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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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12.06.2025

EU members' response to President Trump

The NATO summit in The Hague could mark the end of the European Union. The President of the United States has announced that he may no longer ensure the security of the EU. If this were the case, there would be an urgent need to reorganize the stability of the European continent. Washington already has its solution: replacing the current one around Germany with a structure centered around Poland.

VOLTAIRE NETWORK / PARIS (FRANCE) / 10 JUNE 2025



On June 24, the Netherlands will host the summit of NATO heads of state and government. This could be a decisive moment for the Organization: upon his inauguration, US President Donald Trump warned his allies that if each member state did not devote at least 5% of its annual GDP to defense, the Pentagon would relinquish its role as Supreme Allied

Commander Europe (SACEUR). Yet, five months ago, most were not devoting even 2.5% of their GDP to defense.

Clearly, it is impossible for member states to increase their defense budgets at such a pace. President Trump's announcement therefore seemed irreversible. The Pentagon was already planning to withdraw its forces from Europe.



Polish President's Impromptu Visit to Donald Trump

Polish President Andrzej Duda rushed to Washington to meet his US counterpart without an appointment. He managed to see him for a few minutes on February 22, on the sidelines of the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC). He maintained that Poland had begun restructuring its armed forces several years ago; that it aimed to have the largest army in Western and Central Europe; and that it could not move any faster. Conciliatory, Donald Trump granted him a reprieve: US troops would leave Poland last.

In Paris and London, meetings were held between defense ministers and chiefs of staff. There was talk of a possible replacement of the United States' nuclear umbrella with those of France and the United Kingdom. However, this proposal encountered numerous obstacles: first, the United Kingdom does not truly possess the atomic bomb, since its facilities depend on its big brother, the United States. Second, the atomic bomb can only depend on a single political power. Consequently, states that place themselves under the protection of another must trust it.

Ultimately, all these discussions came to a halt when Washington suspended all information exchange for five days. Everyone immediately felt, in a very cruel way, that without the power of the United States, their armies were worthless. On the Ukrainian battlefield, the European Union's weapons were no longer functioning. Defeat was imminent. In a few days,

the myth of an independent European Union defense system was dead. Everyone made amends.

This excitement, these back-to-back summits, are one of the characteristics of the negotiations led by Donald Trump. He pushes his interlocutors, lets them consider solutions, brutally shows them that they cannot function without him, and ultimately imposes his solution on them.



In early June, the United Kingdom published its *Strategic Defence Review 2025*. It is an ode to the protection of the United States. In typical British style, the Defense Secretary added to this document the announcement of the purchase of Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II bombers capable of carrying and firing atomic bombs. Admittedly, this still doesn't account for 5% of GDP in military spending, but these represent lucrative contracts that London could sign in exchange for US protection.

More in line with Donald Trump's demands, the "Bucharest Nine" (the Baltic countries, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria) and the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) met in Vilnius last week. These fourteen states all committed to spending 5% of their GDP on defense by 2025. So they kept their promise, sometimes cheating a little, by including police spending under the same heading.

This leaves 17 member states (excluding the United States) that will not meet Donald Trump's demands at the Hague summit. How will the United States react? President Trump

may consider that he will cease to fulfill his protective duties for these 17 states (including the three main ones: Germany, France, and the United Kingdom). He may also consider that, since a minority of NATO members have already fulfilled their commitments, he is granting a reprieve.

This is the thrust of the proposal by Mark Rutte, Secretary-General of the Organization. At the meeting of Defense Ministers on June 5, he stated that an overall 5% investment plan could be broken down into a 3.5% component for capability objectives, plus a second 1.5% component for investments, provided that member states commit to annual plans that allow for verification of their compliance with their commitments.

This solution seemed to suit Pete Hegseth, US Secretary of Defense, who commented: "We believe that consensus is close, meaning we are close to consensus, on a 5% commitment for NATO in The Hague later this month." He also announced that the next SACEUR would be Belarusian-born General Alexus Grynkewich.

However, Spain still rejects the 5% target. Its Defense Minister, Margarita Robles, publicly rejected it on May 20.



Ursula von der Leyen dreams of becoming a European empress

Let's consider the first possible answer, the one that changes the game. The Lisbon Treaty stipulates that the EU's security is guaranteed, not by its members, but by NATO. The European Union would instantly become a naked economic giant.

EU experts don't believe Donald Trump will take this step. They argue that, in any case, other NATO members will be able to argue that the 5% requirement was never adopted by a NATO summit (the 2014 summit only called for 3%, not 5%). Trump wouldn't dare impose a rule he defined purely verbally, not because NATO respects international law, but because the United States would be more credible if it deployed to the Far East, leaving behind a stable situation in Europe. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen presented

her vision for the future of the EU at the Charlemagne Prize ceremony on May 29 in Aachen. According to her, the European Union must complete the integration of all Balkan and Eastern European countries (with the exception of Russia and Belarus), become a major economic power, and ensure its own security. The problem: why would member states remain if the United States is no longer there to protect them? The Empress did not answer the vexing question.



In 2017, Donald Trump graced the Three Seas Initiative summit with his presence.

Let's return to the hypothesis of withdrawing US protection for the 17 states that do not meet the 5% requirement. Donald Trump makes no secret of his belief that while the EU was formed under a secret clause of the Marshall Plan, it is now part of the "American Empire," which he rejects. In practice, it only harms the United States (which he considers independent of the "American Empire"). Similarly, Donald Trump makes no secret of his support for the "Three Seas Initiative," that is, the reorganization of the European continent, no longer around a reunified Germany (and therefore the EU), but around Poland and Lithuania. This view of things is consistent with history. From the 16th to the 18th century, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland constituted the "Republic of the Two Nations." This binational state successfully protected its subjects from attacks by the Teutonic Order, the Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and the Swedish Empire. However, due to opposition from a section of the Polish nobility and its alliance with the Tsarist Empire, the Kingdom of Two Nations was dismantled. However, during the interwar period, General Józef Piłsudski (President of the Republic of Poland, later Prime Minister) envisioned reviving the Commonwealth of Two Nations. This is the concept of "Intermarium" and now "Three Seas Initiative." This intergovernmental organization includes thirteen states: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia,

and the Czech Republic. Moldova and Ukraine are associate members, but it is clear that Poland would only want northeastern Ukraine, that is, Eastern Galicia. Donald Trump, who participated in the 2017 "Three Seas Initiative" summit, also makes no secret of his desire for this organization to succeed the EU.



Signing of the Treaty of Nancy

Unwilling to be left behind, France has reactivated the "Weimar Triangle," the Germany-France-Poland summit. Furthermore, on May 9, French President Emmanuel Macron signed the Treaty of Nancy with Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk. The aim is to strengthen military cooperation between the two countries, but still within the framework of NATO.

However, if the EU were to disappear, many old territorial conflicts would resurface with the EU's demise. Yet, never before, from Charlemagne to Adolf Hitler, including Charles V and Napoleon, have Europeans managed to make peace among themselves. Only the Roman Empire and the "American Empire" saved them from their bickering.

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