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DEFINING MOMENT

The Future of the Transatlantic Security Relationship

Julianne Smith and Rachel Rizzo

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DEFINING MOMENT

The Future of the Transatlantic Security Relationship

By Julianne Smith and Rachel Rizzo

Introduction

The legacy of President Barack Obama's handling of the transatlantic relationship will be one of complexity and mixed opinion. When Obama first entered office in 2009, European expectations were exceptionally high. At the time, Europeans felt that the health of the transatlantic relationship had deteriorated over the prior decade. There were long running and deep-seated disagreements over President George W. Bush's management of the Global War on Terror, and those differences had placed considerable stress on the entirety of the U.S.-Europe relationship. For Europe, a new American president meant new beginnings and new priorities; Europeans saw in Obama a return to multilateralism, diplomacy, and international law. In fact, Europe's confidence in Obama ran so deep he received the Nobel Peace Prize during his first year in office.

Many of those expectations were quickly tempered, however, by the realization that the new American president had plans to shift his country's attention to the Pacific, and would soon remove some U.S. forces out of Europe. Europeans also soon discovered that while the president had made some important changes to U.S. counterterrorism practices and policies, other changes they sought would be more difficult. The Guantanamo Bay detention center is still open, and Obama has increased U.S. reliance on drone strikes much to the dismay of many Europeans. Thanks to the intelligence program disclosures made by Edward Snowden, Europeans also learned troubling details about National Security Agency (NSA)

surveillance inside European capitals, which cast an especially dark shadow on the president's relationship with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Despite the sense of abandonment many Europeans felt in the first four to six years of Obama's tenure, he remained popular in Europe up until the end of his presidency—certainly more so than in his own country, where his approval ratings consistently hovered around 50 percent. Much of this popularity in Europe was tied to the fact that the president actively reinvested in the transatlantic partnership during his second term, particularly in the wake of Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. The United States has not only returned force posture to the European continent, but also invested billions of dollars in enhancing deterrence in Europe.

During Obama's tenure, the two sides of the Atlantic also had their share of joint policy victories. The European Union (EU) played an integral and critical role in the successful negotiation of the Iran nuclear deal; NATO recently decided to deploy four multinational battalions to the Baltics and Poland, led by the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom (UK), and Canada; and Europe and the United States are now working together to advance mutually beneficial agendas in climate and energy. During his last year in office, Obama also traveled to London in advance of the British referendum on EU membership to make the case against Britain's departure from the EU, an argument that no other European leader at the time was willing or able to make.

This paper will provide a historical overview of the key issues that shaped the transatlantic relationship during the course of the Obama administration, and it

will examine what that relationship might look like under the newly-inaugurated President Donald Trump. What challenges do each side of the Atlantic face today, and what security issues continue to plague both the United States and Europe? How should the United States approach its relationship with the EU and NATO to adequately face today's complex security challenges? This paper then offers recommendations that the new administration can use to build a strategy that will further strengthen the transatlantic relationship and ensure Europe remains a keystone of U.S. foreign policy.



One of President Barack Obama's first international trips after his inauguration was to Europe for the G20 Summit in London. In this photo, he gives a press conference following the summit on April 2, 2009. (Pete Souza/White House)



Then-NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen poses with members of the Afghan Special Forces at Camp Morehead, Afghanistan, on April 12, 2012. (Maitre Christian Valverde, French Navy/ISAF Public Affairs Office)

Stress Tests for the Transatlantic Relationship during the Obama Administration

A number of world events—starting first and foremost with the war in Afghanistan—shaped the relationship between the United States and Europe over the last eight years. When President Obama assumed office in 2009, the United States was deeply mired in the war in Afghanistan. The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) supported the United States in a multinational attempt to wrest control from the Taliban, but by 2009 the strategy was clearly failing, the human toll was growing, and the United States needed to change its approach. ISAF partners (especially France, Germany, Italy, and Spain) were initially reluctant to join in the American troop surge, but somewhat surprisingly pledged to contribute approximately 7,000 additional troops in addition to more “trainers and trust fund monies.”¹

But European allies placed heavy caveats on where their troops could conduct combat operations, which deeply frustrated U.S. commanders. Despite the fresh start with a new American president, both sides of the Atlantic quickly realized that they would continue to have significant differences on “the nature of the threat, strategy, and the goals of Western engagement”² in Afghanistan. Although cooperation is better today under

the post-ISAF mission Resolute Support, differences between Europe and the United States over the last decade in Afghanistan, especially as the United States began to cut troop numbers in 2011, have negatively affected the health of the transatlantic relationship.

Less than two years later, in early 2011, the Arab Spring took the world by storm. Amid democratic revolutions and armed rebellions, the fall of autocratic governments throughout the Middle East and North Africa fundamentally changed the future of the region. Initially, these events fueled considerable optimism among the transatlantic partners about the future direction of the Middle East. But it soon became apparent that, at least in some cases, both sides of the Atlantic would be forced to choose between supporting revolutionary forces or the historical stability that often stemmed from authoritarian leaders.

The case that triggered the biggest transatlantic response occurred in Libya, where Muammar Gaddafi’s indiscriminate response to civilian pressure put into motion the NATO-led intervention Operation Unified Protector (OUP), which established a no-fly zone and an arms embargo.³ While the United States knew it would need to help launch the mission, especially in regards to the establishment of a command center, the Obama administration hoped to play more of a supporting role once the mission got underway, allowing European militaries to take the lead. But that plan proved difficult to put into practice. Less than a month into the operation,



The failure of Northern Rock, which was the first run on a British financial institution in a century, signaled the arrival of the global economic crisis in the United Kingdom. (Lee Jordan/Flickr)

Europe started running low on munitions, and the operation revealed gaps in both command and control and the number of aircraft available. This highlighted the inability of Europe to “sustain even a relatively small military action over an extended period of time,” and forced the United States to the forefront of the operation for several months.⁴ Despite those difficulties, NATO declared mission success seven months into the operation, leaving policymakers hopeful that OUP would come to be viewed as a blueprint for successful interventions in the future. But the allies failed to create a viable post-intervention plan and as a result, the initial victory in Libya has since been squandered. Today, Libya is in a state of disarray politically and militarily.

Of course, the ramifications of the Arab Spring were not relegated just to North Africa. One of the most consequential of all the resulting conflicts continues to rage in Syria between the government of Bashar al-Assad, rebel forces dedicated to overthrowing his regime, and groups aligned with the Islamic State (IS). Up until recently, when both European and American forces finally decided to engage militarily, the two sides of the Atlantic took a different approach to Syria; unlike the conflicts in Afghanistan and Libya, they stayed largely out of it.⁵

Unfortunately, though, the conflict has still served as a sore point in the transatlantic relationship. In 2012, a little over two years into the conflict, Obama commented to the White House Press Corps that Assad’s use of chemical weapons against rebel forces would be a “red line” that would bring about “enormous consequences” if crossed.⁶ As the world now knows, the Assad Regime crossed that line numerous times, and the United States’ decision to not punish the regime raised concern among some of the United States’ European allies. The French

government, for example, was disappointed the United States backed down, especially as it was preparing to join the United States in military strikes. Similarly, the decision caused governments in Central and Eastern Europe to begin questioning U.S. commitment to their own security. More tragically, the conflict has resulted in immeasurable human suffering, spilled over into the rest of the Middle East, and put immense strain on European cohesion as countries grapple with refugee flows that stand to transform the face of Europe.⁷

On top of the regional conflicts previously mentioned, Europe and the United States were plagued for years by continent-wide financial woes tied to the 2008 financial crisis. Not only did Europe and the United States attempt to solve the financial crisis differently—Europe was more focused on austerity measures and the United States on economic growth—there were disagreements about where and how the financial crisis originated. Many European leaders placed direct blame on the United States. When then-European Commission President José Manuel Barroso was asked at the G20 conference in 2012 about the United States potentially helping Europe to alleviate its financial problems he stated, “This crisis was not originated in Europe.” He said it started “in North America, and much of [Europe’s] financial sector was contaminated by ... unorthodox practices, from some sectors of the financial market.”⁸ Although the United States and Europe have recovered from the worst phases of the financial crisis, several European economies remain weak, and people on both sides of the Atlantic complain they have yet to see any demonstrable change in their lives since the crisis started.

Alongside seemingly unending international crises, some of Obama’s personal policy decisions also created friction in the transatlantic relationship. Perhaps the best



President Obama speaks with José Manuel Barroso, then-president of the European Commission, during the G8 Summit at Camp David in 2012. That year at the G20 Summit, Barroso firmly insisted the global economic crisis did not originate in Europe, but in North America, whose financial practices he said contaminated Europe’s banks. (Pete Souza/White House)

example of this was the Obama administration's 2011 announcement that it would pursue a strategic rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region.⁹ Many European capitals assumed this would in turn mean an automatic decrease in U.S. engagement in Europe.¹⁰ Some experts also felt as though Washington's decision not to invite the EU to "join the pivot" meant America did not view Europe as a relevant player in Asia.¹¹ And when the administration decided to decrease its military presence on the European continent in 2012 and replace two permanently based brigade combat teams with one U.S.-based rotational battalion, it resulted in outright resentment and frustration.¹²

More recently, in 2013, the NSA surveillance revelations sent shockwaves throughout Europe, especially with the disclosure the United States had spied on the leaders of some of its closest allies such as Germany and France. This issue brought to light deep-rooted differences in how each side of the Atlantic views civil liberties and personal freedom. It also raised questions in Europe about American trustworthiness. The effects of this policy are still felt today. In France and Germany, for example, the portion of the public that believes the United States respects personal rights is lower today than it was during President George W. Bush's last year in office.¹³ This widespread belief throughout the populations of some of America's staunchest European allies has complicated future talks on U.S.-EU information-sharing agreements because of lack of public support and data privacy concerns.¹⁴

What's more, the continuation of some of Bush's controversial counterterrorism policies, particularly the use of drones, has been a consistent source of tension between the two sides of the Atlantic. Obama entered office intent on rolling back many of Bush's



U.S. Air Force maintenance technicians conduct preflight checks on an RQ-4 Global Hawk at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia. (Staff Sgt. Andy M. Kin, U.S. Air Force/DoD Flickr)

counterterrorism policies, but the use of drone strikes on counterterrorism targets instead increased under his watch. Europeans have been "torn between an evident reluctance to accuse Obama of breaking international law and an unwillingness to endorse his policies."¹⁵ Many European experts have called on Obama to increase transparency and accountability over U.S. drone use, especially given European concerns that intelligence shared with the U.S. could be used to conduct drone strikes that may be considered illegal in Europe.¹⁶ As his time in office came to a close, Obama attempted to add structure, transparency, and accountability to the U.S. government's use of drones to conduct targeted strikes away from active battlefields.

Most notably, in August 2016 the administration declassified (with some redactions) the "Drone Playbook," a presidential policy guidance setting forth detailed procedures for vetting and approving targets and plans for drone strikes. In addition, a July 2016 executive order requires responsible agencies to take various measures to avoid civilian casualties and to publish annually an unclassified estimate of civilian deaths in such strikes. These measures, if left in place, could substantially enhance domestic and international confidence in the drone program. But it remains to be seen whether the Trump administration—which could revoke these measures at its discretion—will choose to leave in place Obama administration constraints on its authority to use this powerful tool.



President Barack Obama confers with National Security Advisor Susan Rice before speaking with German Chancellor Angela Merkel about Edward Snowden's NSA leaks. (Pete Souza/White House)

Deeper Cooperation during the Obama Administration

While the two sides of the Atlantic have admittedly had their share of differences, the narrative that the United States has disengaged from Europe is not rooted in fact. The administration's strategic attention has indeed, largely been focused elsewhere, but Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 served as a wake-up call for the United States to return to Europe as a major point of focus. The United States has accordingly made a concerted effort over the last few years to shift its attention back to Europe and reassure allies of its unwavering support. In response, Europe has also committed to strengthening its relationship with the United States on wide-ranging issues, which has resulted in a more meaningful and fruitful partnership during President Obama's second term in office.

Although Russian assertiveness has deeply unsettled Europe and raised questions about the durability of the post-Cold War order, in many important respects it has been a catalyst for stronger transatlantic cooperation. In response to Russia's actions in Ukraine, the United States and Europe successfully partnered on a number of punitive measures aimed at isolating the Kremlin and deterring further aggression. Both the EU and United States implemented a far-reaching sanctions regime against various elements of Russia's banking, energy, and defense sectors and imposed asset freezes and travel bans on members of the political elite. Moreover, the United States and four of its closest European allies voted alongside Canada and Japan to oust Russia from the Group of 8 (G8), signifying Western resolve and unity.¹⁷

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Furthermore, the Obama administration quadrupled the funding of the European Reassurance Initiative from \$789 million to \$3.4 billion for FY2017 to increase military presence in Europe, conduct more bilateral and multilateral training exercises, and enhance prepositioned equipment in the East. These investments follow years of decline in NATO's capabilities in Eastern Europe. The United States has also taken steps to reinvigorate its oldest European relationships, mindful of the broad spectrum of new challenges they face. One of the

most significant challenges has been the growing skepticism within the EU over the value and meaning of the European project itself. Most recently, during Obama's April 2016 trip to the UK before it voted to leave the EU, he championed the U.S.-EU relationship and stated very clearly that the UK's influence in global affairs is stronger as a member of the EU so that it can speak as part of one larger voice on matters where unified resolve could make a difference.

But it isn't only the United States' reaffirmation of its commitment to Europe that has been noteworthy during this period. Contrary to the growing narrative in American political discourse that the United States' NATO allies are free riders that do not contribute their fair share to the alliance, defense spending in Europe is slowly increasing. Beginning with the Wales Summit in 2014, there has been a major push within NATO to increase European defense spending to meet the alliance's target of spending 2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) on defense. This put a halt to 20 years of declining budgets and comes at an important time as the American public increasingly questions the benefit of U.S. alliances. As of 2016, defense spending is up 8.3 percent in Europe, largely driven by the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovakia, which will together hike defense spending by almost 20 percent in 2016.¹⁸ While much of this growth in defense spending is driven by fear of Russian aggression in the east, it also comes at a time when Europe faces increased terrorism on the continent, stemming in part from instability across the Middle East.

In addition to defense spending, Europe has also showcased its diplomatic heft in recent years. By using a far-reaching sanctions regime that persuaded Iran to

enter negotiations over its nuclear program, the United States and Europe, along with Russia and China, created and have begun implementing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran. For years, the United States and Europe shared deep concerns about the nature and trajectory of Iran's nuclear program, the program's potential to destabilize the region and threaten Israel, and Iran's track record as a state sponsor of terrorist organizations. In 2012, the Council of the European Union imposed an embargo on Iranian oil, froze assets



The European Union played an integral role in the negotiations of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran. In this photo, U.S. and EU officials meet with their Iranian counterparts at the Blue Salon at Palais Coburg on July 13, 2015. (U.S. State Department Flickr)

held by the Central Bank of Iran, and placed restrictions on the country's trade, finance, and energy sectors. These sanctions—the most comprehensive ever formulated by the EU—were initially politically contentious because there was no consensus among the EU's 28 member states on how the bloc should approach Iran, and also because individual member states such as Spain were especially reliant on Iranian oil. But Europe banded together and became an integral player in drawing Iran to the negotiating table.

There are several other areas in which the transatlantic partners have applied their collective weight to address global challenges. In early October 2016, the EU finally signed on to the Paris Agreement, a landmark U.N. climate treaty set to take effect in November of 2016, with the ambitious goal of tackling rising levels of greenhouse gas pollution and reversing global warming. The United States and Europe have also worked hard to negotiate the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), an ambitious U.S.-EU trade deal that will “boost economic growth and add to the more than 13 million American and EU jobs already supported by transatlantic trade and investment.”¹⁹ The original hope was that this deal could be completed sometime in 2017 or 2018, but unfortunately, work has slowed after the last round of talks in October 2016 due to the outcome of the U.S. election, public opposition, and upcoming elections in Europe, namely Germany and France.

The Transatlantic Relationship: Looking Ahead

In the future, the United States and Europe will face an array of complex security challenges that will continue to test their strength, unity, and resolve. At the top of that list is the conflict in Syria, which shows no sign of abating and threatens to alter the face of both the immediate region and Europe. Russia will be another challenge for the transatlantic partners with its ongoing aggression in Ukraine, acts of intimidation across Europe and Eurasia, and its support of the Assad regime in Syria. Ongoing or brewing crises in Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan, and North Korea will also test the transatlantic partners in the months and years ahead.

Unfortunately, both sides of the Atlantic will find it difficult to maintain their strategic attention on issues abroad due to a long list of pressing domestic challenges. In Europe, for example, instability across the Middle East has given way to a historic migration crisis as millions of Syrians, Iraqis, and others flee war and economic destitution. In fact, 1.3 million migrants applied for asylum in the EU's 28 member states as well as Norway and Switzerland in 2015, which nearly doubles the previous record of 700,000 set in 1992 after the collapse of the Soviet Union.²⁰ Europe has experienced multiple terrorist attacks over the last two years, shaking the core of its populace and setting the stage for the rise of far-right, anti-EU, and anti-immigrant political parties. Europeans have also increasingly lost faith in the efficacy and strength of the EU. Having just last year experienced a near financial collapse and numerous sovereign debt crises, the EU was again shaken by Britain's historic and largely unexpected decision to leave the union in June 2016. Further complicating the situation is the fact European countries differ in their opinions on what constitutes the greatest challenge to the continent, which makes it difficult to determine where to focus.

Similarly, in the United States, even if President Trump decides to refocus on the transatlantic relationship, he will not be able to ignore the deep partisan differences at home, and the widening gap between political elites and the rest of the country. The American populace clearly has vast differences in opinions on the role of the United States in the world, with many on the right and left arguing the United States should turn inward and address challenges at home. And just as in Europe, candidates running on an anti-immigrant platform have been gaining support. The usefulness of the current U.S. alliance structure was repeatedly called into question



Instability in the Middle East has spilled into neighboring areas, creating a historic migration crisis for Europe. Here, Syrian and Iraqi refugees reach the shore of Lesbos, Greece, at the end of a dangerous journey through the Mediterranean Sea. (Ggia/Wikipedia)

during the presidential campaign, and at the center of that rhetoric was America's engagement with its European allies in NATO. The question is whether Trump will be interested in crafting a new transatlantic agreement addressing some of these concerns about burden sharing or if he will turn away from the transatlantic relationship. Full stop.

Recommendations for the Next President

Without question, President Donald Trump has inherited a daunting international agenda. One of the best investments he could make to gain headway with that agenda would be to place the transatlantic partnership near the top of his foreign policy priorities. This relationship has been at the heart of U.S. engagement since World War II—and for good reason. History emphatically shows the United States and Europe tackle global challenges more effectively when they act in concert. But many factors could make that difficult.

Let's start with the newly-elected president himself. Trump made many statements during the presidential campaign that demonstrated either ignorance about the value of the transatlantic relationship or sheer contempt for the United States' transatlantic partners and the shared institutions we created together. He called NATO,

the world's most successful military alliance, "obsolete" and claimed he would only meet America's security commitments to those allies that spend 2 percent of their GDP on defense. He said Brussels was a "disaster." Trump has also made clear he intends to pursue rapprochement with Russia despite Vladimir Putin's aggressive behavior in Eastern Europe and support for the Assad regime in Syria. He repeatedly praised Putin's domestic leadership style during the presidential campaign, expressed openness to recognizing Crimea as Russian territory and downplayed evidence of Russian atrocities in Syria.

Since November, new information has also emerged regarding Russia's direct involvement in the U.S. election. A recent report from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence assesses "with high confidence that Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election, the consistent goals of which were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency."²¹ Trump has publicly acknowledged Russian involvement, but has stopped short of anything denigrating about Putin. Instead, he said that he "respects the fact" that Putin said Russian involvement in the election "totally never happened."²²

One would hope that Trump's pro-Russian statements are being made to avoid assumptions that someone else

helped him win on November 8th and do not actually represent his real views. But even if that is the case and Trump takes a more conciliatory approach towards the United States' European allies, there are several factors that will continue to challenge the transatlantic relationship. These include the public's loss of faith in international institutions, resource constraints, the public's increasing disaffection with globalization, and a shrinking community of transatlantic analysts and scholars. Trump and his advisors should do the following to work against those trends.

Invest Politically and Diplomatically in the European Project

As noted earlier, Europe faces many challenges that could dramatically affect both individual European states and entire institutions such as the EU. While the United States is limited in how much it can shape the future of Europe, it nevertheless has a vested interest in seeing the European project succeed, and preserving the peace and stability of the continent. The next president should therefore identify and pursue diplomatic measures and policy changes aimed at reassuring European allies, deterring Russian aggression, fortifying transatlantic resolve, and enhancing resilience. These diplomatic measures should include high-level travel to Europe, U.S.-EU summits, and regular calls to European leaders to consult not only on challenges within the transatlantic community, but also developments impacting the entire international community such as the rise of China, the threat of climate change, and growing discontent with the disruptive changes wrought by globalization and international trade. Although the transatlantic relationship will remain central to U.S. foreign policy, American and European leaders must look farther afield together.

The next president should also take the case for NATO and strong transatlantic relations directly to the American people by showcasing the significant ways the United States' European allies and partners have contributed to U.S. initiatives in Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere. Although greater sharing of the financial burden must continue to be a goal of the alliance, it is critical to publicly reflect on ways NATO allies have already left their footprint. In Afghanistan, for example, the United States has lost over almost 2,400 service personnel²³ while 1,136 soldiers from NATO allies and other partners—453 British troops, 158 Canadian troops, 88 French troops, and 57 German troops, to name a few—have given their lives to that effort.²⁴

Additionally, NATO has been critical in patrolling the Mediterranean and other vulnerable maritime domains,



During his 2014 state visit to Poland, President Obama conferred on the sidelines with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko. Although Ukraine does not belong to NATO, the United States has an interest in its territorial integrity and the resolution of Russia's ongoing intervention there on the basis of international law and respect for sovereignty. (Pete Souza/White House)

while Germany, Canada, and the UK are contributing troops and matériel to new multinational battalions in Eastern Europe. A comprehensive record of all of NATO's contributions to U.S.-led or inspired initiatives would require much more space than available here; these are just a few examples to highlight how the United States' alliances make America and its allies safer.

Investments in the transatlantic relationship can't come from Washington alone. The daunting task of managing the UK's departure from the EU, the ongoing difficulties of the migration crisis, and growing popular discontent with the EU's governing structure will distract Europe's leaders, but they must resist the temptation to turn inward.

Maintain Sanctions against Russia and Conduct a Review

Despite efforts spanning two decades to forge a productive relationship with Moscow, recent events in Ukraine, Russia's increasingly menacing probing of the Baltic and Arctic Seas, and its brazen interference in American and European political processes demonstrate the United States and Europe must prepare to contain a revanchist Russia and reassure nervous allies in the region. The next president should begin his tenure as president by calling on the transatlantic community to conduct a thorough review of Russia's relationship with the West. On the United States' side, this must include close cooperation by the National Security Council, the State Department, and the Department of defense, and should include an audit of the parameters of the Minsk Protocol.

Trump should also quickly signal the United States' intention to maintain all existing sanctions against Russia—while calling on the United States and Europe, as the need arises, to impose more targeted travel and financial sanctions on additional Russian officials for

violating the Minsk accords, Russia's actions in Syria, and its hacking of the US elections. Allowing the sanctions to lapse without a resolution to the crisis in Ukraine would delegitimize sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy while normalizing Russia's flagrant violation of international norms. Trump's advisors should warn him that relaxing sanctions and pursuing warmer ties with Russia could incentivize future aggressive actions against European states, including NATO allies, without first securing significant concessions from Russia on restoring Ukraine's sovereignty over Crimea or affirming the right of independent European states to join alliances of their choice.

The United States should also raise the issue of Russian information warfare, cyber espionage, and political interference to the highest levels of U.S.-EU dialogue. Washington and Brussels should coordinate a strategy to counter Russia's aggressive disinformation campaigns—particularly on matters of acute importance to transatlantic security such as Russia's ongoing belligerence in Syria and support for pro-Russian rebels in Ukraine.

Forge a New Strategy with Europe on Turkey

As an indispensable NATO ally and a key contributor to the global anti-IS coalition, Turkey's strategic value to the United States cannot be overstated. Straddling Europe and Asia, Ankara has also long sought EU membership while maintaining close economic and trade links to Asia. But Turkey's position in the transatlantic community has recently come under unprecedented strain, especially in the wake of the attempted coup in July 2016. While no one on either side of the Atlantic questions Turkey's strategic importance, many capitals view President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's efforts to consolidate power with great concern. The challenge is how the United States and Europe ought to balance Turkey's vital role as a bulwark against the Middle East's instability while urging Erdoğan to respect the rule of law and avoid an erosion of democratic norms. Instead of addressing their respective relationships with Turkey largely in isolation, Europe and the United States might want to consider launching a dialogue on and with Turkey addressing today's list of grievances (on all sides) and looking at where the partners might take their relationships with Turkey in five to ten years' time.

Enhance Deterrence in the Black Sea Region and in Eastern Europe

The 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw launched a series of important measures aimed at enhancing deterrence



The guided-missile cruiser USS Vella Gulf (CG-72) conducts maritime-security operations in the Black Sea on May 24, 2014, as part of the U.S. commitment to regional stability. (Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Edward Guttierrez III, U.S. Navy/DoD Flickr)

in the Baltic states and Poland, including plans to rotate multinational battalions to vulnerable eastern territories. One of the first questions Trump should ask is whether those encouraging developments are in fact enough. He should consider extending similar measures to the Black Sea region. He should also consider what more the NATO alliance could do to address Russia's anti-access/area-denial capabilities in the region. This is particularly important in light of Russia's aggressive investments in submarine capabilities and alarming steps such as the deployment of the S-400 air missile-defense system to Kaliningrad, which threatens to erode the credibility of NATO's deterrence posture by rendering significant swaths of eastern NATO territory inaccessible to allied aircraft during a conflict. Russia has stationed sizeable forces in the western military district that are ready to conduct large-scale exercises with little or no notice. This raises questions about whether NATO's multinational battalions are enough to deter Russian aggression. The United States should invest more to bolster NATO's enhanced forward presence, conduct larger and more frequent brigade and division exercises, and enhance intelligence and security cooperation with vulnerable non-NATO states such as Georgia and Ukraine.

Deepen Cooperation with European Allies on Counterterrorism

The fight against IS will last for a long time. While it is of the utmost importance that the United States and Europe work together to defeat IS, the threat of terrorism more broadly will not simply go away even if the Islamic State is defeated. This means the next U.S. president must work alongside Europe to create a long-term counterterrorism strategy to address the remnants and offshoots of IS. Both sides of the Atlantic should continue their efforts to increase information sharing, even in the face of privacy concerns throughout Europe. Recent attacks—such as those in Paris and San Bernardino, California—on both sides of the Atlantic demonstrate the importance of addressing the problem of self-radicalization through the internet.

This is not an easy problem to address given the diffused nature of the internet and the constitutional implications of regulating speech and information in the absence of clearly illegal or threatening conduct. The United States and its European allies should counter the

partners to adequately tackle the challenge of Russian meddling and sabotage, the next president should not only place a premium on cyber resilience and, if necessary, offensive capabilities; he should do so in concert with European allies. Furthermore, the next president must join European allies to aggressively counter Russian disinformation tactics, call out Russian aggression more forcefully, and publish information exposing false Russian narratives.

This is not easy to do when information today is diffuse and identifying sources of false narratives is technically challenging. One solution is investing in a proposed Center for Information Analysis and Response, which features prominently in a bill recently introduced by Senators Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) known as the Countering Information Warfare Act of 2016. This measure would provide funds to civil society organizations such as think tanks and non-governmental organizations to expose and counter false narratives from foreign sources. This kind of initiative is necessary given the imbalance of investment

The next U.S. president must work alongside Europe to create a long-term counterterrorism strategy to address the remnants and offshoots of IS.

problem of self-radicalization by promoting public awareness of the problem, encouraging schools to engage with youth to warn them of the dangers of associating with extremists through the internet, and engaging directly with parents, religious institutions, and community figures to describe the warning signs of radicalization and resources to address the problem early through community-based intervention. The United States should also dramatically expand the scope of intelligence gathering sharing with its European allies and partners.

Create New Policy Tools in Collaboration with European Partners

The rise of cyber, outer space, and other new domains such as information warfare pose a grave challenge to the security and cohesion of the transatlantic community. In particular, Russia's aggressive investment in cyber espionage and disinformation campaigns can destabilize the political systems of allied states, limit U.S. efforts to end the conflict in Syria, and reduce tensions over Ukraine. For the United States and its European

relative to foreign adversaries; for instance, Moscow spends \$400 million per year on the Washington bureau of Russia Today, a multi-national television network funded solely by the Russian government. Neither the United States nor Europe is yet capable of heading off the threat of disinformation warfare.

Move the European Reassurance Initiative to the Base Budget

In 2016, the funding for European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) was increased from \$789 million to \$3.4 billion. This was a positive development, but the initiative is still located within the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) fund, which is separate from the base budget and does not count against the budget caps set by the 2011 Budget Control Act. OCO is temporary and must be approved by Congress each year, which makes long-term planning difficult, if not impossible. To reassure European allies and signal the United States' long-term commitment to Russia and the region, ERI funding should be moved to the base budget.

Conclusion

The bond between the U.S. and Europe is a complex web of multinational institutions underpinned by bilateral relationships between states, which makes in-depth cooperation and coordination difficult at times. This is further complicated by the fact that both sides of the Atlantic, including states within the EU, have opposing priorities and different views of history. But beneath the differences lie an equal number of similarities, which inextricably link the two continents and make cooperation integral to their mutual security.

Given the rise of populism in the EU and the UK's historic vote to leave the supranational bloc, history's tide seems to be against the EU, and many internal external forces will continue to threaten its success unless European leaders act now to turn the tide in their favor. The next president should send the message to Europe that the United States will do its part to create a mutually beneficial long-term relationship that will lead to continued and increased prosperity. The United States helped create the European project, and it is of vital interest to see it succeed. But Europe must continue to do its part, too.

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