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## Trump Tells Germany: 'Take Control!'

The pressure building up against Germany will force it to aggressively pursue its own interests for the first time since World War II.

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Is America now Germany's enemy? With the election of Donald Trump, the German government and news media think so.

Since the end of World War II, Germany has sat in America's shadow. The nation hasn't aggressively pushed its own interests—it hasn't had to. America has taken care of them.

That time is over. President Trump is ushering in the greatest change in the world order since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

During the Cold War, German and American interests were the same. If Russia had overrun Western Europe, the Soviet threat to the United States would have exploded—so America defended Germany, to the point of reuniting the very country it had helped to divide after the war. And since the Cold War, America and Germany have faced a common threat in radical Islam.

America has taken care of Germany's economic interests too. Both countries wanted free and stable global trade, with open oceans and trade routes.

Meanwhile Germany had good reason to keep its head down. The destruction left by the Nazis remains in living memory. If Berlin threw its weight around, other nations would quickly oppose it.

German policy, then, has been simple: America takes care of Germany's general interests, while Berlin focuses on building economic, not political, power.

There were disagreements, of course. At times, Germany pushed its own agenda. The Balkans are a good example: Germany recognized Croatia's independence from Yugoslavia against major opposition. But once America came around, Berlin was happy to let Washington do the hard work.

Now, however, times are different. In an increasingly dangerous and chaotic world, Germany has to stand aggressively for its interests—for the first time since World War II.

The threat comes not from a few offhand comments by the new president, but his entire worldview. Mr. Trump promises a revolutionary foreign policy. Rather than pursuing America's long-term interests, he aims to maximize short-term profits. He's about the balance sheet, not the balance of powers.

This has triggered an almost frantic response in Germany. "The inauguration of Donald Trump heralds the arrival of a new world order," wrote Spiegel Online. "Trump is the end of the world as we know it."

"Can Merkel's Europe now hold together?" this article asked. "Can she become a *worthy adversary* to Trump in the approaching conflicts over trade regulations, international agreements, and the liberal legal and economic order that has been so important to the United States for the last six decades?" (January 20; emphasis added throughout). One of the

most popular and influential magazines in Europe sees America as the enemy—and wonders if their leader is aggressive enough.

In an interview in 1990, Mr. Trump singled out Germany and Japan as America's top two enemies—because, he said, those two “are making billions screwing us.”

“Merkel's staff is convinced that his views haven't changed,” wrote Spiegel Online (op cit). Germany's leaders genuinely think America is out to get them.

## Germany Under Attack

What could possibly make Germany so desperate? On the surface, the nation is doing great. The economy grew faster than forecast in 2016. Rather than borrowing, the government is actually paying off its debt. The nation is rapidly growing in power.

Yet Germany is vulnerable. Its political order is fragmenting. The upstart Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and the Left Party (the former Communists of East Germany) are growing in popularity, threatening to destabilize the country's entire political system. Both are generally considered too extreme for mainstream parties to work with. Terrorism and immigration—major threats in their own right—are only pushing more voters toward these parties.

Less appreciated is Germany's economic peril. Germany is the most export-dependent of all big economies. Exports account for almost half its economic output, compared to only one fifth for America. A decline in exports would have major, immediate consequences.

Here Mr. Trump's outlook directly threatens Germany. He believes free trade means other nations *stake advantage of America*. He wants to completely reevaluate global trade policy. No nation has more to lose from this reevaluation than Germany.

Given Germany's current political trouble, economic turmoil would spark a political crisis unprecedented in its postwar history. If the AfD and Communists are currently polling around 10 to 15 percent each, how high would their popularity soar after a crash? They could win a *majority* of votes between them—which would mean that no coalition government would be possible without one of these groups. The dangers posed by an export crisis in Germany are far greater than a slight increase in unemployment: It could destroy Germany's political system.

Yet this is exactly the kind of economic turmoil Donald Trump threatens to ignite.

## ‘Our Prosperity Is at Risk’

In his interview with *Bild* and the *Times*, published January 15, Mr. Trump threatened BMW with tariffs of 35 percent. America is the top destination for German exports. If Germany's economy is to grow, it must increase exports. With most of Germany's export markets in trouble, America is one of the few locations with potential for growth. Anything threatening to *slow that increase* is a danger to Germany. But Mr. Trump wants to go much further and drastically *cut* German sales to America.

By toying with tariffs, Mr. Trump is threatening to destroy Germany's economy.

Germany worries that Mr. Trump could use the 1974 Trade Act to impose tariffs of up to 15 percent on German exports for 150 days—without needing to consult Congress.

Much in President Trump's analysis is right. Germany's export miracle is largely because of the euro. The euro is a de facto subsidy for German goods. Weak economies in southern Europe keep the euro weak—and cheap. Cheaper euros mean cheaper German goods, which means more exports from Germany. If Germany were not part of the euro, its BMWs would be more expensive. Mr. Trump is perfectly justified in taxing them.

Nevertheless, a core German interest is threatened. Germany must persuade America not to impose tariffs—find a way to make free trade with Germany in Mr. Trump's short-term interest. In other words, Germany needs power and leverage—a return to power politics and an aggressive pursuit of self-interest.

“Our prosperity is at risk more than at any other time in the past 60 years,” warned Markus Kerber, director general of the Federation of German Industries. If Mr. Trump follows through with his rhetoric on free trade, “the German prosperity model would fail.”

But the threat President Trump poses to Germany's economy goes beyond just direct trade.

## Trump Vs. the EU

Germany's reliance on exports makes European unity a core interest. Seven of Germany's top 10 destinations for exports are in the European Union. If the EU unravels or the euro falls apart, it means economic depression for Germany.

Unfortunately for Berlin, President Trump wants exactly that. The EU, he said in his January 15 interview, is “basically a vehicle for Germany.” He praised Britain’s decision to quit, adding, “I believe others will leave.”

Spiegel Online wrote, “Officials in Brussels are concerned that one of Trump’s foreign-policy goals may be that of *dividing the EU*—in areas like the environment and energy policy, for example, but particularly in its relationship with Russia” (op cit).

For 60 years, Americans have been cheering for European unification. Now they have a president who is ideologically opposed to it.

Mr. Trump’s fondness for Britain may be designed to hurt the EU. British Prime Minister Theresa May was the first world leader to visit President Trump at the White House. His administration is promising lucrative trade deals to post-Brexit Britain, a marked change from his predecessor, who said that if Britain left the EU, he would put it at “the back of the queue.”

Such deals between Britain and America would undermine Europe’s position in any Brexit negotiation. Britain would enter talks with the world’s most powerful economy on its side.

More importantly, any such trade deals would effectively represent an invitation from President Trump to any other nation thinking of following Britain. *Quitting Europe is not a leap in the dark*, he would be saying. *Abandon Europe and we’ll welcome you with open arms and great deals*. No wonder officials in Brussels are worried.

Mr. Trump’s isolationism poses an additional, though less direct, threat to European unity. For years, American leadership had kept the EU from facing the kind of strain that now threatens to tear the Continent apart. Though this leadership couldn’t protect Europe from economic problems like the euro crisis, Europe didn’t have to ask questions like *what do we do about Russia? How do we confront terrorism?* The questions were there, but the answers didn’t matter much; America set the direction for the West, and Europe merely decided whether to hop on board or not. America did all the hard work, persuading or cajoling nations to follow the American lead.

Even before Mr. Trump’s election, Europe’s answers were starting to matter. But how do you come up with a common answer for a bloc with such a disparate range of views? At one end, you have Estonia, where all young men are conscripted into the armed forces and one in 20 of its working-age adults serves in the military or volunteer for its national guard. Fear of Russia has led to the nation approaching the Israeli model in terms of the level of its citizens’ participation in the military. Yet in the same bloc you have nations like Austria and Italy that are chaffing against sanctions on Russia.

Once, America provided the leadership necessary to keep such a group on the same page. Now someone must replace that leadership. Someone must fight back against Mr. Trump’s attempts to break up the EU. Because if nobody does, the euro, the EU and Germany’s prosperity will fall apart.

## Pressure From Russia

Meanwhile, Germany could also face peril from Russia. Mr. Trump promises a revolution in relations with Moscow. Almost every U.S. president since the 1990s has started out promising closer ties with Russia, only to be disillusioned. But this time, Russia seems interested in playing along, at least for a time. Also, Mr. Trump’s unique rejection of America’s long-term interests could lead him to tolerate a Russian expansion that all former U.S. presidents opposed.

Now Europe must confront this threat—alone.

For Germany, the situation could get worse. Jochen Bittner, an editor at the German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*, wrote in the *New York Times* that the election of Mr. Trump leaves Russian President Vladimir Putin without a “boogeyman.” If the U.S. president is no longer the source of all evil in the world, then who else could Putin blame and attack? “[G]uess who qualifies best as a new, well, boogeywoman?” Bittner asked. “Angela Merkel” (January 1).

“The German chancellor is a perfect target,” he continued. “Germany is holding general elections next autumn, and with politicians sympathetic to Moscow on the rise, she may well be running for her fourth term as the sole European leader willing to stand up to a newly assertive Russia.”

During Obama’s administration, Merkel worked hard to keep Europe united in its sanctions on Russia. If Trump reverses those sanctions and Germany doesn’t, Merkel would be left as the most prominent Russian opponent in the world—and subject to the full force of Putin’s ire and geopolitical genius. That’s not something she is used to.

A Russia with American support would be powerful. “If Trump sticks with his positions, it is the chancellor’s view that Europe could be facing a great threat,” wrote Spiegel Online (op cit). Elmar Brok, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the EU Parliament, warned that Putin might use the opportunity to grab one of the Baltic states: “Trump’s messages about nato could lead to a situation in which Putin says to himself, ‘Let’s give it a shot!’”

Paul D. Millar, assistant professor of international security studies at the National Defense University, wrote in *Foreign Policy*, “Putin now has the most favorable international environment since the end of the Cold War to continue Russian expansion” (November 16).

Russia could take advantage of Trump’s favor to try to divide and rule Europe—while Trump himself is doing the same

thing.

Under all this strain, Germany would have to assert itself aggressively against both powers at once—and hold Europe together at the same time.

## ‘Brutal Pursuit of Self-Interest’

Thinkers around the world see this change in Europe coming. “Brexit, a shock all around, will combine with a Trump presidency to force the EU to put away childish things, and ask hard questions of itself,” wrote John Lloyd in an article published by Reuters. “Infancy may be ending: always a hard transition” (January 13).

Yes, that transition will be hard, but over the next few months *the world is going to see Germany and Europe grow up*.

So Germany faces mounting pressure from all sides and can no longer rely on the United States—and even sees America as an enemy. The result? The nation must stand up for itself. If America follows a narrowly defined “America first” policy, then Germany has no choice but to respond with a “Germany first” policy.

Germany has not had to do this for 70 years. As George Friedman writes in his book *Flashpoints*, after World War II, Germany and Japan “tried to become economic giants without becoming militarily powerful. Both exercise less international power than they could.”

“German intentions are to have an economic policy without political, and certainly without military, consequences,” he writes. “They intend to be the dominant power in Europe without imposing their will on anyone. Their intention is to exercise only one element of national power, the economic, and to exercise that without the brutal pursuit of self-interest. ... This is an understandable impulse. It is not clear that it is practical.”

There have certainly been leaders who wanted a more forceful Germany. But Friedman gives a good description of the worldview of chancellors such as Angela Merkel.

As Friedman notes, Germany is being forced into a more “brutal pursuit of self-interest” by the euro crisis. It has to impose its will on southern Europe, or it will face major political and economic crises. Now, the paradigm shift in America’s worldview adds another great pressure.

For the last 70 years, Europe has lived in a bubble, with the pressures of global politics held off by the United States. With America’s retreat, reality is setting in—a reality where, as one of the first thinkers on international relations, Thucydides, put it, “the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.”

Germany will be forced to become strong in a host of ways.

It must become strong in its response to Russia. It must muster the strength to rally Europe around it. It will have to cajole, beg or force France and Italy to accept sanction extensions, or do the same to the Baltic countries to keep them in line with a rapprochement.

The Middle East can no longer be left to America—Europe sees this already. Germany must muscle up its foreign policy, or migrant floods and terrorist attacks will ravage its political system.

Germany must preserve and strengthen its international trade. This may mean wrestling for leverage with America, meeting strength with strength in order to prevent Mr. Trump’s tariffs. Again this will probably mean an aggressive pursuit of its own interest within Europe. It will mean holding at least a core of nations together while America works to pull them apart.

*Trumpet* columnist Brad Macdonald wrote after the terrorist attacks in Germany last December: “Berliners, the German people and even Europeans in general will increasingly grapple with a choice between who they want to be and who they need to be. They might want to be progressive, open-minded and tolerant, but the message from Berlin and all the other attacks is that they need to be more cynical, more unforgiving and more confrontational. This, you can be sure, is a trend that will affect us all.”

Germans and Europeans face exactly the same choice in foreign policy. The luxury they have enjoyed for decades of being able to forgo the brutal pursuit of self-interest because America took care of that is ending. Now, if they do not aggressively pursue their own interests in the next few years, they will face calamity. They will not let that happen. We will soon see a new Germany, one that is willing to push other nations around.

## Returning to Its History

Europe is peaceful now. History shows this is abnormal. This peace has existed only because America lifted the immediate need for European nations to be strong and stand up for themselves. With that gone, Europe will return to its historical character.

President Trump is pushing an isolationist policy—one that is opposed to the EU, but, outside of trade, not directly anti-German. He probably does not realize the pressure he is placing on Germany. Germans may believe Mr. Trump is an

enemy, but there is little evidence that he himself thinks so. He opposes Germany in important ways, but in other areas, he is all for it. More German military spending? *Great!* More German troops in the Middle East? *Wonderful!* An EU army? *About time you defended yourselves!*

America is forcing Germany to return to power politics, at the same time that it steps back from the world. This sets the stage perfectly for Germany to reemerge as a major power.

This is exactly what the *Trumpet* has forecast for years.

These forecasts are rapidly becoming reality. In January 1963, Herbert W. Armstrong, editor in chief of the *Plain Truth*, the *Trumpet*'s predecessor, wrote, "A united Europe—the astounding resurrection of the 'Holy Roman Empire'—a giant new world power equal to Russia or the United States—perhaps even stronger. It will then hold the *balance of power* between East and West."

It's easy to see how President Trump's foreign policy will lead to the rise of this new power in Europe—a power that, as Mr. Armstrong prophesied, does not merely sit in America's shadow, but maintains its own power base, grows its own resources, and asserts its own foreign policy.

But the rise of this new European power really is "the arrival of a new world order" as Spiegel Online put it. It is a world that few alive today have ever seen—one with an assertive power in Europe, a power that is ready to challenge both America and Russia. ■



**"Great Again"**

Amerika zal weer groots worden, maar niet op de manier zoals miljoenen Amerikanen denken.

DOOR GERALD PLURKY

**I**n het najaar voor het eerst op de televisie mijn nieuwe boekje "Great Again" aanbevelen. Dit boek werd uitgegeven in de zomer van 2016. De nieuwsgierige president Donald Trump publiceerde ongeveer op hetzelfde moment een boek met dezelfde titel! Toen mijn nieuwe boekje naar de drukker ging, was ik niet over het boek van Mr. Trump. Oorspronkelijk was de titel "Crippled America" (Kreupele Amerika). Hij veranderde de naam naar "Great Again" (Sterke Groots). In dit scenario speelt hij samen? Ik denk het niet...

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## Trompet Nieuwsbrief

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