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The impact of the Diplomatic approach in the 2017 USNSS and the 2016 EUGS: Towards a smarter approach?

“Synthesis”

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Author's Declaration

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Dedication

“May the wind always be at your back and the sun upon your face. And may the wings of destiny
carry out aloft to dance with the stars.”

-George Jung-

To the people I love the most in my life. And to myself.

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Introduction

In the globalized world we live in, security issues have inevitably increased and spread across the globe. Accordingly, countries have started giving priority to the formulation of Security Strategies in order to provide common transnational answers to internal and external threats.

Against this background, both the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) have recently converted their security and foreign policy guidelines into official documents: the 2016 European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) written by Federica Mogherini¹ and the 2017 US National Security Strategy (NSS) by Donald Trump². Both Strategies have been structured to provide a policy framework's guiding principles that define ends, ways, and means to pursue goals. Although non legally binding, both Security Strategies have a diplomatic relevance within and without their territorial scope of application. Indeed, by addressing domestic and external security issues, these Documents deliver a strategic communication that reflects the diplomatic approach to be used with regard to the changing global context.

Trump's National Security Strategy can be summarized with the "America First" policy: the goal is to make sure that Washington will maintain its role as the leading global superpower. By this token, the country must protect and prioritize the interests of the American people. The Strategy is inspired by the so-called "principled realism" and not by ideological constructs (Trump; 2017; 1): a shift from an approach centered on strategic patience towards Realpolitik and strong-arm tactics. Indeed, Trump's Doctrine leaves just a little room for democracy and human rights issues as it emerges from the 2017 NSS.

Conversely, Federica Mogherini was to draft a Strategy that could react to the events of the European Union's crisis by sending a message of political unity with a logic of integrating policy. The internal coherence outlined in the Document gives the EU the sense of credibility that has deteriorated in light of the crises that have revealed the weaknesses of the EU's defense and security cooperation. The promotion of peacetime ends follows the most general goals of advancing a better

¹ Federica Mogherini served as the High representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission for the period 2014-2019.

² Donald Trump has been the 45th President of the United States of America.

world, “advance(ing) the prosperity of [...] (European) people”, and “promote(ing) a rules-based global order” (Mogherini; 2016; 8).

Historical events have always influenced decisions and positions taken by political and non-political actors. The moment of publication of these Strategies is the starting point that links both projects, although their contents differ. While the EUGS’ publication comes as a strategic call for increased internal unity after a moment of escalating tensions within and without the Union, the 2017 NSS results from the US President's obligation to inform the US Congress about his strategic vision and goals. This thesis’ topic has relevance within the scientific debate around the presence of multiple links between past and present Strategies that could be analyzed from several points of view. This dissertation intends to dwell on the diplomatic dimension.

However, the purpose of this work is not restricted to the singular analysis of both Strategies. This dissertation intends to investigate whether today’s Security Strategies demonstrate a higher diplomatic engagement with regard to previous strategy Documents. Therefore, it is imperative to draw a domestically-based comparative approach and evaluate the EU and US dimensions separately. In other words, this thesis contributes to the field of comparative diplomacy by promoting two parallel inward-looking comparisons: on the one hand, the American dimension with the 2017 NSS and the 2002 NSS; on the other hand, the European dimension with the 2016 EUGS and the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS).

It is no coincidence the choice of both timeframes. Whilst 2016-17 is a moment where the European order was in turmoil in the wake of the migration crisis, the Brexit referendum, and international conflicts, in 2002-2003 the US experienced one of its darkest moments in recent history with the 9/11 terrorist attack and the fights against terrorism. The choice of these two time intervals stems from the original idea of assessing the diplomatic responsiveness of both the EU and the US in the aftermath of big domestic shocks. Such a comparison allows the thesis to address the following question: “To what extent does the diplomatic engagement of the 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) and the 2016 European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) mirror the 2002 NSS and the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS), respectively? Does the comparison outline a paradigm shift towards deeper Diplomacy?

This dissertation aims to provide the reader with thorough detail about two models of comparisons. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy to emphasize that the analysis of both dimensions unfolds at parallel levels: although intertwined by two given historical moments, the intention of this work would not be to compare the US model with the European one. Once making the reader understand the

diplomatic decisional-making of both actors, the dissertation will critically analyze whether the strategic approaches of the latest Strategies have significantly changed throughout the years.

Many empirical types of research have investigated the diplomatic sphere of both Strategies (Biscop, 2016; Coelmont, 2016; Cordesman, 2017; Davis Cross, 2016; Grevi, 2016; Jeffrey, 2017; Leonard, 2017). However, most of them lacked a comprehensive approach when referring to “Diplomacy”. The term cannot be limited to mere intentions aiming at peace and stabilization within and without the countries’ sphere of action: it also refers to practical solutions and, sometimes, pragmatic actions which strategically respond to threats by using the necessary means. In other words, previous studies did not comprehensively interpret the diplomatic effectiveness of such Strategies according to the “smart power” format (Nye; 2012). By this token, this dissertation aims at bridging this empirical gap by taking as the main reference the model created by Joseph Nye: he sees the existence of soft power, hard power, and smart power. The latter is the intelligent combination of softer and harder means to achieve desired results (Nye; 2012). Applying such a model to the parallel-based comparative study of the EU and the US will directly reply to the research question.

My dissertation’s methodology purely reflects an internal analysis of each Strategy documents, especially from the diplomatic point of view. This work aims to provide the reader with a well-built and detailed framework of the premises, the goals, and aspirations of the Strategies: the concerned strategic Documents will be compared through the analysis of other experts’ publications and books. Although taking inspiration from additional works, this dissertation will approach an outside-in methodology: to put it in simple terms, an illustration of historical factors will serve as a preamble to analyze the crucial features that characterize the four Strategies. However, this work will intentionally focus only on the strategic communication that transpires from the body of Strategies themselves, without analyzing the consequences following the Strategies’ publication.

This dissertation will devote careful attention to the substance of each Security Strategy and will directly extrapolate quotations from their texts: this will serve the overall goal of analyzing motives and reasons behind diplomatic and political choices that both the US and the EU have made. To effectively address the research question, this thesis starts with introducing the concept of Soft, Hard, and Smart Power. Therefore, the first Chapter focuses on Joseph Nye’s concept of *intelligent* power, which perfectly relates to the notion of diplomacy. The second Chapter describes the US diplomatic dimension, starting with a comprehensive analysis of the 2017 NSS’s diplomatic features. It follows the description of the 2002 NSS under G. W. Bush Administration, which paves the way for a final point of the chapter: the comparison between both Strategies, which addresses

whether Trump uses smarter diplomacy than Bush's previously adopted. A special reference to Obama's diplomacy is an additional element that helps better understanding Trump's Diplomacy.

The third Chapter maintains the same structural pattern as the previous one. Yet, this time it deals with the 2016 EUGS and the idea of producing a European strategy concept that would strengthen the EU's credibility within and without its borders. Then, the chapter critically analyzes the diplomatic dimension of the 2003 ESS and, to conclude, it will compare both Strategies: the comparison seeks to provide the reader with an answer to the research question.

Finally, the dissertation concludes by summarizing the main elements of each Strategy and by leaving some room for discussing whether the European and American latest Strategies converge or diverge from a diplomatic point of view.

1. Power and Diplomacy

1.1. Hard Power

When talking about Hard Power, the correlation between military and economic power comes naturally. Initially, it was the only option the ruler could deem effective if he/she wanted to obtain his/her goals. Nowadays, it is not acceptable to think of it as the unique solution to problems since we live in developed and democratic societies.

Hard Power makes use of the so-called carrot and sticks as means to induce other people to change their behavior, respect and obey rules, or make the ruler obtain his/her desired results (Nye; 2008). Initially, the adjective "hard" could give the idea of a rough, brutal, and sometimes violent form of power. However, today its meaning has slightly changed, thus alluding to a command-based and coercion-based power that makes the ruler appear arrogant and pretentious instead of violent. We can say that Hard Power uses dishonest means like threats or coercion for inducing people to accept something "contrary to their initial preferences" (Nye; 2011; 11). This is probably the most direct form of power in the sense that coercing in itself calls for a quick reply from the respondent: accepting or not the conditions set by the requesting party.

1.1.1. Machiavelli

This form of power is closely linked to a historical character: Niccolò Machiavelli³. Half a century ago, he wrote several books about his vision of politics⁴, among which stands out *Il Principe* (1515). Throughout the years, such a masterpiece has inspired many philosophers, leaders, and politicians but, at the same time, has not been spared from criticisms that targeted Machiavelli's pessimistic view of life and his one-sided interpretation of power. Notwithstanding both positive and negative aspects, we must retain Machiavelli as the man who first talked more extensively about politics with a modern touch.

As Benoist⁵ (1907; 1934; 1936) said, it is possible to distinguish between an *Avant et Après Machiavel* to indicate the historical impact he had on politics (Benoist; 1907; 1934; 1936). One of his most significant innovations was to separate the political context from morality: starting from this point, he founded a new social ethic utterly different from the one in the past. With Machiavelli, it is not a case that we enter the actual dimension of Hard Power: a reality where most people are not good, dominated by deception, and no one is as loyal as we might think (Machiavelli; 1515). The Florentine philosopher trains the Prince for successful exits in politics and makes him gain as much power as possible. Whoever we are, whether ruler or ruled, we belong to the world of politics because everything around us is made of it (Machiavelli; 1515).

Machiavelli has a vision focused on what happens in the present. Nevertheless, his realism is something the Prince can benefit from: a heroic prince with virtue, strength, and fortune. Another critical aspect in *Il Principe* (1515) is the concept of war. According to Machiavelli:

"A prince who does not understand the art of war, over and above the other misfortunes already mentioned, cannot be respected by his soldiers, nor can he rely on them. He ought never, therefore, to have out of his thoughts this subject of war, and in peace he should addict himself more to its exercise than in war; this he

³ Niccolò Machiavelli was a Florentine political philosopher at the time of Renaissance. He was also a statesman and diplomat in the city of Florence.

⁴ Amongst his famous books we can find the "Discourse on Reforming the Government of Florence" (1520), "Mandragola" (1512-1520), "Discourses on Livy" (1531), "Discourse about the Provision of Money" (1502), "On the Method of Dealing with the Rebellious Peoples of Valdichiana" (1503).

⁵ Charles Benoist was a French writer and political journalist. At the beginning of 1900s, he also started to participate actively in the political life.

can do in two ways, the one by action, the other by study" (Machiavelli; 1515; 68).

Thus, war is of vital importance in Foreign Politics. By conquering new spaces, the Prince obtains love from his people: he should never resign to peace because being a good man means being weak and vulnerable, thus making the prince lose power (Machiavelli; 1515). Machiavellian Hard Power can be summed up in the expression *the end justifies the means*: what a politician has to do is reach his/her objectives regardless of good morals or ethics (Machiavelli; 1515). Most importantly, when soft power comes into conflict with hard power, the choice a prince should make is always the second one because it "is much safer to be feared than loved" (Machiavelli; 1515, 79).

However, Joseph Nye⁶ (2008) in his book "The Powers to Lead" pointed out that the opposite to love is hatred, and not fear: this represents a considerable controversy of the Florentine's idea of power after he explicitly stated that generating hate among his people is disadvantageous for the power of a Prince (Machiavelli; 1515; Chapter XIX). Indeed, this so-called Machiavellian approach, if one wants to define it as such, has been at the center of huge debates around what kind of advantages it might bring to the leader/ruler/politician who makes use of it, thus exercising Hard Power (Bedell K., Hunter S., Angie A., and Vert A.; 2006) (Deluga R. J.; 2001) (Simonton D.K.; 1986).

1.1.2. Hard Power Skills

1.1.2.1. Machiavellian political skills

It is surprising how Machiavelli's ideas are still modern today. His political approach is a clear example of what hard power means in all its aspects, starting from morality to military force and political skills. Machiavelli truly believed that through the use of force, a leader can obtain power and that with such power, he can impose the collective interests above single human desires. According to him, we cannot live in a chaotic society: that is why no society can exist without order; therefore, such order comes only from coercion and the use of force (Machiavelli; 1515). The Prince should have all the political skills named "Machiavellian skills" closely related to hard power.

⁶Joseph S. Jr. Nye is an expert in Politics, former Politician, and Professor of many prestigious Universities. He is the author of many books that explores the diplomatic reality of international relations, with a special focus on the United States.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines the adjective *Machiavellian* as “using smart but often dishonest methods that deceive people so that you can win power or control”⁷. Consequently, Machiavellianism is often associated with the politics of fear and automatically correlated to negative meaning. Machiavellian political skills are peculiar to Hard Power because the leader exercises the whole power on his/her followers. By reading "The Prince", it is possible to assume that such politics is based on fear: the Italian philosopher believed that it was more important for a prince to be feared than loved (Machiavelli; 1515). There is a sort of connection between Machiavellian political skills and what Roderick Kramer (2006) calls "political intelligence": this ability consists in taking advantage of the vulnerabilities of others to offend them with the use of coercion and threats (Kramer; 2006).

Nevertheless, political intelligence needs self-control. In other words, too much Hard Power can be dangerous both for the followers and the leader him/herself. Notwithstanding the need to prevent abuse of hard tactics, it is unfair to judge them as wrong since they might be the most effective solution to specific contexts.

1.2. Soft Power

However, there exists a second face of power that takes the name of Soft Power. Joseph Jr. Nye was the first person to coin the term in his book called “Bound to Lead” (Nye; 2016; XI). As the years passed, he returned on the subject bringing up new particularities that manifest the progressive adaptation of the soft power to the changing context in international politics⁸.

Soft Power heavily relies on attractiveness and persuasion, with no use of force, thanks to which people shape their preferences following the goals of the ruler/politician because they are propelled by the belief that it is the right choice to make (Nye; 2004). It is precisely the power of attraction that makes people change their behavior, preferences, goals, and purposes. Accordingly, we

⁷Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/machiavellian>, consulted on the 22/07/2021

⁸ Other books written by Joseph Nye are “Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History” (2002), “The Paradox of American Power: Why the World’s Only Super power Can’t Go It Alone” (2002), “Soft Power: The Means To Success In World Politics” (2005), “The powers To Lead” (2008), and many other articles.

understand its relevance in international politics, especially today with the expansion of digitalization and democratization.

1.2.1. Three main resources of Soft Power: Culture, Political Values, and Foreign Policy.

According to J. Nye (2004), a country that aims at developing Soft Power must rely on three primary resources: its culture, its political values, and its foreign policy (Nye; 2004; 11). The interplay of such components may reinforce the effect of soft power, but also when taken singularly, these resources are particularly influential. Especially when it comes to foreign and domestic policies, a government approach that is seen as opportunistic and arrogant may not produce enough soft power to attract people. The same could happen when Governments tend to be isolationist without considering the cooperation with international institutions at the multilateral level. In other cases, like in the United States of America, soft power resources are not directly linked with the Government itself because they simply fall outside mere political competencies. It is the case of cultural values that produce soft power through Sports, Cinema, Brands, and Universities. According to a former French foreign minister, the USA “inspire(s) the dreams and desires of others, thanks to the mastery of global images through film and television and because, for these same reasons, large numbers of students from other countries come to the United States to finish their studies”. (Ajami; 2003)

Although its results cannot be seen immediately, J. Nye (2004) also explains that soft power “costs” less than implementing Hard Power instruments. Moreover, the reduced level of implications in case of failure should encourage the use of soft power (Gomichon; 2013). Notwithstanding Nye’s (2008) claims in favor of the power of attraction, soft power *per se* cannot be considered the best solution regardless of the context. Indeed, changing situations determine the right choice of power a leader/politician should use, whether hard or soft. Although attraction and seduction are often described as means of soft power that allude to a non-harmful form of power, the so-called “soft means” are not always good as they might appear to be.

Thus, it is not a matter of resources that determines which form of power can be considered the best solution because, in most cases, hard and soft resources may overlap. Economic resources and military ones do not always have a negative denotation given the automatic liaison with hard power. Indeed, those resources could also be used to persuade and attract people without coercion (Nye; 2011; 85). Suffice to think that the United States of America takes advantage of its economic

power in institutions like the World Trade Organization (W.T.O.) to spread its internal values (Gomichon; 2013). J. Nye (2005) attributes particular importance to institutions, given their significant role in enhancing a country's soft power (Nye; 2005). Therefore, he refers to the United States of America and suggests that the power of attraction produces its effect, especially when the country manages to shape international rules following its values and preferences (Nye; 2005).

Overlapping resources also interest soft power. Accordingly, J. Nye (2004) explains how many people mistakenly associate soft power with a democratic form of power (Nye; 2004). It is indeed true that this form of power leads to acquiescence, thus going even beyond what is persuasion (Nye; 2004; 6). To understand whether a form of power is good or not, Nye (2004) underlines the importance of the purpose rather than the resources of the power (Nye, 2004). The clearest example is ISIS and all its activities aimed at destroying Western civilization. They recruit people through the force of attraction: they condition people to do what they want by making them think that is the right thing to do. Political experts may call it Hard Power, but the truth is that there is only a slight difference compared to soft power.

The means of soft power can be the same in every situation, but purposes may differ from one context to another and from one actor to another. To simply put it, we should never confuse attraction with manipulation because they are not the same thing (Nye; 2004).

From a moral point of view, Soft power could be a better choice than hard power, especially when its purposes are good. Nonetheless, soft power is particularly difficult to wield, and its effects may take years before producing results (Nye; 2004; 99). It automatically discourages leaders from opting for it when, conversely, with the hard power they can directly control resources and make sure that results do not depend on anybody else other than the Government Administration or the leader him/herself (Nye; 2004; 99). Moreover, there is no need to adapt hard power to the changing contexts, thus allowing leaders to avoid a detailed assessment of the interested scenario. Accordingly, in times of emergency, it is easier for a leader to choose hard power if he/she wants to see desired results in a reasonable time.

To conclude, J. Nye (2012) suggests that "twisting minds is not necessarily better than twisting arms": this explains that soft power may be ineffective or not appropriate to use in any situation (Nye; 2012; 3). Whether hard or soft, leaders/politicians/governments can freely choose which power they retain the best to use. There is no universal rule that condemns whoever opts for a more aggressive form of power or a softer approach. This is because everything depends on the context: changing situations call for a smart decision that could mix both powers when necessary.

1.2.2. Soft Power Skills

Resources are the means to practice Soft Power. Nonetheless, the ability of a leader to produce soft skills him/herself is equally essential. J. Nye (2008) pays special attention to the leader's figure and therefore identifies three main features that distinguish soft power skills: emotional intelligence, communication, and vision (Nye; 2008).

Public opinion believes that there is no connection between mind and emotion. It might be true that letting emotions take precedence over thinking does not positively impact political strategies. Conversely, controlling emotions and regulating them produces the so-called emotional intelligence (Mayer and Salovey; 1997). Such intelligence is closely related to the emotional abilities of an actor that directly depend on the context and, of course, on the interpreter.

Not every leader develops emotional intelligence in the same way, obviously. When a leader succeeds in outreaching others and showing self-control by channeling passions and emotions, it will be easy then to attract people (Goleman; 1998): this is what Edward L. Thorndike⁹ called "social intelligence" (Thorndike; 1920).

1.2.2.1. Communication

Why do we follow a leader? Because directly or indirectly, he/she communicates effectively to the people. Many leaders have understood how focusing on the oratory ability was a guarantee for success. However, the way a leader transmits his/her vision is entirely a matter of opinion. Communication plays a central role when producing soft power, but it can take different shapes and styles depending on the speaker since we are not all alike. The most common forms of communication capable of generating soft power are oratory and inspirational rhetoric (Nye; 2008). When a leader lacks solid public speaking skills, he/she must find another way to attract and inspire followers: indeed, the third form of communication is the example (Nye; 2008). Actions, symbols, manifestations are the most powerful way to express an idea or a vision, and I think they are more direct than any speech.

⁹He is Professor of Educational Psychology, Teachers College, Columbia University

Communication is also about the drafting and writing of Strategic documents, for example the USNSS by Donald Trump or the 2016 EUGS by Federica Mogherini. Ideas, strategies, suggestions, and visions always follow logic. To make this logic understandable, leaders must choose the right words and expressions. Nothing is left to chance. Every word carries its own specific meaning that, according to the context where it is used, suggests which form of power is intended to be utilized, whether soft, hard, or smart.

1.2.2.2. Vision

A leader's vision is what gives sense to his/her ideas (Nye; 2008). It is an essential leadership skill because we can assume whether a leader can successfully analyze the vision. It is the vision that determines all other abilities and attracts the most public attention.

The word "vision" makes us think about the future: this is the case of those leaders who promote the change. However, a vision can also be rooted in the past, willing to preserve the status quo (Nye; 2008). Both these visions are excellent sources of soft power and inspiration for the people, but to achieve this, leaders must shape their ideas according to the needs of the followers (Nye; 2008). Nonetheless, not every vision arising from the needs of a group results in being positive. In most cases, leaders outline overambitious strategies that turn out to be more damaging than beneficial to the country. Therefore, a vision needs to balance what is real and the risk by always keeping a sort of flexibility according to the necessities a country or a community of people have. The power of attraction stems directly from the ability of a leader to make sure he/she analyzes the contextual reality before spreading the vision with his/her audience (Nye; 2008).

1.3. Smart Power

As discussed above, hard and soft power resources are tangible and interchangeable. Although theoretically different, both powers interact with each other. The truth of the matter is that today is not easy to detach one power from another, that is Hard from Soft power and vice versa. This happens especially in modern and advanced societies where the form of power to be used directly depends on the contextual reality we live in.

Notwithstanding their interdependence, the exercise of hard power should by no means limit the use of soft power (Nye; 2008). Conversely, a leader/politician should always try to combine both and give rise to what Joseph Nye (2008) calls *Smart Power*.

Today, knowledge is power. This means that to create effective strategies, a leader must understand the dynamics concerning the domestic and external affairs of his/her country. As pointed out by Karl Marx, “Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please [...] but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past” (Marx; 1963). Events create opportunities, and leaders should be able to take advantage of them.

This so-called Smart Power can only produce desired results if contextual intelligence is adopted (Nye; 2008). This ability helps leaders formulate brilliant strategies which directly influence public opinion and voters' judgment of their leaders. To be successful in leadership terms is necessary to understand how contextual influence works. On the one hand, the leader can deeply examine the context, defining all the problems the group has to face. After that, he/she will decide which strategy is better to adopt, whether hard or soft, by providing a road map that defines the problem the group confronts. On the other hand, the context or environment can influence how particular attributes associated with the leader can be perceived differently as social tendencies change. That is to say, followers adapt to the living context which the leader has modified. Independently from which form of power is better, a superficial analysis of the surrounding environment will benefit neither the leader nor the followers (Nye; 2008). Moreover, contextual intelligence seems to be aligned with emotional intelligence (Nye; 2008).

2. The Diplomatic dimension of the United States: the case of National Security Strategy

2.1. The origin of the National Security Strategy Document

Starting under the Reagan Presidency in 1987, the White House has produced the so-called United States National Security Strategy (USNSS)¹⁰. The 40th US President himself initiated the practice of periodically publishing this kind of Document after signing the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Defense

¹⁰Starting from Reagan in 1987 and 1988, to then continue with Bush G. H. W. in 1990, 1991 and 1993, Clinton for four times in 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1998, George W. Bush in 2002 and 2006, President Obama in 2010 and 2015, to then conclude with Donald Trump in 2017.

Department Reorganization Act (section 603) (Natalizia; 2017). Initially, the scope of the Document was making sure the President and the Executive power formulated a coherent and long-term defense strategy that could defend American values and interests. The structure of every NSS must respect five specific pillars that the President and his Administration would singularly analyze:

- First, the Document must outline the interests and international objectives of the Country;
- Second, the Document must point out a detailed description of the type of foreign policy implemented, the available resources to ensure national security, and the international commitments of the US;
- Third, the presence of a list of suggested tools that would be used to promote and protect American interests. Such tools can be of political, economic, and/or military nature;
- Fourth, the Country should conduct a careful evaluation to prove the efficiency of the resources at disposal to implement the Strategy;
- Fifth, the Strategy must provide additional information to the US Congress to make it aware of eventual issues concerning the Strategy itself (Snider and Nagl; 1995).

2.2. The Wilsonian approach and Trump's Illiberal hegemony

Historical events have always influenced politics and strategies. Americans have long experienced the benefits of an interconnected world, especially in the acceleration of globalization. However, openness also imposes costs when state competitors try to take advantage of a democratic system to undermine the US social order and economy.

Early in the XX century, the United States of America has been predominantly characterized by the promotion, through its leaders, of a sort of American moralism: the so-called Wilsonian influence (Nye; 2019). During the 1910s, Woodrow Wilson¹¹ approached US politics by bringing transformational innovations that rested on soft power. In other words, he was one of the first US presidents ever to consider public diplomacy a fundamental pillar of American politics. He transformed the concept of American principles that, in their turn, shaped international world politics by paving the way for a liberal international order (Nye; 2019)¹².

He succeeded in convincing people of the solidity of American moral values and, most importantly, developed the so-called contextual intelligence. To better explain his interpretation of soft power,

¹¹ He has been the 28th President of the United States of America

¹² Evidence of his influence in shaping the international politics was suggesting to the US Congress the formation of a League of Nations that would later take the name of United Nations.

he said that “everything that affects the opinion of the world regarding us, affects our influence for the good”(Manela; 2007). We can therefore assume that the Wilsonian approach better represents the identity of a leader rather than his/her strategic policies: to simply put, it is an ideology that lays its foundations on multilateralism and liberalism.

In 2016, the election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States of America interrupted the continuous approach initiated by Wilson and then adopted by many other presidents. Indeed, in his 2017 National Security Strategy, Trump promoted a realism that runs counter multilateralism and the diplomatic vision intended to attract others with sound principles and morality. It is a disinterested way of conceiving democracy, human rights, and soft power, all aspects placed below US national interests (Abrams; 2019).

Trump has a vision of politics and diplomacy which stands out for his strategic singularity. Although not always promoting soft power, previous US Administrations have tried to follow a grand strategy anchored in “liberal hegemony”: recognizing and defending the American primacy globally while promoting a free international order based on values that match American interests (Posen; 2018). With Trump, the US keeps preserving its superpower role and witnesses a disruption with the liberalist approach.

2.3. Historical background of the NSS-17

Before the drafting and then publishing the 2017 National Security Strategy, Trump has already advanced his slogan, which would have characterized his whole mandate as the President of the United States: “America First”. When announcing it, Trump gave a speech that anticipated what then would be the content of his NSS: “We will seek friendship and good will with the nations of the world, but we do so with the understanding that it is the right of all nations to put their own interests first” (The White House; 2017). Such a statement unveiled an isolationist sentiment that tries to override trust into multilateral institutions and whichever country does not intend to align with American interests (Posen; 2018).

Competitors are what Trump has been aware of since his presidential elections: extremist manifestations such as ISIS and Al Qaeda, North Korea, or simply non-state actors trying to steal intellectual properties and personal data, are interfering in the internal functioning of the US system and undermining the foundations of the American way of life (Cordesman A. H.; 2017; 4). For such a reason, the 2017 NSS tries to build an imaginary “wall” against external threats but at the same time admits that preparedness and resilience are of vital importance in order to address these modern challenges.

There is a sort of continuity in history if we compare the 2017 NSS and the previous NSS for security priorities: many US administrations have linked the domestic progress with military security, but what changes with Trump is the preference for competition rather than war.

The list of objectives outlined in the 2017 NSS has been previously identified by the National Defense Strategy (NDS) and released by the US Department of Defense (DoD). Moreover, the particularity of the Document's formulation process is worth mentioning, which results from an interaction between power and political habits and not something only based on the President's words.

2.4. The 2017 USNSS under Trump Administration: features and objectives

President Trump's new National Security Strategy (NSS) appears to be a representation of his views rather than a bureaucratic compromise (Cordesman A. H.; 2017; 1). However, the 2017 NSS is not the product of the work of the President alone, but the development of the Document is the result of the National Security Council (NSC) led by the National Security Advisor (NSA). Specifically, the principal author of the 2017 NSS was the former deputy NSA, Nadia Schadlow.

The Document was officially released in December 2017. It consists of five chapters contained in a 55-page dossier that includes four main pillars. They summarize Trump's action strategy and objectives of his Administration:

- The first pillar is about “Protect(ing) the American People, the Homeland, and the American Way of Life” from visible and non-visible threats¹³ (Trump; 2017; 7);
- The second pillar focuses on the promotion of “American Prosperity”, which refers to the protection and the rejuvenation of the American economic system that will insist both on the financing of research and technology and the protection against unfair trade imbalances (Trump; 2017; 17);
- The third pillar addresses the need to preserve the peace that only occurs through a strengthening of military capacities of the US and its allies (Trump; 2017; 25);
- The fourth pillar concludes with “Advance(ing) American influence” globally. Indeed, the US needs the support of other actors to pursue its foreign policy and security strategy: thus, exporting the American interests and values increases the US credibility abroad (Trump; 2017; 37). Moreover, the US influence is also broadened by “America's commitment to liberty, democracy, and the rule of law” (Trump; 2017; 4).

¹³Like cyber attacks or cyber terrorism.

Starting from his election in 2016, Donald Trump has made discontinuity with the past his most distinctive feature. A discontinuity that is reflected in the NSS-17, undoubtedly. The communicative power of the Document seems to stem directly from the President himself: the argumentations, expressions, and words selected are a clear symptom of the attentive and, sometimes, confrontational style that characterizes Trump's presidency. The Introduction already anticipates what would be the theoretical foundation of the Strategy. The American Strategy takes inspiration from what Trump calls "principled realism", a theoretical vision that departs from ideological concepts (Trump; 2017; 1).

US politics is the key to understanding the "America First" policy led by Trump: the goal is to make sure that Washington will maintain its *superpower* in the international scenario. To do so, the Country must protect and prioritize the interests of the American people. Trump's vision sees the US emerging as the "lone superpower" (Trump; 2017; 1). To keep its supremacy role, it needs to prioritize the interests of American citizens: the ultimate goal is to protect national sovereignty at all costs (Natalizia; 2017).

2.4.1. America First and Principled Realism

Trump's approach to the 2017 National Security Strategy seems to reject the Wilsonian project that has characterized previous US Administrations. Conversely, the NSS-17 goes towards a Jacksonian approach¹⁴ to the Grand Strategy (Mead W. R.; 2000): it is impossible to impose the American way of life in other countries, but the US will always be a role model for the rest of the world without making the "revolutionary" temptation prevail in politics (Trump; 2017; 4). In other words, Trump keeps considering the US as the ruling model in the international context: he is perfectly aware of other countries' perception of the United States as a model to imitate. However, his vision runs counter the revolutionist approach that Wilson adopted, aiming to export American values to international actors/institutions.

¹⁴ Andrew Jackson was the Seventh President of the United States. The main features of that characterize the Jacksonian approach are realism and the opposition to Wilsonian interventions. The passionate love for American values reflects foreign policy. It also influences the US approach towards the deviation from multilateral worldview: indeed, the ideal world where everybody follows the same rules, respect the same rights, benefit from the same freedoms does not exist. Every country must take care of its own.

For such a reason, the Strategy takes inspiration from the so-called “principled realism” and not by ideological constructs (Trump; 2017; 1). This principled realism is based on three central convictions:

- The first central pillar is State-centrism: strong Governments can guarantee peace and security, primarily through respecting citizens’ rights and international cooperation (Trump; 2017; 7);
- Secondly, Trump rejects the idea of evolution through time because he considered it utopian: he does not support the cyclic interpretation of history, a sort of theory of democratic peace that characterized previous Administrations. No epoch shows distinctive features that differentiates it from previous eras: past, present, and future only share the struggle for power because it is an unavoidable factor in politics (Trump; 2017; 25). According to the US President, there exists only one change that governments are witnessing in the modern era: technology is replacing the military dimension for what concerns the new arena for conflicts between countries (Trump; 2017; 26);
- Lastly, the idea that what America does is based on the conviction that the spread of ethical and political principles of the US makes possible a world governed by peace and prosperity (Trump; 2017; 55).

Here, it is necessary to understand what the NSS means with principled realism. According to the US Administration of Trump, realism occurs when “[t]his National Security Strategy puts America First” (Trump; 2017; 1). Also, competition is a crucial concept of the Strategy because “it helps the US to rethink the policies of the past two decades [...]” (Trump; 2017; 2): here the shift away idealism. For what concerns the “principled” nature of such realism, we find different points of view of many scholars (Jeffrey; 2017) (Nobile; 2018) (Ettinger; 2018) (Weaver; 2018) (Posen; 2018) (Nye; 2019). The 2017 NSS aims to stick to the fundamental and founding values that made the US a great superpower but, more importantly, it urges other countries to follow the same principles. If it does not happen, the US will take action to “discipline” them: indeed, in the Document, we read that “the United States distinguishes between economic competition with countries that follow fair and free-market principles and competition with those that act with little regard for those principles” (Trump; 2017; 19).

Conversely, the “realist” nature of the Strategy seems to be pretty straightforward. All that Trump cares about is power, interests, competition, and, inevitably, conflicts (Guillot; 2018). Only by reading the title of the Third Pillar, the Document resembles a Hard Power strategy where one can seek peace through the use of force (Trump, 2017; 25). The “America First” slogan may supposedly

be an expedient to impose the US military and economic supremacy over the others (Guillot; 2018). Accordingly, this would mean departing from years of negotiations for trade and political agreements, thus putting at risk the diplomatic dimension that the US has built so far with previous Administrations. Notwithstanding evidence of realism, there are no specific details on how the NSS-17 intends to comply with the realist political theory; instead, Trump merely summarizes realism with the belief that competitiveness in international relations results in a zero-sum game (Trump; 2017) (Havertz; 2019).

Immediately after reading in the Introduction of the Strategy that Trump's principled realism is "guided by outcomes" (Trump; 2017, 1), one might assume there is a subtle connection between Trumpism and Machiavellianism. Hard Power elements may result from Trump's strong emphasis on competition with external actors (Havertz; 2019). Accordingly, the President does not seem to care about what consequences may derive from his intention to pursue American interests: he ignores anything that does not follow the logic of his interests instead. Trump's Strategy indirectly refers to one of the most famous Machiavellian principles, which is "the end justifies the means". Trump does not exclude the hypothesis of using hard power resources to gain an advantage over others: evidence of a clear departure from Soft Power (Havertz; 2019).

What transpires from the NSS-17 is a certain degree of confidence that Trump has in its Country's means. He knows that he does not necessarily have to work on advancing the power of attraction to gain more power, and he also accepts the risk of being criticized by other governments. In this case, as Machiavelli suggested, politics seems to have no relations to morals.

2.4.2. Trump and Hard Power

Although Trump's Strategy seems to go against "Obama's internationalism or Bush's transformational agenda" (Ettinger; 2018; 475), there is a kind of stability between present and past National Security Strategies. Indeed, the 2017 NSS tries to go beyond the rigid structure that characterizes the so-called principled realism. On the one hand, the Strategy accepts the existence of a collision between supporters of a repressive system and a free system, which is typical of the liberal school of thought. On the other hand, there is a reference to long-term challenges that influence the political, economic, and military dimension but in some ways remain circumscribed on a regional scale. The geopolitical objectives of the NSS-17 emphasize Trump's desire to protect the interests of his Country and his people. The 2017 NSS makes a list of small, medium, and big superpowers (non-necessarily countries) that represent the US's new competitors in the international context.

The order through which such opponents are presented and listed in the Document makes the reader understand that Trump has a hierarchy of priorities in fighting state and non-state actors that could put his own country's superpower at risk. Consequently:

- Moscow represents the main military threat to Washington's security in the short term (Trump, 2017; 2-3);
- Beijing is perceived by the US as the most dangerous enemy in the economic and military sphere in the long term (Trump, 2017; 2-3);
- North Korea and Iran destabilize the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific area (also called "Rogue States") (Trump; 2017; 25);
- Terrorists and Jihadists militarily threaten the US (Trump; 2017; 45).

This manifestation of Trump's foreign policy undoubtedly affects US diplomacy: Trump has a pessimistic vision of the world that causes him to take preventive actions. Every external actor wants to take advantage of the United States: hence all actors are enemies (Havertz; 2019). Soft power cannot be taken into consideration by Trump because only coercion and force ensure protection to the Country. Trump underlines the need to adopt whatever form of power that helps emphasize the gap between the US and the rest of the world: military power remains an option (Natalizia; 2017).

2.4.3. Trump and Soft Power

Generally, diplomacy is highly interconnected with foreign policy strategies. More specifically, the diplomatic dimension of a Strategic document results from the form of power the leader adopts. Although the parallelism between Machiavelli and Trump can justify a preference for hard power, the US President has distinguished himself for the capacity of attracting voters' support at the time of the election. Trump has been a strategic player in channeling the discontent of many Americans towards progressive backing for his political campaign. Cultural, racial, and economic resentments have been echoed by Trump's decision to make America great again by limiting illegal migration, preserving American values, and advancing competition (Nye; 2019).

Joseph Nye (2011) explained that shaping the preferences of others with the use of attractiveness, without the use of coercion or strength, is making use of the so-called Soft Power. *Framing* and *agenda-setting* are potent means which can feed persuasive tactics (Nye; 2011; 12-13). In other words, strong emphasis is put on the dialectic skills that a leader uses when representing his/her vision of reality: it can be either oral (like in a speech) or written in a document (like in the NSS).

This form of power takes the name of *representational force*: in this case, the word “force” does not stand for physical violence but instead alludes to a kind of verbal aggressiveness that threatens people (Mattern; 2007; 99-100). Trump has been making use of representational force since his electoral campaign and reflected it in his National Security Strategy. He created his own representation of reality, shared it with other international actors, and encouraged others to accept it as the unique and legit vision of the world: people feel threatened not by the words of the Document itself, but rather by the direct consequences that may derive if one objects Trump’s vision.

Apparently, the NSS-17 makes persuasion its distinctive feature, but the representational force is nothing but a “subtle element of coercion in soft power” (Havertz; 2019). As Nye (2004) pointed out, attraction cannot be confused with manipulation, although a fine line differentiates the former from the latter. In most cases, hard and soft power can use the same means, like in the case of Trump NSS-17: the desired result to persuade people with firm and convincing words is to take advantage of others and increase American influence/power, thus manipulating international actors. In short, the only element that could have brought the NSS-17 towards a softer approach is instead the natural part of hard power (Havertz; 2019).

As already mentioned, the importance of foreign policy in the context of the NSS-17 affects the diplomatic domain considerably and, consequently, America’s soft power. Before drafting the 2017 National Security Strategy, Trump started to advance foreign politics based on unpredictability where secrecy would have prevailed, especially concerning military tactics (Nedal and Nexon; 2017). This “silent” approach can be discerned in the Strategy itself, where the behavior of Trump is extensively focused on American interests and partially oriented towards actions to be taken to stop imminent external threats. A study conducted by Nedal D. and Nexon D. (2017) clearly shows that the adoption of unpredictability in politics can be a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it has the positive effect of restraining an opponent from taking threatening actions; on the other hand, opponents may unleash the full power of their military given the secrecy of the interested Country (Nedal and Nexon; 2017). In this sense, Trump’s Strategy seems to elude an essential aspect in favor of diplomacy. Most importantly, it loses credibility both domestically and externally: levels of soft power experienced a considerable reduction (Havertz; 2019).

According to J. Nye (2011), credibility is the founding element of soft power because of its importance in persuading and attracting others to do what you want them to do (Nye; 2011; 83).

In this respect, the Spring 2017 Global Attitudes Survey of Pew Research Center is an unmistakable indicator of countries’ level of trust in Trump (Wike et al.; 2017). Although developed a few months earlier than the deliberation of the NSS-17, the survey shows that US credibility with Trump was already decreasing. Indeed, Trump’s credibility ranked below opponents like Russia and

China, demonstrating that American international affairs did not get the desired effects (Wike et al.; 2017; 8).

The self-centered and aggressive approach reflected in the 2017 National Security Strategy symbolizes the decline of American Soft Power. Circumscribing strategic objectives toward US only advantages and narrowing universal values to American principles have transformed the US into a culture of intolerance, narrow-mindedness, and unhealthy competition. What previous US Administrations have built through openness, democratic liberties, and multilateralism has been put at risk by Trump in his NSS (Grgic; 2016). Indeed, the NSS-17 outlines the shift away from the idea of international cooperation, a fundamental prerequisite of international politics after the end of the Cold War (Keohane and Nye; 1977). In short, the NSS-17 can be summarized with the expression “less cooperation, more competition”.

The most significant deviation from previous US National Security Strategies does not lie in advancing American influence as such, but rather on Trump’s interpretation of American interests: in the words of David Frum¹⁵, with Trump “American prosperity is to be protected, not enlarged; foreign economies are seen as rivals, not partners” (Frum; 2017).

2.4.4. Trump and the promotion of Competitive Diplomacy

The NSS-17 approach towards diplomacy is quite atypical. Indeed, the Strategy seems to purposefully develop its own notion of diplomatic relations that detaches itself from the genuine commitment to cooperation and dialogue with others. In the 2017 National Security Strategy, the US Government points out the obligation to “upgrade (its) diplomatic capabilities to compete in the current environment and to embrace a competitive mindset” (Trump; 2017; 33). Explicitly, Trump outlines a vision that does not see competition detached from diplomacy: such a belief brings him towards an aggressive approach since whoever has diverging interests from the United States is automatically perceived as an enemy (Havertz; 2019). To simply put it, Trump’s NSS mirrors a sort of *competitive diplomacy* that would be a reference point for his foreign politics (Nobile; 2018). The problem with the NSS-17 is not competition in itself but the continuous insistence on gaining advantages over other actors. Indeed, leading the foreign policy of a superpower like the US urges the leader for actions that pursue economic or military benefits; nonetheless, softer or smarter approaches could somehow help the Country obtain its desired results without using force or coercion.

¹⁵David Frum was the official speechwriter of G. W. Bush in 2001 and 2002. Today he writes for the Atlantic Journal.

The most straightforward message the NSS delivers to the readers is the centrality of military power in all diplomatic aspects. All American interests converge in making the Country more robust and resilient in military terms (Guillot; 2018). Such a protectionist approach is evidence of a pseudo-populist vision that characterizes the Strategy's competitive diplomacy: externalizing domestic problems gives the US Government room to leverage its arrogant blackmailer status with external actors (Nobile; 2018). Such a tactic prevents the US from making domestic decisions intended to reform the internal system, thus shifting the focus abroad.

2.4.5. Multilateral relations and Competiveness

Multilateral relations are another evidence of Trump's poor significance attributed to the diplomatic domain. The second Pillar of the NSS-17 starts with a sort of American self-celebration which emphasizes the US contribution to the foundation of international organizations that shaped the global economic order after World War II. Indeed, the Document says:

“For 70 years, (the United States) working with our allies and partners [...] (has) led the creation of a group of financial institutions and other economic forums that established equitable rules and built instruments to stabilize the international economy and remove the points of friction that had contributed to two world wars” (Trump, 2017, 17).

Accordingly, the question arises whether the NSS-17 is more oriented towards isolationism rather than multilateralism (Havertz; 2019). The NSS-17 outlines that Trump Administration intends to respect and, if necessary, modernize historical agreements and institutions such as “the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and World Trade Organization (WTO)”, and therefore the “United States will continue to play a leading role” (Trump; 2017, 40).

The Strategy shows a critical approach towards the *modus operandi* of many other international organizations¹⁶. According to the NSS-17, “authoritarian actors have long recognized the power of multilateral bodies and have used them to advance their interests and limit the freedom of their own citizens” (Trump; 2017; 40). This example supports the firm belief that not all institutions can follow the same principles: they are different. Accordingly, the US Administration will privilege those institutions which “serve American interests, to ensure that they are strengthened and supportive of the United States, (its) allies, and (its) partners”: hence making impossible the idea that the Country would withdraw from such agreements (Trump; 2017; 40). Therefore, the selective

¹⁶ The United Nations (U.N.), to cite one.

approach that distinguishes Trump's Administration: reinforcing those institutions that go in the direction of American interests while refusing to collaborate with the so-called free riders.

The impression is that Trump's National Security Strategy diverges from the basic parameters of previous US foreign policies. Indeed, Obama's NSS-10 promised the US would maintain, defend, and reinforce the international order built in the 20th century. Most importantly, the US would deny "those nations that defy international norms or fail to meet their sovereign responsibilities [...] the incentives that come with greater integration and collaboration with the international community" (Obama, 2010; 40).

However, the problem with the NSS-17 is not reflected in the suspected isolationism of the Country (Nobile; 2018). Conversely, the issue is associated with Trump's interpretation of alliances and cooperation. We can assume that the isolationist feature of the NSS-17 is nonexistent. In proof of this, Trump points out the historical importance that allies represent for the United States today. In the Pillar "Advance American Prosperity," we read that:

"Allies and partners are a great strength of the United States. They add directly to US political, economic, military, intelligence, and other capabilities. Together, the United States and our allies and partners represent well over half of the global G.D.P. None of our adversaries have comparable coalitions" (Trump, 2017, 37).

The significance of these words runs counter possible indiscretions that label Trump's Administration as isolationist in nature (Nobile; 2018). In the NSS-17, the word "allies" is mentioned 57 times: Trump recognizes the existence of many threats that the US cannot tackle alone. Nonetheless, the Administration makes explicit in the Document that the US "will pursue cooperation with reciprocity" (Trump; 2017; 4). Supposedly, the meaning of *cooperation* is well-known to all. Conversely, *reciprocity* means that all actors who intend to work alongside the US must share responsibilities equally: it could mean aligning to American interest and economic defense burden¹⁷. Trump's attraction for reciprocity is symptomatic of his desire to imitate the American supremacy of the 19th century. Indeed, at that time the US imposed this concept of reciprocity to dominate trade with smaller economies and strengthen its negotiating power (Herring; 2008). The NSS-17, therefore, advances Trump's economic worldview alluding to a preference for bilateral economic relations where the US would be more likely to dominate: suffice to think that the words "free trade" only appear twice in the Document. Therefore, domestic priorities are linked

¹⁷ This refers to the US call for other states to pay NATO defense burden that are considered to be fair by the US Administration itself. Indeed, Trump has repeatedly pointed out the existence of many European countries that paid less than what they were expected to do: according to Trump they were basically free riders.

to a strategic leadership overseas that foresees a generous approach only if other strategic partners share responsibility.

The US has decided to give new vitality to alliances with other countries and international partners by asking them to take more responsibilities at the global level, primarily through the broadening of military forces (Trump; 2017; 28). Notwithstanding this, the 2017 NSS promises to give diplomatic and economic support only to those international organizations that will follow the US guidelines: tensions are escalating between the US and the United Nations because of this lack of compatibility of interests. All this embraces one of the most critical aspects of the “America First” strategy. It does not refer to a kind of isolationism but rather to America’s overseas role that must be protected from external actors: “an America that is safe, prosperous, and free at home is an America with the strength, confidence, and will to lead abroad” (Cordesman A. H.; 2017; 1)¹⁸. Being the biggest role-model country globally is not enough if there is no real commitment to creating enduring advantages for the American people.

The United States has given proof of a change in paradigm that will negatively influence future and present diplomatic relations with others. By this token, it is not very clear the purpose of a confrontational Strategy that urges for greater cooperation and, at the same time, tries to gain advantages over others (Guillot; 2018).

Diplomacy still plays a catalytic role in Trump’s NSS. However, the competitive and protectionist nature of the NSS-17 influences the US diplomatic sphere of action. This decision was anticipated in the Strategy itself when Trump urged to “upgrade [...] diplomatic capabilities to compete in the current environment and embrace a competitive mindset”. (Trump; 2017; 33). Nonetheless, it is Trump’s competitiveness itself that makes the US appear as a Hard Power promoter. Suffice to think of the promotion of American values: the narrow definition of principles, rights, and other forms of values is a real inclination towards egoism. In other words, in the NSS-17, there is no trace of altruism when it comes to promoting universal values or supporting the world citizens' rights (Guillot; 2018). Such a re-definition of values inevitably puts America at the center of the project and, most importantly, re-defines the concept of cooperation as a zero-sum game.

Diplomatic relations are therefore undermined by the American way of advancing its interests over universal values. The Strategy has a realistic approach, detached from idealism, where the US gets its desired results only if adept at exploiting others (Guillot; 2018). The biggest issue with Trump’s NSS lies in that national interests are part of the zero-sum game. In this sense, cooperating with others cannot benefit all sides: win-win solutions do not exist (Nobile; 2018). Conversely, the

¹⁸ Taken from: Trump D. (2017). National Security Strategy of the United States of America.

realist strategy adopted by Trump is based on a cost-benefit evaluation made on a domestic scale. In short, all US diplomatic relations work to make America gain advantages at others' expense, thus protecting American values and maintaining the superpower role globally.

Thus, the NSS-17 is not compatible with Smart Power's notion since it has adopted an approach oriented towards Hard Power. Minimizing the importance of win-win solutions that may derive from international relations and insisting on competition, means adopting a self-defeating strategy. According to Trump, win-win relations do not reflect the modern context of international relations where countries advance interdependence (Havertz, 2019). As Nye (2013) pointed out, intelligent strategies look at cooperation as a positive-sum game where everyone can get absolute benefits (Nye; 2013; 13).

2.4.6. Paradoxes and criticisms

Problems arose after the US Government published Trump's National Security Strategy in 2017. The Document is easily understandable, but the complexity lies in its contradictory nature. It tries to combine two approaches that systematically oppose one another: on the one hand, the US nationalism summed up in the "American First" slogan; on the other hand, the internationalist view, which has been a permanent feature of US politics (Ettinger; 2018). The NSS-17 is evidence of a struggle between preserving the status quo and advancing Trump's worldview. Although contradictory, both visions coexist. Indeed, the Document does not only reflect the President's vision. The double personality issue of the Strategy is justified by the participatory influence of US foreign policy establishments¹⁹ in the drafting process of the NSS-17 (Ettinger; 2018). However, in many NSS-17 passages, Trump seems to go more in the direction of transformative diplomacy, which interrupts the continuity with the past: his Principled Realism does away with ideology. Such a paradox is also evidenced by Trump's words on NATO, accusing it of being "*obsolete and disproportionately too expensive (and unfair) for the US*"²⁰. The statement has been immediately contradicted by the N.D.S. saying that "mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are critical to our strategy, providing a durable, asymmetric strategic advantage that no competitor or rival can

¹⁹ the White House and other departments participated in drafting the 2007 National Security Strategy, such as the Departments of Defense, State, Homeland Security, Energy, Treasury, Commerce, Health, other agencies, and committees.

²⁰Donald J. Trump, 'Twitter post 27 March 2016', @realDonaldTrump [https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/714095595888238592] .

match.” (Mattis J.; 2018; 8). The problem-solving to this paradox has been argued by the British scholar Patrick Porter (2018). According to him, the development of a foreign policy establishment (the so-called “Blob”) that has been set after WWII by the internationalist elite “wants the United States to remain engaged in upholding world order” (Porter P.; 2018; 15). Accordingly, for all US Presidents, including Trump, it has been challenging to modify the core aspects of the US grand strategy that inevitably leads to long-term coherence.

Trump’s diplomacy is therefore centered on the realist vision of American foreign policy. Nonetheless, the paradox of his principled realism lies in the perception that the United States is “guided by (its) values and disciplined by (its) interests” (Trump; 2017; 55). At the very end of the Document, such a statement demonstrates the impossibility to converge Trumpism with the status quo (Ettinger; 2018). Thus, Trump does not seem to clearly outline if his approach is more oriented towards idealism or realism. This is symptomatic of the lack of effective diplomatic communication in the NSS-17. Nonetheless, the hybrid essence of the Strategy may suggest the adoption of different approaches depending on the changing situations. Although not intentional, it might be evidence of a smart power approach.

Not only paradox, but the 2017 NSS is subject to a barrage of criticisms. The main reason the Strategy has some problems of consistency is that although the Document is based on the idea of internationalism, it fails to show coordination and consistency when dealing with strategic action. In other words, the lack of a strategic framework does not guarantee consistent results. The 2017 NSS misses a kind of strategic balance: the Document outlines goals, ambitions, and priorities without clearly deciding on a plan of action to translate such conditions into facts that will shape the global scenario. Consequently, there are several doubts about the strategic nature of the NSS: there is no connection between the means, the ways, and the ends because the Document does not provide specific guidelines but functions as a framework for policy.

The same lack of credibility stems from how President Trump behaves and intervenes in global issues, such as the decision to withdraw all US troops from Syria in December 2018 (Landler M., Cooper H. and Schmitt E.; 2018). It is “Trump’s impulsivity (that) raises the question of whether this administration could implement any strategy at all” (Lissner R. F.; 2017).

2.5. Bush Administration and his strategies in the 2002 USNSS

2.5.1. Historical background of the NSS-2002

History outlines how events strongly influence politics and political leaders' vision, especially when dealing with a National Security Strategy. The 9/11 terrorist attack has dramatically influenced the strategic approach of the Bush Administration, helping the transition towards a sort of “aggressive” Wilsonism. In short, these events have changed the American approach in international affairs since the Country could not benefit any more from the substantial peace that ensured stability to the Country until that moment.

However, rather than the reaction to the 2001 terrorist attack on the Twin Towers, the turning point in the recent US politics dates back when Americans finally got aware of representing the political, economic, and military superpower in the world in the aftermath of the Cold War and other military events²¹. The 2002 NSS reflects a vision based on the transforming efficiency of the American power that people like Dick Cheney²², Paul Wolfowitz²³, Donald Rumsfeld²⁴, and Condoleezza Rice²⁵ have developed throughout their political careers, and that has become a matter of their intellectual and political experience (Romero F.; 2002). They have interpreted the Cold War as a successful event because of the American determination and military power to defeat the Communist threat. Their starting point was the Triad “democracy-freedom-trade”: it was the historical result of the American use of power that should not be interpreted as Hobbesian pessimism, but rather as a way to achieve international integration, liberalization, democratization, and peace (Romero F.; 2002).

On the 2nd of August 1990, with a speech in the State of Colorado, George W. Bush Sr. set the targets of a project called the “New World Order” that was further developed by another document patronized by the Undersecretary of the US Defense Paul Wolfowitz called “Defence Planning Guidance”. These documents aimed to promote Western values, create a “global security” system among the most industrialized countries globally, and offer a bigger room for maneuver to NATO when it comes to security issues (Migaldi R.; 2007; 7). Hence, NATO will reflect a renewed strategy: *responsive* to emergencies and *expansive* and *projective* in nature. The creation of the 2002 NSS will also be influenced by a third document called “Quadrennial Defense Review

²¹ Military events such as the Wars in the Gulf (1991), in the Balkans (1991-1999), in Afghanistan and Iraq.

²² Dick Cheney was nominated US Vice-president by G. W. Bush.

²³ Paul Wolfowitz was nominated deputy secretary of defense from 2001 until 2005. He then became president of the World Bank until 2007.

²⁴ Donald Rumsfeld was nominated US Secretary of Defense under G. W. Bush Presidency (from 2001 until 2006).

²⁵ Condoleezza Rice is an US politician and diplomatic. Under G. W. Bush Presidency, she was nominated US Secretary of State.

Report”, which will introduce some aspects and targets that will be broadened only after creating the National Security Strategy United States of America. The Bush Doctrine will lay its foundations on the promotion of a “preventive world strategy” against the so-called “Rogue States”, but it will also be active on the military front in order to discourage and disarm potential competitors (Bush; 2002). The 2002 NSS tries to oppose a form of terrorism that knows no limits: it cannot be contained but eradicated. It results from a strong radicalism that has expanded because of a lack of democracy, civil societies, and rights to people, which has materialized itself into authoritarian regimes.

There is a clear geopolitical strategy behind the fight against terrorism. Paul Wolfowitz’s suggestion to build the “first Arab democracy” is a clear sign of the neoconservative aspiration: starting a process of democratization in Iraq in order to enter like a Trojan horse the internal struggle of the Islamic world between secularization and fundamentalism and trying to push for a historic change that will reshape the Middle East (Mousavian; 2014; 241).

Such an NSS tries to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century through a legitimization of war as means to solve international conflicts. The US will also claim the right to interpret western values as the only valid values that must be exported in countries that threaten global security. Such universality of American values is pushed by both Western democracy and international capitalism. In short, the doctrine of Bush reflects concepts like the “(military) exportation of democracy” and “preventive war” that have been cornerstones of the previous Administrations. What changes with the 2002 NSS is introducing a “war of ideas” against global terrorism. The most significant limitation of such a Strategy is that it largely depends on the extent to which other countries, mainly Arab and Islamic societies, welcome the deployment of US armed forces as something positive for their foreign policy.

2.5.2. Main features of the 2002 NSS

The 2002 NSS is a complex and ambitious document whose aim is to outline a visionary *modus operandi* of the US but with a kind of flexibility that allows it to be considered more than a mere manifestation of aggressive unilateralism. The Document takes inspiration from the Bush Doctrine and is divided into multiple plans of action that offer several interpretation levels to the reader. The 2002 NSS can be described as a universalistic revival of the Wilsonian exigency to promote and restore peace globally and spread Western democracy and freedoms to other countries (Nye; 2019). Strongly influenced by the big shock of 9/11, Bush Administration reiterated the choice of a *deep American engagement* which would somehow justify the emergency in fighting a global war on

terror (Natalizia; 2017). Accordingly, the 2002 NSS runs counter the international law obligation stopping countries from acting preemptively in cases of imminent threat: according to Bush, this would make the US and other countries easy targets for terrorist attacks (Bush; 2002; 15). Indeed, Bush talks about adaptation to the context, which means showing readiness to understand the objectives of US adversaries and responding with preventive tactics:

“Rogue states and terrorists do not seek to attack us using conventional means. They know such attacks would fail. Instead, they rely on acts of terror and, potentially, the use of weapons of mass destruction. [...] The United States has long maintained the option of preemptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security. The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction” (Bush; 2002; 15).

Preventive decisions are necessary to tackle or, at least, to deter adversaries from threatening US order. Nonetheless, preemption does not automatically mean aggression. By this token, the 2002 NSS has an interventionist character that did not make American military strategies very popular: suffice to think of the decision to launch a war against Iraq in 2003. American credibility diminished, and US soft power was inevitably affected (Havertz; 2019).

Such a interventionist approach is also reflected in the 2006 Bush NSS but, contrarily to the 2002 NSS, it broadened the US perception of imminent threats, this time not limiting them to mere terrorist attacks. Indeed, the Document makes a list of authoritarian regimes which have been accused of militarily sustaining Al-Qaeda through the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). These countries were listed in the so-called *axis of evil*²⁶ and represented the primary source of instability for the US and the countries of origin (Bush; 2006; 3-4).

Consequently, the Document shows to be based on a principle of multilateralism. It repeatedly stresses the usefulness of international cooperation and institutions (like the UN, NATO, and WTO) as far as they work to spread and effectively establish US principles. Although this approach might appear to be aligned with Trump’s idea of multilateralism, the 2002 NSS adopts a broader interpretation of American values: they are identified in principles of democracy, human rights, and liberalism. Indeed, Bush attributed a pivotal role to democracy, representing the strongest pillar of the liberal order (Natalizia; 2017). Notwithstanding this, Bush’s foreign policy did not dwell exclusively on diplomatic tools but made use of economic and military instruments as well (Natalizia; 2018). Indeed, during a meeting hosted by the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington D.C., Bush said:

²⁶ Among the countries listed in the Axis we find the North Korea, Iraq, Cuba, Syria and other associated countries like Belarus, Burma and Zimbabwe.

“In World War II we fought to make the world safer, then worked to rebuild it. As we wage war today to keep the world safe from terror, we must also work to make the world a better place for all its citizens”²⁷ (Bush; 2002; 21).

These words resonate with a desire to exporting democracy in places where there was no trace of respect for human rights. As it emerges from the 2002 NSS, the fundamental feature of the Bush Doctrine is the promotion of bilateral and multilateral relations which respect democracy and protect freedom: protecting human dignity is imperative for all countries, and, where impossible, pressure needs to be brought to bear on governments (Bush, 2002; 3-4). Moreover, Bush manifested his intention to address the poverty issues and urged other international actors to act collectively in that direction (Bush; 2002; 21-22-23). Nonetheless, the 2002 NSS formulated a less rigorous approach when cooperating with other countries. In other words, allies play a vital role in achieving American desired results, but the US opted for the formation of a *coalition of the willing* where alliances directly depend on the mission itself (Greenstein; 2003) (Bush; 2002; 11).

In a multilateral world made of alliances and cooperation amongst states, all partners must be able to take their responsibilities and show active support when needed. Terrorism is America’s biggest adversary, and all other great powers feel being threatened by it. Precisely for that reason, “Nations that enjoy freedom must actively fight terror. Nations that depend on international stability must help prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction” (Bush; 2002, preface). Terrorism cannot be eradicated alone. Hence, Bush firmly believes that a safer world is only possible through alliances and multilateral institutions that amplify single nations’ commitments towards a better world. However, the President reminds his allies that “[...] international obligations are to be taken seriously” (Bush, 2002; preface).

Back in 2002, the US could benefit from the undisputed global superpower status, both economically and militarily. Accordingly, multilateralism and cooperation did not promote a conflict of interests between America and other partners. Thus, competition is not as much developed as in Trump’s NSS. Suffice to think of how China is portrayed in the 2002 Strategy: it was in the midst of an internal transition and was not even close to the US power. Indeed, China could not be treated as a direct economic competitor, but rather as a strategic partner due to its significant democratic transition that would have helped the US promoting a “stable, peaceful, and prosperous Asia-Pacific region” (Bush; 2002; 27).

Thus, multilateralism is at the core of the NSS and is interpreted as synonymous with power and influence. This Strategy aims to make the world “not just safer but better” (Bush; 2002; 1), thanks

²⁷ President Bush Washington, D.C. (Inter-American Development Bank) March 14, 2002

to the intrinsic power of Western values and American interests. America must be open to all countries to achieve goals like “political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity” (Bush; 2002; 1). Therefore, there is a rejection of isolationism and economic protectionism, which, opposite to Trump, pushes America towards promoting universal values (Nye, 2019). However, George W. Bush’s vision of transformative diplomacy encompassed a sort of “armed” exportation of democracy that could only succeed with changeable alliances depending on the military missions (Nobile; 2018).

2.6. 2017 and 2002 USNSS: converging or diverging ideas?

What primarily connects the new NSS with previous Strategies is a framework that sets reasonable goals but lacks clear and specific plans, timeframes for action, or indications of costs and resources. In most cases, the NSSs have proved a lack of a solid strategy able to transform ideas into achievements. To quote Anthony H. Cordesman²⁸, “a meaningful National Security Strategy must be far more specific and give a far clearer lead to the executive branch and the military, the Congress, the American people and our allies. Having the right goals and good intentions is meaningless unless they produce results” (Cordesman; 2017; 7). Conversely, there are some different priorities between the 2017 NSS and the previous ones. This is due to the changing nature of external threats that undermine US stability and challenge American power.

2.6.1. Comparing Diplomacy: Bush, Obama and Trump

The shared priority for US presidents has constantly been advancing American interests. What differentiates their diplomacy is the selection of means to achieve desired results. Trump’s NSS-17 is a deviation from what was pursued by previous US Administrations. Contrarily from Bush and Obama, Trump does not share the cyclical perspective of history that moves towards universal liberalism (Lindberg; 2018). Smart power is probably the most distinguishing feature of Obama’s Administration. The desire to achieve goals through cooperation and attraction stems from Hillary Clinton’s²⁹ commitment to developing a sort of interdependence between America and its partners (Havertz; 2019). Alliances over competition, diplomacy over military engagement, attraction over

²⁸He is the Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at Centre for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS).

²⁹ Hillary Clinton was the US Secretary of State under Obama’s presidency. She started promoting the smart power approach in 2009 in a hearing of the US Senate

coercion, soft power over hard power: the US is meant to be the example to be followed by others (Merrill and Paterson; 2009; 572). Nonetheless, whenever necessary, the US must always be ready to make use of its military means: to simply put it, in the case of a last resort where soft power cannot be adopted, the Country must fall back on its hard power resources (Feffer; 2012). This is the representation of contextual intelligence where situations define which power is best to be adopted.

First with Hillary Clinton and then with John Kerry³⁰, diplomacy has been the gravity point of Obama's Administration. Contrarily from Trump and his principled realism, Obama showed flexibility when choosing between realism, pragmatism, or idealism. People attributed him the title of "progressive pragmatist" (Indyk et al.; 2012).

Obama's election marked a deviation from the Bush Doctrine, who over-exposed American power. Indeed, Bush insisted on advancing the diplomatic, economic, ideological, and military strength of the US, thus overstretching America's politics (Natalizia; 2017). Conversely, Obama's NSS-10 wanted to move away from the perception of a pervasive and arrogant America which, under President Bush, ended up delegitimizing the country's soft power (Natalizia; 2017). The same issue arose with Trump and his "America First" policy which undermined the image of the US both domestically and externally.

The priority of Obama's Strategy was diminishing the interventionist approach encouraged by George W. Bush and other neo-conservatives. He desired to restore American soft power without abandoning military solutions to fight terrorist organizations (Havertz; 2019). Moreover, Obama's priority was giving precedence to domestic policy:

"Our approach begins with a commitment to build a stronger foundation for American leadership, because what takes place within our borders will determine our strength and influence beyond them. This truth is only heightened in a world of greater interconnection—a world in which our prosperity is inextricably linked to global prosperity [...]." (Obama; 2010; 2)

As previously mentioned, advancing American interests is a standard procedure in all NSSs. However, contrary to Trump, Obama's Strategy is aware of the significance of mutual interdependence between countries: interconnections and diplomatic relations contribute to restoring American prosperity and, more generally, world prosperity.

³⁰ He became Secretary of the States after H. Clinton. His biggest diplomatic achievement was putting together great superpowers to negotiate the Iran Nuclear Deal.

Retrenchment and *Selective Engagement* would be the second priority of the NSS-10: Obama's diplomatic tactic rests on the idea that the US should reduce its military commitments (whenever possible) and maintain only those engagements considered indispensable for national security (Natalizia; 2017). Obama's approach could overlap Trump's decision to avoid whichever agreement/relationship/commitment that does not go in the direction of American interests. Nonetheless, Trump's purpose lies in a zero-sum game vision, while Obama welcomes win-win solutions for all. Hence the difference between a harder and a softer power approach. Moreover, Trump goes against some of the priorities that have characterized Obama's political agenda. This is the case of climate change, once considered a threat to national security by Obama and now declassified to second-class priority. Trump Doctrine does not have room for environmental issues. Another changing aspect brought by the 2017 NSS is the determination to follow "competition" instead of "cooperation", a vision that discredits what pursued by Obama in his 2015 NSS that foresaw "a rules-based international order advanced by US leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges" (Obama; 2015; p. 2). The NSS-10's soft power stands out from Obama's stance towards America's rival powers. The diplomatic decision to transform regional competitors³¹ into strategic partners was interrupted by Trump: according to Obama, the biggest enemy is terrorism, thus non-state actors like al Qaeda and the Islamic State (Obama; 2010). While Obama emphasizes multilateral cooperation and the so-called *democratic peace*, Trump restrains himself from multilateralism and reinforces geopolitical competition (Nobile; 2018).

2.6.2. Comparing the 2002 NSS with the 2017 NSS

The analysis of the 2017 NSS is also interesting to compare with the Bush Doctrine and, more specifically, with the 2002 National Security Strategy.

"Today, the United States enjoys a position of unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence. In keeping with our heritage and principles, we do not use our strength to press for unilateral advantage. [...] We will defend the peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants. We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers. We will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent." (Bush; 2002; preface)

³¹ The NSS-10 refers to strategic competitors like Moscow, Beijing, Teheran, Havana.

This extract from the Preface of the 2002 NSS can be the most unmistakable evidence of all virtues and features of the Bush Strategy. The diplomatic dimension of Bush can be summed up in four points:

- First, the 2002 NSS clearly affirms the US as the only superpower globally. Despite being underlined by Trump again in his NSS-17, this concept benefits from two vital aspects: the first advantage is that many great powers are equally focused on the global war on terror: indeed, relationships with Russia and China are nonconflictual and, mainly, oriented towards cooperation; the second advantage for Bush, contrarily to what Trump experienced during his presidency, is the lack of a real competitor since China was still at its initial stage of economic evolution.
- Second, contrary to Trump, Bush does not conceive a zero-sum game in international relations. This is one of the main reasons why in the NSS-2002 great emphasis is put on alliances. Multilateralism is a byproduct of a vision that perceives cooperation as far from unilateral advantages only. The more subtle reason that made Bush initiate a collaborative approach is the implicit objective of military interventions in threatening areas. The pretext of advancing democracy is often used to attract others and make them support America unconditionally: most of the time, the kind of support needed takes a military form, thus reflecting hard power.
- Third, Bush advances the preservation of peace through strength exactly as Trump did. According to Bush, Great Powers are not enemies but a valuable means to fight terrorism. The difference with Trump's National Security Strategy lies in refusing to advance alliances for the sole benefits of American interests. As Tod Lindberg (2018) pointed out, with Bush, the US is "part of a larger whole, one liberal state among a number of liberal states comprising a liberal international order." (Lindberg; 2018; 17).
- Fourth, peace and democracy are universal values that must be extended everywhere. The spread of these principles stems from the idea that American values are identifiable in broader principles. Conversely, Trump is less prone to promoting universal rights but, unlike Bush, his NSS does not appear to be highly interventionist in nature. However, both strategies make use of Hard power means and purposes (Nye; 2019).

Trump refers explicitly to China and Russia as the main competitors in the long and short term of the US. However, the advancement of technology and the importance gained by the cybersecurity dimension have pushed President Trump to rethink the previous administrations' policies. In short, we can say that the development of a new and innovative global context has created new challenges and new competitors that want to expand their influences at the expense of the US: hence the need to modernize the Security Strategy to defend America and Americans. Although the 2002 NSS and the 2017 NSS share the same commitment to the fight against terrorism, there are some points of discrepancies. As we can see with the Bush Doctrine in the 2002 NSS, even Trump makes a shift from an approach more centered on strategic patience towards a Realpolitik and strong-arm tactics. However, Trump Doctrine leaves just a little room for democracy and human rights issues as it emerges from the 2017 NSS: the term "Human rights" only appears once. This goes against the vision of the 2002 NSS where Bush made the promotion of democracy and American values the cornerstones of his doctrine and an absolute priority in order to shape the external environment in favor of the US. For such a reason, Trump does not see the need to impose American values externally. Conversely, he says, "We will pursue this beautiful vision—a world of strong, sovereign, and independent nations, each with its own cultures and dreams, thriving side-by-side in prosperity, freedom, and peace—throughout the upcoming year." (Trump; 2017; II). This emphasizes Trump's priority to protect American sovereignty and go for competition at the expense of cooperation, as demonstrated by the rising tensions with international organizations such as WTO, UN, and NATO.

Soft power highly depends on which kind of foreign policy a country wants to promote. According to Joseph Nye, "the attractiveness of the United States also depends very much upon the values we express through the substance and style of our foreign policy" (Nye; 2004; 60). In other words, foreign policy could be easily associated with one country's inclusiveness of its national interests. Only when broadly defined, national interests can be a tool that increases soft power. Conversely, narrowly structured interests aim at imposing a one-way vision of the world without considering potential diverging perspectives from other countries. The former approach clearly describes Trump's decision to put "America First" by conceiving international relations as a zero-sum game: thus, American interests could never be broadly inclusive and, consequently, cannot develop soft power.

Nye also offers a scheme that represents today's world politics, a three-level chess game under a Liberal perspective. On the top, the US plays the hegemony role under the military dimension; in the middle, we find the multipolar floor of economic power; lastly, there is the level of transnational

relations where soft power must be produced (Nye; 2004; 136-137). The unilateralist approach does not help legitimate one country's power. Diplomacy lays its foundations on multilateral relations and consensus. Trump's Strategy is not isolationist in nature. However, cooperating with other states follows a concept of reciprocity that indirectly threatens partners: those countries that do not support American interests will lose their status as "privileged partners". This is clear proof that the NSS-17 is not compatible with Smart Power's notion since it has adopted an approach oriented towards Hard Power. It is a Strategy with no morality, where diplomacy takes the form of competition. Indeed, competitive diplomacy brings Trump towards an aggressive approach with any actor not willing to share American interests. This vision runs counter the Liberalist approach that Nye finds vital for creating soft power.

More explicitly, the "realist" aspect of the Strategy clearly undermines America's diplomacy. Trump only cares about US interests and power and intends to pursue peace with the use of force. Yet, unlike the NSS-02, Trump does not intend to use military force at all costs: according to the NSS-17, American progress is the fruit of competition. Thus, the US must maintain its role as a global superpower to benefit from the competitive advantage over other actors. However, America will be "great again" only if its domestic interests will be protected and prioritized. This decision implies Trump's readiness to use hard power resources to gain advantages for his countries at the expense of other actors.

Although Bush's decision to fight a global war on terror evokes hard power, Trump does not seem to make any effort to evolve American diplomacy towards a smarter power. Indeed, there is no precise balance between hard and soft resources merely because Trump focuses more on hard power. The rejection of the Wilsonian approach, the re-formulation of multilateral approaches with reciprocity, the competitive diplomacy, and the principled realism do not make the NSS-17 follow a liberalist approach. Although "there is no contradiction between realism and soft power", Trump does not seem to use resources to boost the US power of attraction (Nye; 2011; 82).

3. The Diplomatic dimension of the European Union: the case of the 2016 EUGS

3.1. Historical background EUGS 2016

As time passes, external events may condition the course of history. Unless we react, we passively accept the flow of things. In times of crisis, especially, political leaders are called to choose whether to accept the chaos or restore security and order. In 2016, the European Union was experiencing one of the darkest moments since its creation. Someone called it the “*annus horribilis*” (Leonard; 2017), while others have called out a warning that “our house is on fire” (Tocci; 2017b; 489)³². Such a metaphor helps people better understand the moment of existential crisis the Union was living, both domestically and with its neighbors.

Indeed, the *house was on fire* because of the eurozone crisis in Southern EU countries that were still affected by the far-reaching consequences of the 2008 financial crisis; it was on fire because of the unregulated flows of migrants reaching EU countries³³; it was on fire because of conflicts that destabilized the order in the Middle East³⁴; it was on fire because of the ISIS and new terrorist attacks in Europe³⁵; it was on fire because of Russian influence in the Balkans³⁶; it was on fire because Trump was elected the U.S President³⁷; it was on fire because of the erosion of European values and the growing sentiment of Populism (Tocci; 2017a)³⁸. The UK’s referendum added fuel to the fire and symbolized the ever-increasing power of Euro-skeptic populists at the expense of pro-European activists (Tocci; 2017a). The risk that the Brexit vote would have triggered a domino effect among the EU Member States was real: the European project born more than 60 years ago could miserably fall apart.

The precarious stability of the European project was a clear symptom of the urgent need to reform concepts like *unity*, *cooperation*, and *resilience*. By this token, all Member States agreed that “a strategic rethinking had become imperative” (Tocci, 2015; 120). To simply put it, the EU turned out to be a fragile security system that lacked consistency, both internally and externally. When policymakers realized that the previous European Strategy “is outdated, does not connect threats,

³² This citation belongs to a French official and has been reported by Nathalie Tocci in one of her articles after a private conversation with him.

³³ Especially in countries like Greece and Italy.

³⁴ Wars in Libya, Yemen, and Syria.

³⁵ Terrorist attacks in Madrid, Brussels, Nice, and Berlin.

³⁶ Due to the annexation of Crimea and its direct consequences in Ukraine.

³⁷ During his electoral campaign Trump did not express enthusiasm in collaborating with Europe, because considered to be an egoistic partner.

³⁸ Orban’s Hungary is the clearest example of Populism and violation of basic fundamental rights enshrined in the Treaties of the European Union.

ends, and means and is too vague on common interests and the EU's ambitions", a change was necessary (Drent and Landman; 2012; 1).

New policies were introduced between 2003 and 2016 in foreign policy, defense and security. The revolutionary change could be attributed to the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), but not all changes went in the direction of progress. Nonetheless, the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 strengthened the dimension of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and, more generally, the securitization of the Union. The Treaty adopted new instruments of mutual assistance in case of emergencies, such as the solidarity clause³⁹ and the extension of the scope of Petersburg⁴⁰ tasks (Žutlć and Čehulić Vukadinović; 2017) (Treaty of Lisbon; 2007; Art. 42). Accordingly, Article 21 of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU) clearly points out the objective "to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security" (Treaty of Lisbon; 2007; Art. 21). Moreover, the Lisbon Treaty formally contributed to the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS)⁴¹ and, most importantly, invested the figure of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) with the role of Vice-President of the European Commission (VP) (Tocci; 2017a).

In the moment of absolute political turmoil, the former HRVP Federica Mogherini published the 2016 European Union Global Strategy (EUGS). It is the result of public discussions that started in the aftermath of the 2004 terrorist attack in Madrid. Such a Strategy was meant to represent not just a beacon of isolated hope but also a genuine contribution to restoring the sentiment of unity and interdependence that distinguished the true essence of the Union since its foundation (Tocci; 2017a).

It was by no means a coincidence that the European Council welcomed the 2016 EUGS a few days after the Brexit referendum. The timing of the Document's release is significant and is an apparent attempt to show the EU's ability to thrive in crisis and keep fighting for political unity. Although scholars differ interpretations on the strategic content of the Document, there is no question that the

³⁹ This instrument can be activated in support of those Member States that are victims of terrorist attacks, or natural or man-made disaster. It calls other Members for a joint-action to support the defense of the Union.

⁴⁰ These tasks include, and I quote the Treaty of Lisbon, "joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making and post-conflict stabilisation. All these tasks may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories" (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007; art. 42).

⁴¹ The Service was launched on 1st January 2011.

EUGS serves as a diplomatic response to the deteriorated European environment and, more specifically, to the Brexit vote (EEAS; 2019) (Grevi; 2016) (Tocci; 2017a).

3.2. The 2016 EUGS and its main features

3.2.1. Strategic importance of communicative style

The penholder and special advisor of the then High Representative Vice President Federica Mogherini was the Italian scholar Nathalie Tocci. She has been of vital importance in the formulation process of the Document: the aim was to draft a Strategy that could react to the events of crisis the European Union was facing by sending a message of political unity with a logic of integrating policy. In other terms, the way the Document has been formulated reflects an organic convergence in the political will of EU Member States and EU institutions, whose aim is anticipating moments of crisis by shaping European strategies and the European strategic culture. As the Title suggests, the EUGS represents a “Shared Vision, Common Action” (Mogherini; 2016).

The historical moment in which Mogherini’s team drafted the Strategy influences the Document's priorities, goals, intentions, and narrative. The priorities of the EU did not reflect an optimistic attitude towards its domestic and foreign policies anymore. The destabilization of the European order became perceptible by the opening words of the EUGS: “We need a stronger Europe. This is what our citizens deserve, this is what the wider world expects. We live in times of existential crisis, within and beyond the European Union. Our Union is under threat. Our European project, which has brought unprecedented peace, prosperity and democracy, is being questioned.” (Mogherini; 2016; 1). Supposedly, the very fact of admitting that the EU is facing an unprecedented crisis marks a turning point in the European project.

Federica Mogherini’s urgent appeal to address these “times of existential crisis” (Mogherini; 2017; 7) comes out as a single voice that incorporates the determination of all 28 EU Member States⁴². The strategic importance of the EUGS communicative style is also reflected in the decision to call the Strategy “Global”. With this term, Mogherini intended to deliver a clear message: a full engagement between the Member States and EU’s competencies. The Strategy could not limit its range of actions to diplomacy and defense but needed to encompass other policy instruments in the

⁴² At the moment of the formulation of the 2016 EUGS the United Kingdom was still a European Member Country.

field of trade, migration, research, and education (Novotná; 2017). Moreover, the word “global” also refers to the geographical ambition of the Document: this would represent an apparent attempt by the EU to restore its influence and attractiveness domestically and, consequently, externally (Novotná; 2017). Notwithstanding the geographical impact, the EUGS’s choice of its Title may simply suggest the unexpected strategic convergence reached among the EU Member States, something that could not be taken for granted when drafting the Strategy (Tocci; 2017b). Nonetheless, the strategy’s primary intention was to bring back to light the genuine *raison d’être* of the European Project to reinvigorate the EU’s credibility and power (Coelmont; 2016).

3.2.2. Threats

Differently from customary strategy documents, the 2016 EUGS unusually starts with a soft approach. In the Foreword by Federica Mogherini, the Document does not clearly express the threats the Union must face; contrarily, it generally describes a complex world that positively and negatively affects the European order (Mogherini; 2017; 3-5). The message that stands out from the introductory words of the Document is a sort of “European first” approach: the political turmoil within and without the EU should give new momentum to strengthen first and foremost EU domestic policy (Grevi; 2016). However, the EUGS’s approach consists of aligning domestic policies with the international context to create a strategic foreign policy. The rationale of the Strategy is inherent in the domestic combination of ends and means, which are therefore exported globally (Grevi; 2016).

The EUGS briefly lists what are the security threats around the Union exclusively in the short paragraph dedicated to the “Executive Summary” (Mogherini; 2017; 7). EU’s most significant concerns are escalating tensions in the East and Asia, the violent advance of the Islamic State in North Africa and the Middle East, poverty in African countries, and climate change (Mogherini; 2016; 7). At the very end of the paragraph, the Strategy encourages all involved actors to leverage the EU founding values that have long contributed to the singular growth of Member States and to “stand united in building a stronger Union, playing its collective role in the world.” (Mogherini, 2016; 7).

3.2.3. Pillars and Priorities

The 2016 EUGS is a 60-page document that can be divided into four main pillars:

- The first one focuses on putting European Citizens' interests first (Mogherini; 2016; 13);
- The second pillar defines what will be the EU principles when promoting its External Action (Mogherini; 2016; 16);
- The third pillar enlarges the vision of the EU by looking at the priorities outside the Union (Mogherini; 2017; 18);
- The fourth and last pillar relies on the necessity to transform visions into actions (Mogherini; 2016; 44).

The strategic choice to open the first pillar by introducing EU's domestic affairs is a symptom of the active engagement in bringing stability back within the Union. The domestic political and economic turmoil was an evident sign that the European project was losing attractiveness. The founding values of the EU, its prosperity, and a rules-based global order needed to be restored (Mogherini; 2016; 13-16). Nonetheless, the Strategy emphasizes the critical role of the EU in the promotion of democracy, peace, security, and prosperity elsewhere in the world (Mogherini; 2016; 13). Thus, the EU mantra is easily identifiable in the alignment between EU values and interests: they are the byproduct of Member States' converging strategies (Mogherini; 2016; 13). However, the EUGS also expects internal actors to take their responsibilities to safeguard domestic prosperity, security, and cooperation (Grevi; 2016).

Mainly circumscribed to EU's External Action, the priorities of the EUGS are probably the most exciting aspect of the Strategy. The third pillar describes them:

- the first and foremost priority of the EUGS is the securitization of the EU. According to Federica Mogherini (2016), the turbulent historical moment the European Union was facing did not depend exclusively on problems within the EU. Yet, in spite of this, the Union must extricate itself from this moment of a deep depression by preferentially working on domestic dynamics. Indeed, as the Document suggests, "The EU Global Strategy starts at home" (Mogherini; 2016; 18). The very idea that the European Project could lose credibility and, in the worst-case scenario, the unity among its Member States would nullify decades-long efforts to promote shared values. Accordingly, the EUGS pays close attention to threats that jeopardize the internal stability of the EU, such as "terrorism, hybrid threats, economic volatility, climate change, and energy insecurity" (Mogherini; 2016; 9).
- The second priority relies on the concept of building "State and Societal Resilience to our East and South" (Mogherini; 2016; 23). The fragile and insecure context surrounding the EU justifies pre-emptive tactics to strengthen weaker states. However, resilience is an all-encompassing concept that cannot limit itself to relations between governments: it also

embraces “all individuals and the whole society” (Mogherini; 2016; 24). Building a resilient society means avoiding future state failures and establishing long-term diplomatic relations for future political and economic agreements (ŽutIć and Čehulić Vukadinović; 2017).

- The EU strives to ensure an integrated and principled approach to pursuing peace-keeping goals in conflicting areas that jeopardize European values (Mogherini; 2016; 28). In other words, past experiences have enabled the EU to undertake *ad hoc* measures depending on the place of action (ŽutIć and Čehulić Vukadinović; 2017). Moreover, the EUGS emphasizes the significance of multi-dimensional operations and strategic partnerships to build sustainable peace (Mogherini; 2016; 10, 28-32).
- The fourth priority is promoting more integrated “cooperative regional orders”, which undoubtedly refers to the EU’s intention to make multilateral and bi-lateral relations its core strength (Mogherini, 2016; 32). The range of action of the EU includes the Middle East and Africa, Asia, the Arctic, and the Mediterranean (ŽutIć and Čehulić Vukadinović; 2017). However, the two sections about “A Peaceful and Prosperous Mediterranean, the Middle East and Africa” and “A Cooperative Arctic” are symptomatic of the EUGS’s double personality: on the one hand, we see the idealistic goal in Africa; on the other hand, there is a more realistic vision with the trans-Atlantic relationship⁴³ (ŽutIć and Čehulić Vukadinović; 2017). Moreover, the Strategy points out that the EU mostly favors “reciprocal inspiration” rather than the desperate “exportation” of its own model (Mogherini; 2016; 32).
- The fifth and last priority of the EUGS takes the name of “Global governance for the 21st century” (Mogherini; 2016; 39). This Title can be translated into a genuine preference of the Union for a “multilateral rules-based order” (Mogherini; 2016; 39): hence the outstanding value of the United Nations. Maintaining such an order does not come only through reaffirmation of the status quo: conversely, the EU intends to reform the system and, more specifically, “the UN, including the Security Council, and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs).” (Mogherini; 2016; 39). The ambitious reforming plan can only be

⁴³ A better trans-Atlantic relationship could be seen as realist if one takes into consideration the moment of the writing of the EUGS: indeed, it preceded the election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States of America. After his election, EU-USA relations were deeply jeopardized by Trump’s political campaign, thus converting the realistic vision of Mogherini into a more idealist aspiration.

achieved through cooperation with external partners⁴⁴ and leading by example (Mogherini; 2016; 40).

3.3. Principled Pragmatism

3.3.1. New Terminology: *Resilience*

The fact that Federica Mogherini repeatedly stresses the need for a “more joined-up” Union concept gives the impression the EUGS puts Resilience on a subordinate level (Mogherini; 2016; 11). Most of Strategy documents use terms like “comprehensive”, “integrated approach”, “cooperation” or “interdependence” (Tardy; 2017): this terminology is not an exception in the EUGS since it is part of the coherence that have distinguished EU’s policies and institutions (Duke; 2011). Nonetheless, many scholars have already analyzed the language used in the EUGS and have detected an unprecedented use of vocabulary (Juncos; 2016) (Wagner and Anholt; 2016). The new terminology that characterizes the EUGS is “resilience” and “principled pragmatism” (Novotná; 2017).

According to the EU Commission, the term *resilience* means “the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, adapt, and quickly recover from stresses and shocks” (European Commission; 2012; 5). To simply put it, it is the ability to overcome difficulties thanks to the incredible power of adaptation: the individual does not stress the need to change the surrounding environment in his/her own likeness, but the emergency context dictates conditions of self-organization and adaptive behavior (de Weijer; 2013; iv, 14). Within the framework of the EUGS, resilience serves as a bridge between the EU’s internal and external security: the emergency moment at the time of the EUGS justifies the inward and outward-looking projection of the notion of resilience.

3.3.2. New Terminology: *Principled Pragmatism*

Although being cited only three times, “principled pragmatism” is the true distinctive character of the European Strategy. The combination of such terms seems to be an oxymoron but proves to be extremely suited to the contextual framework of 2016 EUGS (Mihalache; 2016). The Oxford

⁴⁴ With external partners the EU does not mean only governments but includes also organizations, private actors and civil societies.

dictionary defines *principled* as “having strong beliefs about what is right and wrong”⁴⁵ and *pragmatism* as “thinking about solving problems in a practical and sensible way rather than by having fixed ideas and theories”⁴⁶. Both definitions are conflicting: on the one hand, there is a strong emphasis on the fundamental values that determine actions and decisions to be taken; on the other hand, a more realist and practical approach overrides idealism to pursue more concrete results. The EUGS could seemingly promote a Strategy that lacks clarity if it were not because Mogherini has expressly recognized that the EU “will be guided by clear principles. These stem as much from a realistic assessment of the current strategic environment as from an idealistic aspiration to advance a better world. Principled pragmatism will guide our external action in the years ahead.” (Mogherini, 2016; 8). The Document deliberately combines idealism and realism, thus principles and pragmatism. The unstable global order and the EU’s domestic issues urged to narrow the idealism-reality gap and scale back aspirations more precisely (Grevi; 2016).

Whenever possible, principles will remain in full force and shall be unaffected by the pragmatic interest-based analysis of the surrounding context (Tocci; 2017b). However, the EU should start looking at the world in the way it actually is, a reality dominated by disorder, inequalities, conflicts, poverty, and terrorism. By this token, pragmatism is a sort of lifeline for the EU if it wants to survive in such a toxic environment. Approaching international politics in such a pragmatic way helps the Union advance a foreign policy that would only promote its principles after carefully assessing the surrounding environment. We can assume that pragmatism is pursued on the model of resilience. Many EU policymakers see such a model as the “perfect middle ground between overambitious liberal peace-building and the under-ambitious objective of stability” (Wagner, Wolfgang, and Anholt; 2016; 415). In other words, the EUGS does not expose itself to excessive optimism that would nullify the coherence of the Strategy itself. Indeed, the historical moment during the Document’s creation symbolizes the rupture with the obstinate idealism and, more simply, the absolute power of attraction the EU possessed⁴⁷.

On the other hand, preserving the status quo is not contemplated in the Strategy. Indeed, operations like modernizing the multilateral rules-based order and renewing cooperation with external partners are proof of a EUGS that certainly does not want to revolutionize its stability. Still, neither intends

⁴⁵OxfordLearner’s Dictionaries,<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/principled?q=principled>, consulted on the 22/07/2021

⁴⁶Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/pragmatism?q=pragmatism>, consulted on the 22/07/2021

⁴⁷ Suffice to think of the power of attraction the EU possessed in 2003 when many neighboring countries asked for accession. The EU was probably benefitting from the highest moment of credibility since its creation.

to keep things as they were. As Federica Mogherini stated in the first pages of the Document, “our Union needs a Strategy” (Mogherini; 2016; 3).

Notwithstanding pragmatism, the EU must abide by its principled values and act on its undertaking to support the international rules-based order that shares the same values as the European Union. That is why pragmatism should be principled: to avoid cultural relativism (Tocci, 2017)⁴⁸.

The EUGS, therefore, “act(s) in accordance with universal values, but then follow a pragmatic approach which denies the moral imperatives of those universal categories.” (Juncos; 2017; 2). As Ana Juncos (2017) suggests, universal values cannot be exported *a priori* but only wherever deemed necessary after a careful realist assessment. The European Union had to diverge from the uncompromising utopian vision which saw “Europe imposing its own values on the external world” as if it were a moral imperative (Tusk; 2016). Even before the publication of the EUGS, in the occasion of the 2015 Annual Conference of the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), Federica Mogherini redefined the concept of partnerships as something which “can never be built on one party determining the rules of the game” (Mogherini; 2015). The EUGS also acknowledges that collaboration with other actors cannot overlook the significance of the principle of Unity between all Member States: only when EU countries act collectively, the Union can lay the foundations for promoting partnerships and sharing responsibilities (Mogherini; 2016; 18) (Žutić and Čehulić Vukadinović; 2017).

3.3.3. European Realpolitik

The promotion of principled realism implies a return to Realpolitik (Biscop; 2016). As suggested by Professor John Bew (2016), authentic Realpolitik means reaching ideals in a realistic way (Bew; 2016; 28). Such a definition seems to perfectly reflect EUGS’s message to abandon the so-called liberal utopianism without renouncing to idealism. To avoid misunderstanding of any sort with Machiavellianism⁴⁹, such a Realpolitik must be intended in its original sense: thus, we can find the similarity with the EUGS (Biscop; 2016).

If ideals cannot be pursued does not mean the Strategy loses power. It is just a matter of lowering ambitions because the Union recognizes what are its available resources and accepts the

⁴⁸ Cultural relativism exaggerates the principle of non-interference with other cultures. Indeed, judgments are not accepted and the study of one’s specific culture comes only through understanding the culture on its own terms.

⁴⁹ In this case for Machiavellianism is intended the expression “the end justifies the means”.

surrounding reality (Biscop; 2016). Democracy is a clear example: the EU will keep supporting democratic systems worldwide and will work to ensure long-term resilience to poorer countries. Exporting democracy is not a compulsory activity anymore, especially in realities that are not ready for it. Therefore, the EUGS wants to be coherent with itself, honest with its means, and promoter of a smarter strategy. The internal coherence outlined in the Document gives the EU the sense of credibility that has deteriorated in light of the crises that have revealed the weaknesses of the EU's soft power. Accordingly, the EU prefers maintaining diplomatic relations with its partners without demanding unrealistic requests (Biscop; 2016).

The EUGS diplomatically intervenes in the EU foreign policy. Indeed, principled pragmatism could be the byproduct of the EU's effort to promote a Smart Power approach. A strategic vision should have an ambivalent path towards diplomatic ambitions and military strength: as Federica Mogherini puts it in the EUGS, "soft and hard power go hand in hand" (Mogherini; 2016; 4). If the EU does not live up to its values at home, credibility with external partners will become impossible (Grevi; 2016). Nonetheless, the EU does not abandon the idea of hard power means in situations where it needs to "protect Europe, respond to external crises, and assist in developing our partners' security and defense capacities, carrying out these tasks in cooperation with others" (Mogherini; 2016; 19). It must be pointed out that the EU welcomes security cooperation with international actors⁵⁰ but, where possible, seeks to act independently: this is what Mogherini calls "strategic autonomy" (Mogherini, 2016; 4).

Although many scholars were not wholly convinced of such a principled pragmatism (Danlov; 2017) (Smith; 2016) (Howorth; 2016), many others appreciated the work done by Federica Mogherini in the 2016 EUGS (Biscop; 2016) (Helly; 2016) (Techau; 2016) (Davis Cross; 2016) (Mälksoo; 2016). Indeed, they considered the combination of idealism and realism as a step towards adopting a smart power approach, instrumental in a moment of profound internal crisis. By this token, the EUGS outlines the EU will conduct a case-by-case analysis of any situation in order to choose which form of power to adopt, whether soft or hard (Mihalache; 2016). Thus, the EUGS cannot clearly define where EU values will take precedence over a pragmatism vision.

3.4. Diplomatic dimension of the EUGS

⁵⁰ International actors like the United States of America, but also the United Nations, the NATO, or simply ad hoc coalitions.

3.4.1. Public diplomacy and development diplomacy

With the advancing of the globalization era, the EUGS acknowledges the crucial role of diplomacy in its foreign policy. The formulation of a shared vision among all the Member States is a clear symptom of the EU's incredible resources in its public diplomacy. The EUGS presents itself as a Strategy document whose aim is to deliver a clear message to the whole world. Strategic communication is one of the main theoretical dimensions of public diplomacy, halfway between information management and relationship building (ZIELIŃSKA; 2016). As Beata Ociepka⁵¹ (2008) suggests, public diplomacy aims at "shaping or supporting a positive image of a country and society abroad, including – by influence on public opinion – building of positive attitudes towards the country. Public diplomacy understood in this way is meant to assist in the realisation of aims of given country's policy in the international environment" (Ociepka, 2008; 12). It is no coincidence that democratic states mainly rely on public diplomacy as the preferred means to obtain the desired result in their foreign policy (ZIELIŃSKA; 2016). The EU's intention to renew its credibility within and without the Union shall increase the European Soft Power, which is the power of attraction. Accordingly, delivering a positive image of the EU abroad means getting other actors to do what you want them to do without using coercion: this means that public diplomacy facilitates political, economic, and social connections with new partners and, most importantly, makes others follow your example. Indeed, the direct consequence of a credibility-based approach is relationship building.

Such a relational dimension of public diplomacy comes after formulating strategic communication and takes the name of development diplomacy. The EUGS repeatedly stresses the importance of supporting countries in their path to poverty reduction and resilience (Mogherini; 2016). Joseph Nye (2007) interprets such a diplomatic tool as a form of development aid and lists it among hard power and economic resources (Nye; 2004). Nonetheless, Nye (2011) acknowledges the possibility that hard and soft resources may overlap, thereby making him realize the importance of purposes: even development aid, which is based on economic power, could be at the service of softer finalities (Nye; 2011). Development aid can generate soft power because it helps recipient countries develop admiration toward the donor and makes them respect the shared values. Therefore, Nye's (2011) interpretation supports the idea that the EUGS' public diplomacy delivers a double-sided message, thus employing soft and hard resources depending on the changing context.

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3.4.2. The role of diplomacy

Diplomacy has been of outstanding relevance for the creation of the EU's influence globally. Diplomatic efforts are mainly visible during moments of crisis when a country needs to protect its image and keep spreading its power of attraction elsewhere. The EUGS comes in a moment of profound internal turbulence where the risk of losing credibility within and without the Union was high. By this token, the formulation of a Global Strategy represented a meaningful reaction with well-thought-out contents that reflected the EU's will to adapt to the changing global needs continuously (Davis Cross; 2016).

The EUGS is direct evidence of the fact that the EU cannot build its diplomatic tactics alone. Diplomacy cannot function without the support of its partners, whether international organizations or other countries (Novotná; 2017). However, the internal alignment of visions among its Member States is the essential prerequisite for coherent diplomacy. The most challenging part of the formulation process was finding a compromise between all actors, listening to member states' requests but maintaining the "skeleton" of the text as formulated by Mogherini's Team and the EEAS (Novotná; 2017) (Tocci; 2016a; 6). Concerted diplomacy means exponentially increasing the EU's influence in the world: as put by Mogherini in the Document, "a joined-up Union" is needed today to turn visions into actions (Mogherini; 2016; 10). Moreover, the multi-faceted nature of diplomacy allows the EU to broaden its range of joined-up external activities, including "energy diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and economic diplomacy" in conflict settings (Mogherini; 2016; 49).

3.4.3. The goals of diplomacy

Contrary to Euro-sceptics' expectations, the EUGS proves the EU has clear foreign policy goals shared by all its Member States (Davis Cross; 2016). The EU's priorities are in the security and defense field, where it intends to advance peace-building and peace-keeping operations and resilience-based programs whenever needed. Moreover, the advancing of new global threats enlarged the EU's undertaking in cyber-security, migration, terrorism, and energy (Mogherini; 2016). However, priorities must go parallel with strategic cooperation, alliances, and strategic communication, especially when the EU strives to stabilize the economic conditions of specific areas. Mai'a K. Davis Cross (2016) suggested that these are foreign policy goals that imply diplomatic efforts to achieve them. Thus, diplomacy is the key to understanding EUGS' strategic vision.

3.4.4. Three main features of EUGS' Diplomacy

In order to give a comprehensive description of the diplomatic framework within the EU Global Strategy, it is of crucial importance to list precisely three outstanding features of the Document: the moment of its publication, the choice of Smart Power, the development of principled pragmatism.

3.4.4.1. Moment of publication

As already mentioned in the section “Historical background of the 2016 EUGS”, the strategic decision to publish the Document a few days after the Brexit vote is a fully-fledged diplomatic exercise. Indeed, beyond the content of the EUGS, the timing of the strategy is equally essential (Kundnani; 2016). Although extremely risky, Mogherini decided to release the EUGS without showing any kind of hesitation. Her strategic decision attempts to contain the profound internal EU crisis and advocates a renewed joined-up action to strengthen the Union (Mälksoo; 2016). In Mogherini's view, waiting that the tense situation would gradually ease was extremely utopian: the EU needed to react in that precise moment. This decision was self-evident proof of the EU's strategic communication and diplomatic efforts. The message was clear: the Union can do without the United Kingdom, but actions must be taken immediately (Davis Cross; 2016). This is symptomatic of a diplomatic engagement which started even before the world knew about the content of the Strategy.

3.4.4.2. Hard, Soft and Smart Power

The second characteristic of the EUGS in terms of diplomatic engagement within and without the Union is a practical approach oriented towards smart power. It is a combination of coercion and co-option which, depending on the surrounding environment, identifies the form of power, whether soft or hard, that better addresses potential issues. The EUGS encourages a smarter approach, thus smarter diplomacy, although the Strategy acknowledges that “soft and hard power go hand in hand” without explicitly mention the term “smart power” (Mogherini; 2016; 4). Such a combination of coercion and co-option relies on the credibility of the Union as a fundamental shared value that accepts the use of force only as a last resort. This proves the EU's intention to learn from past mistakes and measure itself in a more challenging world (Davis Cross, 2016).

The Strategic Diplomacy can be so divided:

- on the “soft” side, the EU leverages its power of attraction on other countries thanks to the wide-ranging networks of its diplomats (Davis Cross; 2016; 5). EU’s long-lasting diplomatic efforts lay the foundations for strategic communication with partners, prioritizing its closest neighbors. Moreover, tailor-made strategies are designed specifically for those countries furthest away from Europe.
- On the “hard” side, the EUGS goes against the idea that “Europe is an exclusively “civilian power” (because it) does not do justice to an evolving reality” (Mogherini; 2016; 4). Understandably, the EU is not new to the “carrot and stick” method. In the EUGS, the hard power symbolizes the “stick” approach that the European Union has long used to access markets, impose sanctions on countries, and deploy military operations (Davis Cross; 2016).

Independently from Soft or Hard Power, the EU relies on credibility. If the system in itself is not credible in the Member States’ eyes, then it cannot be promoted outside the EU. Accordingly, credibility implies unity and attractiveness. Besides, the EUGS welcomes the diversified nature of its unity, where every Member State has its own power and interests. Differentiation could be interpreted as an obstacle to be removed, but in the EU’s context it represents a source of strength whether mobilized for producing internal convergence (Grevi; 2016). The EU is entirely in line with the belief that carrying the same message is more important than speaking with one voice (Grevi; 2016). The EUGS acknowledges that "our diplomatic action must be fully grounded in the Lisbon Treaty", but also recognizes that its Member States must be left with some room for maneuver (Mogherini; 2016; 11).

Although straightforward, EU diplomacy may lack clarity. This happens when the EUGS urges “creative approaches to diplomacy” (Mogherini; 2016; 31). The Document does not explain what *creative* really means. Nonetheless, the word may allude to the rules-based order to which the EU belongs: preserving the status quo must go parallel with transforming the existing order. Thus, creativity could solicit innovation in the multilateral context without abandoning the way of continuity. Investing in multilateralism also means widening EU’s commitments in other sensitive domains such as climate change, cybersecurity, or sustainable development (Grevi; 2016) where the EU promises it “will lead by example” (Mogherini; 2016, 40). Supposedly, the most innovative solution for an “effective global governance” is the EUGS’ strategy to promote a bottom-up approach (Mogherini; 2016; 43). This means the EU does not necessarily follow the traditional top-down scheme, which runs counter a flexible multilateral system. In other words, the EU is

convinced that bilateral or plurilateral agreements may contribute to revitalizing WTO negotiations (Ujvari; 2016): indeed, the Strategy itself identifies “comprehensive free trade agreements with the US, Japan, Mercosur, India, ASEAN and others as building blocks of global free trade” (Mogherini; 2016; 41). According to Balazs Ujvari (2016), “effective multilateral governance is now the *end* rather than the *means*”, provided that the EU will keep promoting a flexible approach to multilateralism, thus recognizing that WTO’s expansion may also result from private agreements (Ujvari; 2016; 2).

3.4.4.3. A new “global” narrative

In line with the intention to “lead by example on global governance”, the EUGS acknowledges that cooperation with other actors helps it shaping the rules-based order (Mogherini; 2016; 43). However, the EU “cannot deliver alone”, says Mogherini (Mogherini; 2016; 43). Thus, the EU recognizes its vulnerabilities and calls for closer ties with international actors, provided that responsibilities are shared. It is noteworthy that the EU strategically promotes partnerships: in this sense, the Union “will work with core partners, like-minded countries and regional groupings” (Mogherini; 2016; 18). The Strategy lists the three categories of preferred partners by order of appearance:

- Firstly, the EUGS gives priority to its core partners, namely the United States, the United Nations, and NATO. Transatlantic alliances are preferentially used to strengthen European security and enhance the EU’s role in the global governance domain (Grevi, 2016);
- Secondly, the EUGS encourages cooperation with like-minded partners because confident that common results may be achieved. It is, therefore, a matter of attaining credible results;
- Lastly, the Document lists several countries belonging to specific regional groupings which not necessarily share the same aspirations and visions of the EU. Here, the EU slightly changes its approach and calls for tailor-made strategies. This is part of the so-called selective engagement of partners.

It is evident that the EU approaches a more practical multilateralism which automatically results in being more credible. It diverges from the multilateral inclusiveness that had characterized the EU’s approach in the international order. The practice of diplomatic relations with other countries follows a more pragmatic scheme that, as mentioned above, results in a principled pragmatism. Combining realistic assessment and idealistic aspiration in a single Strategy might be ambiguous given these two approaches are entirely opposite from each other. Although a realistic assessment is necessary

when the EU deals with security priorities⁵², Idealism remains at the center of EUGS's doctrine as the European added value. The EU would have never had the power to pursue its integration project without idealistic aspirations. However, it should be noted that since its creation, the EU has witnessed alternating moments of passionate idealism⁵³ and pessimistic periods⁵⁴. The EUGS is nothing but the representation of a turbulent historical moment that automatically makes the EU stepping back from a fully-fledged idealism without completely abandoning it: aspirations are now more pragmatic, more realist (Davis Cross; 2016).

The European Union Global Strategy is the fruit of a diplomatic commitment to craft a shared narrative between EU institutions, Member States, civil societies, and many other actors (Tocci, 2016b). However, from a strategic point of view, the Document also conveys a profound meta-narrative that directly stems from its principled pragmatism (Davis Cross; 2016). In this sense, the combination of realism and idealism is clear evidence that the EUGS is a strategy that connects historical, cultural, and social phenomena (realistic side), but following, however, its universal values (idealistic side) (Davis Cross; 2016). Therefore, the Document symbolizes the birth of a new European diplomatic narrative that brings out a mixed approach of vision and action, idealism and pragmatism (6).

3.4.5. Coexistence of Realism and idealism

Both vision and action are highly encouraged by Federica Mogherini. The third pillar of the Strategy dealing with the EU's external priorities defines with clear examples how realism and idealism coexist in one single Strategy. By this token, the EUGS's realistic ambition to strengthen state resilience in "Central Asia, and south down to Central Africa" (Mogherini; 2016; 23) develops simultaneously with the idealist aspiration that implies a comprehensive commitment of partner countries from their governmental institutions to the participation of civil societies (Mogherini; 2016; 27). It happens exactly the same when the EU intends to achieve "pre-emptive peacebuilding

⁵² Security priorities are climate change issues, terrorism, conflicts in different countries, energy insecurity, cyber-threats, to cite a few.

⁵³ Moments like the first years after the foundations of the European project, in the 1986 with the signing of the European Single Act, in 1992 with the creation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy under the Maastricht Treaty, or the creation of the Euro as the single currency.

⁵⁴ Moments like the Eurosclerosis, the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty before the Lisbon Treaty, and the Eurozone crisis.

and (de-escalatory) diplomacy” realistically, and it equally tries to inculcate the idealistic “political culture of acting sooner” as a Union: instead of promoting an early warning-based approach, the EU has bigger ambitions (Mogherini; 2016, 29-30). Another example is the fight against terrorism: on the one hand, the realist commitment results from “greater information sharing and intelligence cooperation between Member States and EU agencies” (Mogherini; 2016; 21). It is a credible objective which the EU can realistically achieve. On the other hand, the EU intends to cooperate with countries in “North Africa, the Middle East, the Western Balkans, and Turkey, among others,” and urges them to “develop joint programs on countering violent extremism and radicalisation”: such an idealistic ambition goes beyond any realistic assessment merely because of the unlikelihood that the EU could export a sentiment of solidarity with countries that do not share the same cultural perception of extremism and terrorism as Europe (Mogherini; 2016; 21).

EU’s credibility stems directly from the ability to pursue tangible goals without neglecting aspirations. However, the EUGS’ approach with realism is soberer than one might think. The need for a more resilient and realist approach stems from the increasingly competitive context in international affairs. However, the EUGS never gives the impression of a Strategy that only emphasizes rivalries or the EU’s interests. Conversely, its diplomatic strategy will “invest in win-win solutions and move beyond the illusion that international politics can be a zero-sum game” (Mogherini, 2016; 4).

Contrary to Trump, the EUGS did not allow competition to take over its diplomatic relations but advanced an approach where the EU’s interests mainly depend on outer circumstances. Instead of being inward-looking, the EU strategy has a global vision: investing in resilience-building operations outside the Union strengthens the EU’s credibility and, most importantly, helps to prevent further economic or military issues in the world (Grevi; 2016). As the EUGS puts it, the EU “will take responsibility foremost in Europe and its surrounding regions, while pursuing targeted engagement further afield” (Mogherini; 2016; 17).

In conclusion, the diplomatic engagement outlined in the EUGS does not revolutionize the EU’s approach to foreign policy. By introducing the concept of principled realism, the Strategy modernizes its diplomatic narrative through a strategic communication that introduces innovations and continuity. Moreover, it promotes a smart power approach that is coherent with the turbulent existing times and makes the Strategy look “more modest and more concrete” than the idealistic standards the EU used in the past (Grevi; 2016).

3.5. The 2003 ESS

The 2016 EUGS is not the first folio about a common European narrative that aims at expanding the EU's credibility as a strategic actor. Indeed, the Global Strategy can be seen as a narrative continuum of the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS). Both folios formulate priorities and goals of the EU in accordance to the historical moment of their draft. Paving the way for a more prosperous future nevertheless remains the shared ambition of the two Strategies. First with the ESS and then with the EUGS, the EU narrates a sort of European autobiography as an exercise to test its ability to manage "the EU's anxiety in the world of quickly multiplying unknown unknowns" (Mälksoo; 2016; 376). In other words, the EU intends to expand a principle of identity and stability that will automatically shield its Member States from surrounding uncertainties.

3.5.1. 2003 ESS: Historical Background

The idea of developing a European Security Strategy came after the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty in 1999. With the introduction of the syntagm "common strategies" as an instrument in the field of Common Foreign and Security Policies (CFSP), the new treaty wanted to make the European Council acting unanimously and, through qualified majority voting, decide on common positions to be taken (Missiroli; 2015; 9)⁵⁵. By this token, the European Council started to promote three common strategies: the first one with Russia (1999), the second one with Ukraine (1999), and the third one with the Mediterranean region (2000). However, the initial enthusiasm brought by the European Council was soon toned down by the newly appointed HR Javier Solana who criticized such "common strategies" for lacking formalized guidelines, effectiveness, and strategic nature: to put it simply, they did not bring any concrete added value to the EU foreign policy (Missiroli; 2015; 10).

For Nathalie Tocci, "any strategy, while being a long-term vision, is inevitably the product of its times" (Tocci; 2017b; 488). The 2003 European Security Strategy is no exception to this assertion. The historical moment at the time of the ESS's publication was highly favorable due to events that significantly increased the EU's power of attraction and credibility: suffice to think of the creation of the European single currency and its circulation in the many Member States, and the upcoming

⁵⁵ According to the European Parliament "Initial Analysis of the Treaty of Amsterdam" of the Chapter 12 about the CFSP, we read that "The Treaty provides that the European Council will decide on common strategies unanimously, and that these will be implemented by the Council, acting by a qualified majority, in the form of joint actions and common positions (Article J.13)" (taken from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/treaty/analysis/section3_en.htm)

eastern enlargement. The European project was at the height of its power and could easily expand its soft power anywhere globally.

However, moments of peace and prosperity alternated with diplomatic tensions. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, President G. W. Bush advanced military operations in Iraq, thereby invading the country in 2003. The US interventionism risked creating an internal split between the Union where the dilemma for the Member States was whether backing or not Bush's campaign in Iraq (Tocci; 2017b). Indeed, many scholars believe that the EU started to write a comprehensive European Strategy because of the US external influence that came after the launching of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 (Toje, 2005; Becher, 2004; Duke, 2004; Missiroli, 2015; Tocci, 2017). In other words, the 2003 ESS represents a combination of the relatively high optimism and the attempt to cope with the intra-EU disorder over the Iraq war (Tocci; 2017b).

3.5.2. Main features of the 2003 ESS

Against this background, the German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer informally suggested the creation of a strategic document that would strengthen unity among Member States (Forsch; 2017). The HR Javier Solana welcomed the idea and started to draft the European Security Strategy with its team in 2003. The European Council's adoption of the Document⁵⁶ represented a concrete turning point in the EU's history which "marked the EU's coming of age as a strategic actor" (Mälksoo; 2016; 378).

The ESS is a 14-page Document that consists of an Introduction, three sections on European challenges, objectives, and implications, and then a Conclusion (Solana; 2003). In its Introduction, the 2003 ESS says that "Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free" (Solana; 2003; 3) compared to the first half of the 20th century. The spread of democracy and the promotion of the rule of law has primarily contributed, together with the United States' assistance, to create a safer world (Solana; 2003; 1). However, the EU is aware of the factual possibility that global stability may change and become more complex. Accordingly, by recognizing its role as a "global player" in world politics, the EU shoulders "the responsibilities for global security" in order to build "a better world" (Solana; 2003; 3).

⁵⁶ The European Council formally adopted the ESS on the 12th December 2003.

Like any other security strategy, the ESS lists several key security threats that could put at risk EU's purposes within and without the Union. The Document talks about globalization as the first main change in the XXI century, and points out that it might generate both "prosperity" and "frustration" (Solana, 2003; 4). Poverty, diseases, and conflicts are probably the most significant challenges the EU has to prevent, especially in developing countries where poor living conditions do not favor *per se* a healthy environment (Solana; 2003; 4). The ESS also refers to terrorism, the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), regional conflicts, state failure, and organized crime as worldwide threats which directly or indirectly affect the Union, its citizens, and its partners (Solana; 2003; 4-5-6). Although the EU convinces itself that "large-scale aggression against any Member States is now improbable" (Solana; 2003; 5), development can only be achieved through security (Solana; 2003; 4).

Addressing those threats is the first and foremost responsibility of the EU. The ESS attributes strategic significance to the geography since maintaining the Union safe means "think globally and act locally" (Solana; 2003; 8). By this token, the Strategy intends to enlarge its area of influence to its neighbors and "promote a ring of well-governed countries" (Solana; 2003; 10): it means the EU will keep pursuing its enlargement process with Eastern European countries and promoting good governance in the Mediterranean (mostly the MENA⁵⁷ region). The EU strongly believes that achieving security is only possible through spreading European values such as democracy, the rule of law, good governance, and protection of human rights: the Document celebrates the EU as a peace project. Indeed, limiting authoritarian regimes and exporting EU principles to its neighbors is symptomatic of a strategy that strives for building "a world of well-governed democratic states" (Solana; 2003; 12).

A more secure world depends on preserving the international order based on "effective multilateralism" (Solana; 2003; 11). The EU wants to ensure world stability by strengthening International Law and supporting key institutions such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the International Financial Institutions, and NATO. The EU aims to encourage countries to uphold multilateralism and, moreover, attempts to assist countries that lack good governance. Indeed, the Document says that the quality of governments is the prerequisite for a qualitative international order (Solana, 2013; 12). Therefore, the European Union intends to preserve the existing multilateral system, and whenever possible, it helps isolated countries "rejoin the international community" (Solana; 2003; 12). Cooperation with external countries and internal unity is, therefore, the guiding principle of the Document.

⁵⁷ Middle East and North Africa region

Providing rapid and robust interventions that involve civilian and military means is vital to avoid future threats: the combination of soft and hard power is necessary if the EU wants to contribute to a better world. However, the ESS does not really mention how to deploy soft tools. This is due to the joyous historical moment the EU was experiencing that indirectly influenced the idea that the Union could be the role model for the rest of the world. However, the main problem of the Strategy remains its functionality. According to Asle Toje, the ESS cannot be considered as a real strategy because it does not "define actual goals and set up priorities to achieve policy objectives", but it is more "a guide to be used while perusing an agenda" (Toje; 2005; 120-121). In this regard, the ESS seems to be a diplomatic document that develops a common strategic culture among its Member States. It is a sort of educational folio which acquaints European citizens with a renewed and more robust EU with its own strategic personality (Becher; 2004; 354): confident of its means, the European Union optimistically tries to address global issues and make the world a safer place (Tocci, 2017).

3.6. Similarities and differences between the 2016 and 2003 Strategies

3.6.1. Change in the historical context and security landscape

Both the 2003 ESS and the 2016 EUGS strategically contributed to making the EU a more credible actor within and without the Union. Creating a common narrative among EU member States represents an outstanding achievement that has never been a given. After a careful analysis of both Strategies we can see how, as time passes, new dynamics shape the surrounding environment and, automatically, priorities change. Both documents can be defined as two Strategies of survival that share a multilateral vision and whose political rationale is to preserve global order, intensify the European influence domestically and externally, and protect the Union from objectified threats.

Changing scenarios hypothesize a shift in the global security landscape. In 2003 the ESS resulted from an over-optimistic historical moment for the EU where most of its eastern neighbors aspired to become part of the European project as member states. The EU also had incredible confidence in its power of attraction thanks to a relatively positive global context. Contrary to the ESS, the security landscape at the time of the drafting and publication of the 2016 EUGS is indisputably more turbulent and precarious. Most of the issues identified in the framework of the ESS are still present

in the Global Strategy and, to some extent, have expanded their threatening power⁵⁸: the European security was seriously put at risk like never before (Žutić and Čehulić Vukadinović; 2017). The complexity of such an unstable environment did not allow the EU to advocate overambitious optimism but rather to promote strategic ambitions which were directly proportioned to its capabilities. As pointed out by Federica Mogherini before the publication of the EUGS, "the world – and our perception of it – has become more dangerous, divided and disorienting...more connected but also more contested; more integrated but also more fragmented: it is much more complex." (European Commission and HRVP; 2015). The EUGS is considered to be more realistic as a document because it is conscious of the limits the EU has in terms of capabilities and in relation with external actors' preferences, but without losing its Idealism: this is what is called "principled pragmatism", a kind of Realpolitik with European characteristics (Biscop; 2016). Contrary to this approach, the ESS's first sentence says that "Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free", promoting the EU as a peace project to be exported to other countries (Solana; 2003; 3). Such a divergence in the formulation of both strategies is symptomatic of the gap in time between the beginning of the 21st century and the massive wave of threats which risked flooding the EU in 2016.

3.6.2. 2016 EUGS and 2003 ESS: diverging folios

More than the differences in the historical contexts, the ESS and the EUGS diverge on many other several points that could be listed into four categories: the drafting process and consultations, the diplomatic approach, the strategic communication, and the concept of multilateralism.

3.6.2.1. Consultations

Unlike the 2003 ESS, the European Union Global Strategy had a less optimistic view of the world since it reflected the EU's turbulent scenario. In 2016 there were 28 EU Member States, thus making cooperation more difficult than in 2003 when the Union was composed of 15 countries. Moreover, after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, many internal dynamics evolved. Unlike Federica Mogherini, Javier Solana did not wear the double-hat of High Representative and European Commission Vice President: it means that at the time of the 2003 ESS's formulation, he did not feel the responsibility to engage in plurilateral consultations with the Member States and

⁵⁸ Issues like globalization, terrorism, organized crime, climate change, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

other national representative actors. However, it is noteworthy to note that in 2016 highly politicized issues became the new normality of EU foreign policy, thus urging Federica Mogherini to “handle with care” migration, security, and defense matters (Tocci; 2017b)⁵⁹. Accordingly, when all things are extremely politicized, strategies cannot simply limit themselves to superficial consultations of a restricted circle of actors. Indeed, Federica Mogherini could not do otherwise than deepening the EU’s engagement with the Member States without neglecting consultations with other key actors such as universities, think tanks, civil societies, and the private sector (Tocci; 2017b). The idea of creating a common narrative could only result from a collective work towards a shared vision.

3.6.2.2. Diplomatic Approach

The second diverging point between the ESS and the EUGS concerns the diplomatic approach chosen by both Strategies. Although Javier Solana strived to create a united European culture, the ESS reflects more an outside-in approach. In other words, the Strategy formulates the role the EU should play in international politics only after analyzing the surrounding context, threats, and issues. Indeed, the ESS does not concretely outline what the goals and ambitions of the EU are. There is a clear gap between the Document’s formulation and the way a strategy should look like, at least by defining “actual goals set(ing) up priorities to achieve policy objectives” (Toje, 2005; 121). However, from a diplomatic point of view, the ESS demonstrates a sort of, albeit minimal, contextual intelligence. Indeed, the Strategy firstly assesses the surrounding context of the EU and then defines the common position the Union shall take.

Moreover, it is worth noting that the ESS “provided the Union with its first strategic vision” (Tocci; 2016b; 462), thus representing a historical diplomatic triumph of the EU. The European soft power was particularly strong before the drafting of the Document. For this reason, the ESS limited its role by symbolically creating a common European culture among its member states and avoid internal conflicts over potential rifts about the Iraq war. According to Nathalie Tocci, the work of Javier Solana was aimed at “heal(ing) the internal European wounds” (Tocci; 2015; 116).

Contrary to the ESS, the EUGS presents the Strategy differently. Federica Mogherini shaped the Document around the necessity to integrate common interests for the achievement of concrete and more realist objectives (ŽutIć and Čehulić Vukadinović; 2017). Such an inside-out approach results

⁵⁹ Contrary to the EUGS, the 2003 ESS only had one politicized issue: the war in Iraq.

from the Union's emergency where the main priority was re-building unity and cohesion among the Member States. Sharing the same vision does not mean speaking with a single voice: the EU, therefore, respects its members' diversity provided that they intend to spread the same message to the world. Unlike the ESS, the EUGS expanded its contextual intelligence due to the moments of crisis the Union was experiencing. Accordingly, the Document outlines the goals, the needs, and the ambitions of the EU by preserving a realistic tone: this is because, differently from the ESS when the Union benefitted from greater internal stability, the EUGS recognizes the limited capabilities at its disposal and avoids pursuing unrealistic ambitions.

3.6.2.3. Strategic communication

Contrary to the ESS, the EUGS is a more comprehensive strategy in terms of the number of pages. Both folios have diverging priorities and make use of a specialized vocabulary to reflect their narratives better. If the ESS mainly projects European values upon others, the EUGS appears to be less “offensive” and more coherent by protecting the EU’s interests without necessarily exporting its values (Grevi; 2016).

The 2003 ESS is based around three main features that characterize the diplomatic essence of the Document itself: there is, therefore, a strong emphasis on the terms “preventive engagement”, “strategic culture”, and “effective multilateralism” (Toje; 2005; 121). Conversely, the EUGS changes its strategic communication and promotes new core terms that better reflect the priorities of the EU in that precise historical moment. Indeed, there is no more space for terms like “preventive engagement,” but at its place, we find the concept of “resilience” (ŽutIć and Čehulić Vukadinović; 2017). Acting in more impoverished regions through prevention symbolically means that the ESS feels responsible for taking action whenever possible. The ESS, therefore, shows profound confidence in its means and, most importantly, in its values. Indeed, prevention means exporting the EU model whenever needed without hesitation. Hence, the ESS proves to be “overoptimistic” because it is exaggeratedly convinced that values like democracy and good governance are synonymous of security (Biscop; 2016; 1). Conversely, the EUGS does not put a great emphasis on democracy, especially when the EU deals with its neighbors: accepting the fact that democratization cannot be fully achieved or pursued does not mean lowering the level of EU’s ambitions but being realist and modest. For such a reason, in the EUGS, we can read that “A resilient state is a secure state” (Mogherini; 2016; 23).

3.6.2.3.1. *Strategic Culture*

Another significant change in the EUGS is the creation of *principled pragmatism*, which supplants *strategic culture*. In the ESS, we read about the “need to develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid and when necessary, robust intervention” (Solana; 2003; 13). Strategic culture is nothing but the whole set of behavioral habits which stems from a country’s history, politics, and ideas. However, since its introduction in the international relations vocabulary, the term has assumed a military connotation⁶⁰.

According to Toje (2005), “strategic culture provides a framework in which an actor approaches the questions of threat (or use) of force – and the broader question of hard power capabilities as policy resources” (Toje; 2005; 122). In other words, the idea that shared beliefs among the Member States could turn into a semipermanent pillar of EU culture rather than mere policy reinforces the collective agreement on the use of armed forces. Nonetheless, the ESS lacks such a culture since it does not explicitly discuss hard power's ends and means. It is undoubtedly something positive if we consider the EU’s “culture” deficiency as a symbol of ESS’s intention to essentially preserve the EU status of civilian actor⁶¹. Indeed, the 2003 European Security Strategy emphasizes the need to combine military and civilian capabilities (Solana; 2013; 13). For such a reason, the so-called *strategic culture* cannot be seen as something that evokes hard power’s means since it seems to merely aspire to a renewed political integration among its Member States. There is an implicit reference to the use of hard and soft power, although the ESS neither explicitly mentions them nor describes what means should be used to achieve its objectives.

The main difference with the EUGS is the introduction of principled pragmatism, which embeds the notion of hard and soft power. Contrary to Solana, Federica Mogherini promotes a renewed European approach to international politics, combining realistic goals with idealistic ambitions. The need for a more concrete and coherent Strategy gradually shifted the EU towards increased pragmatism which has nothing to see with purely military means. Conversely, the EU recognizes that advancing ambitions that cannot be pursued within the short, medium, or long-term is utopian. Increasing international credibility means pursuing clear and modest goals: this is why the EUGS

⁶⁰ See Snyder J. (1977), “The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Options”, a project Air Force prepared for the United States, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, R-2154-AF, September 1977.

⁶¹ See Edwards G. and Cornish P. (2001), “Beyond the EU/NATO dichotomy: The beginnings of an EU strategic culture” 77/3 International Affairs, pp. 587-603. Also see Steven Everts Lawrence Freedman, Charles Grant, Francois Heisbourg, Daniel Keohane and Michael O’ Hanlon, “A European Way of War” (2004) CER pamphlet, Centre for European reform, London.

appears to be *smarter* than the ESS. It does not only explicitly mention that “soft and hard power go hand in hand” (Mogherini; 2016; 4), but the 2016 Strategy also implicitly refers to the notion of smart power. Indeed, the EUGS is aware of the surrounding context: Federica Mogherini tries to advance a renewed contextual intelligence that stems from the assessment of the EU’s priorities, the external threats, and the EU’s capabilities.

3.6.2.3.2. *Effective Multilateralism vs. Global Governance*

EU’s commitment to multilateralism has always represented a clear necessity and a strategic interest (Kaddous; 2015; 22). According to some scholars, promoting the multilateral-based order is a way through which the EU can exert its influence globally and advance its interests: it is therefore considered to be a “part of its DNA” (Keukeleire and Delreux; 2014; 301) (Jokela; 2011; 56).

The ESS promotes “An International Order Based on Effective Multilateralism” (Solana, 2003; 11) as its strategy's cornerstone. Multilateralism is not only seen as a goal, but it also represents the instrument through which the EU can achieve goals like “Addressing the Threats” and “Building Security in our Neighbourhood” (Solana; 2003; 8-9). Hence, the importance of preserving a multilateral model that has remained undisputed since its creation after World War II (Tocci; 2016b). However, besides traditional multilateral institutions, the ESS retains that regional organizations and strategic partnerships also strengthen global governance (Solana; 2003; 11). The contradiction lies in the parallel promotion of two approaches that do not converge in one single vision: on the one hand, we see the multilateral approach which lays its foundations on the traditional international institutions; on the other hand, we see a more politically oriented approach which intends to make the EU boost connections with other powerful states to better coordinate issues of common concern (Laatikainen; 2013). Promoting legally binding agreements through multilateral institutions and, at the same time, promoting private “strategic partnerships” seems to erode the original meaning of effective multilateralism (Keukeleire and Delreux; 2014; 300).

Conversely, the EUGS shifts away from the idea of “effective multilateralism” promoted in the ESS. At its place, Federica Mogherini encouraged three main innovations:

- Firstly, the 2016 Strategy enhances a “rules-based global order”, better known as “effective global governance” (Mogherini; 2016; 8). Such a move represents a change in the quality-based concept of multilateralism. Indeed, the EUGS decides to go beyond what is promoted in the ESS. Rather than completely distancing itself from the

traditional multilateral order, the EUGS intends to incorporate effective multilateralism into a broader “global” vision: this entails decisions that focus on “investing” in the UN, “implementing” EU’s active role “on sustainable development and climate change”, “deepening” relations with its partners, and “widening” the membership of international institutions (Mogherini; 2016; 40-41-42). The EU recognizes the limits of effective multilateralism and urges deeper collaborations with its partners, not necessarily in the format of existing international institutions (Forsch; 2017). It becomes essential for the EU to partner “with states and organizations, but also with the private sector and civil society”: any specific issue addressed by the EU will require a format that “may vary from case to case” (Mogherini; 2016, 43). Hence, the EUGS promotes a more flexible multilateralism compared to the ESS. Contrary to Solana, Federica Mogherini highlights a problem-oriented approach that reflects principles pragmatism: a bottom-up approach that is more pragmatic than principled (Forsch; 2017).

- Secondly, pursuing an effective global governance “translates into an aspiration to transform rather than simply preserve the existing system” (Mogherini, 2016; 10). The EUGS foresees the erosion of international institutions’ legitimacy and influence: thus, reforms are essential if they want to preserve their global influence. Helping these institutions in their process towards modernization will allow the EU to “strengthen its voice and acquire greater visibility and cohesion” (Mogherini; 2016; 40).
- Thirdly, the EUGS renovates the “partnering” concept and EU’s relations with external actors. The 2016 Strategy states that:

“[w]e will partner selectively with players whose cooperation is necessary to deliver global public goods and address common challenges. We will deepen our partnerships with civil society and the private sector as key actors in a networked world. We will do so through dialogue and support, but also through more innovative forms of engagement.” (Mogherini; 2016; 18).

Unlike the 2003 ESS, the EUGS does not try to favor partners that strategically share the European interests and values but promotes a more coherent approach. Indeed, Mogherini points out that the EU is living in a moment of crisis and has no choice but to detach itself from the principled approach towards cooperation (Forsch; 2017): for such a reason, the Union will partner with actors “whose cooperation is necessary” (Mogherini; 2016; 18). Moreover, the EU also refers to non-state actors when

developing global governance: they are essential players for advancing diplomacy within external countries.

According to Techau, the EUGS' approach towards multilateralism is coherent with the vision of a principled pragmatism which "strike a fine balance between reduced and increased ambition" (Techau; 2016). The EU presents a new "Meta-Narrative," which is ambivalent: it results in being realist when it goes against the promotion of a universal multilateralism, and more idealistic when aspires to reform the existing rules-based order.

3.7. Final Comparison

The EUGS in some ways represents the evolution of the 2003 European Security Strategy that was more a paper presenting the global challenges and the main threats that surrounded the EU: "the ESS calls for more active union, while the EUGS calls for more credible union" (Žutić and Vukadinović; 2017; 110). It is not wrong saying that the ESS was a draft of aspirations that needed to be finalized into a real Strategy, as it is the EUGS.

However, the diplomatic engagement has not changed through time, despite globalization and historical events ran their course. The EU has always leveraged its diplomatic tools to enhance its political, economic, and social relationship with external countries. It is noteworthy to note that with the EUGS, there is a clear evolution of the concept of diplomacy. Smart power is probably the cardinal point of the Strategy, together with principled pragmatism. The EUGS does not want to describe the EU as purely idealistic and overoptimistic, but it has to reckon with the current global challenges. Adapting decisions depending on the surrounding context is clear proof of an effective Strategy. From a diplomatic point of view, leveraging the EU's soft power and using force only as a last resort helps the Union gain more credibility.

From a strategic point of view, outlining the goals, needs, and ambitions of the EU by preserving a realistic tone contributes to making the Union more credible as a strategic international actor. Therefore, the EUGS thinks more strategically than the ESS merely because in 2016, the EU "still hasn't yet realised its full potential" (Žutić and Vukadinović; 2017; 110). Urging a more united approach, a more concrete engagement is symptomatic of a Union that is no longer prosperous than in 2003. Contrary to the ESS, the EUGS is a diplomatic response to the emerging crisis within the

Union. The Document, therefore, alternates moments of defensive approach with offensive acts: such a combination derives from the need to protect the Union integrity from euro-skeptics without refusing to take actions in relation to the strengthening of EU's credibility (Žutić and Čehulić Vukadinović; 2017). On the other hand, the ESS does not really feel the need to call for more unity simply because the EU does not find itself in a moment of existential crisis. Indeed, the ESS is a short-detailed strategy that mainly focuses on preserving communion among its Member States. Therefore, the Document lacks clear guidelines outlining how the Union should behave to achieve its goals.

3.7.1. Broader diplomacy than in 2003

From a diplomatic point of view, the EUGS is the evolution of the ESS since it concretely broadens the use and means of diplomacy. By reading both Documents, one notices that the word "diplomacy" is never used in the ESS, while the EUGS utilizes it 31 times. However, it is not just a matter of word count. When formulating the EUGS, Federica Mogherini acknowledged that to adapt the Strategy to the current times she could not do without the diplomatic power of the EU. She not only put great emphasis on it, but she also expanded diplomatic instruments at the service of EU foreign policy. Indeed, in the EUGS, we find "new fields of our joined-up external action include(ing) energy diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and economic diplomacy" (Mogherini; 2016; 49).

3.7.2. Credibility

More than just diplomatic, a Strategy needs to be credible. Although diplomacy plays a key role when advancing a shared vision and shared ambitions, a strategy may lose its power if diplomatic tools are not intended to achieve credible goals. Against this background, the EUGS shows more diplomatic maturity and consciousness of its means than the ESS. Indeed, Federica Mogherini acknowledged that if the EU is not taken seriously within and without its borders, it would lose its strategic role in the international scenario. The solution is advancing a principled pragmatism able to narrow the gap between diplomacy and credibility. Although the EUGS does not clearly define when principles take precedence over pragmatism and vice versa, the difference with the ESS lies in the EU's approach to the external world. Diplomatic contacts with partner countries do not follow the original scheme that saw the EU imposing its values and conditions on others. In 2016, the former European Council President Donald Tusk stated that it was highly utopian to the EU trying

to impose “its own values on the external world” (Tusk; 2016). Accordingly, Federica Mogherini worked hard to ensure the EU would build true partnerships based on equality, without any country prevailing over others.

Conclusion

Strategic vision requires Strategic communication. Security Strategies symbolically communicate to the world the diplomatic personality of an actor. Especially when drafted in moments of crisis, the diplomatic relevance of such Documents may directly influence countries' foreign policy and, consequently, their external credibility. Joseph Nye (2012) distinguishes three kinds of power: the *soft* power, which is the ability to attract others and get them to do what you desire; the *hard* power, which relies on coercive means and threats; the *smart* power, which is the ability to combine both hard and soft means depending on the surrounding context. While soft power is morally preferred, sometimes hard and soft resources may overlap. Therefore, what distinguishes a good power from a bad power is the purpose of the form of power itself: it may pursue a more diplomatic approach or an offensive-based tactic. Nonetheless, modern diplomacy runs counter pre-defined patterns and, instead, relies on *contextual intelligence*: analogously to smart power, it is the ability to carry out a deep analysis of the surrounding context and formulate a strategy, whether hard or soft, which would benefit the leader and his/her followers (Nye; 2008).

Following Nye's conceptualization of smart power, this thesis has sought to go beyond the previous diplomacy-based analysis of the 2016 EUGS and the 2017 NSS. The aim was to explore the diplomatic dimension of the latest European and American Strategies from a different angle that could bridge the empirical gap of previous studies on the matter. So, to what extent does the diplomatic engagement of the 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) and the 2016 European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) mirror the 2002 NSS and the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS), respectively? Does the comparison outline a paradigm shift towards deeper Diplomacy?

In short, this dissertation concludes that Trump's diplomacy appears to promote a more independent American sovereignty with narrowly structured interests. If promoting Americans' interests is the inevitable goal of any National Security Strategy, conceiving international relations as a zero-sum game clearly undermines America's soft power. Moreover, expecting reciprocity from partnerships deters future collaborations and puts at risk existing agreements with other actors. Unlike the 2002 NSS, the 2017 NSS promotes competitive diplomacy that intimidates and threatens whoever does not comply with Trump's conditions. Although Bush promotes a war on terror and evokes hard

power means, he adopts a more liberalist approach which welcomes win-win solutions and is more willing to cooperate with other actors.

Most importantly, the 2002 NSS perceives Great Powers as a resource to fight terrorism rather than competitive enemies. Although less interventionist than Bush's Strategy, Trump tries to impose his one-way vision to other partners at all costs. Such an approach lacks diplomatic effectiveness because it reduces America's power of attraction and nullifies the idea of contextual intelligence. Although the 2002 NSS does not clearly promote positive diplomacy, in the 2017 NSS there is no sign of any advancement towards smart power-based diplomacy.

This thesis also demonstrates that the 2016 EUGS develops a more coherent diplomatic approach than the 2003 ESS for what concerns the European dimension. Although Javier Solana formulated the first Strategy that strived to unify the diplomatic efforts of all European Member States, Federica Mogherini prioritized cohesion and unity at all costs. The 2016 EUGS expands the European "contextual intelligence" by promoting a more prudent and balanced strategic communication: the coexistence of idealism and realism enhances the EU's credibility within and without the Union. The Strategy prioritizes soft power and accepts the use of harder means only as a last resort. This approach symbolizes the true essence of Nye's smart power. Contrarily to the American case, the 2016 EUGS is a clear diplomatic "evolution" from its previous Strategy. However, the diplomatic engagement has not entirely changed through time, but it has just enhanced the concept of smarter diplomacy.

Although falling outside the scope of this dissertation, it seems inevitable to compare the European dimension with the American one. Albeit resulting from the same historical moment, the 2016 EUGS and the 2017 NSS are strikingly different in terms of content. The unstable situation in Europe urged Mogherini to formulate a strategy that would strengthen the EU's credibility by boosting partnering and unity. Conversely, Trump developed a great power competition that unsurprisingly disregarded multilateralism and alliances. External factors have undoubtedly influenced the formulation of both Strategies' communication, thus influencing diplomacy. Supposedly, in a moment of profound crisis, the EU had no choice but to invest in its soft power, support multilateralism, and fill the gap between idealistic goals and more pragmatic results. On the other side, Trump's arrogance did not help formulate a smart power approach: the obstinate idea to protect US supremacy from its competitors has left no margin for diplomatic tools. Especially with other actors, whether international organizations or countries, Trump overturned the concept of alliances through strong-arm tactics and hard power diplomacy. Ultimately, the 2017 NSS isolates US diplomacy from contextual and emotional intelligence, two critical prerequisites for smart

power tactics (Nye; 2008). The 2016 EUGS, conversely, seems to have more strategic flexibility and diplomatic maturity with its principled pragmatism.

The most significant limitation to this work is focusing only and exclusively on the wording of the Strategies. The thesis intentionally avoids any further study on the consequences deriving from the publication of these Documents. However, it would be an inspiration for the beginning of a new thesis analyzing whether the formulation of the latest Strategies would reflect the current diplomatic tactics of the EU and the US.

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