

Berlin Does Not Lead the EU Independently but Rules It Under American Oversight

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Global Research, October 19, 2020

Region: [Europe](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

In July I [hypothesized that](#) “Germany’s presidency over the EU may be the most important junction in the bloc’s history since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The world is on the cusp of a multipolar order with a more evenly distributed power structure – Germany representing the EU must decide to join this new world order or remain stuck in the old one.”

This was written in the context of Germany assuming the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in July, a position it will hold until December 2020. Germany, the most important economic power in the EU, has always been the architect of the pan-European project. It’s Presidency heralded hope that the EU would break more freely from the interests of the U.S. and pursue policies that would be to the benefit of Europe and not to those across the Atlantic.

However, the hope of the EU being put on a path of self-confidence and sovereignty was quickly dashed. Germany not only continued enacting Washington’s interests, but the areas where it can pursue its sovereign policies has been dominated by self-interest rather than what benefits the entire EU. Just as French President Emmanuel Macron twice emphasized the “brain dead” status of NATO, the EU itself must also be determined as a failed pan-European project that has only been used as a tool to enforce and enact German economic interests over the continent.

The Atlantic Council last week [published a joint letter](#) from 29 Ukrainian MP’s who claim the Nord Stream 2’s “role is not commercial but geopolitical: to menace the world. That’s why the Kremlin spends so incessantly on redundant pipelines and fights so fiercely to get them going.”

The published letter cannot be underestimated as the Washington DC-based think tank is one of the most influential in the world. Even before the letter’s publication, U.S. Senators submitted a bill to sanction the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project on June 4. In July, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that the Nord Stream 2 and TurkStream projects fall under CAATSA (Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions). Undoubtedly the U.S. is exerting immense pressure to ensure the Nord Stream 2 project is not completed in the hope that Europeans will lessen their reliance on Russian energy.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said “I proceed from the assumption that Nord Stream 2 will be completed. The question is when [this will happen].” Then in a message directed at Washington, Maas said “We make decisions about our energy policy and energy supply here – in Europe.”

This begs a question however – if Nord Stream 2 will be completed, why is it delayed instead of being completed?

It suggests that Germany does not have enough confidence to complete the crucial project for European energy security without approval from Washington despite Maas' claim that Europe will act sovereignly to complete the pipeline.

What Germany effectively does by not immediately completing the Nord Stream 2 demonstrates a tier system. Maas earlier this month threatened “targeted and disruptive sanctions” against Russia for the poisoning of opposition figure Alexei Navalny, without providing evidence that Moscow was responsible. This was also followed by immediate calls for sanctions against the administration of Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus.

Berlin understands that despite its sanctions against Moscow, Russia needs Nord Stream 2 operational to end its reliance on Ukraine to deliver energy to European markets. As Ukraine is openly hostile to Russia, it is an unreliable partner. With Russian energy bypassing Ukraine to reach European markets via Nord Stream 2, Kiev will lose significant leverage over Moscow, which is why Russia for now is willing to sideline German-led sanctions and accusations to ensure the pipeline project is completed.

However, Turkey continues to violate the sovereign rights of EU member states Greece and Cyprus in the East Mediterranean, threatens them with war on a near daily basis, and even broke United Nation Security Council resolutions by opening the beach of Varosha in occupied northern Cyprus. Despite this hostile actions against EU member states, German diplomats have openly announced that sanctions against Turkey will not occur. This is directly linked to German economic and domestic political interests. With over three million Turks living in Germany, they form a major voting bloc. Coupled with over 5,000 German businesses operating in Turkey, Germany consistently ranks as Turkey's largest trading partner.

With this we see a tier system in the unipolar world order where Washington stands at the top but Germany will defend its own economic interests with Turkey at the expense of EU member states so long as it does not clash with the interests of the U.S. At the bottom of the tier are the smaller EU states, especially those on the periphery of Europe, like Greece and Cyprus.

Germany's European Council Presidency came at a time when the global financial market is down as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Nord Stream 2 project is near completion, and when external states are directly threatening the interests and security of EU member states. These crises and major shifts in the European geopolitical and economic landscape gave Berlin the opportunity to demonstrate its leadership position and the EU's sovereignty from Washington as a unified bloc. Rather, Germany continually demonstrates to EU sceptics that the bloc is nothing more than a front for a German Fourth Reich, as many critics describe it, because of Berlin's indifference to aggression by its Turkish allies against Europe's periphery so it can protect its economic interests.

Parliamentary elections in 2021 could radically shift German foreign policy as Angela Merkel's near 15 years chancellorship is beginning to receive heavy criticism in Germany. While Merkel's so-called Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) has been indifferent to Turkey's sponsored invasion of the Armenian-majority Artsakh region, or more commonly known as Nagorno-Karabakh which is internationally recognized as a part of Azerbaijan, a

delegation of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) arrived in the warzone today to express solidarity directly to Armenian authorities. In fact, the AfD has maintained relations with the de facto Republic of Artsakh for at least five years, expressing its concern for Turkish expansionism and the existential threat Armenian Christians face.

The CDU portrays itself as a Christian, conservative and pro-European party, but has demonstrated neither Christianity, conservatism or pro-Europeanism in their dealings with Russia or Turkey. The AfD are certainly filling this void left by the CDU's own failure to uphold its own ideology and it can be expected that in 2021 more AfD members will enter parliament at the expense of the CDU. Germans are becoming frustrated that Berlin's policies are enabling Germany's subordination to Washington's interests while simultaneously pursuing anti-European policies. Berlin's opportunity to enter the new Multipolar World Order has been wasted in favor of maintaining a tier system where Germany can continue to dominate the EU but only with Washington's oversight.

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This article was originally published on [InfoBrics](#).

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