

**An article on**  
**Trump Scolds NATO**

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**Uyless Black**

## Donald Scolds NATO

During President Trump's first visits to other countries, he spent some time in Brussels. There, during a meeting with high-level NATO officials, he took NATO countries to task for their not fulfilling their obligation to the NATO alliance.

He said the NATO countries were not doing enough in their funding of the alliance. During his speech: "Fellow NATO leaders occasionally exchanged awkward looks with each other during the president's lecture. ...One European official said NATO members were...taken aback by the aggressive tone of his speech."<sup>1</sup>

Aggressive? Mr. Trump was only expressing a fact: the lack of commitment on the part of most of the NATO members. I had to re-read the quote above as I thought my initial reading was faulty.

No, I had read the quote correctly. Apparently, the NATO delegates' feelings were bruised by Mr. Trump calling a spade a spade.

Mr. Trump attempted to put some humor in his criticism by joking, "I never asked what the new NATO headquarters cost."<sup>2</sup> No one in the meeting laughed.

America has been spending billions of dollars for Europe's defense for many decades. By reducing their defense budgets, most of the EU countries, certainly the NATO members, have not been pulling their load during this time. Most of the NATO countries do not even meet their obligation to contribute the required two percent of their GNP to NATO.

Who picks up the tab? As just mentioned: America. After all, why bother upgrading your military, an expensive proposition, when an ally is covering your back?

Take a look at the figure accompanying this article.<sup>3</sup> Only five nations (of twenty-eight members) meet the requirement of spending two percent of their GNP on NATO.

To illustrate further the pathetic behavior of most of our allies, notice that Greece is in second place. The country contributes 2.46 percent of its GNP to NATO. Yes, Greece, a country that has been bordering on bankruptcy since the financial meltdown of 2008.

Germany, an economic powerhouse, contributes only 1.18 percent of its GNP to the alliance. What irony. The United States bailed out prostrate Germany after WWII with the Marshall Plan. This international welfare recipient continues to feed at America's trough.

"[German Chancellor Angela Merkel] stressed that Germany would abide by its commitment to raise defense spending by two percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) but added it's a long-time goal that is likely to be reached only by 2024."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *CDA Press*, May 26, 2017, A3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> [http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2016/images/04/15/nato-3\\_custom1.jpg?iid=EL](http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2016/images/04/15/nato-3_custom1.jpg?iid=EL).

2024? Prostrate Greece, even tiny Estonia, are meeting their commitments. So is Poland, which is suffering from heavy debt. Yet, Germany, one of the richest countries in the world announces it will take seven years, while at the same time, Chancellor Merkel has the cheek to claim, “Germany is conscious of its responsibility.”

A question for Ms. Merkel: At what point did Germany become conscious of its responsibility? Before or after President Trump’s scolding?

With a few exceptions, the funding for NATO has become a bonus to most of its members. That bonus is courtesy of America. The continued acquiescence of the United States by allowing the facts reflected in the figure should have been corrected many years ago.

It is not only the money that matters, it is the insolence that our allies have displayed toward the United States for years-upon-years. Suckers, we are.

Imagine: the Europeans were “taken aback” by Mr. Trump’s “tone.” Well done, Mr. Trump. NATO is long overdue for your scolding.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.rt.com/news/377773-germany-nato-military-spending/>.

