

How Trump can change America's 'voice' to win over Europe's elites

by Kenneth Timmerman



European leaders seemed to gloat over the way they treated Donald Trump at the recent NATO and Group of 7 summits.

The newly-elected boy president of France, Emmanuel Macron, thought he could out-macho the U.S. president in what the media called a “[white-knuckle](#)” handshake. Macron weighs in at about 5’8” and 130 pounds, not bad for a 39-year-old who kissed the teacher as a teen.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel felt bathed in popularity when she dissed the president and the NATO alliance in public remarks at a Munich beer garden. “We Europeans must really take our own destiny into our own hands,” [she told](#) supporters.

Donald Trump is wildly unpopular across “old” Europe, from

Sweden to Greece. He is especially despised by the media and the political class.

But the European elites have trash-talked America for decades, all the while riding on our backs for their national defense. This, of course, was Trump's point when he called on NATO members to bear their fair share of the joint NATO defense burden, [set by the Alliance](#) in 2014 at 2 percent of each nation's gross domestic product.

Defense spending is not popular in Germany, which prefers to splurge on massive public welfare programs to accommodate the recent influx of more than a million mostly unskilled Middle East and African migrants.

Merkel's likely opponent in the Sept. 24 national elections, Social Democratic Party leader Martin Schulz, [says](#) meeting the NATO goal would impose an "enormous financial burden" on Germany, and "is certainly not the goal that my government would pursue."

Germany currently spends just 1.19 percent of GDP on defense, ranking No. 16 out of the 28-member alliance, [NATO figures show](#).

I lived and worked in Europe for nearly two decades and regularly return for long working and reporting trips. The European media is overwhelmingly anti-American, not just anti-Trump. It is hard to find objective information about the United States even in supposedly conservative media outlets, except in Britain.

Europe is awash with "fake news" when it comes to America, because it suits the interests of the cultural elites, who seek to promote a lifestyle of big government and political correctness – and, of course, their vast cultural "superiority."

In the late 1970s, the French media despised President Carter

because he was weak and so was the dollar. Terrible! The world was going to end because America was vulnerable.

In the mid-1980s, the same French media despised President Reagan because he was strong and so was the dollar. He was a cowboy and going to provoke a Soviet attack!

There is a pattern here. For the European elites, it is always hip to trash talk America. It is less hip – and far less common – to find hard information and level-headed analysis about the United States.

During the early days of the 2003 liberation of Iraq, a military analyst writing for the gray lady of French journalism, [Le Monde](#), claimed that U.S. soldiers were shooting Iraqi citizens at will. “They face no sanctions when a soldier kills civilians,” he wrote. “They even shoot cows!”

That idiocy actually made the front page, as I reported in my 2004 book, [French Betrayal of America](#). French media spin on the 2003 war was so bad that the French prime minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, finally told the press to chill out. “The Americans are not the enemies,” [he said](#).

Trump has a powerful tool he could wield in the war of ideas to help Europeans break down the wall of fake news: the [Voice of America](#) (VOA).

But today’s “voice” itself has [fallen prey to fake news](#) and anti-American vitriol.

By its charter, signed into law by President Ford in 1974, the Voice of America serves the long-range interests of the United States “by communicating directly with the peoples of the world.”

Its broadcasts must uphold three standards: “VOA will serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news. VOA will represent America, not any single segment of American

society. VOA will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively.”

Today, Voice of America has failed its charter, as any reader of [BBGWatch](#), a blog established by former VOA journalists and editors, can see.

But a reinvigorated Voice of America, staffed by reporters and editors guided by a sense of patriotism and national pride – not partisan politics – can change the way the world views this country.

Imagine if Voice of America began broadcasting once again to Europe, starting with AM and FM radio? These command massive audiences, as the flourishing of commercial radio attests. But VOA is not there.

Imagine if VOA began pushing its daily English-language TV news bulletins over satellite into France, Germany, Sweden, and the like, presenting Europeans with actual news they were not reading in their local media?

There’s no secret how the overwhelming majority of European correspondents working in Washington get their news. They pick up The New York Times, The Washington Post and turn on CNN. Little wonder that their dispatches mirror the fake news that already dominates these once-great media organizations.

Imagine if those correspondents had to compete against a popular source of real news, especially if that source were called the Voice of America?

They might actually have to wear out some shoe leather. Talk to actual sources. Sing for their suppers. They might have to actually provide news to their audiences back home, not just the fake news and anti-American nonsense of the cultural elites.

The lack of accurate information about America in Europe would

be comic if our European allies were not facing a dire extremist threat from political Islam, as well as a [demographic time bomb](#) from Muslim immigrants who seek to transform Europe, rather than assimilate to it.

The Voice of America can transform the image Europeans have of this country, and help them rediscover the values we hold in common.

Is that asking too much of U.S. taxpayer-funded journalists? I almost forgot: that's just asking them to live up to the Voice of America charter.

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