

Germany's Presidency of the EU Will Determine if the Bloc Joins the New Multipolar World Order

By [Paul Antonopoulos](#)

Global Research, July 17, 2020

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [History](#)

Relations between the U.S. and European powers like Germany and France are reaching a historic low. This is especially true after U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew a large portion of the American military stationed in Germany to other European countries and after German Chancellor Angela Merkel refused to travel to the G7 summit in the U.S. because of the out of control coronavirus situation in the North American country. Another major reason for the breakdown of relations is Washington's announcement that companies participating in the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project will be sanctioned.

Merkel said [in an interview](#) for The Guardian that the Germans grew up knowing that the U.S. wanted to be a world power. However, now that the U.S. is abusing its power against some of its strongest allies, Germany, which is currently holding the EU Presidency, could make efforts for the European bloc to be more independent of the U.S.

Although a multipolar world order has been emerging for over a decade, the pandemic has accelerated the redistribution of the current international balance of power. Europe has found itself needing to make an urgent decision – remain in Washington's orbit or establish greater independent thinking to serve its own interests. The idea of European independent decision making has been gaining clout. A strong advocate is French President Emmanuel Macron who speaks of the “brain death of NATO” and attempted to impose extremely high taxes on American network giants like Google. In fact, many of the major EU countries have pushing for the bloc to be more independent of Washington. This is contrast to most of the former Warsaw Pact members of the EU, like Poland and Lithuania, who are aggressively pro-U.S.

Along with Macron, Ursula von der Leyen often said that the EU Commission, that she is the president of, would make its own decision on its geopolitical direction. In addition, Merkel, who has taken on the leadership role in the EU for the second time, has chosen the motto for her second chairmanship: “Together. Making Europe Strong Again.” Some major European politicians now understand the geopolitical direction that Europe should develop – and if it wants to remain relevant it needs to find its own independent path. We are beginning to see this, especially with Germany strongly resisting pressure from the U.S. to cancel the Nord Stream 2 pipeline construction with Russia.

It is unlikely that Europe will fully break off from Washington's orbit due to historical and ethnic ties, but European independent decision making is becoming more apparent. The order by Trump for 10,000 U.S. soldiers to be withdrawn from Germany could convince Berlin and the other EU countries that it is time to reconsider the foundations of NATO that lost its legitimacy after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. This is why Europeans could

take a big step towards establishing a pan-European defense system or an organization that could replace NATO – a proposition that Macron fully supports.

While the U.S. remains the greatest military and economic power in the world today, it is clear that it is losing its global influence to China and Russia. Therefore, the U.S. will actively defend its status, whether Trump remains in power or his Democrat rival Joe Biden wins the upcoming election. The most important geostrategic interests for the U.S. will remain constant no matter who is in power.

Trump wants to block China's Belt and Road Initiative from expanding, keep Chinese companies like Huawei away from Europe's technological infrastructure, curb Chinese expansion in the Pacific region, and challenge Beijing's influence in Africa, Latin America and Central Asia. For her part, Merkel wants to use her upcoming meeting with the Chinese president to determine future relations with China. In fact, the EU is facing a dilemma: maintain its current relationship with the U.S. or gradually turn to China.

Relations between the major powers have become much more changeable than before. The EU has every opportunity to develop new models of cooperation between different civilizations, especially between Europe and Asia. An advantage Europe has is that it can emphasize thousands of years of trade between Europeans (beginning with Ancient Greeks and Romans) and East Asian kingdoms. However, for this to occur, Germany needs to make the first brave step of pursuing policies that are to the benefit of Europe and not the agendas of Washington. It is for this reason that Merkel is defying Trump's orders to stop the construction of Nord Stream 2. It is also why Macron is planting the idea of NATO being a redundant organization and that Europe must work towards normalcy with Moscow after European Union-Russian relations strained when Crimea reunited with Russia in 2014.

None-the-less, Germany's presidency over the EU may be the most important junction of 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.

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

Paul Antonopoulos is an independent geopolitical analyst.

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