



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on May 26, 2017

Trump: NATO Member Nations Need to Pay Up; No Mention of Withdrawal

In his speech at the NATO headquarters in Brussels Thursday, President Donald Trump seized the opportunity to publicly call out the member nations that are “not paying what they should be paying and what they’re supposed to be paying for their defense.” Trump also used his time to express his support for a “NATO of the future” that “would be even stronger than it is today, especially from the threat of terrorism.”



While Trump’s words were — as per his style — considered “blunt” and “direct” in many media reports, two facts remain, though they are both ignored by those same media reports: Trump was correct and his remarks are largely beside the point.

On one hand, the president’s remark that “23 of the 28 member nations are still not paying what they should be paying and what they’re supposed to be paying for their defense” is accurate. According to a NATO agreement, member nations are supposed to contribute at least two percent of their GDP. Only five — the United States, Greece, Great Britain, Estonia, and Poland — are living up to that agreement with the United States paying almost twice as much percentage-wise at about 3.7 percent in 2016. Since the U.S. GDP is higher than the other nations, the real U.S. contribution to NATO in actual dollars amounts to the lion’s share. In other words, in this — as in other international agreements (I’m looking at you, UN) — the United States pays for much more than it receives.

President Trump told the assembled heads of government Thursday:

The NATO of the future must include a great focus on terrorism and immigration, as well as threats from Russia and on NATO’s eastern and southern borders. These grave security concerns are the same reason that I have been very, very direct with Secretary Stoltenberg and members of the Alliance in saying that NATO members must finally contribute their fair share and meet their financial obligations, for 23 of the 28 member nations are still not paying what they should be paying and what they’re supposed to be paying for their defense.

This is not fair to the people and taxpayers of the United States. And many of these nations owe massive amounts of money from past years and not paying in those past years. Over the last eight years, the United States spent more on defense than all other NATO countries combined. If all NATO members had spent just 2 percent of their GDP on defense last year, we would have had another \$119 billion for our collective defense and for the financing of additional NATO reserves.

And while the liberal mainstream media have tripped all over themselves to dispute President Trump’s claim, they did not disagree with that claim when it was made by President Obama in his April 2016 interview with *The Atlantic*. In that [interview](#), Obama referred to those nations not paying their share as “free riders,” saying, “Free riders aggravate me.” In fact, that article asserts that it was only after “Obama warned that Great Britain would no longer be able to claim a ‘special relationship’ with the United States if it did not commit to spending at least 2 percent of its GDP on defense” that Prime



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Minister David Cameron “subsequently met the 2 percent threshold.”

So, there is no real — honest — dispute that President Trump’s words were true. Nor, for that matter is there any doubt that the dishonest dispute offered by the liberal mainstream media is based on who he is and not what he said.

Having said that, Trump’s words miss the point. It’s not about whether “23 of the 28 member nations are still not paying what they should be paying” or even about getting them to pay. It’s about whether the United States should even be a part of NATO.

The American people and the world are again faced with the variance between what Trump said as a candidate and what he says as president. As a candidate seeking the White House, Trump called NATO “obsolete.” In fact, he used that word six times in [one interview](#) in March 2016, to describe the international military alliance. As president, Trump said, “The NATO of the future must include a great focus on terrorism and immigration, as well as threats from Russia and on NATO’s eastern and southern borders.” Referring to the section of the Berlin Wall and the twisted metal remnant of the North Tower from the 9/11 attacks, he added:

Each one marks a pivotal event in the history of this Alliance and in the eternal battle between good and evil. On one side, a testament to the triumph of our ideals over a totalitarian Communist ideology bent on the oppression of millions and millions of people; on the other, a painful reminder of the barbaric evil that still exists in the world and that we must confront and defeat together as a group, as a world.

This twisted mass of metal reminds us not only of what we have lost, but also what forever endures — the courage of our people, the strength of our resolve, and the commitments that bind us together as one.

We will never forget the lives that were lost. We will never forsake the friends who stood by our side. And we will never waiver in our determination to defeat terrorism and to achieve lasting security, prosperity and peace.

The NATO military alliance was ostensibly established to serve as a counter against Soviet communism and its War Pact captive nations. The Soviet Union no longer exists, at least not in that form — making the alliance obsolete, just as Trump said during his presidential campaign. But NATO is not only obsolete, it is also dangerous — to U.S. sovereignty and security. Under the NATO treaty, the United States is bound to treat an attack on any country in the military alliance as if it were an attack on the United States, taking the power to declare war away from Congress (where this power constitutionally resides) and potentially plunging the United States into foreign wars that do not serve America’s interests and could weaken rather than strengthen American security.

Rather than dunning 23 of NATO’s 28 members for what they owe, the president should be talking about the United States resigning from the club altogether.

After all, considering that his remarks amount to fair and accurate complaints that the United States is paying for more than it is receiving, perhaps this is a good time to point out that the American people deserve to get what they paid for with their votes. They voted for a candidate who said NATO was obsolete and wound up a president who speaks of “the commitments that bind us together as one” and a “NATO of the future” that will “be even stronger than it is today, especially from the threat of terrorism.”



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The United States does not need NATO any more than it needs the United Nations. While there is some question about whether either organization could survive without the United States footing the bill, it's high time for the United States to pull out and let the world see if its globalist house of cards can stand.

Photo of President Trump at NATO headquarters in Brussels: AP Images



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