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# United States Foreign Policy and the Additions of Sweden and Finland to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY AND THE ADDITIONS OF SWEDEN AND  
FINLAND TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

by

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B.A. May 2016, Longwood University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY  
May 2023

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## ABSTRACT

### UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY AND THE ADDITIONS OF SWEDEN AND FINLAND TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

Kara Gwendolyn Broene  
Old Dominion University, 2023  
Director: Dr. Richard Maass

Following the reemergence of Russia as an aggressive power to the east and the invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, Sweden and Finland have decided to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). With the additions of Sweden and Finland, the security dynamic of the Baltic will change. The United States (US) has been the backbone of NATO since the Soviet Union fell and as such, NATO has continued to be a major part of US foreign policy (USFP). If Finland and Sweden join NATO, then one of three scenarios will occur within USFP: (1) USFP in the Baltic becomes less involved because of the cohesive military presence created by NATO in the Baltic Sea becoming a sufficient deterrent to outside aggression; (2) USFP in the Baltic becomes more involved because NATO, while supplemented by Finnish and Swedish forces, is still not a strong enough deterrent to outside aggression; (3) the security dynamic remains the same, and the level of US involvement in the Baltic does not change as outside actors still pose a general threat to the border nations. This research outlines and evaluates these three scenarios through the use of alliance theory, current and past events, and comparative analysis. With the use of five variables based in alliance theory, this research ascertains that scenario (1) is the direction USFP will go as Finland and Sweden aid in crafting a cohesive deterring force allowing USFP resources to be focused elsewhere while still providing the Article 5 security guarantee.

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This thesis is dedicated to all the people who inspired and helped me through this process, all of you have been an inspiration and your faith in me has meant everything to me. To my family: my Mom, Diane, thank you for being my sounding board, my editor, and my cheerleader; my Dad, Brian, thank you for being a stalwart force of support and love for me in this process; my sister, Brie, thank you for being my biggest fan and hype-woman, your unwavering optimism was a lifeline for me. To my friends: Cassy and Casey, you ladies knew what I was capable of and pushed me to remember it, your friendship dragged me through the hard parts and celebrated with me in the good; Amanda, Annie, Brooke, Kiki, Sam, and Lindsay, even when you had no idea what I was talking about, thank you for the support, love, faith, and willingness to listen, it meant everything to me. Finally, to my mentors, who both aided me in starting this journey: CAPT Liz Higgins (USN), you were behind me from the beginning of this process, you helped me morally and intellectually by being the amazing leader you are and encouraging me to go for what I wanted and achieve it; and finally, the instigator of my love of theory, Dr. William Harbour; I wish I could properly articulate what your influence has meant to me over the years and how your lessons have influenced my life personally and academically, I hope you see something of your teachings in this work, it would not exist without you. To all my other friends and family, thank you for the constant messages of belief and support, they got me through.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of professors have influenced and aided me in this work, for which I am eternally grateful. First and foremost, my advisor, Dr. Richard Maass, thank you for your guidance and endurance over the many versions and edits that eventually became this thesis. I threw a lot at you, and you helped me turn it into something great. Your expertise and courses in USFP were indispensable to this research. Dr. Regina Karp, thank you for being a guiding force since I joined this program and your continued support throughout it. Your courses made me view my research in a new, more collective, light, and provided me with the perspective that enabled me to write this work. Your feedback and critiques only served to make my work, and myself as an academic, better. Professor Aaron Karp, thank you for your kind words and your constructive criticisms, your expertise in theory was invaluable to this research. Feel free to use this to attest to your students that your papers for theory make the difference. To my entire committee, thank you for your time, I know this was rather long, and for your feedback, it all served to make my work and I better.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

With the growing probability that Sweden and Finland will ascend to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership, how will their addition effect United States foreign policy (USFP) in the Baltic Sea region and in Europe? This is imperative to USFP because Europe has always been central to US security but with the resurgence of Russia that security is threatened; and the US needs to know if Europe, and in particular the Baltic Sea region, is capable of deterrence without the US. Depending on the effects of Sweden and Finland on NATO, there are three scenarios that the future of USFP may take: (1) USFP in the Baltic becomes less involved because of the cohesive military presence created by NATO in the Baltic Sea becoming a sufficient deterrent to outside aggression; (2) USFP in the Baltic becomes more involved because NATO, while supplemented by Finnish and Swedish forces, is still not a strong enough deterrent to outside aggression; (3) the security dynamic remains the same, and the level of US involvement in the Baltic does not change as outside actors still pose a general threat to the border nations. This thesis will conclude that scenario (1), USFP will become less involved is most likely based on five variables: burden sharing, entrapment, strategic culture, reassurance against abandonment, and deterrence. Of these five, three, burden sharing, strategic culture, and reassurance against abandonment, suggest scenario (1). The other two, entrapment and deterrence, suggest scenario (3). Because none of the variables are categorized as scenario (2), there is minimal evidence to suggest the US will become more engaged in the Baltic Sea. This is subsidized by the two scenario (3) variables: entrapment and deterrence. Analysis indicates that if Sweden and Finland increase their spending when they join NATO, as they have stated they intend to do, and prove themselves to be loyal military allies, both variables will shift to scenario

(1). This would further benefit the US and strengthen the likelihood of less US involvement in Europe.

The Ukraine War's recency and its subsequent effects have created a gap in the literature on alliances, international relations, US foreign policy, and European security. I aim to close this gap some with my analysis of the possible changes to USFP after Finland and Sweden ascend to NATO. This analysis encompasses the period from the end of the Cold War in 1991 to the present. My conclusions on USFP are not for next year but are projected for 10 years from now. The goal of this thesis is to address several questions: based on NATO history, what form will USFP take in 10 years? Why does the US wish for less European investment? Of the three NATO ascension scenarios posited, which seems most likely? How will Russia, the biggest threat to European security, respond to Finland and Sweden's addition to NATO? The answers to these questions should predicate discussion for anyone involved in USFP and especially those NATO allies concerned with US involvement in European security.

The US currently holds the position of unipole in the international community. This means the US "controls a disproportionate share of the politically relevant resources of the system...faces no ideological rival of equal status or influence, even if ideological alternatives do exist, they do not pose a threat to the unipolar power's role as a model for others" (Gautam 2014, 35). As such, the US has capabilities to overcome any other state in military engagements, and this shapes the perceptions and actions of other states (Gautam 2014). Consequently, the West and US allies rely on American hegemony for their security guarantee from threats from other states or non-state actors (Owen and Rosecrance 2019).

Within this research I make only a few assumptions, states are rational actors and Russia is still a credible threat. There are four caveats to this research. I am unable to know who the next

US president will be, much less what kind of USFP they will have and therefore, cannot foresee an unexpected event; I am predicting based current trends and data. This work will not discuss why or how the US is pivoting to Asia. The Pivot is simply the most prominent of many USFP options open if there is a change in USFP toward Europe. This is not a commentary or critique of NATO missions, structure, or viability, in this context, NATO is a tool of USFP. Finally, this thesis avoids the topic of nuclear weapons. Nuclear proliferation and deterrence are debates well beyond the scope of this work.

While the Theory chapter of this thesis will provide most necessary definitions, there are a few requiring immediate attention. First, and most important, is *alliance*. In this context, an alliance is a formal alignment between two or more states, bound by a treaty, to combine resources to achieve their military or economic aims. I have narrowed the definition to fit NATO as I will not be working with any informal alliances. *Variables* will refer to any of the five theoretical elements of this work: burden sharing, entrapment, strategic culture, reassurance against abandonment, and deterrence. *Indicators* will refer to the indicators within each variable that make the theoretical element visible in international politics (i.e. GDP percentage for burden sharing or military exercise for reassurance). There is also some specificity about geopolitical lines. Baltic states, Nordic states, and border states are often used interchangeably, but within this work they will specify particular groups of nations. *Baltic states* refers to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, but *Baltic Sea states* will also include Poland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland specifically when referring to activities in the Baltic Sea as deterrents to Russia. *Nordic states* will refer to one or any combination of Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland. Finally, the *border states* are prone to change but will refer here to the current owners of the title: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary,

Romania, Bulgaria, and sometimes Türkiye. These nations create the geopolitical border of NATO to the east, mostly with Russia or its allies/neighbors, and are the locations of increased NATO presence since the 2014 Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The layout of this thesis is meant to lead the reader along the same theoretical paths I did in my research. Chapter 2 details USFP in Europe and NATO, reasons the US might want less investment in Europe, NATO expansion, Russian responses to expansion, the Ukraine War spurring Sweden and Finland to action, and the history of Russian antagonism in the Baltic states. In Chapter 3, I will address the basics of alliance theory since my variables are drawn from this literature. Chapter 4 contains my methodology. Chapter 5 through 9 will evaluate the five variables. Within each variable chapter, I will give examples of each variable occurring and/or not occurring historically. Further, I will seek indicators for a particular scenario and evaluate its implications for USFP. In the conclusion, I will summarize the discussion and analysis and propose deductions. I will complete the analysis with what incentives the US will face for each scenario, and which is currently indicated to occur.

I acknowledge that my previous research on the Baltic Sea and Russia and surrounding regions will predispose me toward USFP in the Baltic becoming less involved because NATO's cohesive military presence in the Baltic Sea becomes a sufficient deterrent to outside aggression. However, I believe the variations in literature are enough to indicate a more likely outcome despite my predisposition. This research is relevant to anyone studying or interested in US Foreign Policy, NATO, Nordics, the Baltic, Russia, and alliances. It is relevant due to the rise of Russian aggression and the additions of Sweden and Finland to a formal security alliance after decades of non-alignment. Much of the writings of previous decades, especially that coming after each NATO expansion, stated that Sweden and Finland would never join NATO, and in

fact, were actively working toward preventing the need ever to do so. The fact that there is once again war in Europe has obviously shaken their resolve to remain militarily non-aligned, and it is important to understand changes that will bring to USFP.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONTEXT

European security is vital to US security, and as such USFP includes Europe in its construction. This has been true since the end of World War II. However, the US is not as involved in European security as it was at the end of the Cold War in 1991, much less in 1949 when NATO formed. Europe has rebuilt and flourished under US tutelage and oversight and is now comprised of mostly prosperous economies and well-trained militaries governed by democratic governments. It is important to provide a baseline of current US involvement in Europe, both in and out of NATO to start the analysis on. Obviously, this has increased sharply with the Ukraine War, but it is the investment trends since 1991 that are of particular interest to this work. With this baseline, the aspects involving USFP's use of NATO in Europe and in the Baltic bear description to supplement the discussion of Sweden and Finland in this argument. The next consideration is why the US might wish to become less invested in Europe. In this case, the US "Pivot to Asia" and domestic concerns especially with the rise of the "America First" movement around the 2016 election are germane. Next, a basic history of NATO expansion and the Russian responses to these expansions are vital to gauging Russian reactions. It is also important to consider how Sweden and Finland fit into the larger European security picture. Finally, I will discuss Sweden and Finland's history with decades of Russian antagonism and their decision to abandon military non-alignment and join NATO following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

NATO's formation in 1949 was in response to the rise of the Soviet Union. NATO over the decades has become highly institutionalized and has expanded from 12 founding members to 30 as of 2022 (Member Countries 2022). The Alliance was designed to counterbalance the threat

of the Soviet Union and later the Warsaw Pact. As such, the US provided a security guarantee to the members, should they be attacked, in the form of Article 5 of the Atlantic Treaty: any Alliance member who was attacked unprovoked would be aided by all other members of the Alliance. After 1991, NATO began to engage in out-of-area missions beyond the European continent because it was no longer threatened by the Soviet Union. While these efforts continue, the majority of NATO has returned its attention to European security since Russia seized Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and then invaded Ukraine in 2022.

Background data on military capabilities in the Baltic provides perspective within this research. The information below is based on 2022 and 2023 reports, statistics, and military websites. Obviously, Russian numbers have changed, but with the ongoing war in Ukraine, no one is completely honest about military capabilities. The goal here is to evaluate each actor at full capacity before conflict because that provides the best-case scenario numbers, particularly for Russia, for any potential conflict in ten years.

As of 2022, NATO had 40,000 troops in the Eastern Flank, defined as the Baltic States, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, with 130 aircraft at high alert and 140 allied ships in the surrounding seas. Each of the eight battlegroups within the border nations included allied troops from multiple nations as well as host nation troops. Both were sometimes supplemented by air defense weaponry. (NATO's Eastern Flank 2022). In the air there were planes from NATO and 15 other nations including the US with primary airbases in Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, and Bulgaria, and about 30 aircraft in the air at any time (AIR DOMAIN - MAP 2022). Statista provided overall numbers: NATO had 5.4 million active personnel, 20,723 aircraft, 14,682 tanks, 115,855 armored vehicles, and 2,049 ships (NATO Russia Military Comparison 2022). At 130,500 and 79,300 troops, Poland and Romania respectively held the



majority of NATO troops in the Eastern flank (Number of NATO troops in eastern member states in 2022). In comparison, statistics based on data from February 2022 stated that Russia had 1.35 million active troops, 4,173 total aircraft, 12,420 tanks, 30,122 armored vehicles, and 605 ships (NATO Russia Military Comparison 2022).

It is notable that NATO is going to increase some of the battlegroups to brigades as needed, a three- to four-fold increase decided at the Madrid Summit in 2022 (Madrid Summit Declaration 2022). Based on the Global Fire Power Index, with the additions of Swedish (ranked 37<sup>th</sup>) and Finnish (ranked 51<sup>st</sup>) militaries, NATO can expect an additional 38,000 active-duty personnel each, 205 and 166 aircraft, 121 and 239 tanks, 14,088 and 5,368 vehicles, and 367 and 246 ships respectively (GFP 2023; GFP 2023). With formidable militaries in their own right, Sweden and Finland bring considerable lethality to a military alliance.<sup>1</sup> These numbers come as both nations have promised to increase their defense spending in response to the ongoing Ukraine War to supplement their sophisticated military and intelligence capabilities (Basu 2022).

## 2.1 US BASELINE IN EUROPEAN SECURITY

My intent in this section is to demonstrate the US's investment in European security since the end of the Cold War. History, statistics, policy, and summary of events and agreements are all integral to this. I will briefly recap and then factor the numbers, administration changes and agreements to which the US is currently party in Europe. This creates a baseline from which to compare the variables and indicators within the later analysis. We must determine whether the US will become more or less involved in Europe or that no change will occur with the additions of Sweden and Finland to NATO.

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<sup>1</sup> These numbers do not include the reserves within the countries, which are substantial due to conscription.

Since the end of the Cold War in 1991, US investment in Europe has slowly declined. The US was not the only country dialing down its defenses. Most of NATO and its allies were doing the same as the other superpower, the Soviet Union, was no longer a security threat. This decline was reversed slightly by 9/11 and the US's War on Terror, but defense spending continued to fall with the Great Recession in 2008 and European states' implementation of austerity measures. The US had always been the biggest spender in the Alliance and started to increase again after 9/11, but the gap was becoming rather disconcerting. The US was still cycling troops through Europe and participating in training exercises with the rest of NATO and other allies, but European NATO members seemed to be less invested--until 2014. When Russia appropriated Crimea and then invaded Eastern Ukraine, NATO's European members perked up politically, and so did their spending. Still, only a few states met the standard of 2% of GDP to be spent on defense; while not dependable, the percentage of GDP spent on defense is widely used as a standard of equal measurement within NATO. Considering the asymmetric relationship between NATO members and the US, the following paragraphs provide substantiation for US involvement in Europe. This will be the context to assess more/less/same amount of US involvement in Europe post-ascension.

As of October 2022, the US had 100,000 troops in Europe and was participating in the Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Romanian battlegroups. It was the lead nation in the Polish battlegroup (NATO's Military Presence in the East of the Alliance 2022). Most of the American troops in Europe are in Germany, followed by Italy and the UK, then 7,000 rotate through the NATO forces (US Personnel in Europe 2022). Clearly, the US is committed to the NATO alliance.

USFP is known to change based on who the president is, and since 1991, the US has had six: President George H. W. Bush, President Bill Clinton, President George W. Bush, President Barack Obama, President Donald Trump, and President Joe Biden. While individual commitments to the Alliance have varied since 1991, all of these presidents have enabled NATO actions in some way and have faced some kind of conflict with NATO by their side. George H.W. Bush was in office during the reunification of Germany, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the Gulf War; Bill Clinton oversaw the expansion of NATO and the rebuilding of Russia; George W. Bush battled 9/11 and the 2008 financial crisis; Barak Obama saw Russia annex Crimea; Donald Trump faced the COVID-19 pandemic; and so far, Joe Biden has dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic and the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. The US had not abandoned Europe, but it had decided to concentrate its energy elsewhere now that its allies were capable of taking care of themselves. Russia's annexation of Crimea and instigation of conflict in eastern Ukraine in 2014 brought the narrative back to Europe after two decades fighting international terrorism. Russia has once again proved itself to be a threat to the liberal order, and the US is needed to counter it.

The US has European obligations other than NATO. The State Department has a document listing all of the treaties the US was party to between 2020 and 2022. It is 60 pages long (Treaties in Force 2022). According to the State Department, in 2022 there were 56 agreements, 22 with European states, not including multilateral agreements. Of those, more than a dozen were military related. In 2021 there were 75 agreements; 32 were with European states and 7 were military related. One of these was an extension of a 2010 arms agreement with Russia. (Treaties and Other International Acts Series (TIAS) 2023). These numbers illustrate that

the US is not suddenly becoming reinvested in Europe; there were more agreements made between the US and European nations in 2021 than in 2022.

Twenty-plus years of relative peace in Europe made NATO members complacent in their defense spending. Even the US decreased defense spending after 1991 and until after 9/11, but most European allies continued to decline in theirs. US presidents since 1991 have worked with NATO in Europe or in joint efforts to the benefit of the alliance. Even now, the US is continuing to make new and renew old agreements with its European allies. It is fundamental that the US is invested in Europe and has to be present for the security guarantees to be effect. The US is not currently propping up or protecting any state alone; it is a joint effort between the allies. As the threat in Europe escalated, the US increased its contributions with the rest of the Alliance and even prompted a few to join it in support of Ukraine. This provides a baseline for this analysis.

## 2.2 US FOREIGN POLICY THROUGH NATO AND IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

USFP has been enacted through the institution of NATO, and specifically, the USFP actions or lack thereof, in the Baltic since 1991. NATO is an important tool for USFP, allowing the US unfettered access to European elites who can aid the US in shaping and achieving desired policies for a relatively small price (Webber et al. 2017; Rapp-Hooper 2020; Webber 2009; Song 2016; Testoni and Thompson 2021). Through Sperling's work, the influence that the US liberal security system has had on the institution is evident: members turn to NATO for regional collective security, for discussing internal issues, and for similar internal national security cultures created like NATO policies (Webber et al. 2017; Webber 2009). USFP influence is particularly strong in the North Atlantic Council (NAC), allowing it to communicate with and directly influence other nations within the Alliance which has resulted in most of the major changes within NATO originating from the US (Webber 2009).

While Georgia's and Ukraine's conflicts will be discussed throughout this thesis, their only relevance here is that they were members of Partnership for Peace (PfP) seeking Member Action Plans (MAP) into NATO with US backing. This research is less concerned with the semantics of the conflicts and more with the resultant theory and literature. The fact that the US endorsed them at one point demonstrates the states as being a part of USFP through NATO. NATO, and the US by extension, was accused of recklessness and bringing Russia down on Georgia's head though it certainly was not the only reason for conflict (Lanoszka 2018). In regard to the recent Ukraine war, a NATO statement one year after the start demonstrates USFP and the line it has taken in participating in the war. This included criticizing Russia for violating international law, accusing Russia of responsibility for the war, condemning Belarus directly (and others indirectly) for aiding Russia, enunciating the Russian threat to global security, and delivering the line that "Russia's energy blackmail, its impact on global food supplies...demonstrate clearly Russia's disregard for international norms and the welfare of billions of people around the world" (NATO on One Year Ukraine War 2023, 4). The statement concludes with a reassertion of the Article 5 security guarantee and aims for closer ties with Ukraine, the exact opposite of what Russia wanted (NATO on One Year Ukraine War 2023). There is no way to know how much influence US representatives had on that press release, but there is uncanny similarity to the phrasing and those statements put out by the White House suggesting a high degree of coordination between American leaders and NATO.

When NATO expanded, incorporating the countries that would create a new NATO border, it also integrated states needing help before they would be fully capable of supporting their own portions of the alliance burden. When this expansion began under the Bush and Clinton administrations, it was seen as expanding the democracy and the liberal values of the US

and the West into bereft formerly communist nations, which was, at the time, more important than burden sharing (Rapp-Hooper 2020; Webber 2009; Testoni and Thompson 2021). This was recognized as a potential problem but was deemed worth it, even though the Baltic states were effectively indefensible (Rapp-Hooper 2020). The US wanted to expand its democratic influence, a relic from the Cold War mindset, and by the time of the Big Bang, the US needed as many allies as it could rouse for its out-of-area missions.

The most important consequences of out-of-area operations were that the cohorts were formed with coalitions of the willing; member states could participate or not without consequence; and the missions opened the doors to participation of non-NATO members. These out-of-area missions were an effort to protect and/or spread the liberal communities' ideology and strategic culture which engendered support from non-NATO liberal states (Webber et al. 2017). This expansion of members, geography, and mission only further unnerved Russia (Song 2016).

Although the US never recognized the Soviet Union's dominion over the Baltic states, prior to the end of the Cold War, the US had little interest in the Baltic Sea. Once the Soviet Union collapsed, the US saw an opportunity for economic and political partisanship with the new democracies and supported them in their efforts to throw off the Soviet mantle. The State Department created the "Baltic Action Plan" in 1996 as a means of doing this and integrating the states into Europe through three tracks: integrating the Baltic states into European institutions; creating and nurturing a good relationship with Russia so as not to antagonize it; and making efforts via the US to bring the Baltic states closer economically, politically, and defensively (Meyer 2000). The US then aided the nations in declaring their own sovereignty and supported their efforts to join NATO (Meyer 2000). While unable to match the might of the US

economically or militarily, the Baltic Sea allies are capable in their own right. Smaller states are often strategically important by sitting in a geographically significant place, being capable of burden sharing and relieving commitment pressures, and facilitating niche abilities (Krebs 1999; Rapp-Hooper 2020; Song 2016; Michta 2004). This is no less true for the Baltic Sea states. The geographic advantages of full NATO control of the Baltic Sea alone are a significant benefit to USFP.

When the US under Clinton threw its support behind the Baltic states, there was a significant number of people who feared that by doing so the US had undermined the collective defense goals of NATO. Nations unable to take care of themselves were not a benefit to a defense alliance, but a burden. A NATO study on the enlargement of the Alliance concluded that enlargement did provide further stability and security to NATO (NATO 1995). The document stipulated that for new members the military must be controlled by civilians and democracy; they had to resolve all their ethnic and territorial disputes; they had to abide by the values of democracy and liberalism; and they were economically sound to share their portion of the burden acquired when joining NATO (NATO 1995; Meyer 2000).

In essence, NATO proved the argument that the new members were unable to share the economic burden, but because they could fix or meet all the other requirements, it was politically worth proceeding with the ascension. With the US's ability to use NATO to achieve its foreign policy goals, it is important for USFP to take note of the advisements and learning experiences from past expansions. The US and NATO did not heed all of the suggestions that the enlargement report suggested and consequently supported the new nations far more than intended. If NATO and the US stand by these recommendations in the present day, they

hopefully will not have the same problems with Sweden and Finland and will be able to enjoy the benefits of alliance growth from the start.

### 2.3 US PIVOT TO ASIA AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

The “Pivot to Asia” and domestic politics are not the only reasons the US may want to withdraw from Europe. However, these two concerns can be representative because they are both prominent in the literature and widely discussed in politics today, rendering them visible and accessible for study. China’s rise has been slow and evident since the turn of the millennium, but the US first openly announced a major policy shift toward Asia when President Barack Obama spoke to the Australian parliament in 2011 and declared the US a Pacific power (Remarks By President Obama to the Australian Parliament 2011). The US began to cut the defense budget and realign military personnel to fit the Pivot to Asia foreign policies (Korteweg 2013; Gray 2013). Obama clarified the following year that the US was by no means abandoning NATO which had supported the US in its out-of-area missions, but that the adversarial pool had grown, and USFP needed to do so as well (Remarks by the President on the Defense Strategic Review 2012). While much of the military shift has slowed due to the Ukraine War, the US has not altered its position about the shift from Europe to Asia.

If there is one thing on which authors writing of American alliances seem to agree, it is the relevance of using USFP to restrain China economically or militarily (Rapp-Hooper 2020; Song 2016; Brooks, Ikenberry, and Wohlforth 2012; S. Walt 1997; Lanoszka 2022; Bağbaşıoğlu 2021; Sandler and Hirofumi 2012; Korteweg 2013). China views the US as a power in decline and seeks to exploit that advantage by promoting itself into a regional hegemon. This shift began with control of the South and East China Seas. Having gained significant control over those areas, China has progressed to the remainder of Asia and the world through President Xi



Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with \$575 billion in projects spanning 70 countries (Rapp-Hooper 2020). To date, China poses more of an economic threat than a political one to the US, but considering Russia's aggression, USFP is observing China as it becomes a regional hegemon. China has learned from Russia how to circumvent the *casus foederis* of its neighbors' alliances with the US enough to antagonize and assert dominance but not enough to engage the US directly. China has been terrorizing US Navy vessels near its shores since 2009, though (Rapp-Hooper 2020). Direct conflict with China is inadvisable much less necessary. With the US turning more of its foreign policy to Asia, the US has a better chance of managing China so that both sides are content with the outcome (Rapp-Hooper 2020).

According to the United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), the US has 375,000 military and civilians under its command between India and the US west coast including 36 nations, five of whom have mutual defense treaties with the US. The Navy comprises 200 ships (5 carrier strike groups included), nearly 1,100 aircraft; the Marines have two Expeditionary Forces and an additional 640 aircraft; the Air Force boasts another 420 aircraft; the Army has a corps and two divisions in addition to 300 aircraft; and 1,200 Special Operations personnel operate there (USINDOPACOM 2023). It is also well-funded. In 2021, the US designated \$7.1 billion for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative (PDI), more than the Biden administration requested. The PDI is designed to renovate and modernize US forces and facilities in the Asia-Pacific region (Nakamura 2021). According to Department of Defense 2023 predictions, PDI will have \$6.1 billion in 2023 for "modernizing and strengthening DoD's presence; improving logistics, maintenance, and pre-positioning; carrying out exercises, training, and experimentation; improving infrastructure; and building defense capabilities of allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region" (FY2023 Pacific Deterrence Initiative 2022). This is an

enormous part of the US forces dedicated to the Pacific, and with billions invested to increase force productivity, there no doubt that despite European obligations, the US is dedicated to the Pivot to Asia.

Domestic politics drive international politics, and therefore, they heavily influence international institutions like NATO (Webber et al. 2017). While Obama pushed for a change of scenery, Trump pushed in many directions at once, particularly back at China and Europe. By instigating a trade war with China and accusing NATO allies of free riding, Trump reflected the grievances of a portion of the American populace that has arisen since the end of the Cold War and advocated for USFP restraint (Rapp-Hooper 2020; Lanoszka 2022; Gholz, Press, and Sapolsky 1997). Labeled an “America First” foreign policy, the Trump administration threatened that if allies did not pull their weight and do business fairly, the US would keep its money and investments and put them back into the homeland. Nothing will ever be as important to the US as the homeland.

The “America First” foreign policy can be considered a combination of restraint and retrenchment. This policy follows the slowly growing number of Americans who weary of the US as the world’s police. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the 2008 financial crisis were the breaking point for many Americans. Elements of this policy have been around since WWII: backing out of conflicts that do not directly affect American national security, allowing states to fight their own wars within their borders, and focusing the extra manpower and treasure on domestic problems (Blinken and Kagan 2019). As I will demonstrate later, burden sharing and the US’s carping about it is nothing new within NATO, only that Trump took a more aggressive and direct approach to it than his predecessors (Lanoszka 2022). This avenue has captured his supporters’ attention as well as the attention of the rest of the US which increased its notice

without a real understanding of how burden sharing actually works. Calls by the populace to take the NATO-allocated money and keep it to help Americans' needs has subsequently emerged.

The combination of the "Pivot to Asia" and "America First" foreign policies place pressure on USFP to move away from Europe and focus on greater concerns. If European security can be handled mostly by Europeans, this enables the US to address and invest in these foreign policies.

#### 2.4 NATO EXPANSION AND RUSSIAN REACTIONS

Deterring Russia is a major USFP goal; as such, the history of NATO expansion and how Russia has reacted to those expansions is vital because prior Russian reactions could indicate Russian headspace on the ascension of Sweden and Finland. NATO expansion is predicated on Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty which states that any "European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area" is welcome to apply to join. Any application must be approved unanimously by the current NATO members (Member Countries 2022). The Alliance's expansion is a rational step since the core efforts of NATO outside of security are the preservation and spread of liberal ideas and policies; absorbing and initiating former adversaries from the post-Soviet states is logical, though highly controversial (Webber et al. 2017; Meyer 2000). What makes Sweden and Finland different is that the two states, who have been militarily non-aligned for decades, have decided to join what Russia sees as the largest threat to its security because of Russian actions. While Sweden was never under Soviet control, Finland was party to a friendship treaty with the Soviets which granted some Soviet authority over Finland without Finland technically negating its neutrality. It is the abandonment of neutrality by these two states that seems to disturb Russia because it adds security factors that Russia had not needed to consider previously.

These additional security parameters are often referenced in the expansion literature as Russia's reason for disgruntlement. By expanding the Alliance, NATO added more military, strategic, and economic capabilities as well as those capable of burden sharing and those who would struggle to do so. Expansion also makes a useful deterrent a bigger alliance is more costly to an attacker, and it extends geopolitical influence. This research is pertinent. As Cold War concluded in 1991, the Alliance had 16 members, and with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, there were more than a dozen new states motivated to join NATO. The first expansion was official in 1999 with the additions of Czechia, Hungary, and Poland. Next, in what is sometimes known as the Big Bang, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia joined together in 2004. The ascensions slowed after this with Albania, and Croatia in 2009, Montenegro in 2017, and the most recent, North Macedonia, in 2020, bringing the current total to 30 members (Member Countries 2022). This also brought the border of NATO to the Russian border and well into the Russian sphere of influence. The early expansion came at the cost of post-Soviet states with failing economies and antiquated militaries, problems where NATO channeled money to stabilize and modernize (Webber et al. 2017). The older NATO members risked becoming involved in the still-unsettled domestic population disputes. History has since educated us that most of these settled without NATO assistance, but it was an entrapment concern.

Alliances expand when the addition of the new members provides net benefits to the existing members; such benefits arrive in the forms of military abilities and strategic views, financial capabilities, industrial bases, deterrence, and geographic control (Webber et al. 2017; Sandler and Hirofumi 2012). The apprehension is that the costs of adding new members to the Alliance will outweigh any potential benefits. This is where strategic culture registers to

anticipate interoperability. Many of the post-communist states that joined NATO did so without the ability to uphold the same military and economic standards that NATO had required and maintained for decades. Raising these countries to NATO standards took time and money from existing members, meaning that not all of them received as many benefits as expected as the gains were offset by costs (Webber et al. 2017).

Because of concerns and discourse originating from NATO enlargement, NATO published a study on it in 1995, most recently updated in 2008, that includes the purposes and principles of enlargement, how enlargement contributes to security, how to use the PfP and NACC programs, how to ensure enlargement does not alter the purpose of the Alliance, the implications and preparations that new members should take, and an extrapolation of the expansion process from Article 10. The relationship with Russia even has its own subsection under the security chapter. While professing NATO's dedication to the relationship with Russia, NATO also threw in the line, "NATO-Russia relations should reflect Russia's significance in European security and be based on reciprocity, mutual respect and confidence, no "surprise" decisions by either side which could affect the interests of the other...NATO decisions, however, cannot be subject to any veto or droit de regard by a non-member state..." (Study on NATO Enlargement 1995). It concludes by acknowledging Russia's concerns and stating that "military arrangements will threaten no-one." As I will demonstrate, three years later, the Russians were still not convinced (Study on NATO Enlargement 1995). This Russian skepticism evolved into the distrust of the West we see in Russian politics today and is the origin of its aggressive behavior toward border nations.

Early literature was optimistic about the Russo-NATO relationship; the tethering of NATO to Russia with the Partnership for Program (PfP) and the NATO-Russia council were

putting the new Russian democracy on a more liberal path (Weitsman 2004; NATO 1995; Bergquist et al. 2016). As some of those same authors predicted, Russia perceived that the threat level from NATO grew too much and moved in closer proximity. Even with the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act preventing NATO from permanently stationing troops in the expanded nations and the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002 for Russia to discuss grievances with NATO leaders, Russia was still worried (Lanoszka 2022; Weitsman 2004). In the initial expansion period, most of Russia's discontent was confined to politics until Georgia and Ukraine showed interest in joining NATO after the Big Bang (Bergquist et al. 2016). This period from 2008 onward is when Russian rhetoric started to change and became more openly insulting to NATO, exhibiting anger at expansions both current and retroactive (Bergquist et al. 2016). This period saw harsh rhetoric, economic threats, and strategic measures meant to bully NATO members without triggering Article 5 (Bergquist et al. 2016).

In 1997, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic officially joined NATO. Writing at the time, author Sims described Russia's discontent. He portrayed Poland's importance to Russia as a natural invasion route and Russia's effort to empower a pro-Russian government in the post-Soviet collapse. Russian concern over the expansion "to further generate frustration, suspicion, and even anger in Moscow" and accusations that NATO attempted to encircle Russia were already present (Sims 1997, 25). Russia had created a buffer of the post-Soviet states, to keep the West at arm's length; that buffer was now being subsumed by the West instead. Sims's report argues that it would be nearly impossible to balance democratic advances in Russia while ignoring Russian fears of NATO expansion. Indeed, NATO sacrificed one for the other. The really disturbing part is that Sims cautions that should Russian fears be ignored "the country risks following the fate of the two nations that started World War II" (Sims 1997, 56). A few

years later, another author wrote about the Baltic states' possible acceptance amid Russian concerns. Reiterating that Russia had intended to use these states to buffer itself from the West, the author adds that President Yeltsin considered the addition of the Baltic states to be a "red line" as it would be a direct threat to Russian security (Meyer 2000).

The US was interested in the Baltic states in particular for economic and political reasons (Meyer 2000), and this interest is somewhat reflected in reports of more Russian actions such as revising Russian defense policy, assembling the Russian Security Council to discuss sending additional border forces, calling for Russian monitors at NATO bases under construction in Poland and the Baltic states, and voicing resentment and making political moves to block NATO (Gidathubli 2004). While expanding in 2004, NATO officials told Russia it was necessary to fight terrorism; this Russia had endorsed. However, when NATO Secretary General Scheffer met with President Putin to assure him the expansion was not at threat to Russia as NATO fighter jets patrolled the skies of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Russians were once again skeptical (Gidathubli 2004; Boese 2004). Smaller expansions since have not involved border states and therefore have received little attention from Russia, so the increased threat perceived by Russia with the inclusion of Sweden and Finland as border states has precedence.

After Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, Finland and Sweden reversed decades of non-aligned military policy and applied to join NATO. Their applications have mostly been welcomed by NATO members and criticized by Russia. Russia has a history of disgruntlement over NATO expansion that escalated toward aggression dating from 2008. However, Russia has drawn a line in the sand previously and then allowed NATO to walk over it. Considering Russian statements that Sweden and Finland are not direct threats to Russia, this may happen again. However, Russia has also said that expansion provides NATO with the opportunity to expand its

military infrastructure and spread weaponry ever closer to Russian borders, threatening Russian security (Archick, Belkin, and Bowen 2022). As this research will show, Russia is unlikely to directly attack Sweden or Finland as a result of the decision to join NATO, but instead the frequency of antagonizing measures on behalf of Russia toward the Baltic states is more likely to increase.

## 2.5 SWEDEN AND FINLAND IN EUROPEAN SECURITY

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Sweden and Finland finally have public support for NATO applications, causing a drastic alteration in European security (Alberque and Schreer 2022). So, while this work focuses on USFP, Sweden and Finland are vital actors in their own right. It is essential to place them within the European security paradigm and examine their trajectory from military non-aligned to not only joining NATO but also fast-tracking their membership to a defensive alliance. Decades of non-alignment did not end as suddenly as they seemed. The change stemmed from a building threat to the nations' security which would have been overwhelming in isolation and forced them to ally with NATO and gain the security guarantee of the US. In fact, these nations have been neutral so long that they created their own defense forces and regularly integrated their militaries with Western ones in and outside of NATO. Their ascension will not be a total shock to the NATO system because of this.

In NATO, geography really matters for three reasons: the US is across an ocean and poses a minimal threat to European nations; the US is across an ocean, and therefore, it takes longer to come to the aid of a European ally; and NATO's expansion has brought it in proximity and alignment with Russian borders, making Russia feel encircled (Lanoszka 2022; Boese 2004). NATO controls some rather important routes because of the expansions: Turkey holds the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus; Norway and Denmark control the Skagerrak; and Poland, and



Lithuania control immediate access to Kaliningrad (Lanoszka 2022). Finland and Sweden own two vital geographic assets in the Baltic Sea: the Finnish Åland Islands<sup>2</sup> and the Swedish Gotland. The Åland Islands not only block the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia but also, they are within striking distance of any ship wishing to enter the Gulf of Finland and reach St. Peterburg. Once past the Åland Islands, ships are hemmed in by Helsinki and Tallinn on either side of the entrance to the Gulf of Finland (Alberque and Schreer 2022). Then there is Gotland in the middle of the Baltic Sea within striking distance of Kaliningrad but also bridging the gap between mainland Lithuania and mainland Sweden. The additions of Sweden and Finland would mean multiple choke points for NATO to axe Kaliningrad from the rest of Russia. Short of transiting the Arctic, which is not always possible, NATO is capable of isolating Russia from its Eastern naval forces and supply routes.

However, both Sweden and Finland have been sites of Russian aerial incursion in recent years, suggesting that the Russians are aware of their potential and is nervous (Dahl 2017). Incidents of Russian aerial incursion in NATO and non-NATO Baltic Sea countries have occurred since 2013 (Andersson 2018). At one point, a Danish jet departed Lithuania to help Sweden when it was antagonized on a holiday and its military was mostly on leave (Dahl 2017). There has also been a significant increase in Russian cyber-attacks (Dahl 2018). The increasing frequency of these incursions has created tensions in the Baltic Sea that have pushed Sweden and Finland toward NATO for the last decade or more. Without their NATO membership, Russia perceives Finland and Sweden as fair game to torment more drastically than it does NATO allies (Dahl 2017; Dahl 2018). Even with that membership, the incursions are unlikely to stop, and the

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<sup>2</sup> Note that the Islands are actually semi-autonomous demilitarized and neutral area within Finland. However, Finland has promised to protect that neutrality on its behalf and so I include them as an important aspect of Finnish geography (Finnish Government 2022).

addition of Finland alone will add 1,340 km of common land border; together, Sweden and Finland have 7,818 km of coastline to defend against Russia (Alberque and Schreer 2022; Bergquist et al. 2016).

The relationships of Finland and Sweden with NATO have been friendly since 1991, and they were supportive of the Baltic states joining NATO in 2004, supporting them in their liberalization (Michta 2004). In 1994, they were the first nations to sign the PfP; later, they joined the EOP which was launched after the 2014 Wales summit specifically to strengthen Swedish and Finnish ties with NATO in the aftermath of Crimea's annexation, making them top NATO partners (Dahl 2017; Dahl 2018). In fact, the EOP was a Swedish idea that was coordinated with Finland before presentation to NATO as a "gold card arrangement" that rewarded helpful NATO allies and revoked privileges for those who failed in their promises (Dahl 2018). Both nations participated in Libya in which Sweden claimed the title of "partner number one" to NATO, a title for which the two nations compete (Dahl 2017). They hold a substantial portion of the land mass around the Baltic Sea and therefore could make valuable allies in shielding the Baltic states and Poland from Russia. NATO cannot effectively protect the Baltic Sea without the help of Sweden and Finland (Dahl 2018; Alberque and Schreer 2022).

To attest to the interoperability of Swedish and Finnish governments and militaries, the following is based on the US State Department fact sheets on Sweden and Finland. The US and Sweden have four defense agreements (Sweden Fact Sheet 2023). Sweden has sent Ukraine more than \$570 million in aid, sent troops to Iraq and Kosovo with NATO, and participated in US/NATO exercises including Defender Europe, BALTOPS, Northern Wind, Freezing Winds, and Nordic Strike (Sweden Fact Sheet 2023). In 2022, Sweden hosted the BALTOPS exercise for the first time (Joint press point Stoltenberg and Andersson 2022). Extraneous to NATO,

Sweden is involved in five more partnerships for conflicts and programs around the world (Sweden Fact Sheet 2023). Finland is also a member of several defense agreements with the US and is working on a Defense Cooperation Agreement. Finland plays host to the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats as well as several other NATO groups, to include participating in efforts in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and ISIS, and regularly supplying the UN in peacekeeping operations around the world. Finally, Finland has participated in NATO/US/EU exercises to include Aurora, Cold Response, Trident Jupiter, Northern Coasts, and BALTOPS (Finland Fact Sheet 2022). Even without full NATO membership, Sweden and Finland have worked closely with Western militaries, and continue to do so, integrating themselves into air defense exercises in April 2022 (Allies practise air interoperability 2022).

Agreements, military and economic, are obviously the bedrock of Swedish and Finnish security, and this influences their place in Europe as well. Sweden and Finland created the Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEFECO) in collaboration with Denmark, Iceland, and Norway to facilitate defensive measures, burden sharing, and cooperation within the region (Dahl 2018). Sweden and Finland have a bilateral defense agreement, in addition to NORDEFECO, that ensures them some aid if attacked and confers significant interoperability. This agreement includes the creation of a Swedish-Finnish Naval Task Group that should be ready in 2023. Sweden also has bilateral military cooperation agreements with Denmark, Poland, and the UK (Dahl 2017; Conley et al. 2018). These agreements do not have the same defense capabilities as the Swedish-Finnish one but do allow for the two Nordic nations to work closely with and participate in military exercises with these nations (Dahl 2017). In addition, Sweden and Finland have signed Host Nation Support agreements with NATO to allow Sweden and Finland to receive and provide military support with NATO and to host NATO exercises within

their borders (Dahl 2017; Andersson 2018; Archick, Belkin, and Bowen 2022). While the EU is traditionally an economic alliance, both Sweden and Finland have been active in the organization since 1992 and are participants in the EU defense programs (Andersson 2018). In short, Sweden and Finland have participated in NATO and US missions and exercises for decades to ensure a semblance of interoperability (Alberque and Schreer 2022; Archick, Belkin, and Bowen 2022). Authors Dahl and Friis argue that all of these steps taken, and agreements made were to avoid ever having to join NATO at all. Clearly, Sweden and Finland are so unnerved by Russian actions that they know they cannot save themselves, even together.

Despite all of their efforts, some of which were post-2014 (war in Ukraine commenced in 2014) Sweden and Finland were omitted from the NATO Wales Summit discussions. While NATO improved defense of its Baltic Sea allies, Sweden and Finland were left exposed to Russian aggression (Conley et al. 2018). Consequently, Sweden and Finland improved their own defenses although Sweden needed more work than Finland. Finland still had its conscription in effect, something that Sweden had to reinstate, and it had relatively modernized forces (Andersson 2018; Bergquist et al. 2016). Finland in particular had never let down its guard and continued to focus on territorial defense while still supporting international aid missions. Finland has a large navy, and its military forces are internationally acknowledged for being tech-savvy and experts in their fields (Andersson 2018; Bergquist et al. 2016). Sweden, in the post-Cold War era, reduced its territorial defense until recently and focused primarily on its defense industry which made it highly self-sufficient (Andersson 2018; Bergquist et al. 2016; Archick, Belkin, and Bowen 2022). However, since 2014, Sweden has had to reintroduce conscription because the country had become unable to perform territorial defensive measures with the small private forces it possessed (Andersson 2018). Finland still practices deterrence by denial,

possessing forces that should be strong enough to hold their own borders (Bergquist et al. 2016). Consequently, adding Sweden and Finland would greatly enhance Baltic security while allowing them access to NATO's deterrence measures (Dahl 2018). Granted, on multiple occasions in 2022 alone, Russia has presaged consequences should Sweden or Finland join NATO. President Vladimir Putin said that the two states are "no direct threat for us...but the expansion of military infrastructure to these territories will certainly provoke our response..." (RFE/RL 2022). In response to the ascension announcement, Russia moved troops toward NATO borders, but because of the Ukraine invasion, it was not at the expected scale (Alberque and Schreer 2022; Gramer and Detsch 2022).

Sweden and Finland cannot always be clustered; they are sovereign nations. Nonetheless, when Sweden decided to join the EU without informing Finland, Finland was displeased (Dahl 2017), so the fact that they filed together comes as little surprise. However, in light of the opposition some NATO member states have to Sweden in particular, the likelihood of Finland going it alone may be a real possibility. Even if Sweden were removed from this analysis, it would make little difference to the results. Since many of the same actions and policies will occur if one or both nations join NATO, the biggest changes to the arguments will be different numbers, smaller numbers of additional military resources and GDP, a slightly shorter border, and then, theoretically, Sweden and Finland would be unable to work together to free ride or entrap the rest of NATO.

Finland currently is the more promising of the two candidates. In preparation for just such an occasion, the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported on it in 2016. Based on the military statistics above and their *Bündnisfähigkeit*, a realistic preparedness to become a member of NATO, Finland's ascension is fairly straightforward without Sweden (Bergquist et al. 2016).

The biggest problem with Finland going it alone is that it becomes an isolated ally within NATO, captured between an aggressive state and a non-aligned ally. As will be discussed, it may be unlikely though not impossible that Russia will directly attack Finland, but there is no question that Russia will continue its cyber-attacks and land and aerial incursions as a means of trying to prevent Finland's ascension (Bergquist et al. 2016). Because Finland never revoked conscription, it boasts a potential military force of around one million and the military capabilities to practice denial deterrence and hold its own borders (Bergquist et al. 2016; GFP 2023; Archick, Belkin, and Bowen 2022). This ability alone is important to burden sharing and deterrence within NATO. Finland's air force would be a welcome addition to the Eastern European aerial police force that NATO runs, and its military has already proven its interoperability through NATO exercises (Bergquist et al. 2016).

Even though Finland and Sweden have been militarily non-aligned and effectively neutral for decades, they are not defenseless or inexperienced. They regularly take place in UN peacekeeping operations, joined NATO efforts in Kosovo, and aided the US in out-of-area operations. They have created their own defense forces for self-preservation, and while one is stronger than the other, neither are antiquated past the point that an infusion of defense spending cannot modernize it in a few years. Finland and Sweden have been terrorized by Russia for years and as such have made sure that their own military forces trained in exercises with NATO, ensuring access to the US which has the best of everything military. Sweden and Finland have joined organizations and agreements to facilitate their economic prosperity and their security at lower levels. They had been preparing for the possibility of joining NATO for some time because they knew nothing was out of the realm of possibility, hence the Finnish report on joining NATO in 2016. As I will discuss later, all of this effort on their part has led to an aligning

strategic culture and interoperability militarily with NATO. These indicators suggest that the decision to join NATO was not sudden, the breaking point was. Sweden and Finland have been preparing for the possibility of joining NATO for years, they were just hopefully they would not need to do so.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORY

My research concentrates on how the additions of Sweden and Finland to NATO will affect USFP involvement in the Baltic. The nature of how an alliance will affect foreign policy and security policy within a member state is the aspect of alliance theory that will source the chosen variables in the analysis. Under consideration are a few relevant aspects of alliance theory structure, the benefits, and challenges of alliance participation, and a few of the general aspects of alliance literature that define NATO. Also of importance are each of the five variables: burden sharing, entrapment, strategic culture, reassurance against abandonment, and deterrence. Then, in each variable subsection, I will define them, explain how they work, the variations and causes, and why each is relevant to this research. Examples and the applications of each variable are detailed in their respective chapters. This section serves as an overview preceding the methodology.

I focused on the theory literature of alliances in general rather than NATO-specific literature for several reasons. First, I am attempting to avoid author bias toward NATO, not only my own, but also that of the authors before me. NATO is undoubtedly an ideal case for most alliance literature and testing. Consequently, it is saturated with opinions on NATO's effectiveness and/or complications. I wish to avoid much of that and take a fresh-eyed approach to alliance theory regarding NATO. I made a second deliberate restriction regarding the wealth of NATO enlargement literature post-1991. There is a significant difference between enlargement in relative peacetime and enlargement with an imminent threat. Some previous enlargements were motivated by attempts to remove a state from post-Soviet influence in a relatively benign environment; unlike the current conditions, there was no looming threat to the



ascending nation. Russian aggression is the reason Sweden and Finland are joining NATO, making this case of enlargement unique from previous literature. Third, NATO literature is relatively atheoretical in nature, while my research is empirical, and policy-focused.<sup>3</sup>

While Kenneth Waltz gave international relations (IR) theorists the balance of power theory (1979), Stephen Walt expanded it into balance of threat theory for alliance building (1987), and Glenn Snyder took balance of threat theory and wrote the first section of *Alliance Politics*. The second section of the book, on alliance management, is foundational for this research with its description of alliance bargaining. The formation of alliances has some interesting points that will segue into the theory and variables, but because the intention is to project a NATO with Sweden and Finland as allies. With the basics of balance of threat theory, I will utilize Snyder's work as a foundation for the theory of this analysis. While threat can vary by proximity and intentions (S. M. Walt 1987), Russia is the threat to be balanced and deterred in Europe, the latter of which is an important variable.

Considering that the example in this research is NATO, the longevity of the Alliance has encouraged deeper research on the pros and cons of alliances and how they affect security and foreign policy. To focus on the benefits and disadvantages of alliances in general and to institutionalized defensive alliances specifically, much of the analysis follows a neoliberal and realist institutionalist method respectively. In general, alliances benefit members by deterring an attack on any particular member state, and mitigating entrapment risks because a state with allies is understood to be a more expensive adversary in treasure and blood than a state without allies (Lanoszka 2022; Snyder 1997; Kenwick, Vasquez, and Powers 2015) This added expense is acknowledged to be because of enhanced capabilities as a by-product of resource sharing

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<sup>3</sup> I thank Dr. Regina Karp for her notation of this particular reason for my preference of general alliance theory of NATO alliance theory.

(Lanoszka 2022; Snyder 1997) In the event of an attack on a member, that member is able to consult more powerful allies easily before acting (Lanoszka 2022). Finally, any increase in strength, militarily or economically, in one state benefits the whole of the alliance (Krebs 1999).

Institutionalization provides its own benefits in alliances. It enables and promotes business and trade among members, even when the primary goal is defense (Krebs 1999; Webber et al. 2017; Esitashvili and Martín 2020). Upon joining an alliance, each member cedes some sovereignty to the institution of the alliance; therefore, allies have a greater influence on the other members (Lanoszka 2022; Snyder 1997; Webber et al. 2017). However, the ceding of sovereignty facilitates military cooperation, planning, and integration which reduces fear of attack and allows military members to create strategic culture (Krebs 1999; Webber et al. 2017). It reduces the costs of negotiations, maintenance, and other dealings which can make cooperation profitable (Krebs 1999; Webber et al. 2017; Esitashvili and Martín 2020; Snyder 1997; Bearce, Flanagan, and Floros 2006). An institutionalized alliance links distant areas and enables side dealings to make compromise more likely, abandonment less worthwhile and conflict reduced (Lanoszka 2022; Snyder 1997; Bearce, Flanagan, and Floros 2006). It makes cheating or lying to allies very difficult because institutionalized alliances operate with a high level of transparency; this becomes especially relevant under restraint subsection in the chapter on entrapment (Krebs 1999). Alliances also require that leaders and policymakers interact regularly, thus making it harder to avoid issues and easier to come to agreements and form trustworthy relationships (Krebs 1999). Institutionalized alliances can potentially reduce the costs of peacetime and wartime arms (Snyder 1997).

Inversely, there are disadvantages to alliances in general and when institutionalized. For alliances in general there is the obvious risk of entrapment. Particularly, states can become

emboldened by the power of the defender behind them and attack or antagonize the adversary, entrapping the defender and other members in a conflict in which it has no interest (Lanoszka 2022; Snyder 1997). While the other members can try to restrain the ally, any such attempts can be ignored as the sovereignty of another nation must be respected within liberal alliances (Snyder 1997). The other big issue is that smaller members can exploit larger members by paying fewer dues and providing less support but still reaping the benefits; this is also known as free-riding (Lanoszka 2022; Snyder 1997; Webber et al. 2017; Esitashvili and Martín 2020; Rapp-Hooper 2020). Issue linkage can give states more to dispute. This occurs most often when a member is less aligned to the strategic culture than was previously understood (Lanoszka 2022; Krebs 1999). Alliances complicate unilateral decisions; agreements often require allies to consult and at least agree to a majority before taking any action (Snyder 1997). Facilitating meeting and interactions means that personal relationships between elites can form and be used against other members or to influence them (Lanoszka 2018). Finally, there is a fine balance between an ally feeling abandoned and a defender being entrapped trying to reassure the ally, known as the alliance dilemma (Lanoszka 2022; Snyder 1997; Rapp-Hooper 2020). This phenomenon is amplified to the alliance security dilemma wherein the act of reassuring the ally provokes the threat (Lanoszka 2022; Snyder 1997; Rapp-Hooper 2020).

Institutional drawbacks mirror the advantages, and institutionalization can often enhance the negative effects listed above. For example, transparency does not necessarily facilitate more trust. Allies tend to be fairly well informed on the members' capabilities, so there is little to gain (Krebs 1999; Bearce, Flanagan, and Floros 2006). Further, transparency does not equate agreement. While more concerns and grievances may be aired, they are not necessarily resolved (Krebs 1999). In summary, there are a multitude of advantages to alliances that are neutralized

by the multitude of disadvantages. In this research, the alliance in question was established decades ago, has experienced the vagaries above, and so far, all members have made the decision to stay in NATO. In particular, the US and USFP makers have weighed these pros and cons and continued to stand by the Alliance as providing more benefit than harm to the US.

The broad spectrum of alliance literature includes items such as alliance formation and break-up, types of treaties, bargaining, etc., that are irrelevant here for one reason: NATO is already established with well-defined standards. A few characteristics of NATO that are within these parameters are important to note but not significant enough for full discussion: it is a formal defensive alliance with a treaty and therefore a sense of obligation; it has a rational institutional structure (Webber et al. 2017); it was originally designed to balance against the threat of the Soviet Union and the spread of communism. As a defensive alliance, Article 5 of the Atlantic treaty details the *casus foederis* and the type of commitment required. (Snyder 1997; S. M. Walt 1987). As such, the alliance members are interdependent yet with all of them dependent on the US for their security guarantee (Snyder 1997).

Among the many possible variables in alliance theory, in this context, the five most important ways in which the literature indicates alliances shape policies for analysis are: burden sharing, entrapment, strategic culture, reassurance against abandonment, and deterrence. This analysis will omit balancing/bandwagoning and foreign aid (military or economic) for several reasons. First, only one alliance is subject, NATO, and it is a well-established and long-lived institution. While balancing is certainly occurring with Sweden and Finland joining NATO in response to Russian aggression, balancing does not serve the purpose as an indicator of USFP as well as deterrence does. Second, the other half of the argument, bandwagoning, is not applicable in this situation, as Sweden and Finland are not allying with the source of the threat, Russia.

Third, foreign aid is not really applicable to Sweden and Finland because they are well-developed countries militarily and economically, and I can find no statements or documents suggesting that they currently receive foreign aid from the US.<sup>4</sup>

The following sections contain definition and discussion of the five variables pertinent to NATO. The theoretical basis for the five variables is in Snyder's 1997 work *Alliance Politics* where he provides overviews of each and debates their merits which have been supplemented by the literature since then. Note that there are indicators that are applicable to more than one variable: reputation/credibility and ideology/values. This is because they appeared in the literature pertaining to more than one of the variables and as such will be discussed as they apply to the variables in each section. In an attempt to simplify, I use different names for the same thing depending on the variable being discussed.

### 3.1 BURDEN SHARING

For the purposes of this analysis, I define burden sharing as the costs, political, economic, or military, shared between members of an alliance for its formation, maintenance, operations, and conflicts. The alliance burden sharing system runs on reciprocity; any member contributing to the alliance expects to get something in return of the same value, thus placing considerable trust in the alliance. Snyder specifies three types of burden sharing: political, economic, and military (1997). In addition, there are two types of costs: *ex ante* and *post ante*. *Ex ante* are the sunk costs that every member must pay as part of a military alliance such as troop contributions in personnel and arms for those personnel. *Ex post* costs are those that are not needed imminently but which can incite conflict later amongst allies such as political obstacles or budget constraints (Lanoszka 2022).

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<sup>4</sup> This does not include the security guarantees, sometimes termed security aid, the US has recently provided to the nations since the Ukraine War began.

Theoretically, the members have a common security goal, and their populations support the policymakers in this goal, thereby ensuring crucial domestic support for economic and military burden sharing. Each member pays and contributes its fair share to the alliance, and the alliance benefits from every contribution. A state with an economy and population the size of Germany contributes more at face value because Luxembourg is constrained by capabilities, not desire (Hillison 2009). But what a smaller state contributes, commensurately would equal those of the large state. Each member of the alliance strengthens and modernizes its national military to ensure the latest technologies are incorporated in battle plans and so that no one country takes more responsibility for upgrading troops than another. In reality, no two states are exactly the same politically, and every state and policymaker wants what will best secure the country. This sometimes comes at the expense of other alliance members.

No country wants to assume all of the burden. As such, burden sharing's visibility and public interest levels make it an important variable in this analysis. Burden sharing is always an issue in alliances, and as NATO is already asymmetric, it is important to this thesis to see how burden sharing is and should be calculated and what states do to balance the US guarantee of security. The research on burden sharing is condensed here mostly to the theoretical legitimacy of burden sharing concerns, especially with free riding, through quantitative studies. Free riding is when a state that is part of an alliance does not carry its share of the burden. Free rides of the public goods supplied by others, especially in security, have military and non-military connotations.

When political stability is highly valued within an alliance and the alliance is composed of mostly liberal or democratic governments, then special attention must be paid to the political costs. Because a democracy relies on the voices and opinions of the majority, policymakers in

international alliances have a huge constituency to appease. As such, when other allies make requests of those policymakers, they must be aware of the request's repercussions to the domestic politics of the country (Boyer 1993). In fact, leaders will reference alliance requirements and obligations to justify an increase in spending or troop allocations (Hillison 2014; Wesley, 2017).

Economic burden sharing in this research is referring to both types of costs including everything a member must remunerate the alliance except for troops and armaments including non-military personnel, infrastructure, and any other cost of maintaining a massive institution. Beyond balance of threat theory, the theory of collective goods is also crucial, either public or private goods. Collective goods theory references the political economy within an alliance, specifically burden sharing. If one country provides security to the group, the entire group benefits whether or not the other members chose to participate; this constitutes public goods (Snyder 1997; Lanoszka, 2022; S. W. Kim 2012). Private goods are those that can be produced and consumed by a single state. "NATO is first and foremost a cost sharing arrangement, provider of public goods, set up by rational states with overlapping strategic interests (Webber et al. 2017, 202)." Particularly, it is the security and economic incentives, as public goods, that bind NATO members (Webber et al. 2017; Snyder 1997; Hartley and Sandler 1999; Lanoszka, 2022).

The most significant costs in a military alliance are military costs since they involve the loss of human life. While military costs also include weaponry, training, and all the infrastructure needed to move forces about a continent, it is loss of life that dictates the impact on the political and economic actions of the alliance members (Cimbala and Forster 2010). As such, extensive literature addresses sharing of military burden and sometimes finds evidence of free riding.

However, as many authors underscore, the public debate tends to emphasize military cost and therefore selectively stresses only one of three sections of burden sharing; thus, their results are not an accurate depiction of burden sharing within an alliance. The solution posed by these authors is to refrain from treating politics, economics, and military costs as three different things. They are three parts of a whole and must be compared as such. I will elaborate on specialization in the burden sharing chapter. Specialization is proposed as a viable answer to the burden sharing question (Hartley and Sandler 1999; Boyer 1993; Hillison 2009; Hillison 2014; Cimbala and Forster 2010).

### 3.2 ENTRAPMENT

For this analysis, I am defining entrapment as a member compelled into an ally's conflict or situation when the event holds no relevance to the member. Theoretically, a state allies with another state for mutual protection or for one to protect the other specifically, typically a defender and target relationship. One state, the target, uses that alliance to antagonize or even initiate a conflict with the state perceived as a threat. Because of the alliance, the second state, the defender, must intervene to protect the targeted state, even if the defender has no interest or personal stake in the fight, thus becoming entrapped. The logical means of avoiding entrapment is to distance oneself from the troublesome ally, but then the ally fears abandonment (Snyder 1997). In reality, entrapment as described is very uncommon. Instead, states have learned how to counter the four types of entrapment: treaty, systemic, reputational, and political permeation. Much like burden sharing, entrapment fears are an inherent part of alliances. Despite their rarity, the general concern among policymakers about entrapment makes it relevant to this research. Treaty and systemic entrapment are of less concern to the US; therefore, the emphasis will be on reputational and political permeation, but in Chapter 6, I will explain that rationale.



Treaty entrapment, as the name suggests, means that within a written agreement is the obligation that will require an ally to aid a targeted ally under the *casus foederis*. However, allies can word the treaty in a way that leaves room to maneuver around the commitments should the defender eschew involvement. This is called freedom of action theory (Beckley 2015).

Systematic entrapment has become of less concern because the international stage has changed; the system is currently unipolar; and nuclear deterrence has m the cost of attacking higher than in the pre-WWII area.

There are two types of reputational entrapment. In the first, the defender's leadership believes it must defend an alliance member or risk its own reputation damage. The ally, knowing this, antagonizes the threat knowing the defender will bail it out (Lanoszka 2018; Lanoszka 2022; Lanoszka 2016). The second is called moral hazard and is specifically "when an actor is emboldened to behave aggressively because it is insulated from the risks of its own actions" (Benson 2012, 43; Kenwick, Vasquez, and Powers 2015). Moral hazard leads to what is called restraint, when the defender must restrain the ally from starting a fight it cannot win without the defender's help. Lanoszka, discussing restraint, classifies it as an alliance dilemma when a defender backs an ally too broadly and emboldens the ally (Lanoszka 2022). According to Snyder, successfully restraining an ally involves three variables: the credibility of the defender's threat to the ally to prevent its engagement with the threatening state; the importance of the reasons for the conflict to the ally; and the ally's level of dependence on the alliance with the defender (1997).

I will be using transnational or political penetration as the basis for one of the four types of entrapment or transnational ideology, proposed by Lanoszka (Lanoszka 2016; Lanoszka 2022; Lanoszka 2018). For clarity, I will refer to it as political permeation. Political permeation is when

a state manipulates the political system of another state in an effort to affect its foreign policy toward manipulating the country's goals. It is typically most effective between countries with similar ideologies (S. M. Walt 1987). Walt again provides indicators: public officials who use their divided loyalties to maneuver countries closer or farther apart; lobbyists altering public perceptions and policy toward an ally; and foreign propaganda used to sway a target country's populations and policymakers (S. M. Walt 1987). This is particularly visible in personnel exchanges and personal contacts among elites of the allies.

### 3.3 STRATEGIC CULTURE

Strategic culture is an amalgamation of the different aspects that comprise an alliance, a shared identity within the security community, in this case NATO (S. Walt 1997; Webber et al. 2017). This identity is not only what is required of members based on the NATO charter, but also the shared and promoted characteristics of the members which create a cohesive alliance: ideology, specifically democratic or liberal political systems; high levels of personal freedoms; free market or capitalist economies; and civilian-run, standardized, and regulated militaries. Sharing these characteristics lowers burden sharing costs and produces a net gain, an issue often raised by larger nations, per the burden sharing chapter (Snyder 1997).

Theoretically, strategic culture would be universal within an alliance, uniting the allies in an equal and agreeable manner with their policymakers and their domestic populations because it would be reflective of those populations. However, as previously stated, no two states are exactly alike, so the strategic culture is a combining force based on whatever general characteristics the states do share. Because no two states are alike, the importance of strategic culture to this research is two-fold: it acts as a binding agent, but it also acts as a standard, a bar that must be upheld to join and stay within an alliance. To fall below that bar subjects the ally to criticism and

threats of abandonment; it works as an incentive. The significance to this research is that the closer the strategic culture between two allies, the easier it is for cooperation and interoperability to stabilize the alliance. When more characteristics fail to align, it becomes easier to cause inter-alliance conflict.

Ideological solidarity, according to Walt, is minimally influential on the process of alliance building, but he does posit that some ideologies are more divisive than others (S. M. Walt 1987). It is this note that illustrates the relevance of ideology to strategic culture. Democracies and liberal societies make better allies because other state ideologies are not a threat to liberal ideologies. In addition, democracies fight with each other less, and their alliances last longer compared to authoritarian regimes (S. M. Walt 1987; S. Walt 1997; Weitsman 2004; Owen and Rosecrance 2019; O'Neil 2017). I define alliance strategic culture ideology in this context as states with similar political, religious, economic, or ethnic traits. Extrapolating from Walt's work, the more similar states are, the more likely they are to ally effectively. Thus, when the alliance expands, it seeks to add members that are compatible in these ways. But as is the case with any group of people, no two are exactly alike, and expansion risks introducing states that may disrupt the alliance's cohesion by not being as ideologically compatible (Weitsman 2004).

### 3.4 REASSURANCE AGAINST ABANDONMENT

Reassurance and abandonment are two sides of the same coin in alliances. One state, the target, fears that another, the defender, will abandon it should the state be attacked. The target is not necessarily the weaker state and the defender the stronger, but that is how it appears most often in the literature. The defender must reassure the target that the defender intends to honor the treaty as agreed. Pacifying abandonment fears is usually done by increasing commitment to

support the target's security. It can be done with increased investment and resources in the security dynamic and defender credibility.<sup>5</sup> As previously discussed, too much reassurance can lead to entrapment, creating the alliance dilemma, so it is a fine balance between soothing a nervous member and becoming trapped with promises the ally does not want to keep. At the same time, reassuring a target against abandonment can make a threatening state nervous and cause it to act, creating the alliance security dilemma. The balance between entrapment and abandonment, and thus the level of reassurance a defender should offer, is a cyclical fear in an alliance when there is a credible threat to the alliance. In the case of this research, it will be the road less taken, for the fear of abandonment emanates from Sweden and/or Finland fear of the US abandoning the alliance should Russia attack a border state. The US must provide reassurance to the rest of the alliance that they will support NATO should Article 5 be invoked.

Abandonment can have dire consequences: if a security guarantee is abandoned, the adversary will see it as an opportunity to attack the abandoned member. On the other hand, a member who abandons an ally without good cause damages its own credibility in the eyes of other states and/or alliance members (Krebs 1999). However, literature suggests that effectively threatening abandonment can help restrain an ally from doing something that would be against the defender's interests, as will be mentioned later (Krebs 1999). As such, there are two aspects of the defending ally that are important when states are concerned with abandonment: credibility and strength. Credibility is consequential to the reputational entrapment argument. How credible is that ally's promise to defend another? The primary consideration in strength is in regard to the manpower and resources, the weight, behind the promise.

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<sup>5</sup> For the sake of clarity, I will be using credibility in this section vice reputation. Credibility means nearly the same thing as reputation, but I will be using credibility in an abandonment context for the credibility of a state honoring previous alliances and commitments as a means of reassurance.

### 3.5 DETERRENCE

The goal of a defensive alliance is security, and security is demonstrable in numerous ways, particularly with the deterrence of attack on a particular member or on the alliance as a whole (Snyder 1997). I define deterrence as the efforts of a state or group of states to dissuade a potential threat from attack by communicating to the threat that such actions would be too costly and not worthy of the aggressor's efforts. Hypothetically, a group of states forms a defensive alliance to project to the threatening state the costs it will incur should it attack one of the alliance members. Ideally, the threatening state considers that too great compared to the benefits of confrontation and does not attack. Instead, what usually happens is the alliance makes it known to the threat what will activate the *casus foederis*, and the threatening state antagonizes member states by doing everything provocative short of activating the *casus foederis*. As I shall demonstrate, this leaves a range of behaviors between invasion and complete deterrence. Since complete threat deterrence is NATO's defensive goal, it is important to evaluate how Russia has antagonized the Baltic Sea states for decades without triggering Article 5 yet acted enough that a full-scale invasion of Ukraine sent Finland and Sweden to NATO.

Aggressive states are likely to attack states that they can defeat alone, particularly those who do not have wartime allies (Gartner and Siverson 1996). Based on the work of Gartner and Siverson and their dataset of more than 1000 battle death conflicts from 1816 to 1975, 71.2% (42 of 59 cases) of target states had no allies before the aggressor attacked, did not receive much assistance during the conflict, and as such typically lost. Of the 42 cases, 78.6% had no help and lost while 5 had help and 60% of them still lost. According to their research, the aggressor usually won the war because it chose targets without allies or unreliable allies; therefore, reliable allies enhance the deterrence of aggressive forces (Gartner and Siverson 1996).

Authors Berkemeier and Fuhrmann expanded the research of Leeds et al. (2000) who made an impressive contribution to alliance literature with research signifying military alliance commitments were honored around 75% of the time between 1816 to 1944. Berkemeier and Fuhrmann reassessed the Leeds et al. dataset and increased the date range to 2003. This change demonstrates that after WWII, alliance promises were honored only 22% of the times invoked. Over the entire time period, commitments were upheld 50% of the time. Their data set pre-WWII was expanded as they went by the *casus foederis*, whether it was triggered and fulfilled/unfulfilled, and it included all types of treaties which were upheld at different levels: offense 73.81%; neutral 77.78%; defense 41.18%; and nonaggression pacts 36.73%. It is important to note that post-WWII offense and neutrality pacts only made up 20% of the total pacts, whereas pre-WWII they made up 70%. Critical to this section is that post-WWII, defense pacts were honored 13.95% of the time while pre-WWII it was 61.02%. The authors attribute this change to nuclear armaments. But NATO never appeared in the dataset because it is an effective deterrent to any threat (Berkemeier and Fuhrmann 2018).

While the members within an alliance are secure there, those on the outside perceive this alliance as a threat to their security, whether real or not, thus destabilizing the international system and making war more likely. Finally, dual deterrence deters an aggressor but reassures a target. Public statements ward off the aggressor while private comments to the target reassure it of the defender's commitment (Snyder 1997; Beckley 2015).

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will be describing the various elements that will support this analysis. This includes defining parameters of the research, some reasoning, detailing the data, and the parameters of and for analysis. This research will be constructed around three scenarios: (1) USFP in the Baltic becomes less involved because of the cohesive military presence created by NATO in the Baltic Sea becoming a sufficient deterrent to outside aggression; (2) USFP in the Baltic becomes more involved because NATO, while supplemented by Finnish and Swedish forces, is still not a strong enough deterrent to outside aggression; (3) the security dynamic remains the same, and the level of US involvement in the Baltic does not change as outside actors still pose a general threat to the border nations. I have chosen five theoretical elements of alliance theory to analyze the documents and categorize them as suggesting one direction or another. These variables are entrapment, burden sharing, restraint, abandonment, and strategic culture. I chose these variables for their frequency in the literature as important effects on foreign policy within alliances, their enduring concern to allies within an alliance, and their visibility on the international stage. My approach to this research will fall under a qualitative lens focusing on textual analysis and grounded in theory. Using literature, articles, and press releases, I will analyze the five variables as they pertain to the scenarios and benefit or disadvantage USFP, detailed below. My analysis will be at a system level, but because I am concentrating on the US and its relationship with one section of the world, it will include state-level analysis.

This data will vary in date range from the end of the Cold War to the modern day. This is for five reasons: first, NATO did not expand into the Russia sphere of influence until after 1991<sup>6</sup>;

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<sup>6</sup> I exclude German from this since West Germany was already a member of NATO upon reunification.

second, Russia as it exists today was not an entity until after 1991; third, many of the sources I will use as data have a record originating from the early 1990s which provides more complete and accurate information; fourth, 30-odd years provides a realistic distance to evaluate trends for elements like burden sharing and troop numbers; fifth, Finland and Sweden only truly began inching toward the West after 1991, joining the EU and the PfP in the mid-90's.<sup>7</sup> This data will demonstrate trends in spending or troop commitments, indicators that are best demonstrated through a statistical change. These data points come from official reports and surveys done and for indicators that indicate a commitment or action are not quantifiable statistically, I will use data starting from Russian's 2022 invasion of Ukraine because that is when Finland and Sweden seriously began to consider joining NATO. The sources I intend to use will come primarily from government or organization websites and will in good faith be understood to be authentic and credible. By this I mean leader speeches, statements, and interviews; press releases on the part of government departments, NGOs, or treaty organizations; news articles with exclusive interviews or observations; and research and reports that directly observe or record these indicators within the NATO-US-Baltic Sea sphere. While there will be a bias within the documents, one that favors the individual government or organization, that is part of what makes this research important: the perception of the actions of these entities. Any subject that cannot be fully vetted though these websites will be augmented by news articles from reputable news sources which obtained the information firsthand. My goal in collection is to obtain access to the original source of the information that makes it into the news, be that an interview, speech transcript, press release, formal agreement, or other means of firsthand documentation.

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<sup>7</sup> This is excluding the UN activities the nations participated in as doing so did not affect their neutral status or demonstrate personal aggression toward any country under the covenant of the UN.



#### 4.1 INDICATORS

The meanings derived from the documents will be based on the indicators allocated to each variable as described below. These indicators give a clear signal of what direction USFP will take; if the indicator occurs or not as a benefit or detriment to USFP. This will vary by indicator and thus will be covered on a singular basis. If the literature suggests one indicator as a clearer indication of that variable, occurring, or not occurring, then that indicator may be given more weight. The next part of this section is dedicated to the indicators of each variable, their influencing factors, and what they mean.

Burden sharing indicators include domestic opinion and public disagreements or agreements of support, troop losses, permanent stationing for foreign troops, financial assistance, GDP, equipment expenditures, troop numbers, infrastructure, specialization, hosting bases and exercises, debt forgiveness, waiving fees, and air policing costs. Any beneficial indicator circumstances are indicative of scenario (1) as they would enable the US to become less involved; circumstances that are bad or would negatively affect the US are indicative of scenario (2) as they would likely require the US to become more involved; and if the circumstances do not seem to be occurring in either direction or are of equal measure this is indicative of scenario (3).

For the political side of burden sharing, we are most interested in domestic opinions and public demonstrations of support or opposition. Because public support is necessary for much of the democratic process, changes in public opinion can foreshadow a change in policy; obviously, support for a NATO action that the US endorses is beneficial, and a lack of support is detrimental. When we discuss public demonstrations of agreement or disagreement, I am specifically evaluating conflicts between the policymakers within the decision-making body.

Conflicts between members of the decision-making body of a democratic state often make news nationally and sometime internationally. They can affect public opinion but can also suggest the likely policy direction.

Next is loss of life. Alliances of a militaristic nature will usually involve casualties within the members' military populations. Troop deaths resulting from participating in conflicts reinforce the commitment being fulfilled by member states because there is nothing that politically upsets a population more than the deaths of its service members. Because of this, acceptance of these losses for the cause vies with anger for a lack of meaning and can demonstrate how a domestic population feels about its nation's participation in an alliance. An understanding that, while tragic, it is a consequence of the security guarantee would be beneficial to USFP. An upset population will seek change in leadership that could destabilize the alliance or negatively affect USFP goals. This indicator will obviously be relevant only if the country committed personnel to conflicts or missions. Committing personnel is itself an indicator of support because putting skin in the game is an indicator of dedication.

Because of the 1997 NATO-Russia agreement, NATO did not expand permanently into the new nations but placed rotating forces instead. President Biden has now negated that agreement by placing forces in Poland permanently. As such, now that NATO is allowed to expand and create stronger more permanent footprints in the border nations, will Finland and Sweden join them? Considering their long-time neutral status, the presence of permanent foreign troops in their territories may not be something their domestic populations can accept. This would hinder their defenses and thereby suggest scenario (2) as it would make the US and other allies have to station their protective forces in Norway or another Baltic Sea state and move them into Finland and Sweden should they be needed, a process that could waste precious time. If

Finland and Sweden allow rotating forces as there were in border states after 2014, this would suggest scenario (3). The nations would not be fully committing, but it would be commitment enough to ease the burden from off-site forces. Accepting and placing permanent troops in Finland and Sweden would be the most cost-effective means of burden sharing their defenses and therefore would indicate scenario (1).

When NATO expanded in the '90s and '00s some of the new nations were incapable of upgrading their Soviet-era militaries or defense infrastructures on their own. Their economies were not robust enough. Instead, NATO members took on some of the monetary costs to upgrade and modernize their forces, ensuring collective security in all corners of NATO would be effective. Repeating the bailouts would increase investment on the part of the US, but a self-sufficient new member, one with a strong enough economy to upgrade on its own and/or owning a military modern enough not to need drastic upgrades, would be a great benefit to NATO and to USFP. Self-sufficiency would be a strong indication that financial assistance is not required.

GDP is the standard calculation for burden sharing and alliances and has been for decades. While it is an inaccurate calculation, it is still a representation of burden sharing within alliances and therefore deserves inclusion--but with reservations. The closer to 2% that countries get to defense on their GDP expenditures the more dedicated they seem to be in the eyes of their allies. The further they sink below that 2%, the more likely they are to be perceived as free riders. Within the burden sharing chapter, I will discuss why GDP is not a reliable source for burden sharing; however, it does offer a baseline when evaluating the various forms of burden sharing contributions. Because of this, GDP remains a consideration, but it will not be given the same weight it receives in public politics. Instead, it will be treated as just another indicator indicating willingness to participate. The GDP umbrella often covers the statistics of the

percentage of defense spending dedicated to weapons and equipment. In some ways, this is even more indicative of burden sharing commitment because the definition of this expenditure is very straightforward. If a state is spending a large percentage of that hypothetical 2% on defensive weapons and equipment, then it would logically follow that the state takes its security very seriously and may feel threatened. This is a cyclical issue; more weapons mean greater threat preparedness, but greater preparedness frequently relates to a rise in threat level, so it seems to call for both more and less investment by USFP all at once. This is why it is important to pay attention to specialization as I will demonstrate later. If a country is unable to produce its own weapons and equipment, then it must purchase it elsewhere, often the from the US. This benefits the US economically and may demonstrate not an increased level of threat, but a lack of capabilities that are obtainable economically. This is why it is important to weigh all aspects of a country's situation when evaluating GDP usage.

Debt forgiveness and waiving fees are often incentives to level the field in burden sharing and can be unreliable indicators because their seemingly sparse occurrence does not necessarily mean that burden sharing is not occurring. Consequently, I will use these two indicators, if they do occur, to supplement other evidence indicating that Sweden and Finland are ready and willing to burden share. Within the literature, paying for bases and other necessary infrastructure for NATO and foreign militaries is considered a good indication of burden sharing. I believe this is particularly true in border states. The costs of building and maintaining bases, roads, airfields, harbors, docks, barracks, training grounds etc. are extremely high, so for host nations to offset or cover those costs is a major demonstration of burden sharing. In this case, the indicator is a bit more obvious; if this kind of cost covering is occurring, the US and allies are more likely to benefit, and if they are not covering these costs, less likely. Finally, air policing has become a

vital and costly component of forward defense of NATO. The more Finland or Sweden participates in air policing, especially since this will include their territories, the more inclined toward burden sharing they are.

Entrapment indicators include reputations, threatening rhetoric, and political infiltration like lobbyists or political groups attempting to sway USFP. In this variable, no attempts at entrapment suggest the case for scenario (1); any attempt to entrap the US is a case of scenario (2); and for scenario (3) it is more of a matter of influence but not actual actions occurring because of the influence we are seeking. A state having a reputation for standing by its commitments to aid allies and to burden share means that the state is less likely to entrap allies in conflicts and vice versa. Threatening rhetoric falls under restraint and varies in intensity, but the act of provoking an aggressor and expecting a defender to rescue the state is an indication of entrapment and would not be beneficial to USFP. I classify conciliatory remarks or calls for negotiation or peace as depicting a state reluctant to engage and thus unwilling to pull allies into any conflict. indicators for political infiltration vary in their level of impact. A powerful national political organization is more likely to make an impact on Congress or the administration than a smaller local coalition; so, it depends on the size and impact that group could have on USFP that could weight it more or less. The more weight, the more likely it is to be an attempt at entrapment and vice versa.

Strategic culture indicators fall more along ideological lines such as democracy, liberalism, civilian-led militaries, interoperability of militaries, exercise participation, political and individual freedoms, free market economies, and security goals. Because of the research detailed below, we know that the more liberal a nation is, the more reliable it is, so the more it embraces political and personal freedoms, the more it will benefit USFP. Military structure and

operation are important for interoperability, so again, the more a military is capable of meshing with NATO, the better it will be for USFP. Economics are important for more than ideological alignment. A freer economic structure interacts better with NATO economies and is more capable of covering burden sharing costs without outside assistance which would benefit USFP. Finally, when security goals align domestically with NATO security goals, it puts both parties on the same path and facilitates interoperation and cost sharing. Because there are fewer reasons to divide resources, USFP would benefit and therefore indicate scenario (1). All of these indicators inversely would negatively affect USFP because the US would have to become more involved to stabilize that aspect of the state and would indicate scenario (2). Scenario (3) would be indicative of a state meeting half of these indicators.

Reassurance against abandonment has indicators about intent and credibility because this research is concerned with abandonment by the defender. These include troop commitments, exercises, monetary contributions, public statements, base permission, and a history of honoring agreements. Noting the repetitiveness of some of these indicators, I would clarify that US's participation in these activities demonstrate its commitment and acceptance of the possibility that Article 5 could be invoked, and it might be required to stand against a threat. As mentioned previously, troop commitments are the greatest example of reassurance because nothing compares to the loss of human life, this constituting a benefit to USFP. Exercise participation demonstrates the desire to be a part of the larger group and that a state is a team player, again a benefit to USFP. Monetary contributions are an important big picture indicator. While not as effective as troops in reassurance, monetary assistance does demonstrate a clear line of support. Public statements are much the same in that they look good, but actions speak louder than words, and a verbal commitment can always be reneged upon.

Base permissions are a lot like troop commitments because defaulting is difficult. Once the agreement is made and foreign militaries are in states' territory as a defense, it is problematic to remove them without looking risky or vulnerable. Literature shows that a history of honoring agreements is the most consistent way to demonstrate reassurance to a nervous ally. This is particularly important because both nations have long been neutral and unaligned and therefore have little recent military alliance credibility to reassure NATO. This also means that while it ranks high on the reassurance scale, it may have limited applicability to this research. Finally, the following is the scale of reassurance weighted from most effective to least: troop commitments, credibility, base permissions, monetary contributions, public statements, and exercises. The most effective would be the most reassuring and therefore be the greatest benefit to USFP. The least effective will still benefit USFP but not to the same degree as they are easy to renege on.

Because of this scale, scenario (1) would sit at most effective and scenario (2) at least effective end, the more that the state does to push toward effective indicators the more it indicates scenario (1). A lot of empty promises or lack of commitment at all would suggest scenario (2). Like in strategic culture, scenario (3) would be somewhere in the middle of this, seeing some indications of commitment at both ends of the scale but not enough to tip in the favor of scenario (1) or (2).

Deterrence, the goal of most military alliance, has the most ambiguous indicators because it is marked by the lack of an event in the success scenario, and it is hard to prove that an alliance alone is the reason something did not happen without the benefit of hindsight. As such, I am alert for indicators that demonstrate the ability to deter, like the capability of self-protection, alliance agreements, credibility, practicing extended deterrence, and cases of incursions of sovereign space or cyber-attacks. Sweden's and Finland's abilities to protect their own territory are huge benefits to USFP; however, the inability to do so does not necessarily mean a disadvantage. If

the nation is capable of balancing the burden that other nations have defending its borders, then there is an even trade. The ability to successfully defend one's own territory would suggest scenario (1); but because of capability issues, failure to do so does not necessarily indicate scenario (2). If, for example, we see a nation openly practicing other methods of deterrence, but it is not physically capable of deterring alone, the state is not as likely to become a burden to the US as it is pulling its weight to the best of its abilities, in which case a lack of territorial deterrence capabilities pushes toward scenario (3). If, however, the nation is being protected physically by allies and is not attempting compensation through other methods of deterrence to the best of its capabilities, this suggests scenario (2). The practice of extended deterrence's exclusivity makes it valuable. If a state is able to protect its own borders and actively work to deter the aggressor from another nation, this is a great benefit to USFP, suggesting scenario (1). Again, this may not be a problem for USFP if it does not occur. As stated previously, a state's ability to defend itself is a benefit to USFP, suggesting that for extended deterrence it indicates scenario (3). However, should the state be unable to do even that much, it becomes a detriment to USFP, invoking scenario (2).

Alliance agreements in general are a deterrent to an aggressive state. In this case, there is the NATO treaty, which is in and of itself an effective deterrent, but nations are already parties to other agreements that may also act as additional deterrence. Once again, a lack of agreements is not necessarily detrimental to the alliance; it indicates only that the nation does not have that added benefit. Extra alliance agreements with US allies in and out of NATO demonstrate a nation's efforts at deterrence with like-minded states, suggesting scenario (1). Being only a party to the NATO treaty and not actively working against USFP efforts by allying with US-viewed dubious states would suggest a middle ground, scenario (3). Openly allying via treaty with states



the US views as anti-USFP or which are openly hostile to the US would indicate scenario (2). Credibility is important as it demonstrates a history of helping or hindering an alliance. More positive credibility indicates scenario (1) while a lack of credibility would indicate scenario (2). An absence of data on credibility or a neutral credibility in which the state does not engage in conflicts or disputes whatsoever would indicate scenario (3).

Finally, cases of incursions and cyber-attacks in the Baltic Sea have grown with Russian aggressiveness and are evidence of a disregard for international law. The more incursions there are, the more aggressive the threat, an indication that deterrence is not working well and triggering scenario (2). A decrease in incursions or cyber-attacks may demonstrate the success of deterrence, suggesting scenario (1). A lack of significant change in the number of incursions and cyber-attacks would indicate stasis and scenario (3).

## 4.2 ANALYSIS

To pull this research from pure theory, I will seek real-world examples within the NATO-Sweden-Finland dynamic that would indicate one scenario over another. I will select data, detailed above, that displays these indicators in some form. I will compile incidents of each indicator to conclude each variable chapter and analyze each incident. The Conclusion chapter will compare all the variable chapters. The benefits and disadvantages visible across the five variables should demonstrate if the benefits, scenario (1), or disadvantages, scenario (2), will triumph. If neither trends clearly, this suggests that scenario (3) may be the most likely future for USFP. All five of the elements suggesting trends that benefit USFP would be a strong indication that USFP is headed toward less investment in Europe. The fewer elements that benefit USFP, the more likely the US is to need more investment in Europe. Hypothetically, under burden sharing, there is the standard data point of 2% GDP expenditures on defense for NATO alliance

members. Their high or low proximity to that 2% mark shows their theoretical contribution and commitment to the alliance. The GDP expenditure serves as an indicator for burden sharing within NATO; 2% or above indicates an equitable member that is pulling its weight or more. Any state spending less than 2% would be faulted for insufficient contributions to NATO and could be called a free rider, scenario (2). For a state to recognize this and pledge to reach the 2% marker by 2025 in a press release or speech would demonstrate positive intent, especially if previous years demonstrated an increase in defense spending. A state capable of burden sharing successfully is less strain on US resources, scenario (3). A state that is capable of exceeding its share of the burden is a state that will need US aid only if deterrence fails, scenario (1).

## CHAPTER 5

### BURDEN SHARING

In this chapter I intend to give background and indicators from alliance theory and NATO on burden sharing concerns and then give the indicators to be used in the analysis. These indicators include domestic politics, troop losses, troop numbers, financial assistance, GDP, equipment expenditures, infrastructure, permanently stationed troops, hosting bases, specialization, exercises, air policing, debt forgiveness and waiving fees. This will be followed by an analysis demonstrating that indicators suggest that Finland and Sweden will be capable burden sharers once they join NATO. At the very least nothing will change because Finland and Sweden are capable of carrying their own share of the burden, scenario (3), and the costs will be lower for all members. Ideally, and based on prosperous economies and sufficient militaries, Finland and Sweden would be able to supply other alliance members with their specialized capabilities, well-trained troops and navies, and enable the US to withdraw.

Burden sharing is used here as the distribution of political, economic, or military costs as shared between members of an alliance for its formation, maintenance, operations, and conflicts. These costs can be incentives or deterrents for maintaining an alliance. While states must relinquish something, public goods, to the alliance, states usually receive something of at least equal value in return for the expenditure. In the case of a small state, for example, aiding a defending state in peacekeeping missions can ingratiate the small state to the defender. The defender might provide advanced military capabilities in return. At the very least, non-defending states always receive a security guarantee in return for their burden sharing, something they are unable to acquire alone. A consequential characteristic is that burdens are fluid within an alliance. Burdens tend to increase in times of high threat and decrease in times of peace and

security (Boyer 1993; Hartley and Sandler 1999). Given a highly institutionalized alliance like NATO, the transaction costs decrease over time, becoming a part of the public good (Boyer 1993).

Burden sharing has been a concern in NATO since its formation; in fact, the US insisted on clause, Article 3, requiring all members to maintain a domestic military. Unfortunately, public interest in burden sharing seems to ebb and flow as it tends to be a greater concern in peacetime than in time of war with its immediate needs (Weitsman 2004; Lanoszka, 2022). President Richard Nixon complained about the NATO elite's lack of appreciation for his accomplishments despite an oppositional Congress. Obama lamented that some allies were not giving enough support to the out-of-area operations in Afghanistan and Libya, while the Europeans countered that their austerity measures prevented them from doing more (Lanoszka 2022). As previously discussed, the Trump campaign and administration were the most openly vocal group in accusing Europe of shirking its NATO responsibilities, labeling the entire organization a useless drain on the US. It is an interesting charge since there is little evidence that the US is spending any more on defense than it otherwise would (Wesley 2017; Rapp-Hooper 2020). In fact, smaller allies have been known to join the US on missions, not because they support the ideological reasons, but because they have access to the best technology, intelligence, and strategists in the world; these benefits would require an enormous time and money reserve to achieve alone (Wesley 2017). Such incentives make these nations willing to risk lives and money to appease the US.

Hartley and Sandler's work on burden sharing delineates the origins of burden sharing concerns in three parts: larger allies place a higher price on their security than smaller allies, and therefore, are willing to dedicate more of their GDP to the common defense; the free rider issue has small states taking advantage of their larger allies' increased spending and subsequently

reducing their contributions; and the lack of size limit to the alliance members means any additional ally would assume some of the burden of all the current members when it joined (1999; S. W. Kim 2012). Larger nations still complain of paying more than the smaller nations while all members benefit from the security the larger allies provide, and smaller nations are accused of free riding. The authors' last item, size capping, has obviously not occurred, but potential allies are required to have certain economic attributes before joining NATO, not that this is guaranteed to make them self-sufficient. While Finland and Sweden are not small like the Baltic States, they are still incapable of the power of the UK or Germany. Their placement somewhere in the middle, and the level of threat they face, would suggest that Sweden and Finland fit into the category of states that put a higher price on security, like the US.

Incidents of free riding are regularly debated, even making their way into American domestic politics and elections, yet there is conflicting evidence on the severity of free riding. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is used by NATO to create a percentage threshold that countries are to meet at a minimum. In 2006, before the financial crisis and Russian resurgence, NATO members committed to raising their defense spending to 2% of their GDPs. Recently, fueled by the Russian threat, the calls to spend 2% of GDP on defense by 2024 have resurfaced, with the US especially calling out European allies (Lanoszka 2022; Bağbaşıoğlu 2021). Yet there are issues with this: how much countries spend within and outside of NATO is included in that percentage, but it does not include the money spent by states hosting NATO troops for their expenditures on infrastructure and base construction. These costs are more likely to fall under domestic lines of accounting. Nor does it account for the aforementioned political costs of pushing NATO policy or resolutions through domestic political structures. So, to placate

domestic audiences, keep major spenders within the alliance, and allow smaller nations to demonstrate their commitment, there must be an alternative (Lanoszka 2022).

Considering the narrow parameters discussed above, some of the studies should be read with those in mind. A study in 2009 on burden sharing differences between new and seasoned members of NATO found that while the new members had more limited capabilities, they were often contributing more than the older members, especially after accession. They found that NATO expansion was not leading to more free riding within NATO (Hillison 2009). The core argument is that it is a lack of capability to contribute vice free riding that gives the appearance of lagging. In direct contrast, a study of NATO burden sharing in 2012 between poor and rich allies from 1999 to 2009 showed abuse of the richer members by the poorer members (Sandler and Hirofumi 2012). In fact, the new, poorer members of the alliance diversified NATO defense capabilities and risks; so, while the new members initially spent 2% of their GDP on defense, they soon dipped below that number while many others decreased due to the 2008 recession. Evidence exists of poorer allies exploiting the wealthier ones by 2005; it was noticeable by 2010 but not as drastic as expected (Sandler and Hirofumi 2012). What is really perplexing is the first author produced another study in 2014, and another author in 2012 substantiated it, reaffirming that new members do not lack the will to participate and contribute, only the capabilities. The authors cite the new members' former status as Soviet States as motivation for their willingness; they wished to socialize with other nations and have their policies and contributions acknowledged (Hillison 2014; S. W. Kim 2012). These states did all they could to avoid a return to their pre-1991 statuses. In an even more recent study, the research finds little evidence that economic capabilities influence free riding behavior within NATO and attributes recent accusations of it mostly to political rhetoric (Alley 2021).

Specialization is when an alliance member not proficient in the full military capabilities of a larger alliance member chooses a particular capability at which it excels and focuses substantial defense spending on this capability. Often, this ally becomes the primary source for this good or service within the alliance, thereby lowering the costs for other members who no longer have to dedicate as much money and effort to that particular capability. By specializing, small states physically incapable of competing with the US, UK, or Germany on every level of defense spending without wasting significant funds, focus on one thing and still demonstrate their commitment to the alliance (Lanoszka 2022; Esitashvili and Martín 2020; Cimbala and Forster 2010). Specialization is also capable of supplying public and private goods to alliance members. For example, with the high costs of technology, it is constantly evolving, creating, and circulating among members and can be offset by the specialization of smaller member states (Esitashvili and Martín 2020; Boyer 1993; Lanoszka, 2022). Thus, if researchers included the specializations of each country, catering to a country's political and economic skills, they would find a rather even field in burden sharing within NATO. As Boyer puts it, "Most alliance nations are free riders on one or more alliance security dimensions but bear heavier burdens on other dimensions" (1993, 117-118).

This innate free riding, driven by specialization, means that most countries in NATO do not provide the exact same goods and services as other members. Instead, they take stock of their abilities and typically specialize in burdens of an economic or military nature. As I will show, political burdens are unique to each country but are often directly tied to a choice made for an economic or military burden. So, the three types of burden sharing, political, economic, and military, describe the typical burdens found in alliances, particularly in NATO. Much of the work on these aspects of burden sharing are formulated for a bilateral alliance, but I will be

applying them to NATO as a multilateral alliance. This tends to strengthen their effect but lower the costs of the burdens. The more allies dedicate to the alliance the more they will reap: more members, more resources lower cost.

## 5.1 POLITICAL

As discussed in the theory section, democracies will struggle with additional political burden sharing because their policymakers cannot act unilaterally, like a dictator or illiberal regime would do. The liberal international order is NATO's foundation; thus, domestic opinion is a necessary part of the functions and actions of NATO as members exemplify all forms of democracy.<sup>8</sup> Public opinion plays a heavy role in democratic states and is often a consideration when NATO's elite make choices. While public opinion is not a major contributor to policy, intelligence, exercises, even spending in the public eye of the member states can make or ruin a political career (O'Neil 2017; Oma 2012).

Surrendering some political sovereignty is one thing, but what would a policy maker's constituents think of allowing territorial access in the form of air space or base access within their sovereign borders (Cimbala and Forster 2010)? Loss of life has an even more drastic impact on public opinion as it typically causes public support for the mission to disintegrate. This is especially true when the loss of life is on behalf of an ally's mission (Cimbala and Forster 2010). At the same time, if public opinion supports the policy, idea, or leader, it will be significantly easier to accomplish the goal and is beneficial to the alliance (Oma 2012). Policymakers must present their policies to the people even if their approval is doubtful; at least it is a good stalling method when policymakers know the ally will not like the answer the public will return

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<sup>8</sup> Recognizing the recent setbacks to democracy in some NATO nations such as Türkiye and Hungary, they are still considered republics and hold regular elections.



(Cimbala and Forster 2010). Overall, using domestic politics to influence international policy choices can provide better answers about possible results (Oma 2012).

Leaders have been known to use the need for “alliance maintenance” to convince domestic policymakers and the public to support a mission headed by the US (Wesley 2017). The downside is that the US enters coalition missions with states which do not genuinely care about the objectives; their goal is US placation and a show of credible alliance. While an ally’s assistance is beneficial, an opposing domestic force can create negative political repercussions that can derail USFP. Denmark is a stellar example of this. Denmark was one of the few allies to support the US in Libya in 2011, pushing it to the pinnacle of the US’s most dependable and leading contributing allies list. The burden of blood and treasure that Denmark spent in Libya, and indeed since 9/11, was generously rewarded with political power (Wesley 2017). Denmark is a powerful example of political burden sharing and bucked international opinion to do so in addition to taking on the military and economic burden. The political backlash over Libya in NATO was demonstrated when most allies refused to join the US, and Denmark seized the opportunity to ingratiate itself with the defender. Denmark took its share of the political burden internationally, assuming position as a staunch US ally and furthering USFP.

It is important to clarify the “America First” foreign policy in relation to political burden sharing. Research on this topic contains numerous references to the 2016 Trump campaign and administration which address burden sharing in NATO. President Trump was vociferous about his disdain for alliance members shirking their defense spending. He threatened to abandon NATO if European allies did not comply and increase their defense spending. Germany took the brunt of his ire while simultaneously President Trump redeployed troops to Germany. It was an audacious political ploy then, to shame Germany for free riding while suppling it with additional

forces (Lanoszka 2022). This serves as an excellent example of the political costs of burden sharing. The US population believed Europe was deficient, so the Trump Administration incentivized it. Even for the future of burden sharing, removing forward defense stations globally in an effort to economize and force allies to pay their allotment as demanded by proponents of the “America First” foreign policy, it is likely to cost the US more. In the end, spending gap analysis of the Cold War era shows that the US would not have saved money by going it alone; (Rapp-Hooper 2020) the same is likely true now.

## 5.2 ECONOMIC

Although I have already discussed some of the basics, the implications of specialization are found primarily in the next two sections, economic and military costs. Economic costs can be sources such as taxes and tariffs but are increasingly becoming more about *ex post* costs such as building infrastructure to move military equipment across a continent or building bases big enough to hold the extra units being sent to the Eastern flank; and from debt forgiveness to waiving rent and infrastructure construction, all of which can serve as indicators (Bennett, Leggold, and Unger 1994; Rapp-Hooper 2020). As an added benefit to the US, the NATO alliance is known to facilitate higher levels of trade and have some good impacts on the US economy (Rooney et al. 2022).

Public goods theory is critical to understanding burden sharing in NATO, as per the theory section. Arguing public versus private goods within the alliance is typically what nations dispute. Because NATO members have a similar strategic culture, they usually have similar, though not identical, goals in mind. As such, all members require similar goods and services to achieve their goals, and they are able to disperse expenses among members and lower the overall costs. These public goods are one of the major incentives of alliances. Once institutionalized, the

costs for all decrease. Private goods are something that smaller states can use as an opportunity in which to specialize when a good requires extensive time and effort to create and produce.

When the US provides financial support to those allies that are incapable of countering a threat on their own, this further involves the US in European affairs (Cimbala and Forster 2010). This was a primary concern in the 1990's and early 2000's, when post-Soviet states and those hit hard by the 2008 crisis were struggling to modernize or under austerity measures. This is still a possible issue if NATO wants to expand again. Having been required to support new members before, larger nations, like the US, may not wish to do so again and may require higher economic standards from the applicants. Since so many smaller nations are desperate for the US security guarantee, they are likely to try to meet any aspirations the West requires of them (Webber et al. 2017; Rapp-Hooper 2020). If these requirements are upheld, it is likely to benefit the US in the long-term because an ally that does not need financial assistance is a reliable ally.

An article by NATO provides the structure of NATO's funding which is done through direct funding by members. These fund the public goods, like missions and the NATO-wide air defense and make up only 0.3% of total Allied defense costs. This is apportioned primarily into common funding or joint funding. Common funding is the pooling of collective resources to fund agreed-upon parts of NATO, like the public goods. Joint funding is the *ex ante*, the goods established within the NATO charter, and the amounts are endorsed by all members. Using a cost-share formula based on each member's Gross National Income, NATO allots a percentage of the common funding for each member. The US pays a little over 16% in this model, but so does Germany. Accordingly, the only others over 10% are France at just under 10.5% and the UK at just over 11%. This is logical since Germany, France, and the UK have the largest economies in Europe. Together, the top four NATO economies pay over 53% of the direct

contributions, and they agree to this number regularly as it is updated frequently (Funding NATO 2023). Case in point, if Sweden and Finland join NATO, they will decrease the percentage for every member, and they will pay slightly higher than average percentages because of their successful economies which benefits the US. The US not only agrees to the percentage it pays to the central funds, but also it does not pay a disproportionate amount for the direct public goods, suggesting that the burden sharing concerns may be more political than economic and of less concern to USFP.

### 5.3 MILITARY

Military costs tend to fall to the larger states because they are capable of sustaining large professional forces. For example, in 1995 the US was responsible for more than 75% of the research and development expenditures within NATO and supplied almost 65% of NATO's arms (Hartley and Sandler 1999). In a more recent example, the US approved 14 arms deals to NATO members worth \$15.5 billion in 2021. In 2022, the numbers jumped to 24 sales and \$28 billion (Tasnim News Agency 2022). However, military burden sharing is unique in that the more resources alliance members invest, the more members will receive; when the allies pool their resources to generate power, they generate more power with lower costs (Esitashvili and Martín 2020). Military spending within NATO has been slowly rising since 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea, and it is likely that with the new war, members will continue the increases (Bağbaşıoğlu 2021). In contrast, peace keeping and out-of-area operations attracted substantial support from various member nations. In 1995, Norway, France, Italy, UK, and Canada were major supports of the US and peace keeping missions. Already, Norway is an example of smaller nations supporting US missions (Hartley and Sandler 1999). Out-of-area operations are newer and therefore have been available to recent NATO members for participation. Also, prior to 2022,

allies achieved military goals by “pooling and sharing” resources through smart defense. Select alliance members combined resources to complete a joint effort with less cost to the members. Unfortunately, this means that over in general, individual nations are spending less and are less prepared for defensive measures, and their ability to counter security threats is questionable (Bağbaşıoğlu 2021). Regardless, the US is still considered the best at all military endeavors, hence, the large weapons sales at the beginning of this section, and it seems ready and able to supply the allies as they rearm (Cimbala and Forster 2010; O'Neil 2017). It is incumbent on American allies, then, to find ways to specialize and stay relevant to USFP through platform, organizational, individual, or intelligence military burden sharing.

It is necessary to address the claims over GDP percentages and spending including GDPs of the last few years for NATO, especially in comparison to the ones of Finland (1.96%) and Sweden (1.45%). NATO produces its own Defense Expenditure report, with a rather lengthy definition of what qualifies:

“NATO defines defence expenditure as payments made by a national government specifically to meet the needs of its armed forces, those of Allies or of the Alliance.... Armed Forces include Land, Maritime and Air forces as well as Joint formations...they might also include “Other Forces” like Ministry of Interior troops, national police forces...included only in proportion to the forces that are trained in military tactics, are equipped as a military force, can operate under direct military authority in deployed operations, and can, realistically, be deployed outside national territory in support of a military force. Also, expenditure on Other Forces financed through the budgets of ministries other than MoD is included in defence expenditure.” R&D is also included, as well as military pensions, “peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, the destruction of weapons, equipment and ammunition, contributions to eligible NATO-managed trust funds, and the costs associated with inspection and control of equipment destruction... (Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2022) 2022)”

NATO mostly divides between troop and equipment expenditures to include major equipment as well as R&D for major equipment. In its second graph “Defence expenditure as a share of GDP and equipment expenditure as a share of defence expenditure” we can see the averages versus the guidelines via plot. The median spending for equipment is 25.96% while NATO suggests at least

20%; for GDP the median is 1.65% with the suggestions being 2%. What is really striking are the four obvious outliers. The US is well to the right, with high GDP expenditure of 3.47%<sup>9</sup> but near the average for equipment spending at 27.2% as expected. Above the US, is Greece which outspends the US in GDP at 3.76% and spends 45.3% of that on equipment. Greece and fellow ally Turkey are known to be in some kind of conflict, and much of their defense spending is used to counter one another. Moving down in GDP, just to the left of the median at 1.55% is Hungary, sitting far about the average equipment expenditure, at 48%. Hungary, as a border nation, is spending a large amount of its defense on weaponry, which is logical. However, considering it is below the median and well below the 2% goal in spending, what else it is focusing on would interest the US as it could be beneficial or a complicating factor. The big surprise to the left of Hungary is Luxembourg, sitting at .58% of their GDP on defense. It is the lowest in the alliance, but 52.4% of it is spent on equipment, the most in the alliance. For the smallest member of the alliance, it may struggle to pay outright but seems to be covering its own security needs by being very well-equipped. For comparison with Finland (1.96%) and Sweden (1.45%), Finland is ranked highly between Romania and France in overall GDP spending, while Sweden sits between Italy and Germany and below the NATO average. Finland is with the big spenders and newer members while Sweden is among the well-established members (Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2022) 2022). Unfortunately, Sweden's detailed defense expenditures are not readily available, but Finland does publish its numbers. The Finns expected to spend about 39% on obtaining materials, maintaining the materials, and troop equipment for 2022 (Defence Budget Proposal 2022 2021).

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<sup>9</sup> Note that the US defense budget is dedicated to operations outside NATO as well (NATO 2023).

The numbers from NATO demonstrate nine countries will meet 2% by the end of the year: Greece, US, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, UK, Latvia, Croatia, and Slovak Republic. Romania and France are just below the threshold while the rest have some real work to do to achieve the goal they pledged in Madrid. Considering only GDP, this actually suggests a benefit to the US, as most of the border nations NATO is worried about protecting are around or above the recommended percentage. Even more intriguing is that five countries, Belgium, Czech Republic, Canada, Portugal, and Slovenia are below the 20% mark for equipment expenditure. That is a significant difference in priorities. For the US, the distance between Belgium, Portugal, and especially Canada and the threat actually suggests that these nations are probably pulling their weight elsewhere because they are well-insulated. The cases of Czech Republic and Slovenia would be of more concern since they spend 2% and their proximity to or on the border of NATO makes them more precarious. This is an example of where detailed examination of a country's expenditures is the only way to know if the burden sharing is a positive or negative for USFP. Where Finland and Sweden rank in comparison to established members provides two points of interest: what these countries value in their defense and if they are capable of the burden sharing required by NATO.

NATO separates the US from the first set of totals, making a stark comparison with the remainder of NATO. Defense expenditures of US dollars total \$1.051 trillion with only \$328 billion coming from the rest of NATO. That said, the expenditures have been steadily increasing since 2014, and now the total is the highest in the alliance's history. From there, NATO itemizes who is spending defense money on what within the alliance. For personnel, those spending over 50% of their budget are Italy, Portugal, Bulgaria, Spain, Croatia, Montenegro, Romania, and Slovenia. The US is at 38.84%. Finland is predicted to spend around 38% (Defence Budget

Proposal 2022 2021). This would suggest that many of the border nations that did not meet the 20% mark for equipment, particularly Slovenia, are using that money on personnel instead. Considering the previously discussed value of life, this actually suggests high regard for burden sharing in these countries, a benefit to the US. The highest spenders in infrastructure, all at more than 7%, were Romania, Montenegro, Luxembourg, Latvia, Estonia, Czech Republic, and Albania, which serves as a great example of these border nations assuming the burden that they can carry in place of the one they cannot provide militarily. The US is at 1.52%. These nations include those that are part of the forward defense expansion, suggesting that the host countries do indeed spend on infrastructure when they have to import their security guarantee. Finland expected to spend approximately 10% on “real estate expenditure” in 2022 (Defence Budget Proposal 2022 2021). Again, it benefits the US if both Sweden and Finland are meeting or surpassing other border states in their spending habits because it will demonstrate an ability to burden share without US assistance, freeing the US for other endeavors.

One thing that might change with the additions of Sweden and Finland is that, according to a NATO article, the combined GDPs of non-US allies almost equal that of the US. With the additions of Sweden and Finland, they might be enough to make it equal (Funding NATO 2023). If this comes to pass, the benefits to the US could come in two forms: this extra GDP would bolster the alliance enough to allow the extraction of some US spending, or the extra GDP will mean that the alliance is capable of an increase in overall defense spending for the alliance.

Within the public goods vein of NATO, Becker and Malesky produce research that demonstrates that Operations and Maintenance (O&M) expenditures, readiness, deployment, and utilization of forces, are a more accurate measuring tool for burden sharing in NATO than GDP (2017). They argue that where members choose to send their money is more precise than just



GDP when evaluating commitment levels (Becker and Malesky 2017). For example, Finland spends about 13% of its defense spending on O&M but just under 2% of its GDP (Defence Budget Proposal 2022 2021). This is indicative of why the loss of life outweighs all other burdens under the agreement. It does not matter how much economic or political burden an ally assumes; if members of the alliance are dying on behalf of that ally and that ally does not have skin in the game, then nothing will suffice. This is a very important indicator in this research and in USFP. Committing troops to a conflict is a benefit to the US. Low troop commitment could demonstrate an alliance that is too asymmetrical for the US to find any benefit. No ally is accepting its full portion of the burden if it is not contributing military personnel to the conflict or mission (Cimbala and Forster 2010).

Under the same case for public goods is a particular military ability NATO currently needs, but it is one of the costliest. While most infrastructure costs can be covered and performed by any construction or contracting company, not every country is capable of designing and building aircraft or training qualified people to operate them. According to a report ordered by the US Air Force, training one pilot costs between \$5.6 and \$9.9 million depending on the aircraft (Mattock et al. 2019). This is one human, trained and paid to fly a single aircraft that serves a particular purpose. In the context chapter, statistics for military forces are provided. As of 2022 NATO had 20,723 aircraft, much of which is used for policing the Baltic Sea and border nations, and while there are often more pilots than craft, that means a minimum of approximately \$1.6 billion went into training military personnel to fly them. Finland has 166 aircraft, and Sweden has 205, and while these are not massive numbers, they are capable, which means two more countries with military personnel capable of flying NATO aircraft. The US is known for having the best pilot training programs in the world. This is why allied countries send their best

pilots to the US to for school. The value of having two additional countries capable of sharing the burden of aerial policing cannot be understated. This is where Finland's and Sweden's histories of self-sufficient militaries really benefit the US. The other piece of this problem is the cost of bases. According to a Department of Defense report, costs are related to the number of people on the base and can range from \$1,000 to \$14,000 per person, averaging \$8,000, to run a base. Every additional 1,000 square feet of space was another \$4,000 to fund. (Congress of the United States Budget Office 2019, 10). If host nations can offset these costs, it will obviously benefit the US.

The cases of Norway and Poland are notable as demonstrations of burden sharing within NATO. Norway has, for decades, been the NATO gateway to the Arctic, a Russian-dominated area and therefore of great strategic importance. Norway shares a High North border with Russia and Sweden and as such maintains forces "dimensioned to deny an attacked the possibility of invading Norwegian territory or, if invaded, of putting up resistance (for 48 hours) until allies could come" from NATO to help, while juggling diplomatic relationships over the Arctic (Wesley 2017, 94). Norway, much like Finland, emphasizes self-reliance militarily and has large enough forces to act independently of the alliance. That said, Norway is insistent on regular NATO exercises held on Norwegian territory, something both Sweden and Finland have recently requested also. This is brilliant, because NATO forces from allied countries are then familiarized with the unique terrain, climate, and culture of the Nordic nations, ensuring interoperability.

In 2014, after Russia's annexation of Crimea, Norway asked NATO to increase forces in the Nordic region. This included increased involvement with non-NATO members to include Sweden and Finland. The developments and policy changes that Norway has sponsored have made it an "exporter of security." It is able to send excess forces to NATO members incapable of

defending their own borders without assistance while Norway maintains Norwegian security, something that may be possible for Finland as well (Wesley 2017, 112). In the cases of burden sharing, this is an excellent example of the military type; Norway is, like Finland, capable of deterrence by denial and is so well-established and -defended, it can afford to export its forces to countries who are not as capable. While Norway spends 31.6% on equipment and 32.97% on personnel, it is spending only 1.55% of its GDP on defense (Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2022) 2022). Still, Norway specializes in fully-trained and -equipped troops allowing for a presence in Lithuania and out-of-area missions (NATO's Eastern Flank 2022). Finland and Sweden are also High North countries, although Finland's borders stop before the North Pole. This means that the political balance that Norway has maintained in the Arctic can be supplemented by Sweden and Finland, reducing US participation on Europe's behalf in such affairs. Though Norway shares a border with Sweden, there are actually more parallels between Norway and Finland as is demonstrated above. Norway has been known to be a reliable and helpful ally to the US. Should Finland or Sweden follow in the Norwegian path, they would make themselves indispensable to the US in USFP efforts to focus elsewhere.

Like Norway, Poland occupies a strategic location but one that is exposed geographically, and which historically has been regularly invaded and subjugated. Because of its tumultuous history, Poland decided it would never again be subjugated and joined NATO to guarantee that. Poland is a mid-sized country, like Sweden and Finland, and does its best to contribute, but like many nations it cannot cover all of its costs alone. As such, it tends to side with the US including sending troops to Iraq and Afghanistan despite domestic opposition, to maintain US commitment to its protection (Wesley 2017). Another similar problem that Sweden and Finland had was with out-of-area NATO missions and UN peacekeeping. Poland has been very successful in these

military efforts and receives high praise for continued commitment to the alliance in public (Poland 2022). At 2.42% spent on defense, Poland is behind only the US and Greece while spending 20.43% of that on equipment, 46.30% on personnel, and 4.98% on defense infrastructure (NATO 2022), percentages that Finland is fast approaching.

Poland recognizes it is incapable of its own defense, and so the US leads the NATO battlegroup stationed there with about 10,000 US military personnel in the country at any time. At the 2022 Madrid Summit, President Biden officially announced the first permanent base in the Eastern border countries in Poland. In exchange, in addition to high levels of infrastructure spending, Poland helps to fund peacekeeping and defense missions in Latvia and Romania, something that is likely to fit with what will be required of Sweden based on capabilities. Poland also participates in NATO air policing missions in the Baltic states, Iceland, and Slovakia, something into which both Sweden and Finland are already integrated (Poland 2022). Poland serves as another example of a nation shouldering a larger share of the military burden, this time in the form of infrastructure and funding, in an attempt to hold the attention of the US and to compensate for its lack of force capabilities. In this case, Sweden is a lot like Poland in its specialties. Because of its strategic geographic location, Sweden would also make an ideal location for a NATO base or command center for the Nordic states. As it is still rebuilding its military after drawing down for so many years, Sweden is capable of funding the infrastructure of these projects and continuing its participation in out-of-area operations. These examples are meant to demonstrate that there is little excuse in NATO not to share the burden, regardless of size, politics, or capabilities; there is no excuse good enough to free ride.

## 5.4 ANALYSIS

Sweden and Finland have already begun burden sharing preparations to join NATO and therefore meet some of the criteria for these indicators. I will be discussing the indicators that benefit, are detriments, or do not seem to be having an effect on USFP. These indicators include domestic politics, troop losses, troop numbers, financial assistance, GDP, equipment expenditures, infrastructure, permanently stationed troops, hosting bases, specialization, exercises, air policing, debt forgiveness and waiving fees. Some of the indicators may be repeated because the international community is getting mixed indicators on the subject. When there are both beneficial and detrimental indicators, this may suggest a case for scenario (3) as they might negate each other. This will be discussed by indicator.

We see beneficial burden sharing trends in the indicators for domestic politics, troop numbers, financial assistance, GDP, equipment expenditures, infrastructure, specialization, exercises, and air policing. Domestic opinions in both nations have been swayed to align with NATO since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. There are still political disagreements about joining within both nations, but the polling suggests that 81% of Finns and 74% of Swedes approve of NATO leadership, and the population supports the commitment and all that it entails (Biden, Niinistö, Andersson after Trilateral Meeting 2022; Reinhart 2022). Specifically in Finland, some laws have been rewritten to enable better decision making in crises and to remove geographic restrictions (Working group proposes legislative amendments 2022)

Sweden and Finland have signed agreements with NATO to allow exercises to take place in their territories and have participated in a multitude of military exercises with NATO demonstrating they are aware of the costs militarily that will be required of them. Sweden highlights its work in International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, Operation

Unified Protector (OUP) in Libya, and Kosovo Force (KFOR) as a partner nation which demonstrate its dedication to helping and making decisions post-ascension (Deterioration of the security 2022).

Finland has openly conceded that it will be required to commit troops to NATO activities and seems to accept that burden (Report on Finland's Accession 2022). Sweden, even before 2022, had recognized its ability to deter a threat only for so long and a government report suggested that to strengthen civil and total defense would be 4.2 billion krona (\$3.99 billion) a year (Swedish Defence Commission Secretariat 2019). In 2022, the policymakers in Sweden decided to increase their defense by 2 billion, the Swedish Armed Forces another 30.9 billion and civil defense 0.8 billion (Deterioration of the security 2022). This infers that Sweden and Finland are dedicated to the commitment they have made.

Both nations have learned to specialize, becoming tech savvy and highly trained with what forces they do possess. Finland has been working with the US on quantum technology (Strengthen cooperation in quantum sector 2022), defending against cyberattacks (Sustained funding for cyber security 2022), and strives to become a world leader in technology in the public and private sectors (Finland aims to become world leader 2022). Sweden and Finland worked with Latvia and Estonia to create common-type armored vehicles (Sweden Joins R&D 2022), and are including Germany on the project meant to create a standard-type vehicle suitable for use by all countries involved (Germany and Finland sign SOI 2022). Sweden has focused capabilities and interoperability with NATO especially in cyberwarfare, so much so that it has its own webpage (Relations with Sweden 2022). Some Swedish authors believe that joining NATO will actually make Sweden a hub for NATO because of its strategic location (Neretnieks 2022).

Both nations have fairly large economies that are stable and conducive to growth, and therefore, are able to sustain their economic burdens. Finland has openly stated it understands that 1-1.5% of its current defense budget would be a direct cost of NATO, and that costs will increase at first as the Finnish forces are integrated with the rest of NATO (Report on Finland's Accession 2022). After the NATO application, a report suggested 600-700 million a year would be required of Sweden for NATO funding (Deterioration of the security 2022). As is demonstrated in this chapter, the GDPs and defense expenditures of both countries fall well within the norm for NATO members, and considering new NATO members tend to spend more than their fair share, this number is likely to rise. Even before ascending to NATO, Sweden and Finland have been increasing spending on their equipment resources to include F-35A Lightning II fighters from Texas (Minister of Defence Kaikkonen to visit the United States 2022), short- and long-range missiles from Israel for €223.6 million (Procurement of short and long-range 2022), jet fuel from a domestic company for €49.5 million (Ministry of Defence decided on procurement of jet fuel 2022), naval munitions from Sweden for €12.6 million (Defence Forces to procure munition for naval guns 2022), fragmentation protective vests from a domestic company for €9 million (Defence Forces to procure fragmentation protective vests 2022), field radios from Israel for €24.48 million (Defence Forces to procure field radios 2022), ammunition for Leopard 2 tanks from Germany for €14.1 million (Defence Forces to procure ammunition for Leopard 2 battle tanks 2022), and artillery munitions from a domestic company for €5 million (Defence Forces to procure artillery munitions 2022). Finland is signaling that it is willing to arm its forces with whatever they need when they fight alone, further confirmation that it will be able to share the burden for equipment later on. Sweden has promised to reach 2% GDP spending by

2028 while re-enlarging its forces and protecting Gotland and even recognized that its efforts are not yet enough (Statements Stoltenberg Andersson 2022).

Deterrence by denial is a standard that Finland has been trying to attain for decades. While Finland and its territorial defense would not be able to resist a Russian attack indefinitely, it is designed to do so for an extended period of time. This is supposed to provide enough time that the Finnish can call for and obtain aid. Sweden, as mentioned, is a bit behind in comparison but is no less dedicated to upgrading and enlarging its forces. Sweden in particular is likely to become the hub for NATO military activity in the Baltic Sea. It already possesses the infrastructure and strategic location outside of Kaliningrad's immediate range to make an ideal staging area. This will especially be important considering the geographical changes occurring within NATO. Most relevant are the changes with the extended border with Russia, the protection of the High North, and the control of the waterways in and around the Baltic Sea. Sweden makes a logical location for controlling the High North, a responsibility already distributed between Norway, Sweden, and Finland but which will now fall to NATO and need specialized defense. Sweden has also recognized the vulnerability of Gotland and has started training NATO allies on its defense (Some assembly required 2022). The territorial deterrence by denial has been further enabled since Finland and Sweden have joined the efforts of air space policing in the Baltic and the forward defense efforts in border nations. Finland and Sweden have participated in a dozen training exercises with NATO's Allied Air Command in 2022 alone, and these include policing exercises and missions (2022). Recognizing that planes are one of the more costly burdens to bear and not all are capable of it, the additions of Sweden and Finland to these efforts will be significant.



Detriments appear in domestic opinions and disagreements, permanently stationed foreign troops, and hosting bases. Domestically, most of the populations of Sweden and Finland support NATO, but 19% of Finns and 26% of Swedes do not. In addition, only 62% of Finns and 40% of Swedes approve of the US leadership of the West (Reinhart 2022). Because both nations have participated in UN and NATO missions voluntarily, there has been some loss of life within their ranks. However, this is nothing compared to the loss of life should Article 5 be invoked after ascension. Finland has stated that it recognizes that it will be required to provide some of its forces to assist NATO allies and seems to suggest that this cost is worth it for the input Finland will gain within the alliance (Report on Finland's Accssion 2022). There is, therefore, a concern that the Swedish and Finnish populations are not prepared to share that particular burden.

There is not much information about debt forgiveness and fee waivers. Exact effects remain to be seen, but what is known is that both nations already have massive military infrastructures that can be used in conjunction with NATO. Other than the costs of expanding existing bases, there may be less need for new location creation as there was in border nations upon ascension. On the other hand, depending on how the nations augment the broader plan of NATO defense, strategists may decide entirely new locations for support systems are actually less costly in the long run.

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

Burden sharing in NATO should be lessened with the additions of Sweden and Finland to NATO, thus benefiting the US, and suggesting either scenario (3) or (1). For (3), this is the bare minimum that indicators suggest Sweden and Finland can contribute, covering their costs, and it would not swell the US burden and should still reduce costs. For (1), there are indications that Finland, and perhaps Sweden, might contribute more than their allocation of certain burdens.

Consequently, the US could become less invested in areas in which Finland or Sweden specialized and were able to export the products of those specializations. Considering the number of indicators to the US's benefit, scenario (1) is indicated by the burden sharing variable. In particular, Sweden and Finland are able to contribute to several of the more costly indicators, troops and air policing, and as of now, Finland is capable of one more: deterrence by denial.

Burden sharing within NATO has vexed members since its establishment in 1949, but the US has seen a resurgence in calls for equalization since the 2016 election. Subsequently, the US has had smaller allies unite with it in conflicts and mission, to appease the US, access its technology, and avoid the accusation of free riding. The research above has substantiated that newer alliance members spend more to compensate for limited capabilities but will decrease spending over time, and NATO expansion did not lead to free riding. Smaller states may specialize in niche aspects of burden sharing to compensate for their deficiencies by delivering one outstanding component. Research suggests that considering specialization generates a far more accurate calculation of burden sharing commitments than 2% of GDP.

Burden sharing consists of three types, political, economic, and military. Political burden sharing challenges democracies because a leader cannot act unilaterally, and public opinion is always a consideration. Political burden sharing is most often affected by questions of sovereignty and territorial access, loss of life, and domestic opinions. Domestic leaders will use alliances as a scapegoat to accomplish or fund a goal that will ingratiate them to the US, leaving the US with reluctant partners in the conflict or mission.

Economic burden sharing is usually about *ex post* costs and the division of public versus private goods. Alliances are known to facilitate trade and can eventually lower costs with time and institutionalization. The US has been known to finance allies unable to cover their costs

upon first joining NATO, and the US should consider this historic cost when supporting new members. NATO statistics demonstrate monetary burden sharing. The members facilitate and agree upon the statistics. Only 0.3% of allied defense costs are for public goods, and those numbers are fixed based on the nation's economy. Because the number is a percentage, adding members will lower the percentage for all.

Military costs are typically the most visible of burden sharing costs in a defensive alliance and are the most economically beneficial to the US because it corners weapons creation and production. Because the alliance system works like a pool, the more members invest in it, the greater the return for each. Military spending has increased regularly since 2014, but it is still insufficient for every member state to be equipped and manned for its own defense.

Specialization is the equalizer. Specializing in burden sharing allows other allies to provide the remaining public goods. Only nine nations will meet the 2% GDP goal in 2023, and only five are below the 20% threshold for equipment expenditures. The data reveals which nations prioritize personnel, infrastructure, and equipment and thus discloses that country's means of specialization. Troop commitment is vital to any country invested in an alliance, as every member should risk the backlash should it fail or people die. Remarkably, assuming the operation and training of more costly burdens, like pilots and base maintenance which can range from thousands to millions of dollars, may be a capability for these smaller nations which would confer a fantastic cost savings for the Alliance as a whole.

Sweden and Finland exceed many prior NATO applicants because they began cooperation with NATO as soon as outsiders were permitted. As such, the indicators are domestic politics, troop losses, troop numbers, financial assistance, GDP, equipment expenditures, infrastructure, permanently stationed troops, hosting bases, specialization,

exercises, air policing, debt forgiveness, and waiving fees. These are based on high domestic support, troop commitments, zero financial assistance, a solid GDP, equipment expenditures, infrastructure, specialization, exercises, and air policing. Indicators against ascension include domestic opinions, permanently stationed foreign troops, and hosting bases. The relationship and agreements seem to be too preliminary for a clear understanding of how debt forgiveness and fee waivers will impact the future of USFP. There might also be skepticism over the state of bases within Finland and Sweden and their need for upgrade or relocations as the logistics of defending the Baltic Sea evolve.

The analysis suggests that burden sharing concerns in NATO are incentivizing the US to remain involved in the Baltic Sea because the area is not currently adept at covering all the responsibilities with current capabilities. However, the additions of Sweden and Finland indicate they will assume some of that burden, thereby incentivizing the US to reduce involvement because these are capable and well-developed nations prepared to defend themselves until help arrives. Considering this, and if both nations honor their promises for spending increases, they should be able to assume more than their share of the burden in the not-too-distant future. Therefore, the variable of burden sharing suggests scenario (1).

## CHAPTER 6

### ENTRAPMENT

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that the US is not in great danger of entrapment by Sweden or Finland, but analysis indicates the variable of entrapment suggests scenario (3). Using indicators of international reputation (reliability in conflict and reliable burden sharer), successful restraint negotiations, rhetoric, elite influences, diplomatic discussions, ingratiating the military, propaganda, and lobbyists, I find that while Finland and Sweden are not trying to trigger a conflict, they are working to ingratiate themselves with NATO elite. Also, despite lacking a military reputation, Sweden and Finland are attempting to integrate their militaries with NATO's, but they are doing this through exercises that increase interoperability. These indicators imply that Finland and Sweden are not actively antagonizing any nation. Their entrapment indicators insinuate a desire for a security guarantee during transition rather than behavior to provoke another state. They have proven their reliability in economic treaties, but as mentioned previously, the burden sharing costs of a military treaty are much higher than those of an economic treaty. To summarize, scenario (3) is indicated because Finland and Sweden ingratiated themselves to NATO elite for closer relationships, and lacking a reputation for reliability in military alliances can be compensated only so much by exercise participation. These concerns are neither open provocation, scenario (2), nor are they all easily explained away, scenario (1). Thus, it satisfies the third scenario as it requires the US to remain invested until Sweden and Finland are proven reputable military allies.

Entrapment is a risk in any military alliance, but the security guarantee typically makes it worthwhile, and that is why alliances exist. I define *entrapment* as an alliance member being pulled into the conflict or situation of an ally which holds no relevance to the member. As

mentioned in the theory section, there are four types of entrapment: treaty, systemic, reputational, and political permeation. While the first two are not as applicable in this case, their reasons for inapplicability shed light on the structure of NATO. Before addressing these four entrapment types, I will discuss *restraint*, which is when one ally tries to prevent a targeted state from attacking or antagonizing an aggressive state because the targeted state believes the ally will defend it.

Restraint, when successful, can be a lesser form of entrapment. The defender gets involved but not militarily, instead brokering an agreement if not peace. The need to restrain an ally arises from moral hazard or upsetting the agreed-upon balance between the alliance and enemies. Sometimes, there is nothing that can restrain an ally, and the alliance must deal with the consequences. In this section, I will use the word *restrainer* as the ally that would be the defender should a conflict begin, theoretically like the US in NATO should Finland or Sweden provoke Russia. I use the word *restraine*e to symbolize the ally picking a fight or instigating the moral hazard, in this scenario, Finland or Sweden. Before I detail this section, I will not conclude that Finland and Sweden will taunt Russia into attacking them after their ascension to NATO. On the contrary, analysis will show that both nations are openly stating their desire not to antagonize Russia. Nevertheless, it is important to regard restraint as a scale, and while the scenarios I describe are unlikely to be at either extreme of this scale, background and examples of these extremes will put the situation in perspective.

Snyder states that a restraint attempt will succeed or fail predicated on the degree of the restrainer's fears of abandonment and on the degree to which the restrainer's and restrainee's interests align. Snyder's methods of restraint include threatening defection, withholding diplomatic support in a crisis, insisting on consultation, and offering inducements (Snyder 1997).

Consultation was mentioned previously under the perks of the institutionalization of alliances, and it is noteworthy that this is actually written into the Atlantic Treaty in Article 4: “The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened” (NATO 1949). While the US was ambiguous about commitment if a member were attacked, the allies made consultation very clear, and enabled any member to suggest consultation for any reason. Consultation not only enables potential restrainers to contain a restrainee but also provides potential restrainers with time to gather critical information about the situation that the restrainee may otherwise not provide (Pressman 2008). Pressman suggests that while this is a place to start, discussion on restraint must include discussion on the control one ally exerts over another to enact restraint effectively. Pressman is technically arguing for a new theory for alliance creation, but his explanations of the permutations of restraint within alliances are relevant. According to his research, the best way to restrain an ally is for the restrainer to mobilize its power resources, described here as military capabilities, economic power, and international influential power, and not to rely on rhetoric and persuasion (Pressman 2008). The institution of the alliance provides the restrainer with the means to flex its power which actually enables the mobilization of power resources. Institutionalization of the alliance also enables restraint through influential policies such as enabling “military training exercises, officer training, joint planning, high levels of elite interaction, and shared intelligence” (Pressman 2008, 17). Research also suggests that a stronger ally has no better luck restraining a weaker ally than the reverse (Pressman 2008). In a military alliance, the restrainer will never use force against the restrainee to restrain, nor will it join the threat against the restrainee; it will simply refuse to engage and in essence, abandon them (Pressman 2008).

Success or failure of restraint depends on the restrainer's willingness to mobilize its power resources while deception, leadership unity, national security priorities, and policy alternatives can all increase or decrease the likelihood of this happening (Pressman 2008). First, deception can prevent restraint because if the restrainer is unaware of what the restrainee is planning, the restrainer is unable to practice restraint. Second, if the rest of the alliance leadership, or even the restrainer's leadership, is unified in its objective to restrain an ally, it is more likely to succeed. If the leadership is divided, its success is questionable because of the cost of mobilizing power resources, politically and economically. Restraint is often a byproduct of larger national security interests within the restraining power(s). Nations have a hierarchy of priorities to secure national interests. Wherever a threatened interest lies within that hierarchy, the degree to which that interest is threatened will dictate the restrainer's actions. Whatever is the highest priority to the restrainer will always receive attention first to the detriment of all else. Critically, if the restrainee's plans will negatively affect the restrainer's plans for a priority, the restrainer is more likely to mobilize its power resources and intervene. However, if the restrainee's actions will not negatively affect the restrainer's national security priorities, the restrainer is more likely to use rhetoric to achieve its goals. This is where substitution can help: by mobilizing some of its power resources, the restrainer can find an alternate way to achieve the restrainee's objectives which does not negatively impact the restrainer's strategic policies (Pressman 2008).

Fang, Johnson, and Leeds did a game theory study on restraint in alliances and found that allies can both deter threats and restrain allies and thereby encourage peace on a broad spectrum (Fang, Johnson, and Leeds 2014). They found that if the restrainer can make a credible threat to the restrainee, the restrainee is likely to withdraw (backed up by (Snyder 1997) theory). If the



restrainees still does not retreat, then the restrainer will not engage on its behalf. This means that alliances can be important tools for conflict resolution and prevention. The authors also found evidence that the more the restrainees rely on the restrainer for its security, the less likely the restrainees are to escalate a conflict when threatened by a third party. Policymakers should consider not only emboldening a new ally but also that the alliance and institutionalizing the relationship would incentivize the rest of NATO to restrain new members from provocative actions and punish them for disobedience (Fang, Johnson, and Leeds 2014).

The literature shows that the hazards of restraint can be impactful: deception, leadership unity, national security agenda, and substitution policies. Allies that resist restraint will make great efforts to obscure their intentions. If a potential restrainees can prevent or minimize the restrainer's power mobilization, it stands a better chance of success. Often, a restrainer's ability to restrain the restrainees relies on distributing bargaining power within the alliance. Allies who are less dependent have a credible abandonment threat (Johnson and Leeds 2011). This will be the core of abandonment argument for Sweden and Finland. In essence "...even the most powerful states could fail to restrain or could successfully be restrained by its partners however small in terms of power those partners might be. If the sole great power in the system is unwilling to mobilize its power resources and either coerce a restrainees or disregard a restrainer and thereby go it alone, weaker states can avoid being restrained by the superpower or they can restrain the mighty state" (Pressman 2008, 130).

To reiterate, the scale of restraint begins at one extreme, the restrainees antagonizing the threat and provoking conflict, and ends at another, when the ally is threatened but utilizes the institution of the alliance to avoid conflict. When the restrainees becomes provocative, the restrainer is able to negotiate a balance, something enabled by the institutionalization of the

alliance. It also indicates that the more open the restraining nation is with the restrainee, the less likely the restrainee is to become involved in a moral hazard, as it will already know exactly when it will be supported and what will cause its abandonment (Benson 2012).

## 6.1 TREATY AND SYSTEMIC ENTRAPMENT

Treaty and systemic entrapment have been enduring problems for alliances but are not currently issues for the US in NATO. The wording of a treaty can be a source of entrapment because precise wording dictates the requirements of treaty members. As I will demonstrate, the Atlantic Treaty is worded so as to avoid entrapment. Systemic entrapment originates from the dynamics of the international system between powerful countries, but because the US is a unipole, there is currently no nation capable of a successful direct challenge. In this section, I will explain how NATO and the US have overcome these forms of entrapment, so it is important to note that the exact wording of Article 5 is ambiguous:

“The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area. Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security (NATO 1949).”

However, what scholars often omit is Article 6 which elaborates on the dimensions of the collective security guarantee:

“For the purpose of Article 5, an armed attack on one or more of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack:

- on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France<sup>2</sup>, on the territory of Turkey or on the Islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer;
- on the forces, vessels, or aircraft of any of the Parties, when in or over these territories or any other area in Europe in which occupation forces of any of the Parties were stationed

on the date when the Treaty entered into force or the Mediterranean Sea or the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer (NATO 1949).”

The Treaty is precise about the parameters of who it will help and vague about what that help will entail. As Lanoszka puts it “clarity can convey to allies and adversaries that intent to advance certain interests internationally and to highlight a willingness to defend militarily a common set of values. Nevertheless, enough ambiguity can allow states sufficient wiggle room to extract themselves from an alliance obligation if so desired” (Lanoszka 2022, 43). Because of this wiggle room, the US has latitude to avoid treaty entrapment. This is called the *freedom of action theory*, where a state inserts a loophole into an agreement (Benson 2012; Beckley 2015; Rapp-Hooper 2020). It has also dictated the circumstance in which the Alliance will come to a member’s defense: only in self-defense. As we will see in the next section, self-defense permits defender interpretation. This observation correlates that entrapment is not only rare, but also states anticipate it and therefore are prepared to prevent it (T. Kim 2011; Brooks, Ikenberry, and Wohlforth 2012; Lanoszka 2022; Rapp-Hooper 2020; Leeds, Long, and Mitchell, 2000). In this case, the US put a clause into the Atlantic Treaty to prevent entrapment.

Snyder gives indicators of entrapment based on the following variables: an ally’s interest in the conflict, the level of confidence the ally has in being reinforced, the ally’s level of irresponsibility, the extent to which the defender and ally rely on one another, and the level to which the defender concurs with the ally’s interests (Snyder 1997). As such, entrapment is the cost of fighting the ally’s war minus the degree to which the defender shares the ally’s interests for conflict (Snyder 1997). Therefore, entrapment is more likely to occur when the defender has a tactical investment in defending the ally, not when in agreement with the ally’s interests.

T. Kim’s research uses a similar data set to the Leeds, Long, and Mitchell 2000 study and finds that 310 of 538 alliances in the dataset have one or more conditions for activating

alliance military commitments (2011). T. Kim also emphasizes that proving that clauses against entrapment are effective is difficult because scholars are looking for something not to happen; yet that does not mean such clauses are ineffective. If they were ineffective, then why would potential allies labor at crafting treaties? A consistent example in the literature is Taiwan (Gvosdev and Tanner 2004; Brooks, Ikenberry, and Wohlforth 2012). The Taiwanese tendency to provoke China is a documented issue that concerns US policymakers, reenforcing the need for the Pivot to Asia. Specifically concerned with the ambiguity of the US-Taiwan relationship, the George W. Bush administration actually redefined the relationship to deter China from Taiwan and to deter Taiwan from China (Brooks, Ikenberry, and Wohlforth 2012). The US actively designed alliance agreements to avoid becoming entrapped.

In fact, the current dissemination of power in the international system is in favor of the US vice its allies. “With its bargaining advantages, the United States may well benefit from modifying the contents of its alliance commitments, but withdrawing...would be a misguided policy, because these commitments alone are not likely to drag the United States into a costly war...these commitments enhance US influence on the allies and deterrence against potential enemies. Meanwhile, the United States has more power to entrap its allies, and other states have more reasons to accept entrapment in order to avoid abandonment by the sole super-ally” (T. Kim 2011, 377). While this bears further discussion in the deterrence section, work by Gartner and Siverson suggests that aggressive states tend not to pick on states with allies as they are less likely to win. This infers that being a part of a defensive alliance is, in itself, a preventative to entrapment (Gartner and Siverson 1996). So, the US currently holds all the cards in treaty entrapment, and as the unipole, the US is unconcerned about systemic entrapment. The US possesses the largest and most sophisticated military in the world and therefore has already done

all it can to prevent systemic entrapment by forcing any nation considering attack to rethink the costs (Lanoszka 2022). Of more concern are the two elements that are most relevant to USFP, reputational entrapment and political permeation.

## 6.2 REPUTATIONAL ENTRAPMENT

There is a regular argument in American domestic politics, running counter to “America First” assertions, that the US cannot withdraw from a conflict or country because it would make America look bad. This is the core of reputational entrapment: the amount of credence the defender puts in its international reputation puts it at risk for entrapment. This reputation can be molded by a number of things, but reliability as a security guarantee and a responsible burden sharer are of the most concern to NATO allies. There are two scenarios of reputational entrapment: the defender’s leadership believes it must defend an alliance member or the defender’s reputation is damaged; the ally knows the defender cares a great deal for its reputation, and the ally antagonizes the threat knowing the defender will bail it out (Lanoszka 2022; Lanoszka 2018; Johnson and Leeds 2011). For the first, there are two issues. The leader may care about saving face, but the rest of the alliance would rather not engage, or the national security priorities may override what the leader wants. Examples here include President Lyndon B. Johnson believing he had to escalate in Vietnam for his own reputation and that of his party while the rest of the world did not care what he did, and President Bill Clinton believing that the US had to remain in Somalia or lose face internationally (Lanoszka 2022). For this second type of reputational entrapment to be effective, the ally has actually to be right which does not always happen; the defender has to aid the ally solely because it is worried about its reputation. Motivations are rarely that pure, and there are usually more forces at work in conflict than just reputation. In addition, the other alliance members would have to support the defender as they

would all wish to save face (Lanoszka 2022; Lanoszka 2018). Reputation can also justify decisions made by policy makers. As mentioned under burden sharing, leaders aim to appease a domestic population and do not want to fight pointless wars that do not further national or strategic interest.

Next, how do smaller and less powerful allies manage to entrap defenders with *ex post* options of abandoning the ally in conflict? The answer is that it will damage the defenders' reputation; or the defender needs the ally for its own national security and strategic interests, and the loss of the ally would be detrimental (Benson 2012). The negative effects of losing the ally could drag the defender into an offensive war despite a defensive alliance agreement (Benson 2012). Small allies try continually to convince larger allies to embrace their perspectives and their need for protection thus enabling them to use the alliance institution for their political goals (Krebs 1999).

History provides a numerous examples of reputational entrapment attempts and the failures and successes of restraint based on reputation among allies. For example, the case of Taiwan and China is a regular example. At the end of WWII when the Nationalists were trying to save China from the Communists, the US decided it was too costly to fight in China right after peace had been established and refused to help the Nationalists. The Nationalist government fled to Taiwan and left mainland China to the Communists (Benson 2012; Keohane 1971). It could be argued that the US eventually restrained the Nationalists by refusing to back them against the Communists in a war. Later, in 1954-1955, the UK failed to restrain the US from intervening in the Taiwan Straits because the US was willing to do it without allies. It happened again in the Taiwan Straits Crisis in 1958 (Pressman 2008). In contrast, the US was able to restrain Taiwan in the 1962 Crisis by withdrawing from some of its commitments (Beckley 2015).

Restraint does fail, and it does not matter which state is more powerful. Even the US can fail to restrain an ally. A case of failure followed by successful restraint was the US's attempt to restrain the UK and France from going into Egypt in the Suez Canal in 1956; but they withdrew under intense economic pressure from the US (Pressman 2008). The US could not restrain Portugal in regard to its colonies, the Philippines toward Malaysia, or Greece and Turkey in their continual bickering, and to attempt intervention directly in these situations would not have been worth the costs, so the US left them to their own devices (Keohane 1971). Finally, France, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey attempted to restrain the US from going into Iraq in 2003 (Pressman 2008; Beckley 2015). In these cases, the initial threat was not enough to dissuade the restrainee, and the nations decided to do it without the help of the restrainer(s). In the Suez Crisis, once the US mobilized its power resources, the situation changed, but as in the other examples, it does not always work, so there is some risk.

There are actually more cases of successful restraint or restraint from escalation than instances of failure. The UK restrained France in 1911 by encouraging Germany to relinquish territory in the Congo vice Morocco, effectively going over France's head (Snyder 1997). The US restrained the UK from engaging Soviet forces in 1951 in Iran (Pressman 2008). The American allies talked the US out of escalation in the Korean War in 1953 (Beckley 2015). The UK restrained the US in 1954 when France asked the US for help in Vietnam, but the US would not help without the UK (Pressman 2008). Allies also successfully restrained the US from escalation in the Laos Crisis in 1961 and in the Berlin Crises of 1958 and 1961 (Beckley 2015). The US restrained Israel from targeting Iraq after expelling Iraq from Kuwait after the 1991 Gulf War (Pressman 2008). In fact, in the 1954 Nicaragua-Costa Rica dispute, the Suez Crisis, the 1967 Six-Day War, and the 1980's peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, the US backed out of

alliance commitments and effectively restrained its allies in those situations (Beckley 2015). In essence, restraint was only effective when the restrainer mobilized its power resources to make a credible threat to the restrainee.

### 6.3 POLITICAL PERMEATION ENTRAPMENT

Political permeation, as mentioned in the theory chapter, takes many forms. Considering that most nations are not comparable to the US on nearly any scale, the literature on how smaller states manipulate larger states holds particular interest. Walt provides three indicators: public officials who use their divided loyalties to maneuver countries closer or farther apart; lobbyists altering public perceptions and policy toward an ally; and foreign propaganda used to sway target country's populations and policymakers (S. M. Walt 1987). Keohane in particular claims that some of the US's weakest allies have made drastic changes to USFP through their influence and used the US's ideology against it (Keohane 1971; Lanoszka 2018). The idea is that smaller states develop close ties between their elite and the American elite who are part of the parties or lobbies that will advocate for the smaller country's interests. The elite ingratiate themselves to the US and other Western elite to appeal to liberal ideology, gain security guarantees, and then use them to benefit themselves within their personal conflicts (Lanoszka 2022; Rapp-Hooper 2020; S. M. Walt 1987). These connections are made on three levels, and more than one can be employed: formal diplomatic discussions, negotiating with lower levels of the US government like intelligence agencies or different military branches, and connecting through private interest groups within the American population who are able to lobby and sway public opinion (Keohane 1971; Cooley and Nexon 2016; S. M. Walt 1987). Unfortunately, these connections are usually difficult to discern because they are seldom public. From here Keohane stipulates the requirements a small state must have to influence the US, but since communism is not the threat



it was 50 years ago, I have adapted them: the ally needs to move unilaterally through its domestic political system to manipulate the US easily; the ally needs the strong support of domestic US policy groups; and the ally needs good working relationships with US agencies and the military (1971).

There are two ways for a state to get US attention, as mentioned in burden sharing: to be an ideal and loyal ally or to be somewhat independent of the US. For example, Norway and Denmark avoided vilifying the US when the US was involved in Vietnam, but Sweden had no such qualms. Sweden, unaffiliated with NATO and a non-aligned military power, was capable of defending itself and did not need the US security guarantee like NATO members Norway and Denmark did. Allies such as Taiwan and South Korea are known to be incredibly loyal and are therefore known to be very reliable. However, if an ally wants a little independence, it can pivot to rival powers like China and Russia for aid independent of the US. For example, Pakistan turned to China when it fought India.

Even if the small ally aligns its policies with US ideology, US lawmakers can still oppose it. So, the small ally must approach the American people to force change on the American elite. Taiwan appealed to the US Congress when the State Department would not give it fighter jets. Israel often engages America's Jewish population to lobby for its policies and national security interests. This is the most effective way to use American democracy against itself (Cooley and Nexon 2016; Keohane 1971).

Yet, there is nothing truly wrong with this attempt to influence American democracy. In theory, the people make the decisions, and if the people believe the US should aid an ally, then that is what the US should do. Theoretically. In reality, this literature shows that while manipulating public opinion brings issues to discussion, it does not consistently turn the situation

in favor of the ally. There are too many other variables within the American political system. It should also be acknowledged that the theory assumes that the US elite will be oblivious to being manipulated. While this is highly unlikely, that does not mean the knowledge of manipulation will alter their opinions. As I will demonstrate in the examples, elites advocate because there is something in it for them. As Walt indicated, political permeation rarely works on its own (S. M. Walt 1987).

The most common example in the literature for political permeation is when Georgian elite tried to gain support and security guarantees from US elite prior to the conflicts of 2004 escalating into the 2008 Russo-Georgian War (Driscoll and Maliniak 2016; Gvosdev and Tanner 2004; Cooley and Nexon 2016; Lanoszka 2022; Lanoszka 2018). Georgia, led by President Mikheil Saakashvili, was unable to counter the 2004 Russian-backed aggression in Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia alone. With the military, economic, and political assistance of the US, he believed Georgia might stand a chance against Russia, and if Georgia lost US support, Russia would eventually overcome Georgia. As such, Saakashvili and other Georgian elite worked their way into US policymaker circles to endear Georgia to the US and labored on getting Georgia into NATO (Cooley and Nexon 2016; Lanoszka 2022; Lanoszka 2018). The result was that Georgian elite believed the US would back them against Russia in a conflict. The US elite believed their close personal relationships with Georgia would restrain the Saakashvili administration from engaging Russia aggressively (Cooley and Nexon 2016). While the US did not openly back Georgia militarily, and in fact claims to have tried to dissuade it, the Georgian elite were confident enough to initiate or instigate conflict with Russia. This put the US in a precarious situation, and it complicated US-Russian relations while Georgia was still economically reliant on Russia (Gvosdev and Tanner 2004). Georgian elite, including

Saakashvili, had been given signals of support from US policymakers and intelligence agencies to resist Russia; but while the US was enabling democracy, the US would not do so at the expense of its own self-interests (Gvosdev and Tanner 2004; Cooley and Nexon 2016; Lanoszka 2018).

The US was cognizant of Georgia's antagonistic tendencies and questionable motives, or at least enough US policymakers noticed so that no formal alliance was established with Georgia, and entrapment was thus avoided. It is even argued by some that Georgia saw so much support from the US because US policymakers were trying to use Georgia against Russia (Lanoszka 2018). However, the US did push for Georgian NATO membership, and it was denied by a number of NATO allies, principally France and Germany, because they refused to be dragged into Georgian conflicts (Lanoszka 2022; Lanoszka 2018). Four years later, the US had learned a lesson, and the Obama administration ensured there were more restrictions on US aid to Georgia to prevent Georgian leadership from trying to entrap the US again (Cooley and Nexon 2016). As mentioned in Pressman's research, the US used rhetoric to dissuade Georgian actions against Russia. The US did not mobilize sufficient power resources to restrain Georgia, such as threatening to cut aid or economic investment to Georgia, should the Georgian elite not restrain themselves. Thus, the US failed to restrain Georgia but avoided entrapment.

It should be clarified that there is some debate about some of the examples I have given in this chapter. According to Beckley (2015), cases of entrapment include the 1954 and 1986 Taiwanese Crises, the Vietnam War, the Bosnian War, and the Kosovo intervention. However, Lanoszka (2022; 2018) and Rapp-Hooper (2020) argue that the US had other motives and interests in those conflicts that dictated its actions, and therefore, were not cases of entrapment. In fact, according to both Lanoszka and Rapp-Hooper, the US has never been entrapped by an

alliance member. During the Cold War, the US often did not get involved; the Suez Crisis, Malayan emergency, the Falklands War (Lanoszka 2022) or their parts were predicated on other factors outside the alliances as in Vietnam and Korea (Rapp-Hooper 2020). It is important to consider the whole picture, not just the alliance institution. The US often has multiple reasons for choosing to participate in a conflict, and as the unipole, just as many reasons for choosing not to get involved. In fact, according to Lanoszka, non-US alliances are more likely to face entrapment risks: Belarus/Russia, Kazakhstan/Russia, Armenia/Russia, North Korea/China (Lanoszka 2022). This suggests that not only does the US avoid entrapment well, so do its allies.

#### 6.4 ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I detailed the indicators for entrapment under reputational and political permeation varieties: international reputation (reliability in conflict and reliable burden sharer), successful restraint negotiations, rhetoric, elite influences, diplomatic discussions, ingratiating the military, propaganda, and lobbyists. These indicators appear in the literature and theory often as indicators of entrapment but are also prevalent in the examples given above. I will now demonstrate that these indicators suggest scenario (2) because while neither Sweden nor Finland are actively working to antagonize Russia, both nations have received verbal promises of support should Russia attack them and have familiarized themselves with the NATO elite, creating personal relationships that could be problematic. However, as illustrated in political permeation, the elites are often aware they are open to influence and make the choice to advocate for the state or not. Second, despite regular military exercises with NATO and allies, Sweden and Finland lack a reputation for being reliable military allies. Untested allies are a risk when conflict begins. There is no way of divining if the ally will escalate or placate. As such, Sweden and Finland are

not actively trying to entrap NATO and therefore do not fit the scenario (2), but there is not a complete lack of risk either, which precludes scenario (1).

Beneficially, there are favorable indications for a non-military reliable reputation, no aggressive rhetoric, and minimal efforts in the use of propaganda and lobbyists. In this research, we have noted the large number of organizations to which Sweden and Finland belong and how they are reputable allies within those organizations. They commit economically, militarily, and politically to the EU, OSCE, and UN. This suggests they should be capable of joining NATO without inciting conflict or needing to be restrained. This, of course, can change with an alteration in government, but considering their history of neutrality, antagonization is not known to be Sweden's or Finland's method of operation.

Rhetoric from both nations is openly non-aggressive to prevent unnecessary upset to Russia. It is also unlikely that this will change after they join NATO because they would still be hard-pressed to influence the US enough to support them. Provocation is also unlikely based on their histories of involvement as neutral nations in conflict resolution and peacekeeping missions; both nations actively advocated for peace without alliance commitments, a drastic change in that domestic sentiment is not impossible, but under current indicators it is highly unlikely. The exception to this is their unwavering support for Ukraine with words and aid; the countries of NORDEFECO, which Sweden currently chairs, had, as of November 2022, donated €1.7 billion to Ukraine in defensive support (NORDEFECO Defence Ministers Statement 22 November 2022 2022). Sweden and Finland are advocating with the Nordic states within organizations like NORDEFECO and JEF to support Ukraine, and it is demonstrating the Finnish and Swedish priorities for security (JEF Defence Ministers Statement 10 November 2022 2022; Statements Stoltenberg Andersson 2022). I found no mention that this defense of Ukraine made

either nation a bigger target for Russian aggression. That focuses entirely on their NATO ascension.

There was limited data on active foreign agents from Finland and Sweden in the US according to the Department of Justice: Business Finland, with an international marketing firm; two related to VisitSweden, one filed as a business, the other as a government entity; and the clothing store H&M (Registration Statement - Business Finland 2021; Registration Statement - H&M Hennes & Mauritz AB 2022; Registration Statement - H&M 2022; Registration Statement - Swedish Travel & Tourism Council 1994). While the Swedish government runs the tourism agencies, the rest are actually run in part by corporations and facilitate the economy. While a tourism campaign can change a population's perception of a country, it is hard to overlook an unwanted war. For this reason, indicators of propaganda and lobbying do not seem to extend beyond economics, and they are certainly not situated to enhance entrapment.

While there is little use for propaganda and lobbying outside economics, there are a few situations in the data that actually suggest a US benefit to enhancing the Finnish and Swedish reputations. First, Finland's decision to join NATO has improved its reputation in the international theater with almost half of those polled saying their opinion improved because of the NATO decision. The country with the most positive perception of Finland? The US, where 77% of those polled said their perception of Finland had improved (Exceptional interest in Finland 2023; International visibility increases Finland's influence 2023). While this obviously has economic and political benefits for Finland, it benefits the US by proving to Finland that in the eyes of the American people who are the driving force behind USFP, it is making the right decision to commit to NATO. This indicator could go either way: the US population could be swayed into helping Finland should it act aggressively, or more likely, the US population favors

Finland's choice to join NATO. Should Finland drag NATO into an unprovoked war, the backlash is likely to be severe. According to a statement by the Swedish Prime Minister, Swedish companies supply 350,000 jobs in the US and are the 15<sup>th</sup> largest investor in the US economy (Biden, Niinistö, Andersson after Trilateral Meeting 2022). Once again, this ingratiates Swedes to the US population and can throw support behind them in a conflict, risking entrapment. Yet, similarly to American perception of Finland, indicators suggest that if Sweden does something to pull NATO and the US into an unnecessary war, these numbers will not be sufficient to stop a reversal in perceptions. The hand of Sweden in the US economy certainly has influence, but it is not yet strong enough to do more than lobby for beneficial policies.

In the negative, there are a lack of reputation militarily, elite influences, and opportunities to ingratiate with militaries. Sweden has acknowledged that the transition period will be dangerous for the nation and that it will require security assurances from "some Allies" for this period (2022, 38; Statements Stoltenberg Andersson 2022). While not a direct effort for entrapment, and it can be considered a reasonable request, the report suggests that Sweden is far more concerned about Russia's potential efforts to prevent it from NATO ascension than it openly states (Deterioration of the security 2022). Finnish participation in the NATO Crisis Management Exercise 2023 facilitates interoperability but also involves the exchange of staff among institutions which, as we have seen in this chapter, can enable influencing (Finland to participate in NATO Crisis 2023). NATO elite support Swedish security should Sweden be attacked in transition (Joint press point Stoltenberg and Andersson 2022; Joint Press Stoltenberg and Kristersson 2023; Biden, Niinistö, Andersson after Trilateral Meeting 2022).

Once the Ukraine War began in February of 2022, there was a flurry of Swedish and Finnish visits to potential NATO allies and NATO itself, particularly well-demonstrated by open

access to Swedish and Finnish government records.<sup>10</sup> Sweden and Finland are openly courting NATO elite to ensure their security in the transition period. Subsequently, we see the US confirming its commitment to their protection during the transition (Harris's Meeting with Marin 2023; Biden and Niinistö Bilateral Meeting 2022; Biden, Niinistö, Andersson after Trilateral Meeting 2022). The exploitation of these elite relationships seems unlikely as they are promises that are made to all prospective members. NATO and the US do not have to aid these partners before ascension, but because of possible reputational concerns, having promised after all, they would be dragged into the conflict anyway. Also, Sweden and Finland lack a military reputation. There is no history with which to predict how either nation would act in an alliance: crisis, push for escalation or peace? Because of this, scenario (3) seems the most likely because the US will need to stay invested until Finland and Sweden have demonstrated a positive military reputation within NATO.

## 6.5 CONCLUSION

I have demonstrated that the entrapment variable does suggest likely US involvement, but it is conditional, thus evoking scenario (3). Most of Finland's and Sweden's efforts have minimized conflict of any kind at all costs. The concern is that both nations, due to their historical neutrality, lack a military reputation altogether. This is risky for NATO. Leaders typically analyze prior actions to predict future scenarios; neutrality is an indicator.

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<sup>10</sup> (Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson received NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg 2023) (Prime Minister Marin speaks with NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg 2022) (Prime Ministers of Finland and Estonia meet in Tallinn 2022) (Minister of Defence Kaikkonen to visit the United States 2022) (Prime Minister Marin meets with United States Senators 2022) (Prime Minister Marin meets with Italian Prime Minister Draghi in Rome 2022) (Prime Minister Marin met leaders of North Macedonia 2022) (Norwegian and Swedish defence ministers to visit Finland 2022) (Minister for Foreign Affairs Haavisto visits Budapest 2022) (Minister Mikkonen met Baltic interior ministers and Undersecretary of State of Poland in Helsinki 2022) (Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Defence Esa Pulkkinen to visit United States 2022) (Prime Ministers of Finland and Iceland meet in Reykjavik – discussions focus on security, climate change and Nordic cooperation 2022) (Minister for Foreign Affairs Haavisto to visit Washington DC and New York 2022) (Current security situation to be discussed during Foreign Minister Haavisto's visit to Washington DC 2022) (Prime ministers of Finland and Slovakia discuss European security 2022).



This chapter has considered the four types of entrapment: treaty, systemic, reputational, and political permeation. Treaty and systemic entrapment are not as applicable to NATO, so they are not a primary focus. The NATO charter is ambiguous when in the area of commitments during conflicts. The US is the unipole, and so it faces limited opportunities for systemic entrapment. Some literature indicates that the US is more likely to entrap allies than be entrapped. Research shows that entrapment is more likely when the defender has a tactical investment in defending the ally. The defender need not agree with the ally's interests.

Restraint is a lesser form of entrapment as the defender engages in diplomatic negotiations rather than military conflict. A restraint attempt will succeed or fail contingent on the reliance of the restrainee on the restrainer; the restrainee is constrained by fears of abandonment. Restraint methods include threats of defection, withholding diplomatic support, insisting on consultations, and inducements. Research suggests that the stronger ally and the weaker ally have equal chances of restraining one another.

Because a restrainer will never force the restrainee to restrain it, the success and failure of restraint depend upon the willingness of the restrainer to mobilize its power resources. The likelihood increases if the restrainee's plans negatively affect the restrainer's goals. If the restrainee's plans are immaterial to the restrainer's plans, the restrainer is unlikely to act. Based on the research, if a restrainer can threaten credibly, the restrainee is likely to back down, and if it does not, the restrainer is likely to abandon them. This makes alliances an important tool for conflict prevention and resolution. Clearly, the hazards of restraint deception, leadership unity, national security agenda, and substitution policies can be impactful on alliance decision making. The scale of restraint ranges from the restrainee antagonizing the threat and provoking conflict, to the threatened ally using the institution of the alliance to avoid conflict. The more open the

restraining nation is with the restrainee, the less likely the restrainee is to become involved in a moral hazard.

More relevant to this research are reputational and political permeation. Reputational entrapment relies on either the defender's leadership believing it must defend an alliance member or risk the defender's reputation or when the ally knows the defender cares a great deal for its reputation and willfully antagonizes the threat knowing the defender intervene. I find issue with both of these for several reasons. First, national security priorities can easily override a leader's priorities, particularly in a democratic society. In a multilateral alliance, the defender has not autonomous: support must come from other powerful allies unless the defender is willing to go it alone. The threatened ally must predict the value of reputation to the leaders, and that reputation is the only motive for assisting the ally; it is not usually so simple.

Political permeation in this research is how smaller states effect larger states. Examples are public officials who use their divided loyalties to maneuver countries closer or farther apart; lobbyists altering public perceptions and policy toward an ally; and foreign propaganda used to sway target countries' populations and policymakers. Using US ideology against the US is a particular concern to some researchers. These influential connections are generated through diplomatic discussions with elites, intelligence agencies or military branches, and private interest groups. If the US ally seeks attention from the US, it must either become the ideal loyal ally or become somewhat independent of the US. If the ally wants something denied them by the American elite, allies can appeal directly to the US population to achieve their goals. Yet any of these are unlikely to be the sole cause of a change in domestic politics because of the broad groups and opinions that comprise US politics. There are too many other variables.

For the analysis, I used indicators of international reputation (reliability in conflict and reliable burden sharer), successful restraint negotiations, rhetoric, elite influences, diplomatic discussions, ingratiating the military, propaganda, and lobbyists. There are favorable indications for non-military reputations, lack of aggressive rhetoric, and minimal efforts at the use of propaganda and lobbyists to influence domestic politics. Both Sweden and Finland openly committed to a number of non-military alliances and have thus far been cooperative with the military agreements to which they do belong. Their rhetoric has been non-aggressive excluding their support for Ukrainian resistance. The decision to join NATO has improved the global and US perceptions of Finland, and continued support in non-treaty bound missions and conflicts has proven both states reliable allies.

There are unfavorable indications of a lack of military reputation, elite influences, and ingratiating the military by Sweden and Finland. For decades, both nations have been neutral; therefore, they have not acquired a record as reliable military allies. Attempts at interoperability between NATO and Finnish and Swedish staff and military have increased the capabilities of personal relationships and infiltrations. It seems that Sweden and Finland have used this to advantage to ensure their protection by NATO during the transition period and have risked US entrapment. So far, this integration of elites has not caused problems and it is unlikely to do so before ascension. However, empathy for a weaker ally can be a first sign of possible entrapment over time.

When an ally has a reputation for abiding by its alliance commitments, it accrues a strong reputation for reliability and strengthens the deterrence force of the alliance. Reputation makes a difference. Political permeation has not been very successful either, but it can make a drastic impact on domestic American politics with the permeation of elites, propaganda, lobbyists, and

other influential groups by a foreign power. In this chapter, the indicators suggest that lobbyists from Sweden and Finland have an insignificant effect on US politics outside of the economy. Therefore, there are enough indicators of a lack of military reputation and a plethora of elite and military interactions for scenario (3). As such, these indicators should be monitored until such time that Sweden and Finland prove their military reputation is favorable to NATO. This means that the US must stay invested until this reputation is firmly established, and then the US can reevaluate the risk of entrapment before reducing involvement in Europe.

## CHAPTER 7

### STRATEGIC CULTURE

In this chapter, I will explain why strategic culture strongly suggests scenario (1) based on the indicators of democratic and liberal ideologies, beliefs in high levels of personal freedoms, free market and capitalist economies, and civilian-led, highly trained, and well-regulated military forces. All indicators, to some degree, suggest that the strategic culture of Sweden and Finland will align with NATO to benefit the US. In fact, there were only two recent instances of consistent behavior that do not align with NATO strategic culture: Türkiye's dual accusations of both states harboring terrorists and treating migrants poorly. The dearth of incidents indicates that the US could rely on Sweden and Finland as alliance members with shared values for goals and policies as well as for conflicts. The aligned strategic culture means the US need not monitor the new members as it would if there were more conflicting variables, as it did with the Baltic States, and allows it to reduce its leadership in Europe.

I define *strategic culture* as the amalgamation of internal characteristics that make an alliance unique including ideology and beliefs, economies, and militaries. Alliance strategic culture ideology in this context are states with similar political, religious, economic, or ethnic traits. The indicators listed above are important to the stability of NATO which as an institution advocates the spread of liberal and democratic values. These promote alliance cohesion and endurance, honored commitments, indicated use of force, and lower burden sharing costs (Snyder 1997; Weitsman 2004; Leeds 2003; Song 2016; Rapp-Hooper 2020; Webber et al. 2017; Oma, 2012).

Cohesion originates from low threat levels in the alliance, allowing allies to unite against an external threat (Weitsman 2004). Cohesion is vital to keep an alliance effective in wartime

(Weitsman 2004; Song 2016). A cohesive ideology enables members to agree readily on objectives, strategies to achieve objectives, coordination of those strategies, training and warfare, and operations in times of crisis (Weitsman 2004; Webber et al. 2017). Strategic culture is an important element to consider within any potential member state because it will dictate how well that new state integrates and functions within the alliance. The more commonalities the new state has with current members, the easier the transition. With 30 members, NATO includes numerous opinions and interests within its purview; limiting additional areas of possible contention would benefit the alliance in the long run (Weitsman 2004; Webber et al. 2017).

NATO's liberal ideology is a benefit because leaders are not fighting for legitimacy through ideology in attempting to maintain the power dynamic in their favor (S. M. Walt 1987; S. Walt 1997; Lanoszka 2022). Instead, liberal states find legitimacy within their societies and care much less about international opinions so long as the domestic populace is happy (S. M. Walt 1987). Liberal states, as a byproduct of their party systems, are more likely to discuss and collaborate rather than fight with the opposition because different ideologies are not an inherent threat to the legitimacy of a liberal order's power (S. M. Walt 1987). Liberality confers some helpful traits. Democratic states are 16.5% less likely than a non-democratic state to violate treaty commitment (Leeds 2003). Democratic allies are 87% less likely to dispute while a defense pact between the pair reduces the likelihood by nearly 80% (Gibler 2008). This demonstrates that ideological solidarity is known to be a unifying characteristic, and liberal economies are more flexible and typically able to sustain the burdens of alliances.

Note that an identical ideology, much less an identical strategic culture, is not essential for an effective alliance. The Allied Powers in WWII were extremely effective, but their alliance ended shortly after the war did because they weren't cohesive. Lacking an external threat, they

had no shared ideology much less a strategic culture to unify them. The alliance endured long enough to crush a common ideological enemy, fascism. The breakup of that alliance led to the formation of NATO to balance the threat from communism, and in turn, the Warsaw Pact balanced the threat of NATO. Essentially, ideology tends to be far less imperative when there is a war to fight and becomes more important once that war ends (S. Walt 1997; Weitsman 2004).

In addition to the ideological factors, it is also notable that the security implications that ideological variance can have within a state are another possible source of conflict (S. M. Walt 1987). Conflicting ideology can create an opportunity for entrapment, as mentioned in the previous chapter (Lanoszka 2018). If the allies do not have the same strategic goals or priorities, then there is potential competition for resources and attention which will divide the alliance anyway.

Enabling interoperability between military forces is crucial to an effective defensive alliance. Through a process called *socialization*, allies can shape military policy within the alliance with joint meetings, exercises, demonstrations of unity and other shows of support, thereby adopting other state norms and aims (Beckley 2015). While NATO requires potential members to update their militaries, it is also important that the new members feel like a part of the military. Ensuring that the new members, especially those bordering a threat, are delegated to protect their own border and those of other NATO members creates a militaristic strategic culture within the ranks (Krebs 1999; Hillison 2014). In NATO's operation, a preponderance of new military technology originates in the US and thus is one of the many perks of allying with the unipole. The new members must integrate their militaries swiftly into NATO so that it takes as little time, money, and training as possible to operate and fight using the new technology. A highly trained and modern force is capable of learning new weaponry and technology much

faster than an antiquated or underfunded military can. This is crucial when there is a looming threat.

To facilitate strategic culture, the PfP, EOP, and MAP within NATO prepare the prospective members for ascension, enabling the interoperability of militaries and strategic cultures. The programs mold the states into Western allies that understand the value of burden sharing in return for security, encouraging them to identify culturally with the rest of NATO. The example of Georgia trying to entrap the US was mentioned in the last chapter, but the situation actually went beyond Georgia's attempts at political permeation. Georgia attempted to align its strategic culture with that of the US and NATO. It joined the PfP and commenced economic and political reforms and made progress with the 2003 Rose Revolution and the installation of a democratically elected president. But the inability of Georgia to become a fully free and reliable democratic state was one of the reasons, after its relationship with Russia, that NATO members rejected the Georgian application. Yet Georgia remained unable to become a fully free and reliably democratic state. In addition to its relationship with Russia, this was one of the essential reasons that NATO members rejected the Georgian application.

## 7.1 ANALYSIS

This analysis demonstrates that scenario (1) is the most likely after considering the indicators within the strategic culture variables; this would enable the US to arrest its interventions in Europe. USFP will be stressed more if the new NATO member does not have an aligning strategic culture and less if it does, so Sweden's and Finland's alignment with existing NATO strategic culture is fortuitous. USFP architects should seek familiar indicators for strategic culture: a democratic and liberal government, a civilian-led military with interoperable capabilities with the NATO militaries, participation in military exercises, political and individual



freedoms, free market economies, and security goals. The more pervasive these characteristics within the state, the better the alignment with NATO values, and the more likely integration with NATO will succeed without disruption.

This is the only variable with few detrimental indicators although there is some variation in numbers or statistics. All of the above indicators suggest a benefit to the US with Swedish and Finnish ascension. Both Sweden and Finland have open economies and well-established, liberal governments. Sweden is a constitutional monarchy, and Finland is a republic. To demonstrate this, I draw from CATO's Human Freedom Index 2022 and Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2023 rankings. According to CATO, Sweden and Finland rank 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respectively. The US is 23<sup>rd</sup> (CATO Institute 2022). Finland is 3/165 countries for personal freedoms and 26/165 countries for economic freedom while Sweden is 1/165 countries for personal freedom and 33/165 countries for economic freedom (CATO Insitute 2022). Accordingly, Freedom House gives both Sweden and Finland a score of 100/100, fully free (Finland 2023; Sweden 2023) while the US is 83/100 but still labeled a "Free" nation (US 2023). Freedom House addresses only political rights and civil liberties, so the Fraser Institute's 2020 Economic Freedom index gives an economic perspective counter to the CATO one. While Fraser Institute considers Finland, Sweden, and the US to be "Most Free" economies, they are ranked 26<sup>th</sup>, 33<sup>rd</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup>, respectively (Fraser Institute 2022). So, what does this indicate for USFP? Overall, the two countries actually exceed US levels of political and personal freedoms but are behind the US in economic freedoms. However, at no point is either country considered not free in any capacity, so they demonstrate the political, personal, and economic freedom indicators that should benefit the US.

The armed forces of both nations are structured much like those of the US. Militaries are controlled and funded by Ministries of Defence and a merit-based structure. Military exercise participation is increasingly important; Finland declared that exercises “are a response to the deteriorating security situation while at the same time improving Finland’s readiness to join NATO” (Defence Forces to continue active training 2022). Sweden’s interoperability earns high public praise from NATO (Relations with Sweden 2022; Joint press point Stoltenberg and Andersson 2022). And NATO openly praises the “common values and common interests” it shares with Finland (Joint press point Stoltenberg and Niinisto 2022; Statements Stoltenberg Andersson 2022).

The commitment to exercise participation is well-known and described here, but some specific statistics make the case. Finland currently has about 335 soldiers in 9 different crises areas under the leadership of the UN, the EU, NATO, and the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS (Committee on Foreign and Security 2022). Sweden is also a part of many of these missions, and dedication to the freedoms that define NATO strategic culture is of such importance to Finland and Sweden that they engage in the operations of organizations to which they do not formally belong. We see Finland planning participation in NATO Crisis Management Exercise 2023, something it has done since 1998 when NATO permitted it to join (Finland to participate in NATO Crisis 2023).

All of this has been acknowledged on multiple occasions by President Biden as a benefit to NATO and the US (Biden, Niinistö, Andersson after Trilateral Meeting 2022; Biden Signing Ratifications for NATO Finland and Sweden 2022). The only two indicators that these two countries may not fit the strategic culture are Türkiye’s accusations that they are harboring terrorists and that their treatment of migrants is suspect. The first is highly debated and may be

more political rhetoric than truth. Either way, both nations have gone to great lengths to appease Türkiye. The migrant issue has ebbed and flowed in the last decade, and while I do not discuss it in this research because of its broad reach, migration has been an immense issue in all of Europe. It is true that Sweden and Finland have seen some xenophobic reactions among their populations (Reuters 2022, Khalimzoda 2023). Both accusations are being addressed domestically, and so far, the latter has not proven significant enough to prevent widespread endorsement of the NATO bids. However, because the rest of the indicators align with NATO strategic culture, the majority indicate that scenario (1) is the most likely, benefiting the US to have another like-minded ally in the alliance and thereby allowing the US to reduce commitments in Europe.

## 7.2 CONCLUSION

The indicators of strategic culture as a variable are indicative of scenario (1). There is consistent alignment between Finland and Sweden and NATO strategic culture. Only two recent incidents suggest possible cause for concern: both have been accused of harboring terrorists; and both are accused of the mistreatment of migrants. The first has caused issues that are currently being resolved. It is disquieting that NATO has not mentioned the second. This suggests a clear path to scenario (1). The strategic culture benefits the US and enables the reduction of US investment in Europe once the issues with Türkiye are resolved. Strategic culture is vital to an enduring, coherent alliance. Research shows that liberal and democratic values mean allies are more likely to honor commitments, lower burden sharing costs, enhance endurance and cohesion, and indicate if and when an alliance uses force. A cohesive ideology enables members to agree on objectives, strategies, and training more readily in times of war and crisis. However, more alliance members mean more opinions and a greater chance for divisive ideas and goals.

Thus, for an alliance like NATO, having a similar strategic culture among all allies minimizes divisions from inception.

From here, there are several outstanding characteristics to a strategic culture: ideology, security goals, military, and economy. Liberal states find legitimacy in their democratic power base rather than in ideology and therefore tend to be more stable than non-democratic states. Liberal states are more likely to discuss than resort to conflict. They are 16.5% less likely to violate a treaty, 87% less likely to provoke another liberal state, and having a defense pact reduces it by another 80%, demonstrating their unifying abilities. Conflicting strategic goals can also cause divisions, so allying with states with similar goals is important. Military structures have the added difficulty of being impossible to interoperate if they are structured differently or are antiquated. The goal is that the new members will require little aid and training to operate with existing members in exercises and conflicts. NATO implemented the PfP, EOP, and MAP to facilitate strategic culture with prospective members and allied nations. These programs elevate nations to NATO standards and ideology before formal application for membership.

Accordingly, I sought indicators such as a democratic and liberal government, a civilian-led military with interoperable capabilities with NATO militaries, participation in military exercises, political and individual freedoms, free market economies, and security goals. I found beneficial indicators in almost all areas. Both nations actually surpass the US in freedom scores and rankings; they rank below the US but still highly in the economic freedom rankings. Both nations have a military structure similar to the rest of Europe, and due to decades of neutrality, have managed to maintain fairly modern and well-trained forces. Sweden and Finland are known for joining NATO and other organizations in training exercises. They join the UN and other organizations in peacekeeping and conflict resolution missions which often defend human rights.

The dirt on this picture of Sweden and Finland are Türkiye's accusations of harboring terrorists and their treatment of migrants. Despite these two adverse indicators, the majority of indicators suggest Sweden and Finland will align with NATO strategic culture and benefit the US through scenario (1). This should enable the US to take a step back from Europe knowing that the other members have the same ideology and strategic goals as the US.

## CHAPTER 8

### REASSURANCE AGAINST ABANDONMENT

This chapter will discuss reassurance against abandonment and its indicators including a history of honoring agreements, credibility, commitment of troops, base permission, military exercises, aligned foreign policy goals, monetary contributions, and public statements. These indicators suggest scenario (1) as the US has provided sufficient reassurance that it will honor the *casus foederis* should it be invoked by either nation. In this chapter, I will detail where the indicators originate and why they are important.

The research concentrates on abandonment as the opposite of entrapment and on the defender abandoning the allies. USFP is vital to the security of NATO, but member state participation is what makes the alliance work. Credibility is central to the reputational entrapment argument, but I consider credibility in the context of a state honoring previous alliances and commitments as a means of reassurance against abandonment. How regularly do these states honor their commitments and agreements? How indictive is a state's credibility for its actions? I seek evidence that the US has demonstrated its commitment to the alliance with Sweden and Finland to minimize their fears that the US will retreat should conflict arise (Lanoszka 2022; Rapp-Hooper 2020). Abandonment fears are ingrained in any alliance. There is always the fear that the ally will not give aid. As Lanoszka notes, abandonment fears wax and wane with the alignment of foreign policy interests and threat levels (Lanoszka 2022). Those who are less dependent have a credible abandonment threat (Johnson and Leeds 2011). This is the core of this argument for Sweden and Finland. Because both nations were neutral for so long, they learned to rely on one another and themselves. Learning to rely on an alliance will be an adjustment.

In contrast, reassurance can cause entrapment problems as demonstrated in Chapter 5, hence the alliance dilemma, but there is literature to suggest that at a certain point reassurance is pointless as the ally will never be convinced or happy (Lanoszka 2022). Abandonment takes multiple forms. Refusing to aid in diplomatic transactions or withdrawing allied support during negotiations is one example (Lanoszka 2022). Because of the alliance security dilemma, consoling an ally may need to be done in tandem while reassuring the common threat that the action is not intended to be hostile (Snyder 1997). There must be a balance between security and autonomy to avoid the alliance dilemma (Oma 2012).

An ally's credibility when conflict occurs is based on a reputation, so here I evaluate reliability as it effects credibility. Research on abandonment and the reliability of allies actually indicates that allies honor their commitments in wartime (Leeds, Long, and Mitchell 2000). The Leeds study suggests the number is as high as 74.5% when the *casus foederis* is triggered. Once again confirming that democracies are the most reliable of allies, in a later study, Leeds finds that 80% of democratic states fulfill their treaty commitments when presented with a conflict. Leeds also investigates in this study why 20-25% do not honor commitments and finds that the longer the period between the signing of the alliance and its defense, the greater the probability that the treaty will be violated (Leeds 2003). This is a risky statistic for NATO. It is in its eighth decade, but so far, the alliance has proven committed to its security guarantees. Considering it has only been invoked once, for 9/11, and the allies responded in kind, age does not seem to have eroded the commitment. The conclusion is that states are not likely to form an alliance they do not intend to honor. In a subsequent study, Berkemeier and Fuhrmann found that defensive treaties were honored only 41.18% of the time once the post-WWII period was included (Berkemeier and Fuhrmann 2018). Their findings suggest that if a country becoming involved in a conflict

will not make a difference, that country is unlikely to honor the agreement. This speaks directly to Finland's and Sweden's fear that the US will not lend aid should they be attacked. Gibler's research finds that reputations matter because leaders are attuned to the histories of other states, avoiding those that have a history of breaking commitments (Gibler 2008). There are few methods to predict another leader's choices, so allies use the leader or state's credibility to make decisions. The more consistent a state is when honoring commitments, the better its credibility. In fact, those states with poor credibility are more likely to be attacked, suggesting that credibility is actually a method of deterrence (Gibler 2008; Leeds 2003).

One of the best ways to placate a nervous ally is forward-deployed forces that are purposefully put in harm's way, demonstrating skin in the game (Lanoszka 2022). These forces sometimes act as a tripwire and present the threat with a barrier. They make the threat of punishment more credible. Other times, these forces supplement the native military so that in acting together, the force capably resists the attacks until an agreement can be reached (Lanoszka 2022). Such deterrence by denial will be discussed in the next chapter. There is a difference between a rotational and permanent force, particularly after the 1997 NATO Russia Founding Act prevented placing permanent troops with new NATO members (Lanoszka 2022). As was stated earlier, President Biden changed that in 2022 by stationing troops in Poland in response to Russian aggression. The policy was a hindrance to NATO forces for 25 years, though.

Aligned foreign policy goals are another indicator that can demonstrate commitment and a shared threat much like security goals facilitate strategic culture (Lanoszka 2022; Lanoszka 2018; Rapp-Hooper 2020). Monetary contributions and public statements are also mild forms of reassurance. I classify them as mild because they are not binding. Loss of investment is insignificant compared to loss of life and resources in war, and public statements are easily



contradicted. The most effective methods of reassurance will always be the actions that are hard to retract.

Before discussing examples, note that per the definition of abandonment, no ally has ever totally abandoned the US. However, the US may have been subject to milder forms of abandonment like free riding; it arguably occurred during Charles de Gaulle's tenure in France, but even those costs to the US were minimal compared to the benefits of the wider alliance (Rapp-Hooper 2020). Germany is an example of reassurance. After Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, international and NATO observers speculated if Germany, headed by Chancellor Angela Merkel, would stand with its Eastern European NATO neighbors. Instead of slighting the allies, Merkel took point on EU dealings with Russia and sent physical support to the NATO border countries (Wesley et al. 2017). In 2022, after Russia invaded Ukraine, there was again a question of whether Germany, under new leadership, would break with tradition and send support to Ukraine. In what might be described as reluctant reassurance, Germany did send military aid.

In 1964 President Lyndon Johnson sent a message to Turkey warning it not to invade Greece, or the US would abandon it. While this was an effective means of restraint using the threat of abandonment, it negatively affected the relationship between Turkey and NATO (Krebs 1999). Even when abandonment does not occur, the political fallout of its prevention can take a toll on the nations and leaders involved.

This is especially important to remember in the days of "America First" foreign policy. The Trump campaign threatened to abandon NATO allies who did not pull their weight, as discussed in burden sharing. Although that threat was never realized, it elicited certain kinds of reactions. The European nations were unprepared for the sudden loss of the US and thus startled the first time this happened in 2016. But when Congress defied the president's NATO agenda,

NATO allies learned that Trump was able to incentivize them only rhetorically and could no longer mobilize the resources actually to accomplish the threat. This took a toll on the Alliance.

Members observed the Trump administration with less certainty because they knew the message might change. President Trump was not the first US president to use the US's security guarantee against allies to make them behave.

The case of Poland's abandonment in 1939 is probably the widest-known example. While Czechoslovakia was also abandoned, the Polish fear of abandonment because of this event has persisted and motivated it to realign itself with Europe in the 1990's and 2000's. In 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union invaded Poland from both east and the west and divided it between them. Despite a mutual assistance treaty with France and Britain, no help came for Poland, and after the Second World War, it would be absorbed into the Soviet Union's sphere of influence until 1991 (Lanoszka 2022). Despite alliance commitments, neither France nor the UK aided Poland directly. The two nations were also busy on the Western Front with Germany, but the Polish remembered and were sufficiently disturbed to get a security guarantee as soon as they could.

## 8.1 ANALYSIS

This analysis finds that the indicators for reassurance against abandonment will indicate scenario (1). My indicators for this variable exceed mere participation to credible intent behind actions. The indicators fall into the categories of either strength or credibility. These include a history of honoring agreements or credibility, commitment of troops, base permission, military exercises, aligned foreign policy goals, monetary contributions, and public statements. Most of these indicators are in other variables, but it is the prospective members' participation in them

that will signal intent to support the Alliance or to abandon it. Public statements and money are easily given and forgotten, but actions that influence a state's credibility are far more impactful.

Sweden and Finland can be reassured of US intentions by indicators of troop commitments, military exercises, goal alignment, monetary contributions, and public statements. The US always plays a part in missions and exercises that NATO hosts, and these are frequently held in the Baltic Sea, enabling US forces to interoperate with Sweden and Finland. These include Defender Europe, BALTOPS, Northern Wind, Freezing Winds, and Nordic Strike (Finland Fact Sheet 2022; Sweden Fact Sheet 2023). As discussed in Chapter 7, such interactions build a strategic culture that creates a cohesive alliance, making smaller states feel included and protected. Sweden and Finland could find additional reassurance in a base agreement should they choose to approve permanent foreign troops in their territories. The agreement would station American troops permanently in Finland and Sweden, putting Americans on the ground in their defense.

Finland, Sweden, and the US share strategic goals, as demonstrated in Chapter 7. Both newcomers wish for a secure and free Europe and to deter Russian aggression. US policymakers and leaders have regularly cited Finland's and Sweden's compatibility with NATO's security and strategic goals (Harris's Meeting with Marin 2023; Biden, Niinistö, Andersson after Trilateral Meeting 2022; Biden and Niinistö Bilateral Meeting 2022; Biden Signing Ratifications for NATO Finland and Sweden 2022). Statements of strategic goal alignment cements the aims of the alliance. These shared strategic goals reduce friction between members and create a united front to adversaries.

Monetary contributions are traditionally used when the target state is less prepared than Sweden and Finland. However, Sweden and Finland have strong and well-developed economies,

and there is no evidence that the US provides monetary aid to either nation. Instead, the US participates in government-to-government weapons and equipment sales with Finland which is also beneficial. According to the State Department, its \$13.6 billion in sales include various rocket-launching systems and missiles. The US has also provided Finland with aircraft and \$113.8 million in direct sales which include military electronics, ammunition and ordnance, and aircraft and related articles (Finland Fact Sheet 2022). For Sweden, the US has done around \$1.95 billion in sales including missiles, aircraft, training, and support. From 2017 to 2021, the US sent \$2.9 billion in gas turbine engines, military electronics, and aircraft to Sweden (Sweden Fact Sheet 2023). Not only does the US back Finland and Sweden militarily but also it recognizes their military independence as a benefit and enables their deterrence capabilities.

Public displays of support are the simplest means of reassurance and also the easiest to revoke. The US has verbally reassured Sweden and Finland that should they be attacked, even during the transition process, NATO will come to their aid (Biden, Niinistö, Andersson after Trilateral Meeting 2022; Biden and Niinistö Bilateral Meeting 2022; Biden Signing Ratifications for NATO Finland and Sweden 2022). The Biden administration is firmly on the side of Sweden and Finland joining NATO as is evident by its speeches and actions. President Biden sent Sweden's and Finland's NATO bids through Congress, and they were approved. This is a strong indication of American support. Again, if a nation earns the population's regard, a democratic government can be persuaded to support an ally. In this case, America's confirmation of Finland and Sweden should reassure the states that the US is unlikely to abandon them without good cause.

The real case for Sweden's and Finland's fear of abandonment derives from the credibility indicator based in US history. The US violated agreements with Australia and New

Zealand during the Korean War, during both Taiwan Strait crises, and when Bangladesh was attacked by Pakistan (Berkemeier and Fuhrmann 2018). The US has also been accused of abandoning other allies like Georgia and Ukraine, but there was no formal defense treaty with those countries, so under the parameters of this research it is not considered abandonment. Consequently, the US has labored to reassure Finland by initiating the process for a Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA). A DCA would further develop common defense infrastructure and facilitate military cooperation. However, this process can take a few years, and therefore, can only indicate reassurance but does not guarantee it (US and Finland to open negotiations 2022).

Despite some reservations, Finland and Sweden should be reassured by the actions of the US thus far, and they indicate scenario (1). This scenario benefits the US because it can reassure Finland and Sweden of US commitments should conflict ensue. In addition, because Sweden and Finland are actively trying to avoid conflict, the US is unlikely to use any milder forms of abandonment on the Nordic states as a means of restraint. Both nations are capable of providing significant advantages in a conflict, so ensuring their dedication to the Alliance by reassuring them of the US's allegiance will aid in stabilizing the region. This will then facilitate the US returning more Baltic Sea security to the Baltic Sea states without abandonment concerns.

## 8.2 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I examined the abandonment of an ally when the *casus foederis* is invoked or at risk of being invoked. The analysis indicated that scenario (1) is likely as, despite a dubious record of upholding alliance commitments, the US has committed openly to Finland and Sweden since they announced their bids for membership. This will enable the US to delegate more of the responsibility for Baltic Sea security to a unified Baltic Sea region.

Research shows that allies tend to honor their wartime commitments as high as 74.5% of the time and 80% for democratic states. Further research, including the post-WWII era suggests that more than 41% of defensive treaties were honored which may have resulted from the nuclear environment. The likelihood of honoring a treaty commitment decreases with time as the goals and stages change. However, it also suggests that if an ally knows its involvement in a conflict will not aid its partner, they will simply not get involved.

One of the best demonstrations of reassurance is force deployment to the nervous ally's territory, demonstrating full commitment by risking lives or providing a deterring force. The prohibition on NATO troops in post-1991 members was only voided after the Ukraine War. This now presents an opportunity for allies to display their dedication with permanent troops along NATO's Eastern border. This can also be done with goal alignment, monetary contributions, and public statements.

The indicators for this chapter focus on strength and credibility to include a history of honoring agreements or credibility, commitment of troops, base permission, military exercises, aligned foreign policy goals, monetary contributions, and public statements. Sweden and Finland have been reassured by indicators of troop commitments, exercises, goal alignment, monetary contributions, openness to permanent troop placements, and public statements. Finland and Sweden have very proficient militaries that are simply incapable of going it alone, but that does not mean they need the US as a prop.

For Finland and Sweden, abandonment is indicated by credibility concerns. The US has previously failed to uphold alliance commitments to avoid entrapment or to force an ally's hand, but notably, it has never abandoned an attacked NATO ally only because one has never been attacked. This generates an extra layer of reassurance for Sweden and Finland. Based on the

discussion of entrapment in Chapter 6, Sweden and Finland are unlikely to initiate a conflict with Russia. Ergo, an attack on Sweden or Finland by Russia will likely be within the terms of Article 5.

Reassurance from abandonment as a variable suggests scenario (1) as all of the indicators recommend that the US will support Finland and Sweden with one exception. That exception is the dubious US history of not always standing by allies, which is where the Finnish and Swedish concerns originate. However, considering that the majority of NATO countries in addition to the US are supporting Sweden and Finland in this process, the odds of full abandonment are not high. In fact, based on the indicators, no form of abandonment is likely because Sweden and Finland have given no indication that they would need to be restrained with milder forms of abandonment. As such, the US should be able to start returning Baltic Sea security to the Baltic Sea states as they will be united, militarily interoperable, and strategically aligned to face any threat to the region's security. This will overall increase the security of Europe and enable the US to look to Asia or to domestic matters.

## CHAPTER 9

### DETERRENCE

Deterrence is the primary goal of a defense alliance as it prevents attacks on the security of the Alliance. NATO was designed to deter the Soviet Union which has morphed to deterring and balancing the threat of a resurgent Russia. For this research, I define *deterrence* as the efforts of a state or group of states to dissuade a potential threat from attack by communicating to the threat that such actions would be too costly and not worth the efforts of the aggressor. Deterrence is the counterpoint to restraint in the literature. The objective is to restrain an ally and deter the threat, making deterrence a public good. Threat is a function of the variations within these variables: military expenditures and size, industrial resources and production capabilities, population, proximity to threat, and intentions (Weitsman 2004, 34).<sup>11</sup> An increase or decrease in a combination of these variables can indicate an increased or decreased threat level (Weitsman 2004). This is a foundation for selecting indicators for deterrence. For clarity, I use the term *aggressor* as the threat or adversary from outside the alliance targeting the alliance or one of its members; the *target* is the ally within the alliance marked by the aggressor and under the security guarantee of the defender; the *defender* provides the security guarantee for the target.

*Extended deterrence*, which is what the US typically practices, is when a defender or treaty ally acts to prevent a threat or attack against another member of the Alliance (Lanoszka 2022; Rapp-Hooper 2020). Extended deterrence is best demonstrated by the two types of troop deterrence as described by Lanoszka: *tripwire forces* and *credible forces*. Tripwire forces are the skin-in-the-game troops that when attacked trigger the *casus foederis* and the entire might of the Alliance. Credible forces are fully equipped for war on the front line to supplement the domestic

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<sup>11</sup> I leave out Weitsman's inclusion of proximity of colonial holdings in my research for obvious reasons.



military and counter an invasion. Credible forces are deterrence by denial forces because the aggressor is incapable of overpowering them (Lanoszka 2022). Both types of force are usually provided by a defending ally not under threat or one capable of exporting forces.

A sound alliance as a collective might be capable of besting any aggressor, or at the very least, sufficiently strong to proceed with the conflict with a force powerful enough to bring the parties to the negotiating table (Lanoszka 2022). For truly effective deterrence, the alliance must communicate to the threatening force what actions the alliance will find unacceptable before the *casus foederis* is triggered. Part of this communication includes explicit explanations of the repercussions should the aggressor persevere (Lanoszka 2022; Fang, Johnson, and Leeds 2014). However, the exact circumstances of what constitutes an attack as dictated in the *casus foederis* are somewhat amorphous in the Atlantic Treaty. This implies that the defender can deter the aggressor but restrain the target with the threat of abandonment should it act against the defenders' interests. Unfortunately, sometimes there is no deterring the aggressor. The following demonstrates how that might come to pass.

Deterrence exists on a scale, especially considering NATO's *casus foederis*. On one side is conflict just short of a full-scale invasion by an aggressor on one or more member states. On the other side is an aggressor so outmatched by the deterrence measures that it seeks a new target. In the middle are disinformation campaigns, air space incursions, territorial water incursions, population manipulation, and cyber-attacks (Lanoszka 2022). Despite a combination of all of these factors from Russia in Eastern European NATO countries, Russia has not attacked outright for fear of the Alliance. Russia knows that at present, Russia is not capable of challenging the Alliance and winning.

There is a wealth of literature that suggests alliances enhance deterrence (Leeds 2003). Johnson and Leeds in their 2011 study find that states that have committed allies are less likely to be challenged, thereby reinforcing the idea that alliances deter aggression. Leeds, Long, and Mitchell demonstrate that only reliable allies will make effective deterrents to potential aggressors (2000). Kenwick, Vasquez, and Powers's research on the formation of defensive alliances providing deterrence suggests the viability of extended deterrence for preventing war (2015). In Fang, Johnson, and Leeds's 2014 research, they find that in cases where a target relies on a defender for its security, the target is less likely to escalate a dispute, suggesting that alliances not only deter the aggressor but also the allies (2014, 800). In addition, the presence of a defender can motivate the aggressor to give the target better terms than it would like, thereby avoiding the defender's intervention; inversely, the defender can force the target to agree to terms the target may not like (Fang, Johnson, and Leeds 2014). This is why formal alliance agreements are important for deterrence. Their formality is an inherent deterrent.

Finally, Hillison finds that a reputation for meeting commitments strengthens the deterrence produced by an alliance (2014). A reputation for being strong enough never to need to honor an alliance commitment, especially in war time, can help to deter an aggressor (Gibler 2008). Returning to Gartner and Siverson whose research attests to the predatory nature of aggressor states, they note that states without allies are more likely to be attacked as aggressors choose those states specifically; in fact, the state loses 78.6% of the time. They also found that credible states are necessary for the success of the argument as 41.2% of states with prewar allies did not receive aid and lost. If the aggressor judges the defender(s) to be credible, then the costs of conflict may become excessive for the aggressor, and conflict will never arise (Gartner and Siverson 1996).

As a deterrence example, the US is actually fairly apt at deterring threats for itself and its allies. During the Cold War, no US ally fell prey to an unprovoked attack, and no ally invoked the US commitment (Rapp-Hooper 2020). This alone is testament to the effectiveness of deterrence. Once again, researchers are looking for a lack of events as evidence, but for once, there is proof of theory: the Cold War never became a direct confrontation between the two superpowers. Russia's resurgence requires USFP makers to take an introspective turn and consider what worked for decades that can be resurrected.

## 9.1 ANALYSIS

Indicators for deterrence include capability for self-protection, practicing extended deterrence, a decrease in incursions of sovereign space or cyber-attacks, alliance agreements, and credibility. These are, at the same time, the most important and most elusive indicators of this research. As such, we are looking for actions a nation can take to deter rather than the prior success or failure of deterrence.

Russia is the primary threat in this research; therefore, a short discussion of the trajectory of changes it has forced on the international community since February 2022 is necessary. As early as September of 2022, Europe saw Russia seemingly forced to remove troops from the Baltic states' borders for deployment to Ukraine. This was approximately 80% of local Russian forces (Gramer and Detsch 2022). It occurred just over six months into the Ukraine War, and more than a year later, the West and allies have continued to mark the shift in Russian priorities. Russia still antagonizes the Baltic Sea region. The same article states that Russian air power had not been affected in the Baltic Sea region, but the primary focus of Russian offensive efforts is on Ukraine (Gramer and Detsch 2022). The full-scale invasion of Ukraine has demonstrated the Russian determination to continue on in the face of failure. It has also given NATO insight into

the Russian mindset and strategy which should be used to prepare for NATO's expansion during a time of high threat levels. When Russian priorities shift as Sweden and Finland progress to NATO membership, NATO should make efforts to deter Russia from the entire region. Ideally, to help reduce the US presence in the Baltic Sea, NATO needs to incorporate Finland and Sweden fully into their Baltic states' security plan. A unified Baltic Sea region is an immensely efficient deterrent considering strategy and geography, as mentioned previously. The vulnerabilities that the Baltic states present have been a security concern since 2004; utilizing Swedish and Finnish capabilities and ensuring full Baltic Sea coverage would minimize these concerns and render NATO more efficient. A more efficient NATO would incentivize Russia to abandon any aggressive aims toward the Baltic states and, most likely, redirect further aggressions farther south toward the unallied states like Moldova or Georgia.

For deterrence, there are indications of benefits to the US in self-protection and agreements. Sweden and Finland, together and separately, have toiled to protect their sovereignty, and this is an indicator of deterrence capability beneficial to the US (Finnish Government 2022; Swedish Defence Commission Secretariat 2019). Sweden has the Swedish Armed Forces that "will defend Sweden to win time and create room for manoeuvre and options in order to secure Sweden's independence" (Swedish Defence Commission Secretariat 2019, 1). Its goal has been deterrence through total defense and to be regarded "as a credible, reliable and solidary partner" (2022, 39). Finland has been restructuring its Border Guard Act to better address hybrid threats from Russia (Amendments to the Border Guard Act 2022; Amendments to Border Guard Act 2022; Preparations under way to enhance Border Guard 2023). For 2023, this includes investing €1 billion into the Ministry of Defence and of that. €139 million to the Border

Guard and an additional €1.2 million for the extra work the Border Guard will add as Finland joins NATO (Draft budget for 2023 2022; Fence on the eastern border 2023).

There are numerous examples of agreements, but the military ones have not been tested. Both Sweden and Finland are a part of NORDEFECO which facilitates free movement of military troops and supplies through the Nordic region; conducts interoperability exercises; fights hybrid and cyber threats; and enables the Nordic defense industry (NORDEFECO 2021). Finland acknowledged that it would be voluntarily participating in NATO Defence Planning Process, air policing missions, and readiness forces. Considering its current participation in exercises, this seems to be something the Finnish will honor (Report on Finland's Accession 2022). Finland and Sweden are major international players without belonging to a formal military alliance, each claiming membership to more than a dozen different organizations (US Relations with Finland 2020; US Relations with Sweden 2020).

I find that extended deterrence as an indicator tends to benefit without being a proven concept. As non-aligned nations, Sweden and Finland relied on practiced deterrence between themselves for decades, but we observe them initiating agreements and connections with smaller Baltic Sea states as they progress toward NATO membership. Finland has taken a wealth of actions to increase interoperability with Estonia, and much of it is done in a way that suggests extended deterrence and an attempt to build a strategic culture. For example, the countries regularly discuss how to better their cyber warfare capabilities and facilitate interoperability of weaponry and equipment around the Baltic (Marin, Kallas, Seminar Helsinki 2022; Finnish and Estonian ministers to develop relations in Helsinki 2022). This is unsurprising considering their geographic and cultural similarities.

Possible detriments include an increase in incursions of sovereign space or cyber-attacks and credibility. It is still early days for collective defense by Finland and Sweden which may be why these indicators show little benefit. However, Finland allocated €56 million to cyber security in public administration for 2023, so it is making significant efforts to combat the issue (Investments in road management 2022). As for air policing, Finland and Sweden have participated in a dozen exercises with NATO's Allied Air Command in 2022 alone. These include policing exercises and missions in conjunction with other allies (NATO Allied Air Command 2022). Both are promising for a reduction in activity, especially with NATO backing, but considering Finland and Sweden were unable to stem the incursions and attacks them against them prior to ascension, they may not be able to afterward.

## 9.2 CONCLUSION

Analysis for deterrence indicates scenario (3) because while Finland and Sweden are advanced and capable countries in military power, they are not capable of deterring alone. This also means that the US will not need to escalate investment in deterrence in the Baltic Sea, but must only maintain what is currently working. This chapter focused on deterrence as a variable with indicators such as the capability for self-protection, practicing extended deterrence, a decrease in incursions of sovereign space or cyber-attacks, alliance agreements, and credibility.

With deterrence as the main objective in a defensive alliance, the ability of an individual member state to deter on its own behalf is important. Extended deterrence is performing the same actions on behalf of another state. Deterrence efforts are based on the level of threat a state or alliance faces. The effectiveness of alliance deterrence is communicating to the aggressor what it will face, the costs it will incur should it attack, and what will trigger the *casus foederis* and the full might of the Alliance. Because of the various levels of deterrence, I have suggested a scale.

At one end is conflict just short of a full-scale invasion by an aggressor on one or more member states. At the other end is an aggressor so outmatched by the deterrence measures that it seeks a new target. In the middle are disinformation campaigns, air space incursions, territorial water incursions, population manipulation, and cyber-attacks.

Research shows that reliable allies make effective deterrents; defensive alliances are effective at preventing war; and a defending ally can encourage an aggressor and target to come to terms less favorable to each in an effort to prevent or deescalate conflict. In addition, having a reputation for meeting commitments enhances the alliance's deterrence potential. States without allies are attacked and lose more than 78% of the time, thus suggesting that an aggressor will choose states without allies or with allies it already knows it can defeat.

Indicators for deterrence include the capability for self-protection, practicing extended deterrence, a decrease in incursions of sovereign space or cyber-attacks, alliance agreements, and credibility. We see beneficial indicators in self-protection and agreements. Both Sweden and Finland have highly trained militaries capable of some level of self-defense for their own borders. Finland even has capacity for deterrence by denial. Finland has also seen significant budget increases for its Border Guard in charge of the enormous Russian border. Sweden and Finland show promise in their agreement commitments to NORDEFCO and NATO Defence Planning Process, air policing missions, and readiness forces. The indicator of extended deterrence leans toward beneficial but with a caveat: it is not technically proven. Once again, because of their neutrality, Sweden and Finland have practiced deterrence on themselves and extended deterrence on one other for decades, but there is nothing formal. Even Finnish assistance to Estonia was not treaty-obligated but instead facilitated along economic agreements.

Sweden's and Finland's methods were effective until 2022 when they decided they were no longer able to deter effectively on their own.

Finally, detriments include an increase in incursions or cyber-attacks and a lack of credibility. The Baltic Sea states have seen significant incursions of air and territorial waters by Russian forces in recent years. There have been even more cyber-attacks. So far, this does not seem to be completely deterrable by any state. Finland and Sweden have made the efforts to increase their specialization capabilities to target cyber warfare and air force power, but it still seems to be insufficient. However, with the added power of NATO, these incursions and attacks may decrease. It would be a telling factor if they did in the next ten years with NATO's help. Sweden and Finland will need to prove themselves capable of deterrence and reliability over the next decade or risk further hostilities from aggressive states.

In summary, the US holds the security guarantee for NATO, but the ability to deter a threat alone is a valuable skill and makes for a treasured ally. The other lesson is that Sweden and Finland have been capable of deterrence in their own rights for decades and would be an immediate benefit to deterrent capabilities of the Alliance. Yet, we also saw in the abandonment chapter, neither nation has any experience outside its own borders. They have never officially practiced extended deterrence or been able to prevent Russia from intruding in their air space. These things matter to USFP because they require extra resources to combat. The foreign policy of both nations is no longer self-centered or even bilateral considering their relationship, but multilateral. Sweden and Finland must shift their foreign policy thinking from exclusively domestic considerations to multinational ones because if a NATO ally is attacked so are Finland and Sweden. These results indicate scenario (3) because neither nation is completely capable of



deterrence alone anymore nor will they need US assistance. However, neither nation is going to become an added burden.

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, I will review the analysis results from each variable chapter to construct a future for USFP in Baltic security. I will summarize each variable chapter and its findings to demonstrate how USFP will be affected by the ascension of Finland and Sweden to NATO. I will conclude that USFP will follow scenario (1) and become less invested in the Baltic and broader European security environment due to a stronger and more cohesive alliance. Each of these chapters: burden sharing, entrapment, strategic culture, reassurance against abandonment, and deterrence, produced a set of indicators that were used to analyze data such as leader speeches and organization press releases. The analysis was to determine if the indicators suggested one of three scenarios: (1) USFP in the Baltic becomes less involved because of the cohesive military presence created by NATO in the Baltic Sea becoming a sufficient deterrent to outside aggression; (2) USFP in the Baltic becomes more involved because NATO, while supplemented by Finnish and Swedish forces, is still not a strong enough deterrent to outside aggression; (3) the security dynamic remains the same, and the level of US involvement in the Baltic does not change as outside actors still pose a general threat to the border nations. Each indicator in the data determined if it would benefit or disadvantage the US and USFP. The more indicators that benefit USFP, the more that variable suggested scenario (1), the same inversely for scenario (2), and a lack of change for scenario (3). Scenario (1), a less-invested US with a more independent Baltic, indicates the Baltic states will have the ability to handle their own security until such time as they are threatened beyond their capabilities and require the assistance of the US.

I must briefly address the lack of discussion of nuclear weapons in this research. The comprehensive dialogue can by no means be complete without addressing the nuclear aspect, but it was deliberately omitted from this research because of the enormity of the topic. To cover this aspect sufficiently would require its own paper. Because the extant size and scope of this thesis is already excessive, including the nuclear weapons debate was clearly an untenable option. This thesis is but the first half of the research on the topic of the additions of Sweden and Finland to NATO and their effect on USFP. Further research on this topic is absolutely needed, and the nuclear aspect must be incorporated for an inclusive analysis.

Chapter 5 showed that the visibility of burden sharing in NATO has made it a popular topic in recent years despite it having been an Alliance concern since the organization was founded. In NATO, burden sharing has been characterized by US accusations of free riding, and therefore, it is of great importance to USFP when NATO is expanding. This is reinforced by the fact that NATO had to aid and modernize some of the post-communist states when they joined NATO, and the costs were significant. Analysis indicates that Sweden and Finland are capable of their share of the burden from the start, and with the promised spending increases, should soon be able to assume even more in certain areas. This is particularly important because of each nation's specialties. Finland is known for its well-trained forces, and with conscription, it is often able to loan extra troops to the border nations for the Forward Defense efforts at peace keeping. Finland is also notable for having a well-established defense industry. Sweden is recognized for its humanitarian aid efforts but maintains a territorial defense force as well. Because of these capabilities, Sweden and Finland can shoulder some of the burdens, and the US will be incentivized to pull back from Europe and release more responsibility for European security to

Europeans. The ability to do so is indicative for the first scenario. USFP's ability to withdraw means that the Baltic Sea has a cohesive military presence sufficient to deter a threat.

In Chapter 6, reputation and political permeation are the forms of entrapment most applicable to the US. Reputational entrapment is rarely the sole reason for entrapment, as most states defend allies for reasons more weighty than international reputations. However, reputation does matter: a reliable ally's reputation can act as a deterrent and ensure commitments to the Alliance. Political permeation is not usually very successful either, but it can impact American domestic politics more than other forms of entrapment because of its influence on leaders and the domestic population. Leaders and elites are regularly part of meetings and conferences with one other, allowing for a weaker ally to ingratiate itself and its cause to American leaders. When this does not work, an ally can petition the American people through propaganda and lobbyists or other influential groups to manipulate public opinion. Because of the democratic system, if a majority of Americans support the protection of this ally, Congress is more likely to follow. This chapter's analysis of the indicators designated scenario (3) for two reasons. One, while Sweden and Finland are not openly antagonizing Russia, and in fact, are trying to prevent further provocation, their reputations as military allies is almost non-existent, meaning the US must remain invested in the Baltic Sea until one or both nations have demonstrated their reliability. Second, because Sweden and Finland have been politically ingratiating themselves with NATO leadership, there is a possibility of this intimacy becoming a milder form of entrapment later. Because of these factors, the US must stay invested in Baltic policy until these concerns are assuaged or the circumstances change, and the US can reevaluate the entrapment risks. However, these indicators are not appropriately threatening to warrant increased US investment in the

Baltic, which would suggest scenario (2). Thus scenario (3) is the best option for the entrapment variable.

Chapter 7 on the variable strategic culture demonstrated how aligned to NATO Finland and Sweden are politically, militarily, and economically and indicates scenario (1). The alignment of strategic culture is known to increase the cohesion of an alliance, and certain aspects improve the likelihood of alliance deterrence success and burden sharing. Sweden and Finland share democratic and liberal governments and ideologies, with free market economies and personal freedoms that define NATO in the international liberal order. Sweden and Finland have demonstrated their commitment to NATO's strategic culture with their participation in the PFP, EOP, and now MAP as well as their participation in countless military training exercises, ensuring interoperability between national forces. Both nations have also participated in a number of NATO and UN conflict resolution and peacekeeping missions which are usually in an effort to protect human rights and to promote democracy. There are two points of concern for both these nations under the variable of strategic culture, and both are moral concerns. First, Türkiye has accused both nations of harboring terrorists; the politics of the accusation are not germane to this discussion, but it is a serious accusation and has been used to delay Turkish approval of Swedish ascension into NATO. Only in March of 2023 did Türkiye finally reach an agreement with Finland on the issue. Second, the last decade has seen significant population migration into Europe, and both Swedish and Finnish populations have demonstrated xenophobic actions toward migrants. This is not the entirety of either state's population, but it has caused concern in the international community considering the incidents of violence that have resulted. The first of these concerns is being addressed bilaterally and is making progress since Finland recently received Turkish approval, and the second does not seem to have been raised as a

concern during this process, but both are not enough of a deviation for NATO's strategic culture to suggest increased involvement by the US will be necessary. Because most of the indicators suggest alignment and benefit to the US, scenario (1) is indicated for the strategic culture variable.

Chapter 8 dealt with the perpetual concern of an ally being abandoned by another, especially when that ally provides the alliance's security guarantee. Abandonment has variations: diplomatic abandonment or the rescinding of resources once a conflict has begun are milder versions of abandonment and can have the effect of manipulating the ally into doing the defender's bidding without complete abandonment. The US, as the defender, has done a sufficient job of reassuring Sweden and Finland of its commitment to them and NATO should they be attacked, signifying scenario (1). The US has reassured Sweden and Finland through all mentioned indicators with the exception of credibility. The US has a history of sometimes abandoning its allies when it is avoiding entrapment or is trying to restrain an ally. As demonstrated in the chapter, sometimes this works, and sometimes it does not. That being said, Sweden and Finland are not in a bilateral or trilateral alliance with the US. NATO has 30 members, the majority of whom have also openly backed their ascension to NATO. Should the US try to abandon Sweden or Finland without good cause, the rest of NATO will likely not agree and will continue to support the two nations. There is always a chance that Sweden or Finland may provoke a conflict, but as we have seen throughout this research, that is the opposite of what Sweden and Finland want. They are sacrificing decades of neutrality for the protection of Article 5 and are unlikely to jeopardize that. As such, scenario (1) is suggested by the variable reassurance against abandonment and will enable the US to begin returning Baltic Sea security to the Baltic Sea states, serving as the Alliance defender without the necessity of investment.

Chapter 9's analysis of deterrence may be the most important to this thesis because there is no defensive alliance without successful deterrence. No NATO ally has ever been attacked and required the assistance of the US, and based on the research, it is unlikely to happen with Finland and Sweden a part of the Alliance, suggesting scenario (3). A state capable of deterring a threat without the might of the US, even for a little while, is a great asset to the US and the rest of the Alliance. Sweden and Finland have been doing their own deterrence for decades and have thus far been fairly successful with their small but well-trained and -equipped forces. Now, because of Russia's resurgence, neither nation believes itself capable of solitary deterrence and must join NATO. Based on the indicators, this is true; they are no longer capable of deterring Russia alone. However, their abilities in self-defense, and in Finland's case, territorial denial, are of great value to the US. High operating costs for assets like troops and air forces always improve for alliance members when the new member is capable of absorbing some of that burden. With more members capable of defense, deterrence improves. The self-sufficiency of Sweden and Finland in these areas, particularly in their ability to join air force policing, makes them valuable allies for US deterrence purposes. However, territorial incursions and cyberattacks prevail in both nations despite increased budgets and efforts to stem such aggression, suggesting that the deterrence efforts are not completely effective. The caveat is that neither is capable of full deterrence alone anymore, hence their motive for joining NATO. Sweden's and Finland's capacities to meet the deterrence variable and aid themselves and allies but not excel beyond that, are indicative of scenario (3). As capable as these nations are, they will not add to the deterrence burden of the US, scenario (2), but are not capable of lessening it either, scenario (1). United with the rest of NATO, however, this will be sufficient to deter the majority of Russian aggression in the Baltic.

Because only three of the five suggest less USFP involvement, the argument is not assured should something unexpected occur. Nonetheless, because the other variables are scenario (3) not scenario (2), there is a beneficial trend to USFP in this analysis. This is furthered by the assertion that scenario (3) is flexible. Analysis indicates that if Sweden and Finland increase their spending when they join NATO, as they have stated they intend to do, it will enable them to surpass their fair share of deterrence and possibly decrease Russian aggression overall in the Baltic. While they will always require the backing of the US like most member states, Sweden and Finland possess militaries capable of expanded deterrence beyond air policing should they continue to invest in themselves. This suggests that should their spending increase, the scenario could change to (1). So long as the spending stays at is in Sweden and Finland, the variable will continue to indicate scenario (3).

Between the start of the Ukraine War in February and Sweden and Finland's formal bid for membership to NATO in May of 2022, President Biden met with the Finnish Prime Minister and said, "The bottom line is simple, quite straightforward: Finland and Sweden make NATO stronger, not just because of their capacity but because they're strong, strong democracies. And a strong, united NATO is the foundation of America's security" (Biden and Niinistö Bilateral Meeting 2022). Based on the above research and analysis, this statement holds true. The variables burden sharing, strategic culture, and reassurance indicate scenario (1) while variables entrapment and deterrence suggest scenario (3). None of the variables suggest that Finland and Sweden will require the US to become more invested in the Baltic or European security at large. Recognizing that entrapment and deterrence are major factors in an alliance, note that both can be easily shifted to scenario (1) if Sweden or Finland keep their promises. Entrapment is assuaged when Sweden and Finland prove themselves to be reliable military allies, and



deterrence will be strengthened if the Nordic nations increase their defense spending as promised in the coming years. Based on the analysis, there is little reason to believe that Sweden and Finland will not keep both of these promises. With three of the five variables suggesting less involvement while two suggest the same level of US involvement, this research concludes that USFP is going to become less involved in the Baltic and Europe in general with the additions of Finland and Sweden to NATO. This will inevitably allow the US to turn its attention toward Asia and domestic matters with a more secure Europe behind it.

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## VITA

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Kara obtained her Bachelors of Arts in Political Science with a concentration in International Studies (IS) from Longwood University in May of 2016. After which, Kara began her career in civilian service with the Department of Defense, working for the Defense Finance Accounting Service (DFAS) and then the US Navy in several positions. Kara began her MA online in the Fall of 2020 during the Coronavirus-19 pandemic but managed to finish out her degree with classes back on campus.

Kara has been dedicated to the IS subject matter since she was 14, desiring to work in the US Foreign Service, she has tailored her education since before high school and work experience to achieve this goal. She has a background in French and Russian linguistics and Middle East/Eastern Europe regional studies. In addition, she has a paper published by ODU, *Tunisia: The Colonized Road to a Democratic Identity*, which she presented at the Graduate Studies Conference, the same year she graduated. In her second year in GPIS, Kara was inducted into ΠΣΑ, the National Political Science Honor Society, for high academic achievement.

In her down time, Kara enjoys reading, music, traveling, and horseback riding. She is looking forward to catching up on the pile of books she has yet to read and traveling around the world. She is most looking forward to spending more time with her family and her dog, GiGi, both of which she could not have completed this Thesis without. A dog is a woman's best friend.