

Trans-Atlantic spats overshadow Centenary

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Source: US embassy France

OVER 60 WORLD leaders gathered in Paris on the Centenary of the Armistice which brought an end to the fighting in “the war to end all wars.” The leaders came together at the Arc de Triomphe to pay their respects to the more than sixteen million people who died in the First World War. The First World War – sometimes known as the Great War raged for four years, between major European powers and was the most deadly war in history. One hundred years on and the world has changed beyond recognition; globalisation has made the world smaller with countries more interconnected and interdependent than ever before. It was in this back-drop that Macron used his com-memoration speech to talk about the dangers that rising nationalism and tension around the world pose today – just as they did, with deadly consequences, one hundred years ago. Macron declared that “old demons are resurfacing” as world leaders stood nearby. He warned that history risked repeating itself and that countries should work together towards common hopes and goals, rather than pitting fears against fears. “Patriotism is the exact opposite of nationalism” he declared. However less than a day later President Trump – who felt singled out by the speech – launched a series of tweets attacking the President Macron and France. Trump first attacked Macron for his recent low polling, tweeting: “The problem is that Emmanuel suffers from a very low Approval Rating in France.” He also tweeted “MAKE FRANCE GREAT AGAIN” before finally making a jibe at France over its history and occupation by the Nazis. A more than distasteful joke in any situation but especially on the weekend of the Armistice Centenary. Trump had previously been heavily criticised and mocked by opponents for failing to attend an American centenary event due to bad weather grounding his helicopter, and for not wanting to affect Paris traffic with a motorcade. Perhaps already being frustrated by this criticism is one reason why Trump’s attack on Macron carried so much ferocity. Reports say that Trump was in a foul mood before the weekend, berating Theresa May over the phone after she called to congratulate him on his party’s midterm results. It is likely that Macron was also addressing other leaders present, with multiple nationalist figures in attendance, such as President Erdogan of Turkey and President of Russia Mr Putin. Ironically, Macrons’ speech on anti-nationalism has only demonstrated how world leaders are in

creasingly divided with world tension rising. One of the last items on the itinerary was the opening of a new peace forum in Paris – meant to further international communication, cooperation and to help deal

with any future crises.



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