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NATO and the Ukraine Crisis: Collective Securitization

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Introduction

The 2014 crisis in Ukraine marked a tipping point in NATO's relationship with Russia. That relationship had been difficult for many years and particularly fraught since the Russo-Georgia war of 2008. Russia's annexation of Crimea, however, summarily ended a prolonged period of cooperation dating back to the end of the Cold War. At its September 2014 summit, NATO declared that 'Russia's aggressive actions [… have] fundamentally challenged our vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.' The allies pledged to 'reverse the trend of declining defence budgets' and adopted a package of measures designed to reassure its eastern allies and reconfigure its 'military strategic posture.'[1]

How do we account for NATO's abandonment of partnership and consequent strategic reorientation? It could be argued that over Ukraine NATO simply reverted to

[1] 'Wales Summit Declaration' (5 September 2014), paragraphs.1, 6 and 14, available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm?selectedLocale=en}.

type - emphasizing its core military purpose in the face of Russian aggression. The suddenness and persistence of NATO's action is puzzling, however, in three respects. First, NATO had not reacted similarly to previous episodes of Russian bellicosity. Russia's war with Georgia in 2008, and the Russia-Belarus Zapad 2009 and 2013 military exercises (the former culminating in a simulated nuclear strike on Warsaw) caused alarm in Poland and the Baltic States but did not lead the US and the major European allies to shift NATO toward countering Moscow. Such reluctance could have reflected political complacency or a residual belief in the necessity of partnership.[2] Either way, NATO avoided placing Russia and collective defence centre-stage. In fact, Alliance policy since the early 1990s had given equal standing to cooperative security and conflict management (hence, force projection and expeditionary missions in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Libya). Its reorientation from 2014 was, therefore, a signal shift of purpose. That reorientation, second, was unprecedented in its decisiveness. Given NATO's earlier unwillingness to confront Russia, one might have anticipated an allied response limited to political declarations and a suspension of practical cooperation (as had happened after the Russo-Georgian war). The differentiated exposure of the Allies to Russia also made such a course appear likely. Robust action corresponded to the preferences of Poland and the Baltic States, but not necessarily those of NATO's southern and Balkan states or of the powerful quartet of France, Germany, the UK and the US. In the event, these issues were put aside and consensus was joined on a military response. Third, NATO moved toward collective defence in response to the destabilization of a non-member. Such a move might seem explicable in

[2] Anne Applebaum, 'Obama and Europe: Missed Signals, Renewed Commitments', Foreign Affairs, 94:5 (2015), pp.40-41.

precautionary terms, as a means of ameliorating the concerns of allies near to Ukraine. However, that NATO elevated a regional problem to one of existential significance bears some scrutiny.

Our positing of NATO's reaction to the Ukraine crisis as a puzzle may seem counter-intuitive. After all, would one not expect an alliance to respond robustly to aggression near its borders? Such a supposition is not, however, as sound as it might appear. The balancing logic upon which it is based may smack of conventional wisdom but (as we show below) that logic is flawed. The puzzle, therefore, remains: why did NATO act in such a manner *on this occasion* when comparable precedents for balancing existed? Why, in other words, is the Ukraine crisis distinct from previous episodes of NATO-Russia discord to the extent that Russia assumed the status of a threat to the Alliance as such? Attending to that question, further, allows us to say something of significance about NATO and regional security institutions more broadly: how is it that such bodies assume actorness or agency in response to a threat that is collectively defined?

Securitization theory (ST) offers a productive framework to address these issues. From 2014 NATO unambiguously adopted language and policies which positioned Russia as a clear threat. As we show in the next section, standard IR theories cannot account for this shift satisfactorily because their consideration of threat is too narrowly drawn or too detached from their core theoretical claims. ST, by contrast, makes the conceptualization and reaction to threat the direct object of analysis utilizing the concept of referent object, a malleable categorization of those social and political units

which are threatened and which have 'a legitimate claim to survival.'[3] For NATO, the Crimean annexation undermined the European and international order, an order which the Alliance regarded itself as custodian. Russian behavior also held implications for NATO directly, for the security of its eastern members and thus for the credibility of NATO's core functions of deterrence and reassurance. Viewed this way, the referent object for NATO was not the integrity of Ukraine. Expressions of concern in this regard belied the fact that something more important was at stake: European security governance - a system of order with NATO as the presumptive core - was seen to be threatened.

Through the NATO-Russia case, we consider an over-looked aspect of ST. In its original formulation, ST did not regard securitizing actors (those who speak security) as limited to the state.[4] We extend this position by suggesting that collectives of states can be construed as both the actor and referent of security. As such, we demonstrate the relevance of a phenomenon we label collective securitization. In the military domain, such an approach has been left unexplored because here ST assumes that expressions of security are reducible to the state acting alone. Collective securitization relaxes that assumption and so advances ST in four novel ways.

First, through the conceptual apparatus of the most influential variant of ST, the Copenhagen School (CS), we offer a fresh take on the core concepts of securitizing actor and audience. In doing so, we are able to account for a neglected class of phenomena: securitization within a formal institutional setting. Here, the organization in question

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[3] Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, Security: A New Framework for Analysis (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), p.36.

[4] Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998), pp. 42, 45.

articulates security discourse and policy but derives its ability to do so from repeated interactions with its member states. That process (what below we refer to as recursive interaction) means the member states serve as the validating audience of a securitization move and provide an organization with agency in responding to threats. We show thereby that a body like NATO can successfully initiate and define the securitization process. Second, we correct a thematic bias of ST. The delimitation of 'security sectors' to the political, societal, economic, environmental (but all too rarely the military) has led ST to overlook both defence policy and regional security alliances as subjects of enquiry.[5] Analysing collective securitization within NATO begins to make good that neglect. Third, our focus on NATO illustrates how securitization is a dynamic and reversible process. ST had always allowed for desecuritization but the recent history of NATO-Russia relations reveals a process of *resecuritization,* a return to Cold War policies and discourse, albeit reshaped by the experience of the intervening decades. Lastly, while our empirical analysis of collective securitization is tailored to NATO post-Crimea, our model is generalizable to other institutional settings and different security sectors.

The article proceeds as follows. Its first section considers the limitations of IR theory in accounting for NATO's actions in light of the Crimea/Ukraine crises. The second examines issues within ST in order to establish the continuing relevance of CS. The third section then amends ST and so opens the analytical space for an international organization to engage in securitization on behalf of states. The fourth section presents a stylised model of collective securitization to illustrate how such a process occurs. That

[5] Mathias Albert and Barry Buzan, 'Securitization, Sectors, and Functional Differentiations', Security Dialogue, 42:4-5 (2011), pp.413-25.

model is then applied in an empirical section that traces the post-Cold War de-securitization of the Soviet Union/Russia and the subsequent re-securitization of Russia precipitated by the annexation of Crimea. In the conclusion we consider three caveats to our argument.

NATO-Russia and the Limitations of IR Theory

NATO's reorientation after 2014 might be susceptible to explanations drawn from established theories of alliances. Each, however, is deficient in important regards.

A first, seemingly straightforward, approach rests with realism. There is no single realist voice upon which one can draw in reference to the Ukraine crisis. Certainly, prominent realists have commented on the events surrounding Ukraine, John Mearsheimer most notably. Mearsheimer's position on Ukraine is, however, useful only up to a point in that he is more concerned with Russian threat perceptions than those held by the Alliance (arguing that Moscow acted in order to pre-empt Ukraine joining NATO and being converted into a 'Western bastion').[6] His earlier, more general argument that great powers will balance in order to contain 'a dangerous opponent' could, however, have some traction in NATO's case- at least, if we accept Mearsheimer's view of NATO as an instrument of American hegemony.[7] The logic of this position is that Russia's revisionist behaviour in regard to Ukraine has been met by the US, with its

[6] John J. Mearsheimer, 'Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault', Foreign Affairs, 93:5 (2014).

[7] John J. Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001), pp.139, 379.

NATO allies in tow, in order to close off avenues for further expansion.[8]

This preoccupation with balancing is, of course, common to realism,[9] but it is perhaps best typified by Stephen Walt's 'balance of threat' proposition.[10] Walt's argument that alliances such as NATO mobilize to counter threats seems well-suited to the Ukraine crisis. If Russia's seizure of Crimea marked the return of 'geopolitical rivalries […] to centre stage'[11] then the repercussion for NATO is obvious: heightened threat required of the Alliance a turn toward renewed balancing as a means of protecting its newly exposed eastern allies.[12] There are at least three limitations to this argument however. Even accepting balancing by NATO can be demonstrated empirically, these limitations lead us to reject realism's explanation of it.

First, Walt's is a theory of alliance formation not alliance behaviour. This distinction matters because an alliance of long duration such as NATO will respond to threats in a manner that is influenced by established modes of practice, norms of behaviour and received understandings of its threat environment. Second, even if we

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[8] Here, we paraphrase Glenn H. Snyder's reading of Mearsheimer. See his 'Mearsheimer's World – Offensive Realism and the Struggle for Security: a Review Essay', International Security, 27:1 (2002), p.158.

[9] See Snyder (2002), who views Mearsheimer's 'offensive realism' and Kenneth Waltz's 'defensive realism' as having this shared preoccupation.

[10] Stephen M. Walt, The Origins of Alliances (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

[11] Walter Russell Mead, 'The Return of Geopolitics: The Revenge of the Revisionist Powers', Foreign Affairs, 93:3 (2014), p.69.

[12] Mathew Kroenig, 'Facing Reality: Getting NATO Ready for a New Cold War', Survival, 57:1 (2015).

transplant balance of threat theory to established alliances it remains an awkward fit. The four sources of threat (aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power and aggressive intentions) which Walt identifies as bearing upon alliance formation[13] do not all pertain when applied to NATO's reaction to Russia after March 2014. Since 2008, Russia had registered both quantitative and qualitative improvements in its armed forces including the development of force-projection assets.[14] However, as Walt himself has pointed out, aggregate power (population, economic resources and military capability) has not moved in Russia's favour when compared to the combined power of NATO.[15] The objective level of threat to NATO did not, therefore, shift as a consequence of the Ukraine crisis. Perceptions of aggressive intent are, however, a different matter. Those NATO allies in proximity to Russia – the Baltic States and Poland – did register a heightened sense of threat, one rooted in their experience of aggression and occupation during the Soviet period. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that these states have been loudest in calling for measures to counter Russia. But this takes us to a third caveat. Realist positions (and this applies to Mearsheimer as well as Walt) draw inferences on alliance behavior from the material environment (the distribution of capabilities and the balance of power or threat) within which the alliance in question is situated. Walt allows that perceptions of threat will influence this process but a crucial

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[13] Walt (1987), pp.21-26.

[14] Dmitri Trenin, 'The Revival of the Russian Military: How Moscow Reloaded', Foreign Affairs, 95:3 (2016), pp.23-26.

[15] Stephen M. Walt, 'NATO Owes Putin a Big Thank-You', Foreign Policy blog (4 September 2014) available at: {http:foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/04/nato-owes-putin-a-big-thank-you/}

causal mechanism is left unspecified. No theoretical space is given to how perceptions of offensive intent are aggregated within alliances or how such perceptions are converted into policy.[16]

Institutionalist explanations are similarly deficient. In its rationalist form, institutionalism has offered a persuasive account of NATO's resilience and adaptability, but it has done so largely without reference to NATO's external threat environment.[17] Institutionalism, in other words, identifies how NATO has changed but not why. If the policy shift from 2014 was made possible by the possession of flexible institutional assets (in the same way that such assets facilitated NATO's operational evolution in the first two decades after the Cold War) we still need to ask what prompted the use of those assets in the first place? Inferentially, the shift can be explained either functionally (NATO remained possessed of assets of collective defence and so function followed form) or by recourse to state preferences (NATO was the optimal format for collective action to counter Russian behaviour). However, it is not clear from such accounts why collective defence was elevated to high importance and why so suddenly. Indeed, on institutional grounds one might have expected the opposite - NATO being slow to act and doing so inconclusively. As Robert McCalla has argued, an alliance which assumes a

[16] Robert O. Keohane, 'Alliances, Threats and the Uses of Neorealism', International Security, 13:1 (1988), p.172.

[17] Frank Schimmelfennig, 'NATO and Institutional Theories of International Relations', in Mark Webber and Adrian Hyde-Price (eds.), Theorising NATO: New Perspectives on the Atlantic Alliance (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp.22-40.

multiplicity of tasks will become 'less responsive [...] to changes in the threats it faces.'[18] Change is confounded because state and bureaucratic interests coalesce around competing priorities and institutional resources are stretched across different tasks.

Sociological institutionalism differs markedly from its rationalist variant. Here, institutions are not primarily functional in nature, but rather normative. They embody a common identity and condition their members toward appropriate modes of behaviour based on shared values and social norms reinforced by practice. NATO, accordingly, is less a functional organization concerned with managing its members' security problems and more a 'self-defined institutional expression of the Western liberal-democratic community.'[19] Such an interpretation overlaps with analyses which view NATO as part of a broader, normatively-defined security community. Certainly, such a view sits readily with how the Alliance developed during the Cold War, a period when the threat NATO faced was cultural and civilizational as much as military.[20] In the years since, the absence of a single, animating Other has necessarily directed attention to NATO's interior character - the habits or practices of its members, the identity and norms which

[18] Robert B. McCalla, 'NATO's Persistence after the Cold War', International Organization, 50:3 (1996), p.470.

[19] Alexandra Gheciu, 'Security Institutions as Agents of Socialization? NATO and the "New Europe"', International Organization, 59:4 (2005), p.975.

[20] Bradley Klein, 'How the West Was One: Representational Politics of NATO', International Studies Quarterly, 34:3 (1990).

bind them together, and NATO's ability to persist and enlarge.[21] This is not to say that external threat is missing from the analysis or, indeed, that threat is assumed to be fixed. NATO has been seen, for instance, as preoccupied with managing 'shared security risks' (rather than with deterring a single common threat).[22] Yet whether defined as threat or risk a distinct logic is at play. As an expression of security community, NATO's norms and identity determine how it acts upon the outside world. Thus, the Alliance intervened in the Balkans in the 1990s because conflicts there challenged 'Atlantic sensibilities' on human rights.[23] It acted in Libya in 2011 for similar reasons.[24] As for Russia, security community analysis has viewed it, even prior to the Ukraine crisis, as at odds with NATO 'over the rules of the international security game.'[25] Yet Russia was still positioned as a conditional partner, beyond the reach of integration but still susceptible to security management. The lurch from partnership to antagonism from 2014 marked

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[21] Emanuel Adler, 'The Spread of Security Communities: Communities of Practice, Self-Restraint, and NATO's Post-Cold War Transformation', European Journal of International Relations, 14:2 (2008).

[22] Michael John Williams, NATO, Security and Risk Management: From Kosovo to Kandahar (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p.35.

[23] Victoria Kitchen, 'Argument and Identity Change in the Atlantic Security Community', Security Dialogue, 40:1 (2009), p.106.

[24] Simon Koschut, 'Emotional (Security) Communities: the Significance of Emotion Norms in Inter-Allied Conflict Management', Review of International Studies, 40:3 (2014).

[25] Vincent Pouliot, International Security in Practice: The Politics of NATO-Russia Diplomacy (Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.235.

Russia's departure from this 'security game' and confirmation of its outsider status. Security community is the benchmark against which that separation can be judged. The concept lacks, however, an analytical tool that specifies how the separation occurred. For that, we now turn to ST.

Securitization Theory

From ST certain core assumptions can be elicited relevant to the process of collective securitization. To that end, we draw upon CS, still the most influential (and debated) contribution to the securitization literature. Two considerations dictated our choice. First, given the near absence of securitization scholarship in relation to NATO an underlying task of this article is to establish the appropriateness of ST as such. There is no unified or 'grand theory' of securitization upon which we can call in this respect,[26] but CS occupies the 'city-centre' of securitization scholarship. Its foundational concepts thus have a justified claim to be the starting point of application.[27] Second, the 'neighbourhoods' of ST (to continue the analogy) are less suited to the object of our concern. The so-called Paris School, for instance, does not view securitization primarily through rhetorical performance,[28] a weakness in the case under consideration given

[26] Thierry Balzacq, Sarah Léonard and Jan Ruzicka, '"Securitization" Revisited: Theory and Cases', International Relations (online early, 2015) p.24.

[27] Alex Kreidenweis, 'Welcome to Copenhagen: A Tour Guide to Securitization Theory', available at {www.academia.edu/4896122/Welcome_to_Copenhagen_A_Tour_Guide_to_Securitization_Theory}

[28] Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzick (2015), p.11.

that the rupture in NATO-Russia relations from 2014 was occasioned most obviously by a marked shift of discourse.

In its original formulation, CS viewed ST as having a twofold purpose. First, ST explained how issues moved from the realm of 'normal' politics to the realm of security where the state could bypass democratic discourse and procedure. Second, ST isolated the mechanisms whereby such a move was enacted. Securitization is initiated by a speech act, a 'securitizing move' 'through which an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object, and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat.'[29] The alternative, desecuritization process, shifts 'issues off the "security" agenda and back into the realm of public political discourse and "normal" political dispute and accommodation.'[30] Three issues—state-centrism, threat construction, and audience role— have been contested within ST. Our preliminary purpose here is to set up the CS approach as relevant despite these concerns. The further amendments necessary for a theory of collective securitization are then considered in the next section.

The first issue revolves around the 'Westphalian straitjacket' that embeds the CS in Euro-centric understandings of state capacity and which privileges the role of

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[29] Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security, (Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 491.

[30] Michael C. Williams, 'Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics', International Studies Quarterly, 47:4 (2003), p. 523.

authoritative governing elites in threat definition.[31] This charge of state-centrism is only partially justified. Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver have argued that the CS is 'not dogmatically state-centric in its premises' even if for 'contingent, empirical reasons […] securitization theory is […] somewhat state-centric in its findings.'[32] In fact, a not insignificant literature exists informed by ST in which both inter-governmental and non-governmental actors are given due consideration.[33] In a recent intervention, ST has been explicitly applied to NATO,[34] and there is a body of work of longer-standing which, informed by ST, regards NATO through a discursive lens.[35] These studies are not,

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[31] Claire Wilkinson, 'The Copenhagen School on Tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitization Theory Useable Outside Europe?' Security Dialogue, 38:1 (2007), pp. 5–25.

[32] Buzan and Wæver (2003), p.71.

[33] Mely Caballero-Anthony, 'Non-traditional Security and Infectious Diseases in ASEAN: Going beyond the Rhetoric of Securitization to Deeper Institutionalization', Pacific Review, 21:4 (2008), pp.507-25; Jef Huysmans, 'The European Union and the Securitization of Migration', Journal of Common Market Studies, 38:5 (2000), pp. 751-77; Tine Hanrieder and Christian Kreuder-Sonnen, 'WHO Decides on the Exception? Securitization and Emergency Governance in Global Health', Security Dialogue, 45:4 (2014), pp. 331-48; Jocelyn Vaughan, 'The Unlikely Securitizer: Humanitarian Organizations and the Securitization of Indistinctiveness', Security Dialogue, 40:3 (2009), pp. 263-85.

[34] Gabi Schlag, 'Securitization Theory and the Evolution of NATO', in Webber and Hyde-Price (eds.) (2016), pp.161-182.

[35] For instance, Andreas Behnke, NATO's Security Discourse after the Cold War Representing the West (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

however, about *collective* securitization, insofar as they simply swap one actor (the state) for another (an international or non-governmental organization) as the focus of analytical attention. What interests us, rather, is the neglected question of how a group of states undertakes securitization in concert and how, at the international level, that process is expressed and institutionalized. CS initially held out this possibility in relation to the EU.[36] We see no reason why it cannot be extended to NATO.

As for threat construction, the initial and influential claim of the CS was that the speech act itself constituted 'security' not the 'something more real' which the act described.[37] Such a position is now seen as untenable. The speech act is not separate from reality; it only interprets it in a particular way.[38] What threats become subject to securitization is, in fact, a matter of political choice.[39] Both national and system-wide dynamics are relevant here. States will of necessity respond to threats which impact upon them directly (when their territorial integrity, national identity or constitutional order is infringed). Acting collectively in the face of such threats cannot be excluded (acts of solidarity are possible), but collective securitization is more likely to occur when a threat has a systemic referent (impinging upon international and collective

[36] Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998), pp.179-189.

[37] Ole Wæver, 'Securitization and Desecuritization', in Ronnie D. Lipschutz (ed), On Security (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p.55.

[38] Colin McInnes and Simon Rushton, 'HIV/AIDS and Securitization Theory', Security Dialogue, 19:1 (2011), p. 118.

[39] Ole Wæver, 'Politics, Security, Theory', Security Dialogue, 42:4-5 (2011), pp.468, 472.

identities, or the rules and norms governing interstate interactions).[40] NATO's character as a military alliance bound by a mutual defence pledge and as a community of norms means it embraces both these dynamics.

The third contested issue concerns the precise relationship between the securitizing actor and its audience. In their original formulation, Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde suggested 'an issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such.'[41] The act of acceptance, however, was left unexplored thus leaving the audience marginalized as an analytical category. [42] More recently, Wæver has argued that securitization involves political interaction between *both* actor and audience through which agreement is reached on what constitutes the source of insecurity.[43] Viewing securitization in this manner has two advantages. First, it points to a process that is ongoing, one that entails dialogue, negotiation and compromise rather than a single, unidirectional transaction by the securitizing actor. Here, the audience becomes more than a passive recipient of a securitizing move; it empowers that move and may even initiate it. This process within an international organization we define as recursive

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[40] Although published well before the notion of securitization was conceived, our thinking here is influenced by Wolfram Hanrieder, 'Actor Objectives and International Systems', Journal of Politics, 27:1 (1966), pp. 109-32.

[41] Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998), p. 25.

[42] Matt McDonald, 'Securitization and the Construction of Security', European Journal of International Relations, 14:4 (2008), p.572.

[43] Wæver cited in Paul Roe, 'Is Securitization a "Negative" Concept? Revisiting the Normative Debate over Normal Versus Extraordinary Politics', Security Dialogue, 43:3 (2012) p.255.

interaction: repeated bargaining procedures and substantive exchanges between a security actor (the organization) and its audience (the organization's constituent members) over the content and form of threats as well as the policy responses appropriate to mitigating them. In collective securitization this means the audience takes on a particular form and meaning; it is not external to the securitizing actor but constitutive of it. Second, an active understanding of audience helps explain policy choice: why some issues (and not others) are securitized and, thus, why certain policies are formulated in response.[44] The outcome here remains dependent on the balance of positional power between actor and audience. In a national setting the former will always have an advantage (even in democracies) given its association with government and access to the resources of the state. The latter (whether defined as public opinion, the electorate, political elites, or interested minorities) will be more constrained in its ability to mobilize political resources. Collective securitization (particularly in the military sector) gives rise, however, to a quite different dynamic: the empowering audience is itself comprised of states and the securitizing actor (i.e. NATO) does not enjoy default positional power. Such a dynamic affirms the need to take the role of audience, and recursive interaction, seriously.

Amendments to Securitization Theory

Notwithstanding the departure from state-centrism noted above, ST has been concerned largely with tracing the mechanisms and consequences of securitization

[44] Sarah Léonard and Christian Kaunert, 'Reconceptualizing the Audience in Securitization Theory', in Thierry Balzacq (ed), Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), pp.57-76.

within and by states. With the exception of Jürgen Haacke and Paul Williams[45] (to whom we return below) there has been no systematic effort to apply ST to relations among states in a process of collective securitization. Five amendments to ST are necessary to support such an approach, rendering it relevant to NATO (and, by extension, to other regional security organizations).

A first amendment centres on the need to differentiate between private and public security goods. ST assumes that security is, in effect, a private good, subject to a national policy programme with national repercussions, even in those cases where the securitized threat is transnational, for example terrorism or a communicable disease. Although Buzan and Wæver's understanding of 'macrosecuritization' suggests that securitization does not stop at the water's edge,[46] ST has paid too little attention to the problem of how system-level, public goods are securitized. The necessary shift of focus here would see securitization as the outcome of a shared threat perception across states followed by agreement on the appropriate policy response. International organizations (and regional security organizations specifically) are the obvious framework within which to observe this process. This contention may lack purchase in many regions of the world. However, in the densely institutionalized European and transatlantic security space, it is persuasive both conceptually and empirically.

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[45] Jürgen Haacke and Paul D. Williams, 'Regional Arrangements, Securitization, and Transnational Security Challenges: the African Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Compared', Security Studies, 17:4 (2008), pp. 775-809.

[46] Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, 'Macrosecuritization and Security Constellations: Reconsidering Scale in Securitization Theory', Review of International Studies, 35:2 (2009), pp. 253-276.

Even if we accept that NATO is an important actor in this space, a second amendment becomes necessary. This relates to the notion of agency. ST risks essentializing the security actor, a potential problem if NATO is regarded as a unitary actor or agent of securitization. To avoid this, our previous observations on the role of audience are relevant but need extending. Recursive interaction we suggested involves both the securitizing actor (the organization) and its members (who constitute the audience), but recognition needs to be given to the fact that members may be so powerful as to blur the actor-audience distinction. Indeed, within a strictly inter-governmental body such as NATO only members have the power to validate a securitization move and the policies that flow from it, and certain members (in NATO's case, the US) may exert a decisive influence. This need not, however, render security organizations mere ciphers for the 'atomistic pursuit' of individual member interests.[47] NATO, specifically, is the repository of a common strategic language as well as a set of practices and norms built up over decades. NATO aggregates material power but also embodies symbolic power, assuming in its own right an authority to speak and act in the security field. By this view, there is no neat distinction between the organization and its membership. Those inside organizations, Michael C. Williams has suggested, 'must work within the parameters of the prevailing institutional form […] organizations wield power over their members, but it is a power which these members will upon themselves.'[48] Applied to ST this insight suggests that individual allies can initiate a demand for securitization, but it is the Alliance which renders the securitization process

[47] Michael C. Williams, Culture and Security: Symbolic Power and the Politics of International Security (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), p.68.

[48] Williams (2007), p.65.

authoritative by providing a common language and set of policies. NATO's significance in securitization can, therefore, only be understood if *a priori* we regard it as a site of recursive interaction where the Alliance is simultaneously a securitizing actor and a framework of audience participation.

A third amendment stems from the assertion inherent in ST that a threat, to be regarded as such, must endanger the integrity of the referent object – hence, the standard CS definition that threats are 'existential' in nature. The integrity of the state as referent is too narrow a means of thinking about securitization, however. States assess their security with an eye to how their concerns are shared with others – and so, the referent object can take an organizational form (as in an alliance). Securitization is also conditioned by a broader institutional context. In densely institutionalized security spaces, well-developed rules and norms regulate inter-state interactions, frame appropriate mechanisms of conflict resolution, and ensure compliance with issue specific regimes, treaties and law.[49] A necessary amendment for a theory of collective securitization, therefore, is to give due weight to instances when this institutional context is itself undermined. The breaking of rules (a violation of the principle of territorial integrity, for example) challenges not just the specific arena in which the action occurs, but the broader edifice of international order, or governance, of which it is part. Collective securitization, in short, reflects a layering of referent objects: state, international organization and international order.

This amendment to how threats are securitized requires (and this is our fourth amendment) a concomitant consideration of how measures are taken in response. Two

[49] James Sperling and Mark Webber, 'Security Governance in Europe: A Return to System', European Security, 23:2 (2014), pp. 126-144.

points are worth making here. The first is to go beyond the CS's emphasis on the speech act. As Rita Floyd has pointed out, the securitizing move and its acceptance by the audience is only part of what constitutes securitization. To the performative act of speech it is necessary to add the practical one of policy.[50] Second, in accepting that policy matters, emergency ought not be the defining criterion of securitization. A securitized issue (immigration for instance) can become routinized in domestic policy. And that state of affairs is just as relevant when applied to collective securitization. An international organization such as NATO enjoys precisely the legal and political authority (through its founding treaty and, on occasion, UN Security Council Resolutions) to initiate military measures when called upon; it is part of its modus operandi, not an exception to it.

A fifth and final amendment relates to the largely absent concept of resecuritization. Desecuritization, as already noted, entails the removal (or downgrading) of an issue from the security agenda. Equally, it might involve a mutual willingness to alter the terms of an adversarial relationship. Re-securitization is effectively a unilateral process that can be initiated by either party to such a desecuritization effort. Resecuritization has not featured prominently in ST, but is distinct from the process of securitization owing to the presence of a number of factors, foremost among them the existence of a ready-made security grammar, or set of 'master

[50] Rita Floyd, 'Extraordinary or Ordinary Emergency Measures: What, and Who, Defines the "Success" of Securitization', Cambridge Review of International Affairs, online early (2015), p. 8.

signifiers' that make it easier for an actor to initiate a resecuritization move and to encourage an audience to accept it without reservation.[51]

Collective securitization.

Haacke and Williams were the first to explore collective securitization. They conceive of it as occurring when 'one or more securitizing actors within [a regional] arrangement identif[ies] a particular development or issue as an existential threat to a security referent.'[52] Their analysis assumes that a state will initiate a securitizing move that will then be generalized within a regional arrangement or organization. There is no assumption here that the organization possesses the authority necessary to initiate this move itself or that it engages in a recursive interaction with its members. The organization is little more than a site of bargaining between its member states. Our focus, by contrast, is the role of regional security organizations as both a site and agent of collective securitization. Building on the amendments to ST in the previous section, we see such a role as plausible when an international organization is possessed of legal and political authority, has agenda-setting powers, is the framework for formulating and implementing common policies, and is the repository of a common security narrative. Collective securitization, meanwhile, is most likely when a threat is posed to a public security good (shared material interests or commonly-held rules and norms).

Set out as a model, there are six distinct stages in the process of collective securitization by a regional security organization (see Figure 1). The first stage

[51] Juha Vuori, 'A Timely Prophet? The Doomsday Clock as a Visualization of Securitization Moves with a Global Referent Object', Security Dialogue, 41:3 (2010), p. 259.

[52] Haacke and Williams (2008), p.785.

represents the status quo security discourse and concomitant policies premised upon received notions of threat. The second is constituted by a precipitating event (or inter-related series of events) of gravity sufficient to disrupt this status quo and prompt a perception by the securitizing actor (and its audience) that the qualitative character of the external security environment has altered for the worse.

(Figure 1 here. A Model of Collective Securitization.)

The third and fourth stages - the securitizing move and audience response - are separated analytically but are co-dependent through the process of recursive interaction. The precipitating event initiates the securitizing move. For a theory of collective securitization it is necessary to show how such a move is detectable first at the collective level. Hence, the third stage isolates collective expressions of threat even if we accept that these are not entirely autonomous of the audience to which they are directed and which facilitate their generation. The securitizing (or resecuritizing) move will take the form of a speech act, which, in NATO's case, will consist of statements by authoritative actors, including the Secretary General, the SACEUR, the Chair of the Military Committee and others. These figures act in NATO's name but bring with them other institutional preferences (the SACEUR, for instance, is also head of US European Command). Greater authority, therefore, resides in statements endorsed by the membership, most authoritatively at ministerial or head of state and government level. Such statements express the will of the Alliance and epitomize recursive interaction among NATO members as well as between those members and the NATO

bureaucracy.[53] The speech act signifies the presence of a threat to a referent object (i.e. NATO itself) and to the systemic properties which sustain it (i.e. international norms and a preferred international order). The speech act is thus replete with allusions to how that order has been subverted (and who is to blame) and how this degrades NATO's own sense of security. A regional security institution can only act as a securitizing actor *if* the member states grant it the legal and political authority to do so and if it represents 'normal politics' within the institution. The fourth stage of the process is thus the empowering audience's involvement in the securitizing move and validation of it.

The next two stages in the collective securitization process revolve around the formulation and execution of policies which address the securitized threat. Consistent with the position staked out earlier, successful collective securitization occurs when a securitizing actor obtains audience acceptance, and consequent adoption, of appropriate common policies. The final stage of collective securitization, meanwhile, is the routinization of the amended or new strategic vocabulary, agenda and practice. A disrupted external environment gives rise to a new *status quo* meaning this final stage

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[53] That interaction can be demonstrated empirically. According to Jamie Shea, Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges, (in an e-mail communication with authors, 18 May 2015) the lead in drafting policy statements (Ministerial communiqués, statements by the North Atlantic Council) is taken by the International Staff (IS) overseen by the Secretary General's office. These drafts are subsequently circulated to, and negotiated by, Allies in meetings chaired by staff from the IS.

effectively becomes a new stage one of a future securitization process.

While the process of collective securitization unfolds sequentially, we nonetheless depart from the 'decisionistic' bias of the CS which sees securitization as occurring at specific moments in time.[54] For us, the stages in this sequence are overlapping rather than separate. A precipitating event can occur in one compelling and concentrated moment, but its consequences are felt over an extended period; other related events, furthermore, may follow and reinforce it. The upshot is that the discourse of threat runs in parallel with (not simply in reaction to) the events it is narrating. That discourse will also run alongside policy (discourse does not cease once a relevant policy is initiated). Further, the stages of securitization need not be seen as occurring *ex nihilo*. A precipitating event may occur of such suddenness as to be truly without parallel (the 9/11 attacks, for instance) but it may also be the culmination of a manifest trend. The issue here then becomes one of scale as much as of surprise - with the event confirming in dramatic form an already known and emerging threat. By the same token, the securitizing move may be a repeat of a previous sequence – a resecuritization in other words.

In the following section the model of collective securitization is given empirical content. Models can have many purposes. That used here serves an 'explicative function', by which the model in question 'explores the putative causal mechanisms underlying phenomena of interest.'[55] To that end, the data we present is intended to show how and why NATO resecuritized Russia. We are aware that not all statements

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[54] McDonald (2008), p.576.

[55] Kevin A. Clarke and David M. Primo, 'Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Based Approach', Perspectives on Politics, 5:4 (2007), p.743-744.

emanating from NATO's members states conform to the securitizing narrative. By excluding these we are open to the charge of underplaying contingency and contestation while, at the same time, overplaying consistency and coherence. Our approach is, nonetheless, sound for two reasons. The first relates to the nature of models themselves. Models in the social sciences are meant to be a representation of reality not its faithful reproduction. They aim, following Patrick Jackson, 'not to capture the whole of actuality, but instead to help […] bring some analytical order to our experiences.'[56] A model needs to 'fit the facts' but not every fact needs to fit the model.[57] The second reason relates to the nature of NATO. While stubbornly inter-governmental (reflective, therefore, of a variety of views), it is also the consensus-based organization *par excellence*. Its statements once agreed are thus expressive of a meaningful and authoritative organizational voice.

NATO and the Collective (Re)securitization of the Russian Federation.

We now turn to NATO's role as an agent of collective securitization utilizing the six stages just outlined. The context is the events prior to, and then consequent upon, Russia's annexation of Crimea in the spring of 2014. From that point onward, NATO articulated an explicit discourse of threat and adopted a raft of measures in response. Securitization then ran in parallel with the extension of the Ukrainian crisis as war

[56] Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, The Conduct of Enquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), p.154.

[57] Anna Alexandrova, 'When Analytical Narratives Explain', Journal of the Philosophy of History, 3:1 (2009), pp.9-10.

erupted in the east of the country. That conflict reached a stalemate by the autumn of 2015; even so, concerns over Russia continued to preoccupy NATO. Taking our case up to NATO's Warsaw summit in July 2016, it becomes clear that the securitization of Russia had become routine within NATO.

Status quo security discourse and policy

During the Cold War, NATO subjected the Soviet Union (Russia's predecessor) and the Warsaw Pact to a sustained securitization process. The qualifications of détente and the systemic stability of bipolarity notwithstanding, the view dominant within the Alliance was that its fundamental purpose was to deter Soviet aggression. The material evidence for this lay, first, in NATO's military organization (along with attendant strategic and doctrinal assumptions) and, second, in the minimal role NATO played in contingencies not involving the Soviet bloc (hence, the absence of an 'out-of-area' role).[58] Importantly, evidence also existed in NATO discourse. During the Cold War, the Alliance adopted four authoritative Strategic Concepts (in 1949, 1952, 1957 and 1968) all of which identified the Soviet Union as a threat.[59] These documents were classified, but publically-available statements conveyed an identical point. The Report of the Committee of Three of 1956

[58] Mark Webber, James Sperling and Martin S. Smith, NATO's Post-Cold War Trajectory: Decline or Regeneration? (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp.24-26.

[59] Jens Ringsmose and Sten Rynning, 'Introduction. Taking Stock of NATO's New Strategic Concept', in Jens Ringsmose and Sten Rynning (eds.), NATO's New Strategic Concept: A Comprehensive Assessment (Copenhagen: Danish Institute of International Studies, 2011), p.9.

pointed out that NATO's formation had resulted from 'the fear of military aggression by the forces of the USSR and its allies.'[60] The 1974 Ottawa Declaration noted that 'the nature of the danger' posed by the Soviet Union had changed but that the members of the Alliance 'remain[ed] vulnerable to attack.'[61] Ten years on, a NATO statement on East-West relations stated that 'a massive [Soviet] military build-up' posed 'a continuing threat to Alliance security and vital Western interests.'[62] NATO did not take the view that a Soviet attack would happen at any minute, but the threat was regarded as both substantive (the military strategy of the Warsaw Pact was directed at fighting NATO) and severe (in Europe, Warsaw Pact capabilities exceeded those of NATO).

NATO's military concerns were underpinned by a systemic referent in that the Soviet Union was seen as exemplifying a form of social, political and economic organization utterly at odds with the value system of 'the West.'[63] An end to the Cold War thus only became possible once this fundamental incompatibility was resolved. The changes when they did come were profound (the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the unification of Germany within NATO and, ultimately, the collapse of the Soviet Union

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[60] 'Report of the Committee of Three on Non-Military Cooperation in NATO' (13 December 1956), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_ 17481.htm}.

[61] 'Declaration on Atlantic Relations Issued by the North Atlantic Council' (19 June 1974), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_26901.htm}.

[62] 'Washington Statement on East-West Relations issued by Foreign Ministers at the North Atlantic Council' (31 May 1984), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_23262.htm}.

[63] Klein (1990), p.319.

itself) and led NATO to desecuritize the Soviet Union in two senses. First 'a non-adversarial and cooperative relationship' was seen to be in the offing. Second, and connected, that relationship was posited as being outside of the realm of mutual insecurity.[64] These assumptions were transferred to Russia as the continuing state of the Soviet Union and up until the Ukraine crisis an assumption of partnership constituted the post-Cold War status quo. This was evident in three regards: the privileged status accorded to Russia by NATO, practical interaction between the two sides, and NATO's changed strategic posture.

On the first point, NATO's post-Cold War Strategic Concepts refer to Russia in positive terms: as the component of a 'strong, stable and enduring partnership' according to the 1999 document, and of a 'strong and constructive partnership' according to that of 2010.[65] Partnership with Russia, furthermore, was seen as distinct from the many other relationships NATO developed during this period. Russia, the 1997 Founding Act on Mutual Relations noted, stood alongside the Alliance in building 'a lasting and inclusive peace in the Euro-Atlantic area' (a phrase subsequently repeated in the NATO-Russia 2002 Rome Declaration).[66] Such language did not go without

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[64] 'The Alliance's New Strategic Concept' (7 November 1991), paras. 5 and 13, available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_23847.htm}.

[65] 'The Alliance's Strategic Concept' (24 April 1999), para.36, available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_27433.htm}; 'Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept 2010' (19 November 2010), para.34, available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_82705.htm}.

[66] 'Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation' (27 May 1997), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official

qualification. Throughout the 2000s, NATO communiqués referred with increasing regularity to specific issues of concern and, in the case of Russia's intervention in Georgia, to major differences of principle.[67] NATO was also unresponsive to suggestions in Moscow that Russia be admitted to the Alliance, that NATO be subordinated to a new pan-European security arrangement and that formal relations be established with the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization.[68] These qualifications ran in parallel, however, with an ongoing claim that, in the words of the 2012 Chicago summit declaration, 'strategic partnership' with Russia still mattered for 'creating a common space of peace, stability and security' in Europe.[69]

As for practical cooperation, this was hardly extensive. It was also subject to periodic interruption (Russia broke off contacts in the wake of NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1999, and relations were mutually curtailed in the wake of the Russo-

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_texts_25468.htm}; 'NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality' (28 May 2002), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official _texts_19572.htm}.

[67] 'Statement: Meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the Level of Foreign Ministers' (19 August 2008), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_ 29950.htm}.

[68] David Yost, NATO's Balancing Act (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2014), pp.223-225.

[69] 'Chicago Summit Declaration' (20 May 2012), paras. 36-37, available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_87593.htm?selectedLocale=en}.

Georgian war). Yet periods of downtime were matched by equally significant uptakes.[70] The break over Kosovo was set aside by increased cooperation after 9/11, while the rupture over Georgia underwent repair after NATO's 2010 Lisbon summit (Russia cooperated with the ISASF mission in Afghanistan by allowing it access to the Northern Distribution Network and abstained on two crucial votes in the U.N. Security Council in early 2011 thus facilitating Operation Unified Protector, NATO's mission in Libya).

NATO's strategic posture also reflected an investment in partnership with Russia. While the Alliance retained collective defence as a core mission, this was reconceived to encompass terrorism, cyber warfare and WMD proliferation – contingencies not necessarily made with Russia in mind.[71] Indeed, NATO went to some lengths *not* to take measures against Russia. The Founding Act indicated that NATO would refrain from stationing nuclear weapons or 'additional permanent [… and] substantial combat forces' on the territory of new members.[72] Following the enlargements of 1999 and 2004, NATO thus avoided providing reinforcement capabilities to the east European allies and it was not until 2010 that the Alliance began contingency planning for the defence of the Baltic states. Throughout the 2000s, NATO was, in fact, preoccupied with force projection out-of-area. Its signature mission, ISAF, was in Afghanistan, its most symbolic military innovation was the NATO Response

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[70] Tuomas Forsberg and Graeme Herd, 'Russia and NATO: from Windows of Opportunities to Closed Doors', Journal of Contemporary European Studies, 23:1 (2015).

[71] David Yost, 'NATO's Evolving Purposes and the Next Strategic Concept', International Affairs, 86:2 (2010), pp.507-519.

[72] 'Founding Act' (27 May 1997), Section IV.

Force (NRF)[73] and its most noteworthy statement of purpose (the 2006 Comprehensive Political Guidance) placed 'unpredictable challenges […] far from member states' borders' on a par with collective defence.[74] At the 2012 Chicago summit, NATO considered itself satisfied with its 'existing mix of [military] capabilities',[75] and gave the impression that Russia was not of pressing concern.[76]

The precipitating event

The details of the Ukraine crisis are well-known and need not be repeated at length here.[77] Ukraine had experienced political turmoil over several years, particularly following the 'Orange Revolution' which saw the coming to power of a reformist government under President Viktor Yushchenko in January 2005. Yushchenko was

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[73] The significance of the NRF lay in its potential as a 'driving engine of NATO's military transformation'. Formed in 2002, it was not until 2009 that discussion began on reorienting it toward tasks of collective defence. See Yost (2014), pp.82-84.

[74] 'Comprehensive Political Guidance' (29 November 2006), paras.10-11, available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_56425.htm}.

[75] 'Deterrence and Defence Posture Review' (20 May 2012), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87597.htm}.

[76] Mention of Russia was thus omitted from certain key documents. See 'Summit Declaration on Defence Capabilities: Toward NATO Forces 2020' (20 May 2012), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_87594.htm?mode =pressrelease}.

[77] A good introduction is Rajan Menon and Eugene Rumer, Conflict in Ukraine: the Unwinding of the Post-Cold War Order (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2015).

replaced, in turn, by Viktor Yanukovych in February 2010, a president whose decision in late 2013 to forge closer ties with Russia rather than sign an Association Agreement with the EU sparked the Euromaiden protests in Kiev. This volte face triggered escalating violence that culminated in February 2014 with Yanukovych's removal from office. Two sets of events then followed which marked a significant deterioration of the situation.

The first concerned Crimea, an autonomous republic within Ukraine with a majority ethnic Russian population. During March 2014, Russia effectively annexed the territory against a backdrop of destabilization by pro-Russian militias. The formal process entailed a referendum in Crimea on union with the Russian Federation, a treaty of accession signed by the Crimean authorities and the Russian president, and that treaty's ratification by the Russian parliament.

The second set of events occurred in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine immediately after the Crimea episode. Here, armed militias of the self-declared republics of Donetsk and Luhansk seized territory and strategic locations. This prompted a counter-offensive by Ukrainian forces and then a series of battles of increasing severity. Rebel advances in Ukraine's south-east were such that by August the prospect loomed of a land corridor being established with Crimea. A ceasefire agreed in September (the Minsk Agreement) forestalled it. That agreement was subsequently violated but a further text was concluded in February 2015 (Minsk II). This second agreement reduced but did not halt the fighting; it also failed to bring a political settlement any closer.

There were many notable aspects of this twin crisis although it was the events of Crimea that presented the most far-reaching challenge to international order, despite the greater human toll of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. As Thomas Grant notes, the

Russian action represented 'the first formal act of annexation following the use and threat of force against a state in Europe since 1945.' Parallels are few: Crimea was unlike the partition of Cyprus in 1974 (the Turkish north declared independence but was not incorporated into Turkey proper) as well as Russia's recognition of the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia after the 2008 Georgia war (Russia absorbed neither into the Federation). According to Grant, the only post-War comparison is 'Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait'; both involved one UN member acting against another with the aim of 'eradicating an international boundary' and seizing territory.[78] The Russian government saw matters rather differently and mounted an elaborate legal defence of Crimea's change of status.[79] Its arguments were dismissed, however, whenever put before an international forum. In mid-March 2014, a draft Security Council resolution rejecting the referendum in Crimea was supported by 13 of the Council's 15 members (China abstained and Russia exercised its veto). A vote before the General Assembly later that month upholding Ukraine's territorial integrity was supported by 100 members with 11 against and 58 abstaining. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, meanwhile, passed resolutions on three separate occasions (April 2014, January 2015 and June 2015) condemning the 'illegal annexation of Crimea.'[80]

Roy Allison has described Russia's annexation of Crimea as 'an affront to the core

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[78] Thomas D. Grant, Aggression against Ukraine: Territory, Responsibility, and International Law (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp.vii-viii.

[79] Roy Allison, 'Russian "Deniable" Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules', International Affairs, 90:6 (2014), pp.1260-1266.

[80] The relevant resolutions are: 1990 (2014), 2034 (2015) and 2063 (2015).

principles of contemporary interstate conduct' thereby raising 'the question [of] whether Putin is mounting a wider challenge to what he regards as a western-dominated international system and legal order.'[81] Attending to that question is a matter of controversy because some influential observers have viewed Russian behavior as an understandable reaction to NATO (and EU) influence building in and around Ukraine.[82] What matters in the current discussion, however, is not a value judgment on Russian actions but a sense of how its conduct has provided a pretext for (re)securitization. In this sense, the legal context (noted above) matters, as do two other significant aspects of the Ukraine crisis.

The first is its obvious military character. While Moscow maintained a narrative of deniability, it is clear beyond reasonable doubt that Russian armed formations took up position on the Russo-Ukrainian frontier, provided the separatists with sophisticated military equipment (including surface-to-air missiles, one of which downed a Malaysia Airlines flight in July 2014), and sent military advisers to the conflict zones. Russian troop detachments and special forces also intervened directly on the battlefield at key points (the second battle for Donetsk airport in September 2014 and for Debaltseve in February 2015 being the most significant).[83] Beyond the Ukrainian theatre, meanwhile, Russia undertook several shows of strength. The Russian navy and air force increased

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[81] Allison (2014), pp.1266-1267.

[82] Mearsheimer (2014); Richard Sakwa, Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), pp.3-7.

[83] International Crisis Group, 'Eastern Ukraine: a Dangerous Winter', Europe Report, 235 (2014); International Crisis Group, 'The Ukraine Crisis: Risks of Renewed Military Conflict after Minsk II', Crisis Group Europe Briefing, 73 (2015).

their activities in the Baltic region, the high north and the North and Black Seas (resulting in numerous infringements of NATO air and maritime space as well as that of Sweden and Finland),[84] increased the scale and tempo of military exercises (some premised on war with NATO's northern members), and engaged in nuclear signaling (with President Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov both alluding to the strategic importance of Russia's nuclear capability).[85]

The second aspect of note concerns Russia's claims to propriety around its borders along with accompanying anti-NATO sentiment. As the Ukraine crisis unfolded, Putin suggested that Crimea's union with Russia was necessary to prevent the territory falling into NATO's hands in the event of Ukrainian accession to the Alliance.[86] The Ukraine crisis, he suggested in September 2014, was 'engineered […] by certain of our western partners' with the aim of 'reinvigorating' the NATO 'military bloc.'[87] In this vein,

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[84] Ian Kearns, Lukasz Kulesa and Thomas Frear, 'Russia – West Dangerous Brinkmanship Continues', European Leadership Network (12 March 2015), available at {www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/russia--west-dangerous-brinkmanship-continues-_2529.html}.

[85] Jacek Durkalec, 'Nuclear-Backed "Little Green Men": Nuclear Messaging in the Ukraine Crisis', Polish Institute of International Affairs, Report (July 2015), p.7.

[86] Speech to the Russian Federal Assembly, BBC News (19 March 2014), available at: {www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-26652058}.

[87] {www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46589} (10 September 2014).

Putin would go on to suggest that the Ukrainian army was 'a NATO foreign legion' motivated by 'the geopolitical aim of containing Russia.'[88]

The (re)securitizing move

Prior to the annexation of Crimea, the Alliance had expressed concern at the deteriorating political situation in Ukraine but had refrained from identifying events in the country as in any sense threatening.[89] From March 2014, however, the focus shifted. Russian action was not only a violation of Ukrainian sovereignty but also 'challenged' the stability of the Euro-Atlantic region, contravened international law, and 'gravely breached the trust upon which cooperation' with NATO had been premised.[90] The then NATO Secretary General Anders Rasmussen suggested that Crimea was a 'game-changer' for NATO and concluded in late March that 'we live in a different world than we did less than a month ago.'[91] Russia's 'present path of aggression, confrontation and escalation', Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow declared, meant that it

[88] 'Meeting with Students at the Mining University' (26 January 2015), available at: {http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47519}.

[89] 'Statement by NATO Defence Ministers on Ukraine' (26 February 2014), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/events_107755.htm}.

[90] 'Statement by NATO Foreign Ministers' (1 April 2014), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_108501.htm}.

[91] Cited in S. Erlanger, 'Doubt that Europe Will Beef Up Forces', International New York Times (27 March 2014).

was now 'less of a partner and more of an adversary.'[92]

The war in eastern Ukraine reinforced this perspective. In the face of protestations in Moscow, NATO charged Russia with a 'continued and deliberate destabilization' of the region.[93] NATO's Wales summit of September 2014 concluded that Russian action had undone efforts at partnership stretching back over two decades,[94] while incoming Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg described it as a 'challenge to the international order we have built since the fall of the Berlin Wall.'[95] The Minsk II agreement de-escalated fighting in eastern Ukraine, but 'Russia', NATO Defence Ministers declared in June 2015, continued to challenge 'Euro-Atlantic security through military action, coercion and intimidation of its neighbours.'[96] Speaking in November 2015, Vershbow accused Russia of ripping 'up the international rule book' and plunging relations with NATO 'to their lowest point in decades.'[97]

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[92] Speech in Krakow, Poland (4 April 2014), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_108889.htm}.

[93] 'Joint Statement of the NATO-Ukraine Commission' (4 September 2014), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_112695.htm?selectedLocale=en}.

[94] 'Wales Summit Declaration' (5 September 2014), paragraph. 21.

[95] The Secretary General's Annual Report 2014, p.3, available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_116854.htm}.

[96] 'Statement by NATO Defence Ministers' (25 June 2015), paragraph 2, available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_121133.htm?selectedLocale=en}.

[97] Speech in Berlin, 17 November 2015, available at: {www.nato.int./cps/en/natohq/opinions_124808.htm}.

This concern for international order had a particular focus. Ukraine's fate was viewed as a possible precursor to a Russian assault on neighbouring countries, particularly Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan,[98] and more worryingly on NATO's own Baltic member states.[99] In light of what a NATO discussion document referred to as 'Russia's multiple naval and airspace incursions in the Nordic-Baltic region',[100] so Alliance officials held out the possibility of NATO being caught unprepared by Russia. According to the Deputy SACEUR, Sir Adrian Bradshaw, Russian conventional forces could be deployed 'not only for intimidation and coercion but potentially to seize NATO territory'; the attendant danger of war, 'however unlikely' was, nonetheless, 'an existential threat to our whole being.'[101]

Over the two-year period surveyed here, NATO officials went to great lengths to detail (often with the help of photographic and satellite imagery) the destabilization of Ukraine. Here, as the SACEUR General Philip Breedlove suggested in July 2014, Russia was employing covert military tactics as well as 'the most amazing information warfare blitzkrieg we have ever seen in the history of information warfare.' These methods of

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[98] 'Wales Summit Declaration', paragraph.30.

[99] Rasmussen cited in A.E. Kramer and M.R. Gordon, 'New Front Opens in Ukraine Conflict', International New York Times (28 August 2014).

[100] 'White Paper - Next Steps in NATO's Transformation: to the Warsaw Summit and Beyond', HQ NATO Supreme Allied Commander Transformation in Partnership with the Atlantic Council, NATO Transformation Seminar, Washington D,C. (24-26 March 2015), p.9.

[101] Speech to the Royal United Services Institute, London, (February 2015), available at: {www.rusi.org/go.php?structureID=videos&ref=V54E7621089708#.Viuh4fmrS73}.

'hybrid war' posed particular problems for the Alliance (fuzzy attribution, escalation by stealth and the need to combine military and civilian instruments in response) all of which required NATO to rethink how it defended its eastern flank.[102] Breedlove would repeat these points more than a year later, describing Russia as 'aggressive and coercive in [its] use of diplomatic, military and economic tools.'[103] Comparison of two keynote NATO documents show just how significant was this shift in language. Hybrid warfare barely merited mention in NATO's 2013 Strategic Foresight Analysis. It loomed large, however, in the 2015 successor, Framework for Future Alliance Operations. The latter included among its threat scenarios a conflict 'in the Euro-Atlantic region' involving 'hybrid actors', 'expansionism at NATO's borders', 'internal instability of a NATO member' and a 'large-scale insurgency within the Alliance' – events all based on how the experience of Ukraine might transfer to NATO's eastern members.[104] Hybrid tactics were not NATO's only concern. Russia's militarization of Crimea extended Russian anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) capabilities in the Black Sea thereby enhancing its

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[102] J. Vandiver, 'SACEUR – NATO Must Prepare for Russia "Hybrid War"', Stars and Stripes (4 September 2014), available at: {www.stripes.com/news/saceur-allies-must-prepare-for-russia-hybrid-war-1.301464}.

[103] Speech at Stanford University (9 November 2015), available at: {http://fsi.stanford.edu/news/nato-commander-calls-recalibration-europe}.

[104] NATO, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation and Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Framework for Future Alliance Operations (August 2015), pp.57-58, available at: {www.act.nato.int/futures-ws-2}.

ability to interfere with NATO aerial and naval forces and so escalating tensions with Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, NATO's littoral states in the region.[105]

Audience response

NATO's securitizing audience, as argued above, is its member states. As states, they are not passive recipients of the securitizing move; in a process of recursive interaction they are also responsible for its generation. Empirically, therefore, the speech acts of NATO's members will approximate those issued in the name of the Alliance. Such an understanding does not require that all members are equally vocal or that there is a uniformity of views – we would expect NATO's eastern members, understandably, to be more concerned with Russian action than its southern ones. That said, the Baltic States and Poland are excluded from the analysis for even before the Ukraine crisis, they had securitized Russia without effect on NATO policy.[106] What is more important in the present context is how NATO's most influential states (the US, the UK, Germany and France), where such securitization was not so evident, moved toward a language of threat.

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[105] Vershbow interview with Defence Matters, 5 November 2015, available at: {http://defencematters.org/news/vershbow-nato-needs-strategy-to-address-threats-from-the-south-and-the-east/410/}.

[106] M.Mälskoo and Margarita Šešelgyte, 'Reinventing "New" Europe: Baltic Perspectives on Transatlantic Security Reconfigurations', Communist and Post-Communist Studies, 46:3 (2013), pp.397-406; Kerry Longhurst, 'Where From, Where To? New and Old Configurations in Poland's Foreign and Security Policies', Communist and Post-Communist Studies, 46:3 (2013), pp.363-372.

In the case of the US, relations with Russia prior to the Ukraine crisis were comparable to the oscillations of the broader NATO-Russia relationship. Major disagreements repeatedly challenged the rhetorical commitment to partnership. Some issues overlapped with Alliance concerns (Kosovo, enlargement, missile defence, the Russia-Georgia war), whereas others played out bilaterally (Iran, Russian nuclear capabilities, the Edward Snowdon affair). Nonetheless, during both the Clinton and Bush administrations Russia was not positioned explicitly as a threat to American vital interests or to those of NATO. The Obama administration's effort to 'reset' relations with Russia during its first term replicated this pattern.[107] Into the second term, that outlook persisted - at a summit meeting with Putin in June 2013, Obama referred to the ongoing possibilities of a 'constructive, cooperative relationship that moves us out of a Cold War mindset.'[108]

The Ukraine crisis, however, resulted in a distinct shift of emphasis. Here, according to one Pentagon official, Russia had demonstrated 'a very sophisticated capacity for asymmetric, unattributed aggression.'[109] Russia's 'alarming' behavior in

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[107] A. Stent, 'US-Russian Relations in the Second Obama Administration', Survival, 54:5 (2012-13), pp.123-139.

[108] 'Remarks by President Obama and President Putin of Russia after Bilateral Meeting' (17 June 2013), available at: {www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/17/remarks-president-obama-and-president-putin-russia-after-bilateral-meeting}.

[109] Robert Bell, defence advisor to the US NATO delegation, cited in E. MacAskill, 'US Urges NATO States to raise Defence Spending to Counter Russia', The Guardian (24 June 2014).

Ukraine, incoming Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joseph Dunford claimed in July 2015, had endangered NATO's eastern borders. Dunford also used the pretext of Ukraine to focus attention on Russia's military, and particularly nuclear, capabilities. These, he argued, presented the 'greatest threat to (US) national security', indeed an 'existential' one.[110] The 2015 National Military Strategy prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff was more measured (Russia was not 'seeking a direct military conflict with the United States or its allies'). It noted, nonetheless, that 'Russia's military actions' were 'undermining regional security' and that Russia was 'acting in a manner that threatens [America's] national security interests.'[111] Senior administration figures shared some of these concerns. President Obama, while holding out hope of Russian participation in a diplomatic solution, took the view that Russia had challenged 'the most basic principles of our international order' (he referred to the annexation of Crimea as an 'invasion of Ukraine'), had encouraged 'violent separatists' in eastern Ukraine, and was complicit in the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight 17.[112]

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[110] Cited in Defence News (9 July 2015), available at: {www.defensenews.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2015/07/09/dunford-confirmation-hearing-russia-china-top-threats-joint-chiefs-of-staff-chairman/29912233/}.

[111] The National Military Strategy of the United States of America (June 2015), p.2, available at: {www.jcs.mil/portals/36/documents/publications/2015_national_ military_strategy.pdf}.

[112] Obama speech at the Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels (26 March 2014), available at: {www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/26/remarks-president-

Official British views of Russia mirrored those of the US. Bilateral relations had been troubled well before the Ukraine crisis (over issues such as Litvinenko affair) and the UK was a prominent critic of Russian action against Georgia in 2008. British officials, however, retained a language of cooperation, evident as late as March 2013 in the launch of a new UK-Russia Strategic Dialogue. The Crimea crisis prompted a change of direction. Prime Minister David Cameron described Russian action as a 'flagrant breach of international law'; an action with (unspecified) consequences for the UK as 'Britain's own future depends on a world where countries obey the rules.'[113] Defence Secretary Phillip Hammond argued that Russia was 'very significantly misaligned with the interests of ourselves and our western allies.'[114] His successor Michael Fallon would subsequently suggest that Russia was now 'as much a threat to Europe as Islamic State'; it posed 'a real and present danger' to the Baltic States and, by extension, was 'testing

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address-european-youth}; Obama speech at the Nordea Concert Hall, Tallinn (3 September 2014), available at: {www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/03/remarks-president-obama-people-estonia}; 'Statement by the President on Ukraine' (18 July 2014), available at: {www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/07/18/statement-president-ukraine}.

[113] House of Commons, Oral Answers to Questions (10 March 2014), Column 27, available at: {www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm140310/debtext/140310-0001.htm}.

[114] Oral Evidence to the House of Commons Defence Committee (9 July 2014), pp.2, 4, available at: {www.publications.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/defence-committee/towards-the-next-defence-and-security-review-part-two-nato/oral/11292.pdf}.

NATO.'[115] 'Russia', a keynote UK government statement declared in November 2015, 'has become more aggressive, authoritarian and nationalist [… willing] to undermine wider international standards of cooperation in order to secure its perceived interests.'[116]

The German and French positions were more circumscribed, a consequence of the direct involvement of Berlin and Paris in diplomatic efforts to contain the crisis. A sense of threat nonetheless emerged. Russian action, German Chancellor Angela Merkel suggested in November 2014, called 'the entire European peaceful order into question' with possible repercussions for Moldova, Georgia and even Serbia and the western Balkans.[117] Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble stated that Russia's annexation of Crimea was comparable to the Nazi occupation of the Sudetenland.[118] Even the more diplomatically-inclined Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier charged Russia with

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[115] A. Osborn, 'Putin a Threat to Baltic States, Western Officials Say', Reuters (19 February 2015), available at: {http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/02/19/uk-britain-russia-baltics-idUKKBN0LN0FT20150219}.

[116] HM Government, National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015, Command Paper 9161, November 2015, p.18.

[117] Merkel cited in I. Traynor, 'European Leaders Fear Growth of Russian Influence', The Guardian (18 November 2014).

[118] Cited in S. Walker, 'Medvedev in Crimea as Army Begins Pull-back', The Guardian (1 April 2014).

'flouting the central foundations of the peaceful order in Europe.'[119] The French position was similar. Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius argued at the 2015 Munich Security Conference that '[s]ecurity on the European continent today' had been defined by events in Ukraine with Europe now divided between 'a country with huge military capabilities […] which does not act according to […] the core principles' of international order 'and a community of states committed to the rule of law and eschewing the 'use of military means as a preferred option' of policy.[120] President Francois Hollande, meanwhile, argued that Ukraine's territorial integrity was 'non-negotiable' and that Russian designs on Crimea posed a broader problem – '[t]here are lot of countries which could get worried if a precedent were set for breaching borders and territorial integrity.'[121]

Policy output

Successful securitization requires a response to the securitizing move (the speech act) one that revises policies previously pursued toward the (re)securitized source of threat. NATO responded immediately to the annexation of Crimea by suspending 'all practical

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[119] S. Brown, 'German Foreign Minister Worries Russia May Open "Pandora's Box"', Reuters (23 March 2014), available at: {www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/23/us-ukraine-crisis-germany-idUSBREA2M0FG20140323}.

[120] 'Remarks at the Munich Policy Conference Discussion Panel' (8 February 2015), at: {www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2015/02/237298.htm}.

[121] Cited in France 24 (8 March 2014), available at: {www.france24.com/en/ 20140308-pictures-paris-ukrain-turn-out-vitaly-klitschko-visit}.

civilian and military cooperation' with Russia.[122] It had done the same over the 2008 Russian-Georgian war but the Ukraine case marked a much more decisive break, for here sustained follow-on measures were pursued. These fall into two categories, defined by NATO as 'assurance' and 'adaptation'. Both were consolidated within the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) approved at the Wales summit, in turn, underpinned by a common commitment to increase allies' defence spending.[123]

Assurance commenced as early as mid-March 2014 with increased NATO AWAC flights over Poland and Romania. In mid-April, agreement was reached on air policing over the Baltic States, maritime patrols in the Baltic Sea and eastern Mediterranean, a review of NATO 'defence plans' and the preparation of a greater number of exercises.[124] These measures were not new as such - NATO had, for example, initiated the Baltic air policing mission in 2004. What was notable was the scaling-up of the activity: the number of aerial and maritime patrols was increased as was the number of participating allies.[125] Similarly, NATO having in 2012 already shifted the purpose of its

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[122] 'Statement by NATO Foreign Ministers' (1 April 2014), available at: {http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_108501.htm}.

[123] NATO Fact Sheet, 'NATO's Readiness Action Plan' (October 2015), available at: {www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_10/20151007_1510-factsheet_rap_en.pdf}.

[124] Rasmussen, 'Doorstop Statement', 16 April 2014, available at: {www.nato.int/cps /en/natolive/opinions_109231.htm}.

[125] X. Pintat (rapporteur), 'The Readiness Action Plan: Assurance and Deterrence for the Post-2014 Security Environment', NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Defence and Security Committee, Report 052 DCCFC 15 E (16 April 2015), p.2.

exercises toward collective defence took that process a significant step further. During the course of 2014, the Alliance mounted 162 exercises (double the number originally scheduled) and in 2015 some 280, half of which were 'dedicated to Assurance Measures in the [e]astern part of NATO.'[126] 2015 also saw the largest NATO exercise for a decade (Trident Juncture), the largest ever NATO exercise in the Baltic Sea (BALTOPS 2015) and the biggest anti-submarine warfare exercise ever mounted by the Alliance (Dynamic Mongoose). Through 2016 the pace and scale of exercises was maintained: Operation Anakonda, a Polish-led national exercise held in June, was the biggest field exercise mounted by NATO allies in eastern Europe since the end of the Cold War.

As for adaptation, the key measure here has been a reinvigoration of the NRF. Following agreement in principle at the Wales summit, more forces were made available (from 13,000 to a projected 40,000) and a new 'spearhead' component created - the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). This was supplemented by the establishment (from September 2015) of seven new multinational headquarters (so-called NATO Force Integration Units) in the Baltics and eastern Europe, an enhancement of Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast (in Szczecin Poland) and the creation of a new Divisional Headquarters Southeast in Romania as well as a Standing Joint Logistics Headquarters within the Alliance command structure.[127] NATO Defence

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[126] NATO, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, Jean-Paul Paloméros, press conference (21 May 2015), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_119868.htm}.

[127] Louise Brooke-Holland, 'NATO's Military Response to Russia', House of Commons Library, Briefing Paper, No.07276, February 2016, available at: {http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7276}.

Ministers in February 2016 agreed on 'an enhanced forward presence in the eastern part of […] the Alliance,'[128] and in June to station four multi-national battalions in Poland and the Baltic states. Additionally, NATO's Warsaw summit the following month announced plans to develop a 'tailored forward presence' in Romania and the Black Sea region.[129] Individual allies took measures in support. Most significantly, the US through Operation Atlantic Resolve (and its main funding instrument, the European Reassurance Initiative) increased its commitment to training, exercises, military construction, and rotational troop presence in NATO's eastern allies. It also provided 'enabling capabilities' for the VJTF and augmented the pre-positioning of equipment in the Baltic States, Poland, Romania, Germany and Bulgaria.[130] At Warsaw, the US along with Canada, the UK and Germany agreed to serve as framework nations for the NATO build up in the Baltics and Poland.

NATO which, prior to 2014, had been mainly concerned with expeditionary and out-of-area contingencies was, Defence Ministers concluded in mid-2015, undertaking a 'far-reaching adaptation of [its] military strategic posture […] with a renewed emphasis

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[128] Stoltenberg cited in 'NATO Boosts its Defence and Deterrence Posture' (10 February 2016), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_127834.htm}.

[129] 'Warsaw Summit Communiqué' (8 - 9 July 2016), paragraph.40, available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm}.

[130] Jospeh A. Day (general rapporteur), 'New Defence Imperatives: the Implementation of Wales Pledges and Prospects for Warsaw', NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Defence and Security Committee (25 April 2016), pp.5-6.

on deterrence and collective defence capabilities.'[131] This was, Secretary General Stoltenberg pointed out, 'the biggest reinforcement of [NATO] collective defence since the end of the Cold War.'[132] In less diplomatic language, Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow noted in October 2015, '[w]e want to deter Russia from even thinking of messing with us.'[133]

The new security status quo

Secretary General Stoltenberg noted in December 2015 that the '[c]hallenges posed by Russia's actions in the Euro-Atlantic area will be with us for a long time.'[134] SACUER General Breedlove has suggested similarly that '[t]he Russia problem set is not going away'. Some two years after the Crimea crisis, 'a resurgent aggressive Russia' had enforced 'a permanent redrawing of sovereign boundaries in Europe', posed 'an ongoing challenge to Western efforts aimed at assuring [...] NATO allies' in the Baltics and so constituted a 'long-term existential threat' to NATO.[135] Notwithstanding the challenge

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[131] 'Statement by NATO Defence Ministers' (25 June 2015), paragraph.8, available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_121133.htm?selectedLocale=en}.

[132] Cited in H. Cooper and J. Kanter, 'NATO Adds to Defences with an Eye on Moscow', International New York Times (9 October 2015).

[133] Cited in J. Beale, 'NATO War Games Keep Syria and Russia in Mind', BBC News (23 October 2015), available at: {www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34603504}.

[134] Press conference (2 December 2015) at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/ opinions_125571.htm?selectedLocale=en}.

[135] 'Statement of General Philip Breedlove, Commander US Forces Europe', Senate Committee on Armed Services (1 March 2016), at: {http://www.armed-

of Russia, a debate has emerged within the Alliance, consequent upon the rise of ISIS and the war in Syria, on the need to rebalance to NATO's south.[136] As NATO prepared for its July 2016 summit in Warsaw, NATO's eastern and southern flanks were both enveloped within what Deputy Secretary General Vershbow referred to as a 'comprehensive, 360 degree approach [… to] threats.'[137] The evidence to date, however, is that instability in the Middle East and North Africa has been insufficient to initiate a new NATO-framed securitization, one in which a narrative of threat is translated into policy. Indeed, as of this writing, other than limited measures in support of Turkey and (an as yet unfulfilled) agreement to provide AWAC surveillance NATO has no formal role in the Syria/Iraq theatre of operations. The resecuritization of Russia, meanwhile, has become routine. In the run-up to the summit in Warsaw, the language from NATO officials thus continued to be that of deterrence, defence and resolve[138] - even a

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services.senate.gov/imo/ media/doc/Breedlove_03-01-16.pdf}, pp.4, 10, 23; Stenographic Transcript before the Senate Committee on Armed Services (1 March 2016), at { http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/16-20_03-01-16.pdf}, p.11.

[136] Jeffrey A. Larsen, 'Time to Face Reality: Priorities for NATO's 2016 Warsaw Summit', Research Paper (NATO Defence College, Rome), No.125 (January 2016), p.4.

[137] Speech in Prague (6 June 2016), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/ opinions_131609.htm?selectedLocale=en}

[138] Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, speech to the Munich Security Conference (13 February 2016), available at: {www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_128047.htm}.

contemplation of hostilities. NATO, the incoming SACEUR General Curtis Scaparrotti declaimed in May 2016, should be 'ready to fight should deterrence fail.'[139]

Conclusion: Collective Securitization in Context

In this article we have argued that NATO performs the act of collective securitization. In response to Russian action in Ukraine, the Alliance has translated successfully a resecuritizing move evident in discourse into concrete policy measures. The robustness of our case is, however, subject to three broad qualifications, respectively theoretical, methodological and normative.

Theoretically speaking, the CS has often been seen as content to describe the process of securitization rather than explain it. This does not, however, render the CS atheoretical –a constructivist logic, after all, underpins it.[140] CS also confirms the proposition that theory is about 'what' as well as 'why' questions.[141] Our contribution has been to ask 'what' constitutes securitization in collectives where states still matter. If, as Thierry Balzacq suggests, '[t]he ways in which securitization occurs is ultimately an empirical question'[142] then a framework which delineates that process is essential.

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[139] Cited in Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (4 May 2016) available at: {www.rferl.org/articleprintview/27715802.html}.

[140] Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998), pp.203-207.

[141] Alexander Wendt, 'On Constitution and Causation in International Relations', Review of International Studies, 24:5 (1998), pp.101-118.

[142] T. Balzacq, 'Constructivism and Securitization Studies', in Myrian Dunn Cavelty and Victor Mauer (eds), The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies (London and New York: 2010), p.65.

The reasons for securitization and resecuritization can be drawn from the model as presented. Like Stefano Guzzini, our concern is with causal mechanisms that lead to an 'empirical theory of securitization', one focused on the unfolding of historical processes in which pre-existing policy discourses, 'repositories of common meanings and self-other understandings' interact with events to 'trigger' (re) securitization in its various forms.[143]

The methodological point relates to issues set aside in our analysis. Our focus on NATO as actor has meant analytical compromise in three regards. First, the mutually-dependent status of actor (NATO) and audience (its members) in the generation of discourse meant it was necessary to highlight the shift of language on Russia among important allies. But while national discourses were examined, little consideration was afforded to national policies. Yet NATO is, in policy terms, almost entirely dependent upon the contributions of its members. We acknowledge this omission but do not regard it as problematic analytically. The US, NATO's most powerful member and the one state whose national policy was referenced, has channeled its efforts through, and in concert with, NATO. Had we space for detail, the same would also have been shown for important European allies and, indeed, Canada. It is that choice which is important in policy terms. Rather than engaging in a random set of actions, the allies have combined in an act of collective purpose which renders our analytical treatment of NATO entirely appropriate.

A similar point concerns the shades of emphasis evident among the allies. Some positions - the sympathy shown toward Putin by Hungarian prime minister Victor

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[143] Stefano Guzzini, 'Securitization as a Causal Mechanism', Security Dialogue, 42: 4-5 (2011), pp.334-337.

Orban or Czech president Milos Zeman – are idiosyncratic.[144] Others, however, suggest seemingly substantive differences. Poland and the Baltic States have been the most insistent that NATO reorient itself to the task of collective defence; France and Germany have invested heavily in diplomacy; and the US and the UK have championed the cause of increased defence expenditure. These differences are bracketed in our analysis not because they have been inconsequential in debate, but simply because they have not prevented a NATO consensus. Indeed, what has been notable about the Ukraine crisis is precisely the extent of allied agreement. There has been no debate on offering Ukraine a path to membership (an issue which divided NATO in 2008), and even differences of opinion on providing arms to Kiev conceal more than they reveal. The US, often seen as at odds with France and Germany on the issue, has itself been cautious: the demand to arm Ukraine has come from the Republican-dominated Congress, not from the Obama administration.[145]

Further, in considering NATO views of Russia, we have given only indirect consideration to related issues that sit outside Ukraine. Some are of long pedigree (ballistic missile defence), others coincident in time with the Ukraine crisis (Moscow's support of the Assad regime in Syria, Russia's heightened military expenditure, snap military exercises, and alleged infractions of the INF Treaty). The full logic of Russia's securitization would need to survey this broader canvas. Yet our contention remains that the Ukraine crisis has a singular importance. Up until that precipitating event,

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[144] I. Krastev, 'What Central Europe Thinks of Russia', International New York Times (28 April 2015).

[145] J. Steinhauer and D.M. Herszenhorn, 'Many in Congress Press to Arm Ukraine', International New York Times (13-14 June 2015).

NATO-Russia relations survived in a reasonably amicable form, if increasingly marred by mutual fits of pique. They deteriorated rapidly thereafter. It is that break which merits a particular treatment.

The normative qualification relates to the concern that the process of securitization courts numerous dangers. It privileges a discourse of threat over that of partnership and so gives rise to policies which ramp up tensions. It is for this reason that CS favours desecuritization 'where compromise, solutions and debate is made possible.'[146] That position has been challenged by Rita Floyd who has suggested that there are instances when securitization can be regarded as morally acceptable.[147] Floyd's categories of 'moral securitization' would repay serious attention in Russia's case. Does Russia pose an objective and intersubjectively acknowledged existential threat to NATO? Does the Alliance have the authority to respond to that threat once defined? And how appropriate are the policies which NATO has pursued in addressing it? Answers to such questions have been addressed, in part, in our analysis. One enduring theme which ties them together is, however, worthy of final reflection.

Inherent in a critical view of securitization is a sense that it has counter-productive effects. Here we are in the realm of two well-known but still intractable problems of international politics: misperception of malign intent and the security dilemma. The latter has assumed a worrying quality in NATO-Russia relations. Measures which NATO may justify as precautionary are construed in Moscow as

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[146] Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen, The Evolution of International Security Studies (Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.216-217.

[147] R. Floyd, 'Can Securitization Theory Be Used in Normative Analysis? Towards Just Securitization Theory', Security Dialogue, 42:4-5 (2011), pp.427-439.

evidence of influence wielding and preparation for aggression. Russian actions are regarded similarly by NATO. On both sides, policies that may seem 'tactically prudent' thus 'invite strategic misinterpretation.'[148] That danger has been compounded by the shrinkage of dialogue. NATO and Russia have, since the Ukraine crisis, talked to one another primarily 'through military signaling and by taking military actions' according to one former US ambassador to the Alliance. The 'chances' consequently 'of an accident that could escalate are greater than at any time since the 1960s.'[149]

Before writing NATO off as culpable in a slide to war, however, certain qualifications are in order. First, the dangers of a reignited security dilemma are recognized. Germany has expressed a particular sensitivity in this regard. Berlin has taken a firm line in opposing NATO membership for Ukraine; it has also led on the construction of an EU sanctions policy which nullifies the need for a more robust military response.[150] NATO has also been open to a return to dialogue (the NATO-Russia Council met, albeit unproductively, in April 2016) in order to promote 'transparency', 'predictability' and 'strategic stability.'[151] Second, NATO has itself demonstrated a certain restraint. While the reorientation of the Alliance has been clear since 2014, NATO has given no indication that it is prepared to reverse Russian behavior in Ukraine

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[148] G. Allison and D.K. Simes, 'Russia and America: Stumbling to War', The National Interest (May-June 2015).

[149] Ivo Daalder cited in G. Dyer, 'New NATO Stance Raises Stakes on Eastern Frontier', Financial Times (27 June 2015).

[150] Adrian Hyde-Price, 'The "Sleep-Walking Giant" Awakes: Resetting German Foreign and Security Policy', European Security, 24(4), 2015, pp.607-11.

[151] Stoltenberg, speech to the Munich Security Conference (13 February 2016).

through force of arms. The Alliance is not bound to Ukraine by any formal treaty commitment and has stayed well clear of referencing any other sort of security assurance (those, for instance, the UK and US extended to Kiev in the 1994 Budapest Memorandum). Through 2014-2016, NATO did upgrade its assistance to Ukraine, but this has been limited to military career management, cyber defence, logistics, and command, control and communications. Merkel, Obama and others are on record that there is no military solution to be had in Ukraine.[152] Third, and of greatest significance, is NATO's collective defence posture. Here, the Alliance has demonstrated a certain caution. Its nuclear policy has remained (in public at least) unchanged and the conventional reinforcement of its eastern flank has been justified as remaining within the terms of the NATO-Russia Founding Act. Through 2014-2015 it was possible to argue that NATO's shift in policy had had only a negligible effect on the military balance in Europe – owing to long-term reductions in both European defence spending and the US military presence on the continent.[153] Both trends have now been reversed. Defence spending in NATO Europe in 2016 was projected to increase for all but three allies (Italy, Greece and Luxembourg),[154] and the US has committed to position an additional armoured brigade in eastern Europe from early 2017. The impact of these decisions is, however, open to interpretation. There is 'no hard evidence' a recent study

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[152] P. Baker, 'Obama Increases Ukraine Aid, Without Weapons', International New York Times (12 March 2015).

[153] L. Simon, 'Understanding US Retrenchment in Europe', Survival, 57:2 (2015), p.167.

[154] Allesandro Marrone, Olivier De France and Daniele Fattibene (eds.), Defence Budgets and Cooperation in Europe Developments, Trends and Drivers (Istituto Affari Internazionali, 2016), p.3.

has suggested 'that the upward trend' of defence budgets 'is going to endure.'[155] The American initiative, meanwhile, would if carried out result in a modest increase of 4,200 American troops in Europe, a fraction of the approximate 165,000 US army personnel withdrawn from the continent since the late 1980s.[156]

The qualifications described here suggest that NATO still carries a certain 'security dilemma sensibility.' As such, the logical next step is a move toward 'modalities of mitigation'.[157] Historical perspective here gives pause for thought. Russia's current resecuritization was preceded by a desecuritization of both its Soviet predecessor and of Russia itself. The logic of securitization is not, therefore, unbending, it can be undone.

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[155] Marrone, De France and Fattibene (2016), p.3.

[156] John Deni, 'The Flawed US Approach to European Reassurance', Carnegie Europe (27 May 2016) available at: {http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/?fa=63675}.

[157] K. Booth and N.J. Wheeler, The Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp.165-170.