

# National Security in the Trump Era

**Business as Usual?**

by G. Murphy Donovan



Donald Trump has only been in office for a couple of months. Any performance evaluation to date is probably premature. Nonetheless, early on, there are some good and bad omens. The good news is domestic. President Trump seems to be focused on health care reform, the economy, employment, border security, and immigration/alien control.

In contrast, national security and foreign policy initiatives are off to a hoary start.

One national security advisor has already been sacked and President Trump has been horse-collared as a Moscow puppet or stooge. No matter the evidence, insinuations that Russians played a role in the 2016 election is a [smear](#) now morphing into a political zombie, a Beltway specter with tenure.

By throwing, General Mike Flynn, erstwhile national security advisor, under the bus, Trump has forfeited the first game of “gotcha” to hostile Democrats and a partisan media. Beyond

hasty judgement, the Flynn affair also suggests that team Trump folds at first fright.

President Trump flinched again by allowing his new Attorney General to recuse himself from the Russophobia probe. Flynn and Sessions are just blood in the water now. Trump [opponents](#) are circling like sharks.

There is a very real possibility that the infamous DNC hack, now attributed to Russia and Wikileaks, was a false flag operation, begun by the Obama administration, designed to discredit the Trump candidacy.

The Obama [probe](#) of Trump colleagues began six months before the 2016 election. The FISA court, originally created to protect citizens, is now used almost exclusively to authorize broad [surveillance](#) under the burka of national security. FISA is a junta or IC fig leaf where only the government is represented. Victims and the accused have no voice.

Just as the FISA court never [says no](#) to Uncle Sam, the *New York Times* never says no to deep state leakers who use wire taps/classified intercepts for political sedition.

The Flynn/Sessions casualties confirm what critics already believe about a Putin/Trump "bromance." The Putin proxy is now tar and feathers to be used by a neo-conservative/ liberal establishment who believe that globalist experiments like the EU, military alliances like NATO, and regime change [stunts](#) in Ukraine and elsewhere are beyond reproach or reform.

President Trump may have thus handcuffed himself to "business as usual" on the world stage. Just before the 2016 election, the Obama White House and DOD deployed NATO and American tanks to the Baltics and Poland. New anti-missile missile [deployments](#) to Eastern Europe are now part of that mix too.

Yes, German tanks are again in Poland and the Baltics. Clearly designed to annoy the Kremlin, these "symbolic" NATO

encroachments are now Trump baggage.

We say symbolic because, NATO sabre rattling on Russian borders is more than a bit of a strategic mime. Putin [says](#) that he could be in Kiev in two weeks, should the need arise. The Russian president is probably correct.

Why would anyone believe West Europeans, who will not pay for NATO, would fight Russians today any more successfully than they fought the *Wehrmacht* in the last continental war?

Trump's original campaign instincts were correct. NATO is an [expensive](#) Cold War artifact, not unlike the defunct Warsaw Pact. The need to defend defense budgets today is more important than any hedge against real Russian aggression. The long war against the Muslim *jihād*, still unresolved after 50 years, provides a similar rationale for [Intelligence](#) spending.

The deep state has deep [roots](#).

**Appeasing Muslims, demonizing Israelis and Russians, universal surveillance, and fiscal incontinence at home seem to be the four defaults, or inherited, legs of American national security policy and strategy.**

NATO is next to useless when it comes to active shooters in a half dozen Muslim small wars. In fact, *Schengen* Zone vulnerabilities, and Berlin oblivion, are facilitating an ever [expanding](#) Islamist threat within Europe itself.

Take Angela Merkel's "open borders" policy and subsequent Muslim migrant blitz. No head of state in Europe has done more for terror, fear, appeasement, *jihād*, Islamic religious [fascism](#), and continental instability than the German chancellor. If Brexit is followed by a "Frexit," Mrs. Merkel can take a bow.

If the EU is going the way of the Holy Roman Empire, no single individual is more culpable than "Angela." Indeed, if [common](#)

[sense](#) and culture is at risk in Europe, the angel of death again rides again on a Berlin broomstick.

Muslim admission to Europe now seems to come at the price of another [Jewish exit](#). You would think a German chancellor who serves under the shadow of the Holocaust would know better.

In a real world, a stable and prosperous future for Europe is a function of American and Russian forbearance and cooperation. Unfortunately, posturing or [histrionics](#) in Brussels and Washington is now more about business and appeasement than a stable European future.

Besides automobiles, the only manufacturing of any consequence left in the West is the defense industry. If the business of national security is now business, it's a booming business.

The Middle East and Africa are awash with weapons, war, and instability because NATO nations are willing to sponsor sedition and sell the [wherewithal](#) to Muslim friends and foes alike.

US military [exports](#) grew by 54 percent in the Obama era and are expected to rise faster under Trump. America now accounts for 36 percent of world arms exports compared to 12 percent for Russia.

Unfortunately, taking on the American military/industrial establishment at this point might be a bridge too far as it seems to be one of a few manufacturing games left in America. Whilst Defense and Intelligence industries experience explosive growth, the private sector languishes in the doldrums.

Throwing money at bombs and bullets is hardly new policy in Washington. America already spends more on its military than the next seven countries [combined](#), including China and Russia. The Pentagon spends seven times (\$680 billion versus \$94

billion) more on defense than does the Kremlin.

Possible explanations for such disparities include waste, fraud, abuse, and incompetence. The truth is probably the Eisenhower [prophesy](#) actualized. The military/industrial complex seems to be more about profit than patriotism.

Alas, big spending never meant more capability. The profligate USAF F-35 fighter program alone is illustrative, possibly the biggest [budget](#) boondoggle (\$1.5 trillion) in all of military history.

If America needs a next-generation fighter that is affordable and operational, the Pentagon might think about giving the next contract to the Kremlin. Russian rockets now shuttle American astronauts in and out of orbit, a dependency that doesn't get much visibility in national security estimates.

Government debt in the US now stands at 24 trillion dollars, ten times larger than Russian debt. National sovereignty isn't a virtue if the price is moral bankruptcy or national [insolvency](#).

Donald Trump cannot buy the affection of the establishment, right and left, with profligate [defense spending](#). The permanent state does well enough without any President's help. And if and when haters succeed in their campaign to cripple the President, the deep state comes that much closer to becoming the creep state.

---

G. Murphy Donovan writes\* about the politics of national security.

\*This essay is a truncated version of a longer argument that appeared in the *Small Wars Journal* on 10 March 17.