

Emerging Contours of Transatlantic Relationship under Trump Administration

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Abstract

With the election of US President Donald Trump, the very essence of transatlantic relations, embedded in the shared ideologies of liberalism, democracy, human rights and globalization has begun to erode. The already strained United States-Europe relationship is now at the lowest ebb under the Trump administration. This rift is visible since long and is continuously widening due to divergence of economic, security, political and environmental interests of the United States (US) and its European allies. This paper discusses the reasons for divergence between the two old partners who have traditionally identified themselves collectively as the 'West' and the impact it has had on their partnership. This paper examines the evolution of the US-Europe relations, crisis under Trump's Jacksonian politics leading to divergences on core issues, namely Russia as a threat and energy supplier, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), climate change and Iran. In addition, it deliberates on the future trajectory of transatlantic partnership under Trump administration and offers policy options.

Keywords: Transatlantic Relations, US-EU, US-NATO Relations, Trump-Europe, EU-Iran, Russia-Europe.

Introduction

US President Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 presidential election against a more popular candidate, Hillary Clinton, was quite unanticipated¹ and came as a shock particularly for Washington's European allies. Strong sentiments of dismay were perceptible on the eastern side of the Atlantic Ocean mainly due to Trump's advocacy of 'Jacksonian' politics, which in foreign policy translates into 'isolationism'

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¹ For details, Dan Roberts, Sabrina Siddiqui, Ben Jacobs, Lauren Gambino and Amanda Holpuch, "Donald Trump Wins Presidential Election, Plunging US into Uncertain Future," *Guardian*, November 9, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/09/donald-trump-wins-us-election-news>. Hillary Clinton, former Secretary of State and a democrat was the most popular candidate for the 2016 elections.

and 'protectionism.'² Later, once elected, President Trump quickly began to pursue the protectionist policies and claimed to put *America first* and make *America great again*. This became evident when he pulled out of or renegotiated several 'bad deals' including alliances, trade deals, multilateral agreements and international commitments.³ More importantly, after assuming the presidency, he called off the *US Pivot to Asia strategy* abandoning his Atlantic allies, withdrew from the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Paris Climate Accord.⁴

Trump's presidency has also been characterized as 'reckless', 'erratic' and 'flip-flopping' on policy statements. Initially, he criticized North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as 'obsolete' and then days later, declared it 'no longer obsolete.'⁵ Moreover, in yet another diplomatic faux pas, Trump directly criticized NATO members for not sharing their due responsibility in organization's defense budget.⁶ This was seen as humiliating, condescending and outright false by the latter. In addition, he had a narrow and misinformed view of Article 5 of NATO's

² Taesuh Cha, "The Return of Jacksonianism: The International Implications of the Trump Phenomenon," *The Washington Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2016): 83-97, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2016.1261562>; and Fareed Zakaria, "Trump Defines Foreign Policy Down," *Fareedzakaria.com*, April 27, 2016, <https://fareedzakaria.com/columns/2016/04/28/trump-defines-foreign-policy-down>. Zakaria while explaining Trump's foreign policy said that it is mainly based on Jacksonian politics, 'Donald Trump is a Jacksonian. In his book "Special Providence," Walter Russell Mead explains that Andrew Jackson represented a distinctly populist style of American thinking that is quite different from the country's other major ideological traditions. It is anti-immigrant and nativist, economically liberal and populist. In foreign policy, it is largely isolationist but, if and when engaged abroad, militaristic and unilateral. In trade, it is protectionist, and on all matters, deeply suspicious of international alliances and global conventions.'

³ Hasan Dudar and Deirdre Shesgreen, "Trump's Long List of Global Trade Deals, Agreements Exited or Renegotiated," *USA Today*, November 21, 2018, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/11/21/donald-trump-foreign-policy-iran-nafta-russia-mexico-canada-trade/1732952002/>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Jane C. Timm, "Tracking President Trump's Flip-Flops," *NBC News*, Nov. 20, 2016, <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/president-trumps-first-100-days/here-are-new-policy-stances-donald-trump-has-taken-election-n684946>; Chris Riotta, "Donald Trump is Reckless, Erratic and Incompetent, According to Business Leaders around the World," *Newsweek*, June 23, 2017, <https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-reckless-erratic-dictator-business-leaders-say-cnbc-survey-628569>; "The Guardian View on The Trump Presidency: A Reckless and Undignified Spectacle," editorial, *Guardian*, January 5, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jan/05/the-guardian-view-on-the-trump-presidency-a-reckless-and-undignified-spectacle>; and "Trump Says Nato 'No Longer Obsolete'," *BBC News*, April 12, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-39585029>.

⁶ Julie Hirschfeld Davis, "Trump Warns NATO Allies to Spend More on Defense, or Else," *New York Times*, July 2, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/02/world/europe/trump-nato.html>

founding treaty which deals with collective security of NATO members.⁷ Consequently, these developments have placed serious strain on the transatlantic relationship and are a cause of concern, especially for European allies who previously shared collective identity with the US. These developments have made them question the reliability of this longstanding alliance. Hence, it was not astonishing when German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated, Europe must 'take its fate into its own hands.'⁸

In this backdrop, this paper explores emerging contours of transatlantic relationship under the Trump administration. It analyzes the US foreign policy towards Europe, by delineating its evolution and current transformation. It argues that there is a visible rift in transatlantic relations, which is only widening with time. Hence, the paper will look into the future implications of Trump's policies on the transatlantic partnership especially in the context of conflicting policy approaches by the stakeholders towards core issues including Russia as a threat and energy supplier; sanctions on Russia and its impact on European economy; NATO; climate change; transatlantic trade partnership, and the forgone Iran nuclear deal framework. It also discusses the future tractor of the transatlantic relationship under Trump Administration.

Evolution of Transatlantic Relationship

The evolution of transatlantic relationship can be seen in the context of shared ideology, economic integration, collective security and mutually acceptable world order. It stems from the historical and cultural linkages between the 'old' and the 'new' world. The US and Europe have had relations since the former became independent but it was only after the Second World War that a new dimension emerged in the transatlantic relationship. After Japan's attack on US Naval Base at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1941, the US entered into world politics abandoning its isolationist policies. After more than a century, it built a strong political, military and diplomatic presence in Western Europe. During Cold War, 'the United States helped create the conditions to transform Western Europe from a balance of power system to a security community where war between France, Germany, and the United Kingdom was not only unlikely but unthinkable and unplanned for.'⁹ This was deliberately

⁷ NATO, "Collective Defence - Article 5" (Brussels: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2018), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm.

⁸ Jon Henley, "Angela Merkel: EU cannot Completely Rely on US and Britain Any More," *Guardian*, May 28, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/28/merkel-says-eu-cannot-completely-rely-on-us-and-britain-any-more-g7-talks>.

⁹ Thomas Wright, *A Post-American Europe and the Future of US Strategy* (paper, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 2017), <https://www.bosch-stiftung.de/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/2018-05/Post%20American%20Europe.pdf>.

conceptualized by far-sighted policies of successive US presidents. Overall, transatlantic relations can be divided into three broad phases: from the Second World War to the end of the Cold War, from end of the Cold War to 9/11, and from 9/11 to the present day.

In the first phase, after defeating Japan and Germany, the US emerged victorious and assumed the role of an active, protective global power. In that, it filled the security vacuum left by the Great Britain, which had weakened after such a disastrous war. Hence, the US became a 'power in Europe' without actually being in Europe. In order to facilitate its newfound powers, it took the lead in developing Europe through its Marshall Plan (1948) launched during President Harry Truman period (1945-53) for reconstruction and stabilization of war-torn Europe. Thus, the US assisted Europe in recovering from catastrophic losses in the Second World War. Later on this relationship would develop into a military alliance, NATO, which was established during the early years of the Cold War. In fact, the relationship between the US and Europe was even deeper with a shared sense of history, culture and perceived common threat vis-à-vis communist Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Hence, during this phase, the relationship was at its peak, as evident in the Paris (1951) and Rome (1957) treaties. In this Cold War period, the US aimed to contain the spread of communism in any place that it could and there was no better way to do so than to aid reconstruction of Western Europe after the war. Even the European Union (EU) was created 'as a series of small steps in American-led efforts to promote post-war security.'¹⁰

In the second phase, the fall of Berlin Wall symbolized the triumph of the 'West' and of the socio-political and cultural ideology of liberalism. This was described by Fukuyama as the 'end of history.'¹¹ However, with the USSR defeated, the common threat was neutralized but NATO was retained as a common military alliance.¹² At that moment, the transformation of the world order from bipolar to unipolar, brought new and more complicated security issues such as the first Gulf War (1990-1991) and the Balkan violence (1991-2001). During this period transatlantic relations further bolstered with Transatlantic Declaration 1990 (TAD), Joint Action Plan (1995), New Transatlantic Agenda 1995 (NTA), Transatlantic Economic Partnership 1998 (TEP) and Bonn

¹⁰ Elizabeth Ross, "How the US Influenced the Creation of the EU," *Public Radio International*, January 28, 2019, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-01-28/how-us-influenced-creation-eu>.

¹¹ Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest*, no. 16 (1989): 3-8.

¹² John S. Duffield, "NATO's Functions after the Cold War," *Political Science Quarterly* 109, no. 5 (1994-95): 763-787.

Declaration (1992), weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), regional conflicts, and terrorism.

The transatlantic partnership began to erode in the beginning of the new century, when the Bush administration started abandoning international commitments. The advent of neoconservatives in positions of power in the US at the turn of the Twenty-first Century strained this partnership as the US withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol. Clinton had signed this multilateral environmental agreement during his administration but did not send it to Senate for approval and consequently Bush Jr. withdrew from the treaty stating that it was unfair and placed the US at an economic disadvantage.¹³ The US also withdrew its signature from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in 2002 citing the reason that the court, composed of non-American judges and prosecutors, would have the authority to try American citizens for crimes.¹⁴ Both these agreements were based on environmental cooperation and securing human rights for which the EU has been very vocal and the US' hesitance in this regard seemed to create a divide between both.

However, the common threat of terrorism became a major reason in initial cooperation in the post 9/11 'War on Terror' and the West collectively responded to combat terrorists in Afghanistan. On September 12, NATO invoked Article 5 of 'mutual defense' committing NATO to help defend the US by sending seven of its Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircrafts, crews, and ground support personnel to assist in the air defense of the US.¹⁵ Nevertheless, this cooperation came to an abrupt end with the President Bush's polarizing neoconservative doctrine of 'prevention, preemption and preeminence', his extensive 'reliance on US military power, his *axis of evil* rhetoric leading to the invasion of Iraq and the overly simplistic approach to the complexity of Middle East policies.'¹⁶

Later, the strained transatlantic relations saw a somewhat brief honeymoon period with Barack Obama in power particularly with his

¹³ Glen Sussman, "The USA and Global Environmental Policy: Domestic Constraints on Effective Leadership," *International Political Science Review* 25, no. 4 (2004): 349-369.

¹⁴ Ron Synovitz, "Explainer: Why Does the U.S. Have It Out for The International Criminal Court?" *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, September 11, 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/explainer-why-does-u-s-have-it-out-for-international-criminal-court-/29484529.html>.

¹⁵ Brian Collins, "Operation Enduring Freedom and the Future of NATO," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 3, no. 2 (2002): 51-56.

¹⁶ Günter Burghardt, "The European Union's Transatlantic Relationship," paper 2, Department of EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies, Brugges, 2006), 15-19.

Berlin speech where he won the hearts of Europeans by declaring that 'America has no better partner than Europe' and that it 'needs a strong European Union that deepens the security and prosperity of this continent, while extending a hand abroad.'¹⁷ However, this phase was transitory and the differences emerged during the first EU-US talks (2009) and then on the troops surge in Afghanistan (2009), the Pentagon doctrine of 'burden sharing' and 'smart defense' and military intervention in Libya.¹⁸ During an interview with *The Atlantic*, Obama even called the Europeans as 'free-riders'¹⁹ and his Secretary of Defense called them 'apparently unwilling to devote the necessary resources ... to be serious and capable partners in their own defense.'²⁰

Furthermore, Obama's administration in January 2012 developed the doctrine of 'Strategic Guidance' which shifted its focus to Asia-Pacific. This policy is known as the 'US pivot to Asia.' It aims at rebalancing 'the US military presence and investment in Europe where the majority of countries are considered by the Pentagon as 'producers of security rather than consumers of it,'²¹ towards the Asia-Pacific region where containing China's military rise and potential threat would now become a strategic priority for Washington.²² Simply put, US focus on Asia clearly meant that Europe was no longer the core of US strategic and economic interests.

The transatlantic relations further eroded as a consequence of the PRISM Scandal, when it was revealed that 'top-secret surveillance program code-named PRISM aimed at processing electronic personal data including that of EU citizens and officials' was launched against Europe by the US.²³ Details of the PRISM surveillance program, initiated by the US National Security Agency (NSA) in 2007 in accordance with the

¹⁷ Chris V. Thangham, "Obama in Berlin: 'America Has no Better Partner than Europe'." *Digital Journal*, July 24, 2008, <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/257804>.

¹⁸ For details, Lisa Aronsson and Molly O' Donnell, *Smart Defence and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century?* report (Chicago: Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2012), https://espas.secure.europarl.europa.eu/orbis/sites/default/files/generated/document/en/Conference_Report.pdf.

¹⁹ Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine," *Atlantic*, April 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/>.

²⁰ Robert M. Gates, "Remarks by Secretary Gates at the Security and Defense Agenda," (speech, Brussels, June 10, 2011), US Department of Defense, <http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=4839>.

²¹ Greg Kennedy and Harsh V. Pant, eds., *Assessing Maritime Power in the Asia-Pacific: The Impact of American Strategic Re-Balance*, Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies Series (New York: Routledge, 2015).

²² For details on Obama administration, Anna Dimitrova, "Transatlantic Relations Under Obama's Presidency: Between Dream and Reality" (paper, Centre International de Formation européenne, Nice, 2014), https://mafiadoc.com/transatlantic-relations-under-obamas-presidency_59891e331723ddcd6988885d.html.

²³ *Ibid.*, 19.

Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) of 1978, were leaked by Edward Snowden through a classified PowerPoint presentation which claimed that PRISM enables 'collection directly from the servers' of Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook and other online companies.²⁴

Now, during Trump's administration, the actual realities of this broken partnership are unfolding. Donald Trump is not the first US President who differs from European partners vis-à-vis national and global interests. Churchill and Roosevelt, Johnson and de Gaulle, and Kohl and Reagan, all had contentious relationships with the latter. Yet, while these disagreements yielded to a stronger Western alliance, Trump's foreign policy towards Europe is inimical and lacks diplomacy; his policies threaten to seriously damage transatlantic relationship.²⁵

Transatlantic Relationship and Trump Administration

Trump's arrival into the White House marked a new aggressive phase in the course of Transatlantic relationship. The developments since the end of 2016 in this relationship point towards the assumption that these four (or possibly eight in case of Trump's re-election as President) years can put this relationship on a new trajectory forever; whether it is for the best or the worst for the parties involved and the world at large is to be determined.

Trump's advent in the Oval Office marked the resuscitation of Jacksonian tradition (the basic political principles of Andrew Jackson, 7th President of the US) back into the US politics. Jacksonianism values allies but does not promote institutional constraints which may impinge on the freedom of the US to act unilaterally. It does not promote free trade, which compromises domestic economy and reject Wilsonian Internationalism and the idea of US global leadership for constructing a better world or that the US should have the responsibility to deal with every situation that manifests in the world.²⁶ Jacksonianism disregards international laws or humanitarian values and promotes protection of national interests at all costs.

²⁴ Timothy B. Lee, "Here's Everything We Know About PRISM to Date," *Washington Post*, June 12, 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/06/12/heres-everything-we-know-about-prism-to-date/?utm_term=.7fdec4e90879.

²⁵ Benjamin Haddad and Alina Polyakova, "Is Going It Alone the Best Way Forward for Europe? Why Strategic Autonomy Should be the Continent's Goal," *Foreign Affairs*, October 17, 2018, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2018-10-17/going-it-alone-best-way-forward-europe>.

²⁶ Michael Clarke and Anthony Rickettes, "Donald Trump and American Foreign Policy: The Return of the Jacksonian Tradition," *Comparative Strategy* 36, no. 4 (2017): 366-379, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495933.2017.1361210>.

However, Jacksonians regard their relationship with Europeans as an asset when it comes to cater their interests in dealing with security threats from Russia or Middle East. At the same time, on other matters the European allies are accused of 'free riding' the American power. When European policy differs from the US, this adds further tension to an already strained relationship, especially when the EU disagrees with the US on Middle East policy or against American interests. In other words, Europe is an ally as long as it is following the same lines as the US. The moment it diverges from US interests, Washington can abandon it. Trump has made his policy very clear at the 73rd United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session by stating that the US will reject the notion of globalism and embrace patriotism, 'America will always choose independence and cooperation over global governance, control, and domination.'²⁷

The ongoing tensions in transatlantic relations point towards a power imbalance. Americans are frustrated at Europe's lack of defense investments and do not see the continent as a reliable ally; Europeans resent American unilateralism and disregard for their policy concerns.²⁸ Tensions have flared up to such a point that Trump for the first time as an American President openly questioned whether the EU is a trustworthy ally to facilitate American interests. He even went so far as to contemplate that the creation of the EU was with the express purpose to 'beat the United States when it comes to making money.'²⁹ While several policy experts have indirectly pointed out to Germany as the EU's leader, Trump openly stated that the EU is 'basically a vehicle for Germany,'³⁰ supported UK for 'Brexit'³¹ and criticized German Chancellor Merkel vis-à-vis her stance on refugee crisis. His abrupt, dismissive style, both on official and unofficial visits to Europe, failed to leave any positive impressions. Rather, these interactions only created more rifts in US relations with European allies particularly on climate change, free trade, humanitarian values and other security issues.³²

²⁷ Alex Ward, "Read Trump's Speech to the UN General Assembly," *Vox*, September 25 2018, <https://www.vox.com/2018/9/25/17901082/trump-un-2018-speech-full-text>.

²⁸ Haddad and Polyakova, "Is Going It Alone the Best Way Forward for Europe? Why Strategic Autonomy Should be the Continent's Goal."

²⁹ Ben Jacobs, "Donald Trump: EU was Formed 'to Beat the US at Making Money'," *Guardian*, July 24, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jul/24/donald-trump-eu-was-formed-to-beat-the-us-at-making-money>.

³⁰ Henry Mance, Shawn Donnan, and James Shotter, "Donald Trump Takes Swipe at EU as 'Vehicle for Germany'," *Financial Times*, January 15, 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/1f7c6746-db75-11e6-9d7c-be108f1c1dce>.

³¹ "Donald Trump on EU: 'Brexit is a good thing'," *BBC News*, June 24, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-scotland-36617669/donald-trump-on-eu-brexit-is-a-good-thing>.

³² Vincent Lofaso, "The Transatlantic Divorce: A New Security Alliance?" *International Policy Digest*, June 6, 2017, <https://intpolicydigest.org/2017/06/06/the-transatlantic-divorce-a-new-security-alliance/>.

This growing rift is evident by the outbursts of several European leaders. For instance, French President Emmanuel Macron, who has been most vocal against President Trump, harshly criticized American policies on climate change,³³ lamented that 'Europe can no longer rely on the United States for its security' and said 'the partner with whom Europe built the new post-world war order appears to be turning its back on this shared history.'³⁴ He also criticized what he termed as the US 'aggressive isolationism.'³⁵ Moreover, at the 73rd UNGA session, Macron criticized Trump for his isolationist and anti-globalist policies.³⁶ More compelling, prior to the commencement of the commemoration marking the centenary of the armistice that ended First World War, Macron even proposed a European standing army.³⁷

Other European leaders who condemned President Trump include British Prime Minister Theresa May who protested against Trump's response to violence in Charlottesville, German Chancellor Merkel who called on Europeans to take their destiny into their own hands.³⁸ It is not only the powerful members of the EU, the EU's executive council, all EU leaders, have collectively criticized Trump as evident from the European Council's President, Donald Tusk's statement, 'With friends like that, who needs enemies?'³⁹ European media is also using its voice to prove, that there is no love lost between the US and the EU. According to Jörg Lau, foreign editor of the German newspaper *Die Zeit*, 'We can almost be thankful to Trump... He's made it clear to Europe that we need to wake up'⁴⁰.

³³ Tom Batchelor, "Paris Agreement: Macron Says Climate Deal will not be Renegotiated Despite Trump's Demands," *Independent*, September 19, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/paris-agreement-trump-macron-climate-deal-renegotiated-france-says-no-a7956036.html>.

³⁴ "Macron Hits Out at US Isolationism and Says EU Unity More Important than UK Relations Post-Brexit," *Telegraph*, August 27, 2018, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/08/27/macron-hits-us-isolationism-says-close-eu-relationship-important/>.

³⁵ Angelique Chrisafis, "Europe can No Longer Rely on US for Security, Says Emmanuel Macron," *Guardian*, August 27, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/27/europe-can-no-longer-rely-on-us-for-security-says-emmanuel-macron>.

³⁶ Nicole Gaouette, "Macron Rebukes Trump's Isolationist Message," *CNN*, September 26, 2018, <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/09/25/politics/macron-unga-speech-trump/index.html>.

³⁷ Jon Stone, "Emmanuel Macron Calls for Creation of a 'True European Army' to Defend against Russia and the US," *Independent* November 6, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/emmanuel-macron-european-army-france-russia-us-military-defence-eu-a8619721.html>.

³⁸ Henley, "Angela Merkel: EU cannot Completely Rely on US and Britain Any More."

³⁹ "With Friends Like Trump, Who Needs Enemies: EU Chief," *Dawn*, May 17, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1408228/with-friends-like-trump-who-needs-enemies-eu-chief>.

⁴⁰ Griff Witte, Michael Birnbaum, "As Tensions with Trump Deepen, Europe Wonders if America is Lost for Good," *Washington Post*, May 19, 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/as-tensions-with-trump-deepen->

This tense relationship has severely affected public opinion of the US in Europe. For example, on July 13, 2018, several grassroots British public organizations launched a 'day of protest' against the US President's controversial visit to the UK that shows the level of resistance to the persona and policies of Trump, irrespective of their standing on the political spectrum.

Factors Responsible for Divergences

The following factors have been identified as variables in determining the transatlantic relationship during Trump administration.

Russia

Relations with Russia act as a major determinant in this relationship. During the Cold War, fear of a common enemy became the driving force in forging a cordial transatlantic relationship. This was done, presumably, to contain Soviet expansionism. When the Soviet threat was neutralized, strong grounds of partnership were actually lost. However, in the present era, a resurgent Russia is creating both opportunities and challenges for the US-EU transatlantic partnership. Even though both the US and the EU have supported the UK in its strife against Russia, especially following an alleged nerve agent's attack on a former Russian military officer and a double agent Sergei Skripal for British intelligence on British soil in March 2018,⁴¹ there exist deeply different interests with respect to Russia. At the June 2018 Group of Seven (G7) Summit in Quebec, the US expressed a desire to include Russia back into this organization, in order to recreate the G8. This was not acceptable to the other members,⁴² particularly because of Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. More recently, at the July 2018 NATO Summit in Brussels, Trump called the EU a foe and mocked how Germany was captive to Russia.⁴³

Importantly, Russia is one of the largest oil and gas exporters of the world. Consequently, the EU is the largest market of Russian petroleum products.⁴⁴ Hence, Europe's economy and industry is heavily dependent upon Russian energy supplies. This dependence on Russia is

europe-wonders-if-america-is-lost-for-good/2018/05/18/6f90c56e-587f-11e8-9889-07bcc1327f4b_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.8779c3320a37.

⁴¹ "Russian Spy Poisoning: What We Know so Far," *BBC News*, October 8, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-43315636>.

⁴² Zeeshan Aleem, "Trump Wants Russia Invited Back into the G7," *Vox*, June 8, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/6/8/17441338/trump-russia-g7-summit>.

⁴³ Raf Casert, "EU, US Relations Sinking Further after Divisive Trump Tour," *AP News*, July 18, 2018, <https://www.apnews.com/c21c88598ae34fe1a328625a66ef459c/EU,-US-relations-sinking-further-after-divisive-Trump-tour>.

⁴⁴ "Delivery Statistics: Gas Supplies to Europe," *Gazprom Export*, accessed June 26, 2019, <http://www.gazpromexport.ru/en/statistics/>.

challenging the US-EU transatlantic partnership. This imposed punitive measures against Russian business interests and companies on the grounds of Russian interference in the US presidential elections to undermine Hillary Clinton, and the Russian invasion of Crimea. As a consequence, this bill has potential to stagnate the Russian economy and, also cause severe damage to European economy as Russian sanctions are causing about \$3.2 billion loss per month.⁴⁵ This bill also bans all the companies involved in Russian gas pipeline project Nord Stream 2. The project is an expansion of the original Nord Stream project that would add two additional gas pipelines across the Baltic between Vyborg in the Russian Federation to Greifswald in Germany. The project has faced constant criticism from both the EU and the US.⁴⁶ Despite all opposition to Anti-Russia Sanctions Bill, the EU extended sanctions for another six months banning export of oil and gas from Moscow. Nevertheless, Europe's demand of energy resources will at one point make it rethink the decision or look for alternatives. In March 2019, the EU and the US collectively along with Canada placed new sanctions on Russia over Ukraine⁴⁷. Nevertheless, the rift between EU-US is very much evident on the different stances of the Minsk Agreement, 'a hasty peace deal between Ukraine, Russia and the separatists.'⁴⁸ The two agreements in 2014 and 2015 between Russia and Ukraine were conducted to bring stability in the warring region with France and Germany overseeing the process because Europe's complete security cannot be achieved with Russia constantly in the backyard with a militaristic posture.⁴⁹ The US stance on the agreement was that it does not want to be 'handcuffed' by it.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ "Anti-Russian Sanctions Cost Europe \$100 bn – UN Special Rapporteur," *RT News* September 13, 2017, <https://www.rt.com/business/403209-sanctions-russia-eu-billion-losses/>.

⁴⁶ "US Ambassador Unleashes New Sanctions Threats against Nord Stream 2 Participants," *RT News*, May 3, 2019, <https://www.rt.com/business/458292-us-nord-stream-sanctions/>.

⁴⁷ "US, Canada, EU Hit Russia with Fresh Sanctions over Ukraine," *AlJazeera*, March 16, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/03/canada-eu-hit-russia-fresh-sanctions-ukraine-190315173304135.html>.

⁴⁸ "What are the Minsk Agreements?" *The Economist Explains*, September 14, 2016, <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2016/09/13/what-are-the-minsk-agreements>.

⁴⁹ "Everything You Wanted to Know About the Minsk Peace Deal, but were Afraid to Ask," *EuroMaidan Press*, accessed June 26, 2019, <http://euromaidanpress.com/minsk-agreements-faq/>.

⁵⁰ Patricia Zengerle, "U.S. doesn't Want to be 'Handcuffed' to Ukraine Agreement," *Reuters*, June 14, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-diplomacy-tillerson-idUSKBN19528J>.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Trump's blunt, and flip-flopping remarks about NATO and Europe are alienating large segments of European society. All in all, he continuously asks Europe to do more, while using humiliating and condescending language. All NATO countries are supposed to spend 2 percent of their defense budgets on NATO for common security and defense.⁵¹ However, so far only six countries, namely US, Greece, UK, Poland, Estonia, and Romania have met this level. The US contributes more than one-fifth i.e. 22% of the direct, collective funding that keeps NATO's military and civilian operations on track.⁵² The 2 percent contribution is a non-binding rule but it demonstrates political commitment of members in NATO as a collective security organization. While Trump's demand from every NATO member to contribute its due share does not appear unreasonable, it would also prevent NATO from becoming merely a vehicle of US interests on the basis of it being the primary contributor of the organization.

Furthermore, the US-EU interest diverges when considering future NATO missions. The US demands its allies to contribute both resources and military personnel to effectively confront contemporary 'security challenges.' That would include, for instance, joining in combat mission against Daesh in either Syria or in Afghanistan. NATO lacks capacity to deal with these 'new challenges' and member states do not want to commit troops in what could be unpopular wars in their own countries.

Moreover, the nature of modern warfare has expanded into new domains, which are related to information technology such as cyber warfare and disinformation campaigns. This requires a collective response from NATO members to efficiently deal with in future.

Another issue is increasing internal strains within NATO members on policy issues. This is evident in the case of Russian sanctions. The states in the North are worried about the Russian resurgence in Eastern Europe and the states in the South are worried about the security situation in Middle East. Then, there are some states (such as Italy) who

⁵¹ Jan Techau, "The Politics of 2 Percent: NATO and the Security Vacuum in Europe" (paper, Carnegie Europe, Brussels, 2015), https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_252_Techau_NATO_Final.pdf.

⁵² Patrick Goodenough, "US Pays 22.1% of NATO Budget; Germany 14.7%; 13 Allies Pay Less Than 1%," *CNS News.com*, March 20, 2017, <https://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/patrick-goodenough/us-pays-2214-nato-budget-germany-1465-13-allies-pay-below-1>.

are concerned about their disrupted supplies of oil and gas from Russia and want to lift anti-Russian sanctions.⁵³

As a result of these developments, the EU has intensified its work on forming a common European security and defense policy. In September 2016, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel supported the creation of a Defense Fund, calling it an 'Important pillar of the integration of the European defense sector.'⁵⁴ The EU originally created the fund in August 2017. With an annual budget of 5.5 billion euros (\$6.1 billion),⁵⁵ this laid the basis for a permanent European military cooperation and in future aims to provide an autonomous military capacity for EU to respond to crises. What regard Europe would then have for NATO remains to be seen.

Environmental Degradation and Climate Change

Environmental degradation and climate change are a major cause of global concern and demand an urgent global response. In 2015, during the Obama administration, the US became part of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change that calls for reduction of greenhouse emissions through mitigation, adaptation and finance. The agreement was signed by 195 countries of the world. However, on June 1, 2017, President Trump announced the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. According to President Trump, 'The agreement is a massive redistribution of United States' wealth to other countries. It's to give their country an economic edge over the United States.'⁵⁶ This should not have been surprising, considering Trump had pledged to quit this agreement during his presidential campaign. He vowed to help American workers and businesses, by putting *America first*, and that limitations placed on the US by the Paris Agreement hurt the US. The US withdrawal decision was seen as extremely isolationist and a hasty move. Especially, at a time when there is a need of coordinated global strategy to deal with this global issue. The world and European allies are extremely apprehensive of Trump's approach to deal with environmental deterioration as the US is the second largest emitter of greenhouse gases and is responsible for 15 percent of total world emissions.

⁵³ Gabriela Galindo, "Salvini: Italy 'not afraid' to Use EU Veto to Lift Russian Sanctions," *Politico*, July 16, 2018, <https://www.politico.eu/article/matteo-salvini-italy-not-afraid-to-use-eu-veto-to-lift-russian-sanctions-crimea-vladimir-putin/>.

⁵⁴ "Merkel, Macron vow closer co-operation; pledge to reform Eurozone," *France24*, July 13, 2017, <https://www.france24.com/en/20170713-merkel-macron-elysee-eurozone-finance-minister-defence-cooperation>.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Donald Trump, "Statement by President Trump on the Paris Climate Accord," (speech, Washington, D.C., June 1, 2017), White House <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-paris-climate-accord/>.

Even before his electoral victory, Trump undermined the gravity of climate change. He even called climate change a 'Chinese hoax.' Only to claim later, in typical Trump fashion, he was joking. Yet, in his tweets from November 2012, he said, 'The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make the US manufacturing non-competitive.'⁵⁷ His stance on climate change now is that this phenomenon is serving a political agenda of the climate scientists.⁵⁸ Notably, the US also provides green solution to world by financing and sharing technological equipment to mitigate greenhouse emissions. The absence of the US will result in difficulties in achieving the target of keeping global temperature rise under 2 degrees Celsius.⁵⁹

In addition, the 2018 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) vividly described how grave the situation had become and that drastic action needed to be taken vis-à-vis climate change.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, the Trump administration cancelled the Green Climate Fund, which provided finances and technological support to developing countries to deal with emission reduction. The Trump administration's Department of Energy has even denied the existence of a US-EU cooperation group on climate change, created during the Obama administration.⁶¹ These serious differences between the two over climate change are also negatively affecting US-EU relations.

Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

TTIP included four key areas: tariff elimination, services liberation, public procurement and regulatory cooperation. Both Europe and the US supported a 'rule based' trading system and 'a high level of protection from risks to health safety, financial security and environment.'⁶² However, their views differed on certain areas including the use of hormones in meat, Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), energy consumptions in cars, nanotechnology and privacy issues. The EU is generally against the use of GMOs while the US is in favor of it primarily

⁵⁷ Donald Trump, "The Concept of Global Warming was Created by and for the Chinese in Order to Make U.S. Manufacturing Non-competitive," *Twitter*, November 6, 2012, <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/265895292191248385?lang=en>.

⁵⁸ "Trump: Climate Change Scientists have 'Political Agenda'," *BBC News*, October 15, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45859325>.

⁵⁹ CFR, *The Global Climate Change Regime*, report (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2013), <https://www.cfr.org/report/global-climate-change-regime>.

⁶⁰ IPCC, *Global Warming of 1.5 °C*, report (Geneva: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2018), <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>.

⁶¹ Peter Teffer, "US in Denial on EU Climate Forum," *EU Observer*, June 5, 2018, <https://euobserver.com/environment/141984>.

⁶² EC, "The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership: The Regulatory Part" (brief, European Commission, Brussels, 2013, http://www.sice.oas.org/TPD/USA_EU/Studies/tradoc_151605_Regulatory_Part_e.pdf).

because of the corporate lobbying by the biotechnology industry.⁶³ As far as privacy laws are concerned, EU regulations are more 'consumer-focused' than those of the US.⁶⁴ The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the EU considers privacy as paramount and deals with private data securely. However, data is regulated in the US depending on the subject matter with HIPPA concerned with health and data GLBA with financial data.⁶⁵

Talks for TTIP were stalled once Trump came to lead the executive. He first scrapped TTIP and pledged to bring the US out of multilateral partnerships, a clear indication of his Jacksonian mindset. The future of TTIP as a trade deal does not seem very promising with Trump in power. Although the Trump administration showed some willingness to resume talks very recently, yet no progress has been made in this regard. Instead of the development of the TTIP, the aluminum and steel tariffs incident damaged trade relations between the EU and the US.⁶⁶ A truce was achieved in July 2018 and talks began which seems to reinvent the TTIP. At the same time when Trump is opposing multilateralism, he is negotiating bilateral agreements with some European countries while staining relations with others. What this holds for future trade and commerce transatlantic relationship remains yet to be seen.

Iran

Dealing with Iran is another contentious issue between the US and the EU. In 2015, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed between P5+1.⁶⁷ The deal offered reducing sanctions on Iran while the latter reduced its nuclear activities. Even during his election campaign, Trump made the promise of renegotiating this treaty. To him it is the

⁶³ Paul B. Thompson, "How We Got to Now: Why the US and Europe went Different Ways on GMOs," *Conversation*, November 6, 2015, <https://theconversation.com/how-we-got-to-now-why-the-us-and-europe-went-different-ways-on-gmos-48709>.

⁶⁴ Tony Wagner, "The Main Differences between Internet Privacy in the US and the EU, Market Place," April 24, 2017, <https://www.marketplace.org/2017/04/20/tech/make-me-smart-kai-and-molly/blog-main-differences-between-internet-privacy-us-and-eu>.

⁶⁵ "Differences between European Privacy Laws and American Privacy Laws," *Compliance Junction*, February 23, 2018, <https://www.compliancejunction.com/differences-european-privacy-laws-american-privacy-laws/>.

⁶⁶ Zack Beauchamp, "Why Trump's Steel and Aluminum Tariffs on US Allies are so Dangerous," *Vox*, May 31, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/5/31/17413172/trump-tariff-steel-aluminum-eu-canada-mexico>.

⁶⁷ US Department of Treasury, GoUS, "Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) and Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)" (Government of the United States, 2018), https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Pages/jpoa_archive.aspx.

worst deal ever and so terrible that it could lead to a nuclear holocaust.⁶⁸ Trump accused Iran of violating the agreed treaty on several occasions, reiterating that it is defective at its core. Therefore, in Trump's view, Iran was not doing its part, which nullified the treaty. Despite Europe's objections and Iran's protests, the US President withdrew from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018.⁶⁹ Trump argued that Iran was not complying with the treaty obligations despite the IAEA claiming that Iran was doing its part and 'in the event we are not able to reach a solution working with Congress and our allies, the agreement will be terminated.'⁷⁰ Subsequently, Washington placed sanctions on Tehran.

The EU resisted supporting Trump's decision and using it as an opportunity to obtain more concessions from Iran in order to save the deal. It has also urged the US lawmakers not to re-impose sanctions on Tehran, but that did not happen.⁷¹ The leaders of the EU expressed their commitments for the continued, full and effective implementation of all parts of the JCPOA. The leaders of the UK, Germany, and France who are traditionally US allies have declared their backing for this landmark agreement after releasing a joint statement delivered by High Representative Federica Mogherini supporting the deal.⁷² However, despite all efforts by the EU to ensure US continued participation in the deal, Trump 'decertified' it and this created another rift between the US and EU's already unsteady relationship. Some Analysts believe that by withdrawing from JCPOA, Trump might have just pushed Europe towards Russia by giving Moscow and Brussels rare common ground.⁷³

⁶⁸ Yeganeh Torbati, "Trump Election Puts Iran Nuclear Deal on Shaky Ground," *Reuters*, November 9, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-trump-iran/trump-election-puts-iran-nuclear-deal-on-shaky-ground-idUSKBN13427E>.

⁶⁹ Krishnadev Calamur, "Trump Rips Up a 'Decaying and Rotten Deal' with Iran," *Atlantic*, May 8, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/05/trump-iran-deal/559082/>.

⁷⁰ Julian Borger, Saeed Kamali Dehghan and Peter Beaumont, "Trump Threatens to Rip up Iran Nuclear Deal unless US and Allies Fix 'Serious Flaws'," *Guardian*, October 13, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/oct/13/trump-iran-nuclear-deal-congress>.

⁷¹ Ali Vaez, "Can Europe Save the Iran Deal? Time for It to Consider a Plan B," *Foreign Affairs*, January 16, 2018, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2018-01-16/can-europe-save-iran-deal?cid=int-rec&pgtype=art>.

⁷² Rob Price, "The UK, Germany, and France will Continue to Uphold the Iran Deal Even Though the US is Pulling Out," *Business Insider*, May 8, 2018, <https://www.businessinsider.com/uk-germany-france-uphold-iran-deal-2018-5>; and "EU seeks to keep Iran nuclear deal alive despite US pressure," *Financial Times*, January 20, 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/a9397224-1c9d-11e9-b126-46fc3ad87c65>.

⁷³ Yasmeen Serhan, "Is the U.S. Bringing Europe and Russia Closer Together?" *Atlantic*, May 25, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/05/is-the-us-bringing-europe-and-russia-closer-together/561008/>.

This can be further analyzed by the EU's 'European Neighborhood Policy' (ENP). The policy focuses on fostering stabilization, political security and economic prosperity in Middle East and North Africa.⁷⁴ The US unilateral recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and its interest in Middle East is in sharp contrast with European interest and policies.

Trump and the Future Trajectory of the Transatlantic Relationship

The rift in the transatlantic relationship is not the result of Trump being in power, but rather was evident much earlier. Several of Trump's predecessors have had disputes with their European counterparts. Yet, in spite of differences, the Western alliance remained important. However, now, there are divergent viewpoints, policies and ideologies putting serious strains on this relationship. Trump's administration, categorized as Jacksonian, is more eloquently described as proponents of 'better nationalism';⁷⁵ they hold the point of view that by being 'inward looking, shunning international engagement, but preparing to aggressively defend US national security if the country is threatened'⁷⁶ is somehow better than those who engage fully in the global system. There is no doubt that with the passage of time, President Trump has now come to acknowledge the value of this relationship, which explains his partial stance reversal on NATO and TTIP talks. However, one thing that needs to be kept in mind is that we no longer live in the 19th century where a policy like the Monroe Doctrine can take the US back to isolation or create 'Fortress America' because the 21st century has brought forward new challenges such as non-traditional security threats which cannot be dealt with mere military might.

The nature of the international politics requires states to come together and jointly overcome the obstacles. This is so because decisions in one country may have far-reaching impact. China is already taking lead in combating climate change⁷⁷ and has shown keen interest in

⁷⁴ Yannis A. Stivachtis, "The EU and the Middle East: The European Neighbourhood Policy," *E-International Relations*, November 26, 2018, <https://www.eir.info/2018/11/26/the-eu-and-the-middle-east-the-european-neighbourhood-policy/>.

⁷⁵ For details, Hal Brands, "U.S. Grand Strategy in an Age of Nationalism: Fortress America and its Alternatives," *Washington Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (2017): 73-94, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2017.1302740>. Better Nationalism refers to a benign and constructive nationalism, it emphasizes striking better deals, more evenly distributing burdens, and better protecting American sovereignty and finite resources, while still preserving—even strengthening America's global role.

⁷⁶ Josh Busby, "A Jacksonian Moment in U.S. Foreign Policy: Will it Last?" *Duck of Minerva*, April 6, 2018, <https://duckofminerva.com/2018/04/a-jacksonian-moment-in-u-s-foreign-policy-will-it-last.html>.

⁷⁷ Anita Engels, "Understanding How China is Championing Climate Change Mitigation," *Palgrave Communications* 4, no. 101 (2018): 1-6, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-018-0150-4>.

sustaining an economic liberal order. Russia is aiming for resurgence under Putin's leadership. In this scenario, with China and Russia gaining ground, it is not possible for Trump to remain isolationist. However, at the same time, he cannot ignore the demands of his Jacksonian voters who are more interested in job creation and opportunities for the Americans.⁷⁸

In view of the above discussion, the Trump administration may consider several policy options to deal with its relationship with Europe. First, Trump can take short-term advantage of the divisions within Europe. For over five decades, the US played a major role in integrating Europe as an economic and security community. However, a strong EU produced peer competition between two sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Moreover, the EU has its own laws and regulatory mechanism that must be adhered by American firms in order to enter its market. These laws often contradict the views of both sides with each other on issues such as, sovereignty, privacy and data, climate change, energy security, refugees and migration, and corporate taxation. Trump can increase these contradictions by trying to devalue Euro, discourage integration in security and foreign policy and cut bilateral deals with European countries for short term economic and diplomatic interests.

Second, Trump might remain a strong supporter of European integration but exercise restraint on meddling in European affairs. This is the policy adopted by the Obama administration to deal with European allies. Obama, while adhering to the NATO commitment of collective security along with emphasizing on burden sharing, only interfered in European affairs when it was in the interest of the US. This option should be accompanied by efforts to ensure that Europeans remain part of the US global agenda.

Another policy option is to engage with Europe and actively play its role in resolving conflicts within Europe. The rationale behind active engagement is to bring strong, prosperous and coherent Europe that could act as an effective partner for the US to advance US interests. This seems to be the best option because in case of disengagement or short term interest persuasion, the US would lose its long term partner. Europe is an ally that the US cannot really afford to lose forever. Moreover, there are other powers like Russia and China which can easily fill in the vacuum left by the US in Europe.

⁷⁸ Oren Dorell, "Trump's Foreign Policy Often Put 'America First' — and Alone," *USA Today*, January 19, 2018, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2018/01/19/trumps-foreign-policy-often-put-america-first-and-alone/1036558001/>.

Conclusion

The rift in transatlantic relations is widening because of divergence of interests between the US and its European allies. The collective identity of the 'West is nevertheless eroding and with it the concept of 'normative', 'rule- based' world and 'world society' is becoming irrelevant in world politics. The emerging divide if continued will further polarize the world but would lead to multipolar world order where the interests of the major powers and their interactions will remain pivotal. This divide between the US and Europe is also favoring the rise of other powers like China and Russia which are increasing economic interaction with the Europe.