Can the Transatlantic Relationship Survive another Trump Presidency?

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1. The President consulted his primary European allies before he acted

2. Europe and the United States were tied together strategically

3. Europeans trusted the US to do the right thing

4. European security relied on American decision-making
Fast forward to 2020: Where we are today?

1. Transatlantic relations have become transactional
2. Consultation has become optional
3. Commitments have become negotiable
4. Americans and Europeans no longer share the same strategic context
Two Questions

• What explains these developments?

• There will be transatlantic relations, but will there be a *transatlantic relationship*?
Ups and Down of the Transatlantic Relationship

Cold War

Unity of Purpose:
Deterring the Soviet Union
American Leadership,
European Followership
Questions of Burden-sharing
Building the Liberal International Order
After the Cold War

- **Loss of Unity of Purpose**: Out-of-Area or Out-of-Business
- **Efforts to Regain Unity of Purpose**: Balkan Wars and Kosovo, September 11 attacks, Afghanistan
- **Loss of Unity of Purpose**: Iraq War, Libya Campaign, Georgia War, Russian War in Ukraine, Annexation of Crimea, U.S. Pivot to Asia
- **Efforts to Regain Unity of Purpose**: Enhanced Deterrence of Russia in Eastern Europe
- **Loss of Unity of Purpose**: Trump snubs democratic allies in Favor of Autocratic Friends: Putin, Xi, MBS, Kim Yong-Un
Trump Administration

- Principal questioning of America’s role in the World
- Questioning the Utility of Alliances and Allies
- Walking away from Treaties and Agreements important to European allies
- Focus on Flaws in the Transatlantic Relationship: Defense Spending
- Emphasis on Exploitation of American Leadership
- America First means America Alone
European Responses to Trump’s Election – Early Phase

Three Types of Responses:
- There will be ‘Adults’ in the Room (from Apocalypse to Accommodation) Germany, Italy, Scandinavians
- The ‘Enhancement’ Effect of Trump’s Election for anti-liberal Domestic Agendas (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, United Kingdom)
- The ‘Spoiler’ Effect of Trump’s Election (France)
European Responses prior to 2020 Presidential Elections

All three initial responses are still visible, **BUT:**

1. Increasing sense of Trump unrestrained, ‘Adults’ have left the Room
2. Loss of Influence on US Decision-Making
3. Questions over US membership in NATO

Europe Alone??
European Dilemmas

Historically asymmetric security relationship with the United States

Transatlantic Relationship has become geopolitically anomalous:

500 million Europeans expect 300 million Americans to defend them against threats they do not care about or do not concern their vital interests?? 25 years after the Cold War??

A Certain Idea of America – remote but involved

Europe’s Iconic Image of America – Vying for Special Relationship

Inter-European Rivalries and America’s Role

America as Europe’s Security Provider – from necessity to default

European do not trust each other to provide Security
The Future of the Transatlantic Relationship
What to Expect?

Three Scenarios:

1- “We will be back”, Joe Biden at the 2019 Munich Security Conference
   - Return to American leadership, multilateralism, Europeans as essential partners
   - Restoration of Trust in partnership

Unlikely: Geopolitics has changed: Emergence of China as Peer Competitor
   - Trust is not easily recovered
The Future of the Transatlantic Relationship
What to Expect?

2- US leaving NATO, Imposition of wide-ranging Tariffs on European Exports
   ▪ Transactionalism across the Board
   ▪ European must defend themselves

**Unlikely/Likely**: US Strategic interest to contain Russian and Chinese Ambitions in Europe but Trump may still abandon Europe
The Future of the Transatlantic Relationship
What to Expect?

3- America will be back but not in its old Form
   - Europe matters but only as instrument in the New Great Game of Geopolitics
   - Europe has to invest more in defense
   - Europe has to be ready to act coherently
   - NATO and EU must be seen to support the US

Likely: Scenario takes account of America’s reduced role in Europe and follows geopolitical logic
Implications for Europe and the Transatlantic Relationship – Europe is Running out of Time!

- Europe is not a coherent foreign policy actor
- More will be invested in defense but not enough: No Strategic Autonomy
- Europe will be marginalized in the US-China competition
- Europeans will continue to block one another’s ambitions and remain unwilling to accept European leadership in foreign and defense policy
- Another Trump Presidency will accelerate America’s declining interest in Europe and Europe’s strategic irrelevance
Q & A