

New Century, Old Foes: Assessing the Policy Relevance of Strategic Culture in Central and Eastern Europe

A Monograph

by

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Following the end of the Cold War, formulas based on rationalist theory and external factors failed to resonate in a new era of political independence. The new social order brought new life to the concept of "Strategic Culture" and the idea that unique national identities and collective experiences have tangible influence on strategic thoughts and choices. This monograph examines the factors which influenced the post Cold War security choices of Poland, Romania and Russia and the degree to which those choices were influenced by each nation's individual strategic culture. While Poland and Romania opted to pursue western democratic ideals, heavy investments in alliances, and assumed that the post Cold War status.

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Abstract

New Century, Old Foes: Assessing the Policy Relevance of Strategic Culture in Central and Eastern Europe, by Ms. Tobie Gass, 50 pages.

Following the end of the Cold War, formulas based on rationalist theory and external factors failed to resonate in a new era of political independence. The new social order brought new life to the concept of "Strategic Culture" and the idea that unique national identities and collective experiences have tangible influence on strategic thoughts and choices. This monograph examines the factors which influenced the post Cold War security choices of Poland, Romania and Russia and the degree to which those choices were influenced by each nation's individual strategic culture. While Poland and Romania opted to pursue western democratic ideals, heavy investments in alliances, and assumed that the post Cold War status quo could not be taken for granted, Russia, challenged by NATO's eastward expansion followed a traditional quest for Great Power status. This work uses the Russian annexation of Crimea to assess the impact of these three country's strategic cultures on their policies and actions towards the most direct ideological and territorial challenge to the new order since the end of the Cold War to determine that strategic culture can be used as a viable tool when assessing potential actions to an event.

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Introduction

Nations respond to events and crises not only predicated on political expediencies and the "realpolitik" of policy based on power rather than ideas, but a unique sense of self and an understanding of what its security concerns and priorities should be. Developed out of a complex amalgamation of capabilities, history, geopolitics, and social values, the resulting "strategic culture" can have a strong influence on a state's security choices and behavior. The concept of strategic culture provides a theoretical alternative to the prevailing theoretical constructs of realism and liberalism in the study of international relations. While all seek to discover patterns and tendencies in state behavior, the concept of strategic culture originated from a need to identify and account for strategic decision making results and behaviors not readily explainable through these existing frameworks.

The preponderance of recent academic work on strategic cultures following the rapid expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Eastern Europe and the creation of the European Union (EU) in the post Cold War era has focused on the development of strategic cultures within those two organizations. Having set about re-establishing independent statehood and national identities while simultaneously working to integrate into Western institutions following the end of the Cold War, the newest members of NATO and EU, Poland and Romania, offer interesting case studies to assess the level of influence of both established and emerging strategic cultures on security policy in Central and Eastern Europe. A range of issues such as the "pivot" of the United States toward the Pacific, a financial crisis which has impacted levels of defense spending in all of Europe, and Russia's efforts to reassert regional dominance, are testing the newest members of an alliance originally based on a common enemy and territorial security with different challenges and requirements to meet existing threats and international obligations. This thesis aims to examine the security behaviors of three states based on persistent, country specific strategic cultures to determine to what extent Poland, Romania, and Russia are looking to

unique historical experiences and capabilities in order to formulate comprehensive security strategies, influence decision-making within alliances, and forward their own national interests.

The subsequent sections of this monograph compares the dominant frameworks of international relations theory on state behaviors and lays out their relationship to the evolution of strategic culture. The development of the concept of strategic culture will be traced as well as its growth as a viable theory in part due to a greater global connectivity, interests and access to various cultural and historical phenomena. The review will establish the foundation for the use of strategic culture as a theoretical model to assess the impact of the historic and current relationship of Russia and case study countries. Next, the methodology will describe the theoretical model and steps used to test the validity of the strategic culture concept using selected case studies. Finally, the selected case studies will address the impact of historical relationships with Russia and the effects of strategic culture on the policy choices of Poland, Romania, and Russia towards the annexation of Ukraine.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Evolution of Strategic Culture in Relation to Dominant Theoretical Frameworks

Although the term "strategic culture" initially gained recognition for its potential use in the assessment of nuclear options and the Soviet Union, the relationship between culture and strategy can trace its conceptual origins to "national character" studies on Germany and Japan following World War I. These character studies, conducted by the U.S. War Office Foreign Morale Analysis division, were some of the first attempts to operationalize the connection between culture and national security strategies.¹ Although the culture/strategy connection was overshadowed by the popularity of rationalist theory, the end of the Cold War and the return to a

¹ Nayef Al-Rodhan, "Strategic Culture and Pragmatic National Interest," *Global Policy*, July 22, 2015, accessed December 17, 2015, <http://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/22/07/2015/strategic-culture-and-pragmatic-national-interest>.

multi-polar international environment reignited an interest in the potential predictive qualities of culture to behavior. A review of the characteristics of realism, liberalism and constructivism and the primary theoretical works associated with each, will show the evolution from a propensity of strategic thinking based on state structured international order reliant on either balance of power and rational processes, to a security community more cognizant of the influences of culture, historical experience, and even national aspirations on state actions.

Realism

The most dominant theory in international relations regarding state behavior and the enduring propensity for conflict between states is neorealism, also known as structural realism.² Kenneth N. Waltz is the academic most identifiable with structural realism. Waltz introduced the theory in *Man, the State and War*, first published in 1954. His 1979 work, *The Theory of International Politics*, refined the theory and became the seminal work associated with the neorealist school of thought. In contrast to classical realist thinkers such as Morgenthau and Thucydides who reflected that the contentious, war-like nature of relationships between states is a reflection of the contentious, avaricious nature of man, Waltz sought to apply a more rigorous, amoral process to the analysis of state behaviors.³

To formulate a more widely applicable theory which accounted for, but did not rely on the nature of individuals, Waltz opted to apply principles of economic theory to explain state behavior. Structural realism is essentially a systems-based theory where states, rather than firms, are the primary comparative units. As such, states are unitary actors motivated by survival and

² Stephen M. Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories." *Foreign Policy*, no. 110 (Spring, 1998): 29-35, accessed October 10, 2015, <https://lumen.cgscarl.com/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.lumen.cgscarl.com/docview/224038646?accountid=28992>.

³ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man the State and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), 34.

self-interest. Because the international system does not have a sole unifying authority or a structure which can impose order, each state is instead compelled to seek power in order to maintain balance and stability.⁴ Structural realism holds that states do not necessarily attempt to maximize power for power's sake, but instead balance their relative power within the international order to achieve stability, centered on the idea of maintaining a equilibrium of power, not necessarily wielding it. Waltz contends that it is the balance of power which creates the structural conditions for the peace and preservation of state interests and which encourages states to behave moderately to ensure security.

While Waltz's theoretical approach is grounded in "defensive realism" and the need to maintain a balance of qualitative power and measured response to ensure security, John J. Mearsheimer and "offensive realism" take the opposite approach. Mearsheimer contends that an anarchical international environment "compels states to maximize power and provides conditions which incentivize expansion."⁵ In offensive realism, having overwhelming power makes the most sense to ensure survival; pursuing hegemony in certain circumstances is simply logical.⁶ Mearsheimer also contends that in order for structural realism to work as a theory, an underlying belief that states have or will have aggressive intentions must exist.⁷

⁴ Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4 (Spring 1988): 615-628, accessed 10 October 2015, <http://www.jstor.org.lumen.cgscarl.com/stable/204817>.

⁵ Jefferey W. Taliaferro, "Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited," *International Security* 25, no. 3 (Winter 2000-2001): 128-161, accessed October 10, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org.lumen.cgscarl.com/stable/2626708>.

⁶ John J. Mearsheimer, "Structural Realism," July 31, 2006, accessed November 15, 2015, <http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/StructuralRealism.pdf>.

⁷ John J. Mearsheimer, "Conversations in International Relations: Interview with John J. Mearsheimer," *International Relations* 20, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 231-243, accessed October 11, 2015, <http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/A0039.pdf>.

Stephen M. Walt refined the realist power imperative to add the conditions of perceived threat and intentions. Walt contended that a clearer picture of state behavior and choices are available by examining how states evaluate threat rather than relative power alone. So, instead of balancing power, states work to balance perceived threat. In his work, *The Origins of Alliances*, Walt provides four criteria to assess the threat posed by another state. These are composite strength defined by size, population and state of economy, geography, offensive capabilities and offensive intentions.⁸ While policies driven by internal conditions and the social and cultural preferences of the state receive little consideration in this realist construct, Walt's reintroduction of intentionality acknowledged the need to account for differing reactions to similar events.

Realism provides compelling arguments for the behavior of states, but the reliance on monolithic state characteristics and explanations for state behavior based primarily on external factors seemed to lack the same degree of resonance in the post-Cold War era. While measurable shifts in power and tit for tat actions in a bipolar world provided a rational linear theory, globalization, economic interdependence and the rise of complexity theory have made differing cultures and less obvious determinants more accessible and relevant to policy discussions.

Liberalism and Constructivism

Although liberalism has not achieved paradigmatic status and the preponderance of international relations theory debate occurs on the continuum between classical realism and structural realism,⁹ increasing globalization and economic interdependence have led to a

⁸ Stephen M. Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 115.

⁹ Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics." *International Organization* 51, no. 4 (Autumn 1997): 513-553, accessed December 16, 2015, <https://lumen.cgsccarl.com/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.lumen.cgsccarl.com/docview/219170367?accountid=28992>.

resurgent interest in a liberal alternatives based on the idea of complex interdependence, variable national interests and cultural influences.

Like realism, liberalism is grounded in the assumption that states are rational actors seeking continuous advantage in a world without an authoritative governing body. While acknowledging that the world can be a dark and violent place, liberalism allows that the use of non-military means and institutions to defend or promote national interests are also effective at preserving the balance of power. Although states have different priorities and interests which will shape their foreign policies, liberal structuralism asserts that states will cooperate if they have significant common interests and believe there will be a benefit from such cooperation. As a result of these common interests, governments will attempt to construct institutions together to support them.¹⁰ Per Robert O. Keohane "institutions can provide information, reduce transaction costs, make commitments more credible, establish focal points for coordination, and facilitate reciprocity."¹¹

Realism and Liberalism both have exogenous theoretical leanings - states react to external factors when making strategic decisions. Both agree that states are rational actors driven by the need to survive in an anarchic world, and seek advantages by calculating relative costs and benefits relative of certain policies. Constructivism offers an ontological alternative, emphasizing the internal development of a state's identity, needs and wants and has directly influenced the development of the strategic culture concept.

Constructivism links national identity and the formation of international relationships to collective historical experience and national discourse which reflect a society's understanding of itself. Most associated with constructivism, Alexander Wendt, author of *Anarchy is What States*

¹⁰ Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1995): 39-51, accessed December 17, 2015, http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~plam/irnotes07/Keohane_and_Martin_1995.pdf.

¹¹ Ibid.

Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics, describes the fundamental principle of constructivist theory as that way which the people (or in this case the state) behave towards actors or objects based on the socially constructed meaning that the objects have for them."¹² Drawing on Berger and Luckmann and *The Social Construction of Reality*, Wendt further notes that actors, through relationships, acquire relatively stable, role specific understandings and expectations about themselves and others.¹³ For individuals, these understandings can be exemplified by such roles as "mother" or "teacher." The constructivist premise also assumes that states take on certain ideational roles, attributes and identities. For states, these meanings and role specific understandings can be as basic as the concept of "friend" versus "enemy" or encompass greater ideals and concepts such as "sovereign," and "leader of the free world."¹⁴ It is these constructed identities made up of personal and group experiences which are the foundations of strategic culture.

Strategic Culture

"Had nature given both men identical psychological quantities, would they have acted in the same manner? Certainly not, and that alone makes it impossible for us to measure them by the same standard."

—Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*

The emergence of constructivism in the 1990's gave new life to the idea of unique national identities and collective experiences having tangible influences on strategic thoughts and choices. Originally introduced in 1977 by Jack L. Snyder in a Rand Corporation report titled *The*

¹² Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46, no 2 (Spring 1992): 391-425, accessed October 10, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org.lumen.cgscarl.com/stable/2706858>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations, the concept of strategic culture offered a new way of thinking about a state's choices and the social and institutional influences on national policy. Snyder defined strategic culture as "the sum total of ideals, conditioned emotional responses and patterns of habitual behavior that members of the national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other in regards to strategy."¹⁵ Providing examples such as the Soviet experience in World War II which may have created a possible tolerance for higher levels of destruction, as well as the potential lingering influence of Stalinist purges on the military and its views on politicians, Snyder concluded that the Soviet Union's "unique historical experiences, distinctive political and institutional relationships...combined to produce a unique mix of strategic beliefs and a unique pattern of strategic behavior based on those beliefs."¹⁶ Although Snyder's focus was on strategic culture as it related to nuclear options, he also offered the concept as an additional analytic tool which might explain choices and attitudes that otherwise might seem ill-considered or simply peculiar.

Snyder's article inspired subsequent works on ways to use strategic culture to improve the understanding of why states may approach strategic affairs differently, and indeed, later analysts would also apply the strategic culture concept to well known works on Germany and Japan (Thomas Berger), as well as China (Alistair Ian Johnston). The evolution of strategic culture can generally be divided into three generations. The first generation, including analysts such as Snyder and Colin Gray, focused on nuclear strategy and looked to tendencies in national style which might influence strategic decision making. Gray considered the actions of the security

¹⁵ Jack L. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1977).

¹⁶ Ibid.

community were the result of "behavior effected by culturally shaped, or en-cultured, people, organizations, procedures and weapons."¹⁷

Second generation strategic culture is largely consistent with constructivism and the idea that the state and its agents are mutually influenced by their common culture. However, second generation focused on the difference between declared policies and the policy of elites.¹⁸

The third generation, represented by Alistair Iain Johnston, criticized first and second generation scholarship as being untestable and focused efforts on creating a falsifiable framework.¹⁹ Johnston defined strategic culture as " a consistent set of ranked preferences that persist across time and across strategic contexts" which "allow one to consider strategic culture as a constant...that creates variation on the overall independent inputs into strategic choice."²⁰ This approach takes a more positivist viewpoint and steps away from the less structured variables of culture and behavior put forth by the first and second generation scholars.

In sum, strategic culture acknowledges that foreign policies are not based solely on material interests, but can also be guided by socially constructed values and norms. Citing Harald Muller, Katzenstein notes "norms can emerge in a variety of ways, spontaneously evolving, as a social practice, consciously promoted, as political strategies to further specific interests, deliberately negotiated, as a mechanism for conflict management; or as a combination."²¹ As a

¹⁷ Colin S. Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 1 (January 1999): 49–69, accessed October 10, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org.lumen.cgscarl.com/stable/20097575>.

¹⁸ Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (Spring 1995): 32-64, accessed December 17, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org.lumen.cgscarl.com/stable/2539119>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Peter J. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 227.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

result, state interests and strategies are shaped by a never ending political process that generates publically understood standards for action. Moving beyond the narrower definition of strategic culture as it relates to the use and control of military force, newer interpretations look at political, economic, social and environmental security threats as well as considering prestige and reputation as factors in decision making. The end of the Cold War and bipolarity provided an impetus to re-examine the shifting balance of power and states relationships with one another and reinvigorated the study of security cultures and their impact on strategic decision making, as well as the opportunity for states to incorporate new norms into old identities. Particularly as we look at the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, an assessment of strategic culture has been critical to the acknowledgement of legitimate anxieties and post Cold War state-building narratives.

Chapter Two: Methodology

This monograph uses a qualitative case study method to determine how and to what extent strategic culture ideates in national security documents and other public texts, and to what level it influences the policy choices and actions of certain states in Central and Eastern Europe - Poland, Russia, and Romania. These countries were chosen for their geography, status as former Warsaw Pact countries and relationships with the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) and the European Union (EU).

This work will examine the application of the theory of strategic culture to the policy responses of Poland, Russia, and Romania to the Ukrainian crisis in Crimea. Such an assessment should lead to a better understanding of contemporary attitudes towards Russia from former members of the Warsaw Pact and the influence historical relationships have had on their development of current national security identities and strategy. Do the security choices made in the post Cold War era and responses to a particular current event reflect each country's unique historical experiences, stated national security goals and individual strategic cultures and how dominant is strategic culture in these choices? Do, as hypothesized Kerry M. Kartchner, a certain

set of conditions allow for, strategic culture to play a more dominant role in decision-making? These conditions would be, first, a strong level of perceived threat to a group's identity, existence or resources or belief that the group is at a disadvantage; second, a strong group identity and the leadership often uses cultural symbols in support of security goals and aspirations; third, a "high degree of homogeneity" within the strategic culture and, finally, a history which leads to a tendency to perceive threats.²²

The research framework is consistent with that described by Alistair Ian Johnston. The first step is to establish a falsifiable definition of strategic culture. This paper uses the definition proposed by Thomas Mahnken of "strategic culture" defined as "that set of shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives."²³ This definition is also used by the Army War College for instruction on drafting national security strategies.²⁴ Second, the research will identify elements of strategic culture which are present in the society's strategic text traditions. In this case, these texts will be the most recent National Security Strategies (NSS) of the representative countries and public statements. Third, the research will look for examples

²² Jeffrey S. Lantis, "Strategic Culture and Threat Assessment" (lecture, Second Annual Joint Threat Assessment Workshop, Chicago, April 4, 2006), 1-27, accessed November 15, 2015, http://www.jtac.uchicago.edu/conferences/06/presentations/Lantis_Presentation.ppt.

²³ Thomas G. Mahnken. *United States Strategic Culture*. (Washington, DC: Science Applications International Corp, 2006), accessed October 15, 2015, http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/dtra/mahnken_strat_culture.pdf.

²⁴ Alan G. Stohlberg, "How Nation-States Craft National Security Strategy Documents" (monograph, Army War College: Strategic Studies Institute, 2012), 11, accessed October 15, 2015, <https://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/people.cfm?authorID=873>.

of strategic culture in policy behavior and will focus on post-Cold War security choices and current responses to the Crimean crisis.²⁵

Johnston's methodology is based on two primary assumptions. The strategic level should show the nature the of the adversary and the threat it poses, as well as the ability to use force affectively to control outcomes or eliminate threat. On the operational level, or the level where culturally influenced behaviors are likely more influential, we should expect to see components of strategic culture manifest in a country's stated strategic preferences.²⁶ To test for evidence of a strategic culture at the first level, major formative events in the individual country's history will be reviewed, particularly how each has been influenced by its dominant neighbor to the east, Russia. The country's individual defense policies and capabilities will also be reviewed, with an emphasis on continuity in post-Cold War security policies, national priorities as presented in the most recent individual national security strategies and current actions with regard to the Russian incursion into the Ukraine.

²⁵ Peter J. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 222.

²⁶Ibid., 223.

Table 1. Variables and Indicators for Level of Strategic Culture Present in Behaviors

VARIABLES	INDICATORS		
	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
First Level - National Identity and Narrative	National Narrative and Identity Strongly Accepted Part of National Discussion. Repeated Presence of National Narrative and major formative events in Current Strategic Documents and Public Statements	National Narrative partially developed/ inconsistent over time	No cohesive national narrative
Second Level - Stated Strategic Preferences identified in National Security Strategy (Texts)	Threats - Primary narrative threats identified using language such as "vital, critical, major." Ideals - Ideals represented by law, government structure, and institutional behavior.	Some priority threats tied to formative events but indistinct connection	Threats inconsistent over time, not tied to geographic boundaries or historical events
Second Level - Policy Toward Ukraine	Policy consistent with stated ideals, threats, policies.	Policy toward Ukraine partially consistent with stated ideals, policies and threats.	Policy toward Ukraine inconsistent with stated policies.

Source: Created by author with input from Alastair Iain Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China," *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identities in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996; Biehl, Heiko. *Strategic Cultures in Europe Security and Defence Policies across the Continent* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013), 272.

Documenting Strategic Preferences

Along with existing historical narratives, a country may manifest its strategic culture through its "Grand Strategy" which can be represented in its national security strategy and other security related documents. A NSS is meant to be a document which reflects national interests and domestic political considerations as well as institutionalize national priorities.²⁷ A state's assessment of its priorities are based on a desire to articulate its values, identify threats, and

²⁷ Alan G. Stohlberg, "How Nation-States Craft National Security Strategy Documents" (monograph, Army War College: Strategic Studies Institute, 2012), 4, accessed October 15, 2015, <https://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/people.cfm?authorID=873>.

identify resources to address priorities. These characteristics will be defined by "how state actors choose to define the concepts of national interest and strategic culture on behalf of the nation" and "a determination of how the state defines national security for itself."²⁸ The language of security documents verbalizes interests with terms such as "vital," "critical," and "major" appearing in scholarly works and government documents to reflect the level of concern and prioritization of state interests. Strategic culture as determined by "geography and resources, history and experience and society and political structure" frame the national security dialogue and are among the primary determinants behind how nations think about strategy.²⁹ For example, as will be shown later, the pressures of geography have made Poland painfully aware of its strategic vulnerability to its powerful neighbors. On the other hand, the United States has often been able to ignore much of the drama of European balance of power politics simply because of the distance. The formation of strategy also rests on a society's economics, religion, ideology, cultural, and not least, the nature of the government.³⁰ In *How Nation States Craft Security Strategy Documents*, Alan G. Stolberg notes that countries often fall into three categories when assessing their roles as members of the international system and understanding of what their security roles should be and are generally either globally or regionally focused, or prioritize immediate borders and internal domestic security issues. This will also become more evident in the analysis of the national strategies of Poland, Russia, and Romania. The making of national strategy is "a process...that involves internal political influences and idiosyncrasies of individual behavior as well as the pressures of external events and threats."³¹

²⁸ Alan G. Stohlberg, "How Nation-States Craft National Security Strategy Documents" (monograph, Army War College: Strategic Studies Institute, 2012), 4, accessed October 15, 2015, <https://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/people.cfm?authorID=873>.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁰ Murray, Williamson, *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 13.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

Chapter Three: Case Study One - Poland

"Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they aren't out to get you."

—Joseph Heller, *Catch-22*

Disappearing borders, omnipresent threats, and sometimes reluctant allies have instilled in Poland a level of strategic uncertainty which differentiates it from its contemporary European neighbors. When looking at the reflections of Polish strategic culture in the development of its foreign and defense policies since the end of the Cold War, Russia stands out as the most critical influence on Poland's attitudes and priorities towards their national security. Russia has been the driving force in Poland's security narrative and its efforts to integrate into Western organizations and alliances. Poland's lengthy history with its eastern neighbor and the ever present Russian force have greatly influenced Poland's sense of self and self-reliance and deeply ingrained the sense of Russia as the pre-eminent existential threat. In 1996, *Gazeta Polska* offered the following synopsis of Poland's historical territorial interactions with Russia:

"966 beginning, 1772 Russians entered, 1793 Russians entered, 1795 Russians entered, 1831 Russians left but they entered again, 1863 Russians left but have entered again, 1918 Russians have left, 1920 Russians entered but left soon, 1939 Russians entered, 1944 Russians entered, 1981 allegedly Russians were about to enter, 1992 Russian say they will leave in a moment, 1993 Russians have left, 1994 Russians say they will come again, 1995 Russians say it is too early for NATO, 1996 Russians have invented the corridor to have a way to enter."³²

Geographically defined by its position between West and East and hemmed between ambitious and powerful neighbors, Poland has an intensely unique history on the European continent. The dubious distinction of disappearing from the map provides useful insight not only into its current attitudes toward Russia, but into Poland's strategic defense choices in the post Cold War period. Three major historical misfortunes repeatedly arise in Poland's narrative which have

³² Torsti Siren, *New World Order – Reconstructing Polish Defense Identity after the Cold War Era* (Helsinki: National Defence University, 2009), 244.

greatly influenced Polish security decisions since the collapse of the Soviet Union and continue to evidence themselves in current National Security Strategy. These three events are the three eighteenth century partitions which progressively destroyed Polish statehood; the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement and Katyn Forest massacre in 1940 which divided Polish territory and effectively wiped out the officer corps, and the "betrayal" of Poland by Western powers following the Yalta conference in 1945, where Poland was once again left in the hands of Russian invaders and without control of their own political structure.

The partitioning of Poland occurred in three stages in 1773, 1793 and 1795 and such a division of a historic European state had no precedent in Europe.³³ Russia had run Poland as a Russian protectorate since the early 1700's and Poland had also traditionally served as an political and military arena for for Sweden, Prussia, France and Austria.³⁴ Such interference left Poland with little autonomy and kept the Polish state weak and ineffective. When Polish King Stanislaw August made attempts to modernize the dysfunctional political system and weaken outside authority, Russia encouraged religious dissension in Poland-Lithuania's sizeable Eastern Orthodox population. This provoked a Catholic uprising by a league of Polish nobles. Following this rebellion, Russia, Prussia, and Austria forced partition on Poland-Lithuania commonwealth under the pretext of restoring order.³⁵

While the 1772 partition did not destroy Poland-Lithuania, it did drive the recognition of the need for internal reforms and Poland's identification as a western-minded nation likely has some of its origins in this time period. The Polish King was quite progressive and he and fellow reformers were attuned to the ideals of the European enlightenment and Western political figures

³³ Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland in Two Volumes, Volume I, The Origins to 1795* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 511.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 513.

³⁵ Glenn E. Curtis, *Poland: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), 11.

such as George Washington and Edmund Burke. In 1791 the Polish Sejm produced Europe's first written Constitution which provided for legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government; and established "people's sovereignty" for certain classes.³⁶

In 1792, domestic and foreign reactionaries combined to end reform in Poland. In cooperation with Prussia, Russia invaded Poland under the pretense that Poland had been radicalized by the spirit of the French Revolution. This led to a second partition which greatly reduced Poland's territories. In an attempt to combat the partition, and led by a military officer who had fought in the American revolution, Poland revolted. The revolt had some limited success but was eventually defeated by superior Russian forces. It was the third partition following this revolt which effectively erased the Poland-Lithuania Commonwealth from the map.³⁷ According to historian Norman Davies, the three partitions all followed a predictable pattern. Outside actors would obstruct Polish reform plans, Poles would revolt, and suppression by Russian forces usually followed.³⁸ Unfortunately for Poland, the occasion of its demise after the third partition was little noted as most attention was being paid to Revolutionary France. With the third partition, Austrians occupied Krakow, Prussians replaced Russians in Warsaw, and Russians took large portions of the eastern border region. This partition was essentially the end of the Polish state and the treaty denied Poland its name "in view of the necessity to abolish everything which could revive the memory of the existence of the Kingdom of Poland."³⁹

³⁶ Glenn E. Curtis, *Poland: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992), 11.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland in Two Volumes, Volume I, The Origins to 1795* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 527.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 542.

New Century, Old Foes

Although Poland eventually regained sovereignty following World War I, the Polish experience in World War II again proved how tenuous Polish national existence could be and further ingrained Poland with a mistrust of Russian intentions. The 1939 Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and the following Katyn Forest massacre remain an important part of the Polish/Russian narrative. The pact guaranteed that Germany could invade Poland without fear of Soviet intervention, and within a few short weeks after invasion, Poland collapsed and its territory was divided. The Soviet Union began mass deportation of Poles from Soviet occupied territory and over a million Poles were sent to Siberia where they later died. The Soviet Union captured over two-hundred thousand Polish soldiers in Eastern Poland, who were later joined by Polish reserve officers who had sought refuge in Estonia. When Estonia was taken, the soldiers were handed over to Soviet authorities. It was later discovered that 15,000 of these soldiers, including approximately 8,300 Polish officers were executed by the NKVD and had been buried in mass graves.⁴⁰ After the discovery of the mass graves by the Germans in 1943, Poland requested a Red Cross investigation. The Soviets used this opportunity to claim Poland was collaborating with the Germans, end discussions with the Polish government in exile, and begin creating the communist government which would rule Poland for the next fifty years. Katyn became the symbol of Stalinist government in Poland.⁴¹

Finally, unlike France, Poland was not granted "victory power" status at Yalta even though Poles had participated in multiple allied war efforts.⁴² Following the failure of the Warsaw

⁴⁰ J.K. Zawodny, *Death in the Forest: The Story of the Katyn Forest Massacre* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962), 5.

⁴¹ Paul Allen. "Truth Behind the Bodies in the Forest." *The Times*, Sep 01, 2009, accessed November 17, 2015, <http://search.proquest.com.lumen.cgscarl.com/docview/320232380?accountid=28992>.

⁴² Torsti Siren, *New World Order – Reconstructing Polish Defense Identity after the Cold War Era* (Helsinki: National Defence University, 2009), 244.

Uprising, Soviet troops were already occupying Poland and had a provisional government in place. Although the U.S. and Great Britain had supported the Polish government in exile, Stalin demanded Soviet interests in Poland be recognized. While the final Yalta agreement called for elections, many felt this left Poland condemned to communism, but Roosevelt felt there was little he could do since the Soviets had already occupied Poland. The resulting agreement left Poland feeling isolated and betrayed by the Allies and has had its lingering consequences on Poland's strategic culture. While its geographic position in Europe makes alliances for Poland necessary, it is likely wise not to rely on others too heavily.⁴³

In the following decades, Poland was never content with Russian hegemony and its history of revolt continued. During the Cold War period, Poland was often recalcitrant and worked to undermine Russian influence. In 1956, Poles once again took to the streets to protest Soviet influence and influenced a popular revolt in neighboring Hungary. A series of strikes in 1970 led to the creation and eventual recognition of the "Solidarity" movement. The Polish exile community stayed active and Pope John Paul II, a native Pole, was an outspoken anti-communist. When looking at these representative events in Polish history, Poland's strategic culture of antipathy toward Russia and desire to create a self-help defense system seems preordained - resistance to Russian dominance and a self-help attitude have been the consistent responses of the Polish state and its peoples to security challenges.

Post Cold War Security Choices

If understood as a set of beliefs and enculturated responses to the use of force and state-centric attitudes and practices, Poland's strategy for nation-creation and self-preservation following the Cold War is consistent with historical attitudes. Following the end of the Cold

⁴³ Torsti Siren, *New World Order – Reconstructing Polish Defense Identity after the Cold War Era* (Helsinki: National Defence University, 2009), 244.

War, Poland had several options to pursue to ensure its external security. The country could have opted to remain in a security and economic coalition with Russia, declare its neutrality, or as Russia proposed, enter a pan-European alliance intended to strengthen the OSCE at the expense of NATO - options which were rejected outright.⁴⁴ Poland's first priority was freedom from Russian hegemony. Because of the immediate imperative to create and preserve state identity and territory and capitalize on Russian weakness, in the early 1990's Poland established two primary objectives for security - NATO membership and accession to the European Union (EU). These two alliances would enable Poland to achieve its primary goals of physical security and economic growth, as well as integrate fully into Western institutions and agreements. Integration served to provide more immediate security guarantees and ensure Poland would have a voice in the decision-making process which would directly impact the future of Poland and Eastern Europe. The unofficial Polish policy motto was "never again about us, without us."⁴⁵ Over time, Poland has continued to use integration as a way to shape its own forces and assure a voice in NATO discussions. Poland has actively participated in NATO actions such as those in Kosovo and Iraq, and as the EU's security posture has developed, with EUFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Congo and Chad. Poland has used these deployments in an effort to be seen as a reliable partner worthy and deserving of reciprocal security support as well as test its own forces.⁴⁶

The drive for NATO membership in particular has had a two-fold purpose. Not only did Poland's weak military status make territorial defense on its own unlikely, integration would provide Poland the time and space necessary to strengthen its independent capabilities. The strength of Poland's economy has allowed it to act on the self-help aspect of its security policy

⁴⁴ Torsti Siren, *New World Order – Reconstructing Polish Defense Identity after the Cold War Era* (Helsinki: National Defence University, 2009), 170.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Biehl, Heiko, *Strategic Cultures in Europe Security and Defence Policies across the Continent* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013), 272.

and strategic culture. While other major European allies have made cuts, Poland increased its defense spending and continued to implement a modernization plan for the armed forces. As of September 2013, spending on modernization was expected to reach approximately 30 billion dollars by 2022.⁴⁷ Although Poland continues to purchase military hardware heavily from Western countries and will need to partner heavily with them to fully capitalize on technological capacity, the modernization strategy also calls for the development of Poland's indigenous defense industry. Eventually the government hopes Polish suppliers will be able handle up to 80 percent of defense projects.⁴⁸ Poland's efforts to strengthen its own production abilities and modernize forces are consistent with its desire to provide for its own security and make up for decreased emphasis on the European theater by the U.S., and likely end of eastward NATO expansion. According to well known scholar of Central European studies, Andrew Michta, Polish security policy can be summed up in one Polish proverb: "If you can count, ultimately count on yourself."⁴⁹

In addition to Poland's moral ethos to support the Western integration of its eastern neighbors and former Soviet satellites, Poland's desire to foster NATO expansion serves a most practical purpose. Poland has consistently seen itself in the uncomfortable position as the last frontier on the European border.⁵⁰ Supporting NATO accession ensures additional real estate between Poland and an eastern threat. Poland was critical of NATO's decision not to offer MAP to Georgia during the April 2008 Bucharest Summit, and not surprisingly was critical of Russian

⁴⁷ Andrew A. Michta, "Polish Hard Power: Investing in the Military as Europe Cuts Back," American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, December 2013, accessed November 15, 2015, https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/-polish-hard-power-investing-in-the-military-as-europe-cuts-back_170557821177.pdf.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Torsti Siren, *New World Order – Reconstructing Polish Defense Identity after the Cold War Era* (Helsinki: National Defence University, 2009), 171.

military action in Georgia in 2008.⁵¹ In a bit of geopolitical irony, as Poland sees Georgia and Ukraine as buffer states to invasion from the East, Russia considers them buffer states to invasion from the West.

As a statement of strategic culture, the National Security Strategy (NSS) which Poland published in 2014 reinforces not only Poland's focus on territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, and democratic order, but the perception of Poland's strategic culture as one obsessed with the Russian threat from the East. The NSS identifies relations with Russia as one of four main factors which are critical to the security of Europe, with the others being NATO, the EU, and the continued strategic presence of the U.S. on the continent.⁵² The NSS explicitly identifies Russia as one of the major factors for stability in Europe, and calls for relationship building (particularly with NATO and the EU) with respect for international law, "sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, as well as freedom to choose their own path of development, political and military alliances."⁵³ Poland is very alert to the wolf nipping at their heels. In a thinly veiled description of Russia's actions in Crimea, Poland highlights the risk of "regional and local conflicts" which engage the country either directly or indirectly and "in its closest vicinity...a large concentration of military potentials, also in offensive posture."⁵⁴ Poland follows with a direct condemnation of Russia's "confrontational policy" in Ukraine which Poland considers to be negatively impacting security in the region.⁵⁵ The situation in Ukraine is a direct challenge to

⁵¹ David Cadier, *CFSP and Central European Strategic Cultures: The Visegrad Countries and the Georgian Crisis* (Brussels: Sciences Po/CERI and CEFRES, 2009), accessed December 17, 2015, http://www.eu-consent.net/library/phd/Award-winner3_2009.pdf.

⁵² Poland, National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland (Warsaw, 2014), accessed November 15, 2015, http://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/NSS_RP.pdf.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

NATO and a test of Poland's post Cold-War security policy.

What the Ukraine Crisis Says About Poland's Strategic Culture

"Without an independent Ukraine, there cannot be an independent Poland" -

—Jozef Piludski

While Poland's history with Ukraine has not been without its difficulties, Ukrainian independence in 1991 signaled a new relationship with Poland and a focus on a strategic relationship based on "avoiding political isolation in the shadow of Russia."⁵⁶ Although Poland initially prioritized NATO membership over dealings with Ukraine, Poland has actively sought to support an independent and viable Ukraine since the mid-1990's. Not only would an independent Ukraine satisfy Poland's NATO requirement to be a regional leader, Poland hoped its cooperation would lead to a strong, stable Ukraine allied to Western security institutions (in so much as it was possible) and to a friendlier Ukraine standing between Russia and Poland.⁵⁷ From a Polish perspective, better a Ukrainian "speed-bump" than a Polish one. In its role as ambassador to the East, Poland has tried to act as a mentor to Ukraine and facilitate its transformation to a stable democracy. The two countries made some tangible progress in security cooperation and in 1995 established a joint Ukrainian-Polish battalion.⁵⁸ Economic cooperation increased significantly and Poland remained intent on integrating Ukraine more closely with the West. While Poland has a largely homogenous population and has been a shining example of post Cold-War economic and political reform, in contrast, Ukraine has been plagued by ethnic divisions, poor governance, corruption, and economic reliance on Russia. Unfortunately, the Ukraine's complicated political

⁵⁶ Marcin Zaborowski, *Poland: A New Power in Transatlantic Security* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 143.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 145.

environment often left it as the pariah state outside European norms and made Poland's attempts at Ukraine's "Europeanization" more difficult. From Poland's point of view "Ukraine is a mission, for the EU, it is merely a problem."⁵⁹

The Russian annexation of Crimea has tested the limits of NATO and European willingness to confront renewed Russian vigor. Following protests which favored closer economic integration with Europe and the ouster of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich in February 2014, Russia deployed forces to the border of Ukraine and annexed the port city of Sevastopol and the Crimean Peninsula.⁶⁰ The crisis in Crimea has confirmed Poland's fears that Russia would attempt to renew its influence on its eastern borders and violate the state sovereignty of former Warsaw Pact members. In a June 2015 Pew public opinion poll, of the major NATO countries Poland is the most worried about the Russian threat, with 70 percent of respondents saying Moscow posed a major danger. This compares with approximately 38 percent of German respondents asked the same question.⁶¹ Polish concerns over increasing Russian aggressiveness on its eastern border were also clearly reflected in candidate positions in the Polish presidential campaign in 2015. Security was the most important topic, and in public statements, the two main candidates, Bronislaw Komorowski and Andrzej Duda, maintained a hard line toward Russia and their advocacy with the EU and NATO for support for the government in Ukraine.⁶² The December 2015 parliamentary election of a right-leaning

⁵⁹ Marcin Zaborowski, *Poland: A New Power in Transatlantic Security* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 149.

⁶⁰ Robert McMahon, "Ukraine in Crisis," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified August 25, 2014, accessed December 13, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/ukraine/ukraine-crisis/p32540>.

⁶¹ Kate Simmons, Bruce Stokes, and Jacob Poushter, "NATO Public Opinion: Wary of Russia, Leery of Action on Ukraine," Pew Research Center, accessed December 13, 2015, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/10/1-nato-public-opinion-wary-of-russia-leary-of-action-on-ukraine/>

⁶² Annabelle Chapman, "Don't Bring a Dove to a Polish Hawk Fight," *Foreign Policy*, May 9, 2015, accessed December 15, 2015. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/05/09/dont-bring-a-dove-to-a-polish-hawk-fight-presidential-election-russia-ukraine/>

government is unlikely to change these attitudes.

Throughout the crisis, Poland has been vocal about the need for action. At the European level, Poland has advocated for sanctions for against Russia, continued calls for economic and humanitarian support to the government in Ukraine and stepped forward to mediate talks in early 2014. Poland has consistently reached out to European capitals to press the issue and President Duda made an official visit to Ukraine in December 2015 to support the continuation of sanctions against 14 Russian companies and member's of Putin's inner circle including five major Russian energy companies. Poland has consistently reached out to European capitals to press the issue and Duda made an official visit to Ukraine in December 2015 to call for a continuation of these sanctions against Russia which were to expire on December 31. The February 2014 talks, which also included Weimar partners Germany and France, showcased Poland's growth as a regional leader though not yet a power player. Poland's diminished role in further negotiations was a bit of a blow, with some commentator's accusing Germany and Russia of once again talking "over our heads," and ignoring Poland and Ukraine's vital interests, but Germany remained tough and advocated for further sanctions.⁶³

So what does the Ukrainian crisis say about Poland's strategic culture? Clearly the historical influence of Russia has played a major role in Poland's assessment of Russian intent and desire to block further expansion of Russian territorial aggression. Poland is also aware of its geographic vulnerability and position as the Eastern frontier of Western "civilization" and the security reach of its alliances. Poland's policy actions and public statements have remained true to its post Cold-War goals of military and economic alliances with an independent military capability - supporting NATO and EU security operations while at the same time ensuring its own defense budget and industries have become more robust. Circumstances have also shown

⁶³ Piotr Boras, "Can Poland Remain a Leader of EU Foreign Policy," European Council on Foreign Relations, last modified February 5, 2015, accessed December 15, 2015. http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_can_poland_remain_a_leader_of_eu_foreign_policy418.

Poland's maturity as a regional leader and self-appointed voice of warning on Russian intentions.

Chapter Four: Case Study Two - Romania

"The dramatic wish of Romanians at the end of the Second World War was to be occupied by the Americans and not by the Russians."

—Traian Basescu, Author

The history of Romania has been marked by diverse territories, repressive regimes, and a troubled transition from dictatorship to modern democracy. As a European crossroads, Romania has suffered from being neither wholly this nor that, and its identity subject to the influences of Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe. Even as member of the Warsaw pact, Romania did not share the same strategic importance to the Soviet Union as Poland or Czechoslovakia, and its nonconformist nature under the repressive Ceausescu regime created the image of a "maverick" state not subservient to Moscow and with a degree of economic independence. Although much of Romania's antipathy toward Russia can be linked to the aftermath of World War II, Romania's relationship with Russia has long been contentious. The Black Sea region is home to a number of protracted conflicts with a Russian past (including South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh), and the contested Transnistria region has been disputed for centuries. Alternately ruled by the Ottomans, Russians and Romanians, the region remains a pointed reminder of Russian interests in the former Eastern bloc countries and Romania's potential vulnerability to Russian expansionism. Actions in the Ukraine only serve to heighten Romania's fear that neighboring Moldova may be the next target.

Divided Legacy

The geography of Romania places it at the intersection of three cultural and geopolitical boundaries: the Austro-Hungarian influenced Central Europe, Russian and Orthodox Eastern

Europe, and the Balkans, shaped by their own pasts with the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁴ Romania is linguistically linked to portions of Europe and Romanian tradition claims descent from the ancient Romans. This lineage is important for distinguishing Romania from the surrounding non-Latin groups and adding the gravitas of an ancient pedigree.⁶⁵ Some also argue that Romania can claim Central Europe as its axis due to confluence of access to the Rhine, Main, and Danube rivers and European commerce.⁶⁶ Romania has historically been caught between Central European power struggles and Russian spheres of influence and expansion in the Black Sea region. At times territory was also held by Hungary and Bulgaria, and periods of independence were sporadic. The territories of Transylvania, Bessarabia (Moldova), and Bukovina were not united under the Kingdom of Romania until the defeat of the Germans in World War I. Romania's hold on these territories did not last and the years of World War II saw the repeatedly exchange of Romanian territory.

Romania's most recent assessment of the security issues it faces have much to do with its Soviet past. When the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact between Germany and Russia left Germany free to invade Poland, Romania allowed Poland's government to flee to Romania and itself proclaimed neutrality. However, the fall of France left Romania without security guarantors, and Romania, searching for a similar security guarantee and unaware of the German-Soviet pact, aligned with Germany.⁶⁷ In 1941, Romania joined Germany in the invasion of the Soviet Union. Germany

⁶⁴ Radu Sageatu, "Romania: A Geopolitical Outline," Institute of Geography, Bucharest, Romania, accessed 20 February 2016, <http://geoinst.academia.edu/RaduSageata>.

⁶⁵ Cristina Petrescu, "Rethinking National Identity after National-Communism? The Case of Romania," European Network for Contemporary History, accessed February 22, 2016, <http://www.eurhistxx.de/spip.php%3Farticle78&lang=en.html>.

⁶⁶ Radu Sageatu, "Romania: A Geopolitical Outline," Institute of Geography, Bucharest, Romania, accessed 20 February 2016, <http://geoinst.academia.edu/RaduSageata>.

⁶⁷ Ronald D. Bachman, *Romania: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress Federal Research Division, 1991), 42.

rewarded Romania with the return of Bessarabia and Bukovina, and allowed them to annex Soviet lands east of the Dniester.⁶⁸ However, by 1943 the Soviets had destroyed Romanian forces at Stalingrad and Romania's last minute diplomatic efforts with the Allies did not save the country from Soviet occupation. The end of World War II, Romania once again lost Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina went to the Soviet Union, and Southern Dobrudja to Bulgaria. There was also the temporary loss of northern Transylvania to Hungary. Bessarabia still plays an important role in Romanian policy. Bessarabia, which today encompasses parts of Moldova and Ukraine, had been ruled by the Ottomans since the 16th century. By 1812, Russia had annexed the territory as a result of the Russo-Turkish war. At that time, Bessarabia was majority Romanian and was subject to Russification policies in administration, politics and literature.⁶⁹ Much of this same territory is still contested and now involved in a decades-long "frozen conflict" between Romania, Moldova and Russian supported separatists.

In addition to this loss of territory, Soviet forces occupied Romania and remained there until 1958.⁷⁰ The occupation of Romania was harsh, but largely in retribution for Romania's alignment with the Germans. The largest number of forces from German satellite countries had come from Romania and the capture of Odessa was brutal, with a massacre of approximately 30,000 Jews and thousands more deported to concentration camps.⁷¹ The Romanian occupation of Bessarabia was characterized by massive export of resources back to Romania, and in the end,

⁶⁸ Ronald D. Bachman, *Romania: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress Federal Research Division, 1991), 42.

⁶⁹ Charles Upson Clark, *Bessarabia: Russia and Roumania on the Black Sea* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1927), 79.

⁷⁰ James R. Millar ed., *Encyclopedia of Russian History* (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 1292-1294.

⁷¹ Alfred J. Rieber, "The Crack in the Plaster: Crisis in Romania and the Origins of the Cold War," *Journal of Modern History* 76, no. 1 (March 2004): 62-106, accessed March 15, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/lumen.cgscarl.com/stable/10.1086/421185>.

the Soviets did not forget their perfidy.⁷² In contrast to the occupation of Bulgaria, which the Soviet Union recognized as an ally, Romania was required to pay massive reparations, host thousands of Soviet troops, and suffer the consequences.

Identity as Cold War Maverick

The era of the Ceausescu regime, in itself a long brutal tale, has left an imprint on Romanian strategic choices and an identity of nonconformity. Romania's geopolitical position allowed it to move from Soviet domination to their own brand of internal repression based on Ceausescu's cult of personality and efficient police state with a center of power including himself, his wife Elena, and their son Nicu.⁷³ Many of the government's policies were extreme, for example, "systematization" was the policy of rural relocation to urban centers which destroyed at least half of Romania's 13,000 villages.⁷⁴ In contrast to its internal policies, the regimes foreign policy was considered quite progressive. Romania's actions during the Cold War era earned it the reputation as a "maverick." For example, Romania openly condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Soviet documents show that Romania was considered an unreliable ally and Western supporter, if not an overt threat. Moscow noted Romania's refusal to cooperate and was also concerned with Romania's attempts to create an anti-Soviet Balkan Pact.⁷⁵ In the late 1970's, Romanian leadership challenged Soviet policy in the Middle East and Africa, and refused

⁷² Alfred J. Rieber, "The Crack in the Plaster: Crisis in Romania and the Origins of the Cold War," *Journal of Modern History* 76, no. 1 (March 2004): 62-106, accessed March 15, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org.lumen.cgscarl.com/stable/10.1086/421185>.

⁷³ Nelson Duque, "Inside Ceausescu's Romania: An Unquestionably Efficient Police State," accessed 18 March 2016, <https://thevieweast.wordpress.com/2011/07/21/inside-ceausescus-romania-an-unquestionably-efficient-police-state/>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Larry Watts, "The Soviet-Romanian Clash over History, Identity and Dominion," Wilson Center, accessed 18 March 2016, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-soviet-romanian-clash-over-history-identity-and-dominion>.

to support Soviet actions in Nicaragua and Vietnam.⁷⁶ The West, however, was supportive of these policies and any aggravation to the Soviet Union, and appreciated Romania's refusal to condemn NATO and the U.S.

Post Cold War Security Choices

Looking at Romania's post Cold War security choices through the lens of strategic culture, three major themes emerge - its self identification with Central Europe, lingering suspicion of Russian intent, and a struggle for political redemption. The transition has not been easy. The last of the orthodox communist states in Eastern Europe, Romania has struggled to modernize its economy and overcome corruption, as well as create a unified national identity in the post Cold War environment. While Romania has made great steps toward integration with Western norms, the country's sense of identity and strategic culture are still a work in progress.

Economic and social conditions have forced Romania to prioritize domestic concerns. Romania has expressed a desire to move forward in a more Western tradition. much of Romania's current NSS is inward looking and reflects current domestic priorities for transition and stability. The current national security strategy recognizes that the country's primary security interest is stabilizing the internal political system and overcoming some of the "wide gaps separating Romania from the developed European countries."⁷⁷ There is heavy emphasis on guaranteeing the constitutional order and inculcating the rule of law as well as developing civil society and the middle class.⁷⁸ While there is a focus on this economic and social development, Romania's

⁷⁶ Larry Watts, "The Soviet-Romanian Clash over History, Identity and Dominion," Wilson Center, accessed 18 March 2016, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-soviet-romanian-clash-over-history-identity-and-dominion>.

⁷⁷ Romania, National Security Strategy of Romania (Bucharest, 2007), accessed March 3, 2016, <https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/07/ROU>.

⁷⁸Ibid.

foreign policy remains security driven and territorially focused. This emphasis on territory has been consistent in multiple documents and has spurred Romania's desire to integrate into the EU and NATO.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Romania considered NATO accession the best solution for its immediate post Cold War security considerations and as a means to build closer bilateral relations with the United States.⁷⁹ Like other Central European countries, Romania has chosen to push for continued American participation in the region and has chosen to take part in numerous security operations with the United States, including Iraq, as well as support NATO operations in the Black Sea region. The relationship with NATO has been prioritized over that of the EU because of its security dimension, and politicians and citizens have publicly supported cooperation with the US. While Romania's NSS outlines several potential threats, public polls indicated that most citizens believed Romania's cooperation, including a bilateral agreement to host portions of an anti-ballistic missile system was intended to counter Russia.⁸⁰ In addition to its focus on NATO integration, Romania is looking for an expanded regional role based on its geography. Romania is attempting to create a strategic focus for the Black Sea area for Western interests and expand its activities in other nearby regions. Romania hopes this could also potentially support Romania's call for a more vigorous Western response to the stationing of Russian troops in Moldova.⁸¹

Romania on Ukraine

Russian-Romanian relations have not improved and recent events have fueled Romanian skepticism about Russia. Romania is particularly sensitive to the territorial disputes in

⁷⁹ Biehl, Heiko, *Strategic Cultures in Europe Security and Defence Policies across the Continent* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013), 295.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 298.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 299.

Transnistria and Russian actions in the Ukraine have reinforced Romanian perceptions that Russia may attempt similar actions in Moldova. Ukraine's troubles have served as a reminder that territorial losses are still possible, even in the new world order.

Although there have been some tensions between Romania and Ukraine, including a territorial dispute over a sea shelf in the Black Sea and issues regarding Ukraine's treatment of an ethnic Romanian minority, Romania has been supportive of Ukraine during the current crisis. In the past, Romania supported NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia, and has been a consistent supporter of Ukrainian territorial integrity. Although Romania initially said little regarding the protests in Ukraine, the country did respond quickly when protesters were suppressed.⁸² In line with its NSS statement of frozen conflicts, Romania condemned the annexation of Ukraine and actions of all separatists. Their own experiences in Transnistria make them especially sympathetic. Romania has more leeway to take a vocal stand against Russia and has done so in its "maverick" past as well. Romania imports little gas from Russia and has been working to decrease the percentage further. Russian goods also account for only 3.4 percent of Romania's overall trade.⁸³

With a difficult transition to democracy and a stable economic and social system not yet complete, Romania's national narrative and strategic culture are a work in progress. Romania of the post Cold War era, however, looks to a strategic culture based on its non-Slav heritage, historically contentious relationship with Russia, and a struggle to reach parity with the rest of its Central European peers.

⁸² Joerg Forbrig, "A Region Disunited? Central European Responses to the Russian-Ukrainian Crisis," The German Marshall Fund of the United States, February 19, 2015, accessed December 17, 2015, <http://www.gmfus.org/publications/region-disunited-central-european-responses-russia-ukraine-crisis>.

⁸³ Ibid.

Chapter Five: Russia - Case Study Three

"At last, Russia has returned to the world arena as a strong state - a country that others heed and that can stand up for itself."

—Vladimir Putin

The end of the Cold War brought contemplations of peace, prosperity and a democratic Russia aligned with Western visions of a stable, prosperous Europe. Policymakers and scholars questioned the ongoing utility of NATO and the future role of the United States military in Europe. There were great plans for the so-called "peace dividend." The demise of the Soviet Union had left Russia fragmented and dependent on U.S. financial aid to avoid complete collapse, and the early years saw an uneasy friendship and cooperation between former rivals on issues such as arms reduction, counterterrorism, and democratization. This cooperation, however, did not mean that Russia embraced the new state of affairs or was resigned to a weaker global position. With improvements in the Russian economy and the emergence of Vladimir Putin as a leader intent on re-establishing Russian prestige, the following years have shown a Russia striving to reclaim its place as a great power and having no plans to take a secondary role to the U.S. in the international arena.

As interventions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria attest, Russian is willing to use its military and economic power to protect and project its interests and challenge the United States, who it identifies as a danger to Russian national priorities. Power and prestige remain vital to Russian national strategy and the Russian psyche, and Russian actions in the post Cold War reflect a strategic culture shaped by foreign invasion, the quest for great power status and security through spheres of influence and control of border regions.⁸⁴

Russia is a complex character which seems to carry the burden of both inferiority and superiority complexes. A history of invasion seems to have left it feeling perpetually besieged,

⁸⁴ Lawrence Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of War* (London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2006), 34.

and with its history of empire, entitled. Russia has also cast itself as the cultural and political "Other," a viable alternative to East and West and necessary balance to the post Cold War order. Russian national priorities and security choices toward Ukraine reflect their realist traditions and enduring strategic culture.

Russian Identity as a Great Power

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the tumult that followed left Russia with a staggering economy and a military force reduced in size from approximately four million personnel in 1986 to less than one million by 1999.⁸⁵ The collapse not only affected Russia in real terms, but resulted in a weakened position inconsistent with Russia's legacy as a great power and rival equal to the United States.⁸⁶ Russia's position, developed over centuries, as a power influential in both East and West seemingly shattered overnight. Although Russia maintained its nuclear arsenal and seat on the United Nations Security Council, the period of transition left the United States virtually unchallenged and Russia temporarily bereft of its sense of self. As a result, Russia has spent much of the last decade in an attempt to regain global influence and authority. To Russian elites, Russia is an essential global leader and a necessary balance to the world order, and "unlike in any of the other established or rising great powers, the question as to whether or not Russia is a great power is seen as an existential matter."⁸⁷

Much of the language used in Russia's 2015 NSS focuses on Russia's drive to regain influence and prestige. Modern Russia must be a powerful Russia. The document calls for

⁸⁵ Congressional Research Service, *Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol, CRS Report RL3307 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, March 14, 2014), 29.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Nikolas Gvosdev, "Because It Is: Russia, The Existential Great Power," *The National Interest*, accessed March 15, 2016, http://www.gwu.edu/~sigur/assets/docs/major_powers_091407/Gvosdev_on_%20Russia.pdf.

"consolidating the Russian Federation's status as a leading world power, whose actions are aimed at maintaining strategic stability and mutually beneficial partnerships in a polycentric world."⁸⁸ Russia's leadership defines "great power" in realist terms. At a 2006 G-8 summit, now head of the Foreign Affairs committee in the State Duma and Russian commentator, Alexey Pushkov, outlined the factors he believed identified Russia as a great power. These included Russia's military strength, natural resources, and Russia's "indispensability, in part due to its geopolitical location, for solving critical world conflicts," particularly in Asia and the Middle East.⁸⁹

This viewpoint has much to do with Russia's belief that it provides a viable alternative and political pole outside of Western democratic and economic models. Moscow argues that "Russia is a legitimate political model along the lines of a Sovereign or Conservative Democracy, and posits the legitimacy of Russia's own values."⁹⁰ These values include an "autocratic democratic" government and an alternative Eurasian security union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The CSTO is designated in the NSS as a tool to counter regional political and military threats, and foster economic cooperation.⁹¹ Regional endeavors highlight Russia's desire to be the Eurasian power broker. So, while Russia is not quite of the East and not quite of the West (and proud of it), modern Russia desires to play influential roles in both hemispheres, and the NSS notes with "an increase in the Russian Federation's role in resolving

⁸⁸ "New Russian National Security Strategy - Full Text." *BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union*, January 06, 2016, accessed March 3, 2016, <https://lumen.cgscarl.com/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.lumen.cgscarl.com/docview/1753452154?accountid=28992>.

⁸⁹ Nikolas Gvosdev, "Because It Is: Russia, The Existential Great Power," *The National Interest*, accessed March 15, 2016, http://www.gwu.edu/~sigur/assets/docs/major_powers_091407/Gvosdev_on_%20Russia.pdf.

⁹⁰ Andrew Monaghan, "Russian Foreign and Security Policy - a Strategic Overhaul?," *Panorama: Insights into Asian and European Affairs* (02/2009): 87-95, accessed March 3, 2016, http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_19799-1522-2-30.pdf?100608093214.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

the most important international problems," reaffirming that Russia's status as a great power is a long term interest and intrinsic to its identity and strategic culture.⁹²

Territorial Tradition and Threat Perception

Paradoxical to its great power ethos, the Russian strategic culture also displays a siege mentality based on history and geography. When imagining the landscape of Russia, often the first thing that comes to mind is the vast, open space of the tundra. Over the centuries the lack of natural geographic defenses has been a defining characteristic of Russian defense strategy and impetus for territorial expansion. It is this lack of natural boundaries which has left Russia open to repeated invasion from both east and west. The Mongols defeated a coalition of Russian princes in 1223 and returned in 1236. Many cities, including Moscow, were ransacked and burned, and the invasion culminated with the fall of Kiev in 1240.⁹³ The following centuries did not fare much better. There was the failed invasion of Napoleon in 1812; Poland briefly held Moscow in 1610 and invaded Russian territory again in 1920. Soviet Russia was the target of Operation Barbarossa, the largest German military operation of the Second World War.

To counter the succession of enemies and mitigate geographic vulnerabilities, Russian rulers traditionally sought to increase territory and reach outward from the Russian core. The first era of expansion under Ivan III was marked by a blend of nationalism, orthodoxy and military rule. Ivan III enlarged Russian territory northward through diplomacy, purchase and conquest and broke free of the Mongols.⁹⁴ Large scale expansion continued in the sixteenth century under Ivan

⁹² Olga Oliker, "Unpacking Russia's New National Security Strategy" *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, Last modified January 7, 2016, accessed March 3, 2016. <http://csis.org/publication/unpacking-russias-new-national-security-strategy>.

⁹³ Curtin, Jeremiah, *The Mongols in Russia* (Boston: Little Brown, 1908), 240.

⁹⁴ James R. Millar ed., *Encyclopedia of Russian History* (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 1292-1294.

IV and he moved east to the Caspian and south, seizing Grozny. In 1552, Ivan IV destroyed the Mongol strongholds of Kazan and Astrakhan and annexed large portions of Siberia as well as a large Muslim population.⁹⁵ Russian territory and influence continued to increase in the eighteenth century with the reign Peter the Great (Peter I). Peter "opened the window to the West," using diplomacy in conjunction with a new army and navy, defeating the Swedes, and bringing enhanced respect and status to his empire.⁹⁶ Following the defeat of Napoleon, Alexander I was seen as the "savior of Europe" and Russia's military seemed invincible.⁹⁷ By this point, Russia had become intrinsic to the balance of power in Europe and capable of leveraging its large resources. The country, however, was slow to industrialize and the empire gradually weakened, leading to Russia's total defeat in the Russo-Japanese war and the turbulent years of the Bolshevik revolution.

Russian territorial interests did not end with the demise of Imperial Russia. The Soviet Union and its mission of international communism sought to expand its influence abroad, and Stalin's policies were impacted by his view of historical events and experiences with the Germans in World War II. Stalinist Russia determined that the preservation of socialism required "acquiescent border-states," and "the experiences of the interwar years, most notably with Poland, Romania, and Hungary, had further convinced the Soviet leader [Stalin] that he must prevent the reemergence of hostile regimes anywhere along the Soviet Union's western flank."⁹⁸

⁹⁵ James R. Millar ed., *Encyclopedia of Russian History* (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 1292-1294.

⁹⁶ "Peter the Great and His Legacy," New York Public Library, accessed 5 March 2016, <http://web-static.nypl.org/exhibitions/russia/level3.html>.

⁹⁷ Norbert Eitelhuber, "The Russian Bear: Russian Strategic Culture and what it Implies for the West," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 9, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 1-28, accessed March 3, 2016, <http://search.proquest.com.lumen.cgscarl.com/docview/517598503?accountid=28992>.

⁹⁸ Mark Kramer, "Stalin, Soviet Policy, and the Consolidation of a Communist Bloc in Eastern Europe, 1944-1953" (paper presented at The Europe Center, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, April 30, 2010), accessed March 16, 2016, http://tec.fsi.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/evnts/media//Stalin_and_Eastern_Europe.pdf.

The desire to maintain a defined sphere of influence and territorial buffer zone between Russia and the West has continued into the post Cold War era. The creation of the short-lived Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in the early 1990's "reflected Russia's desire to maintain a traditional buffer zone against external threats."⁹⁹ Russia's interpretation of sphere of influence has also played out in its reactions to NATO expansion and EU accession, which Russia viewed as impingements on areas traditionally within the Russian domain. The so-called "color revolutions" in Ukraine (2004-2005), Georgia (2003), and the "tulip revolution" in Kyrgyzstan only served to increase Russian anxiety over its borders and US intent.¹⁰⁰

Russia and Ukraine

"Russia has demonstrated the ability to safeguard sovereignty, independence, and state and territorial integrity and to protect the rights of compatriots abroad."

—2015 Russian National Security Strategy

The territorial uncertainty following the collapse of the Soviet Union left Russian intellectuals and politicians pondering the impact of Ukrainian independence and questioning Ukrainian control over large parts of Ukrainian territory. Russia was left without ownership of significant strategic assets and suffering the loss of culturally and historically significant sites. Quickly following Ukraine's declaration of independence 1991, Russian President Boris Yeltsin reserved the right to review borders with neighboring republics, particularly areas with significant

⁹⁹ Lawrence Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of War* (London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2006), 34.

¹⁰⁰ Olga Oliker, Christopher S. Chivvis, Keith Crane, Olesya Tkacheva and Scott Boston. *Russian Foreign Policy in Historical and Current Context: A Reassessment*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015, accessed March 3, 2016, <http://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE144.html>.

Russian populations such as Donbas, Crimea, and northern Kazakhstan.¹⁰¹ Russian attitudes toward Ukraine are also colored by their shared history, so much so, that in public statements in 2014, Putin described Ukraine as having “invaluable civilizational and even sacral importance for Russia, like the Temple Mount in Jerusalem for the followers of Islam and Judaism.”¹⁰² Ukraine and Russia shared the ancient capital of Kyivan Rus, which was eventually sacked by the Mongols and overshadowed by Muskovy.¹⁰³ And, like much of Eastern Europe, Ukraine has a history of territorial divisions and had portions under the control of Russia, Poland and Austrian empire. In the fourteenth century, the division of Ukraine into east and western influences became greater under the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland, and this division of identity persists into the modern day era.¹⁰⁴ It is also fair to say that "Ukrainian-Russian relations suffer from differing attitudes toward the Russian imperial past - what was a new beginning for Ukraine [in 1991] was a loss of empire and great power status for Russia."¹⁰⁵ The ongoing struggle over the Crimea is representative of that split.

After the declaration of Ukrainian independence, Russia continued to question the legality of Ukraine's control over Crimea and based their argument on two major points. The first

¹⁰¹ Klaus Bachmann and Igor Lyubashenko, eds., *The Maidan Uprising, Separatism and Foreign Intervention: Ukraine's Complex Transition (Studies in Political Transition)* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2014), 3.

¹⁰² Joshua Keating, “Putin Says Crimea is Russia's Temple Mount,” *Slate.com*, December 4, 2014, accessed March 26, 2016, http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_world_/2014/12/04/putin_describes_crimea_as_russia_s_temple_mount_in_annual_address.html.

¹⁰³ Sergey Yekelchik, “The Ukrainian Crisis: In Russia's Long Shadow,” *Origins - Current Events in Historical Perspective* 7, no. 9 (June 4, 2014): 1, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://origins.osu.edu/article/ukrainian-crisis-russias-long-shadow>.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Sergey Yekelchik, “The Ukrainian Crisis: In Russia's Long Shadow,” *Origins - Current Events in Historical Perspective* 7, no. 9 (June 4, 2014): 1, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://origins.osu.edu/article/ukrainian-crisis-russias-long-shadow>.

was the legality of the Soviet Unions transfer of Crimea to Ukraine in 1954. The second point of contention was jurisdiction over the Black Sea Fleet and its ports, including Sevastopol.¹⁰⁶

Russian political elite were not ready to acknowledge that Crimea no longer belonged to Russia and continued to challenge Ukrainian sovereignty over the territory. For example, in 2003, Russia attempted to build a dam to change the coast line to control a navigable channel in the Kerch straight, which connects to the Black Sea.¹⁰⁷ It was also during this time frame that the debate over the fate of Russian populations outside of Federation borders became an important domestic issue. Russia continued to utilize its bases and Black Sea Fleet to spread Russian influence in Crimea and funded pro-Russian NGO's. Russia financially supported anti-NATO protests and the Crimea played a significant role in NATO's decision to delay Ukrainian membership in 2006.

The current conflict in Ukraine has refocused Western attention on geopolitics, something which Russia has never forgotten. The eastward expansion of NATO had been and continues to be problematic for Russia and is tinged with a narrative of Western betrayal and Russia under siege. Many of Russia's policy statements, including Putin's now famous 2007 address in Munich, claimed western promises of no eastward expansion, which NATO denies. The "Color Revolutions" of the early 2000's likely stoked some anxiety for Putin and Ukraine became the red-line. The protests in Maidan, Ukraine, followed protests in Moscow in 2011-2012 where tens of thousands of Muscovites condemned parliamentary elections tainted by fraud on behalf of Putin's party, likely leaving Putin with a sense of vulnerability and need to reassert

¹⁰⁶ Sergey Yekelchik, "The Ukrainian Crisis: In Russia's Long Shadow'," *Origins - Current Events in Historical Perspective* 7, no. 9 (June 4, 2014): 1, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://origins.osu.edu/article/ukrainian-crisis-russias-long-shadow>.

¹⁰⁷ Klaus Bachmann and Igor Lyubashenko, eds., *The Maidan Uprising, Separatism and Foreign Intervention: Ukraine's Complex Transition (Studies in Political Transition)* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2014), 247.

himself both domestically and in the "near abroad."¹⁰⁸ While Western nations view NATO and EU expansion as the victory of liberal institutions and integration, Russian strategic culture remains very much realist in nature. In both public statements and government documents, Russia sees the West as a danger to regional stability and US and EU policies on Ukraine as support for an "anti-constitutional coup d'état." Russia sees Western support for Ukraine and other former Eastern bloc countries as a hindrance to natural integration and a conscious effort to thwart the "realization of Russia's national interests."

Chapter Six: Case Study Findings

Poland, Romania and Russia provide clear examples of the possible differing levels of national strategic culture and the degree of influence strategic culture may have on national policy responses. Significantly, these case studies have shown that the degree and influence of a nation's strategic culture can vary widely among peer nations, such as those of Poland and Romania, and two nations with some commonalities of strategic culture, like Poland and Russia, can have very different policy responses to discrete events. The studies also show that strong strategic cultures arise from a long term sense of self as a sovereign nation, a readily identifiable existential threat to that self, and the economic means and national will to act on that strategic culture.

Consistent with Alastair Iain Johnston's hypothesis, characteristics attributed to a strong strategic culture were found at both the strategic and operational levels of the case study country. The first, or strategic level, showed an enduring national narrative and well-defined adversary. For example, Poland has considered Russia a primary threat and adversary from at least the early eighteenth century and continues to list Russia as its primary threat in Poland's most recent NSS.

¹⁰⁸ Ellen Barry, "Rally Defying Putin's Party Draws Tens of Thousands," New York Times, December 10, 2011, accessed October 25, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/11/world/europe/thousands-protest-in-moscow-russia-in-defiance-of-putin.html?_r=0.

Russia, which also has a strong strategic culture, is pointed in its description of the danger the United States poses to Russia's ability to attain its stated national interests. At the second, or operational, level, where we would expect to see strategic culture manifest in strategic documents, these adversaries were well defined not only in official texts, but in public sentiment and press. In contrast, although Romania is clearly disturbed by Russia's support to separatists in Transnistria, Romania's primary threats are internal - national texts are primarily concerned with more pressing issues of potential economic and social failure and the need to modernize its society.

Each of these three country's actions in Ukraine proved to be very illustrative of its assessed level of strategic culture and the operational realization of its security policies. Consistent with its long term self-identification with the West and as a regional leader, Poland has supported the democratic transition and NATO accession of its eastern neighbors and has been very active in condemning Russia's assault on Ukrainian sovereignty. Although Poland's call to provide military support has been tempered by its cooperation with the EU for a coordinated response to the crisis, Poland has been the most vocal in calling for sanctions against Russia and providing economic and humanitarian support to Ukraine. As Russia has become more aggressive, Poland has also invested more heavily in NATO commitments and its own defense industry. Concurrently, Russian actions in Ukraine strongly reflect its strong strategic culture. Flexing muscle in its neighborhood, Russia has not only challenged eastward NATO expansion, but used the opportunity to assert its Great Power historic status and territorial claims in its "near abroad." Just as the strong strategic cultures in Russia and Poland have resulted in emphatic responses to the turbulence in Ukraine, Romania's response has been more muted. Although Romania had a neighborly relationship with Ukraine, its initial reaction to the crisis was slow and public statements have been limited. Romania's unique geographic location and greater economic and energy independence from Russia have also allowed them a degree of separation from the immediate problem.

From a theoretical standpoint, these case studies have confirmed that elements of realism, liberalism, and constructivism exist in the list of ingredients which make up a nation's strategic culture. A nation's viewpoint can be heavily influenced not only by geography and experience, but national aspirations. While Poland and Romania can call from recent memory experiences with Soviet occupation and imposed political structures, each also aspires to integration with Western norms. Russia continues to struggle with its loss of power and prestige following the collapse of the Soviet Union and desire to reclaim its imperial heritage and influence on world events, but also wishes to create alternative functioning institutions. In sum, "many, probably most, alleged strategic cultural traits are fully rational, in strict, realpolitik terms, given the perceived historical experience of the nations in question."¹⁰⁹ The possibility that different national experiences can lead to consistent policy responses seems a well founded and useful construct for foreign policy analysis.

¹⁰⁹ Colin Gray, "Comparative Strategic Culture'," *Parameters: Journal of the US Army War College* 14, no. 4 (1984): 27, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/Articles/1984/1984%20gray.pdf>.

Table 2. Indicators and Assessment of Level of Strategic Culture Present in Behaviors

	Poland	Romania	Russia
National narrative and Identity - Major Formative Events (1st Level)	Regional leader - Support transition to Democracy Last outpost of Western civilization (NATO frontier) Betrayed by West (Yalta) Mistreated by Russia (Historical Invasions and Soviet Occupation)	Latin not Slav, Western heritage Mistreatment by Russia (Soviet Occupation) Nonconformity Repression under Ceausescu Struggle for political redemption	Great Power Status "Other" - alternative to Western tradition Besieged, Western territorial encroachment Broken promises regarding NATO expansion US hindering Russian attainment of national interests
Priorities Identified in National Security Strategy (2nd Level - Texts)	Threats - Russia as Primary threat, Germany considered pacified. Ideals - Supporter of democratization of Eastern counterparts Ukraine and Georgia	Threats - Economic and Social Failure/ Corruption; Russian involvement in frozen conflict Ideals - Modernize Society and Economy	Threats - United States, Interference in Eurasia, Global Order undermined, Islamists Ideals - Making Russia great again, multi-polarity
Ukrainian Policies (2nd Level - Policies)	Support MAP Call for sanctions against Russia Economic and Humanitarian support to Ukraine government Call to provide military support tempered by EU	Backed NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia Initial Lack of Reaction followed by prompt condemnation following crack-down on protestors Condemns all acts of separatism Allows NATO ships to port during 2014 Black Sea operations	Extending Black Sea Fleet agreement until 2042 Legal Arguments against 1954 agreement Support for pro-Russian NGO's and anti-NATO protestors Support for Russian separatists Hybrid Warfare
Level of Dominance of strategic culture on policy and decision-making	High	Low-Medium	High

Source: Created by author with input from Alastair Iain Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China," *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identities in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996; Biehl, Heiko. *Strategic Cultures in Europe Security and Defence Policies across the Continent* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013), 272.

Conclusion

The end of the Cold War brought with it both great opportunity and great uncertainty. Countries which had been dominated by external influences were now free to create sovereign policies and examine who they were and who they wanted to be. Formulas based on rationalist theory and external factors failed to resonate in a new era of political independence and in which the rise of global communications and economic interdependence made differing political and social cultures readily accessible and relevant to policy discussions. The new social order brought new life to the concept of "Strategic Culture" and the idea that unique national identities and collective experiences have tangible influence on strategic thoughts and choices.

This monograph sought to determine to what extent Poland, Romania and Russia looked to unique historical experiences and capabilities in order to formulate comprehensive security strategies in the post Cold War environment. How did their distinct type and level of strategic culture influence decision-making toward alliances and with regard to their own national interests? Poland and Romania opted to pursue a democratic ideal, heavy investments in alliances, and assumed that the post Cold War status quo could not be taken for granted. Russia followed a traditional quest for great power status and a position as a viable alternative to Western domination. From a policy perspective, Poland, Russia and Romania have been consistent in their goals and choices to achieve their post Cold War objectives.

The Russian annexation of Crimea has also offered the opportunity to assess the relevance of strategic culture on recent events and the relationships of these states to one another. Russian actions represent one of the most direct ideological and territorial challenges to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe since the end of the Cold War. Both Poland and Romania can call from recent memory experiences with Soviet occupation and have reacted accordingly. Russia, too, challenged by NATO's eastward expansion has looked to historical experience and interpretation to guide its actions in its near abroad.

The case studies in this monograph again have shown that the concept of strategic culture does have value from a policy perspective. Of the three case study countries, Poland and Russia exhibited the highest level of strategic culture and have remained the most true to their historic tendencies in their security choices. Romania is still a work in progress, and the stability and level of impact of its territorial disputes with Russia and its developing democratic tradition remain to be seen. So, in the words of Mark Twain, "history may not repeat itself, but it does rhyme." While analysis of strategic culture cannot lead to rigid, predetermined conclusions, it can provide improved understanding into a nation's policies based on its historical experiences, geographic circumstance and cultural motivations.

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