

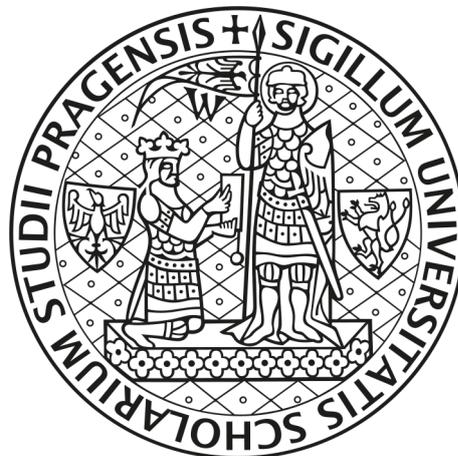
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**Scenarios of Future EU-Britain Defence  
Cooperation**



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# **Scenarios of Future EU-Britain Defence Cooperation**

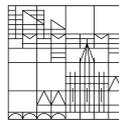
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## **Abstract**

Brexit day may have passed, but we know too little about what form the future relationship between the EU and the UK will assume. This thesis explores several scenarios for an EU-Britain cooperation post-Brexit, focusing in particular on the partnership in defence policy. It considers defence cooperation (1) within the EU defence framework, (2) relations within the NATO framework, (3) structured cooperation outside the EU framework and the NATO framework, (4) bilateral ties between the UK and EU member states and (5) non-cooperation. The author combines analytic eclecticism with a qualitative interpretative research design to evaluate each scenario against a series of theoretically-informed empirical expectations regarding governments' decisions to pursue defence jointly. It puts forward a theoretical framework that includes factors, such as strategic culture, foreign-political postures and attitudes towards European integration as potential explanations for the post-Brexit dynamics of defence cooperation.

## **Keywords**

Brexit, Britain, European Union, defence, cooperation, scenarios

## **Citace**

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## **Abstrakt**

Brexit je již za námi, ale víme příliš málo o tom, jak bude vypadat vztah mezi Evropskou unií a Spojeným královstvím. Tato práce zkoumá různé scénáře pobrexitové spolupráce mezi EU a Spojeným královstvím se zaměřením zejména na partnerství v oblasti obrany. Zvažuje spolupráci v obranné politice (1) v rámci EU, (2) spolupráci uvnitř NATO, (3) strukturovanou spolupráci mimo rámce EU a NATO, jakož i (4) bilaterální vztahy mezi Spojeným královstvím a jednotlivými státy EU a (5) nespolečnou spolupráci. Autorka kombinuje analytický ekletismus s kvalitativně interpretativní metodou, jimiž porovnává jednotlivé scénáře v kontextu teoreticky podložených empirických předpokladů týkajících se rozhodnutí vlád o společném přístupu k obranné politice. Předkládá teoretický rámec obsahující takové faktory jako jsou strategická kultura, zahraničně-politické postoje a stanoviska vůči Evropské integraci coby možná zdůvodnění pobrexitového vývoje v rámci spolupráce v oblasti obrany.

## **Klíčová slova**

Brexit, Británie, Evropská unie, obrana, spolupráce, scénáře

**Length of the work:** 123, 237 characters, 22 628 words, 79 pages.

## **Declaration**

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
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Prague

21.05.2020,



Pavlina Boyanova

## Research project

The United Kingdom may have left the European Union on 31 January 2020, but the UK and EU member states are bound to remain intertwined even post-Brexit. Andrew Moravcsik (2016) calls this the 'Hotel California' effect: Britain can check out any time it likes, but it can never leave Europe nor all EU policies. This statement holds particularly true when one considers the area of defence policy. Britain and the EU are dependent on each other for reasons like geography but remaining close to each other in defence policy is within their interest so as to remain relevant on the world security stage. After all, the countries which seem to matter most in security and defence are those the size of a continent or those who join their efforts to achieve that size (Biscop 2018).

Having spent almost three years negotiating the UK's exit from the EU, as the UK left the EU institutions, another set of negotiations commenced as of 1 March 2020. The future relationship between the EU and the UK post-Brexit is to be established within the next seven months, yet this may prove to be a challenging a task, much like negotiating Brexit itself turned out to be.

## Research target

This thesis thus contributes to the academic knowledge about the consequences of Brexit by analyzing the impact of the British departure from the EU on the prospects for cooperation in defence policy between the EU and Britain post-Brexit. While the academic interest in forecasting the economic effects of Brexit has been substantial, defence policy is one area where the effects of Brexit have remained underexplored. Defence, however, is a policy area of great importance to a nation-

state. It is also an area where there are considerable benefits to be made from finding ways to act together in concert, which is something both EU member states and the UK often reiterate that they desire.

While other policy areas have taken the forefront of the negotiations at the moment, the presence of foreign, security and defence policy in the political declaration signed before the British withdrawal signal that there was interest in pursuing common objectives in the future from both sides – at least initially (European Commission 2019). Therefore, opening up the negotiations to the issues of defence is still a possibility.

This thesis deals with the question: *how will the future relationship between the EU and UK in defence look like post-Brexit?* The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to define the different avenues the relationship between the EU and Britain can take after Brexit in consideration of the theoretical knowledge we have in the field of international relations and security studies about the factors which facilitate or constrain interstate cooperation in defence policy.

Our best guess about what may offer or agree to, shall negotiations for cooperation in defence be opened, will be based on the information currently available as well as based on what we know about the strategic priorities of the key players in European defence. The author does this by conceptualizing different scenarios of the future relationship between EU member states and Britain. The analyst then offers an assessment of those scenarios against a pool of empirical evidence regarding the views of the British, the German and the French government. In parallel, this research also probes the plausibility of various theoretical constructs as potential explanations of the future partnership between EU member states and the UK post-Brexit.

## Research plan

Several aspects require investigation to analyze the future relationship between the UK and EU member states. First, we need to understand the immediate consequences of the British exit from EU defence. Putting these into perspective, we need to outline the tenets of the future relationship as well as possible. The best indications of what is on the table are the latest future relationship paper presented by Her Majesty's government and the draft negotiation proposal published by the EU (Her Majesty's Government 2020; European Commission, Task Force for Relations with the United Kingdom 2020b).

Afterwards, we utilize our knowledge about defence cooperation rooted in international relations theories and formulate empirical expectations about the potentially relevant considerations each party may have. Here the main focus will be the differences and commonalities among the views of the three leading nations in European defence – the UK, France and Germany who may pursue their strategic objectives through different channels. Despite some advances at Europeanizing defence policies across EU member states, defence remains within the competencies of national governments, and it is their strategic interests what will influence strategic choices.

Following that, the author constructs different scenarios of the future relationship between EU member states and Britain. The way the EU engages with third countries in its defence policy is one example of how it might engage with the UK post-Brexit. But cooperation can also occur outside the EU institutional framework, notably, through NATO. The UK and a number of other EU member states also participate in several defence structures besides the EU and NATO, so these need to be considered as potential forums for cooperation as well. The UK may also want to pursue a defence

relationship with individual EU member states bilaterally and gauging how other countries view this option for themselves is similarly important. Finally, states may choose not to engage with other countries in their defence policies altogether and opt for acting on their own when needed.

The author then goes on to evaluate these scenarios against the presumed policy considerations or stated post-Brexit objectives of the British, the French and the German government. The selection of these countries reflects the actual power relations in the EU before Brexit. While Germany and France are only two of the remaining 27 member states, they count among the leading actors in European defence, boasting substantial economic and security capabilities as well as immense influence in international politics. Studying these three as the primary drivers of policy in the EU is a research tactic which has long been used by researchers of European Union politics

This scenario-based assessment of the post-Brexit relationship in defence between the EU and the UK is beneficial for two reasons. First, it offers a glance at what the future of European defence may look like now that Brexit is over and the future partnership negotiations are ongoing. Second, it tests the plausibility of various theoretical constructs as potential explanations for decision-making in defence.

## Research methodology

Clarifying this thesis's approach to the research topic is now in order. This thesis starts from the postulation that cooperation in defence, as opposed to the pursuit of national strategic autonomy reflected in abstention from interstate collaboration, will be sought. But acting unilaterally and isolating oneself from other states is still an option

which states have. As long as states wish to engage with other countries, however, *defence cooperation* can occur in several mini-lateral or multi-lateral formats.

Hence, the author examines five general *scenarios of cooperation* between the UK and EU member states post-Brexit: (1) within the EU defence policy framework; (2) within the NATO framework; (3) outside the EU framework and the NATO framework, through OCCAR, the Letter of Intent (LoI) framework or the European Intervention Initiative (EI2); (4) in terms of bilateral relations; and finally (5) non-cooperation or the pursuit of unilateral actions in defence.

This list is by no means exclusive as it remains possible that new such formats might emerge or that the UK will seek association with other existing formats. However, Britain already participates in NATO, OCCAR, the LoI framework and the EI2, so these are already available as alternatives to cooperating with the EU within the EU defence policy framework. Furthermore, the UK already pursues bilateral relationships with individual EU countries, like France and Germany.

Any academic endeavour that tries to assess the likelihood of a particular course of action in the future needs to be able to account for an actor's preferences and understand the way actors evaluate the different options they have. When we lack a clear statement about how an actor ranks their preferences and wish to deduce how one's preferences are ranked, it is helpful to know what the factors which influence those preferences in the first place might be. In an attempt to uncover that, the author reviews the literature and develops empirical expectations based on the theoretical framework this literature review yields.

Given the research topic and the choice of scenario-building as a way to describe the avenues the future relationship could take, this analysis resembles the work of Henökl (2018) on development cooperation. Unlike Henökl, however, this

thesis does not limit itself to the insight offered by a single theoretical tradition. Instead, it pursues what Sil and Katzenstein (2010) call *analytic eclectism*, which seeks to combine different paradigm-bound theories to grasp better the linkages between the various mechanisms affecting complex phenomena. Given the scope and the nature of the research question under investigation here, such an approach can be potentially very informative and worth adopting.

The methodology borrows from the seminal work of Leuffen et al. (2013), which Haughton (2016) classifies as an example of applied analytic eclectism. Leuffen, Rittberger and Schimmelfennig use different theories of European integration, derive theoretically-informed empirical expectations from them and assess the evidence to test their plausibility against cases of differentiated integration in EU primary law (Leuffen et al. 2013). British participation in the EU defence policy represents an example of external differentiation which makes theories of differentiated integration potentially useful.

The author argues in favour of combining the insight from the intergovernmentalist variant of differentiated integration theory with neoclassical realist accounts of systemic and domestic factors when trying to explain the dynamics of the post-Brexit relationship in defence. It also gives attention to strategic culture, foreign-political postures and attitudes towards European integration as contributing conditions.

The author examines speeches, public statements and official reports and analyzes their content, seeking evidence regarding the objectives of the British, the French and the German governments in light of our empirical expectations. It concludes with a discussion of the findings. All in all, they lead us to expect that after the transition period ends, cooperation between the UK and European states will most

likely take place outside the EU framework. In the long-run, however, as the European defence-industrial market develops, the EU may be able to attract the UK as a strategic partner based on what it has to offer in terms of capabilities and opportunities to funding research.

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## List of Abbreviations

CARD	Coordinated Annual Review on Defence
CCDP	Civilian Capabilities Development Plan
CCS	Civilian CSDP Compact
CDP	EU Capability Development Plan
CJEF	Combined Joint Expeditionary Force
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EAEC/Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
EC	European Communities (European Coal and Steel Community + European Atomic Energy Community + European Economic Community)
ECJ	European Court of Justice
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDA	European Defence Agency
EDAP	European Defence Action Plan
EDC	European Defence Community
EDF	European Defence Fund
EDIDP	European Defence Industrial Development Programme
EDITB	European Defence Industrial and Technological Base
EEA	European Economic Area
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EI2	European Intervention Initiative
EPC	European Political Cooperation
EPF	European Peace Facility
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EUBG	EU Battlegroups
EUGS	Global strategy for the foreign and security policy of the European Union (or European Union Global Strategy for short)
EUISS	European Union Institute for Security Studies
EU SatCen	European Union Satellite Centre

EU NAVFOR	EU Naval Force Somalia
FAC	Foreign Affairs Council
Galileo	Galileo Security Monitoring Centre
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICT-Directive	Directive on intra-EU-transfers of defence-related products (officially, Directive 2009/43/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union of 6 May 2009 simplifying terms and conditions of transfers of defence-related products within the Community)
IPSD	Implementation Plan on Security and Defence
LoI	Letter of Intent
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MPCC	Military planning and Conduct Capability
MSC-HOA	Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDPP	NATO Defence Planning Process
OCCAR	Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation
OCT	Overseas Countries and Territories
OpsCen	Operations Centre
PADR	Preparatory Action on Defence Research
PARP	Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
PSA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PSC	Political and Security Committee
QMV	Qualified majority Voting
R&D	Research and Development
SNP	Scottish National Party
SPA	Strategic Partnership Agreement
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

US	United States of America
WAB	EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill
WEU	Western European Union

## Introduction

The issue of Brexit was one that baffled audiences for more than three and a half years. Ever since the British government decided to hold a referendum on the United Kingdom's (UK) membership in the European Union (EU) in 2016, many pondered why the referendum was announced and speculated how British citizens would vote. Once the results became apparent, a plethora of other questions arose. Observers began wondering what Brexit would mean, whether it would happen and if it did, exactly how and when. Few things regarding the Brexit process were clear from the onset, and little was certain until its very end.

The withdrawal of a member state from the EU was made possible by a legal mechanism enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty. According to Art. 50 TEU, any member state may choose to withdraw from the Union according to its own institutional requirements and to do so, it must notify the European Council, negotiate an agreement with the Union and have that agreement ratified. Once a country leaves the EU, it may ask to rejoin the Union by applying for accession in accordance to membership criteria set by Art. 49 TEU (European Union 2007; May 2017).

The results of the Brexit referendum, 51.89% for Leave and 48.11%, saw the Prime Minister at the time, David Cameron, who had previously attempted to renegotiate the terms of the British membership in the EU, resign. His successor to the premiership, Theresa May, announced that the government would consider these results politically binding, despite the fact that the referendum was only legally advisory. Hence, Art. 50 TEU was triggered in March 2017 which started the clock for the British withdrawal from the European Union.

The negotiations themselves became contentious early on. First, the EU and

the UK disagreed about whether the negotiations and the resulting agreement should cover only the British withdrawal from the European institutions or the future relationship in specific policies. While the UK was hoping that trade and other aspects of the future relationship will be discussed at once, the EU favoured treating the withdrawal and the future relationship separately.

Several issues took priority in the first phase of the negotiations: citizens rights, the Irish border, and the financial settlement. In December 2017 both parties announced that they had made enough progress on those issues so that the preliminary talks on the future relationship could begin (European Union and United Kingdom Government 2017). By March 2018, an initial draft of the withdrawal agreement could be published (European Union et al. 2018a). The final draft was issued in November 2018 and clarified the relationship between the EU and the UK during the so-called implementation period after the British exit from EU institutions (European Union et al. 2018b). The withdrawal agreement (WA) was accompanied by a non-binding political declaration which sketched the terms of a possible 'association agreement', akin to that between the EU and Ukraine (Emerson 2018).

What seemed even harder to manage, however, was getting the deal, once reached, ratified by the British. There are many reasons why this was the case, ranging from an inter- or intra-party disagreement about what type of Brexit MPs wanted, whether Brexit should occur in the first place without a confirmatory referendum on the deal, to mere political opportunism given the unstable position of Theresa May as Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party. The November 2018 deal itself contained many provisions which MPs found unacceptable, such as the handling of the Irish border issue by introducing a backstop, the threat to the Union<sup>1</sup> by having

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<sup>1</sup> Pertains to the unity of the United Kingdom, not the Unity of the European Union.

differential rules apply in Northern Ireland, the authority of European courts on British territory after Brexit among others. The October 2019 deal was not wholly unproblematic either, as many concessions with the previous government's red lines were made so as Brexit can happen sooner. The perplexity of these issues notwithstanding, the biggest hurdle to getting a deal ratified appeared to be the unfavourable parliamentary arithmetic.

In an attempt to strengthen her hand in the ensuing negotiations, however, May called an early general election in June 2017 but despite her party's victory, the Conservatives lost their majority, yielding a hung parliament. In the absence of a stable majority, getting the government's plans for Brexit approved by Parliament became a formidable challenge which allowed the opposition and those worried about the way Brexit was being handled to secure concessions of crucial importance from the government, giving the British Parliament significant control over the Brexit process over time.

The British government under Theresa May failed to get the British Parliament to approve the November 2018 deal a total of three times<sup>2</sup>, which ultimately resulted in requesting extensions of Article 50 TEU twice and a subsequent change of leadership in the Conservative Party. The new PM, Boris Johnson, was set on removing the backstop from the withdrawal agreement even if this meant leaving the EU without a deal on 31 October 2019 – something over which he was willing to prorogue or

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<sup>2</sup> The House of Commons voted down the Withdrawal Agreement together with the political declaration on the future relationship twice (on 15 January 2019 and on 13 March 2019). The withdrawal agreement (without the political declaration) was rejected on 29 March 2019.

dissolve<sup>3</sup> Parliament.

Despite having insisted previously that the withdrawal agreement was not to be re-negotiated, the EU agreed to reopen talks with the UK, and both parties reached a revised deal in October 2019 (European Union et al. 2019). The European Council endorsed the revised deal immediately after. Given the minimal time for parliamentary scrutiny of the Withdrawal Agreement Bill (WAB) on the British side, however, an amendment forced the Prime Minister to request another extension to the negotiating period.

Soon after an early general election was called in the UK. Having ensured that all candidates who run for the Tories supported his deal, Johnson managed to overcome one of the biggest obstacles so far to getting the WAB approved: having MPs defect given an otherwise precarious working majority. The Conservative Party emerged victorious from the elections with a majority of 80 seats. An amended version of the deal he had presented before Parliament back in October 2019 made it through the British Parliament in January 2020 as a result. The deal obtained the consent of the European Parliament on 29 January 2020, the approval of the Council on January 2020 and entered into force on 31 January 2020 at midnight.

To some people's relief and others' displeasure, the UK left the EU institutions in a much harder Brexit than envisioned by the May government. Based on the withdrawal agreement, we are now in a transition (or implementation) period, during which the UK will follow some of the EU's rules but will no longer be part of EU decision-making bodies. It is until 31 December 2020 when the future relationship between the EU and the UK as a third country needs to be negotiated.

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<sup>3</sup> When Parliament is dissolved, every seat in the House of Commons becomes vacant. This occurs 25 working days before a general election.

Many worry that this time will not suffice to disentangle the complex web of connections, linking the EU and the UK. The British government rejects any notions of requesting an extension to the transition period beyond December 2020, even if the EU would propose this to the UK. Unless both sides agree to an extension or introduce other temporary arrangements, there are now less than eight months to complete the negotiations on the future relationship. Accordingly, we will witness one of three possible outcomes: not reaching an agreement, reaching a 'bare-bones' agreement on critical issues or reaching a comprehensive agreement.

For now, the 'Brexiternity', as some might call it, continues (MacShane 2019). The future relationship between the two parties post-Brexit is yet to be built and this may prove an equally as challenging a task as negotiating and ratifying the British exit from the EU institutions did. But how will that future relationship look like?

This thesis sheds light on the matter by looking into defence policy in particular. Defence policy is an area where cooperation is mutually desired, judging by the text of the political declaration on the future relationship (European Commission 2019: 5, 16). And while many expected that the future economic relationship and the future foreign policy relationship would be negotiated simultaneously, we now know that this will not be the case. Upon the UK's insistence, foreign and security policy will be handled separately and are currently, not part of the regular discussions. But if they were to be re-opened as issues again, we can assume, based on what Theresa May's government suggested, that internal and external security policy will be separated (Her Majesty's Government 2018a).

The United Kingdom may have left the European Union on 31 January 2020, and the British may appear to have lost interest in cooperating with the EU in defence, but the UK and EU member states are bound to remain intertwined even post-Brexit.

Andrew Moravcsik (2016) calls this the ‘Hotel California’ effect: Britain can check out any time it likes, but it can never leave Europe nor all EU policies. This statement holds particularly true when one considers the area of defence policy. Britain and the EU are dependent on each other for reasons like geography, but remaining close in defence policy is within their interest so as to remain relevant on the world security stage. After all, the countries which seem to matter most in security and defence are those the size of a continent or those who join their efforts to achieve that size (Biscop 2018).

The EU itself appears very invested in advancing its defence policy further and has launched several new ambitious defence initiatives over the past few years. Britain has a lot to offer as a potential strategic partner, and so do European member states themselves, but given the absence of defence from the negotiation agenda, and considering the emergence of new defence initiatives and bilateral frameworks since the Brexit referendum, we generally know little about how this mutually desired cooperation can take place post-Brexit.

This thesis attempts to fill this gap by analysing the prospects for cooperation in defence policy between the EU and Britain post-Brexit. The empirical puzzle which it tries to solve can be described as: *how will the future relationship between the EU and UK in defence look like post-Brexit?* The research purpose, therefore, is to define the different avenues the relationship between the EU and Britain can take after Brexit, discuss the issues which facilitate further cooperation or constrain it and see how these issues are reflected in the way governments view the future partnership in defence.

Several aspects require investigation to analyse the future relationship between the UK and EU member states. First, we need to understand the immediate consequences of the British exit from EU defence. This will be the topic of the section following immediately after the introduction. Having put the consequences of the British

withdrawal from EU defence into perspective, the author utilises our knowledge about defence cooperation rooted in international relations theories and later formulates empirical expectations about the potentially relevant considerations each party may have.

The author analyses the prospects for a future partnership by constructing five different scenarios of the future relationship between EU member states and Britain. The way the EU engages with third countries in its defence policy is one example of how it might engage with the UK post-Brexit. But cooperation can also occur outside the EU institutional framework, notably, through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The UK and a number of other EU member states also participate in several defence structures besides the EU and NATO, so these need to be considered as potential forums for cooperation as well. The UK may also want to pursue a defence relationship with individual EU member states bilaterally and gauging how other countries view this option for themselves is similarly important. Finally, states may choose not to engage with other countries in their defence policies altogether and opt for acting on their own when needed.

Our best guess about what may offer or agree to, shall negotiations for cooperation in defence be opened, will be based on theoretically-derived empirical expectations about the strategic priorities of the key players in EU defence. We can test these against a pool of data gathered from speeches, publically available documents and reports between July 2019 and March 2020. To give an answer to the research problem posed before, the author evaluates the five scenarios of future cooperation in defence against the presumed policy considerations and the stated post-Brexit objectives of the British, the French and the German government.

This scenario-based policy-consideration-centred approach to the research topic allows us to make informed predictions about how the future defence relationship between the UK and the EU might evolve once the transition period ends. In doing so, the author offers an assessment of the plausibility of various theoretical constructs in the context of post-Brexit defence cooperation.

## The British Withdrawal from EU Defence

This section of the thesis examines the consequences of the British departure from EU institutions in the context of EU defence policy. First, the author briefly discusses the development of EU defence policy and outlines its components, focusing on the practical implications of the British withdrawal and the rules for third-country participation. Then the rights and obligations of the UK during the implementation period, enshrined in the withdrawal agreement and the political declaration, are inspected. The section concludes with a discussion of the overall meaning of Brexit from EU defence as well as a brief reflection on the prospects of extending the transition period or ending the transition period without a deal on defence.

The history of European integration in defence runs much farther back in time than the 1990s. The idea for a community of states which would have a European army, whereby signatories would delegate control over their arm forces to a joint supranational framework and establish a common armament programme, can be traced back to the 1950s. Security and defence concerns regarding the threat presented by the Soviet Union as well as the rearmament of West Germany alongside perceived shared economic interests were the main drivers behind the idea for the creation of a European Defence Community (EDC). France, however, failed to ratify

the EDC. Instead, a new framework for defence coordination and military cooperation emerged – the Western European Union (WEU); while the responsibility for planning and operations was given to NATO.

The French under de Gaulle then began promoting the idea of creating an intergovernmental structure under the European Economic Community's (EEC) structure, independent of NATO. But the tensions between 'Europeanists' and 'Atlanticists' member states whose views regarding the role of NATO differed significantly delayed foreign policy integration for the decades that followed.

The international crises throughout the 1970s and the 1980s brought up the question of cooperation in foreign policy, security and defence to the forefront again (Leuffen et al. 2013). This culminated with the emergence of the intergovernmentally organised European Political Cooperation (EPC) and the ensuing creation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and its successor the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

The ESDP and the CSDP's defining features were their mostly intergovernmental nature and their function in complementarity to NATO. Some member states' distrust towards supranational authorities as well as their firm conviction that the transatlantic alliance should be the cornerstone of European defence constrained the way common defence could be pursued on the level of the EU and its predecessors. It is notable, for example, that the European Court of Justice's (ECJ) jurisdiction is minimal as regards policies under the CFSP umbrella, and that qualified majority voting (QMV) is permitted only in areas of implementation where joint positions, joint strategies or joint actions have been previously agreed on by unanimity (Leuffen et al. 2013). While the Juncker Commission, as well as the von der Leyen Commission, are proponents of the introduction of more QMV in order to

boost the efficiency of the decision-making and likewise support the development of a European Defence Union and the advancement of the European strategic autonomy, many member states remain sceptical to such endeavours in defence (Juncker 2018; Leyen 2019). Their misgivings can be understood to reflect their mistrust towards the increasing supranationalism in the EU as well as their objection to creating any structures that would duplicate NATO which they see as the primary forum for defence policy coordination. According to some, it is this fundamental divergence of preferences why the EU allows for constructive abstentions and the emergence of coalitions of the willing in defence under the enhanced cooperation mechanism (Leuffen et al. 2013).

As a result, supranational authorities still have limited powers over EU defence policy. Let us consider each of them in turn. Many of the competences the European Commission enjoys in more integrated EU policy areas, such as having the mandate for negotiations with third countries, have been granted to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy<sup>4</sup>, who is the Union's chief coordinator and representative in foreign policy. The Commission, on the other hand, has an obligation to monitor the implementation of the Treaties but its powers to ensure the enforcement of decisions are only present in areas of relevance to the defence market. Generally, the Commission's primary role is the provision of knowledge and expertise in the areas of capability development and planning. Also, it has the right to budgetary initiative, meaning that it can request increases/decreases of funds devoted to defence. Still, these are to be decided on by the European Parliament and the Council.

As for the European Parliament, alongside its budgetary powers, it has the right to scrutinise the CSDP, to be informed regularly and consulted by the High

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<sup>4</sup> Henceforth referred to as the High Representative.

Representative. It can address questions or make recommendations to the Council or the High Representative as well. Twice per year, it debates the progress of the implementation of the CSDP and adopts reports.

Finally, the ECJ has the competence to assess the political authorities' actions against the legal order (Art. 275 TFEU) (European Union 2007). This right of oversight is particularly significant concerning the Court's judgments regarding the defence market. However, as a rule, the Court cannot review actions within the CFSP/CSDP framework.

Now let us turn to the specificities of the EU defence policy as we know it today. *EU defence policy* will be understood here as the agreed-upon among EU member states course of action in defence, presumed to result from the convergence of policy goals at a certain point in time and/or over a period of time, developed under the EU framework.

Many would equate EU defence policy to the CSDP. This is not entirely wrong since many of the EU's defence structures are subsumed under the CSDP framework. This thesis, however, espouses a more a broader view of EU defence in light of this study's interest in possible cooperative arrangements with non-EU countries which go beyond mere cooperation in crisis management operations and missions.

In describing what the EU's defence policy is in practice (Table A1 in the appendix), the author follows Rangel de Mesquita (2019) and examines EU defence policy along three dimensions (1) *political and strategic*, (2) *institutional and operational*, and (3) *financial initiatives*<sup>5</sup>. This approach is similar to the systems approach applied by Dadashov and colleagues who examine the CSDP as 'a holistic

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<sup>5</sup> In Table A1, the author describes the three dimensions of EU defence policy in more detail, by listing their components and achievements.

phenomenon in the EU structure [whose] components are interrelated and independent' (Dadashov et al. 2019). But this thesis goes beyond merely the CSDP as CSDP is only one of the many components of EU defence policy which serve different functions and are governed differently. It views EU defence policy in its entirety on the one hand. Still, on the other hand, it leaves the opportunity to concentrate the analysis on individual policy components if needed.

Let us first consider the **political and strategic dimension** of the EU's defence policy which guides how EU defence shall be governed and on what strategic basis will policy decisions be made. The EU's principal objective, enshrined in the *EU Global Strategy*, is the achievement of European strategic autonomy (European External Action Service 2016). *Strategic autonomy* as a central concept needs to be understood as the tasks that Europeans collectively need to be able to take on their own, without the support of non-EU allies, where necessary (Biscop 2019). The ally on which European states are mainly dependent for their defence is, of course, the United States (Biscop 2016).

The EU defence policy's political and strategic dimension also entails the *European Defence Action Plan* (EDAP). EDAP contains a list of measures intended to aid the development of defence capabilities within the European Defence Industrial and Technological Base (EDITB) (European Commission 2016). It seeks to boost the competitiveness and the innovation of the European defence industry while setting up the legislative and policy framework needed for advancing the single market in defence (European Commission n.d.).

The *European Defence Industrial Development Programme* (EDIDP) and the *Preparatory Action on Defence Research* (PADR), in turn, try to enhance those efforts by looking for ways to make improvements in defence equipment and technology as

well as research and technology.

Next is the *reflection paper on the future of EU defence*. It illustrates the Commission's view as regards the future of defence, how it will proceed and what trends might be observed if a particular scenario of defence integration occurs as opposed to another. The reflection paper scenarios mainly differ as per the depth of integration achieved, which serves as another indication that there are important choices to be made as regards the future of EU defence in terms of whether the level of integration shall increase or remain the same.

The rest of the EU defence policy components along the political and strategic dimension address the planning and review for specific defence needs. The *EU Action Plan on Military Mobility* paves the way to increase cooperation with NATO in military actions by guaranteeing more effortless military mobility. Finally, the *Capability Development Plan* (CDP) targets the development of military capabilities and capacities, while the *Civilian Capability Development Plan* (CCDP), in turn, considers only civilian capabilities.

Keeping these in mind, let us turn to the **institutional and operational** dimension, realised in the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)<sup>6</sup>. CSDP is part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSFP). As such, it provides for an opt-out to Denmark which does not participate in the CSDP. CSDP is currently one of

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<sup>6</sup> The Political and Security Committee (PSC), expert committees and groups develop the political framework and finalize the approval of a crisis management concept. Decisions for setting up a mission/operations are based on conclusions by the European Council and the Council of the European Union. The respective command takes over and all relevant decisions are coordinated with the PSC. Programmes, like Galileo and Copernicus, assist with the provision of navigation system and satellite imagery for the conduct of the missions.

the least integrated policy areas of the European Union in terms of its level of communisation (Europeanization). The decision power here lies in the hands of the member states, whereby decisions are taken predominantly by unanimity in the European Council or the Council of the EU<sup>7</sup>. Some decisions with regards to issues of implementation, the European Defence Agency (EDA) or the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO), however, can be taken by a qualified majority only.

Next are the EU battlegroups. The *battlegroup* concept envisions the rapid deployment of multinational military units who are capable of conducting stand-alone operations or of acting in the initial phases of more extensive operations. They are built on the principle of rotation so that every six months, a new coalition of states or a framework nation take the lead and provide troops and equipment. The decision to deploy is taken unanimously by the Council. Third countries can contribute to battlegroups, as Norway does, but cannot command a battlegroup.

*PESCO* is another one of the instruments within the EU's defence arsenal worth examining more closely. It is aimed at deepening defence cooperation based on the coordination of several collaborative military projects among 25 of the EU member states. After initial hesitation, Portugal and Ireland were the last countries to join. Non-participants are Denmark, which has an opt-out from foreign and security initiatives with defence implications; Malta, which feared that participation in PESCO might represent a violation of its constitutionally-prescribed neutrality but has not ruled out joining PESCO in the future; as well as the United Kingdom, which has now left the EU. Third-country participation in PESCO is permissible, much like the participation of non-EU countries in CSDP missions and operations is. The main difference is, however, that as of the time of writing, the conditions on which third countries will be

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<sup>7</sup> Hereafter occasionally referred to as the Council, unless explicitly specified.

allowed to participate in PESCO projects have not been set.

The *Coordinated Annual Review on Defence* (CARD) is another of the newer defence initiatives of the EU. It is a project designed to make defence planning easier and aid the development of capabilities according to the EU Capabilities Development Priorities. It helps identify shortfalls and suggests ways of optimising defence spending. CARD aims to make capability development across member states more structured and coordinated. At the time of writing, British participation is not foreseen, but some view it as an attractive option for the UK (Rangel de Mesquita 2019).

The *European Defence Agency* is responsible for coordinating the research, development and procurement efforts of the EU. The EDA acts as a Secretariat for PESCO, CARD (together with the EU Military Staff), runs the PADR and the EDITB (precursors of the European Defence Fund) as well as the CDP and the CCDP. Third countries can participate in projects and programmes governed by the Agency (e.g. in CARD) based on administrative arrangements or as part of association agreements between the EU and third countries (Besch 2018). These arrangements, however, do not afford decision-making powers to participating third states but merely establish paths for discussions and exchange of information (Besch 2018).

Finally, let us take a look at the **financial** dimension of EU defence. EU defence initiatives can be financed either from the EU's multi-annual budget or outside of it. The *European Defence Fund* (EDF), which falls under the former category, was launched in 2017 and has two main strands: a research and development (R&D) window and an acquisitions window. This overlaps with the financial functions of PADR (i.e. fully financing defence and research activities) and the EDIDP (i.e. co-financing higher-end industrial development activities) (Santopinto 2018). These are managed by programme committees of member states who decide by a qualified majority, with the

Commission being represented at the committees but without having a voting right. The EDF will overtake PADR and the EDIDP in 2021 so that third states who wish to make contributions to the EU budget and enjoy the EDF funding without having a right to managing its programmes need to have special arrangements with the EU in place (Santopinto 2018).

EPF is based on a proposal by the High Representative (Rangel de Mesquita 2019). It is financed by EU member state contributions according to a distribution key and is intended for funding rapid deployment actions that would otherwise not be covered by the EU budget (Rangel de Mesquita 2019). It is a financial tool in which the UK might be interested in (Rangel de Mesquita 2019).

Let us now consider the contents of the withdrawal agreement with relevance to defence. The British exit from European institutions waived the UK's right to decision-making in EU policy. In defence matters, this means that the UK can no longer have representatives or permanent observers in EU defence councils or committees (of whichever form) responsible for policy-making or strategic management.

Brexit dissolved the defence obligations imposed on the UK under articles 42-46 TEU (European Union 2007). In other words, the UK is no longer be required to improve on or make contributions from its civilian and military capabilities for the implementation of the CSDP. Nor is it bound by the mutual assistance (defence) clause<sup>8</sup>, the permanent structured cooperation, the enhanced cooperation rules, nor by the Petersberg Tasks. It cannot command CSDP missions and operations and

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<sup>8</sup> The UK, as a member of NATO, will continue to be bound by the collective defence clause of Art. 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. The British withdrawal from the EU rules and institutions will remove the UK's obligation to aid and assist an EU member state in case of armed aggression on its territory, as per Art. 42 (7) TEU. This clause is relevant to the defence of EU member states who are not members of NATO.

provide operational headquarters (Art. 129 (7) of the withdrawal agreement). That is why, Brexit forced the relocation of the EU Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) headquarters from Northwood to Rota in Spain as well as the relocation of the Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSC-HOA) to Brest in France. The command of the Althea operation also had to be transferred from General Sir James Everard to the French Lieutenant Colonel Olivier Rittimanna as British nationals cannot hold command posts in CSDP missions, even those subjected to the Berlin Plus framework where the EU cooperates with NATO (Santopinto 2018).

During the implementation period, the UK will continue to host the Galileo<sup>9</sup> Security Monitoring Centre until its relocation to France is completed as per Article 119 of the withdrawal agreement. But in order to access Galileo's PRS after Brexit, the UK will have to sign an agreement on information-sharing and satellite navigation cooperation (Besch 2018). Similarly, the UK can continue to access Copernicus<sup>10</sup> satellite data by signing a bilateral agreement with the EU's satellite centre (Besch 2018). The UK may decide, however, that it wishes to continue cooperating to CSDP missions and operations or join new ones as a third country. In that case, Britain will find itself in a comparable situation to that of Australia and New Zealand in NATO – it may contribute troops but will have little say in strategy (Biscop 2016).

According to Art. 129 (7) of the withdrawal agreement, the UK had to give up command of the battlegroup planned for the rotation during the second semester of 2019. These duties were assumed by France instead. In the post-Brexit future, the UK

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<sup>9</sup> Galileo is part of the European space policy but is relevant to EU defence for it provides a navigation system which can be used in missions or operations.

<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Copernicus is also an integral part of the EU space policy but its satellite imagery can be used for the purposes of EU defence policy missions and operations.

will not be able to command a battlegroup, but may nevertheless decide to contribute troops to EU battlegroups. For this to work, the UK needs to establish close cooperation with potential framework nations, like that between Sweden and Norway, whereby Sweden ensures that it informs Norway, promptly and outside official channels, about a planned operation which may be of interest to the Norwegian (Besch 2018).

As for PESCO – in which the UK did not participate in before it left the EU, the possibility that the UK might be invited to participate in individual projects as a third country remains open. Art. 127 (7) of the withdrawal agreement specifies that this shall occur only on an exceptional basis or in any other format of cooperation set up under the PESCO framework in the future. As mentioned previously in the thesis, the rules for non-EU countries' participation in PESCO had not been established at the time of writing. Several admission criteria are being discussed, however. These include an evaluation of the degree to which third-country participation may lead to dependencies on that third country for the viability of the project as well as the degree to which a third country shares the values on which the EU was founded (Barigazzi 2019; Brzozowski 2019). As for the procedure, it will likely go along the following lines: the third state would submit a request to the country in charge of the PESCO project of interest and will be admitted if all governments participating in the project agree unanimously. Once a third country has been admitted, one or more EU member states may decide to address the Council with concerns regarding the added value of that third country's continued participation in the project, upon which the member states and the High Representative can make a reassessment of whether or not they wish to terminate the arrangement (Barigazzi 2019; Brzozowski 2019).

During the implementation period, the UK will continue to make contributions to

the EU budget. Article 156 foresees financial contributions from the UK to the EDA, the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), and the European Union Satellite Centre (EU SatCen), as well as to the costs of CSDP operations until 31 December 2020. Art. 157 then also requires the United Kingdom to pay pension liabilities for the personnel of the former three as well as to cover its share of costs for the liquidation of the WEU.

The British withdrawal from the EDA means that the UK now lacks the right to decide how the Agency's funds shall be used. If the UK and the EU manage to reach an agreement before the implementation period ends, the path to UK association with the EDA is open. This may be governed by a special administrative arrangement with the Agency which will allow the UK participation in defence capability programmes (Santopinto 2018). Neither the withdrawal agreement nor the political declaration explicitly foresee British participation in CARD, however, this may be desired by the UK, as some argue (Rangel de Mesquita 2019).

The UK is not allowed to take part in the PADR and EDIDP programme committees after 31 January 2020 until 31 December 2020. This overlaps with the expiration of the current programme periods. As the UK will be making payments to the EU budget during the withdrawal agreement implementation period, however, British companies can take part in calls for proposal in both programmes. In the counterfactual, if PADR did not get subsumed under the EDF, a model for third-country participation in PADR would be available via a special agreement, like the one Norway has. This agreement envisions financial contributions to the programme budget and a right to be represented at the programme committee but with no voting rights (Santopinto 2018).

Representation in the EDIDP is exclusive to member states, but as previously

stated, British businesses can take part in calls for proposals until 31 December 2020, unless an EU member state explicitly objects to that (Santopinto 2018). EDIDP funding is accessible only to businesses established in the EU and controlled by entities of nationals of a member state as well as to subsidiaries of third-country-based companies located on EU soil which can certify that intellectual property and technology will remain exclusively in the EU and will not be transferred to the parent company (Santopinto 2018). Finally, EU companies tendering with a third-country company can participate in EDIDP-financed projects but are not eligible to receive funding (Santopinto 2018).

Similarly, the participation criteria for the EDF specify that only collaborative projects involving firms from member states or associated countries—Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein—shall receive EU financial support. Cooperation between EU defence companies and third-country firms is not excluded, as long as the latter's involvement does not put the union's security interests at risk. But in practice, this means that non-EU firms—for example, those based in the United States or the United Kingdom after Brexit—would not receive any EU funding. (Besch 2018). This could be disadvantageous to British firms who wish to operate on the EU market (Kluth 2019).

These factors notwithstanding, the UK will remain an attractive partner by default. Britain is Europe's largest defence spender. Even before the Brexit referendum it had committed to not only meeting the NATO target of spending 2 per cent of GDP on defence, but also increasing the national defence budget by 0.5 per cent every year to 2020-2021 spending (Black et al. 2017). The UK also announced that it intends to grow its procurement budget by 1 per cent annually, with a target of spending GBP 178 billion over the next 10 years on new military equipment (Black et al. 2017). To the extent that these economic objectives are achievable, the UK will continue to be a

leader in defence spending.

The UK, together with France and Germany, count among the top 10 largest exporters of arms in the world (see table A2 in the appendix), house some of the top 100 arms-producing and military services companies in the world (see table A3 in the appendix). The British share in the European industrial-base is quite large (Mölling and Giegerich 2018). The UK also outspent both Germany and France in terms of total defence expenditure and investments in defence equipment procurement but lagged behind France on research and development (R&D) spending in 2018 (see table A5 in the appendix). If after the implementation period, the UK does not gain access to EU funding, R&D could become more intense and costly given the increasing complexity of the development of new military equipment (Mölling and Giegerich 2018). This would mean that in order to stay competitive, Britain will need to increase its investments even more.

For some, having restricted access to EU defence is not particularly problematic, as the attractiveness of the EU defence market is too low at present. UK companies already focus more on non-EU exports, and there are alternatives for continued defence industrial collaboration (Black et al. 2017). There are readily available outside the EU framework, namely through the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR) and the Letter of Intent (LoI). The problem, however, is that without access to the Single Market and the Customs Union, cross-border supply and transfer may be disrupted (Chalmers 2018). The situation will become even more complicated in case the regulatory arrangements between the EU and the UK begin to diverge significantly, or if free movement of labour becomes restricted (Chalmers 2018).

The UK also boasts substantial military and diplomatic capabilities (see table

A4 in the appendix for an overview of the latter). However, its actual contributions in terms of personnel are much smaller than that of other member states, like France or Germany (see table A6 in the appendix). When we look at the missions or operations by type (civilian, military or civilian-military), it is interesting that Britain contributed fewer people to military operations than civilian missions until 2017. Similarly, it afforded more people to CSDP missions and operations where the EU is cooperating with NATO.

But the value of the British contribution lies beyond just raw personnel. The UK provides high-level command, control and reconnaissance assets (Chalmers 2018). It brings credibility to missions and a strong diplomatic network. With Brexit, the EU will be devoid of the skilled British personnel (unless the UK decides to join a CSDP mission or operation), but on the other, defence-industrial, side of things, so will the UK of the highly skilled European labour too.

From the political and strategic point of view, Brexit left the Atlanticist camp of EU member states significantly weakened (Kluth 2019). For the longest time, Britain served as a champion for all member states who preferred channelling their national priorities through NATO over EU structures. Now that the UK can no longer exert influence over EU defence, the preference constellation has shifted significantly.

It is for that reason why the overall course which EU defence policy may change in the future. Most analysts believe that EU defence is poised to take the path towards further integration as a result. Removing the UK, which has been one of the most hesitant states when it comes to deepening integration, has come as an opportunity for the EU to revitalise its defence policy. The British departure from the EU has thus opened up the possibility for strengthening the integrative efforts in the field of defence policy (Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet 2019).

The EU may well lose the British contribution to its budget after the withdrawal agreement expires and the financial obligations from the withdrawal get paid<sup>11</sup>, but some see this in a positive light. It might mean that the route to a budget increase which the UK had vetoed will be opened, such as the one for the EDA (Biscop 2016). The author, however, recommends caution when accepting the validity of such statements, as recently tensions among member states and EU institutions arose when the Finnish Presidency proposed budget cuts to certain funds in the Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027. As regards the area of defence, a decrease from €11.5 billion to €6 billion for the EDF was suggested (Bayer 2019).

On the operational side, newer EU defence activities<sup>12</sup> continue to emphasise their complementarity to NATO, which is a commitment EU reaffirmed in its main strategic document – the Global Strategy Strategy (European External Action Service 2016). From the industrial perspective, however, the EU has become increasingly active in building up its defence market, given the multitude of instruments which emerged since 2016.

So what can we expect to happen in the future? Art. 127 (2) of the withdrawal agreement provides for a derogation from the responsibilities during the implementation period in case the UK and the EU reach an agreement in the areas of CSFP or CSDP before the end of the implementation period (European Union et al. 2019). In other words, if Britain and the EU were interested and willing to define their future relationship in defence quickly enough, the new arrangements could come into

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<sup>11</sup> Assuming that these financial obligations (also known as the 'divorce bill') will indeed be paid out

<sup>12</sup> Assessing to what extent these new initiatives indeed complement NATO is beyond the scope of this thesis. This remark only serves to demonstrate that EU member states recognise that after Brexit, NATO will continue to be an essential locus of action, as some would argue Economides et al. (2016).

force well before 1 January 2021. Even if the UK and EU fail to make a deal in defence policy, as long as there is the willingness on both sides to keep cooperating, the path to cooperation, ideally, shall stay open.

In its earlier version, the political declaration for the future relationship envisioned 'an ambitious and comprehensive future security relationship between the EU and Britain' (Her Majesty's Government 2018b) was envisioned. The ratified version, in contrast, spoke about 'a broad, comprehensive and balanced partnership' (European Commission 2019). This vision included defence as an area of common interest but only in accordance to the respective parties' foreign policies, strategic and security interests, and legal orders. Both sides appear to have been open to a political dialogue on CSFP and CSDP matters. Research and industrial cooperation were also seen as areas of mutual interest, with an administrative arrangement with the EDA, participation in the EDF and PESCO explicitly mentioned.

But to what extent did these stated ambitions pan out? When we look at the development of the post-Brexit negotiations on the future relationship so far the prospects of striking any deal in defence seem bleak, let alone a deal similar to the vision in the political declaration. The British have reportedly refused to engage in negotiations in foreign policy, security and defence (European Commission, Task Force for Relations with the United Kingdom 2020b). As a result, there is no negotiating group devoted to foreign policy, security and defence (European Commission, Task Force for Relations with the United Kingdom 2020a).

One could have anticipated that the two parties would drift apart over contentious issues, such as trade, the Irish border or the jurisdiction of EU courts based on what we observed during the Brexit negotiations. At the moment, the negotiations are reported to have reached a stalemate on fisheries and the commitment to

sustaining a level playing field with EU rules and standards on trade and competition (Fox 2020). Some interpret this as an indication that the UK is heading towards a path of absolute dissociation from the EU (Ondarza 2020).

If this trend continues, a lot of resentment may build up between the UK and EU member states. This could hamper the prospects of cooperation in any policy area. In fact, the bitterer the overall post-divorce relationship, the more politically difficult will it become to justify collaboration with the UK. It is for that reason why we can expect that if the negotiations break down and a no-deal outcome materialises in 2021, even cooperation outside the EU framework (in defence or otherwise) will become extremely problematic.

The timing of the negotiations is also of the essence. The EU rules for membership withdrawal set aside 2 years for negotiations. In practice, the Brexit negotiations took almost twice as long to complete. In contrast, the transition period is set to last only 11 months which is particularly challenging, as they are to tackle even more policy areas than before. The deadline for deciding on whether the implementation period of the withdrawal agreement shall be extended is approaching. Non-coincidentally, it overlaps with the deadline for the last stages of deciding on the next MFF. If the UK does not wish to join any specific EU initiatives where participation is available to non-EU countries, it is understandable why it does not want to extend the transition period and is trying to avoid having to continue to pay up to the European budget unnecessarily. On the other hand, if it is interested in a closer relationship with the EU in the future, the option of extending the transition period deserves to be re-evaluated. In any case, extensions are only feasible until the end of 2022 at most (Ondarza 2020).

This section of the thesis followed the development of EU defence policy over

the years, and traced the roots of its intergovernmental nature and function in complementarity to NATO. It then outlined the consequences of Brexit for EU defence in political and strategic, institutional and operational as well as financial terms. This put the significance of the British departure from the EU into a concrete perspective. The discussion also touched upon the vision for cooperation in defence the future the EU and the UK shared upon the British withdrawal from EU institutions as well the prospects of cooperation as we see them at the time of writing.

The following section of the thesis will review the literature on withdrawals from international organisations, defence policy-making and cooperation as well as the specifics of the defence policy in the European context. The goal, therefore, is to identify the factors which guide policy-makers in their decisions as they can inform our expectations about what policy considerations might be of importance in determining the future relationship between the EU and the UK.

## Theoretical Framework

The British withdrawal from the EU is not the first case of withdrawal from the block. Algeria seceded from the Europea Economic Community (EEC) as it gained independence from France in 1962. Greenland left the EEC in 1985 after having held a referendum on its membership where 53% of the voters voted to leave. Finally, in 2012 the Carribbean island of Saint Barthélémy withdrew from the EU and just like Greenland, joined the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) list instead. Brexit, however, will mark the first time a full-fledged member state of the EU will leave.

In as much as Brexit can be viewed as a case of withdrawal from an international organisation, the British departure from the EU hardly seems like that special a case

(Vabulas 2016). Indonesia, for example, withdrew from the United Nations in 1965<sup>13</sup>, Burundi and the Philippines withdrew from the International Criminal Court (ICC) more recently, and in fact, several EU member states quit the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) over the past decades.

Several reasons have been identified as to why countries consider such withdrawals and why the withdrawals occur. First, geopolitically powerful states or states which contribute disproportionately to an international organisation are more likely to leave (Vabulas 2016). Second, the threat of withdrawal is often used to extract political concessions (Vabulas 2016). Both the Harold Wilson-led government's decision to pursue a renegotiation of the terms of British accession in 1975 and David Cameron's 2016 attempt to strike a more suitable to Britain's 'special status' EU-membership-reform deal serve as examples here. Third, the reason why countries withdraw from international organisations may have more to do with domestic politics, rather than international politics (Vabulas 2016). The context of the two EU-membership referendums in Britain is illustrative to this point as well.

The 1975 referendum was a direct result of the electoral promise by the Labour party at that time to hold a plebiscite on whether the UK should continue its membership in the European Community (EC). The membership in EC back then was presented by the Remain campaign at the time as much more than a free trade area, highlighting EC's importance to security, industrial and regional funding as well its role in aiding developing countries (Full Fact 2016). The 2016 referendum, in turn, was the product of domestic political dynamics as well. Historical institutionalist accounts trace the decision to hold the 2016 referendum as borne out of the Conservatives' utilisation

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<sup>13</sup> This was never formally acknowledged by the UN. Indonesia resumed cooperation with the UN the following year.

of populist eurosceptic sentiments for electoral gains against Tony Blair's New Labour; the abandonment of that strategy once David Cameron became leader of the Conservative Party in 2005; the UKIP's opportunistic adoption of the strategy of fusing populism and Euroscepticism at a time where the EU was experiencing economic and migration crises which the electorate awarded; and the ensuing 2013 commitment by David Cameron to a referendum seen as an attempt 'to shoot UKIP's fox in the short term' (Bale 2018).

The issue of withdrawal from the EU never really disappeared from the British political discourse after the 1975 referendum, as the previous paragraph indicated. It became the cornerstone of Labour's electoral campaign in 1983 and persisted within its doctrine until the reformulation of the party's ideology towards pro-Europeanism with the emergence of the 'New Labour'. The rising Euroscepticism in public opinion was instead picked up by segments of the Conservative Party and the newly emerging UKIP who became the primary advocates for leaving the EU. These policy shifts notwithstanding, the rise in Euroscepticism proved troublesome for all successive British governments, regardless of who the incumbent was at the time. This problem persisted and must have affected intra-party dynamics as well given how larger parties displayed different degrees of Euroscepticism within their ranks.

When it comes to policy-making and cooperation in defence, we can assume several theoretical perspectives based on international relations theory. There is a benefit to utilising a greater plurality of scholarly approaches, best described by proponents of analytical eclecticism. As Sil and Katzenstein (2010) put it, combining different paradigm-bound theories helps us grasp the linkages between the various mechanisms affecting complex phenomena. This fits the research purpose of the thesis. Extracting as much analytical as possible for understanding the research topic

also matches the question-driven approach to studying the consequences of Brexit, applied elsewhere (Martill and Sus (2018).

If one is to follow the teachings of regime theory, international cooperation, and state participation in international organisations can be explained by scrutinising the cooperative motivations of participating actors. These can be examined from three perspectives, conceptually derived from the three grand theories of international relations (realism, neoliberalism and constructivism) (Grillot et al. 2010).

First, the power perspective follows in the steps of realist thinking. It views interstate cooperation and membership in international regimes as a means to advance a state's own goals and aspirations in an anarchic global system, where countries are mainly concerned with power advantages and relative gains, once established, regimes will endure as long as the individual states perceive them as advantageous for the achievement of their own goals

The second perspective corresponds to the neoliberalist train of thought, where signing treaties, forming international organisations or international regimes may result from reasoning beyond concerns for power and relative gains. Instead, cooperation is perceived as jointly beneficial and carries value in terms of absolute gains. Lasting cooperation creates further mutual benefits and greater joint interests, which helps regimes sustain.

The third perspective is the ideational or knowledge-based one which conforms to constructivism. Instead of focusing on external interests, it dives into factors connected to knowledge, identity, norms, values and commonalities. Continued interaction within a regime helps accumulate knowledge about the other members of the group. Over time, notions of kinship and joint identity develop, which can explain regime persistence.

In their book, Leuffen, Rittberger and Schimmelfennig (2013) test the three different grand theories of European integration and run plausibility probes of those theories' ability to explain the various dynamics of integration and differentiation in the EU. Integration can be understood as "the creation and maintenance of intense and diversified patterns of interaction among previously autonomous units" (Rosamond 2000: 13). If the UK decides to enter into cooperation in defence matters with the EU, this will be an example of horizontal differentiation, for a third country will join an EU-integrated policy area.

Intergovernmentalism views international negotiations as two-level games (Putnam 1988). They are simultaneously negotiations at the domestic and at the international level. Accordingly, policy-makers have to deliver international deals which are acceptable to domestic audiences or more specifically, to the actors involved in the domestic ratification procedure. These internal-political dynamics allow negotiators to bargain on the international level.

In defence, intergovernmentalism posits that higher levels of independence among states, coupled with a convergence of welfare and security preferences within a geopolitical or economic environment drive states to collaborate. The decision to remain outside integrated defence policy could carry negative externalities which is something countries account for when making policy decisions. The realist variant of intergovernmentalism sees states in a way similar to the power perspective of regime theory, where countries are concerned with balancing the power of one another.

The liberal variant of intergovernmentalism developed by Andrew Moravcsik (1993) Examines governments' preferences are borne out of domestic policy processes, where national defence champions in privileged position dictate the stance governments will take on issues such as opting in or out of pursuing defence jointly

(Kluth 2019). Here the economic interests of the armament industry and the degree of economic interdependence among states are of chief concern.

Supranationalism, in turn, also focuses on defence-industrial interests, but instead primarily on those of transnationally operating actors for whom a common defence market would be beneficial. Moreover, integration in one policy area could create demand for integration in related policy areas which could explain the incorporation of defence into the EU's internal market. Finally, supranational actors may exert an influence over defence integration, but as Kluth (2019) notes, EU bodies and institutions have a marginal role in decision-making, and their functions are more focused on the implementation side of defence policy. It is for that last factor why Leuffen et al. (2013) do not find much support for the supranationalist explanation.

The reader is already familiar with the constructivist framework from the discussion of the ideational or knowledge-based perspective of regime theory. In the EU defence context, scholars are interested in the consensus on the idea that a multinational force is the best way to implement defence and that the supranational authorities which are to be created are the best modus to implement defence policy. Here domestic conflict over the appropriateness of either of these two factors can generate discord across states and impede integration. Conflicting norms can also serve that function.

The UK's defence policy record as an EU member state fully corresponds to the expectations of an overall 'awkward partnership' (George 1998). The British contribution to the emergence of the CSDP notwithstanding, the UK has stayed rather lukewarm to defence efforts. It might have assumed a more active lead in European security and defence policy (especially under Tony Blair) at the inception of EU defence policy. Still, it has always firmly upheld the principles of more intergovernmental and

less supranational cooperation on the EU-level in parallel to its domestic discourse and its foreign-political convictions.

Many argue that the evolution of the EU defence policy into an intergovernmental system which can only produce the lowest-common-denominator policy and prioritises consensus at the cost of potentially dangerous inaction can largely be attributed to the UK's assertion of intergovernmentalism in EU matters (Wright 2018). One example where this firm belief that the EU should remain intergovernmental in defence policy, in particular, was the long-standing veto of the British to the creation of a permanent EU military headquarters. For a long time, the EU had to rely on either NATO's operational headquarters (through the Berlin Plus arrangement), a framework nation or an impermanent independent EU Operations Centre (OpsCen) (Turpin 2019; Keukeleire and Delreux 2014). The reasons that the British gave for this decision was that such headquarters would threaten the intergovernmental underpinnings of EU defence cooperation as well as antagonise, and potentially undermine NATO (Turpin 2019; Koutrakos 2013).

Other member states, in contrast, have been much more open to defence integration under the EU framework, especially recently. Germany and France were the drivers of initiatives like PESCO, the EDF and the EDA. For Germany, CSDP yields domestic legitimacy to foreign policy actions, and for that reason, Germans are not opposed to the prospect of an EU army in the future (Besch and Puglierin 2019). For France, these projects also represent a step in the right direction as they improve Europeans' capacity to act.

While the American strategic priorities shifted away from Europe years ago, the calls for more significant European contribution (if not self-reliance) to their security and defence, intensified especially after the election of Donald Trump as President.

The US remains the main guarantor of European security, as Black et al. (2017) note, however, in anticipation of the US disengagement from European security, European states need to boost their strategic autonomy from the US grew more pressing.

Recall the definition of strategic autonomy Biscop (2019) gives: it is the tasks which Europeans collectively need to be able to take on their own, without the support of non-EU allies, where necessary. Many European countries now feel that they need to step up their efforts in defence to become more independent from the US. In contrast, others are wary of increased cooperation, especially in military terms, as this might duplicate NATO functions and unnecessarily aggravate the relations with the United States.

One way to explicate these intricate dynamics between European states and the US is by diving into the fundamentals of the structural neorealist tradition and understanding the concept of the alliance security dilemma. When strategic alliances consist of more junior and more senior partners, certain aspects of this imbalanced relationship may become strained over time because of the different considerations each side faces. Junior partners may choose not to develop autonomous defence capacities and thus become over-reliant on their senior partners; this can generate a fear of entrapment by the senior partner (Turpin 2019). Alternatively, junior partners may opt for investing less in the alliance which can be seen by the senior partner as insufficient; for that reason, junior partners may fear abandonment by the senior partner (Turpin 2019). The essence of the alliance security dilemma lies in the trade-off between these two fears (Snyder 1984). European states experience this differently, which is why their investment in NATO, EU defence or other multilateral alliances or bilateral partnerships vary (Dyson and Konstadinides 2013).

Building on the structural neorealist insight, neoclassical realists argue that state behaviour responds to both international as well as domestic factors. Their approach combines the neorealist understanding of the importance of power distribution in the international system with a conceptualisation of domestic-level factors as intervening variables which both guide state behaviour. For Turpin (2019), states' attitudes towards defence integration can be understood as stemming from both systemic pressures (i.e. the dynamics contributing to more/less fear of abandonment (entrapment) and the emergence atlanticists vs. europeanists divide) as well as intervening factors, such as domestic politics and strategic culture<sup>14</sup>.

Scholars of the neoclassical realist tradition also engage with concepts like grand strategy, which refers to the way states or political units think about what they perceive as their interests and how they utilize their military, diplomatic, political, cultural or economic means to fulfil those interests<sup>15</sup> (van Hooft 2017). In the EU context, they account for the existence of an atlanticist vs. europeanist cleavage in EU member state relations as central to EU member states' individual grand strategies (Vennesson 2010).

Figure 1 visualizes four distinct grand strategy types in Europe according to the way individual states see the use of military force (as permissible only to defend one's

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<sup>14</sup> In Kluth's (2019)'s example strategic culture is proxied by attitudes towards the use of military force

<sup>15</sup> The concept of grand strategy is not strictly neoclassical realist. Depending on the theoretical perspective, scholars who study grand strategy stress different factors and pursue different end goals. Realists would focus on the threats and the opportunities of the international environment or their interaction with domestic political constraints and how they ensure a state's security (van Hooft (2017). Liberalists, on the other hand, would be more concerned with the ideologies and interests of domestic political coalitions and their preferences for the setup of the international order (van Hooft (2017).

Figure 1. Four EU grand strategy concepts as per Kluth (2019)

<p><b>Counter Abandonment</b></p> <p><i>Relations with the United States</i></p> <p><b>Counter Entrapment</b></p>	<p><b>Normative Power EU</b></p> <p><b>Order:</b>                      Interdependence &amp;                      Globalisation</p> <p><b>Action:</b>                      Entangle US, erode                      sovereignty</p>	<p><b>Euro-Atlanticism</b></p> <p><b>Order:</b>                      Unipolar hegemony                      Liberal rule-based order</p> <p><b>Action:</b>                      Invest in interoperable                      capability &amp; bandwagon US</p>
	<p><b>Euro-Isolationism</b></p> <p><b>Order:</b>                      Distant power-balancing                      Limited territorial threat                      Delicate European Order</p> <p><b>Action:</b>                      Global disengagement                      Police borders</p>	<p><b>Superpower Europe</b></p> <p><b>Order:</b>                      Balancing, prospects of power                      transition</p> <p><b>Action:</b>                      Invest in credible autonomous                      capabilities</p>
	<p><b>Only defensive</b></p>	<p><b>Unavoidable tool</b></p>
	<p><i>Military force</i></p>	

Source: Kluth (2019)

territory or as an unavoidable tool) as well as how they relate to the United States as a senior partner in transatlantic security (Kluth 2019). Those whose main objective is countering the entrapment within NATO by overreliance on the US fall in the lower end on the vertical axis (i.e. the europeanists), while those who mostly fear abandonment gravitate towards the upper end on the vertical axis (atlanticists). With consideration to

their willingness to use military force, countries further fall into *euro-isolationists*<sup>16</sup> (who score low on both axes) and *proponents of normative power EU* (who score low on the horizontal axis but high on the vertical axis) vs. *advocates of superpower Europe* (who score high on the horizontal axis but low on the vertical axis) and *Euroatlanticists* (who score high on both axes).

Kluth (2019) offers the following placement of the main European actors along those lines. The UK would fit well in the first quadrant (that of Euro-atlanticists), France would occupy the fourth quadrant (superpower Europe), and Germany would belong to the second quadrant (normative power EU).

A comparison of the national strategies of the UK, France and Germany is also offered by Chappell et al. (2015). In their view, the British, the French and the German national strategic priorities clash over Atlanticism vs Europeanism, the role of the EU in using force (civilian EU vs military EU) as well as where military capabilities should be pooled and generated.

Scholars of various theoretical traditions have testified for the existence of an atlanticist vs. europeanist cleavage in the European foreign policy (Wallace 1991; Ikenberry 2001). EU member states (both former and present) have had to continuously balance between Europe and their relationship to the Transatlantic alliance (Whitman 2016). The British solution to this problem was to preserve the British international influence by staying closely aligned to the US as a first priority, but also maintaining good relations with other countries, albeit to a lesser extent. From 1991 to 2015, Britain demonstrated significant continuity in terms of strategic outlook, marked by pragmatism and devoid of ideological divergence and elite discord (Wright 2018). The Brexit referendum and the decision to leave the EU represented a dramatic

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<sup>16</sup> Vennesson (2010) prefers the term 'Euro-neutralism' instead.

change to the pattern<sup>17</sup>. Brexit meant that foreign policy needed to be reformulated and recalibrated further away from the European end of the spectrum. Shifting towards the US end completely, however, would mean that Britain only had one main foreign policy option - an option which was becoming increasingly unattractive given Donald Trump's presidency (Hill 2018). The concept of Global Britain emerged as a result.

Both France and Germany are supportive of boosting the European defence capabilities and pursuing strategic autonomy but to a different end. France belongs to the group of states who have historically been primarily concerned with ensuring European autonomy from the US in a manner that follows from the fear of entrapment. From the German perspective, however, infusing European strategic autonomy runs the risk of pushing the US to abandon the Transatlantic alliance (Grant 2020).

Britain and France tend to be more supportive of the use of force than Germany, whose preferences are centred on civilian operations. This preference for using non-violent methods follows from German history (Grant 2020).

The three countries also vary in their institutional preferences for where military capabilities should be pooled and generated. The British do not see the CSDP as a central component of their defence strategy, have made limited commitments to CSDP missions and operations (Chappell et al. 2015). Their preferences have historically been focused on NATO, but they recognised the unique value of the EU's comprehensive approach to crisis management (Chappell et al. 2015). To them, capability development can be done without the EDA but instead by increasing defence spending, it is also argued. Finally, the British industry has a strong preference to US firms over European ones. The French approach is predominantly pragmatic and

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<sup>17</sup> Something historical institutionalists would call a critical juncture or a punctuated equilibrium (Capoccia (2016); Lundgren et al. (2018)).

accounts for what option is most likely to be successful: CSDP, NATO, bilateral or unilateral action (Chappell et al. 2015). In line with the reflexive multilateralism which Germany preaches (contributing capabilities and resources to alliances but maintaining a common approach to ensure the legitimacy of action), and its reservations towards the use of force, Germany has concentrated more on pooling soft power capabilities in the CSDP rather than partaking in operations (Chappell et al. 2015).

Gravelle et al. (2017) compare several distinct foreign policy “postures”<sup>18</sup> across the UK, France, Germany and the US (their results are displayed in Table A9 of the appendix) using data collected years before the Brexit referendum. The first posture they examine is militarism which captures preferences regarding the use of force in preventing aggression by expansionist powers or in international crises, the importance of the strength of the military as well as that of a country’s projection to other states. According to their data, militarism appeared to be less pronounced in Germany compared to the other countries. Still, across all four nations, diplomacy was preferred to the use of military means too quickly. A majority of the Britons and French agreed that a strong military was a necessity. These results fully correspond to our understanding of the three countries’ foreign-political orientation as per their national strategies discussed before.

The posture of isolationism in Gravelle, Reifler and Scotto’s study combined views regarding the degree to which a country should keep to itself in international affairs and avoid involvement with other nations in order not to upset their citizens’

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<sup>18</sup> Postures capture the way individuals think about how their country should behave in the international arena. Gravelle et al. (2017) advocate their use as they are broader and arguably, more stable than issue-specific attitudes.

happiness and well-being. Interestingly, French respondents scored the highest on all three scales of isolationism. Very few people in the UK agreed that it was in their country's best interest not to involve themselves with other nations or intervene in other nations' affairs. These results also conform to our expectations based on the stated preferences of all three countries in favour of multilateralism.

Gravelle et al. (2017) finally directed their attention to unilateralism which reflects the view that cooperation can be desirable but acting alone may sometimes be necessary despite the objections of its allies or the opinions of international organizations. A majority of Britons agreed with all these statements. Germans approved of unilateral actions when necessary to a similar degree. Still, much fewer people there shared the sentiment for disregarding their international partners' views as compared to the other three countries.

In this section of the thesis, the author reviewed some of the literature on defence cooperation between the UK and European countries. There is plenty of analytical insight to be gained from examining defence cooperation through the theoretical lens. Theories help us understand the context, the modalities and the structure of interstate interactions, how the relations between nations develop and why. Given the scope, the complexity and the largely speculative nature of the research question such analytical insights were deemed worth examining. This thesis will now move on to discussing the research methodology.

## Research Methodology

This section of the thesis describes the research approach, which is used to address the research puzzle of how cooperation between the UK and the EU in

defence will look like after 2020. An intermediate answer will be given in the first subsection, where five different scenarios for the future relationship will be conceptualized. Our empirical expectations about the behaviour of the UK, France and Germany are formulated in the subsection after that. Next are the explication of the research method and a description of the data collection procedure.

### Conceptualization: Scenarios of EU-UK Cooperation Post-Brexit

Negotiating the British withdrawal was a challenging task for both the EU and the UK, but it was a necessary step towards establishing a new relationship in the future. Some, like Ivan Krastev, would compare Brexit to a divorce, emphasizing that many divorced couples learn how to adapt to their new situation; and some even manage to reconcile and remarry (Institute of International Relations Prague; Institute for Human Sciences 2019). The EU and the UK may no longer 'be married', yet they can still find ways to be apart and remain connected to their mutual benefit.

In this subsection of the thesis, the author describes how this post-divorce partnership may take place in the form of scenarios of the future relationship. The first scenario deals with cooperation within the EU framework. The second then examines the NATO alternative. The third follows other formations, such as the European Intervention Initiative, OCCAR and the Letter of Intent (LoI) as alternatives for cooperation outside the EU and NATO framework. The fourth scenario traces bilateral relations as an alternative to multilateral cooperation. The fifth and final scenario is that of non-cooperation. Let us examine each in turn.

The scenarios constructed here do not present mutually exclusive options in a similar vein like the scenarios in the European's Commission White Paper on the

Future of Europe (Juncker 2017). They are merely illustrative of how cooperation could evolve based on our understanding of European states' considerations when making decisions about their defence policy.

### Cooperation within the EU Framework

It is well established in the literature about EU foreign policy that third-country partnerships are essential for extending the EU's reach and projecting its reputation as a global player (Missiroli et al., eds. 2016). In the area of defence, the EU has been able to cultivate several key strategic partnerships with third countries (for an extensive list of those – see table A7 in the appendix). Some of these are based on ad hoc agreements; others follow a more structured form of cooperation within the EU framework.

Four kinds of structured partnerships exist between the EU and non-EU partners: framework participation agreements (FPAs), administrative arrangements, association agreements and strategic partnerships. Each kind will be examined in turn.

*Framework participation agreements* (or FPAs for short) allow non-EU countries who wish to participate in CSDP civilian missions and/or military operations to be involved in their day-to-day management (Santopinto 2018). They cover issues regarding the status of the personnel and forces, the operation conduct and information exchange and how the financing of the operation or mission shall take place (Tardy 2014). The signatories agree that the non-EU state shall be allowed to contribute to the mission or operation of interest in exchange for respecting the EU's decision-making authority. FPAs do not confer decision-making rights to the contributing nation, so third countries have no say in setting the strategic course of missions and

operations. Coordination, exchange of information and political dialogue, however, are structured and take place on a regular basis.

*Administrative arrangements* between non-EU countries and the Union's agencies exist to allow third countries to participate in those agencies' projects and programmes or contribute personnel to EU missions and operations. Currently, such agreements have been made between the EDA and Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine, respectively. The provisions of the first three are almost identical and govern the exchange of information (subject to a security of the exchange of information agreement), the representation within the consultative committee, the appointment of liaison officers and the modalities of participation in projects and programmes (Solana 2006; European Defence Agency and Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sports of the Swiss Confederation 2012; European Defence Agency and Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia 2013). Third countries who cooperate with the Union based on administrative arrangements are similarly devoid of voting rights.

*Association agreements*, in turn, are another tool of cooperation with third countries for the EU. They can include the area of defence alongside other policy areas or policy initiatives. The EU-Ukraine association agreement, for example, envisions participation in CSDP missions and operations, the EDA, Galileo and the EU Satellite Centre (EU SatCen) among other things. Association agreements usually involve coordination on all levels: the high-level political (within the annual summit), ministerial (within the Association Council) and on the daily-management level (within the Association Committee) (Miller et al. 2019).

*Strategic partnerships*, or framework agreements, are the tool the EU uses to cooperate with global and regional powers. These can encompass a variety of issues,

from free-trade agreements to political and security agreements<sup>19</sup> (Renard 2015). This kind of structured partnerships go beyond mere operational or administrative arrangements in defence policy. Strategic partnership documents make references to shared values and set common foreign-political positions. While strategic partnerships are a suitable framework for overall foreign-policy cooperation, the other three options presented here offer more in terms of traditional means of coordination in defence.

There are several models of cooperation (Table 1) which the UK can arrange to follow after the implementation period if it wishes to gain access to various EU defence structures (Koenig 2018b). The *Swiss model* is characterized by a high degree of flexibility and selectivity. Political coordination is guaranteed on the basis of ad hoc political consultations. Participation in defence programmes and projects is founded on an administrative agreement with the EDA. Cooperation on the operational dimension of defence is centred around participation in civilian missions. These are the preferred type of missions the UK has historically engaged in as part of the CSDP (Table A6 in the appendix). But this model<sup>20</sup> leaves no room for taking part in military operations under the CSDP framework or joining EU battlegroups or for access to the research component of the EDF.

The *Norwegian model*, in turn, describes the situation of the closely integrated outsider who remains a third country to the EU but is also a key NATO member. The political coordination under this model is formally restricted to meetings within the European Economic Area Council; the informal dialogue is more regular and encompasses different levels, but the influence over policy-making is very limited. An administrative agreement with the EDA allows for participation in EU battlegroups,

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<sup>19</sup> These would most likely fall under the FPA framework.

<sup>20</sup> Switzerland is a neutral country which excludes military cooperation by default

**Table 1. Models for EU-UK defence cooperation post-Brexit as per Koenig (2018).**

Model/Area	Political coordination	EDA	CSDP	Battlegroups	EDF	PESCO
Switzerland	Ad hoc political consultation at all levels	Administrative Agreement	Ad hoc based on Participation Agreements	-	-	-
Norway	Formal political dialogue + informal consultations	Administrative Agreement	Participation in civilian and military missions based on FPA	yes	Potential participation and contribution to research window	Invited third state participant
Norway+	Formal dialogue <i>PLUS</i> enhanced access to informal decision-shaping	Enhanced partner	Regular invitations based on Enhanced Partnership Agreement	yes	Participation and contribution to research window	PESCO partner (regular invitations, engaged at project level)
Defence associate	Observer status in formal Decision-making	Associate	Continuity based on Deep and Special Partnership Agreement	yes	Participation and contribution to both windows (special associate status)	PESCO associate (engaged at project and ministerial level)

Source: Koenig (2018b)

contribution to the EU budget opens up the EU's PADR, and an FPA governs the participation in civilian and military missions. Contribution to the EDF should pave the way to accessing funding within the research and development window. Similarly, once the rules for third-country participation in PESCO become clear, Norway may apply.

The *Norgewian Plus model* is an imaginary variant for the future relationship which would confer informal decision-shaping rights to third countries who subscribe to EU values and commit to the CSDP proportionally. Formal political dialogue at the ministerial and strategic level as well as more frequent consultation on common PESCO, EDA and EDF matters underpin the enhanced partnership between the EU and the third country. Participation in EU battlegroups as well as in the EDF's R&D window are also envisioned.

Finally, a *defence associate model* resembling a mixture of an association/observership to the WEU may be sought but is politically and legally unviable. EU defence associates could be allowed to participate in the PSC, the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), PESCO Council or EDA Steering Board meetings without voting rights. They could participate and contribute to the EDF's R&D window, take part in CSDP missions, but most importantly, influence decision-making.

Depending on the extent to which the UK wishes to engage with the EU in security and defence as a third country, it can enter into collaboration with looser associateship, cooperation with closer involvement or a quasi-membership involvement (Duke 2019). Table 2 presents these options in further detail. What is important here is that the more structured and formalized cooperation is, the more comprehensive the collaboration.

*Looser association* implies that cooperation in CSDP missions and operations,

**Table 2. The UK's post-transition security and defence cooperation as per Duke (2019).**

<b>UK level of engagement with EU</b>	<b>Type of EU instrument</b>	<b>Conditions of instruments Pros for UK Cons for UK</b>	<b>Pros for UK Cons for UK</b>	<b>Cons for UK</b>
High	Bespoke Treaty	Declarations/ <i>Ad hoc</i> alignment	Reflects joint UK-EU interests & allow for some secondment and staff/exchange of classified material	Unlikely to allow UK nearer EU decision-making tables & others likely to demand similar rights if granted
High	Association Agreement	Declarations/ <i>Ad hoc</i> alignment	Highest level of formal dialogue and greatest chance to influence EU	UK must respect internal market, customs union and four freedoms
Medium	Strategic Partnership Agreement	Declarations/ <i>Ad hoc</i> alignment	High levels of dialogue that extend into home security cooperation	Normally accompanied by extensive trade agreement & not unique
Medium	Partnership & Cooperation Agreement	Legally binding and consent of Council and Eur. Parl. Needed	Less formal than Assoc. Agt. but still extensive dialogue	Designed primarily for EU's neighbouring countries & not unique
Low	Framework Participation Agreement	Legally binding and consent of Council and Eur. Parl. Needed	Can be done on an case-by-case basis & demonstration of solidarity with EU	Inability to shape decisions on CSDP operation/ mission mandates & not unique
Low	Declarations/ <i>Ad hoc</i> alignment	Legally binding and consent of Council and Eur. Parl. needed	Allows for divergence when in UK interests	UK can only associate but not shape decisions & not unique

Source: Duke (2019)

which is voluntary and on an ad-hoc case-by-case basis. The fact that divergence of interests is permissible counteracts the lack of decision-shaping authority, it is argued (Duke 2019). This should be the easiest way to relate to the EU in case no deal can be reached by the end of 2020. A more structured alternative of this loose association would entail at least an FPA with the EU.

The option for a *closer involvement* allows for a medium-level engagement with the Union with opportunities for more extensive dialogue. It can be based on a partnership and cooperation agreement (PCA) which covers several policy areas (such as the economy or security) or a strategic partnership agreement (SPA), like the ones between the EU and Canada or the EU and Japan which follow alongside a comprehensive trade agreement. Such agreements would not grant the UK an observer status to the PSC, nor will it give it access to the EDA.

A *quasi-membership* involvement, on the other hand, can be based on an association agreement or a bespoke treaty and deeper commitments, aimed at closer economic, political and security convergence. This scenario would require the UK to adhere to the Union's decision-making and legal order to ensure the integrity of the internal market, the customs union and the four freedoms, without an opportunity to cherry-pick only the policy areas of interest. It is also in the EU's interest, as Duke argues, to ask for guarantees that the UK would not disrupt the EU's ambitions for closer integration in security in defence. Under these circumstances, however, the UK would be too constrained in its options for action. Similarly, any moves towards the establishment of a European Defence Union would be difficult to sell to domestic audiences. Participation in CSDP missions and operations will be allowed and so will be participation in EDA projects upon invite.

## Cooperation within the NATO Framework

As an integral part of the European security architecture, the role of NATO as a centre for cooperation in defence between the UK and EU member states post-Brexit deserves to be evaluated. NATO is a political and military alliance which has three main tasks according to its most recent strategic concept: collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security (North Atlantic Treaty Organization 2018). Any actions in pursuit of those tasks are “defensive in nature, proportionate and in line with international commitments given the threats in the changed and evolving security environment” (North Atlantic Treaty Organization 2020). In recent years, NATO adopted defence investment pledges which call for allies to refrain from defence budget cuts and encourages them to meet the agreed 2% of GDP spending on defence objective in the 2020s. The UK is one of the few European countries who meet this target (recall table A5).

As the most capable military actor in Europe left the European Union, the European security architecture became even more skewed in military terms, with the overall distribution of military capabilities between EU member states and non-EU allies tilted toward the latter (Biscop 2016). If the UK were to engage with European states mostly through NATO without reaching an agreement about participating in EU defence initiatives in the future, the EU would lose an essential and extremely competent strategic partner.

It is for that reason why maintaining good EU-NATO relations post-Brexit is of strategic importance to European states. This is an argument the NATO Secretary-General himself repeatedly made. The EU cannot defend Europe on its own (Stoltenberg 2019b). When discussing the effects of Brexit, he argued that Brexit would

change only the UK's relationship with the EU, not the UK's relationship with NATO (Stoltenberg 2019c). Regardless of Brexit, the UK would remain a key NATO ally for it would still have the second biggest defence budget in the Alliance after the US, contribute key capabilities to NATO, lead battlegroups in the Baltics and operate in Afghanistan (Stoltenberg 2019c). Both Brexiteers and Remainers advocated continuous commitment to NATO (Stoltenberg 2019a). If anything, Brexit could cause NATO to grow in importance as a political platform (Stoltenberg 2019a). Close EU-NATO cooperation in that case would be the only means to bring all European Allies, EU members or non-EU members, together under one political platform (Stoltenberg 2020).

EU-NATO cooperation has been a decade-long project for the organizations. Ever since the WEU's Petersberg Tasks were transferred to the EU, and the CSDP was created, the EU sought access to NATO's planning capabilities for its military operations. The Berlin Plus arrangements were set up a framework for ensuring access to NATO assets and capabilities, while also regulating the exchange of classified information. Since the 2010s, they have reaffirmed their mutual interest in a strategic partnership. After the results of the Brexit referendum were announced, the two organizations have stepped up their cooperative efforts (see table A8 in the appendix). They declared interest in stepping up their higher-level political dialogue, know-how, concepts and doctrine exchange, and coordination efforts on capacity-building activities with partner countries as well as industrial, research and capability development. Despite these efforts to reinforce EU-NATO cooperation, the British view remained that EU-NATO cooperation in operational terms was rather limited (UK Parliament 2018).

As Sophia Besch remarks, obtaining the right to British participation in CSDP

missions and operations is 'not Britain's most urgent priority' either (Besch 2018: 5). The UK is seen to worry little about its ability to deploy alongside European partners, even if a crisis develops, as it has other options readily available, the most prominent of which is NATO.

For the British, the choice to infuse its military might into the Transatlantic Alliance can be explained not only as a consequence of its traditional strategic alignment with Atlanticism but also as a conscious choice. After Brexit, NATO provides an alternative channel for the UK to steer European security and defence per its strategic priorities (Economides et al. 2016). Finding alternatives, multilateral or otherwise, where the UK has a say over decision-making is a way to appease the concerns of those who are worried about the lack of sovereignty in making policy. It is for those reasons why the UK's commitment to NATO will be unlikely to wane (Black et al. 2017).

For decades, Britain has entertained a special relationship with the US. For many years it advocated policies which were closely aligned with the American interests in Europe (Oliver and Williams 2016). For the US, a post-Brexit relationship where the UK disrupts EU-NATO cooperation could be problematic in a similar vein as there are tensions between the two organizations on Turkey, Greece and Cyprus (Oliver and Williams 2016). On the British side, many Brexiteers see the UK's future more closely intertwined with the nations from the Commonwealth and the Anglosphere (Whitman 2016). To some extent, this vision has been reflected in the Global Britain narrative. The goal of this narrative, it is argued, is to encourage hope in domestic audiences for a future where Britain is undergoing the trauma of Brexit and needs a sense of purpose to move forward (Turner 2019). In reality, however, Global Britain is seen as inefficacious and strategically regressive, as it ignores the

preferences and expectations of Britain's international partners (Turner 2019; Glencross and McCourt 2018).

There is a risk that the UK-UK special relationship may start to fade. With the election of President Macron and Brexit, however, France might replace Britain in that role. Many believe that President Macron is now the most privileged European partners to the Americans, especially under President Trump (Mattely 2019). The French have traditionally argued that Europe needs to develop its capacity to ensure its defence irrespective of the US. That is why the French have always been proponents of the development of European defence initiatives (Mattely 2019). In an interview, the French President even characterized NATO as brain dead (*The Economist* 2019). Some interpret this statement not so much a sign of anti-Americanism but as a provocation to European states, whose inaction could lead Europe to strategic irrelevance globally (Haddad 2019).

This is welcomed by those who share Trump's anti-institutionalist rhetorics as it absolves the US from the need to invest so much into NATO. On the other hand, it may pose a threat to the integrity of the transatlantic alliance, similar to those posited by the alliance security dilemma.

From the German perspective, NATO is still the cornerstone of European security. Domestic disagreements over defence spending and militarism have characterized recent foreign policy (Grant 2020). While the relations with the US during the Obama administration were flourishing, the US-German relationship under Trump is seen differently (Mattely 2019). In response to Trump-like rhetorics, Germany committed to enhancing its defence capabilities in a way that pursues European autonomy but not to the extent that would come to the US's detriment.

## Cooperation outside the EU and outside the NATO Frameworks

Cooperation outside the EU defence framework appears to be a more suitable option for cooperating with the British if the British prioritize decision-making authority and if they, indeed, want to appear active, independent and sovereign in all areas of policy-making post-Brexit. There are several areas where cooperation outside both the EU and the NATO framework in defence would be of interest, not just politically and strategically but also in terms of deployment, industrial collaboration and capability development. Let us examine the EI2, OCCAR and the Lol framework as potential venues for such cooperation.

### *European Intervention Initiative*

The EI2 can represent an alternative to involving the UK in future multinational military operations, regardless of the outcome of the post-Brexit negotiations about the future relationship between the EU and the UK (Chalmers 2018). It is a flexible, pragmatic and non-binding framework set up outside the EU and NATO structures (Koenig 2018a). With public confidence in NATO on decline Europe-wide (Fagan and Poushter 2020), it can serve as a good alternative for defence cooperation for non-EU member states.

The EI2's main advantage is that it can serve a variety of functions and operates on a voluntary principle. It is an exclusive club, comprised of the most military capable European states, who wish to develop a shared strategic culture, share intelligence, collaborate on planning and on shaping the strategic direction of joint operations (House of Commons Library). Its membership base consists of 11 EU member states

who participate in the CSDP<sup>21</sup>, Denmark, which has an opt-out from that policy area, and 2 non-EU member states (the UK and Norway). All except Finland and Sweden are also NATO members.

The EI2 can serve as a framework for the coordination of deployment following a 'coalition-of-the-willing' format (Besch 2018). It does not discriminate against missions and operations that would be lead by ad hoc coalitions or conducted under the EU, NATO or UN framework (French Republic et al. 2018). Its goal is to foster efficiency and better preparedness for missions and operations, using existing structures (French Republic et al. 2018).

The Initiative is to run in accord with NATO's Framework Nation Concept (French Republic et al. 2018). It is likewise welcoming to new EU defence initiatives and intends to be complementary to existing EU structures for capability development, such as PESCO (French Republic et al. 2018). Interestingly, its membership base includes countries like Denmark and the UK, who did not join PESCO.

While intended as complimentary, the EI2 can be seen as a hedge against PESCO, which currently reflects the more inclusive smaller-scale capability development plan which Germany favours (Duke 2019; Grant 2020). Through the EI2, the French pursue more larger-scale commitments and operational effectiveness that can be guaranteed by the participation of the most military capable European states (Duke 2019).

The EI2 is a French invention and can easily be seen as an attempt to counteract the slowness and inefficacy of defence cooperation at the EU level (Navratil n. d.). Even though the EI2 is not intended as a rapid reactionary force, the argument

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<sup>21</sup> Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Italy and Romania

goes, eliminating the institutional rigidity of decision-making can be critical when deployment needs to happen rapidly.

There are several aspects which hinder the prospect of E12 developing a shared strategic culture. With the participation of Germany in the Initiative, divergences as regards militarism are introduced from the start (Navratil n. d.). Participating states not only differ with regards to their preferences for the use of force when engaging in crisis management operations, they also vary in their threat perception (Zandee and Krujver 2019).

### *Letter of Intent (LoI)*

Defence-industrial collaboration post-Brexit can be channelled through the LoI framework. This was set up by France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the UK in the 1990s. These six countries count among the top arms-producing nations in the world (for a list of the leading British, French and German armament and military service companies, see table A3 in the appendix).

EU membership is not a legal prerequisite for participation, but LoI is closely linked to the EU framework (Sartori et al. 2018). At the time of its inception, the forum consisted of EU member states and its primary goal was to provide a political and legal basis to promote industrial restructuring and a more competitive EDITB (Witney 2016). In practice, the framework acted as means to facilitate “the formation of a new European market in which new transnational defence companies can operate as if it were a single market (...) [governed by] common rules and [following] a coordinated political process.” (Sartori et al. 2018: 39). In time, the EDA was strengthened and the tasks which the LoI initially were later overtaken by the EDA (Witney 2016). With the

launch of the European defence market and the establishment of planning and coordination mechanisms within the EU framework, Lol became a tool for the six framework nations to harmonize their positions vis-à-vis EDA and Commission activities (Sartori et al. 2018).

Lol can serve as an alternative forum for consultation and coordination between France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the UK now that Britain has left the EU. It could foster cooperation between governments regarding research, development and acquisitions (Sartori et al. 2018). It could also make consultations among EU-based and UK-based companies easier (Sartori et al. 2018). From the British perspective, it could be a way to compensate for the British loss of sway over EU decision-making in defence (Sartori et al. 2018)

Some who believe in the Lol's potential as consultation and coordination forum argue that an EDA/Lol deal will be easier to make than setting up an entirely new defence arrangement within the EU framework with the EU as a third country would be (Witney 2016). Others, however, think that striking a general EU-UK deal or bilateral agreements with the EU will be most member states' preferred option (Sartori et al. 2018). In fact, the prospect of boosting up an EDA/Lol partnership could leave the EDA weaker as in this scenario, as decision-making would happen outside the EU framework.

#### *Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR)*

Similarly to the Lol case, OCCAR is another alternative intergovernmental framework which Britain can make use of after Brexit. It is based an administrative agreement between Italy, France, Germany, the UK as well as Belgium and Spain

outside the EU framework. Its inception in the 1990s can be explained by a conversion of regional interests given decreasing defence budgets (House of Commons Library).

EU membership is not a must for participation in OCCAR. Several countries participate in OCCAR programmes even without being members of the organisation, such as the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Finland, Sweden, Lithuania, Poland and Turkey. In that sense, OCCAR can be a venue for the UK to collaborate with several capable member states.

The cooperative efforts within OCCAR are aimed at improving the EDITB and its competitiveness as well as making links between companies (Sartori et al. 2018). This is something of interest to British firms (Baciu and Doyle 2019; Kluth 2019). The outcome of the future relationship negotiations between the EU and the UK with regards to the EDA, PESCO and the EDF, in particular, however, could affect OCCAR's effectiveness as a bridge between the EU and the UK (Sartori et al. 2018). The current OCCAR/EDA relationship sees the EDA on the planning side of projects and initiatives, and OCCAR on the procurement and implementation side. If Britain, remains outside the Customs Union after 2020 and if it does not obtain access to the EU's research and development activities and joint-procurement initiatives, the EU and the UK would be in open competition, as Sartori et al. (2018) note.

In fact, if some PESCO projects were to be managed through OCCAR, the UK would de facto be afforded veto power over projects in which it is technically not a part of (Sartori et al. 2018). Utilizing OCCAR for the management of national acquisition programmes, on the other hand, could infringe upon EU regulations and is likewise problematic (Sartori et al. 2018).

## Bilateral Relations

As an alternative to multilateral and minilateral cooperation, the UK could invest in bilateral alliances with key strategic partners (Baciu and Doyle 2019). Historically, these have been: (1) the US; (2) France; (3) 'Five Eyes'<sup>22</sup> partners, and (4) other European nations (Bakker et al. 2017). European states could also try to build up their relationship with Britain on a bilateral basis.

The cornerstone of the Franco-British cooperation in defence are the Lancaster House Treaties (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and French Republic 2011). They set up cooperation on military doctrine, personnel exchange, common procurement programmes, training, capability pooling, as well as defence industrial cooperation (Duke 2019). A key achievement of these efforts was the development of a Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJEF). On the industrial side, they have worked together on a strategy to integrate their missile industries and on the development of unmanned aerial vehicles. They remained largely uninfluenced by EU affairs (Pannier 2016).

More recently, the two countries agreed “on the importance of the ability of the UK’s defence industry to continue to be able to engage in European defence research and capability development programmes” (Her Majesty's Government 2018). They were considering setting up a joint defence ministerial council as a permanent and regular forum of cooperation.

All in all, it appears that France is interested in establishing a net of bilateral agreements with both EU and non-EU relevant countries to shelter its military and defence industry from changes within the political scene (Sartori et al. 2018). It took

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<sup>22</sup> Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK, US

steps towards reinforcing its bilateral cooperation with Germany and also participates in EDF, PESCO and CARD for developing its capabilities (Sartori et al. 2018). It is for that reason why its bilateral relations with London may be of lesser priority to the French government than its bilateral relations or relations within minilateral capability-development formats. If the French are serious about building up the EDTIB, then investing too heavily in the bilateral relationship with the UK can even be counterproductive (Pannier 2016).

In the aftermath of Brexit, Germany was reluctant to invest too heavily on a bilateral relationship with Britain so as not to disturb the progress of the Brexit negotiations (Ondarza and Major 2018). Even now, the British-German cooperation is mostly based on political dialogue on the ministerial level regarding equipment and capabilities and remains rather limited (Duke 2019).

While bilateral relations may be a good alternative to other channels of cooperation, it is worth reiterating at this point that the prospects of not reaching a deal with the EU could be harmful even to the possibility of advancing cooperation on a bilateral basis (Baciu and Doyle 2019).

## Non-cooperation

Isolation or inaction would be inconsequential if they did not go against a state's strategic interests. But if a country's strategic interests would be affected by its inaction, then this a choice between acting unilaterally or in concert with other actors would become inevitable.

Deployment on a multi-national basis often offers greater legitimacy than unilateral action. It is no coincidence then that multilateralism is central to the German strategic culture for historical reasons. Cooperation is also often less costly than

deploying alone. But unilateralism might be inevitable in certain situations, like when time is of the essence, or when there is little political support for action from other countries.

Multilateralism is central to the German strategic culture and deployment must be placed under NATO, EU or UN auspices (Grant 2020). The UK is also invested in multilateralism in its foreign policy. France is more tolerant of unilateral or even unilateral deployment (Grant 2020).

## Operationalisation

The guiding principle behind the construction of the future relationship scenarios in the previous subsection was the fact that states might decide to cooperate with other countries or to act on their own. If they chose the former, they may channel these relations with other states through various channels: the EU, NATO, E12, LoI and OCCAR frameworks or proceed on a bilateral, rather than multilateral or unilateral basis. In this sense, cooperation in defence can be defined as the opposite of pursuing national strategic autonomy.

As the section about the consequences of the British withdrawal from EU defence showed, EU defence is a multidimensional policy area. The concept of defence cooperation also is by extension. Hence, defence cooperation must be operationalized per these various possible meanings. On the one hand, defence cooperation can address political coordination and joint strategic planning. Another meaning may denote cooperation in the deployment of missions and operations. Finally, defence cooperation in its defence-industrial context might describe capability development or a constellation of various industrial and economic interests.

By operationalizing defence cooperation in such a way, the author can formulate her expectations about states' preferences regarding the post-transition future. Knowing what kind of defence cooperation can be found in EU, NATO, E12, LoI and OCCAR or state-to-state, we can moreover relate the results of the analysis to assess the different scenarios of cooperation.

The analysis focuses on the UK, France and Germany. Long before Brexit, these three countries were the central loci of power within the EU (Moravcsik 1993). Given the amounts they spend on defence and their immense capabilities, they can easily be seen as the three main defence actors (Soloch n.d.).

When defence cooperation takes on the meaning of political coordination and strategic planning, we can expect that all three countries will favour cooperation over non-coordination. All three are proponents of multilateral actions. In this sense, the last scenario (scenario five) of non-cooperation is least likely to materialize.

The three countries vary, however, as regards their choice for cooperation venue in terms of strategic planning and political coordination. It is within the British interests to have the strategy and planning of defence activities. It is for that reason why cooperation within the EU framework (scenario 1) is unlikely. This leaves it with a choice between scenario 2 (NATO), scenario 3 (minilateral formats) and scenario 4 (bilateral cooperation). While minilateral formats allow the UK to coordinate with some EU member states and some EU strategic partners, like Norway and Turkey, given the UK's strong Atlanticism, the best way to ensure a good transatlantic relationship will be to give an opportunity to the US to be involved in decision-making as well. That is why:

- 1. The UK will prioritize defence cooperation within the NATO framework for political coordination and strategic planning with EU member states.***

France follows a pragmatic approach, as Chappell et al. (2015) argued. It chooses institutions depending on the utility given the task at hand. It is the most europeanist out of the three countries in its transatlantic relations and traditionally, fears entrapment from the US. It has resolve to act quickly and determinedly in its foreign policy and is frustrated with other European states' reluctance to step up their defence efforts. Moreover, It perceives most European states as incapable of action, while it is itself ready to make large-scale commitments. In its relations with the UK, however, it is less willing to go the bilateral route, as it is focused on maintaining good relations with the other most capable European nations. Therefore France leans most to scenario 3:

- 2. France will prioritize defence cooperation outside the EU framework and the NATO framework for political coordination and strategic planning with the UK***

Germany's focus on multilateralism is the most pronounced feature of its foreign policy (Grant 2020). Its strategic priorities are best pursued under multi-national formations. In EU defence, Germany has promoted foremost inclusivity. In its approach to Britain in defence, it tried to upkeep the EU interests of sustaining sovereignty over decision-making. However, it also maintains its interests as regards the transatlantic relationship, where it is among the camp of those who fear abandonment. It is for that reason why, the author expects that:

- 3. Germany will prioritize defence cooperation within the NATO framework for political coordination and strategic planning with the UK.***

When it comes to defence cooperation in the operational sense – in terms of deployment, the multilateralism norm which all three states espouse again leads to expect that cooperation will manifest. In addition to that, it is argued that the key to understanding the states' approach to the future relationship will be their stance on militarism in relation to the EU and their preferences for the transatlantic relationship.

The UK has historically favoured the EU for its comprehensive approach. In CSDP missions, it has favoured civilian missions over military operations. But in deployment, the British face similar concerns as before: under the EU framework, they will have no right to make decisions. The only alternative in that case become NATO, joining an ad hoc coalition or deploying alongside another state. But in order to keep good relations with the US, the UK needs to accommodate American interests.

#### ***4. The UK will prioritize defence cooperation within the NATO framework with EU member states for deployment***

France is also a country which recognizes militarism as legitimate means in its foreign policy. It is ready to act unilaterally if needed. The French, however, perceive the main locus of threat differently than the UK, so bilateral cooperation will probably not occur unless their interests converge. France has contributed to CSDP missions but it disapproves of the EU's institutional rigidity. In recent years also increased its role in NATO operations. The French understanding of European autonomy prioritizes the development of capabilities as means to counteract the fear of entrapment by the US, but this does not preclude deploying alongside it if need be. As for now, the E12 alternative is mainly grounded in political coordination, given the French history of previous deployment:

**5. *France will prioritize defence cooperation within the NATO framework with the UK for deployment***

The German considerations for deployment mirror the ones from earlier. Germany is averse to militarism, focused on multilateralism but also on maintaining the transatlantic alliance as the cornerstone of its defence policy. While it has contributed to CSDP missions, in order to garner domestic support for deployment, it needs to account for the British preference, given Brexit, and give priority to NATO. Accordingly:

**6. *Germany will prioritize defence cooperation within the NATO framework with the UK for deployment***

Capability development is the final area of interest. Having left the EU, the only UK alternative to develop its capabilities jointly outside the EU framework, where it will not have any decision-making authority, are Lol, OCCAR and bilateral projects. The main priority of British defence-industrial actors is cooperation with US firms, but gaining as much access to the large European market as possible post-Brexit will be economically beneficial. From that perspective, the opportunity to cooperate with more states yields that:

**7. *The UK will prioritize defence cooperation outside the EU framework for capability development alongside EU member states.***

Both the French and the German are committed to strengthening the EDIB, but France may still prefer cooperative arrangements among a smaller number of countries to cooperation within the EU framework. First, it is interested in more

ambitious projects with the most capable European states. Second, France is aware that the British will not seek access to the EU defence market unless the negative externalities of remaining outside of it dictate for the UK to join.

**8. France will prioritize defence cooperation outside the EU framework for capability development alongside the UK**

The German approach to EU capability development can be characterized as internal inclusivity and external exclusivity (Besch and Puglierin 2019). In addition, boosting the defence-industrial partnership with the UK is a goal that has been stated but no actions in that direction have been pursued. Given that EU defence policy reflects mostly the German perspective, the fact that Germans have a preference for incorporating new initiatives under the EU framework as well as avoiding competition to EU structures, we can expect that:

**9. Germany will prioritize attracting the UK to defence cooperation within EU framework for capability development.**

## Research Design and Method

Given the research topic and the choice of scenario-building as a way to describe the avenues the future relationship could take, this analysis resembles the work of Henökl (2018) on development cooperation. Unlike Henökl, however, this thesis does not limit itself to the insight offered by a single theoretical tradition. Instead, it pursues what Sil and Katzenstein (2010) call *analytic eclecticism*, which seeks to combine different paradigm-bound theories to grasp better the linkages between the

various mechanisms affecting complex phenomena. From the literature review, a theoretical framework combining the insight of constructivist, intergovernmentalist and neorealist theories emerged. It explicated contributing conditions, from international factors which guide state preferences and to domestic factors, such as the emergence of national defence strategies, which could all influence policy-making decisions.

The methodology borrows from the seminal work of Leuffen et al. (2013), which Haughton (2016) classifies as an example of applied analytic eclectism. Leuffen, Rittberger and Schimmelfennig use different theories of European integration, derive theoretically-informed empirical expectations from them and assess the evidence to test their plausibility against cases of differentiated integration in EU primary law (Leuffen et al. 2013).

Here, however, the empirical expectations, formulated in the previous section, can be put to the test by using an interpretative research design using other types of qualitative data, namely speeches, public statements or official documents available online. The research goal to understand the British, the French and the German preferences of the future relationship in defence yields itself well to a content analysis method.

What is used here is an interpretative content analysis (Drisko and Maschi 2016). It is “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff 2004: 18). Content analysis operates under the assumption that things that are communicated are manifestations of patterns of beliefs or preferences (Krippendorff 2004: 72). In that sense, counting whether a reference to an idea is made and whether this occurrence indicates favourable or unfavourable characteristics, can be indicative of the attitudes of the speaker (Krippendorff 2004: 59). As government officials, these references

should also be indicative of the preference of the respective government. Basic content analysis founded in purposive sampling matches the research purposes of exploratory research designs, where researcher seek to discover new knowledge or little theory is available on the topic (Drisko and Maschi 2016). The results here will be reported descriptively and may only indicate an association between variables, without estimating its strength.

## Data

The author engages in relevance (or purposive) sampling and selects all textual units that can be deemed relevant for answering the request question (Krippendorff 2004). Here we are interested in the statements made by leading government officials which could indicate the preferences of the government. These include the British prime minister, the French president, the German Bundeskanzler, the respective ministers of European and foreign affairs or defence. In the British case, this would also entail the Queen's speech to the parliament<sup>23</sup>.

The first criterion for finding potentially relevant content for the analysis is time. Only documents, speeches or public statements published between December 2019 and March 2020 will be considered. The period covers the start of the new Johnson government as well the British withdrawal from the EU.

Second, only documents containing references to all five main classes of keywords will be used. These are: (1) *Brexit*, (2) *European*, (3) *EU*, (4) *defence* (policy), and (5) *cooperat\**, *partner\** or *associat\**. A document may mention the keyword

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<sup>23</sup> The speech is written by the government, approved by Cabinet and delivered by the Queen in the presence of members of both houses of Parliament (Her Majesty's Government (2019)).

*defence* in the context of reporting a statement made by the Minister of Defence but at the same time, may lack any information about the government's defence policy plans or its general attitudes towards a defence policy course (Garton Grimwood and Brooke-Holland 2019). These documents will be left out of the dataset altogether. The restrictiveness of the case selection procedure yielded only relevant 6 data sources.

The dataset records paragraphs from the data sources containing at least one of following keywords: *Brexit*, *defen\** (for defence or defend), *NATO*, *alli\** (for allies or alliances), *OCCAR*, *LOI*, *intent*, *initiative*. Paragraphs will be recorded to the dataset only once. All messages (recording units) contained in one paragraph (the sampling unit) will be analysed within the context of the entire paragraph, not simply sentence by sentence.

The dataset will be organized as follows<sup>24</sup>. First, it provides information about the source of the sampling unit. The text of the sampling unit is contained within *quote*. Then the dataset records the topic of all recording units within the sampling unit, from the country or organisation in question to the type of defence policy or initiatives discussed. These are followed by variables about the EU-specific context, the transatlantic relationship, NATO, E12, OCCAR, LoI, bilateral cooperation between UK, Germany, France or bilateral cooperation with other EU member states or non-member states as well as indications of multilateralism, unilateralism as well as isolationism attitudes. Each of these variables records the occurrence of a word/concept as well as an evaluation of the context, within which the word/concept occurs, whether it carries positive or negative connotations.

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<sup>24</sup> For a detailed description of the organisation of the dataset, please consult the codebook in the appendix.

For example, an announcement, such as that of the launch of the EDF, will be counted as a statement concerning EU defence integration, where *eu\_integr\_count* will be coded as 1, whereas information describing the amount of available funding or who is eligible for funding will be coded as 0.

Consider also the sentence: “[successive UK governments] have regarded [CSDP] as entirely complementary to NATO and essential for strengthening European military capabilities within that alliance, as opposed to the view that the EU should establish an independent military capability outside the NATO framework” (Mills 2019). Here we get information about how a government ranks its preferences towards EU defence vs. NATO from a strategic sense. *Eu\_integr\_count* and *NATO\_count* will be coded as 1, as they are explicitly mentioned. But *transatlantl\_count* will be 0 because the transatlantic alliance is implied, not expressly noted. Moreover, *nato\_positive* will be coded as 1, but *eu\_integr\_negative* will be 0, unless the sampling unit contains information to the contrary, where there are reasons to code *eu\_integr\_negative* as 1.

The author of the text may talk about the views of a government regarding EU defence policy in a positive sense in the subordinate clause; still, the main clause may convey a message about a view on EU defence, the message in the main clause takes priority for the coding purposes. Take, for example, the following sentence: “while generally supportive of CSDP, successive UK governments have been cautious in their approach to greater EU defence integration” (Mills 2019). Here *eu\_integr\_positive* will be 0 and *eu\_integr\_negative* will be 1.

## Analysis

At the start of the Brexit process, observers were faced with a series of questions. The answers to those fall into one of three categories: 'known knowns', 'known unknowns' (things we were aware that we knew little about), and 'unknown unknowns' (things we were unaware we knew little about) (Heisbourg 2018). We knew the rules for withdrawal of a member state from the EU, but we did not know what type of Brexit the British government would want, nor what position the remaining EU-27 would assume (Heisbourg 2018). We did not expect the outcome of the 2017 general elections in the UK, and we did not know to what extent these would affect the progress of the negotiations, he continues. We knew that a dense web of interstate and supranational links had developed throughout the British membership in the EU, but we were not aware of how intricate these links were and how deep they ran, he also notes.

While defence is not part of the negotiations for the post-transition relationship, we have a clear indication of what the EU would have proposed (European Commission, Task Force for Relations with the United Kingdom 2020b). Defence could be part of a close and thematic dialogue and consultation within multilateral fora and organizations, including NATO (Art.2, FPSD). In the area of capability development, cooperation would aim at promoting interoperability and joint effectiveness of the armed forces (Art. 8, FPSD). Involvement with the EDA, PESCO, EU SatCen or Galileo would have to follow existing EU rules (Art.9, Art. 10, Art. 13, Art. 15 FPSD, respectively). On operations and missions, the EU would seek common positions with the UK and invite the UK to participate in CSDP missions and operations and exchange relevant information with it during the planning phase in proportion to the UK's level of

contribution (Chapter 3, FPSD). A protocol would govern the specifics of British participation in missions and operations. Upon inviting the UK to participate, the EU would share information about the projected costs of an operation. If the UK agrees to join, it would have to respect EU crisis management procedures and decision-making. The UK would not be allowed to take operational or tactical command during the mission.

### The British Perspective

EU institutions may see association agreements as a suitable arrangement for the future relationship with Britain, the biggest challenge that association agreements represent as an option for a future relationship within the EU framework is that they are aimed at convergence and association, while the UK is striving for more divergence and less political cooperation (Duff 2017). That makes them incompatible with the British objectives (Miller et al. 2019). Moreover, defence is off the table in the current EU-UK negotiations.

If having right to decision-making is Britain's main guiding principle in the choose of partners for defence cooperation, the more alternative options the UK has, whether inside NATO, within the newly-created E12 or on bilateral terms, the fewer the incentives to re-associate themselves with EU defence policy. Reapproachment to the EU may also be faced with domestic opposition, so the incentives for cooperation with the EU need to be strong enough. These incentives need to be strong enough in the first place as domestic opposition to EU cooperation on normative terms may continue post-Brexit.

Our expectations regarding the future relationship in defence cooperation did not identify cooperation in the EU framework as an attractive option to the British. It predicted that for political collaboration and strategic planning as well as deployment, the UK will prefer NATO as a channel, in accordance with Scenario 2. In terms of defence capability development, the preferable alternative appeared to be Scenario 3 which entails cooperation within Lol and OCCAR.

### The French Perspective

France wanted to ensure that regardless of how Brexit happened and regardless of whether a deal on the future relationship will be negotiated, it will still be able to partner up with the UK. The French are determined to “to maintain structural defence cooperation with the United Kingdom in all fields despite Brexit, reinforcing the two countries’ special defence relationship.” (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs 2019). Yet the choice of format for cooperation can minimise the utility of EU defence policy. For France, the primary concern is “to defend our interests and the European Union’s decision-making autonomy [;] we’re not seeking to accuse or punish our British friends (...) We’re simply seeking to protect the integrity of the Union.” (Le Drian 2019).

The French position, where there is willingness to step up defence efforts, but only among those who are willing and capable, is borne out of pragmatic concerns and frustration with EU defence institutional rigidity and insufficient commitments from most European states. In that sense, the political and strategic cooperation in defence is best suited within a smaller group of states, which is why scenario 3 stood out as an option. The concerns for capability development within the EU were similar, so if France wants to maintain cooperation with the UK the best alternative appear to be Lol and

OCCAR (likewise scenario 3)

At the same time, NATO remains the cornerstone of European defence and the best venue “for ensuring the interoperability of allied forces, and consistency in their equipment efforts” (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs 2019). For that very reason, the analyst concluded that France will pursue deployment within the NATO framework as long as no better unilateral alternative appears.

### The German Perspective

EU member states who wish to boost defence cooperation and strengthen EU structures, like Germany, would be wise not to opt for cooperation outside the EU framework, so as to increase its attractiveness to the UK, especially in terms capability development. If the objective is to keep the UK close but also to advance EU integration, finding ways to manage programmes or fund projects which are otherwise based outside of the EU framework can increase the costs of non-association with EU defence.

For the political and strategic dimension as well as the operational dimension of defence cooperation, however, NATO appears as a better forum for engaging with the UK.

The results from the analysis show that since December 2019, Germany has spoken about defence cooperation in its strategic meaning and deployment meaning. It spoke in support of multilateralism and bilateral cooperation with the UK, which was a surprising development.

### Discussion

The purpose of this thesis was to describe and assess the likelihood of different

scenarios of EU-Britain cooperation post-Brexit against the British and European preferences. The author took a particular interest in defence policy – a policy area which has, arguably, remained underexplored. The scenarios under investigation captured different avenues of the future relationship as regards the formats in which cooperation can take place: within the EU framework, within the NATO framework, outside of the EU and the NATO frameworks, bilaterally as well the option of non-cooperation. In this sense, cooperation in defence represented the opposite of pursuing national strategic autonomy.

In essence, the thesis formulated a frame of reference about what issues may become the topic of discussion with regards to cooperation in defence based on the insights of intergovernmentalism, neoclassical realism and studies centred on constructivist concepts like strategic culture and foreign-political postures. It identified two primary cleavages which guide Europeans' state behaviour: their disposition to the transatlantic alliance as well as their preferences regarding EU defence integration.

The author thoroughly examined EU defence policy and what Brexit, as an exit from that policy area, entailed. The thesis employed a holistic systems approach when describing EU defence policy and inspected its policy components along the three dimensions defined by Rangel de Mesquita (2019) – political and strategic, institutional and operational, as well as a financial dimension. The author then went on to describe the implications of Brexit from EU defence policy by looking into the provisions of the withdrawal agreement and the significance of Brexit from EU defence more generally.

This exercise of scenario-building and ranking preferences was a purely analytical endeavour and may hold little predictive power. In as much as it is grounded in empirical data, albeit limited, and to the extent that it made use of theories with proven analytical robustness, however, it managed to answer the question of how the

future relationship between the EU and the UK in defence post-Brexit can look like. Cooperation within the EU framework can resemble existing arrangements with third countries which vary in terms of the degree to which the EU and the third state need to converge in order to pursue defence jointly. Cooperation outside the EU framework can be structured within NATO, the European Intervention Initiative (EI2), the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR), the Letter of Intent (LoI) framework or on a bilateral basis. These channels represent important alternatives for politico-strategic cooperation, collaboration in defence missions and operations as well as for joining efforts in defence-industrial terms. The option of acting unilaterally is always available but conventional wisdom, coupled with Britain's as well as the French and German predilection for multilateral action, make it a last resort.

The researcher expected that the UK will seek alternatives to defence cooperation outside the EU defence framework. In the politico-strategic sense, the most important channel for cooperation will be NATO. Minilateral initiatives, such as the EI2 or collaboration with EU member states on a bilateral basis are of interest to the UK, but they would not aid the Transatlantic relationship and could even impede it, especially if the US perceives them as duplicating NATO efforts. The British interest in joining CSDP missions and operations will be minimal by default, mainly because the UK will have no say in decision-making over those. NATO, ad-hoc coalitions or the EI2 will be far more preferable. Defence-industrial cooperation is the only area where cooperation with the EU might be of interest to the UK as British firms may seek unimpeded access to the European defence market. As defence becomes more integrated, the UK could be subjected to the negative externalities of its inability to access it. Alternatives to EU capability-development do exist, but in the future, they might become more tangled with EU structures. In any case, however, the UK will

value its sovereignty of decision-making over other things.

From that perspective, on political-strategic defence cooperation, the analyses postulated that the UK and Germany would have a preference for NATO, while France will prefer cooperating with the UK via the E12. For deployment, it expected unanimous support for joint action within NATO structures. In terms of capability development, it expected France and Germany to pursue cooperation via OCCAR and Lol, while Germany to seek to attract the UK to EU defence capability development initiatives.

Content analysis was chosen as a method for analysis. Content analysis can be judged by the applicability of the data to the research question, the analytical context, the operationalisation of the analytical construct and the inferences intended to answer the research question (which is derived from theory or research assumptions (Krippendorff 2004: 29–30). Aside from the scarcity of the data given the case selection restriction rules, one important drawback of the methodology applied in this thesis is that in the absence of multiple coders, it is difficult to test the validity of the content interpretation or demonstrate any strive for greater objectivity. Nevertheless, the use of publicly available data and the elaboration on the coding procedure should make this study more easily replicable at the minimum and ensure that the validity of its constructs can be assessed more easily. To paraphrase Schneider et al. (2011), one of the main problems of forecasting political events is that predictions are only as good as the data they are based on are reliable.

The data used here were scarce and phrased in a neutral way which is to be expected from public speeches or documents published on the websites of ministries, presidencies or chancellorships. But the mere mentioning of an idea or issue can indicate its relevance to the decision-making process. In most cases, it was impossible to find any data on individual variables which is significant on its own. If the results are

to be interpreted in a sense that governments will speak about the issues which are most salient to them or have the greatest impact over their decision-making process, then it is conceivable that these factors might well be too low on their priority list.

## Concluding remarks

Let us briefly mention some of the issues which the thesis did not discuss in great length but which are nevertheless relevant for understanding the context of the negotiations on the future relationship that will ensue post-Brexit.

First, let us address the issue of a no deal. It should be clear to the observer that failure to reach a deal on the future relationship with the EU could create friction between the UK and the EU in the same vein as a no-deal Brexit would (have). These tensions could potentially spill over to domestic politics as well. No deal or a 'bad deal' on the future relationship which fails to appease domestic concerns and accommodate domestic interests can trigger what Whitman (2019) refers to as a 'two union' problem for the UK. This is particularly relevant considering the situation in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

There have been significant concerns regarding the differential treatment of Northern Ireland after Brexit both among unionists and among those who favour reunification with Ireland. Ever since the negotiations began, the issue of the Irish border and the security implications of potentially threatening the Good Friday Agreement has been to the forefront and no long-term solution that satisfies a large segment of the Northern Irish population has yet been found. The existing withdrawal agreement does not alleviate those concerns to a great extent either. Northern Ireland has been promised economic benefits after Brexit via access to new UK trade deals

and has been given guarantees that the integrity of the UK-internal market will be maintained and strengthened (The UK in a Changing Europe 2019). Only time will show to what extent these promises will bear fruition.

Many are also worried that Scotland will pursue a second independence referendum in the case of unfavourable arrangements post-Brexit. After all, the propositions of the Scottish National Party (SNP) in their 2019 election manifesto suggest that pursuing Scottish independence can be a way to escape Brexit in case no special status for Scotland can be achieved<sup>25</sup> (The UK in a Changing Europe 2019). In addition, after the elections, Nicola Sturgeon, in her authority as First Minister of Scotland, requested from Her Majesty's government that the power to legislate for a referendum on independence be devolved to the Scottish Parliament (BBC 2019).

On the other hand, an outcome where the prospects of reaching a deal on the future relationship are bleak will be celebrated by hard-line Brexiteers. The Conservative Party may have skipped including the issue of defence policy post-Brexit in its election manifesto for the 2019 general elections, but the other avid proponent of the Brexit cause, the Brexit Party, did not. They were actively advocating 'leaving the European Defence Union', by which they most probably meant the CSDP, and focusing instead on granting state aid in the defence-industrial sector as well as keeping procurement at home (The UK in a Changing Europe 2019)<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> This is currently the case at the time of writing.

<sup>26</sup> The defence policy preferences of the other major British parties which during the 2019 election campaign supported a second referendum, a confirmatory public vote, or the revocation of Art. 50 can perhaps be equated to whatever their preferences for defence were during the British membership in the EU (The UK in a Changing Europe (2019). In any case, these parties are highly unlikely to be content with a no deal outcome of the future-relationship negotiations.

In case the British government decides to follow through with another one of Johnson's infamous promises from his campaign for the Tory leadership, namely, to refuse to pay the £39 billion divorce bill in case of a no-deal Brexit, and likewise resorts to withholding payments if the negotiations on the future relationship with the EU turn sour, the UK is likely to incur heavy reputational costs.

Similarly problematic but not for the domestic, rather for the UK's international standing, will be the situation where the UK and the EU try to negotiate an agreement on the future relationship but fail because the Johnson's government employed risky negotiating tactics, such as threatening to leave without a deal if the EU does not grant them the desired concessions. During his campaign for the Conservative leadership elections, Johnson stated on numerous occasions that removing the threat of a 'no deal' outcome diminishes one's standing in negotiations which is why he kept insisting that a no-deal Brexit could not be ruled out. His team's thinking about the negotiations of the future relationship may resemble his previous stance. Tactical considerations aside, one needs to remember that in the end, a no-deal outcome remains politically and economically hazardous.

There are many threats and challenges, to use the EU's terminology from the 2016 Global Strategy to European security in the current international environment (Council of the European Union 2017). One recent example where presenting a united European front may be of vital importance to European states comes from the escalations between the US and Iran. European countries' involvement was instrumental in concluding the nuclear deal with Iran back in 2015. President Trump chose to withdraw the US from that deal in May 2018 and imposed sanctions on Iran. The relations between the US and Iran kept deteriorating ever since and reached a boiling point after the President ordered a strike which killed an Iranian military general.

Iran announced its withdrawal from the nuclear deal as a result. The US Secretary of State also went on to blame European allies (the UK, France and Germany, in particular) for failing to stand behind the American position. It was the joint effort of the three which helped de-escalating the tensions with Iran.

European states are quick to mobilise when presented with a direct threat (which is, incidentally, something that neoclassical realists would expect) but realising the importance of keeping the general picture in mind in the absence of direct threats can be challenging. Other factors come to the forefront for negotiating partners in such situations, and the overall benefits of cooperation are quick to be forgotten. Policy-makers have stated on numerous occasions that cooperation in defence is needed and mutually desired. We will soon find out if states can uphold that principle in practice. What might as well happen is that European states will be too preoccupied with internal problems and domestic debates to organise and prepare themselves for arising security threats.

The expected economic downturn caused by coronavirus in 2020 can have grave implications for the future of European defence. Faced with an economic recession, states often resort to defence budget cuts. As financial commitments have already been made, states need to prioritize covering those before investing in new initiatives. It is for that reason why it is hard to imagine the emergence of any new ambitious defence initiatives at least in the short run. States will more likely focus on implementation. While unavoidable, this may leave vulnerable in their external security.

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