

ARMING COUNTRIES WITH OR WITHOUT THE UNITED STATES

AYŞE İ. A. ÖZER

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SUMMARY

This analysis shows that although the United States was a security partner of both the EU and Turkey when it decided to no longer commit to responding to its allies' security concerns, the latter took over the responsibility of ensuring their national defenses.

This analysis is about a country's choice of cooperation over non-cooperation on building national defense. It argues that states opt for alternative strategies when they realize that they can no longer depend on the hegemon for their national defense. Turkey's deal for the S-400 missile defense system with Russia and the European Union's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which aims to intensify the union's internal defense cooperation, are clear cases of strategic non-cooperation. This analysis will show that although the United States was a security partner of both the EU and Turkey when it decided to no longer commit to responding to its allies' security concerns, the latter took over the responsibility of ensuring their national defenses.

INTRODUCTION

In hegemonic international systems, the hegemon stands out with its strong economic position and role as a maintainer of a stable economic regime. The hegemon does not only control the capital market and raw materials, but its military power remains the main pillar of hegemony. Hegemony creates a security umbrella and deters threats by aggressors to both the hegemon and to its allies. Allies are not as powerful as the hegemon, hence they mostly depend on the superpower for their security. As long as the hegemon is dedicated to protect these second-ranked states, they are safe. But when the hegemon quits playing a responsible role of maintaining their security, those states take over the responsibility to ensure their own survival and start looking for different sources of defense. Turkey's purchase of S-400s from Russia is such a decision motivated by the U.S. denial to sell Patriots to Turkey and also the withdrawal of Patriots by NATO allies during the heyday of the Syrian Civil War. The European Union's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) initiative also

eliminates the U.S. as the sole actor of cooperation as the US started showing unwillingness to pay for its allies' security. Turkey is not an outlier country in search of alternatives for its defense, nor is it the only country subjected to the threat of U.S. sanctions.

By examining this changing trend with two examples, this analysis focuses on countries' decision of strategic non-cooperation on arms sales. It looks at the conditions under which cooperation is broken and countries search for alternative sources for their defense. It is not about Turkey's purchase of S-400s or the nature of PESCO. It is not about Turkish-American relations or European-American relations in general. The issues discussed here are not the sustainability of Turkey's S-400 decision or that of PESCO. The issue is more about the causes of a new trend of alignment behavior in the field of defense industry and organization.

Alliances take new forms, and allies change according to a country's interests. Hence, it is not reasonable to bring such choices up for discussion. The strategic choices of Turkey and the EU can be read more correctly if their former relations with the U.S. and the effects of such relations on these countries are taken into account. This analysis will look closely into Turkey's purchase of the S-400 missile defense system from Russia and the EU's agenda of accelerating its defense cooperation via PESCO through strategic non-cooperation. Turkey's S-400 deal shows that countries can cooperate when the hegemon is out of the equation and when there are no institutions to facilitate cooperation. PESCO, on the other hand, is an initiative made possible under the roof of an institution, the EU, against the will of the hegemon. The U.S. has traditionally been an ally of both Turkey and the EU. As

the United States resigned from its position of hegemony, its former allies turned to alternative security measures. I argue that this search for an alternative on the part of Turkey and the EU is not motivated by the idea of balancing the United States, but by providing security for themselves when the U.S. no longer commits itself to defending them. This analysis will start with a review of the literature on defense cooperation and on how the position of the hegemon shapes the choices of second-ranked states. Then, it will look closely at the U.S. withdrawal from the international scene and how such a move pushes its former allies to guarantee their national security through alternative means. The decisions regarding PESCO and Turkey's S-400 deal with Russia will shed light on how strategic non-cooperation works. The conclusion will offer some final remarks regarding Turkey's possible courses of action.

STRATEGIC NON-COOPERATION

In the hegemonic international system, the superpower regulates the relations between countries. The hegemon is the guardian of the system and sustains the security of the other states; there is no other country strong enough to challenge it with its own military power. Even when the hegemon's actions do not fully serve others' interests, the alternative of resisting its will is too costly for other countries. Hence, when there is a hegemon, others are forced to cooperate or at least tacitly approve the hegemon's course of action. Under the authority of the hegemon, no state can wander off and act as it pleases. The superpower is there stabilizing the system, which gives confidence to those under its protection.

When there is no hegemon, on the other hand, states have to take their security into their own hands. The option of outsourcing protection goes out of the window. But, under what conditions might cooperation with the hegemon be broken? Under what conditions do countries opt to create their own security tools and organizations? What choices does non-cooperation give to countries which were secure under the hegemon's security umbrella?

In the literature on defense cooperation there are two conflicting views regarding the hegemon's effect on cooperation. Hegemonic stability theorists underline the indispensable role of a world leader for cooperation among countries. On the other hand, neoliberal institutionalists claim that even without the hegemon, cooperation among countries can take place mainly because of institutions already erected through the power of the hegemon. The role of an overarching authority to arrive at common goals can be taken back to Mancur Olson who claims that without coercion or selective incentives achieving common interests is not possible.¹ Coercion is a tool used by a state powerful enough to make side payments and/or force other countries to do what it wants. Hegemonic stability assumes that the presence of a hegemon creates a stable international regime as the dominant state sets the rules and regulates the system. Kindleberger does not see any reason for the cooperation after the decline of hegemony.² For him, a benevolent despot is required for countries to realize common inter-

1. Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, Second Printing with a New Preface and Appendix (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 51.

2. Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929–1939* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1986).

ests. He attributes the reason of the economic crisis after the First World War to the absence of a dominant power in world politics.³ Hegemonic stability stipulates a cooperative outcome as it works for the benefit of all sides. Moreover, it assumes they will be better off in such a system than they would be in a non-hegemonic system.⁴ However, there is no doubt that the hegemon will set the rules of the system according to its own advantage to further its own interests.⁵ Hence, in the hegemonic international system, the hegemon's self-interest prevails over the distribution of public good to others.⁶

In the hegemonic international system, the superpower regulates the relations between countries.

Although accepting the basic tenets of the hegemonic stability theory, neoliberal institutionalists suggest cooperation is possible even in the absence of a hegemon. Keohane says that without hegemony, cooperation can take place through institutions. According to Snidal, cooperation cannot only be sustained in face of declining hegemony, it can also be enhanced through collective action.⁷ Moreover, even the

beneficiaries of hegemonic leadership can seek ways to obtain a greater share in the international system.⁸ And that possibility becomes even stronger when the hegemon reneges on its promises as a security provider. Keohane and Nye underline that as the rule-making and rule-enforcing powers of the hegemonic state begin to erode, the policies of secondary states are likely to change.⁹ When that is the case, a country can strategically choose not to cooperate with the hegemon any longer and can start searching for alternatives. A great part of the literature regarding the role of the hegemon in cooperation is dedicated to proving that states choose strategic non-cooperation in order to gain influence over a stronger partner. Such minor states come together to increase "their defensive and deterrent capabilities, so as to dissuade the hegemonic power from becoming too strong or too threatening."¹⁰ Moreover, they do it precisely because they are disturbed by the inequitable benefits they receive from the cooperation with the superior power. By creating their own security coalition, they try to "equalize the odds through soft balancing."¹¹ But states do not always come together with the intention of constraining or undermining the hegemon with their military power. The alternative coalitions and alliances may not necessarily aim to balance against a hegemony. Such coalitions may just be looking for new options to safeguard themselves in the absence of a guardian - they may not be directed against the hegemon. Besides, curtailing

3. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929–1939*, p. 28.

4. Duncan Snidal, "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory," *International Organization* 39, no. 4 (1985), p. 590.

5. rules are set Through lower tariffs, rising trade propositions, and less regionalism, etc. See Stephen Krasner, "State Power and the Structure of International Trade," in *International Political Economy: Perspectives on Global Power and Wealth*, Fourth (Boston: Routledge, 2003), p. 23; Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 4th edition (Boston: Longman, 2012), p. 196.

6. Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

7. Duncan Snidal, "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory," *International Organization* 39, no. 4 (1985), p. 593.

8. Snidal, "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory," p. 613.

9. Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 4th ed. (Boston: Longman, 2012), p. 38.

10. Paul, "Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy," p. 52.

11. Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing against the United States," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (July 2005), p. 36.

the power of the superpower and displacing it from its current position in order to take over the post would not be the most logical and reliable option for countries as it means taking over the responsibility with economic and military costs. In other words, the literature falls short of seeing this reality and perceives every attempt of alternative alliances as an initiative to weaken the superpower or to balance it.

However, in general, countries are disinclined to balance against hegemony. Instead, what countries may try at most to do is to push the limits for more equitable cooperation in the future. Hence, it is not about challenging the military preponderance of the hegemon but rather about safeguarding themselves and increasing their own capabilities in defending their nations when the hegemon is not dedicated to protecting them. In other words, if the hegemon is not willing to assume its role as a security provider, others have to take responsibility for their safety.

There are two ways to guarantee security under such conditions. The first option is for a state to be confident that it is self-sufficient and can resort to its resources for protection. In such a scenario, the domestic factors can make up for the loss caused by strategic non-cooperation.¹² The second option is to form alliances with third parties.¹³ If the expectations of second-ranked states converge, they might opt for cooperation among themselves while strategically choosing not to cooperate with the hegemon. Such a move basically gives the message that they have somewhere else to go to and do not want to be shortchanged while decisions

that substantially concern them are being made. Making such a decision is risky and might be costly because the signals for alternative alliances might annoy the hegemon and lead to economic sanctions and embargoes to deter cooperation among second-ranked states. However, in the long run there is a real threat to a second-ranked state since cooperation with the hegemon, being shortchanged in the decision-making process, and not gaining enough advantages (profits) as a result of this cooperation will actually undermine its capacity to develop its own apparatuses to protect itself. This state will be vulnerable to threats coming from other countries if and when the hegemon steps aside and does not prioritize its ally's security. On the other hand, the costs of non-cooperation will be high, including sanctions and embargoes for offending the hegemon. However, the strategic and economic costs to the hegemon will also be high which is why the hegemon treats others so harshly. Meanwhile, when a country does not submit to such threats, it might strengthen its hand in future bargaining.

As opposed to an idea that sees cooperation as possible only when a hegemon stabilizes the system or when the institutions set the rules and maintain the system, this analysis argues that a third alternative is possible: when a hegemon is out of the equilibrium and regardless of whether institutions are part of that system, second-ranked countries can still cooperate among themselves. This type of behavior will be illustrated by two examples of reaction to the declining U.S. commitments to Turkey and the EU. The rationale behind these two cases also shows that an alternative cooperation does not necessarily arise from the intention of balancing against the hegemon or undermining its power.

12. Kelley, "Strategic Non-Cooperation as Soft Balancing: Why Iraq Was Not Just about Iraq," p. 168.

13. Ibid.

DECLINING COMMITMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES

Ever since the Obama administrations, the world started seeing less U.S. involvement in international disputes. During the terms of President Obama, as opposed to President Trump, a softer approach prevailed hence it was not that apparent that the U.S. started retreating from international issues. With the Trump administration, American constituents and their interests were obviously prioritized and more conservative and aggressive policies were expected. The signs were quite obvious ever since Trump started his campaign with the slogan “America First” and blamed international trade and globalization for unemployment and the reduced wealth of the nation. At every chance, Trump made clear that the United States is no longer willing to pay out of pocket. He accused other countries for “ripping off” the U.S. and taking advantage of bilateral trade relations.¹⁴ He showed displeasure about the United States paying for the security of other countries and asked them to pull their own weight. It was high time, he believed, others take more responsibility for their own protection. Trump insisted that the EU NATO members should allocate a greater share of their GDPs on defense expenditures which for many of the EU countries is below the threshold of 2% (See Chart 1). On the one hand, by expecting others to pay more and share the burden, he abandoned the proactive role played in the past by the U.S. in the international scene. Meanwhile, he focused more on U.S. security and the national job market in order to “Make America Great Again.” He

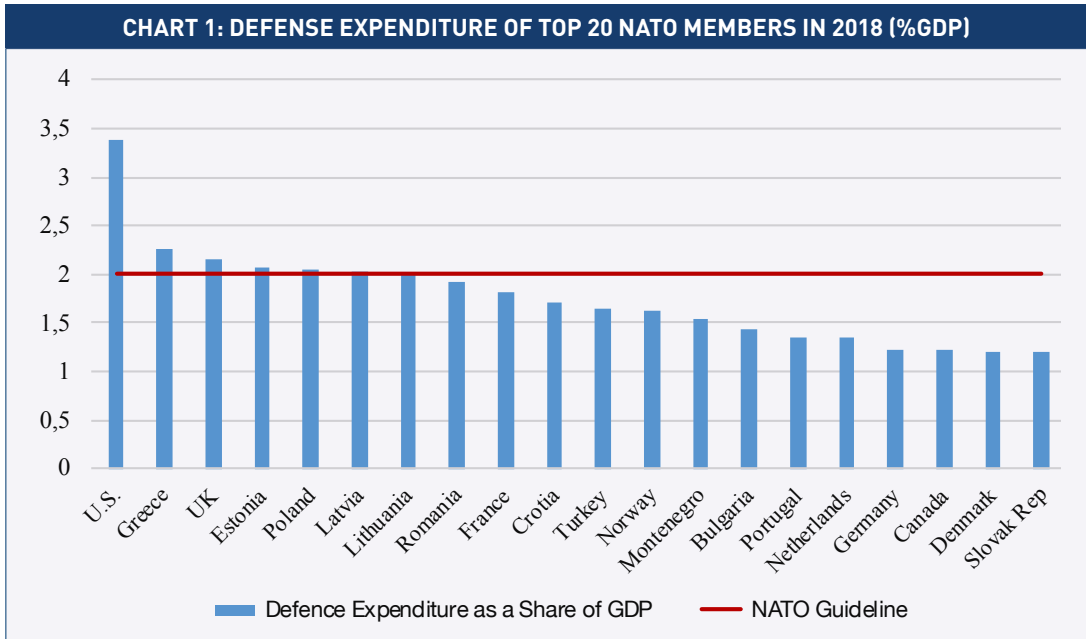
acted in order to protect the American market by calling big firms to bring their businesses back to the U.S. Although this was about protecting the United States’ producers and companies, when other nations take similar precautions, alarm bells rang in the United States. This is because such a move means U.S. firms’ market share is being cut down in those respective countries. As an outcome, the Trump administration declared the resignation of the United States from the position of hegemony.

In terms of trade and security, the U.S. and the EU were on the same page. They adhered to multilateralism as a principle when they took external action and communicated with other countries. The EU has a broader security agenda including human rights, energy security, and migration which started losing importance for the U.S. And when the U.S. withdrew from the Paris Agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the UN Human Rights Council, and UNESCO, the EU started questioning the U.S. commitment to the principle of multilateralism.¹⁵ The U.S. withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear deal, which the U.S. with other members of the Security Council and Germany reached together, again showed the EU that the U.S. way of resolving problems was diverging even more. The United States’ protectionist policies started targeting not only U.S. adversaries but also European interests. Steel and aluminum sectors were struck when the U.S. imposed tariffs on imports on the grounds of national security and refused to grant an exemption to the EU.¹⁶ Upon disagreement with French President Macron regarding NATO and PESCO, President Trump threatened to introduce

14. Jack Thompson, “Trump and the Weaponization of International Trade,” *CSS*, 2019, pp. 13-14.

15. Roderick Harte and Elena Lazarou, “State of EU-US Relations,” *European Parliament*, September 2018, p. 2.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 1.



The chart has been prepared by the author based on data provided by NATO in 2019. For further information see https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_06/20190625_PR2019-069-EN.pdf.

tariffs on wine coming from France.¹⁷ Trump also had a falling out with German Chancellor Merkel because of Germany's low contribution to NATO, which is a little over one percent. He denigrated Germany for being controlled by Russia in reference to the payments it makes for oil and gas imports.¹⁸ Trump questioned the devotion of Germany and other European countries to NATO because of their overdependence on Russia by asking, "What good is NATO if Germany is paying Russia billions of dollars for gas and energy?" His salvos targeted European countries, and particularly Germany. The only way to keep on good terms with him seemed to be to pay more for defense.

17. Thompson, "Trump and the Weaponization of International Trade," p. 21.

18. For Germany's dependence on Russian sources for energy see: Julian Wettengel, "Germany's Dependence on Imported Fossil Fuels," Clean Energy Wire, April 29, 2019, <https://www.cleanenergywire.org/factsheets/germanys-dependence-imported-fossil-fuels>.

As the U.S. showed less will to put its neck on the line for allies, cooperation with the hegemon for security was no longer an option. EU countries had to draw their own path. However, European countries were not the only ones being reprimanded by Trump. United States' aggression showed up in other cases. Turkish-American relations followed a similar path. Turkey's S-400 deal with Russia and the resulting tensions with the U.S. are not that different than what happened with the EU. Turkey is challenging the U.S. hegemony in the arms market by the S-400 procurement. The European Union aims to achieve its strategic autonomy in terms of its defense through the European Defense Fund (EDF) and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). While the U.S. seemingly chooses to focus on its internal affairs, it fears losing out in foreign affairs. Its protectionist and isolationist policies force others to take initiatives in

terms of their national security. However, there is something to be fearful about: what if a single country sets an example to the rest and shakes up the whole balance in the international system daring to challenge the U.S. position? In order to prevent this from happening, the U.S. has to be preemptive. That is why it is making threats to nations with autonomous agendas. The cases of Turkey and the European Union, with their autonomous agendas in defense, can be used as examples of strategic non-cooperation with the hegemon. Nevertheless, this specific strategy of non-cooperation is not caused by seeing the U.S. as a national security threat and trying to develop weapon systems or form alliances to countervail its aggression. The changing U.S. priorities and its protectionist policies forced these two actors, Turkey and the EU, to choose a similar path for providing for their security.

FORMATION AND PROBABLE CONSOLIDATION OF PESCO

Under the umbrella of PESCO, countries in the European Union have been working on a joint defense capacity and to increase their military capabilities together. The aim is to increase the EU's investment in developing defense equipment and becoming independent from the United States. It is also viewed as a contribution to the further integration of the union, which will become even more critical after Brexit. The reasons for accelerating PESCO can be listed as three. First, two prominent EU members, namely France and Germany, are disturbed by the policies of President Trump. Second, Brexit made it easier for the rest of the countries to reach the decision of accelerating PESCO since Britain was constantly blocking further integration

through defense cooperation. Third, ever since Russia annexed Crimea and started supporting pro-Russian secessionists in Ukraine, European countries are more worried about their own security. Moreover, since the United States became more distant to transatlantic problems and the security of the EU, the EU felt the necessity to create a separate union for sustaining the common security of European countries without being dependent on NATO or the United States.

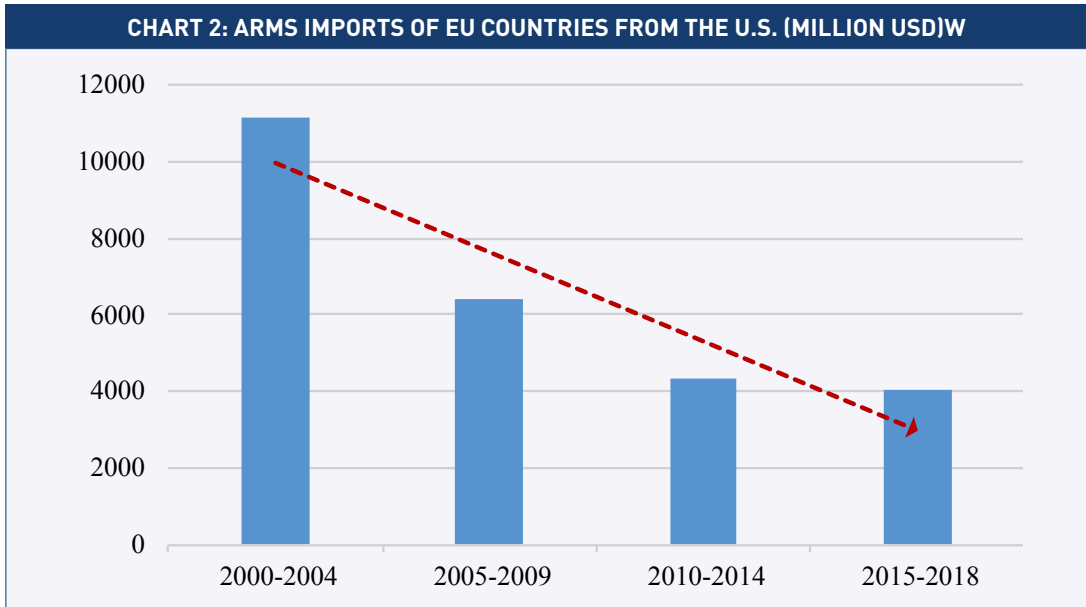
The projects of PESCO include, among others, the development of surveillance and cyber-security systems, manufacture of armored infantry vehicles, assault vehicles, and mine-sweeping drones.¹⁹ These are projects exclusively designed to be undertaken by member countries and third-state participation is seen as exceptional since "PESCO projects must have a clear European added value in addressing the Union's capability and operational needs."²⁰ While the U.S. is not content with how things are going with the deepening defense integration of the European Union, the EU is also complaining about restrictions in using the capabilities developed with U.S. technology.²¹

Much to the dismay of the United States, third-state participation is a murky area for PESCO projects. "It is first up to members of individual projects to consider inviting a third State that meets the general conditions. The Council will decide whether a third State meets these re-

19. "COUNCIL DECISION Establishing the List of Projects to Be Developed under PESCO" (Council of the European Union, March 1, 2018), <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6393-2018-INIT/en/pdf>.

20. "Permanent Structured Cooperation PESCO-Deepening Defense Cooperation Among on Defence" (EUDefense, May 2019), https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/pesco_factsheet_may_2019.pdf, p. 2.

21. Robin Emmott, "Open up U.S. Market, EU Says in Riposte to Pentagon Threat," *Reuters*, May 16, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-eu-defence-idUSKCN1SM2AL>.



The chart has been prepared by the author based on the data provided by SIPRI in 2019. 2018 figures are included. For further information see <http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/values.php>.

quirements. Following a positive decision, the project may then enter into an administrative arrangement with the concerned third State, in line with procedures and decision-making autonomy of the Union.”²² While generating capabilities for “EU’s most urgent requirements,” PESCO alienates non-EU countries from cooperation for defense.²³ Basically, foreign defense companies are not welcomed in PESCO projects. Although trying to protect its market from outside encroachments, the U.S. sees a similar European Union step as an attack on its own companies. The nationalist policies of Trump might favor local companies at the domestic level, but the nationalist policies of other nations create barriers for North American goods and especially arms

of defense. This is, of course, an undesired development for a country like the United States for which it means losing its share in the European arms market – the United States’ second largest export market in defense.²⁴ The U.S. accounted for 41% of EU states’ arms imports during the 2014-2018 period.²⁵ Although the EU continues to import from the U.S. in large amounts, they are increasingly turning to European suppliers.²⁶ Chart 1 shows the decrease in the EU countries’ imports of major arms from the United States since the 2000-2003 period. That means the EU was already reducing its arms imports and the PESCO agenda was clearly a challenge to the U.S. predominance in the EU arms market. See-

22. “Permanent Structured Cooperation PESCO-Deepening Defense Cooperation Among on Defence,” p. 3.

23. Martin Banks, “European Union Tees up New Military-Cooperation Proposals,” *Defense News*, May 6, 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2019/05/06/european-union-tees-up-new-military-cooperation-proposals/>.

24. Alexandra Brzozowski, “Brexit Uncertainty Delays EU’s Defence Industry Plans,” *Euractiv.Com* (blog), May 9, 2019, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/news/brexit-uncertainty-delays-eus-defence-industry-plans/>.

25. Pieter D. Wezeman et al., “Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018” (SIPRI, March 2019), p. 10.

26. *Ibid.*

ing this tendency, the U.S. is pushing the limits in order to stay within the European market by having a share in the PESCO projects.

While the EU is trying to protect its domestic capabilities, the U.S. market is already overly protected by a 1933 U.S. legislation which stipulates that the United States prefers U.S.-made products over foreign-based alternatives even when the former are more expensive. The trade imbalance between the EU and U.S. caused by this legislation is a cause of great disturbance among EU countries. Regarding the disparity, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini stated, “In the EU there is no ‘Buy European Act’ ...[as a matter of fact] around 81% of international contracts go to U.S. firms in Europe today.”²⁷ Hence, the ongoing situation favors U.S. companies while undercutting European-based firms, which creates an incentive on the side of Europe to protect its own domestic market through strategic non-cooperation.

On February 20, U.S. ambassador to the EU Gordon Sondland hosted a number of MEPs (Member of the European Parliament) and warned them about the negative consequences of PESCO. The warnings were related to technological and economic aspects of undertaking an independent defense initiative which would risk the interoperability of defense systems. Risks of duplication and waste of resources were aspects presented as disadvantages of insisting on strategic autonomy. The message delivered to the guests clearly indicates that the United States is disturbed by the initiative and attempts to “delay

the adoption or even completely torpedo the initiative.”²⁸ However, as long as the EU countries are dependent on the U.S. for arms, they can never be entirely free to use their arms as they wish or sell them to other countries due to ITAR (International Traffic in Arms Regulations). That is why this U.S. regulatory regime to restrict and control the export of arms “is increasingly seen as a threat by the European contracting authorities,” and European manufacturers are trying not to use ITAR components.²⁹ From an EU perspective, however, ITAR-free PESCO projects could have more export opportunities on the global defense market, once fully developed.

On May 1, 2019, prior to the EU members’ meeting for deciding new projects to be implemented by PESCO, Vice-President of the European Commission Mogherini received a letter from Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Ellen Lord and Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Andrea L. Thompson regarding American concerns over PESCO.³⁰ The letter addressed concerns about possible damages to the transatlantic relations fostered to date. However, the letter was not restricted to U.S. concerns of being shut out of the European market. It also threatened the EU members by alluding to eco-

27. Fergus Kelly, “US Threatens EU with Trade War over Weapons,” *The Defense Post*, May 15, 2019, <https://thedefensepost.com/2019/05/15/us-eu-trade-war-weapons/>.

28. Nicolas Gros-Verheyde, “USA Launches Lobbying Operation to Undermine European Defense Fund,” *Brussels2 version Beta* (blog), March 13, 2019, <https://www.bruxelles2.eu/en/2019/03/13/usa-launches-lobbying-operation-to-undermine-european-defense-fund/>.

29. Lucie Béraud-Sudreau, Yvonne-Stefania Efstathiou, and Conor Hannigan, *Keeping the Momentum in European Defence Collaboration: An Early Assessment of PESCO Implementation* (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, May 2019), p. 13.

30. Valerie Insinna, “US Officials Threaten Retribution for European Union’s Restrictions on Defense Fund,” *Defense News*, June 19, 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/digital-show-dailies/paris-air-show/2019/06/19/us-officials-threaten-retribution-for-european-unions-restrictions-on-defense-fund/>, (accessed on June 27, 2019)

conomic sanctions: “It is clear that similar reciprocally imposed U.S. restrictions would not be welcomed by our European partners and allies, and we would not relish having to consider them in the future.”³¹ By asking for a change in the rules governing the European Defense Fund, the U.S. wanted to keep its market share in Europe which has a high potential.³² If the U.S. national interests are damaged and profits are blocked, there is no doubt that it can retaliate by imposing sanctions on the countries that curtail its interests. The letter was clear proof of that in terms of showing the possible U.S. reaction if the EU does not comply with its requests by exempting them from participation rules.

TURKEY’S S-400 PURCHASE

Turkey’s purchase of S-400s and the U.S. reaction was very similar to the U.S. approach to PESCO. Turkey’s preference for S-400s was another sign that the U.S. was being cut out of a strategic deal, and an alternative was preferred over what the Americans could provide. When Turkey’s purchase of Russian S-400s first became public, the U.S. tried to talk Turkey out of the deal. But Turkey’s decision in the first place was a result of the U.S. refusal to sell Patriots to it. Moreover, having experienced the withdrawal of Patriots by its NATO allies in southeastern Turkey in the heydays of the Syrian Civil War, made Turkey question the commitment of its allies to its security.³³ Turkey became an open target to attacks coming from Syria, which on

several occasions caused casualties as well as material damages. Hence, in 2017, Turkey opted for S-400s which are technically superior and can better serve Turkey’s security. Afterward, the U.S. started threatening to expel Turkey from the F-35 program. The enforcement of sanctions became more institutionalized when the United States Senate passed the bill known as the CAATSA on August 2, 2017. The Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) is a law that regulates the U.S. response to Iran, Russia, and North Korea’s aggression. Related to Turkey’s purchase of S-400s, a section of this law includes the imposition of sanctions to those who engage with defense sectors of the Russian Federation. If Turkey does not change its mind about the S-400s, there is the possibility that for the first time the CAATSA will be applied to a NATO ally. However, although Trump is not an ardent supporter of imposing sanctions on Turkey, he has no choice but to implement them if the Congress passes the bill. He showed his reluctance for the very first time during the G-20 Summit in Osaka, in a bilateral meeting with President Erdoğan. He accused the previous administration of failing to provide Patriots to Turkey when Turkey needed them the most.

Although by using the CAATSA, congress can ask the president to impose sanctions on Turkey, Turkey was also warned by a letter directly addressed to Turkish Minister of National Defense Hulusi Akar. On June 6, 2019, Turkey received a letter with similar content to the one sent to the EU. Former U.S. Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan wrote the letter after Turkey sent its military personnel to Russia for training in May 2019. The letter declares that the F-35s will not be delivered to Turkey and training of

31. Fergus Kelly, “US Threatens EU with Trade War over Weapons,” *The Defense Post*, May 15, 2019, <https://thedefensepost.com/2019/05/15/us-eu-trade-war-weapons/>, (accessed on June 3, 2019)

32. Ibid.

33. Ayşe İ. A. Özer, *The Rise of the Turkish Defense Industry*, 2019, p. 76.

the Turkish pilots will be terminated once Turkey receives the S-400s. It was also decided to ban Turkey from attending the top-level meetings regarding the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF). Moreover, the fate of the four F-35s for which Turkey has already made the payment is uncertain.³⁴ Shanahan suggested that Turkey should change its course on the S-400s if it does not want to be excluded from the program.³⁵ Turkey was also warned about possible sanctions if it does not override its deal with Russia. The deadline given to Turkey to change its decision about purchasing Russian missiles was July 31.³⁶ Although the first batch of S-400s arrived in Turkey before July 31, the decision about sanctions was postponed - a clear sign of the costs of imposing sanctions for the United States.

In the long run, if the U.S. continues the policy of neglecting traditional allies and maintains a threatening approach, one can even expect the formation of balancing coalitions among these actors.

It appears that Turkey's deal with Russia has political and economic consequences not only for Turkey but also for the United States; even more so, if other countries follow Turkey's example in changing their preference of supplier.

Until 2018, the U.S. was the primary exporter of ballistic missile defense systems. Guided missiles accounted for 19% of U.S. major arms exports in the period 2014-2018.³⁷ These exports included the delivery of 400 cruise missiles and 124 ballistic missiles - both types with a range between 250 and 400 kilometers.³⁸ The U.S. share in international arms transfer is 36%. It is again a major supplier of the Turkish market. The U.S. comprises 41% of Turkey's arms imports, while European countries comprise 50%.³⁹ On the one hand, exporting major arms is a source of huge revenue for the United States. This is seen as a matter of national security because when the U.S. is the country that sells the arms, it can limit their use by buyer countries in a situation which can produce undesirable results for its foreign policy.

There were several issues on the Turkish agenda when joining the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter consortium. Among them were to increase the operational capabilities of local firms, and gain the technological know-how in due process to improve its designing and manufacturing capabilities for an indigenous fighter. Turkish manufacturers are responsible for the manufacturing of landing gear and center fuselage, which is a great contribution to the Turkish economy.⁴⁰ Although American officials threatened Turkey

34. "10 Soruda ABD'nin F-35 Mektubu: Ne Anlama Geliyor, Neden Sızdırıldı?," June 8, 2019, sec. Türkiye, <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-48567283>.

35. Matthew Rocco, "US Threatens to Cut Turkey from F-35 Programme," *Financial Times*, June 7, 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/76adcb4e-8952-11e9-97ea-05ac2431f453>.

36. Marcus Weisgerber, "Pentagon Gives Turkey a Deadline to Cancel S-400 Deal or Lose F-35," *Defense One*, June 7, 2019, <https://www.defenseone.com/politics/2019/06/pentagon-gives-turkey-deadline-cancel-s-400-deal-or-lose-f-35/157569/>, (accessed on June 8, 2019)

37. Pieter D. Wezeman, et al., "Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018" (SIPRI, March 2019).

38. Ibid.

39. "Sasad-Performans-Raporu-2018" (Ankara: SASAD, 2018), p. 10.

40. Karen DeYoung and Missy Ryan, "Pentagon to Stop Training Turkish Pilots on F-35s as Dispute over Purchase of Russian System Escalates," *Washington Post*, June 7, 2019, sec. National Security, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/pentagon-to-stop-training-turkish-pilots-on-f-35s-as-dispute-over-purchase-of-russian-system-escalates/2019/06/07/895b4ca2-895d-11e9-98c1-e945ae5-db8fb_story.html, (accessed on June 17, 2019)

to move it out of the production, which may cause economic damages, the loss will not be one-sided. In 2018, the U.S. Department of Defense stated that eliminating Turkey would be a loss of time, which would cause adverse effects to the economy. However, thinking about the positive spillover effects would give a partial approach to the F-35 issue since the JSF has its own problems. After these political exchanges, Turkish society and defense industry elites started a new discussion about the costs and benefits of the F-35 program based on technical details. Recently, two F-35 pilots suffered from excruciating pain due to a shortcoming known since 2014.⁴¹ This incident stems from a CAT-1 (Category One) technical deficiency which lists the most critical failures of the fighters that could jeopardize the life of the pilot or prevent the jet from performing its key mission.⁴² In Luke Air Force Base in Arizona, the operations were halted and resumed on the condition that jets fly at lower altitudes.⁴³ Overall, notwithstanding the technological superiority of the JSF, technical deficiencies create a concern regarding being dedicated to buying F-35s.

Upon discussions over the delivery of S-400s and the possible U.S. sanctions which would exclude Turkey from the F-35 program, the first parts of the Russian missile defense sys-

tem arrived in Turkey on July 12. Although the U.S. is threatening Turkey, the coercive power of the hegemon is not strong enough to change Turkey's mind on the decision. Of course, Turkey's choice of S-400 is a strategic one just as the EU's PESCO. Turkey's long-term "strategic ally" is no longer willing to solve critical security issues. There is a general agreement today in Turkey, as Walt said, that it is futile to "hope that strong states will remain benevolent."⁴⁴ America's new approach to its former allies - in other words, treating friends like adversaries - creates doubt on the part of the EU and Turkey regarding U.S. security commitments and weakens alliances.⁴⁵ The EU countries and Turkey opt for strategic non-cooperation and seek alternative alliances. Maybe such initiatives on the part of Turkey and the EU came late because of dependency on the benevolence of the United States. Also, such moves of independence are never taken lightly by the U.S. which makes the costs of non-cooperation more visible for second-ranked states. But, at the moment, the preferences of the United States push these countries to take such initiatives. For now, there is no sign of a conscious effort to balance against the U.S. hegemony. Traditional U.S. allies feel uncomfortable about the U.S. strategy and are trying to find new defense tools and organizations as a substitute for U.S. friendship. In the long run, if the U.S. continues the policy of neglecting traditional allies and maintains a threatening approach, one can even expect the formation of balancing coalitions among these actors.

41. Valerie Insinna, "The Pentagon Is Battling the Clock to Fix Serious, Unreported F-35 Problems," *Defense News*, June 13, 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/air/2019/06/12/the-pentagon-is-battling-the-clock-to-fix-serious-unreported-f-35-problems/>.

42. Valerie Insinna, "FAQ: Your Guide to Understanding How the Military Rates F-35 Technical Shortfalls," *Defense News*, June 17, 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/smr/hidden-troubles-f35/2019/06/12/faq-your-guide-to-understanding-how-the-military-rates-f-35-technical-shortfalls/>.

43. Valerie Insinna, "A Fix Is Coming for a Problem That Left Two F-35 Pilots in 'Excruciating' Pain," June 12, 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/air/2019/06/12/a-fix-is-coming-for-a-problem-that-left-two-f-35-pilots-in-excruciating-pain/>.

44. Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security* 9, no. 4 (1985): p. 15.

45. Thompson, "Trump and the Weaponization of International Trade," p. 11.

CONCLUSION

The reason that Turkey and the EU are trying to take a more proactive role in terms of providing for their security, embark on alternative cooperation that disturbs their longtime ally, the United States, and make deals with U.S. rivals should be sought in the decreasing U.S. willingness to step in for its allies. The Trump administration showed great discontent for the burden the U.S. had to endure for its allies across the world. As promised during his election campaign, Trump worked for national economic interests through adopting punitive measures against other countries after coming to office. The policy implications were reflected in areas stretching from trade to defense. It pushed U.S. allies to make alternative alliances for their national security. However, the latter was not a move on the side of second-rank states to balance against the U.S. threat as the literature on soft balancing predicted. Strategic non-cooperation was a reactionary response on the side of those countries to fill the gap left open when the U.S. forewent its role as its allies' protector. However, the realization of the punitive measures can force the EU and countries like Turkey to form alliances to balance against the U.S. in the future if it becomes too threatening.

When the United States proved that it was no longer willing to contribute as much to NATO and provide arms of defense to allies for their security, countries determined their independent road map. Turkey's purchase of S-400s despite all the threats by the United States and the EU's insistence on PESCO for the further integration of Europe around collective security were the results of this U.S. decision, which forces these countries to seek alternative options. Moreover, under the changing international

structure, there are several ways that Turkey can work for its national security. These are:

- Cooperation with third states like Russia should always be an option, and if such countries can provide Turkey with better alternative systems of defense, then Turkey should pursue this option while doing damage control with the United States.
- Depending on internal sources for the country's defense is always the number one option. That is why the U.S. is so confident with its own capabilities to protect both itself and its allies. Turkey has been improving its national defense industry for quite some time. Not being totally dependent on foreign alliances can give Turkey more room for maneuver in matters concerning national security, especially when its interests clash with those of its allies.
- The EU might appear adamant in the PESCO framework in terms of restrictions on the inclusion of third states. Part of this stems from not getting its share from its deals with the U.S. up to this point. However, although Turkey would benefit significantly from a PESCO alliance both economically and technologically, cooperating with Turkey instead of the U.S. would be acceptable for the EU. Hence, Turkey can try to safeguard itself in the long term through pushing the limits for cooperation in defense with European countries.
- Although procuring S-400s from Russia, Turkish authorities made clear it that their intention was not to break off the relation with the U.S., and that they are willing to keep cooperating with it on F-35 and other projects. The future of relations requires the bilateral commitment to be strong.

Turkey shows that it is committed to preserving ties, but the U.S. side is multivocal with the U.S. Congress wanting to impose CAATSA, even though President Trump puts the blame on the previous administration for not selling Patriots to Turkey which

made it turn to the S-400s. As long as it is possible, Turkey will and should keep relations intact with the United States. If sanctions will be the final U.S. decision, however, Turkish authorities have declared that there will be countermeasures.

ARMING COUNTRIES: WITH OR WITHOUT THE UNITED STATES

AYŞE İ. A. ÖZER

SETA | ANALYSIS

This analysis is about a country's choice of cooperation over non-cooperation on building national defense. It argues that states opt for alternative strategies when they realize that they can no longer depend on the hegemon for their national defense. Turkey's deal for the S-400 missile defense system with Russia and the European Union's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which aims to intensify the union's internal defense cooperation, are clear cases of strategic non-cooperation. This analysis will show that although the United States was a security partner of both the EU and Turkey when it decided to no longer commit to responding to its allies' security concerns, the latter took over the responsibility of ensuring their national defenses.

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