



## Transatlantic Views on President Trump's First 100 Days in Office

- **Washington:** President Trump remains at odds with much of Washington's foreign policy establishment, but U.S. power is back as a force to be reckoned with.
- **Brussels:** The Brussels leadership may worry less about U.S. isolationism and more about the challenges of more vigorous American unilateralism.
- **Paris:** As counterterrorism is likely to remain the top strategic priority for both Paris and Washington, relations may in fact be a rare instance of some stability.
- **Berlin:** Germany expects more disregard for individual freedom, more condescension toward Europe, and more active dismantling of the liberal international order.
- **Bucharest:** Romania is relieved that quick reconciliation with Moscow seems off the table, but is worried about dramatic aid cuts.
- **Warsaw:** Trump's foreign policy may yet become a continuation of a traditional Republican policy, which is welcomed by U.S. allies on NATO's Eastern flank.
- **Ankara:** Initial optimism in Turkey that President Trump would work closely with President Erdoğan has tapered, but it has not completely disappeared.

The consensus of President Trump's first hundred days in office is that there is no consensus beyond uncertainty. Allies' worst fears have not been confirmed, but hopes that a President Trump would be more predictable and moderate than candidate Trump have also proven false. The administration's missile strike in response to the chemical weapons attack in Syria has been greeted by many at home and in allied countries as a welcome sign of U.S. power and engagement. Trump has softened some of his criticism of alliances, and defenders of the transatlantic alliance from U.S. Congress have been vocal — both reassuring signs. However, an "America First" posture, including on spending priorities and trade, remains concerning for many Allies.

The past few months have brought messaging more consistent with campaign rhetoric and more status quo than some predicted, but certainly not an identifiable strategy. In terms of foreign policy, the first 100 days of the Trump administration may tell us that what the world can most expect from Washington are confounded expectations.

Our experts from seven capitals offer their assessment on the first 100 days of President Trump's administration.

*by Rachel Tausendfreund*



## Washington Distanced from its Chief

*by Daniel Twining*

President Donald Trump remains at odds with much of Washington's foreign policy establishment. He has yet to embrace the trade leadership that makes the world's biggest economy more dynamic and Americans more prosperous. But his willingness to step up military action in Syria and Afghanistan, and to stand up to the regional power plays of revisionist states, creates opportunities to more effectively manage complex conflicts from the Levant to North Korea.

China and Russia look off-balance after early fears in Washington, DC, that an inexperienced president would appease their leaders. Ironically, Trump is likely to be the first U.S. president in two decades not to pursue a "reset" with Russia, due to political constraints imposed by investigations into Moscow's meddling in the election. The White House wants to hold China to account on North Korea, including leveraging the U.S.–China economic relationship in ways that have not been tried before.

There remain reasons to be concerned, particularly about the administration's trade agenda. But U.S. power is back as a force to be reckoned with in a dangerous world, after what many saw as President Obama's abdication of the U.S. role as global guarantor and following a political campaign in which the United States was presented as a victim of globalization rather than as its engine.

## Brussels Left Guessing

*by Ian Lesser*

Brussels is a place where the weight of traditional international partnerships is keenly felt. From trade policy to defense, officials and observers have viewed the advent of the Trump administration with concern, and a good deal of curiosity. At a time of political flux, slow growth, and mounting

insecurity in Europe, predictability in transatlantic relations is at a premium. But predictability has been in short supply. To be sure, there has been a certain moderation in the tone of the debate in recent weeks. On multiple fronts, the new administration has gone to some lengths to reassure anxious leaders in the EU and NATO that Europe and European partnerships still matter.

One hundred days in, it is clear that the administration is far less revolutionary in practice than the campaign rhetoric suggested. Still President Trump's style leaves Europe guessing. The cruise missile strike on Syria was actually well received in many quarters here, as evidence of continued U.S. security engagement in Europe's neighborhood, and indirectly, with Russia. Looking ahead, the Brussels leadership may worry less about U.S. isolationism — never really in the cards — and more about the challenges of more vigorous American unilateralism.

## Continuity of a Special Relationship with France

*by Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer and Martin Quencez*

Trump's first 100 days have not fundamentally impacted the convergence of interests between Paris and Washington. This can be explained by the fact that France's relationship with the United States is primarily based on mutual pragmatism and common strategic interests, especially in the fight against terrorism. In fact, the France–U.S. bilateral relations have experienced three months of continuity, with the same level of defense and security cooperation.

The challenge for the next French president will be to capitalize on the excellent bilateral military coordination to build a political relationship based on mutual trust. The main issue, however, is that the U.S. president remains an unpredictable partner from a French perspective, and his first decisions have not helped anyone better understand his working methods and strategic vision. Like many of its European partners, France has engaged in a multi-

track diplomacy, by intensifying working relations with Trump's traditional Atlanticist cabinet members, such as James Mattis and Herbert McMaster and engaging Congress on Europe and NATO.

As counterterrorism is likely to remain the top strategic priority for both in Paris and Washington, DC in the near future, France–U.S. relations may in fact be a rare instance of some stability.

## Germany Has Little Hope of Moderation

*by Thomas Kleine-Brockhoff*

There is a pattern of misreading the Trump administration that does not seem to want to go away, not even after 100 days of experience with the new U.S. president. A few people continue to assume that Trump will not be as bad as the first nightmarish predictions made us believe. As evidence for the mainstreaming of the president they point to Trump's newfound love of NATO, his unexpected critique of Russia, or his awkward attempt at getting along with Chancellor Merkel. This group, the party of wishful thinking, is particularly small in Germany, but more than a few diplomats and some analysts are card-carrying members.

Unfortunately, the containment of Trump is not the same as a Trump makeover. Yes, the generals are piling up sandbags in Washington. Nevertheless, at what point will the flood of Trump crest all dams? Every time he tweets we hear the RealDonaldTrump. And therefore we know that it is the RealDonaldTrump who calls President Erdoğan in Turkey to congratulate on a successful turn toward authoritarianism. We can be sure: there is more to come. More disregard for individual freedom, more nationalism, more contempt for multilateralism, more negligence of old alliances, more condescension toward Europe, more active dismantling of the liberal international order.

After 100 days of Donald Trump, the United States has turned into a source of global insecurity, which is why 100 days seem like 100 years.

## Romania Relieved and Worried

*by Alina Inayeh*

Standing at the Eastern border of the European Union and NATO, Romania is seriously concerned about security in the region and wary of Russia's actions here. The first 100 days of the Trump administration brought a sense of relief in this regard, as the much feared reconciliation between the United States and Russia seems to be following a more strategic path than the electoral speeches led many believe.

A speedy and ill-conceived reconciliation would send a worrying signal throughout Eastern Europe, especially to countries like Romania, a major security player in the region and, consequently, regularly threatened by Russia.

Though the worst fears about Russia have been assuaged, the proposed cuts in foreign assistance advanced by the new administration worry Bucharest and many others in the region. If these cuts are made, it would eliminate a major element of support for economic and social progress. But equally as critical, it would signal a retreat of Western soft power, leaving even more space for anti-Western rhetoric and sentiment.

A staunch ally of the United States for the past 26 years, Romania seeks to deepen this strategic partnership and add a more vigorous economic component. It remains to be seen how the economic and trade policies of the new administration will affect Romania's efforts in this regard.

## Poland Tries to Read the Two Faces of Donald Trump

*by Michal Baranowski*

The first 100 days have been a roller coaster for U.S. allies. The campaign rhetoric of "obsolete NATO" and the professed desire to make nice with Putin deeply worried many countries in Central Europe. With the dismissal of General Flynn, it became clearer that

the political cost of making a quick deal with Russia would be too high for the Trump camp, and worries in Warsaw subsided somewhat. But it was the Tomahawk strikes against a Syrian government airfield that gave many here hope that Donald Trump's foreign policy may yet become a continuation of a traditional Republican policy of standing up to bad guys and engaging with allies, a posture that made Poland and other countries in the region one of the most pro-American in Europe. The strike and the following visit of Vice President Pence in Asia was read here as a sign that serious, experienced, and more hawkish members of the Trump team had won, or at least had begun to win, the debate with the neo-isolationist, "America First" wing of the administration.

This is good news, but also just the beginning of a process that could lead to a cohesive foreign policy. If the next 100 days look more like the last 20 — and not the first 80 — it will be good news for U.S. allies on NATO's Eastern flank.

## Turkey Remains Optimistic

*by Özgür Ünlühisarçıklı*

In no other European capital was Donald Trump's presidency anticipated with nearly as much optimism as in Ankara. Trump's pitting "the people against the elites" resonated well with the Turkish government circles that share a similar approach to politics. Frustrated with the Obama administration for allegedly undermining Turkey's concerns in Syria and not standing with Turkey during last summer's coup attempt, the Turkish government hoped that President Trump would understand Turkey better and work closely with President Erdoğan. These expectations have even prevented the Turkish leadership from openly criticizing Trump's "Muslim ban" beyond a superficial minimum.

After 100 days of Trump's presidency, Ankara's optimism has tapered, but not disappeared. While the Trump administration has not taken any concrete steps that have met Turkey's high expectations, from

Ankara's perspective, it has at least not continued the Obama administration's disapproving approach toward Turkey's democratic backslide.

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