

## Chapter IV

### CONCLUSION

This research aims to answer the ultimate question of European and American security dilemma, “why NATO’s European country members are unwilling to increase their GDP military spending based on the initial commitment to counter the Russian threat in Europe?” Finally, the author is able to turn up with an answer. **Western European Countries tend to weaken their commitment to avoid the risk of entrapment in the alliance due to their diverse shift of threat perception in their security dilemma.** The dilemma is juggling between the fear of entrapment and or, abandonment. This thesis uses Snyder’s alliance security dilemma and Scweller’s under-balancing, as one of the concepts under neo-realism umbrella. The western part is the group of countries that highly prominent in NATO’s operation, but outspokenly criticize not only the goal, but also NATO as a defense alliance itself. The eastern part of Europe, however, are countries who see Russia as ambitious, opportunistic, or threatening their homeland and more likely to join. Furthermore, the author has come up with several key findings in this research:

**First,** there is a large distinction in European perception of threat towards Russia. The case of Crimea and Russian propaganda in Eastern Europe are a major concern of NATO. However, the vigilance towards their collective threat has been loosening each year. The perception of threat towards Russia has been decreasing since the end of Cold War, increased after the annexation, and yet become dormant. Members with a positive opinion of Russia or a lower sense of danger are more

likely to fear about Russian economic or military retaliation. Moreover, NATO's modern spirit is undergo the peace talk in a diplomatic manner. Besides, Kremlin's power has been declining since a decade. Their socio-economic reality has been stagnant, and their defense budget is projected to save money rather than invest heavily on major development. Western part of Europe does not feel the direct threat from Russia since they do not share the same border. In contrary, Eastern part of Europe already spent their fighting power by increasing its military spending for more than 2% based on the goal since the illegal annexation of Crimea. Therefore, there is a diverse perception of threat, be it from the east side and the west side, both are not concerning the same common enemy in NATO.

**Second**, there's an alliance security dilemma; be it the fear of being entrapped and being abandoned. In a multipolar system, NATO will never absolutely firm. Western Europeans feel good to reduce the risk of entrapment, and preserve their realignment option in the future. On the other side, they also face the fear of being abandoned by the Americans. Europeans cannot simply protect themselves from the external threat without the help from the U.S. If they appease the goal of the U.S., not only feel entrapped, but they have to sacrifice their budget on something they do not highly concerned with. They would leave other major issues neglected that require a lot of money, such as their budget deficit and migration issue.

**Third**, the behaviour is influenced by the alliance's determinants of choice; which are dependence level, strategic interest, and explicitness. Eastern Europe with their economic collapse and unstable political activity entrap their choice to

be limited under the help of its fellow Americans in giving aid and amplifying democracy. In western part of Europe, countries are more independent, be it as economic and political sector. This also lead into their strategic interest, which is not the same with other members. Western side does not need to block its adversary's increasing power, not only due to the far geographical condition, but also many countries such as Spain and Luxemburg do not invest a political concern in the case of Russia.

**Fourth,** the metric of 2% does not possess a definitive variable of the type of spending. 'Defense expenditure' includes many elements such as humanitarian operation, research and development, and also pensions. The increase of 2% does not mean an increase of a state's fighting power to deter its adversary. Countries such as Belgium and France spent a major budget for pension larger than anyone else in the alliance. Americans tend to simplify the 2% target, but ignoring the factor in differ threat perception thus reflected in their budget spending. Finally, it only speaks a little about country's real military capabilities in their readiness, sustainability, and the nature of power.

Last but not least, the alliance eventually choose to under-balance. Europeans do not sufficiently balance as the response to a dangerous and unappeasable aggressor, while it is important to deter it. They keep profiting from the security provided by the U.S., while redefining and managing its European issues. Western is still combating its European problems, which accumulate their cost and risk to their will or unwillingness to deter the threat, not simply because their geostrategic opportunities, but also their material factor. They are still facing

the impact of migration and budget deficit and thus unable to mobilize the budget to deter their “Russian threat” needed. Therefore, they choose to profiting from the status quo by being dormant into the situation, letting the U.S. provides the needs of the alliance.

All in all, five key findings in this research reflected the basis of why Europeans are unwilling to appease their commitment until 2019. The author realizes that there are several weaknesses in this research. In such a short period of time, the research is mostly use second-hand data, which gave more gap in inaccuracy details within. Second, the research is exclusively analyzed in Snyder’s alliance dilemma and Schweller’s under-balancing concept, whereas it is not reflected a strong opinion in its metric basis, even though the discussion is mainly debating the 2% goal. Moreover, the under-balancing concept is mostly determine the decision-making process in the domestic level, state by state. Therefore, in this research, it is an obstacle to elevate the discussion into a regional decision-making, thus might miss several principles in Schweller’s concept. This research only highlight the decision to under-balance is by the impact of their different perception of threat and letting the other to spend more.

Through the weaknesses above, the author seeks for a better research from its reader in the future. Since it lack of first-hand data, the author hope that further research will involve interview, field study, and survey to get a more accurate and strong foundation of argument in understanding NATO. Furthermore, seeing the gap in this research, and also other publications, the author also suggests the next research to analyze the numeric factor in the commitment, to stand for a stronger

argument. The author also realizes the broad spectrum in this research does not cover the understanding of each countries' concern and views toward NATO. Therefore, further research in more narrow scope, for instance state by state using a decision-making theories would help to have a depth in understanding countries' behaviour in utilizing their role in NATO.

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