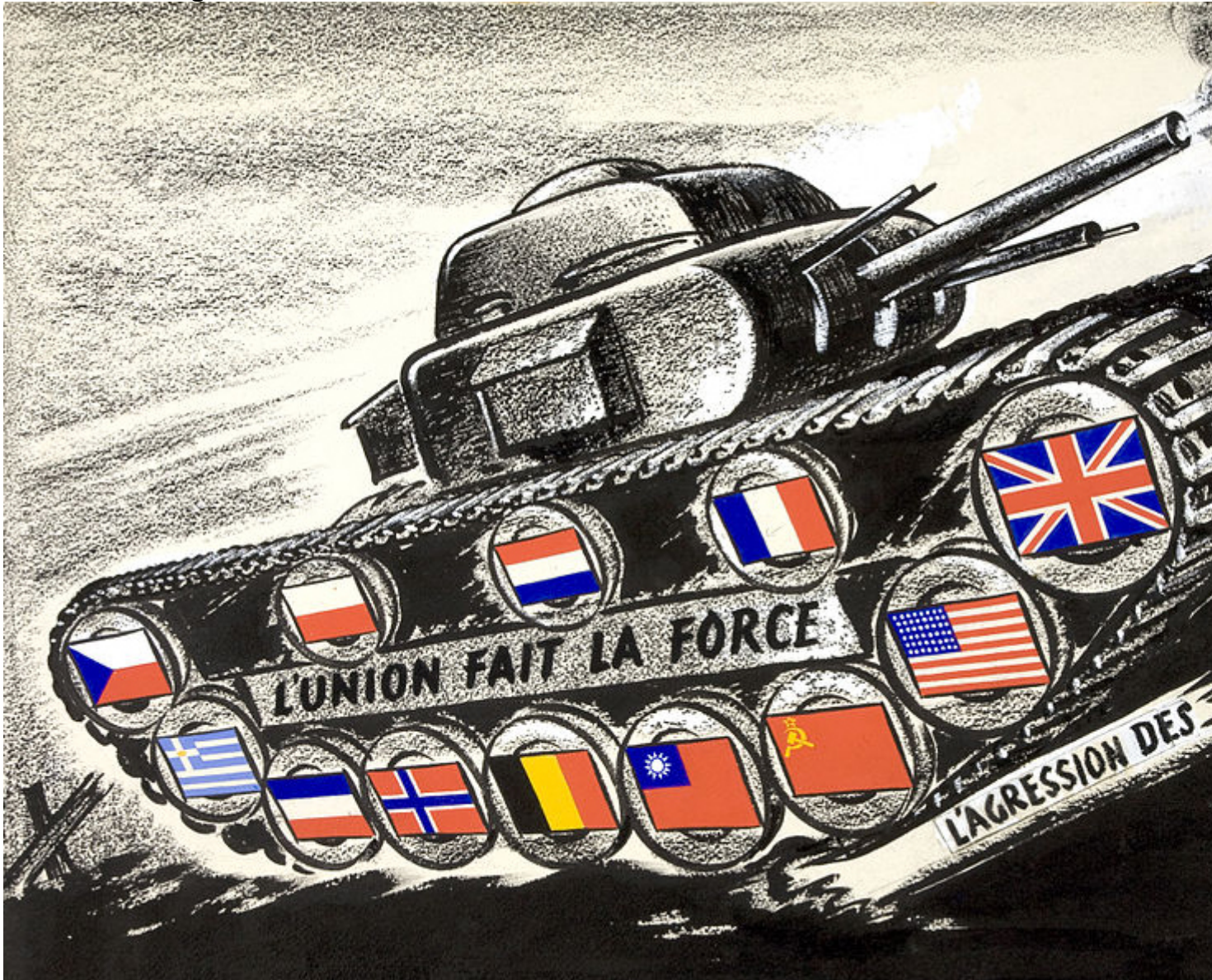


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Jul 02, 2018 by [Mark Dillen](#)

## And Then There Were None <sup>[1]</sup>

*“What is it doing to public opinion and public views of the United States? That’s the thing the Trump people don’t sufficiently take into account.”*

— Stephen J. Hadley, National Security Advisor to President George W. Bush

You could say that Republicans and Democrats don’t agree on anything these days, but you’d be wrong. Quite a few Republicans who worked in the administrations of George W. Bush and George H.W. Bush and even some who worked in the Reagan White House agree with the

Democrats' strong criticism of Donald J. Trump.

After all, the last two Republican presidential standard-bearers, Mitt Romney and John McCain, are staunch opponents of the current U.S. president.

Conservative commentators and political operators such as George F. Will, Bill Kristol, David Frum and Steven Schmidt recently have declared themselves at odds with Trump's policies and behavior in the strongest terms.

Even the current Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Republican Paul Ryan, having decided to not run for reelection, is starting to oppose some Trump policies.

In normal times, such opposition would be important. But these times are not normal. The representatives of the "old" Grand Old Party (as the Republican Party is sometimes called) have little if any influence on the future. Trump's strongman rhetoric has been injected into the country's body politic and, like a cancer, is eating through the Republican Party.

The world outside the United States has taken note. Foreign strongmen and dictators can read the Trump playbook without translation—"America First," "build a wall," "lock 'em up," "enemies of the people," "fake news." They already speak much the same language in Putin's Russia, Erdogan's Turkey, Orbán's Hungary, even Salvini's Italy.

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## ***A country's image in the world also depends on how it deals with its own citizens and with those who seek refuge from terror and oppression.***

Trump's new ambassador to Germany Richard Grenell recently told Breitbart that he wanted to spread this gospel further and to "empower conservatives throughout Europe," prompting reprimands from the dean of Germany's foreign policy leadership, Wolfgang Ischinger.

America's allies, who have fought and sacrificed alongside the U.S. and have willingly offered political muscle and diplomatic support when America called, are now turning away. The acidic smell of decaying relationships is wafting over the continent. The more that Trump seeks to tear down the existing order to make room for the strongmen populists he admires, the more the liberal democracies we have depended on will return the favor.

The next time we need help from a Trudeau or a Merkel, what does President Trump think the answer will be?

As Trump heads for Europe to meet with our NATO allies in Brussels and with Putin in Helsinki, he must think he has his priorities straight. With Putin, there's a stage to share with only one other strongman, but at NATO, it's a scrum of a photo-op with 28 other countries that include some new enemies in his trade wars.

At first, the image of the Trump administration abroad was explained by its simplistic and mistaken view of international trade, the WTO and tariffs. A devaluing of diplomacy, expertise and even science.

But now the list of problems includes images of crying babies separated from their parents by U.S. border police.

A country's image in the world also depends on how it deals with its own citizens and with those who seek refuge from terror and oppression.

This is not just a matter of “elites” being offended by the way Trump treats them. By last January, according to a Gallup poll, international public support for U.S. leadership had collapsed. The global survey collected data from 134 countries and showed a decrease in approval of the U.S. from 48 percent under President Obama to just 30 percent under Donald Trump—the lowest level Gallup had recorded since beginning its global leadership poll more than ten years ago.

In both foreign and domestic policy, the Trump Administration has earned the ire and disrespect of those whose views should matter most to us—our traditional allies. The next time America needs help, where will they be?

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