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Serious and Existential: The Clinton and Trump Challenges to Transatlantic Relations

by Jeremy Shapiro

ABSTRACT

Transatlantic relations have long been predictable. Stability has served the interests of the transatlantic partners well. For the US, the European allies individually, and through the forums of NATO and the EU, have remained the partners of first choice. For Europe, the alliance has served to keep the Americans involved in European issues. But now, for the first time in generations, the very concept of "alliance" is being called into question by a major US presidential candidate. Without a radical reshaping of the burdens and purposes of the alliance, the Republican nominee, Donald Trump, claims that under his presidency America will simply walk away from Europe. The Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton, presents a much less fundamental challenge, but her approach to Russia, as well as the growing American demand for Europeans to take greater responsibility for their own security, will nevertheless pose a serious challenge to European leaders.

US presidential elections | US foreign policy | Transatlantic relations

keywords

Serious and Existential: The Clinton and Trump Challenges to Transatlantic Relations

by Jeremy Shapiro*

Introduction

Transatlantic relations have long been predictable, even boring. Their dysfunctions and disputes have become ritualized and repetitive. Indeed, while pundits have failed dramatically in recent years to predict the future of, say Arab governance or the Chinese economy, we have always known with great certainty that the transatlantic partners would continue to fight about burden-sharing across the Atlantic, continue to struggle with NATO-EU relations, and above all continue to wonder aloud if the alliance needed a new purpose for some new geopolitical reality. The relationship was, in short, a rock of stability in an otherwise ever-changing world.

This type of repetitive, ritualized disputes has proven a challenge for analysts or journalists looking for new or exciting material. But it has served the interests of the transatlantic partners fairly well. In geopolitics, repetitive, boring disputes at summit meetings are in fact an amazing and a historically rare achievement. For the constant complaints on both sides of the Atlantic, the alliance has functioned fairly well in recent years.

For the United States, the European allies individually, and through the forums of NATO and the EU, have remained the partners of first choice. Various European allies are America's key partners in every major foreign policy endeavour, particularly in military operations. For Europe, the alliance has served to keep the Americans interested and involved in European issues even as the Middle East continues to burn and Asia grows in geopolitical weight and danger.

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For these reasons, the alliance remains popular among policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic. But now, for the first time in generations, the very concept of "alliance" is being called into question by a major US presidential candidate. The Republican nominee, Donald Trump, has been clear that he views the alliance in short-term instrumentalist terms. Without a radical reshaping of the burdens and purposes of the alliance, he claims that under his presidency America will simply walk away from Europe, leaving Europeans to deal with their problems on their own.

The Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton, presents a much less fundamental challenge, but her approach to Russia, as well as the growing American demand for Europeans to take greater responsibility for their own security, will nevertheless pose a serious challenge to European leaders.

What would a Trump or Clinton presidency mean for Europe and how should Europeans respond to the potential and in one case existential challenge that these candidates will each present? This paper examines that question by looking at the nature of the challenge that each of the candidates poses to Europe.

1. Trump's existential challenge

One needs to be wary of predicting what Trump would do as president. He has abhorred specifics throughout the campaign, and on foreign policy, particularly, he has embraced a level of inconsistency that celebrates the idea that his policy pronouncements are beyond the dictates of logic. So with one breath he can declare a profound disinterest in using force abroad,¹ but with the next propose to "bomb the shit" out of ISIS-controlled oil fields in Iraq and Syria,² surround them with a "ring" of American troops, and take the oil.

This lack of consistency has led many to assume that it does not matter what he says on the campaign trail. A forthcoming ECFR survey of European views of Trump shows a widespread belief that either he does not mean it when says, for example, that he may withdraw from NATO, or that the American system of checks and balances will constrain him from implementing his more radical proposals.

This is a dangerously complacent notion. American presidents have long had enormous latitude on foreign policy. In the years following the 9/11 attacks, both Presidents George W. Bush and President Barack Obama have further centralized foreign policy decision-making in the White House.³ The Congress, divided

¹ Josh Rogin, "The Trump Doctrine Revealed", in *Bloomberg View*, 31 January 2016, <http://bv.ms/1StYhi5>.

² Pamela Engel, "Donald Trump: 'I Would Bomb the S--- Out of' ISIS", in *Business Insider UK*, 13 November 2015, <http://uk.businessinsider.com/donald-trump-bomb-isis-2015-11>.

³ Karen DeJoung, "How the Obama White House Runs Foreign Policy", in *The Washington Post*, 4

and inert, has barely even protested and indeed largely avoided taking any responsibility for foreign policy. President Trump would take over a well-honed and independent executive machinery for conducting foreign policy that includes a virtually unlimited capacity and authority to assassinate people in much of the world.⁴

And while Trump often contradicts himself, as Thomas Wright of Brookings has demonstrated, a core consistency has animated his understanding of foreign policy for decades.⁵ There are three pillars of his foreign policy thought from which he has never wavered. First is the idea that America is getting a bad deal from its allies; second, is that the American approach to free trade has impoverished American workers and weakened the United States; and third, that, as a strong leader, he can work effectively with authoritarian strong men to fashion better deals for America than it has achieved by working with its allies.

1.1 America's crappy allies

Trump has consistently claimed that America is getting a raw deal from its allies and the global order in general. In 1987, he paid nearly 100,000 dollars of his own money to take out a full page ad in the *New York Times* to make this point.⁶ America, the letter declared, has been stuck with the bill for global security for generations and gotten precious little in return. It secures Europe and Japan, yet is forced to pay for the privilege. It liberated Kuwait and Iraq, yet gave the oil wealth there to others who stood by and watched American soldiers die in their defence. The 1951 US-Japan security treaty is, in Trump's view, the prime example of this type of raw deal because it obligates the United States to defend Japan, but does not obligate Japan to defend the United States.⁷

This sense of a bad bargain often seems to make Trump angrier at America's allies than at its enemies. America's enemies strike hard deals, but at least you know where you stand. So he can imagine that Russian President Vladimir Putin is someone he "would get along with very well."⁸ But America's allies are like poor relatives, who play on your sympathies to borrow money and then spend all day frolicking in your swimming pool. So when it comes to Angela Merkel, Obama's

August 2015, <http://wpo.st/jYO42>.

⁴ "The Power to Kill", in *The New York Times*, 10 March 2012, <http://nyti.ms/1rz3V8i>.

⁵ Thomas Wright, "Trump's 19th Century Foreign Policy", in *Politico*, 20 January 2016, <http://politico.com/1Jjdhxy>.

⁶ Ilan Ben-Meir, "That Time Trump Spent nearly \$100,000 on an Ad Criticizing U.S. Foreign Policy In 1987", in *BuzzFed News*, 10 July 2015, <https://www.buzzfeed.com/ilanbenmeir/that-time-trump-spent-nearly-100000-on-an-ad-criticizing-us>.

⁷ Jesse Johnson, "Trump Rips U.S. Defense of Japan as One-Sided, Too Expensive", in *The Japan Times*, 6 August 2016, <http://jtim.es/f7ut302YQkt>.

⁸ Eric Bradner, "Donald Trump: I'd 'Get Along Very Well with' Vladimir Putin", in *CNN Politics*, 11 October 2015, <http://cnn.it/1LpksCV>.

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most important interlocutor in Europe, all Trump sees is someone who is “sitting back” and “accepting all the oil and gas that they can get from Russia” while the United States is “leading Ukraine.”⁹

Trump intends to get a better deal from US allies. In Trump’s version of the transatlantic alliance, a better deal means European allies like Germany will have to pay for American protection. If they fail to meet their “obligations,” they will not be defended.¹⁰ More than that, it means that they should not need American protection at all. He will expect Europe to shoulder the burden for dealing with conflicts that are European not American problems, such as the war in Ukraine and the refugee crisis.

1.2 Bad trade deals

The second pillar of Trump’s foreign policy is that free trade deals have hurt America. Trump’s views on trade seem to also have formed during the 1980s and the debates over US-Japanese trade. In this view, American elites, in an effort to woo allies away from the Soviet Union, sacrificed the interests of the American economy and American workers to foreign interests. With the Cold War long over, this habit of mind is no longer necessary, if it ever was, and the United States can now pursue better trade and investment deals that put America’s economic interests ahead of the global ambitions of its cosmopolitan elites. According to Trump, “Americanism, not globalism, will be our credo.”¹¹

He has consequently pledged to overhaul America’s trade policy and pull the United States out of a wide variety of unacceptable trade deals,¹² including NAFTA, the (still unratified) Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and even the World Trade Organization.¹³ The prospect of a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) would die the day he entered office.

It is important to note, however, that Trump does not believe that trade is inherently bad for the American economy. He rather believes that the practice of negotiating multinational trade deals has disadvantaged America’s economy.

No longer will we enter into these massive deals, with many countries, that are thousands of pages long, and which no one from our country

⁹ “U.S. Presidential Hopeful Trump on Ukraine’s Possible NATO Entry: ‘I Wouldn’t Care’”, in *RFE/RL*, 16 August 2015, <http://www.rferl.org/a/27191920.html>.

¹⁰ “A Transcript of Donald Trump’s Meeting with The Washington Post Editorial Board”, in *The Washington Post*, 21 March 2016, <http://wpo.st/t-Q42>.

¹¹ Aaron Blake, “Donald Trump’s Strategy in Three Words: ‘Americanism, not Globalism’”, in *The Washington Post*, 22 July 2016, <http://wpo.st/eAQ42>.

¹² “Full Text: Donald Trump 2016 RNC Draft Speech Transcript”, in *Politico*, 21 July 2016, <http://politi.co/2a3004N>.

¹³ Geoff Dyer, “Donald Trump Threatens to Pull US out of WTO”, in *Financial Times*, 24 July 2016.

even reads or understands [...] Instead, I will make individual deals with individual countries."¹⁴

In so doing, he seems to believe he could leverage the size of the American market and his own negotiating skills to obtain a better deal.

1.3 The advantage of the strong man

As Wright documents, Trump's fascination with strong, authoritarian leaders is also not new to his presidential run. After a 1990 visit to Moscow, Trump criticized Mikhail Gorbachev's lack of a firm hand in responding to challenges to Soviet rule in Eastern Europe. He contrasted that supposed weakness with the Chinese's leadership strong response to the 1989 protests in Tiananmen. "They were vicious they were horrible, but they put it down with strength. That shows you the power of strength."¹⁵

Trump's praise of strength and of authoritarian strong men has repeatedly returned during the 2016 election.¹⁶ He has at moments praised Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un, Syria's murderous President Bashar al-Assad, and the late Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi.¹⁷ And, most prominently Trump has engaged in something of a bromance with Russian President Putin, praising his decisiveness and touting Putin's supposed comment that Trump is brilliant.¹⁸

Trump's admiration for strength in leadership reflects more than just personal preference. It reflects his sense that strong individuals "win" in history. Systems that prevent strong leaders from emerging, either because they diffuse power and decision-making too much or because they do not value the traits of strength create weak leaders and thus weak nations. This is a widely noted disadvantage of democracies – though it fails to account for the fact the strongest and richest countries on earth are democracies.¹⁹

Regardless of its validity, Trump's faith in strong leadership seems to have created in him an inherent bias against the idea that democracies are likely to be strong.

¹⁴ "Full Text: Donald Trump 2016 RNC Draft Speech Transcript", cit.

¹⁵ Glenn Plaskin, "Playboy Interview: Donald Trump (1990)", in *Playboy*, 14 March 2016, <http://www.playboy.com/articles/playboy-interview-donald-trump-1990>.

¹⁶ Jose A. DelReal, "Trump's Favorite Dictators: In Reviled Tyrants, GOP Nominee Finds Traits to Praise", in *The Washington Post*, 6 July 2016, <http://wpo.st/rqQ42>.

¹⁷ Meghan Keneally, "5 Controversial Dictators and Leaders Donald Trump Has Praised", in *ABC News*, 6 July 2016, <http://abcn.ws/29hyI0w>.

¹⁸ Linda Qiu, "Did Vladimir Putin Call Trump 'Brilliant'?", in *PolitiFact*, 8 September 2016, <http://bit.ly/2cbbWdh>.

¹⁹ Archie Brown, *The Myth of the Strong Leader. Political Leadership in the Modern Age*, London, The Bodley Head, 2014.

His view is that they can only be strong if they succeed in putting forth a leader that can cut through the morass of competing interest groups and strongly assert the national interest.

1.4 The Trump challenge to the transatlantic alliance

Trump's core worldview presents a serious challenge to the transatlantic alliance. Of course, a desire for more equitable burden-sharing has been present in American foreign policy for decades. President Obama's pivot to Asia reflected the idea that Europe was capable of dealing with its own problems and that the excessive American military presence in Europe had enabled Europeans to neglect their own forces. US Secretary of Defence Bob Gates ended his tenure in office in 2011 with a blistering attack on European irresponsibility in defence.²⁰

But the difference between Obama and Trump highlights what is new about Trump. Previous US efforts to equalize the burden, including Obama's, have always been based on the notion that America's best partners are democracies, that America's prosperity rests in a broad global system of trade and investment, and that Europe's security must be protected – by Europe if possible, and by the United States if necessary. Previous American presidents have explicitly looked for a more equitable partnership with Europe, but they believed that Europe's security and prosperity were a core interest of the United States and have not sought to abandon Europe and leave it to its own devices.

This American approach to Europe has, as Trump has no doubt noticed, weakened US bargaining leverage. It implies that the United States will take up whatever slack Europe leaves behind and so encourages Europeans to free-ride. But it also reflects an historically sound belief that the United States cannot ultimately stand aside from European conflicts.

Trump, in contrast, believes in walls and in oceans. In this view, America can stand aside from problems in other regions and should not help on the European refugee crisis, for example, because "we have our own problems."²¹ Unlike every US president since Truman, he does not believe that America has special relationships with countries because they are democracies and indeed sees such countries as inherently weak. He believes he can formulate individual deals with authoritarian leaders that can better support American economic and security interests.

Because Trump can walk away, this type of thinking would strengthen his bargaining power with Europe and other US allies considerably. But in the process

²⁰ Michael Birnbaum, "Gates Rebukes European Allies in Farewell Speech", in *The Washington Post*, 10 June 2011, <http://wpo.st/UhR42>.

²¹ "Trump on Refugee Crisis: 'I'd Love to Help, But We Have Our Own Problems'", in *Fox News Insider*, 9 September 2016, <http://insider.foxnews.com/2015/09/09/donald-trump-europes-refugee-crisis-we-have-our-own-problems-us>.

it might destroy the transatlantic partnership that has made both sides of the Atlantic so secure and prosperous.

2. Clinton's serious challenge

From a European perspective, Clinton is a far more "normal" and comprehensible presidential candidate – and not just compared to Trump. She has been a presence in national politics for more than 25 years and has a long record as first lady, senator, and Secretary of State. Her foreign policy views place her firmly in the centre of the American foreign policy spectrum and thus firmly within the long-held establishment consensus on the transatlantic alliance. Indeed, given the tenor of the times and the frustration that much of the electorate feels with both the Bush and Obama's foreign policies, Clinton is perhaps more normal than is appropriate for the national mood.

Be that as it may, it is surpassingly simple to describe Clinton's basic approach to the transatlantic alliance. Like every president since 1945, she will rely on the alliance as a cornerstone of her foreign policy. And like every president for nearly that long, she will, within the confines of that approach, seek to shift some of the burdens for global and particularly regional European security to the larger powers of Europe. Like Obama, she will seek to re-allocate some of the resources spent on European security to areas of greater urgency, particularly East Asia.

This core approach is too familiar to merit a very detailed explanation. Instead, the paper will focus on three less central aspects of her approach to foreign policy and transatlantic relations. They are less often remarked upon, but will have an important impact on Europe. The first is the essential continuity in foreign policy that would result from a Clinton presidency, including on the use of military force. The second is the role of gender in her approach to foreign policy. And last is her approach to Russia, which stands out as an exception to the basic rule of continuity between her and President Obama's foreign policy.

2.1 *The essential continuity between Obama and Clinton*

As is normal for someone running to succeed a president of her own party, Clinton has made an effort during the campaign to disassociate herself from the less popular aspects of Obama's foreign policy. As a democrat, a party often linked with anti-militarism, and as the first female major party candidate for president, she has been particularly careful to project an image of strength and a willingness to use force. This effort, as well as her past record supporting US military interventions,²² including the war in Iraq, have led to a widespread view she would resort to force

²² Micah Zenco, "Hillary the Hawk: A History", in *Foreign Policy*, 27 July 2016.

much more often than Obama, particularly in Syria.²³

But this view hides an essential continuity in how she and Obama approach these problems. It also underestimates just how often Obama has used force. He has been at war every single day of his two-term presidency, the only American president to have that dubious distinction.²⁴ He has taken military action in seven Muslim majority countries, and dramatically expanded the use of drones and special forces. It also underestimates just how important Clinton herself was, as Secretary of State, in helping to form Obama's approach to foreign policy.

As the conventional wisdom holds, Clinton has often favoured the use of force. As first lady in the 1990s, she supported US intervention in the former Yugoslavia. As a senator, she voted for the war in Iraq in 2003. She supported the troop surge in Afghanistan in 2009. As Secretary of State, she advocated for military intervention in Libya in 2011 and forceful measures in Syria. And in her current presidential campaign, many of her foreign policy advisers are prominent advocates of increased use of the military, particularly in Syria.²⁵

But President Hillary Clinton would not likely be the über-hawk that so many expect. This is in part because her record is in fact more nuanced than is often appreciated. She has just as often pushed for diplomatic solutions as military ones.

As Secretary of State, Clinton frequently complained about the militarization of US foreign policy²⁶ and touted the virtues of "smart power" (the idea that all elements of national power are needed to solve foreign policy problems) and diplomacy in tackling the nation's most serious national security challenges. She started the secret negotiations with Iran in 2012 that ultimately led to the Iran nuclear deal. She has similarly supported President Obama's opening to Cuba. She supported and implemented the reset with Russia that began in 2009. When China started becoming aggressive in the South China Sea, she did not reach for military tools, but rather looked to a regional diplomatic approach that stood in stark contrast to Beijing's military aggression.

But perhaps more importantly than that record, it is because, as president, she will find that the use of force abroad will offer precious few opportunities for making a difference, and will come at a considerable political cost at home.

²³ Mark Landler, "How Hillary Clinton Became a Hawk", in *The New York Times*, 21 April 2016, <http://nyti.ms/26gmdvP>.

²⁴ Mark Landler, "For Obama, an Unexpected Legacy of Two Full Terms at War", in *The New York Times*, 15 May 2016, <http://nyti.ms/27mVwWX>.

²⁵ John Hudson, "Inside Hillary Clinton's Massive Foreign-Policy Brain Trust", in *Foreign Policy*, 10 February 2016.

²⁶ Aaron David Miller, "Would Hillary Clinton Be a Hawk as President?", in *The Washington Post*, 3 May 2016.

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In Syria, the idea of risking US boots on the ground or war with the Russians to support an opposition that consists largely of Islamist extremists is not likely to appeal to her any more than it has to President Obama. For fighting the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS), Clinton seems comfortable with Obama's template for the use of military force: the limited use of armed drones, special operations forces, air strikes, and efforts to build local capacity for ground operations and stabilization duties.

Changing these policies would be politically risky. As recent presidents have learned, military intervention abroad can carry a heavy political price at home. Despite the headlines of global disorder, there is no clamour from the American public or the Congress for a more active military policy, except from a handful of members of the Washington foreign policy establishment.

This was broadly seen on the campaign trail in both the Democratic and Republican primaries, when hawkishness emerged as a political liability that both Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump profited from. A recent Pew survey, for example, found that 57 percent of Americans surveyed want the US to deal with its own problems, while letting other countries get along as best they can. Only 27 percent of respondents felt that the United States is doing too little to solve world problems.²⁷

Clinton has always reserved her greatest passion and vision for domestic issues.²⁸ She wants to make her mark in domestic policy and she will likely reserve her political capital to make the deals and compromises that will be necessary to advance her domestic policy agenda. As many presidents before her, Clinton may find that she needs to turn to foreign policy to make her mark later in her presidency. But she will begin as a domestic policy president.

Like her predecessor, Clinton will not risk her political standing unless she is convinced that there is a strong case for how such an intervention will both improve the situation on the ground and meet with the approval of the American public. In the next four years, such cases will be few and far between.

2.2 A gendered foreign policy

Clinton's approach to gender will also have an important impact on her foreign policy. When Obama became the first African-American president, he seemed very determined not to rule as an African-American. He took very few opportunities to highlight his race and did not give any particular priorities to issues of race in his policy agenda. His message seemed to be, "I am not a black president. I am president

²⁷ Pew Research Center, *Public Uncertain, Divided Over America's Place in the World*, 5 May 2016, <http://pewrsr.ch/1QSz5g9>.

²⁸ Maeve Reston, "Hinting at 2016, Hillary Clinton Focuses on Humanizing Her Image", in *Los Angeles Times*, 20 September 2014, <http://fw.to/y5wtpdK>.

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who happens to be black.” In so doing, he likely reduced (although certainly did not eliminate) a racist backlash to his presidency.

For better or for worse, Clinton seems determined to take a different approach to being the first female president. In her current campaign, she has been much more willing than in 2008 to speak about her gender and about how the historic nature of her candidacy. She has implied in various ways that she intends to be a female president in every sense, most prominently in her intention to ensure that half of her cabinet is female.²⁹ This would almost certainly include the first-ever female Secretary of Defence.

This all seems a natural fit. Clinton has been working for women’s equality and talking about women’s inclusion her whole life. Her first effort on the global stage was her speech on women’s rights at the 1995 UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, in which she declared that “human rights are women’s rights... And women’s rights are human rights.”³⁰ On leaving the State Department, she assembled a group of long-time female aides together and told them that she wanted to devote herself to issues affecting women and girls in preparation for another presidential run.³¹ The *New York Times*, based on interviews with her close confidantes, calls the issue of women’s rights, “the central cause of her career.”³²

Consistent with a lot of feminist theory, Clinton believes that women bring a unique and valuable perspective to decision-making and peace-making that men simply do not possess. Women think more holistically, with greater attention to issues of broad issues of social justices and economic development that men give short shrift. Their substantial presence in decision-making role is essential for finding durable solutions to almost any social problem. Attention to gender equity is therefore necessary to achieve social stability.³³ As she said in 2011,

[f]rom Northern Ireland to Liberia to Nepal and many places in between, we have seen that when women participate in peace processes, they focus discussion on issues like human rights, justice, national reconciliation, and economic renewal that are critical to making peace, but often are overlooked in formal negotiations. They build coalitions across ethnic and sectarian lines, and they speak up for other marginalized groups. They act as mediators and help to foster compromise.³⁴

²⁹ Patrick Healy, “‘President Hillary Clinton?’ She Wants Progress on Immigration and to Drink with G.O.P.”, in *The New York Times*, 4 July 2016, <http://nyti.ms/29mtrKv>.

³⁰ Hillary Clinton, *Remarks for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women*, Beijing, 5 September 1995, <http://www.un.org/esa/gopher-data/conf/fwcw/conf/gov/950905175653.txt>.

³¹ Amy Chozick, “Hillary Clinton’s Beijing Speech on Women Resonates 20 Years Later”, in *The New York Times*, 5 September 2015, <http://nyti.ms/1hKoQke>.

³² Ibid.

³³ Valerie M. Hudson, “What Sex Means for World Peace”, in *Foreign Policy*, 24 April 2012.

³⁴ US Department of State, *Secretary Clinton’s Remarks on Women, Peace, and Security*, Washington, 19 December 2011, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/>

It is unclear what precisely this gendered perspective means for Clinton's foreign policy. But it certainly implies that she will only seek to build durable solutions or alliances with countries that allow women to be well represented in society and government.

2.3 Clinton's Russia problem

Ironically, one country that also has a gendered perspective on foreign policy is Russia. But that perspective is nearly the polar opposite of Clinton's. The Russian policy is based on the idea that women have no place in such discussions. There are very few women in the upper echelons of the Russian foreign and security policy apparatus. And Russia's policy stance, as presented by its often-shirtless president, Vladimir Putin, seems the epitome of a macho foreign policy.

As Secretary of State, Clinton had a very bad relationship with her Russian counterparts. The delegations of men they brought to meetings with her and her team often seemed more intent on humiliating or flustering her than on achieving any particular policy outcome. According to *Politico*, Russian officials referred to her with both derision and respect as a "lady with balls."³⁵ After Clinton criticized the fairness of the December 2011 Russian elections, Putin personally accused her of fomenting protests against his rule³⁶ and remains angry with her to this day³⁷ over those events.

Putin's anger against Clinton is clearly motivated by more than just gender. But it is also clear that it is part of Russia's diplomatic playbook to treat women counterparts with disdain. People who worked with Condoleezza Rice when she was Secretary of State suggest that she received similar treatment,³⁸ despite being a Russia specialist and speaking fluent Russian. And Putin's ill treatment of Angela Merkel, including trying to play on her fear of dogs,³⁹ is well known. Yet Clinton's successor at the State Department, John Kerry, does not seem to have had these types of problems with the Russians and has bonded with his Russian counterpart, foreign minister Sergei Lavrov, over late night dinners.⁴⁰

rm/2011/12/179173.htm.

³⁵ Michael Crowley and Julia Ioffe, "Why Putin Hates Hillary", in *Politico*, 25 July 2016, <http://politico.com/2a1BsRD>.

³⁶ David M. Herszenhorn and Ellen Barry, "Putin Contends Clinton Incited Unrest over Vote", in *The New York Times*, 8 December 2011, <http://nyti.ms/2aOtiwq>.

³⁷ Simon Shuster, "Vladimir Putin's Bad Blood With Hillary Clinton", in *Time*, 25 July 2016, <http://ti.me/2acT7Iy>.

³⁸ Glenn Kessler, *The Confidante. Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 2013.

³⁹ Blake Hounshell, "Putin Uses Dog to Intimidate Merkel", in *Foreign Policy*, 14 June 2016.

⁴⁰ Jo Biddle, "Kerry and Lavrov: The Diplomatic Odd Couple", in *Dawn*, 14 September 2013, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1042780>.

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After Russia's apparent effort to sabotage her election, it seems likely as this point that Putin's dislike of Clinton has become mutual. Even as Secretary of State, Clinton frequently took the opportunity to smack the Russians over the back of the head with a metaphorical block of wood,⁴¹ sometimes to the surprise of the White House.

All of this means that under Clinton that the US relationship with Russia is unlikely to improve. While many in Europe, particularly in the eastern parts of the European Union, may welcome a more confrontational US-Russian relationship, this is not necessarily good news for transatlantic relations.

The essence of the Obama administration's approach to Russia since the invasion of Ukraine has been to maintain close alignment with the German position. Together, the Americans and the German have held the centre of this debate and been able to maintain unity among a diverse set of opinions within Europe on the right approach to Russia. If the Germans and the Americans cease to find agreement on Russia and that centre ceases to hold, transatlantic unity will break down and the Western approach to Russia will devolve into confusion.

3. Challenges on both sides

Trump's view of allies and trade represents an existential threat to the transatlantic alliance. Such a threat, while unwelcoming, would clarify the need to develop a more independent and coordinated European approach to foreign policy in both Europe's east and south. Of course, Trump may not be president in 2017 and the transatlantic alliance would likely endure a Clinton presidency in something close to its current form.

Under Clinton, the European challenge will be, as it has long been, to maintain the American commitment to Europe without being overwhelmed by it. If she is elected, there will be a temptation to assume that business can continue as usual. But as the Russia example highlights, if there is not a re-balancing, American policy may surprise Europeans in unpleasant ways.

Even in the event of a Clinton presidency, Europe would be foolish not to learn lessons from the experience of Trump's candidacy. Trump represents only an extreme version of a growing feeling in the United States that, in a time of relative decline, the country is getting a raw deal from its allies. The partnership cannot persist along the current lines for too much longer. The promise of future elections fought along Trumpian lines means that America will likely become more self-centred and less predictable as an international partners.

⁴¹ Colum Lynch and Liz Sly, "Clinton Accuses Russia of Selling Attack Helicopters to Syria", in *The Washington Post*, 12 June 2012, <http://wpo.st/g7T42>.

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Given the current direction in the US politics, Europeans would be wise to take more proactive measures to visibly increase the defence burden they bear and their capacity for independent action under the next US president – no matter who she is.

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