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**THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA'S PRESENCE ON THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT
THROUGH NATO**

Bachelor's Thesis

Programme International Relations

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I hereby declare that I have compiled the paper independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors has been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading.

The document length is 7286 words from the introduction to the end of conclusion.

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates the importance of the United States of America's importance on the European continent in cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Research was conducted by analysing various academic papers, speeches and articles. The paper emphasises the importance of having American military forces in Europe to work as a deterrent against any outside military aggression, why the United States need to have influence on the continent as well as the importance of cooperation between the European Union and the United States through NATO.

Throughout the paper, the author brings out different reasonings behind the importance of NATO. In the first part of the text, an introduction about the Atlantic Treaty is given, which is followed by in which state cooperation between NATO members currently is. A big part of the paper is dedicated on discussing NATO funding, who are the biggest and smallest contributors, on which fields the money is spent, is it done efficiently and effectively and does the current security environment reflect the financing spent on it. The following part talks about the problems in NATO expenditure and how to maximise cooperation and operation efficiency. Next, the author discusses how NATO is of crucial importance to European security, what is being done to make it so and what threats exist for Europe. In the end of the paper, the author discusses the future of NATO cooperation, gives insight how to improve it and discusses the possible consequences of an US withdrawal from the Atlantic Alliance.

By reading through various articles, academic papers and speeches, the author found valid evidence to answer all the research questions and prove the paper's hypothesis.

Keywords: NATO, cooperation, collective security, budget, transatlantic relations

INTRODUCTION

The concept of collective security has played a major role in the security of European countries for almost a century. During the longest period of time, Europe has been without a major military conflict, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been the cornerstone in maintaining peace and military cooperation. After the Second World War when the United States of America started focusing more on global issues and came out of its isolationist foreign policy, NATO gave the country the possibility to spread its influence on the European continent to counter the communist expansion into other regions as well as deterrence against the Soviet Union to use military, especially nuclear power, against Europe as well as the United States.

The conclusion of the First and Second World Wars showed the world that the international community is in need of a treaty that would prevent the occurrence of another large-scale war in Europe and other parts of the world. As the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was signed, it made a significant global and regional impact, bringing Europe and North America closer together. The treaty is built up on a concept of collective security, which means an attack against one member, is an attack against all, which is stated in Article 5 of the treaty. The importance of the Treaty has become more relevant in the last decade, as Russia has made aggressive moves in Georgia and Ukraine, as well as current US President Donald Trump creating tensions and feelings of uncertainty in NATO's European Allies through statements indicating that NATO has no importance for the United States, and whether the country should leave the Alliance altogether.

This research paper focuses on the necessity of NATO cooperation, its effectiveness in deterring military conflicts and the importance of USA's role in Europe and what the continent gains through its cooperation with the United States. In addition, the paper questions the threats to NATO by Russia and China, whether they are a reality and are there any grounds behind the claims of an invasion and should member states be fearful of it considering NATO's budget and actual military power. The author will also try to give possible solutions to budget problems and how to make cooperation between NATO Allies more efficient. The topic of the research paper was chosen due to NATO's increasing relevancy in the contemporary world, especially in eastern Europe and because of rising questions about the Organization's competencies.

The author has formulated a hypothesis: “European states need the United States’ presence on the continent to ensure European security,” to which the paper tries to prove through finding answers to four research questions:

1. Why does Europe need the US to be in NATO?
2. Do NATO members spend their defence budget to maximize military efficiency?
3. Is a Russian attack against the Eastern part of NATO a real threat?
4. Can Europe manage another security cooperation in parallel with NATO?

1. CREATION OF THE ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

The United States of America had not been in a peacetime military alliance before NATO outside of the Western Hemisphere. The Second World War left European countries in a state of destruction and were in a struggle to rebuild their own economies and ensure their security. The war-torn continent was in desperate need of aid to help re-establish industries, rebuild destroyed landscapes and produce food. The United States, in that matter, needed a way to have influence on the European continent against the Soviet Union, with whom the Cold War was beginning. An economically strong, rearmed and integrated Europe was a vital point for the United States in order to stop further communist expansion on the continent. The start of further cooperation between the US and Europe was started by Secretary of State George Marshall who proposed a large-scale economic aid to Europe, resulting in the Marshall Plan. (Office of the Historian)

As many security concerns and tensions were present on the continent, Western European countries were willing to consider and create a collective security solution in terms of a military alliance. In March 1948, the Brussels Treaty was signed between Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg and it had the same foundation that NATO has today: should one of the countries be attacked, others are forced to intervene. The Truman Administration, at the same time, instituted a peacetime draft, raised the amount of money spent on military and called upon the isolationist Republican Congress to consider a military alliance with European states. In 1948, the Republican Senator Artur H. Vandenburg proposed a resolution to the president of the United States to create a military alliance with Europe outside of the United Nations' (UN) Security Council, in order to exist outside of the Soviet Union's Veto power but would still adhere to the UN charter. The resolution that Vandenburg had proposed, passed and the negotiations for the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty began. (Office of the Historian)

After the launch of the US-funded Marshall Plan and through other means of aid, Europe received a degree of economic stability. However, the question of military security was still in the air and needed to be solved before countries could start talking and trading with each other again. Countries, including the US, understood that military cooperation would have to develop alongside with political and economic development. Taking this into consideration, several

Western European democracies came together to create several projects for military cooperation and collective defence. In order to deter Soviet aggression and prevent the revival of European militarism, it was understood that only a transatlantic security treaty would suffice and by creating such an alliance, it would also set a cornerstone for economic cooperation and integration. (NATO)

1.1. Concerns on the US side

The general concept of the Treaty was agreed upon by both the European side and the American, but it took months to work out exact terms because the US Congress was concerned about the wording of the treaty. In the US Constitution, it is stated that only the US Congress can declare war, however, the European Allies wanted assurances that an immediate intervention will happen in case of an attack. Negotiations were held in order to find a suitable language that would give Europeans reassurance but would not obligate the United States to break its own laws in the case of activation of Article 5. In order to rebuild Western Europe's military capabilities and enhance its collective security contributions, it needed large-scale assistance from the US. At first, European Allies preferred the NATO membership to be restricted to the members of the Brussels treaty plus the United States. However, the US felt that there was more to be claimed from adding additional countries into the treaty including Canada, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Ireland and Portugal. These countries combined held territories that covered both shores of the Atlantic Ocean and created a bridge which would facilitate military action, should it become necessary. Another point that was discussed about, was that Article 5 would only apply to attacks against the territories in North America and Europe, but not in colonial territories. (Office of the Historian)

1.2. Signing of the Treaty

On the 4th of April, after intense discussion and debate, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was signed by 12 countries: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The Allies agreed to a collective security agreement to which Article 5 of the Treaty states that: "an armed attack against one or more of them... shall be considered an attack against them all" and that following such an attack, each Ally would take necessary actions, including the use of

military force in response. Article 3 of the Treaty lays the groundwork for military cooperation and training exercises between Allies and Article 2 gives some freedom for the members to engage in non-military cooperation. (NATO)

A quote said by the Secretary General of NATO sums up the necessity behind the Atlantic Treaty and why it was created at the time: “Our Alliance was created by people who had lived through two devastating world wars. They knew only too well the horror, the suffering, and the human and material cost of war. They were determined that this should never happen again.” (Stoltenberg, 2019) Europe and the United States set their priorities on collective security and making sure that the world would never have to suffer through another war of global scale.

2. NATO COOPERATION

When it comes to US contribution and its willingness to participate in the treaty, there can be some misleading factors and statements which can create a false sense of insecurity in the future of NATO, US presence in Europe and European security. As Anthony H. Cordesman has said that aspects about Trump's Administration's approach to the US foreign policy are controversial in Europe as well as the United States. He stated that in spite of what Trump has said and how he has expressed himself in extreme terms and sudden changes of position, one cannot ignore the underlying realities of the US stance on contribution into NATO alliance, the country's strategy and Europe's own failures and divisions to create effective forces. He adds that the current tensions between some European countries and the US should not lead European countries, the US and even Russia into ignoring the fact that the US is still fully committed into the Atlantic Treaty and its strength. The country's forces and capabilities are critical to European security and the Trump administration is greatly increasing its budget into transatlantic security and NATO. (Cordesman 2018)

According to Beraud-Sudreau and Childs, besides direct support to NATO capabilities, the United States has a significant military presence in Europe. As of 2018, the US European Command had around 16 350 Department of Defence civilian personnel, 70 000 active duty personnel and 2000 reservists. The cost of operating US bases in Europe is estimated around 24.4 billion USD in 2018 which includes operations and maintenance expenses, and personnel deployed on Operation Atlantic Resolve. Since 2014, the US presence in Europe has been increasingly strengthened as an evolving response to the Russian annexation of Crimea. The budget for European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) was 789 million USD in 2016, 3.42 billion USD in 2017 and 4.78 billion USD in 2018 and is thought to increase by another almost 2 billion dollars. (Beraud-Sudreau, Childs 2018) During recent years, the US has significantly raised its expenditure on European missions and increased its presence on the Continent. This shows growing concern for European security and willingness to deter any Russian aggression. Also, the increased numbers of American troops in Europe gives the US better control over our security policy making and strengthens the country's influence in the region.

2.1. NATO members' defence expenditure

NATO's website defines defence expenditures as payments made by member states' governments to meet the needs of its armed forces. A major part of the defence expenditure is payments within the Ministry of Defence's budget. The armed forces of each country include maritime, land, air and joint formations as well, such as special forces, administration and command, medical services, logistics and other parts. They might even include "other forces", like police forces, coast guard, carabinieri etc. but in these cases, expenditure should only reflect forces that have had training in military tactics, are armed with military equipment and can be deployed in a foreign country as a defensive force to be under NATO command. (NATO 2019)

Every year, NATO's website publishes updated tables with every country's defence expenditure. The version published in 2019 covers several key factors on the financial and economic aspects of NATO defence. These include: Total defence expenditures, defence expenditure and GDP growth rates, defence expenditure as a percentage of GDP, defence expenditure and GDP per capita, defence expenditure by category, armed forces personnel strength. (NATO HQ 2019)

According to NATO, defence expenditure data is collected from Allies on regular basis and each member states' Ministry of Defence reports current and estimated defence expenditure for the future according to a definition of defence expenditure that has been agreed on. The sums amount to instalments by a national government actually made, or to be made, over the span of the fiscal year to address the needs of its military, those of Allies or the Alliance. In the tables and figures on NATO's website, latest economic and demographic information available from the Directorate for Economics and Financial Affairs of the European Commission, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development is used. The figures shown in their reports and tables may be completely different from those of quoted by the media, published by national authorities or given in national budgets due to differences between NATO defence expenditure and national definitions. The expenditures for equipment include major equipment as well as research on major appliances development. Personnel expenditure, apart from training, salaries and wages, include pensions paid to retirees. (NATO 2019)

2.2. Actual figures

According to NATO's report on defence expenditure of Allied countries, published in 2019, only 6 European countries contributed 2% or more than 2% of their GDP into defence in 2018. With all figures converted to US dollars (USD) and considering prices and exchange rates of 2010, these countries are (NATO 2019):

1. Greece - 2.22% of its 253 billion USD real GDP (5.6 billion USD)
2. United Kingdom – 2.15% of its 2.9 trillion USD real GDP (62.4 billion USD)
3. Estonia – 2.07% of its 26 billion USD real GDP (538.2 million USD)
4. Poland – 2.05% of its 611 billion USD real GDP (12.5 billion USD)
5. Latvia – 2.03% of its 32 billion USD real GDP (649.6 million USD)
6. Lithuania – 2.00% of its 49 billion USD real GDP (980 million USD)

The biggest contributor to the NATO budget is the United States of America with over 600 billion US dollars spent overall on their military. According to International Institute for Strategic Studies, in 2017, the United States' total national defence expenditure amounted to US\$602.8 billion, which was equivalent to 70.1% of all the then 28 NATO member states' defence expenditures. The second highest contributor was the United Kingdom, with 5.9% of NATO's total defence budget. (Beraud-Sudreau, Childs 2018) In 2018, the US spent US\$684.4 billion on its defence budget, which is 3.39% of their total 17.9 trillion-dollar GDP in 2018 (NATO 2019).

The countries that spend the biggest amount of money on their defence budget in Europe, are The United Kingdom with 62.4 billion USD (2.15% of GDP), France with 51.2 billion USD (1.82% of GDP) and Germany with 50.2 billion USD (1.23% of GDP). The country, which contributes the least into its defence budget as a share of their GDP, is Luxembourg, with 0.54% of their 65 billion USD real GDP, that in turn translates to 351 million US dollars. (NATO 2019) Surprisingly, Greece is the second biggest contributor into the collective defence budget as a share of their GDP, even though the country has been struggling economically. When it comes to the Baltic countries, it is understandable that they would want to spend as much as they can on defence due to Russian provocations in terms of airspace violations and the country's illegal annexation of Crimea, participation in Ukraine's civil war and border problems in Georgia.

Despite Trump's complaints about Europe's military expenditure, which was in a long decline before 2014, it has been on a rise following Trump's win in the presidential elections and as security outlooks in Europe became more serious after Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. According to Beraud-Sudreau and Childs, most European countries have promised to increase their military spending, including Norway, that had already announced plans to give the country's defence budget additional 1.8 billion USD in 2020. (Beraud.Sudreau, Childs 2018)

On the area of total military personnel, European NATO members account for over half of the total manpower in the Atlantic Treaty. The NATO report shows that in 2018, 1.79 million people were from European Allies' states, with Turkey's forces being the biggest, having 386 thousand people in their military forces. North American countries have a total of 1.39 million personnel in their military force, with the US providing 1.32 million people and Canada 71 000 people. (NATO, 2019) Without NATO, the US would lose half of the usable personnel to use in missions in the Middle East and in a hypothetical invasion on US soil.

Considering only the top 3 countries which spend the most money on their defence in NATO, The US, France and UK, there are 3 main areas to which the money goes: equipment, personnel and infrastructure. According to NATO reports, the US spent 25.27%, the UK 24.14% and France 23.66% of its national defence budget on military equipment which amounts to a total of 200 billion USD and each of the 3 countries spent 172.8 billion, 15.1 billion, 12.1 billion USD, respectively. The countries spent a total of 309.9 billion US dollars on personnel and 13 billion US dollars on infrastructure. (NATO 2019)

2.3. Funding problems in infrastructure

Infrastructure is the area which is least funded by those countries' military budgets and that has become a critical problem in the transport of military equipment around Europe. During the Soviet Union, the border between the West and the Soviet Union was situated through Germany, as Poland was a part of the Warsaw Pact. With NATO's expansion in 2004 right next to the Russian border, problems arose when tanks and personnel needed to be transported from German military bases to the Baltics.

Michael Birnbaum has written about the US' concerns about military infrastructure in Europe, especially about border crossings. He states that US commanders are worried if a war should break out with Russia, the most powerful military in the world would get stuck in a traffic jam, get stuck behind trucks on narrow roads and have problems with railroads. Although many barriers would disappear with the declaration of war and activation of Article 5, the unclear period before military engagement presents a major problem and the US tanks could still break bridges that are too weak to carry their weight. Even though, eFP has small groups of personnel situated in countries bordering Russia, reinforcements would need to travel hundreds of miles to get to the war-zone. With the mixture of bureaucracy, bad planning and decaying infrastructure, in a war situation, Russia could seize all the Baltic states before any reinforcements make it there. A big issue stands with the difference between railroads in the Western part and Eastern part of Europe, as railways have been built differently during the Soviet era. Eastern European railways have wider rails, which means that all military vehicles carried by trains, would need to be unloaded and then reloaded onto different trains in order to fit the railways, which in turn can add days to the transport, Birnbaum says. The infrastructure plays a major role during peace-time as well. Birnbaum explains how during one White House exercise which gamed out a European war with Russia, the Russian side won against NATO due to logistical problems. Another example, he brings out, is the transfer of troops from Georgia to Germany, when the US army planned to move their armoured vehicles to train in Germany. The transfer took four months in stead of the planned 2 weeks, leaving the US army without their armoured vehicles and weaponry. He emphasises that NATO's forces must move as fast or faster than Russia for the idea of deterrence to work. (Birnbaum 2018)

Birnbaum also writes that when the Soviet Union collapsed, Western planners, in hope of a new cooperation with Moscow, threw away the plans for securing Eastern Europe. After NATO's expansion into the areas formerly belonging to the Soviet Union, the Alliance had no plans on how to effectively protects their new Allies in case of an attack. Returning to the example of the US army trying to transport vehicles from Georgia to Germany, he added that obstacles quickly piled as Hungarian border control did not like the Romanian-approved way the armoured vehicles were attached to the rail cars, so all 12 trainloads had to be refastened. As well as in Germany, the convoy missed its narrow chance for straight passage and had to wait behind commercial and passenger train traffic and the US army squadron had to train without their specialized vehicles. (Birnbaum 2018)

2.4. US concerns before 2014

In 2012, former Secretary General Rasmussen said on wider capabilities issues that the Chicago Summit sent a very clear message that European Allies are fully committed to increasing their military expenditure in the future, despite the economic crises and declining defence budgets. However, a senior US official gave an assessment of how cooperation and burden sharing is seen in Washington. The US official stated: “The U.S. has been NATO's quarterback since the alliance was founded. That's OK by us, but we're increasingly concerned that - in light of economic pressures in Europe - we're going to have to play quarterback, running back, and wide receiver all at the same time. That's not good for the team. Although NATO wants to strengthen its partnerships around the world, its Achilles heel remains an inability to seriously engage with major emerging powers, especially the so-called BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India and China). Drawing those countries into a closer relationship would need to be a future priority if the alliance entertains any serious ambition to become a hub for global crisis management and cooperative security.” (Chamberlain, Davis 2012) The United States has had concerns for European Defence spending for a longer time, even before Trump became the president. This shows that monetary problems in defence expenditure in Europe is not a recent problem but is more seriously addressed now. It may be possible that European Allies are not fully capable of contributing the necessary 2% into their military budgets and the problem will not disappear in the future either, even though some countries are spending more.

3. ENHANCED FORWARD PRESENCE GROUPS

Although, the United States has the biggest army and military budget, the Baltic countries, for example are still protected by larger European states, such as the United Kingdom. Through Enhanced Forward Presence groups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, the forces deployed into those regions work as a deterrent against Russia.

Kalev Stoicescu and Pauli Järvenpää from the International Centre for Defence and Security have said that the Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) does not use many forces, however, it plays a very significant and visible role in strategic communication and also deterrence. The eFP is usually thought to be suitable for these roles only because of its size, but further planning and proactive thinking is needed to make eFP stronger in case of a crisis situation. The Forward Presence groups have to be fully reinforced by back-up forces that would not need a lot of time to be transported into the area necessary. Stoicescu and Järvenpää also note that better cohesion between the eFP and other Allied presence in those regions is needed alongside with regular training exercises for cooperation and reinforcement operations. (Järvenpää, Stoicescu 2019)

With Enhanced Forward Presence groups, the problem of insufficient funding to the infrastructure becomes present. Even though, there are some British or Canadian troops in the Baltics, they are not enough to stop the Russian forces, should a situation like that happen. Deterrence against Russia loses its validity to a degree as well, if they know that there are not enough forces to stop them and reinforcements are at a too great of a distance to get to the area of war in time. The only way deterrence works in this situation, is through the mindset that attacking and killing the military forces of a greater country than Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania, would bring severe consequences.

In an interview with Evelyn Kaldoja from Postimees, the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg talked about the importance of military logistics as well. When asked about the Trident Juncture training exercise and what the first lesson was, Secretary General Stoltenberg stated that the most important lesson was being able to reinforce, which is of crucial importance to Norway, as well as the Baltic countries. He emphasises how NATO has adapted since 2014 and how the Alliance has implemented the highest levels of collective defence and reinforcement since the Cold War. He states, however, that NATO's infrastructure is not as bad as it seems because Trident Juncture demonstrated how to move tens of thousands of forces

across Europe and the Atlantic. The training exercise demonstrated NATO's strength as 29 Allied forces can work together and provide reinforcement for an ally and eFP forces, if necessary. Stoltenberg marks the importance of Enhanced Forward Presence groups for Norway and the Baltic states as the latter share a border with Russia and the eFP sends a clear message that NATO is capable of reinforcing their Allies. The training exercise illustrated the importance of military mobility and that NATO is investing in infrastructure as well with the United States, who build airfields and harbours to move troops more efficiently. (Kaldoja 2018)

3.1. Training exercises

Training exercises play a key role in keeping an army ready for a real crisis and bring out the strong and weak points on which to improve on. Exercise Trident Juncture 2018 was NATO's largest military exercise since the end of the Cold War with around 50 000 foot soldiers and tens of thousands of vehicles, aircraft and ships. Christopher Woody has written in an article that NATO carries out a major training exercise like this one every year, although the scale of Trident Juncture is bigger than some others, however, the exercise is a normal part of NATO's battle rhythm. He brings out that in 2017, NATO held 108 training exercises and its members held 162 additional national and multinational exercises. In 2018, NATO had 106 joint exercises and its members were expected to lead about 180 extra exercises. (Woody 2018) A considerable amount of these have been held on the Eastern part of Europe, such as Hedgehog 18, held in Estonia, and BaltOps, held on the Baltic Sea. This shows the concern and willingness to be ready for an attack from the East.

On the other hand, Russia also held its biggest military exercise with China "Vostok" in 2018 with over 300 000 troops and 36 000 land vehicles taking part of it. Russia's president Putin has talked up the country's increasingly close relationship with China as he met Xi in Vladivostok. He stated that Russia and China have trustworthy ties in political, defence and security fields. China's leader added also that the two countries' partnership is getting stronger all the time. The military exercise was carried out after tensions between NATO and Russia had started to rise again over the accusations of Russian interference in Western affairs and conflicts in Syria and Ukraine. A NATO spokesman Dylan White said that Vostok 2018 demonstrates Russia's focus on preparing for a large-scale war with the West and how to cooperate with China in that situation. The spokesman added that the exercise fits into a pattern

the West has soon over some time of a Russia that is significantly increasing its defence budget and military presence of the country's western border. (Chita 2018) White's statement, however, does not correlate with the figures given by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), who state that Russian military expenditure has been decreasing. The Warsaw Institute also states that Western sanctions and a long-lasting economic recession forced Russia to cut its military spending by 20% in 2017 but because that could have collapsed the country's arms industry, the government cut military spending by 7% and in 2018 it fell by 3.2%. (Warsaw Institute 2018)

Chita states that Kremlin dismissed NATO's concerns and made a similar statement to NATO trainings' reasoning that these drills held in Russia are of great importance, but they are a part of the routine work to develop the country's and China's armed forces. In Chita's words, Moscow has increased the number of large-scale military exercises in the Caucasus, the Baltic and Arctic regions in recent years. (Chita 2018)

4. TENSIONS WITHIN NATO

4.1. Common Security and Defence Policy and Permanent Structured Cooperation. Is it competent without the UK and separately from NATO?

The European External Action Service (EEAS) has made a statement that the EU is in need of further military integration and for a higher level of ambition to cooperate in the area of defence. It is necessary because European citizens and EU's global partners have demanded more stability and security in order to react to crises in a fast and effective way. According to EEAS, more than 500 million EU citizens have demanded that the EU should be able to react to its own crises and look after its own security interests. They also wish for more stability, security and coordinated response to current threats, which they believe will come from a separate EU military cooperation organization. In this context, the EU and its member states have put in place a set of new measures and parameters to increase the effectiveness of new command structures for military training missions or policies to strengthen the civilian dimensions of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). According to the EEAS webpage, coordination and cooperation is the main focus of EU's approach to create a stronger foundation to continuously make security and defence capabilities more competent. (Europa 2018)

A markable example of the progress made towards EU's military integration and cooperation, separate from NATO, is the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) with 25 members from the 28 EU members, because Malta, Denmark and the United Kingdom have decided to not participate in the treaty. According to EEAS, 34 projects have been put forward by a number of member states that have been adopted by the Council. The member states of PESCO have a foundation on which to work together on military training and exercises and cooperate on cyber defence areas. (Europa 2018) According to the PESCO factsheet published by EEAS, the cooperation agreement is a Treaty-based framework and process to deepen defence cooperation within the EU member states with the will to do so. It was created to enhance the security of EU and its influence on an international level which would contribute to the protection of EU citizens and make the defence spending as effective as possible. (Europa 2018)

Although, PESCO makes cooperation between EU member states easier and maximizes its defence budget effectiveness, the United Kingdom does not take part of it, which means that the second most powerful military stays outside of the treaty. This plays a role in PESCO's global and regional competence as it cannot fulfil necessary tasks. According to Yasmine Salam, the EU Defence Ministers agreed to set out rules in order to involve partners from outside of the European Union, which is mainly focused on attracting UK into the treaty after the country leaves the EU (Salam 2018)

The second most powerful military force in Europe is the United Kingdom just after France. This is the reason it plays such an important role in European security, if the EU decides to work separately outside of NATO perimeters and UK decides not to take part of it. Christopher Woody, in an article about the world's military strength by countries, has written that the UK is ranked 6th in the world and 2nd in Europe. The rankings consider the diversity of weaponry, geography, natural resources, logistical capability and the state of local industry. Although nuclear power gives bonus points, the stockpiles of nuclear weaponry are not taken into account. In the ranking table, points are not taken off for the lack of navy due to being a landlocked country but are penalized for not having a merchant marine force. NATO members receive a minor bonus due to the alliance would theoretically share resources, but all in all, the political and military leadership is not considered. (Woody 2018)

The current foreign ministers of Poland, Lithuania and Romania have stated that the UK, as a United Nations (UN) Security Council member, a nuclear power and the owner of around one fourth of the total of European defence capability, is a major actor and a key pillar in EU's external action competence. Without Britain, the EU, separate from NATO, would face a weakening of its global stance in terms of military missions, protection and makes the Union vulnerable to external threats. (Czaputowich *et al.* 2018)

The United States' Embassy in Tallinn's political/economic chief, John Spykerman, has stated at a discussion panel at the EU-NATO Roundtable event held on the 4th of April, 2019, that he sees a problem whether PESCO would be competent, because in his words, if a lot of European countries cannot even contribute the minimum amount that they have promised, which is 2%, into NATO's budget, how would it be possible to create a similarly structured military cooperation organization separate from NATO without American countries being involved. In a lecture, on the 1st of April 2019, as being a guest speaker talking about the US foreign policy,

Spykerman also noted that if the United Kingdom does not take part in that organization, it is very unlikely that it would work sufficiently. The United States is interested in European security, willing to cooperate in the matter through NATO and has no plans to pull away from the treaty but expects its allies to contribute and focus more on NATO cooperation. Although, President Trump has tweeted that the US should pull away from NATO as the country does not benefit anything from it, Spykerman made clear that the United States of America is just not its president and other parts of its government are in complete favour of being a member of the Atlantic Treaty. He stated, however, that the US has set its priorities more on national issues, but the statement “America first” does not mean America alone. (Spykerman 2019)

These statements made by John Spykerman give reassurance that the US does not mean to leave Europe alone in its security issues and wants to be involved in them, which in turn is of critical importance for NATO’s eastern allies in terms of military deterrence. Spykerman also stated that the United States is grateful for close military cooperation of other European states such as Finland and Sweden, who do not belong to NATO but their contribution in Afghanistan in close cooperation with NATO allies is noted. (Spykerman 2019)

European states would not be able to create a similar military alliance to NATO due to financial repercussions, as the biggest part of the Alliance’s budget is from the United States. In the interview with Postimees, Jens Stoltenberg stressed that the European Union cannot replace NATO, not only because of monetary problems as more than 80% of Allied defence spending comes from outside of the EU, but also because of geographical reasons. (Kaldoja 2018)

5. Future of NATO

In a speech addressed to the United States Congress, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg called for the Alliance to stay more united than ever against an increasingly aggressive Russia and as Donald Trump has made statements that question the solidarity of NATO. Stoltenberg devoted most of his speech to address the threat Russia poses against the Western Allies and its partners under Vladimir Putin's autocratic leadership, criticizing the country's annexation of Crimea in 2014, support for the Syrian regime, cyber-attacks, assassination campaigns and interference in the US elections. Stoltenberg outlined the measures NATO has taken to increase its readiness against Russia in the past couple of years. In his 40-minute speech, the Secretary General said that all this is done in order to prevent conflict, not to provoke it and to preserve peace; not to fight but to deter; to defend, not to attack. In addition, Stoltenberg added that there is no contradiction between defence and dialogue and NATO does not wish to isolate Russia but strives for a better relationship with the country. He did also credit President Trump for his message to NATO members to spend more money on defence and says that the reason European countries have started to spend billions of dollars more on their defence in the following years, is due to Trump's callouts. "NATO allies must spend more on defence. This has been the clear message from President Trump and this message is having a real impact," Stoltenberg said in his speech. (Stoltenberg 2019)

In his speech, Stoltenberg addressed the problem of Trump having ideas of pulling out of the Atlantic Treaty altogether, warning that the Alliance had not endured so long for nothing. Stoltenberg said: "Our Alliance had not lasted so long for 70 years out of a sense of nostalgia or sentiment. NATO lasts because it is in the national interest of each and every one of our nations." The Secretary General also reminded the United States Congress that after the events of September 11th, 2001, when Article 5 was invoked for the only time in NATO's history, NATO's troops have been fighting alongside the US in Afghanistan. He also states that Europeans are aware of the importance of the US forces on the European continent and believe that America has been, is and will be the backbone of the Atlantic Alliance. (Stoltenberg 2019)

5.1. Advancements in cyber defence

As technological advancements move at a rate the world has never seen before, there is a reason to create a cyber defence command structure as well. It became more evident after the Bronze Night riots in Tallinn in 2007, and the cyberattacks that followed it, that cyberspace can be used as a tool against government, medical and other official webpages, which can cripple a part of a country's web-based infrastructure. Individuals are especially affected when pages related to banking and voting are under attack.

According to Piret Pernik, the main focus of NATO's cyber defence approach is to protect its own headquarters, agencies and operations and the Alliance has been working on improving this field since the 1990's. In his paper he talks how over the past decade NATO and EU have come to regard cyber security as a strategic security and defence issue. The EU has not been as successful as NATO in refining more mature approaches to cyber defence and has had a major breakthrough because of the fact that the Alliance can launch a military response to a cyber threat. In 2014 she addressed that for a stronger security stance in the field of cyberspace, NATO should establish a joint cyber command headquarter at SHAPE in order to have one single focal point of development, coordination and direction in the field. In the paper she emphasises that two organizations could benefit more from each other's competencies as NATO is successful in integrating cyber defence into practical matters and exercises, as well as in establishing ways to ensure interoperability of cyber capabilities and the EU has expertise on public-private partnership, policy and strategy development and on resilience of infrastructure. (Pernik 2014)

5.2. Consequences of US withdrawal from NATO

European Atlantic Treaty Alliance member states host 28 US main operating bases across Europe. The former United States Secretary of Defence, James N. Mattis, has said to a US Department of Defence reporter, Jim Garamone, that these bases in Europe are not only for Europe, as the bases serve as a basis for the US to project its military force also across Middle East and Africa, which helps for strategic advantages in counterterrorism and other threats. He brings out two examples: the US Africa Command which is located in Stuttgart, Germany and the US 6th Fleet based in Naples. The Secretary General adds that NATO continues to play a

relevant and effective role in Afghanistan against the Islamic State and in deterring Russia. (Garamone 2018)

Taking into to account what Mattis has said, the amount of US military bases in Europe, manpower deployed and the factor that the United States places over 600 billion US dollars on its military, it is safe to assume that if the country should withdraw from NATO, European security will be severely compromised. Not only does the US force on the continent work as a deterrent against Russian aggression, it is also protecting Europe from terrorism, as the US can launch counterterrorism missions from European bases. Even though, President Trump has expressed his concerns on the lack of importance NATO has to the United States, it is highly unlikely that withdrawal from the Atlantic Treaty will be realized.

CONCLUSION

As the research has demonstrated, European NATO Allies need the United States of America to be present on the continent to ensure its safety. The United States of America has been the biggest contributor into the North Atlantic Treaty Organizations budget since its creation on the 4th of April 1949. Today, the US contributes over 650 billion US dollars into its military budget, which accounts to around 70% of all the other NATO member states' budgets combined. The US has voiced its concerns about European security and its Allies' failure to meet the minimum requirement of 2% contribution of their GDP to military expenditure. Countries' contributions started to increase after 2014 due to Russia's aggressions against Ukraine. NATO's weak point stands in its military infrastructure and the problem is reflected by where a bigger part of NATO members' budget goes. Only a small amount is invested on infrastructure and transporting military equipment has become a problem after NATO expansions. Even though, NATO has Enhanced Forward Presence groups in countries that neighbour Russia, reinforcements cannot get there fast enough, so it is critical that infrastructure is made better and more is invested into it. The US forces deployed onto the European continent work as a deterrent against Russia, although, in eFP groups they are not enough to stop a Russian attack, they are enough to create a sense of deterrence.

NATO is holding numerous joint training exercises each year in order to keep militaries ready for a real crisis. However, Russia is doing the same and held its biggest military exercise since the Cold War in 2018 together with China. Even though, Russia does not spend nearly as much on its military, an attack is still possible, and the country is provoking NATO by airspace violations and involvement in the Ukrainian civil war. Joint military training exercises with the United States and the country's military presence on the European continent prevents, through deterrence, further Russian aggression into European areas.

The European Union has started to work on a separate military cooperation organization within EU member states that works separately from NATO and does not use its resources. Even though, it would give the EU some freedom in resolving its own problems, the Permanent Structured Cooperation would not be competent without the United Kingdoms military power. Even when EU Ministers of Defence would agree on a resolution to let UK take part of PESCO, it would still fall short on being a competent global and regional actor as the EU members that are NATO members as well, do not pay the required 2% of their GDPs into military

expenditure. It is more important to focus on improving NATO cooperation and contribute more into its budget, work on solutions regarding Russian aggression and work together on cyber defence systems as it is an area that will influence the world on a larger scale in the future. Although, the US withdrawal from the Organization would yield severe consequences on European security, the possibility of it realizing is low.

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