ONE

Introduction

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We live in turbulent times. The unlimited access to information, one of the benefits of modernity, is also its curse. With too much information—not to mention fake news—it is becoming increasingly harder to understand what really matters. This is particularly true in foreign policy, where distance, different languages, and cultural norms further complicate the picture. Transatlantic relations are not exempted. Americans do not fully understand Europeans, and Europeans think they know Americans because of Hollywood movies. However, while Hollywood can legitimately be considered the United States' most relevant soft power tool, the image conveyed is far from accurate in describing the complexities of American society.

The narrative about transatlantic relations is not exempt from this trend. In the time of Trump, *twitterplomacy*, and fake news, our understanding of the state of transatlantic relations seems to reflect more what each of us wish they were, rather than their actual reality. Wishful thinking, however, is extremely dangerous in policymaking, especially in foreign policy. With the end of the Cold War constraints, transatlantic relations have

become more complex, rather than simpler. Twenty years of wars—of which we are not seeing the end—have dispersed the moral capital that the United States acquired with the two world wars and the Marshall Plan, in a way that it is not comprehended in the United States. Similarly, Europeans only partially appreciate the effect of Donald Trump's election on Americans—both to his emboldened supporters, and his outraged adversaries.

All these factors combined risk ending whatever little is left of transatlantic relations. The contributors to this book, however, share the belief that vital transatlantic relations are today more important than ever. Refounding transatlantic relations requires a better understanding of each other and, in particular, of the determinants of foreign policy decisions, both in Europe and in the United States.

This book, by comparatively analyzing ten national case studies, aims to better understand which variables determine the foreign policies of the transatlantic partners, a necessary step to try to foresee the future of transatlantic relations. We therefore selected eight representative member states of the European Union: the four "big" EU member states (Germany, France, Italy, and the soon-to-be-ex-member, the United Kingdom), two "midsize" countries (Spain and Poland), and two smaller member states (Czech Republic, Denmark). The countries were also chosen to be geographically representative—with a balance between the south (Italy, Spain, France), the north (United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark), and Eastern Europe (Poland, Czech Republic)—as well as between EU founding countries (Germany, France, Italy), mid-termers (United Kingdom, Denmark, Spain), and newcomers (Poland, Czech Republic).

To these eight cases studies, we added chapters about Russia and the United States. Ever since the end of World War II, however, European countries have in fact been suspended between the West (the United States) and the East (USSR, then Russia). Any decision in foreign policy had to take into consideration—at least to some extent—either or both of these countries' preferences. During the Cold War, the USSR pretty much dictated any foreign (and domestic) policy decision for the Central and Eastern Europeans. For Western Europe the picture was more nuanced. Countries like Germany or Italy tried to find a difficult balance between Atlantic obligations and Eastern reality. With the end of the Cold War, both Eastern and Western Europe gained a new freedom of action in foreign policy, though the legacies of the past still loom. Europe's foreign policies can

therefore be understood only by including in the picture both American and Russian foreign policies, with particular reference to their policies toward Europe.

As for the European Economic Community/European Union, the bloc has been a foreign policy actor only since the 1970s. The EEC/EU foreign policy has at the same time supported the foreign policies agendas of its member states and shaped its own agenda. The role of the EU as a united actor in foreign policy depends on the bloc's institutional advancements, but also appears to be inversely proportional to the health of transatlantic relations. To better understand EU-U.S. relations, we also added a history chapter chronologically reviewing the relation. As the chapter will show, there seems to be a pattern in EU-U.S. relations: historically, the EU has integrated further in foreign and defense policies during periods of crises in the transatlantic relationship. The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) created in December 2017 is just the latest case in point.

We built the book in a way to make quick referencing and comparability easier. Each chapter gives a historical overview and an introduction to the most important priorities of the national foreign policy. An analysis of the country's most important geographic relations (relations with Russia, the United States, the Balkans, the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, China) and of eventual thematic areas of interest (energy, environmental protection, defense, trade policy, international organizations) follows. Geographic and thematic policy areas were chosen by each author to reflect the main priorities of the country in question.

In his chapter about Germany, Jan Techau argues that the country is a major player in international economic and trade policies but a minor one in the fields of foreign and security policies, and that Germany's foreign policy has not substantially changed since the beginning of the Cold War. It was an approach built on "three plus three" pillars. The first three pillars represent close relationships with Germany's most important bilateral partners: the United States, France, and to a lesser extent and on very different terms, Russia. The other three pillars represent Germany's multilateral engagements with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Community (today the EU), and later, the United Nations. Keeping this pillars construction intact remains Germany's unspoken primary foreign policy goal. In what constitutes remarkable continuity, the major turning points in German postwar history—rearmament in the mid-1950s, the 1968 cultural shift, *Ostpolitik*, UN membership in 1973, NATO's

dual-track policy in the late 1970s and early 1980s, unification in 1990, and the more assertive period after Helmut Kohl's ousting from office after 1998—had no real game-changing impact on the overall strategic culture established in the 1950s. In essence, Germany is operating its foreign policy in the twenty-first century based on a strategic culture from the 1950s: Germany is an ambitious world player in international economic affairs but shows no sign that it desires to be a significant political player on the world stage. Defense and security policies thus remain a weak spot for Germany, whose strategic culture remains largely unchanged from the one that emerged in the newly established federal republic after the country joined the Western alliance. It is marked by an instinctive rejection of military power as a means of international problem-solving and a strong reluctance even to debate matters of security and defense publicly. Remarkably, historic developments since 1990—the Kosovo War; the attacks of September 11, 2001; Afghanistan; Libya—have not significantly changed Germany's strategic culture.

In a similar way, argues Federiga Bindi, Italy's foreign policy has been influenced by the country's fascist past. This started from the rejection of the "national interest," which was replaced with a vaguer "European interest." Though today there is a shared consensus that national interests should be at the center of Italy's foreign policy, this has proved hard to define and execute because of the other historical legacy of the country: the Cold War. Until 1989, Italy held a privileged geopolitical role because of its unique geographic location in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, between East and West. After that, like Germany, Italy has struggled to redefine its role in world affairs. If the symbol of the new German foreign policy is the fight for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council (UNSC), the symbol of post–Cold War Italy is the fight *against* a German seat on the Security Council, masked as a need for a global reform of the UNSC (admittedly a good point per se). As with Germany, the key pillars of Italy's foreign policy have thus remained consistent since the 1950s: strong support for European integration and transatlantic relations, counterbalanced by collaboration with Russia and an attention to its neighbors: the Balkans and the Mediterranean area.

France has a different historical legacy. As Aleksander Lust argues, France's foreign policy is mainly defined by its colonial past. Today, France generally accepts that it is a medium-size power with a limited ability to shape world events, but it remains willing to use its position as a UNSC

permanent member to challenge U.S. policy in those regions where it has strategic and economic interests. The presence of French territories in numerous parts of the world, military bases in Africa and the Middle East, and a large diplomatic body—France has embassies in 160 countries, more than any other country except the United States—physically root France's claim to a global role.

Similarly, the contradictions of British foreign policy stem from its colonial past, Klaus Larres argues. As Dean Acheson said in 1962, Britain lost an empire and has not yet found a role. British foreign policymakers continue to view the United Kingdom as a major international power. The general perception outside the United Kingdom—be it in Washington, Beijing, or Berlin—is somewhat different, however. For instance, the United States has used the "special relationship" with Britain only when useful to Washington, never really considering London on a level of parity. Even the Brexit decision—like the decision not to join the European Communities at the outset—was influenced by this hypertrophic vision of the country's role in world affairs, and what Larres describes as Britain remaining caught in a Churchillian foreign policy framework.

Denmark, a small country situated at the northern tip of the European continent, does carry out a full-fledged foreign policy, argues Jonas Parello-Plesner. The trends in Danish foreign policy have been shaped by history and geography, as well as by the conditions encountered by any small state with limited room to maneuver in the international system. Nevertheless, Denmark has sought to make a small but clear mark in global politics in several specific policy areas, leading President Barack Obama to remark that Denmark punched well above its weight. This has been particularly true since the end of the Cold War, with an activism that took a stronger military bent, moving Denmark beyond the blue helmets of UN peacekeeping missions and foreign aid—two traditional tenets of Danish policy—and into the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Global developments such as terrorism, poverty, climate change, fragile states, piracy, and cyberwarfare are what Denmark perceives today as threats to its freedom and prosperity, although Russia's threatening posturing also raises concerns.

After the demise of the Francisco Franco regime, the Spanish government adopted a frantic agenda of *Apuntarse a todo* ("Sign up for everything"), explains Joaquín Roy. Spain ratified the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and became a member of the Council of Europe in 1977; it joined NATO in 1981 and acceded to the European Community (EC) in

1986. Relations with the rest of Europe and the United States have monopolized the attention of Spain's governments since the rebirth of Spanish democracy. Spain's mediation role was recognized at the Middle East Peace Conference, convened by the United States in Madrid in 1991, and in the Mediterranean process, founded by the EU and its southern partners in 1995. The record of Spain's membership in the European Union has proved to be truly impressive. From being a country that was a net receiver of aid from the EC, Spain is today a net payer. However, that does not mean that Spain has forgotten other parts of the world, in particular Latin America, which Spain successfully managed to elevate to EU policy.

Poland, too, argue Michela Ceccorulli and Serena Giusti, constitutes a successful model of the EU's transformative power, rapidly becoming a front-runner and a regional power in Europe. Since 1989, Polish foreign policy has progressively become more proactive, assertive, and pragmatic. Warsaw has used the EU tactically to pursue its own interests: It has revived regionalism as a means of advancing the interests of the Central and Eastern European countries and, in turn, it is using its role to acquire more leverage both within the EU and Central and Eastern Europe. There has been a dramatic reassessment of relations with countries that once were considered hostile, such as Germany and Russia. Yet Poland is looking carefully at Russian moves on the regional landscape. The Georgia war and the annexation of Crimea have persuaded Warsaw to review its more lenient posture toward Russia. Poland also has encouraged regional cooperation with the near abroad through the Eastern Partnership to dilute potential instabilities in the periphery and create a buffer with Russia. Hence, Poland has emphasized its role as a bridge between the West and Eastern Europe and Russia and has made the promotion of democracy a new part of its external projection. Poland's Atlanticism seems to have turned out to be quite pragmatic, with Warsaw adopting a more equidistant position between the United States and the EU. Poland's strong support for strengthening Europe's defenses is a case in point. Poland's mounting power is due in part to its formidable economic performance. The Polish leadership has put forward an ambitious strategy for accomplishing foreign policy goals and has domestic public opinion on its side.

The story of the Czech Republic is different, argues David Cadier. If the "new Europe" label traditionally refers to congenital Atlanticism, a proactive and teleological (that is, neoconservative-like) approach to democracy promotion and a certain reluctance toward the process of European

integration, then the Czech Republic is probably the one state to which this label can be most accurately applied. The Czech Republic has in fact systematically prioritized NATO over the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy. For instance, the Czech Republic had sought to participate in the Ballistic Missile Defense system envisioned by the George W. Bush administration, it has been the most vocal critic of the Cuban regime and the staunchest supporter of Israel within the EU foreign policy arena, and it has not hesitated to join the United Kingdom's "splendid isolation" on certain European questions such as the fiscal compact. Today, however, the Czech Republic finds itself at a crossroad. Major structural evolutions have affected its international and regional environments, such as the rebalancing of U.S. priorities, the economic rise of China, the reshaping of EU institutional and power structures, and the resurgence of Russia.

For centuries, Russian foreign policy was marked by expansion, militarization, and border defense, writes Serena Giusti. Russia's very identity was forged by the country's capacity to spread out and conquer new territories. Unlike other empires, the Soviet Union did not fall because it was defeated in war, but rather because the political and economic model on which it was based failed. Contemporary Russian foreign policy has been determined by both history (Russia's self-image as a great power) and the sense of frustration that the country felt after the implosion of the Soviet system, which was accompanied by a deep economic slump. When Vladimir Putin became president in 2000, his foremost priority was to restructure the economic foundations of the country in order to bring about economic recovery and to restore Russia's international dignity. Once Russia got back on its feet economically, thanks to its energy revenues, its priority has been to consolidate its international role and expand its influence in strategic areas. Putin explicitly committed his government to regaining Russia's status as a great power. Putin's conception of the process for developing Russia's foreign policy followed a linear sequence: first, strengthen the Russian state politically and economically; second, restore Russia's international status; third, act assertively on the international scene. The Kremlin is strengthening its leverage by widening its network of partners and creating new organizations. Putin is, for instance, willing to consolidate the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) as both an economic and a political force in order to counterbalance U.S. power, especially after its exclusion from the 2014 Group of Eight (G-8).

On the other side, the United States emerged from the Cold War victorious, prosperous, and confident, argues Jussi Hanhimäki. The collapse of the Soviet Union was interpreted as proof of the superiority of liberal capitalism over totalitarian socialism. The United States was "bound to lead," Joseph Nye wrote. The confident tone remained a trademark in the 1990s. The reaction to September 11, 2001, reflected the United States' status as the self-appointed indispensable nation: the Bush administration acted unilaterally for the most part, alienating most of its allies. The war in Iraq created a multitude of long-term problems that linger on. In January 2009, Barack Obama moved into the White House burdened by unrealistically high expectations. Many expected that the forty-fourth president would reverse course. However, much remained the same. The Obama administration's priorities were, as they had to be, *American* priorities: protecting U.S. national security and reviving the U.S. economy. In fact, one of the striking things about the first years of the Obama administration was the degree of continuity. America's standing with its European allies certainly improved after 2009. There was the signing and ratification of a New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty). Some, albeit lackluster, efforts were made to repair America's difficult relations with the Muslim world, a task made more complicated by the Arab Spring of 2011. All such efforts can, however, be seen as part of a long-term continuum of U.S. foreign policy. Rather than a radical departure with the past, Obama's foreign policy can be regarded as a mixture of President Bill Clinton's emphasis on multilateral engagement and democratic enlargement and the Bush Doctrine's assertions about the American need to reserve for itself the right to take unilateral military action. What is most incredible, however, is that despite the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear agreement, the possibility of a trade war with China and the EU, Trump's rebuke on NATO, and his unclear relation with Vladimir Putin, the United States' relations with the rest of the world have yet not fundamentally transformed. Incredibly, world leaders are still looking at the United States, convinced that sooner rather than later it will go back to business as usual. Will it, before all is lost? The answer is at the end of this book.