rule of law in Poland in

²¹⁹ Taylor, “‘Fort Trump’ or Bust? Poland and the Future of European Defence,” 21.

²²⁰ Balcer et al., “In a Clinch: The European Policy of the PiS Government,” 22–23.

²²¹ Buras, “Europe and Its Discontents,” 2.

²²² Sara Candido, “Europe’s Many Souls: Abandoned Places and the Struggle for a European Dream,” Text, IAI Istituto Affari Internazionali, October 22, 2018, <http://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/europes-many-souls-abandoned-places-and-struggle-european-dream>.

2016. Subsequently, in 2017, the Commission even threatened to use the so-called “nuclear option” to restore the independence of the Polish judiciary, which would mean asking the European Council to impose sanctions in accordance with Article 7 of the EU Treaty.²²³

The party claims that the will of the population, expressed through the process of election and the subsequent decisions of the elected government in the name of the people, stands above all former decisions, both made by former Polish governments or especially made by a supranational entity as the institutions of the EU. The PiS wants to change policies, and to that end, it wants to change the mechanisms of policy making, demanding a reform of the EU treaty, implementing the principle of unanimity for European Council decisions.²²⁴ Unanimity in decisions would mean that every member is able to effectively veto any decision. However, the partners were not interested, did not embark on the Polish course of action, and as a consequence the changes proposed by the Polish government have not advanced.²²⁵ In his 2018 speech on Poland’s foreign policy priorities, Minister of Foreign Affairs Czaputowicz expresses the government’s frustration by saying “that the European Commission is not a supra-government, and the European Parliament not a supra-parliament empowered to instruct national governments and parliaments,” later adding that Poles “reject the usurpation by anyone of the right to lecture fellow citizens about what they should believe in.”²²⁶ Since Poland has not altered its sovereigntist bearing, Buras warns that a course of further de-Europeanization will render Poland even more powerless to shape the course of the EU.²²⁷ In miniature, exactly that has already happened with regard to Eurocorps.

The United States appears to offer an exit from the dilemma of being stuck with European partners, whose support is essential, but whose solidarity demands Poland does not want to accept. Against the backdrop of the alliance policies and occasional

²²³ Buras, “Europe and Its Discontents,” 1–2.

²²⁴ Balcer et al., “In a Clinch: The European Policy of the PiS Government,” 16; Buras, “Europe and its Discontents,” 6.

²²⁵ Buras, 6.

²²⁶ Czaputowicz, “Minister Jacek Czaputowicz on Polish Diplomacy Priorities in 2018.”

²²⁷ Buras, 11.

announcements by the Trump administration, starting with presidential candidate Trump's qualification of NATO as obsolete, and a recurring theme since,²²⁸ Poland strives to secure extensive U.S. benevolence. In doing so, Poland aims to mitigate two problems Poland faces with its European partners. As detailed previously, from a Polish perspective, questioning the resolve of its European allies, it is chiefly the United States that offers protection against external threats. And a firm and close relationship with the United States would increase Poland's independence from its European partners' approval of Polish policies. President Trump's speech in Warsaw in July 2017 can only have reinforced those considerations among the Polish government.²²⁹ Thus, whatever may cause any conceivable rift between Poland and the United States must be avoided.

In that light, the second motive for a course of de-Europeanization relates to a perception of European realities and American assessments of the European integration in defense matters. From a nationalist Polish perspective and reinforced by President Trump's frequently uttered critical attitude toward NATO, it is only a small step to perceive a risk of alienating the United States by playing a European card. If deepening the European integration jeopardizes the transatlantic solidarity, then it cannot be in Poland's interest to support it. Matching with the Eurosceptical opposition to a European integration, a reasoning that demonstrates risks to Polish interest supports claims of abandoning all that can be pictured as a risk to transatlantic solidarity.

In the discussion about the character of the European pillar of NATO, one camp claims that strengthening European capabilities has a detrimental effect on the alliance. The conundrum that Secretary of State Dean Acheson faced when NATO was founded²³⁰ is also a brain-teaser today. Will a better balance in transatlantic burden-sharing make the alliance stronger, or weaken it?

²²⁸ Julian E. Barnes and Helene Cooper, "Trump Discussed Pulling U.S. from NATO, Aides Say amid New Concerns over Russia," *New York Times*, January 14, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/14/us/politics/nato-president-trump.html>.

²²⁹ Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump to the People of Poland," Speech script, The White House, July 6, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-people-poland/>.

²³⁰ Harper, *American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan and Dean G. Acheson*.

Barry R. Posen describes the duality of the U.S. perception of a strengthening of European capabilities: Welcoming any strengthening of the European pillar of NATO in the sense of burden sharing is paired with the concern that European independent capabilities might undermine NATO, or actions might contrast U.S. security interests.²³¹ Thierry Tardy refers to the strategic autonomy sought by the EU. He, slipping into the role of the devil’s advocate, argues that “when two such organizations operate in similar places, with similar activities and similar membership, then [...] competition is also part of the game.”²³² Following that, he advocates a strengthening of the European defense efforts, and insists that it serves to ease burden-sharing tensions and that Europe will anyway remain a comparably humble military player. Luke Coffey rails against EU Defense Integration, eloquently claiming that it has a detrimental effect on NATO, the transatlantic relations, and, as a consequence of all that, on Europe’s security.²³³ His main criticism is that the CSDP has not led to an increase in capabilities of the European militaries but instead the European countries have used it to reduce, or at least freeze, their defense spending. How to create just enough distance between Poland and the rest of Europe so as not to be held responsible for European shortcomings?

Buras draws attention to the issue of symbolism. The PiS government changed the motto of the Polish diplomatic service from the former “To serve Poland—to build Europe—to understand the world” to the current “Faithful to my Homeland, the Republic of Poland.” Buras asserts that the “new” motto relates to the Polish Home Army, the resistance against Nazi-German occupation.²³⁴ Obviously, the new motto does not refer to Europe. Although Eurocorps constitutes a model that allows for strengthening the

²³¹ Barry R. Posen, “European Union Security and Defense Policy: Response to Unipolarity?,” *Security Studies* 15, no. 2 (July 1, 2006): 182, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636410600829356>.

²³² Thierry Tardy, “European Defence: What Impact for NATO,” *NDC Policy Brief* (blog), December 2018, 3. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=2ahUKEwi_vI7LqJTiahXFo54KHdhzB-sQFjAAegQIBBAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndc.nato.int%2Fdownload%2Fdownloads.php%3Ficode%3D569&usg=AOvVaw32xD0DyCsyCTSZYUXxniO-

²³³ Luke Coffey, “EU Defense Integration: Undermining NATO, Transatlantic Relations, and Europe’s Security,” The Heritage Foundation, accessed August 26, 2018, </europe/report/eu-defense-integration-undermining-nato-transatlantic-relations-and-europes-security>.

²³⁴ Buras, “Europe and Its Discontents,” 4.

European pillar of NATO's security in an intergovernmental model, it is also a powerful symbol for successful European integration, even across former East-West divides. The opening line of the 2017 interview, in which Poland's deputy defense minister Tomasz Szatkowski gives an explanation for Poland's decision not to become a Framework Nation despite the preparation, runs "Eurocorps is a political symbol, rather than an elite military unit."²³⁵ Putting that line from the middle of the interview as a kind of "bottom line up front," and the change in the motto of the diplomatic service bespeaks the current Polish government's wish to distance itself from European political symbolism. Although Poland's sustained participation in Eurocorps is in the Polish interest and even in accordance with the government's ideas of international cooperation, it has become collateral damage in the clash between contradictory assessments of how to address European integration.

Poland's military possibilities had to take more bruises, inflicted by the new government. In its policies of scaling back the European orientation of its military, Poland acted on different levels: On a domestic level, it dismissed a large number of high ranking officers. In a bilateral context, it was on the verge of shunning the fledgling Polish-German army cooperation. On the multinational stage, it repealed armament procurement and development decisions, and ultimately made the Eurocorps decision that is subject of this thesis.

Close to 300 high-ranking officers were dismissed in a domestic "purge" of the military. An uncommented table in Zaborowski's 2018 article "Poland and European Defence Integration" shows the extent of the personnel exchange. According to the figures in the table, 90% of all leaders in the General Staff, and 82% of those in the General Command have been replaced in the timeframe from 2016 to May 2017. Likewise, 100 staff at the defense university have been dismissed. Zaborowski puts the figure of "High-ranking officers who left their positions"²³⁶ at 260. Somewhat corresponding with that

²³⁵ Poland Current Events, "Poland's Future in Eurocorps."

²³⁶ Zaborowski, "Poland and European Defence Integration," 8.

figure, Taylor asserts that about 30 generals and 200 colonels had been forced to leave.²³⁷ In a *Telegraph* article by Matthew Day, the number is even higher, and amounts to “some 26 generals and 260 top officers,”²³⁸ some of whom stepped down in a “mass exodus” to protest against the government’s practices. On the evening of the 2015 election, *Politico* author Jan Cienski forecasted that the new government would do as all new Polish governments have done and “purge state institutions,”²³⁹ albeit listing only civilian institutions as targets of such purges. To include the military in such a measure seems to be an unprecedented move, and certainly does not assist to raise the assertiveness of the Polish armed forces against a possible external threat.

In his *Stars and Stripes* report of the issue, Marek Strzelecki quotes the Polish Ministry of Defense’s statement. According to the ministry, the personnel changeover aimed at putting experienced officers, who have seen proper action, in key positions. Beside the official version, the move served to bring the military in line. Strzelecki goes on by quoting a retired brigadier general, who holds that while a part of the dismissals was due to normal retirements and postings, most of it happened in a political context.²⁴⁰ Two factors indicate the validity of the general’s observation: first, the attention which a multitude of sources devote to the issue and, second, the lasting disorientation within the Polish military. As Melissa Hooper reports, the Polish security community has difficulties coping with the dismissals.²⁴¹ The written reports correspond with the author’s experience of anxiety among Polish military personnel about their individual futures, and the lasting

²³⁷ Taylor, “‘Fort Trump’ or Bust? Poland and the Future of European Defence,” 48.

²³⁸ Matthew Day, “Mass Exodus of Polish Army’s Top Ranks in Protest over Political Interference from Government,” *Telegraph*, February 17, 2017, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/17/mass-exodus-polish-armys-top-ranks-protest-political-interference/>.

²³⁹ Jan Cienski, “5 Takeaways from Poland’s Election,” *POLITICO*, October 25, 2015, <https://www.politico.eu/article/5-takeaways-polish-election-2015-law-justice-civic-voters-kaczynski-tusk-eu-pis-szydlo/>.

²⁴⁰ Marek Strzelecki, “Poland Guts Military Command on NATO Front Line,” *Stars and Stripes*, February 23, 2017, <https://www.stripes.com/poland-guts-military-command-on-nato-front-line-1.455528>.

²⁴¹ Alina Polyakova, Torrey Taussig, Ted Reinert, Kemal Kirişci, Amanda Sloat, James Kirchick, Melissa Hooper, Norman Eisen, and Andrew Kenealy, *The Anatomy of Illiberal States*, Foreign Policy at Brookings (Washington, DC: Brookings, February 26, 2019), 20, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-anatomy-of-illiberal-states/>.

difficulties of finding the appropriate points of contact in the daily life of multinational cooperation.

Strzelecki also connects the replacement of the military leadership with the question of lack of resources and Warsaw's call for a greater allied troop presence. Part of the official Polish justification of its Eurocorps decision was the need to relocate resources in the wake of the 2014 and 2016 NATO summits in Newport and Warsaw.²⁴² Indeed, the implementation of the RAP has caused an increased need for human resources, but at any rate that problem has a self-inflicted misery dimension in the Polish case. Additionally, Poland was able to agree to leave a large part of its personnel, and especially the highly trained specialist field grade officers, in Eurocorps for the 2020 NRF LCC HQ standby obligation.

With a crisp statement, Balcer et al. raise the issue of bilateral Polish-German relations as a central facet of Poland's de-Europeanization: "If we were to point to one decisive strategic change implemented in PiS's European policy, this would be the redefining of Germany's place as Poland's partner in the European Union."²⁴³ Monika Sus reports that in the field of the military, the envisioned ambitious cooperation has suffered setbacks after the 2015 elections in Poland.²⁴⁴ Parts of it have been put back on track in the meantime, but with considerable delay.

The centerpiece of the cooperation is the cross attachment of combat battalions to the partner countries' brigades. This cross attachment is in the stage of successful experimenting and, for the time being, amounts to a tight affiliation that culminates in a dedicated battalion of a German and a Polish brigade each taking part in brigade level

²⁴² eNews Channel Africa, "Poland to Withdraw Troops from Eurocorps Force."

²⁴³ Balcer et al., "In a Clinch: The European Policy of the PiS Government," 3.

²⁴⁴ Sus, "Germany in Polish Security - An Irreplaceable Neighbour but Not an Irreversible Partner," 168.

exercises in the “other” brigade.²⁴⁵ The satisfactory results of the tactical cooperation and the positive individual assessment of the soldiers involved are subject of substantial messaging between both armies. Whether what the Polish and German soldiers achieved in northeast Germany will soon find its equivalent under the leadership of a Polish brigade, and in Poland, remains to be seen. According to Sus, the PiS chairman Kaczyński stated in a 2014 interview about a bigger NATO presence in Poland that in the light of the Polish-German history, “German NATO troops should not be allowed on Polish soil ‘for at least seven generations.’” The broken political china may be mended by professionals in both armies.

The last-minute cancellation of the procurement of multi-role helicopters produced by Airbus in 2016, and the way it was communicated, caused a veritable diplomatic crunch between Poland and France. The deal even foresaw parts of the production of the aircraft in Poland, along with a technology transfer to the Polish armament industry, and would have lifted Poland’s state-owned *Polska Grupa Zbrojeniowa* (PGZ) to the level of a European co-player.²⁴⁶ Balking at deeper European integration, the PiS canceled it anyhow.²⁴⁷

Early in 2017, Poland quit the European Defence Agency (EDA) project of sharing the procurement of multi-role tanker transport aircraft, claiming that the country would make the investments on a national basis, allegedly getting more value for the money. As Balcer et al. point out, such an outcome for Poland is very unlikely.²⁴⁸ Indisputably, exposing the national defense industry to the international competition bears risks, but, as

²⁴⁵ Marco Dorow, “Feuer Frei! Deutsch-Polnisches Gefechtsschießen in Jägerbrück,” [Fire at will! German-Polish live-firing exercise in Jägerbrück], *deutschesheer.de*, December 14, 2018, https://www.deutschesheer.de/portal/a/heer/start/aktuell/nachrichten/jahr2018/dezember2018!/ut/p/z1/hY5RC4IwFIX_kXdK03qchENCCc2Ve4kxhxm2yVjSQz--ReCbdB8O3Hue-zjA4QJci3nohRuMFqPfwx5f490mp1GNCho1BBFWnQ6sKEPEMDA4_004t9HKEAR1p6D1GclaBkUR1MCB38UsXsFkrBuVC4T8doT2JnQ3qqOR5HfwYKcCabRnvDql3eC1t8IZu3zLp7XeCYYOWhTuU4SXTuE7TbKMNjij93lawfTItmWJ-w-afPM6/dz/d5/L2dBIS9nQSEh/#Z7_694IG2S0MG2UA0AVRTKVMN1G02.

²⁴⁶ Zaborowski, “Poland and European Defence Integration,” 12.

²⁴⁷ Zaborowski, 14–15; Buras, “Europe and Its Discontents,” 7; Balcer et al., “In a Clinch: The European Policy of the PiS Government,” 25–26.

²⁴⁸ Balcer et al., “In a Clinch: The European Policy of the PiS Government,” 26.

Zaborowski concludes, from a Polish perspective, “the risks of cooperation are real, [but] the dangers stemming from a failure to cooperate are greater.”²⁴⁹

Giving up the intent to become a Framework Nation of Eurocorps in another “last-minute” decision, Poland renounces the possibilities of shaping the practical implementation of European defense efforts in real-world operations. Buras contends that

Poland’s decision to reduce its cooperation within the Eurocorps framework to the minimum level is symptomatic of its broader scepticism regarding plans to develop specific CSDP institutions or engage in defence capability planning within CSDP, which is currently one of the key developments being discussed in the context of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).²⁵⁰

In Chapter II, the thesis has already disproved the claim that Eurocorps was merely oriented to CSDP tasks. Thus, despite maintaining a generous contribution to Eurocorps for the NRF standby period, and retaining Associated Nation status,²⁵¹ Poland accepts quite an element of collateral damage. In the search for the incentive that justifies the losses coming with the decision, Buras’ analysis offers an insight. He claims that “what made its stance significant was that it began to detach itself from CSDP just when it was gaining traction again, in the wake of Donald Trump questioning NATO.”²⁵²

Given the influence that the United States enjoys in the European capitals, and especially in Warsaw, clever U.S. leadership could assist. In a 2018 *American Interest* article, Michta demands that the United States boost its bilateral relationships with European allies to overcome their differences, which are “defined by the progressive regionalization of individual nations’ security optics”²⁵³ (i.e., a fractionalization between states focusing on the eastern and others focusing on the southern risks and threats to security). Does that mean the necessity for an increased U.S. troop presence in Europe?

²⁴⁹ Zaborowski, “Poland and European Defence Integration,” 14–15.

²⁵⁰ Buras, “Europe and Its Discontents,” 7–8.

²⁵¹ eNews Channel Africa, “Poland to Withdraw Troops from Eurocorps Force.”

²⁵² Buras, “Europe and Its Discontents,” 8.

²⁵³ Michta, “The US Needs to Boost Bilateral Relationships in Europe.”

D. FORT TRUMP OR EUROPEAN MILITARY INTEGRATION?

A stable Europe is in the United States' interest, and worth an effort on its part. What has been the case from a Cold War perspective, as spelled out in Josef Joffe's 1984 *Foreign Policy* article, and has been maintained despite "the West Europeans' security parasitism,"²⁵⁴ has not lost its significance today. In the opening remarks of the 2017 Munich security conference, U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis affirmed the United States' acclaim for European defense cooperation that increases European capabilities and considers NATO interoperability. He reiterated that "American security is permanently tied to the security of Europe," and added that "done correctly, European initiatives and NATO unity are mutually reinforcing."²⁵⁵ Against that backdrop, the following pages examine the different yet interlinked dimensions of a permanent U.S. troop presence in Central/Eastern Europe.

The military-operational dimension simply asks—not without fierce discussion though—if and how a stationing of substantial U.S. forces would impact on the regional power balance. Sparked by a RAND Corporation wargame conducted by David A. Shlapak and Michael W. Johnson, these authors on one side and Kofman on the other, have entered into an intriguing exchange²⁵⁶ over the character of deterrence, that quickly transcends the technical aspect of their discussion. With starkly differing notions of future war, they dispute each other's fundamentals of deterrence and come to contrasting conclusions about the sufficiency or, respectively the futility of force concentrations vis-à-vis the Russian potential across the border. Shlapak and Johnson advocate the establishment of deterrence by denial—in order to deny Russia the possibility to create a *fait accompli* without

²⁵⁴ Josef Joffe, "Europe's American Pacifier," *Foreign Policy*, no. 54 (1984): 64, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1148355>.

²⁵⁵ "Opening Statements by Ursula von Der Leyen and James N. Mattis," Munich Security Conference (Munich, 2017), <https://www.securityconference.de/en/media-library/munich-security-conference-2017/video/opening-statements-by-ursula-von-der-leyen-and-james-n-mattis/>, 24:29-24:39.

²⁵⁶ Shlapak and Johnson, "Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank: Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics"; Kofman, "Fixing NATO Deterrence in the East, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love NATO's Crushing Defeat by Russia"; Karl Mueller et al., "In Defense of a Wargame: Bolstering Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank," *War on the Rocks*, June 14, 2016, <https://warontherocks.com/2016/06/in-defense-of-a-wargame-bolstering-deterrence-on-natos-eastern-flank/>.

resistance. Kofman points out inconsistencies of the RAND wargame and holds that its basic assumptions were cooked to achieve a specific outcome. He argues in favor of deterrence by threat of punishment, ambiguous and delivered by means in which the United States enjoys superiority, instead of trying to match the Russian potential. Even more importantly, in his *War on the Rocks* polemic in response to the RAND wargame he suggests that while the Russian aggression against Georgia and Ukraine is real, unlike them, the Baltics and Poland are NATO members.²⁵⁷

A permanent stationing of U.S. forces inevitably taps into a bigger picture, where a security dilemma is looming. Michael Hunzeker and Alexander Lanoszka occupy a position between Shlapak and Johnson, and Kofman, arguing that the United States should indeed permanently station forces in Poland, but not an armored division. They deem enablers such as air and missile defense forces less offensive and suggest their permanent deployment.²⁵⁸ Kofman holds that such proposals fail to recognize the character of a possible conflict with Russia—which would encompass much wider areas than the Baltics and Poland.²⁵⁹ Possibly giving Russia reason to boost its own capabilities to address its own security concerns for a larger theater is counterproductive.

If politically disadvantageous, legally a permanent presence of NATO troops on the territory of NATO's eastern members is not precluded by the NATO Russia Founding Act. Ryan Van Wie suggests a reinforcement of U.S. forces in Europe, but for political and especially operational reasons to deploy them in Germany.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ Shlapak and Johnson; Michael Kofman, "Fixing NATO Deterrence in the East, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love NATO's Crushing Defeat by Russia," *War on the Rocks*, May 12, 2016, <https://warontherocks.com/2016/05/fixing-nato-deterrence-in-the-east-or-how-i-learned-to-stop-worrying-and-love-natos-crushing-defeat-by-russia/>; Karl Mueller et al., "In Defense of a Wargame: Bolstering Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank," *War on the Rocks*, June 14, 2016, <https://warontherocks.com/2016/06/in-defense-of-a-wargame-bolstering-deterrence-on-natos-eastern-flank/>.

²⁵⁸ Michael Hunzeker and Alexander Lanoszka, "Fort Trump: A Silly Name Masks a Good Idea," *Defense One*, September 21, 2018, <https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2018/09/fort-trump-silly-name-masks-good-idea/151439/>.

²⁵⁹ Kofman, "Permanently Stationing U.S. Forces in Poland Is a Bad Idea, But One Worth Debating"; Kofman.

²⁶⁰ Ryan Van Wie, "Bring the Tanks Back: It Is Time to Put a U.S. Armored Brigade in Germany," *War on the Rocks*, November 6, 2018, <https://warontherocks.com/2018/11/bring-the-tanks-back-it-is-time-to-put-a-u-s-armored-brigade-in-germany/>.

For NATO, another dilemma arises in competition with a possible security dilemma, and NATO cohesion is at stake in both. The risk of creating a security dilemma, pointed out by Kofman, is an undesirable prospect. But to avoid getting too close to the Scylla of a security dilemma at any cost results in encountering Charybdis: While stationing forces would give Russia reason to launch “counter measures,” paving the way to increased tension in the competition, NATO’s Central/Eastern European members have existential concerns that need to be addressed. Adding to a security dilemma cannot find widespread approval among NATO’s allies, thus undermining NATO cohesion. On the other hand, failure to alleviate Polish and Baltic security concerns is equally detrimental for alliance cohesion.

A permanent U.S. military presence in Poland has long been advocated by the country. In the summer of 2018, the idea eventually made the headlines, where it was dubbed “Fort Trump.”²⁶¹ It is basically an old Polish desire, and “a non-partisan issue.”²⁶² Despite the RAP, Poland and the Baltic States have a heightened threat perception, arguing that the deterrence posture of the RAP is not sufficient. The intention to station a U.S. armored division primarily means to address that threat perception. Russia pictures the RAP as a possible threat to Russian security, albeit so far without permanently increasing its own forces in the border region. Substantial U.S. forces stationed in the area would give Russia more reason to point out aggressive NATO-U.S. intentions, thus contributing to a security dilemma and leading to demands from other Central/Eastern European states.

If it is fair to say that alliance cohesion is NATO’s center of gravity, then the Polish proposal calls for discussion among the allies—in its bigger frame of questions relating to the need for, and the nature of, deterrence. So far, triggered by Poland’s request, the

²⁶¹ For the name *see*: Julian Borger, “‘Fort Trump’: Donald Trump Considers Request for US Military Base in Poland,” *Guardian*, September 18, 2018, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/18/fort-trump-us-military-base-poland-russia>; more background is offered by Jaroslaw Adamowski, “Amid Russian Military Buildup, Poland Reacts,” *Defense News*, August 27, 2018, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2018/08/27/amid-russian-military-buildup-poland-reacts/>.

²⁶² Peter B. Doran and Ray Wojcik, “Unfinished Business: Why and How the U.S. Should Establish a Permanent Military Presence on NATO’s Eastern Flank,” *Intelligence Brief* (Washington DC: Center for European Policy Analysis, November 2018), 3, 11, <https://www.cepa.org/unfinished-business>.

discussion has been a pastime for scholars and experts. Now, the United States seems to be seriously considering it: Kyle Rempfer, covering the issue of a permanent U.S. troop presence in Poland for the U.S. forces publications *Army Times* and *Military Times*, reported in March 2019 that possible locations have been selected.²⁶³ What is currently a bilateral process between the United States and Poland clearly has relevance for the entire alliance. As Kofman has worked out, “Poland’s request sends a terrible signal to Moscow that is not confident in NATO Article 5 commitments and seeks a separate arrangement with Washington. [...] It misses the entire point of being in NATO, and the purpose of the alliance as a collective security arrangement in Europe.”²⁶⁴ Taylor, very critical in his report about the Polish policies, holds that Poland’s focus on bilateral agreements with the United States, in parallel to the NATO alliance and in lieu of EU solidarity, undermines NATO solidarity,²⁶⁵ In a 2018 POLITICO article, arguing against Fort Trump, he concludes that “in any scenario, Europe’s future stability and cohesion hinges on the struggle for Poland.”²⁶⁶ Jim Townsend warns against a bilateral deal that is not coordinated with the other allies and calls on the United States to consider the issue “from many angles.”²⁶⁷

One of the angles that the United States has to look from is promotion of liberal democracy. It is not for nothing that the European Commission and the Polish government have been at loggerheads about issues of liberal democracy since the October 2015 election in Poland. Looking from that angle, Michael Fitzsimmons warns that agreeing to establish the strong U.S. military presence in Poland now would constitute “a powerful signal to the capitals of Europe and beyond of U.S. tolerance for the erosion of liberal democracy,” and concludes that “in this light, the symbolism today of ‘Fort Trump’—by that or any other

²⁶³ Kyle Rempfer, “Prepare to Man Fort Trump? US Has Made Poland a ‘Very Serious Robust Offer’ for Base,” *Military Times*, March 14, 2019, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2019/03/13/prepare-to-man-fort-trump-us-has-made-poland-a-very-serious-robust-offer-for-base/>.

²⁶⁴ Kofman, “Permanently Stationing U.S. Forces in Poland Is a Bad Idea, But One Worth Debating.”

²⁶⁵ Taylor, “‘Fort Trump’ or Bust? Poland and the Future of European Defence,” 29–30.

²⁶⁶ Paul Taylor, “Poland’s Risky ‘America First’ Policy,” *POLITICO*, October 4, 2018, <https://www.politico.eu/article/poland-risky-america-first-policy-jaroslawn-kaczynski-donald-trump/>.

²⁶⁷ Jim Townsend, “Fort Trump Is a Farce,” *Foreign Policy* (blog), accessed March 27, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/08/fort-trump-is-a-farce-poland/>.

name—risks striking the wrong balance between defending NATO interests from the outside and defending them from within.”²⁶⁸

E. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The new Polish government, influenced by the PiS party’s chairman, Jarosław Kaczyński, has reevaluated policy priorities. Equating the experience Poland made 80 years prior with essential parts of today’s conditions, it has decided to stake a clear prioritization of its relationship with the United States, even if this comes at the cost of frustrating its European partners.

From a mindset of Poland being the bargaining chip of its European neighbors vis-à-vis Russia, and the United States being the only trustworthy and capable ally, such a conduct is comprehensible. Nevertheless, as much as Poland has been betrayed in history, drawing the conclusion that no partner is trustworthy—but the United States—is not a *conditio sine qua non* of Polish foreign policy. The European defense integration, admittedly still in a fledgling state, is just about to develop more momentum. As the previous chapter has shown, Poland had embarked on a careful change of its perspectives through trustful participation in the European integration until 2015. Now Poland has opted to not shape that integration but to try to push it back, or at best watch from the outside. That bears considerable risks, not only for Poland, but also, as the chapter shows, for European security, and inextricably linked with it, transatlantic security. The question of Central/Eastern Europe’s security—or merely the perceptions thereof—has a regional if not global significance, because certainly undermining NATO’s cohesion to the point of its demise would change the world order. And just as certainly, none of NATO’s members and its partners could benefit from such a change.

NATO and its non-NATO partners in the EU have a vested interest to address the security concerns of its Central/Eastern European allies, and therefore, a responsibility to do so. Poland has a special responsibility, closely followed by the United States, to allow

²⁶⁸ Michael Fitzsimmons, “Two Reasons Not to Build Fort Trump in Today’s Poland,” *Defense One*, September 25, 2018, <https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2018/09/two-reasons-not-build-fort-trump-todays-poland/151551/>.

its partners to exercise their responsibilities. However, the European partners demand the maintenance of liberal democratic standards according to widely shared European code of behavior. Given the deeply engrained convictions prevalent in the PiS party, that is a hard nut to crack.

As regards the question why Poland has decided not to become a Framework Nation of Eurocorps despite the former intent, the chapter yields indications that the political symbolism of Eurocorps is a reason why the PiS government has repealed its predecessor government's decision. Whether Poland's contribution to Eurocorps has become collateral damage in a conflict of political rancor is not clear. Given the criticism the PiS has expressed about its predecessor's policies and that Polish "personnel and financial resources [in Eurocorps] have been recklessly wasted,"²⁶⁹ while most of the resources will remain at the disposal of Eurocorps until the end of the NRF LCC standby in 2020, such rancor may well have been another factor, but not a reason.

²⁶⁹ Poland Current Events, "Poland's Future in Eurocorps."

V. CONCLUSIONS

A reevaluation of Poland's strategic situation, conducted by the government in power since the fall of 2015, has yielded decisions that constitute a serious change in course for Polish domestic and foreign policies. Although the latter constitute the focus of this paper, they are without fail closely linked to the former. In order to create optimal conditions to obtain a U.S. security guaranty for Poland, whose government perceives an existential threat from Russia's military potential to Poland's physical security, and a threat to the western societies' resolve to assert their existence from those societies' "modern" European values, Poland aims to kill two birds with one stone.

The choices the new government makes reflect a reevaluation of circumstances, conditions, and international context through a nationalist lens that does not care much about long-term maintenance of common values. In 2005, Leopoldo Nuti chose to give his article about the Italian government's policies aimed at securing U.S. benevolence at the cost of European ties the title "The Richest and Farthest Master is Best."²⁷⁰ The same title might be applied to Poland's effort to forge an alliance with the United States. Such a triage is understandable as far as serious existential threats are concerned—only that most of Poland's allies do not share the threat perception in its extreme form. Moreover, they demand compliance with common standards in the rule of law.

Staking security on the implementation of a U.S. military presence in Poland, the country does what it deems necessary and affordable to achieve it. Poland is content to strain the ties with its European partners, because it does not want to accept their demands concerning domestic issues of rule of law. From the Polish government's perspective, it cannot tolerate external influence into what it insists are sovereign issues. From a European perspective, the respect for liberal democratic values and the rule of law cannot be claimed as a sovereign domain of one of its members. These shared values constitute the bedrock of the Union.

²⁷⁰ Leopoldo Nuti, "The Richest and Farthest Master Is Always Best: US-Italian Relations in Historical Perspective," in *The Atlantic Alliance Under Stress: US-European Relations after Iraq*, ed. David M. Andrews (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 195.

In the current situation of ongoing discussions about the effect of a strengthening of the European pillar of NATO, with one camp asserting its reinforcing, the other camp insisting on its detrimental effect, compounded with President Trump's propensity to realign the United States' position through advantageous bilateral agreements, engaging in European security integration could be taken as a statement the current Polish government was not ready to make. Instead, it made a contrasting statement, which can best be understood from a Polish nationalist and historicist perspective. The risk of being left without a U.S. commitment, e.g., through a failure of NATO, is a risk Poland must counter at almost any cost.

The policies of the PiS government vis-à-vis the United States are teeming with proofs of loyalty. This goes from rhetoric through armament decisions, loyal military support in operations to the proposal of establishing "Fort Trump." In the process, Poland's European ties suffer. It appears likely that the effects on the European defense integration are not merely unintended side effects of Poland's pivot to the United States, but in the current situation are meant to reinforce the message of loyalty to the United States.

As the thesis has shown, the officially mentioned reasons for Poland's decision not to become Framework Nation of Eurocorps are in large part unsubstantiated. Neither is it true that Poland would have had no say about its employment, nor is the military prowess of the headquarters questionable. Even the resources argument is only half acceptable, because firstly some of Poland's human resource scarcity is self-inflicted, and secondly Eurocorps is being employed in the frame of NATO's Readiness Action Plan. Moreover, Poland's financial contribution to Eurocorps pales in comparison with the amount of money offered to build infrastructure for a U.S. military presence in Poland. Also, the armament procurement decisions repealed by the government rather hurt Poland's military and industrial capabilities but constitute a signal of loyalty to the partner of choice, the United States. Thus, the official reasons are more than merely lame excuses for a Eurosceptic policy. They are part of a strategic messaging of Poland's allegiance to the United States.

The past provides important orientation for Polish policy-makers. Yet, while many have given up finding all orientation in the past, and adopted a more forward-looking

mindset, the current government stresses dependence on U.S. protection to the extent that precludes even a remote risk to the Polish-U.S. bond. If certain European endeavors on their current perceived trajectory, one of which is the “Eurocorps project,” could possibly endanger the transatlantic link, Poland had an interest in demonstrating it wants to avoid any risk to that transatlantic link and actively protect it instead.

If the relationship between NATO’s members is characterized by realist behavior as Zięba concludes, then from an international relations scholarly perspective, the case study demonstrates that realist policies in practice have their origin in factors that pertain to the role of the individual, and individuals’ interactions within a government as well as with counterparts in partners’ and opponents’ governments.

Poland’s partners on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean would do well to demonstrate their interest in the maintenance and development of the transatlantic alliance. Indeed, the United States holds one of the keys to the maintenance and strengthening of Europe’s stability—or the weakening of it. Poland desires additional reassurances and, not least in the interest of European stability, should receive them. Nevertheless, these would better emanate from a coordination of all players in NATO and the EU.

In order to promote NATO cohesion, bilateral efforts can shape the strategic environment, but they have to be conducted in consideration of the interests of more than the partners involved in the bilateral activity. Concerned by the loss of “threat consensus that kept the Euro-Atlantic glued together during the Cold War,”²⁷¹ Michta proposes that the United States boost its bilateral relations with its European partners, especially the United Kingdom, Poland, and Germany—in the interest of “NATO’s long-term health.” If on a smaller scale, in principle the same must be suggested for German foreign policy. As the analysis of the discussion about “Fort Trump” demonstrates, NATO cohesion is at stake if the issue of Central/Eastern European security perceptions and requirements become a bilateral issue between the United States and individual Central/Eastern European allies. Sus’ suggestion that the German government increases its efforts to maintain a constructive

²⁷¹ Michta, “The US Needs to Boost Bilateral Relationships in Europe.”

attitude and extend a hand to Poland despite currently strained relations²⁷² mirrors Michta's postulation toward the United States on a Central European level.

Moreover, expanding Krekó et al.'s recommendation to give opportunities for debate "to challenge the Tribalist Zeitgeist,"²⁷³ the present research asserts that a discussion about solidarity on a level below the one of government-to-government negotiations would help. Visibly addressing the issue of NATO and EU solidarity may not find the approval of the PiS party but may give the Polish public an orientation as to Poland's esteemed role in European and international affairs.

²⁷² Sus, "Germany in Polish Security - An Irreplaceable Neighbour but Not an Irreversible Partner," 173.

²⁷³ Krekó, Juhász, and Molnár, "How to Challenge the Tribalist Zeitgeist?"

APPENDIX. EXTRACT FROM TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EUROCORPS STEERING BODIES

This Appendix is an extract from the unclassified main body of a Headquarters Eurocorps unpublished internal document. The Terms of Reference for the Eurocorps Steering Bodies specify roles, rules and responsibilities of the Framework Nations and the headquarters to enable a smooth exercise of governance by the Framework Nations over the headquarters. The text directly quotes from the original. This extract comprises clauses, or parts of clauses 5–7, 11, 16, 18, 20, 24–27, 29–33, 36.

05 The EC Steering Bodies consist of the:

- Common Committee (CoCo);
- EC Committee (ECC);
- Air Committee (ACEC);
- Naval Coordination Board (NCB);
- EC Security Committee (ECSC);
- Auditing Committee (AUDITCOM);
- Budgetary and Financial Committee (BFC);
- Expert Groups (EG);
- HQ EC Board and HQ EC Resources Board (ECRB).

06 The Common Committee is the main steering body for the EC....

07 As described in article 4 of the ToS [Treaty of Strasbourg], the CoCo will prepare and implement the decisions of the Parties, issuing amongst others directives to the Commanding General (COMEC) of the EC [Eurocorps] and ensuring mutual information and coordination between the Parties.

It will determine the conditions and framework for employment (for the EU, for NATO, possibly for other international organizations and/or for the contributing nations within the framework of a common operation of the Corps).

It will maintain relations with the EU, NATO, other international organizations and non-member states.

It will consider the questions concerning the implementation of the ToS.

It will coordinate the decisions that are related to the implementation of the ToS.

It will exercise the powers specified in Title III (concerning the settlement of damages) and in Title IV (in the fields of budgeting and finance) of the Treaty of Strasbourg.

It will give particular attention to specific agreements and matters concerning the EC structure and, if necessary, their adaptation.

It will approve the policy of personnel assignment to HQ EC with special attention to the balanced manning among the FNs [Framework Nations].

The CoCo will determine COMEC's responsibilities in accordance with Art. 6 of the ToS.

...

11 The CoCo will be composed of the Chiefs of Defence (CHODs) and the Political Directors of the ministries of foreign affairs of the Parties or their representatives in accordance with Art. 2, No 3 of the ToS.

...

16 The CoCo decisions will be taken by consensus.

...

18 Chairmanship of the CoCo will be performed by rotation among the Parties on a yearly basis (secretary nation). The secretary nation will operate the secretariat of the CoCo and of other EC Steering Bodies. The chairmanship will in principle be taken over/handed over at the end of the CoCo's annual meeting.

...

20 The secretary nation will designate a general officer ("Corresponding General") or an officer in a comparable position at

ministerial level, as the CoCo's point of contact vis-à-vis COMEC and other military and/or international institutions.

...

24 The ECC will assist the CoCo in the preparation of all decisions taken by the Parties and will analyze all draft decisions and proposals before they are submitted to the CoCo, to include those from AREC, the NCB, the BFC and the ECSC ... It acts as the antechamber for all bodies to the CoCo. ...

25 The ECC will deal with all politico-military and military questions including the [standby] commitments, the preparation for employment (including force generation), organization, manning, training, exercises, logistical support, air (in close coordination with ACEC) and naval aspects (in close coordination with NCB), routine tasks of EC and with its external relations. It will report to the CoCo, if needed, on the impact of the funding as proposed by the BFC on these activities, or on the ECSC security related topics. Tasks will be given on behalf of the CoCo.

26 Within its area of responsibility it is the permanent point of contact for both HQ EC and external military/international authorities.

27 The ECC will prepare the agenda items to be discussed by the CoCo.

...

29 The ECC will accomplish its tasks with the assistance of HQ EC, of several Committees and of the EGs composed of specialists from the Parties and HQ EC. If deemed necessary, the ECC may task HQ EC to provide assistance to these committees and EGs.

30 The ECC will be composed of senior officers from the joint/or army staff of the Parties. Participation of representatives of the ministries of foreign affairs and the final composition of the national delegations will be a decision of the respective Party.

31 The delegations should have appropriate decision authority. As a rule the head of the delegation should be OF-5 [equals U.S. O-6] or equivalent.

32 HQ EC will be represented on the same level as th Parties.

33 The participation of experts in the ECC meetings should be limited to the extent needed to take decisions.

36 The ECC decisions will be taken by the Parties by consensus. The HQ EC representative will contribute to the decisions in an advisor role.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ Parties to HQ Eurocorps, “The Terms of Reference for the Eurocorps Steering Bodies” (unpublished internal document, December 9, 2010).

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