

CHAPTER I: DEBATE OVER EVOLVING PARTNERSHIP – CASE OF FINLAND

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INTRODUCTION

THE ELECTION OF President Donald Trump has raised question about United States commitments to the rules-based order – to international norms, institutions and agreements. The overall uncertainty has characterised the discussions on where the U.S. is heading in its foreign policy and how it sees the value of multilateral cooperation and institutions. President Trump has criticised the international system, and has considered it to be economically disadvantageous to the U.S. President Trump's argument for more fair burden-sharing in financial terms is not, however, a completely new idea. For example, the 2% GDP minimum spending requirement for defence by NATO member countries was mentioned in the Wales Summit Declaration of 2014. Much of the recent discussion has focused on how committed the U.S. is to international cooperation. Special National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster and Economical Advisor Gary D. Cohn in an Op-Ed column outlined how President Trump started his foreign visit to the Middles East and Europe “with a clear-eyed outlook that the world is not a ‘global community’ but an arena where nations, non-governmental actors and businesses engage and compete for advantage.”²

Instead of a multilateral order, the policy of the Trump administration seems to emphasise bilateral relations at least in some policy areas, national sovereignty and the art of

2 See H.R. McMaster and Gary D. Cohn. 2017. “America First Doesn’t Mean America Alone.” Op-ed. *The Wall Street Journal*, May 30, 2017. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/america-first-doesnt-mean-america-alone-1496187426>.

‘deal-making’ in foreign relations. In his speech to the United Nation’s General Assembly (UNGA), President Trump reminded the audience about the previous and current U.S. commitments, but also emphasised state sovereignty and transactional cooperation, stressing ‘outcomes instead of ideologies’. By using the concept of ‘policy of principled realism’ based on ‘shared goals, values and interests’, President Trump offered one view of his ‘foreign policy philosophy’.³

As an example of the importance of the bilateral relations and efforts to build them, President Sauli Niinistö’s visit to the White House could be mentioned. In the aftermath of the visit, it has been argued that the relationship between Finland and the U.S. is closer than ever ranging from cultural, economic and security issues and topics. In the press meeting with President Niinistö, President Trump noted that Finland and the U.S. share common values.

Recently, the government of Finland has published reports on defence and foreign and security policy outlining its visions, objectives and operating environment. Both documents mention that the U.S. is an ‘important partner’ (*tärkeä kumppani*) for Finland. In regard to the previous and ongoing cooperation in the realm of security, a couple of issues could be mentioned. In 2016, Finland and the U.S. signed a declaration of intent to enhance and increase defense collaboration and cooperation between the two countries.⁴ Finland cooperates with NATO in the frameworks of the Partnership for Peace programme and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. Finland also contributes to international crisis management operations such as the U.S.-led

3 Remarks by the President Trump to the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Sept. 19, 2017.

4 See “Statement of Intent on bilateral defence cooperation between Finland and US” at http://www.defmin.fi/en/topical/press_releases/2016/statement_of_intent_on_bilateral_defence_cooperation_between_finland_and_us.8013.news

operation in Iraq (OIR) and NATO-led operation in Afghanistan (RS).⁵ It also, for example, recently trained in the Baltic Sea with Sweden and the U.S. as a part of the Aurora17 exercise organized in Sweden.

This paper draws on the discussions between the current U.S. government and the Republican Party in regard to U.S. international engagements. How is the role of the international organisations such as NATO viewed in the U.S.? How significant is NATO considered by the Trump administration? And how do these have an effect on the willingness of Finland to become officially defence- (and partly politically) dependent. The paper also looks at domestic discussion in Finland about transatlantic relations and their future.

PRINCIPLE REALISM AS A GUIDE TO U.S. FOREIGN POLICY UNDER THE TRUMP PRESIDENCY

DURING THE ELECTION campaign and after President Donald Trump was elected, the commitment of the U.S. to international norms, institutions and international agreements has raised discussion. At that time, the candidate Donald Trump called NATO ‘obsolete’ and questioned free trade agreements and the level of U.S. engagements in international organisations and agreements. President Trump withdrew the U.S. from the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade agreement and announced U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord if the U.S. could not negotiate better terms. Recently it was reported that the

5 See more in detail about Finns in crisis management tasks at <http://puolustusvoimat.fi/en/international-activities/international-crisis-management>

U.S. is withdrawing from UNESCO⁶. President Trump also announced that he will not continue ratifying the Iran Nuclear deal, leaving to Congress the decision on how to proceed.⁷ The Trump administration seems still to be searching for its foreign policy. The new government has not yet published its first national security strategy document, which would provide some guidance.⁸

President Trump himself has framed his foreign policy in terms of ‘principled realism’.⁹ He used the description in his speech to the Arab Islamic American Summit in May 2017:

“For our part, America is committed to adjusting our strategies to meet evolving threats and new facts. We will discard those strategies that have not worked – and will apply new approaches informed by experience and judgment. We are adopting a principled realism, rooted in common values and shared interests.”

In his speech about U.S. strategy in Afghanistan and South Asia in August 2017, President Trump explained how this guides his foreign policy:

“But we will no longer use American military might to construct democracies in faraway islands, or try to rebuild other countries in our image. Those days are now over. Instead, we will work with allies and

- 6 The question of U.S. commitment to UNESCO has been on the table also before. See e.g. Senator Marco Rubio’s press release on the issue (Oct. 12, 2017). <https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=11553FCF-B671-406D-900C-3403EFA199AE>
- 7 Mark Landler & David E. Sanger. 2017. Trump to Force Congress to Act on Iran Nuclear Deal. The New York Times, Oct. 5, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/05/world/middleeast/trump-iran-nuclear-deal.html>
- 8 For an analysis of what the NSS could look like, see e.g. Tarun Chhabra. 2017. Brookings Report: “Crafting Trump’s first National Security Strategy: What it could be – and why it not might matter anyway”. Sept. 13, 2017. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/crafting-trumps-first-national-security-strategy-what-it-could-be-and-why-it-might-not-matter-anyway/>
- 9 The conception of “principled realism” has been also used before. For example Paul Johnson, a contributor to Forbes, wrote in 2005 in connection with George W. Bush’s presidency how “Principled Realism [is]: Good for Both Parties.” (See Forbes, Opinion 4/18/2005) <https://www.forbes.com/forbes/2005/0418/037.html>.

partners to protect our shared interest. We are not asking others to change their way of life, but to pursue common goals that allow our children to live better and safer lives. This principled realism will guide our decisions moving forward.”

President Trump returned to this theme in his speech at the UNGA in September 2017. He argued:

“We want harmony and friendship, not conflict and strife. We are guided by outcomes, not ideology. We have a policy of principled realism, rooted in shared goals, interests, and values.”¹⁰

According to commentators, the speech that the President gave at UNGA provided a description of the Trump doctrine – a genre of “big-power nationalism” – that the president and his advisors have also called “America first”. The speech differed from the Obama presidency emphasis on human rights and climate change, or Obama’s focus on international organisations and his apprehension with the restrictions of U.S. military power. However, while the focus on nationalism was in accordance with President Trump’s campaign theme, the speech presented an assertive view of the U.S. role in the world that was somewhat different to some of the earlier campaign talk, hinting at ‘a more isolationist path.’¹¹

President Trump’s idea of foreign policy has also been described as transactional, to be reviewed from the perspective of

- 10 President Trump’s speech to Arab Islamic American Summit, May 21, 2017. Remarks by President Trump on the Strategy in Afghanistan and South Asia. Aug. 21, 2017. Remarks by President Trump to the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Sept. 19, 2017. Speeches accessed via <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-and-remarks>.
- 11 See the analysis by Noah Bierman & David Lauter. 2017. “In U.N. speech, Trump defines his foreign policy doctrine as sovereignty for major powers.” *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 19, 2017. See also an analysis by Ishaan Tharoor. He claimed that international agenda of the President is not pragmatic or principled but “has always been guided as ideology first.” *The Washington Post*, September 20, 2017: “Trump’s ‘principled realism’ is an incoherent mess.”

cost and effectiveness.¹² In two Op-Eds, McMaster and Cohn have commented U.S. foreign policy. The other was entitled “America First does not mean America alone.” In practice it translates to a “commitment to protecting and advancing … vital interests while also fostering cooperation and strengthening relationship with … allies and partners.”

The three principles of this policy are:

1. America’s primary interest in the safety and security of its people,
2. Guaranteeing economic prosperity,
3. Strong alliances and economically successful partners.

In another Op-Ed, McMaster and Cohn summoned the approach of President Trump as a search for “areas of agreement and cooperation”, whilst at the same time “protecting America’s interests”.¹³

The ideas appearing in President Trump’s speeches could be distinguished as national sovereignty, the power of the people, and the U.S. role in the world with certain conditions, to mention but a few aspects. The President uses phrases such as “America must put its own citizens first”, “Our government’s first duty is to its people, to our citizens” and “I will defend America’s

12 See e.g. Leon Hadar. 2017. The Limits of Trump’s Transactional Foreign Policy. *The National Interest*. January 2, 2017. <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-limits-trumps-transactional-foreign-policy-18898?page=2>. In his speech at UNGA, President Trump noted that “The United States will forever be a great friend to the world and to its allies. But we can no longer be taken advantage of, or enter into a one-sided deal where the United States gets nothing in return. As long as I hold this office, I will defend America’s interests above all else.”

13 McMaster and Cohn 2017. Gary D. Cohn and H.R. McMaster. 2017. “The Trump Vision for America Abroad.” Op-Ed. *The New York Times*, July 13, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/13/opinion/the-trump-vision-for-america-abroad.html>.

interests above all else.”¹⁴

In the 2016 elections, as previously, both culture and identity had a role to play. The Brookings Report from 2017 entitled *Building “Situations of Strength” A National Security Strategy for the United States* explains how in 2016 the American people voted for a candidate who had a critical attitude towards the international order and its integral parts. While foreign policy did not play a dominant role in the elections, “President Trump’s victory demonstrates that many Americans believe they are not beneficiaries of the existing order.”¹⁵ The question floating around has been how much change President Donald Trump’s policies will actually bring? In his well-known book, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (2001), Mead writes “American thinking about foreign policy has been relatively stable over the centuries.”¹⁶ Inasmuch, the public and elite opinion is taking into account, a long-term bipartisan view has given its support to the central commitment to an active leadership role by the U.S. when at the same time nation in its entirety has followed ‘opinion leaders’ in Congress and the administration.¹⁷

While there is a long-term continuity as argued by Walter Russel Mead, changes do occur at least as a small scale. For example, since the Obama Presidency the focus has been on hard rather than soft power. President Trump does not consider soft

14 See President Trump’s joint address to Congress and his speech at the UNGA.

15 Derek Chollet, Eric Edelman, Michèle Flournoy, Stephen J. Hadley, Martin Indyk, Bruce Jones, Robert Kagan, Kristen Silvberberg, Jake Sullivan, Thomas Wright. Brookings Report 2017, p. 2. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/fp_201702_ofc_report_web.pdf

16 Walter Russel Mead. 2001. *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World*. New York and London: Routledge, xvi.

17 Kari Möttölä. 2017. “Present at the (re)creation? Words and deeds in an emerging Trump foreign policy and the consequences for European security.” In Mika Aaltola and Bart Gaens (ed.), *Managing Unpredictability: Transatlantic relations in the Trump era*. FIIA Report 51 (2017), p. 50

power as the main organising value for the international policies¹⁸. The President himself noted during his speech on his Afghanistan strategy that “Under my administration, many billions of dollars is being spent on our military. And this includes vast amounts being spent on our nuclear arsenal and missile defence.” An agreement for USD 700 billion of funding for the U.S. military was announced, however, requiring full congressional enactment. President Trump has previously also suggested decreasing funding for diplomatic instruments such as the Department of State and the UN. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has introduced his plan to redesign the State Department and make its diplomacy more effective.¹⁹ The effort to cut the diplomatic instruments has, however, encountered opposition among the Republicans and Democrats.²⁰

In his book, Mead labelled the four schools of U.S. foreign policy as “Wilsonians”, “Hamiltonians”, “Jacksonians” and “Jeffersonians”. Mead discusses Trump in the context of Jacksonians, who see the U.S. government’s role as taking care of the security and economic wellbeing of the American people at home. In the current situation, Jacksonians are distrustful of U.S. commitments to global politics and the liberal order, Mead writes. This is not, however, from the perspective of a desire to have some replaceable outlook, but more that they lack trust in the persons formulating foreign policy. Mead also points out that for

18 See Leo Michel. 2017. US “Soft Power” and the Trump Administration: Disturbing Signs. FIIA Comment 15/2007. www.fia.fi/en/publication/695/us_soft_power_and_the_trump_administration/

19 Remarks by President Trump on the Strategy in Afghanistan and South Asia. Aug. 21, 2017. Tracy Wilkinson. “Tillerson trims State Department staff and wows to make diplomacy more effective.” *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 14, 2017. <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-fq-pol-state-department-plan-20170915-story.html>

20 Patricia Zengerle. 2017. Senators Blast State Department over Cuts. Reuters, November 17, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-diplomacy-senate/senators-blast-state-department-over-cuts-idUSKBN1DE268?il=0>

the first time since Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration U.S. foreign policy faced “debates this fundamental”.²¹

SEPARATION OF POWERS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

IN THE UNITED States, conducting foreign policy is the realm of the President. He or she has more leeway in foreign than domestic politics. U.S. Congress does not have such a visible or direct role in U.S. foreign policy-making, but it still has an effect.²² Mead has written how there is a specific continuity in American foreign policy in the longer perspective but that the foreign policy of the U.S. “does not proceed out of single unified worldview.” Diverse views on the definition of “national interest” can even be found at the centre of the political processes. The basis of American foreign policy is in rivalling and conflicting values and voices. Mead describes it as a “symphony” rather than a “solo”.²³

Some of the Republican senators have commented vocally on the direction of U.S. foreign policy. Recently, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker was reported as saying that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Secretary of Defence James Mattis and Chief of Staff Gen. John Kelly “are those people that help separate our country from chaos.”²⁴

21 See Walter Russel Mead. 2017. The Jacksonian Revolt. American Populism and the Liberal Order. Comment. *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2017 issue. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-01-20/jacksonian-revolt>

22 Constitutionally established, the Senate gives it “advice and consent” to the ratification of treaties. In spring 2017, the US Senate voted 97-2 to admit Montenegro to NATO. Andrew Hanna. 2017. Senate votes overwhelmingly to admit Montenegro to NATO. *Politico*, 03/28/2017. <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/03/senate-approves-montenegro-nato-treaty-236606>

23 Mead 2001, 52–54.

24 Sophie Tatum. 2017. Corker: Tillerson, Mattis and Kelly ‘separate our country from chaos.’ CNN, October 6, 2017. <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/10/04/politics/bob-corker-mattis-tillerson-kelly/index.html>

The current situation, in which the Republicans are the majority in both houses of Congress and in the White House is favourable in terms of advancing the agenda.²⁵ The tensions among the Republicans have already been visible, however, in many policy issues such as healthcare reform and relations with Russia, just to give a few examples. It could be, however, that Congress could be less likely to impose additional restrictions on the President and be more willing to further his policies than in times of a divided Congress. Despite the current situation of unified government, Jordan Tama has written how opposition and support for President's foreign policy will not necessarily turn directly into party positions.²⁶ A recent bipartisan example that could be mentioned is the sanctions legislation passed by a veto-proof majority.²⁷

According to research, so far foreign policy has been less polarised in the U.S. than domestic politics. Foreign policy decisions are often characterised by 1) different views within the party, producing conflicting bipartisan congressional coalitions or 2) legislators in both parties joining together to contest the President's policies. Recent scholarly literature actually shows that Congress restricts the President in many foreign policy issues such as the development of weapons of mass destruction, the funding of international institutions, diplomatic agreements, human rights, international trade, counter-terrorism, the civil-

25 See Anna Kronlund. 2017. "The United Government in the US. The implications for foreign policy." FIA Working Paper 99 (2017). www.fia.fi/en/publication/708/republican_government_in_the_united_states/

26 Jordan Tama. 2017. "Presidential-Congressional Relations in Foreign Policy." In James A. Thurber and Jordan Tama (ed.), "Rivals for Power. Presidential-Congressional Relations". Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Rowman & Littlefield, sixth edition, p. 230.

27 See "Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act", passed with Senate by votes of 98-2 and in the House 419-3. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3364/all-actions?overview=closed&q=%7B%22roll-call-vote%22%3A%22all%22%7D>

military relationship and sanctions.”²⁸ The decision of President Obama to seek congressional authorisation for the use of military force has been used as an example of Congressional influence in military affairs.²⁹

TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS IN A STATE OF FLUX?

TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS HAVE somewhat been in a state of disarray in recent months. After the G7 meeting in May 2017, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, for example, said that Europeans will have to do things by themselves from now on, but added that it would be in friendship with the U.S., Great Britain and other neighbours. “But we need to know that we must fight for our own future and destiny as Europeans,” Merkel was reported to have said.³⁰ As argued, the political discord between the European Union and the U.S. is not only a result of the change of course in President Trump’s foreign policy. It also stems from the fact that the Trump Presidency has more clearly illustrated that many Americans support another kind of foreign policy and do not share connecting values with Europe. Domestic interests now mark the foreign policy of the U.S.³¹ This is not the only time, however, that there has been a ‘rupture in the relationship’. The George W. Bush administration’s war in Iraq was opposed by many European countries and their leaders. In addition, John Ikenberry argues how the first years of the 21st century highlighted many differences across the Atlantic on

28 See the references in literature in Jordan Tama. 2017, 220-222.

29 Douglas L. Kriner. 2014. Obama’s Authorisation Paradox: Syria and Congress’s Continued Relevance in Military Affairs. *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 44, no 2 (June), 309–327.

30 Quoted in CNN, May 29, 2017. <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/05/28/politics/angela-merkel-donald-trump-g7/index.html>

31 See Teija Tiilikainen. 2017. Pääkirjoitus. *Ulkopolitiikka*, 3/2017. http://www.ulkopoliitikka.fi/artikkeli/1694/haavoittuva_lansi/.

cultural and social issues besides politics, ranging from foreign policy to global warming and transnational justice. As described by Ikenberry, the issues that keep the “Atlantic order” together are economic integration, common values, military alliance and linkages of diplomatic and political governance. It is also characterised by the ideas of capitalism, democracy and shared civilisation heritage.³² It is now questionable whether there is more than just cooperation in military affairs, when the values of the Trump’s administration and Europe do not necessarily coincide.

THE ROLE OF ALLIES AND PARTNERS?

THE UNITED STATES defence and security relationship took a new step during the Obama presidency. From the establishment of NATO in 1949 to the two presidential terms of George W. Bush, the United States applied a “two-track” approach in dealing with defence and security issues with Europe, as pointed out by Leo Michel. One track linked European allies and the U.S. through NATO cooperation. The other track concerned bilateral agreement with allies and strengthened with vast array of informal agreements. The Obama presidency meant adding an additional step, a “U.S.-EU track”, to transatlantic security and defence relations.³³ European Union and NATO cooperation in defence and security policy was furthered again after the Warsaw Summit when the parties committed to the

- 32 G. John Ikenberry. 2008. Explaining Crisis and Change in Atlantic Relations. An Introduction. In Jeffrey Anderson, G. John Ikenberry, and Thomas Risse (ed.), *The End of the West?* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, p. 1, 8.
- 33 Leo Michel. 2017. “Transatlantic defence and security relations under the Donald Trump administration: a new paradigm?”. In Mika Aaltola and Bart Gaens (ed.), *Managing Unpredictability: Transatlantic relations in the Trump era*. FIIA Report 51 (2017), 130. See more about the U.S. strengthening bilateral relations with EU in the realm of defence and security cooperation in Michel 2017, 136–137.

Joint Declaration in July 2016.³⁴

One item causing headlines has been Trump's view on NATO, in particular that NATO member countries should do more, especially in budgetary terms. Trump has raised the two percent of GDP spending requirement on many occasions. The idea is not unprecedented as the requirement was actually already included in the accord of the 2014 Wales Summit. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Senator Bob Corker in early January when asked about the issue stated:

“But with NATO, there is an issue there. And we have countries that we've had a relationship with for a long time that are not contributing the amount that they're supposed to contribute to NATO [...] Madeleine Albright has been before our committee complaining about it. I complain about it every year. And finally, there's a President that's making a big deal out of that. I actually think that's a healthy thing, as long as we continue to understand the strong importance of the NATO alliance, and what it means to our own security. What it means to world's security.”³⁵

At regular intervals, U.S. leaders have urged the Europeans and Canada to increase their defence capabilities.³⁶ It remains to be seen how NATO will develop during the Trump presidency.

The debate on NATO under Trump has also revolved around the U.S. commitment to Article 5 of the treaty, covering collective defence. Is, the Trump administration fully committed to the

34 See the statement by President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organizations. https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official_texts_133163.htm

35 The Global Politico. Sen. Bob Corker: The Full Transcript by Susan B. Glasser, Feb. 13, 2017. Available at <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/02/sen-bob-corker-the-full-transcript-214767>

36 See Leo Michel. 2016. Bilateral Defence treaties with the United States: Not an alternative to NATO. FIIA Comment 19/2016. www.fii.a.fi/en/publication/618/bilateral_defence_treaties_with_the_united_states/

article?³⁷ There is certain historical background to the wording of the article. To many Americans, the First and Second World Wars proved “the folly of isolationism,” but not all agreed. When Harry S. Truman negotiated the treaty with Europeans and Canadians, the President at the same time tried to convince a group of senators that the treaty on hand would not oblige direct militarily intervention if there were an armed attack against a member country. Therefore, Article 5 was carefully written. It means that allies are required ‘to assist’ an attacked member with action ‘as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force’.³⁸

Another point of discussion has been the allies and alliances. In May 2017, McMaster and Cohn argued that President Trump’s visit to the Middle East and Europe “represented a strategic shift” for the U.S. According to them, “America First” means the reassurance of the U.S. role abroad. Diplomatic, military and economic means are adopted to increase American security, advance its prosperity and expand American impact.³⁹ In his speech in September 2017, Minister of Defence James Mattis shared his view of how the Department of Defence is currently reaching for “three lines of effort.” The three lines mentioned by Mattis were: 1. “building a more lethal joint force”; 2. “effort to strengthen international alliances and partnerships;” and 3. “to reform the business practices of the departments inside.” Mattis explained his view on the importance of allies as follows: “*Because*

- 37 President Trump has referred to the U.S. commitments in his speech in Poland for example by saying: “the United States has demonstrated not merely with words but with its actions that we stand firmly behind Article 5, the mutual defense commitment.” Remarks by the President Trump to the People of Poland, July 6, 2017. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/07/06/remarks-president-trump-people-poland-july-6-2017>
- 38 Michel 2017, 131. See also Senator John McCain’s remarks at the 2017 Brussels Forum on March 25, 2017 on Transatlantic relations. <https://www.mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/speeches?ID=C3A7436F-F167-40F2-90D7-E70E751CAE24>
- 39 McMaster & Cohn 2017.

history is compelling on this point, that nations with allies thrive and those without allies decline. It's that simple." He also referred to an example of current joint cooperation, the 'defeat ISIS campaign', that brings together 69 nations and four international organisations: the Arab League, NATO, Interpol and the EU. Mattis also pointed out that the procedures, processes and organisations of the U.S. must be "allied-friendly." He further noted to the audience, to consider that the number of the aircraft carriers of one nation does not necessarily correlate with the fact that it produces most of the good ideas.⁴⁰

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FINLAND AND THE UNITED STATES

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN Finland and the U.S. is conducted bilaterally and in the framework of the EU. In his visit to Washington D.C. in August 2017, President Sauli Niinistö met with President Donald Trump. In an interview after the bilateral meeting, President Niinistö noted that security was the main topic discussed at the meeting. After his visit, Niinistö outlined the relations between the two countries as follows: "Today the bond between Finland and the United States is closer than ever."⁴¹ President Niinistö also met with Senators Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska), Chris Coons (D-Delaware) and Ben Cardin (D-Maryland).⁴²

40 See Secretary of Defense Speech at Air Force Association 2017, Air, Space, and Cyber Conference, Sept. 20, 2017. <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech-View/Article/1318960/air-force-association-2017-air-space-and-cyber-conference/>

41 The President of the Republic of Finland. President Niinistö in Washington: Security the top theme of talks. <http://tpk.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=365693&nodeid=44809&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>. See also The White House, August 28, 2017. Remarks by President Trump and President Niinistö of Finland at a Joint Press Conference. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/08/28/remarks-president-trump-and-president-niinist%C3%B6-finland-joint-press>

42 The President of the Republic of Finland, 17.9.2017. <http://tpk.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=366446&nodeid=44809&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>

President Niinistö also met with the Secretary of Defence James Mattis when he visited Finland in November 2017. While in Finland, Mattis also participated to the working meeting of the Northern Group defence ministers.⁴³

Cooperation between Finland and the U.S. covers cultural, economic, educational and security and defence aspects. Collaboration between the two countries also takes place in arenas such as the Arctic Council, which Finland currently chair after the U.S. Another issue that could be mentioned is the recently established European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki (Hybrid CoE). Its aim is not only to benefit the 15 participant countries but also to invite the EU and NATO to join its activities.⁴⁴ There has also been new research cooperation between Finland and the U.S. The newly established Cyber Research Institute in Oulu is a collaborative effort with the U.S. national Science Foundation.⁴⁵

As of November 14th, it was announced the President Trump has nominated Robert Frank Pence of Virginia to be the U.S. ambassador to Finland. The nomination falls into the political appointee categorization. The nomination needs to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate. According to American Foreign Service Association, total of ambassadorial appointments by the Trump administration is 57 (as of Nov. 9, 2017). Overall, there are still several unfilled positions in the Department of State.⁴⁶

43 Press release, The US Secretary of Defense James Mattis to visit Helsinki on 6 to 7 November 2017, Ministry of Defence, https://defmin.fi/en/topical/press_releases?588_m=8834

44 See more about the Centre at <https://www.hybridcoe.fi/>

45 See, "Preserving collaboration brings cyber research centre to University of Oulu." <http://www.oulu.fi/university/node/48379>.

46 See the data provided by Partnership for Public Service. <https://ourpublicservice.org/issues/presidential-transition/political-appointee-tracker.php>. See the statistics provided o Ambassadors by the American Foreign Service Association at: <http://www.afsa.org/appointments-donald-j-trump#f>.

FINLAND AS MILITARILY NON-ALIGNED

THE STRATEGIC CHOICES of a country are guided by not only the geography and geopolitical environment but also its historical experiences⁴⁷. Before becoming independent in 1917, Finland had been part of Sweden and Russia. In the mid-20th century, Finland fought two wars with Russia, with which it shares a border of 1,340 kilometres: the Winter War (1939) and the Continuation War (1941–1944). The armistice agreement was signed with Russia in 1944 and afterwards the Paris Peace Agreement was ratified in 1947. Finland maintained its independence but the agreement imposed limitations on Finland's sovereignty, including conditions for the number of troops and armaments. As a result of the wars, Finland also paid war reparations and had to give up some of its territory.

As a follow-up in 1948, Finland signed the “Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance” (Ystävys, Yhteistyö ja Avunanto -sopimus) with the Soviet Union, which defined the relationship of the countries for years to come. Finland never considered the agreement as a military agreement and the military requirement for cooperation was restricted to a very specific case.⁴⁸ The agreement was replaced in 1992 with a treaty with Russia that did not include any mutual assistance condition.

During the Cold War, after Finland joined the UN in 1955 and Porkkala Island that had been leased to the Soviet Union as a military base was returned, Finland adopted a policy of “neutral-ity”. The so-called “Paasikivi-Kekkonen” doctrine, named after two Finnish presidents expressed the foreign policy of Finland after the wars. It was based on two ideas: nonalignment/neutral-ity

47 Arvio Suomen mahdollisen Nato-jäsenyyden vaikutuksista. Ulkoasiainministeriö 2016, p. 8.

48 *ibid.* 8–9.

and good relations with its Eastern neighbour. The background to the neutrality policy was the geographical situation and the Cold War.⁴⁹ The neutrality policy of Finland at the time has also been termed “Finlandisation”, meaning that a smaller state carefully keeps up its neutrality in order not to cause trouble with its super power next door. This concept has also since acquired somewhat negative connotations.

It is said that the policy of neutrality became somewhat empty when Finland joined the EU in 1995. EU membership was not, however, contradictory to the policy of being military non-aligned or keeping good relations with Russia.⁵⁰ Previously Finland had joined the European Free Trade Association as an associate member in 1961, and had also signed a free trade treaty with the EC in 1972.

Despite the close diplomatic connections with the leading NATO countries, Finland established official relations with NATO only after the Cold War.⁵¹ In 1992, Finland joined as an observer to the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. The opening of the NATO debate in Finland took place in 1991–1992. The debate was not politicised, however, because the parties did not want to appraise the membership. In Finland, the question of NATO membership has usually been considered in terms of security, but this has only been one theme. Two others have concerned the political influence of Finland and its identity.⁵² The decision of Finland to join the Partnership for Peace programme in 1994 was based on three issues according to analysts:

1. Finland wanted to be part of the peace-keeping framework;
2. Finland valued the development of the military capabilities

49 Tuomas Forsberg. 2002. *Nato Kirja*. Helsinki: Ajatus-kirjat, p. 1.

50 Forsberg, 2002, p. 18–19.

51 Arvio Suomen mahdollisen Nato-jäsenyyden vaikuttuksista. Ulkoasiainministeriö 2016., p. 10.

52 Forsberg 2002, p. 265, 267.

needed in peace-keeping; and 3. The decision was guided by the willingness to follow the relationship between Russia, NATO and the Eastern European countries. The official NATO policy of Finland has been written into the government's policies and reports on defence and security policies since 1995 onwards, after Finland became a part of the Partnership for Peace or PfP.⁵³

Finland works in cooperation with all the partners and organisations that, on their behalf, advance the security of Europe, including NATO, EU, OSCE and Nordic cooperation.⁵⁴ It has been argued that, for a small country such as Finland located far away from the centre of the Western world, it is good to be part of organisations enhancing certain values of rule of law, human rights and democracy. These organisations are those also providing Finland with security.⁵⁵

Why then has Finland not joined NATO? After the Cold War, the NATO policy for Finland was guided by “maintaining the NATO option”, meaning that Finland would not seek membership under the current conditions but does not rule it out either.⁵⁶ The question of NATO membership was discussed in the mid-1990s in the Defence Council led by the President and Prime Minister. The conclusion was, as brought up by Tuomas Forsberg in his book on Nato (2002), that Finland could become a member if things happened: NATO becoming a crisis management institution and Russia acquiring a positive view on cooperation and becoming part of it. It was also argued that Finland would not be in the right reference group at the time

53 Juha Karvinen ja Juha-Antero Puistola. *NATO ja Suomi*. Helsinki: Auditorium, p. 207-208.

54 Arvio Suomen... 2016, p. 5.

55 Pauli Järvenpää. 2016. Argumentteja Suomen NATO-jäsenyyden puolesta. In Fred Blombergs (ed.), *Suomen Turvallisuuspoliittisen Ratkaisun Lähtökohtia*. Maanpuolustuskorkeakoulun julkaisusarja 1: tutkimuksia numero 4.

Tampere: Maanpuolustuskorkeakoulu, p. 14. http://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/124431/Blombergs_verkkoversio_2016-2.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y

56 Forsberg 2002, p. 244.

among members joining the alliance. In the early 2000s, the “security situation” had not changed indicating that there was no “reason” to apply for a membership. While the discussions have circulated around the same themes and issues on NATO, there have been some changes of emphasis as characterized by Forsberg. The first phase of the discussion was more theoretical about whether membership would realistically be an option in the first place. The second phase meant an actual discussion about the enlargement of NATO. At the same time, the uncertainty of Russia and its changing policy raised some concern in Finland. In the debate at that time, the role of NATO as a defence alliance was topical. Those with a positive view of the alliance argued that Finland should apply for membership when the “weather was good”. Next, the third phase of the discussion took place when NATO enlargement actually happened. The discussion moved from a threat analysis to a question of Finland’s influence in the international setting.⁵⁷

The latter phases of the discussion have been characterised by the timing of applying for membership and whether the door is actually open for Finland to join.⁵⁸ Furthermore, what would it actually mean to apply and what would the effects of possible membership be, as a group of experts have been pondering in a

57 See more in detail in Forsberg 2002 p. 260, p. 266–267.

58 For example, in a recent op-ed writing in a Finnish newspaper, asked why in Finland the NATO “option is discussed” when we clearly do not have one. The author is referring to the meaning of the word “option” and whether the NATO countries would actually accept Finland as a member. Wiberg points out how the discussion of NATO in Finland lacks specificity, for example in regard to the cost and benefit analysis. (See Matti Wiberg. 2017. Nato-keskustelussa pitäisi päästää asiaan. *Turun Sanomat*, alio, 9.11.2017.)

recent report commissioned by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.⁵⁹ A journalist in an article, “Wary of Russia, Finns take another look at NATO”, published in Politico Europe recently speculated that Finns would now be ready to have the debate on NATO.⁶⁰ The article refers to some of the recent statements by current and recent politicians and diplomats about membership. The first debate among the candidates in the Finnish presidential elections organised by the Finnish Business and Policy Forum (EVA) revolved around security and foreign policy. The question of NATO was considered in the debate but mainly from the perspective of whether there would need to be a referendum on membership.

FINLAND AS A PARTNER IN DEFENCE AND SECURITY POLICY

AN OUTLINE OF Finnish security and defence policy was recently sketched in the government’s reports on foreign and security policy (2016) and on defence policy (2017). The government’s report on foreign and security policy was released in June 2016 before the Brexit referendum and the U.S. presidential election. The question of the report’s timing was brought up. In May 2017, Parliament considered the Prime Minister’s announcement (pääministerin ilmoitus): how security and foreign policy and the

59 “Arvio Suomen mahdollisen Nato jäsenyyden vaikutuksista.” Written by Mats Bergquist, Francois Heisbourg, Rene Nyberg and Teija Tiilikainen. Available at: <http://www.finlandnato.org/public/download.aspx?ID=157406&GUID={8D6158F6-B7E5-483C-9455-F66D76ACC1FB}>. In addition, the topic has been considered by scholars. See e.g. a recent publication titled *Suomen turvallisuuspoliittisen ratkaisun lähtökohtia* edited by Freds Bloomberg, which concentrated on analysing what kind of impact external factors have on the security environment of Finland. Available at: <http://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/124431>

60 Reid Standish. 2017. *Politico* 10/30/17. <https://www.politico.eu/article/finland-russia-nato-wary-finns-take-another-look/>

operating environment of the EU have changed. The committee on Foreign Affairs had asked for it earlier.⁶¹

The report defines the emphasis of Finnish defence and security policies with a timeline of the mid-2020s. These include, for example, strengthening the EU as a security community, deepening cooperation with Sweden and other countries, deepening cooperation with the U.S., relations with Russia, other bilateral relations, developing the relationship with NATO, the future of the Arctic region and sustainable development in foreign and security policy.⁶² Finland's position, as stated in the defence policy report, is that Finland is non-militarily aligned⁶³ (sotilasliittoon kuulumaton maa), but in practice Finland is a partnership country of NATO and the "door is kept open" for the possibility of applying for a NATO membership.⁶⁴

Finland has been part of NATO's Partnership for Peace programme (PfP) from 1994 onwards. Finland has taken a part in crisis management operations carried out by NATO.⁶⁵ It has also participated in exercises organised by NATO and managed multinational exercises. Finland also takes part in

61 See the discussion "(Brexit, Trump ja Suomi)" at <https://areena.yle.fi/1-3847349>.

Chairman of the committee Matti Vanhanen noted in Parliament that because of the changes the Prime Minister should return to the issue later on. https://www.eduskunta.fi/Fl/vaski/PoytakirjaAsiakohta/Sivut/PTK_139+2016+5.aspx

62 See Valtioneuvoston ulko- ja turvallisuuspoliittinen selonteko, 2016. Valtioneuvoston Kanslian julkaisusarja 7/2016. https://www.eduskunta.fi/Fl/vaski/JulkaisuMetatieto/Documents/VNS_6+2016.pdf

63 See Valtioneuvoston puolustusselonteko, 2017. Valtioneuvoston julkaisusarja 5/2017. <https://www.eduskunta.fi/valtiopainoasiakirjat/VNS+3/2017>

64 "Suomi on sotilasliittoon kuulumaton maa, joka toteuttaa käytännönläheistä kumppanuutta Naton kanssa ja ylläpitää edelleen mahdollisuutta hakea Nato-jäsenyyttä". *Ibid.* p. 13.

65 Since 2015, the International Centre of Finnish Defence Forces (FINCENT) has coordinated crisis management training with NATO and its partner countries. See, <http://www.finlandnato.org/public/default.aspx?contentid=75622>.

the activities of the NATO Response Force.⁶⁶

NATO's Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) brings together the allied countries and their partners. It is the framework for NATO's cooperation with partner countries in the EURO-Atlantic area and is the forum for bilateral relationships between NATO and partner countries taking part in the PfP. Finland has been part of the EAPC since its inception in 1997. Finland was invited to join to NATO's "Enhanced Opportunities Partner" programme at the Wales Summit in 2014.⁶⁷

"Almost a member, but not quite," has been used to describe the relationship of Finland (and Sweden) to NATO.⁶⁸ The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland prepared a report entitled "Review of the impacts of Finland's possible NATO membership," which was published in 2016. In Finland, the NATO debate has revolved around Article 5, primarily because of the prospect of military assistance in crisis situations. The fact that Finland would also be obliged to act in times of crisis has also been seen as a negative factor of NATO membership.⁶⁹ *The Advisory Board of Defence Information* has regularly published data on the opinions of Finns on security and foreign policy

66 See Finland and NATO <http://www.finlandnato.org/public/default.aspx?contentid=101587&nodeid=31554&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>. See also The Finnish Defence Force. International Activities. <http://puolustusvoimat.fi/en/international-crisis-management/nato-response-force>

67 See more about Finland and NATO at <http://www.finlandnato.org/public/default.aspx?nodeid=31554&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>

68 See Hans Binnendijk, Debra L. Kagan and Adnras Simonyi. 2014. NATO Enlargement and Enhanced Partnership: The Nordic Case. In Daniel S. Hamilton, Andras Simonyi, Debra L. Kagan (ed.), *Advancing U.S. Nordic-Baltic Security Cooperation. Adapting Partnership to a New Security Environment*. Washington D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University. See also, Juha Pyykönen. 2016. "Nordic Partners of NATO. How similar are Finland and Sweden with NATO cooperation?" FIIA report 48 (2016).

69 See Björn Whlroos. 2017. Miksi liittyä Natoon? *Ulkopolitiikka*, 3/2017. Available at http://www.ulkopoliitikka.fi/artikkeli/1690/miksi_liittya_natoon/

and national security and defence (the most recent Dec. 2016). The question of NATO membership has been included in the questionnaire for the past 12 years. Recent polling indicated that about a quarter of respondents ‘believe that Finland should seek NATO membership’, while 61% disagreed. According to the findings, the support of Finns for military non-alignment has slightly grown but approval/disapproval of the NATO membership has stayed the same.⁷⁰

CONCLUDING REMARKS

TWISTS AND TURNS have filled the headlines in recent months. Uncertainty and mixed messages complicate the picture. While Trump’s foreign policy is still taking shape, some themes can be distinguished, such as a focus on hard rather than soft power, emphasis on national sovereignty, withdrawal from some parts of the international community, and an emphasis on bilateralism rather than multilateralism (at least in some policy areas), to mention but a few. Question to ponder are whether there is a change in the big picture or in continuity, when thinking in broader terms?

The lack of U.S. commitment in practice means that there is room for other actors to fill in, whether it be in regard to climate and trade policies or security in Europe. Maintaining and connecting to institutional norms, institutions and agreements have been seen as beneficial from the perspective of a small country such as Finland. The current situation can result in new openings or further already existing ones. One example

70 See the exact figures and the formulation of questions at: http://www.defmin.fi/en/tasks_and_activities/media_and_communications/the_advisory_board_for_defence_information_abdi/bulletins_and_reports/finns_opinions_on_foreign_and_security_policy_national_defence_and_security.8091.news. The report and bulletin are from December 2016.

that could be mentioned is the development of the EU's security policy role that has also been seen as 'encouraging' in Finland.⁷¹ Cooperation can also be taken to new forums as the newly established Hybrid CoE indicates. The other type of example of soft power is related to Nordic cooperation. In June 2017 prime ministers of the Nordic countries launched "Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges" aiming to progress UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The five Nordic prime ministers, for example, issued a statement confirming their stance on a promise 'to future generations' after the U.S. announced it would be leaving from the Paris Climate Accord.⁷² Transatlantic relations seem to be in a state of flux and it remains to be seen in which direction they will further develop.

- 71 Speech by President Sauli Niinistö at the Ambassador Seminar on 22 August 2017. <http://www.tpk.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=365465&nodeid=44810&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>
- 72 Nordic Co-operation. Nordic prime ministers respond to Trump. <http://www.norden.org/en/news-and-events/news/nordic-prime-ministers-respond-to-trump>