



*And must have whiskey
Oh, you know why*

« German Parliament Report: U.S. Presence in Syria Is Illegal | Main | Syria Sitrep - Army Liberates Daraa City »

July 11, 2018

Trump's False Arguments Will Not Sell Well In Europe

Donald Trump, the 'America First' salesman, came to Brussels today to demand more tribute to the empire. He wants Europe to buy more U.S. made weapons and to use U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG). But his arguments are all wrong. The people in Europe are not impressed by them and they will reject his appeals.

His first talk in Brussels was [a profoundly wrong bashing](#) of Germany to push it into buying very expensive LNG from U.S. fracking producers. Trump, Putin's puppet according to the 'resistance', used the Russian bogeyman to set the scene:

Well, I have to say, I think it's very sad when Germany makes a massive oil and gas deal with Russia, where you're supposed to be guarding against Russia, and Germany goes out and pays billions and billions of dollars a year to Russia.

...

So we're protect you against Russia, but they're paying billions of dollars to Russia, and I think that's very inappropriate. And the former Chancellor of Germany is the head of the pipeline company that's supplying the gas. **Ultimately, Germany will have almost 70 percent of their country controlled by Russia with natural gas.**

So you tell me, is that appropriate? I mean, I've been complaining about this from the time I got in. It should have never been allowed to have happened. But **Germany is totally controlled by Russia, because they will be**

getting from 60 to 70 percent of their energy from Russia and a new pipeline.

...

Now, if you look at it, Germany is a captive of Russia because they supply. **They got rid of their coal plants. They got rid of their nuclear.** They're getting so much of the oil and gas from Russia.

...

I think trade is wonderful. I think energy is a whole different story. I think energy is a much different story than normal trade. And you have **a country like Poland that won't accept the gas.** You take a look at some of the countries — they won't accept it, because they don't want to be captive to Russia. But Germany, as far as I'm concerned, is captive to Russia, because it's getting so much of its energy from Russia. So we're supposed to protect Germany, but they're getting their energy from Russia. Explain that. And it can't be explained — you know that.

Trump was talking about the Nordstream II pipeline which will supply Germany and other European countries with natural gas from Russia.



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Nord Stream I has been operating for a while. Nord Stream II is currently being build by private Austrian and German companies.

The big advantage for Germany is that these pipelines do not run through any other country. Other pipelines from Russia, built in the 1970s, run through the Ukraine and Poland to Germany. They are used by all three countries to receive gas from Russia.

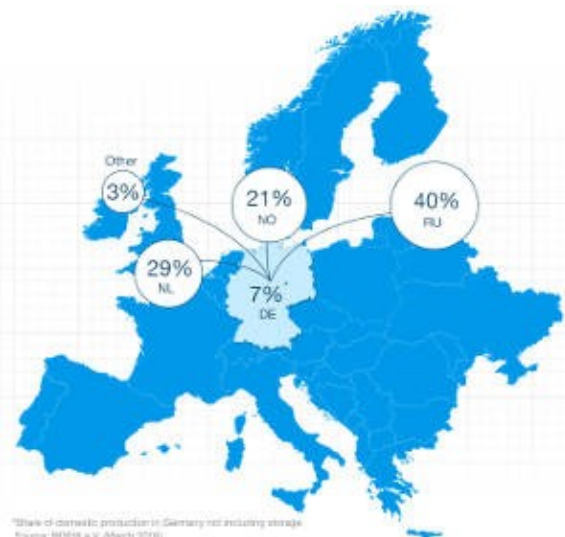
Whenever the Ukraine has no money to pay Russia for gas and does not pay its dues, Russia will send less gas through the pipeline. The gas for Germany and Poland is supposed to continue to flow without the Ukraine taking any of it. But the Ukrainians cheat. They steal

the gas that is supposed to pass through without paying for it. In the end Germany has to give money to the Ukraine so that the Ukraine can pay Russia. This happened in 2006, in 2008 and again in 2014.

Enough is enough. Nord Stream prevents such blackmail of Germany by the Ukraine. That is the main reason why the Ukraine lobbies against it.

Poland is not rejecting gas from Russia even as it claims to do so. It has a long term contract with Russia and will receive plenty of gas through the Ukraine pipeline up to at least 2022. Since 2014 it also imports gas from Germany through the new bi-directional pipeline pumping station at Mallnow. Germany receives the gas its exports to Poland through the Nord Stream system from Russia and pumps it through the Opal pipeline and Mallnow to Poland. It is extremely hypocritical for Poland to lobby against Nord Stream when it significantly contributes to Poland's energy security.

Trump claims that Germany "will be getting from 60 to 70 percent of their energy from Russia and a new pipeline". Of the primary energy Germany uses only some 20% comes from natural gas. Less than 40% of the natural gas Germany uses comes from Russia. Thus Russia delivers 7-8% of the primary energy Germany uses. If need be Germany can do without this. It is not a strategic issue.



bigger

Trump also claims of Germany: "They got rid of their coal plants. They got rid of their nuclear." Germany did not get rid of its coal plants. It builds new ones with higher efficiencies. Germany is phasing out nuclear energy. It will not build new nuclear plants. But there are currently still nine nuclear plants running. Their planned shutdown date is 2022 but this will likely be

extended. Without nuclear power it will be extremely difficult to reach the set greenhouse gas limit.

Trump has the facts, as usual, all wrong. But the U.S. is producing more natural gas than it needs and wants to export it. Compressing the U.S. natural gas into liquefied form for sea transport takes so much energy that the price is inevitably much higher than Russian gas delivered through pipelines. In Germany it will never be competitive to Russian gas. It is understandable that Trump wants Germany to buy U.S. produced liquefied gas. But without competitive pricing and a more plausible sales argument he will have no luck.

Trump took an even bigger shot at all European NATO countries when he [demanded](#) that they commit to spending 4% of their GDP on defense. He hopes that they will buy more U.S. produced military systems. The demand is ludicrous. Parliaments decide how much a country spends on defense. Parliamentarians want to get reelected. [Only 15%](#) of Germans agree with increasing the defense budget to 2% of the German GDP. For most of them even 1.5% is already too much. A plurality [wants U.S. troops to leave](#) Germany. There is no way that NATO countries can or will agree to 4%.

That said I am all for spending 4% on defense - but under one condition. Health is a security issue. Healthcare is the defense from death. We need to nationalize our healthcare systems and let the defense departments run them.

The U.S. military is the biggest socialist organization of the world. It is egalitarian and its *citizens*, i.e. the soldiers, are extremely well cared for. It runs its own healthcare system through the Veterans Health Administration.

NATO countries could adopt the VHA system and extend it to their populations. Under that condition 4% of GDP for 'defense' will indeed be a good deal.

Posted by b on July 11, 2018 at 18:50 UTC | [Permalink](#)

Comments

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Many NATO countries, at least in Western Europe, already have socialised health care in on form or another*. One notable exception is the US...

*Admittedly not part of the defence budget.

Posted by: DomesticExtremist | Jul 11 2018 19:04

utc | [1](#)

I am glad to read you calling out Trump lies b
Trump's only positive are his pompous glaring
human negatives that he prances around showing
all to see. The added "benefit" is that his attitudes
and actions are bringing all the like minded out of
their hiding for all to see and take measure of as a
species.

I am going to offer a friendly upgrade to your
suggestion about expanding military healthcare to
all

In the US, military healthcare provided through the
VA is for the meat sacks that defend and project
empire but there is even better healthcare for the
Congresscritter puppets that I propose be extended
to all. Why should the public not get what the
puppets get?

Posted by: [psychohistorian](#) | Jul 11 2018 19:31 utc |
[2](#)

It is indeed hard to believe that western european
governments would agree to what Christopher Black
calls a "US shakedown". Except that they have been
doing so since 1949.

It is important to remember that the US Embassy
exerts at least as much influence on the government
as Parliament does. And that Parliaments are full of
agents of the the US empire, in some cases they are
actually on the payroll, many more are either US
educated, marinated in the imperialist ideology or in
the service of corporations which know that the
Empire is the final guarantor of their survival and
capable of crushing them with ease.

That having been said, things are changing, The
imperialists cling to power only by exerting the most
extraordinary, and unsustainable, pressure. An
example of which is the ludicrously over-wrought
campaign against the left in the UK being waged by
the Israeli Embassy, with the assistance of the entire
MSM.

B's arguments are correct but it will take a mobilised
and politically conscious public opinion to impose
them on governments full of people who see
themselves as Washington's servants and expect to
be rewarded one day for being loyal to the US and
for betraying their countrymen and, of course,
women.

Posted by: bevin | Jul 11 2018 19:41 utc | [3](#)

The question is if Europe will truly continue to bark
and bite at the deep state or if this is all just for
show and they'll eventually capitulate. I'm worried

that this is nothing more than political theatre. I'm not expecting much from the Europeans. But we'll see.

Posted by: [SomeGuy](#) | Jul 11 2018 19:41 utc | [4](#)

Europe buying LNG from the US just makes no sense at all. Aside from the cost, LNG is difficult to transport and work with; the whole idea is just nuts, especially considering the quantities involved. In addition, Russian gas is plentiful and cheap, so to expect Europe not to use it is also nuts. Could it be that Trump fully understands this and the hidden agenda is to get out of NATO and bring home the troops?

Posted by: jack Leavitt | Jul 11 2018 19:53 utc | [5](#)

An Act of War against Russia

Russia is a near neighbor to Germany. Commerce between relatively close countries is the normal course of events, so what is Trump suggesting, a 1970's style energy embargo on Russia? Depriving Russia the opportunity all trade with her neighbors 'because we said so' is no better than a blockade.

One of these days, my country is going to get a taste of, 'no soup for you' and we will be screaming like stuck pigs.

Yes, I am obsessed w/Sean Hannity

It's his earnest, self-righteous, mind numbingly idiotic voice, I'm hypnotized. Ollie North was on his show and they were going on about 'Iran's' saber rattling by threatening to close the Straits of Hormuz. Sean rattled off how the EU would wake up and it would be the end of Iran's belligerence.

He neglected to mention that this 'threat' is only coming after our act of war by actively trying to cut off all of Iran's oil exports which is no better than a naval blockade.

Posted by: Christian Chuba | Jul 11 2018 20:25 utc | [6](#)

"Their planned shutdown date is 2022 but this will likely be extended. Without nuclear power it will be extremely difficult to reach the set greenhouse gas limit."

That's nonsense. The set CO2 emission limit will not be reached because Germany out of utterly stupid reasons is not getting rid of its brown coal. There is plenty of wind and solar energy production and it's getting cheaper and cheaper. The nuclear power shut down in Germany will not be extended. 2022 is

final. There is no more money to make. The big companies are satisfied now.
And yes, as many other countries like the USA Germany is dependent from foreign fossil energy. This is indeed a strategic problem and one of the main causes for the wars in the middle east region.

Posted by: Pnyx | Jul 11 2018 20:26 utc | 7

Much can be gleaned from [this NATO Defence Expenditure pdf](#) with special attention given to graphs 5, 6 & 7. Since the dissolution of the USSR, military spending as share of GDP by EU & Canada decreased about 50% as shown in Graph 5. It should also be noted that the demand made by the Outlaw US Empire for EU NATO members to increase their wastage of monies on military equipment began with Obama in 2015, with compliance noted by the graphs in 2016. When Obama gave his orders, very little squawking was heard from EU/Canada governments, although it was quite different from the public. Of course, EU/Canada are caught in a trap of their own design--Russia's quite obviously not the "aggressive" nation that must be defended against using all necessary means as promoted by Russophobic Media Propaganda as they all trade and benefit from commercial interactions; thus, bean counters see NATO as a wastage of vital, finite monies that ought to be spent on productive endeavors advancing the human condition. In national legislatures: "Russia's a growing threat to humanity!--BUT--No, I'm voting against any increase in military spending as there's no need for it."

European members of NATO don't need such an organization. If they were to join the Russian and Chinese enterprises to unite Eurasia into a common economic zone, then the need for NATO would become indefensible. And their finally becoming independent of the Outlaw US Empire's diktats would provide the impetus required to finally solve the status of Palestine and reaffirmation of the paramountcy of International Law as a greatly expanded Multipolar Order would be established. The United Nations might actually begin to function as designed.

Is Trump trying to push NATO apart by injecting it with a dose of American Chaos? Force EU/Canada to declare their independence from the Outlaw US Empire for numerous reasons? All of which would force the contraction of the Overseas element of the Empire and install an actual defense policy, not one aiming to control the world? Is this Trump's way to force a Neocon retreat?

Meanwhile, [China charms Arabia](#) "Under the radar,..., the eighth ministerial meeting of the

China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF), established in 2004, sailed on in Beijing, hosted by President Xi Jinping." Please note the article's citing of new demands made to Iraq by the Outlaw US Empire, which has their roots in Trump's appraisal of the situation.

Posted by: karlof1 | Jul 11 2018 20:36 utc | [8](#)

I'd say this is why you do not mix a military alliance with politics. Nor allow federal presidents to command and represent an army. Trump's retarded bullshit aside the USA shouldn't be holding committee meetings with allies without an war. An alliance shouldn't be considered active during peacetime. An ally is a figment of political imagination until military necessity requires it in actuality. Historically and currently a military alliance is treated as a contract for warmongering against an outnumbered enemy while at peace or at war. Which is why honorable people (currently very few) eschew alliances or non-aggression agreements until they become a defensive requirement. If President Trump want's to crash NATO with no survivor's, more power to him.

Posted by: anon | Jul 11 2018 20:44 utc | [9](#)

@7

By the look of the demands in the Escobar's article, what the US is demanding is full and total control of Iraq.

Posted by: Peter AU 1 | Jul 11 2018 21:05 utc | [10](#)

From Trump's full speech mentioned at the beginning of this posting:

"So we're going to have to do something [about Nordstream 2] because we're not going to put up with it. We can't put up with it. And it's inappropriate."

So what does Trump intend to do? What can he do?

Posted by: anon2 | Jul 11 2018 21:14 utc | [11](#)

Trump has the ace;
as Trump is Trump.

Posted by: [Guerrero](#) | Jul 11 2018 21:22 utc | [12](#)

There are claims from US soldiers that disagree about the quality of health care they receive. Unfortunately, financiers and politicians definitely are well looked after.

Posted by: Ian | Jul 11 2018 21:27 utc | [13](#)

I think Trump got some numbers confused.

1) [Clean Energy Wire reports that in 2015](#), 40% of oil imports came from Russia and 35% of German natural gas was imported from Russia (*Note: b says 20% of gas was from Russia - did it decline?*) Also, I wonder if Russia is giving Germany a better deal so that future consumption of gas from Russia would be likely to increase?

2) 75% of Germany house heating comes from natural gas.

<> <> <> <> <> <>

But Germany's need for natural gas could decrease substantially in the years ahead. German heating infrastructure is very inefficient. Germany could import much less natural gas by insulating homes and installing modern heating systems.[which is already on the drawing board](#):

Buildings account for over 40 per-cent of German energy consumption; 85 percent of which is used for heating purposes. In private households this figure is as high as 86 percent of total energy consumption. Of the 17 million heating generators in Germany, only 12 percent could be considered state-of-the-art: 70 percent are between 10 and 24 years old, and 18 percent are older still. . . Around 50 percent of total building stock will be retrofitted within the next 20 years.

Potential savings are up to 93 percent of primary energy consumption of apartment houses in Germany ... with an average savings of 35%.

Note: AFAICT that 35% savings is only from modern generators - it doesn't include savings from better insulation!

And we should also consider the energy savings when other European countries also modernize their infrastructure.

Posted by: [Jackrabbit](#) | Jul 11 2018 21:29 utc | [14](#)

Cutting healthcare spending down to 4% of GDP would gut spending in every country. The US and UK governments both spend ~10% GDP on healthcare and the US private sector spends another 10% on top of that to not cover everyone, and deliver much worse outcomes. I'll assume you meant just adding spending, which the UK desperately needs but 4% GDP would undoubtedly be way more than the NHS would know what to do with. What the US

system needs is to kill the parasitic health insurance and pharma companies that extract huge rents and require so much billing overhead. Switching to a single payer system would undoubtedly bring the government spending up several percentage of GDP but would definitely decrease total spending in the sector.

@2 psychohistorian

Health Insurance

Since all provisions of the Affordable Care Act or "Obamacare" took effect in 2014, members of Congress have been required to purchase health insurance plans offered through one of the Affordable Care Act-approved exchanges in order to receive a government contribution toward their health coverage.

Prior to passage of the Affordable Care Act, insurance for members of Congress was provided through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB); the government's employer-subsidized private insurance system.

However, not even under the FEHB plan was the insurance "free." On average, the government pays from 72% to 75% of the premiums for its workers. As all other federal retirees, former members of Congress paid the same share of premiums as other federal employees.

Of course our corrupt as hell campaign finance system ensures that no member of congress will ever have to do without much of anything, especially money for healthcare. Not that I disagree with the sentiment but lets stick with facts.

Posted by: UserFriendly | Jul 11 2018 21:39 utc | 15

Great idea! ;) But sadly the NATO only defends against phantoms, and not against real threats.. ;)

@bevin/3: I too think it seems like a david vs goliath fight.. And i sympathize with the British left, the propaganda even state broadcaster BBC is pushing is stunning.. But at least there IS a Corbyn. And the youth seems to be on this side. So the tide is turning, even if it is slow. :) Trump helps to pull down the "humanitarian" and "liberal" mask of the empires face. And thats what has been needed for decades and decades.

Quote of Max Weber: "Die Politik bedeutet ein starkes langsames Bohren von harten Brettern mit Leidenschaft und Augenmaß zugleich."
--> "Politics means the strong, slow drilling of hard wood with passion and focus/sense of proportion at the same time."

:)

@SomeGuy/4: Yeah, Those dogs that bark dont bite.. Like bevin/3 said, our european politicians are to much invested and domesticated in the trans atlantic "partnership" to actually stand up. The only reason for which they are willing to risk a confrontation with the Empire is major business interests, and even there i doubt they will stand up to the stable genius. So as you say, dont expect anything substantial.. You can only be disappointed.. ;)

Another thing: If you meant your response to my posting in the previous thread as a true discussion, and not an empty personal attack, read my answer..

Pnyx/6: Well, i think B's assessment is the realpolitik approach.. I have heard for 10 years that atomic energy is too costly.. Sadly we are not there yet. Not making the energy is the problem, the distribution is the big and costly issue! There is no coherent concept at least here in Germany.. No decentralization, whole new grids and power transfer nets have to be builded, and connected intelligently to smart software and hardware.. And without a clear plan from high level politics, this wont work.

So even if solar energy would cost 0,03€ as i can in the near future, we can not use this because of or political chaos and unwillingness to lead this change. Sad, but thats where we are in 2018.

Have a good night all in both all our empire and vassal nations.. ;)

Posted by: SteLe/TheDarkCornerInUrBrain | Jul 11 2018 21:42 utc | [16](#)

@ UserFriendly with the update on CongressCrittter healthcare

Thanks for that...Can't keep up

Posted by: [psychohistorian](#) | Jul 11 2018 22:01 utc | [17](#)

How could a deal like nordstream happen anyway?
Are puppets now allowed to make high-level strategic contracts on their own?

Posted by: radiator | Jul 11 2018 22:10 utc | [18](#)

We should also recognize that to some degree Trump is posturing before meeting Putin.

Posted by: [Jackrabbit](#) | Jul 11 2018 22:15 utc | [19](#)

The bright side of Trump bullying is revealing NATO astronomical hypocrisy as they join psychotic delusions about Russian menace they refuse to put money where their mouth is and shamelessly disclose their vassal status begging for American military support for free.

All that knowing well that there is no threat from Russia that cannot be eliminated simply by good neighborly relation with Russia not by spending \$billions on otherwise useless fraudulent US MIC junk.

Is that nor reverse psychology that is in play here, put up or shut up, let me make deal with Russia so you do not have to spend on military ridiculous sums to match your delusional rhetorics about Russian threat.

Trump is s gambling man, wants to make money for US MIC on anti Russian lies or make money for US industry on Russia peace and cooperation truths.

Posted by: Kalen | Jul 11 2018 22:31 utc | [20](#)

Love this exchange at breakfast;

"Stoltenberg: [...] I think that two World Wars and the Cold War taught us that we are stronger together than apart.

Trump: But how can you be together when a country is getting its energy from the person you want protection against or from the group that you want protection?

Stoltenberg: Because we understand that when we stand together, also in dealing with Russia, we are stronger. I think what we have seen is that —

Trump: No, you're just making Russia richer. You're not dealing with Russia. You're making Russia richer."

You'd have to be an idiot not to agree with Trump here.

Posted by: gda | Jul 11 2018 22:34 utc | [21](#)

A notable difference between the way Trump treats the likes of Putin, Xi, and Kim Jong Un - all leaders in their own right - to the way he treats the EU poodles. Zero respect for the poodles.

Posted by: Peter AU 1 | Jul 11 2018 22:40 utc | [22](#)

"... The big advantage for Germany is that (Nordstream I and Nordstream II] pipelines do not

run through any other country ..."

That's because idiot EU / NATO countries like Denmark, who would gladly accept having the pipelines pass through their land and maritime territories (and the transit fees that go with them) if Russian gas were not flowing through them, prefer to support the Nazi whacko Banderites ruling Ukraine who whine that all Russian gas should transit Ukrainian territory in deteriorating pipelines. So Denmark and others refuse to host any part of the pipelines at all.

When Gazprom starts sending all gas through Nordstream I and II and pipelines through the Black Sea, completely bypassing Ukraine, then that country will be close to bankruptcy. Denmark and everyone else in the EU and NATO had better be ready to rescue the Banderites.

Posted by: Jen | Jul 11 2018 22:43 utc | [23](#)

psychohistorian @2. Right On! Maybe Trump lies hit home to Europeans with more force when they're spoken in Europe, about Europeans.

I think our Congress Critters have "Gold Label" Private Health Insurance, though. My wife and I had such policies when she was in the CA nurses' union. But Ii far and away prefer a universal single payer system like the Expanded Medicare For All promoted by Sanders.

During the Primaries, the very conservative Tax Policy Center was forced to admit that plan would save the average household \$4,300 per year. And that's after any additional taxes. In fact, households that earn the median income or less would save at least \$8,000!

One of the hard things to overcome talking to propagandized USAmericans is that few actually know how much of the fruits of their labors go into healthcare.

Posted by: Daniel | Jul 11 2018 22:45 utc | [24](#)

[*Der Spiegel's fact-checking article*](#) of Trump's assertions provides some interesting facts, all in German, which I used Yandex to translate. To counterargue Trump's most pointed assertion that Germany's a captive of Russia, the author provides this rebuke: "Russland ist auf den Abnehmer Deutschland angewiesen. Die Deutschen benötigten die Russen vor allem als Lieferanten für Erdgas." (Russia is dependent on the customer Germany. The Germans needed the Russians mainly as suppliers of natural gas.) Overall: "Für Russland ist Deutschland als Handelspartner wichtiger als andersherum. Von

allen deutschen Importen kamen 2017 nur drei Prozent aus Russland - und lediglich zwei Prozent der Exporte gehen in Putins Reich. Für die Russen war die Bundesrepublik mit einem Anteil von 8,6 Prozent ihres gesamten Außenhandels der zweitwichtigste Partner hinter China. Und mehr als zwei Drittel der russischen Exporte nach Deutschland waren Erdgas, Öl und Steinkohle." (For Russia, Germany is more important as a trading partner than elsewhere. Of all German imports, only three percent came from Russia in 2017 - and only two percent of exports go to Putin's Reich. For the Russians, Germany was the second most important Partner behind China, accounting for 8.6 percent of its total foreign trade. And more than two-thirds of Russian exports to Germany were natural gas, Oil and coal.)

Clearly, the total trade turnover between Russia and Germany represents just a small fraction of their totals, and both nations would likely find a replacement if a total embargo was to ensue.

Posted by: karlof1 | Jul 11 2018 22:45 utc | [25](#)

Jen @22--

Something I didn't cite from the *Der Spiegel* article I linked is that many pipelines were upgraded so the directional flow can be reversed and product sent back to those not initially on receiving end. So, that supposed irritant can be brushed off except for nations having no monies for purchase, like Ukraine or Greece.

Posted by: karlof1 | Jul 11 2018 22:53 utc | [26](#)

bevin @3, please keep in mind that studies show that we commoner USAmericans have a statistical ZERO influence on our Legislature, too. The top 10% get about 80% of what they want. And if our recent military budgets are a guide, the top 0.1% get 140% of what they want. ;-)

In Naomi Klein's "The Shock Doctrine," she posited that, after WW II the social welfare/social democratic systems of Western Europe were established because the 0.01% feared Europeans would see good examples in nearby Commie/Socialist countries, and demand the same. So, they were bribed, and enjoyed relatively secure lives.

But with the "collapse" of the Soviet Union, and globalized maximized exploitation of the resources and labor of "the underdeveloped" countries, the 0.01% no longer saw the need to bribe Western Europeans, So, they've been nibbling away at those

social programs ever since.

Posted by: Daniel | Jul 11 2018 22:56 utc | [27](#)

The US began pressuring countries to forego nuclear power to support the Petro Dollar in 1978. One big reason they deposed the Shah who was planning to go big with nuclear power with orders for about 20 French and /or German reactors

The TMI accident was likely a false flag run by the newly established FEMA.

If the restrictions on recycling nuclear fuel rods were eliminated there would not be a disposal problem.

Germany's decision to phase out nuclear makes US happy. Germany will only accept Nord Stream 2 if it does not bypass Ukraine. This also makes US happy although they would prefer no Nord Stream 2. As said up thread this is as much about posturing before the Putin meeting and gaining leverage.

A bit O/T but it appears rare metals needed by US military and tech industries are on the list of products subject to tariffs. China basically has a monopoly on these metals so the only short term purpose is to drive up prices for weapons and tech gadgets which get passed onto the taxpayer/consumer. In effect the tariffs are just another revenue source to finance tax cuts to corporations and the rich.

Longer term of course the tariffs make mining some of these metals in the US more feasible, at some cost to the environment, seeing as EPA has been gutted. But for that to happen the tariffs need to be more or less a permanent thing. It's not like they don't have tariffs on food and clothes from China. Just expanding the revenue base. The middle class takes the hit in the end, what's left of it anyways

Posted by: Pft | Jul 11 2018 23:03 utc | [28](#)

Trump as a used car salesman does not make much sense either. In fact I don't think he can spell to sense. It's telling that he is impervious to the mood in both NATO and the EU.

His middle name should be clueless. He is truly clueless, he will not get an increase in defense expenditure, it would be political self goal (Hello England, no not football, that's more like clueless) for any major political party to demand that, the electorate across Europe are firmly against it. Ohh and who cares about Perfidious Albion, they are not part of Europe anymore, they are some Islands with bad weather in the North Sea. Seabird sanctuary ?

Europe hopefully comes to its senses and casts of the American yoke, and fashion its own defences, based on ITS needs.

BTW: F the Poles and the Baltics!

Posted by: Den Lille Abe | Jul 11 2018 23:12 utc | [29](#)

thanks b.. informative and interesting comments from everyone too.. thanks..

trump is a hard guy to read in some respects... he is like a blunt object on the one hand, but he might have some alternative purpose in mind, which would include the meet with trump in 5 days..

if he wants to get rid of nato, i think he is going about it the right way.. i can't see why he would though as that wouldn't benefit the mil complex...i can't see the purpose of nato either way and perhaps it would be best if the poodles let go of having the usa as it's leader in the 21st century.. consider a different approach... i am not sure what canada and other western type poodles can do with all this..

@7 karlof1.. thanks for the pepe link... i just don't see the approach - bullying - taken by the usa to iraq, as working out.. i am listing the demands for others to see firsthand..

"

1. 30% of all the oil in Iraq should be American-controlled – and it's up to the US do what it wants with it.
2. Washington must have full access and control of Iraqi banks.
3. All business and trade with Iran must cease right now.
4. The Hashd al-Shaabi, known as People Mobilization Units (PMUs), instrumental in the victorious fight against Daesh (Islamic State),

must be immediately disbanded."

the usa takes this approach based on weakness, not strength... in fact - if one was to read trumps comments on the surface here - it is the same thing that b has highlighted in this post.. again - the usa is not working from a place of strength.. it is like a wild animal in the last phase of it's life - not good..

Posted by: james | Jul 11 2018 23:21 utc | [30](#)

meant - meet with putin..

Posted by: james | Jul 11 2018 23:21 utc | [31](#)

re the usa demands on iraq - the democratic way,
lol..

Posted by: james | Jul 11 2018 23:22 utc | [32](#)

Lost in the story is fact it is not new supply of natural gas to Europe. It is new pipe lines including two others with the sole intent of bypassing Ukraine. Presently near all Russian natural gas passes through Ukraine on its way to Western Europe and particularly .. Germany. The Ukraine regime has been reaping the benefit of transmission fees and stealing billions of cubic meters of gas, on which they also charged transmission fees. This was the basis behind a recent dispute panel finding in favor of Ukraine and the gas theft. The Americans and willing European Poodles would very much like to keep the gas flowing through Naziville where they would maintain a strangle hold. Gazprom, the principle Russian supplier, more or less said f**K you and formed consortiums to build new pipe lines

Posted by: ger | Jul 11 2018 23:23 utc | [33](#)

@32 So if Germany gets gas through Nordstream they are 'controlled by Russia' but if they get it via Ukraine they aren't. Seems Nordstream would be good insurance against Ukrainian meddling. Cheaper too, a very sound business strategy that Trump should appreciate.

Posted by: dh | Jul 11 2018 23:37 utc | [34](#)

You are agreeing with an idiot, no matter what...Europe has nothing to worry about with regards to Russia. Unless they threaten Russia.

'Love this exchange at breakfast;

"Stoltenberg: [...] I think that two World Wars and the Cold War taught us that we are stronger together than apart.

Trump: But how can you be together when a country is getting its energy from the person you want protection against or from the group that you want protection?

Stoltenberg: Because we understand that when we stand together, also in dealing with Russia, we are stronger. I think what we have seen is that —

Trump: No, you're just making Russia richer. You're not dealing with Russia. You're making Russia richer."

You'd have to be an idiot not to agree with Trump here.

Posted by: gda | Jul 11, 2018 6:34:15 PM | 20'

Posted by: kgw | Jul 11 2018 23:37 utc | 35

Trump seems to enjoy antagonizing the Europeans one way or the other. As to NATO, Trump made the same complaints during his campaign while calling it "obsolete." Sometimes it sounds like he would rather have the US out of NATO. One theory I have is that he is limited in what he can do so he works around TPTBs to get closer to his goals. So he antagonizes and threatens Europe on NATO. The same goes for Syria. He talked about wanting to pull out but kept being drawn back in by the usual suspects. So he's pulled monetary support in certain cases and refused to dig the US in any deeper than it is. And it will be interesting to see what happens with his upcoming meeting with Putin considering how much he had to backtrack on his talk of better relations during his campaign. Those who've wanted him to join the "hate Russia" team may get frustrated.

Will he take direct action on any of these things? I doubt it. The indirect route seems to go in the right direction.

Posted by: Curtis | Jul 11 2018 23:42 utc | 36

"The U.S. military is the biggest socialist organization of the world. It is egalitarian and its citizens, i.e. the soldiers, are extremely well cared for. It runs its own healthcare system through the Veterans Health Administration."

A wonderful conclusion b.

Does anyone know of any in-depth economic analysis of the U.S. military as a state welfare system for its members, as well as the impact of aggregate military spending on the general purchasing power of citizens within the society at large?

Posted by: Alan Heffez | Jul 11 2018 23:49 utc | 37

karlof!. Good to "see" you back. The following is specifically to you, but it does continue from your first comment. [I couldn't get some links to embed, sorry]

My best short term hope is that all this war-blustering is just to convince we commoners to bend over so the military/industrial contractors can make lots of gelt. The Global War OF Terror has been terrific for their bank accounts, but with SAA and the MoD of the RF beating the snot out of terrorists wherever they go to such an extent that the Pentagon is considering ISIS essentially defeated.

Besides, the really “**big ticket products**” are things like aircraft carriers, “upgraded” nuclear weapons, 5th Generation fighters, etc. etc. etc., that are harder to excuse when their targets are guys in sandals with AK47s and IEDs.

That could be why the 2018 National Defense Strategy plan has shifted from fighting “terrorism” back to “...the long-term, strategic competition between nations.”

<https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>

Same with our “adversary” across the big pond in China. Just the other day, the CPC warned of “China’s army infiltrated by ‘peace disease’ requiring a major new “defense posture” just like the US and NATO.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2153579/chinas-army-infiltrated-peace-disease-after-years>

China’s Central Military Commission specified that much of this “posturing” will be “military reforms are aimed at expanding its military might from the traditional focus on land territories to maritime influence to protect the nation’s strategic interests in a new era.”

Within this new “multipolar” world, only Russia is cutting its military budget. And they still seem to have at least one of the most effective conventional war-fighting capability, and their next generation nuclear deterrence looks nothing short of awesome. They have pipelines to build, and like China, long-term economic contracts to sign.

Posted by: Daniel | Jul 11 2018 23:50 utc | [38](#)

No dear b, for once I think you've got it wrong. I see Trump asking three questions for all of which there is one answer.

1. Angela. You tell us that NATO ought to concentrate on the Russian threat. If Russia is a threat, why are you buying gas from it?
2. Angela, You tell us that Russia is a reliable energy supplier. If Russia is a reliable supplier, why are you telling us it's a threat?
3. Angela. I hope you're not saying Russia is a threat and its gas is cheap but the USA will save us.

The answer to all 3 questions is: we're out of here, defend yourselves.

It's Trump cutting the Gordian Knot of obligations.

Posted by: [Patrick Armstrong](#) | Jul 11 2018 23:52 utc

Aarrgghh! Besides some continuity problems when I recut and pasted the above since the links weren't working, I also left out the following completely.

That could be why, even though the US 2018 Nuclear Posture Review observes we are changing from: "For decades, the United States led the world in efforts to reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons." To "...the current, pragmatic assessment of the threats we face and the uncertainties regarding the future security environment." Which conveniently can use up, or more likely go over budget on former President CareBear's additional \$10 Billion in nuclear weapons development over the succeeding 10 years.

<https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872886/-1/-1/1/2018-NUCLEAR-POSTURE-REVIEW-FINAL-REPORT.PDF>

Posted by: Daniel | Jul 11 2018 23:54 utc | [40](#)

Alan Heffez@36

The military has socialized medicine but mainly for young active duty troops. There are many homeless vets and retirees with poor care. Psychohistorian is on the right track with a more Congress oriented program.

But there is hope on the horizon.

[Interview with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez](#)

""A twenty-eight-year-old member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) who was working as a bartender last year unseated a potential Democratic House speaker.""

Posted by: financial matters | Jul 12 2018 0:11 utc | [41](#)

Patrick Armstrong @38.

I'm no fan of Angela, but she/Germany have been trying to tamp down this AZ Empire New Cold War against Russia since at least 2013. When she, Putin, Yanukovych (elected President of Ukraine) and the leaders of the Maidan protests got together and signed an agreement in which Yanukovych acquiesced to essentially all of the "peaceful, pro-democracy protesters" demands, it was the Asst. Secretary of the US State (Vickie Nuland) who said, "F*ck the EU" "We can midwife this thing" and even appointed the new PM "Yats is the guy."

She was then an active participant in the Minsk Agreement to end the “anti-terrorism action” which our gal Vickie shredded publicly the next day because the AZ Empire thought the Uki-Nazis would finish off those Muscovite, Colorado Hicks and (can I post the Ukie terms for Jews?) in the east like they’d done in the south.

Then, Angela was involved in the Minsk II cease-fire/road to peace (when the Uki-Nazis were being driven out of the east, and were about to lose Mariupol).

I know there are others in addition to b here who know this stuff better than I. Isn’t this about right?

Posted by: Daniel | Jul 12 2018 0:12 utc | [42](#)

"It is extremely hypocritical for Poland to lobby against Nord Stream when it significantly contributes to Poland's energy security."

There are other explanations that could be better documented, like stupidity and insanity. BTW, Poland has big pollution problem, and a major part is that many older multifamily buildings and new single family building has polluting heating with coal furnaces and stoves. Natural gas does not generate pollutants except for CO2 which is not affecting health, plus it uses less than half of carbon than coal.

On the other note, merely to get enough gas for internal needs, Poland could get enough through Belarus. But if you need to add re-export to Ukraine, that is not enough. So Poles can pride themselves of not being as stupid and insane as their southeastern neighbors.

Posted by: Piotr Berman | Jul 12 2018 0:19 utc | [43](#)

publius tacitus at sst [take on this..](#)

Posted by: james | Jul 12 2018 0:24 utc | [44](#)

@41 daniel.. patrick has quite a good handle on this topic... <https://patrickarmstrong.ca/>

Posted by: james | Jul 12 2018 0:26 utc | [45](#)

Patrick Armstrong@38

Well stated.

There are many gordian knots.

[The BIS should be dissolved](#)

""Responsible fiscal practice requires a government to fill spending gaps left by fluctuations in non-government spending patterns. In that way, the government takes responsibility for maintaining full employment.

What the Troika did in Greece was the exemplar of irresponsible fiscal practice.""

Posted by: financial matters | Jul 12 2018 0:27 utc | [46](#)

I really really like the way you include a 'solution' to a global problem in this analysis b. To many times we just speak to the choir and rarely are solutions presented regardless where they lie on the possible/probable line. Did I mention I really like this SA. Thanks.

Posted by: Tannenhouer | Jul 12 2018 0:28 utc | [47](#)

karlofi @7. In graph 1, of actual dollar expenditure, NATO spending was going down until 2012, then it started to rise again, and has been a net increase every year since 2015.

In graph 4, per nation spending relative to GDP went up from 2014 to 2017 in almost all member states... notably, except the US and UK, but even then, US went from 3.58% to slightly over 3.5% and UK from 2.14% to a touch over 2.1%, so both are above the 2% "minimum."

Graphs 5, 6, 7 all show actual dollar expenditures dropping from 1010 to 2014, but then increasing every year since then.

Perhaps I misunderstood your point. But it sure looks like NATO spending has been rising since this "New Cold War" really kicked into gear in 2014/2015.

Posted by: Daniel | Jul 12 2018 0:28 utc | [48](#)

Pft @ 27

"One big reason they deposed the Shah who was planning to go big with nuclear power with orders for about 20 French and /or German reactors"

Another hat in the ring for CIA/MI6/Mossad helping to install the Islamic part of the Iranian Revolution? WooHoo!

"China basically has a monopoly on these metals"

Yes. Bear in mind though that "discovered" after the US invasion/occupation is that Afghanistan has

perhaps the world's largest reserves of lithium. And the "Democratic Republic" of Congo also has much rare earth wealth. As in fact do other parts of central Africa. Hence, the AZ Empire's new "AfriCom" military classification and the reinstallation of French Colonialism.

I'm not so up on this whole tariff thing. Hasn't Germany had substantial tariffs on automobiles for years now? Do those tariffs apply to other EU states?

Posted by: Daniel | Jul 12 2018 0:54 utc | [49](#)

Daniel

I have read in the past that Afghan is very rich in a number of minerals and China was looking at development there as part of it road belt intuitive. Going by the state Afghanistan is in I can't see the US extracting minerals there. US squatting in Afghanistan may be simply to deny Chinese access to the mineral deposits.

Posted by: Peter AU 1 | Jul 12 2018 1:02 utc | [50](#)

Curtis @35

Another theory is that Trump is just like every other spokesmodel for the US part of the AZ Empire.

He in a SAG actor, with decades of experience in professional entertainment though, so he knows how to play to his audience. They love the sh*t out of him, even as he sticks it to them harder and harder.

Posted by: Daniel | Jul 12 2018 1:05 utc | [51](#)

10

If NS2 goes online and EU goes dark to Qatar, especially if Iran corks Qatar with a South pipeline, the Middle East economies will collapse into chaos, and nobody will be buying either US guns or butter.

US'own economy is going down the crapper with No Taxes for the Rich running an \$800B Deficit, and private Fed Bank ratcheting up \$50B at a gulp in interest-only Debt financing ...forever. Collapse of MediCare and MediCaid will bleed even more out of the retsil economy, which will increase the Deficit, into a National Debt death spiral, and collapse of the public pensiin systems.

If you project MIC arms spending and Fed interest-only bleed out, Trump's illegal 25% Fed VAT sales tax (aka 'tariffs) and EU/RU/CH counter-tariffs, all US health and human services will be insolvent by

2025.

When that happens, and could happen much sooner, the world we knew in 20C will be inverted, upended, chaos, albeit, only chaos for the Lower Classes, Workers and Private Pensioners/401Ks. The Deep Purple Mil.Gov UniParty will...uhh...find a way!

Posted by: Chipnik | Jul 12 2018 1:07 utc | [52](#)

@kgw

"You are agreeing with an idiot, no matter what...Europe has nothing to worry about with regards to Russia. Unless they threaten Russia."

Well shit or get off the pot why don't you - "idiot" Trump is calling your bluff - stop freeloading off a (by your assessment) non-existent threat, or he'll stop it for you. Can't have it both ways. The US can't keep funding your crappy little joke of a disintegrating "European Union" for ever. Sooner or later you'll have to put on big-boy pants.

Methinks this guy has a good take on this.

"Trump, like the innocent child in the tale of the naked emperor, has stated the obvious truth that the elite and the experts have refused steadfastly for years to publicly acknowledge. Way to go Trump. You hit a home run."

http://turcopolier.typepad.com/sic_semper_tyrannis/2018/07/nato-a-naked-emperor-by-publius-tacitus.html/

Posted by: gda | Jul 12 2018 1:10 utc | [53](#)

James, @44. I largely agree with (and have called for) Patrick's recommendations for what Ukraine should do now. I don't see anything in there that contravenes what I wrote about Germany's role in the AZ Empire's coup and resulting war, though.

Do you remember those events, or should I dig out citations? I was following it pretty closely from mid/late 2013 until it quieted down in 2015. Since then, I just pick up articles here and there.

like, did you see that [Israel is providing assault rifles and ammo to the Azov Battalion](#) (the naziest of the neo-nazis)?

And then, of course, [the Zoo-nazis whine](#) about a couple of Jewish journalists reporting on it.

Posted by: Daniel | Jul 12 2018 1:23 utc | [54](#)

When you'd have to be an idiot to agree with Trump (\$1 TRILLION MIC arms profiteering slash National Police State slash MIC Indefinite Detention Gulags), but now you'd have to be an idiot NOT to agree with Trump (drag EU into the funeral pyre)m then you know it must be the Red Army v Blue Army media spewfest and the National Novitiate in November is near. Rahhh.

E pluribus now get back to work. Your 2Q ONE TRILLION Deep Purple State tithe-tibute is due in 3 more days, ONE TRILKION that you and your hiers will never see again.

Posted by: Chipnik | Jul 12 2018 1:23 utc | [55](#)

USA govt's assessment of China and Russia as "revisionist" should be understood as a determination to remain the hegemonic power. Thus, we have Cold War II. From that perspective, European objections to more "defense" spending are considered naive (or worse) as Europe's fate is views as tied to that of the Empire.

I think European elites are much more likely to side with USA than European people. If the Trump's talk with Putin doesn't go well, we are likely to see increased scaremongering to rectify public opinion.

Posted by: [Jackrabbit](#) | Jul 12 2018 1:29 utc | [56](#)

Peter AU 1 @49

Well, the opium is sure getting out ok. ;-)

Not to mention those same rare earth metals are getting out of DRC despite millions of murderous deaths and disease.

And the oil started flowing out of Libya before Gaddafi was even lynched. Oil's been flowing out of "Kurdish" Iraq into Israel come hell or high water. And of course, ISIL was shipping Syrian oil through Turkey and Jordan (if not Israel) throughout.

Chaos can make doing business harder, but that can also increase profits. As the posters said in the '60s, "War Is Not Good For Children And Other Living Things." But it's great for the psychopaths.

Posted by: Daniel | Jul 12 2018 1:31 utc | [57](#)

Trump's native approach I suspect may be something like that of fellow-New Yorker and great American chess player Bobby Fischer who famously said: "Try something!"

Posted by: [Guerrero](#) | Jul 12 2018 1:35 utc | [58](#)

gda. "Trump, like the innocent child ..."

OMG! Are you for real? If so, are you a Q/QAnon fan?

Here, let me fix the for you... "Trump LIKES little, innocent children," especially with no clothes on. Just ask his long-time buddy and still next door neighbor, Jeffery Epstein. Or those girls who sued him for rape when they were 12, but were threatened to shut up.

Posted by: Daniel | Jul 12 2018 1:38 utc | [59](#)

Daniel @41

That sounds about right. I would only add that Minsk Accord is another example of a non-agreement. Ukraine never signed yet Russia is accused of not implementing this non-agreement whenever people feel the need for some more Russia-bashing.

Posted by: [Jackrabbit](#) | Jul 12 2018 1:46 utc | [60](#)

Here is an article that explains the relationship between Russian pipelines, USA sanctions on Russia, MH17, Crimea, and Syria. It is an excellent background to comprehend Trump's accusations about Germany's purchase of gas from Russia. Patrick Armstrong and Pat Lang seem to think that Trump is about to cut NATO support, reduce/eliminate sanctions against Russia, and redirect relations with Israel, but I am not persuaded.

<https://www.unz.com/article/why-was-malaysian-airlines-flight-mh17-shot-down/>

by Kees van der Pijl

He also wrote a book on this topic.

Posted by: mauisurfer | Jul 12 2018 2:31 utc | [61](#)

I'm not so up on this whole tariff thing.

Trump follows the footprints of the post-USA Civil War Republican Party policy.

From Chapter 1 of *The Politicos* 1865-1896 by

Matthew Josephson (published in 1938)

"The new industrialist and financial class and the farmers of the North emerged the greatest gainers by far among the mixed coalition of classes which fought to win the social revolution underlying the War Between the States. But no less triumphant and dominant was the war party itself, the youthful organization of professional politicians and officeholders known as the Republican Party. A minority party in 1860, and victor in a three-cornered electoral contest, it knew during the war the intoxication of unchallenged power and fortune beyond calculation, leaving it in command of all the offices of the Federal Government!"

From Beard, Contemporary American History, p.91

It had the management of the gigantic war finances, through which it attached to itself the interests ... of the great capitalists and bankers throughout the North. It raised revenues by a high tariff which placed thousands of manufacturers under debt to it and linked their fortunes also with its fate ... Railway financiers and promoters of all kinds had to turn to it for privileges and protection...

Posted by: [Guerrero](#) | Jul 12 2018 2:40 utc | [62](#)

jackrabbit@59

surprised to hear you say Ukraine did not sign MinskII.

On the contrary, I read that it was signed by LD Kuchma, Second President of Ukraine.

Please correct me if I am wrong.

quote

Signatories

The document was signed by:[23]

Swiss diplomat and OSCE representative Heidi Tagliavini

Former president of Ukraine and Ukrainian representative Leonid Kuchma

Russian Ambassador to Ukraine and Russian representative Mikhail Zurabov

Separatist's leaders Alexander Zakharchenko and Igor Plotnitsky

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minsk_II#Signatories

quote

All-night negotiations on Wednesday ended with the signing of the Declaration of Minsk in support of the "Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements" by Angela Merkel of Germany, Francois Hollande of France, Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine and Vladimir Putin of Russia and release of the full agreement. The talks, according to some

reports, almost collapsed near the end as Ukraine and rebel leaders balked at signing.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/paulroderickgregory/2015/02/13/putin-comes-out-on-top-in-new-minsk-agreement/#21ffe18f4ede>

Posted by: mauisurfer | Jul 12 2018 2:48 utc | [63](#)

From Chapter 1 of The Politics 1865-1896 by Matthew Josephson (published in 1938):

"The prosecution of the war against rebellion had been associated with a protective tariff levied against a hated England, which profited and sought to profit further from our disaster. With the close of the war, a cry arose from the Northeastern region that high tariffs were needed to pay the war debt, and an outburst of high Protectionism followed in 1866."

Posted by: [Guerrero](#) | Jul 12 2018 3:34 utc | [64](#)

20

Trump is factually correct; but it doesn't make him right.

Posted by: V | Jul 12 2018 3:44 utc | [65](#)

Everything the US does works to undermine its old power in the new world. We see this continually. Trump is an accelerator. But whether any of this is intentional and actually desired by a part of US vested interests, is still an open question.

Nevertheless, as we watch, we see every action of the US working to cement the bonds of its opposition in the rest of the world. From the Escobar article linked by karlofi above, we see the pressure on the Middle East to reject the US and turn for safety to the Eurasian institutions of commerce, finance and national security. The same thing is happening to Europe.

Some days I think that Trump was a brilliantly inspired choice of some deep state players to further their agenda of fragmenting the old arrangements to allow new alignments to come into place - to modernize the elite control of the world. But most days I just don't know. What can one say about a force this magisterial and still this enigmatic?

I was talking with a friend today about Trump. She said she sees his approach as quite typical of US business style. You come out with the big stick, knowing it will get chopped in half by the time you get to agreement. But at least you end up with half a stick. Gotta start big. You don't ask, you don't get.

This style worked perfectly with North Korea, which was a standout among the nations of the world, in my opinion, for understanding superbly well how Trump played the game, and played it right back. The result was a meeting of equals, where something could actually get done. But NK worked hard to develop the bargaining chip to put on the table too. Words without substance don't work.

I'm not seeing many other countries responding with this same kind of exaggerated bravado - it is a very US way of doing business. Most countries are simply working to go around the US. Europe seems to be doing the same thing, simply rejecting and turning away. But the European countries could certainly create bargaining chips if they wanted to play the Trump game of negotiation. I truly suspect his style is something they're still getting to grips with. Perhaps they should call Kim for pointers.

I think ultimately we are seeing two things at work, and in tandem: the natural style of Trump, and the very real and unstoppable current of history. Whether either force is aware of the other, I can't say. Like the success or failure of the French Revolution, it's too soon to tell.

Posted by: Grieved | Jul 12 2018 3:51 utc | [66](#)

@65 Good summary. I think the Europeans simply don't know what to make of him. The look on Stoltenberg's face said it all. They just don't know how to respond to someone so direct. Maybe Putin is the only one who can talk his language....but not in public.

Posted by: dh | Jul 12 2018 3:56 utc | [67](#)

Daniel--

China's taking a page from Mahan regarding sea power. NATO graphs: I mentioned Obama ordered an increase in spending and the chart shows the compliance. The ups and downs correlate well with wars and major recessions.

Posted by: karlof1 | Jul 12 2018 3:57 utc | [68](#)

@53 daniel... what you said earlier - i think much the same way... i would be curious to know more of how patrick armstrong sees all that, but i think it is much the same as us too.. those links @53 reflect how messed up ukraine is at present.. having a failed state on your doorstep doesn't sound like fun and that works both ways for europe and russia.. i guess that was the usa (and israel's?) plan... screw up countries so they don't function properly, so you

have to spend a lot of imf money to fix them.. works for wall st, lol..

Posted by: james | Jul 12 2018 4:07 utc | [69](#)

@38 "The answer to all 3 questions is: we're out of here, defend yourselves"

Patrick, I'm confused: they are meant to defend themselves against whom, exactly?

The equation as it stands now is this:
A muscle-bound USA + an anaemic Europe
"detering" a Russian Federation that has no intention of invading.

Remove the muscle-bound Americans from the equation and this is what remains:
An anaemic Europe "detering" a Russian Federation that has no intention of invading.

Since Russia is no threat either way then there is no need - none whatsoever - for the Europeans to increase their military expenditure to "defend themselves" against a non-existent Russian threat.

Indeed, the only reason the Europeans would feel that they might have to prepare to "defend themselves" would be because that muscle-bound US military is now outside the tent pissing in, not inside the tent pissing out.

Posted by: Yeah, Right | Jul 12 2018 4:07 utc | [70](#)

@68 Maybe they thought Ukraine would join the EU at some point but Crimea was the prize. The plan was to turn Crimea into a NATO base. Putin spoiled everything.

Posted by: dh | Jul 12 2018 4:17 utc | [71](#)

mauisurfer @62

Wikipedia also says (as part Leonid Kuchma's bio):

*Since July 2014, Kuchma has been Ukraine's representative at the **semi-official peace talks** regarding the ongoing War in Donbass.*

Why are they "semi-official"? Because Ukraine would not talk to the rebels directly. They believe that the rebels are sponsored by Russia so the dispute is between Russia and Ukraine. They would not talk to the rebels as that might convey legitimacy to the rebels. That's why the Trilateral Contact Group was set up. The signers of Minsk II (Russia,

Germany, France, Kuchma/Ukraine) are merely "guarantors" of an agreement between Ukraine and the Donbas rebels - neither of which has actually signed.

Kuchma "represents" Ukraine but can't bind Ukraine. Although Poroschenko attended some of the talks, he never signed the agreement.

Minsk and Minsk II have reduced conflict somewhat but Ukraine has dragged its feet every step of the way. For example: they were slow to pull back heavy artillery as called for under the accord, then they wouldn't pass laws that were necessary for other provisions of the accord.

Recently, [Ukraine has passed a law that essentially negates Minsk/Minsk II and treats the rebels as terrorists](#) (as Ukraine has always claimed them to be).

The Minsk accords outlined a detailed procedure through which Donetsk and Luhansk would receive "special status," hold internationally-recognized elections, and then negotiate their reintegration into Ukraine directly with Kiev, including basic constitutional reforms to federalize the country. No substantive steps have ever been undertaken by either side to implement these terms, and the new "Donbass Integration Law" now makes clear that Kiev expects the country to be re-united on its terms alone, though probably not anytime soon.

Ukrainian lawmakers, who overwhelmingly passed the bill on Jan. 19, argue that it simply normalizes a situation that has long existed but was clouded by misleading jargon and official fealty to the non-functioning Minsk accords.

Poroschenko signed the bill into law in February 2018.

Posted by: [Jackrabbit](#) | Jul 12 2018 4:19 utc | [72](#)

@dh "Maybe Putin is the only one who can talk his language"

Going by what Putin said of Trump after their 2 1/2 hour meeting in Vietnam, it seems more likely Trump talks in Putin's language when meeting actual leaders. Same would go for his meeting with KJU, and I would guess Xi.

Posted by: Peter AU 1 | Jul 12 2018 4:22 utc | [73](#)

Within the US west, there would be no one Trump

could meet as a leader and equal. They are all hired help.

Posted by: Peter AU 1 | Jul 12 2018 4:25 utc | [74](#)

@ Grieved with his observations

Since whenever, America has been the proxy front for the current instantiation of empire with the core of control being ongoing private finance with global tools like BIS, IMF, World Bank, etc. Since WWII and even before the goal of empire is to have all of the world under its control. Since the engine of empire is a supra-national matrix of private finance control, the enemy becomes any nations who do not want to be impregnated with the Western model of private Central Bank, an oligarchy, inheritance, private property, etc.

The empire model of growth through wars and boom/bust expansion has reached its "logical" limits and the existential question has become, blow everything all up or agree to a multipolar world. I think that the elite hope Trump's bluster will make it so they do not have to answer that existential question.....yet

The EU has always been a bastard child with little chance of growing up because there was no finance core agreements to manage the national variations within. I am surprised it has lasted as long as it has given the historical tension between the nations. The US has similar social tensions but our structure has homogenized the economy enough that we haven't imploded...yet

The key to this process which I believe is being managed by the elite is at what point are the big decisions made and by whom. Given the accelerated nature of the managed deconstruction, I suspect the elite believe they will retain their mystique of power long enough to not lose grip on private finance running the Western world. The EU countries will have to come to terms with their oligarchs and determine what path forward works for all of eurasia. I don't see the current leadership of any EU countries as having the public's best interest in mind or action.

Are we seeing Western plutocracy fail of its own "weight"? Perhaps so.....nice

Posted by: [psychohistorian](#) | Jul 12 2018 4:52 utc | [75](#)

If Trump's fake argument gambit was intended to inspire people inside and outside the EU to think outside the box then it seems to have worked.

Posted by: Hoarsewhisperer | Jul 12 2018 5:03 utc | [76](#)

I LUV how Trump stomped on all those preening European elite scumbags. He's my hero for pooping all over their little pride parade. Tell em like it is Donald they call you stupid and all those other useless names. Your stinking GENIUS. MORE and an ENCORE!!!!

Posted by: Fernando Arauxo | Jul 12 2018 5:05 utc | [77](#)

@39 Patrick

Agree with Patrick. It is surprising to still see so much animosity towards a president who has done more to combat the absurdity of NATO and globalism than I can remember any other President doing.

The ball is in the EU elites court, now. Put up or shut up and I believe it makes no difference to Trump. We are about to find out who is REALLY to blame for marching lockstep with the current of hypercentralization (globalism): the Trump admin or the EU elitez.

Sorry for the break in the Trump-bashing. Let's all get back to that good ol' America-hatin' catharsis.

Posted by: NemesisCalling | Jul 12 2018 5:25 utc | [78](#)

So nothing is really new, sigh!
Since the start of the 70ties I have heard exactly the same tune from the US and the blathering idiot in charge now has not changed the tune; ever since have I had to listen to this "The Russians are coming" tune, with the rhetoric getting ever more shrill and false, 1989 brought a brief and marvelous, albeit very short pause to this tune, and for a few years the US Kleptocracy was happy plundering the former USSR. When Russia resisted the plunder i. e. Putin was elected, the tune started over again from where it was paused, disregarding the fact that Russia does not in any way compare to the former USSR.

N, noooe , it is still "The Russians are coming" playing, but with a new beat, pepped up, but same substance. But we are not listening anymore, the disgraceful actions and evil behavior of The United States of Mordor, have come into the open (The internet, appreciate it, we will not for long have it in its present form), even the most daft of us quietly starts wondering.

Well I am not daft, and the questioning ended 4

decades ago, The US must be resisted. Our politicians here on the continent must wake up and reject US imperialism and militarism, and devise our own defenses if deemed necessary, many European nations are not at the living standards we enjoy in Scandinavia, surely the money were better spent on that.

If the Poles and Baltic's want American troops on their soil, withdraw EU spending, we do not need their insane sabre rattling. (Especially the Poles are vile, they forget that when Hitler invaded, they had been a fascist dictatorship for years).

Posted by: Den Lille Abe | Jul 12 2018 5:55 utc | [79](#)

Den Lille Abe # 79

N, noooe , it is still "The Russians are coming" playing, but with a new beat, pepped up, but same substance.

Two things; a total lack of imagination combined with a failure to apply intelligence; the I.Q. kind.

Posted by: V | Jul 12 2018 6:36 utc | [80](#)

Nemesisiscalling@78

What exactly has Trump done to combat the absurdity of globalization and NATO besides talk?

While he stopped TPP and TIPP he is negotiating similar agreements bilaterally.

Also his Personal Empire benefits from globalization.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/06/28/five-ways-donald-trump-benefits-from-the-globalization-he-says-he-hates/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.daf25165315b

US only contributes 1% of their defense budget to NATO's direct costs so pulling out of NATO would make hardly a dent in the budget except to increase costs to relocate all the personnel and hardware. Those bases are invaluable

His calling for NATO countries to increase defense spending benefits US and Israeli compsnies who make up the military and security industrial complex and wont do squat to lower the defense budget

Posted by: Pft | Jul 12 2018 6:54 utc | [81](#)

Born and raised in Southern California, been here 70 years...The US has been manipulating NATO

ever since it was formed. Most NATO officials are vetted by the US.

Trump is an idiot, like the bulk of US politicians.

@kgw

"You are agreeing with an idiot, no matter what...Europe has nothing to worry about with regards to Russia. Unless they threaten Russia."

Well shit or get off the pot why don't you - "idiot" Trump is calling your bluff - stop freeloading off a (by your assessment) non-existent threat, or he'll stop it for you. Can't have it both ways. The US can't keep funding your crappy little joke of a disintegrating "European Union" for ever. Sooner or later you'll have to put on big-boy pants.

Methinks this guy has a good take on this.

"Trump, like the innocent child in the tale of the naked emperor, has stated the obvious truth that the elite and the experts have refused steadfastly for years to publicly acknowledge. Way to go Trump. You hit a home run."

http://turcopolier.typepad.com/sic_semper_tyrannis/2018/07/nato-a-naked-emperor-by-publius-tacitus.html/

Posted by: kgw | Jul 12 2018 7:05 utc | [82](#)

You're assuming Europe's leaders aren't bought and paid for by Wall Bank Street Banksters. The system is rigged. I wouldn't doubt that they go into lapdog mode and bow to blowhard Trump.

Posted by: rcentros | Jul 12 2018 8:42 utc | [83](#)

83 Trump has just officially blown up NATO.

This was worked out before - there will be a "[European Defense Union](#)" including Britain.

Mrs Merkel emphasised that the German armed forces would remain commanded by parliament and not the government, and "would not take part in every mission".

This is theater.

Posted by: somebody | Jul 12 2018 9:58 utc | [84](#)

add to 84

This here is a [clear description of the issues involved](#).

Of course, in the rivalry between the US and Russia, Europe's interest is best served playing the two off

each other united.

It is no surprise both - the US and Russia - have a strategic interest to split Europe.

You don't believe Russia doing this, too? This [here is from Greece](#). No, their government is not anti-Russian.

Macedonia is expecting an invitation at the NATO summit in Brussels this week to join following its landmark deal with Greece whereby it will change its name to the Republic of North Macedonia. Moscow strongly opposes NATO expansion.

...

The Greek diplomatic source told Reuters Athens would expel two diplomats and bar two other Russians from entering the country due to concerns that they were involved in rallies in Greece against the deal with Macedonia and that they had attempted to offer money to Greek state officials.

Becoming a "neutral" military force would end this type of nonsense.

Trump acting like mafia is another strong incentive.

Posted by: somebody | Jul 12 2018 10:18 utc | [85](#)

@AH #37:

"The U.S. military is the biggest socialist organization of the world. It is egalitarian and its citizens, i.e. the soldiers, are extremely well cared for. It runs its own healthcare system through the Veterans Health Administration."

A wonderful conclusion b.

Does anyone know of any in-depth economic analysis of the U.S. military as a state welfare system for its members, as well as the impact of aggregate military spending on the general purchasing power of citizens within the society at large?

And US military spending is also an enormous job-creation and wealth-redistribution program in the form of defense contractors spread all over the nation, where they are especially vital for areas with weak employment.

The US winds up with a lot of projects it does not need because Congresspeople are not about to kill a program that employs thousands in their districts.

Posted by: ralphieboy | Jul 12 2018 10:20 utc | [86](#)

Why should Germany spend 4% on its military?
Didnt see that coming from this blog.
Are germany facing an enemy? If not, its a waste of more money. All this useless money could be spend to actually strenghten the welfare state. Something that actually matters and are much needed.

So which enemy is Germany facing? Either Trump is right that Russia is a threat to Germany or hes not. What is it?

Posted by: Zanon | Jul 12 2018 10:43 utc | [87](#)

#87
So which enemy is Germany facing?

The U.S., of course...

Posted by: V | Jul 12 2018 10:54 utc | [88](#)

This is absurd,
Nato leader kick out EU leader during talks with Trump...

<https://www.rt.com/usa/432844-trump-nato-leave-congress/>

Posted by: Zanon | Jul 12 2018 11:18 utc | [89](#)

Alan Heffez says:

Does anyone know of any in-depth economic analysis of the U.S. military as a state welfare system for its members, as well as the impact of aggregate military spending on the general purchasing power of citizens within the society at large

no, but if you find one i sure hope it takes into account the [21 trillion](#) dollars that's unaccounted for down at the pentagon. apparently they are at this very moment auditing themselves...

and i'm just waiting for the comic relief.

Posted by: john | Jul 12 2018 11:19 utc | [90](#)

Posted by: ralphieboy | Jul 12, 2018 6:20:14 AM | [86](#)

Therefore Trump needs NATO more than Europe needs NATO. How else defend the defense spending?

[Senate votes to support NATO ahead of Trump summit](#)

The nonbinding motion, which came as the Senate voted to reconcile its version of the annual defense policy bill with that of the House, expresses the Senate's support for NATO and calls on negotiators to reaffirm the U.S. commitment to it.

The 97-2 vote in the Senate comes as Trump heads to Brussels.

That is bi-partisanship.

Posted by: somebody | Jul 12 2018 11:31 utc | [91](#)

Lol watching Trump asking questions, pretty only fanatical eastern-european journalists pretty much urging war with Russia,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbgSnz6ivdY>

Posted by: Zanon | Jul 12 2018 11:34 utc | [92](#)

The last time they debated a missing 21 million defence money at the pentagon, they got a cruise missile through the door! Figure that out! 911

Posted by: Mark2 | Jul 12 2018 11:34 utc | [93](#)

Or was that trillion

Posted by: Mark2 | Jul 12 2018 11:37 utc | [94](#)

[It looks like Germany caved on the Iran deal](#)

Helaba is a state bank.

Posted by: somebody | Jul 12 2018 12:12 utc | [95](#)

@21 gda

Trump's "reasoning" makes sense in an infantile sort of way, but there's more too it than meets the eye, is there not?

Trump doesn't just want to Europe to "pay their fair share" for NATO, which we all know is code for buying more US mil.gear but also to buy their LNG from US too. It's like NATO is some sort of grotesque, evil franchise where the franchisees can only buy goods/services from that single source, even though it's crap & inordinately expensive, and even if you can get it cheaper elsewhere, i.e Russia.

I would love to see those fence-sitting NATO countries tell the US "sure, we'll increase our mil.spending, but after what we saw in Syria, we'll be buying our gear from Russia" (more bang for the buck too!) - that would be game, set & match right

there!

Posted by: xLemming | Jul 12 2018 12:27 utc | [96](#)

I think you are wrong, Bernard. It will sell well in Europe too. To what extend were the themes of the Brexit campaign based on Germany as the slave master of Europe, to exaggerate slightly? It will also sell well in the US.

Posted by: LeaNder | Jul 12 2018 12:33 utc | [97](#)

@81 pft

Wow! You don't feel that Trump has, by his mere existence and by winning the presidency, been given a platform of which to decry the myriad injustices of globalization and to utter things unspeakable by any Prez in the last fifty years?

I don't think you've been paying attention. The proof is in the pudding but what will be the benefit of raising the spectre of doubt over bad deals like NATO, the current iteration of world trade, and for animosity towards Russia? Evidently, it ain't worth shit to predictable TDS-sufferers that hang around here.

Posted by: NemesisCalling | Jul 12 2018 12:40 utc | [98](#)

So much for those who projected that Trump's demands for an increase in the defense spending of other members and his scolding of Germany would lead to a weaker Nato!

Nato members just caved to Trump and are increasing their spending and Trump is touting that Nato is stronger and everyone's doing the kumbaya.

When I say that Trump is establishment on steroids; it's an understatement. Trump is doing the kissy, kissy with Putin because the plan is to pull Russia away from collaborating with China. Zionist oligarchs are in league with Trump and Russia will eventually be under their complete control.

@98 You just don't get it. Trump is fascist establishment.

Trump is separating kids from their mothers. Who does that??? He's a sick sadist.

Posted by: Circe | Jul 12 2018 13:01 utc | [99](#)

Posted by: xLemming | Jul 12, 2018 8:27:20 AM | [96](#)

Europe has an arms industry of their own. I doubt European countries invest their money into US stuff - they buy their own. Most of the money does not go into weapons anyway, but personel and administration. Germany contributes to the maintenance and infrastructure of US bases, but those bases are business, too.

This is not Saudi Arabia buying protection.

The real news is that Trump has [started a trade war](#) negotiating by tantrum.

Posted by: somebody | Jul 12 2018 13:14 utc | [100](#)

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