



Trump Strains NATO

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- NATO summit was recently held in Brussels amid raise trade tensions between the U.S. and the members of the alliance.

\n

- In this context, Mr. Trump's clarion call for countries to enhance defense budgets has aggravated the situation.

\n

\n\n

What is causing fissure within the organization?

\n\n

\n

- **Significance** - NATO is a cold war era bloc of that comprised of pro-U.S. powers and had positioned against the Soviet alliance.

\n

- With the end of the cold war, the alliance became a mere collective security net, and its importance weakened drastically.

\n

- Currently, NATO allies uphold some form of military cooperation but diverging worldviews of members has greatly reduced its unity.

\n

- **Budget** - U.S. is traditionally the largest contributor to the NATO (22% of the total), and many U.S. presidents have tried to correct this imbalance softly.

\n

- But Trump is assertively asking other countries to spend 4% of their GDP on defense annually and has even questioned their commitment to the alliance.

\n

- Notably, most NATO allies are even faltering to progress towards the currently mandated 2% mark, which is to be reached by 2024.

\n

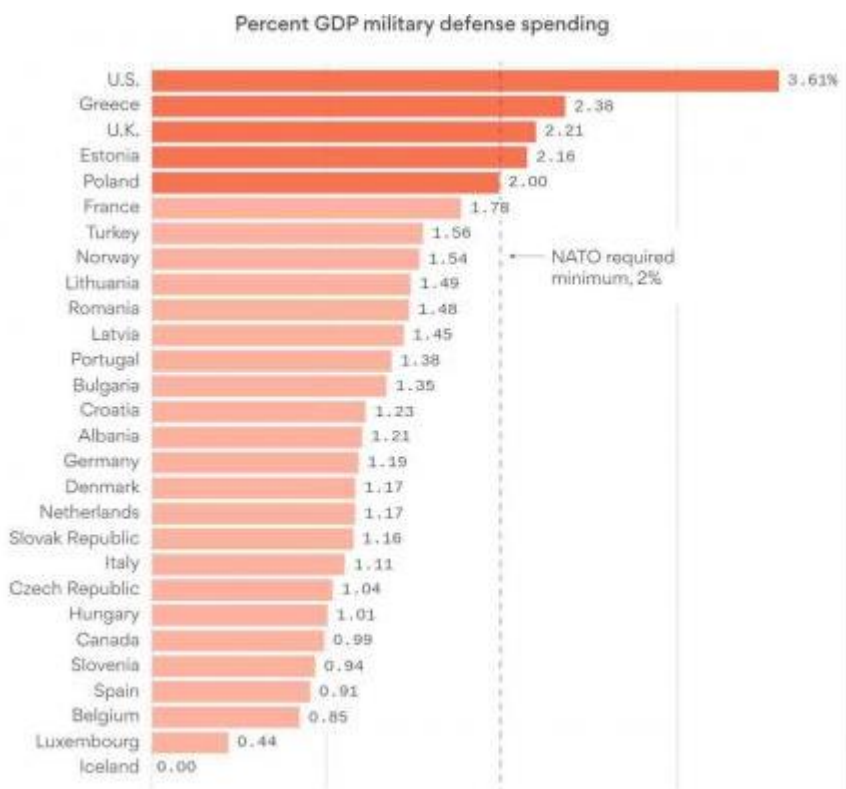
- The U.S. on the contrast is now shelling out well over 3% of its annual GDP on security and is clearly moving towards the 4% mark.

\n

- Mr. Trump's abrasive diplomacy and the stern financial demands are likely to cause severe strain within NATO in the coming days.

\n

\n\n



\n\n

Why did Trump single out Germany for criticism?

\n\n

\n

- Germany enjoys a big trade surplus with the U.S., an aspect that is irking the Trump administration, which is presently embracing protectionism.

\n

- In this context, Trump has lashed out on Germany for not spending enough on defense, despite having strong economic metrics in recent years.

\n

- Additionally, he has also targeted Germany for buying huge volumes of gas from Russia despite U.S. sanctions against the latter.

\n

- Notably, Russia's regional ambitions and its interventions in international theaters to thwart American efforts are indicative of a new cold war.

\n

\n\n

What is the actual situation?

\n\n

\n

- Spending - Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 has created a new security situation in Europe after more than two decades of relative peace.

\n

- As a consequence, Europe's expenditure on defense has been on the rise since 2014, even without Trump's rhetoric.

\n

- Even otherwise, Washington's commitment to Europe's security is just 5% (NATO and other commitments included) of the total U.S. defense budget.

\n

- Politics - Trump seems to be exploiting polarizing issues within NATO to further his domestic political prospects among ultra nationalists.

\n

- Also, his offensive against Germany and his rhetoric against Russia seem to be logical if viewed from this prism.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n\n

\n\n

\n



IAS PARLIAMENT

Information is Empowering

A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative