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Chair of Comparative Politics

**Analysis on the Reason for Maintenance of
the Transatlantic Alliance During the Trump Administration**

--A Perspective of Alliance Management

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Introduction

After the Second World War, the Transatlantic Alliance is the most durable and tightest alliance in the world. However, after Donald Trump had come to power, the Transatlantic Alliance encountered its most serious challenge since the Iraq War. Since the 2016 U.S. election, Trump has stated that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is “obsolete” and questioned the value and rationality of NATO's existence. At the same time, Trump also condemned European allies for free-riding and issued a warning that if the latter does not increase defense spending, The United States will abandon NATO and Europe.¹ He has called the European Union a “foe” and “worse than China, just smaller.”² On the European side, the pursuit of “strategic autonomy” has been accelerated since 2016, and the contradiction between the United States and Europe has become more prominent. Nevertheless, the Transatlantic Alliance has not disappeared, but after a series of adjustments, it has shown new characteristics and remains the most important security pillar in transatlantic relations.

In the early days of Trump administration, there were many doubts on whether the Transatlantic Alliance was going to survive and which direction the future Transatlantic Alliance will choose. The current facts have answered these questions, that is, the Transatlantic Alliance has survived and continues to exist in a form with many new features. With Biden assuming the presidency of the United States, the relationship between the United States and Europe may once again face a moment of adjustment. In order to understand the nature of the Transatlantic Alliance and its continuing significance as a classic alliance case better, this article attempts to answer the puzzle, that is, when the United States and Europe have adjusted their security policies several times and caused many disagrees in NATO during Trump administration, why can NATO still maintain?

There are several explanations for this question among scholars, such as explanations based on common interests, explanations based on common threats, and the characteristics of Trump, etc. However, this article attempts to return to the essence of the Transatlantic Alliance and answer this question from the perspective of alliance management. Based on previous theoretical frameworks such as alliance management, this article

¹ Philip Bump, “Donald Trump Is Just About Over This Whole NATO Thing,” *The Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/03/21/donald-trump-is-just-about-over-this-whole-nato-thing/?utm_term=.8c98818b44a0, last accessed on 22 September 2018.

² Jessica, Kwong, “Donald Trump Told Angela Merkel, ‘you owe me \$1 trillion’ in their first meeting: report”, *Newsweek*. 2018, July 9, Retrieved from <https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-anglamerkel-1-trillion-1014437>, latest accessed on 2021/9/17.

will review the explanations from other perspectives and the existing theoretical frameworks of alliance management, and try to put forward the simultaneous attention to the both two main bodies of the dominant state and the subordinate state in an asymmetric alliance which rooted in the analytical framework of alliance management. This paper tries to propose an analytical framework based on the calculation of costs and gains when maintaining an alliance, to explain the new dilemmas of the alliance under the context of the strategic competition between the United States and China and the change of the comparison of relative power. Additionally, to clarify the approaches which depends on the different type of dilemmas an actor may encounter when managing an alliance.

The hypothesis of this article is that the reason why the Transatlantic Alliance was maintained during Trump Administration was that: Hypothesis 1: Both the two sides of the Transatlantic Alliance adjusted their policies based on the costs and (relative) gains of new international situations (H1); Hypothesis 2: The United States achieved certain objects by transmitting threatening signals to the NATO's European allies (H2); Hypothesis 3: the Europe played an active role as a weaker part of the asymmetric alliance (H3), and Hypothesis 4: formed interactions with the adjustments the United States when adjusting the policies to maintain the Transatlantic Alliance (H4) , which finally lead to the maintenance of the Transatlantic Alliance.

As for the methodology, this article will use historical method, case study and process tracking methods to describe the process of adjustments of security policies towards the alliance of the United States and the Europe during the Trump's Presidency and their impacts on NATO and the Transatlantic Alliance. Then put the interactions between the United States and the Europe into the analytical framework of alliance management of an asymmetric alliance mentioned above, try to clarify the causal link between the two and answer the question why the Transatlantic Alliance can still maintain after Trump came to power in 2017.

The composition of the article is as follows: The first chapter of this article will give the definitions to the Transatlantic Alliance, a brief introduction of the Transatlantic Alliance, alliance maintenance as well as other related concepts, and demonstrate the expression that the survival of the Transatlantic Alliance under the Trump Administration. At the same time, this chapter will also summarize other explanations on the research question, and challenge them.

In the second chapter, the analytical framework would be formed. The first part of the second chapter will illustrate the analytical framework of the paper based on the costs and gains of maintenance of alliance in an asymmetric alliance. It would start from reviewing the theories of dilemmas of alliance and the costs and gains of maintaining an alliance. Based on that, this chapter would continue with the soft cost of the

alliance management in asymmetric alliances. And in the second part of the chapter, the approaches, pressure and appeasement, to manage the alliance under different circumstances would be discussed. Firstly, it will discuss the necessity of detecting the initiative of non-leading actors in the Transatlantic Alliance. Secondly, differences between the United States and Europe in the context of China-U.S. strategic competition is necessary to be demonstrated to understand the calculation of costs and benefits in this period. Lastly, the whole analytical framework of the paper will be formed.

The third chapter will review the adjustments of policies towards the Transatlantic Alliance of the United States based on framework during Trump's term of office and examine the hypothesis 1 and 2 as well. It is critical to give a short summary on the management of the Transatlantic Alliance of the former administration before Trump came to power because the maintenance of any alliance has its own historical logic and route-dependence. Then it will discuss the interpretation of the burden-sharing of the United States for the Transatlantic Alliance during Trump Administration based on the framework of "costs and gains" of alliances. And how the United States exerting pressure on NATO's Europe allies on military expenditure concerning the costs of the alliance will be discussed in third part of the chapter. In the fourth part, the focus should be the neglecting the soft cost of the alliance management exacerbating the divergences between the United States and Europe during Trump Administration. Lastly, the logic of managing the Transatlantic Alliance based on the analytical framework of alliance management during Trump Administration would be proposed.

The chapter four of this article will focus on how the Europe formed policies under the huge pressure exerted by Trump and verify the hypothesis 1 and 3. With listing several facts this chapter will begin with the appropriate concession of the Europe on military expenditure. Then, how the America's European allies in NATO pursuing strategic autonomy during Trump Administration will be answered. What's more, NATO's European Alliance exerting their normative power to influence the adjustment of the U.S.' Transatlantic Alliance policies would be discussed here align with the logic of the analytical framework. And the last part of this chapter will explain the adjustments of policies of U.S.' European allies in NATO from the perspective of alliance management under the asymmetric alliance. And two cases, the Europe pursuing Strategic Autonomy by launching Permanent Structural Cooperation and negotiation with China on Comprehensive Agreement on Investment with its normative power, would be illustrate to test the hypotheses.

The last chapter of the main body of this article will analyze the interaction between the adjustments of the policies towards the Transatlantic Alliance of the United States and Europe during Trump's Presidency and try to prove the hypothesis 4 as well. Firstly, there are related facts on the interactions between the U.S. and its European Allies in the Transatlantic alliance during the Trump Administration. Then combined with the analytical framework in the second part of this chapter, it will answer under what circumstances an actor would choose to pass bucks or hedge or compromise. And in the last part, it is necessary to clarify the deficiencies of the analytical framework and response to other alternative explanations.

Chapter 1: The Maintenance of the Transatlantic Alliance During Trump's Term of Office

Before answering the question of why the Transatlantic Alliance survived after Trump came to power, it is necessary to make a judgment on the statement that “the Transatlantic Alliance was actually maintained during Trump Administration”. In order to define this statement, this chapter will define two important concepts. The first is the Transatlantic Alliance and the second one is alliance maintenance and estimating whether the Transatlantic Alliance maintained during Trump's term in office based on theories and facts as well. At the end of this chapter, the existing answers to the research question in this paper will be summarized and reviewed, and on this basis, the hypotheses of this article will be proposed.

1.1 The Transatlantic Alliance Within NATO's Framework

Before defining the Transatlantic Alliance, it is necessary to conceptualize the concept of “alliance” analyzed in this paper. To clarify the relationship between the United States, the Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and understand the Transatlantic Alliance within NATO's framework, a brief introduction of the NATO and those relations will be given.

1.1.1 Working Definition of the Transatlantic Alliance

Alliance is a concept that can be defined from multiple perspectives. In a narrow sense, the concept of alliance is closely related to traditional security issues and military affairs. In this context, alliance usually refers to the military cooperation organization (such as NATO and Warsaw Pact) established by countries through formal agreements assuming a third party as a specific enemy or threat. For example, Robert E. Osgood believes that alliance is a form of national security commitment, and relevant countries will sign a formal agreement to promise to use military resources against specific enemies, or consider the use of military

force (unilaterally or jointly).³ Arnold Wolfers argues that alliance refers to the commitment which is made between two or more sovereign states to provide military assistance to each other. This commitment is different from those loose cooperation agreements. Once a military agreement containing commitments is signed, a country with other countries formally promises the military actions should be implemented when facing a common enemy.⁴ After the end of the Cold War traditional security issues changing a lot, more and more non-traditional security issues entered the research scope, which caused the status of military security in alliance theory changed as well. Then the research on the transformation of alliance began to rise. In this case, the definition of the concept of alliance is more generalized. Stephen M. Walt's definition related to alliance has also changed from the traditional "formally signed agreement" to "formal and informal arrangement".⁵ Douglas M. Gibler and others believe that an alliance is a formal commitment made by two or more countries to take security related actions in the future.⁶ Michael N. Barnett and Jack S. Levy also believe it is not necessary for alliance to conclude a military alliance. It is said in their paper that the alliance in a broad sense means the formal or informal security cooperation formed between two or more countries. It involves the mutual expectations formed by a certain degree of policy coordination under specific conditions in the future. There is no need to publicly explain the degree of commitment, the specific form and specific implementation mode of policy coordination.⁷ Some scholars gave a more general definition. According to the different forms of security commitments among allied countries, Glenn H. Snyder divides alliances into "alliances" and "alignment".⁸ Some new concepts like "quasi alliance", "tacit alliance" and "subterranean alliance" were discussed, stressing the cooperation form that is broader and vague than the alliance, involving various fields, lacking the hard binding covenant like the traditional alliance.⁹

³ Robert E. Osgood, *Alliance and American Foreign Policy*, Baltimore: The Hopkins Press, 1968, p. 17.

⁴ Arnold Wolfers, David L. Sills ed., "Alliances," *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, New York: Macmillan, 1968, pp.268-269

⁵ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, p. 12

⁶ Douglas M. Gibler, John A. Vasquez, "Uncovering the Dangerous Alliance 1495 – 1980," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4, 1998, p. 787.

⁷ Michael Barnett and Jack Levy, "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt," *International Organization*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 1991, p. 370.

⁸ Glenn H. Snyder, "Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 1990, pp. 104 - 105; Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997, pp. 6-10, 20.

⁹ Erich Reiter, Heinz Gartner, *Small States and Alliances*. New York: Physica- Verlag, 2001; Victor D. Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism: The United States- Korea- Japan Security Triangle*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 36; Sylvia K. Crosbie, *A Tacit Alliance: France and Israel from Suez to the Six - Day War*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974. Michael T. Klare, "Subterranean Alliances: America's Global Proxy Network," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 43, No. 2, 1989, p. 97; David V. Edwards, *International Political Analysis*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969, p. 206.

Although the Transatlantic Alliance with NATO as its framework has undergone transformation and presented new characteristics after the Cold War, it was a traditional military alliance at the initial stage of its establishment and focused on traditional security issues. Therefore, the definition of the concept of the Transatlantic Alliance in this article will still follow the definition of the narrow one. It is worth noting that security issues are so-called “high politics”, often involving political factors. Therefore, the Transatlantic Alliance to be discussed in this paper is a political (more obvious after the Cold War) and military alliance between the United States and the Europe for traditional security issues, rather than a transatlantic relationship involving the fields of economy and global governance in a broad sense. However, in terms of actors in the alliance, the European side of the U.S.-European alliance shows particularity. The concept “the Europe” here is a regional concept, instead of any single sovereign state. The European Union (EU) representing Europe, is a supranational actor with international political status. At present, among the twenty-seven EU member states, twenty-two of them are also NATO member states, accounting for the majority of the thirty NATO member states in total. Although the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) is one of the three pillars of the EU, the power of member states in security and defense affairs is still greater than that of the EU.

In addition to defining the concept of alliance through the content of alliance, the nature of alliance should also be defined through the power comparison of members in the alliance. With the deepening of alliance theory research, more and more researchers began to turn to the alliance to explore the changes and stability of the alliance, including the asymmetric alliance theory. Robert L. Rothstein believes that the alliance can be divided into symmetric alliance and asymmetric alliance according to the capability of its member states and their contributions to the alliance.¹⁰ In symmetric alliance, all parties have equal capacity and share equal rights and responsibilities, while the asymmetric alliance is, on the contrary, mostly composed of large and small actors with large differences in power, there are differences in power and status between the two sides in the alliance. Therefore, large powers become leading countries in the alliance, while small ones usually become affiliated countries. To explore the internal development and changes of asymmetric alliance relations within the framework of asymmetric alliance theory, it is necessary to rely on the “security-autonomy” theory in the alliance. These mainstream viewpoints in the alliance theory regard the alliance as a tool for aggregating the capability to prevent threats, that is, countries ally to ensure security by aggregating their capability to resist common enemies. When the threat disappears, the alliance also disappears. This view could be interpreted into the capability aggregation theory in an alliance as a whole and emphasizes the role of the alliance in promoting the common interests of its members. Since common interests are usually regarded as a

¹⁰ Robert L. Rothstein, *Alliance and Small Power*, Columbia University Press, 1962.

deterrent to common threats, alliances are regarded as a capability aggregation tool to deal with expansionist threats. Different from the above view, James D. Morrow argues that the view that alliances are only used as a tool for capability aggregation and deterrence threats is incomplete and can be classified into a broader theory. In order to understand the logic of this broader alliance, a theory is needed to explain the reasons why countries choose to start and end an alliance. Michael F. Altfeld, proposed a rational choice theory of military alliance to explain how a power uses weapons and alliance as a tool to obtain the advocate, security and wealth they want. National security can be enhanced by sacrificing wealth to buy weapons; National security can also be enhanced by sacrificing some countries to form an alliance with other countries. Different countries will choose whether to buy weapons or sacrifice autonomy or both weapons and autonomy based on their own needs for autonomy, security and wealth, thus emphasizing the trade-off between increasing security and reducing autonomy. ¹¹Morrow defined the concept of autonomy and security in Altfeld's theory and pointed out that autonomy and security come from the possibility of an alliance, that is, the alliance between small countries and large countries is to obtain security from large countries through alliance relations, while the alliance between large countries and small countries is to obtain additional autonomy from small countries through alliance relations.¹²

Therefore, even if the America's European allies in NATO are regarded as a whole, they are very powerful in economy arena, but due to the lack of independent defense capability, the Transatlantic Alliance is essentially an asymmetric alliance. Needless to say, they are regarded as separate individuals and there is a huge gap in economic and military strength between these countries and the United States.

1.1.2 Brief History of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Although the limitation of time span of the research question to be answered in this article is 2017-2020, NATO is the core of the Transatlantic Alliance. Consequently, to analyze the puzzles related to the Transatlantic Alliance, we must have a clear understanding of NATO. Therefore, it is necessary to briefly review the history of NATO since launching to transforming and to declare the relationship between European supranational institutions and NATO.

¹¹ Michael F. Altfeld, "The Decision to Ally: A Theory and Test," *Western Political Quarterly*, 1984.

¹² James, D. Morrow, "Alliances and asymmetry: An alternative to the capability aggregation model of alliances," *American Journal of Political Science*, 1991, pp.904-933.

After the Second World War, the United States and Europe decided to establish an alliance. Although there were many frictions, after the adoption of the landmark resolutions such as the Vandenberg resolution in 1948 and a series of documents issued by the National Security Council (NSC) of the United States, the alliance strategy between the United States and the Europe after the Second World War was basically settled. Despite the brakes that the State Department leadership wished to place on a Transatlantic Alliance, the revised NSC 1/9, first delivered as NSC 9/2 a week after the Senate acted on the Vandenberg Resolution and then delivered as NSC 9/3 on 28 June, loosened those brakes and placed the nation firmly on the path of political and military entanglement with Western Europe. ¹³The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which provides the most solid foundation for the political and military alliance between the United States and the Europe, was officially established in August of the same year after the founding country signed the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington in 1949. At the beginning of the Cold War, the United States and the Europe faced the possible security threat to Europe from the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union. NATO positioned itself as a military alliance based on the collective security mechanism. In the relationship between the United States, the Europe (mainly referring to the European Communities here) and the Transatlantic Alliance, as a military alliance to carry out collective security defense within the scope of transatlantic allies, NATO serves the competition of global hegemony between the United States and the Soviet Union in a bipolar world. On the one hand, in the early days of the establishment of NATO, the United States controlled the leadership of NATO with its strong military strength. The specific military strategy implemented by NATO in different periods of the Cold War actually displays the logic of security strategies of the United States. Because of the huge gap between European countries and the United States and the urgent need to protect their own security, they choose to accept the leadership of the United States voluntarily. On the other hand, when the relative power of United States and the Europe changed, although there have been divergences between the U.S. and the Europe when it came to the development of an independent European defense capacity. For example, France withdrew from NATO military integration organization in 1966¹⁴, but the United States has never given up its leadership over NATO.

Before the very end of the cold war, as NATO member states scrambled to reduce military expenditures and troops, differences among NATO member states on security policies increased, the leadership of the United States in NATO was questioned by France and other European countries, and many European countries

¹³ Kaplan, Lawrence S., Morris Honick, *NATO 1948: The Birth of the Transatlantic Alliance*, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2007.

¹⁴ Brigadier K. "Hunt (1966) NATO without France: The military implications," *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol.6, No.32, pp. 1-21.

began to pay attention to other security mechanisms and organizations outside the NATO. The future of NATO after the Cold War has triggered a lot of discussions again.

The administration of George H.W. Bush witnessed the transition from the Cold War to the post-Cold War era. On September 11, 1990, in an address to Congress, President Bush announced a new world order that would be freer from terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice and more secure in the pursuit of peace. This is an age when all nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can live in prosperity and harmony.¹⁵ Despite the uncertainties of the first years after the Cold War, the United States remained committed to NATO's political and military leadership.¹⁶ Most Bush Administration officials believe that even if the Soviet threat disappears, NATO will remain an important American influence on the political and security issues in Europe.¹⁷ The Clinton Administration further revitalized the alliance. Before becoming president, Bill Clinton did not have a grand vision regarding NATO. However, the intensifying conflict in Bosnia and the obstacles to European integration put Europe on the Clinton Administration's radar.¹⁸ Like President George H.W. Bush, President Clinton maintained America's commitment to European security even after the threat of Soviet Union had vaporized. Considering the U.S.' and European NATO countries' common values and interests, President Clinton was keen on strengthening the U.S.' partnership with European NATO countries in a broader effort to overcome the challenges of the globalized world. In keeping with his commitment to liberal multilateralism and an undivided, democratic Europe, Clinton is an enthusiastic supporter of NATO's expansion into central and eastern European countries. Clinton also sees it as an important step in NATO's transition to a collective security organization based on the principles of openness and friendly relations with non-members. Meanwhile, NATO began to strengthen cooperation with intergovernmental international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Western European Union (WEU) and the European Union (EU). After the end of the cold war, NATO also began its eastward expansion process. In 1999, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic became new members of NATO. Within the alliance, the United States began to support the European allies within NATO to play a role and establish a "European pillar" to alleviate its own burden on military expenditure, but the U.S. was wary and reserved about the construction of European independent defense. Meanwhile, the EU

¹⁵ Stephen Knott, "George H.W. Bush: Foreign Affairs", Charlottesville, VA: Miller Center, n/a, <https://millercenter.org/president/bush/foreign-affairs>

¹⁶ Frank Costigliola, "An 'Arm around the Shoulder': The United States, NATO and German Reunification, 1989-90," *Contemporary European History*, Vol.3, No. 1, 1994, p.101.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, New York: Colombia University Press, 2002, p.291.

was also strengthening its own defense construction. In 1998, Britain and France reached Franco–British St. Malo Declaration at the San Malo conference, proposing that the EU should establish an independent defense force independent of NATO.¹⁹ In 1999, the European Council held a summit in Helsinki, Finland, and decided to establish a rapid response force by 2003, which received the direct help of NATO.

Nonetheless, unlike other multilateral alliances that no longer exist, NATO became reviving by intervening in the Balkan War after the Communist threat disappeared. In short, NATO has achieved transformation successfully after the Soviet Union collapsed. The U.S.’ commitment to NATO was reaffirmed under President George W. Bush. During his presidency, NATO expanded to the Baltic and Balkan regions and NATO-Russia relations were deepened.²⁰ Especially after the Islamic extremist group al Qaeda hijacked four airplanes and carried out suicide attacks against targets in New York on September 11, 2001, the United States has actively played its leading role in NATO, and promoted NATO to implement military actions outside the territory of Member States, which broke through the assumption of “collective security” at the beginning of NATO’s establishment. Shortly after the attack, European countries demonstrated their unity with the United States by proposing to invoke Article 5. Therefore, in 2001, Article 5 was invoked for the first time in the history of NATO. The United States and European countries reached an agreement on two NATO led military operations (Operation Eagle Assist and Operation Active Endeavor). Through the Eagle Assist, NATO supports the efforts of the United States to defend its airspace. At the congressional hearing, deputy secretary of defense Douglas Firth expressed the satisfaction of the United States with the support of European countries. He said that the U.S. have received impressive and satisfactory from their allies.²¹ During that period, the strategic object of NATO has also shifted from the socialist camp led by the former Soviet Union to terrorism. During this period, the United States updated the definition of national security interests and the changes in their understanding and interpretation of its foreign policy. After Europe initially supported the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, the Iraq war in 2003 led to the division of Europe. Germany and France, who were America's biggest allies, did not support the invasion and claimed that it was an example of unilateralism of the George W. Bush’s administration. U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld described France and Germany as “old Europe” and said that NATO’s focus was moving eastward.²² Conservatives in the United

¹⁹ See “Franco–British St. Malo Declaration”, 4 December 1998, on https://www.cvce.eu/obj/franco_british_st_malo_declaration_4_december_1998-en-f3cd16fb-fc37-4d52-936f-c8e9bc80f24f.html, last updated on 2015/06/22, latest accessed on 2021/9/18.

²⁰ Martin A. Smith, “How NATO Survived George W. Bush: An Institutionalist Perspective,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2016, p.61.

²¹ *Ibid*, p.70.

²² The Guardian, “Anger at Rumsfeld attack on 'old Europe': Transatlantic row as Berlin and Paris hit back at US defence chief”, 24 Jan

States warned that “It is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world.”²³ This shows that after the Cold War, there is an eastward expansion not only on the borders of Member States, but also for security interest of the NATO which represent the security interest of the U.S. in Europe and Middle East, which has caused the disagreements within the Transatlantic Alliance, because the Europe believes that such statements highlight the unilateralism of the United States and started to doubt whether the Europe can bet on their ally regarding self-security.

Transatlantic relations have not flourished under the Obama Administration; However, they have not reached a low point. In a speech in Berlin before becoming president, Barack Obama spoke of the importance of countries working together to solve global problems and emphasized his belief that allies listen to each other, learn from each other and, above all, trust each other.²⁴ Instead of prioritizing transatlantic relations, Obama has focused on extricating the U.S. from Iraq and Afghanistan and shifting U.S. strategic interests to Asia. During that time, European countries were focused on recovering their economies after the financial crisis broke out in 2008. However, the NATO’s European allies have cooperated in some areas, such as NATO's operation in Libya.²⁵ While US-NATO relations have thus been tested by periods of political tension in the past, those tensions have entered a new phase under President Trump.

1.1.3 The European Community/ The European Union- NATO Relations

During the Cold War, there was a functional distinction between the European Community and NATO, that is, NATO served as a military organization for European security, while the European Community, as a “civilian institution”, was responsible for European economic prosperity²⁶ and provided guarantee for European security with a stable society. However, although European economic integration was initially

2003, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/jan/24/germany.france>, the latest accessed on 2021/9/18.

²³ Robert Kagan, “Of Paradise and Power,” *The New York Times*, 30 Mar 2003, <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/30/books/chapters/of-paradise-and-power.html>, latest accessed on 2021/9/18

²⁴ Jonathan Freedland, ‘US Elections: Obama Wows Berlin Crowd with Historic Speech’, *The Guardian*, July 24, 2008, <https://www.theguardian.com/global/2008/jul/24/barackobama.uselections2008>, the latest accessed on 2021/9/18.

²⁵ Kristian L. Nielsen, “Continued Drift, But Without the Acrimony: US–European Relations Under Barack Obama,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, Vol.11, No. 1, 2013, p.99.

²⁶ A. Deighton, “The European Security and Defence Policy”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 40, 2002, pp.719-724. H. Ojanen, “Theories at a loss? EU-NATO fusion and the ‘low-politicisation’ of security and defence in European integration”, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Working Paper 35, 2002, p.4.

supported by the United States, it was not led by the United States. Thus, the European Community and NATO are clearly established and distinguished according to the power and status of the United States and Europe in the Atlantic Alliance under the condition of the bipolar. The most important relationship between the two is reflected in dealing with the threat posed by the Soviet Union. Both the EC and NATO are tools for transatlantic countries to deal with the security threat of the socialist block led by the Soviet Union under the bipolar system. NATO provides security for European economic recovery and prosperity through the exertion of its military power, while the European Community stabilizes NATO's ideological foundation by promoting European economic recovery and development. Compared with the establishment and maintenance of defense capability, economic cooperation is a way to strengthen the joint force of politics and ideology.²⁷ At this point, the European Community is also an "excellent tool for security" to assist NATO²⁸. This relationship effectively ensured European security under bipolar system and conducted the rapid reconstruction of Western Europe after the Second World War. Nevertheless, this institutional distribution between NATO and the EC also limits the nature and activities of the two organizations to some extent, which hindered the direct connection between the two organizations, resulting in almost no intersection between the two institutions for a long time.

During the transformation of NATO, the EU began to directly connect with NATO on military defense and other related issues, and took over some responsibilities of the Western European Union, which previously played a link role between NATO and EC. The outbreak of the Iraq War not only caused greater disputes within NATO, but also made the EU aware of the necessity to enhance its own defense capability.²⁹ Although the extent to which the EU's defense policy should be independent of NATO and the United States is still the focus of European debate and a sensitive topic in the transatlantic circle, the EU's consensus is that in the event of a regional crisis, the EU should not be helpless because Washington chooses not to intervene.³⁰

After the cold war, NATO and the European Union also began to establish informal to formal institutionalized ties on defense agenda. Since 1997, there have been some fixed informal meetings between the heads and senior officials of the two major organizations of the EU and NATO. In January 2001, the Secretary General of NATO and the Prime Minister of Sweden, also the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union reached an agreement on regular meetings, that is, every six months, NATO and the EU

²⁷ Marc Weller, "The European Union within the "European Security Architecture"," in M. Koskenniemi ed., *International Law Aspects of the European Union*, Martinus Nijhoff, 1998, pp.57-69.

²⁸ Robert Kagan, "Of Paradise and Power", *The New York Times*, 30 March 2003, <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/30/books/chapters/of-paradise-and-power.html>, latest accessed on 16 October 2018

²⁹ Elizabeth Pond, "The dynamics of alliance diplomacy over Iraq," *EUI Working Papers*, No.26, 2004.

³⁰ Bruno Tertrais, "The Changing Nature of Military Alliances," *The Washington Quarterly*, 2004. P.149

will meet in the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the Political and Security Committee (PSC), and it should commit to at least 3 meetings at the ambassadorial level and at least 1 meeting at the ministerial level. In 2002, the EU and NATO reached a military resource sharing agreement, agreeing that the EU can use NATO's military resources when needed in peacekeeping, crisis management and strengthening European defense capacity, so as to make up for the deficiencies of European countries in long-distance transportation tools, intelligence information and logistics military supplies. In 2003, the two sides signed relevant security conventions and information security agreements, further promoting bilateral cooperation in common defense. The adjustment of the Transatlantic Alliance during the Obama administration will be specifically analyzed in chapters 3 and 4 as a comparative case of the adjustment during the Trump Era.

1.2 The Alliance Maintenance and Determining Whether the Transatlantic Alliance Survived During Trump's Term of Office

The establishment of alliances is often based on common threats or interests³¹, while the maintenance of alliances is more complex. For realists, when discussing the maintenance of the alliance, often pay more attention to the word "common" rather than a fixed opponent. In his masterpiece *Politics Among Nations*, Hans J. Morgenthau claimed that even Britain and the United States cannot accurately define who their strategic opponents are. For Britain and the United States, countries or groups threatening the European balance of power are their potential common threats. The essence of an alliance is to obtain power, so the adversaries of alliance could change arbitrarily with the change of circumstances, and is not bound by international morality.³² From the perspective of constructivism, an alliance is a socially shared knowledge embodied in the official text. The cognition in the interaction determines whether the alliance collapses or not.³³ The size principle of alliance highlighted that the larger the scale of the alliance, the less revenue each member can get from it. When the scale of the alliance is large and there is a great possibility of success, if the leading country believes that its cost-benefit is disproportionate, it should reduce the scale of the alliance.

³¹ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987; Glenn H. Snyder, "Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 1990, pp.103-123; Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics*, Vol.36, No.4, 1984, pp.461-495

³² Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The struggle for power and peace*, New York, Alfred Kopf, 1948, pp.240-249.

³³ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*. Vol. 67. Cambridge University Press, 1999, p240.

³⁴The analysis of the size principle of alliance reveals the possible contradictions in the process of alliance maintenance, but the shrink of alliance's size does not mean the disintegration of the alliance. Snyder further improved the relevant theories of "entrapment" and "abandonment" to describe the dilemma in the alliance³⁵ based on the concept of two fears of getting entrapped or abandonment proposed by Michael Mandelbaum.³⁶ "The greater one's dependence on the alliance and the stronger one's commitment to the ally, the higher the risk of entrapment."³⁷ While one that is worried about the risk of entrapment and chooses to distance itself from its allies faces the risk of abandonment. He also argued that the pressure of alliance dilemma under the bipolar pattern is less.³⁸ Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder further did an analysis on the "chain-ganging and buck-passing" strategies that member states of the alliance may implement, which depends on their vulnerability to attacks. If there is a defensive advantages, the one is more likely to choose to pass the bucks, and when the probability that the country may be attacked increases, the country is more likely make the commitment to chain-ganging.³⁹ These studies involve various possible contradictions that endanger the sustainability of a alliance, and the origin of the contradiction is the gap of relative power among different countries. Based on relative power among the members, the interests of actors in the alliance process also show differences, which leads to conflict among alliance members. Based on the previous literature review on alliance theory and alliance maintenance theory, the criteria for estimating whether the alliance maintains or not should be at least the following two points: first, the official text such as treaties or military agreements etc. at the time of the establishment of the alliance has not been terminated. And second, in the process of maintaining the alliance, there has been no outbreak of wars or conflicts that the rest of the alliance does not want to see. From these two criteria, it can be determined that during Trump Administration, the Transatlantic Alliance was maintained rather than disintegrated.

³⁴ William Riker, *The theory of political coalition*, 1962, New Heaven: The Yale University Press, p174; Karl W. Deutsch, *The analysis of international relations*, 1968, Prentice Hall.

³⁵ Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics*, Vol.36, No.4, 1984, p466.

³⁶ Michael Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Revolution: International Politics before and after Hiroshima*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp.151-152.

³⁷ Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics*, Vol.36, No.4, 1984, p467.

³⁸ Ibid, pp.461-468.

³⁹ Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity," *International organization*, Vol.44, No.2, 1990, pp.137-168.

1.3 Literature Review

After conceptualizing the Transatlantic Alliance and declaring the state whether the Transatlantic Alliance maintained during Trump Administration, it is necessary to summarize other alternative explanations of the core research question of this article, propose suspicions and deficiencies on those explanations. And in the end of this part, the hypothesis based on the literature review would be provided.

The answers to the question of why the Transatlantic Alliance was maintained during Trump Administration mainly focus on the following perspectives.

1.3.1 Answers from the Perspective of Balance of Threat (BoT)

The first is a series of analysis of the reasons for the maintenance of the Transatlantic Alliance during Trump Administration based on the view of common threats. The main theoretical basis of scholars who hold this view is the “balance of threat (BoT)” theory. Stephen M. Walt, its representative, believes that countries form alliances mainly because of their response to threats instead of power. He suggested replacing Waltz's “balance of power” theory with the theory of “balance of threat” referring the establishment of an alliance. And he proposed four elements of threat are aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive capabilities, and offensive intentions which lead to two possible behaviors in alliance, namely “balance” and “bandwagon”. According to the balance of threat theory, the alliance behavior of states is determined by the threat that they perceive from other states. Walt contends that states generally balance by allying against a perceived threat, but very weak states are more likely to bandwagon with the rising threat to protect their own security. The BoT based on a large number of empirical research still has strong persuasion and explanatory potential.⁴⁰ On the issue of why the Transatlantic Alliance endured during Trump Administration, scholars with the view of BoT often believe that the main reason for the continuation of the alliance during this period is geopolitical threats, including changes in the situation in the Middle East and a series of terrorism and refugee problems. In addition, when explaining this issue, many scholars choose to regard rising China as an important threat to the security of the United States and Europe, which is also an important reason for

⁴⁰ Stephen M. Walt: “Testing Theories of Alliance Formation: The Case of Southeast Asia”, *International Organization*, Vol. 43, No .2, 1992, pp.448- 482; “Alliance, Threats, and U.S. Grand Strategy: A Reply to Kaufman and Labs,” *Security Studies*, Vol.11, No .3, 1992, pp.448-482; *The Origins of Alliances*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987.

maintaining the existence of the Transatlantic Alliance. For example, Anna Stahl and Xu Yixiang consider that to deal with the threat posed by the rise of China, the United States and Europe should “support a strategic NATO Response to China”.⁴¹ Louis Simon, Linde Desmahle and Jordan Becker believe that NATO’s presence in Western Europe is of great significance to the maintenance of the European balance of power.⁴² Some scholars even warned that in the context of strategic competition between China and the U.S., the EU should be vigilant that the United States and China should form an alliance for specific interests and abandon European allies.⁴³ Stanley R. Sloan argues that the Transatlantic Alliance continues to exist for a series of reasons, including traditional threats brought by Russia, as well as a series of new security threats brought by terrorism, immigration, and the rise of China.⁴⁴ In the face of serious threats, such as Russia or China, the Europe and the United States will still stand together. Bjørnar Sverdrup-Thygeson supposes that Russia indirectly affects the EU's China policy by influencing the EU-China-US triangular relationship, and NATO plays a vital role in the whole security mechanism.⁴⁵ In addition, in the context of Sino-US strategic competition, NATO also included coping with China's development in science and technology in its own R&D focus in the transformation.⁴⁶

1.3.2 Answers Based on the Idea of “Balance of Interests”

The second is the relevant answers based on common interests. Randall L. Schweller and other scholars hold a critic on that the theory of BoT underestimates the importance of domestic factors for alliance policy. They criticized Walt's theory downplays the importance of domestic factors in alliance decisions suggesting that illegitimate elites and states that are weak *vis-à-vis* their societies bandwagon more often than balance-

⁴¹ Anna Stahl, and Yixiang Xu. *A New Age of Transatlantic Alliance? US China policy after the presidential election and its implications for the EU*. Jacques Delors Centre, 2020.

⁴² Luis Simón, Linde Desmaele, and Jordan Becker, "Europe as a Secondary Theater? Competition with China and the Future of America's European Strategy," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* Vol.15, No.1, 2021, pp.90-115.

⁴³ Alicia Garcia Herrero, "Europe in the midst of China–US strategic economic competition: what are the European Union's options?," *Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies*, Vol.17, No.4, 2019, pp. 403-423.

⁴⁴ Stanley R. Sloan, "Permanent alliance or passing fancy?," *Atlantisch Perspectief*, Vol.43, No.2, 2019, pp.4-9.

⁴⁵ Bjørnar Sverdrup-Thygeson. "The bear and the EU-China-US triangle: transatlantic and Russian influences on EU's “pivot to Asia”." *Asia Europe Journal*, Vol.15, No.2, 2017, pp.161-172.

⁴⁶ ALLESLEV, Leona. "NATO Science and Technology: Maintaining the Edge and Enhancing Alliance Agility." *Special Report* 183: 2018-12.

of-threat theory predicts. ⁴⁷ After criticizing the BoT theory, in his paper proposed the idea of "balance of interests". ⁴⁸ He believes that countries will form alliances not only because of threats but also because of interests and opportunities. In addition to adjusting their alliance strategies when facing threats, countries often take the initiative to take actions to expand their own interests. It is worth noting that the concept of "common interest" closely related to political and military alliances is often closely related to its core values and power, and these interests are often closely related to the international order and the comparison of relative power. Daniel Keohane argues that the Europe, as a neighbor of Russia, Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia and other big countries, not only has important strategic significance in geography but also energy security is the focus of NATO after the transformation. ⁴⁹ Some people also criticized the EU and its member states for participating in Asia Pacific Affairs with multilateralism rather than adhering to the logic of hard power, which makes the US "pivot" in Asia and the Indo Pacific strategy can not be implemented well. Given the challenges brought by the rise of Asia, Europe can no longer sidestep. The transatlantic hard power demonstrated by NATO must play a role in the Asia Pacific region. ⁵⁰

1.3.3 Answers Related to the "Trump's Doctrine"

⁴⁷ See Robert G. Kaufman, "To Balance or to Bandwagon? Alignment Decisions in 1930s Europe," *Security Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1992, pp. 417-447; Paul W. Schroeder, "Neo-Realist Theory and International History: An Historian's View," paper presented at the War and Peace Institute, Columbia University, 1993. Also The domestic-sources school of alliance formation includes Deborah Welch Larson, Stephen R. David, and Jack S. Levy and Michael M. Barnett. See Larson, "Bandwagoning Images in American Foreign Policy," pp. 85-111; Steven R. David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 2, 1991, pp. 233-256; David, "Why the Third World Still Matters," *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 3, Winter 1992/93, pp. 127-159; David, *Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World*, Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991; Jack S. Levy and Michael M. Barnett, "Alliance Formation, Domestic Political Economy, and Third World Security," *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 1992, pp. 19-40; Levy and Barnett, "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-1973," *International Organization*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 1991, pp. 369-395.

⁴⁸ Randall L. Schweller, "Neorealist's Status-Quo Bias: What Security Dilemma?," in Benjamin Frankel ed., *Realism: Restatements and Renewal*, London: Frank Cass, 1996, pp.90-121; "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In", *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1994, pp. 72-107.

⁴⁹ Daniel Keohane, "Ambiguous Expectations: Future Scenarios and Key Variables for the Transatlantic Relationship." *Solidarity Under Stress in the Transatlantic Realm*. The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2016. 24-28. Donahoe, Eileen, and Alina Polyakova. "A Transatlantic Effort to Take on China Starts with Technology." 2020-12-18

⁵⁰ Yong Deng, "The Role of the EU in Asian Security: Between Transatlantic Coordination and Strategic Autonomy." *Asia Policy*, Vol.27, No.1, 2020, pp. 105-126.

Thirdly, relevant answers are based on Trump's personal ruling philosophy and domestic factors in the United States. Since Trump introduced the diplomatic strategic concept with "America first" as the core to the public since he participated in the election in 2016, which has triggered a debate on security relations among many the U.S. and its European allies, there are also cases to answer this question from Trump's nationalism oriented foreign policy.⁵¹ In addition to Trump's personal factors, the President's national security team and Congress were also doing their best to prevent the United States from withdrawing from NATO.⁵² Some scholars pointed out that although Trump criticized NATO more and more, it actually reflected that the US president was willing to make greater contributions to collective defense.⁵³

The above views are reasonable to explain this question, but most of these views are based on the fact that NATO and the Transatlantic Alliance have adjusted from 2017 to 2020. Nevertheless, they are insufficient to determine the profound changes brought by China-US strategic competition to the international system and the enhance of the Europe's relative strength and influence. At the same time, as a traditional political and military multilateral asymmetric alliance, those answers lack an in-depth discussion on its essence, that is, the alliance, but studies it as an assemble of ordinary bilateral (or multilateral) relations, which is not enough to explain the rule of the operation of the Transatlantic Alliance. Based on the literature reviews, here are the hypothesis of the paper.

Hypothesis 1: Both the two sides of the Transatlantic Alliance adjusted their policies based on the costs and (relative) gains of new international situations (H1);

Hypothesis 2: The United States achieved certain objects by transmitting threatening signals to the NATO's European allies because of the dilemma of being entrapped(H2);

Hypothesis 3: The Europe played an active role as a weaker part of the asymmetric alliance and pushed the United States to feel the threat of abandonment and make policy adjustments (H3);

Hypothesis 4: The interactions between the both sides of Atlantic when managing the Transatlantic Alliance finally contributes the maintenance to the Alliance (H4).

⁵¹ Daniel Keohane, "Ambiguous Expectations: Future Scenarios and Key Variables for the Transatlantic Relationship," *Solidarity Under Stress in the Transatlantic Realm*. The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2016. 24-28. Donahoe, Eileen, and Alina Polyakova, "A Transatlantic Effort to Take on China Starts with Technology," 2020-12-18.

⁵² Anna Dimitrova, "The State of the Transatlantic Relationship in the Trump Era," Policy paper n°545/2020, Fondation Robert Schuman, 2020.

⁵³ Jorge Benitez, "US NATO policy in the age of Trump: Controversy and consistency." The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs. The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 2019.

Therefore, in the next chapter, this paper will focus on how to construct an analysis framework of alliance management in asymmetric alliances. More concepts and theories related to alliance management will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Analytical Framework of Alliance Management in the Transatlantic Alliance

After combing the relevant concepts and reviewing the existing answers, the focus of this chapter is to put forward a new alliance management analysis framework based on the previous theories of alliance dilemma, alliance costs and benefits, and alliance management, combined with the interpretation of current international situation from the perspective of respective power of the United States and Europe, to explain the interaction between the leading and subordinate countries in asymmetric alliances.

2.1 Dilemmas of Alliances and Alliance Management

Alliance management is actually the adjustment of the alliance by the state after rationally considered the cost and income of the establishment and maintenance of an alliance according to different intensities of alliance dilemmas. Since the establishment of the alliance, the alliance dilemma continues to exist and affects the choice of strategy of the actors' alliance management. The alliance dilemma is also changing with the international system. In addition to the traditional two types of dilemmas, "entrapment" and "abandonment" in alliances, alliances are also facing new dilemma. Similarly, the costs and benefits to be considered in maintaining the alliance have also changed. In addition to the costs and benefits of traditional military security, the state has paid more and more attention to the additional costs and benefits required to maintain the alliance when the security threat is not strong. In a relatively peaceful environment, the dilemma of "being abandoned" and "being entrapped" is more about the country's judgment on the costs and benefits of the alliance, especially the relative benefits. Alliance management is closely related to the alliance dilemma and the cost and benefit of maintaining the alliance. So in this part it will discuss how the actors conceive the dilemmas of alliances when considering the costs and gains under current circumstances and decide their policies towards manage the alliance.

2.1.1 Dilemmas of Alliance and Costs-Gains of Alliance Maintenance

In addition to the previous research on dilemmas of alliance, dilemmas of alliance also have a new development. At present, more and more countries are facing competition between security protection providers and economic and trade partners when forming alliances, which is very obvious in certain region, such as the Asia Pacific. The costs of alliance establishment and maintenance generally include military expenses and obligations to maintain the alliance, while as a form of cooperation, reputation is also the cost to maintain the alliance.⁵⁴ Douglas M. Gibler argued that under the same other conditions, countries would try to form alliances with countries that had fulfilled their alliance commitments in the past; The country inclined to avoid establishing alliances with countries that violate previous commitments to allies. When a country abides by its commitments, its reputation will often improve, while when it needs to pay a great cost to break its commitments, its reputation will decline sharply. If countries form alliances with countries with a dishonorable reputation and breach of commitments in the past, they are likely to fall into disputes, and vice versa.⁵⁵ Therefore, reputation is very important for an actor intending to establish and maintain alliances, which actually exists as the “soft cost” of establishing and maintaining the alliance.⁵⁶ When the international environment is relatively stable and security is no longer the most urgent task of an alliance, more and more countries begin to turn the benefits of the alliance maintenance to economic interests and aspects other than isolate security benefits. Generally speaking, countries facing the dilemma of “being abandoned” will be willing to pay higher costs to maintain the alliance and even sacrifice certain strategic autonomy, which is particularly obvious in the early the U.S.-Asia Pacific Alliance in a way of a “security-autonomy” transaction.⁵⁷ Ones of the alliance facing a more serious “being entrapped” dilemma will not accept higher costs and are more likely to choose passing bucks.

⁵⁴ Ken Booth and Nicolas Wheeler, *The Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; Brugger, P., Hasenclever, A., & Kasten, L, “Vertrauen lohnt sich. Über Gegenstand und Potential eines vernachlässigten Konzepts in den Internationalen Beziehungen,” *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen*, Vol.20, No.2, 2013, pp.65-104.

⁵⁵ Douglas M. Gibler, "The Costs of Reneging: Reputation and Alliance Formation." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol.52, No.3, 2008, pp.426-454.

⁵⁶ Zhang Jingquan and Liu Lili, “Chengben yu Kunjing: Tongmenglilun de xintansuo,” *Dongbeiyi Luntan*, “Cost and Dilemma: New Exploration on Alliance Theory,” *Northeast Asia Forum*, No.2, 2016, pp.11-22.

⁵⁷ James D. Morow, “Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances”, *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol.35, No.4, 1991, pp.904-933.

2.1.2 Alliance Management

At present, most of the theories about alliance management or governance are based on the practice of how the leading countries in asymmetric alliances restrain the allies. NATO has been an asymmetric alliance since its formation. Due to the gap in command system, military capability, security strategy and expenditure sharing, the United States and the Europe are in a dominant and subordinate position respectively in the Transatlantic Alliance. Therefore, the interaction of US-European relations within the NATO framework involves how to carry out “alliance restraint”. Through the research on the interactive practice between the United States and its allies, David A. Lake believes that the international system is not complete anarchy, but there is a certain hierarchy. The leading country in the alliance, especially in the asymmetric alliance, has “relational authority” over the subordinate countries⁵⁸ and is usually in roles of the actor and controller within the alliance management. The countries in the alliance, especially the leading countries in the asymmetric alliance, often govern or restrain the behaviors of other alliance partners while realizing their own security interests through alliance, to ensure the constancy of the alliance and promote the agreement of objectives, actions, and strategies of the alliance. In this sense, the leader has the function of managing members and maintaining order in the asymmetric alliance. Jeremy Pressman believes that countries in the alliance often control each other to start war, and even the important function of some alliances is to control the behavior of belligerent allies and prevent the outbreak of war.⁵⁹ Restraining the allies is very important for the maintenance of the alliance. The main task of restraining is how to dissuade the allies from adopting policies that harm their own security interests. There are two ways to restrain allies basically: pressure and appeasement. Most scholars focus on how to effectively exert pressure on constrained objects. Snyder proposes that three factors determine the success or failure of restraining allies: the first is the credibility of the constrictor's threat of pressure; Second, the degree of divergence of interest between the constrained and the third-party enemy; The third is the dependence of the bound on the alliance.⁶⁰ Pressman further proposed that only if the leader of the alliance is willing to use its resources, the restraint can succeed.⁶¹ This argument

⁵⁸ David A. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009.

⁵⁹ Jeremy Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Relations*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.

⁶⁰ Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.

⁶¹ Jeremy Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Relations*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.

is consistent with the former one, which focuses on threats and pressure to force the constrained to abandon their established policies. On the other hand, some scholars emphasize the importance of appeasement in international politics. Although different names were used in the literature a lot such as “positive sanctions”, “appeasement” or “commitment” when studying the relationship between an actor and hostile countries, it also has enlightening significance for restraining allies. These studies show that in some specific cases, appeasement can affect other countries’ strategic choices more than threat and pressure.⁶² As far as restraining allies is concerned, the key point of appeasement is that the signal released by the leading country can make the followings believe that there are other feasible means to achieve their security goals. But the difficulty in restraining allies is that the results of both pressure and appeasement are difficult to predict. Reasonable oppression could urge the following members to abandon the policy that may lead to the “entrapment” of the leader, but it may also urge the followings to reduce its trust in the alliance and adhere to its established policy, which would eventually cause the failure of restraint. Similarly, appeasement can make the weaker member states recognize the reliability of the alliance without worrying about being “abandoned”, but it may also create an illusion to the countries, that is, in any case, the allies will firmly support themselves, and then continue their radical strategy, generating the failure of the constraint. The above scenario is the dilemma of alliance restraints.⁶³ When facing this kind of dilemma, it could easily tell the wise choice is to combine pressure and appeasement, however, the information transmitted by pressure and appeasement are often contradictory and offset each other. The effective combination of the two means should be implementing appeasement in strategy and pressure in policies.

But this is the traditional perspective and analytical framework focusing of leading actors of “Costs and Gains of Alliance Maintenance -- Dilemmas of Alliance -- Alliance Management” in asymmetric alliances. However, in the case of major adjustments in the international context, it is necessary to recognize the interaction in alliance management, rather than narrowly equate alliance management with the unilateral constraints of leaders of alliance on their followers.

⁶² David A. Baldwin, “The Power of Positive Sanctions,” *World Politics*, Vol.24, No.1, 1971, pp.19-38; Stephen R. Rock, *Appeasement in International Politics*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000; James Davis, *Threats and Promises: The Pursuit of International Influence*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

⁶³ Jie Dalei, “Yushu mengguo de luoji yu kunjing,” *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi*, “The Logic and Dilemma of Alliance Restraint,” *World Economics and Politics*, No.3 2016.

2.2 Analytical Framework of Alliance Management in The Transatlantic Alliance

Although the previous analysis of alliance management is from the perspective of how the advanced roles govern the alliance, under the background of the strategic competition between the United States and China, little threat to European security and the improvement of European comprehensive capacity, the initiative of allies of the United States in the Transatlantic Alliance should not be ignored.

2.2.1 Necessity of Detecting the Initiative of Non-Leading Actors in the Transatlantic Alliance

On the one hand, the strategic competition between China and the United States has largely changed the judgment of the member states of the traditional alliance on the cost-benefit of the alliance. Burden sharing and military expenditure are still the costs of maintaining the alliance concerned by alliance members. However, in terms of alliance benefits, in addition to traditional security benefits, more and more benefits that do not belong to the traditional security field have also become the benefits to be considered by alliance members. The direct or indirect benefits such as political and economic benefits obtained by the United States and Europe due to the military alliance are also important as allies, but these benefits are not as intuitive as military costs and are more difficult to quantify. Notwithstanding compared with the Asia Pacific region, America's European allies do not need to face the urgent situation that allies of the U.S in Asia Pacific choose between China and the United States on security and economic benefits. However, China-EU trade is equally important to Europe. As of 2019, the EU has been China's largest trading partner for 16 consecutive years, while China has been the EU's second-largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years. In 2020, the trade in goods between the EU and China grew in both directions against the trend of the epidemic, and China replaced the United States as the largest trading partner of the EU for the first time.⁶⁴ More and more trade frictions between the United States and Europe have brought losses to the economic benefits of both sides. At the same time, the two sides' different views on values of traditional democracy and freedom have also caused the decline of the influence of the Transatlantic Alliance in the political field. During Trump Administration, the "transactional" attitude towards European allies has greatly reduced the trust of European

⁶⁴ Eurostat, "Euro area international trade in goods surplus €20.7 bn," July, 2021, https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/december/tradoc_151969.pdf

allies, and they are more and more worried about “being abandoned”. On the other hand, although Europe still needs the existence of the Transatlantic Alliance to a large extent in terms of security, unlike other asymmetric alliances in the U.S. alliance system, the comprehensive capability of the U.S. allies in the Transatlantic Alliance is stronger than other U.S. allies. In terms of conventional military capacity, the allies of the United States in Europe have been rapidly restored by relying on NATO and the European Community after World War II. Coupled with the original industrial base, the conventional military capacity of the Europe can not be underestimated. In terms of nuclear power, the United Kingdom and France are of five nuclear-weapon states. With the end of the Cold War, the intensity of security threats in Europe has decreased. Europe began to pay attention to more economic interests besides security interests. It can also have more chips in the negotiations with the United States by virtue of its strong economic strength.

To sum up, when analyzing the Transatlantic Alliance from the perspective of alliance management, it is critical to give more consideration to the initiative of the European side in the Transatlantic Alliance during Trump Administration. However, this does not mean that the management of the Transatlantic Alliance by the United States, as the leading country, is not the focus of the interaction. The United States also needs to think about the policy towards the Transatlantic Alliance in the face of new dilemmas of alliance.

2.2.2 Different Interests Between the United States and Europe in the Context of China-US Strategic Competition

As John Ikenberry argued in 2008, China’s rise is inevitable.⁶⁵ During the Obama Administration, the United States began to gradually shift the global strategic focus to the Asia-Pacific region to deal with the rise of China. During Trump Administration, China’s rise continued to affect the international order. However, the Western order, which many scholars emphasized should have been “open and dense”, is being challenged inside itself. Since Trump took office, the United States and Europe have different opinions on maintaining the traditional liberal order and the whole international situation.

First of all, in the Trump Administration’s National Security Strategy, the United States government’s judgment on the international situation tends to be negative, believing that the competition among major

⁶⁵ G. John Ikenberry, “The Rise of China and the Future of the West. Can the Liberal System Survive?,” *Foreign Affairs*, No.87, 2008, p.23.

powers and the geopolitical competition has returned in an all-round way, and the world is facing increasingly fierce political, economic and military competition. Therefore, the United States can not be optimistic about the situation in Europe. It believes that the Europe has become a place for the geopolitical competition, and the West with the United States and Europe as the main body is facing the biggest threat since the end of the Cold War.⁶⁶ The cognition of Europe is very different from that of the United States. Over the past decade of the financial crisis, Europe has faced severe challenges in economic, political, security, and other fields. Optimism and idealism at the beginning of the 21st century have gradually given way to pragmatism. However, Europe did not accept the state “New Cold War”. They still believed the conventional way to maintain the liberal order and believed that global economic growth, population flow, and scientific and technological progress were the general trend of the world. Europe could survive the crisis and reproduce prosperity through internal reform and deep participation in globalization.⁶⁷

Secondly, due to different views on the international situation and the evolution of the international order, the United States and Europe also have different perceptions of major threats and adversaries. The Trump Administration’s National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy listed China and Russia as “revisionist countries” and “strategic competitors” respectively. Hardliners in Congress and academia are particularly active in suppressing China, believing that China not only challenged the international order dominated by the United States but also damages the interests of the United States in many fields such as economy and trade, science, and technology, military, culture, education and ideology.⁶⁸ These hardliners have created noise and trouble on various issues related to China-US relations in an attempt to further encourage the U.S. government to subvert its general strategy towards China and focus on the strategy of strengthening checks and balances, replacing contact with all-round competition and paying equal attention to competition and cooperation. This is significantly different from the understanding of Europe. In 2016, the European Commission mentioned in the EU’s new strategic cognitions for China is that China's growing international influence and expanding interests to the world will inevitably require a greater voice in global economic governance. The Europe also believes that China has increased its investment in development, climate change and regional security issues which need global governance and becoming stronger in East

⁶⁶ A. Wess Mitchell, “Anchoring the Western Alliance,” U.S. Embassy in Cyprus, June 5, 2018, <https://useu.usmission.gov/remarks-by-a-s-wess-mitchell-anchoring-the-western-alliance/>.

⁶⁷ European Union, “Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe, A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy,” June 2016, http://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/regions/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf.

⁶⁸ Kurt M. Campbell and Ely Ratner, “The China Reckoning: How Beijing Defied American Expectations,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 97, No. 2, March/April 2018, pp. 60-70.

Asia. However, the EU's concern about China does not lie in the development of China's comprehensive capacity and accent of international status. The dissatisfaction of EU towards a rising China mainly focuses on the economic level, such as the so-called "unequal and non-reciprocity" in economic exchanges. The main challenge of the EU's China policy is to make a firm, clear and consistent voice. ⁶⁹Although the European Strategic makers have also expressed concern about "China's political influence in Europe" in the past two years, ⁷⁰Europe as a whole does not regard China as a challenger to the international order and a destroyer of European interests, but still emphasizes the great potential of cooperation with China.

Thirdly, the United States and Europe have different cognition on itself and views on the way of exerting power. In spite of the United States has a relatively negative view on the international situation, the U.S. is still confident in its advantages in politics, economy, military, science and technology believing that the current hard power of the United States is still unmatched by other countries. ⁷¹Europe believes that the Europe still stay advanced on soft power and can play a regulatory role in the international stage and regional affairs. In the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy in 2016, although the EU expressed its ambition to enhance its hard power by strengthening strategic autonomy and counter-terrorism capacity-building, it also recognized that the power of the EU is still mainly in the diplomatic network and economy, including soft factors such as the EU's global leading position in the fields of international trade, investment and development assistance. ⁷²

The difference in the essence of power determines that the United States and Europe have giant differences referring to exerting the power. In order to win "global competition" and "all-round competition", the Trump Administration attempts to abandon multilateralism and emphasizes that the U.S. would implement strategies based on its own advantages and size to put pressure on allies and opponents in a tougher way and pursue U.S. interests with hard power, which actually interpreted the expression on the Principled Realism. Europe is different from the United States. First of all, Europe's belief in multilateralism

⁶⁹ European External Action Service (EEAS), "Elements for a New EU Strategy on China," June 22, 2016, https://eeas.europa.eu/regions/asia/15397/elements-new-eu-strategy-china_en.

⁷⁰ François Godement and Abigaël Vasselier, "China at the Gates: A New Power Audit of EU-China Relations," European Council on Foreign Relations, November 2017, https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/china_eu_power_audit7242; and Thorsten Benner, et al., *Authoritarian Advance: Responding to China's Growing Political Influence in Europe* (Berlin: Global Public Policy Institute and Mercator Institute for China Studies, January 2018,) http://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2018/Benner_MERICS_2018_Authoritarian_Advance.pdf.

⁷¹ *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, D.C.: White House, 2017.

⁷² European Union, "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe, A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy," June 2016, http://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/regions/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf.

has not wavered. A rule-based international system and multilateralism are most conducive to safeguarding European interests. Neither “World Police” nor fighting alone are suitable for today’s world.⁷³ Secondly, Europe's admiration for "moral power" and "regulatory power" has also become a kind of self-restraint, It is required to adhere to the principles advocated over the years. For example, on the eve of the G20 summit in Hamburg in 2017, European Commission President Jean Claude Juncker and European Council President Donald Tusk stressed in a joint letter that in times of turmoil, Europe has a greater role and responsibility on the international stage and will become the world leader. Europe should become the global reference for safeguarding liberal democracy, practicing free trade, and addressing climate change, poverty, terrorism, illegal immigration and other issues.⁷⁴

2.2.3 Analytical Framework of Alliance Management in the Transatlantic Alliance

Based on the previous theories on the formation of alliance, alliance maintenance, dilemmas of alliance and alliance management, this paper attempts to construct the following analytical framework. During Trump Administration, although the Transatlantic Alliance faced the traditional dilemmas of being “abandoned” and “entrapped” in the alliance, it faced a new dilemma of balancing economic and security benefits when the security threat was no longer as significant as before. Therefore, this paper will first analyze the interaction between the United States and Europe in the process of alliance management and analyze the reasons for the sustainment of the Transatlantic Alliance in this period from the perspective of alliance management.

As mentioned earlier, the intensity of security threats in this period has been greatly reduced compared with the Cold War when Europe was facing serious security threats. During Trump’s term of office, no war broke out in Europe, and the situation in Crimea has stabilized under the control of the Minsk Agreement; The Syrian war and the Libyan war have also ended. Although there are still problems left over by refugees and terrorism, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) has also been eliminated in 2017. Therefore, when the security threat getting faded, the calculation of costs and benefits of alliance becomes very important in this period. At this time, the dilemma of alliance is no longer the traditional “entrapment” and “abandonment” about the disintegration of the alliance, but a new dilemmas based on the calculation of cost

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ “Joint Letter of Presidents Donald Tusk and Jean-Claude Juncker on the Upcoming G20 Summit,” European Council/Council of the European Union, July 5, 2017, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/07/05/tusk-juncker-joint-letter-g20/>.

and benefit. Hence, this paper holds that when maintaining a strong alliance needs to pay a high cost, an actor would worry about being “entrapped” because it can not get enough benefits from it; If the alliance becomes loose or disintegrated, some countries would feel “abandoned” for fear of losing the security benefits provided by the alliance. The cost here should include burden distribution and military expenditure sharing, as well as soft costs such as reputation and credibility. So the member states that have the concern of “being entrapped” choose to send a threatening signal (such as withdrawing from the alliance) to reduce the cost of maintaining the alliance. Member states worried about being “abandoned” will choose appropriate concessions for security, and countries that send threatening signals often combine some appeasement measures to accordingly dispel the doubts of followers. From the perspective of relative gain, one or some countries will be dissatisfied with the uneven cost allocation and worry that they will be “entrapped”; If each member equally shares the cost of maintaining the alliance, and the asymmetric alliance relationship often leads to uneven income distribution, one or some allies would assume that the relative benefit is not as expectancy. The gains here not only refer to security interests but also include the economic interests concerned by the United States under the influence of Trump’s “pragmatism”, as well as the political interests in values that Europe has always emphasized. At this time, the interaction evolves into the motivation that the member states may withdraw from the alliance or find alternative solutions, that is, actively “abandon” the old alliance and choose hedging strategy.

In short, when the international environment is relatively peaceful and the security threat faced by the country is declining, the new dilemma of alliance and choices faced by the country are shown in the table below.

	Concerning Costs	Concerning Gains
The Leader (the United States)	Costs of maintain the alliance are high, worrying about “entrapment”, buck-passing	Economic benefits declining, worrying about “entrapment”, buck-passing
The Followers (the European Allies)	Costs of maintain the alliance are low compared with the leader but lacking of security capacity, worrying about “abandonment”, being forced compromising	Political benefits declining, worrying about “entrapment”, displaying initiative actions

In the following chapters, this article will focus on the analysis of the interaction between the United States and Europe in burden-sharing, military expenditure and soft costs based on reputation under the new international situation. In the next two chapters, this paper would use historical research methods and process tracking methods to conduct case studies to introduce how the United States and its European allies adjusted the Transatlantic Alliance Policy facing the changing of the international order during Trump Administration and examine the hypothesis 1, 2, and 3. The interaction between the two will be analyzed within the analytical framework based on the cost-benefit of the asymmetric alliance.

Chapter 3: Policy Adjustments of the United States on the Burden-Sharing of the Transatlantic Alliance During Trump's term of office

The adjustment of the Transatlantic Alliance during Trump Administration is not isolated. The United States and Europe also follow a certain historical logic in managing the Transatlantic Alliance. Therefore, before analyzing the adjustment of U.S. security policy during Trump Administration, it is necessary to briefly explain the previous U.S. management of the Transatlantic Alliance. On the one hand, it helps to have a better understanding of the logic of the United States managing its allies in the past; On the other hand, this can also reflect the changes in the US policy choice towards the Transatlantic Alliance during Trump Administration by comparing the policies of the previous period.

3.1 Contradiction and Adjustment of US-European Burden-Sharing Before Trump Took Office

Before Trump's term of office, the United States and Europe had a similar interaction on burden-sharing in the Transatlantic Alliance. In fact, since the end of the Cold War, the United States has hoped that its European allies can share some security and military burdens, and the development of EU defense forces should be limited to the leadership of the United States. Since the 1990s, NATO has gradually formed a model of division of tasks between the United States and Europe. The United States is responsible for dispatching armaments and troops for military intervention; Europe is responsible for sending peacekeeping forces for post-war reconstruction after the United States completes military operations and controls the situation. After the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, NATO launched the Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty for the first time, and the United States received the moral and practical support of its allies for the war on terrorism. However, during the Bush administration, the United States seemed to prefer ad hoc alliances based on a "case by case, mission by mission" basis, and NATO seemed to be only a tool for the United States. The US practice of bypassing NATO and "Temporary Partnership" has triggered a debate on

the future of NATO. Some people believe that NATO is about to be at edges or demise.⁷⁵ When the Bush Administration launched the war in Afghanistan in its first term, the United States even rejected the military support that Europe tried to provide. However, with the outbreak of the Iraq war, the United States' military spending continued to rise, its economic capacity was greatly consumed and its power was relatively declined. The Bush administration began to ask Europe to change the situation of "free-riding" on security issues and assume more security responsibilities. The purpose of the United States is to let Europe help share the heavy defense burden.

After the Iraq war, the United States gradually abandoned the "primacy" strategy among NATO's allies, implemented strategic contraction, and hoped that allies would help take responsibility on defense burden.⁷⁶ In the face of this "American-lite European security order", NATO responded.⁷⁷ In 2010, Anders Rasmussen, then Secretary General of NATO, put forward the concept of "Smart Defense". In 2011, he published an article *On Foreign Affairs*, proposing that NATO's European Allies should strengthen division of labor and cooperation in the era of austerity, give play to their respective strengths and build a "Smarter Defense" system.⁷⁸ This means that during the Kosovo War and the Afghan War, the division of burden mode in which the United States was mainly responsible for military strikes and European countries were responsible for peacekeeping and post-war reconstruction has changed. In 2011, the U.S. response to the Libyan crisis became more hesitant, even negative. With the relative decline of U.S. comprehensive capability, the United States during the Obama Administration no longer believes that the benefits obtained from promoting the democratization process in the Middle East can offset the real costs paid by the United States, so it hopes to promote France and Britain, which are more enthusiastic about the "Arab Spring", to undertake this originally American intervention task. After being dragged into the Libyan War by France and Britain, the US military only undertook the task of suppressing and destroying enemy air defense systems at the beginning of the campaign and subsequent combat support. The sorties flown by the United States warplanes account for only 25% of those dispatched by allies (80% of the air refueling and battlefield intelligence collection, surveillance and reconnaissance tasks are undertaken by the U.S. military due to the

⁷⁵ Ellen Hallams, "The Transatlantic Alliance Renewed: The United States and NATO since 9·11," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, Vol. 77, Issue 1, 2009, pp. 38 - 60.

⁷⁶ Christopher Layne, "America's Middle East Grand Strategy after Iraq: The Moment for Offshore Balancing Has Arrived," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Jan. 2009, pp. 5 - 25; Lanxin Xiang, "China and the 'Pivot'," *Survival*, Vol. 54, No. 5, Nov. 2012, pp. 113 - 128.

⁷⁷ Doug Stokes and Richard G. Whitman, "Transatlantic triage? European and UK 'Grand Strategy' after the US Rebalance to Asia," *International Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 5, Sep. 2013, p1089.

⁷⁸ Anders Fogb Rasmussen, "NATO after Libya: The Atlantic Alliance in Austere Times," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2011.

lack of air tankers and sufficient intelligence collection and command capabilities in European countries), but more than half of the airstrike tasks were undertaken by British and French warplanes.⁷⁹ It can be said that the Libyan war has created a new model of "Lead from Behind" of the United States, and the transatlantic strategy of the United States has entered the model of "Behind the Scenes" leading.⁸⁰ Leon Panetta, then U.S. Defense Secretary, said bluntly that the Libyan model should become a template for more equal Atlantic responsibility sharing, and the U.S. burden is unsustainable.⁸¹

3.2 The Interpretation of U.S.' Burden-Sharing in the Transatlantic Alliance During Trump Administration Based on the Framework of "Costs and Gains" of Alliance Maintenance

From the perspective of the United States, Trump's attitude towards the cost of maintaining the Transatlantic Alliance is stricter than that during the Obama Administration and pays more attention to the actual "losses" brought to the U.S. economy by the cost paid by the United States in maintaining the Transatlantic Alliance.

With Trump taking office as the president of the United States in 2017, the U.S. diplomacy has entered the "Trump Era". Based on the diplomatic concept of "America first", Trump unilaterally pursues the security and prosperity of the United States. His goal is to reduce the global responsibilities of the United States as a hegemonic power in the past, reduce the burden caused by leading and maintaining the international order, and replace multilateral relations with bilateral ones, so as to give better play to the advantages brought to the United States by asymmetric power in bilateral relations. Trump's "America First" diplomacy has a strong impact on the traditional framework of US-European relations based on liberalism and multilateralism, which has not only seriously damaged the Atlantic Alliance but also greatly intensified

⁷⁹ Li Chen, "Libiyazhanzhengzhongmeiguoyouzhoujunshililiangdeyunyong," *Guojizhengzhiyanjiu*; Li Chen, "The Employment of the U.S. and European Military Forces in the Libyan Campaign," *The Journal of International Studies*, No.1, 2014, pp.101-124.

⁸⁰ Paquin Jonathan and Beauregard Philippe, "US Transatlantic Leadership after Iraq," *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 50, No. 4, 2015, pp. 510 - 530.

⁸¹ US Department of Defense, "Carnegie Europe (NATO), Speech by Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta," Oct. 5, 2011.

the contradictions and divergences between the United States and the Europe on the concept of international order and Atlantic values. (H1)

Supporting European integration has long been an important basis for the U.S. policy towards Europe, while Trump's attitude towards the EU is colder than that of the Asia Pacific region. Trump even tried to divide Europe by supporting "Brexit" and the right-wing conservatives and populist forces in Europe. At the same time, the Trump Administration's "Withdrawal Doctrine" has also dealt a blow to the EU.⁸² In the field of Climate Governance and the Iranian nuclear issues, where the EU adheres to multilateral diplomacy and has achieved results, the United States also chose to withdraw from relevant agreements, which shows that Trump attaches more importance to national economic interests and despises areas that once valued increasing its own soft power (represented by supporting freedom and democratic values). The EU is particularly concerned that the withdrawal of the United States from the Iranian nuclear agreement will trigger a rebound in Iran and exacerbate regional instability. The EU has important security interests in the Middle East, and maintaining stability in the region is one of the priorities of its peripheral diplomacy. Therefore, the Europe regards the withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as an act of ignoring European security interests; However, in the view of the United States led by Trump, the Trump Administration's move is aligning with its diplomatic logic of "America First".

To this end, Trump repeatedly accused European allies of being "deadbeats" and "hitchhikers" of the U.S. power, believing that NATO actually depends on U.S. military and defense spending to protect European allies and maintain regional peace. In Trump's view, the alliance obligation to protect European security was established in the period of the economic prosperity of the United States, but it has become a heavy burden against the fact of American economic recession. Therefore, NATO needs reform, and the share of defense expenditure borne by the member states should be redistributed. Trump no longer adopts the diplomatic consultation method during the Obama administration, but directly threatens to end the "free protection" of Europe. The military investment of European allies must meet NATO standards. In particular, the withdrawal of the United States from the the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action reflects the dislocation of the security interests of the United States and Europe in the Middle East, which is the main reason for the increase of diplomatic differences between the two sides in the region in recent years. After withdrawing

⁸² Richard N. Haass, "Present at the disruption: How Trump unmade US foreign policy," *Foreign Affairs*, Issues. 99, 2020, p.24; "How a world order ends: And what comes in its wake," *Foreign Affairs*. Issues. 98, 2019, p.22; "Trump's foreign policy doctrine? The Withdrawal Doctrine," the Washington Post, May 27, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/05/27/trumps-foreign-policy-doctrine-withdrawal-doctrine/>, latest accessed on 2021/9/19.

from the agreement on Iranian nuclear issues, the Trump administration moved the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, recognized Israel's "sovereignty" over the Golan Heights, and withdrew its troops from Syria. These actions further damaged the Europe's security interests in the region and caused more tension between the two sides. Trump even threatened that "hypocritical" Germany had become a "captive" of Russia. Due to the transactional nature of Trump's series of policies, Trump's attitude towards his allies is more like that of traders than that of military allies.⁸³ Trump's mercantilist understanding of the transatlantic security relationship is rooted in his zero-sum approach to world politics according to which foreign relations are simple interactions to which the US has made disproportionately higher contributions than its allies, and has gotten raw deals from them and the global order in general⁸⁴. This sense of a bad bargain requiring urgent renegotiation, by putting America's interests first, has been the driving force behind Trump's statements and policies and has caused much concern in Europe about the U.S.' security posture regarding NATO.

From the facts and analysis above, it supports the hypothesis 1 abundantly. During this period, the cost of the commitment to the allies on burdens and military expenditures overwhelming other gains from other aspects for the Trump Administration.

3.3 the United States Exerting Pressure on NATO's Europe Alliance on Military Expenditure Concerning Costs of Alliance During Trump Administration

In terms of military expenditure, in accordance with the provisions of the NATO Summit in Wales in 2014, in order to distribute roles, risks and responsibilities equally, member states of the Organization should follow two principles: first, defense expenditure should maintain the standard of at least 2% of their GDP, and second, at least 20% of defense expenditure should be mainly used for equipment.⁸⁵

As the leader of NATO, the United States has maintained its military spending at more than 4% of GDP for a long time. However, after the end of the Cold War, European countries generally reduced military

⁸³ Karen E. Smith, "MA European Union Global Strategy for a Changing World," *International Politics*, July 2017, Volume 54, Issue 4, pp.503-518.

⁸⁴ A transcript of Donald Trump's meeting with The Washington Post editorial board, *The Washington Post*, March 21, 2016.

⁸⁵ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Wales Summit Declaration," September 4, 2014, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm?mode=pressrelease.

spending and were unwilling to share NATO's military spending. According to the data of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Germany's military expenditure continued to decrease in the post-Cold War period, with a greater decline than that of Britain and France.⁸⁶ In terms of the proportion of defense expenditure in GDP, Germany also lagged behind Britain and France. As reported by the relevant data of the European Defense Agency (EDA), the overall defense expenditure of the EU has been declining since 2006.⁸⁷ After the outbreak of the European debt crisis in 2009, the shrink in military spending of the Europe has become more serious. For example, from 2008 to 2010, the overall defense expenditure of the 26 member states of the European Defense Agency (Denmark is the only member state in the EU that did not participate in the European Defense Agency, Croatia joined the EU and the European Defense Agency in July 2013, and both countries are NATO members) decreased by nearly 4%. In 2011, the defense expenditure of these 26 member states accounted for only about 1.55% of their total GDP, which was 192.5 billion euros,⁸⁸ far lower than the standard set by NATO. From 2006 to 2011, EU defense expenditure decreased by 21 billion euros, a decrease of about 10%.⁸⁹ In addition, according to the 2013 annual report released by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, from 2008 to 2013, although the United States reduced defense spending, European allies reduced more in defense investment. In 2007, the defense investment of five member states reached the standard of 2% of their GDP, but by 2013, it was reduced to three countries. At the same time, in spending on major equipment, many allies are far from reaching the standard of accounting for 20% of defense investment.⁹⁰

At the NATO summit in July 2018, Trump severely criticized the current situation of defense spending of allies and once again asked European allies to continue to increase the proportion of defense spending in GDP, which aroused strong opposition from participating allies. At the NATO summit in December 2019,

⁸⁶ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), "The SIPRI Military Expenditure Database," <http://milexdata.sipri.org/result.php4>. According to the data of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), in 2012, the military expenditure of Britain, France and Germany accounted for 2.5%, 2.3% and 1.4% of their GDP respectively, which is different from the data published by the World Bank. Latest accessed on 2021/9/19.

⁸⁷ European Defence Agency: Defense Data, <http://www.eda.europa.eu/info-hub/defence-data-portal>, latest accessed on 2021/9/19.

⁸⁸ The European Defence Agency, "Defence Data 2011," July 22, 2013, <http://www.eda.europa.eu/info-hub/news/2013/07/22/defence-data-2011>, latest accessed on 2021/9/19.

⁸⁹ The European Defence Agency, "Defence Data 2012," December 10, 2013, <http://www.eda.europa.eu/info-hub/news/article/2013/12/10/defence-data-2012>, latest accessed on 2021/9/19.

⁹⁰ NATO, "Secretary General's Annual Report 2013," January 27, 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_106247.htm, latest accessed on 2021/9/19.

Trump once again linked the collective defense responsibility to military spending, suggesting that European allies will not be able to obtain US security if they “owe”.⁹¹

3.4 Neglecting Soft Costs of the Alliance Exacerbating the Divergences Between the United States and Europe During Trump Administration

As mentioned above, with the continuous improvement and development of alliance theory and the increasing importance of mutual trust to the formation and maintenance of the alliance, the soft costs of the alliance should be taken in account in costs of the current alliance. However, during Trump Administration, the United States neglected the international reputation and the importance to appease allies to some extent.

During the Obama Administration, the United States had planned to shift its crucial strategic interests from Europe and the Middle East to East Asia and put forward the “Asia-Pacific Rebalancing”, which makes European countries worried that the United States would bypass the security guarantee for Europe. But in order to avoid over-stimulating Europe, the Obama Administration replaced the expression “pivot” with “rebalancing”. Before leaving as Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton “comforted” the Europe and said that the United States does not want to shift its focus from Europe to Asia, but to shift its focus to Asia together with Europe. After John Forbes Kerry took over as Secretary of State, Europe and the Middle East were chosen to be as his first visit to show that the United States still attaches great importance to Europe. In February 2013, when attending the Munich Security Conference, then Vice President of the United States, Joseph Robinette Biden Jr., stated that “Europe remains America’s indispensable partner of first resort”, “Europe is the cornerstone of America’s engagement with the world” and “a catalyst for global cooperation”.⁹² The Obama administration is more cautious in maintaining and managing the Atlantic Alliance, alleviating the doubt that European allies are “abandoned” so that the United States has achieved a certain degree of rebalancing in global strategy. Trump chose to criticize his allies in a tough tone, and his inconsistent policy towards the Transatlantic Alliance is not to appease his allies in the traditional sense, but under the pressure of domestic

⁹¹ US Department of Defense, *Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21st Century Defence*, Washington D. C.: Department of Defense, 2012.

⁹² The White House, “Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden to the Munich Security Conference,” Hotel Bayerischer Hof Munich, Germany, February 2, 2013, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/02/02/remarks-vice-president-joe-biden-munich-security-conference-hotel-bayeri>, latest accessed on 2021/9/19.

security policy departments and Congress. This has further reduced the trust of European allies in the United States.

In terms of international reputation, the United States withdrew from a series of international systems such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, the Paris Climate Agreement, the the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and refused to nominate judges for the Appellate Body of the World Trade Organization, resulting in its suspension for more than a year. These events have enormously damaged the international reputation of the United States and triggered a decline in the trust of European allies in the United States. At the same time, Trump pays attention to economic interests, and his attitude towards European allies on steel and aluminum tariffs has also strictly damaged their trust in the United States. Florian Böller proposed an analytical framework to measure the trust and distrust of the Transatlantic Alliance. The US-European security relationship during Trump Administration (2017-2019) is taken as an empirical case study to prove that due to the reduction of trust in the United States under Trump's leadership, Europe has begun to implement hedging strategies aimed at protecting its core values and interests against the United States and expressed opposition to the principle of "America First".⁹³

On the one hand, Trump's rejection of multilateralism, free trade and democracy has led to a mismatch between core values and the security community. This mismatch affects the credibility of the United States as a European partner. In a social relationship, the credibility of a partner depends on a sense of moral integrity based on common values and norms. Political disputes can continue if partners recognize that common values are the basis of future cooperation. In this way, the existing transatlantic trust can cushion the negative impact of policy disputes. However, Trump's disregard for the existing institutional framework is even related to the transatlantic core norms of Article 5. Trump hesitated to recognize this criterion and made a second guess about the US commitment to weaker NATO members, which not only weakened the external deterrence function of the security community. The president also weakened the credibility of the United States as a superior authority across the Atlantic.

Symbolic action is also important for transatlantic relations. Trump has repeatedly alienated the United States from its European partners. Shortly after his angry visit to the NATO summit in 2018, Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin praised us Russian Relations.⁹⁴ Similarly, Trump left the G7 summit very

⁹³ Florian Böller, "A Breakdown of Trust: Trump, Europe and the Transatlantic Security Community." In Michael T. Oswald edited, *Mobilization, Representation, and Responsiveness in the American Democracy*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, pp.301-319.

⁹⁴ Will Inboden, "How Much Damage Did Trump Cause in Helsinki?," *Foreign Policy*, July 19, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/07/19/how-much-damage-did-trump-cause-in-helsinki-intelligence-nato-putin-baltic/>, latest accessed on 2021/9/19.

early, but on his way back to the United States, he announced on twitter that he would abandon the summit declaration. These symbolic policies have a negative impact on the level of trust among transatlantic partners, as they weaken the perception of the common identity of the United States and its European allies based on democratic values.

The daily transaction between strangers depends on the expectation of specific reciprocity, and the trust relationship depends on the understanding that even if the promise will not be compensated immediately, the trust giver will get the return of future cooperation. Trump's interactionist policy has fundamentally changed the time frame within which benefits are expected to be offset. This applied in particular to Trump's interactionist concept of Article 5 and European defense spending. In fact, the president claims that because of his demands, Europeans spend more on defense. When European NATO members began to increase military spending after the Ukraine crisis, Trump's concept of burden sharing revealed how the president changed the terms of the transatlantic agreement by focusing on material compensation. In the short run, Trump's demands might produce the intended outcome of higher European defense spending. However, this strategy damages the level of trust as partners see core principles of the security community undermined. In turn, cooperation might be impeded as the case of Germany illustrates. Then politicians of the Social Democratic Party used Trump's lack of trustworthiness to justify that Germany does not fulfill NATO's 2% spending goal. The allies "compensate" the expensive leadership role of the United States mainly by allocating legitimacy and support to the world order led by the United States. Trump prefers to get immediate and substantial returns, rather than promoting the interests of the United States by allowing partners to join institutions created by the United States itself.

On the other hand, withdrawing from existing agreements and changing the "rules of the game" within the transatlantic community reduces predictability of the United States. For example, the strategy of Syria and North Korea is changing too quickly, the area of US-EU trade negotiations is not secure, and the withdrawal from previous arrangements. International treaties are costly signals of commitment to specific political goals. Relying on these institutions can reduce transaction costs. More importantly, those would increase transparency and create an arena for repeated interactions that can build trust. From this perspective, withdrawing from existing treaties would not only fuel policy disputes but also increase uncertainty about future U.S. behavior. Trump, already a candidate, has conceded that the U.S. should become more "unpredictable" under his leadership. As president, he continued to reduce America's credibility by withdrawing from longstanding treaties without prior consultation and refusing to traditional multilateralism institutions for transatlantic cooperation.

With regard to common interests between partners, the two sides continued to emphasize their common objectives, such as non-proliferation or the global fight against terrorism. At the same time, the Trump Administration has even broken agreements in areas traditionally seen as positive-sum games, particularly on transatlantic trade. Not only has the Trump Administration imposed tariffs on European products and threatened to target the European car industry, but the president has also listed the EU as one of the "biggest enemies" of US economic interests⁹⁵. This shows that the Trump administration maintains a zero-sum concept even within the transatlantic security community, which reduces overlapping interests.

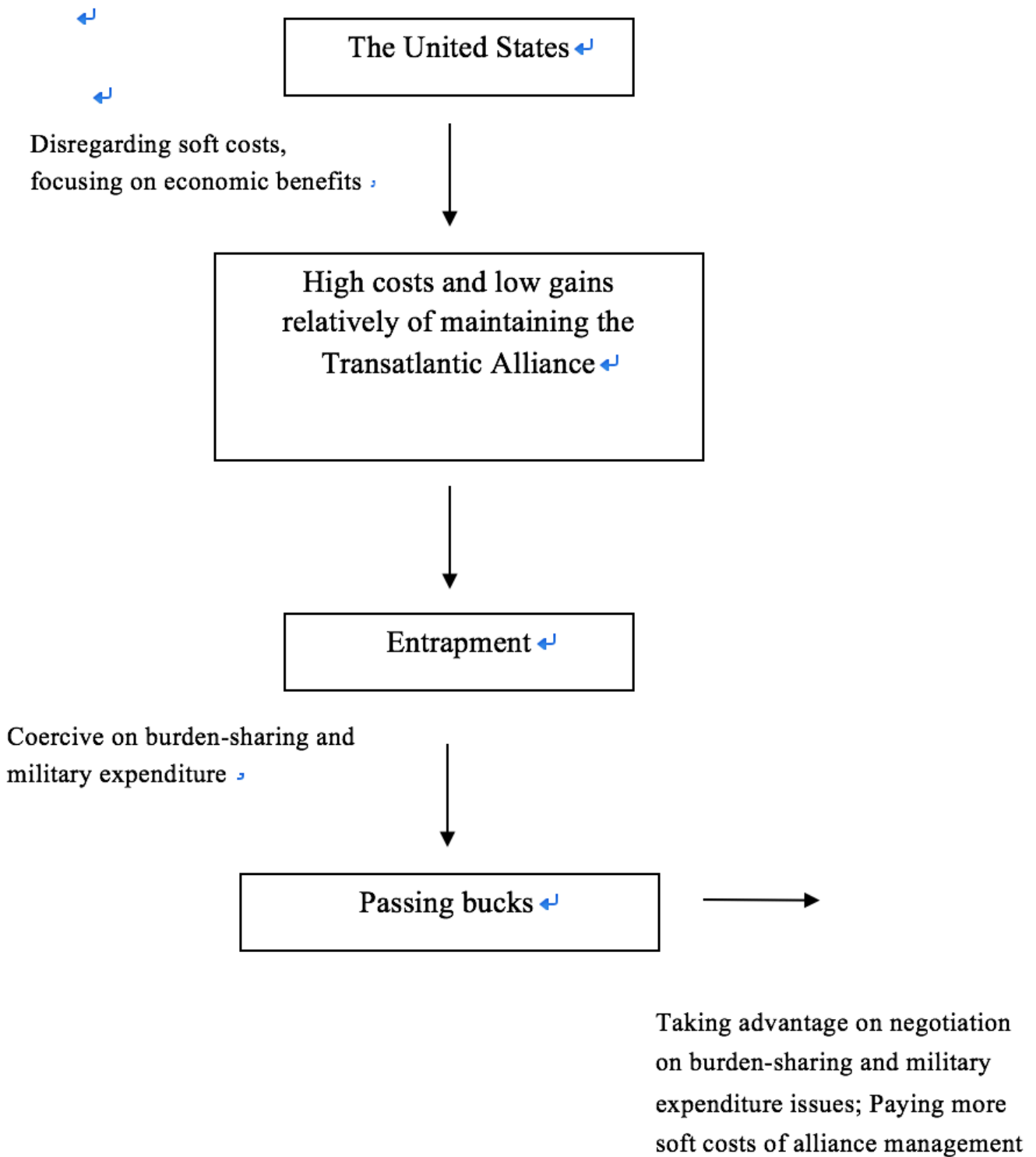
Domestically, Trump's foreign policy has drawn criticism from both parties in Congress. Internationalist policymakers sought to assure partners in NATO that the United States would remain committed to the alliance and the mutual defense clause of Article 5. Several non-binding resolutions were passed by overwhelming majorities to highlight the U.S. commitment to NATO, such as S. Amdt. 240 to S. 722 or Sec. 1248.a of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019. The congress also increased the budget for the European Deterrence Initiative, which funded the rotation of troops and equipment on NATO's eastern flank, as well as military exercises. Congress, however, remains weak in opposing unilateral measures by the Trump Administration, such as withdrawing from international treaties, trade policies and threatening NATO partners with increased defense spending. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, the Congress and bureaucracy of the U.S. made progress on NATO though didn't offset the deficiency of so many withdrawals. Moreover, in the course of the frequent rotation of Trump's cabinet, those represented the traditionalists of the traditionalist like H.R. McMaster have been replaced by actors who support Trump's unilateralist and nationalist orientation.

3.5 The Logic of the U.S.' Management of the Transatlantic Alliance Based On the Analytical Framework of Alliance Management During Trump Administration

During Trump Administration, "America First" dominated the logic of the United States' management of the Transatlantic Alliance during this period. Given the analytical framework, this part could examine the hypothesis 1 and 2. Trump believes that maintaining a strong transatlantic security community requires a high cost. At a time when the power and influence of the United States is relatively declining and under the situation

⁹⁵ Cat Contiguglia, "Trump: EU is one of United States' Biggest Foes," *Politico*, July 15, 2018, <https://www.politico.eu/article/donald-trump-putin-russia-europe-one-of-united-states-biggest-foes/>, latest accessed on 2021/9/19.

where the strategic competition were carried out with China, it is far from enabling the United States to obtain sufficient benefits. (H1) Therefore, when considering the costs and gains of maintaining the alliance, it is reasonable to position the current United States as a role “entrapped” by allies in the Transatlantic Alliance, and conduct alliance management based on this. Trump chose to challenge European allies on the issue of burden-sharing, and sent a series signals to his allies by declaring that he would withdraw from NATO so that they would make concessions on this issue for fear of being “abandoned”. (H2) Compared with the previous government, Trump does not consider the soft costs that need to be paid when maintaining the alliance, which leads to Trump’s way of alliance management focusing on threats and paying little attention to the importance of soft costs such as international reputation. Although this approach has achieved positive results for the United States in the burden-sharing negotiations, it has made the United States pay more “invisible” soft costs that are difficult to quantify when managing the alliance. At the same time, this “transactional” negotiation also led to the damage of mutual trust among allies, making the Europe turn to thinking about adopting a hedging strategy to alleviate the seriousness of dilemma that may be abandoned while making concessions to the issue of defense spending. And here is the diagram shows how to interpret the logic of the adjustments of the U.S. policies.



The next chapter will focus on the strategic adjustment made by the European allies of the United States in the dilemma of facing the pressure of security and the collapse of trust in the United States based on the consideration of the costs and gains of maintaining the alliance.

Chapter 4: Policy Adjustment of NATO's European Allies on Burden-Sharing of the Transatlantic Alliance During Trump's Term of Office

To a large extent, the estimation of Europe's attitude towards the Transatlantic Alliance and adjustments of policies during this period are based on Trump's tough attitudes towards the Europe and the its response to strong pressure on the Europe during this period. However, as mentioned above, in the context where the international situation has changed, the Europe needs to implement its policies of alliance management according to the costs and gains of maintaining the alliance to avoid the dilemma of the alliance. However, it is worth noting that the European Union, relying on its strong economic capacity, its determination to promote strategic autonomy, and the use of its strong "normative power", has also exerted certain pressure on the United States. The notion of Normative Power Europe (NPE) is that the EU is an "ideational" actor characterized by common principles and acting to diffuse norms within international relations.⁹⁶ Therefore, this chapter will focus on how the European allies of the United States, as the weak side of the alliance which was easy to be ignored in the past, can face pressure from the United States, and the initiative of the alliance can be maintained by accepting some American arrangements, negotiating and releasing certain threatening signals. In this chapter, the hypothesis 1 and 3 would be verified with the facts and analysis. And two cases, the Europe pursuing Strategic Autonomy by launching Permanent Structural Cooperation and negotiation with China on Comprehensive Agreement on Investment with its normative power, would be illustrate to test the hypotheses.

4.1 Appropriate Confessions of European Allies on Burden-Sharing During Trump Administration

When faced with the pressures from the United States, America's European allies still undergoing significant pressure on the possibility of losing the security protection from the United States. Therefore, it is difficult to risk rejecting America's demands before defense independence achieved. Especially some Eastern

⁹⁶ Richard Whitman ed., *Normative power Europe: Empirical and theoretical perspectives*, Springer, 2011.

European countries are facing greater security pressure. Poland and the three Baltic countries, which are neighbors of Russia, are more worried about the “withdrawal of the United States from NATO”. During his visit to the United States in September 2018, Polish President Andrzej Duda said that he was willing to spend money for his own country’s security and proposed permanent American base called Fort Trump.⁹⁷ Faced with Trump's “oppressive” forced trade, despite the dissatisfaction expressed by France, Germany and other countries, there is nothing to do except verbal accusations. Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel said “this” way of negotiating with allies is strange.

Although European countries may increase their military spending to 2% of GDP by 2024,⁹⁸ except for the more active Eastern European countries, among the traditional allies of the United States in Western Europe, only France, Greece and Portugal have reached 2% by 2020. Although the proportion of military expenditure in the GDP of the United States has decreased since 2014, this proportion will remain at 3.7% by 2020, much higher than that of its European allies.

⁹⁷ PBS, “WATCH: Poland’s president proposes permanent American base called Fort Trump,” <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/watch-live-trump-hosts-joint-news-conference-with-poland-president>, latest view on 2021/9/16.

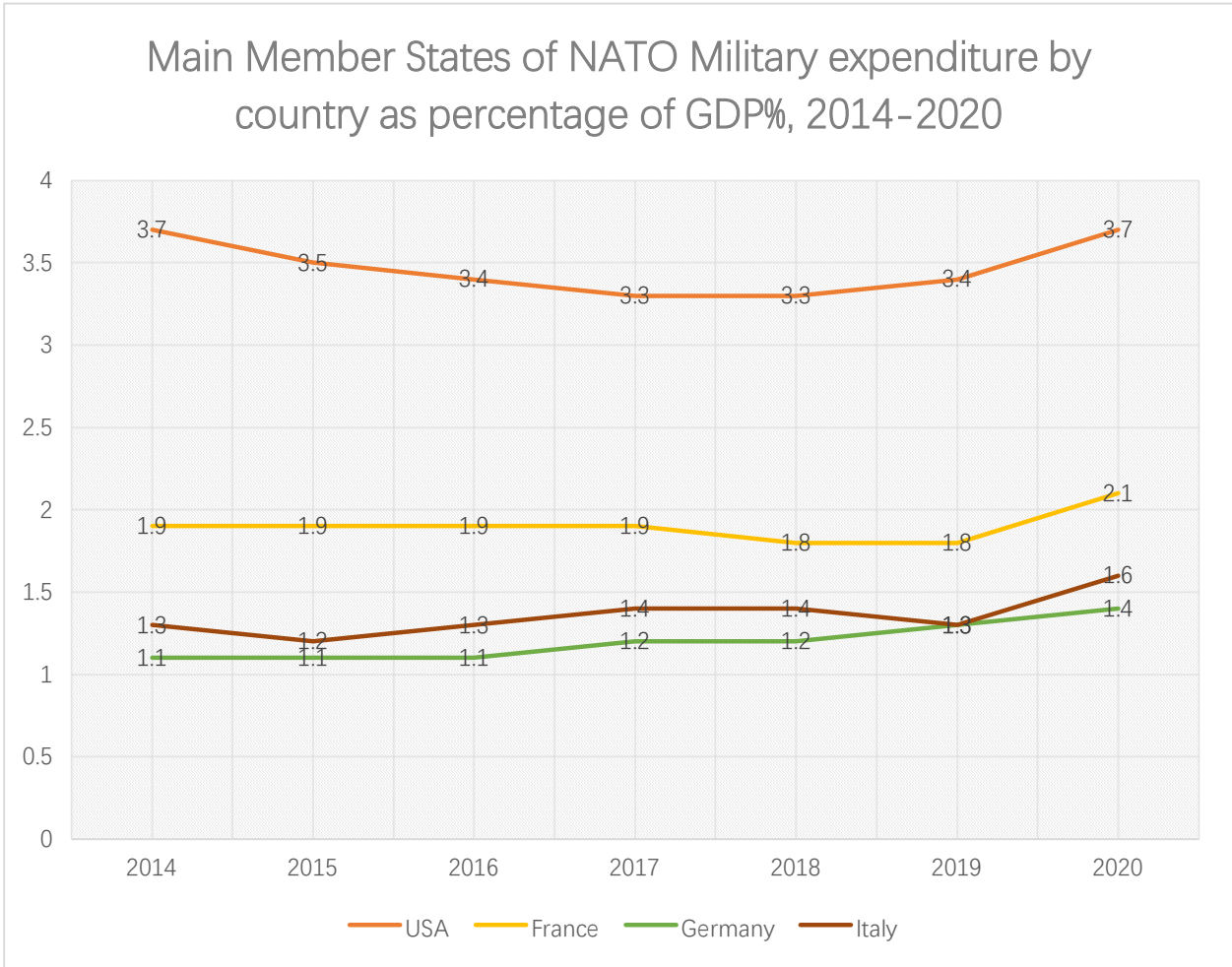
⁹⁸ Jonathan Stearns, “NATO Salutes Europe’s Defense Budget Increases”, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-02-14/nato-salutes-europe-s-defense-budget-rise-amid-trump-pressure>.

Military expenditure by country as percentage of gross domestic product, 2014-2020

Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
USA	3.7%	3.5%	3.4%	3.3%	3.3%	3.4%	3.7%
Bulgaria	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.5%	3.1%	1.8%
Czechia	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	1.2%	1.4%
Estonia	1.9%	2.0%	2.1%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.3%
Hungary	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	1.3%	1.6%
Latvia	0.9%	1.0%	1.5%	1.6%	2.1%	2.0%	2.3%
Lithuania	0.9%	1.1%	1.5%	1.7%	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%
Montenegro	1.5%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	2.1%
Poland	1.9%	2.1%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%	2.0%	2.2%
Romania	1.3%	1.5%	1.4%	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%	2.3%
Serbia	1.9%*	1.8%*	1.7%*	1.8%*	1.6%*	2.2%*	2.1%*
Slovakia	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.7%	1.8%
Slovenia	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%
Belgium	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	1.1%
Denmark	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%
France	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.8%	1.8%	2.1%
Germany	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	1.4%
Greece	2.4%	2.5%	2.6%	2.6%	2.7%	2.7%	2.8%
Italy	1.3%	1.2%	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	1.6%
Luxembourg	0.5%*	0.5%*	0.5%*	0.6%*	0.6%*	0.6%*	0.8%*

Portugal	1.8%	1.8%	2.0%	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%	2.1%
Spain	1.3%	1.3%	1.1%	1.2%	1.3%	1.2%	1.4%

The trend of the proportion of military expenditure in GDP of the United States and its major European allies from 2014 to 2020 is shown in the figure below.



Source: SIPRI, Stockholm Peace Research Institute, Sweden, marked with * is the estimated value of SIPRI.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ SIPRI, SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>

4.2 PESCO: European Allies of NATO Pursuing Strategic Autonomy During Trump Administration

Nonetheless, Trump's transactional policies to threaten allies has a great negative effect which weakens the mutual trust among the Transatlantic Alliance. Martin Schulz, then chairman of Germany's Social Democratic Party, called Trump as the destroyer of all Western values and argued that only a stronger Europe can meet Trump's challenges.¹⁰⁰ In a speech, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said bluntly that the era of Europe relying on U.S. military protection is over and it is time to "hold the fate in our own hands". French President Macron said that the EU must stop relying on the United States for protection and that "it is time for us to safeguard Europe's security". He also called for strengthening European military cooperation, saying that "the EU should build a new order which is independent from the United States".

The vision that European political elites publicly expressed to expect the EU to move towards strategic autonomy sent a signal to the United States: Europe needs to reconsider the credibility of the United States as an ally. Only when it becomes stronger can it win the "respect" of the United States, then maintain and manage the alliance relationship more effectively, and achieve the goal of more balanced U.S. - European relations in the field of defense. As German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said, the US president called the EU the "foe", which once again shows that there has been a deep political gap between the two sides of the Atlantic since Trump took office. "We can no longer completely rely on the White House," EU countries should unite more closely, "To maintain our partnership with the USA we must readjust it. The first clear consequence can only be that we need to align ourselves even more closely in Europe." He also called for a "more balanced partnership" with the United States and it is time to "reconsider" the transatlantic partnership.¹⁰¹ However, the EU's pursuit of "Strategic Autonomy" is not because European countries generally believe that as NATO allies of the United States, there is irrationality in cost-gain in the post-Cold War period. In fact, compared with Western European countries, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, the three Baltic countries, would join NATO as a guarantee of "paying for security", and are more willing to increase defense spending. Therefore, these countries do not pay as much attention to the cost-gain dilemma of alliance as Western European countries but hope to maintain the benefits of security as the core content

¹⁰⁰ EURACTIV, "Critical Trump Tweet Sends Shockwaves to Germany," May 31, 2017, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/critical-trump-tweet-sends-shockwaves-to-germany/>, latest accessed on 2021/9/20.

¹⁰¹ Reuters, "Germany: We can no longer fully rely on U.S. White House," July 16, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-russia-germany-idUSKBN1K60WP>, latest accessed on 2021/9/20.

under the protection of the United States and NATO. At the same time, Trump's vacillating attitude towards Article 5 of NATO means that the strategic reputation of the United States has declined, resulting in the urgent need for European countries to unite and strengthen their capacities and adopt certain hedging strategies, including the limited participation in EU defense integration by "investing for discourse power" and the attempt to build a sub-regional security mechanism by "investing for opportunities".

As an ally of the United States, although the Europe felt disappointed with the United States and dissatisfied with the Trump Administration's foreign policy, its response was not just verbal accusations and increased military expenditure as the United States expected, but was determined to accelerate European defense cooperation, especially EU defense integration, so as to enhance strategic autonomy and balance US-EU partner relationship. To some extent, Trump provides an opportunity for European defense integration. Under the background that the security strategy of the United States has been adjusted and its policies towards Europe tends to be tough, the old issue of European common defense cooperation (including EU defense mechanism construction and capacity improvement) has gained new impetus. In consideration of its own security, in the publication, "Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy" issued in 2016, the EU stressed that ambition and strategic autonomy are very important for the EU to maintain peace and safeguard security within and outside the region, also a sustainable, innovative and competitive defense industry is the key to achieving strategic autonomy and a reliable common security and defense policy.¹⁰² In June 2017, Council of the European Union finally agreed to activate Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

On 13 November 2017, ministers from 23 member states signed a joint notification on the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and handed it over to the High Representative and the Council.¹⁰³ This marks the beginning of a new era for the EU to strengthen European defense capacity through joint military investment and project development. Subsequently, Ireland and Portugal also agreed to join and the number of membership increased to 25 countries. In December 2017, the European Council formally adopted the COUNCIL DECISION establishing Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and determining the list of Participating Member States establishing Permanent Structural Cooperation. Defense cooperation under the EU framework such as PESCO is a "reinsurance" outside NATO for European countries to improve their

¹⁰² The European Union, "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe -- A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy", Brussels, 2016, p.19, 45. https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf.

¹⁰³ Council of the European Union, "Permanent Structured Cooperation – PESCO," https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/32081/qa_pesco.pdf. 2021/9/10.

military capabilities and build European security. After the launch of PESCO, the EU common defense cooperation accelerated. On March 6, 2018, the European Council adopted the first 17 projects of PESCO and their responsible countries and roadmap. On November 19, the European Council announced the second batch of cooperation projects. So far, the total number of cooperation projects under the Permanent Structural Cooperation framework has reached 34, covering: training, facilities, maritime, cyber, air, land, formations, cyber, etc.¹⁰⁴ In November 2019, the EU held a meeting of defense ministers, which approved 13 joint defense projects, including the construction of unmanned anti-submarine systems at sea and the medical training centers to support EU special operations forces. So far, there have been 47 cooperation projects. First established in December 2017, PESCO counts 25 participating Member States and a current total number of 47 projects on such areas as training facilities, land formation systems, maritime, air systems, cyber, and enabling joint multiple services. Work of PESCO will continue, with a particular focus on implementation over the next two years.¹⁰⁵

For the launch of Permanent Structural Cooperation, Federica Mogherini, EU high representative for foreign and security policy, called it a historic moment in the construction of European common defense. In fact, it is reasonable to regard the launch of Permanent Structural Cooperation as a new milestone in the history of EU defense integration. One important reason is that the Lisbon treaty, which officially entered into force at the end of 2009, has established the origin and legal basis for the EU's "Permanent Structural Cooperation" in the field of defense. The treaty stipulates: "Military capabilities meet high standards and make more binding commitments under the common security and defense policy mechanism. Taking into account some member states with the most urgent mission, they should establish a 'Permanent Structural Cooperation' relationship within the EU framework." these countries must "increase defense budgets, coordinate military needs and improve the availability and compatibility of military capabilities". It can be seen that when Europe was still in a debt crisis a decade ago, the EU encouraged member states with more mature conditions and willing to take the heavy burden to become pioneers in the development of defense capabilities, to promote the improvement of the EU's overall defense level. However, in 2009-2017, there

¹⁰⁴ Council of the European Union, "Declaration on PESCO Projects", Brussels, 11 December, 2017; Council of the European Union, "Council Decision (CFSP)2018/1797of 19 November 2018", *Official Journal of the European Union*, L294/18,21-11-2018, pp.18-22.

¹⁰⁵ EEAS, "European cooperation on defence: EU Ministers agree to 13 new PESCO projects", see from https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/eu-global-strategy/70328/european-cooperation-defence-eu-ministers-agree-13-new-pesco-projects_en, latest accessed on 2021/9/10.

was no progress in Permanent Structural Cooperation, which was praised by Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission “Sleeping beauty of the Lisbon Treaty”.¹⁰⁶

In addition to PESCO, the EU has also explored other areas of security cooperation. In September 2017, Macron launched the European Intervention Initiative, which proposed to ensure Europe’s independent action ability in the field of defense as a supplement to NATO.¹⁰⁷ The initiative aims to unite other countries, including Britain, to voluntarily build a new European military force outside the EU framework, so as to respond to various security threats promptly. In September 2017, Lithuania, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and other countries proposed to establish a “military Schengen zone” to improve the military mobility of the EU. In June 2018, France, Germany, Britain and other nine EU countries promised to establish a European joint military intervention force, which can quickly carry out military operations, evacuate civilians in the theater and provide post-disaster relief without the participation of NATO.¹⁰⁸

4.3 NATO’s European Alliance Implementing Normative Power to Influence the Adjustment of the Transatlantic Alliance

In addition to putting pressure on the United States to strengthen its defense capability with practical actions, such as pursuing strategic autonomy mentioned before, the Europe is also actively using its normative power to improve its negotiation capability and increase the soft cost of the United States when maintaining and managing the alliance.

Regardless of the size of the actor, financial and military expenditure remain an essential part of NATO’s burden-sharing. Although larger countries may provide more funds according to proportional assessment, this does not mean that the financial investment of smaller countries is worthless. All members must make substantial contributions to defense, which in turn will provide them with resources to enhance NATO’s

¹⁰⁶ Niklas Nováky, “The EU’s Permanent Structured Cooperation in Defence: Keeping Sleeping Beauty from Snoozing,” *European View*, March 2018, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Emmanuel Macron, “Speech of Initiative for Europe,” September 26, 2017, p. 4, https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/english_version_transcript-initiative_for_europe-speech_by_the_president_of_the_french_republic_cle8de628.pdf.

¹⁰⁸ Cristina Maza, “Europe to Launch Joint Military Intervention Force Because It Can't Count on NATO,” June 25, 2018, <https://www.newsweek.com/europe-launch-joint-military-initiative-because-it-cant-count-nato-993799#:~:text=At%20least%20nine%20members%20of%20the%20European%20Union,Britain%2C%20Denmark%2C%20the%20Netherlands%2C%20Estonia%2C%20Spain%20and%20Portugal,latest%20accessed%20on%202021%2F9%2F10.>

comprehensive military capacity and credibility of deterrence. If used properly, these military expenditures will enhance NATO's comprehensive capability through resource allocation.

In the face of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, NATO cited Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty for the first time. NATO must consider the contribution of the dissemination of values of promoting democracy and safeguarding the freedom to military and political aspects in counter-terrorism. Although there are differences on whether the defense of democracy and freedom should play a central role in NATO's objectives, rather than NATO's focus on territorial defense, NATO's founding arrangement made this objective clear in its formation statement. The North Atlantic Treaty states that, they (NATO Member States) are determined to defend the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their people based on the principles of democracy, individual freedom and the rule of law. If the factors related to values are not included, it is contrary to the provisions at the beginning of the establishment of NATO. Similar to the anti-Soviet period, today's anti-terrorism war is still the core of the ideological competition. When measuring whether member states have fulfilled obligations of an alliance, to deal with this type of conflict, it is necessary to take "softer" factors into account. In addition, even in more traditional conflicts, such as those with Russia, NATO countries need the support of freedom and democracy in addition to strong soft power to resist information warfare and attempts to undermine their social stability. The North Atlantic Treaty also calls for the promotion of "economic cooperation" and the elimination of "... Conflicts in international economic policies." Therefore, although the free market economy is often ignored, it should be evidence of NATO members' contribution to promoting NATO values.

The United States during the Trump period further reduced its attention to the role of "soft power". On the one hand, it reduced the international reputation of the United States and made the U.S. paid more invisible costs for maintaining the alliance. On the other hand, it also led to the collapse of the trust of developed countries led by France and Germany in the United States. Based on this, the Europe chose to send a protest signal through symbolic policies to "warn" or "humiliate" Trump directly. When congratulating Trump on his election, Merkel stressed the common values that are the basis of Transatlantic relations: "Germany and the United States are bound by common values -- democracy, freedom, respect for the rule of law and everyone's dignity... Based on these values, we hope that close cooperation can be carried out between individuals and between the two governments". This was interpreted as Merkel's warning to Trump, asking him not to implement some controversial statements. Macron also said in May 2018 to criticize Trump with expressions like "for the sake of our own sovereignty, we have the responsibility to defend its rules

rather than yield, neither hesitate in the face of unfair competition nor show weakness when the countries that formulated the rules with us at that time but threatening us now.” Heiko Maas, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, pointed out that the consensus on the values and interests that have affected the transatlantic relationship in the past is declining. These symbolic signals are intended to convey to the United States Europe’s concern about values and other soft power, hoping that Trump will regain his attention to the Transatlantic Alliance. In addition, the EU has always attached importance to its normative power through its influence since adhering to multilateralism and participating in global governance, it has exerted certain public opinion pressure on the Trump Administration domestically and abroad.

4.4 CAI: The Europe Pursues Strategic Autonomy by Exerting Normative Power

In addition to enhancing Strategic Autonomy by launching PESCO in defense policy, Europe also actively uses normative power to show its comprehensive capacity and coordinate the relationship between the United States and Europe in security relations, among which, the negotiation of the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) between the EU and China can well support this argument. At the same time, some scholars also believe that this practice of the EU is a “hedge” against the U.S.’ policy.

As mentioned earlier, the cost and gains judgments of the United States and Europe in maintaining the alliance are different. Therefore, Europe also chooses to actively exert its normative power in the trade field of special concern to Trump to improve its relative economic benefits in the maintenance of the alliance and the costs to be paid by the United States. The negotiation of China-EU CAI is influenced by the trilateral relationship between China, the United States and Europe. Since entering the 21st century, the trilateral relations between China, the United States and Europe have become increasingly complex. The fundamental reason why China has become the most prominent variable in trilateral relations is that China’s comprehensive national strength has risen rapidly, while the power of the United States and Europe is in a relatively declining trend. The rising China has affected the complex changes in international relations and potential changes in the international order. The United States remains the world’s no. 1 power with global influence and regards the rise of China as the greatest threat to its hegemony. During the Obama’s Administration, the United States adopted the “Asia-Pacific Rebalancing” strategy to actively respond to

China's rise; During Trump Administration, he pursued the "America First" policy, adopted the confinement policy and limit pressure policy against China, curbed China's development in an all-round way, vigorously promoted the "decoupling" of Sino-US technology, and even threatened to launch a "New Cold War" against China. The U.S. policy towards China has led to a precipitous decline in China-US relations. The competition between China and the United States at the global level has been clearly presented and has had a profound impact on international relations. At the same time, China-EU relations have also undergone a series of changes. Marked by the EU-China: Strategic Outlook issued by the European Commission in 2019, the EU's China policy not only highlights the importance of bilateral cooperation, but also emphasizes contradictions and competition in bilateral relations, and puts forward that China plays different roles in different policy fields and is both a partner of the EU to achieve important goals also a negotiating partner for the EU to seek a balance of interests; It is not only an economic competitor pursuing a leading position in technology, but also a systematic opponent promoting alternative governance models. This requires the EU to adopt a flexible and pragmatic approach and defend European interests and values in principle. The tools and methods of EU-China engagement should also be distinguished according to important issues and policies. ¹⁰⁹

Despite the impact of China's rise on the international order, the United States and Europe have common interests. However, Europe and the United States are not completely consistent, and there are still many differences in China policies between the two sides. In order to safeguard common interests, the EU has had a positive impact on the maintenance of the Transatlantic Alliance through the actions mentioned earlier. On this basis, the EU actively communicates with the United States and establishes relevant mechanisms to coordinate its strategy towards China. The U.S.- European policy coordination on China has always existed, and the two sides have repeatedly discussed cooperation and competition with China through it. The transatlantic China-related dialogue mechanism began in 2001. Initially, it mainly focused on unofficial contacts. The Stimson Center of the United States and the German Committee on Foreign Relations organized exchanges between experts in the fields of China, East Asia and transatlantic relations.

¹¹⁰Nevertheless, this dialogue mechanism is often disturbed by the converts of American foreign policy, especially after the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, the focus of American foreign policy changed and the mechanism was temporarily suspended. By 2005, the United States and Europe officially opened the

¹⁰⁹ European Commission, "EU-China: A Strategic Outlook," March 12, 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf>, lasted accessed on 2021/9/20.

¹¹⁰ Alan Romberg, "Transatlantic Dialogue on China: Final Report," February 14, 2003, <https://www.stimson.org/2003/transatlantic-dialoguechina-final-report/>.

officially led transatlantic China-related dialogue mechanism on the basis of the unofficial dialogue mechanism because of their inconsistent attitude towards the lifting of the EU arms sales ban to China. In May 2005, Solana, then the EU High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR), visited Washington and met with then the U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, which is considered to be the symbol of the official launch of the transatlantic China-related dialogue mechanism. In November of the same year, the United States and Europe held another strategic dialogue on China and Asia. However, with the shelving of EU arms sales to China, the focus of the U.S. diplomacy has shifted to the Middle East, and the transatlantic China-related dialogue mechanism has gradually been placed at the unofficial level and is not very active.

The transatlantic China-related dialogue mechanism is intermittent, mainly because the United States and Europe have different ways and interests in dealing with China's rise. The positions of the two sides are similar, but there are also great differences. Many American scholars and policymakers believe that China is the primary competitor of the United States in the future and must be contained. The EU and several member states do not believe that a stronger China will inevitably conflict with the interests of the West. As long as China integrates into the institutional international system, it can still coexist with it and achieve win-win results. The U.S.' policy towards China has experienced the evolution of engagement, hedging, and containment, and finally emphasizes confrontation. The United States hopes to see a China whose strength will never pose a threat to itself. The EU has been pursuing comprehensive engagements and cooperation with China.¹¹¹ Europe expects China to become a responsible actor and a supporter of multilateralism gradually integrating into the international rule system. In response to China's rise, Europe still adheres to the principle of focusing on contact and cooperation, and close economic cooperation with China is the unchanged principle of previous EU institutional leaders, which is an important historical background for the EU to independently promote the negotiation of the agreement. In June 2020, the EU High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell Fontelles proposed to launch the transatlantic China policy dialogue, which received a positive response from the United States. In October 2020, Borrell Fontelles and then US Secretary of state Michael Richard Pompeo met by telephone to discuss a series of issues of common concern in the transatlantic partnership, especially China. During the meeting, The European External Action Service (EEAS) and the U.S. State Department held a bilateral dialogue on

¹¹¹ Bates Gill and Gudrun Wacker, eds., "China's Rise: Diverging U.S.-EU Perceptions and Approaches," August 2005, https://www.swpberlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/projekt_papiere/ChinaGMF_end_ks.pdf

China.¹¹² In June 2020, during his meeting with Pompeo, Borrell said that the EU and the United States should strengthen cooperation on the “challenges” brought by China, but the unilateralist foreign policy of the United States caused no consultation between the United States and Europe, and sometimes even damage the interests of the EU.¹¹³ In December, 2019, the European Commission issued the “EU-US: A new transatlantic agenda for global change” highlighted how the United States and Europe should cooperate on a series of global issues and maintain multilateral order and rules, showing that the EU not only wants to maintain the community of values but also leaves room for cooperation with China, so as to better promote multilateralism.¹¹⁴ It can be seen that although the EU has common goals with the United States in dealing with China’s rise, it is also dissatisfied with the unilateralism of the United States. The EU hopes to respond to China’s rise through multilateral mechanisms, international institutions and rules. Through the negotiations with China, Europe has always emphasized its soft gains in global governance, multilateralism, trade liberalization, and so on. When explaining the EU’s foreign policy, the the EU High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Borrell stressed that the US-China strategic competition will continue to be the dominant trend of international politics in the future. In this regard, the EU needs to maintain its courage and formulate its own response. Europe must follow its own path and act in accordance with its own values and interests. At the same time, Europe also hopes to carry out long-term cooperation with China on some global issues. The two sides can bind interests in-depth and work together to jointly deal with global uncertainty and actively promote multilateralism and liberalization for world trade.¹¹⁵

When considering costs and benefits in alliance management, Europe also increasingly more focusing other aspects includes economic benefits in the measurement. Some contents of CAI are of common concern to Europe and the United States, which are mainly reflected in improving market access standard and promoting trade reciprocity, strengthening intellectual property protection, eliminating forced technology transfer, prohibiting high-tech and information technology theft or espionage, and reforming State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). At the same time, the agreement also reflects the differences between Europe and the

¹¹² “EU/US: Joint Press Release by the EEAS and Department of State on the Phone Call Between J.Borrell and M. Pompeo,” October 23, 2020, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/87472/euus-joint-press-release-eeas-and-department-state-phone-call-betweenjborrell-and-mpompeo_en, latest accessed on 2021/9/19.

¹¹³ Josep Borrell, “China, the United States and us,” July 31, 2020, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/83644/chinaunited-states-and-us_en, latest accessed on 2021/9/22.

¹¹⁴ EU-US: A new transatlantic agenda for global change https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip_20_2279/IP_20_2279_EN.pdf, latest accessed on 2021/9/20.

¹¹⁵ Josep Borrell, “China, the United States and us,” July 31, 2020, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/83644/chinaunited-states-and-us_en, latest accessed on 2021/9/22.

United States. The core issue is whether Europe and the United States can “benefit simultaneously”. The United States believes that Europe taking the lead in reaching the “agreement” with China means that the United States faces losses in the Chinese market. Because Europe and the United States cannot benefit simultaneously, they confront the risk that the alliance will be divided by China in the face of interests, and may lose more bargaining power to China due to the decline of cohesion. For the Europe, this is closely related to its own economic interests. Although the United States is also an important trading partner of the EU, many unilateralist practices of the United States have made Europe realize that it must safeguard its own interests in its own way.

The US and Europe have been competing for interests around the Chinese market, especially on the issue of China’s market access, some contradictions between the two sides are difficult to reconcile. At the beginning of 2020, China and the United States reached the first stage of economic and trade agreements, which created preferential conditions for Chinese market access for American enterprises. However, in the view of the EU, the agreement is damage to the interests of European enterprises in China and seriously disrupts the order of market, thus promoting the World Trade Organization to review whether the agreement reached between China and the United States violates relevant regulations. Even more irritating to the EU is that the United States has abandoned Europe to reach an agreement with China alone, which is typical of unilateralism and egoism.¹¹⁶ This has also further deepened the concern that the EU is facing the dilemma of “being abandoned”. Against the background that the negotiation of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is difficult to continue, major countries such as Germany and most of large multinational companies in Europe support the agreement and believe that it is a good path to gain the first opportunity and offset losses. China signed bilateral investment agreements with many European countries, most of which were completed in the 1980s and 1990s. Compared with the previous agreements signed by China and the EU Member States, the agreement reached in 2020 has higher standards, involving market access, transparency, environment, investment arbitration and other aspects, of which market access is the focus of the negotiations. The two sides have been preparing for negotiations since 2012, and the first round of negotiations was held in January 2014. In 2016, after China and the EU reached an agreement on the scope of the investment agreement, they continued to conduct specific negotiations on documents. Especially after Trump took office, in order to cope with the impact of Trump’s unilateralism, China and the EU have carried out intensive negotiations after 2018, and successively held several rounds of negotiations on market access

¹¹⁶ “In Defense of the EU-China Investment Deal,” January 8, 2021,

<https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-at-large-eu-china-investment-deal/>, latest accessed on 2021/9/19.

conditions and related financial services, capital transfer, national treatment-related commitments, dispute settlement, sustainable investment development, fair competition, forced technology transfer, state-owned enterprises and other issues, And finally announced on December 30, 2020, that an agreement was reached on all negotiation contents. Although the European Parliament did not pass the CAI in the end, this is also the embodiment of the European side's active pursuit of Strategic Autonomy during Trump Administration.

The strategic adjustments of U.S. foreign policy have had an impact on China and Europe, making Europe realize that in-depth cooperation with China is a pragmatic and reliable choice. The negotiation of bilateral investment agreements between China and the United States and Europe and the United States has long been started, and China and the European Union invariably regard the United States as the focus of economic and trade cooperation negotiations and breakthroughs. However, after Trump took office, Trump's unilateralist stance and "America First" policy caused serious cracks in U.S.-European relations, and the U.S. European trade war caused the crisis of transatlantic strategic mutual trust. The United States does not hesitate to see Europe as a trade competitor and its protected market as a challenge to American interests.¹¹⁷ Therefore, during Trump Administration, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations between Europe and the United States did not make progress. The decline of strategic mutual trust also further makes the EU turn to the pursuit of strategic autonomy. The EU's independent choice to accelerate the negotiation of the agreement with China shows the EU's efforts to pursue its own interests and strategic autonomy. It also shows that the EU's diplomacy with China has its own way and interest orientation, which is not completely consistent with the United States.

The negotiation process of CAI reflects the logic of EU policy-making by comprehensively calculating the costs and gains of maintaining the Transatlantic Alliance. From the cost-gain perspective of alliance management, the reason why the EU started the negotiation of the investment agreement with China is that first, the Europe needs to give full play to its advantages in values such as multilateralism and maintaining free market, to reduce its costs in maintaining the alliance and enhance its international reputation and influence; Second, Europe needs to develop trade with China to offset the adverse economic impact of Europe's concession to the United States on the issue of military spending; Third, economic and trade negotiations with China are also chips for further pursuing strategic autonomy and increasing burden-sharing with the United States in the Transatlantic Alliance. CAI reduces the cohesion of European and American

¹¹⁷ Tom Fowdy, "The US' Fury Over the China-Europe Investment Deal Shows How Rattled & Isolated They Are. It's Clear Who's Been 2020's Big Winner," December 31, 2020, <https://www.rt.com/oped/511221-us-fury-china-eu-deal/>, latest accessed on 2021/9/18.

cooperation in geopolitics, but the degree of European Strategic Autonomy and execution are variables with great influence. The cooperation and competition between China and the United States have boosted Europe's tendency of Strategic Autonomy and partially weakened the effectiveness of the transatlantic dialogue. The Europe endeavors to avoid becoming a battlefield for the competition of great powers and strive to become a participant and bridge in the competition, and its sense of Strategic Autonomy continues to improve. The EU is the object that China and the United States are trying to win over. While constantly enhancing its awareness of Strategic Autonomy, the Europe strives to improve its initiative in dealing with European and American relations and takes advantage of the strategic competition between China and the United States to improve its bargaining power. In transatlantic cooperation, the Europeans' Strategic Autonomy is not only absolute but also relative and conditional. The absolute reason is that there are deep-rooted contradictions between the United States and Europe, which are difficult to reconcile, and it is impossible to achieve unanimity; The relative is mainly reflected in the relations between Europe and the United States, especially in the field of security, and the Europe's dependence on the United States. Although the Europe's desire for "strategic autonomy" is attractive to most EU Member States, the reality of overreliance on the United States in security and defense determines the limitations of its autonomy. Although the construction of EU common security and defense has achieved phased results, there is still a big gap from defense independence. The vulnerability of the EU's Strategic Autonomy makes it difficult to substantially change the structural relationship of the United States staying dominating and Europe staying subordinate in transatlantic relations. The EU can only show limited "hard power" through soft power, such as single market power, agenda-setting, the normative power of the EU, etc.

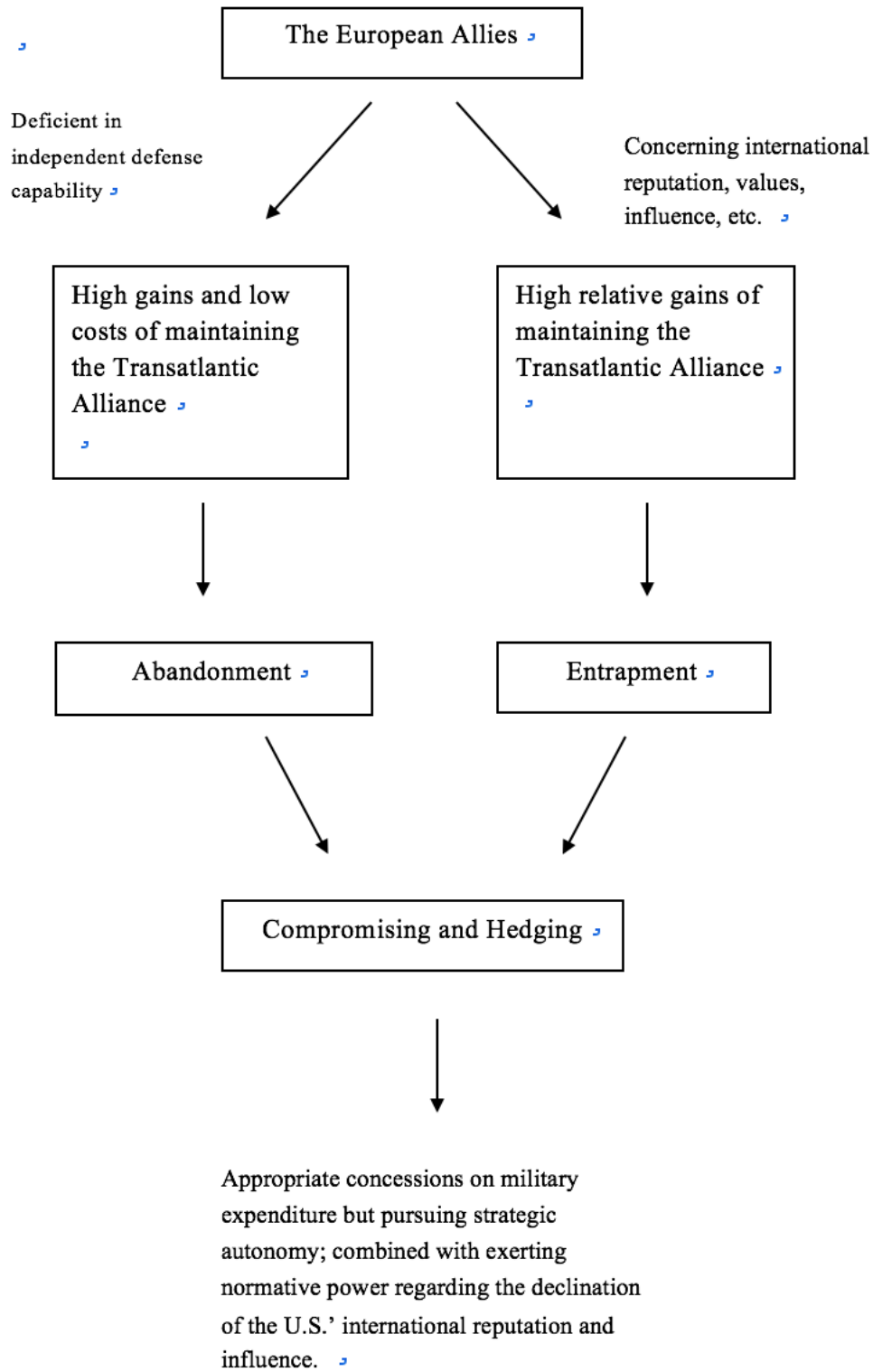
This case also supports the argument of hypothesis 1 and 3 and this this case would also be mentioned in the next chapter to illustrate the interactions between the United States and the Europe.

4.5 Understanding the Adjustment of Policies of U.S.' European Allies in NATO from the Framework of Alliance Management under the Asymmetric Alliance

Due to the lack of independent defense capability, the dilemma Europe facing at this time is still the "abandonment" dilemma based on security concerns. Worried about being "abandoned", the Europe chose to make appropriate concessions on military expenditure in order to continue to obtain assurance on security

from the United States. However, the “coercion” of the United States towards its allies not only led to the decline of the allies’ trust in the United States but also damaged the international reputation of the United States itself. Although the current military expenditure of European allies has not reached 2% of each country’s GDP, according to the trend in recent years, the military expenditure of most European allies is gradually approaching this criterion. Under the dual influence of losing confidence in the commitment of the United States and pursuing its own security interests, Europe began to take more countermeasures. Among them, the most effective is to strengthen the construction of their own defense forces. In addition to launching the Permanent Structural Cooperation in 2017, they also actively try to establish strategies such as sub-regional defense organizations. At the same time, Europe pays more attention to the soft costs of maintaining the alliance, such as national reputation. On the one hand, by directly blaming Trump, sends a signal to warn him to treat the Transatlantic Alliance carefully and hope him to realize the importance of the Transatlantic Alliance; On other hand, through the exertion of its normative power, it will increase its influence and try its best to reduce the “relational authority” formed by the United States in the alliance. Although this symbolic signal release can only exert pressure on the United States by influencing public opinion, combined with Europe’s practical efforts in pursuing strategic autonomy, Europe hopes to improve the possibility that the United States will face the dilemma of “being abandoned” in the alliance in the future, so that the United States has to revise Trump’s view and strategic adjustment on the Transatlantic Alliance.

And a diagram to illustrate the logic of the responses to the U.S. adjustment of the Europe is displayed below.



Chapter 5: The Interactions between the United States and the U.S.’ European Allies During the Trump Administration from the Perspective of Alliance Management

In the last two chapters, this paper respectively analyzes how the two parties in the Transatlantic Alliance analyze the dilemma they face and manage the Transatlantic Alliance according to their judgment on the costs and gains of maintaining the alliance under the changing international situation since Trump came to power. However, as mentioned above, alliance management should be an interactive process, rather than focusing only on the governance of the leader of the alliance. In this chapter, the interaction of both sides of the Transatlantic Alliance in this period will be analyzed under the analytical framework of alliance management in asymmetric alliances. Other alternative explanations will also be briefly explained in this chapter.

5.1 Facts on the Interactions between the U.S. and its European Allies in the Transatlantic Alliance During Trump Administration

In addition to Trump’s adjustments to NATO policies and expression of his attitude mentioned in the previous part, some contradictory attitudes of the United States towards the Transatlantic Alliance can serve as a starting point for understanding the interaction between the two sides of the Atlantic in alliance management. Efforts by some senior administration officials to temper Trump’s comments, such as Vice President Mike Spence, who said at the Munich Security Conference in February 2017 that the United States of America strongly supports NATO and remains unwavering in our commitment to this Transatlantic Alliance¹¹⁸, was hardly enough to reassure Europeans. In fact, Trump's U-turn on NATO is stunning. In May 2017, President Trump refused to explicitly endorse Article 5 in his speech at the NATO summit in Brussels,

¹¹⁸ Steven Erlanger and Alison Smale, “In Munich, Pence Says U.S. Commitment to NATO Is ‘Unwavering’”, *The New York Times*, February 18, 2017.

¹¹⁹and a few weeks later surprised all his national security advisers by declaring at a press conference that the United States was firmly behind Article 5¹²⁰. While Trump has reversed his view of NATO as “obsolete” by recognizing its importance in fighting terrorism, he has been persistent and outspoken in his attacks on European allies for not meeting the 2% threshold for defense spending. Furthermore, in his speech at the 2018 NATO Summit in Brussels, he even suggested that alliance partners increase their military spending to 4%.¹²¹ However, the New York Times reported on one of the most startling of President Trump’s contradictory statements on NATO. In 2018, Trump privately raised his threat to withdraw the United States from NATO, the newspaper reported. The idea drew harsh criticism from the president’s national security team, including then-Defense Secretary James Mattis and former national security adviser John Bolton. They all point out that a U.S.’ withdrawal from the 70-year-old alliance would greatly reduce American influence in Europe, which would hurt U.S. interests and could embolden Russia for decades to come. Along the same lines, Congress takes steps against any such action by the president. In January 2019, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed unprecedented bipartisan legislation, the NATO Support Act, prohibiting the United States from withdrawing from NATO without Senate approval.¹²²

While much of Trump’s criticism of European NATO participation is based on his tweets and speeches, the actual document tells a slightly different story. For example, President Trump’s National Security Strategy (NSS) released in December 2017 reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to Europe, emphasizing that a strong and free Europe is vital to the United States. Both sides share a commitment to the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. America is safer when Europe is prosperous and stable and helps defend our common interests and ideals. The United States remains deeply committed to our European Allies and partners. NATO’s alliance of free sovereign States is a great advantage over our competitors, and the United States remains committed to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.¹²³ It shows that the United States is under pressure from its European Allies to change, at least when it comes to values. The Secretary of Defense’s new National Defense Strategy (NDS), released in February 2018, also emphasized NATO’s strategic importance and value in the face of major threats, namely China and Russia, known as “revisionist powers”. He also said that mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are central to the U.S.’ strategy,

¹¹⁹ Jacob Pramuk, “Trump Gave a Speech to NATO Leaders, But It’s What He Left Out That Got Their Attention,” *CNBC*, May 25, 2017.

¹²⁰ Jacob Pramuk, “Trump Endorses NATO’s Mutual Defense Pact in Poland, After Failing to Do So On First Europe Trip,” *CNBC*, July 6, 2017.

¹²¹ Jeremy Diamond, “Trump Opens NATO Summit with Blistering Criticism of Germany, Labels Allies ‘Delinquent’,” *CNN*, July 11, 2018.

¹²² The Congress, H.R.676 - NATO Support Act, 01/23/2019, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/676>, latest accessed on 2021/9/19.

¹²³ *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, D.C.: White House, 2017.

providing enduring, asymmetric strategic advantages unmatched by any competitor or competitor. Allies and partners work with us every day to defend freedom, prevent war, and uphold the rules of a free and open international order. ¹²⁴The documents clearly reaffirm the U.S. commitment to Europe and the critical importance of Russia's re-emergence as a potential threat.

5.2 Understanding of the Interaction between the United States and Europe within the Analytical Framework of Alliance Management in Asymmetric Alliances

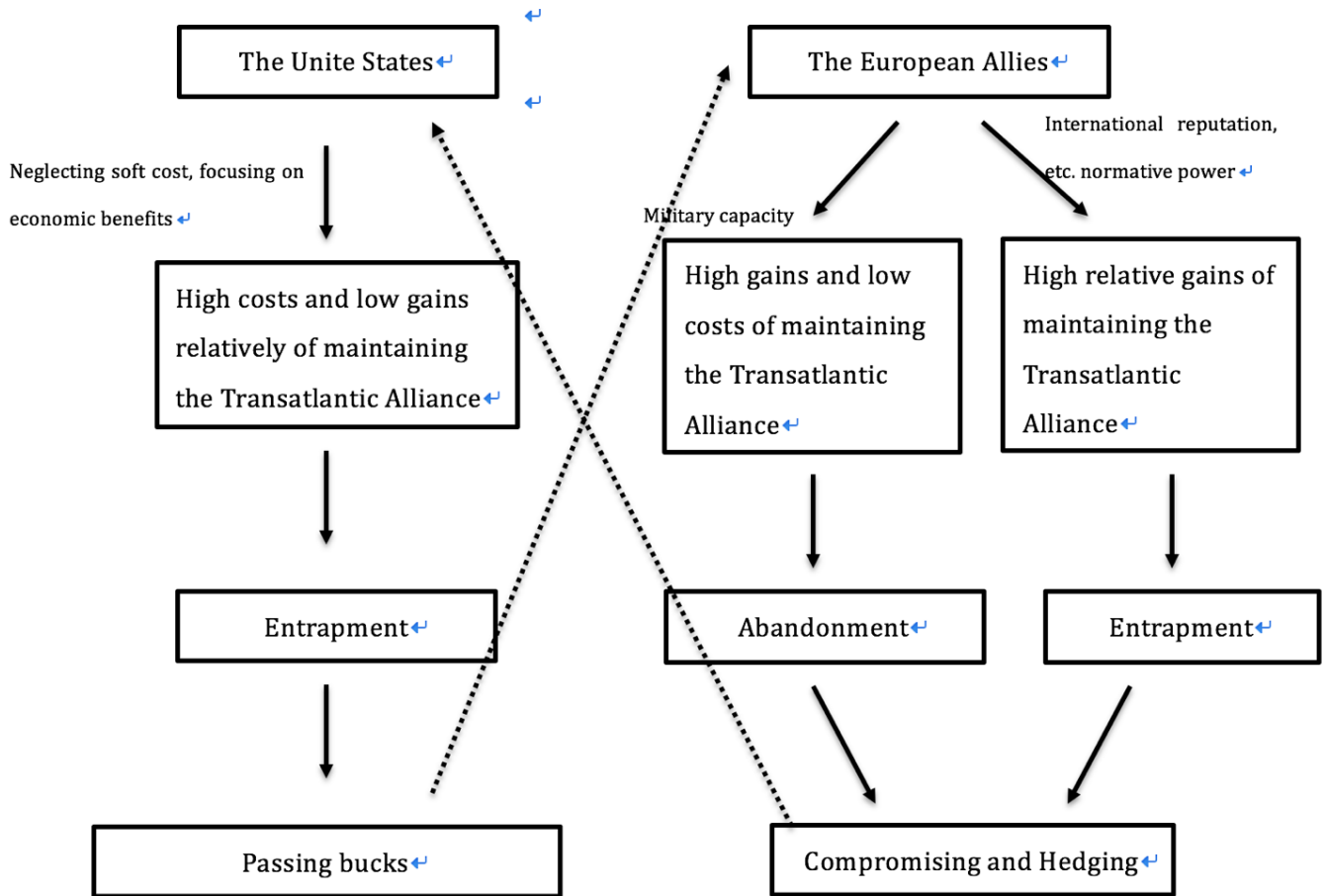
As mentioned in the previous two chapters, the United States and its European allies within NATO have made the choice of managing the alliance based on the cognition of the costs and gains of maintaining the alliance. From the perspective of alliance management, the United States' contradictory policy towards the Transatlantic Alliance is neither that common interests and threats outweigh differences on many issues, nor the performance of Trump's unpredictable characteristics of policy-making. For the United States, during Trump Administration, the United States adjusted its Transatlantic Alliance policy on the basis of believing that the costs of maintaining the alliance is too high and ignoring the soft costs of alliance management to a certain extent, believing that the United States actually fell into the dilemma of alliance, "entrapment", and chose to force its allies to make concessions by means of personal verbal threats. In this process, Trump often plays the role of releasing threatening signals, while other US bureaucrats are responsible for "appeasing" allies. In essence, this is the embodiment of the psychology of "passing-bucks" of the United States in the reality of relative decline of power.

For Europe, despite the fact that the security protection given by the United States cannot be replaced (temporarily), it is helpless for Europe to choose to make concessions on the issue of military expenditure sharing. However, relying on its comprehensive capabilities, especially its independent defense construction, Europe has put pressure on the United States, forcing the United States to worry about falling into the alliance dilemma of "abandonment" and reconsider the importance of NATO. At the same time, given the soft costs of maintaining the alliance concerned by Europe, Europe skillfully took advantage of the fact that the international reputation of the United States has declined, and exerting normal power has forced the

¹²⁴ Department of Defense, *Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge*, 2018.

United States to rethink the interests of publicizing the values of democracy and freedom and multilateralism that may enhance the influence and normative power of the European.

The logic of interaction of the two sides in the Transatlantic Alliance based on the analysis framework of alliance management in the asymmetric alliance is shown in the graph below.



The two dotted lines in the figure indicate that the behaviors will conducting the reassess of the actors on the costs and gains of maintaining the alliance according to the other one's actions and policies, and make adjustments to the previous policies. For the United States, facing the pressure exerted by European allies on itself through the decline of America's international reputation, the United States reiterated its position of committing to the agreement and attaching importance to the values of freedom and democracy in many official documents and statements. In the face that Europe may choose to develop relations with its competitors that are unfavorable to the United States, the United States would realize that it may fall into the dilemma of being abandoned. Therefore, it will reaffirm the important strategic significance of European allies and the Transatlantic Alliance to the United States.

For the European allies of the United States in NATO, due to the lack of independent defense capability, Europe can only choose to make concessions in the face of the oppressions post by the United States on military expenditure and burden-sharing. However, when the benefits such as the values they pay attention to fail to meet the expectations, the EU will choose to exert public opinion pressure on the United States through the exertion of its own normative power. At the same time, by pursuing strategic autonomy or choosing to reach agreements with other countries on issues of concern to the United States (such as economic and trade issues), the Europe tried to make the United States feels the pressure that it may be abandoned by Europe.

5.3 Deficiencies of the Analytical Framework and Other Alternative Explanations

The purpose of this paper is to explore the interactive behaviors of actors in alliance management on the basis of recognizing that the essence of the Transatlantic Alliance is to evolve from traditional military alliance to formal political and military alliance. Therefore, this paper does not deny that there are other explanations that define the Transatlantic Alliance as bilateral or multilateral relations in other fields, and suggests on this basis on “the reasons for the maintenance of the Transatlantic Alliance or transatlantic relations during Trump Administration”. However, it is worth noting that based on the statement that the state is the most important actor in international relations, this paper does not pay too much attention to the domestic factors of the United States. At the same time, some other influencing factors that cannot be described and interference variables that are difficult to quantify still matter. Therefore, at the end of the article, it is necessary to supplement the deficiencies and other interference variables of this paper.

The first is the causal links between some variables in the analytical framework that are difficult to establish directly. In international politics, the hysteresis of the results of the actions of actors is common, so it is difficult to directly and simply connect the change of some positions of the United States with the outcomes of European policies. Instead, this paper chooses to place the interactions between the United States and Europe in the time span of before and after Trump Administration for an overall description. In alliance management, the soft cost is difficult to quantify and can only be described as well.

In addition, the domestic factors and the change of the priority of the United States and Brexit also had impacts on the policy-making of the United States and its European allies during this period.

The first is the domestic factor of the United States. According to the implementation of the previously reviewed changes in U.S. attitude and policy towards the Transatlantic Alliance, the U.S. President's national security team, Congress and bureaucracies have made positive efforts to maintain the Transatlantic Alliance. However, this paper focuses on the interaction between two actors in alliance management. Therefore, although the influence of this variable cannot be excluded, it still does not affect the understanding of interaction in the Transatlantic Alliance according to the analytical framework of this paper.

The second is the impact of the shift of the priority of the United States. Some analysts believe that given the volatile security relations between the two sides of the Atlantic, especially if people remember the division between the United States and some of its allies, such as France and Germany, the policies and statements of Trump had crucial impacts on the Transatlantic Alliance should not be exaggerated caused by George W. Bush's unilateral decision to intervene in Iraq in 2003.¹²⁵ From this perspective, even after Trump decided to unilaterally withdraw Iran from the JCPOA, the current tension between the United States and the European Member States in NATO on the Iranian nuclear deal is not unique. The current transatlantic crisis is considered to be the result of power asymmetry between the United States and Europe¹²⁶. This is also related to the shift in U.S. priorities. In view of this, the United States should avoid problems in other regions, including Europe. However, as far as the research problem is concerned, this is not a variable, because the phenomenon of divergences of the two sides in the Transatlantic Alliance has existed since the establishment of the Transatlantic Alliance, and the shift of the strategic focus of the United States to the Asia-Pacific region has appeared since the Obama Administration. In the analysis process of this paper, it also analyzes the impact of the international situation on the costs and gains calculation of the United States and the Europe in the alliance management. The last point is the impact of Brexit. After Brexit, 80% of NATO's defense expenditure will come from non-EU allies, and the military capacity of NATO's European member states will be greatly reduced.¹²⁷ However, this paper focuses on the relationship between the United States and its European allies in the traditional Western European region and the those middle and eastern European countries after the European Union and NATO's eastward expansion, especially those regional powers such as France, Germany and other major powers play a key role in promoting European defense integration.

¹²⁵ Joyce P. Kaufman, "The US Perspective on NATO Under Trump: Lessons of the Past and Prospects for the Future," *International Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 3, 2017, pp.251-266.

¹²⁶ Alina Polyakova and Benjamin Haddad, "Europe alone: what comes after the transatlantic alliance," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2019.

¹²⁷ Nicholas Burns and Douglas Lute, "NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis," *Belford Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School*, February 2019.

Although this study also involves the UK, the core of the study is not on the special relationship between Britain and the United States or the relationship between Britain and the European Union after Brexit.

Conclusion

Since Trump became the President of the United States, it has brought a certain degree of chaos to the U.S.-European relations and impacted the most basic and important relationship in the transatlantic relationship, the U.S.- European security relationship. The purpose of this paper is to have a better understanding on the changes in the U.S.- European security relations during Trump's term of office from the perspective of alliance management. Specifically, the Transatlantic Alliance is the most important embodiment of U.S.-European security relations after the Second World War. To understand this relationship, it is crucial to conduct an in-depth study of the Transatlantic Alliance. By reviewing the relevant theories on the establishment of the alliance, the nature of the alliance and the history of the Transatlantic Alliance, it is clear that the Transatlantic Alliance discussed in this article is a political (more obvious after the Cold War) and military alliance between the United States and the Europe for traditional security issues, rather than a transatlantic relationship involving the fields of economy and global governance in a broad sense. The Transatlantic Alliance is asymmetric especially in the comparison of military capabilities. And the concept, “the Europe” here is a regional concept, instead of any single sovereign state. The European Union (EU) representing Europe, is a supranational actor with international political status. However, given the power of member states in security and defense affairs overwhelming the EU, sometimes the paper need to discussed some specific European countries.

Most views on why the Transatlantic Alliance maintained during Trump Administration are based on the fact that NATO and the Transatlantic Alliance have adjusted from 2017 to 2020 from the perspective of common threats or interests or Trump’s personal factors. Nevertheless, they are insufficient to determine the profound changes brought by China-US strategic competition to the international system and the enhance of the Europe's relative power and influence. At the same time, those answers neglect the essence of the Transatlantic Alliance as a traditional political and military multilateral asymmetric alliance. It is necessary to propose an analytical framework from the perspective of alliance to explain the rule of the operation of the Transatlantic Alliance.

From traditional alliance management theories, alliance management refers to that the leader in the alliance choose approaches between threatening and appeasing their allies in different dilemmas of alliances

to prevent a war which would cause disintegration of the alliance or loss of self-interest. However, in today's complex international situation: the strategic competition between China and the United States, the relative declination of the U.S.' power, and the intensity of security threats in this period has been greatly reduced compared with the Cold War when Europe was facing serious security threats, it is necessary to propose a new framework to analyze the logic of actors to manage the alliance. Under those circumstances, member states in an alliance need to weigh the costs and gains when managing the alliance, which lead to different dilemmas of alliance. When maintaining a strong alliance needs to pay a high cost, an actor would worry about being "entrapped" because it can not get enough benefits from it; If the alliance becomes loose or disintegrated, some countries would feel "abandoned" for fear of losing the security benefits provided by the alliance. The cost here should include burden distribution and military expenditure sharing, as well as soft costs such as reputation and credibility. So the member states that have the concern of "being entrapped" choose to send a threatening signal to reduce the cost of maintaining the alliance. Member states worried about being "abandoned" will choose appropriate concessions for security, and leaders in the alliance that send threatening signals often combine some appeasement measures to accordingly dispel the doubts of followers. From the perspective of relative gain, one or some countries will be dissatisfied with the uneven cost allocation and worry that they will be "entrapped"; If each member equally shares the cost of maintaining the alliance, and the asymmetric alliance relationship often leads to uneven income distribution, one or some allies would assume that the relative benefit is not as expectancy. The gains here not only refer to security interests but also include the economic interests concerned by the United States under the influence of Trump's "pragmatism", as well as the political interests in values that Europe has always emphasized. At this time, the interaction evolves into the motivation that the member states may withdraw from the alliance or find alternative solutions, that is, actively "abandon" the old alliance and choose hedging strategy. In addition, the alliance management is an interactive process, so the responses to the leader of the following member states in an alliance and its impacts are also vital.

During Trump Administration, principled realism also known as the Trump's Doctrine dominated the logic of the United States' management of the Transatlantic Alliance during this period. Trump believes that maintaining a strong transatlantic security community requires a high cost. At a time when the power and influence of the United States is relatively declining and under the situation where the strategic competition were carried out with China, it is far from enabling the United States to obtain sufficient benefits. Therefore, when considering the costs and gains of maintaining the alliance, it is reasonable to position the current United States as a role "entrapped" by allies in the Transatlantic Alliance because the primacy of the Trump's

philosophy is economic benefits. So the U.S. tended to challenge European allies on the issue of burden-sharing, and sent a series threatening signals to allies so that they would make concessions on this issue for fear of being “abandoned”. Compared with the previous government, Trump does not consider the soft costs of maintaining the alliance, which leads to Trump’s ways of alliance management focusing on coercion instead of soft costs such as international reputation, which conduced positive results for the United States in the burden-sharing negotiations. Nevertheless, these ways to treat allies made the United States pay more “invisible” soft costs that are difficult to quantify. At the same time, “transactional” negotiation also incurred the damage of mutual trust among allies, making the Europe turn to thinking about adopting a hedging strategy to alleviate the seriousness of “abandonment”.

Due to the lack of independent defense capability, the dilemma Europe facing then is still the “abandonment” dilemma based on security concerns. Worried about being “abandoned”, the Europe chose to make appropriate concessions on military expenditure. However, the coercion of the United States towards its allies not only destroyed the allies’ trust in the United States but also damaged the international reputation of the United States itself. According to the trend in recent years, the military expenditure of most European allies is gradually approaching the 2% criterion. Under the dual influence of losing confidence in the commitment of the United States and pursuing its own security interests, Europe began to take more countermeasures such as launching the Permanent Structural Cooperation in 2017, forming sub-regional defense strategies. At the same time, the Europeans pays more attention to the soft costs, such as reputation and values. On the one hand, signaling to warn Trump on cognition of importance of the Transatlantic Alliance by directly blaming on the U.S.; On other hand, increasing its influence and trying to reduce the “relational authority” formed by the United States in the alliance with exertion of normative power. Although symbolic-signal-releasing can affect the United States’ strategies to some extent by influencing public opinion, combined with progress in strategic autonomy, the Europeans try to improve the possibility that the United States would feel being abandoned in the future.

From the perspective of alliance management, the United States’ contradictory policy towards the Transatlantic Alliance is neither that common interests and threats outweigh differences on many issues, nor the outcome of Trump’s Doctrine. For the United States, during Trump Administration, the United States adjusted its Transatlantic Alliance policy based on the judgment that high costs and disregard of soft costs of alliance management, believing that the United States confronts “entrapment”, and coercive its allies to make concessions by means of personal verbal threats. In this process, Trump often plays the role of releasing

threatening signals, while other US bureaucrats are responsible for “appeasing” allies. In essence, this is the embodiment of the psychology of “passing-bucks” of the United States in the reality of relative decline of power. Although the fact that the security protection given by the United States cannot be replaced temporarily, it is helpless for Europe to compromise on military expenditure sharing. However, relying on its comprehensive capabilities, especially its independent defense construction, Europe has put pressure on the United States, forcing the United States to worry about the dilemma of abandonment and reconsider the importance of NATO. At the same time, given the soft costs of maintaining the alliance concerned by Europe, Europe skillfully took advantage of the fact that the international reputation of the United States has declined, and exerting normal power has forced the United States to rethink the interests of publicizing the values of democracy and freedom and multilateralism that may enhance the influence and normative power of the European.

Although the above analysis is based on the adjustment of US-European security relations during Trump Administration, it is still helpful to understand the current US-European security relations. Since Biden became president of the United States, the Transatlantic alliance has not undergone profound changes. The NATO summit held in Brussels in June 2021 is considered to be a vital repair to the alliance relationship between the United States and Europe and provides a guiding road map for the upgrading of NATO capabilities in the next decade. Biden aims to take advantage of this multilateral meeting to express the position and attitude of the new U.S. government towards its European allies and announce the general direction of the US policy of “returning to Europe”, in order to reduce and eliminate the negative impact of the Trump’s alienation from European allies on US-European relations and pave the way for further restoring strategic mutual trust within NATO. The meeting also adopted the NATO 2030 Initiative. Although its contents have not yet become a part of NATO's mechanism, they can appear in the joint communique, which has shown that these principled contents have been widely recognized and accepted within NATO and become the design for NATO’s medium and long-term strategic adjustment. At the same time, the meeting redefined the alliance’s security threats. It is believed that the systematic competition of some countries is endangering the security of both sides of the Atlantic. The threats of Russia, China, and terrorism to NATO in different fields were particularly emphasized. In addition, NATO’s strategic focus has expanded to Indo-Pacific region. It has extended the geographical range of its allies, focusing on strengthening cooperation with Asia-Pacific partners such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea, so as to help NATO continue to expand its strategic power projection in the Indo-Pacific region and improve its ability to intervene in Indo-Pacific Affairs.

But these symbolic achievements can not overwhelm the deep contradictions on both sides of the Atlantic. At least from the current situation, the transatlantic security cooperation based on NATO has not yet returned to the level before Trump took office, let alone future development. The following two profound contradictions may affect the future process. On the one hand, the U.S.' European allies are not unanimous in their willingness to be chain-ganged with the United States. Although NATO has long been deemed as a tool to serve American hegemony controlled and dominated by the United States. The definition of alliance security threats in the Brussels summit report also basically reflects the relevant strategic cognition and interest demands of the United States. The United States and Europe jointly balance the rising powers, at least for now, which is only a unilateral strategic idea of the United States. The leaders of European allies, especially the major powers among them, such as France and Germany, have said that they should not repeatedly mention China and the Asia-Pacific region as targets. On the other hand, the contradiction of burden-sharing between the United States and the European will continue to develop. The issue of U.S. and Europe's share of NATO's collective defense burden have not disappeared due to the change of the U.S. government. Under the background of the current epidemic situation leading to the economic downturn in the United States and Europe, this contradiction may ferment and hinder the further development and upgrading of transatlantic security cooperation. During the summit, Stoltenberg proposed to increase the budget on military expenditure, which was resisted by France, Belgium and other countries. It is estimated that by the end of this year, only 10 member states' military spending can reach the criterion of 2% of GDP. There is still great uncertainty whether the future NATO burden-sharing disagreements can be solved. In addition, with regard to the current economic interest of concern to the United States and Europe, some people believe that the Biden's attitude towards Nord Stream 2 is an important step to repair German-American relations. However, the US-Germany relations are not equal to US-European relations. Biden's concession may be the maximum limit of concessions to Europe. Tariffs on steel, aluminum and digital services tax still exist. It is also possible for Europe to gain self-confidence and further pursue Strategic Autonomy, and it is more likely to conduct countermeasures against some policies.

Although the analytical framework proposed in this paper is helpful to understand how the United States and its European allies consider the costs and gains of maintaining the alliance and can explain the policy adjustments made by the United States and Europe based on this. Nevertheless, Biden has shown a series of actions to repair the security relationship between the United States and Europe, how to optimize the existing analysis framework to further reflect the interaction between the United States and Europe will be the focus

of the next step of study when the Transatlantic Alliance has not returned to the level of cooperation before Trump took office.

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Summary

After the Second World War, the Transatlantic Alliance has been the most durable and tightest alliance in the present world. However, after Donald Trump had come to power, the Transatlantic Alliance encountered its most serious challenge since the Iraq War. Since the American presidential election in 2016, Trump has stated that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is “obsolete” and questioned the value and rationality of NATO’s existence. At the same time, Trump also condemned the U.S.’s European allies for free-riding and warned that if the latter does not increase the military expenditure, The United States will abandon NATO and Europe. As for Europe, the pursuit of “Strategic Autonomy” has been accelerated since 2016, and the contradiction between the United States and Europe has become more prominent. Nevertheless, the Transatlantic Alliance has not disappeared, but after a series of adjustments, new characteristics appeared within the alliance and the Transatlantic Alliance remains the most important security pillar in transatlantic relations. In the early days of Trump Administration, there were many doubts on whether the Transatlantic Alliance could survive and which direction the future Transatlantic Alliance would head. The current facts have answered these questions, that is, the Transatlantic Alliance has maintained with many new features. With Biden assuming the presidency of the United States, the relationship between the United States and Europe may once again face a moment of adjustment. In order to understand the nature of the Transatlantic Alliance and its continuing significance as a classic alliance case better, this article attempts to answer the puzzle, that is, when the United States and Europe have adjusted their security policies several times when encountering many contradictions and caused many disagrees in NATO during Trump Administration, why can NATO still maintain?

There are several explanations for this question among scholars, such as explanations based on common threats, interests, and the “Trump’s Doctrine”, etc. However, this article attempts to return to the essence of the Transatlantic Alliance, an asymmetric political and military alliance, and to answer this question from the perspective of alliance management. Based on previous theoretical frameworks such as the costs and gains of alliance maintenance, dilemma of alliance, and alliance management, this article will review the explanations from other perspectives and the existing theoretical frameworks of alliance management, and propose an analytical framework that could be a supplement the former theories and frameworks. This paper tries to

propose an analytical framework based on the calculation of costs and gains when maintaining an alliance, to explain the new dilemmas of the alliance under the context of the strategic competition between the United States and China and the change of the comparison of relative power, and to clarify the approaches which depend on the different types of dilemmas an actor may encounter when managing an alliance as well. And it would pay equal attention to the subjects of the framework, both the dominant actor and the subordinate actor in an asymmetric alliance.

The hypotheses of the research question are: Hypothesis 1: Both the two sides of the Transatlantic Alliance adjusted their policies based on the costs and (relative) gains under new international situations (H1); Hypothesis 2: The United States achieved certain objects by transmitting threatening signals to the NATO's European allies (H2); Hypothesis 3: the Europe played an active role as a weaker part of the asymmetric alliance (H3); and Hypothesis 4: The interactions between both sides of Atlantic when managing the Transatlantic Alliance eventually contributes the maintenance to the Alliance (H4). As for the methodology, this article will use the historical method, case study, and process-tracking method to describe the process of adjustments of security policies towards the alliance of the United States and Europe during the Trump Presidency and their impacts on NATO and the Transatlantic Alliance. Then put the interactions between the United States and Europe into the analytical framework of alliance management of an asymmetric alliance mentioned above, try to clarify the causal link between the two, and answer the question of why the Transatlantic Alliance can still maintain after Trump came to power in 2017.

The composition of the article is as follows: The first chapter of this article define the Transatlantic Alliance, and give a brief introduction of the Transatlantic Alliance, alliance maintenance as well as other related concepts, and demonstrate the expression that the survival of the Transatlantic Alliance under the Trump Administration. At the same time, this chapter also summarizes other explanations on the research question, and challenge them. Specifically, this chapter started with the definition and theories related to "alliance" including the origin of the alliance, alliance transformation, asymmetric alliance, etc. combined with a brief introduction of NATO and the Transatlantic Alliance's history. Based on the reviews and analysis of those theories and history, the working definition of the Transatlantic Alliance in this paper is that the Transatlantic Alliance is a political (more obvious after the Cold War) and military alliance between the United States and Europe for traditional security issues, rather than a transatlantic relationship involving the fields of economy and global governance in general and it is asymmetric especially in the comparison of military capabilities within the alliance. Secondly, it is vital to test whether the statement of the Transatlantic Alliance survived during Trump Administration is correct or not before answering the research question. Therefore,

theories of alliance maintenance and facts supporting the maintenance of the alliance are discussed then. In the last part, the article reviews three mainstream types of the existing answers to the research question. The first are answers based on the theory of Balance of Threat (BoT) arguing the reason for the continuation of the alliance during this period is geopolitical threats, including the changing situations Europe and a series of terrorism and refugee challenges. In addition, when explaining this issue, many scholars take the rising China into account as an important threat to the security of the United States and Europe, which is also an important reason for maintaining the existence of the Transatlantic Alliance. The second is the relevant answers based on the idea of “balance of interests”. Scholars believe in this opinion challenged the BoT, and argue that actors will form alliances not only because of threats but also because of interests and opportunities. And they list cases supporting their arguments on the common interests of the U.S. and Europe on geopolitical and energy security issues. And the last type of answers considers the question on a personal scale, Trump’s personal factors, including “unpredictability of policies”, etc. The above views are reasonable to explain this question to some extent, but most of these views are based on the fact that NATO and the Transatlantic Alliance have adjusted from 2017 to 2020. Nevertheless, they are insufficient to determine the profound changes brought by China-US strategic competition to the international system and the enhancement of Europe’s relative power and influence. At the same time, as a traditional political and military multilateral asymmetric alliance, those answers lacks an in-depth discussion on its essence as an alliance, but studies it as an assemble of ordinary bilateral (or multilateral) relations, which is not sufficient to explain how the Transatlantic Alliance works as an alliance. Therefore, based on the literature reviews and the definition of the Transatlantic Alliance the analytical framework would be purposed next.

In the second chapter, the analytical framework would be formed. The first part of the second chapter illustrates the analytical framework of the paper based on the costs and gains of maintenance of alliance in an asymmetric alliance by reviewing the theories of dilemmas of alliance and the costs and gains of maintaining an alliance. Two concepts closely related to the analysis framework need to be declared in advance. One is the reputation, the other is the normative power. The costs of alliance establishment and maintenance generally include military expenses and obligations to maintain the alliance, while as a form of cooperation, reputation is also the cost to maintain the alliance. Douglas M. Gibler argued that under the same other conditions, countries would try to form alliances with countries that had fulfilled their alliance commitments in the past; The country inclined to avoid establishing alliances with countries that violate previous commitments to allies. When a country abides by its commitments, its reputation will often improve, while when it needs to pay a great cost to violate its commitments, its reputation will decline sharply. If countries form alliances with

countries with a dishonorable reputation and breach of commitments in the past, they are likely to fall into disputes, and vice versa. Therefore, reputation is very important for an actor intending to establish and maintain alliances, which actually exists as the “soft cost” of establishing and maintaining the alliance. And when it comes to the normative power, it is always related to Normative Power Europe (NPE). NPE is that the EU is an “ideational” actor characterized by common principles, and acting to diffuse norms, such as values of freedom and liberty, multilateralism, human rights, within international relations.

The current world is more peaceful compared with the days back to the Cold War, and the urgency of traditional security threats has declined which leads to changes in the ways of member states in the alliance to conceive the “abandonment” and “entrapment” as the dilemmas of alliances. Therefore, the U.S. and its European allies tend to calculate costs and relative gains of maintaining the alliance based on their own concerns in the context of the strategic competition between China and the United States. From traditional alliance management theories, alliance management refers to that the leader in the alliance chooses approaches between threatening and appeasing to “govern” their allies in different dilemmas of alliances to prevent a war which would cause disintegration of the alliance or loss of self-interest. However, under current international circumstances where the strategic competition between China and the United States exists, the the U.S.’ power relatively decline, and the urgency of traditional security threats in this period have been greatly reduced compared with the Cold War when Europe was facing serious security threats, it is necessary to propose a new framework attaching great importance to subordinate actors to analyze the logic of actors to manage the alliance. Under those circumstances, member states in an alliance need to weigh the costs and gains when managing the alliance, which induces different dilemmas of the alliance. When maintaining a strong alliance needs to pay a high cost, an actor would worry about being “entrapped” because it can not get enough benefits from it; If the alliance becomes loose or disintegrated, some countries would feel “abandoned” for fear of losing the security benefits provided by the alliance. The cost here should include burden-sharing and military expenditure sharing, as well as soft costs such as reputation and credibility. So the member states that have the concern of “being entrapped” choose to send a threatening signal to reduce the cost of maintaining the alliance. Member states worried about being “abandoned” will choose appropriate concessions for security, and leaders in the alliance that send threatening signals often combine some appeasement measures to accordingly dispel the doubts of followers. From the perspective of relative gain, one or some countries will be dissatisfied with the uneven cost allocation and worry that they will be “entrapped”; If each member equally shares the cost of maintaining the alliance, and the asymmetric alliance relationship often causes uneven distribution of interests. Therefore, some actors would assume that the relative gain is not as expectancy. The gains here not only refer

to security interests but also include the economic interests concerned by the United States under the influence of Trump's "pragmatism", as well as the political interests in values that Europe has always emphasized. Meanwhile, the interaction evolves into the motivation that the member states may withdraw from the alliance or find alternative solutions, that is, actively "abandon" the old alliance and choose hedging strategy. In addition, alliance management is an interactive process, so the responses to the leader of the following member states in an alliance and its impacts are also vital.

In order to test the hypotheses, the following parts would combine the facts of how the United States and Europe adjust their policies towards the Transatlantic alliance during Trump Administration with the analytical framework. As mentioned before, when analyzing the Transatlantic Alliance from the perspective of alliance management, it is critical to give more consideration to the initiative of the European side in the Transatlantic Alliance during Trump Administration. However, that does not mean the management of the Transatlantic Alliance of the leading country is not the focus of the interaction. The United States also needs to think about the policy towards the Transatlantic Alliance in the face of new dilemmas of alliance. Nevertheless, after reviewing the adjustment of the U.S. this article would explore the initiative acts conducted by the subordinate member states in the alliance. And two cases, the Europe pursuing Strategic Autonomy by launching Permanent Structural Cooperation and negotiating with China on EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment with its normative power, would be illustrate to test the hypotheses.

The third chapter reviews the adjustments of policies towards the Transatlantic Alliance of the United States based on framework during Trump's term of office and examine the hypothesis 1 and 2 as well. It is critical to give a short summary on the management of the Transatlantic Alliance of the former administration before Trump came to power because the maintenance of any alliance has its own historical logic and route-dependence. Furthermore, it continues to discuss the interpretation of the burden-sharing of the United States for the Transatlantic Alliance during Trump Administration based on the framework of "costs and gains" in an asymmetric alliance and how the United States exerting pressure on NATO's European allies on military expenditure regarding the U.S.' estimation of the costs and gains of alliances.

During Trump Administration, principled realism dominated the logic of the United States' management of the Transatlantic Alliance during this period. Trump believes that maintaining a strong transatlantic security community requires a high cost. At a time when the power and influence of the United States are relatively declining and under the situation where the strategic competition was carried out with China, it is far from enabling the United States to obtain sufficient benefits. Therefore, when considering the costs and gains of

maintaining the alliance, it is reasonable to position the current United States as a role “entrapped” by allies in the Transatlantic Alliance because the primacy of Trump’s philosophy is economic benefits. So the U.S. tended to challenge European allies on the issue of burden-sharing, and sent a series of threatening signals to allies so that they would make concessions on this issue for fear of being “abandoned”. Compared with the previous government, Trump does not consider the soft costs of maintaining the alliance a lot, which makes the mode of Trump to treat allies more coercive. Disregarding soft costs such as international reputation, which conducted positive results for the United States in the burden-sharing negotiations. Nevertheless, these ways to threaten allies made the United States pay more “invisible” soft costs that are difficult to quantify. At the same time, “transactional” negotiation also incurred the damage of mutual trust among allies, making the Europe turn to think about adopting a hedging strategy to alleviate the seriousness of “abandonment”.

The European allies needs to respond to US pressure and act on its own initiative. The chapter four of this article focuses on how the Europe formed policies under the huge pressure exerted by Trump and verify the hypothesis 1 and 3. Due to the lack of independent defense capability, the dilemma Europe facing then is still the “abandonment” dilemma based on security concerns. Worried about being “abandoned”, the Europe chose to make appropriate concessions on burden-sharing and military expenditure issues. However, the coercion of the United States towards its allies not only destroyed the allies’ trust in the United States but also damaged the international reputation of the United States itself. According to the trend in recent years, the military expenditure of most European allies is gradually approaching the 2% criterion. Under the dual influence of losing confidence in the commitment of the United States and pursuing its own security interests, Europe began to take more countermeasures such as launching the Permanent Structural Cooperation in 2017, forming sub-regional defense strategies. At the same time, the Europeans pay more attention to the soft costs, such as reputation and values. On the one hand, signaling to warn Trump on cognition of importance of the Transatlantic Alliance by directly blaming on the U.S.; On other hand, increasing its influence and trying to reduce the “relational authority” formed by the United States in the alliance with the exertion of normative power.

Besides PESCO, the negotiation of the Comprehensive Agreement Investment (CAI) between the EU and China is another case in which the EU pursues strategies beyond the defense field based on the emphasis of the United States on economic interests. At the same time, some scholars also believe that this practice of the EU is a “hedge” against the U.S. policy. As mentioned earlier, the cost and gains judgments of the United States and Europe in maintaining the alliance are different. Therefore, Europe also chooses to actively exert its normative power in the trade field of special concern to Trump to improve its relative economic benefits in

the maintenance of the alliance and the costs to be paid by the United States. The negotiation of China-EU CAI is influenced by the trilateral relationship between China, the United States, and Europe. Since entering the 21st century, the trilateral relations between China, the United States, and Europe have become increasingly complex. The fundamental reason why China has become the most prominent variable in trilateral relations is that China's comprehensive national strength has risen rapidly, while the power of the United States and Europe is in a relatively declining trend. The rising China has affected the complex changes in international relations and potential changes in the international order. The United States remains the world's no. 1 power with global influence and regards the rise of China as the greatest threat to its hegemony. Despite the impact of China's rise on the international order, the United States and Europe have common interests. However, Europe and the United States are not completely consistent, and there are still many differences in policies towards China between the two sides. The positions of the two sides are similar, but there are also great differences. Many American scholars and policymakers believe that China is the primary competitor of the United States in the future and must be contained. The EU and several member states do not believe that a stronger China will inevitably conflict with the interests of the West. As long as China integrates into the institutional international system, it can still coexist with it and achieve win-win results. The U.S.' policy towards China has experienced the evolution of engagement, hedging, and containment, and finally emphasizes confrontation. The United States hopes to see a China whose strength will never pose a threat to itself. The EU has been pursuing comprehensive engagements and cooperation with China. Europe expects China to become a responsible actor and a supporter of multilateralism gradually integrating into the international rule system. In response to China's rise, Europe still adheres to the principle of focusing on contact and cooperation, and close economic cooperation with China is the unchanged principle of previous EU institutional leaders, which is an important historical background for the EU to independently promote the negotiation of the agreement. Although the EU has common goals with the United States in dealing with China's rise, it is also dissatisfied with the unilateralism of the United States. The EU hopes to respond to China's rise through multilateral mechanisms, international institutions and rules. Through the negotiations with China, Europe has always emphasized its soft gains in global governance, multilateralism, trade liberalization, and so on. Although symbolic signal-releasing can affect the United States' strategies to some extent by influencing public opinion, combined with progress in strategic autonomy, the Europeans try to improve the possibility that the United States would feel being abandoned in the future.

The negotiation process of CAI reflects the logic of EU policy-making by comprehensively calculating the costs and gains of maintaining the Transatlantic Alliance. From the cost-gain perspective of alliance

management, the reason why the EU started the negotiation of the investment agreement with China is that first, the Europe needs to give full play to its advantages in values such as multilateralism and maintaining free market, to reduce its costs in maintaining the alliance and enhance its international reputation and influence; Second, Europe needs to develop trade with China to offset the adverse economic impact of Europe's concession to the United States on the issue of military spending; Third, economic and trade negotiations with China are also chips for further pursuing strategic autonomy and increasing burden-sharing with the United States in the Transatlantic Alliance. CAI reduces the cohesion of European and American cooperation in geopolitics, but the degree of European Strategic Autonomy and execution are variables with great influence. The cooperation and competition between China and the United States have boosted Europe's tendency of pursuing Strategic Autonomy and partially weakened the effectiveness of the transatlantic dialogue. The Europe endeavors to avoid becoming a battlefield for the competition of great powers and strive to become a participant and bridge in the competition, and its willingness of Strategic Autonomy continues to improve. The EU is the object that China and the United States are trying to win over. While constantly enhancing its awareness of Strategic Autonomy, the Europe strives to improve its initiative in dealing with European and American relations and takes advantage of the strategic competition between China and the United States to improve its bargaining power. In transatlantic cooperation, the Europeans' Strategic Autonomy is not only absolute but also relative and conditional. The absolute reason is that there are deep-rooted contradictions between the United States and Europe, which are difficult to reconcile, and it is impossible to achieve unanimity; The relative is mainly reflected in the relations between Europe and the United States, especially in the field of security, and the Europe's dependence on the United States. Although the Europe's desire for "Strategic Autonomy" is attractive to most EU Member States, the reality of overreliance on the United States in security and defense determines the limitations of its autonomy. Although the construction of EU Common Security and Defense Policy has achieved phased results, there is still a big gap from defense independence. The vulnerability of the EU's Strategic Autonomy makes it difficult to substantially change the structural relationship of the United States staying dominating and Europe staying subordinate in transatlantic relations. The EU can only show limited hard power through soft power, such as single market power, agenda-setting, the normative power of the EU, etc.

The last chapter of the main body of this paper analyzes the interaction between the adjustments of the policies towards the Transatlantic Alliance of the United States and Europe during Trump Presidency and tries to prove hypothesis 4 as well. Firstly, there are related facts on the interactions between the U.S. and its European allies in the Transatlantic alliance during the Trump Administration. Then combined with the

analytical framework this chapter answers under what circumstances an actor would choose to pass bucks or bandwagon or compromise. From the perspective of alliance management, the United States' contradictory policy towards the Transatlantic Alliance is neither that common interests and threats outweigh differences on many issues, nor the outcome of Trump's Doctrine. For the United States, during Trump Administration, it adjusted own Transatlantic Alliance policy based on the judgment that high costs and disregarded of soft costs of alliance management, believing that the United States confronts "entrapment", and made its allies to make concessions employing personal verbal threats coercively. In this process, Trump often plays the role of releasing threatening signals, while other US bureaucrats are responsible for "appeasing" allies. In essence, this is the embodiment of the psychology of "passing-bucks" of the United States in the reality of relative decline of power. Although the fact that the security protection given by the United States cannot be replaced temporarily, it is helpless for Europe to compromise on military expenditure sharing. However, relying on its comprehensive capabilities, especially its independent defense construction, Europe has put pressure on the United States, forcing the United States to worry about the dilemma of abandonment and reconsider the importance of NATO. At the same time, given the soft costs of maintaining the alliance concerned by Europe, Europe skillfully took advantage of the fact that the international reputation of the United States has declined, and exerting normal power has push the United States to rethink the interests of publicizing the values of democracy and freedom and multilateralism that may enhance the influence and normative power of the Europe.

The last part of the paper clarifies the deficiencies of the analytical framework and responds to other alternative explanations. The purpose of this paper is to explore the interactive behaviors of actors in alliance management based on recognizing that the essence of the Transatlantic Alliance is to evolve from traditional military alliance to formal political and military alliance. Therefore, this paper does not deny that other explanations define the Transatlantic Alliance as bilateral or multilateral relations in other fields, and suggests on this basis on "the reasons for the maintenance of the Transatlantic Alliance or transatlantic relations during Trump Administration". However, it is worth noting that based on the statement that the state is the most important actor in international relations, this paper does not pay too much attention to the domestic factors of the United States. At the same time, some other influencing factors that cannot be described and interference variables that are difficult to quantify still matter. Therefore, at the end of the article, it is necessary to supplement the deficiencies and other interference variables of this paper.

The first is the causal links between some variables in the analytical framework that are difficult to establish directly. In international politics, the hysteresis of the results of the actions of actors is common, so

it is difficult to directly and simply connect the change of some positions of the United States with the outcomes of European policies. Instead, this paper chooses to place the interactions between the United States and Europe in the time span of before and after Trump Administration for an overall description. What's more in alliance management, the soft cost is difficult to quantify and can only be described as well.

The second point is that domestic or regional factors cannot be eliminated. The first is the domestic factor of the United States. According to the implementation of the previously reviewed changes in U.S. attitude and policy towards the Transatlantic Alliance, the U.S. President's national security team, Congress and bureaucracies have made positive efforts to maintain the Transatlantic Alliance. However, this paper focuses on the interaction between two actors in alliance management. Therefore, although the influence of this variable cannot be excluded, it still does not affect the understanding of interaction in the Transatlantic Alliance according to the analytical framework of this paper. The second is the impact of the shift of the priority of the United States. Some analysts believe that given the volatile security relations between the two sides of the Atlantic, especially if people remember the division between the United States and some of its allies, such as France and Germany, the policies and statements of Trump had crucial impacts on the Transatlantic Alliance should not be exaggerated. From this perspective, even after Trump decided to unilaterally withdraw from the JCPOA, the current tension between the United States and the European Member States in NATO on the Iranian nuclear deal is not unique. The current transatlantic crisis is considered to be the result of power asymmetry between the United States and Europe. This is also related to the shift in U.S. priorities. In view of this, the United States should avoid problems in other regions, including Europe. However, as far as the research problem is concerned, this is not a variable, because the phenomenon of divergences of the two sides in the Transatlantic Alliance has existed since the establishment of the Transatlantic Alliance, and the shift of the strategic focus of the United States to the Asia-Pacific region has appeared since the Obama Administration. In the analysis process of this paper, it also analyzes the impact of the international situation on the costs and gains calculation of the United States and the Europe in the alliance management. The last point is the impact of Brexit. After Brexit, 80% of NATO's defense expenditure will come from non-EU allies, and the military capacity of NATO's European member states will be greatly reduced. However, this paper focuses on the relationship between the United States and its European allies in the traditional Western European region and those middle and eastern European countries after the European Union and NATO's eastward expansion, especially those regional powers such as France, Germany and other major powers play a key role in promoting European defense integration. Although this study also involves the UK, the core of the study is not on the special relationship between Britain and the United States or the

relationship between Britain and the European Union after Brexit.

Although the above analysis is based on the adjustment of US-European security relations during Trump Administration, it is still helpful to understand the current US-European security relations. Since Biden became president of the United States, the Transatlantic Alliance has not undergone profound changes. The NATO Summit held in Brussels in June 2021 is considered to be a vital repair to the alliance relationship between the United States and Europe and provides a guiding road map for the upgrading of NATO capabilities in the next decade. Biden aims to take advantage of this multilateral meeting to express the position and attitude of the new U.S. government towards its European allies and announce the general direction of the US policy of “returning to Europe”, in order to reduce and eliminate the negative impact of the Trump’s alienation from European allies on US-European relations and pave the way for further restoring strategic mutual trust within NATO. At the same time, the summit adopted the NATO 2030 Initiative and redefined the alliance’s security threats. It is believed that the systematic competition of some countries is endangering the security of both sides of the Atlantic. The threats of Russia, China, and terrorism to NATO in different fields were particularly emphasized. In addition, NATO’s strategic focus has expanded to the Indo-Pacific region. It has extended the geographical range of its allies, focusing on strengthening cooperation with Asia-Pacific partners to help NATO continue to expand its strategic power projection in the Indo-Pacific region and improve its ability to intervene in Indo-Pacific Affairs.

But these symbolic achievements can not overwhelm the deep contradictions on both sides of the Atlantic. At least from the current situation, the transatlantic security cooperation based on NATO has not yet returned to the level before Trump took office, let alone future development. The following two profound contradictions may affect the future process. On the one hand, the U.S.’ European allies are not unanimous in their willingness to be chain-ganged with the United States. On the other hand, the contradiction of burden-sharing between the United States and Europe will continue to develop. Under the background of the current epidemic situation leading to the economic downturn in the United States and Europe, this contradiction may ferment and hinder the further development and upgrading of transatlantic security cooperation. What’s more, some believe Biden’s concession on Nord Stream 2 may be the maximum concessions to Europe. Tariffs on steel, aluminum, and digital services tax still exist. It is also possible for Europe to gain self-confidence and further pursue Strategic Autonomy, and it is more likely to conduct countermeasures against some US policies.

Although the analytical framework proposed in this paper is helpful to understand how the United States and its European allies consider the costs and gains of maintaining the alliance and can explain the policy adjustments made by the United States and Europe based on this. Nevertheless, Biden has shown a series of

actions to repair the security relationship between the United States and Europe, how to optimize the existing analysis framework to further reflect the interaction between the United States and Europe will be the focus of the next step of study when the Transatlantic Alliance has not returned to the level of cooperation before Trump took office.