

Western Leaders Have A History of Pandering to Washington's Whims

Few can match the hypocrisy and double standards of Western government leaders.

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Global Research, December 15, 2018

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Since the Second World War's conclusion, Europe's major powers have pandered politely to their master across the Atlantic, America. While the United States has waged war and ousted governments in regions around the world, European states like Britain, France and Germany have either bloodied their hands with them, provided aid, or nodded silent approval.

As populations across the West rebel against neoliberal globalization, cracks have been emerging. The strain has been exacerbated by the election of US president Donald Trump, whose severe sanctions on Russia have affected old allies like Europe's powerhouse, Germany. Heaven forbid that Germany, whose institutions have for years strangled the Greek economy, should suffer indirect consequences of sanctions against Russia.

Last year, then German Minister for Economics and Energy, Brigitte Zypries, denounced the US sanctions bill as "being against international law, plain and simple". Weighing in, German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel lambasted the "unacceptable" measures which demand "a much higher price" from Germany.

Yet it was not "against international law" when Angela Merkel, then opposition leader, vociferously backed the illegal 2003 US invasion of Iraq – ignoring protests from within her own party. Merkel said, "War had become unavoidable. Not acting would have caused more damage."

Merkel urged her country to "stand by America's side" in the illegitimate attack on a sovereign nation that would kill hundreds of thousands, while destroying Iraqi civil society. As German Chancellor Merkel assured the public, in 2007, that America is "a force that has brought freedom to the peoples of the world". The US has undeniably been "a force" but those who have suffered under American dominion may find the word "freedom" a contentious one.

Merkel's wisdom in supporting the Iraq invasion has almost been forgotten. Moreover, her ministers were not heard complaining that it was "unacceptable" when the European Union – with German backing – imposed a variety of measures on Russia relating to the Western-initiated Ukraine conflict. Sanctions are only "against international law, plain and simple" when it affects German business interests one can assume.

Merkel remained noticeably quiet as the US performed a key role in the unlawful

overthrowing of Ukrainian President, Viktor Yanukovich, in February 2014. She chose to “stand by America’s side” once more, offering no opposition that might have affected her “friendship” with then US President Barack Obama. Still, the Chancellor spoke up later as Russia reintegrated Crimea to its territory, overwhelmingly backed by the Crimean people. Merkel insisted that Russia “must not be allowed to get away with it”.

The Ukrainian coup has resulted in that country’s descent into chaos, but such a reality has never seemed of immediate concern to the German leader. America was “allowed to get away with” financing the putsch, or “brokering a deal” as Obama admitted on CNN in early 2015 – and also more forceful interventions elsewhere. All of this has not prevented Merkel from sanctimoniously addressing the rights of minority groups.

In May last year during a conference in the Russian city of Sochi, she said,

“I asked President [Vladimir] Putin to use his influence to protect these minority rights [homosexuals in Chechnya]. I have... indicated how important the right to demonstrate is in a civil society.”

The liberties of minority groups, it appears, are more important to Merkel than the rights of millions of Iraqi or Ukrainian citizens. Lecturing the Russian president on how to behave “in a civil society” served its purpose in public relations.

Meanwhile, in neighbouring France, its president Emmanuel Macron said,

“Tonight I wish to tell the United States, France believes in you, the world believes in you. I know that you are a great nation. I know your history – our common history.”

Perhaps by his description of “the world” Macron was referring to parts of Europe, Australia or Israel. It is doubtful whether many of those in Latin America, the Middle East or Africa “believes” in the United States at this late date.

Shortly after being elected, Macron further felt the need to rebuke RT and Sputnik for being “organs of influence, of propaganda, of lying propaganda”. Macron neglected to condemn other networks like Sky News, the BBC or CNN, who have been known to criticize Putin on occasion, while being far more supportive of the French leader.

One could be forgiven for attributing Macron’s comments to former British prime minister Tony Blair, partner-in-crime with George W. Bush in the invasion of Iraq. Blair has been attempting to rehabilitate his reputation in recent years with comments like “democracy is not on its own sufficient” and “you need effective government taking effective decisions”. The former Labour leader indeed made “effective decisions” by joining the US in waging a war that’s consequences continue to present. Blair’s viewpoints have been aired by a variety of establishment media.

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