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EXPLAINING U.S. AND GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS TOWARD UKRAINE

by

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This thesis explains U.S. and German foreign policy decisions regarding Ukraine over the course of 1992–2015. Using theoretical models of foreign policy analysis and a method of structured-focused comparison, the research provides multi-causal explanations of crucial U.S. and German foreign policy decisions regarding Ukraine. They include the 1992–1994 Ukrainian nuclear disarmament, the 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit, and the Western response to the ongoing Russia–Ukraine conflict that began in 2014. The thesis provides a detailed comparative analysis of key factors that caused the emergence of American–German disunity regarding Ukraine. It concludes that divergent U.S. and German decisions regarding Ukraine appear in the dynamics of their changing power statuses and national security interests, as well as their dominant ideas and domestic politics. The inconsistency regarding Ukraine emerges when one or both states perceive Ukraine as a subsidiary part of each country's bilateral relations with Russia. The results of the research are critical in evaluating U.S. and German efforts to prevent further escalation of the Russia–Ukraine conflict, avoid a new East–West confrontation, and ensure the reliability of the Euro–Atlantic security architecture. The results of the research also provide important background for the further development of the American–Ukrainian and German–Ukrainian strategic partnership.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION....1
- A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION....1
- B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION....1
- C. LITERATURE REVIEW....2
- D. HYPOTHESES AND POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS....12
- E. RESEARCH DESIGN....15
- F. THESIS OVERVIEW....16

II. THE 1992–1994 UKRAINIAN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT....17
- A. UKRAINE'S NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT....18
- B. THE UNITED STATES AND UKRAINIAN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT....23
  - 1. U.S. Geostrategic Position and Security Interests....24
  - 2. U.S. Ideas: Nonproliferation and Arms Control....26
  - 3. Domestic Politics....31
- C. GERMANY AND UKRAINIAN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT....36
  - 1. German Geostrategic Position and Security Interests....36
  - 2. German Ideas: A Civilian Power and a Special Russo-German Relationship....39
  - 3. Domestic Politics....42
- D. CONCLUSION....43

III. THE 2008 BUCHAREST NATO SUMMIT....45
- A. REVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL EVENT....46
- B. THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES....50
  - 1. U.S. Ideas....50
  - 2. Domestic Politics....57
  - 3. U.S. Geostrategic Position and Security Interests....59
- C. THE ROLE OF GERMANY....61
  - 1. Germany's Geostrategic Position and National Interests....61
  - 2. Domestic Politics....65
  - 3. German Ideas....71
- D. CONCLUSION....72

IV. THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT....75
- A. OVERVIEW OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT....76

B. THE UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE....82
1. U.S. Security Interests and Geostrategic Position....84
2. Domestic Politics....87
3. U.S. Ideas....98
C. GERMANY AND RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE....101
1. German Geostrategic Position and National Interests....103
2. German Ideas....107
3. Domestic Politics....109
D. CONCLUSION....115

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS....117
A. UKRAINE'S DENUCLEARIZATION....118
B. UKRAINE "WILL BECOME" A NATO MEMBER....120
C. RUSSIA'S 2014 INVASION OF UKRAINE....123
D. LESSONS LEARNED....123

LIST OF REFERENCES....127

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST....141

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDU	Christian Democratic Union
CSU	Christian Social Union of Bavaria
CU	Customs Union
EU	European Union
FDP	Free Democratic Party
HEU	highly enriched uranium
ICBM	Intercontinental ballistic missile
INF	Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces
LEU	low-enriched uranium
MAP	Membership Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPT	Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSC	National Security Council
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)*
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TCG	Trilateral Contact Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

What explains foreign policy decisions of the United States and Germany regarding Ukraine? What factors influence and constrain U.S. and German foreign policy options? This thesis examines whether a realist emphasis on a state's relative power, a constructivist focus on dominant ideas, or domestic political competition among key decision makers carried the most weight in shaping U.S. and German foreign policy with respect to Ukraine.

The thesis analyzes specific aspects of foreign relations through the dynamics of Ukraine's bilateral relations with the United States and Germany in three case studies: 1) the 1992–94 Ukrainian nuclear disarmament; 2) the 2008 Bucharest North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit; and 3) the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict that began in 2014. The research focuses on policy inputs and develops a multi-causal explanation of important foreign policy decisions. Clarifying the causes of certain foreign policy decisions on Ukraine will help illuminate the state of Ukraine's bilateral relations with the West and potential for a rift in the Atlantic Alliance.

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The Ukraine crisis is one the most serious crises in Europe since the end of the Cold War.[1] Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and the outbreak of war in eastern Ukraine a few months later have challenged the stability of post-1989 international security order. Ukraine has suddenly become an important research subject for U.S. and European scholars.[2] Located between Russia and NATO's eastern borders, Ukraine now presents a geostrategic importance as an outpost against a dangerous aggressor. Scholars have debated whether it was Western active involvement or, on the

[1] Nicholas Burns, "The Aspen Strategy Group on the Old and the New Cold War," *The Aspen Idea* (Winter-2015), 63.

[2] Alexander Motyl, "The Surrealism of Realism: Misreading the War in Ukraine," *World Affairs* (January/February 2015): 79.

contrary, a weak Western foreign policy that prompted a Russian aggression against Ukraine.[3] Russia's actions raise the question whether the United States and Germany as leading nations are able to prevent further escalation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and ensure the reliability of Euro-Atlantic security architecture. Answering this question requires understanding what drives U.S. and German foreign policy decisions regarding Ukraine. The following section addresses explanations offered in the international relations literature.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

When seeking existing explanations for U.S. and German foreign policy regarding Ukraine, there is little academic work specifically focused on bilateral relations with Ukraine. Most Western foreign policy scholarship work focuses on foreign policy regarding Russia, and mentions Ukraine only within that framework.[4] Taras Kuzio notes that U.S. and German actions are the results of their post-Soviet focus on Russia, with "Ukraine regarded as merely an appendage of Russia."[5]

Only at significant security-related moments in post-Soviet Ukrainian history, such as the 1992–1994 bargaining process over Ukraine's nuclear disarmament, the 2008 Bucharest NATO summit that dealt with the question of Ukrainian membership, and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict that began in 2014 have prompted Western scholars to focus on the West's foreign policy related to Ukraine. This scholarship offers a wide range of causes to explain U.S. and German policy decisions.

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[3] John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusion That Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2014): 1–12. Note: see also Motyl, "The Surrealism of Realism: Misreading the War in Ukraine."

[4] John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusion That Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2014); Stephen F. Szabo, "Germany's Commercial Realism and the Russia Problem," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* (October–November 2014); William Wallace, "European Foreign Policy since the Cold War: How Ambitious, How Inhibited?," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19, no. 1 (2017). Tuomas Forsberg, "From Ostpolitik to 'Frostpolitik'? Merkel, Putin and German Foreign Policy towards Russia," *International Affairs* 92, no. 1 (2016), and others.

[5] Taras Kuzio, *Ukrainian Security Policy: The Washington Papers/167* (Washington, DC: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1995).

Upon Ukraine's independence in 1990 and the collapse of the Soviet Union the following year, scholarly attention turned to the question of Soviet nuclear weapons now on Ukrainian sovereign soil.[6] The process of nuclear disarmament became the main foreign policy agenda item of the United States and Germany toward Ukraine. In Western eyes, any Ukrainian attempt to establish control over nuclear weapons would mean isolation and possible withdrawal of diplomatic recognition of the state.[7] In addition, in 1993, Germany clearly stated that it would develop closer relations with Ukraine only after nuclear disarmament.[8] The events around the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit provoked another burst of academic interest in Ukraine, due to the difference in U.S. and German foreign policy choices regarding Ukraine's membership in NATO.[9] Despite President Bush's support for Ukraine entering the Membership Action Plan, Germany's opposition is argued to have played a vital role and caused the failure of NATO to extend Ukraine an invitation to Membership Action Plan (MAP), while stating that Ukraine would "one day" attain membership.[10]

In 2014, the emergence of the Russia-Ukraine crisis provoked a fresh series of scholarly work attempting to explain the U.S. and German responses and their foreign policy choices regarding both Ukraine and Russia. This work focuses in particular on three aspects of U.S. and German responses: First, the ambivalent U.S. response, given the existing security commitments to Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum on

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[6] Kuzio, *Ukrainian Security Policy: The Washington Papers/167*; Sherman Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997); Steven Woehrel, *Ukraine: Nuclear Weapons and U.S. Interests: CRS Report for Congress* (Washington, DC: The Library of Congress, March 15, 1994); Roman Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*: McNair Paper 55 (Washington, DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, October 1996), and others.

[7] John J. Mearsheimer, "The Case for a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 58; Mariana Budjeryn, "Was Ukraine's Nuclear Disarmament a Blunder," *World Affairs* (Summer 2016): 13.

[8] Angela Stent, "Ukraine and Germany: Toward a New Partnership?" *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 23, no. 1 (December 1, 1997): 292.

[9] Dieter Mahncke, "The United States, Germany and France: Balancing Transatlantic Relations," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* (2009); Jeffrey Simon, "Ukraine Against Herself: To be Euro-Atlantic, Eurasian, or Neutral," *Strategic Forum* (February 2009); Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine's Relations with the West since the Orange Revolution," *European Security* (September 2012).

[10] Kuzio, "Ukraine's Relations with the West since the Orange Revolution," 401.

Security Assurances,[11] manifest in U.S. decisions to support Ukraine only through financial and limited military aid and economic sanctions against Russia;[12] second, Germany's active opposition to any military response to Russia's aggression and hesitation about imposing economic sanctions against the aggressor;[13] and third, Germany's active involvement in peace negotiations between Ukraine and Russia as the leading European mediator.[14]

When explaining the aforementioned foreign policy choices related to Ukraine and its conflict with Russia, scholars propose a number of explanations emphasizing realist, constructivist, domestic, societal, psychological, and personality inputs that could shape the U.S. and German decisions in the dynamics of Russia-Ukraine conflict. Many scholars explore multi-causal explanations of U.S. and German foreign policy decisions concerning Ukraine.[15] From this scholarship, we can extract explanations dealing with material power, the ideas that inform foreign policy, the nature of political institutions involved in foreign policy decision making, and organized interest groups. These are the factors that shape the hypotheses regarding the causes of U.S. and German foreign policy here.

The scholarship concerning U.S. and German foreign policy regarding Ukraine can be categorized more generally as realist, constructivist, and liberal explanations that emphasize the state or societal level of analysis. In international relations theory, foreign

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[11] David S. Yost, "The Budapest Memorandum and Russia's intervention in Ukraine," *International Affairs* 91, no. 3 (2015).

[12] Vincent L. Morelli, "Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service* (March 29, 2016).

[13] Matthias Matthijs, "The Three Faces of German Leadership," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 58, no. 2 (April–May 2016): 147.

[14] Frank-Walter Steinmeier, "Germany's New Global Role," *Foreign Relations* (July/August 2016).

[15] Hans Kundnani, "Germany Rethinking Its Role in the World," *Current History* (March 2015); Steinmeier, "Germany's New Global Role"; Matthijs, "The Three Faces of German Leadership"; Jeffrey Gedmin, "The Case for Berlin," Bringing Germany Back to the West, *World Affairs* (November/December 2014); Stephen F. Szabo, "Germany's Commercial Realism and the Russia Problem," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* (October–November 2014); William Wallace, "European Foreign Policy since the Cold War: How Ambitious, How Inhibited?," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19, no. 1 (2017); Tuomas Forsberg, "From Ostpolitik to 'Frostpolitik'? Merkel, Putin and German Foreign Policy towards Russia," *International Affairs* 92, no. 1 (2016), and others.

policy is held to be best explained at the state or societal level of analysis.[16] In terms of explanatory power, this level of analysis provides a deeper image of international relations and allows more detailed investigation of the policy-making process.[17] At the domestic level, realist, liberal, and constructivist approaches focus on material capabilities, ideas, identities, domestic political competiton, interest groups, epistemic communities, and institutional structures to explain foreign policy choices. Hence, they allow examination of how material capabilites, ideational factors, domestic political competiton, interest groups, and mass publics may create foreign policy decisions.

a. Material Power and Realism

Realism draws a pessimistic picture of international politics. Realists assume that the international system is anarchic and consists of separate political units not subordinated to any higher central power. As a result, states must ensure their own survival. This in turn defines the national interest in acquiring wealth and military capabilities and allies in order to ensure survival. These capabilities in their turn pose a potential danger to other states' survival, creating a security dilemma, as an increase in one state's ability to secure itself increases other state's sense of insecurity.[18] Classical realists usually explain foreign policy decisions by focusing on the distribution of material power among states.[19] Neoclassical realist theorists build on this insight, holding that foreign policy of a state is driven by its relative power but this effect "is indirect and complex because systemic pressures must be translated through intervening unit-level variables such as decision makers' perceptions and state structure."[20] Realist would fundamentally expect the material capabilities of the United States, Germany, Russia, and

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[16] Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," 83–84.

[17] Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," 90.

[18] John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (Winter 1994–1995), 10.

[19] Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 16*;* Note: Classical realists: Hans J. Morgenthau, Reinhold Niebuhr, Henry Kissinger, Arnold Wolfers, and others.

[20] Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (October 1998): 144–177; Note: neoclassical realists include Thomas Christensen, Randall Shweller, William Wolfforth, Fareed Zakaria, Gideon Rose, and others.

Ukraine to weigh heavily in shaping foreign policy. Realism, however, is not dependent on whether the United States and Germany would seek to balance against or appease Russia with respect to Ukraine.

Many explanations of the U.S. and German foreign policy choices concerning Ukraine in early post-Cold War period focus on realist factors such as maintaining the existing nuclear nonproliferation regime, including preventing a dangerous precedent for further proliferation of nuclear weapons, and removing the significant threat posed by the newly Ukrainian nuclear arsenal.[21] With respect to NATO's 2008 decision not to extend a MAP to Ukraine, Dieter Mahncke emphasizes the role of each country's broader national interests, where Germany is "strongly economically oriented in its foreign policy objectives," while the United States continues to spread its global American presence.[22] Jeffrey Simon proposes a realist explanation of Germany's behavior in rejecting Ukrainian membership in NATO, suggesting that Russia's tactics of intimidating Europe with a new energy crisis shaped German policy makers' decisions, in ways unfavorable to Ukraine.[23] With respect to the current Russia-Ukraine conflict, John J. Mearsheimer underlines the role of national interest as a shaping factor: "The United States and its European allies do not consider Ukraine to be a core strategic interest, as their unwillingness to use military force to come to its aid has proved."[24] Mark Fitzpatrick similarly argues that, "for the [United States], the Korean Peninsula is a priority; the Crimea Peninsula is not."[25]

b. Ideas, Epistemic Communities, and Constructivism

Constructivists argue that not just material factors and power politics influence international relations, but that ideas and identities also play a significant role. Alexander

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[21] Mearsheimer, "The Case for a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent," 59–61.

[22] Mahncke, "The United States, Germany and France: Balancing Transatlantic Relations," 82.

[23] Simon, "Ukraine Against Herself: To be Euro-Atlantic, Eurasian, or Neutral," 5.

[24] John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusion That Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2014): 12.

[25] Mark Fitzpatrick, "The Ukraine Crisis and Nuclear Order," *Survival* 56, no. 4 (August–September 2014): 86.

Wendt puts forward two main aspects of constructivism: that "the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature."[26] In general, proponents of social constructivism focus on the impact of social norms, political and economic ideas, and cultural practices and values on political life as these variables determine interests.[27] Thus, scholars have to understand these variables in order to know what interests actors actually have, rather than assuming what those interests are, as realists and liberals usually do.[28]

Constructivists focus on the ideas at play in domestic politics that yield national interests and foreign policy choices; they tend to stress the role of domestic or organizational identities, norms and ideas in shaping foreign policy interests and decisions. In addition, while constructivists share the belief that interests imply choices, these choices may be constrained by social practices, actor identities, and societal norms.[29] Hence, in the case of the foreign policy, state actions could be constrained by domestic and international social practices. In sum, the constructivist approach allows scholars to determine the differences among states, as states "behave differently toward other states, based on the identity of each." Constructivists, therefore, "expect different patterns of behavior across groups of states with different identities and interests."[30]

Within constructivism, the epistemic community literature focuses on the role of scientific ideas in shaping foreign policy outcomes. According to Peter Haas, epistemic communities represent a "network of knowledge-based experts" including scholars, think tanks, and other professionals who have "prestige, and reputation for expertise" and may have "influence over policy debates" through provision of alternative policy proposals to

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[26] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1; Note: Constructivists include Alexander Wendt, John Gerard Ruggie, Martha Finnemore, Peter J. Katzenstein, Judith Goldstein, Robert O. Keohane, Ted Hopf, and others.

[27] Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), 15.

[28] Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," *International Security* 23, no. 1 (Summer 1998): 174.

[29] Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," 176–177.

[30] Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," 193.

key decision makers.[31] Epistemic communities can play a decisive role when decision makers experience uncertainty about the proper response to emerging global challenges.[32] Scientific knowledge produced by epistemic communities in such circumstances can shape domestic and international policy processes, as well as the definition of states' interests.[33] Finally, "epistemic communities also shape the stage of policy choice because they use their professional experience to lay out the consequences of different courses of action as well as of not acting."[34] Emanuel Adler demonstrates how scientists at Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and their Soviet counterparts "invented" the idea of nuclear arms control and mutually assured destruction. These experts were able to demonstrate to U.S. and Soviet policy makers that limiting nuclear arms and counterintuitively making their society vulnerable to the other's second-strike weapons would actually stabilize the U.S.-Soviet security dilemma.[35]

Constructivists would expect arms control epistemic communities actively to seek to shape U.S. and German behavior regarding Ukraine's nuclear weapons. They would also expect commonly shared ideas to shape decision making. Some scholars find that a widespread "russophilism and nostalgia for Russia" exists among German political elites, creating preferences and interests not in favor of newly independent Ukraine.[36] Kuzio offers a constructivist explanation of NATO's failure to extend a Membership Action plan to Ukraine, arguing that George W. Bush administration followed the ideology of NATO enlargement to the East in order to expand the zone of the democracy to the post-Soviet countries, while Germany openly performed the ideology that opposed NATO and

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[31] Peter Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination," *International Organization* 46 (Winter): 2–3.

[32] Anne L. Clunan, "Epistemic Community," in *Encyclopedia of Governance* (University of California, Berkeley: Sage Publications), 278.

[33] Clunan, "Epistemic Community," 278.

[34] Clunan, "Epistemic Community," 278–279.

[35] Emanuel Adler, "The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control." *International Organization* 46, no. 1. (Winter, 1992): 101–145.

[36] Kuzio, *Ukrainian Security Policy: The Washington Papers/167*, 62.

European Union (EU) enlargement to the East.[37] Others explain that Germany's post-World War II ideology of pacifism and subsequent normative and civilian foreign policy significantly constrains Germany's decisions over military means in conflict resolution.[38]

c. Liberalism

Liberalism comprises a broad set of theories of domestic politics that seek to identify factors that cause state behavior unexplained by systemic approaches.[39] Liberal theorists focus both on the effect of a country's political regime and on the domestic politics that yield political coalitions in their explanations of foreign policy.[40] For example, presidential systems may produce different foreign policies from parliamentary systems.[41] Leaders, when negotiating in the international arena, take into account domestic political institutions, various groups preferences, and coalitions.[42] For democracies, the structure of political institutions and interest groups are often seen to be decisive in shaping foreign policy, so these explanations are developed in more depth here.

d. Foreign Policy Making Institutions in Democracies

The existence of either a coalitional parliamentary democracy or a presidential democracy may create advantages or constraints in foreign policy decision making. In parliamentary systems, coalitional governments are always at risk of breaking down and thus require significant bargaining and compromise among the various parties. In

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[37] Kuzio, "Ukraine's Relations with the West since the Orange Revolution," 401, 403.

[38] Steinmeier, "Germany's New Global Role," *Foreign Relations* (July/August 2016): 110; Liana Fix and Steven Keil, "Berlin's Foreign Policy Dilemma: A Paradigm Shift in Volatile Times," *U.S.-Europe Analysis Series*, no. 58 (Center on the United States and Europe at Brookings, February 16, 2017): 3.

[39] Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," 34.

[40] Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," 32, 39.

[41] Kenneth Waltz, *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics: The American and British Experience* (Boston: Little Brown, 1967).

[42] Note: a number of scholars believe in a plurality of domestic factors: Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organizations* 42, no. 3 (1988): 427–460; Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); Morton H. Halperin, Priscilla Clapp, with Arnold Kanter, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (2nd ed., Washington, DC: Brookings, 2006).

presidential systems, these constraints on the executive are absent, and the foreign policy makers are subordinated to the president.[43] Scholars suggest that coalitional cabinets, on the other hand, "seek middle-of-the-road positions and compromises designed to secure legislative approval," as they need to get the support and consensus of different political parties and groups.[44]

With respect to Germany, its consistution hold that, "[t]he Federal Chancellor shall determine and be responsible for the general guidelines of policy. Within these limits, each Federal Minister shall conduct the affairs of his department independently and on his own responsibility."[45] In fact, ministries usually do not just follow the chancellor's directives but are able to shape a policy taking into account their interests and priorities.[46] Members of the government have "an interactive effect, meaning that their impact on outcomes varies, depending on the nature of power and interests."[47] In practice, the chancellor and the minister of foreign affairs are the main actors in the sphere of foreign policy making. However, as William Paterson writes, "a foreign minister has the advantage of inheriting a huge specialist ministry with embassies around the globe…[and] unlike a chancellor can devote almost all his/her time to foreign affairs while a chancellor has a quite different and hectic schedule."[48] Reimund Seidelmann explains that the foreign policy bargaining process usually is built around the traditional division of competencies between ministries, and the final decision remains the responsibility of the Federal Foreign Office and the Chancellery.[49] In practice, Seidelmann emphasizes, the Chancellery often overrules the foreign ministry as it is in

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[43] Miriam Fendius Elman, "Unpacking Democracy: Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Theories of Democratic Peace," *Security Studies*, 9, 4 (Summer 2000): 96.

[44] Elman, "Unpacking Democracy," 99.

[45] German Bundestag, *Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany*, Article 65.

[46] Katy A. Crossley-Frolick, "Domestic Constraints, German Foreign Policy and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding," *German Politics and Society*, issue 108, vol. 31, no. 2 (Autumn 2013), 61.

[47] Brian Rathbun, *Partisan Interventions: European Party Politics and Pace Enforcement in the Balkans* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 90.

[48] William E. Paterson, "Foreign Policy in the Grand Coalition," quoted in Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 41–42.

[49] Reimund Seidelmann, *The New Germany: History, Economy, Policies* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2011), 299.

charge of defining key foreign policy guidelines such as special German-Russian relations.[50] Seidelmann notes that Germany usually has a coalition government with shared responsibilities: a smaller coalition party gets the post of foreign minister, while the main party is responsible for the Chancellery. Thus, the interagency bargaining process often reflects intra-coalition relations, allowing the foreign minister to strengthen his or her position in the debates that may influence the coalition's cohesion.[51]

e. Interest Group Politics

Many scholars of international relations emphasize the significant impact of organized interest groups on state's foreign policy.[52] According to their views, various domestic groups influence foreign policy decisions using their members' votes, financial contributions, labor strikes, and other means to achieve their prefereed ends. Norrin M. Ripsman believes that "in democratic states, we should expect the greatest influence from well-organized, coherent, vote-rich, single-issue interest groups that can provide an electoral payoff…[these are] groups that can frame executive thinking on foreign affairs."[53] Some organized groups may affect foreign policy indirectly through parliaments, whose representatives may be dependent on demands from their specific groups of voters or campaign donors.[54] Lawrence R. Jacobs and Benjamin I. Page, exploring the influence of different actors on U.S. foreign policy, determine that "business may exert the most consistent influence on government officials but that policymakers' views may also be affected by labor, experts, and, to a lesser extent, public

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[50] Seidelmann, *The New Germany: History, Economy, Policies*, 299.

[51] Ibid., 299.

[52] Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition*: Robert Keohane, *American Diplomacy: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984); Jeffrey A. Frieden, "Invested Interests," *International Organization* 45 (1991): 425–52; Peter Gourevich, *Politics in Hard Times* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); Ronald Rogowski, *Commerce and Coalitions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), and others.

[53] Norrin M. Ripsman, "Neoclassical Realism and Domestic Interest Groups," in Steven Lobell et al., *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 185.

[54] Helen Milner, *Interests, Institutions, and Information: Domestic Politics and International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

opinion."[55] For example, William Wallace emphasizes the role of interest groups, explaining that the U.S. decision to involve Ukraine in NATO enlargement process was "pressed forward by conservative Washington think tanks.."[56]

Tuomas Forsberg, analyzing Germany's foreign policy related to Russia during the Russia-Ukraine conflict, emphasizes three main domestic/societal inputs: government coalitions and leadership, interest groups, and public opinion.[57] Forsberg argues that "the Social Democrats are more willing to follow the cooperative Ostpolitik tradition than the Christian Democrats." In terms of the business lobby, Forsberg notes that during the Ukraine crisis, German business resisted sanctions against Russia at the first stage, but later accepted them. Public opinion about Russia reflected these changes in the same way as Germany's policy.[58]

D. HYPOTHESES AND POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS

The scholarly literature provides a number of different explanations of foreign policy choices of the United States and Germany concerning Ukraine. They focus mainly on the two countries' material power position relative to Russia and Ukraine, ideational factors, and domestic politics (foreign policy-making institutions and organized interest groups). As these factors may provide the best explanation of foreign policy choices, they are developed in this research.

Hypothesis 1. Broadly speaking, realists would expect U.S. and German foreign policy to be driven by each country's power position and security interests relative to Russia, with Ukraine viewed as a subsidiary part of each country's bilateral relations with Russia.

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[55] Lawrence R. Jacobs and Benjamin I. Page, "Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy?" *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 1 (February 2005): 121.

[56] Wallace, "European Foreign Policy since the Cold War: How Ambitious, How Inhibited?," 85.

[57] Forsberg, "From Ostpolitik to 'Frostpolitik'? Merkel, Putin and German Foreign Policy towards Russia," 38.

[58] Forsberg, "From Ostpolitik to 'Frostpolitik'? Merkel, Putin and German Foreign Policy towards Russia," 39.

Defensive realists would expect the United States and Germany to carry out a foreign policy concerning Ukraine that fulfills its security interests in balancing Russian power and aligning Russia with U.S. interests, while offensive realists would expect the United States and Germany to use every opportunity to weaken Russia's influence in Ukraine and to use Ukraine to isolate Russia. Given Russia's greater military power and proximity to Germany, realists would expect Germany either a) to be more deferential to Russian interests and seek to bandwagon with it against the United States, and to elevate its relations with Russia over its relations with Ukraine; or b) to align closely with the United States, and follow its lead regarding Russia and Ukraine. Neoclassical realists would expect domestic political factors, such as some of those outlined later in this section, to additionally influence each country's policy toward Ukraine. In this manner, a realist explanation may complement those below.

Hypothesis 2. Constructivists would expect widely shared ideas in the United States and Germany to drive their foreign policy choices with respect to Ukraine.

In the United States and Germany, such ideas might include the ideas of "the democratic peace" or "liberal zone of peace," neoconservatism, multilateralism, pacifism, Europeanism, or pragmatic internationalism.[59] For example, if the idea that democracy, economic integration, and institutionalization promotes peace is dominant in the United States or Germany, then their foreign policy regarding Ukraine should be in the form of supporting Ukraine's (and eventually Russia's) membership in NATO and the EU and its democratic transition. If the idea of pragmatic internationalism is dominant, then we would expect the foreign policy of both countries to favor limited involvement in Ukraine's political situation.

Hypothesis 3. From a domestic politics perspective, scholars should expect foreign policy concerning Ukraine to be the outcome of a bargaining process between government decision makers and the influence of organized interest groups to differ based on whether it is a presidential or parliamentary democracy.

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[59] Munevver Stewart Cebeci et al., *Issues in EU and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011); Bruce Russett and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001).

Hypothesis 3a. From a presidential versus parliamentary perspective, foreign policy decisions are shaped first by the structure of the political system. In the U.S. presidential system, scholars would expect foreign policy related to Ukraine to be the outcome of decisions within a strong executive, where members of the government are subordinated to one top leader. In the German parliamentary system, scholars would expect foreign policy decisions about Ukraine to be the outcome of political comprises within coalitional cabinets, where members of the government usually seek middle ground decisions to keep a consensus among different political parties and ensure further electoral support. If one party wins outright, then foreign policy decisions should reflect the party platform and personal preferences of members of the cabinet.

In the United States, decisions on Ukraine depend on whether central decision makers are able to influence the president, who either accepts alternative proposals or makes unilateral decisions based on his personal views on Ukraine. If certain governmental actors are able to persuade the highest leader that Ukraine presents a geopolitical interest, then scholars would expect U.S. foreign policy choices in favor of Ukraine. If certain governmental actors are able to persuade the highest leader that Russia is more important for the United States, then scholars would expect the foreign policy of limited interest and lower involvement in Ukraine. In Germany, decisions toward Ukraine depend on whether the federal chancellor governs via a coalition cabinet or a single-party cabinet. In the former case, the chancellor is likely to share foreign policy making with a foreign minister who represents a crucial faction of the coalition. Decisions toward Ukraine are therefore likely to be the outcomes of a compromise between the chancellor and foreign minister.

Hypothesis 3b. From the interest groups perspective, scholars would expect foreign policy regarding Ukraine to be the outcome of the influence of various interest groups with interests in Ukraine and Russia, including private businesses, labor unions, and lobbies in the United States and Germany.

In the United States and Germany, if organized business lobbies that have economic interests in Russia are able to influence U.S. or German decision makers to protect their economic welfare, then scholars would expect limited U.S. or German

involvement in Ukraine-Russia disputes. If business groups with economic interests in Ukraine are able to influence U.S. or German decision makers to protect them from commercial risks, then scholars would expect supportive U.S. or German foreign policy choices toward Ukraine.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

The analytical approach of this thesis is to explain foreign policy decisions of the United States and Germany regarding Ukraine from the U.S. and Western European perspective. The basic analytical approach of this thesis is to use paired case studies of U.S. and German decision making regarding three events: 1) the 1992–1994 Ukrainian nuclear disarmament; 2) the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit; and 3) the current Russia-Ukraine conflict that began in 2014. These occasions present three of the most important events of modern Ukrainian history since its independence in 1991. Furthermore, they have provoked a debate among scholars and policy makers about how these decisions were made and under what factors.

In evaluating each hypothesis for each of the three events, the research applies inferential analysis to U.S. and German decision making to determine which of the potential explanations is compatible with "an uninterrupted chain of evidence from hypothesized cause to observed effect."[60] The thesis uses the method of structured-focused comparison of cases to determine causation by examining German and U.S. decision making in detail.[61] The empirical chapters apply the same set of hypotheses to U.S. and German decision making in each case. Summing up the results of the research, the thesis assesses the causal variables that played a primary and secondary role in each of the six decisions. On this basis, the thesis evaluates which of the research hypotheses offers the best explanation for U.S. and German behavior.

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[60] Andrew Bennett, "Cade Study Methods: Design, Use, and Comparative Advantages," in *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 22.

[61] Alexander George, "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison," in *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy*, edited by P.G. Lauren (New York: Free Press, 1979).

The thesis relies on primary sources, including official memoirs of decision makers, government documents and policy statements, published interviews with decision makers, and statistical data, as well as the secondary scholarly literature and press.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

The remainder of the thesis is organized into four chapters, comprising three paired case studies of U.S. and German decision making regarding Ukraine, and a chapter comparing the findings from these cases and offering conclusions. Chapter II focuses on the 1992–1994 Ukrainian nuclear disarmament, providing a review of the historical event and evaluating the three general explanations for the United States and Germany's decisions during the process. Following the same logic, Chapter III explores the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit that considered Ukrainian membership in the alliance, and Chapter IV examines the ongoing conflict between Russian and Ukraine that began in 2014. Finally, Chapter V analyzes the findings from Chapters II through IV, evaluates the primary causes of U.S. and German foreign policy towards Ukraine, and provides recommendations about the factors that should be taken into account in developing bilateral and multilateral foreign relations between the United States, Germany, and Ukraine.

II. THE 1992–1994 UKRAINIAN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

On June 1, 1996, the last Soviet warhead left the territory of Ukraine, marking the end of the issue of Ukraine's nuclear disarmament.[62] The successful outcome of the process came after three years (1992–1994) of complex negotiations and decisions between Ukraine, Russia, the United States, and other Western countries. With the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in December 1991, Ukraine inherited a significant part of the Soviet military infrastructure created to conduct offensive actions against the United States, Germany (West Germany), and other NATO allies. A significant nuclear arsenal on Ukrainian soil presented a substantial threat to U.S. security as it was targeted at the United States.[63] At the same time, there was concern that a nuclear Ukraine would cause Germany to build a nuclear arsenal,[64] as well as the failure of U.S. and German non-proliferation efforts. "Ukraine`s evolution could have a profound influence on the post-Cold War security order";[65] hence, it was vital to reduce and transform Ukraine`s huge and disorganized military forces to ensure regional stability and prevent nuclear proliferation.

This chapter explores U.S. and German foreign policy choices during the 1992–1994 process of Ukrainian nuclear disarmament. It seeks to understand how the United States and Germany came to focus primarily on the nuclear agenda in bilateral relations with newly independent Ukraine. It evaluates how relative power positions, commonly held ideas, and domestic political structures and interests affected these foreign policy decisions.

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[62] Roman Popadiuk, "American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations," *McNair Paper 55* (Washington, DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, October 1996), 1; Note: As a point of clarification, the term "disarmament" in the present research refers to a concept of international relations that implies the reduction and limitation of the state's weapons in conformity to international agreements.

[63] Leonid L. Polyakov, *U.S.-Ukraine Military Relations and the Value of Interoperability* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2004), 11.

[64] Taras Kuzio, *Ukrainian Security Policy: The Washington Papers/167* (Washington, DC: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1995), 63.

[65] F. Stephen Larrabee, "Ukraine: Europe`s Next Crisis," *Arms Control Today* 24, no. 6 (July 1994): 14

A. UKRAINE'S NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

The end of the Cold War in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 significantly changed the global security environment, curtailing the bipolar competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. Even though the threat of a nuclear war between the two superpowers had been reduced, nuclear weapons located in former Soviet republics continued to pose a significant danger for both European and global security. After its collapse in 1991, the Soviet Union left a huge arsenal of both strategic nuclear warheads and delivery systems in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.[66] Russia, which had declared itself the successor state to the Soviet Union in international treaties, was able in a relatively short period of time to conclude bilateral agreements with Belarus and Kazakhstan on the removal of strategic weapons from their territories. The process with Ukraine, however, was more complicated, making it the center of Western concerns about the former Soviet military apparatus.[67]

On December 25, 1991, Ukraine not only became an independent state but also inherited the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world after the United States and Russia.68 According to former State Expert on the Analytical Service of the National Security and Defense Council Staff of Ukraine Leonid Polyakov:

> Ukraine inherited a large nuclear arsenal, with 220 strategic weapon carriers, including 176 land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) (130 SS-19 and 46 SS-24 missiles) and 44 strategic bombers (19 Tu-160 and 25 Tu-95). The overall nuclear potential of the strategic force was estimated at 1,944 strategic nuclear warheads, in addition to 2,500 tactical nuclear weapons. The ICBMs were targeted at the United States and armed with multiple independent reentry vehicle (MIRV) warheads, and every bomber carried long-range cruise missiles.[69]

Tactical nuclear weapons presented an additional concern to the West, owing to the risks of their proliferation to extremist groups through smuggling or use during possible

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[66] Steven Pifer, *The Trilateral Process: The United States, Ukraine, Russia and Nuclear Weapons* (Foreign Policy at Brookings: Arms Control Series, Paper 6, May 2011), 1.

[67] Pifer, *The Trilateral Process*, 1.

[68] Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*, 2.

[69] Polyakov, *U.S.-Ukraine Military Relations and the Value of Interoperability*, 7.

emerging chaos and civil war in the post-Soviet republics.[70] Consequently, the United States and Germany concentrated their foreign policy efforts regarding Ukraine on nuclear weapons and its nuclear disarmament.

The Ukrainian nuclear disarmament process lasted three tense years, from1992 until December 1994. While in early May 1992 Ukraine successfully transferred all tactical nuclear weapons to Russia, the same plan for strategic nuclear weapons had not worked.[71] Ukraine as well as Kazakhstan faced deteriorating relations with Russia and both were seeking treatment equal with Russia from the West.[72] In response, to find a consensus, the United States initiated making the three non-Russian Soviet nuclear republics a party of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I), on the condition that they join the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and become non-nuclear states.[73] In May 1992, Ukraine signed the Lisbon Protocol and became an independent party of START I, obligating itself to abandon strategic nuclear weapons and join the NPT.[74] The protocol recognized Ukraine as one of the successor states of the Soviet Union, thus making the state an equal participant of further START I negotiations.[75]

From 1992 to the spring of 1993, this outcome was in doubt, however. Sherman W. Garnett describes the period as "two years of misunderstanding and mutual recriminations."[76] Western powers preferred using political sticks toward Ukraine, pressuring the state to transfer its nuclear arsenal to Russia without taking into account Ukrainian security and economic concerns. Ukraine, on the other hand, desired to get particular security and economic benefits before giving up a huge nuclear arsenal. From a

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[70] Kuzio, *Ukrainian Security Policy: The Washington Papers/167*, 95.

[71] Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*, 6.

[72] Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*, 6.

[73] Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*, 6.

[74] Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*, 7.

[75] "Protocol to the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms," Lisbon, May 23, 1992, https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/27389.pdf

[76] Sherman Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997), 113.

security perspective, Ukraine after the Soviet collapse was worried about instability within Russia leading to threats to Ukrainian territory and sovereignty, especially given the huge presence of Soviet military forces and equipment in Ukraine, including the headquarters of the Soviet Navy Black Sea Fleet in Crimea. From an economic perspective, at a time when the Ukrainian economy of the early 1990s was in crisis, the strategic nuclear warheads on Ukrainian territory presented a significant commercial value as they contained highly enriched uranium (HEU) that could be changed into low-enriched uranium (LEU) for Ukrainian nuclear power plants.[77] Steven Pifer, a former senior U.S. official who worked on these issues, writes that the Ukrainian government sought clear answers from the West and Russia to four key questions:[78] What guarantees of sovereignty and territorial integrity would Ukraine obtain after nuclear disarmament? What compensation would Ukraine receive for the HEU? Who would compensate Ukraine for the expensive dismantlement of the intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), strategic bombers, and nuclear infrastructure? And, what would be the procedure and conditions of disarmament?

The United States and Germany, together with Russia, for two years maintained pressure on Ukraine for unconditional disarmament. For Yuri Shcherbak, a former Ukrainian Ambassador to the United States, the question of Ukrainian non-nuclear status became the most confrontational issue of the period.[79] He remembers those negotiations as "the first time that Ukrainian officials and diplomats faced such tough and consistent pressure from the world`s two nuclear superpowers."[80] At the same time, Germany clearly stated that it would develop closer relations with Ukraine only after nuclear disarmament.[81]

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[77] Pifer, *The Trilateral Process: The United States, Ukraine, Russia and Nuclear Weapons*, 1.

[78] Pifer, *The Trilateral Process: The United States, Ukraine, Russia and Nuclear Weapons*, 1.

[79] Yuri Shcherbak, *The Strategic Role of Ukraine: Diplomatic Addresses and Lectures (1994–1997)* (Cambridge, MA: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 1998), 57–58.

[80] Shcherbak, *The Strategic Role of Ukraine, 58.*

[81] Angela Stent, "Ukraine and Germany: Toward a New Partnership?" *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 23, no. 1 (December 1, 1997): 292.

However, by the spring of 1993 the Western strategy of ultimatums caused serious political opposition in Ukraine. Ukrainian parliamentarians believed that the West was using unfair pressure on Ukraine, demanding its quick ratification of the START I and the NPT.[82] In addition, in their view, a number of issues, including the costs of dismantlement, environmental and social impacts, and growing concerns about Russia needed more detailed examination.[83] Consequently, in April 1993, a group of 162 members of the Ukrainian Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) signed an open statement declaring Ukraine's status as a successor to the USSR and a nuclear power that has a "right of ownership of the nuclear weapons on its territory" that was seeking economic compensation and security guarantees in exchange for nuclear weapons elimination.[84] This coercive approach did not lead to success, leaving the problem of Ukrainian nuclear weapons for President William Clinton's new administration.

The significant domestic opposition in Ukraine to unconditional nuclear disarmament led the United States and Germany in 1993 to reconsider their respective approaches toward the newly independent state. The visit of Strobe Talbott, then the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for the Newly Independent States, to Kyiv on May 1993 resulted in the broadening of the U.S. focus from the nuclear issue alone to economic assistance, military and defense contacts, and the review of political relations.[85] In early June 1993, U.S. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin also visited Kyiv and proposed a plan for the dismantling of nuclear systems in Ukraine that included international monitoring of the process, transfer, and final destruction of nuclear warheads.[86] Two months later in August 1993, the Defense Minister of Germany, Volker Rühe, during his own visit to Ukraine, expressed German readiness to provide financial assistance for the dismantling of Ukrainian nuclear weapons if Ukraine ratified START I and joined the NPT.[87]

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[82] Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*, 14.

[83] Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*, 14–15.

[84] Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe*, 116.

[85] Ibid., 119.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Stent, "Ukraine and Germany: Toward a New Partnership?" 300.

Furthermore, in late October 1993, then U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to Kyiv resulted in the conclusion of the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction agreement that guaranteed financial assistance to Ukraine for dismantling its strategic nuclear weapons.[88] Once the West shifted its approach toward Ukraine to using significant security and economic carrots instead of sticks, the process moved away from deadlock.

By the end of 1993, the long and complex U.S., Russian, and Ukrainian bilateral and trilateral negotiations finally led to a consensus on Ukrainian nuclear issues. The discussions of December 1993 resulted in the Trilateral Statement, signed in Moscow on January 14, 1994, by Presidents Bill Clinton, Boris Yeltsin, and Leonid Kravchuk.[89] According to the Statement, the sides agreed that:[90]

- Ukraine would follow its commitments to eliminate strategic nuclear weapons and to become a non-nuclear state acceding to the NPT as soon as possible;
- Ukraine would receive security assurances from the United States and Russia from the moment its adhesion to START I and the NPT entered into force. In addition, the United Kingdom as a depositary state of the NPT would also provide security assurances to Ukraine;
- Russia would compensate Ukraine for the cost of the HEU in the strategic warheads on Ukrainian territory, supplying an equivalent amount of LEU;
- The United States would provide Nunn-Lugar assistance for dismantling the ICBMs, bombers, silos, and related nuclear infrastructure. Furthermore, the United States would ensure $175 million in financial aid according to the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program.

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[88] Pifer, *The Trilateral Process*, 20.

[89] Ibid., 2.

[90] Ibid., 22.

In February 1994, Ukraine ratified START I and, in November 1994, acceded to the NPT, thus becoming a non-nuclear state.[91] On December 5, 1994, during the Budapest summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Ukraine's newly elected President Leonid Kuchma passed to Clinton, Yeltsin, and British Prime Minister John Major Ukraine's instrument of accession to the NPT.[92] Finally, the four parties signed the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances that confirmed security assurances pledged by the United States, Russia, and the United Kingdom, thus finishing the complex negotiations and compromises.

The remainder of this chapter examines in detail the factors that led to this outcome in the United States and Germany. It argues that while U.S. decisions regarding Ukraine were driven by its power relative to Ukraine during the first stage, in 1992–1993, and ideas and domestic politics during the second, Germany's decisions resulted from the constant influence of its power position combined with a strong set of ideas, with domestic politics having a negligible impact.

B. THE UNITED STATES AND UKRAINIAN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

The U.S. desire to see Ukraine as a non-nuclear state shaped the first years of U.S.-Ukrainian bilateral relations, resulting in political, economic, and diplomatic pressure on a newly independent state to complete the process of nuclear disarmament in the shortest period of time possible. In practice, this foreign policy decision regarding Ukraine was part of the broader U.S. strategy of accepting Russia as the only emerging nuclear power after the collapse of the Soviet Union.93 While maintaining its new global power position was the main cause of the U.S. position regarding the Ukrainian nuclear disarmament, U.S. political ideas and values in the sphere of arms control and nuclear non-proliferation complemented the U.S. approach to nuclear-related issues both during the Cold War and after its end. Even though these ideas played an important role during

[91] Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*, 43.

[92] Pifer, *The Trilateral Process*, 28.

[93] Ibid., 4.

in the George H.W. Bush administration, they had a more powerful impact on the U.S. decision toward Ukraine's nuclear weapons in the Clinton administration.

1. U.S. Geostrategic Position and Security Interests

In late December 1991, the United States suddenly became the only global superpower. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and, respectively, the bipolar world, only the United States possessed sufficient strength in all categories of great power capability, thus enjoying "a preeminent role in international politics."[94] It immediately directed its efforts to ensure its hegemony and world leadership.[95] This focus became clear when the *New York Times* published in 1992 a leaked Pentagon planning document demonstrating this U.S. preoccupation with unipolarity:

> Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat… Our strategy must now focus on precluding the emergence of any future global competitor.[96]

Accordingly, the 1993 U.S. National Security Strategy defined the United States as "the preeminent world power with unique capabilities" and "the nation whose strength and leadership is essential to a stable and democratic world order."[97] Many decision makers in Washington believed that "neither an integrated Europe nor a united Germany nor an independent Japan must be permitted to emerge as a third force or a neutral bloc."[98]

As a key to its preeminence and national survival, the United States wanted to ensure that only newly independent Russia would retain the ability to destroy the United States with nuclear weapons and that strategic arms limitation would continue to erode that threat. This strategic capability would also ensure that the United States considered

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[94] Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise," *International Security* 17, no. 4 (Spring 1993): 5.

[95] Rochester, U.S. *Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century*, 89.

[96] *New York Times*, March 8, 1992. Cited in Rochester, U.S. *Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century*, 89.

[97] *National Security Strategy of the United States*, January 1, 1993 (Washington, DC: The White House, January 1993), preface, 1.

[98] Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, The Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 17.

Russian stability its primary concern in the former Soviet Union. The United States, in its 1993 National Security Strategy, broadly defined the "limiting the proliferation of advanced military technology and weapons of mass destructions" as one of the national security interests in achieving global and regional stability.[99] In addition, the Strategy determined that:

> In the post-Cold War era, one of our most threatening national security challenges is the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. As the threat of nuclear confrontation with the former Soviet Union receded, the danger that a nuclear…weapon will be launched from some other quarter by an aggressor is growing… Inevitably, an increasing number of supplier nations will become able to contribute to the proliferation of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction.[100]

This U.S. preoccupation with maintaining its position and national security through nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament pushed the process of the nuclear disarmament and strategic weapons reductions in post-Soviet republics.

Given their desire to maintain the U.S. unipolar position, U.S. foreign policy decision makers focused first on the nuclear negotiations with Russia and then on Ukraine as a subsidiary part of those negotiations. Ambassador Pifer emphasizes that the elimination of nuclear weapons from the territory of Ukraine

> …was seen as key to implementing the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) signed in July 1991 by President George H. W. Bush and then-Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, just months before the Soviet Union broke up, especially after Russia conditioned START I's entry into force on Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine first acceding to the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) as non-nuclear weapons states…The desire to begin implementing START I reductions gave Washington an additional interest in seeing the question of nuclear weapons in Ukraine resolved as rapidly as possible.[101]

Ambassador Popadiuk makes clear that Ukraine was aware of these U.S. concerns, writing that

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[99] *National Security Strategy of the United States* (1993), 3.

[100] Ibid., 16.

[101] Pifer, *The Trilateral Process*, 4–5.

> There was also concern that Ukraine's failure to fulfill its promises [to become a non-nuclear state] could unravel the whole START Treaty as well as endanger the START II, which was eventually signed with Russia in January 1993. Russia's Parliament had stipulated that there would be no exchange of the instruments of ratification for a START I until the other nuclear republics acceded to the NPT as non-nuclear weapons states. And START II would not come into force until START I had been successfully resolved. It was also feared that Ukraine's reluctance could set a precedent for increased nuclear proliferation and could have jeopardized the NPT regime which was due for review in 1995.[102]

During the first years of bilateral relations, it is clear that for reasons of national power and survival, U.S. foreign policy regarding Ukraine's non-nuclear status became a subsidiary part of U.S.-Russian (Soviet) bilateral relations. After many years of the Cold War nuclear competition between the two superpowers, these states agreed to reduce their huge strategic nuclear arsenals.

Even though the realist focus on national security interests dominated in U.S. decisions toward Ukraine in 1992–1993, the coervcive approach did not lead to the desired outcome in relations with Ukraine. During these years, the United States chose coercive tactics in relations with Ukraine to ensure that an additional nuclear power did not arise in Europe. Former Ambassador Popadiuk, confirming this U.S. approach toward Ukraine, emphasizes that, while

> …some European states favored Ukraine retaining its nuclear weapons, [but] the United States urged various European capitals to discuss the issue with Kiev and to tell Kiev it could not expect to receive economic assistance on the level Poland had until it moved on START and NPT.[103]

2. U.S. Ideas: Nonproliferation and Arms Control

After the Cold War, the Bush administration prioritized such broadly realist ideas as containment and perpetuating unipolarity.[104] During late 1992 and early 1993, the Bush administration was preparing a "new NSC 68" [National Security Council Report

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[102] Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*, 9.

[103] Ibid., 46.

[104] Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise," 6.

68] as a future guideline for the U.S. post-Cold War grand strategy.[105] Where the original NSC 68 had set containment as the U.S. grand strategy for the Cold War, the new policy document declared that, "American grand strategy should actively attempt to mold the international environment by creating a secure world in which American interests are protected."[106] In this sense, the Bush administration focused on the ideas that reflected its realistic approach to foreign policy decisions.

Nevertheless, narrower, nuclear weapons related ideas did not lose their importance. The Cold War nuclear competition between the United States and the Soviet Union and its possible devastating consequences caused the formation of U.S. national ideas to reduce the nuclear threat worldwide. These included deeming the ideas of mutual nuclear arms limitation as a core stabilizing force and nuclear proliferation a key security threat, even though some prominent realist scholars argued that nuclear weapons proliferation would stabilize rather than destabilize international security.[107] Preventing proliferation of nuclear weapons had been one of the highest foreign policy priorities for the United States since the 1960s and it included active measures not only regarding potential enemies such as North Korea or Iran, but also its allies, including South Korea, Italy, and West Germany.[108]

In the 1993 National Security Strategy, the Bush administration affirmed previous ideas and priorities regarding the nuclear issue, and vowed to "continue its worldwide efforts to constrain the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."[109] In addition, according to this strategy, the United States made the idea of nuclear disarmament in the former Soviet Union a key foreign policy priority.[110]

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[105] Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise," 6.

[106] Ibid., 33.

[107] Kennteth Waltz, "More May Be Better," *Adelphi Papers*, Number 171 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981).

[108] Mariana Budjeryn, "Was Ukraine's Nuclear Disarmament a Blunder," *World Affairs* (Summer 2016): 12.

[109] *National Security Strategy of the United States* (1993), 20.

[110] Ibid., 19.

The the new Clinton administration's U.S. National Security Strategy, issued in July 1994, demonstrates continuity in U.S. ideas and values regarding nuclear issues:

> A critical priority for the United States is to stem the proliferation of nuclear weapons and…their missile delivery systems. Countries' weapons programs and their levels of cooperation with our nonproliferation efforts will be among our most important criteria in judging the nature of our bilateral relations.[111]

The sustained U.S. efforts and achievements in the sphere of nuclear nonproliferation and arms reduction stem from a system of ideas and cultural values that governed U.S. nuclear strategy for most of its history, with the exception of the first Reagan administration. These ideas took on new life in the Clinton administration, largely thanks to a community of experts who changed the U.S. approach to Ukrainian nuclear disarmament.

a. Arms Control Epistemic Community

The U.S. decision-making process can reflect the influence of epistemic communities as an important foreign policy input. Epistemic communities are "a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area."[112] Historically, a U.S. epistemic community played a crucial role in creating a set of internationally accepted ideas and practices of nuclear arms control, which later contributed to the Cold War cooperation between the two superpowers.[113] This group of experts significantly changed the approach to nuclear weapons, as they created a favorable intellectual climate for the idea of arms control by ensuring technical knowledge was available that provided the superpowers with reasons "why—despite all their ideological and political differences…—it was important that they cooperate."

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[111] *National Security Strategy of the United States* (1994), 11.

[112] Peter Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination," *International Organization* 46 (Winter): 2–3.

[113] Emanuel Adler, "The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control," *International Organization* 46, no. 1, Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination (Winter 1992): 101.

Additionally, the arms control epistemic community inspired the interest in arms control among government agencies and interest groups, and made the mass public aware of arms control. It promoted arms control legislation in Congress, and helped formulate specific rules and norms of arms control. Finally, members of the epistemic community became close partners with decision makers and directly influenced the formulation of policy.[114] Thus, the U.S. arms control epistemic community was a key contributor to the peaceful nuclear cooperation between Cold War superpowers.

The arms control epistemic community played a critical role in the U.S. foreign policy decision toward Ukrainian nuclear disarmament, one that became decisive only in the Clinton administration—at the second stage of disarmament negotiations. Prior to that time, the Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act of 1991, known as Nunn-Lugar, became the prominent example of U.S. arms control experts' influence on governmental decision making. Exercising indirect influence through Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar, arms control experts shaped the negotiation process regarding Ukrainian nuclear disarmament. In addition to the Nunn-Lugar Act, Senators Nunn and Lugar visited Ukraine in 1992, promoting the ratification of START I and published a report reinforcing the U.S. approach toward the Ukrainian nuclear weapons.[115] Later, the Nunn-Lugar Act became an integral part of the 1993 Trilateral Statement, ensuring the financial assistance of $175 million to help Ukraine eliminate its nuclear weapons.[116]

The experts' role in the Nunn-Lugar program began with a regular arms control study. In November 1991, a group of experts from the Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government studying nuclear arms control issues for many years published a detailed report, *Soviet Nuclear Fission: Control of the Nuclear Arsenal in a Disintegrating Soviet Union.*[117] The group of experts

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[114] Adler, "The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control," 142.

[115] Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*, 8, 60.

[116] Pifer, *The Trilateral Process*, 22.

[117] Kurt Campbell, Ashton Carter, Steven Miller and Charles Zraket, *Soviet Nuclear Fission: Control of the Nuclear Arsenal in a Disintegrating Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, November 1991).

recommended that the U.S. government create a financial program of assistance for post-Soviet republics, thus ensuring the safety of a huge nuclear arsenal.[118]

While members of the Bush administration lacked interest in the experts' ideas, Senators Nunn and Lugar, being concerned with military issues and nuclear danger, accepted the recommendations with enthusiasm.[119] In addition, the initial group of experts joined with soon-to-be Defense Secretary Bill Perry and Carnegie Corporation President David Hamburg to create coherence between the ideas of the Harvard study and Senators Nunn's and Lugar's legislative implementation.[120]

This cooperation provides direct evidence of the epistemic community's influence on U.S. decision making. Ashton Carter and William Perry, in their book *Preventive Defense: A New Security Strategy for America*, describe the role and place of this community:

> On November 19, 1991, David Hamburg, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, invited the two of us [Carter and Perry] and our colleague John Steinbruner of the Brookings Institution to a meeting in Nunn's office…Through the Carnegie Corporation of New York Hamburg and his associate, Jane Wales had for many years supported exchanges and discussions between Soviet and America scholars and officials…We were then both outside of government, Perry leading a research team at Stanford, and Carter a research team at Harvard, both studying national security problems…Carter briefed the senators on the Harvard study. It turned out that Senator Nunn and Senator Lugar and their staff members, Robert Bell, Ken Myers, and Richard Combs, were working on a similar scheme for joint actions. After the meeting broke up, Carter, Bell, Myers, and Combs stayed behind to draft what became known as the Nunn-Lugar legislation.
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> In March 1992, after the legislation had gone into effect, we joined Senators Nunn, Lugar, Warner, and Jeff Bingaman, as well as David

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[118] Campbell et al., *Soviet Nuclear Fission: Control of the Nuclear Arsenal in a Disintegrating Soviet Union.*

[119] Ashton B. Carter, "Origins of the Nunn-Lugar Program," *Preventive Defense Project, A Research Collaboration of Stanford & Harvard Universities* (November 14, 2005), http://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/hofstra_presidential_conference_presentation_november2005.pdf, 2.

[120] Carter, "Origins of the Nunn-Lugar Program," 2.

> Hamburg and staffers Bell, Myers, and Combs on a trip to look at the problem firsthand…visiting…Russia and Ukraine.[121]

As a result, the Nunn-Lugar program achieved its goal, contributing to the final denuclearization of Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. At the same time, Perry and Carter, as the leading representatives of the epistemic community, were able to put their ideas into practice. In 1993, they both landed positions in the Pentagon—Perry as Deputy Secretary of Defense (Secretary of Defense from February 1994) and Carter as Assistant Secretary of Defense in charge of the Nunn-Lugar Program.[122] The Nunn-Lugar Program showed how policy experts and scholars ensured their long-standing influence on the U.S. government providing a talent bank for presidential administrations.[123] The arms control epistemic community clearly played a significant role shaping the U.S. foreign policy decision about the Ukrainian nuclear disarmament.

3. Domestic Politics

Despite optimistic U.S. plans to complete the Ukrainian nuclear disarmament in the shortest period of time, in practice the process dragged out into a complex three-year-long negotiation. The U.S. foreign policy choices regarding Ukrainian nuclear weapons was the outcome of interactions between key decision makers within the Bush and the Clinton administrations.

a. The Bush Administration

The top-level advisors of the Bush administration demonstrated that cohesive cooperation and the unity of worldviews did not always lead to the desired political outcomes. The lack of competition and bargaining among governmental officials caused a slow political response to the rapid changes taking place in 1991. Donald M. Snow and Eugene Brown explain that George H. W. Bush's significant government experience, serving in Congress, as Ambassador to China, the head of the CIA, and Vice President,

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[121] Ashton B. Carter and William J. Perry, *Preventive Defense: A New Security Strategy for America* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1999), 71–72.

[122] Carter and Perry, *Preventive Defense: A New Security Strategy for America, 72.*

[123] Snow and Brown, *United States Foreign Policy: Politics beyond the Water's Edge*, 246.

led to the formation of a collegial team consisting of James Baker, Secretary of State, a close Bush's friend for 30 years; Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense and a former White House Chief of Staff and congressman from Wyoming; and Brent Scowcroft, the National Security Adviser, who previously held the position in the Ford administration and was admired for his scholarly grasp of international issues (with a Ph.D. in Russian history). Snow and Brown argue that a number of vital faults constrained their foreign policy decisions. Although the members of the collegial team "shared a worldview of pragmatic, moderate conservatism" and had excellent knowledge of Cold War international politics, "the world they knew was collapsing around them making them too often a half-step behind the march of history." In 1991, Bush's team aimed all its efforts on cooperation with Gorbachev and the Soviet Union, failing to perceive that "the future lay with Boris Yeltsin and other heads of a post-Soviet, noncommunist assortment of republics." As decisions were made "within a closed circle comprised of Bush's hand-picked foreign policy-making team," they became rather a reaction to events than an outcome of a wider vision of U.S. post-Cold War leadership. Long-lasting personal relations and identical worldviews among governmental actors excluded the principle of informal checks and balances, thus creating a national security bias. Finally, as the staff was ideologically very consistent with the president and his wishes, it could not promote new fresh ideas vital for the policy making process.[124]

Pifer, describing how Bush's political appointees, particularly James Baker, influenced U.S. foreign policy decisions on Ukrainian nuclear weapons, emphasizes that, "U.S. officials had begun thinking about the fate of Soviet nuclear weapons even before the Soviet Union finally collapsed in December 1991. Some in the Bush administration saw value in an independent Ukraine retaining nuclear arms. They believed a Ukrainian nuclear force could serve as a hedge to protect Kyiv's sovereignty against a possibly resurgent Russia, and the fewer weapons in Moscow's hands, the better." According to Pifer,

> Secretary of State James Baker took a sharply different view… Baker strongly believed it in America's interest that only a single nuclear power

[124] Snow and Brown, *United States Foreign Policy: Politics Beyond the Water's Edge*, 98–123.

> remain in the post-Soviet space. He saw no value to potential nuclear rivalries between Moscow and its neighbors. Baker thus argued for moving quickly and forcefully to ensure removal of all nuclear weapons from the post-Soviet republics outside of Russia, which would leave Russia as the sole nuclear power. [Pifer recalls that] while some in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and elsewhere did not share Baker's view, no one in the U.S. government chose to challenge it. Baker made the issue of strategic nuclear forces a personal priority during his last months as secretary of state.[125]

President Bush shared Baker's view that Ukrainian nuclear weapons should be viewed as just a subsidiary part of more important relations with Russia. On October 1992, Bush in his letter to President Kravchuk clearly stated that Ukraine should ensure the transportation of nuclear weapons to Russia for dismantling.[126] In discussing the proposal of tying the nuclear issue to economic assistance for Ukraine, Scowcroft rejected the idea, and expressed confidence that Ukraine would cooperate on the nuclear issue anyway.[127] Recalling the self-assuredness of this approach, Popadiuk concludes that despite Scowcroft's certainty about Ukrainian submission to pressure, "the lame-duck status of the Bush administration appeared to be working against any quick success."[128] The Bush administration's one-sided focus on foreign policy regarding Russia that reduced Ukraine to a part of U.S.-Russian relations had no success in forcing newly independent Ukraine to abandon its nuclear weapons.

b. The Clinton Administration

Unlike the Bush administration, the central decision makers of the Clinton administration were able to achieve Ukrainian nuclear disarmament after a significant change in approach. President Clinton's perception of foreign policy priorities and reliance on other governmental decision makers with fresh ideas sparked flexible and creative political outcomes. On the one hand, as Clinton was the first president without military experience, he had no links to the national security system and its Cold War

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[125] Pifer, *The Trilateral Process: The United States, Ukraine, Russia and Nuclear Weapons*, 10.

[126] Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*, 21.

[127] Ibid., 5.

[128] Ibid., 22.

legacies.[129] In contrast to the collegial Bush team, Clinton's administration key players did not know each other, which strengthened the role of the National Security Advisor as a mediator and helped prevent biased decisions.[130] Talbott recalls that,

> Clinton saw strategic arms control as old business—unfinished, worthwhile, necessary, to be sure, but nonetheless not high on his agenda. He liked to refer to himself as 'a tomorrow guy'… that meant letting others (like me) think about how many warheads the Russian Strategic Rocket Forces had aimed at the U.S. Unlike his predecessors from Truman to Reagan, Clinton didn't have to get up every morning and worry about whether the leaders in Moscow were going to go to war against the West.[131]

To ensure the effectiveness of the U.S. policy toward nuclear disarmament in post-Soviet republics, the Clinton administration created an Interagency Working Group within the National Security Council that included the Departments of State, Defense, Energy, Commerce, Central Intelligence Agency, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Office of Management and Budget, as well as the Office of Science and Technology Policy.[132] Consequently, a new method on foreign policy decision making allowed the members of the Clinton team to form a multidimensional approach to the Ukrainian nuclear disarmament.

Recognizing the mistakes of the previous administration, the Clinton team reevaluated and expanded the U.S. approach toward Ukraine. In April 1993, the U.S. government interagency review concluded that a new approach to Ukraine was needed.[133] Pifer writes that,

> All interagency participants agreed on the importance of eliminating nuclear weapons in Ukraine. The main debate centered on whether to use more carrots or sticks and how to put this issue in the context of a broader

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[129] Snow and Brown, *United States Foreign Policy: Politics Beyond the Water's Edge*, 27.

[130] Ibid., 198.

[131] Strobe Talbott, *The Russia Hand: A Memoir of Presidential Diplomacy* (New York: Random House, 2002), 43.

[132] Statement of Charles B. Curtis, Under Secretary of Energy U.S. Department of Energy, before the Committee on Armed Services "Military Application of Nuclear Energy panel on the Department of Energy's Plan for Surplus Fissile Material Control and Disposition" (April 19, 1994), 25.

[133] Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*, 29.

> approach to Kyiv. The review concluded that the U.S. government should seek a broader relationship with Kyiv and engage on a range of political, economic, assistance and security issues, progress on which would be tied to progress on the nuclear question. Nuclear weapons remained the number one issue in Washington's view.[134]

As a result, Talbott visited Kyiv in May 1993 to initiate a new stage of U.S.-Ukrainian relations, broadening them from only nuclear issues to economic assistance, revamped political relations, and new military and defense ties.[135]

Talbott underlines the vital role of Bill Perry, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, a core member of the arms control epistemic community, who "had been the most powerful backer of Ukrainian denuclearization within the U.S. government and would bring the weight of the Pentagon to the talks, along with his own mastery of the subject."[136] Perry brought Ashton Carter into the Defense Department to run the Cooperative Threat Reduction program. In addition, arms control experts Rose Gottemoeller at the NSC and Steve Pifer at the State Department were critical parts of the interagency team devising the new Ukrainian policy. With the participation of Perry, the United States and Ukraine achieved mutual understanding on complex issues, providing Ukraine "various forms of assistance from the United States as well as debt relief from Russia and international assurances on its sovereignty."[137] The contribution of a new policy making process that advanced the ideas of the arms control epistemic community led to the successful foreign policy outcome.

The central decision makers of the Clinton administration shifted from the conservative Cold War thinking to a new multi-vector view on post-Soviet republics. Unlike the Bush administration, the new interagency team changed foreign policy efforts from the Russia-first policy to broader, independent relations with other post-Soviet republics. The U.S. approach regarding Ukraine included the desire to understand the identity of the newly independent state and use political and economic carrots instead of

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[134] Pifer, *The Trilateral Process*, 18.

[135] Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch*, 119.

[136] Talbott, *The Russia Hand*, 109.

[137] Ibid.

pressure. Consequently, this approach finally led to the nuclear disarmament of Ukraine and allowed the states to turn the page in bilateral relations.

In sum, in 1992–1994, the U.S. desire to resolve the issue of Ukraine's nuclear weapons was elevated above all other decisions regarding the newly independent state and was one of the main priorities of the Bush and the Clinton administration. However, the United States won its diplomatic victory only in 1994, when the Clinton administration shifted from the Cold War thinking of Bush's closest advisors, based on the maintaining the U.S. position as a superpower, to the multidimensional approach driven by ideas of the arms control community.

C. GERMANY AND UKRAINIAN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

In contrast to the United States, domestic politics played little role in the formation of German foreign policy decision regarding the Ukrainian nuclear disarmament. Instead, Germany's geostrategic position relative to Russia, as well as ideas shared by government and society were the main causes that ensured a German consistent approach to Ukraine's nuclear weapons.

Unlike the active U.S. political-diplomatic involvement, the role of the Federal Republic of Germany in achieving Ukraine's nuclear disarmament was less central. However, in 1991, Germany clearly conditioned the further development of its bilateral relations with Ukraine on its nuclear disarmament and non-nuclear status. Being a non-nuclear state, Germany could not propose security assurances as the United States or the United Kingdom did, but its relative economic power allowed Germany both to exert diplomatic pressure and to provide a set of economic to reduce the Ukrainian burden of nuclear arsenal elimination.

1. German Geostrategic Position and Security Interests

The new geostrategic position and security interests of a reunified Germany impacted its foreign policy decisions regarding the countries of the former USSR. The 1990 reunification of Germany and the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union completely changed the security architecture of Europe. Reunified Germany was transformed into a

powerful European nation-state due to its geographic size, central location, economic strength, and population size, thus significantly influencing the development of the new Europe.[138] Despite the skeptical predictions of the neo-realist school that Germany would quickly transform into a new regional hegemon and would seek nuclear status, the state demonstrated continuity in its foreign policy, maintaining its commitments to such multinational institutions as the EU and NATO.[139]

Germany was then and remains a much weaker military power than the United States and Russia, and it took into account U.S. and Russian security interests in non-nuclear Ukraine. The German position became even more uncertain with the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991. Huge Soviet conventional forces on German soil were now technically controlled by Russia. There was no certainty about whether Soviet military personnel were still subordinated to the Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev or to the Russian president Boris Yeltsin. Germany also had yet to conclude the Two Plus Four Agreement ending the World War II with the four occupying powers (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union) and finally restore its sovereignty.

After the Soviet Union's collapse, Germany focused on getting Soviet (then Russian) military personnel and equipment out of the former East Germany. Germany's priority was to remove the "massive presence of Soviet conventional forces capable of launching a *blitzkrieg* attack in Central Europe."[140] To accomplish this, Germany recommitted to earlier pledges against the production of weapons of mass destruction, and the use of force in territorial disputes, as well as recognizing East German territory as a denuclearized zone within NATO.[141] Germany, to realists' surprise, opted for a soft-

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[138] Franz-Josef Meiers, "A Change of Course? German Foreign and Security Policy After Unification," *German Politics* 11, no. 3 (2002): 195.

[139] Meiers, "A Change of Course? German Foreign and Security Policy After Unification," 196.

[140] Ibid., 195.

[141] Catherine Keller and Cathleen Fisher, "Germany," in Douglas J. Murray and Paul R. Viotti, eds., *The Defense Policies of Nations: A Comparative Study*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 162.

power approach using its economic and political power instead of the military.[142] That soft-power position determined German foreign policy choices in the wake of the Soviet collapse, creating preferences for political-economic conflict prevention, a partnership-oriented cooperative model, and democracy building.[143]

Germany continued to recognize the United States as a world power and its main ally, and thus supported its foreign policy decisions regarding the Ukrainian nuclear weapons. David Schoenbaum and Elizabeth Pond emphasize that "from the German point of view, there was also a need in the post-Cold War world for an American presence farther east… In still-nuclear Ukraine, America's leadership was indispensable."[144] On the other hand, the German perception of Russia as "the largest military power in Europe and, at the same time, global nuclear power"[145] contributed to Germany elevating relations with Russia over relations with Ukraine. As Soviet conventional forces continued to be present on German soil until 1994, this material factor overshadowed alternative views on Ukraine.[146] As a result of it its relative geostrategic position, German foreign policy choice regarding Ukrainian nuclear disarmament was subordinated to ensuring good bilateral relations with post-Soviet Russia.

Another aspect of Germany's geostrategic position, its geographic location, also played a role in formulating the German foreign policy decision regarding Ukrainian nuclear disarmament. The location of Germany in the center of Europe determined the state's national interest in the stability of Eastern Europe.[147] As the newly Central and Eastern European states were in transition from communism to democracy and experienced massive economic disruption, there was a significant concern that some of them could slide to anarchy or become a zone of a violent conflict similar to the former

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[142] Reimund Seidelmann, *The New Germany: History, Economy, Policies* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2011), 299.

[143] Seidelmann, *The New Germany: History, Economy, Policies*, 299.

[144] David Schoenbaum and Elizabeth Pond, *The German Question and Other German Questions* (Hampshire and London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1996), 184.

[145] *Germany. White Paper 1994*, Art. 230, http://resdal.org.ar/Archivo/alem-cp2.htm

[146] Schoenbaum and Pond, *The German Question and Other German Questions*, 174.

[147] Stent, "Ukraine and Germany: Toward a New Partnership?" 287.

Yugoslavia. In determining its main interests, Germany in its *White Paper 1994* pointed out that

> In addition to the Euro-Atlantic ties, close cooperation with our eastern neighbors is also necessary to German security…Our relations with Russia and Ukraine play a crucial role. Russia is an especially important partner for lasting stability in Europe and the world. Because of its location at the center of Europe, Germany, more than any other state, is particularly interested in supporting its neighbors in the east on the road to democratic and market reforms.[148]

Thus, any potential conflict between Russia and Ukraine could cause negative consequences for German stability after its unification.[149] As Russia was still a major nuclear power in Europe, Germany as a non-nuclear state had an interest in retaining good relations with Russia. At the same time, the Germans viewed the Ukrainian nuclear arsenal as a source of a new potential environmental disaster similar to the Chornobyl accident that happened in Ukraine in 1986.[150] Thus, it was in the German national interests to contribute to the peaceful resolution of the Russia-Ukraine nuclear disputes and promote the further reduction of the strategic nuclear weapons in Russia and nuclear disarmament in Ukraine.

2. German Ideas: A Civilian Power and a Special Russo-German Relationship

The historical lessons of two world wars had led to a set of ideas and values that formed a West German identity as a civilian and pacifist state. Thus, West Germany's traditional ideas and cultural values became powerful inputs for unified Germany's foreign policy decisions in the early 1990s. Hanns W. Maull, the German political scientist, describing Germany as a "civilian power," emphasizes the domination of ideas of nonmilitary means and cooperation through multinational institutions to achieve foreign policy goals.[151] Developing Maull's concept, Sebastian Harnisch explains that

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[148] *Germany. White Paper 1994,* Art. 313.

[149] Stent, "Ukraine and Germany: Toward a New Partnership?" 288.

[150] Ibid..

[151] Hanns W. Maull, "Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers," *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1990–91): 92–93.

Germany prefers to use various strategies, including the strong system of collective security, non-violent resolution of disputes, and promotion of the rule of law.[152] In support of this argument, Harnish points to Germany's major contribution to the regulations in the sphere of arms control, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and international criminal law.

Franz-Josef Meiers believes that German civilian approach "is the result of socializing effects of international and collective identities of the Germans shaped by history and collective memory. Germany learned lessons from the past."[153] This culture of restraint affects the state's identity and includes shared preferences within German society for multilateral cooperation, opposition to the use of military force, and antipathy to the state's possible leadership in international security affairs.[154] Furthermore, traditional ideas of multilateralism or anti-militarism usually inspire German politicians to make foreign policy decisions in accordance with them, and those decisions are likely to get domestic approval.[155] In terms of foreign security decisions, Meiers concludes, "Germany prefers the role of a follower rather than agenda-setter."[156]

German decisions toward Ukraine and its nuclear weapons was a part of its efforts to civilize international relations. Through the reduction of offensive nuclear capabilities in Russia and Ukraine, the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation law, and the proposal of economic carrots for Ukraine, Germany demonstrated preferences for cooperation and peaceful dispute resolution. At the same time, it is likely that the pacifist identity and the antipathy to domination in security affairs determined German acceptance of a U.S. leading role in resolving the Russia-Ukraine nuclear dispute and U.S. foreign policy decisions regarding the Ukrainian nuclear disarmament.

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[152] Sebastian Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," *German Politics* 10, no. 1 (2001): 35.

[153] Meiers, "A Change of Course? German Foreign and Security Policy After Unification," 196.

[154] Ibid..

[155] Crawford, *Power and German Foreign Policy: Embedded Hegemony in Europe, 28.*

[156] Meiers, "A Change of Course? German Foreign and Security Policy After Unification," 214.

The German foreign policy decision on Ukrainian non-nuclear status was also driven by the long-held idea of German nuclear pacifism and policy of nuclear non-proliferation in the world. According to the German *White Paper 1994*:

> Germany advocates the unconditional and indefinite extension of the NPT, the accession of further states and the strengthening and widening of the possibilities for inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency…The non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction…will be a priority task of security policy in the years ahead. Only if this task is accomplished will it be possible to guarantee that the transformation in international relations after the end of the East-West conflict does not lead to a phase of unpredictable global risks to security and stability.[157]

This state policy reflects the ideas and goals of a powerful German anti-nuclear movement. Since the early 1970s, German anti-nuclear activists strongly opposed the nuclear industry, making a direct link between nuclear power and an atom bomb.[158] This interest group continued to spread its non-nuclear ideology through the increasingly powerful Green Party, thus strengthening German national beliefs in life without nuclear energy.[159] With these ideas prevalent in German politics and society, it is clear that Germany preferred to see Ukraine as a non-nuclear state and formulated its foreign policy decisions toward Ukraine accordingly.

Simultaneously, the German idea of friendship and cooperation with Russia also influenced German decisions toward Ukraine. For reasons related to the brutal conflict between Germany and the Soviet Union during World War II, Germany understood how much German unification worried the Soviet and post-Soviet leadership in Moscow. As a result, Germany stressed its desire to strengthen bilateral relations with Russia. According to the German *White Paper 1994*:

> The Joint Declaration of 21 November 1991 is a major step in the positive evolution of Russo-German relations. It states that the objectives are "relations in a spirit of friendship, good neighborliness, and cooperation."

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[157] *Germany. White Paper 1994*, Art. 479, 495.

[158] *Deutsche Welle*, "Germany's anti-nuclear movement: Still going strong after four decades of activism," accessed July 29, 2017, http://www.dw.com/en/germanys-anti-nuclear-movement-still-going-strong-after-four-decades-of-activism/a-39494549.

[159] *Deutsche Welle*, "Germany's anti-nuclear movement: Still going strong after four decades of activism."

> Good Russo-German relations are an important element of the future European system of security and stability.[160]

In the early 1990s, the idea of peaceful and close relations with Russia often guided German foreign policy and affected Germany's approach toward Ukraine as well.[161] Until 1994, the German government continued to formulate its relations with Ukraine through a Russian lens, focusing mostly on unresolved disputes between Russia and Ukraine.[162] It is likely that the Germans perceived the issue of nuclear weapons on Ukrainian soil as one of those disputes. By using diplomatic pressure on Ukraine to abandon its nuclear weapons, Germany *de facto* added value to its relations with Russia as well as with the United States.

3. Domestic Politics

Neither competition among central decision makers nor organized interest groups were significant factors in the German decision on Ukraine's nuclear weapons. German decision makers were united in their approach, and they produced a policy that satisfied German societal expectations and reflected widespread national beliefs in a non-nuclear world and a better security environment in Europe.

a. Coalitional Politics

There is little evidence that competition between key German decision makers shaped the German foreign policy decisions regarding Ukrainian nuclear disarmament.. In the early 1990s, the German government consisted of a coalition of the Christian Democratic Union/the Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CDU/CSU) and Free Democratic Party (FDP).[163] The Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl (CDU), the Defense Minister Volker Ruhe (CDU), and the Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher (and after 1992 Klaus Kinkel, both from FDP) shared the same ideas and values of nuclear

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[160] *Germany. White Paper 1994*, Art. 223.

[161] Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 38.

[162] Stent, "Ukraine and Germany: Toward a New Partnership?" 292.

[163] Keller and Fisher, "Germany," in Douglas J. Murray and Paul R. Viotti, eds., *The Defense Policies of Nations: A Comparative Study*, 173.

non-proliferation and disarmament. In addition, they believed in the idea of peaceful and close relations with Russia.[164] Kohl would become the closest friend of Russian President Yeltsin in the West.[165] Foreign Minister Genscher emphasized that the German-Russian (Soviet) relations presented the central pillar of stability of Europe.[166] Thus, it is likely that German decisions regarding the Ukrainian nuclear disarmament were the outcome of a consensus between the main governmental players that shared the same anti-nuclear ideas and followed the Russia-first policy. As German decision makers viewed foreign relations with Russia as more important and beneficial than those with Ukraine, they formulated the approach to Ukraine after taking Russia's interests into account.

D. CONCLUSION

For both the United States and Germany the nuclear agenda was one of the top priorities in constructing the new security architecture of post-Cold War Europe. They conditioned the further development of bilateral relations with Ukraine on its commitments to abandon nuclear weapons and join the NPT. While the United States was directly and actively involved in the process of the Ukrainian nuclear disarmament and played the role of mediator in Russian-Ukrainian nuclear disputes, Germany played a supporting role, agreeing with U.S. and Russian policies regarding Ukraine's nuclear weapons. Despite a number of complexities and misunderstandings, both states achieved their foreign policy goals of Ukrainian denuclearization after three years of negotiations.

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[164] Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 38.

[165] Talbott, *The Russia Hand*, 43.

[166] James Sperling, "German Security Policy after the Cold War: The Strategy of a Civilian Power in an Uncivil World," *Arms Control* 12, no. 3 (1991): 87.

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III. THE 2008 BUCHAREST NATO SUMMIT

> NATO welcomes Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO. Both nations have made valuable contributions to Alliance operations. We welcome the democratic reforms in Ukraine and Georgia and look forward to free and fair parliamentary elections in Georgia in May. MAP is the next step for Ukraine and Georgia on their direct way to membership. Today we make clear that we support these countries' applications for MAP. Therefore, we will now begin a period of intensive engagement with both at a high political level to address the questions still outstanding pertaining to their MAP applications.[167]

The events surrounding the April 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit demonstrated the emerging division among the NATO allies on the policy of enlargement to the East, in spite of their seeming agreement in the official declaration. Despite the intentions to extend the zone of stability and security in Europe, the NATO policy of enlargement has led to disagreements between allies and strengthened the risk of confrontation with Russia.[168] During the Bucharest Summit, the continuous debate over the possible accession of Ukraine (as well as Georgia) to NATO revealed the lack of consensus between the European and North American allies, thus undermining long-standing Euro-Atlantic unity.[169] At the summit, the allies decided that they would not even accept the post-Soviet country's application to begin the MAP. The allies' ambivalent decision concerning the MAP for Ukraine demonstrated completely different U.S. and German approaches to Ukraine. In contrast to the case of the Ukrainian nuclear disarmament, where Germany followed the U.S. lead, the Bucharest summit revealed German dissent. As the most prominent opponent of Ukrainian membership in NATO, Germany played a critical role in preventing the decision to begin a MAP for Ukraine.[170] NATO's

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[167] North Atlantic Council, "Bucharest Summit Declaration," par. 23, accessed August 4, 2017, http://www.nato.int/cps/in/natohq/official_texts_8443.htm.

[168] Tracey German, "NATO and the Enlargement Debate: Enhancing Euro-Atlantic Security or Inciting Confrontation?" *International Affairs*, 93, no. 2 (2017): 292.

[169] Ibid., 299.

[170] Kuzio, "Ukraine's Relations with the West since the Orange Revolution," 401.

uncertainty concerning further enlargement to the East combined with dubious promises about Ukrainian membership at 'some point in the future' is argued to have undermined the prestige and credibility of the Alliance.[171]

What explains the opposing U.S. and German foreign policy decisions concerning Ukraine at the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit? Which factors influenced and constrained U.S. and German foreign policy options? The U.S. decision toward Ukraine was mainly driven by its ideas and domestic politics, leaving behind geostrategic position and security interests. The German decision, conversely, was primarily affected by its rising power status and national security interests, as well as domestic politics, which elevated the traditional impact of dominant German ideas.

A. REVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL EVENT

The 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit was an important event in the modern history of Ukraine. The summit marked the peak of NATO-Ukraine relations, bringing Ukraine closer to possible membership in the Alliance.[172] On April 2–4, 2008, the allies discussed, among other challenges, the issue of the possible participation of Ukraine and Georgia to the MAP.[173] In response to Ukraine's January 2008 membership request, U.S. President George W. Bush unexpectedly proposed to its NATO allies to invite Ukraine to begin the MAP process at the April NATO Summit in Bucharest.[174] This proposal caused a contentious debate, producing no consensus among the allies and a *de facto* negative decision on Ukrainian participation in MAP.[175] Despite the "open door" policy of Article 10, the disagreement over Ukraine called into question the credibility of the official statement to include Ukraine in future enlargements of the alliance and the allies' own unity.

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[171] German, "NATO and the Enlargement Debate: Enhancing Euro-Atlantic Security or Inciting Confrontation?" 293–294.

[172] David S. Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2014), 230.

[173] Paul Gallis, *The NATO Summit at Bucharest, 2008*, CRS Report No. RS22847 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, May 5, 2008), 3–4.

[174] Ibid., 1.

[175] Ibid., 5.

It became clear in the aftermath of the Bucharest Summit that the United States and its European allies had different foreign policy approaches toward Ukraine and its future in NATO. Indeed, Germany and other key European NATO allies showed their reluctance regarding a MAP for Ukraine even before the Bucharest Summit.[176] On March 6, 2008, at a NATO foreign ministers' meeting, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier stated, "I cannot hide my skepticism" about Ukraine's prospects for a MAP.[177] In addition, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner emphasized the importance of retaining good relations with Russia.[178] Condoleezza Rice, then the U.S. Secretary of State, when describing the U.S. efforts to persuade the German side, remembers that,

> [W]e intensified consultations with the Germans, trying to find a solution…At one point we thought we had an answer—a kind of enhanced cooperation that looked like the MAP but wasn't called the MAP. Unfortunately, it satisfied no one. Since the Germans weren't anxious to push the relationship with the aspirants [Ukraine and Georgia] too far beyond where it currently stood. Then we tried a tactic of fixing the end of the year as a deadline for making a final decision on the MAP. That didn't satisfy anyone either. We left for Bucharest with no agreement in hand.[179]

These controversial issues created a strong basis for the further contentious discussion between NATO allies at the Bucharest Summit.

Germany and other Western European allies repeated their previous opposition to a MAP for Ukraine. George W. Bush in his memoirs *Decision Points* looked back:

> I was a strong supporter of [Ukraine's and Georgia's] applications. But approval required unanimity, and both Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy, the new president of France, were skeptical. They knew Georgia and Ukraine had tense relationships with Moscow, and they worried NATO could get drawn into a war with Russia.[180]

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[176] Paul Gallis, "Enlargement Issues at NATO's Bucharest Summit," CRS Report No. RL34415, *Congressional Research Service-The Library of Congress* (March 12, 2008): 24.

[177] Ibid., 24.

[178] Ibid., 24.

[179] Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (New York: Crown Publisher, 2011), 672.

[180] George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2010), 430–431.

U.S. State Department officials also emphasized that Germany opposed the MAP for Ukraine and Georgia and expressed concern about provoking a negative reaction from Russia.[181] Other Western European countries, including France, Italy, and Spain, supported the German view and argued that NATO should focus on existing military issues (such as the operation in Afghanistan) rather than a political discussion over further enlargement.[182] Some of the allies believed that Ukraine did not meet alliance standards given domestic opposition to NATO, while other allied governments proposed instead that NATO should focus on European energy security issues, including a critical dependence on Russian energy resources.[183] Indeed, several allied governments criticized the United States for its efforts to persuade them to find a consensus on Ukrainian MAP despite their previously expressed opposition and national security concerns.[184] These points of controversy and friction left little chance for a consensus to emerge in Bucharest on the MAP for Ukraine.

At the event, the political discussion on the MAP for Ukraine and Georgia quickly turned into the main agenda of the summit, highlighting the clear absence of consensus. As a witness to those events, Rice described the official dinner with the foreign ministers as one of "the most pointed and contentious debates with our allies that I'd ever experienced … the most heated that I saw in my entire time as secretary."[185] While the German foreign minister Steinmeier expressed his concerns about "the weakness of the Ukrainian coalition" and "frozen conflicts" in Georgia, the Central European ministers immediately disagreed.[186] First, they reminded Steinmeier of the history of West

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[181] The testimony of the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs at the Department of State Daniel Fried, the hearing before the Subcommittee on Europe of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (April 23, 2008, serial No. 110–166), 23–24; see Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington*, 672.

[182] German, "NATO and the Enlargement Debate: Enhancing Euro-Atlantic Security or Inciting Confrontation?" 299.

[183] Gallis, "CRS Report for Congress: The NATO Summit at Bucharest, 2008," 5.

[184] Ibid., 5–6.

[185] Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington*, *673*.

[186] Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington*, 673.

Germany and its admission to the Alliance despite a divided Germany being "one big frozen conflict until 1990."[187] Then, according to Rice's memoirs:

> The Polish foreign minister, Radoslaw "Radek" Sikorski, took the floor. Radek…was a fierce defender of the prerogatives of Central Europe…I sat back in my chair. "We've tried to be sensitive to German concerns in the EU," Radek said. "You're always saying, 'Germany needs this and Germany needs that.' Well, this is a matter of national security for us. And now you come and tell us you are more worried for Moscow than for your allies."…Then, referencing the Munich appeasement of 1938 without saying the words, Radek reminded the German that Eastern Europe's forty-year captivity under Soviet rule had been thanks to Berlin…Frank-Walter was devastated. He would later say it was the most brutal experience of his time as foreign minister.[188]

Using this psychological advantage, Rice tried to persuade Steinmeier, explaining that "[t]here are times when allies have to stand together…the MAP does not confer immediate membership…Moscow needs to know that the Cold War is over and Russia lost[, and] we can't let it split the Alliance."[189]

The debate continued on the next day. Even though the allies decided to avoid the confrontation and postpone the MAP for Ukraine and Georgia, the Polish president at the start of the general session suddenly objected, "We want MAP now!"[190] At this point, German Chancellor Merkel, in a discussion with Rice and East and Central European leaders that used Russian as the only common language, proposed the ultimate solution: "Ukraine and Georgia *will* become members of NATO."[191] Nevertheless, as the allies did not lay out a time frame for Ukraine, the decision suggested uncertain rather than firm prospects of NATO membership and continued division when Russian interests appeared at stake.

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[187] Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington*, 673.

[188] Ibid.,, 673–674.

[189] Ibid., 674.

[190] Ibid., 674–675.

[191] Ibid., 675.

B. THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES

The United States was the main advocate of a MAP for Ukraine at the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit, a position that reflected its broader goal regarding NATO's eastern enlargement: democracy promotion. Initially, the goal of democracy promotion was only a part of Bush's Doctrine of neoconservatism, overshadowed by an extreme realism that advocated using American military power in the name of national interests.[192] The consequences of the military intervention in Iraq, however, significantly weakened the U.S. emphasis on military preeminence causing, after 2006, the Bush administratrion's primary focus on "a Wilsonian tradition of liberal internationalism and universalism."[193] Thereafter, the United States saw the policy of NATO enlargement as an integral part of its idealism. Consequently, the U.S. ideas and domestic politics drove its decision on Ukraine's future in NATO rather than its geostrategic position.

1. U.S. Ideas

U.S ideas were the primary impetus for its foreign policy choice about Ukraine at the Bucharest summit. Ideas and values played a substantial role in U.S. foreign policy decisions in the 2000s. Over the period of 2002–2006 the idea of democracy promotion coexisted with the idea of a *Pax Americana* built on U.S. military primacy in the Bush administration's neoconservative philosophy.[194] This worldview emphasized that "military power provides the teeth."[195] In supporting the idea of the American primary, neoconservatives rejected a multilateral approach to foreign policy and advocated unilateral actions and extended use of military force.[196] Simultaneously, neoconservatives still believed that "American foreign policy should actively, and at

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[192] Rochester, U.S. *Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century*, 107.

[193] Brian C. Schmidt and Michael C. Williams, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives Versus Realists," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008): 214.

[194] cf. Garry Dorrien, *Imperial Designs: Neoconservatism and the Rise of Pax Americana* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[195] Schmidt and Williams, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives Versus Realists," 199.

[196] Ibid., 198–199.

times forcefully, work to spread democracy."[197] On the other hand, given the mess that would be created in Iraq, the the doctrine of preemptive use of force lost its influence on U.S. decision making after 2006.

Analyzing the consequences of the three-year war in Iraq, the second Bush administration began distancing itself from previous policies.[198] On the one hand, the Bush administration continued an idealistic approach to achieving its national goals.[199] On the other hand, the Bush administration began "walking—indeed, sprinting—away from the legacy of its first term," demonstrating a return to multilateralism and emphasizing the role of "transformational diplomacy."[200] The idea of democracy promotion not only survived this change, but became one of the dominant factors in U.S. foreign policy decisions. Since 2003, democratic values and the idea of worldwide promotion of democracy significantly shaped the Bush foreign policy agenda. "In November 2003, as the Georgian Rose Revolution was just getting underway, President George W. Bush spoke before the National Endowment for Democracy," writes Mark Beissinger, "where he redefined (once again) the purpose of the American invasion of Iraq, calling it the beginning of a 'global democratic revolution.' Since then, we have seen active efforts by the United States and a number of American-based nongovernmental organizations … to support democratic revolutions within the post-Soviet region and elsewhere."[201] U.S. government funding democracy promotion in Ukraine increased after the 2004 "Orange Revolution," following several years of decline.[202]

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[197] Schmidt and Williams, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War," 200.

[198] Francis Fukuyama, "After Neoconservatism," *New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/19/magazine/after-neoconservatism.html

[199] George Bush, "My Fellow Americans" in *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2006), preface.

[200] Fukuyama, "After Neoconservatism."

[201] Mark R. Beissinger, "Promoting Democracy: Is Exporting Revolution a Constructive Strategy?," *Dissent* 53, No. 1 (Winter 2006): 18–24.

[202] Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine's Orange Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 186.

The Bush administration promoted democracy after 2006 as the most effective instrument of conflict prevention and conflict resolution, emphasizing the peaceful nature of democratic states and their ability to cooperate with international institutions.[203] The 2006 National Security Strategy emphasized the crucial importance of democracy promotion for the United States, stating that

> [b]ecause democracies are the most responsible members of the international system, promoting democracy is the most effective long-term measure for strengthening international stability; reducing regional conflicts; countering terrorism and terror-supporting extremism, and extending peace and prosperity.[204]

U.S. support for Ukraine's membership in NATO reflected this ideational approach.

Advocating and promoting the policy of NATO enlargement to the East, the United States sought to expand democracy in Europe. Explaining the U.S. decision regarding Ukraine at the Bucharest NATO Summit, Daniel P. Fata, Deputy Assistance Secretary of Defence for European and NATO Policy, stated:

> NATO enlargement continues to play a vital role in supporting the cause of freedom in Europe by promoting democratic values and giving countries a roadmap for military and political reforms. Ukraine['s]…aspirations to join the Alliance are closely connected to these same values as [it] seek[s] to solidify [its] democratic reforms and join the Euro-Atlantic family of democracies. We believe strongly that …Ukraine …deserve[s] to participate in a Membership Action Plan (MAP). This was the message the President and the Secretary of Defense took to Bucharest.[205]

U.S. decisions about Ukraine were highly ideational in origin. In applying the idea of democracy promotion in Ukraine, the U.S. decision makers also promoted the idea of further democratization in Russia. In 2006, the Bush administration declared:

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[203] *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 15.*

[204] *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (2006), 3.

[205] Prepared Statement of the Deputy Assistance Secretary of Defence for European and NATO Policy Daniel P. Fata, the hearing before the Subcommittee on Europe of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (April 23, 2008, serial No. 110–166), 19.

> Stability and prosperity in Russia's neighborhood will help deepen our relations with Russia, but that stability will remain elusive as long as this region is not governed by effective democracies. We will seek to persuade Russia's government that democratic progress in Russia and its region benefits the peoples who live there and improves relationships with us, with other Western governments, and among themselves. Conversely, efforts to prevent democratic development at home and abroad will hamper the development of Russia's relations with the United States. Europe, and its neighbors.[206]

In response to Russia's negative reaction to Ukraine's possible membership in NATO, Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried expressed the official view that "democratic and peaceful countries on Russia's borders are a threat to no one and make good neighbors for Russia, and for us all … thanks in part to NATO enlargement, Russia's western frontiers have never been so secure and benign."[207] Thus, the dominant ideas of democracy promotion and NATO enlargement were powerful inputs for U.S. foreign policy decisions during the George W. Bush presidency. Nonetheless, the idea of NATO enlargement was not new and reflected the long-held ideas pushed forward by a U.S. epistemic community in the early 1990s.

a. Epistemic Community and NATO Enlargement as Expanding Peace

A key reason that there was a little divergence in U.S. thinking about whether NATO should expand in 2008 was that opponents of the Alliance's expansion had lost the debate in the 1990s when Clinton was president. The new Bush team believed that the United States could remake the world in its image as the unipolar power. It continued the ideas-based approach of the Clinton administration, adopting its "initial rationale for enlargement … on the notion that genuine peace could be constructed on the basis of shared democratic values. NATO's political rather than military dimension stood at the center of the enlargement case."[208] This set of ideas of NATO enlargement was

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[206] *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 39.*

[207] Prepared Statement of the Honorable Daniel Fried, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Department of State, The hearing before the Subcommittee on Europe of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (April 23, 2008, serial No. 110–166), 12.

[208] Rebecca Moore, *NATO's New Mission: Projecting Stability in a Post-Cold War World* (London: Praeger Security International, 2007), 76.

originally promoted by an epistemic community of security experts, who advocated a new U.S. foreign policy agenda that stressed the link between democracies and peaceful stability in Europe. The 2008 U.S. decision concerning Ukraine's future in NATO was a part of the long-standing U.S. strategy of NATO enlargement in Central and Eastern Europe inspired by that group of experts in the early 1990s. Using direct and indirect channels in the U.S. administration and U.S. Congress, the community of experts dramatically shifted the U.S. approach to Central and Eastern Europe ensuring the green light for the NATO enlargement policy. Even though there is no explicit evidence of experts' direct impact on the U.S. decision about a MAP for Ukraine, this epistemic community formulated the ideological base that became U.S. policy in the 1990s, and which formed the basis for the 2008 decision.

In the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse, the RAND Corporation, a U.S.-government funded think tank, proposed a significant shift in the U.S. approach toward Central and Eastern Europe, as well as Russia.[209] Ronald D. Asmus and several of his colleagues at RAND believed that "the U.S. should enlarge NATO as the natural extension of the American commitment to democracy and integration in Europe."[210] They sought NATO enlargement as a vital instrument of Central and Eastern Europe's stability and the Alliance's survival.[211] To promote the new policy, Asmus first used his close relationship with Senator Richard G. Lugar, inspiring Lugar to give a public speech on NATO enlargement.[212] Senator Lugar became the second Western politician, after German Defense Minister Volker Ruehe, who publicly advocated for NATO enlargement as a basis of a new European security architecture.[213] Then in September 1993, three RAND experts—Asmus, Richard L. Kugler, and F. Stephen Larrabee—published in *Foreign Affairs* an article that, Asmus believes, "became a *cause célèbre* in policy

[209] Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), xxix.

[210] Ibid.

[211] Ibid. 30.

[212] Ibid.

[213] Ibid.

making and diplomatic circles."[214] Arguing for the enlargement, their article "Building a New NATO," proposed several core ideas of further NATO development:[215]

- NATO should shift from collective defense priority to a broader strategy based on democracy promotion, stability, and crisis management.
- It is in the U.S. interests to promote the "Europeanization" of the alliance.
- Despite the West's "fear of offending Russia's strategic sensibilities," democracy indeed ensures stability and prevents instability and potential conflict in Russia's neighborhood.
- The Alliance's expansion to the East is "a step toward Russia, rather than against it."
- Ukraine is an important guarantee against Russian imperial ambitions and a strategic buffer between Europe and Russia.
- The West should promote the European future of Ukraine.

Although the article did not promote the idea of Ukrainian membership in NATO directly, it played a core function in the enlargement strategy. These ideas were made manifest in the 2008 U.S. decision regarding a MAP for Ukraine.

RAND experts, however, did not stop the publication of the scholarly article. They promoted their new NATO policy by seeking direct positions and contacts in the U.S. administration. At first, senior officials from Pentagon and State Department perceived RAND briefings on enlargement with opposition and skepticism. In addition, reacting to Lugar's speech, the Department of State circulated Secretary Warren Christopher's remarks urging members of the administration to avoid any debate on enlargement.[216] Nevertheless, there were some important proponents of enlargement, including Clinton's National Security Advisor Tony Lake and Chief-of-staff at the State

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[214] Asmus, Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era, xxix.

[215] Ronald D. Asmus, Richard L. Kugler, F. Stephen Larrabee, "Building a New NATO," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 4 (September/October 1993): 32–38.

[216] Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, 34.

Department Tom Donilon.[217] Asmus describes how the epistemic community's policy promotion proceeded, writing that,

> Donilon read Lugar's speech and had received an advance copy of our RAND article from Undersecretary of State Lynn Davis. Davis was an old NATO hand from previous stints in government and think tanks. As a RAND Vice President, she had directed some of RAND's early work on NATO enlargement… She was one of Secretary Christopher's confidants. Along with Steve Flanagan and Hans Binnendyk, from the Policy Planning staff, she became the voice in Christopher's immediate entourage making the intellectual case for NATO enlargement.[218]

Later, in November 1996, the new Secretary of State Madeleine Albright invited Asmus to work in the Clinton administration as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the State Department's European Bureau, seeking to develop the policy of NATO enlargement, as well as relations with the Russians and the Baltic States.[219] Using the direct and indirect influence on the policy making process, the epistemic community shifted the U.S. post-Cold War vision of Europe toward NATO enlargement in Central and Eastern Europe.

Once inspired by these experts, Senator Lugar continued to promote further expansion of NATO to the East even though his longtime Senate ally, Sam Nunn opposed NATO expansion. On February 6, 2007, Lugar introduced the NATO Freedom Consolidation Act that, after passing the Senate and the House, was signed into law by President Bush on April 9.[220] Later in January 2008, Senator Lugar successfully introduced a resolution expressing U.S. Senate support for Ukraine and Georgia to participate in NATO's MAP "as soon as possible."[221] The U.S. Congress's decisions point to the impact of the epistemic community on foreign policy issues. Their core principles of NATO enlargement are visible in the U.S. position on Ukraine at the

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[217] Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, 36.

[218] Ibid., 36.

[219] Ibid., xxxi.

[220] NATO Freedom Consolidation Act of 2007 (P.L. 110–17), 3(2). Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "Senate Committee Report 110–34 on the NATO Freedom and Consolidation Act of 2007," March 9, 2007.

[221] Expressing the strong support of the Senate for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to enter a Membership Action Plan with Georgia and Ukraine, S. Res. 439, *The Senate of the United States*, February 14, 2008.

Bucharest NATO Summit. and its insistence a final declaration suggesting a MAP for Ukraine by the end of 2008. Relying on the ideas of this epistemic community, U.S. politicians sought to persuade its NATO allies and Russia to accept the U.S. position toward Ukraine.

2. Domestic Politics

U.S. domestic politics played a complementary role strengthening the primary influence of ideas on the U.S. decision on Ukraine's membership in NATO. Before 2006, the heretofore collegial Bush team became divided between those with hawkish sympathies and those more cautious about the use of force. By 2006, given the consequences of the Iraq war, many of the hawks in the Bush team lost their influence on central decision making. The second Bush team rejected the dominance of unilateralism, the policy of preemptive war, and use of American forces to promote democracy. Instead, it focused again on multilateralism and promotion of "realistic Wilsonianism."[222]

From the beginning of the Bush presidency, key members of the Bush's foreign policy team, including National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice, Deputy National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, and Secretary of State Colin Powell, were main proponents of enlargement. During the Clinton years, these three were a part of the conservative "U.S. Committee on NATO, a nonprofit organization formed in 1996 to support enlargement at a time when Senate ratification was in doubt."[223] Yet, as Rebecca Moore notes,

> Even more significant was Bush's appointment of Daniel Fried to his National Security Council staff as Director for European and Eurasian Affairs. As a member of Bill Clinton's National Security Council staff and then U.S. Ambassador to Poland from 1997 until 2000, Fried had been a strong proponent of NATO enlargement. Bush's decision to appoint him to a key position within his own administration might be construed as evidence that the President was, from the beginning, at least somewhat sympathetic to the enlargement process.[224]

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[222] Fukuyama, "After Neoconservatism."

[223] Moore, *NATO's New Mission: Projecting Stability in a Post-Cold War World*, 77.

[224] Ibid.

Indeed, with time Bush turned from just a sympathetic to a strong believer in the success of further NATO enlargement to the East.

In formulating the U.S. position on Ukraine's future in NATO, the key policy makers demonstrated cohesive cooperation, similar to the collegial team of George H.W. Bush. The political outcome regarding Ukraine mainly resulted from a coalition between President Bush, Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, and National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley. Rice, like Gates, had the same expertise in Russian (Soviet) studies and had successfully worked in the George H.W. administration on the issues surrounding the collapse of the Soviet Union.[225] Working together with Rice in the George W. Bush team, Gates admitted to "a strong working relationship that radiated throughout our respective bureaucracies" that produced agreement on most issues, including Ukraine.[226]

While there was strong support for Ukraine's membership in NATO on the National Security Council, Bush himself was a strong believer in NATO and made the enlargement of the Alliance a personal priority.[227] Despite Western European concerns about Russia's interests, Bush truly believed that extending a MAP to Ukraine would reduce the threat of Russian aggressive action.[228] Even though Rice and Gates remained uncertain about whether they would succeed in Bucharest, they supported the president's choice. Gates remembered how he "dutifully supported the effort to bring Georgia and Ukraine into NATO (with few pangs of conscience because by 2007 it was clear the French and Germans would not allow it)."[229] Describing the how the the decision on Ukrain came to be made, Rice emphasized that,

> We faced a dilemma. At the NSC meeting held to consider our position, I presented the pros and cons with no recommendation. Frankly, I didn't know what to do. Though the status was not the same as membership in

[225] Robert Michael Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary of War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 2014) 98–99.

[226] Ibid., 99.

[227] Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington*, 667.

[228] Bush, *Decision Points*, 431.

[229] Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary of War*, 158.

> NATO, everyone knew that no MAP country had ever failed to gain membership… The President listened to the arguments and then came down on the side of Ukraine and Georgia. 'If these two democratic states want MAP, I can't say no," he said toward the end of the meeting. I admired his principal stand… *But I have to deliver this*, I thought. *This is going to be really hard*.[230]

Consequently, even though members of the team remained uncertain about the success of the decision, President Bush took the lead, reaffirming his commitment to NATO Eastern enlargement. Bush continued to believe that, "no nation should be used as a pawn in the agendas of others. We will not trade away the fate of free European people. No more Munichs. No more Yaltas."[231] .

3. U.S. Geostrategic Position and Security Interests

Even though the U.S. global geostrategic position played an important role in the foreign policy decisions of the Bush administration in general, these factors had only an indirect influence on the decision regarding Ukraine's membership in NATO. The Bush administration used its enormous military power to resolve global challenges, such as a war against international terrorism, and to preserve its primacy. With the election of George W. Bush, "the ideology of American global preeminence" came to power.[232] Although the more realist members of the Bush team were somewhat more cautious about the use of military force to reshape international politics, the more neoconservative members lobbied for the notion that "the United States is now the sole superpower in the world and seeks to preserve its hegemonic position for the indefinite future; American omnipotence and leadership [is] a prerequisite for an orderly and peaceful world."[233] President Bush, in a speech at West Point in June 2002, said that "America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenge."[234]

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[230] Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington*, 671–672.

[231] George W. Bush, cited in Moore, *NATO's New Mission*, 76–77.

[232] Garry Dorrien, *Imperial Designs: Neoconservatism and the Rise of Pax Americana* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 1.

[233] Schmidt and Williams, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives Versus Realists," 195.

[234] George W. Bush, cited in Schmidt and Williams, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives Versus Realists," 195.

The Bush administration truly believed in its unipolar position but in acting unilaterally and without restraint, it rejected the arguments of various realist scholars about how to sustain American primacy.[235] This habit led to a major division within NATO over the Iraq war, with Germany and other key European allies (except the United Kingdom) opposing the military intervention. Much of the Europeans' criticism of the U.S. intervention in Iraq was that, in relying only on its superpower status, the United States "had not made an adequate case for invading Iraq in the first place and did not know what it was doing in trying to democratize Iraq."[236] Explaining the effect of this U.S. approach, Fukuyama concludes that, "the global reaction to the Iraq war … succeeded in uniting much of the world in a frenzy of anti-Americanism.[237] The primary focus of the Bush administration on U.S. superpower status in foreign policy decision making provoked opposition among key NATO allies and rising anti-Americanism.

As noted previously, the 2006 *National Security Strategy* reflected a change in foreign policy. The state continued declaring its "enormous power and influence" to deal with global challenges and determined that "America must lead by deed as well as by example."[238] Nevertheless the new *National Security Strategy* toned down the unilateral use of force, stating that U.S. strength "rests on strong alliances, friendship, and international institutions, which enables us to promote freedom, prosperity, and peace in common purpose with others."[239] Hence, the second Bush team prioritized ideas as one of the main instruments of foreign policy. This updated approach to foreign policy decisions led the second Bush team to revitalize the policy of democracy promotion and NATO enlargement in Eastern Europe. Before arriving at this ideological position, U.S. core security interests defined its primary focus on the cooperation with the world's great

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[235] Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise," *International Security* 17, no. 4 (1993): 5–51. doi:10.2307/2539020; and Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion Revisited: The Coming End of the United States' Unipolar Moment," *International Security* 31, no. 2 (2006): 7–41.

[236] Fukuyama, "After Neoconservatism."

[237] Ibid.

[238] *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, March 2006).

[239] George W. Bush, "My Fellow Americans" in *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, March 2006), preface.

powers, including Russia, rather than Ukraine, particularly in the global war on terror.[240] During the first years of Bush presidency, the U.S. foreign policy decisions were driven by its core national security interests in fighting terrorism and led to the extended strategic cooperation with former adversaries. In his second inaugural address, Bush highlighted instead the importance of ideas. He declared that "America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one."[241] Neoconservatives in the Bush team underscored a liberal theory of international relations.[242] Realist scholars argue that this ideas-driven approach "led to so many of the United States' foreign policy blunders."[243] Neoconservative preeminence and ideology superseded concerns for U.S. geostrategic position in formulating U.S. foreign policy decisions during the second term, including decisions on Russia and Ukraine.

C. THE ROLE OF GERMANY

In contrast to the United States, Germany's foreign policy decision regarding Ukraine was primarily affected by its rising power status and domestic politics, which in this case were more important than ideas. During the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit, Germany became the main opponent of further enlargement of the Alliance to Ukraine. Despite U.S. efforts to find a consensus with Western Europe, Germany took the leading role in preventing the extension of the MAP to Ukraine. In expressing its divergent approach to Ukrainian accession to NATO, Germany confirmed its status as a major European power that calculated its own interests and priorities rather than followed U.S. leadership.

1. Germany's Geostrategic Position and National Interests

The 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit demonstrated that geopolitical status was the most powerful determinant of Germany's skeptical view of Ukrainian membership in

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240 *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (2002),* 26–27.

241 Fukuyama, "After Neoconservatism."

242 Schmidt and Williams, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives Versus Realists," 212.

243 Ibid., 202.

NATO. Globally Germany has a weaker geostrategic position compared to the United States and Russia due to its non-nuclear status and limited military capabilities. In addition, Germany's geographical proximity to Russia heightens its concerns regarding Russian revisionist ambitions and possible aggressive reaction to further NATO enlargement to the East. The long history of Russian-German relations has formed the German perception that 1) Russia is *the* big neighbor; 2) "a resource-rich and technology-poor Russia complements the resource-poor, technology-rich Germany"; and 3) Russia remains dangerous due to its history of unreliable cooperation and destruction.[244] The German *White Paper 2006* confirms the continuity of the Russia-first approach that was evident in the denuclearization case,

> Russia takes a special place in…bilateral cooperation, this being due to the formative experience in the course of our common history and that country's special role as a prominent partner of NATO and the European Union, its size and potential. Russia is one of the G8 nations, a nuclear power, and a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council…Russia is an important energy supplier and economic partner. Without Russia, security, stability, integration, and prosperity in Europe cannot, therefore, be guaranteed. It is in Germany's special interest that Russia's modernization is supported by intensified political, economic and cultural cooperation.[245]

Following from this, Germany recognizes Russia as a regional great power that may possess a threat to its security and further economic development. When explaining Germany's skeptical response to further NATO enlargement to Ukraine, U.S. President Bush stated that Germany as well as France "worried NATO could get drawn into war with Russia."[246] German Foreign Minister Steinmeier did not hide his concerns regarding Russia's negative reaction to Ukrainian membership.[247] Consequently, Germany's power status significantly influenced its decision on Ukraine. Even though its growing national power allows Germany to make independent foreign policy choices, its weaker

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[244] Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 15.

[245] *White Paper 2006*, 47.

[246] Bush, *Decision Points*, 431.

[247] Gallis, "CRS Report for Congress: Enlargement Issues at NATO's Bucharest Summit," 24.

geostrategic position compared to Russia in this case led to the calculation of a possible aggressive reaction from the latter.

Since reunification, Germany has significantly developed its economic capabilities and transformed itself into the EU's "embedded hegemon."[248] Germany's economic position has given it more confidence to conduct an independent foreign policy than in 1992–1994. Its rising national power, according to Beverly Crawford, inspires Germany to preserve its independence and freedom of actions and to have its national interests shape European institutions, not the other way around.[249] According to Crawford, the status of regional embedded hegemony means that Germany "has led by shaping new institutions in Europe, and, more importantly, it has been Europe's 'patron,' in that it has taken on a disproportionate share of the regional burden of institutional cooperation. Its leadership is thus 'embedded' in those institutions."[250] Germany's leadership is, however, highly dependent on the strength of these institutions and their impact on German power and economy, as well as on the general state of Germany's economy.[251]

Stephen Szabo agrees that economic interests are the most powerful foreign policy inputs and that they supersede the influence of ideas. Germany continues to perceive multilateralism as one of its national interests to collectively prevent emerging security challenges and threats.[252] Germany's transformation into a trading state, however, has led to the dominance of a geo-economic approach to foreign policy, in which business takes precedence over values such as human rights and democracy promotion, and economic performance determines German preferences in relations with other countries.[253] According to Szabo, Germany "cedes overall grand strategy to

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[248] Beverly Crawford, *Power and German Foreign Policy: Embedded Hegemony in Europe* (Basingstoke, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 15

[249] Ibid., 21–23.

[250] Ibid., 15

[251] Crawford, *Power and German Foreign Policy: Embedded Hegemony in Europe*, 15.

[252] Paul Belkin, "German Foreign and Security Policy: Trends and Transatlantic Implications," CRS Report No. RL34199, (Washington, DC: *Congressional Research Service*, , October 3, 2007): 24.

[253] Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 7–9.

business interests, especially those associated with the export market and natural resources, and reduces the role of political and administrative leaders… The symbiosis between business and politics is deepened in those cases in which German business has to deal with state-dominated economies, most notably in China, Russia, and the Middle East."[254]

The preceding suggests that economic stability and energy security are vital national interests for Germany. Russia's status as the primary supplier of gas to Europe challenges such stability and security. In 2006 Russia cut off gas in the aftermath of the 2004 pro-democracy Orange Revolution in order to use Ukraine's gas dependence to restore its dominance in the country. This first "energy war" with Ukraine promoted Germany and other EU states to perceive a significant threat from Russia, which only a few years ago had been considered a reliable energy partner.[255] It is in German national interests to prevent new energy risks for the European Union and Germany's economy and ensure the stability of German-Russian relations. Consequently, these concerns are reflected in the 2006 German *White Paper,* released in October that year,

> A secure, sustained and competitive supply of energy is of strategic importance for the future of Germany and Europe…Germany's and Europe's growing dependence on imported energy resources calls for an intensification of the dialogue and cooperation between producer, transit and consumer countries, including trade and industry.[256]

In 2008, the German economy remained highly dependent on energy resources exported mainly from Russia. As Russia supplied around 40 percent of its natural gas and 30 percent of crude oil in 2007, Germany likely put a high priority on good relations with the Russians.[257] In opposing a MAP for Ukraine, Germany likely sought to protect its national interests and thus considered its bilateral relations with Russia as more vital than those with Ukraine.

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[254] Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics,* 9–10.

[255] Alexandr Rahr, "Germany and Russia: A Special Relationship," *Washington Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 140.

[256] *White Paper 2006,* 20.

[257] Belkin, "German Foreign and Security Policy: Trends and Transatlantic Implications," 10.

2. Domestic Politics

German domestic politics played an important role in its foreign policy decision regarding Ukraine. Both parliamentary politics and organized interest groups complemented Germany's shift to commercial realpolitik[258] and thus contributed to the state's skeptical foreign policy decision toward Ukraine's membership in NATO.

a. Coalitional Politics

The German decision regarding Ukraine was the result of the bargaining between German high-ranking officials with different interests and ideological priorities. The German debate on the MAP for Ukraine reveals the existence of pro-Western and pro-Russian views in German foreign policy. From 2005 to 2009, Germany was governed by the Christian Democratic-Social Democratic grand coalition; this created "dualism" between the Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel of the CDU and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier of the Social Democratic Party (SPD).[259] Szabo points out that "there was always a certain tension and rivalry between two bureaucracies during this period, heightened by the fact that both parties were practically equal in their parliamentary representation and were temporary partners."[260] The competition between the two leaders became obvious in the process of formulating Eastern European and Russia policy.[261] While Merkel expressed skepticism about the idea of cooperation with Russia, Steinmeier acted as the main advocate of the Russia-first policy.[262] In addition, Steinmeier openly opposed Merkel's approach toward Russia and her efforts to isolate this eastern neighbor.[263] Before Merkel became chancellor, Steinmeier had served as the head of the Chancellor's Office for Gerhard Schröder, leader of the SPD. There he

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[258] Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 8.

[259] Stefan Meister, "An Alienated Partnership: German-Russian Relations after Putin's Return," *FIIA Briefing Paper 105* (May 10, 2012): 3.

[260] Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 42.

[261] Meister, "An Alienated Partnership: German-Russian Relations after Putin's Return," 3.

[262] Ibid.

[263] "Kritik an Merkels Aussenpolitik 'Angstlicher Blick auf die Schlagzeile,'" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 9, 2007, cited in Forsberg, "From Ostpolitik to 'Frostpolitik'? Merkel, Putin and German Foreign Policy towards Russia," 25

became the major architect of the policy "Modernization through Interdependence" in dealing with Russia.[264] Even though Schröder with his pro-Russian policy lost the elections to the Bundestag in 2005, his former right hand, Steinmeier, continued promoting the special approach toward Russia as foreign minister in the new Merkel government.[265] Steinmeier and Schröder reflected the political views of their SPD, which had always preferred closer relations with Russia, neutrality, and distancing from the United States.[266] Forsberg emphasized that "Steinmeier was known to be Schröder's trusted man and a staunch supporter of a cooperative *Ostpolitik*."[267] Hence, the Russia policy became the subject of political debates within German government.

It can be argued that it was Frank-Walter Steinmeier who persuaded Chancellor Merkel to oppose the U.S. initiative on Ukraine at the Bucharest NATO Summit. First, Foreign Minister Steinmeier openly expressed his skepticism about the MAP for Ukraine at official meetings before and during the Bucharest Summit.[268] Steinmeier emphasized the risk of the decision for the stability of relations with Russia. He suggested that accepting the U.S. initiative on Ukraine, Germany could undermine the special German-Russian relations developed by Steinmeier and Schröder in previous years. Holding a strong position in the grand coalition that formed Merkel's first government, Steinmeier probably did not leave Merkel other options than pushing forward the decision to postpone indefinitely the MAP for Ukraine. In fact, the German decision regarding Ukraine reflected the influence of Steinmeier's pro-Russian foreign policy.

b. Organized Interest Groups

Interest group politics played an indirect role in shaping the German decision regarding Ukraine at the Bucharest Summit, largely through their support for a pro-

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[264] Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 37.

[265] Ibid.

[266] Stephen F. Szabo, "Can Berlin and Washington Agree on Russia," *Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (October 2009): 32.

[267] Forsberg, "From Ostpolitik to 'Frostpolitik'? Merkel, Putin and German Foreign Policy towards Russia," 25.

[268] Gallis, "Enlargement Issues at NATO's Bucharest Summit," 24.

Russian foreign policy. High economic stakes conditioned the emergence of the powerful business lobby that focused mainly on the promotion of reliable German-Russian economic relations. In the first half of 2008, the trade between the two countries rose to $50 billion, including $36 billion in German exports to Russia.[269] More than 4,600 German companies invested around $13.2 billion in the Russian economy, making Germany's position that of the world's largest exporter to Russia.[270] In addition, energy issues raised the economic stakes, as in 2008 Russia remained the main energy partner of Germany, providing about 37 percent of its natural gas supply and 32 percent of its oil.[271] Thus, it was in several business lobbies' interest to support and strengthen the pro-Russian direction of German foreign policy.

According to Szabo, German business is the most powerful driver of Germany's special approach toward Russia.[272] It was the German private sector that transformed Germany into one of the most successful economies in the world.[273] German companies, according to Szabo, therefore felt they had a moral right to extend their influence to German foreign relations. As German-Russian economic relations presented a large share of the German economy, a significant number of German companies sought to influence the state's foreign policy to ensure the stability of relations with Russia. German manufacturing and energy companies took the lead in creating various bilateral institutions and working groups.[274] For instance, a German-Russian Working Group for Strategic Questions of German-Russian Economic and Financial Relations (SAG) was created to link politics and business and provide "impulses for joint pilot projects."[275]

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[269] Szabo, "Can Berlin and Washington Agree on Russia," 28.

[270] Nicholas Kulish, "Germany Aims to Guide the West's Ties to Russia," *New York Times*, December 1, 2008, accessed August 23, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/02/world/europe/02germany.html?mcubz=1.

[271] Szabo, "Can Berlin and Washington Agree on Russia," 28–29.

[272] Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 47.

[273] Ibid.

[274] Ibid., 48.

[275] Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 48.

In addition, there were special lobbying organizations with long traditions of promoting Russian-German relations. Szabo points out that the German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations (*The Ost-Auschuss der Deutschen Wirtschaft* (OA), founded in 1952, focused on support of German companies investing in the Russian economy and acted as a mediator between German business and policy makers.[276] Szabo emphasizes that the Committee "has been extremely successful and influential when it comes to lobbying the German government on its policy concerning the East, most importantly Russia."[277] Indeed, the Committee has around 200 member companies and is supported by five main German industry associations: the Federation of German Industries (BDI), the Association of German Banks (BdB), the German Insurance Association (GDV), the Foreign Trade Association of German Retailers (AVE), and the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (ZDH).[278] Thus, according to Szabo, the OA played a key role in strengthening the pro-Russian direction of German foreign policy.

In addition, the German-Russian Forum also had an impact on the development of pro-Russian policy. The Forum is a nonprofit organization founded in 1993 to promote the cooperation between Germany and Russia, and it is best known for the co-organization of the Petersburg Dialogue.[279] It consists of 300 members, including representatives of the Germany's largest companies, politicians, think tanks, journalists, and academics.[280] The Petersburg Dialogue, established in 2001, provides the basis for bilateral economic working groups and annual meetings of high-ranking members of business and governments.[281] The Petersburg Dialogue focuses on a "business *über*

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[276] Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 50.

[277] Ibid., 50.

[278] *German Committee on Eastern Economic Relations*, accessed August 23, 2017, http://www.ost-ausschuss.de/print/22.

[279] *Deutsch-Russische Forum e.V.*, accessed August 23, 2017, http://www.deutsch-russisches-forum.de/ru/o-nas.

[280] Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 52.

[281] Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 48.

alles" (business above all) tone, which avoids discussing such Russian political issues as human rights or democratic regression.[282]

There is also evidence that in 2008 the German-Russian Forum had the opportunity to influence German foreign policy decision making. As Szabo points out,

> The Forum's Chairman since 2003 has been Ernst-Jorg von Studnitz, a former German ambassador to Russia. Its Kuratorium include[d] Eckhard Cordes and Klaus Mangold, Gernot Erler of the SPD, Manfred Stolpe and Lothar de Maziere, former leaders in eastern Germany after unification and Hans Joachim Gorning, a managing director of Gazprom Germania and someone suspected of former ties with the Stasi.[283]

Thus, as some of the members of the Forum were either the representatives of the SPD or former officials of the Schröder government, there were reasonable grounds to assume that they probably had some impact on the pro-Russian policy of the Foreign Minister Steinmeier.

Nevertheless, it is likely that the Russian energy giant Gazprom has had the most powerful impact on the development of the Russian-German special relations. Szabo emphasizes that "Gazprom is not a normal multinational energy company … [but] rather an organization that serves the interests and the agenda of the Russian state."[284] Indeed, Gazprom through its subsidiary company Gazprom Germania has significant shares in various German companies, controlling 38 percent of the German gas market.[285] In addition, Gazprom owns 51 percent of the Nord Stream Pipeline, while others holders are E.ON and BASF, each with 15 percent.[286] Russian Gazprom is a reliable agent for promoting Russian interests in Germany.

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[282] Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 51.

[283] Ibid., 52

[284] Ibid., 70.

[285] Ibid., 72.

[286] Ibid., 72.

Former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's case may be seen as the most obvious example of Gazprom's influence on German politics.[287] In fact, Gazprom directly lobbied its interests during and after the German government under Schröder. Two weeks before he left office, Schröder approved the controversial Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline for a staggering $6 billion. Shortly after leaving office, he accepted the position of chairman of the supervisory committee of the North European Gas Pipeline Company (NEGPC), responsible for the building of the Nord Stream pipeline.[288] These facts caused outrage in Germany and abroad. According to *Spiegel*, both Schröder's political friends and opponents were equally stunned.[289] Merkel's Christian Democrats called on Schröder to resign, asserting that "he has done grave damage to Germany's reputation. Unless he quits, his job will look like a reward for his efforts [as chancellor]."[290] In addition, The U.S. *Washington Post* wrote:

> The chancellor of Germany—one of the world's largest economies—leaves his job and goes to work for a company controlled by the Russian government that is helping to build a Baltic Sea gas pipeline that he championed while in office. To make the decision even more unpalatable, it turns out that the chief executive of the pipeline consortium is none other than a former East German secret police officer who was friendly with Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, back when Mr. Putin was a KGB agent in East Germany. If nothing else, Mr. Schroeder deserves opprobrium for his bad taste.[291]

These events around Schröder suggest the power of Russian interests in German decision making.

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[287] Claudia von Salzen, "Kritik an Gerhard Schröder : 'Cheflobbyist Eines Russischen Staatskonzerns,'" [Criticism of Gerhard Schröder: 'Chief lobbyist of a Russian state-owned company'] *Der Tagesspiegel*, October 6, 2016. http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/kritik-an-gerhard-schroeder-cheflobbyist-eines-russischen-staatskonzerns/14649718.html.

[288] Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 75–76; Luke Harding, "Schröder Faces Growing Scandal over Job with Russian Gas Giant," *Guardian*, December 12, 2005. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/dec/13/russia.germany.

[289] Alexander Schwabe and Carsten Volkery, "Neuer Job: Schröder Verrubelt Seinen Ruf," [New job: Schröder scrubs his reputation] *Spiegel Online*, December 12, 2005, http://www.spigel.de/politik/deutschland/neuer-job-schroeder-verrubelt-seinen-ruf-a-389956.html.

[290] Harding, "Schröder Faces Growing Scandals over Job with Russian Gas Giant."

[291] "Gerhard Schroder's Sell Out," *Washington Post*, December 12, 2005, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2005/12/13/gerhard-schroeders-sellout/780f2476-c72d-4caa-9cb7-828101c0a151/?utm_term=.b2bc2d4019c8.

The analysis of German interest group politics demonstrates that various groups with pro-Russian interests are deeply involved in German domestic politics and have a powerful influence on Germany's decision making. There are significant reasons to believe that the aforementioned business lobbies influenced German foreign policy making in 2008. Nevertheless, there is little evidence that they directly pushed forward the German decision on Ukraine at the Bucharest NATO Summit though it is likely they supported Steinmeier's pro-Russian stance.

3. German Ideas

Long-standing ideas regarding Germany as a "civilian power," discussed in the previous chapter, failed to influence the German decision regarding Ukraine at the Bucharest Summit. National economic interests collided with ideas and values that underpinned the civilian state approach to foreign policy. Throughout the 1990s, this approach was still dominant, as Germany together with the United States were the primary champions of NATO enlargement.[292] One might expect these ideas and values to be drive Germany to support Ukrainian membership in NATO in 2008. Yet, the decision to reject a MAP for Ukraine in April 2008 reinforces Szabo's argument that Germany now engages in "selective multilateralism," based on its economic interests.

Even while Germany in 2008 remained officially committed to the civilian power ideas of multilateralism, international law, and democracy promotion, its behavior suggests a different set of preferences.[293] In addition, officially, the German government asserted in 2006 that "the transatlantic partnership remains the bedrock of common security for Germany and Europe. … NATO is committed to safeguarding the principles of democracy, freedom and the rule of law and lays the foundation for collective defense.[294] Hanns W. Maull has pointed out that "the tensions, even contradictions, between [German] traditional 'grand strategy'—or foreign policy role concept as a 'civilian power'—and a Germany, a Europe, a world of international relations so

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[292] Belkin, "German Foreign and Security Policy: Trends and Transatlantic Implications," 15.

[293] *White Paper 2006*, 24.

[294] Ibid.

radically different from what they had been before 1990 have become increasingly apparent."[295]

Germany's rejection of a MAP for Ukraine demonstrates its shift from an ideational to a geo-economic approach to foreign relations. Paul Belkin believes that "Germany has consistently sought to ensure that Russia does not feel threatened by EU and NATO enlargement."[296] In Szabo's view, special German-Russian relations combined the legacy of *Ostpolitik* to create this new German geo-economic strategy. The idea of special relations with Russia became an extension of the German *Ostpolitik* founded in the late 1960s.[297] Germans believed that the *Ostpolitik* strategy of détente and engagement with the Russians allowed Germany to reunify peacefully.[298] The significant focus on special relations with Russia was the primary determinant of the German approach to Ukraine. Traditional German ideas and values ceded to its new national interests. German geo-economic approach and special German-Russian relations surpassed ideas of democracy promotion and NATO enlargement to cause Germany's vote against Ukraine at the Bucharest Summit.

D. CONCLUSION

The 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit was remarkable for the public disagreement between allies on the policy of NATO enlargement to the East. While the United States became the main advocate of the MAP for Ukraine, Germany played the opposite role and prevented further NATO extension to Ukraine. Divergent U.S. and German approaches to Ukraine were primarily caused by the collision of American idealism and German geo-economic pragmatism. While U.S. ideas and domestic politics pushed forward the decision on Ukraine's membership in NATO, Germany's rising power status and national interests, supported by domestic politics, prevented a favorable decision for

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[295] Hanns W. Maull, ed. *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 1.

[296] Belkin, "German Foreign and Security Policy: Trends and Transatlantic Implications," 10.

[297] Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 11.

[298] Ibid.

Ukraine. Hence, power status and national interests, ideas, and domestic politics had a different impact on U.S. and German decisions regarding Ukraine.

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IV. THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

The armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine that began in 2014 marked the end of peaceful European order and stability established after the end of the Cold War. Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and further escalation of the war in eastern Ukraine shocked the United States and its European allies. It is the first case in the post-World War II history when a state that had previously agreed to respect the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of another European state forcefully annexed a part of its territory.[299] Russia brutally violated its commitments under the UN Charter and the 1975 Helsinki Final Act to respect the "inviolability of borders" in Europe.[300] Furthermore, Russia's violations of its obligation to guarantee the territorial integrity of Ukraine under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances (Budapest Memorandum) provoke significant risks for international security and credibility of nuclear non-proliferation policy throughout the world.[301] Russia's aggression against Ukraine has become another dangerous precedent of a stronger state using force to violate the sovereignty of a weaker state.[302] The European security architecture, based on peace and liberal values, has faced its "severest, possibly fatal, test" in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.[303]

The sudden emergence of the conflict has raised the difficult question for the United States and its European allies on how to respond to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Before the conflict, some believe Washington and Western European capitals did not pay significant attention to Russia's possible efforts to challenge the current European security order. East-West political and economic interdependence has

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[299] Rajan Menon and Eugene Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine: The Unwinding of the Post-Cold War Order* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2015), 158.

[300] Ivo Daalder, Michele Flournoy, John Herbst, et al., "Preserving Ukraine`s Independence, Resisting Russian Aggression: What the United States and NATO Must Do," The Atlantic Council of the United States (2015): 3.

[301] David S. Yost, "The Budapest Memorandum and Russia's Intervention in Ukraine," *International Affairs* no. 3 (2015): 505; Note: for more details see the Chapter II of this thesis.

[302] Matthias Matthijs, "The Three Faces of German Leadership," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 58, no. 2 (April-May 2016): 148.

[303] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 157.

weakened the American-European perception of Russia's potential threat.[304] Even though the United States and its European allies are unified in condemning Russia's aggression against Ukraine as unacceptable, further efforts to construct effective and consistent responses reveal a significant division.[305] The asymmetry of American-European interests in Russia has challenged the Western consensus on how to deter Russia and support Ukraine.[306] As a result, the United States and its European partners have only agreed on non-lethal policy responses, such as increased financial and military-political support of Ukraine, the imposition of various sanctions against Russia, and promotion of a diplomatic solution to the conflict.[307] This multidimensional approach still has not produced a compromise to end the conflict and end Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Why have U.S. and German foreign policy decisions diverged regarding the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict? What factors influenced and constrained U.S. and German foreign policy options? The following chapter argues that U.S. foreign policy decisions were mainly driven by concerns for its superpower status, supported by the U.S. president's own realist ideas. In Germany, the response to the conflict was mainly initially driven by power considerations until the killing of 211 EU citizens on July 17, 2014, when Russian-backed separatists blew up Malaysian Airlines (MH) flight 17. That event brought ideas back in as a primary source of German decisions. Both U.S. and German domestic politics did little to influence decisions regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

A. OVERVIEW OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict is the apogee of Russia's long-standing efforts to reestablish its political control over Ukraine. Ever since Ukraine obtained its

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[304] Daalder et al., "Preserving Ukraine`s Independence, Resisting Russian Aggression," 3.

[305] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 158.

[306] F. Stephen Larrabee, Peter A. Wilson, John Gordon IV, *The Ukrainian Crisis and European Security: Implications for the United States and U.S. Army* (Santa Monica, CA): Rand Corporation, 2015), 18.

[307] "Russia and Eurasia," *Strategic Survey*, no. 114, vol. 1 (2014): 160–161.

independence in 1991, the Russian political elite has sought special relations with Ukraine in order to transform the state into an area of exclusive Russian influence. In attempting to prevent Ukraine's pro-Western orientation, Russia systematically pressured Ukraine to align with Moscow by raising tensions over Crimea, provoking two energy wars, and actively opposing Ukraine's membership in NATO and extended economic cooperation with the EU.[308] In seeking to interrupt the expansion of the EU's eastern partnership to Ukraine, Russia sought to involve Ukraine in its own Customs Union (CU) with Belarus, thus ensuring its closer "political integration with a Russian-dominated supranational decision making body."[309] On the eve of the Vilnius summit to discuss the EU-Ukraine trade agreement, Ukrainian President Yanukovych, after consistent pressure from Russia and a secret meeting with President Vladimir Putin, on November 9, 2013, suddenly ordered the suspension of negotiations with the EU and, instead, announced further talks with Russia about membership in the CU.[310]

Yanukovych's decision triggered massive protests on November 24, 2013, in the Ukrainian capital, marking the emergence of an intense political crisis in Ukraine.[311] After months of endless demonstrations, spreading violence on Kyiv's streets, and more than 100 casualties a compromise agreement between the government and opposition was reached on February 21, 2014. Yanukovych, upon the signing of the agreement, unexpectedly left Kyiv and in a few days fled to Russia. On February 25, the Ukrainian parliament voted to remove Yanukovych from office, elected Oleksandr Turchynov as a new speaker of the parliament, and made him acting president until new presidential elections could be held on May 25.[312] It was the end of the Yanukovych era in Ukrainian history.

The Ukraine crisis at this point transformed into a full-scale Russia-Ukraine conflict. The rapid and widespread political transformations in Ukraine were a "stunning

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[308] Note: for more details regarding NATO see the Chapter III of this thesis.

[309] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 75.

[310] Ibid., 77.

[311] Daalder et al., "Preserving Ukraine`s Independence, Resisting Russian Aggression," 2.

[312] "Ukraine Crisis: Timeline," *BBC News*, November 13, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26248275.

surprise" for both Western leaders and the Kremlin.[313] For Putin, the collapse of the Yanukovych regime and the victory of the pro-Western opposition in Kyiv presented significant reputational risks and "the perception of historical loss" after his previous success with Ukraine.[314] After his bitter experience of the 2004–2005 Orange Revolution, Putin perceived the Ukraine crisis as the West's second attempt to impose pro-Western authorities in Kyiv using social unrest.[315] The presence of Germany and Polish foreign ministers in Kyiv during the crucial period of the crisis, in February 2014, strengthened Russia's belief that the West orchestrated the fall of Yanukovych.[316] Publication of a leaked telephone conversation between two senior U.S. officials discussing the preferable composition of the new Ukrainian government only added fuel to the fire.[317] In seeking to prevent Ukraine from "slipping away," the Kremlin opted for a reliable and popular instrument of foreign policy—local separatism.[318] Using the successful experience of creating permanently frozen conflicts in Transnistria, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia, Russia chose Crimea as a primary "target for inflicting a wound that would undermine Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and create a pressure point to influence Ukraine's behavior."[319]

Russia's annexation of Crimea marked the violent starting point of its war with Ukraine. Russia's decision to launch its aggression from Crimea was predictable. The presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol, the predominantly Russian population that includes many retirees from the Soviet and Russian Armed Forces, a long history of separatist aspirations, and tensions between the two countries over the peninsula made it a logical starting point.[320] Pro-Russian separatist demonstrations began

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[313] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 81.

[314] Ibid., 82.

[315] "Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club," *President of Russia*, October 19, 2017, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55882.

[316] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 82.

[317] "Ukraine Crisis: Transcript of Leaked Nuland-Pyatt Call," BBC News, February 7, 2014, accessed October 6, 2017, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26079957.

[318] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 83.

[319] Ibid.

[320] Ibid.

in Crimea on February 23, the day after the collapse of Yanukovych regime in Kyiv.[321] Four days later, heavily armed and masked Russian troops invaded Crimea and seized airports, regional parliament buildings, other strategic sites, and blockaded Ukrainian military bases on the peninsula.[322] During March 6–16, Crimea's authorities held an illegal secession referendum, in which some 95.5 percent of those voting approved Crimea's union with Russia.[323] On March 18, Putin signed a "treaty" with Crimean and Sevastopol city leaders that formally incorporated the Crimean peninsula into Russia, a flagrant violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.[324] On March 24, Ukraine withdrew its remaining military personnel from the peninsula after threats made by Russian forces against Ukrainian soldiers and their families.[325] The Kremlin was not satisfied and went further to stir insurrection in eastern Ukraine.

Only a few weeks after the annexation of Crimea, thousands of Russian-backed protestors and armed separatists triggered organized demonstrations in eastern Ukraine and seized government buildings in the major cities of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.[326] It was a part of a broader Kremlin strategy that was promoted domestically using the old imperial Russian term of *Novorossiya* (New Russia) to refer to the separatist enclave of eastern and southern regions of Ukraine. This strategy ranged from amassing numerous troops on the eastern border of Ukraine, to recruiting and equipping combatants to eastern Ukraine, to managing the occupation of government buildings, and to establishing the so-called Donetsk People's Republic (*Donetskaya Narodnaya Respublika*, DNR) and Luhansk People's Republic (*Luganskaya Narodnaya Respublika*,

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[321] "Timeline: Key Events in Ukraine's Ongoing Crisis," *Washington Post*, May 12, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/timeline-key-events-in-ukraines-ongoing-crisis/2014/05/07/a15b84e6-d604-11e3-8a78-8fe50322a72c_story.html.

[322] Ibid.

[323] "Crimea Referendum: Voters 'Back Russia Union,'" BBC News, March 16, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26606097.

[324] Steven Woehrel, "Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," CRS Report No. RL33460 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, April 14, 2014, 3.

[325] Woehrel, "Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," 3.

[326] Vincent L. Morelli, "Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," CRS Report No. RL33460 (Washigton, DC: *Congressional Research Service*, 29 March 2016, 12.

LNR). Russia also sought, to destabilize the May 25 Ukrainian presidential elections.[327] Through these measures, Russia sought to demonstrate the weakness and illegitimacy of the new Ukrainian authorities, as well as the futility of Ukraine's efforts to join NATO and the EU.[328] On May 11, 2014, leaders of the armed separatist forces held illegal "referendums" on the "sovereignty" of the so-called DNR and LNR.[329] According to their claims, 89 percent of voters in Donetsk region and 96 percent in Luhansk region approved the "referendum" to support the independence of these "republics" from Ukraine .[330] The referendum is widely seen as fraudulent and illegal outside of Russia.[331] In seeking to restore a constitutional order in its eastern regions, the Ukrainian government launched an extensive anti-terrorist operation.

When Ukrainian authorities started making progress in restoring control over several cities in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in June–July 2014, Russia escalated, leading to heavy casualties among Ukrainian military and civilians and further occupation of territory. Russia supplied its insurgents with various heavy weapons, including "tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery and advanced anti-aircraft systems, including the *BUK* surface-to-air missile system."[332] Using one of the BUK missiles, on July 17, 2014, Russia-backed separatists used one of the BUK missiles to shoot down Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 over the Donetsk region. The jet was flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, and all 298 civilian passengers on board, including 196 Dutch citizens and representatives of ten other nations, were killed.[333]

Although in August 2014 the Ukrainian Armed Forces and "volunteer battalions" seemed to be at the verge of defeating the separatists, they faced the Russian army

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[327] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine,* 85.

[328] Ibid.

[329] Morelli, "Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," 13.

[330] Ibid.

[331] Ibid.

[332] Daalder et al., "Preserving Ukraine`s Independence, Resisting Russian Aggression," 2.

[333] "MH17 Ukraine Plane Crash: What We Know," BBC News, September 28, 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28357880.

backing the insurgents.[334] The Ukrainian military was smashed in the town of Ilovaisk, as Russian regular troops and artillery wiped out entire Ukrainian units, causing hundreds of casualties and dozens of burned out tanks and troop carriers, as well as leaving 200 prisoners of war.[335] In seeking to maintain its zone of control in eastern Ukraine, Russia brutally invaded Ukraine, demonstrating its direct responsibility for the conflict.[336]

After this defeat, Ukraine agreed to start ceasefire talks. On September 5, the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), composed of representatives from Russia, Ukraine, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) signed the Minsk protocol as a step toward implementation of the peace plan of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and Russian President Putin.[337] The protocol, which was facilitated by the German and French heads of government, called for 12 measures to de-escalate the conflict, including an immediate and bilateral ceasefire under OSCE "monitoring and verification," the "decentralization" of power in Ukraine, the release of all hostages, the withdrawal of "illegal armed groups" and military equipment, and other steps.[338] None of the points of the protocol were fully implemented, however, and further fighting resulted in over 1,300 deaths and the additional separatist seizure of over 500 square kilometers of Ukrainian territory.[339] Recognizing the failure of the Minsk protocol, German Chancellor Merkel and French President Francois Hollande attempted another political resolution to the conflict. In February 2015, they met in Minsk with the presidents of Ukraine and Russia to discuss a new ceasefire agreement.[340] After 16 hours of negotiations, the four leaders agreed on a new plan, the so-called Minsk-II, intended to update the points of the

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[334] Daalder et al., "Preserving Ukraine`s Independence, Resisting Russian Aggression," 2.

[335] Carlotta Gall, "Ukraine Town Bears Scars of Russian Offensive That Turned Tide in Conflict," *New York Times*, September 9, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/10/world/europe/ukraine-town-bears-scars-of-russian-offensive-that-turned-tide-in-conflict.html.

[336] "Ukraine Crisis: Russian Troops Crossed Border, NATO Says," *BBC News*, November 12, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30025138.

[337] "Protocol on the results of consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group, signed in Minsk, 5 September 2014," (trans. by author) Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, accessed October 6, 2017, http://www.osce.org/ru/home/123258?download=true.

[338] Ibid.

[339] Morelli, "Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," 14.

[340] "Ukraine Ceasefire: New Minsk Agreement Key Points," BBC News, February 12, 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31436513.

original protocol, but to little avail.[341] Full implementation of the Minsk-II agreement has not occurred to date. According to a UN report, from mid-April 2014 to March 12, 2017, the Russia-Ukraine war resulted in at least 9,940 people dead and at least 23,455 injured.[342] At the time of this writing, the conflict continues, and the future of the Crimean peninsula and occupied territories in Donetsk and Luhansk regions remains uncertain.

B. THE UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

In response to the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, the United States took a number of measures hoping to promote a diplomatic solution to the conflict and deter further aggressive Russian action. U.S. foreign policymakers, however, have been unable to stop Russia's further escalation or resolve the conflict. As noted in Chapter II, under the Budapest Memorandum regarding Ukraine's denuclearization, the United States committed to ensure the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Despite this commitment, the United States ruled out military actions to eject Russian armed forces from Crimea or prevent their further invasion of eastern Ukraine.[343] The administration of Barack Obama also left the leading role in peace negotiations to Germany and France and held to a middle ground policy that sanctioned Russia, but eschewed lethal assistance to Ukraine.[344] Although the conflict has already lasted for more than three years, decision makers in U.S. and European capitals still argue over whether to provide military aid to Ukraine and whether it should include lethal weaponry.[345]

Instead of military aid, U.S. leaders initiated a series of financial sanctions against Russian companies, imposed visa bans and asset freezes against several Russian officials responsible for the ongoing conflict, suspended some bilateral cooperation with Russia,

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[341] "Ukraine ceasefire: New Minsk agreement key points."

[342] "Escalation of Hostilities Has Exacerbated Civilian Suffering – UN Report," *The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, March 15, 2017, http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21383&LangID=E.

[343] Woehrel, "Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," 14.

[344] Morelli, "Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," 15.

[345] Woehrel, "Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," 15.

and provided financial, technical and non-lethal assistance to Ukraine's defense and security sector.[346] While financial sanctions seem to be having a significant impact on the Russian economy, affecting the drop of oil prices and reducing export earnings, they have not persuaded Russia to end the conflict with Ukraine.[347] As a result, former officials and members of Congress have criticized U.S. policy. Senator Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, emphasized that "the refusal of the administration to step up with more robust support for Ukraine and further pressure on Russia is a blight on U.S. policy and 70 years of defending a Europe."[348] U.S. Ambassador (Ret.) John E. Herbst, in his testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in 2015, went further, declaring that,

> The political class in Washington, policymakers, and influence wielders are slowly coming to understand what is going on… Ukraine, the states of the former Soviet Union, NATO, and the EU face the problem of Kremlin revisionism… The U.S. and Europe placed some mild economic sanctions on Russia in response. They were also making every effort in private diplomacy…to offer Mr. Putin an "off-ramp" for the crisis. That the West had such a tender regard for Mr. Putin's dignity was not unnoticed in the Kremlin and certainly made [his] decision to launch his hybrid war in the Donbass easier…The West was slow and weak in confronting the Kremlin.[349]

The remainder of this section examines what drove the U.S. to adopt its middle ground response regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict. As the following research suggests, the national security interests and changing global power resources of the United States are the main drivers of this policy decision. At the same time, realist ideas have exceeded the previous ideological approach, confirming the dominance of

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[346] Morelli, "Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," 14–22; Woehrel, "Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," 11–14.

[347] Daalder et al., "Preserving Ukraine`s Independence, Resisting Russian Aggression," 2.

[348] Opening Statement of U.S. Senator Bob Corker during the hearing on "U.S. Policy in Ukraine: Countering Russia and Driving Reform" in the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, March 10, 2015, http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/us-policy-in-ukraine-countering-russia-and-driving-reform-03-10-15.

[349] Testimony by Ambassador (ret.) John E. Herbst during the hearing on "U.S. Policy in Ukraine: Countering Russia and Driving Reform" in the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, March 10, 2015, http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/us-policy-in-ukraine-countering-russia-and-driving-reform-03-10-15

pragmatic realism in the foreign policy of the Obama administration. Domestic sources of U.S. foreign policy have failed to dominate, influencing individual choices rather than the broad response to the conflict.

1. U.S. Security Interests and Geostrategic Position

Broader national security interests played the key role in the U.S. response to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. The global geostrategic position of the United States is a necessary but not a decisive cause of U.S. foreign policy decisions regarding the Russo-Ukraine conflict. The U.S. decision to exclude a military resolution of the conflict was mainly driven by a *Realpolitik* motivation based on the pragmatic calculation of U.S. national interests. The dynamics and the scope of U.S. security challenges arising from military interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya and the 2009 financial crisis weakened its international position. Since 2008, the Obama administration opted for a policy of "retrenchment" that implied "highly selective" U.S. engagement in international security challenges, a "fairer share of the burden" with its allies, and extended focus on domestic problems.[350] The Obama administration recognized that the global distribution of power was shifting toward multipolarity, which changed its foreign policy from Bush's unilateral and militaristic primacy. In addition, the U.S. geostrategic position relative to Russia was one of an equal: equal nuclear capabilities and equal absence of significant economic power over one another. As Obama stated, "our strength and influence abroad begins with the steps we take at home. We must grow our economy and reduce our deficit. We must educate our children to compete in an age where knowledge is capital, and the marketplace is global."[351] In addition, while the 2010 National Security Strategy confirmed the U.S. status of "the world's largest economy and most powerful military,"[352] it recognized the importance of "renewing American leadership" and "build[ing] a stronger foundation" for it.[353] The relative reduction in U.S. power

[350] Stephen M. Walt, "More or Less: The Debate on U.S. Grand Strategy," *Foreign Policy*, January 2, 2013, http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/01/02/more-or-less-the-debate-on-u-s-grand-strategy/.

[351] Barack Obama, "Foreword," *National Security Strategy*, May 2010 (Washington, DC: The White House, 2010).

[352] National Security Strategy, May 2010, 9.

[353] Ibid., 1–2.

changed U.S. perceptions of global challenges, revised responses to them, and narrowed geostrategic priorities. Its equal position with Russia shaped its decisions regarding Ukraine.

Although the United States under President Obama continued to assist Ukraine in building democracy and adopting a pro-Western stance, the United States would not risk a full-scale conflict with Russia over it.[354] Obama during his speech at West Point in May 2014, clearly defined the role of military force in U.S. calculations:

> The United States will use military force, unilaterally if necessary, when our core interests demand it; when our people are threatened, when our livelihoods are at stake; when the security of our allies is in danger…[I]nternational opinion matters, but America should never ask permission to protect our people, our homeland, our way of life.[355]

Conversely, when these U.S. core national interests are not threatened, "then the threshold for military action must be higher. In such circumstances, we should not go it alone. Instead, we must mobilize allies and partners to take collective action," Obama emphasized. He continued, saying that, "We have to broaden our tools to include diplomacy and development…and, if just, necessary and effective, multilateral military actions."[356] Obama shifted to a foreign policy of strategic restraint after the Bush years of unilateral use of military force that overstretched the armed forces and weakened U.S. prestige. The Obama administration held to the principle that, in the absence of a direct threat to its vital interests, the United States should avoid direct military interventions, ignore conflicts of peripheral concern, stay away from costly humanitarian interventions, and encourage other states to rely on their own strengths and capabilities.[357]

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[354] Machal Wozniak, "The Ukraine Crisis and Shift in U.S. Foreign Policy," *International Studies: Interdisciplinary Political and Cultural Journal* 18, no. 2 (2016): 95.

[355] "Full Transcript of President Obama's Commencement Address at West Point," *Washington Post*, May 28, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/full-text-of-president-obamas-commencement-address-at-west-point/2014/05/28/cfbcdcaa-e670-11e3-afc6-a1dd9407abcf_story.html

[356] Ibid.

[357] Steven David, "Obama: The Reluctant Realist," in U.S. *Foreign Policy and Global Standing in the 21st Century: Realities and Perceptions*, ed. Efraim Inbar and Jonathan Rynhold (New York: Routledge, 2016), 44.

In ruling out the military response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Obama believed in a balance of interests in which one concedes to the state that has the biggest stake in a given issue.[358] Jeffrey Goldberg, the *Atlantic*'s editor-in-chief, writes that, "Obama's theory here is simple: Ukraine is a core Russian interest but not an American one, so Russia will always be able to maintain escalatory dominance there."[359] Russia's position as a great power armed with nuclear weapons and huge conventional forces ensured that the United States would avoid a full-scale war for secondary priorities.[360] The U.S. middle ground response to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict reflects the Obama administration's realist policy of restraint, based on a pragmatic calculation of national interests. Ukraine was of secondary interest to the United States in Obama's view. Instead, his administration was preoccupied with wars and revolutions in the Middle East, Iran's nuclear program, relations with China, and military withdrawal from Afghanistan.[361]

Russia, on the other hand, was of primary interest to the United States, as it understood Russia as a nuclear superpower still capable of destroying it. Before the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Obama committed to a foreign policy of "resetting" relations with Russia in order to advance a new START arms control agreement in 2010. Further U.S. concerns about Russian commitment to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and the Syrian chemical weapons stockpile created U.S. interests in cooperating with Russia in this sphere. As a result, Ukraine vanished from the orbit of American interests. Recognizing Russia's geostrategic position, the Obama administration declared, "As the two nations possessing the majority of the world's nuclear weapons, we are working together to advance nonproliferation.."[362] Compared with its two predecessors, the Obama administration virtually ignored Ukraine, stating

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[358] Richard K. Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 1987).

[359] Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine," *Atlantic* (April 2016), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/

[360] David, "Obama: The Reluctant Realist," 49.

[361] Trenin, "The Ukrainian Crisis and the Assumption of Great-Power Rivalry," 5.

[362] National Security Strategy, May 2010, 44.

only that "we will support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Russia's neighbors."[363]

Limited geostrategic interest in Ukraine caused the slow and selective U.S. response to Russia's annexation of Crimea, despite its economic recovery after the global financial crisis and President Obama's newfound confidence in the U.S. ability to lead.[364] Obama declared that, "these complex times have made clear the power and centrality of America's indispensable leadership in the world. We mobilized and are leading global efforts to impose costs to counter Russian aggression."[365] The Obama administration, however, focused only on diplomatic and economic means in its response and left the leading role in resolving the conflict to Germany and France.

2. Domestic Politics

Although key decision makers and organized interest groups failed to dominate in the U.S. response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, they constrained specific choices, preventing a more muscular U.S. response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. On the one hand, the bargaining process among the members of Obama's team reinforced his rejection of a U.S. military response to Russia's actions. Organized interest groups, on the other hand, also sought to prevent or weaken financial sanctions against Russia and its business sector.

a. The Obama Administration

The U.S. foreign policy decision to rule out military engagement in the resolution of the Russia-Ukraine conflict was the consequence of debates among members of the Obama team, based on their experience of geopolitical victories and defeats. The decisions to rule out the use of American force countering Russian aggression in Ukraine, as well as to postpone supplying lethal weapons to Ukraine indefinitely, caused a wave of criticism from the right, who argued that it brought U.S. deterrent credibility into

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[363] National Security Strategy, May 2010, 44.

[364] Barack Obama, "Foreword," National Security Strategy, February 2015.

[365] National Security Strategy, February 2015, 2.

question.[366] A detailed analysis of the interactions and debates between Obama and his key policy makers is important for understanding U.S. policy choices regarding the Russo-Ukrainian conflict.

During the two terms of his presidency, Obama and his team faced multiple geopolitical challenges that demanded decisive actions and not always led to the desired outcomes. In 2009, Obama came into office seeking to strengthen the liberal world order, cut military spending, and end the U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan.[367] During the 2008 presidential elections, Obama stated in his foreign policy speech,

> I am running for President of the United States to lead this country in a new direction—to seize this moment's promise. Instead of being distracted from the most pressing threats that we face, I want to overcome them. Instead of pushing the entire burden of our foreign policy on to the brave men and women of our military, I want to use all elements of American power to keep us safe, and prosperous, and free. Instead of alienating ourselves from the world, I want America - once again - to lead.[368]

According to Stephen Sestanovich, who served in Republican and Democratic administrations, Obama "appears to have had a personal, ideological commitment to the idea that foreign policy had consumed too much of the nation's attention and resources."[369] The burden of Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as later geopolitical challenges in Libya, Syria, and Ukraine, step by step caused Obama to become "bogged down in geopolitical rivalries he had hoped to transcend."[370] These challenges often were met with forceful decisions and the use of American military power in conflict resolution—a strategy that contradicted Obama's personal ideas and beliefs. Goldberg, after a series of interviews with Obama, concludes that he "generally does not believe a president should place American soldiers at great risk in order to prevent a humanitarian

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[366] Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine."

[367] Walter Russel Mead, "The Return of Geopolitics," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2014), https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2014-04-17/return-geopolitics.

[368] "Full Text: Obama's Foreign Policy Speech," *Guardian*, July 16, 2008, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/jul/16/uselections2008.barackobama.

[369] Stephen Sestanovich, an expert on presidential foreign policy at the Council on Foreign Relations, cited in Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine."

[370] Mead, "The Return of Geopolitics."

disaster unless those disasters pose a direct security threat to the United States."[371] Obama appears to be a pragmatic president, who prefers "pulling back, spending less, cutting risk, and shifting to allies."[372] As Obama said, "what I think is not smart is the idea that every time there is a problem, we send in our military to impose order. We just can't do that."[373] In addition, unlike liberal interventionists, Obama indeed is a follower of the foreign policy of realism of President George H.W. Bush and his national security advisor, Brent Scowcroft, who, according to Obama, "deftly managed the disintegration of the Soviet Union" among other victories.[374]

Even though Obama's personal approach to foreign policy often was reflected in U.S. decisions, during his first term, many issues of critical geopolitical importance involved a contentious bargaining process among key officials with divergent beliefs and interests..[375] Obama consciously brought experienced experts with different views into his cabinet, reportedly following the "team of rivals" approach of Abraham Lincoln.[376] For his first national security team team, Obama "retained as secretary of defense, Robert Gates, and appointed a close ally of McCain's as national security adviser, General James Jones."[377] In addition, key aides, including Susan Rice, Obama's first-term U.N. Ambassador and second-term National Security Advisor, and Samantha Power, NSC staffer and second-term U.N. Ambassador, were proponents of armed humanitarian intervention. Denis McDonough, first-term Deputy National Security Adviser and second-term White House Chief of Staff, was dedicated to implementing the President's

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[371] Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine."

[372] Stephen Sestanovich cited in Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine."

[373] Obama cited in Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine."

[374] Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine."

[375] Inderjeet Parmar, "Introduction: American Power and Identities in the Age of Obama," *International Politics* no. 48 (2/3): 155–163.

[376] Doris Kearns Goodwin, "Defeat Your Opponents. Then Hire Them," *New York Times*, August 3, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/03/opinion/03goodwin.html; Sam Youngman, "Obama's 'Team of Rivals' Cabinet Living Out the President's 'No Drama' Mantra, *The Hill*, December 28, 2009, http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/73689-obamas-team-of-rivals-following-no-drama-mantra; Philip Rucker, "Obama Inspired by, Compared to Lincoln," *Washington Post*, November 19, 2008, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/18/AR2008111803854.html

[377] Parmar, "Introduction: American Power and Identities in the Age of Obama," 155–163.

views.[378] Secretary Clinton, though a foreign policy hawk, also supported Obama's realism, defending the policy of "principled pragmatism" in relations with Russia, China, and Iran "over a range of interests and the resulting need for flexible, case-by-case tactics over democracy and human rights."[379] Gates too shared Obama's pragmatism but disagreed with him on the war in Afghanistan.[380] Obama cultivated debate amongst his advisors during his first term and would take their advice. This system of debate marked the first term of Obama's presidency. After a series of setbacks, it was significantly weakened in the second term.

Obama's decisions regarding the Russo-Ukrainian conflict reflected his and his team's previous experience in resolving foreign policy crises. For Obama, Russia remained an important strategic ally in arms reduction and Iran's nuclear program, making its 2008 war against Georgia a secondary issue.[381] Analysis of his decisions to intervene militarily in 2011 in Libya and later to reject military operations in Syria sheds light on Obama's reaction to the Russia-Ukraine crisis. The decision on Libya and its bitter consequences weakened Obama's reliance on his key advisors, as well as strengthened the degree of his mistrust of policy advisors and his personal hesitation to use military force. Describing the failure of Obama administration's operation in Libya, Goldberg explains,

> Obama did not want to join the fight; he was counseled by Joe Biden and his first-term secretary of defense Robert Gates, among others, to steer clear. But a strong faction within the national-security team—Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Susan Rice, who was then ambassador to the United Nations, along with Samantha Power, Ben Rhodes, and Anthony Blinken, who was then Biden's national-security adviser—lobbied hard to protect Benghazi, and prevailed. (Biden, who is acerbic about Clinton's foreign-policy judgment, has said privately, "Hillary just wants to be Golda Meir.")… But Obama says today of the intervention, "It didn't

[378] Wesley W. Widmaier, *Presidential Rhetoric from Wilson to Obama* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 114.

[379] Nicolas Bouchet, "The Democracy Tradition in U.S. Foreign Policy and the Obama Presidency," *International Affairs*, no. 89, vol. 1 (2013): 45.

[380] Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary of War*, 298–299.

[381] Widmaier, *Presidential Rhetoric from Wilson to Obama*, 117.

> work." The U.S., he believes, planned the Libya operation carefully—and yet the country is still a disaster.[382]

Despite his personal pragmatic view on foreign policy, Obama accepted the compelling advice of the majority, about which he later regretted.

The Libyan failure affected Obama's considerations of Syria. After the operation in Libya, Obama seemed less confident in opting for an armed response to Bashar Assad's violent actions in Syria. In the summer of 2011, Obama limited his response to only calling on Assad to resign.[383] A year later, reacting to the possible use of chemical weapons against the Syrians, Obama declared, "We have been very clear to the Assad regime…that a red line for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized. That would change my calculus. That would change my equation."[384] On August 30, 2013, Assad brutally crossed Obama's red line, killing over 1,429 people after using chemical weapons.[385] Now, the majority of the Obama team believed the president would threaten military action.[386] The Pentagon had already received the order form Obama to prepare a target list for air strikes; and James Clapper, the director of national intelligence, met with Obama to make clear that the threat report on "Syria's use of sarin gas" was not another bogus '"slam dunk,'" referring to the infamous Bush administration intelligence failure in Iraq.[387]

While key senior officials in the Pentagon and NSC were in favor of the military response and were moving toward war, Obama "had come to believe that he was walking into a trap…his doubts were growing."[388] As Goldberg describes,

> [Obama] asked McDonough, his chief of staff, to take a walk with him on the South Lawn of the White House. Obama did not choose McDonough randomly: He is the Obama aide most averse to U.S. military intervention,

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382 Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine."

383 Obama cited in Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine."

384 Ibid.

385 "Syria Chemical Weapons Attack Killed 1,429, Says John Kerry," *BBC News*, August 30, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-23906913

386 Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine."

387 Ibid.

388 Ibid.

> and someone, who, in words of one of his colleagues, "thinks in terms of traps." Obama, ordinarily a preternaturally confident man, was looking for validation… The president believed, the Pentagon had "jammed" him on a troop surge for Afghanistan. Now, on Syria, he was beginning to feel jammed again.[389]

In the aftermath of the discussion, Obama told his national security team that he decided to stand down. This decision shocked the nation security team, which made further efforts to change the president's mind.[390] Rice, now the National Security Advisor, emphasized serious and lasting consequences for American credibility.[391] Other key officials such as Secretary of Defence Chuck Hagel and Secretary of State John Kerry were not even present when Obama informed his team about the decision.[392] Goldberg concludes that "by 2013, Obama's resentments were well developed. He resented military leaders who believed they could fix any problem if the commander in chief would simply give them what they wanted, and he resented the foreign policy think tank complex."[393] Obama had lost his taste for collective decision making and now relied more on his own pragmatic worldview rather than the divergent and often contradictory advice of his foreign policy team. This shift in Obama's thinking clearly shaped the U.S. response to Russia's military aggression in Ukraine.

By the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in March 2014, Obama mainly relied on his own principles in making foreign policy decisions. As Obama's personal pragmatism had only strengthened, other members of the president's team had fewer chances to promote alternative decisions. Strong supporters of military interventionism such as Clinton, Kerry, and Power made several attempts to change Obama's views on the means of conflict resolution, but failed. Responding to Clinton's criticism, Obama reminded Clinton of the 2003 Iraq invasion and the danger of making such decisions.[394] Later, when Clinton's successor, John Kerry, continued to lobby for the policy of

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[389] Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine."

[390] Ibid.

[391] Ibid.

[392] Ibid.

[393] Ibid.

[394] Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine."

interventionism, Obama announced at one of the NSC meetings that only the secretary of defense should propose plans for military actions.[395] Likewise, all the attempts of several top advisors to persuade Obama to authorize supplying lethal weapons to Ukraine failed as well.[396] As a result, the decisions concerning the Russia-Ukraine conflict reflected Obama's personal realist views on Ukraine and Russia. Obama said,

> Putin acted in Ukraine in response to a client state that was about to slip out of his grasp. And he improvised in a way to hang on to his control there…Real power means you can get what you want without having to exert violence. Russia was much more powerful when Ukraine looked like an independent country but was a kleptocracy that he could pull the strings on… The fact is that Ukraine, which is a non-NATO country, is going to be vulnerable to military domination by Russia no matter what we do… [My position on Ukraine is] realistic. But this is an example of where we have to be very clear about what our core interests are and what we are willing to go to war for.[397]

Obama did not hide his skepticism regarding Ukraine, perceiving the state as Russia's neighbor, weaker and not as important for the United States compared with Russia. Unlike his predecessors Clinton and Bush, Obama did not pay an official visit to Ukraine, passing this job to Vice-President Biden.[398] Many of Obama's top advisors sought to persuade him to shift to a stronger response to the conflict and eventually failed. Instead, the U.S. rejection of military involvement in the Russia-Ukraine conflict was the outcome of Obama's pragmatic realism. For Obama, the bitter experience of U.S. failure in armed interventions and his reluctance to repeat them again were the decisive factors that blocked his team's desire to use military means in conflict resolution.

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[395] Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine."

[396] Michael Crowley, "Obama's Ukraine Policy in Shambles," *Politico*, February 29, 2016, http://www.politico.com/story/2016/02/obama-ukraine-russia-putin-219783. See also Michael R. Gordon and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Considers Supplying Arms to Ukraine Forces, Officials Say," *New York Times*, February 1, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/02/world/us-taking-a-fresh-look-at-arming-kiev-forces.html.

[397] Obama cited in Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine."

[398] "Barack Obama: Presidential and Secretaries Travels Abroad," U.S. Department of State, accessed November 15, 2017, https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/travels/president/obama-barack.

b. Interest Groups Politics

Unlike U.S. decision makers focused on shaping the strategic response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, organized business lobbies were seeking to constrain the imposition of financial sanctions against Russia. Today, there is little evidence that business lobbies significantly shaped U.S. sanctions against Russia, though individual companies met with some success. Even though business lobbies could not shape a broad set of U.S. responsive measures, they predictably focused on preventing or, at least, minimizing the consequences of sanctions against Russia on their economic interests.

When the United States first imposed sanctions against Russian officials and companies in March 2014, the event shocked U.S. companies that trade with or invest in Russia.[399] Just a year previously, U.S. business lobbies had successfully pushed Congress to cancel the last Cold War-era trade restriction on Russia.[400] Now, these interest groups faced a new complex challenge. They said that financial sanctions could lead to the collapse of U.S. and European banks with hundreds of billions of dollars in Russian loans and investments.[401] Top U.S. companies such as Exxon Mobil, Boeing, Pepsi, Ford, and General Electric have significant financial stakes in Russia.[402] As a result, both U.S. and Russian companies lobbied the Obama administration and Congress, seeking to constrain the U.S. response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Business groups warned the Obama administration and Congress to avoid unilateral actions that "would put tens of billions of dollars of American investment and trade at risk of retaliation."[403] Instead, they argued that economic sanctions against Russia should be a multilateral decision of as many states as possible. William Reinsch, president of the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC), commenting on the results of

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[399] Howard Schneider and Holly Yeager, "As Talk of Russia Sanctions Heats up, Business Draws a Cautionary Line," *Washington Post*, March 7, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/as-talk-of-russia-sanctions-heats-up-business-draws-a-cautionary-line/2014/03/07/c3246bda-a54c-11e3-84d4-e59b1709222c_story.html?utm_term=.45e5728eefdf .

[400] Ibid.

[401] Ibid.

[402] Ibid.

[403] Ibid.

his meetings with White House officials and members of Congress, emphasized, "We have not been shy about telling them…if it is not multilateral, it is not going to work."[404] At the same time, the U.S.-Russia Business Council, the Washington-based trade association representing the interests of its U.S. and Russian member companies on commercial matters, also mobilized its efforts.[405] On March 5, 2014, representatives of the Council met with U.S. National Security Council staff to express their concerns and promote their economic interests in Russia.[406] It is unclear whether these meetings somehow shifted the U.S. primary approach to financial sanctions. Further escalation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict has led to new U.S.-EU multilateral sanctions, which, in turn, demanded additional efforts from lobbying companies and individual U.S. and Russian businesses.

There is proof that the U.S. energy giant Exxon Mobil, with large economic stakes in Russia, successfully delayed sanctions that would hurt the company. Due to the U.S. sanctions against Russia, Exxon Mobil lost billions of dollars and postponed important drilling projects with Russian oil giant PAO Rosneft.[407] These companies collaborate on ten joint ventures in the Russian Arctic, the Black Sea, and western Siberia.[408] At Exxon's 2014 annual meeting, Rex Tillerson, then the chief executive of Exxon Mobil, stated, "We do not support sanctions, generally, because we do not find them to be effective unless they are very well implemented comprehensibly, and that is very hard thing to do. So we always encourage the people who are making those decisions to consider the very broad collateral damage of who are they really

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[404] William Reinsch cited in Schneider and Yeager, "As Talk of Russia Sanctions Heats up, Business Draws a Cautionary Line."

[405] "About Us," The U.S.-Russia Business Council, accessed November 17, 2017, http://www.usrbc.org/site/about/about.

[406] Schneider and Yeager, "As Talk of Russia Sanctions Heats up, Business Draws a Cautionary Line."

[407] Andrew E. Kramer and Clifford Krauss, "Rex Tillerson's Company, Exxon, Has Billions at Stake Over Sanctions on Russia," *New York Times*, December 12, 2016, http://nyti.ms/2gAZp9j .

[408] Isaac Arnsdorf and Elana Schor, "ExxonMobil Helped Defeat Russia Sanctions Bill," *Politico*, December 18, 2016, http://www.politico.com/story/2016/12/exxon-mobile-russia-sanctions-rex-tillerson-232770.

harming."[409] In 2014, the U.S. sanctions against Russia prohibited the transfer of advanced offshore and shale oil technologies to Russia; Exxon was obliged to suspend all offshore drilling cooperation with Rosneft by September 26, 2014.[410] The company had an unfinished $700 million drilling project with the Russian oil giant in the Kara Sea (Arctic).[411] Exxon received a temporary reprieve from the Treasury Department until October 10, 2017, arguing that Russia's security services had threatened to literally seize the rig.[412] Only a few weeks later, Exxon Mobil successfully discovered a major field with about 750 million barrels for Rosneft.[413]

Exxon Mobil's second successful lobbying operation happened at the end of 2016. The company lobbied against the STAND for Ukraine Act in Congress, a bill that would have made the sanctions against Russia law for five years, making it more difficult for the next U.S. administration to cancel them.[414] In addition, "Exxon also lobbied the Senate Foreign Relations Committee" seeking to prevent other bills targeted to punish Russia for aggression in Ukraine.[415] Furthermore, Exxon Mobil involved trade associations, such as the American Petroleum Institute and the U.S.-Russia Business Council, where Tillerson had been a board member. Subsequently, the STAND for the Ukraine bill "stalled" at the hands of Senator Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), who explained his decision as due to the absence of bipartisan support in the Senate.[416] Exxon Mobil was able to carve out exceptions to U.S. sanctions against Russia and demonstrated, to some degree, successful lobbying efforts.

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[409] Rex Tillerson cited in Kramer and Krauss, "Rex Tillerson's Company, Exxon, Has Billions at Stake Over Sanctions on Russia."

[410] Kramer and Krauss, "Rex Tillerson's Company, Exxon, Has Billions at Stake Over Sanctions on Russia."

[411] Ibid.

[412] Ibid.

[413] Ibid.

[414] Arnsdorf and Schor, "ExxonMobil Helped Defeat Russia Sanctions Bill." See also Bradley Olson and Peter Nicholas, "Oil Giants Lobby Against Bill to Toughen Russia Sanctions," *Dow Jones Institutional News*, July 3, 2017.

[415] Arnsdorf and Schor, "ExxonMobil Helped Defeat Russia Sanctions Bill."

[416] Ibid.

There is also a Russian business lobby in Washington, D.C., that seeks to protect the interests of the Russian government in the United States. In the summer of 2014, Gazprombank, "a banking subsidiary of the Russian oil giant" Gazprom, paid $150,000 to the law firm Squire, Patton, Boggs to lobby "the Senate and the Department of State on the sanctions and other banking laws" against Russia.[417] The team of lobbyists included former Republican Senators Trent Lott and John Breaux, former ambassador Joseph LeBaron, and former first deputy administrator of the Transportation Security Administration Stephen McHale.[418] Simultaneously, two other large Russian state banks, Sberbank and VTB Group, lobbied Congress to minimize financial sanctions against Russia and themselves.[419] While the two state banks play an important role in financing Russian government programs and its military-industrial complex, VTB has gone even further, successfully listing on the U.S. stock market and raising $90 billion in debt financing for private and state-run Russian companies.[420] According to the *Atlantic*,

> [In 2016], Sberbank and VTB collectively spent hundreds of thousands of dollars lobbying against U.S. sanctions, according to lobbying disclosure reports. Sberbank, Russia's largest bank, paid a total of $425,000 to two Washington, D.C., firms last year in order to lobby Congress, the State Department, and the Department of Commerce for "possible ways to address sanctions relief," according to all of the disclosures. VTB Group, the country's second-largest bank, hired a different firm in May, paying them $17,500 a month for lobbying related to U.S. sanctions, according to a copy of the contract submitted to the Department of Justice under the Federal Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA), which lobbyists are required to submit when they do work for foreign clients.[421]

Russian business lobbies have concentrated significant forces on easing financial sanctions against Russia and against these companies in particular. The analysis of U.S.

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[417] Alexander Cohen, "Ex-senators Breaux and Lott Confirm Lobbying for Russian Bank on Ukraine Sanctions," The Center for Public Integrity, October 21, 2014, https://www.publicintegrity.org/2014/10/21/15994/ex-senators-breaux-and-lott-confirm-lobbying-russian-bank-ukraine-sanctions.

[418] Ibid.

[419] Alexia Fernandez Campbell, "Why Russian Banks Have an Interest in Washington," *Atlantic*, January 26, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/01/russian-banks-lobby-congress/514250/.

[420] Ibid.

[421] Campbell, "Why Russian Banks Have an Interest in Washington."

and Russian business lobbies' actions has confirmed that they, as organized interest groups, are a factor in influencing foreign policy. However, the detailed effect of this lobbying on the U.S. decision making process is a matter of additional research.

3. U.S. Ideas

In contrast to the Bush administration's emphasis on democracy in the preceding chapter, the Obama administration focused on promoting the liberal internationalist ideas of multilateralism and engagement, ideas that align with Obama's vision of pragmatic realism. These ideas did not play the primary role in the U.S. multidimensional response to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, but they acted as a complementary factor strengthening the *Realpolitik* logic of foreign policy decisions of the Obama administration. Once Obama became U.S. President in 2008, he proposed an idea of American engagement seeking to break off with the unilateralist Bush foreign policy that disappointed many around the world.[422] The policy of engagement, outlined in the 2010 *National Security Strategy*, confirmed the U.S. desire to rely less on its military strength and redistribute the burden of global and regional problems to close allies and partners.[423] Obama's engagement policy determined that "diplomacy is as fundamental to our national security as our defense capability. Our diplomats are the first line of engagement, listening to our partners, learning from them, building respect for one another, and seeking common ground."[424] In contrast to the previous administration's interventionism, the Obama administration would rely on "diplomacy, development, and international norms and institutions to help resolve disagreements, prevent conflict, and maintain peace, mitigating where possible the need for the use of force."[425] Furthermore, recognizing the use of force as the last means of conflict resolution, the Obama administration preferred to "exhaust other options before war…and carefully weigh the

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[422] David Skidmore, "The Obama Presidency and U.S. Foreign Policy: Where's the Multilateralism?" *International Studies Perspectives*, no. 13 (2012): 43.

[423] National Security Strategy, May 2010, 11.

[424] Ibid., 14.

[425] Ibid., 44.

costs and risks of action against the costs and risks of inaction."[426] Thus, the idea of engagement confirmed the U.S. shift to pragmatic realism, where the level of the U.S. response to a conflict correlated with its interests and priorities.

In addition, the idea of multilateralism also served as an important means of advancing U.S. national interests and rebuilding its reputation globally.[427] As Obama explained, "One of the reasons I am so focused on taking action multilaterally where our direct interests are not at stake is that multilateralism regulates hubris."[428] This idea found a broad expression in the 2010 National Security Strategy:

> Alliances are force multipliers: through multinational cooperation and coordination, the sum of our actions is always greater than if we act alone. We will continue to maintain the capacity to defend our allies against old and new threats. We will also continue to closely consult with our allies as well as newly emerging partners and organizations so that we revitalize and expand our cooperation to achieve common objectives… Although the United States and our allies and partners may sometimes disagree on specific issues, we will act based on mutual respect and in a manner that continues to strengthen an international order that benefits all responsible international actors.[429]

The dominant ideas of engagement and multilateralism are reflected in the U.S. middle ground response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, including its primary focus on diplomatic means, rejection of a military solution, and recognition that Germany and France as regional actors should lead in solving this regional challenge. U.S. adherence to the idea of multilateralism played a role in Obama's decision to postpone supplying lethal weapons to Ukraine after the Germans expressed their strong opposition. In general, these ideas can be tools of U.S. *Realpolitik* approach, based on the pragmatic calculation of national security interests and different perception of the main and secondary threats.[430]

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[426] National Security Strategy, May 2010, 22.

[427] Ibid., 40.

[428] Quoted in Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine," *Atlantic* (April 2016), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/

[429] *National Security Strategy* (May 2010), 41.

[430] Stephen G. Brooks, G. John Ikenberry, and William C. Wohlforth, "Don't Come Home, America: The Case against Retrenchment," *International Security* 37, no. 3 (Winter 2012/2013), https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/IS3703_Brooks%20Wohlforth%20Ikenberry.pdf.

The liberal ideas of democracy and freedom that often influence U.S. foreign policy decisions failed to dominate in the Obama administration. Compared to the previous Bush administration, democracy promotion occupied a secondary place in Obama's foreign policy—"albeit couched in a deliberately much toned down rhetoric."[431] U.S. funds for democracy promotion went down at United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the Obama administration compared with the Bush administration, which had increased it after the Russian invasion of Georgia. It was only after Russia invaded Ukraine that it received increased funding from $22 million in 2014 to $66 million in 2015 for democracy promotion.[432] As a USAID senior official mentioned, while the Obama administration in one of its final acts in December 2016 asked for funds to counter "Russian aggression in the Europe and Eurasia region," it was Congress that "upped the countering Russian aggression piece substantially from our initial request of $10 million."[433] Despite Russian propaganda claims that Obama's administration spent $5 billion to overthrow Ukrainian President Yanukovych, U.S. government agencies, from 2009 until 2014, spent $456.4 million total in Ukraine for all projects, not just democracy promotion.[434]

In sum, despite U.S. commitments under the Budapest Memorandum, the United States opted for a middle ground, non-lethal response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Rather than sending lethal military aid or troops, it promoted a diplomatic solution, sanctions against Russia, and financial, non-lethal military and technical assistance to Ukraine. The United States supported Germany's role as a chief negotiator between Russia and Ukraine and ruled out a military response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. These decisions were the result of the U.S. pragmatic realism based on a

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[431] Nicolas Bouchet, "The Democracy Tradition in U.S. Foreign Policy and the Obama Presidency," *International Affairs*, no. 89, vol. 1 (2013): 32.

[432] "U.S. Foreign Aid by Country: Ukraine," *USAID*, accessed November 10, 2017, https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/UKR?fiscal_year=2015&implementing_agency_id=1&measure=Disbursements.

[433] Anne Clunan, personal communication with senior USAID official, October 31, 2017.

[434] "The United States Spent $5 billion on Ukraine Anti-government Riots," *Politifact*, March 19, 2014, http://www.politifact.com/punditfact/statements/2014/mar/19/facebook-posts/united-states-spent-5-billion-ukraine-anti-governm/.

calculation of core national interests and the perception of Ukraine as a secondary priority.

C. GERMANY AND RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

In contrast to the United States, Germany's response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict has marked the return of its traditional ideational approach to foreign policy. Even though initially Germany's decisions were driven mainly by its economic interests and secondarily by domestic politics, the Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 tragedy three months into the conflict led to the renaissance of German ideas dominating foreign policy decisions. From the very beginning of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Germany played a leading role in formulating a unified Western response to Russia's actions "built on the threat of massive sanctions in combination with constant diplomatic engagement."[435] Although Germany ruled out the use of military force in the conflict resolution, it was ready to act as the main peace mediator and promoter of tougher sanctions regarding Russia.[436] Whether the Ukrainian crisis has permanently shifted German foreign policy to a more ideas-driven track is unclear.

Germany's response has provoked a mixed reaction among experts and journalists. Critics, such as John Vinocur, charge that "Germany's new, projected engagement in foreign policy leadership boils down to making sure its old 'let's-talk-this-over' and 'maybe-we-can-do-nothing' approaches stay in place."[437] Others emphasize that "the shift that is taking place in German foreign policy is subtler and less complete than this response suggests."[438] However, there are those who underscore Germany's vital role in formulating the unified Western response to the conflict. Matthew Karnitschnig notes that, "Germany's size and economic weight make its voice especially crucial. Without Berlin's backing, U.S. attempts to box in Russia through sanctions and

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[435] Ulrich Speck, "Germany Plays Good Cop, Bad Cop in Ukraine," *Carnegie Europe*, June 15, 2014, http://carnegieeurope.eu/2014/06/25/germany-plays-good-cop-bad-cop-on-ukraine-pub-56011.

[436] Forsberg, "From Ostpolitik to 'Frostpolitik'? Merkel, Putin and German Foreign Policy," 28–29.

[437] John Vinocur, "Understanding Germany's Russia Lobby," *Wall Street Journal*, Eastern edition, April 2, 2014, https://www.wsj.com/articles/john-vinocur-the-russia-lobby-in-germany-1396297558.

[438] Kundnani, "Germany Rethinks Its Role in the World," 115.

other measures will be hampered."[439] Ulrich Speck notes that, while in the past "Germany's role has been limited and overshadowed by U.S. leadership in Europe" and its usual tandem with France, the Russia-Ukraine conflict changed this, revealing both a U.S. desire to yield leadership and act as "an outside partner" to a largely German-led EU, and "little [French] interest in being in the center of the action."[440] Others stress that it is important to remember that Germany's foreign policy decisions remain a part of the EU common foreign policy that needs a consensus of 28 member states. Elizabeth Pond emphasizes that "Berlin regularly helps to build a consensus by digging into its deep pockets" and "lending a sympathetic ear to the smallest, as well as the biggest, members and formulating ways to blend varied interests."[441] Germany, in this view, has transformed into the EU's "indispensable nation" and so called "chief facilitating officer."[442]

During the initial months of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Germany faced a major division among the EU members. These cleavages regarding the common response arose from their long-held disagreements on Russia, substantial economic ties of the most influential EU members with Russia, and fear of negative economic consequences of sanctions against Russia for European economies.[443] Consequently, the initial European response to Russia's aggression targeted Putin's close officials rather than key sectors of the Russian economy and "were widely seen as little more than a slap on the wrist."[444] The July 2014 shooting down of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 changed the perception of the Russia-Ukraine conflict for Germany and its EU partners alike. In the aftermath of the event, Germany and other EU members abandoned their hesitation and disagreements

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[439] Matthew Karnitschnig, "German Businesses Urge Halt on Sanctions Against Russia; Vocal Opposition Has Helped Keep Merkel from Endorsing Broader Penalties on Moscow," *Wall Street Journal*, May 1, 2014, https://www.wsj.com/articles/german-businesses-urge-halt-on-sanctions-against-russia-1398990236.

[440] Speck, "Germany Plays Good Cop, Bad Cop in Ukraine."

[441] Elizabeth Pond, "Germany's Real Role in the Ukraine Crisis," *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 2 (March2015): 176.

[442] Pond, "Germany's Real Role in the Ukraine Crisis," 176; Note: see also Radoslaw Sikorski, "I Fear Germany's Power Less Than Her Inactivity," *Financial Times*, November 28, 2011.

[443] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 120–121.

[444] Ibid., 122.

and deepened economic sanctions against Russia. This event removed the disunity between the EU and the United States regarding a common response to Russia's actions.[445] German Chancellor Merkel "took a tougher line" and found a consensus among EU members.[446] Germany became the coordinator of a unified European approach to Russia mainly based on the extension of economic sanctions against the aggressor.[447] It significantly increased the level of its engagement in the conflict's resolution. Germany promoted the diplomatic track, leading the "Normandy Four" together with France, Russia, and Ukraine.[448] First, Merkel focused on a ceasefire agreement, which was achieved in Minsk in September 2014. Later, the German leader "invested a great deal of personal authority" in contributing to the new Minsk-2 ceasefire agreement in February 2015.[449]

1. German Geostrategic Position and National Interests

Germany's material power resources shaped its stance regarding Russia's invasion in Ukraine in two ways. First, its economic might and interdependence with Russia led it to assume the lead over EU policy regarding the conflict. Second, its economic interdependence relative to Russia led it initially to reduce the damage to its economy by limiting the sanctions applied to Russia in retaliation for its aggression.

In 2011, Polish foreign minister Radoslaw Sikorski made the remarkable statement that, "I fear German power less than I am beginning to fear its inactivity. You have become Europe's indispensable nation. You may not fail to lead."[450] As Kundnani notes,

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[445] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 122.

[446] Kundnani, "Germany Rethinks Its Role in the World," 115.

[447] Liana Fix and Steven Keil, "Berlin's Foreign Policy Dilemma: A Paradigm Shift in Volatile Times," *U.S.-Europe Analysis Series* no. 58 (Center on the United States and Europe at Brookings, February 16, 2017): 8.

[448] Fix and Keil, "Berlin's Foreign Policy Dilemma: A Paradigm Shift in Volatile Times," 6.

[449] Forsberg, "From Ostpolitik to 'Frostpolitik'? Merkel, Putin and German Foreign Policy towards Russia," 30.

[450] Radoslaw Sikorski, "I Fear Germany's Power Less than Her Inactivity," *Financial Times*, November 28, 2011, https://www.ft.com/content/b753cb42-19b3-11e1-ba5d-00144feabdc0

> German power is characterized by a strange mixture of economic assertiveness and military abstinence. Germany is increasingly using its economic power within Europe to impose its preferences on other member states—and in that sense is "normal." But it has few of the ambitions of France and the UK to project power beyond Europe, where it seeks above all to sell more cars and machines, and in particular rejects the use of military force—in that sense it is "abnormal."[451]

Since 2008, Germany has only strengthened its role as the European embedded hegemon.[452] Others label Germany a "geo-economic power" or a "reluctant hegemon."[453] In 2010, Germany took the "driver's seat in Europe," due to the combination of its national strength and the weakness of other states; by the end of the 2014, "the rest of the world looked to Germany as an example to follow."[454]

With regard to the Ukraine crisis, according to Marco Siddi, "Germany's position was seen as decisive for the overall EU stance vis-à-vis Russia. As the leading economic power in the EU and Russia's main European commercial partner, Germany steered EU foreign policy."[455] Andrew Moravcsik agrees, arguing that "Germany has been Europe's most capable and committed government… Geo-economic influence, not military influence plays the decisive role on the margin in combatting Russian influence in places like Ukraine—and such influence is overwhelmingly European."[456] In July 2016 Merkel stated that, "Germany's economic and political weight means that it is our duty to take on responsibility for Europe's security in association with our European and transatlantic partners in order to defend human rights, freedom, democracy, the rule of law and international law."[457] Thus, Germany's enormous economic power position relative to

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[451] Kundnani, *The Paradox of German Power*, 103.

[452] Crawford, *Power and German Foreign Policy: Embedded Hegemony in Europe*; Note: for more details see the Chapter III of this thesis.

[453] Matthijs, "The Three Faces of German Leadership," 140.

[454] Matthijs, "The Three Faces of German Leadership," 138.

[455] Marco Siddi, "German Foreign Policy toward Russia in the Aftermath of the Ukraine Crisis: A New Ostpolitik?" *Europe-Asia Studies* 68, no. 4 (2016): 668.

[456] Andrew Moravcsik, "Lessons from Ukraine: Why a Europe-Led Geo-Economic Strategy Is Succeeding," *Transatlantic Academy* (2015-16 Paper Series No. 10): 25.

[457] Angela Merkel in the *White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr* (Berlin: The Federal Government: 2016), 6.

other members of the EU and status as the fourth largest economy in the world determined its decision to take a leading role in the Western response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Germany's weaker position relative to Russia, however, initially prevented a more forceful response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Germany's economic interdependence with Russia, its weaker military power, geographic proximity, and limited natural resources continue to reduce Germany's ability to use armed forces in the resolution of security challenges. Härtel emphasizes that while in 2013 the annual trade between Russia and Germany reached €76.5 billion, around 300,000 German jobs also depended on commercial relations with Russia.[458] Germany is Russia's third largest consumer of Russian exports (after China and Netherlands), and Germany is the second largest (after China) supplier of goods to Russia.[459] Moravcsik argues that the EU, led by Germany, "possesses more intense interests [in Russia]…. it trades ten times more with Russia…[and] takes almost all of Russian energy exports."[460] Europe as a whole is the largest market for Russian exports, while the United States only makes up a 3 percent share of Russia's total exports.[461]

Matthijs emphasizes that while "Germany remains dangerously dependent on oil and natural gas from Russia," its "reliance on exports also makes it vulnerable to growth slowdowns abroad."[462] In addition, Matthijs continues, "Berlin suffers from a large military deficit and remains a dwarf in foreign and security policy."[463] It is a non-nuclear state, unlike Britain and France, and therefore would seek to avoid an armed confrontation with nuclear superpower Russia. Consequently, although Germany is the

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[458] André Härtel, "Germany and the Crisis in Ukraine: Divided over Moscow?" *Royal Institute Elcano*, May 8, 2014, http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/web/rielcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/ari24-2014-hartel-germany-ukraine-crisis-divided-over-moscow.

[459] "Russia," *The Observatory of Economic Complexity*, https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/rus/.

[460] Moravcsik, "Lessons from Ukraine: Why a Europe-Led Geo-Economic Strategy Is Succeeding," 24–25.

[461] "Russia," *The Observatory of Economic Complexity*.

[462] Matthijs, "The Three Faces of German Leadership," 143.

[463] Ibid.

leading European economic power, its weak military position in a broad sense influenced Germany's decisions to rule out a military response to Russia's aggression and reject the idea of providing lethal weapons assistance to Ukraine.

At the outset of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Germany continued relying mainly on its narrow economic interests as it did at the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit. Matthijs confirms that, in elevating its economic interests over ideas and norms, Germany "has been less shy about imposing its national preferences onto others, and has shifted to a more selective multilateralism with a more realist approach to international affairs."[464] Although Berlin strongly opposed Russia's annexation of Crimea, blaming it for violating international law, it was indecisive regarding further actions, recognizing that "any economic- and financial-sanctions regime against Russia would hurt Germany's economy and business interests more than most other EU members."[465] Indeed, by July 2014 the German economy, which provided more than 25 percent of the EU's output, demonstrated a 4 percent decline—the biggest one since 2009.[466] Furthermore, as Szabo states, "for Germany, Russia is not only a large neighbor but a country in which its economic interests far outweigh those that it has in Ukraine."[467] Unsurprisingly, at the beginning of the conflict, Merkel sought to resolve it diplomatically, particularly through personal negotiations with Putin.

After the shooting down of the Malaysian airliner and Russia's expansion of the military conflict to eastern Ukraine, however, German leaders concluded that Russia "has gone in one year from being a difficult partner to being an adversary."[468] Many agree that "had the Malaysian airliner not been shot down, the EU probably would not have agreed to impose such biting sanctions."[469] Germany and its EU allies realized that pragmatic

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[464] Matthijs, "The Three Faces of German Leadership," 147.

[465] Ibid.

[466] F. Stephen Larrabee, Peter A. Wilson, John Gordon IV, *The Ukrainian Crisis and European Security* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015), 23.

[467] Stephen F. Szabo, "Germany's Commercial Realism and the Russia Problem," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* (October-November 2014): 125.

[468] Larrabee et al., *The Ukrainian Crisis and European Security, 27.*

[469] Ibid.

calculation of national interests has its limits. They could not tolerate such a brutal violation of core international norms and human values. The Russia-Ukraine conflict became an international challenge rather than the interstate crisis. German ideas once again became the main driver of foreign policy decisions.

2. German Ideas

At the outset of the conflict, Germany faced a dilemma of finding a balance between core values and large economic and energy interests in bilateral relations with Russia.[470] Szabo emphasizes that the Cold War *Ostpolitik* policy of détente and engagement with the Russians became the basis for initial decisions toward Russia and Ukraine trying to minimize the collision between core values and pragmatic economic interests.[471] Even though Germany's policy makers expressed criticism of Russia's violation of core international norms, they still believed in the tenets of *Ostpolitik*, trying to continue a cooperative approach in relations with Russia and resolve the conflict by diplomatic means.[472] Siddi argues that initially, in using its growing influence in EU foreign policy together with a legacy of *Ostpolitik*, Germany achieved "the trust of all sides in the Ukraine crisis..[473]

However, Fix and Keil note that in the aftermath of the MH17 tragedy "the idea that Russia could be changed through rapprochement disappeared from government speeches, as well as the label 'strategic partner.'"[474] Russia's military aggression in Ukraine "clashed with two…pillars of Germany's positioning in the international arena, European integration and transatlanticism."[475] Germany could no longer tolerate Russia's violent actions; its core values thereafter drove foreign policy decisions above its bilateral economic relations. German policy makers shifted to an ideas-driven approach, in which

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[470] Szabo, "Germany's Commercial Realism and the Russia Problem," 122.

[471] Ibid.

[472] Siddi, "German Foreign Policy toward Russia in the Aftermath of the Ukraine Crisis: A New Ostpolitik?" 668.

[473] Ibid., 674.

[474] Fix and Keil, "Berlin's Foreign Policy Dilemma: A Paradigm Shift in Volatile Times," 6.

[475] Siddi, "German Foreign Policy toward Russia in the Aftermath of the Ukraine Crisis: A New Ostpolitik?" 668.

multilateralism, democracy, pacifism, and respect for human rights were the major drivers of foreign policy decisions regarding the conflict. Before the conflict, Matthijs argues that, "German ideas, both in the areas of economics and foreign policy, have been very influential in the process of European integration."[476] In addition, Germany's idea of itself as a civilian power influenced "EU's vision of soft-power projection in the world" based on "universal values of peace, democracy, human rights and the rule of law."[477] Despite previous disagreements with its NATO allies on the 2003 military intervention in Iraq or at the 2008 Bucharest NATO summit, after mid-2014 Germany again reemphasized the ideas of multilateralism, European integration and transatlantic unity. This emphasis is apparent in the 2016 *White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr*, in which Merkel declares that "Our security is based on a strong and resolute North Atlantic Alliance and a united and resilient European Union. We will be able to meet the great challenges of our era successfully if we strengthen and further develop these two pillars of our foreign, security and defense policy."[478] Despite previously divergent German and U.S. views on various global and regional challenges and their resolution, Germany declared itself ready to lead and contribute to the collective security and solidarity with its key allies.

At the same time, Germany's ideas of a civilian state and pacifism were major determinants of its decision to rule out a Western military response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict and caused its strong opposition to providing Ukraine with lethal weapons aid. In 2016, the German government declared that "[t]he renaissance of traditional power politics, which involves the use of military means to pursue national interests and entails considerable armaments efforts, elevates the risk of violent interstate conflict—even in Europe and its neighborhood, as is illustrated by the example of Russian actions in Ukraine."[479] According to Szabo, the Germans continue to view themselves as "anti-militarist, even pacifist, and exceptional in their rejection of the use of military force à la

[476] Matthijs, "The Three Faces of German Leadership," 142.

[477] Matthijs, "The Three Faces of German Leadership," 142–143.

[478] *White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr*, 6.

[479] *Ibid.*, 38.

the [United States], France and the United Kingdom."[480] As a result, they have not sought to build their nation into a military great power, but an economic one. Explaining Germany's hesitation in using military force, Germany's Foreign Minister Steinmeier said in 2016,

> Germans share a deeply held, historically rooted conviction that their country should use its political energy and resources to strengthen the rule of law in international affairs. Our historical experience has destroyed any belief in national exceptionalism—for any nation. Whenever possible, we choose *Recht* (law) over *Macht* (power). As a result, Germany emphasizes the need for legitimacy in supranational decision-making and invests in UN-led multilateralism. …Germany will continue to frame its international posture primarily in civilian and diplomatic terms and will resort to military engagement only after weighing every risk and every possible alternative.[481]

This civilian approach played out over the 2000s, resulting in Germany's opposition to military intervention in Iraq and Libya, and only strengthened in the aftermath of the West's bitter experience in Afghanistan and Syria.[482] These ideas, which have ensured its military weakness, fundamentally shaped Germany's perception of interstate conflicts, particularly the Russia-Ukraine one.

3. Domestic Politics

Both coalitional politics and organized interest groups failed to play a significant role in Germany's multidimensional response to the Russia's aggression in Ukraine. While at the beginning of the conflict these factors added some ambiguity and hesitation to Germany's initial decisions, Russia's later escalation made their role negligible.

a. Coalitional Politics

Unlike in the U.S. case, Germany's foreign policy decisions regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict were neither constrained nor significantly pushed forward by competition between coalitional partners. Russia's brutal violation of Germany's core

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[480] Szabo, "Germany's Commercial Realism and the Russia Problem," 120.

[481] Steinmeier, "Germany's New Global Role," 110.

[482] Speck, "Germany Plays Good Cop, Bad Cop in Ukraine."

values and international norms led to consensus within Germany's grand coalition government after some initial differences. Unlike the case of the Bucharest NATO Summit, the power of the Foreign Minister did not constrain the state's broad response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Germany's governing coalition before and during the conflict consisted of the same duumvirate of Christian Democratic Chancellor Merkel and Social Democratic Foreign Minister Steinmeier as it had in 2005–2009. "German foreign policy," as a result, "remains an elite affair that is resolved within a notably stable centrist consensus."[483] In July 2014, both leaders formed a unified front in seeking resolution to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. According to Forsberg, the standard assumption of foreign policy experts is that Steinmeier and his Social Democratic party are willing to constrain decisions unfavorable to Russia by promoting "the cooperative *Ostpolitik* tradition in German foreign policy."[484] While "the Social Democrats were inclined to downplay criticism of Russia and seek a more accommodating line before the Ukrainian crisis," later this key party in the grand coalition "was more critical towards Russia that might have been expected."[485] Eventually, Merkel and Steinmeier minimized differences in their parties' stances regarding Germany's approach toward Russia, such that they became "more a matter of emphasis that a real clash of two separate foreign policy lines."[486]

The German response to Russia's aggression in Ukraine resulted in a new strategy that emerged over the course of 2014, in which Steinmeier played the 'good cop' with Russia and Merkel, the 'bad cop.'[487] Prior to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Steinmeier still sought to reanimate and strengthen cooperation with Russia, adding some ambiguity about how Germany would initially respond to Russia's annexation of Crimea.[488] According to André Härtel, "Steinmeier, who again took the post of Foreign Minister in

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[483] Pond, "Germany's Real Role in the Ukraine Crisis," 176.

[484] Forsberg, "From Ostpolitik to 'Frostpolitik'? Merkel, Putin and German Foreign Policy towards Russia," 38.

[485] Ibid.

[486] Ibid., 37.

[487] Speck, "Germany Plays Good Cop, Bad Cop in Ukraine."

[488] Härtel, "Germany and the Crisis in Ukraine: Divided over Moscow?"

late 2013, had initially high hopes for a renewal of his earlier 'partnership for modernization' approach and—as a gesture—appointed Gernot Erler, an expert on Russia known for advocating a policy of 'trying to understand' and engaging with Putin's Russia through dialogue and close cooperation, as his special coordinator for Russia."[489] This reflected Steinmeier's center-left Social Democratic Party philosophy, which holds that "the way forward is to try harder and to engage even more with the Kremlin" and "consider[s] a more confrontational approach dangerous, as Russia might completely slip away from the West and move toward a more hostile position."[490] Consequently, Steinmeier at first refused to support sanctions against Russia and disagreed with the Western decision to remove Russia from the G8.[491] Even though by November 2014 Merkel and Steinmeier had declared their strong agreement in foreign policy decisions on Russia and Ukraine, Steinmeier continued making pro-Russian public statements, leading experts to conclude that Merkel and Steinmeier were coordinating their actions.[492] Steinmeier's reflected the "good cop, bad cop" strategy, where he used political "carrots" for Russia promoting a diplomatic solution to the conflict, while Merkel focused on "sticks" pushing forward a strong response, particularly financial sanctions.[493]

Chancellor Merkel, however, played the decisive role in formulating the unified response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Playing the 'bad cop,' Merkel adopted a "confrontational approach" toward Russia threatening it "with massive sanctions if Moscow openly attacked and invaded Ukraine."[494] According to Larrabee, Merkel demonstrated "firm leadership" pushing forward "a toughening of the sanctions [against Russia] after the shooting down of the Malaysian commercial airliner MH 17 in July 2014."[495] Furthermore, she played a central role in creating the unified United States-EU

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[489] Ibid.

[490] Speck, "Germany Plays Good Cop, Bad Cop in Ukraine."

[491] Forsberg, "From Ostpolitik to 'Frostpolitik'? Merkel, Putin and German Foreign Policy towards Russia," 31.

[492] Ibid.

[493] Speck, "Germany Plays Good Cop, Bad Cop in Ukraine."

[494] Ibid.

[495] Larrabee et al., *The Ukrainian Crisis and European Security*, 66.

approach toward the Russia-Ukraine conflict, becoming the key negotiator between Russia and the West, as well as between the EU and the United States.[496] In 2015, during the press conference with President Putin, she openly defined the Russia's annexation of Crimea as "criminal."[497]

To ensure domestic support, Merkel gave Steinmeier "the green light for his attempts to find a cooperative solution to the crisis."[498] Involving him as a 'good cop,' Merkel not only balanced her "sticks" approach toward Russia but was able to show Russia's unwillingness to find a peaceful solution to the conflict.[499] According to Speck, "by exhausting diplomatic means, [Steinmeier] demonstrated that Russia, not Germany or the EU, was to blame for the lack of cooperation. This, in turn, made a shift to more robust measures such as sanctions appear inevitable."[500] Merkel and Steinmeier in a similar fashion worked to minimize Western concern that Germany would favor Russia, while still being able to exercise leverage with Moscow. In this sense, according to Härtel, "the former is trying to convince Germany's Western partners of the sincerity of its commitments to the alliance and international law, whereas the latter is trying to preserve an open channel for Moscow, thereby enhancing its scope for manoeuvre."[501] Consequently, longstanding differences on foreign policy concerning Russia within Germany's coalitional government did not significantly affect the foreign policy outcome. Chancellor Merkel's personal leadership and mastery at finding a compromise with core members of the grand coalition resulted in Germany's unified response to the conflict. Despite her efforts, resolution of the ongoing conflict remains distant.

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496 Speck, "Germany Plays Good Cop, Bad Cop in Ukraine."

497 Angela Merkel, "Pressekonferenz von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel und Staatspräsident Putin am 10 Mai 2015 in Moskau," May 10, 2015, https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2015/05/2015-05-10-pk-merkel-putin.html.

498 Speck, "Germany Plays Good Cop, Bad Cop in Ukraine."

499 Ibid.

500 Ibid.

501 Härtel, "Germany and the Crisis in Ukraine: Divided over Moscow?"

b. Organized Interest Groups

By 2014, the enormous economic interdependence between Germany and Russia had created a strong lobby formed of German and Russian businesses dependent on the other's national markets. Kundnani states that "German companies demand that the German state make policy that promotes their interests; they in turn help politicians maximize growth and in particular employments levels—the key measure of success in German politics."[502] As noted earlier, 300,000 German laborers depend on Russia's market; consequently, "all major German political parties have an electoral stake in good relations with Russia"[503]

German organized interest groups tried but failed to determine Germany's key decisions toward the Russia-Ukraine conflict. According to Forsberg, "the business lobby first resisted the sanctions [against Russia] but then accepted them, albeit with a reminder of their negative consequences for the German economy and hopes for their swift end."[504] During the first stage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, business lobbies predictably sought to prevent economic sanctions against Russia; they "spoke out in favor of dialogue with Moscow and even expressed some understanding for its position."[505] Indeed, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, in May 2014 many officials in Berlin recognized that,

> Some 6,200 German companies, from industrial giants such as Volkswagen to small family-owned machine-makers, are active in Russia, more than those in the rest of the EU combined. Many of those companies, both in public and behind the scenes, have warned that any sanctions affecting the trade with Russia could cost tens of thousands of German jobs and hit the economy hard."[506]

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[502] Kundnani, *The Paradox of German Power*, 104.

[503] Szabo, "Germany's Commercial Realism and the Russia Problem," 121.

[504] Forsberg, "From Ostpolitik to 'Frostpolitik'? Merkel, Putin and German Foreign Policy towards Russia," 39.

[505] Härtel, "Germany and the Crisis in Ukraine: Divided over Moscow?"

[506] Matthew Karnitschnig, "German Businesses Urge on Sanctions against Russia; Vocal Opposition Has Helped Keep Merkel From Endorsing Broader Penalties on Moscow," *Wall Street Journal*, May 1, 2014, https://www.wsj.com/articles/german-businesses-urge-halt-on-sanctions-against-russia-1398990236.

Leading German business giants including BASF SE, Siemens AG, Volkswagen AG, Adidas AG and Deutsche Bank AG expressed their strong opposition to broad economic sanctions against Russia.[507] Eckhard Cordes, a former Daimler AG executive and a chief of the Ost-Ausschuss (OA) lobbying company, stated, "If there is a single message we have as business leaders, then it is this: sit down at the negotiating table and resolve these matters peacefully."[508] Herbert Hainer, chief executive of Adidas, proposed that politicians engage more with Putin: "One has to wonder if someone like Putin should not have been included in the process much earlier, instead of waiting until it was too late."[509] Frank Appel, chief executive of Deutsche Post, said, "One should think in advance about the results of a policy bringing about political change in the forecourt of a great power."[510] Private business, in their view, should not be responsible for U.S. and E.U.'s political faults. Joe Kaeser, chief executive of technology giant Siemens, went even further and just a few days after Russia's annexation of Crimea, on March 26, 2014 privately visited Putin in Moscow where he said that his company "will not let its long-term planning suffer from short-term turbulences."[511] At the end of April 2014, former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, now the chairman of Gazprom's Nord Stream AG, organized the celebration of his 70th birthday in St. Petersburg, thereby reaffirming the close ties between Gazprom and German business.[512] Among the guests were representatives from Wintershall, BASF's gas subsidiary, German power company E. ON SE, as well as Rüdiger Freiherr von Fritsch-Seerhausen, Germany's Ambassador to Russia and Philipp Missfelder, the Foreign Affairs Speaker of the Bundestag grand coalition.[513]

In just a few months, however, the German business lobby shifted to more supportive views on sanctions against Russia. By May 2014, several of Merkel's

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[507] Karnitschnig, "German Businesses Urge on Sanctions Against Russia."

[508] Ibid.

[509] Ibid.

[510] Härtel, "Germany and the Crisis in Ukraine: Divided over Moscow?"

[511] Ibid.

[512] Karnitschnig, "German Businesses Urge on Sanctions against Russia."

[513] Ibid.

meetings with key German business leaders resulted in their support of tougher Germany's decisions regarding Russia.[514] Markus Kerber, director-general of the Federation of German Industries, recognized that Russia's violation of international law could not be tolerated, and that core ideas and values stood above economic interests.[515] The July 2014 MH17 tragedy only strengthened this view, inspiring German business lobbies to support the government's foreign policy decisions toward Russia despite the economic consequences.[516] Core ideas and values and Merkel's personal involvement influenced business lobbies' reaction on economic sanctions against Russia, not the other way around.

D. CONCLUSION

The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict remains one of the main tests of the reliability of Europe's security architecture, as well as unity within NATO and the EU. The foreign policy decisions of the United States and Germany became the cornerstone of the economic and diplomatic Western response to Russia's revisionist ambitions and its brutal violation of international norms. Although the United States and its European allies agreed that Russia's actions in Ukraine are unacceptable, the asymmetry of their interests and power positions relative to Russia led them to take only non-violent retaliatory measures, in combination with an unconditional rejection of a military response. Despite U.S. commitments under the Budapest Memorandum to ensure the sovereignty and territorial independence of Ukraine, the United States was unable to prevent the escalation of the conflict and laid the responsibility of peace negotiations on Germany and France. While the U.S. middle ground response regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict remained mainly driven by geostrategic interests and Obama's realism, Germany's active engagement in conflict resolution marked the renaissance of its ideas-driven approach to foreign policy. The Russia-Ukraine conflict continues to be one of the

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[514] Speck, "Germany Plays Good Cop, Bad Cop in Ukraine."

[515] Markus Kerber, "German Industry Should Speak Hard Truths to Putin," *Financial Times*, May 7, 2014, https://www.ft.com/content/3f73efe6-d5cf-11e3-83b2-00144feabdc0.

[516] "German Industry Lobby Supports Tougher Sanction on Russia," *Reuters*, July 28, 2014, https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-ukraine-crisis-sanctions-germany/german-industry-lobby-supports-tougher-sanctions-on-russia-idUKKBN0FX0I320140728.

main security challenges for the United States and Germany. Even though Western responses to the conflict demonstrated the renewal of American-German unity within NATO and regarding Ukraine, the U.S. and German decisions to take only non-lethal measures confirm that Russia remains their priority relationship, with Ukraine seen as a subsidiary part of these relations.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ukraine came to the forefront of the world's attention with Russia's annexation of Crimea and direct involvement in the insurrection in eastern Ukraine in 2014. Russia's aggression not only led to questioning of the non-militarized U.S. and German response but revitalized interest in prior U.S. and German decisions, including removing Ukraine's nuclear weapons in the early 1990s and keeping Ukraine out of NATO in the late 2000s. Given this new interest, this thesis undertook an analysis of these decisions regarding Ukraine. To remain unbiased, the thesis relies only on U.S. and Western European sources. Scholars offer three broad explanations for U.S. and German decisions regarding Ukraine. The first, rooted in realism, focuses on the two countries' material and geostrategic positions relative to Russia and Ukraine. The second set of explanations, rooted in constructivism, focuses on particular ideas as driving decision makers. Third, scholars suggest two sets of domestic political explanations for foreign policy decision making. One set suggests that presidential and parliamentary systems produce different decisions regarding foreign policy. In the United States, the president has the ultimate voice on foreign policy. In parliamentary systems, the need to form governing coalitions can lead to compromise decisions. The other set of domestic explanations suggests that organized interest groups in the United States and Germany influenced decisions regarding Ukraine to favor their interests.

This thesis evaluates these three sets of Western explanations of U.S. and German decision making regarding three crucial events: the 1992–1994 process of Ukrainian nuclear disarmament; the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit considering Ukraine's path to membership; and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict that began in 2014. It finds that the last 25 years of U.S. and German relations with Ukraine demonstrate different and sometimes inconsistent policies concerning the newly independent state. Both the United States and Germany, this research finds, too often have perceived Ukraine as only a subsidiary part of their broader relations with Russia, making each country's relative power position the underlying, or permissive, cause of both U.S. and German policy decisions. These geopolitical considerations operated as a background factor in all the

cases, but were not necessarily the most important or direct causes of the ultimate decisions. Instead, ideas and domestic political institutions mattered most for some decisions, while U.S. and German material capabilities mattered more for others. This chapter reviews the findings of the case studies and concludes with recommendations for how to improve mutual understanding among the United States, Germany and Ukraine.

A. UKRAINE'S DENUCLEARIZATION

Some scholars have argued that, because of Russian power and proximity, Ukraine made a strategic mistake in abandoning a nuclear arsenal that was the third largest in the world in 1994. In return, Ukraine received security assurances under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum that the United States and the United Kingdom would act as guarantors of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. These promises failed to deter Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, and the Western guarantors failed to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity. The detailed analysis in Chapter II of Ukraine's denuclearization makes clear that the U.S. and Germany saw no alternative for the newly independent state than to relinquish its nuclear weapons. U.S. and German foreign policy decisions toward Ukrainian nuclear disarmament had multiple causes. Geostrategic position and ideas were the most important causes of U.S. and German foreign policy decisions in this case. U.S. decisions were shaped by its superpower position and security interests in preventing new nuclear states. However, it was the different perspectives of the Bush and Clinton teams, and the ideas of an arms control epistemic community that came to power under Clinton, that were determinative of the U.S. foreign policy that ultimately persuaded Ukraine to surrender its nuclear arsenal to Russia. In contrast, German decisions were consistently affected by both its geostrategic position relative to Russia and a powerful set of ideas.

Their respective geostrategic positions and security interests affected U.S. and German decisions regarding the Ukrainian nuclear disarmament and determined the place and role of the United States, Germany, and Russia in the negotiation process with Ukraine. The U.S. global geostrategic position allowed the Bush administration to lead the denuclearization process and put pressure on Ukraine in 1992. Germany, in contrast,

in 1992 was a non-nuclear state with a huge presence of formerly Soviet, now Russian forces in East Germany. This position of weakness led it to support the U.S. and Russian efforts to remove nuclear weapons from Ukraine. For the United States, Ukrainian nuclear weapons were seen as an integral part of the long-standing and complex U.S.-Soviet bilateral nuclear negotiations. Thus, the U.S. decisions toward Ukraine reflected its national security interest in maintaining nuclear stability through consolidation of all remaining nuclear weapons in one post-Soviet state—Russia—that had the best capacity to prevent uncontrolled nuclear proliferation. For Germany, its national security interests were to ensure the stability of Eastern Europe and prevent a potential conflict between Russia and Germany, in the first instance, and between Russia and Ukraine. Germany had to maintain good relations with Russia as the major and neighboring European nuclear power, so long as post-Soviet troops remained in the post-communist countries.

Different U.S. and German sets of ideas and values also provided important foreign policy inputs on Ukraine's nuclear disarmament. In the United States, longstanding ideas about nuclear danger underpinned the U.S. policy of nuclear non-proliferation and strategic arms control during the Cold War. After the Cold War ended, a U.S. arms control epistemic community significantly influenced the Clinton administration's approach, providing the ideas and technical expertise that would guide its policy. This group only influenced foreign policy decision making indirectly during the Bush administration by providing the technical basis for the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Act. After Clinton became president in 1993, this community exercised direct influence on policy through their personal participation in the official negotiations with Ukraine. In Germany, the ideas of nuclear pacifism and non-proliferation reinforced German support for Ukraine's denuclearization as well. These ideas had become dominant as the result of the long-standing activity of the German antinuclear movement, which shaped societal perceptions of nuclear weapons and energy; they would later become a fixture of German politics through the Green party. At the same time, German awareness of deep Russian unease about a reunified Germany contributed to the idea of a special friendship with Russia. The result was to make Ukraine a subsidiary part of Germany's more important relations with Russia.

Domestic politics played a different role in the U.S. and German denuclearization decisions. While the policy differences between the Bush and Clinton administrations were critical factors shaping the disarmament process, the lack of competing views among German coalition members yielded a stable and consistent approach to Ukraine. In the U.S. case, the interagency bargaining process within two different presidents' administrations demonstrated that key decision makers, rather than geopolitical constraints, produced the specific policy outcomes. The Clinton administration moved away from the Bush administration's Cold War thinking and Russia-first policy to a multifaceted view of Ukraine and other post-Soviet republics; its new conceptualization made the deal with Ukraine come to fruition. In the German case, its decision was driven by the consensus among governmental actors that followed the same anti-nuclear and Russia-first ideas.

This case study confirms that the changes in U.S. and German power positions after the collapse of the Soviet Union as well as ideas shaped the sequence and content of their decisions. U.S. decisions in the George H.W. Bush administration reduced Ukraine to a bothersome appendix to Russia; they failed to achieve its desired outcome of Ukrainian denuclearization. The new Clinton administration, in contrast, formulated its approach to Ukraine based on the ideas of the arms control epistemic community that emphasized a multidimensional U.S.-Ukrainian relationship. Germany, preoccupied with Soviet/Russian troops on its newly unified territory, played a supportive role but did not significantly influence the denuclearization process. In contrast, in the next case concerning whether Ukraine should be invited during the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit to begin the long process of joining the NATO alliance, Germany acted as an equal to the United States.

B. UKRAINE "WILL BECOME" A NATO MEMBER

The 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit erupted into controversy when U.S. President George W. Bush decided to push for Ukraine to be offered a Membership Action Plan, contrary to what had been previously negotiated among the allies. The summit dramatically and publicly revealed divergent U.S. and German foreign policy approaches

regarding Ukraine and the compromise outcome—no immediate MAP but a statement that Ukraine "will become" a member of NATO—pleased no one and infuriated Russia's president. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to assess whether the summit's decision not to invite Ukraine to begin a MAP either inspired or prevented Russia's future revisionist activities in Eastern Europe. However, the event did reveal disunity within NATO allies, bringing into question the credibility of the alliance in the face of potential adversaries. The collision of American idealism and German economic pragmatism led to the disagreement between the United States and Germany regarding Ukraine. The U.S. support for Ukraine being offered a MAP reflected the primacy of ideas of democracy promotion and liberty underlying U.S. support for NATO enlargement. This ideological cause contrasts with Germany's decision making process, wherein its economic interests and power relative to Russia, and the influence of coalitional politics, determined the outcome.

While Germany's enormous economic power became the cornerstone of its foreign policy decision regarding Ukraine at the Bucharest Summit, the U.S. geostrategic position had little influence on its decision. For Germany, significant growth of its national economic capabilities caused its transformation into the leading geo-economic power in the European Union, one that exercised embedded hegemony.[517] Consequently, national power and economic interests were the crucial factors in its opposition to the U.S. stance on Ukraine. Even though Germany's power allowed it to be more independent of the United States in foreign policy decisions, its weaker geostrategic position relative to Russia contributed to its fear of possible Russian revisionist reactions to NATO expansion to Ukraine. In opposing a MAP for Ukraine, Germany sought to protect its economic and security interests, once again viewing good relations with Russia as more important than with Ukraine.

Ideas of democracy promotion and freedom played a key role in Bush's support for Ukraine's membership in NATO. In the United States, the decision on Ukraine reflected Bush's ideational approach to foreign policy and the success of an epistemic

[517] Crawford, *Power and German Foreign Policy: Embedded Hegemony in Europe*.

community that favored NATO enlargement. This group of experts, using its direct and indirect influence, provided the rationale and roadmap for the policy of NATO enlargement to the East and the ideological basis for the U.S. decision at the 2008 summit. In Germany, in contrast, longstanding ideas collided with new economic interests. The German decision toward Ukraine revealed an uncomfortable tension between the longstanding idea of special Russo-German relations and the ideas of transatlanticism and European integration as the twin pillars of German security. As NATO enlargement to Ukraine could negatively impact German-Russian economic and energy relations, Berlin chose to protect its economic ties and special relations with Moscow.

Domestic politics played only a complementary role strengthening the primary decisions of the United States and Germany at the Bucharest Summit. In the United States, key officials fell in line behind President Bush's beliefs in promoting democracy via NATO enlargement to the East. In the German case, the grand right-left coalition between the Christian Democratic Union and the Social Democratic Party put the SPD's Steinmeier in charge of the Foreign Ministry. From this strong position, he promoted his party's longstanding pro-Russian policy of Ostpolitik and persuaded Chancellor Merkel to postpone indefinitely a MAP for Ukraine. This position was reinforced through the pro-Russian lobbying efforts of German business interests. While organized interest groups in the United States had little influence on the U.S. decision, business lobbies in Germany significantly contributed to the overall geo-economic and pro-Russian direction of German foreign policy. It is likely that powerful business lobbies caused German politicians to calculate the effect of NATO's decision on Ukraine would have on German-Russian bilateral relations.

The Bucharest Summit confirmed the existence of deep U.S.-German disunity. During the 1990s, U.S. and German decision makers had agreed on the rationale for NATO's eastward enlargement. The Bush administration's inversion of Iraq and neoconservative ideology caused a deep rift with Germany, adding a new vulnerability to the transatlantic security architecture. The allies' disagreement over a path to NATO for Ukraine was caused by the collision of U.S. idealism and German geo-economic realism.

Ukraine acquired a new significance for the two allies in 2014 when Russia invaded Ukraine.

C. RUSSIA'S 2014 INVASION OF UKRAINE

Russia's war against Ukraine raises the stakes for the West's response, as it is not just an issue of Ukraine's bilateral relations with the United States and Germany but rather an international challenge to European peace and the transatlantic security architecture. The United States and Germany were united not only in deeming Russian aggression to be unacceptable but also in limiting their response to economic sanctions, non-lethal aid to Ukraine, and diplomatic resolution of the conflict. At the time of writing, in late 2017, this unified American-European response to Russia's aggressive actions has failed to de-escalate or resolve the conflict. The limited U.S. response and decision to have Germany lead the allied efforts to end the conflict reflect President Obama's pragmatic realism and perception of Ukraine as only a secondary concern to his nation's interests. Germany's active engagement in the peaceful resolution of the conflict, in contrast, suggests a deeper change in Germany's view of Russia and of its own role in European security. Germany turned away from letting its economic interests drive its policy in regard to Russia and Ukraine and returned to its "civilian power" approach as a result of Russia's aggression. Even though Germany demonstrates leadership and tenacity in seeking resolution of the conflict, it is this very idea of Germany as a peaceful, civilian power that has led Germany to favor economic over military power. This is turn physically constrains its ability to undertake military action against other countries, let alone its nuclear armed Russian neighbor.

D. LESSONS LEARNED

The results of this research point to a number of lessons that should be learned and recommendations that should be taken into account in developing Ukraine's bilateral and multilateral relations with Western states.

1. Despite all the debates between realist and liberal theorists, relative power and material interests are important sources of U.S. and German foreign policy decisions toward Ukraine. These factors cannot be ignored if U.S. and German decisions regarding

Ukraine intersect with the interests of Russia. In making decisions regarding Ukraine, the United States and Germany calculate their power positions and security interests relative to Russia. This calculation takes into account Russia's status as a nuclear superpower with the largest military in Europe, the absence of significant U.S. leverage over Russia in the latter's economic and energy relations, the enormous Russo-German economic and energy interdependence, Germany's geographic proximity to Russia, and its non-nuclear status and weak military power. These factors influence the United States and Germany to take policy decisions regarding Ukraine that avoid a significant escalation with Ukraine's more powerful neighbor Russia. Realists would expect the United States and Germany only to change their view of Ukraine if any of the three of them significantly strengthens their economic and military power or if Russia loses its material power. Material factors place definite constraints on the West's support of Ukraine and rule out the use of military force in defense of countries outside the NATO alliance.

2. The constructivist focus on ideas helps us to better understand other, non-geopolitical sources of U.S. and German foreign policies concerning Ukraine when use of force is not a consideration. States' foreign policy decisions are the product of ideas and domestic politics. This finding allows us to know states' interests and priorities in foreign policy making, enabling better prediction in other scenarios of their policy choices. The dominant ideas of the United States and Germany result from domestic social practices, national historical experience, and long-standing mutual cooperation within multilateral institutions. In the United States, epistemic communities may also produce specific policies that promote alternative and innovative ideas or change politicians' existing perceptions of security challenges. Thus, it is highly important to take the role of ideas into account when analyzing previous U.S. and German policies or when seeking to predict their future decisions.

3. The different foreign policy making institutions in democracies significantly impacted how U.S. and German decisions regarding Ukraine were made. The preceding analysis clarifies how the U.S. presidential system allows key members of the U.S. government to initiate and conduct debates over various foreign policy proposals. However, the president's status as the ultimate decision maker determines his last word in

foreign policy choices. Understanding of a president's and his team members' professional experience, as well as a history of previous analogous decisions, may help predict future decisions. The cases examined here demonstrate that when a president has taken too personal an approach to foreign policy decisions, uncontested by other members of the government, the outcomes were not positive for Ukraine. Instead, a debate between key foreign policy officials, with different expertise and views on Ukraine and Russia, might produce decisions more favorable to Ukraine.

Unlike the United States, Germany's foreign policy making institutions within its parliamentary system are highly dependent on the composition of a coalitional government. When one political party dominates the government, the federal chancellor can operate similar to the U.S. president and be the final foreign policy decision maker. In the presence of a coalition government, compromise is to be expected. In cases where there is a grand coalition of two major political parties, a duumvirate of the federal chancellor and foreign minister results, and often implies tension over foreign policy and increased calculation of coalitional support for particular decisions. Thus, the understanding of past and future German foreign policy decisions on Ukraine requires an additional focus on the ideology of political parties that appoint the federal chancellor and foreign minister to the government.

4. Organized interest groups in the United States and Germany are a factor in influencing states' foreign policies, though this study failed to find direct evidence that they are important causes of the decisions examined. Although this factor failed to define U.S. and German decisions in all the cases studied, this may result from their having limited interests in Ukraine's denuclearization and membership in NATO. Their efforts to water down U.S. and German sanctions, however, was evident and somewhat successful, suggesting that their influence may be more considerable on other issues.

5. Unexpected events that need immediate foreign policy decisions, such as Russia's implication in the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight 17, may not coincide with standard foreign policy assumptions and predictions. The MH17 case demonstrated that Russia's aggression directly affected Europe, not just Ukraine. Europeans would not be safe while Russia used military force and backed armed separatists in the Donbass. That

turned off the pragmatic calculation of economic interests and turned on the calculation of all-European security interests.

6. Many would say that treating Ukraine as a secondary interest compared to Russia promoted stability and security in Europe since 1991. However, the Russia-Ukraine conflict demonstrates the opposite. Providing privileges to great powers in their spheres of influences does not necessarily prevent war. For the United States and Germany, Russia's aggression against Ukraine is an important moment to reconsider geostrategic priorities in the European region and develop a new multidimensional approach to Ukraine. Only U.S. and Germany's active and strong involvement in the resolution of the Russia-Ukraine conflict would ensure the de-escalation and stabilization in the region.

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