

## The Rhetoric and Reality of the Trump Administration and the Transatlantic Relationship

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*President Trump's comments on the transatlantic alliance are deeply troublesome to most policy professionals involved in the maintenance of that relationship. Yet, the substance of American defense policy in Europe since 2016 shows a stronger American commitment to Europe and a more concerted effort to constrain Russian action. This disparity between what is said and what is done is part of Trump's negotiation style born of his experience in commercial real estate. Although potentially destabilizing when brought to American foreign policy, it also has the potential to open a new phase of the transatlantic security relationship that would refocus NATO on its core mission of deterring Russian interference and create space for the European Union to mature as a security actor on a range of other regional issues.*

Headlines such as “Trump calls NATO obsolete,” “Trump bashes allies” and “Trump says Putin meeting easiest” create a media image that the current US administration is on the verge of abandoning its traditional allies in Europe in favor of an improved relationship with Russia.<sup>1</sup> Of course, President Trump's own inflammatory comments are the source of much of this speculation. In the week of the July NATO summit, Trump referred to Germany as “captive to Russia” and nonsensically linked the US trade deficit to low defense spending among the European allies.<sup>2</sup> It is troubling language that calls into question some of the basic elements of American foreign policy since the end of World War II and implies a US retreat from the transatlantic security relationship. Setting the rhetoric aside, however, the actions of the current administration speak to a very different reality. Rather than weakening, the US military commitment to Europe has actually increased during Trump's presidency in ways that send direct signals to Russia and limit potential Russian involvement in Europe. What accounts for this disparity between rhetoric and action?

The simplest answer is that it is a matter of path-dependence and the US military continues in fulfilling existing commitments with its allies. But this is not a complete explanation because the US has shifted to a stronger deterrent posture regarding Russia and increased its military commitments in the region

since Trump became president. This disparity between rhetoric and action is a product of President Trump's negotiating style developed in his business practices, particularly his interpretation of the concept of leverage. He makes no secret about his ideas on how to negotiate and the lessons he has learned from a lifetime in what he describes as the Hobbesian world of commercial real estate. There is ample reason to question if the approach President Trump brings to the table is appropriate for international relations, but it is unlikely to change regardless. Rather than engage in a collective nervous breakdown as a result of Trump's often bombastic rhetoric, those concerned about the transatlantic relationship should recognize it for what it is and act accordingly. Donald Trump may be a rhetorical blunt instrument in a transatlantic relationship more used to nuanced discourse, but this is an opportunity to forge a somewhat different security relationship that would lead to a more mature relationship. For decades the US has pressured its European partners to take more responsibility for security in their region and the European Union has sought to build a role for itself as an independent security provider. There is room here to reconstruct the relationship around the shared core interest of deterring Russian interference in Europe while the EU builds a capacity to manage the myriad of other security concerns across Europe and the broader neighborhood. Provided that this does not lead to weakness that can be exploited by Russia- and the increased US military commitment to Europe is aimed at preventing that- this is a moment to forge a somewhat different relationship that would suit both long-term US and EU objectives, as well as bring NATO back to its original purpose.

### **An increased US commitment to Europe under the Trump administration**

Despite the harsh tweets and awkward summit meetings, the US commitment to the defense of Europe from Russian action has undeniably strengthened over the past two years. This can be seen in personnel choices for key positions in the administration, an increased American military presence and specific capabilities in the region, and energy development in the US that undercuts Russia's leverage in Europe. Developments in any one of these areas could be dismissed as coincidental, but there is a distinct pattern emerging that demonstrates a coordinated effort to boost American deterrent power in the most vulnerable parts of Europe.

In 2016, Jakub Grygiel and A. Wess Mitchell wrote *The Unquiet Frontier*, a volume that was highly critical of what they viewed as an overly accommodating policy of Russia and China during the Obama administration.<sup>3</sup> In particular, they stress that both Russia and China engage in probing on the frontiers of American influence to see how much they can get away with without provoking a response. The authors outline this strategy as one of low risk but with potentially high rewards. Rather than challenge a hegemon directly, it is better to probe the strength of the hegemon's commitments to its weaker allies, such as the exposed Baltic states. If the US failed to come to the aid of one of those states in the event of a crisis involving Russia, it would call into question the reliability of the US and the credibility of NATO. Grygiel and Mitchell question the grand strategies of retrenchment and restraint and instead advocate a policy that bolsters the alliance network in Central and Eastern Europe where it is most subject to Russia's probing.

At the time, Grygiel was a professor at Johns Hopkins University and Mitchell headed a think tank in Washington focused on European affairs. Today, they occupy important positions in the State Department with Grygiel on the Policy Planning staff and Mitchell as Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia. There were numerous individuals who could have filled those positions whose previous work would indicate a shift toward a more restrained American presence in the global security environment. Instead, we have advocates of a deterrent strategy that centers on bolstering the capabilities of the "frontline" states around Russia. In large part, as will be detailed below, this is precisely what is occurring.

Kay Bailey Hutchison was selected by the Trump administration as the US Permanent Representative to NATO. Once again, placing someone of her background in that position is indicative of an American commitment to the defense of Europe. As a Senator, Hutchison was a strong supporter of the alliance and reiterated this in her testimony as her nomination hearings, where she stressed the enduring importance of NATO for US security. "NATO has also evolved into much more because today's security environment now encompasses a much broader array of challenges, including asymmetric warfare."<sup>4</sup> True to form, she did not shy away from calling out Russia for its actions to destabilize Europe, noting that, "Russian disinformation campaigns and malign influence activities targeting NATO Allies and Partners seek to undermine Western democratic institutions and principles, and sow disunity in longstanding transatlantic bonds." She held out the possibility of an improved relationship

with Russia, but this was conditioned on some rather unlikely changes in Russian policy. “I want – I think all NATO Allies want – a constructive relationship between NATO and Russia, but there can be no return to “business as usual” between NATO and Russia as long as Russia fails to live up to the deal it signed in Minsk and continues to ignore basic norms of international law and responsible international behavior.” All of this is in keeping with her previous actions and statements as a Senator.

John Bolton returned to political prominence when President Trump brought him into the administration as the new National Security Advisor in April 2018. His abrasive reputation raised concerns in many quarters about his potential to spark conflict with North Korea with his often less-than-diplomatic language. It is important to note, however, that Bolton often reserves his harshest comments for Russia and Vladimir Putin in particular. In recent years, Bolton has referred to Putin as a habitual liar, arguing in 2017 that, “for Trump it should be a highly salutary lesson about the character of Russia’s leadership to watch Putin lie to him. And it should be a fire-bell-in-the-night warning about the value Moscow places on honesty...negotiate with Russia at your peril.”<sup>5</sup> This was a consistent theme of Bolton’s during his tenure as a commentator at Fox News during the Obama administration, when he often argued for a harder line on Russia including firmer sanctions that would directly impact on Putin. “I think in order to focus Putin’s thinking, we need to do things that cause him pain as well,” said Bolton in a 2013 interview.<sup>6</sup> He made similar comments on a consistent basis over the intervening years and was inherently critical of the Trump administration for not doing enough to respond to the poisoning of a former Russian intelligence agent in the United Kingdom. “The response needs to be such that we begin to create, in Vladimir Putin’s mind, deterrence theories that he will understand if he undertakes this again the cost that Moscow will bear will be significantly greater,” said Bolton in March 2018.<sup>7</sup>

The point here is not to catalog the statements of every key official in the administration working on issues related to the transatlantic security relationship, but rather to underscore that the personnel choices reflect a distinct view of Russia and the American security interest in Europe. That worldview sees Russia as a strategic competitor in Europe and elsewhere whose actions should be pushed back against forcefully to ensure deterrence. It views the American alliance system and the US commitment to its most vulnerable members as critical to American credibility and the endurance of American hegemony. The Trump administration could have filled these positions with individuals whose

past statements would indicate a worldview of realist restraint, or of greater accommodation of Russian interests in Europe. Instead the president turned to a group of policy professionals that are known for their hawkish views on Russia and their commitment to the US-led alliance system in Europe.

Personnel choices mean little unless those advisors are listened to and their recommendations are acted upon. But a brief examination of the level of the US military commitment to Europe indicates that they are in fact highly influential in the decision-making process. Since the start of the Trump administration, the US has both doubled down on the Obama administration's policy to reinforce the Baltic states and increased the US presence in Ukraine. The US also sent a strong signal to Russia about the limits of some aspects of so-called "hybrid warfare" in an engagement between US forces and Russian contract troops in Syria.

The US military presence in the Baltic states is part of the European Reassurance Initiative to bolster the defense of the most exposed members of the alliance. Each Baltic state and Poland has a brigade of allied forces stationed in it with the US taking the lead role in Poland. A brigade is clearly not meant to stop a traditional military assault, but those troops are essentially fulfilling a tripwire function as their counterparts did in West Berlin during the Cold War. The US has bolstered this commitment in various ways. First, the US specifically sent special forces trainers to work with Lithuanian troops on guerrilla warfare techniques in March 2018.<sup>8</sup> This was striking because it took place during a scheduled exercise focused on more conventional tactics and was a clear indication to Russia that even a rapid military defeat of the limited forces NATO has in the Baltic states would not be the end to the conflict. Similar training took place with Estonia as well. Secondly, the US is boosting its conventional power in the region. In May 2018 the US notified its European allies that it was testing its ability to rapidly move heavy military equipment into Europe with a massive movement of 87 Abrams tanks and more than 500 other armored vehicles.<sup>9</sup> But in probably the clearest message to Russia, the US began to openly consider deploying a carrier strike group in the Mediterranean Sea as a specific deterrent to Russia that would free other US Navy vessels to patrol the Baltic and Black Seas.<sup>10</sup> This is in keeping with the Trump administration's National Defense Strategy, which underscores that inter-state strategic competition is the main concern for American national security and specifically names Russia as a strategic competitor.

The US has also increased its presence in, and military assistance to, Ukraine. The sale of lethal arms including Javelin anti-tank missiles beginning in 2017 was a noted departure from the policy of the Obama administration that

shied away from what could be seen as a provocative move against Russia. But as Defense Secretary James Mattis said at the time, “defensive weapons are not provocative unless you’re an aggressor, and clearly, Ukraine is not an aggressor since it’s their own territory where the fighting is happening.”<sup>11</sup> Beyond this however, the US is engaged in other activities that receive less press attention. In particular, the US began building a maritime operations center in 2017 on the Black Sea coast at Ochakiv. The official description of the purpose of the operations center is to “maximize European reassurance initiatives,” and “deliver flexible maritime capabilities through the full range of military operations.”<sup>12</sup> Building such a facility as close as possible to the contested Crimea and the home of the Russian Black Sea Fleet surely did not go unnoticed in Moscow.

In addition, the US sent a strong signal to Russia in Syria about its willingness to use force in a confrontation with Russian military contractors in February 2018. A key part of Russia’s hybrid warfare strategy is the use of non-uniformed military personnel in eastern Ukraine that allows Russia to deny its military is engaged in the conflict. Similarly, the Russian government often uses “contractors” in Syria as part of their effort to militarily assist the Assad government. When US special forces found themselves and their Syrian allies being advanced upon by a column of Russian contract soldiers, they issued a warning as per the agreed upon deconfliction policy. When the column continued its advance, US forces struck in a brutally lethal manner killing and wounding approximately 200-300 Russian contractors. Of course, the rationale for the muted response from Russia was that these were contractors and not Russian military personnel, but it is notable that the wounded were evacuated on Russian military aircraft to Russian military hospitals.<sup>13</sup>

The decision to attack was not made in the White House, but it is a product of a decision by President Trump to give more decision-making power to commanders in the field and limit the back and forth between operational theaters and Washington that can hamstring military effectiveness. Yet, the outcome and its lessons cannot be mistaken in Moscow: if its “little green men” come in contact with US forces in Ukraine, the Baltic states or elsewhere, the results may be deadly.

A less directly relevant way in which the US has strengthened its hand in Europe is through energy exports that undercut Russian influence in the region. The United States is an increasingly significant player in the global energy market and is set to be the single largest producer of oil and natural gas in the near future.<sup>14</sup> Over the past several years, facilities in the US that were designed to

import Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) have been transformed into export terminals for the huge amounts of gas being extracted in the Midwest. This trend began in the previous administration but has only intensified with the Trump Administration's focus on "energy independence." Leaving aside the point that energy independence is a fairly meaningless concept in a globalized energy market, the active encouragement of gas and oil production by the administration through various incentives has two interrelated effects on European security.

The most significant effect is reducing the dependence of Europe, particularly Eastern Europe, on Russian natural gas. The vulnerability of Central and Eastern Europe to supply disruptions from Russia for political purposes sparked a range of activities to ensure that more gas could flow from west to east, but many states were still importing the majority of their gas from Russia in 2014.<sup>15</sup> With the construction of LNG facilities in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Bulgaria, the mix of gas sources has shifted somewhat, although Russian gas still dominates the market in Europe. American LNG is a relatively small portion of the total, as Russia exports far more gas than the US; in 2016 Russia exported over 200 billion cubic meters compared to the US exports of 5 billion cubic meters.<sup>16</sup> The point, however, is political not economic. As Dan Brouillette, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Energy said during a 2018 meeting in Denmark, "What price freedom? That's an important concept. We're talking energy security and not so much economics here."<sup>17</sup>

While American gas exports to Europe are likely to remain a relatively small part of European consumption, American natural gas production has driven the global price down to low levels that cut into the profits of the major Russian gas export company, which is closely tied to the Kremlin and seen as a "piggy bank" for Kremlin activities.<sup>18</sup> Gazprom maintains its grip on European markets, but its ability to raise prices for political purposes is hamstrung by the effects of American gas production and exports that set an effective ceiling on prices. If Gazprom were to play an aggressive game in the future that looked anything like the gas wars of the mid 2000s, the result would be to make US (and other) LNG sources much more competitive in the European market and reduce Russian market share. The amount of American gas entering Europe is small, but the reduction of Russian leverage it creates is disproportionately large.

In sum, the past two years have witnessed an increased American military commitment to Europe, the creation of a policy team known for its hawkish views on Russia, and an effort to weaken the hold of Russian energy on Europe. A hypothetical question might be clarifying at this juncture: if Mitt Romney, who to

the derision of President Obama defined Russia as the single largest geopolitical threat to the US in 2012, were president today, would we expect to see a similar set of personnel and policies toward Russia and the defense of Europe? The answer is clearly yes, which poses the following question: why does the rhetoric of Donald Trump not match up with the reality of increased American action directed at blunting Russian influence in Europe?

## **Trump as a Negotiator**

Unlike nearly every other modern American president, there is no lengthy record of policy positions, votes, speeches and other documentation to analyze for an understanding of how Trump operates and his underlying worldview. The closest we have for Donald Trump is a series of books extolling his successes in the commercial real estate development market, the most famous of which is *The Art of the Deal*.<sup>19</sup> It is worth parsing through it if for no other reason than it presents the image that Trump wants to promote of himself. There are a number of telling points, particularly in how he views negotiations, that may offer some clues to explain why his rhetorical approach is so disturbingly different from previous presidents.

First, Trump consistently underlines the importance of leverage in any negotiation. It is an obvious point, but one that he returns to time and again in different ways. “The best thing you can do is deal from strength, and leverage is the biggest strength you can have. Leverage is having something the other guys wants. Or better yet, needs. Or best of all, simply can’t do without.”<sup>20</sup> The book is filled with examples of leverage; using the threat of leaving a mid-town Manhattan hotel vacant as an eyesore to leverage a 40-year tax abatement from the city is just a particularly striking one.<sup>21</sup> When a point of leverage works in your favor, Trump’s strategy is to push it as far as it can go. When Trump first bid on his Florida residence, for example, he offered \$15 million, which was rejected. When another buyer’s bid was accepted but fell through before closing, Trump bid again, but even lower than previously sensing that the owners were under pressure. His bid was rejected again, but after another failed sale, his \$8 million bid was accepted- nearly half of where he had started.<sup>22</sup>

Another consistent theme in *The Art of the Deal* is the importance of asking for the seemingly unthinkable. By asking, the conversation shifts in that direction, and what was outrageous becomes a point of negotiation. Trump admires this



quality in others and tells of former president Jimmy Carter's visit to his office when Carter suddenly asked him for \$5 million as a contribution to his presidential library fund. "I was dumbfounded...but that experience also taught me something. Until then I'd never understood how Jimmy Carter became president. The answer is..(he) had the nerve, the guts, the balls to ask for something extraordinary."<sup>23</sup> This taste for the outrageous plays out in his approach to the press and public opinion. "If you are little different or a little outrageous...the press is going to write about you."<sup>24</sup> "I call it truthful hyperbole. It's an innocent form of exaggeration- and a very effective form of promotion."<sup>25</sup> All of this ultimately relates back to his interpretation of leverage. "My leverage came from confirming an impression they were already predisposed to believe."<sup>26</sup>

As a candidate, some of Donald Trump's statements indicated a dangerously transactional approach to the American alliance system that threatened to undermine arrangements that have paid security dividends to the US for decades. Yet, many of the demands he is making as president are in line with what he predecessors have asked for, such as increased defense spending and capabilities. The distinction is that Trump sees the previous US position as one lacking in leverage. As long as its European allies are convinced that the US will continue to provide the bulk of military capabilities in the alliance out of its own national security interests, the Europeans are not likely to fulfill American requests in the face of competing priorities. By convincing many of his European counterparts that he just might actually reduce the US military commitment to Europe, or in his words, "confirming an impression they were already predisposed to believe," he gains considerable leverage that his predecessors lacked.

This is directly related to the confrontational language used in his statements on NATO and the European allies. In actual substance, his reiteration of the American frustration with low defense spending and capabilities in Europe echoes his predecessors, including Barack Obama. Obama's Secretary of Defense Robert Gates famously warned his counterparts in 2011 that, "If current trends in the decline of European defense capabilities are not halted and reversed, future US political leaders - those for whom the Cold War was not the formative experience that it was for me - may not consider the return on America's investment in NATO worth the cost."<sup>27</sup> What is different is how Trump says it and the questions he raises, much along the line of Gates' point, that maybe it just is no longer worth it for the United States. The truth is that there is progress on defense spending across Europe and many European states defense budgets are trending the right direction. The July 2018 summit conclusion noted this trend,

but then Trump casually put forth a target of 4% of GDP for defense spending.<sup>28</sup> It is on its face a ridiculous figure and one the US would be hard pressed to meet in the coming years, but it is exactly how Trump negotiates: find the point of leverage and then exploit it for all it is worth, even to the point of making outrageous demands. You may not get it, but you move the conversation in that direction.

Much of the same negotiation style can be seen in the relationship Trump is attempting to forge with Vladimir Putin. Russia is identified as a “strategic competitor” by his administration’s National Defense Strategy, and he uses the exact same language to describe Russia in his impromptu comments. But Putin as a leader is invariably described in much more neutral terms. He is the leader of a competitor state, and no moral judgment is made about his personal character. Instead Putin is consistently portrayed as someone who can be worked with and trusted to protect Russian national interests. Nothing is said about the abuses of the Russian government, the personal corruption, or the anti-democratic nature of the Putin regime. Once again, Trump’s description of his dealings with corrupt individuals in the commercial real estate world offer some clues as to his worldview. This comes out in his positive discussion of working with the notorious Roy Cohn, whom Trump describes as having “spent more than two thirds of his adult life under indictment on one charge or another,”<sup>29</sup> but more tellingly in his stories about choosing apartment managers early in his career. Trump had run through a series of honest but less than satisfactory managers until finding one he only names as Irving and frankly describes as a “crook.” “But with Irving I had a dilemma,” says Trump. “He was far and away more capable than any honest manager I had found, and so long as he was in charge, no one under him would dare steal. That meant I only had to keep my eyes on him.”<sup>30</sup> In Trump’s Hobbesian world, a competent crook is a preferable business partner to an ineffectual principled individual.

The end result is that Trump is comfortable dealing with Vladimir Putin because he fits the model of the competent crook. But once again, leverage is key to any negotiation, so while Trump avoids insulting Putin personally, the US has significantly increased its deterrent presence in Eastern Europe as outlined above. From Trump’s perspective, any negotiation begins with the acquisition of leverage. With the NATO allies, the leverage comes from the increased perception that the US could reduce its commitments in Europe if they do not increase their defense spending and take more responsibility for security matters in the European region. For Putin, the leverage comes from building up the

American military presence in Europe and demonstrating a willingness to use force when necessary against ununiformed Russian troops.

## **Conclusion**

The core of the transatlantic security relationship will remain strong, not because of sentiment or vague commitments to shared values, but because of mutual national interests. For the US, blunting Russia in Europe is a key priority as defined by the National Defense Strategy set forth under the Trump administration. That strategy could have gone in other directions, defining security and the national interest in terms of other priorities put forward by the administration such as checking illegal immigration or defeating radical Islamist terrorist groups. Instead, the key points are about reorienting the use of American military power to counter the influence of strategic competitors, especially Russia and China.

Rather than hanging on every tweet from President Trump, his rhetorical bombast should be understood for what it is: part of a negotiating strategy to bring the administration closer to its goals. In terms of Europe and the transatlantic relationship those goals are relative consistent with those of previous administrations despite the vast differences in style. Once again, the National Security Strategy is very clear as to what the US perceives as the main dangers to itself and global order, and a robust defense of Europe from Russian interference is plainly stated as a main priority.

Thus, the US will remain involved in the defense of Europe, but the administration clearly wants Europe to do more to defend itself from Russian involvement and other potential threats such as those emanating from the southern frontier of the region. Once again, this is nothing new and the Obama administration pushed for the same thing. At least on paper, this is also what many US allies in Europe claim to want as well. This is an opportunity to strike a new strategic relationship that recognizes the differences in interests, but also the common interest in blocking Russian influence in Europe. What might emerge is a somewhat more balanced relationship that finally allows Europe more independent influence in the international environment but retains a strong transatlantic link based on minimizing Russian disruption of the region. To get there, however, we need to collectively move beyond an obsession with Trump's seeming inability to play according to the rules of diplomatic behavior.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example, Ashley Parker, “Trump says NATO is ‘Obsolete’, UN a ‘political game,’” *New York Times*, 2 April 2016 <https://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2016/04/02/donald-trump-tells-crowd-hed-be-fine-if-nato-broke-up/>; Brittany De Lea, “Trump bashes NATO members: who pays what?” *Fox Business*, 10 July 2018 <https://www.foxbusiness.com/politics/trump-bashes-nato-members-who-pays-what.amp>; Veronica Stracqualursi, “Trump says Putin meeting may be, ‘the easiest of them all,’” *CNN*, 10 July 2018 <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/07/10/politics/trump-putin-meeting/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> Gregory Korte, “Trump blasts US ally Germany as ‘captive to Russia’ in tense opening of NATO summit,” *USA Today*, 11 July 2018 <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/07/11/trump-nato-germany-totally-controlled-and-captive-russia-defense-spending/774308002/>

<sup>3</sup> Jakob Grygiel and A. Wess Mitchell, *The Unquiet Frontier: Rising Rivals, Vulnerable Alliance and the Crisis of American Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Statement of Kay Bailey Hutchison nominee to be US permanent representative to NATO, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 20 July 2017. <https://nato.usmission.gov/july-20-2017-testimony-kay-bailey-hutchison-u-s-senate-committee-foreign-relations/>

<sup>5</sup> John Bolton, “Vladimir Putin looked Trump in the eye and lied to him,” *The Telegraph*, 10 July 2017, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/07/10/vladimir-putin-looked-trump-eye-lied-negotiate-russia-peril/>

<sup>6</sup> Hadas Gold, “Bolton on Putin: cause him pain,” *Politico*, 8 August 2013 <https://www.politico.com/story/2013/08/vladimir-putin-russia-john-bolton-095327>

<sup>7</sup> Jenna Lifhits, John Bolton’s long history as a Russia hawk,” *The Weekly Standard*, 22 March 2018, <https://www.weeklystandard.com/jenna-lifhits/john-boltons-long-history-as-a-russia-hawk>

<sup>8</sup> Eric Schmitt, “In Eastern Europe, US military girds against Russian might and manipulation,” *New York Times*, 27 June 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Sebastian Sprenger, “US Army flows fresh tanks, troops into Europe,” *Defense News*, 23 May 2018. <https://www.defensenews.com/land/2018/05/23/us-army-flows-fresh-tanks-troops-into-europe/>

<sup>10</sup> David Larter, “US weighs keeping carrier strike group in Europe as a check on Russia,” *Defense News*, 20 April 2018. <https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2018/04/20/us-weighs-keeping-carrier-strike-group-in-europe-as-a-check-on-russia/>

<sup>11</sup> Jon Bowen, “Trump gives green light to selling lethal arms to Ukraine,” *The Hill*, 20 December 2017. <http://thehill.com/policy/international/365906-trump-administration-approves-lethal-arms-sales-to-ukraine>

<sup>12</sup> “Seabees break ground on maritime operations center in Ukraine” US Department of Defense press release, 7 August 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Maria Tsvetova, “Russian toll in Syria battle was 300 killed and wounded: sources,” Reuters 15 February 2018 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-casualty/russian-toll-in-syria-battle-was-300-killed-and-wounded-sources-idUSKCN1FZ2DZ>

<sup>14</sup> Natasha Bach, “This country could pass Saudi Arabia to become the world’s largest oil producer in 2018,” *Fortune*, 19 January 2018 <http://fortune.com/2018/01/19/us-saudi-arabia-russia-largest-oil-producer-2018/>

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<sup>15</sup> Chi-Kong Chyong and Vessela Tcherneva, “Europe’s vulnerability on Russian gas,” European Council on Foreign Relations, 17 March 2015. [https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_europes\\_vulnerability\\_on\\_russian\\_gas](https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_europes_vulnerability_on_russian_gas)

<sup>16</sup> US Energy Information Agency <https://www.eia.gov/naturalgas/importsexports/annual/>

<sup>17</sup> Ana Shiryaevskaya and Ewa Krukowska, “Russia tightens grip on Europe with Gazprom deal,” *Bloomberg*, 25 May 2018. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-05-24/russia-tightens-grip-on-europe-s-gas-supply-with-gazprom-deal>

<sup>18</sup> Leon Aron, “What does Putin want?” *Commentary* (December 2006): 19-24.

<sup>19</sup> Donald J. Trump and Tony Schwartz, *The Art of the Deal* (New York: Ballantine, 1987).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 53.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 122.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 25-6.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 60.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 56.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 58.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 54.

<sup>27</sup> US Defense Chief Blasts Europe over NATO,” *The Guardian*, June 10, 2011 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jun/10/nato-dismal-future-pentagon-chief>

<sup>28</sup> Meg Wagner, “Trump attends NATO Summit,” CNN 12 July 2018 <https://edition.cnn.com/politics/live-news/trump-nato-summit-2018/index.html>

<sup>29</sup> Trump and Schwartz, 100.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 86-87.