2020/21

THE BERLIN PULSE

GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY IN PERSPECTIVE

With contributions by Gro Harlem Brundtland,
Paolo Gentiloni, Peter Altmaier, H.R. McMaster and others

Körber Stiftung

Involvement or Restraint?

53%

say their trust in American democracy has weakened in light of the election.

78%

feel that transatlantic relations will normalize again under Joe Biden.

82%

say that Germany should remain neutral in case of a Cold War between China and the United States.

43% / **23%**

view France / the United States as Germany's most important partner in foreign policy.

51% / **45%**

say Germany and Europe should become more independent from the US.
feel that Germany and Europe should continue to rely on the partnership with the US.

37%

perceive migration and refugees as the greatest challenge for German foreign policy.

85%

feel that democratic states are better suited than non-democratic states to meet the international challenges of the 21st century.

49% / **41%**

say that the COVID-19 pandemic strengthened solidarity within the EU.
say the pandemic has weakened solidarity.

A representative survey on German attitudes to foreign policy commissioned by Körber-Stiftung

Dear Readers,

THOMAS PAULSEN
Member of the Executive Board, Körber-Stiftung, Hamburg

Welcome to the fourth edition of The Berlin Pulse!

In last year's edition, we called 2020 an 'eventful year' with Germany's presidency of the European Council and the US presidential election. But no one would have thought that a pandemic might be added to the list of major events affecting German foreign policy and political priorities around the globe. One year – and a COVID-19 special edition of The Berlin Pulse in between – later, international policy-making is slowly adjusting to the new level of uncertainty the pandemic brought into our lives.

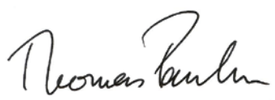
Despite these uncertain times, German public opinion on involvement or restraint in international crises remains solid as a rock: 44 percent of respondents say that Germany should get more strongly involved while 49 percent still prefer restraint. Since Körber-Stiftung posed this question for the first time in 2014, the public's perspective has barely changed.

In spite of this continuity, the present issue is also full of surprises and novelties. The idea of The Berlin Pulse is to identify potential gaps between German public opinion and expectations of international policy-makers. In 2020, another gap becomes an eye-catcher – the one between German and US public perceptions of the transatlantic partnership. A wide majority of US respondents considers Germany as a partner when tackling issues, such as protecting human rights and democracy (75 percent) or the environment (76 percent). By contrast, German respondents hardly reciprocate this feeling.

With the US presidential election just behind us, an increasing US-Chinese rivalry in which Europe risks becoming – as Pauline Neville-Jones puts it – 'the pig in the middle' and crises beyond COVID-19 on the horizon, the present issue dedicates one chapter to each of these three developments to which German foreign policy needs to respond.

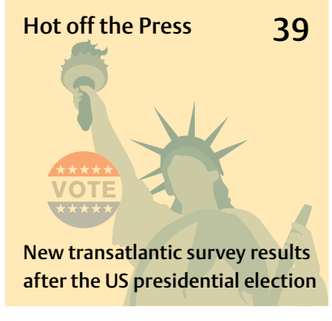
As the EU and the United Kingdom still try to find common ground, our survey brings together German and British public perspectives – a novelty of this year's issue. I wish to thank the British Embassy Berlin for the initiative and our great partner, the Pew Research Center, for fielding the US questions. My special thanks goes to our new editor Julia Ganter and her predecessor Joshua Webb. Their ideas and expertise made this timely fourth edition possible.

Looking at the contributions of this year's distinguished authors – such as the German Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy, Peter Altmaier, the former National Security Advisor to President Trump, H.R. McMaster, and the former Director General of the WHO, Gro Harlem Brundtland, to name but a few – I wish you an interesting read. One final note: some of our transatlantic survey results come hot off the press. More surprises guaranteed!



THOMAS PAULSEN
November 2020

Content



German Foreign Policy Beyond COVID-19

Exploring its partnership potential will be essential for Germany's responses to international challenges

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that international cooperation is indispensable for solving common challenges – or, as Gro Harlem Brundtland puts it, 'a virus knows no borders'. Migration – ranked by the German public with 37 percent as the number one foreign policy challenge for their country – is another challenge where joint efforts are paramount.

While 46 percent of Germans expect states to cooperate more once the COVID-19 crisis is over, 24 percent say that they will focus more on their national interests instead. German officials do not get tired of articulating Berlin's commitment to multilateralism and solidarity in the EU and beyond. Yet, Germany has to match actions to words and prove that national go-it-alone measures are not an option, and that its export ban on medical equipment at the very beginning of the pandemic was a unique faux pas.

Yet, those who want to cooperate need partners. To avoid being left alone, Germany not only has to be more proactive regarding its allies but also to be open to new partnerships.

Forty-three percent of Germans see France as their country's most important partner. In September – before the US presidential election – its importance was even higher for the German public (54 percent). The joint proposal for the European recovery fund was clearly Germany's attempt to prevent the EU's economic collapse during an unprecedented crisis. However, this can also be seen as a move to reach out to southern EU member states. It is also one recent example illustrating that the Franco-German engine is working again. A European strategy for the Indo-Pacific region could become another one.

So there is France. However, when Germans name their most important partner, other European countries such as Italy or Poland are not considered relevant options. Yet, for a middle power with a foreign policy strategy based on a cooperative and multilateral approach, one partner is hardly sufficient. Who else is there to cooperate with Germany?

The long-lasting Brexit negotiations might have brought the EU members closer together but they certainly did not improve the United Kingdom's standing as a trustworthy partner. The perception of the German public reflects this: only 1 percent say the country is Germany's most important partner. In contrast, 15 percent of Brits assign this role to Germany.

Looking across the Atlantic, the partnership with the United States – the guarantor of European security for the past 75 years – has changed. Under President Donald Trump it has lost its foundation: a shared belief in the rules-based order. Whether it is about the protection of the environment, democracy and human rights, dealing with China or promoting free trade, ahead of the presidential election a majority of Germans did not consider the United States as a partner. What is more, 25 percent perceived the United States and Trump as a foreign policy challenge. From a German point of view, the transatlantic relations had reached a new low.

With the election of Joe Biden, the future appears more positive: 78 percent of Germans expect the strained transatlantic partnership to normalize again and almost a quarter name the United States as Germany's most important partner (compared to 10 percent in September). In addition, the German government will have responsive counterparts in Washington again. However, the US retreat from global leadership is likely to continue as the Biden administration will have to focus on a plethora of domestic challenges, leaving it with little bandwidth to restore the relationship with Germany and other European allies. This might be the reason why – even with a change in the White House – 51 percent of Germans say that greater independence from the United States is needed.

When it comes to Russia, the recent developments in Belarus and the poisoning of the opposition leader Alexei Navalny have further strained an already complicated relationship. Many more Germans now perceive Russia under President Vladimir Putin rather as a challenge (27 percent in 2020 compared to 6 percent in 2019) than as a partner (5 percent).

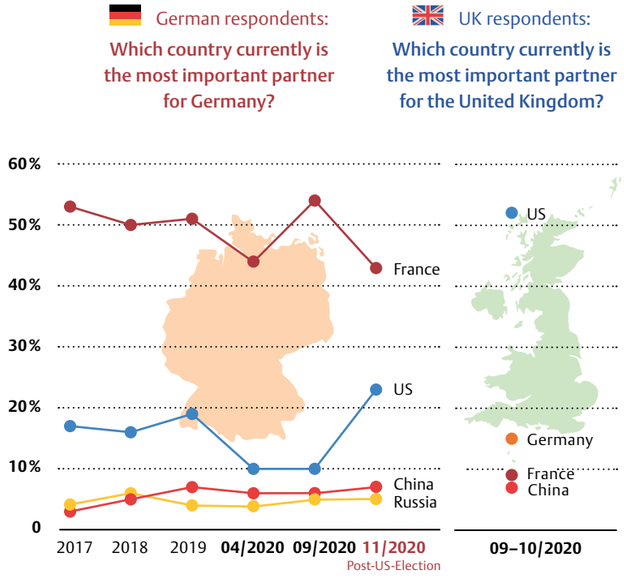
While experts debate whether a fundamental change in Germany's China policy has taken place, the government sticks to the idea of 'change through trade'. But what was a success for *Ostpolitik* might not work with China in the current geopolitical setting. In case of a US-Chinese Cold War, 82 percent of Germans would prefer their country to remain neutral instead of positioning itself next to one of the two superpowers.

The past years have shown that Germany's traditional partnerships are not a given and that different challenges might require different partners.

So what are Germany's options? The German public has a clear opinion on this: democracies! Eighty-five percent say that democratic states are better suited to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. This preference could become directive in the search for partners and evaluating common interests. Yet, dialogue should also continue with difficult actors not matching these criteria.

With regards to diversification, Germany's new strategy for the Indo-Pacific points in the right direction. Taking a closer look at African and Latin American countries might also bring to light more partnership potential.

In tackling foreign policy challenges during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, Berlin needs to do its homework vis-à-vis its allies, but it must also diversify its international relations and cooperate with other countries in a more flexible manner, based on shared interests and not only on legacies.



JULIA GANTER
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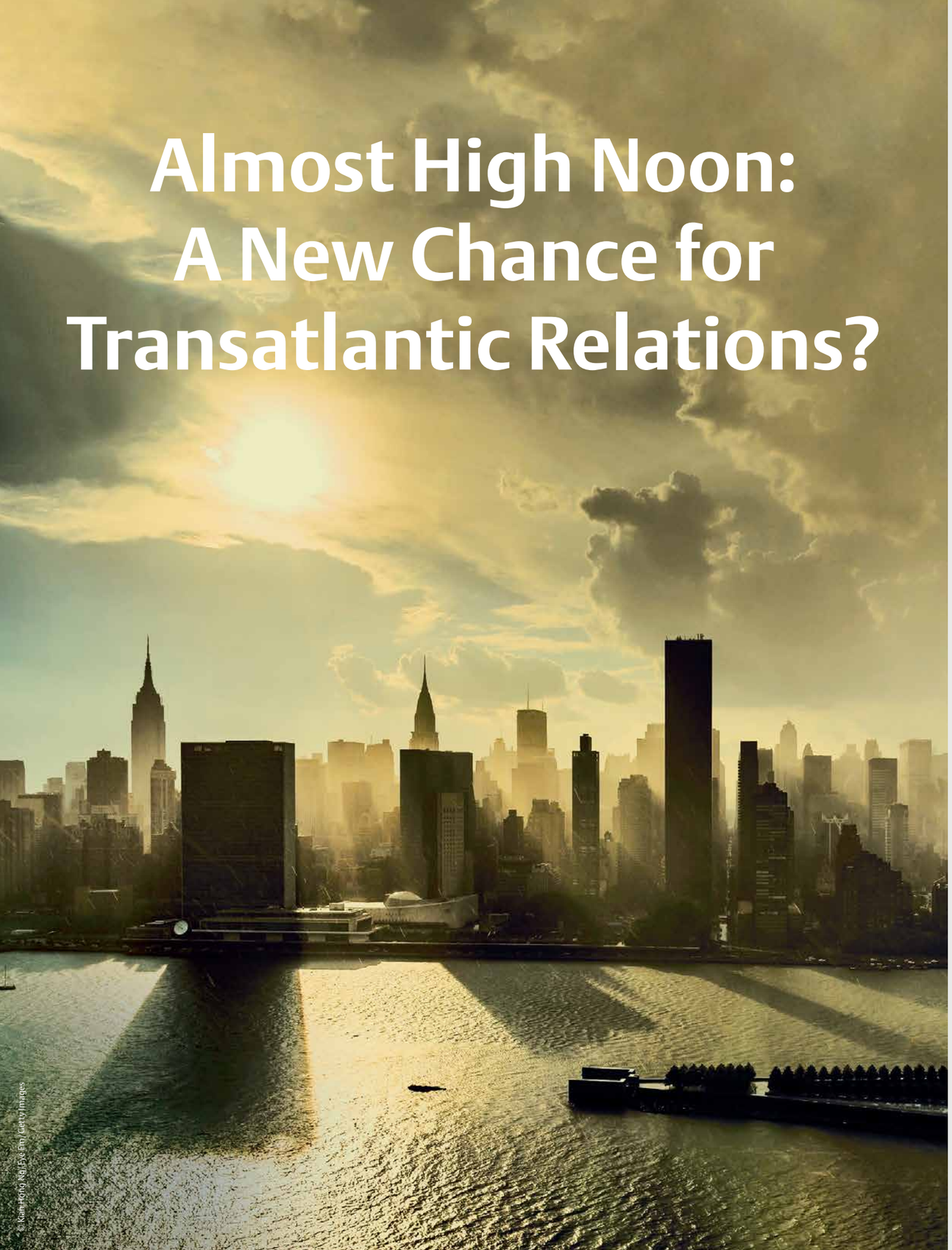
Almost High Noon: A New Chance for Transatlantic Relations?



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The past four years in transatlantic relations were a litmus test for committed transatlanticists. As the historian Michael Kimmage outlines, there have been many ups and downs since 1945. But the trend in public opinion demonstrated a worrisome transatlantic alienation during the Trump presidency. Now, all hopes rest on Joe Biden. But US contributors in this chapter warn: things will not go back to pre-2016. Former Congresswoman Jane Harman reminds us that nostalgia is not a strategy for transatlantic relations.

Before the election, relations with the United States were at an all-time low from a German perspective, with 79 percent (compared to 64 percent in 2019) saying they were very bad or somewhat bad. The United States was not perceived as a partner on most foreign policy issues, except when it comes to European security. After the election, 23 percent of Germans say the United States is Germany's most important partner in foreign policy, up from 10 percent in September. Nevertheless, 53 percent say the presidential election has weakened their trust in US democracy. Most strikingly, on a scale from 1 to 10, the United States receives an average rating of 5 from Germans when they are asked how democratic they perceive the country to be.

Americans for their part still say relations with Germany are very good or somewhat good (74 percent) and that they regard the country as a partner on most foreign policy issues. The incoming Biden administration can build upon this solid basis. Furthermore, 78 percent of Germans are convinced that transatlantic relations will normalize during Biden's presidency.

The transatlantic to-do list is long; for instance, when it comes to European security. Russia is seen by 27 percent of Germans as a challenge, up from 6 percent last year. Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius warns that Europeans finally have to do their part and fulfill NATO's 2 percent goal. For the way ahead, H.R. McMaster urges the United States and Europe to rebuild confidence. They also need to have patience, says Michael Kimmage. But the United States will return to the fold.

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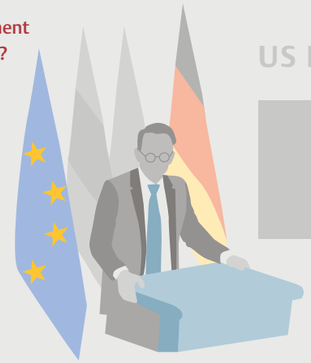
With which statement do you agree most?



US ELECTION

45 %
Germany and Europe should continue to rely on the relationship with the United States.

51 %
Germany and Europe should become more independent from the United States.

November 2020:
don't know 2 %, no answer 2 %

Two Possible Futures

An outlook on EU-US relations

Things will not go back to the way they were before 2016. Regardless of how one thinks Donald Trump handled the relationship with Europe and with Germany in particular, he was right that something was fundamentally off.

The fundamental reason for this is not personality but power, economic growth, and structure. China's rise – and especially its behaviour in recent years – has buried the notion that geopolitics was a thing of the past. In the United States, this realization dawned a few years ago and has now increasingly come to be accepted – belatedly, for sure, but definitively. This is leading to a re-examination of every facet of US foreign and domestic policy.

This must include US relations with Europe. US policy toward the continent will need to be shaped by the overall demands of dealing with China. Asia is the world's largest market, and China its most plausible aspiring regional hegemon. Accordingly, preventing China from dominating Asia will be the top priority for Washington. US policy towards Europe will necessarily have to follow from how Europe fits into that framework.

This means that the United States will have to economize its efforts and exposure in Europe. Politically, Washington will need to husband its capital for Asia rather than spend it on addressing European concerns or controversies that might have engaged it more fully in the 1990s or 2000s. It will also need to ensure its economic vitality, and thus that its companies and workers operate on as fair a basis as possible. The United States can no longer afford to look magnanimously beyond inequitable economic relationships, as it might have when it was by far the world's largest economy. And in the military realm, while it should certainly maintain its commitment to NATO, it will need to reduce the military requirements of doing so. Indeed, a major part of the long-term attraction of NATO for Washington is precisely its ability to maintain security in Europe with a reduced US effort.

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ELBRIDGE COLBY
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This means the United States will have to press Europe to do more. This applies to Germany more than anyone, given the country's size, strength, and economic health.

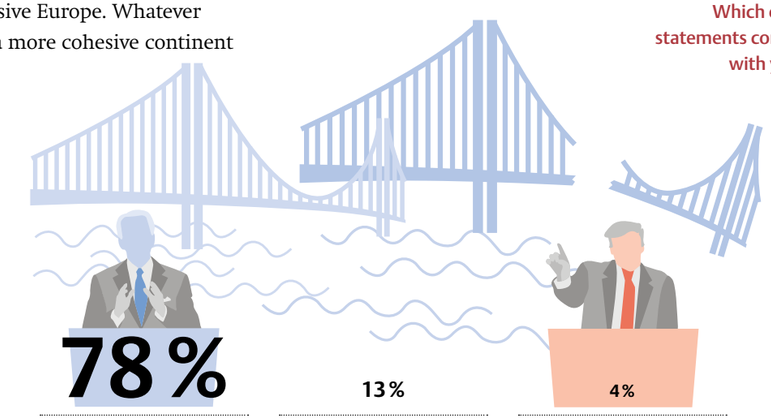
Beyond these constants there are, it seems, basically two broad futures for US-Europe relations. Because the United States will need to focus on China, especially in Asia, this means that its orientation is likely to be relatively fixed. Everything else will be adjusted in light of how it relates to that primary challenge. This is as true of Europe policy as of any other issue.

In one future, Europe, concerned by the threat an increasingly domineering China poses to its own security and prosperity, takes a firmer line vis-à-vis Beijing. This does not require poking China in the eye. But it will mean things like reducing Europe's exposure to China's coercive leverage, for instance with matters like 5G, and working with the United States to develop equitable trade agreements to create transatlantic and indeed global markets to match the scale of China's. It will also mean supporting vulnerable Asian states and Taiwan that seek to resist Chinese domination, helping developing countries to avoid Chinese debt traps, and assuming more security responsibility for defence of the European area as well as the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Levant. In this future, Washington will have very potent incentives to support a stronger and more cohesive Europe. Whatever scepticism it has about a more cohesive continent will pale before the primary need of ensuring it has strong allies to help balance China.

The other future is a more difficult one. In this, Europe seeks to avoid friction with China or even tries to chart a neutral or 'third pole' path between the United States (and its partners like Japan, Australia, and India) and China. Europe shies away from increasing its resilience to Chinese coercion. It avoids doing things that, by helping the United States, its partners and other states resist Chinese pressure, 'offend' Beijing. In this future, Washington's incentives toward Europe will be considerably different. Why would it want to encourage the strengthening of a cohesive Europe that is so profoundly misaligned with it on the central issue of the time? In this context, the United States will be better off working with individual European states that are more in sympathy with this goal and prepared to do something about it. Of course, China will do the same, turning Europe into an arena of competition rather than an active shaper of that competition.

It will be Europe's decisions about how it relates to China's growing power and influence that will drive US policy toward Europe. For its interests, and for the health of the transatlantic bond, Europe should seek to bring about the first future.

Which of the following statements corresponds most with your own view?



78 % – The transatlantic partnership worsened under President Trump and will normalize again under President Biden.

13 % – The transatlantic partnership worsened under President Trump and will remain the same under President Biden.

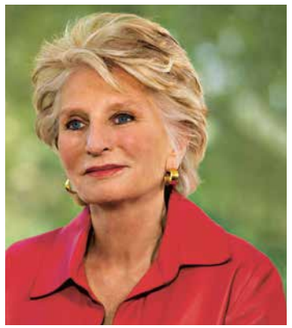
4 % – The transatlantic partnership did not worsen under President Trump.

November 2020: don't know 3 %, no answer 2 %

Overcoming Nostalgia

A stronger transatlantic relationship would empower the United States

Few would deny it: the transatlantic relationship has seen better days. On trade, hope of a grand deal has given way to a string of petty disputes, from steel to lobster. In the digital domain, American intelligence priorities have clashed with European privacy, a conflict that threatens to break the global internet into smaller pieces than it already has. In the Middle East, the US 'maximum pressure' campaign has collided and collided again with Europe's efforts to salvage the Iran deal, a tension steadily escalating all the way to the United Nations Security Council.



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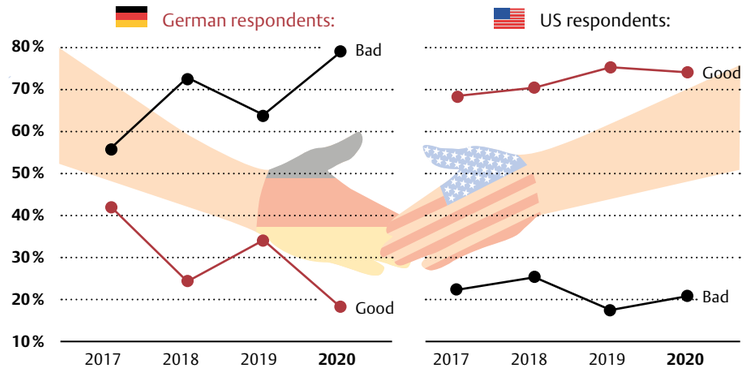
The lion's share of fault for this strain lies in Washington – and policy-makers in the United States should be ready to acknowledge as much. Too many of our officials have forgotten that American power is at its lowest ebb when we act alone. In that light, rebooting the alliance must be a priority for the next president of the United States, Joe Biden. But Europe must also understand that not every shift in American priorities can be chalked up to the current occupant of the Oval Office. In some respects, our foreign policy has changed because the world has changed around us. Nostalgia is not a strategy: US-EU ties must adapt to the world as it actually exists today.

To be sure, that effort starts with the United States getting its own house in order. For years now, we have systematically underfunded and understaffed our diplomatic efforts. Offices as critical as Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasian Affairs – or Ambassador to Ukraine – should not be going without Senate-confirmed appointees for months at a time. Partners as critical as Germany should be able to trust that the ambassadors we do send are consummate professionals, not representatives of a particular political party or the personal interests of the president. We have undervalued, too, our treaty commitments, recklessly withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, the

How would you rate the current relationship between Germany and the United States?



September 2020: don't know 2 %, no answer 1 %

September 2020: don't know 5 %

Pew Research Center

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and the Iran nuclear deal. Each move was an error. Reversing course is the kind of repair Joe Biden can start on inauguration day.

In other areas, though, the work of building a modern alliance will take many hands, and it will call for soul-searching in Berlin and Brussels as much as it does in Washington. If the Trump administration has been too reckless in its approach to China, for instance, Europe has sometimes been too slow to reckon with Beijing's growing aggression. As China grows more brazen, whether in Xinjiang or Hong Kong, the United States and Europe must rally around a coordinated response. Rather than fall prey to narrow temptations, we must exercise our shared economic power to defend shared principles.

Similarly, if the United States has spied too aggressively, Europe has sometimes seemed more interested in punishing American tech companies for it than in building an internet that harmonizes our values. There are positive-sum ways to improve security and privacy. Expanding the use of strong encryption is one; imposing the kind of 'data sovereignty' pioneered by China and Russia is not. Make no mistake: Washington has woken up to the urgency of surveillance reform — and of reining in the worst excesses of Silicon Valley. Europe is, understandably, impatient to see change, not to mention still scarred by the Snowden disclosures. But whatever our disagreements on the best way to create an open, secure, accountable internet, they are not so deep that it would be worth ripping the network into pieces. The importance of digital collaboration, whether on shared cybersecurity or the next leap in artificial intelligence, is only growing. There has never been a worse time to throw up new walls.

Across the foreign policy portfolio, whatever our current difficulties, the transatlantic alliance remains the world's indispensable relationship. We are too connected – by values, interests, markets, and networks – to give up on the work. President-elect Joe Biden will, I hope, make that a priority. I hope the same of the next chancellor. Because if the last several years have taught the West anything, it should be that the go-it-alone theory of diplomacy is a lose-lose.

Why Poll?

The relevance of public opinion in the United States and Germany

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Survey research has become a central feature of public debates about politics and policy in most democracies, and governance in these countries necessitates that public opinion be considered, even amidst legitimate scrutiny of election polling. Still, it is difficult to imagine what international affairs would look like if public opinion were sovereign, as James Madison, the fourth President of the United States and father of the constitution, argued.

Political leaders regularly cite polls when making claims that the public is on their side. While foreign policy may not always be a top-of-mind issue for average citizens, polling makes clear that they do have opinions, priorities, and concerns about international affairs. It is also clear that politicians are paying attention and that public opinion will be an important component of debates about the international challenges facing Germany and other nations. In thinking about the role of polling in foreign policy, two basic questions arise: Why poll on topics related to international relations, and how should the results of said polls play into the formulation of foreign policy?

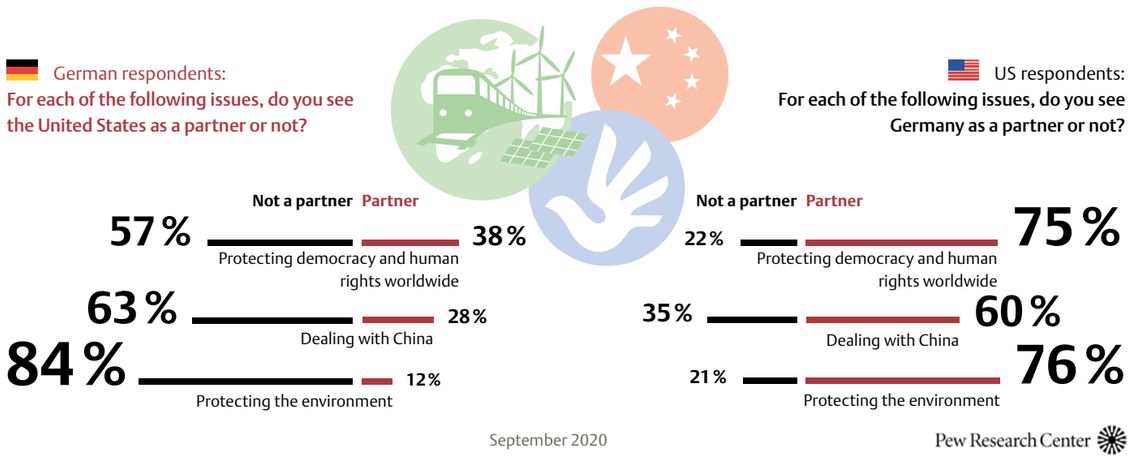
The clearest and most compelling rationale for polling is the fact that public opinion surveys give voice and agency to a long-neglected constituent of international affairs: the people themselves. In the mid-1960s, after two decades of examining the impact of public opinion on foreign policy and, in particular, the Second World War, many American political scientists grew skeptical of public opinion. The so-called Almond-Lippmann consensus suggested that public opinion was too volatile and incoherent to be of much relevance to policy-makers. However, more recent studies suggest that public opinion frequently does follow coherent values and sets of ideas. Contrary to many expectations, people do have opinions on heady issues such as the state of democracy or relations between countries.

To be sure, polling has its challenges. Poor-quality surveys can lead to incorrect conclusions, and polls can be manipulated to achieve a desired outcome and obfuscate, divide, or mislead. But high-quality, reputable polls remain an indispensable tool for understanding people's worldviews, their sense of justice and proper order in the world, and their support for or aversion to closer relations with foreign governments.

Recent polling, for instance, makes clear that many Germans have begun to re-evaluate their country's relationship with the United States. For the better part of a century, the country has served as an indispensable security guarantor for Germany and Europe more broadly, but during Donald Trump's presidency, America's image has turned sharply negative among Germans. Sure, Hollywood movies continue to appeal, as do most elements we consider part of US 'soft power'. But Americans are hardly perceived as a political partner, certainly not when it comes to dealing with China (say 63 percent of Germans in this year's The Berlin Pulse survey), nor for protecting democracy and human rights around the world (57 percent), nor for fighting climate change (84 percent). These numbers may reflect attitudes shaped in response to the current US president, but their legacy may linger. If the public has shifted its view of the United States and of Germany's role in world affairs, politicians would be wise to consider this. Public support could be critical for major policy changes in how Germany defends its borders, extends its influence abroad and defines risks to national security. Americans, for their part, are still likely to say the relationship with Germany is going well (74 percent). And, as opinions of China deteriorate across the democratic world, more in the United States prefer a close relationship with Germany (55 percent) than with China (35 percent).[1] Germans largely concur with this assessment. But the imbalance between public opinion in the two countries on the core question of their bilateral relations has implications for how leaders on both sides of the Atlantic handle their own relationship and their interactions with China. Both issues have profound implications for global affairs, especially in a world in which the two superpowers lack popular support.

Policy decisions, of course, are not simply about pleasing the public. Elected leaders need to lead. But inadequate consideration of public opinion can lead to perceptions of elite indifference and fuel the fires of anti-establishment populism. Used wisely, public opinion polls help illuminate areas of divergence and convergence between the worldviews of policy-makers and citizens. Leaders must traverse this topography if they wish to secure enduring policy decisions. A world without polling is a world in which the people's voice is severed from that of its leaders. Despite the challenges involved with conducting survey research, polling remains the best way of gauging the general populations' intent, fears and hopes. It ultimately remains the lifeblood of democratic discourse.

1 https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/10/06/unfavorable-views-of-china-reach-historic-highs-in-many-countries/



‘Transatlantic relations are irreplaceable’

Why Europe has to do its part

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **A prominent issue on the transatlantic agenda is the question of NATO burden sharing. In contrast to Lithuania, Germany still spends considerably less than two percent on defence. Is it in the end Berlin’s own fault that transatlantic relations are increasingly under strain?**

LINKEVIČIUS: That is not to blame on anyone here. Let us look strategically on the issue. I am convinced that transatlantic relations are irreplaceable. There were brighter and darker moments. For example, when France left the chain of military command. It is crucial that we pay attention to the two percent defence-spending goal we have agreed upon many years ago. I believe President Trump was right to put a more substantial emphasis on this topic by telling us to share responsibility. It is definitively not good that the two percent goal is not really fulfilled in NATO. Therefore, it is needless to say that we have to do our part and that the split in transatlantic relations could be detrimental to all of us. Not only from a security policy perspective, but also due to other possible common policies. I believe that we will come back to issues, such as trade, which we now push aside. Let us be honest, it is not the best time to discuss trade. Although I believe that it is unavoidable, and a topic we can only discuss together. The same is true for climate change. Both is unimaginable without the United States. We trust Germany and it is a decisive force in Europe. No matter in which policy area, the direction the continent will choose depends on Germany. Especially now, while we are facing difficult times, it is very important that Germany takes the lead and plays an active role. Otherwise, we face the undesirable situation of a vacuum.

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LINAS LINKEVIČIUS
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Lithuania

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **Would a US troop withdrawal strenghten the security of eastern NATO members at the expense of Germany?**

LINKEVIČIUS: We always said that we would be happy to host US troops, but not at the expense of Germany. From our perspective, the withdrawal of US troops from Europe would definitely be detrimental for the whole continent.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **Do you consider US sanctions against German companies or the threat of it a legitimate instrument to stop the construction of Nord Stream 2?**

LINKEVIČIUS: US policy has its own leverages. I believe sanctions are not the best instrument to be used in international politics. Nord Stream 2 is probably the only issue we publicly disagree on with Germany. It simply contradicts the policies and the principles the EU has agreed upon.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **Would you have wished for a more prominent German role during the crisis in Belarus, given that Germany was very active in the Ukraine conflict since 2014?**

LINKEVIČIUS: The answer is yes. Germany is the most powerful country in Europe. However, as neighbours, we all have to play a more prominent role and should share this task.

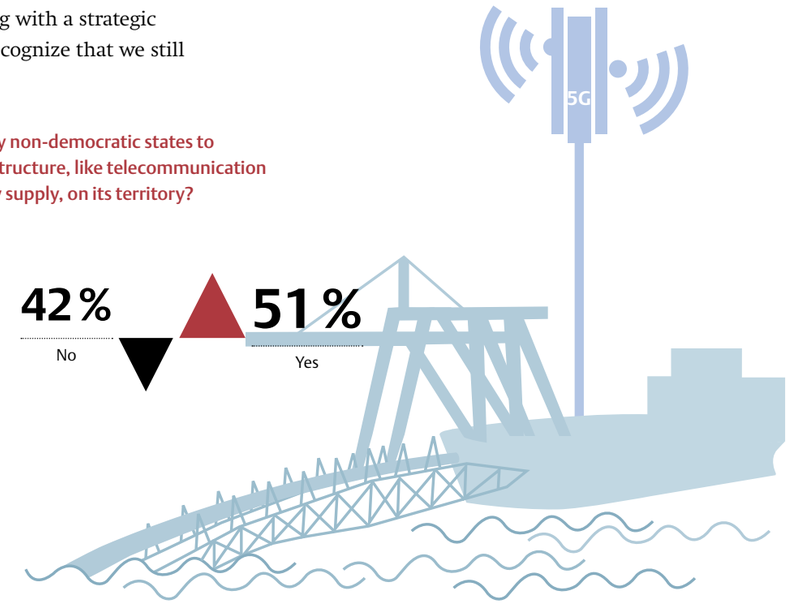
KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **During its presidency of the Council of the European Union, Germany has tried to establish a more coherent European stance towards China. Do you think that these efforts will lead to success in the future?**

LINKEVIČIUS: They should lead to success. A few years ago, we did not discuss China at all. This was a mistake. We are now starting with a strategic discussion on all fronts and recognize that we still need to do more collectively. What we have to do is setting rules and sticking to them, independent of the subject: be it trade, 5G or investment in strategic sectors. Concerning the latter, we have already identified the gaps in our industrial potential. In order to be competitive, we now have to invest more. The same holds true for pandemics. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we discovered that the only market to buy protection gear and ventilators was China. We need to develop and create some incentives and support for the industry, for example by engaging more in research and development. This is a task for all Europeans.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **Do you think that European countries should stop buying critical infrastructure from authoritarian states?**

LINKEVIČIUS: If we are still able to meet our needs, we should stop, yes. When you are trying to save lives, as during the pandemic, you might make a compromise and order what you need, regardless of the regime you are backing. However, the goal needs to be to fill those gaps that became visible during the pandemic.

Should Germany deny non-democratic states to provide critical infrastructure, like telecommunication technology or energy supply, on its territory?



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Competence and Confidence

The need for a sensible and sustained foreign policy

In 1989, I was a captain in the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment headquartered in Nurnberg. On November 9, 1989, our scouts watched as East German guards stepped aside and threw open the gates. The German people reunified. The Soviet Union broke apart. America, West Germany and our NATO allies had won the Cold War. There was reason for optimism, but the free world became overconfident. Today we face daunting challenges, in part, because overconfidence bred complacency.

Complacency stemmed from three assumptions about the post-Cold War era. First, some believed that an arc of history guaranteed the primacy of free and open societies over authoritarian and closed societies. The expansion of democracy was inevitable. Second, some assumed that old rules of international relations and competition had become irrelevant. A great-power condominium and global governance would displace rivalry. Third, some asserted that America's and NATO's military prowess would guarantee 'full-spectrum dominance' over any potential enemy. Military competition was over.

Today it is obvious that all three assumptions were false. Vladimir Putin's Kremlin is fostering a crisis of confidence in democratic governance, the European experiment, and the transatlantic alliance. The Chinese Communist Party is stifling the freedom of its own people and exporting its authoritarian, mercantilist model to reshape the international order in its favour. The Kim family regime in North Korea is developing the most destructive weapons on earth and it seems that Iran's theocracy is not far behind as it continues its destructive proxy wars across the Middle East. As Europe and America emerge from the pandemic and recession, they must work together to regain competitive advantages and overcome those and other challenges such as climate change and health security. If they fail to do so, the word will be less free, less prosperous and less safe.

Overcoming crucial challenges will require a high degree of competence. The first step in building competence is to overcome what we might call strategic narcissism: our tendency since the end of the Cold War to define problems as we would like them to be, and to indulge in the conceit that others have no aspirations or agency except in reaction to American and European policies and actions. In its most extreme form strategic narcissism appears in the belief that overly powerful and interventionist United States, sometimes aided by its allies in Europe, is the principal cause of the world's problems. But in reality, adversaries act based on their own aspirations and goals and US and European disengagement would not make those problems easier to overcome.

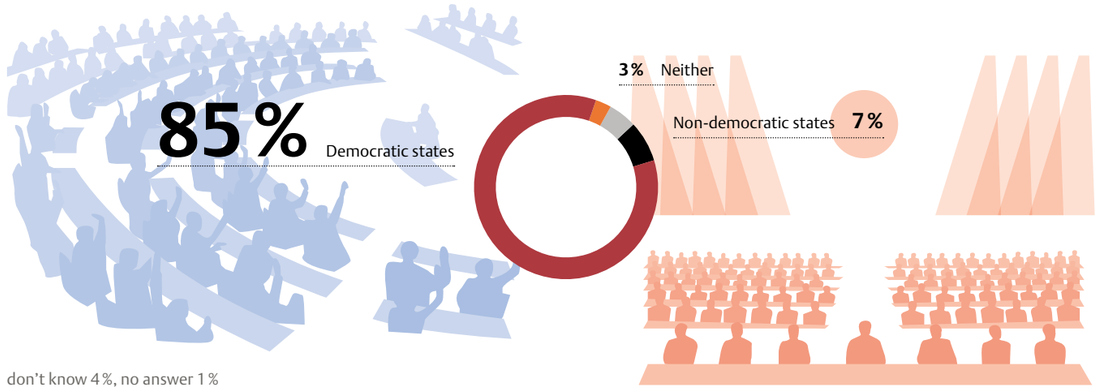
© Ray Kachatorian

H.R. MCMASTER
fmr. National Security Adviser to Donald Trump

Although the Trump administration was right to demand that NATO allies, especially Germany, do more to share the burden of collective defence, reducing US forces in Europe appears unwise at a time when Putin's principal rival was poisoned with a military-grade nerve agent and the Kremlin threatens to quash calls for freedom in Belarus. The impulse to withdraw from challenges abroad is likely to grow as the United States emerges from a contentious presidential election and the triple crises associated with the pandemic, economic recession, and social unrest sparked by the murder of George Floyd.

But there is an alternative: sensible and sustained engagement. The COVID-19 experience reinforces a fundamental lesson of 9/11: threats that originate abroad, if not checked, can move rapidly across our world. Seventy-five years after the most destructive war in modern history, we should remember that it is much cheaper to deter Russia and China than it would be to bear the costs of a catastrophic war. Sensible and sustained engagement might displace strategic narcissism with what the historian Zachary Shore terms 'strategic empathy', the recognition that others influence our collective future. But improved competence based on strategic empathy is not enough to build a better world. The United States and Europe must rebuild confidence as well. As the late philosopher Richard Rorty observed, 'National pride is to countries what self-respect is to individuals: a necessary condition for self-improvement.' If we lack self-respect, we will lack the confidence necessary to strengthen our partnerships and implement a competitive, sensible and sustained foreign policy. To generate pride in the free world, Americans and Europeans, when debating issues that divide us, might first devote at least equal time to what unites us – especially the principles that bind us together such as our commitment to freedom and human rights. And while prioritizing self-criticism and the acknowledgement of imperfections in our democracies, we might also celebrate the fact that our citizens have a say in how they are governed and can demand more competent policies and stronger cooperation to overcome the difficult challenges we face.

Who is better suited to meet the international challenges of the 21st century, such as pandemics, climate change, digitalization and international tensions?



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Transatlantic Ups and Downs

What our past can teach us about our future

© Asta Luitka

MICHAEL KIMMAGE
Professor of History, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

The two deepest lows of the transatlantic relationship were caused by war. The Vietnam War placed enormous strain not so much on the institutions of the relationship – it did not weaken the NATO alliance – as on the bonds of affection undergirding these institutions. Young Europeans especially, like many young Americans, were horrified by the long and brutal war in Vietnam. So too were most European governments. Western Europe's diplomats hated the war, and they worried about the loss of confidence that shadowed the American defeat in Vietnam. The Iraq War echoed all this. It was not universally rejected in Europe: Spain, Britain and several central European nations went along with it. Yet the unilateral thrust, the American efforts to divide 'old' from 'new' Europe, the never-to-be-found weapons of mass destruction and the mismanaged occupation made the Iraq War a turning point. It undermined trust in American stewardship. Then, George W. Bush's re-election in 2004 undermined European trust in the wisdom of the American electorate.

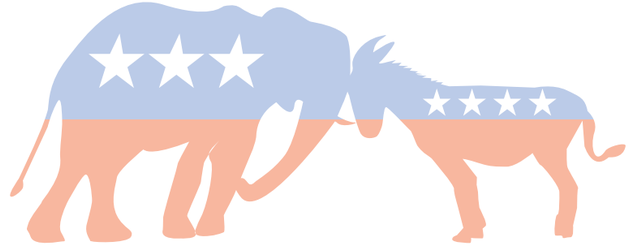
Devastating as these two wars were for the reputation of the United States, and disconcerting as they were to so many Europeans, they did not alter a pattern set in 1945. When President Harry S. Truman decided to stay in Europe after the war, he committed the United States to serve as a guarantor of European security. This commitment was mirrored in an array of informal connections, from commerce to tourism to academic exchange, that arose on both sides of the Atlantic. The better angels of the transatlantic relationship were democracy and multilateralism or what in the Cold War was referred to as the 'West'. John F. Kennedy gave this West its most lyrical articulation, when he listed the freedoms available only on the western side of the Berlin Wall in the summer of 1963. Also in the name of the West, Washington encouraged the growth of the EU, beginning in the 1950s with the interlinking of the French and German economies. The Cold War

West was an antagonist of the Soviet Union, and it was a kind of proto-Europe. Terrible as it was, the Vietnam War did not prevent the apotheosis of the transatlantic relationship in 1989, which was Germany's and Europe's reunification. Nor did the Iraq War prevent a genuine German-American partnership from flowering when Barack Obama was elected. Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Obama agreed that the old transatlantic pattern is still relevant, accessible and good.

From this up-and-down history, Europeans can learn three lessons:

- **Do not assume that the United States is inevitably transatlantic** in its foreign policy. This is an obvious point for the Trump era, but nevertheless a useful working assumption – even when the transatlantic relationship is flourishing. For Europeans, this is sobering, given that the US security commitment to Europe is much more meaningful than the European security commitment to the United States. A key component of European foreign policy should be to convince Americans outside of Washington that a secure and peaceful Europe enhances the security and the prosperity of the United States, and that together Europe and the United States have accomplished and can still accomplish a great deal for democracy and multilateralism – serving those better angels.
- **Cultivate the Republican Party,** the less 'European' of the two American parties. Republicans are harder for Europeans to work with: they are less inclined to multilateralism, believe in gun rights, do not believe in abortion rights and tend to be sceptical about the EU. Yet, without the genuine enthusiasm of the Republican Party, the transatlantic relationship will wither away – election by election – unless Republicans can be made to support a transatlantic agenda. The German and other European government should reach out to up-and-coming Republican diplomats, governors, members of Congress and intellectuals.
- **Have patience.** American politics was designed to be a chaotic collision of interests, and this is what it is. Jimmy Carter rejected Nixon's foreign policy as corrupt. Ronald Reagan rejected Carter's foreign policy as naïve. Bill Clinton rejected Reagan's foreign policy as old-fashioned. George W. Bush rejected Clinton's foreign policy – pre-9/11 – as hubristic. Obama rejected Bush's foreign policy as aggressively wrong. Trump rejected Obama's foreign policy as progressive and therefore deluded. Biden will likely retain elements of Trump's conflict-ridden China policy. He is certain, though, to reverse the spirit of Trump's foreign policy, its emphasis on ethno-nationalist unilateralism, its indifference to democracy and human rights and its hostility to the European Union in general and to Germany in particular. Polarization and disagreement are the norm for the United States, as are bad foreign-policy decisions. But behind these colourful reversals, and behind the many wrong turns, is an approach to foreign policy that goes back to Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, in which the ideals of democracy and – since Woodrow Wilson – of multilateral deliberation are enshrined. Historically, the United States has deviated and returned to this approach, which is the common ground of the transatlantic relationship. Since 2016, it has deviated mightily. Amid the many present-day uncertainties, the United States is still likely to return to the fold.

What has a bigger impact on your perception of the United States?



37 % US domestic policy

39 % US foreign policy

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‘Its centre of gravity will always be in the transatlantic space’

How NATO can adapt to future challenges

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **With a globally changing debate on China, NATO also devotes more attention to the country. Could you describe which events influenced how NATO is thinking about China?**

GOTTEMOELLER: When I arrived at the NATO Headquarters in 2016, China was very far away and did not figure very highly in NATO’s considerations. In addition, the main missions of NATO are in Europe and the fight against terrorism was very much front and centre at that time. When North Korea tested their long-range missiles and did another nuclear test in 2017, the alliance really woke up to the fact that these missiles could land in Berlin, Paris or Los Angeles. Asia suddenly seemed less far away from Europe. At this point, we began to talk to the Chinese about developing a political military dialogue.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **How do you evaluate Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg’s approach to call for NATO to respond to China’s growing global presence, and simultaneously emphasize that there is no need to place NATO troops in the Indo-Pacific region?**

GOTTEMOELLER: NATO depends on bringing troops and equipment from the United States and Canada to exercise and – in the case of crisis or conflict – to reinforce troops in Europe. It became a concern that – with its Belt and Road Initiative – China started to control some of these facilities in Europe. It was an important decision to focus not only on the opportunities but also on the challenges China presents. Secretary General Stoltenberg was right to be very alert to China’s presence in Europe instead of deploying troops to the Indo-Pacific. NATO is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Its centre of gravity will always be in the transatlantic space, rather than in Asia.

© Erik Luntang

ROSE GOTTEMOELLER
fmr. Deputy Secretary General, NATO; Lecturer, Stanford University, Stanford

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **Do you not see a risk of neglecting NATO’s core tasks, such as to ensure European security, especially vis-à-vis Russia?**

GOTTEMOELLER: I do think NATO must remain focused on its core tasks. At the same time, it must remain alert to the kinds of threats that China may pose going forward, including threats directly in Europe. We will have to work through how NATO should respond to that. Yet, I want to point out that cooperation with China and the Chinese military exists, such as the operation to shut down the piracy in the coastal areas of Somalia in 2015.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **What does the current sense of transatlantic estrangement mean for NATO’s ability to develop a coherent approach towards China?**

GOTTEMOELLER: President Trump has been very tough on all NATO allies with regard to their defence-spending. Especially on Germany. The next American president will remain tough on Europe for defence-spending purposes. There currently also is a very uncompromising attitude in Washington on China. The actions taken on big Chinese companies, such as TikTok and its owner ByteDance, are examples for the strong point the Trump administration is making. However, I am wondering whether trade necessities will not temper the American view in the long run.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **How should we best think about the intensifying rivalry between Washington and Beijing?**

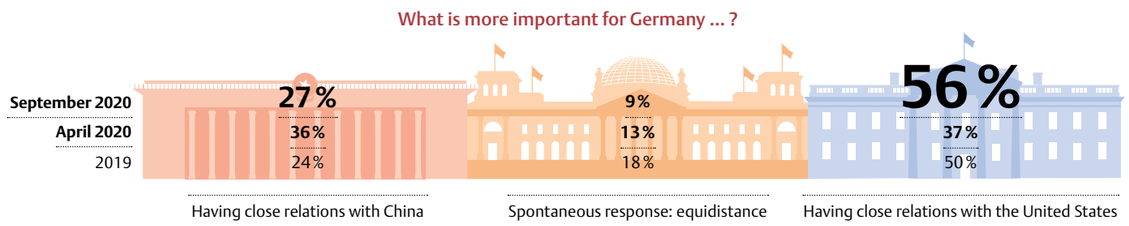
GOTTEMOELLER: It is very serious that the two sides cannot talk anymore. This was a feature of the Cold War and came to its most horrible fruition with the Cuban Missile Crisis. The greatest danger I see nowadays is that the two sides are no longer trying to work through difficulties. Despite Beijing's relative weakness in the defence arena, there is still potential for crisis, and especially military crisis.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **One way to reduce the risk of military escalation would be to include China in the arms-control architecture. What could the United States do to convince China to join such talks?**

GOTTEMOELLER: It was a bit strange that the administration demanded that China should be included in the extension of the New START Treaty. The United States and Russia have several thousand warheads that are not deployed on strategic missile systems. In comparison, China has fewer than 500 warheads. It is good that President Trump now suggested inviting China for negotiations later on, after the United States and Russia have agreed upon a deal. Frankly, I think that is the way to engage China.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **In terms of defence policy, what kind of advice would you give to the German chancellor regarding the future of the transatlantic relations?**

GOTTEMOELLER: I think it is important for the German government to recognize the strong support for NATO across the US body politic. Particularly in the Congress, which controls the budget. There are some limitations on what can be done in the White House. In our Department of Defense and elsewhere in the executive branch, there continues to be strong support for Europe and for the relationship with Germany overall.



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Sitting on the Fence: Europe's Position in Great-Power Politics

© Francisco Seco/Getty Images

Under the Trump administration, tensions between the United States and China have increased, leading to a trade war with both countries imposing protectionist duties on each other's goods. So are we in the middle of a new Cold War? While some experts use this analogy, Kori Schake and Yao Yunzhu lay out why they do not consider it suitable.

Irrespective of what we call the current developments, the question remains how the European Union and its member states should position themselves in this great-power competition. When asked, 56 percent of Germans say that close relations with the United States are more important than with China. However, 82 percent of respondents in Germany and 68 percent of respondents in the United Kingdom would prefer to remain neutral in a US-China conflict. Pauline Neville-Jones explains how Europe can avoid being caught in the middle.

During the course of 2020, many European governments decided to restrict market access for Huawei or even banned the Chinese company as a supplier of 5G infrastructure. The contribution by Paolo Gentiloni demonstrates that the European Union recognizes the necessity to move towards enhanced European sovereignty and to reduce economic as well as technological dependencies. By contrast, the German public is still torn: 51 percent of respondents say Germany should ban the provision of critical infrastructure by non-democratic states, whereas 42 percent say it should not.

While the survey results do not give a clear answer to the question of whether COVID-19 has strengthened (49 percent) or weakened (41 percent) European solidarity, the ongoing pandemic has certainly had one effect. It has accelerated the debate about a reshaping of the world economy and has turbocharged some countries' desire to roll back their global trade and investment ties. Yet, as Ng Eng Hen points out, increased European economic independence should not lead to isolation but to more cooperation with like-minded partners in the Indo-Pacific. According to Vijay Gokhale, India and the EU should partner to strengthen multilateralism and to counterbalance 'China's unipolar dream'. Europe has to walk the line between political cooperation and economic independence – without losing its balance.

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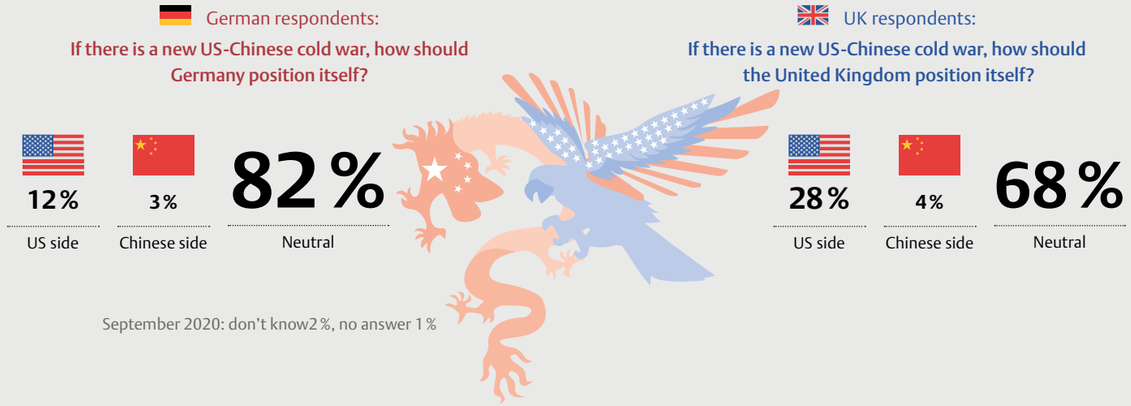
Editor, The Berlin Pulse, Körber-Stiftung, Berlin



Full Tilt for the Multilateral Trading System

What Germany can and should do in light of loosening US-Chinese economic ties

The conflict between the world's two largest economies, the United States and China, which has been lasting for years now, is impacting on the global economy, and of course also placing a burden on the EU. At the end of the day, trade conflicts, looser international value chains or spirals of tariffs do not help anyone, but are rather harmful to everyone.

The current COVID-19 crisis in particular has shown the world that open markets, reliable rules and a stable European and international policy environment are indispensable in order to prevent unilateral dependencies and make our supply and value chains more resilient. We need fewer, not more, tariffs and a strong, modern multilateral trading system. The Federal Government has continued to work towards this, not least during the German presidency of the Council of the EU. I am convinced that open trade is an important driving force to enable the entire world economy, including that of Europe, to emerge stronger from the crisis. For this purpose, we need a strong, reformed World Trade Organization and modern free trade and investment protection agreements.

Germany and the EU are engaged in a dialogue with both China and the United States – a dialogue for a positive trade agenda. Since the end of the Second World War, the United States has been our closest ally and one that shares our values – in political, economic, military and cultural terms. Our economies are closely intertwined. In 2019, the United States accounted for 9 percent of Germany's exports. Germany ranks fifth behind China, Canada, Mexico and Japan among the United States' most important trading partners.

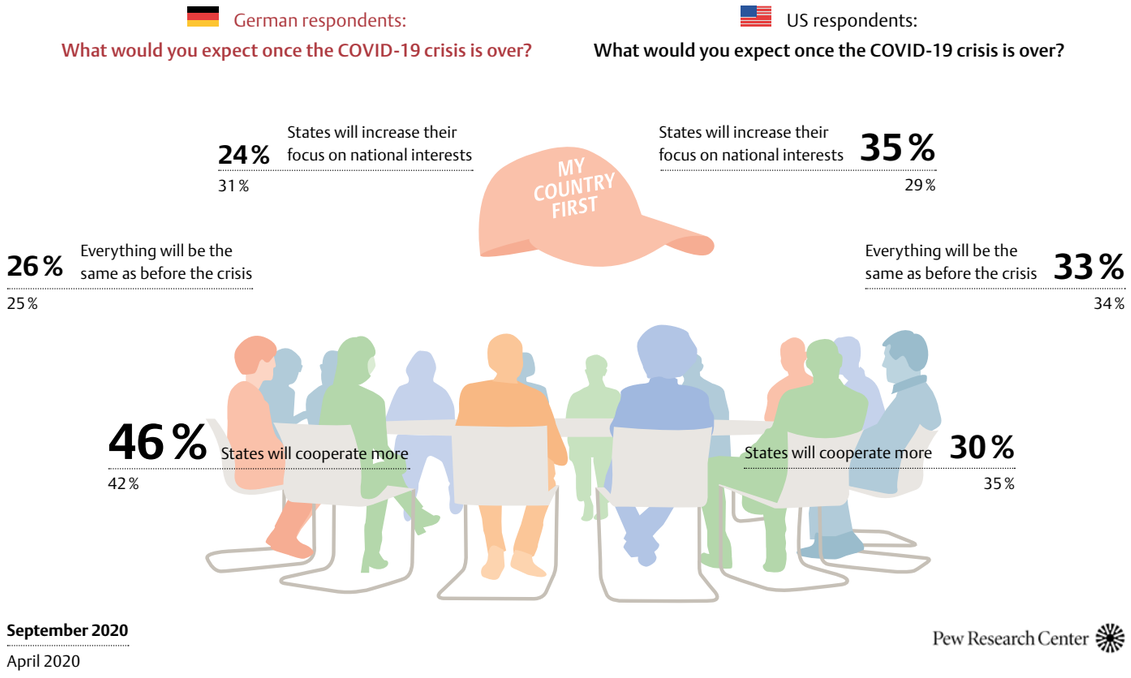
© BPA/Steffen Kugler

PETER ALTMAIER
Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy, Germany

In the last few decades, Germany and Europe have also considerably intensified their economic relations with China. In 2019, the EU was China's number one trading partner, while China was the second-largest trading partner for the EU. Germany accounts for around one-third of the EU's trade with China. For us, the rule of law and respect for human rights have always formed the basis for good economic relations. The EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, which the two sides have been negotiating for years, would mark a big step forward. It is our aim to improve access for European investors to the Chinese market and create a level playing field. For this purpose, the policy environment needs to be harmonized for domestic and foreign, and for private and state-owned, enterprises. In the context of Germany's presidency of the Council of the EU, we have been making great efforts to advance the negotiations.

In contrast, the United States has fundamentally reassessed its relationship with China in the last few years. It is the US administration's economic-policy aim to reduce the bilateral trade deficit with China and persuade the country to adjust its economic policy, which is characterized by state control. I am convinced that, should we witness a further rapid loosening of the economic ties between the United States and China, this would be harmful for both countries as it is competition on common markets that generates innovation, growth and efficiency.

The German Federal Government is therefore pressing hard for a global trading system on the basis of a strong World Trade Organization. With a population of approximately 450 million people and a share of more than 16 percent of global GDP, the EU is a key political and economic player when it comes to actively creating a level playing field. We are using our full weight to ensure that the United States will in the future again, and China will perhaps increasingly, join forces with us in strengthening the multilateral trading system in everyone's interest, and to everyone's benefit.



Three Questions to...

Paolo Gentiloni, Commissioner for Economy, European Commission

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: How can the European Union position itself in the light of increasing Sino-US tensions?

GENTILONI: In the past troubled years, the European Union and its member states have responded to the need to defend cooperation at all levels without brushing aside traditional alliances. On the contrary, these alliances remain our key and most essential reference point – even more in a constantly changing geopolitical environment.

The COVID-19 crisis and its economic and social effects point out once more how important it is to protect resolutely the Union's strategic interests and values. Some thought that democracies could fail the test of this crisis. We are showing that, despite all difficulties, this is certainly not the case. On one side, the international community has to act in solidarity and responsibility. On the other side, the EU has to take its share of both. If we raise our heads and look in our nearest surrounding, whether it is the Mediterranean or our eastern neighbours, we see how much European action is needed. If we do not play our role, others will do it.

The current crisis also demonstrates that there are vital common interests with our global partners, including China. This is true for international security and free trade as well as in other areas, such as health, climate change and the preservation of cultural heritage worldwide.

© European Commission

PAOLO GENTILONI
Commissioner for Economy,
European Commission, Brussels

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: Can the EU counterbalance the increasing weaponization of economic tools, or will Brussels have to acclimatize to an era of geo-economics?

GENTILONI: For the EU, rules-based multilateralism is the very essence of how we work – at home and abroad – for and on behalf of a single market of close to 450 million citizens. In this context, the Commission has launched reflections; for example, on how to strengthen Europe's economic and financial sovereignty or on how to increase the international use of the euro. The Commission has also started what I would call 'economic diplomacy'; that is, to engage more with international partners and to explain what we do in the Economic and Monetary Union, and how others could benefit as well. Yet, we must also be ready to defend ourselves against unfair practices from third countries. For example, when European companies face unfair competition. The new foreign investment screening regulation is one of the examples that show how we are currently improving our defence 'arsenal'.

We are fully attached to change by design – not by destruction. Europe will use its weight to lead reforms, of the World Trade Organization or the World Health Organization, together with like-minded partners. In doing so, we should not forget other emerging players, such as Africa. Without them, it would not only be wrong, but rather impossible to define the right balances of our future world.

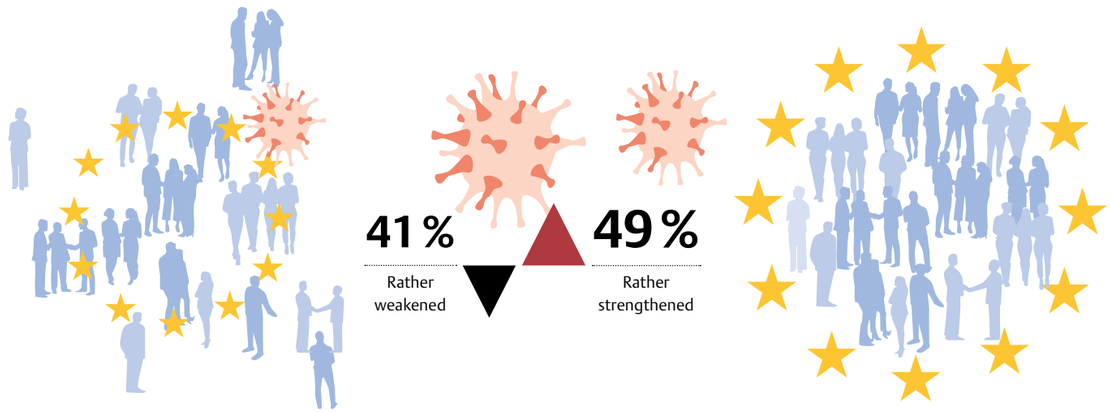
KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: What can Germany and other member states do to maintain the international economic role of the EU?

GENTILONI: As President Ursula von der Leyen has said, 'if Europe is to play this vital role in the world – it must also create a new vitality internally.' Primarily, this requires a strong and resilient economy. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have struck a historic agreement on the 'Next Generation EU' recovery instrument, which shows our determination to avoid a dangerous fragmentation of the Union.

Second, it is essential to strengthen the EU's internal cohesiveness. We can only step up if we speak with a strong, common voice. From an economic policy perspective, the EU has made significant progress over recent years in aligning positions in the G20, the World Bank and multilateral development banks. We need to continue building on this.

Finally, the European Union is only as strong and ambitious as its member states want it to be. If they acknowledge the collective capacity of the EU to preserve their economic independence and their sovereignty, I count on them to support the Commission in its ambitious objectives within the frame of a rules-based multilateralism.

Has the COVID-19 pandemic rather strengthened or rather weakened solidarity within the EU?



neither 5 %, don't know 4 %, no answer 1 %

Caught in the Middle?

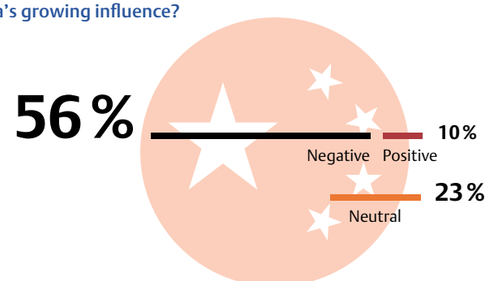
How Europe can maintain control over its future

China-US relations are shaping up to be the divisive power struggle of the 21st century. There are both similarities and differences with the Cold War of the twentieth century. Similar is the fact that we are already acquainted with a world divided in two blocs. But there is a big difference too. During the Cold War, the level of trade between the Soviet Union and the West was minimal. By imposing tough commercial sanctions on the Warsaw Pact, Western democracies faced little tension. They could focus on protecting and advancing their political-military interests and values without notable commercial sacrifice. Today, there is potentially a high commercial price to pay if globalization goes into reverse, and with COVID-19 leaving behind a significant aftermath and big economic challenges of its own.

©Pauline Neville-Jones

PAULINE NEVILLE-JONES
Member, House of Lords;
fmr. Security Adviser to
David Cameron, London

UK respondents:
What is your view of China's growing influence?



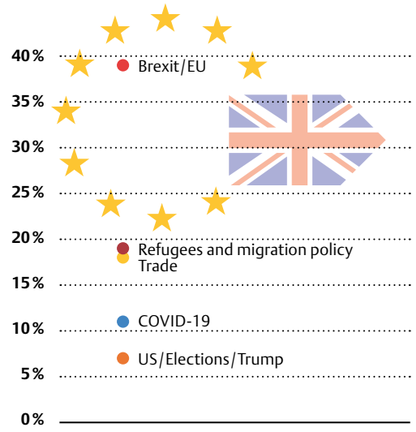
Moreover, the East-West political frontier in the Cold War went straight through the middle of Europe. This kept Europeans focussed on their political survival as free societies and created the same imperative for the United States. Discipline was injected into the Atlantic alliance and its military embodiment NATO, which kept us on track despite transatlantic differences. This transatlantic discipline is lacking today. The geography of the challenge of China makes it much less compelling for Europeans while the United States – or at least the Trump administration – conducts policy on a largely unilateral basis in which allies are pressurized to conform without sharing in policy-making. This is self-defeating. China can, will and has exploited the absence of Western solidarity. It is to be hoped that the next US-administration will change the way in which American policy towards China is made.

All that said, Xi Jinping's policies are helping the Allies to converge in their attitudes towards China. There are plenty of examples: the forced transfer and theft of industrial intellectual property by cyber and other means; the breaking of international agreements and norms (Hong Kong is one of the more flagrant examples); the treatment of the Uighurs; the suppression of domestic freedoms; the lack of transparency over COVID-19 when millions of lives are at stake. Combined with a continuing lack of transparency over the corporate governance of companies like Huawei, this has led directly to the beginning of what has come to be known as 'decoupling'. In consequence, western governments started with the reversal of integrated manufacturing, the breaking of supply chains as over 5G, increased onshoring of manufacturing and restrictions on inward Chinese investment.

So how far should we let this go? Europeans and Americans may be coming closer together about China and taking similar policy steps in some areas. But this does not amount to a shared strategy about ends or means. Policies without frameworks tend to be led by events and the more this is the case, the greater the danger of military incidents having unintentional but serious consequences. China's military capability is significantly smaller than that of the United States but this does not prevent the world – and the South China Sea in particular – from becoming a more dangerous place.

We Europeans, not being principal players, risk being caught in the middle of a contest controlled by others. We should not let authority over our future be taken from us, ending up as 'pig in the middle'. For this, we need to act. European countries, including the United Kingdom joining her traditional EU partners, should make a sustained approach in Washington. Their common goal should be to arrest the current downward trend in transatlantic relations by formulating a joint strategy towards China, one that also promotes and supports democratic values worldwide. This strategy should also include an agreed conditionality in relation to third countries when they fail to meet criteria. Such a strategy would avoid being uniquely aimed at Beijing. The dual-track approach adopted by the West during the Cold War is relevant here. If we cannot achieve this larger objective, we need to work out a Europe-wide policy and encourage democracies like Japan and Australia to join us. Germany and the United Kingdom have a lot of shared interests and attitudes. Without getting involved in angry institutional debates, it should be possible to agree on some national security norms. This could be a contribution to a wider strategy and involve matters, such as export control, inward investment and – a big issue for the future – international research cooperation in science and technology. The stakes for us all are high.

UK respondents:
What are the greatest challenges currently facing British foreign policy?



Multiple answers possible

Pax Sinica

Europe's dilemma in facing the Sino-Russian axis

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ALEXANDER GABUEV
Senior Fellow and Chair, Russia in the Asia-Pacific Program, Carnegie Moscow Center, Moscow

As the transatlantic community enters a new political cycle following the US presidential election, rivalry among great powers looms increasingly large. Two players stand out as the most problematic for Europe. First, there is the familiar challenge of dealing with a belligerent Russia. Second, there is an increasingly assertive China. What is new is that these two challenges get ever more conflated. Beijing and Moscow are entering into a relationship that is also increasingly asymmetric, with the latter gradually becoming the junior partner. The emergence of a Sino-Russian axis as the backbone of Beijing-centred order in Eurasia – a Pax Sinica – has profound security and economic implications for Europe and Germany.

China and Russia have gradually deepened their ties over the last three decades. Since solving their territorial dispute in 2004, they share a need for peace along their 4,200 kilometres border – the alternative is too risky and too costly for two nuclear states. Then there is the natural economic complementarity between commodities-exporting Russia and a resources-hungry China. In addition, the two authoritarian regimes do not criticize each other for illiberalism at home, and they share a common agenda in global fora on issues like internet governance.

On top of that, both Beijing and Moscow are in confrontation with the West. Following the war in Ukraine and the introduction of western sanctions, Russia is increasingly looking to China for markets, technology and money. Meanwhile, Beijing taps Moscow's support for the modernization of the People's Liberation Army, and it looks at the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) as a testing ground for a geo-economic order dominated by Chinese technical standards. Chinese economic inroads into Russia are driven by the western sanctions. Ironically, they come at the expense of European, particularly German, businesses. For

Involvement or Restraint?

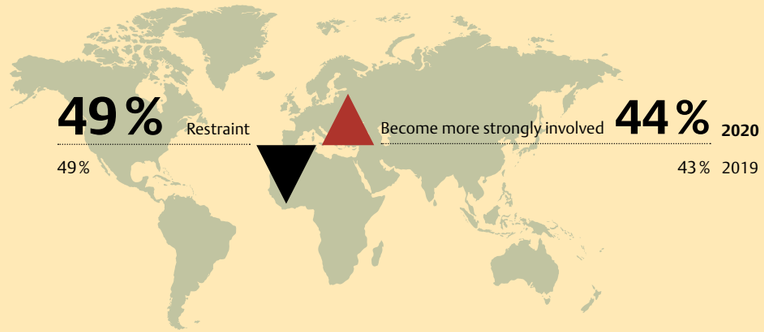
A representative survey on German attitudes to foreign policy commissioned by Körber-Stiftung

in September 2020 (p. 33–38; 41–44) and November 2020 (p. 39–40).

All US results by Pew Research Center

German Foreign Policy: Challenges, Partners and Priorities

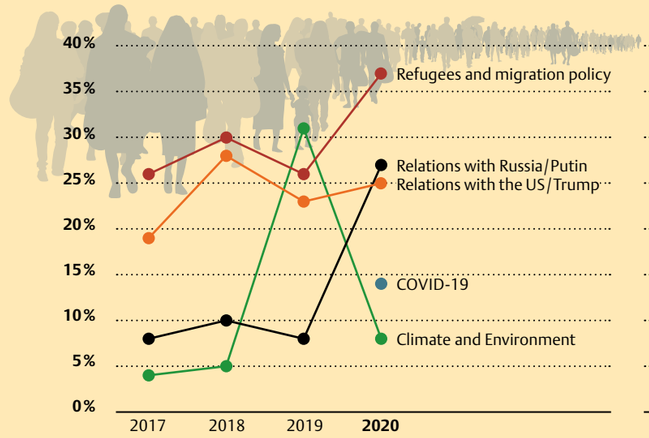
International responsibility: Should Germany become more strongly involved in international crises?



2020: don't know 5 %, no answer 2 % | 2019: don't know 5 %, no answer 3 %

German respondents:

What are the greatest challenges currently facing German foreign policy?

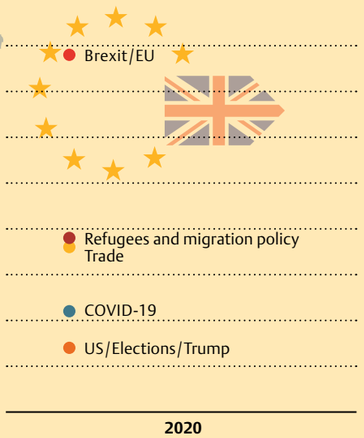


Multiple answers possible

© iStockphoto.com/Route55/FaberInk

UK respondents:

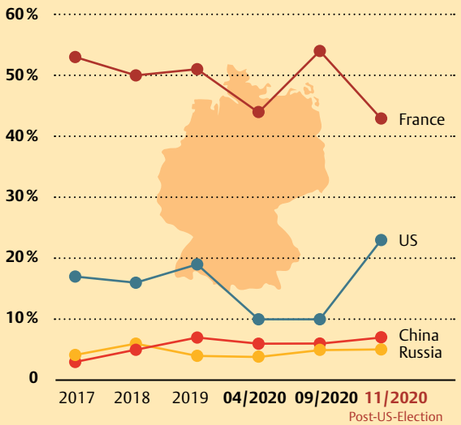
What are the greatest challenges currently facing British foreign policy?



Results from the UK by YONDER.
In cooperation with British Embassy Berlin

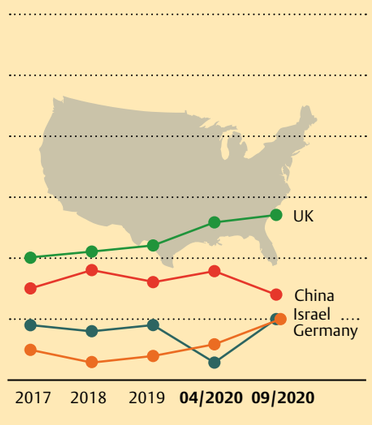
German respondents:

Which country currently is the most important partner for Germany?



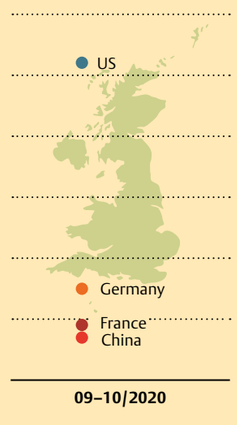
US respondents:

Which country currently is the most important partner for the United States?



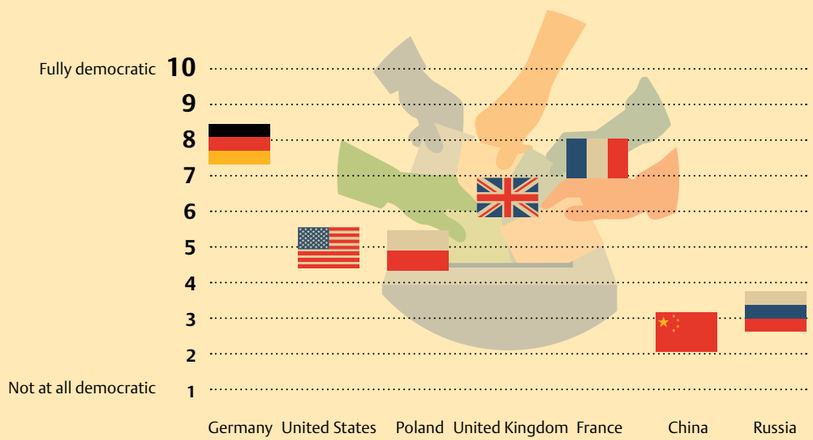
UK respondents:

Which country currently is the most important partner for the United Kingdom?



In previous editions the results referred to added value of the most and second most important partner.

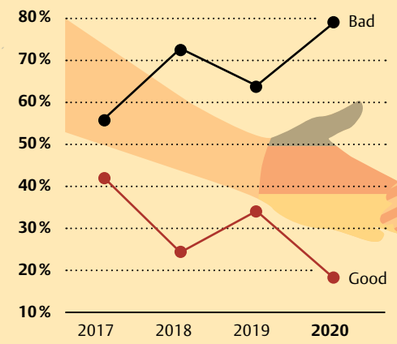
How democratic do you think the following countries are?



Transatlantic Relations

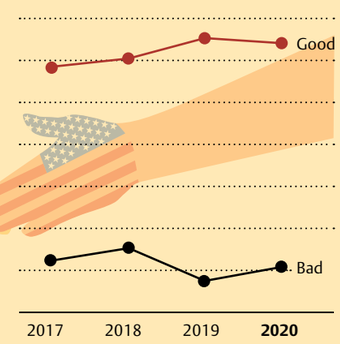
How would you rate the current relationship between Germany and the United States?

German respondents:



September 2020: don't know 2 %, no answer 1 %

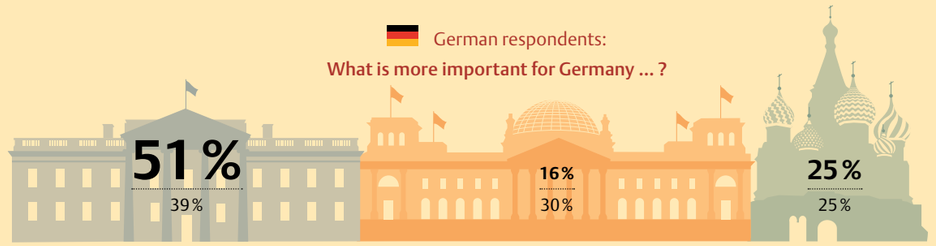
US respondents:



2020: don't know 5 %

German respondents:

What is more important for Germany ... ?



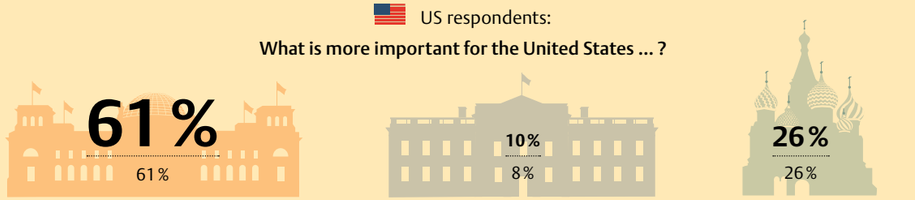
Having close relations with the United States | Spontaneous response: equidistance | Having close relations with Russia

September 2020: don't know 5 %, no answer 3 % | 2019: don't know 5 %, no answer 1 %

2020
2019

US respondents:

What is more important for the United States ... ?

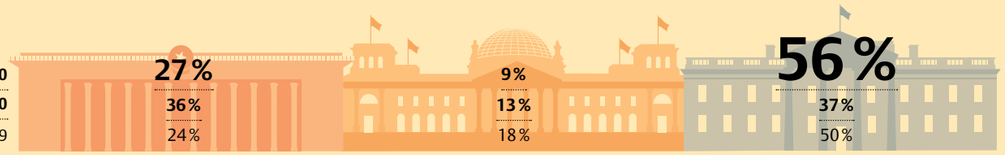


Having close relations with Germany | Spontaneous response: equidistance | Having close relations with Russia

September 2020: neither 1 %, don't know/no answer 3 % | 2019: neither 3 %, don't know/no answer 4 %

German respondents:

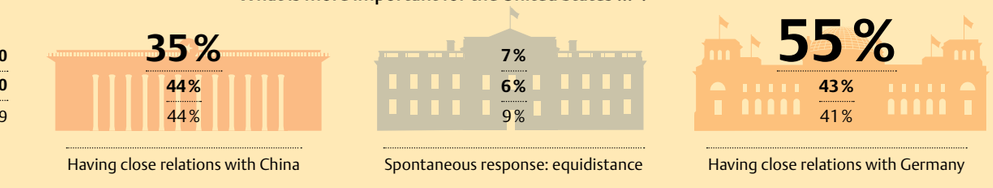
What is more important for Germany … ?



September 2020: don't know 6 %, no answer 2 % | April 2020: don't know 10 %, no answer 4 %
2019: don't know 6 %, no answer 2 %

US respondents:

What is more important for the United States … ?



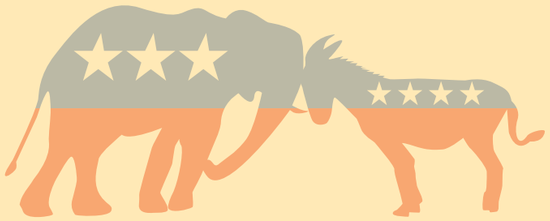
September 2020: don't know/no answer 1 % | April 2020: don't know 4 %, no answer 3 %
2019: neither 2 %, don't know/no answer 4 %

What has a bigger impact on your perception of the United States?

37 % US domestic policy

39 % US foreign policy

neither 18 %, don't know 5 %, no answer 1 %



Which aspects of US domestic policy particularly influence your perception of the United States?

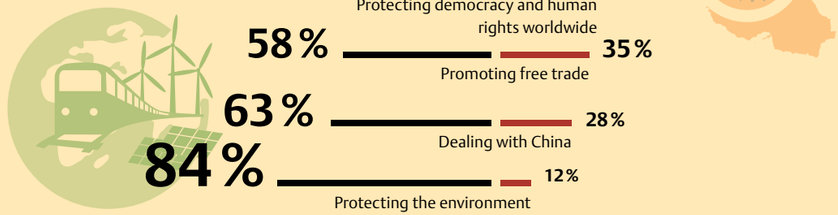
30 % Racism/protests

28 % Trump

10 % Health and social issues

German respondents:

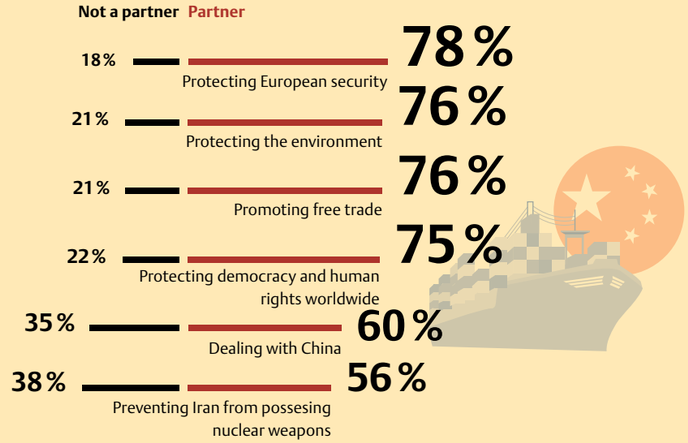
For each of the following issues, do you see the United States as a partner or not?



answer 'neither' ranged from 1 to 6 percent for all issues

US respondents:

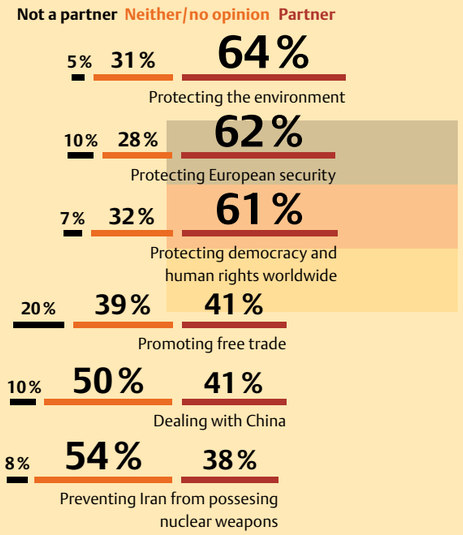
For each of the following issues, do you see Germany as a partner or not?



answer 'neither' ranged from 1 to 6 percent for all issues

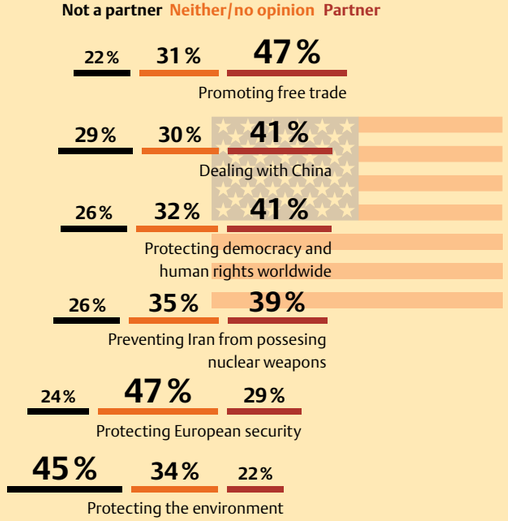
UK respondents:

For each of the following issues, do you see Germany as a partner or not?



UK respondents:

For each of the following issues, do you see the United States as a partner or not?

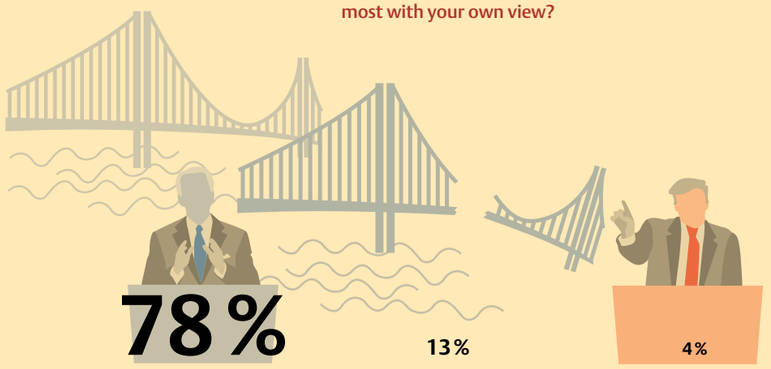


For UK respondents neither/nor was actively offered as one possible response option.

Hot off the Press – Transatlantic Relations after the US Presidential Election

The following five questions were posed to the German public between 6 and 10 November 2020

Which of the following statements corresponds most with your own view?



78%
The transatlantic partnership worsened under President Trump and will normalize again under President Biden.

13%
The transatlantic partnership worsened under President Trump and will remain the same under President Biden.

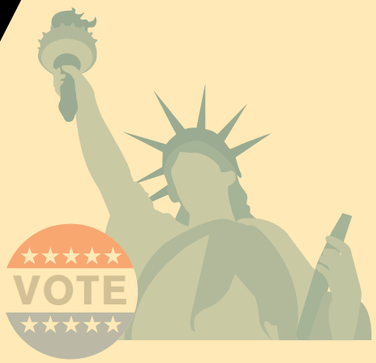
4%
The transatlantic partnership did not worsen under President Trump.

don't know 3%, no answer 2%

Has the US election rather strenghtened or weakened your trust in US democracy?

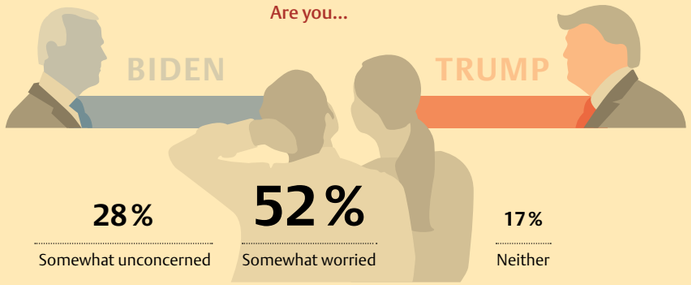
53%
Rather weakend

34%
Rather strenghtened



neither 7%, don't know 5%, no answer 1%

What does the US election mean to you personally? Are you...



28 % Somewhat unconcerned

52 % Somewhat worried

17 % Neither

don't know 2 %, no answer 1 %

With which statement do you agree most?

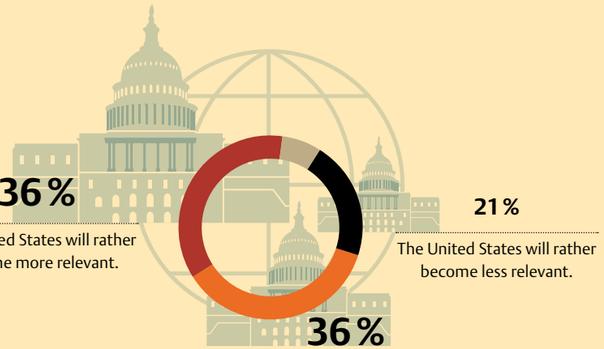
US ELECTION

45 % Germany and Europe should continue to rely on the relationship with the United States.

51 % Germany and Europe should become more independent from the United States.

don't know 2 %, no answer 2 %

How will the international position of the United States develop within the next four years?



36 % The United States will rather become more relevant.

21 % The United States will rather become less relevant.

36 % The United States will be as relevant as before.

don't know 5 %, no answer 2 %

Europe-US-China Triangle

How likely is the possibility that the current US-Chinese confrontation turns into a Cold War?

German respondents:

42 % Somewhat unlikely / Very likely **9 %**
48 % 7 %

Very unlikely **5 %** / Somewhat likely **40 %**
8 % 35 %

US respondents:

25 % Somewhat unlikely / Very likely **18 %**

Very unlikely **14 %** / Somewhat likely **41 %**

2020
2019

2020: don't know 3 %, no answer 1 %, 2019: don't know 2 %

2020: don't know 2 %

German respondents: If there is a new US-Chinese cold war, how should Germany position itself?

12 % US side

3 % Chinese side

82 % Neutral

UK respondents: If there is a new US-Chinese cold war, how should the United Kingdom position itself?

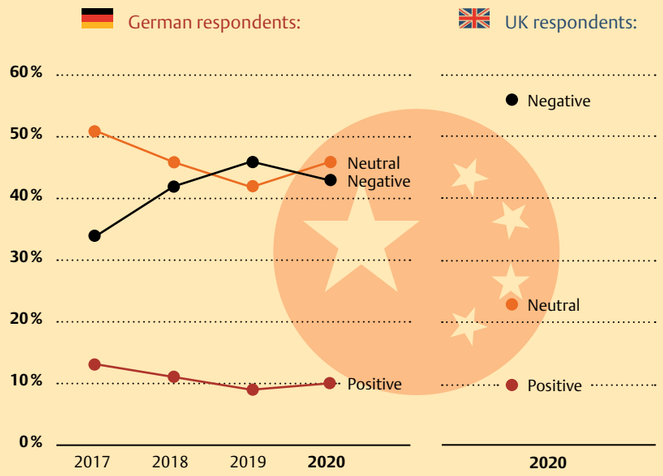
28 % US side

4 % Chinese side

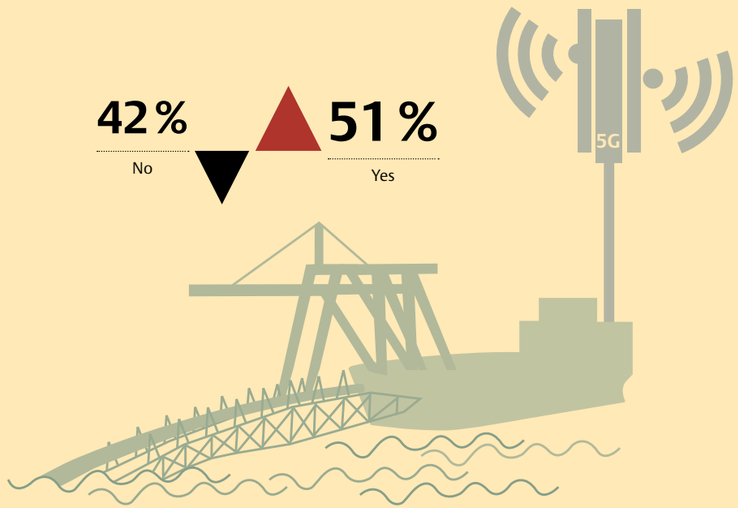
68 % Neutral

don't know 2 %, no answer 1 %

What is your view of China's growing influence?

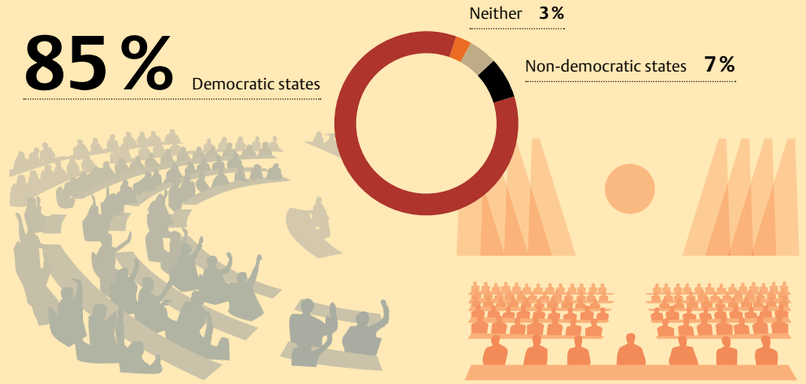


Should Germany deny non-democratic states to provide critical infrastructure, like telecommunication technology or energy supply, on its territory?



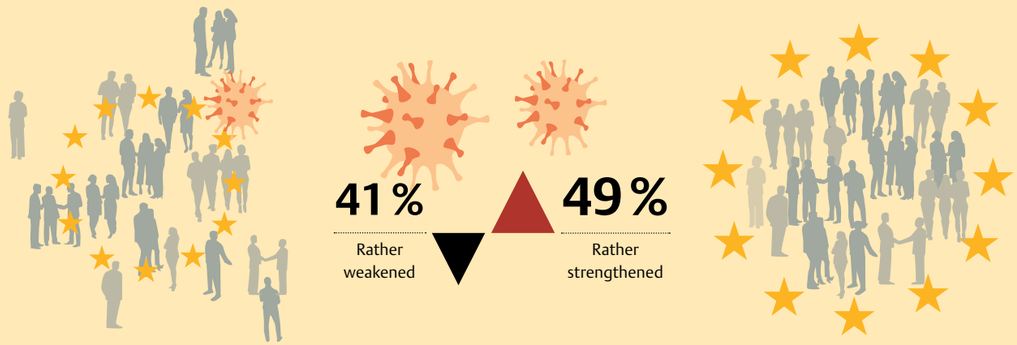
don't know 5 %, no answer 2 %

Who is better suited to meet the international challenges of the 21st century, such as pandemics, climate change, digitalization and international tensions?



don't know 4 %, no answer 1 %

Has the COVID-19 pandemic rather strengthened or rather weakened solidarity within the EU?



neither 5 %, don't know 4 %, no answer 1 %

German respondents:

What would you expect once the COVID-19 crisis is over?

24 % States will increase their focus on national interests

31 %

26 % Everything will be the same as before the crisis

25 %

46 % States will cooperate more

42 %

US respondents:

What would you expect once the COVID-19 crisis is over?

States will increase their focus on national interests **35 %**

29 %

Everything will be the same as before the crisis **33 %**

34 %

States will cooperate more **30 %**

35 %

September 2020

April 2020

The survey for Germany was commissioned by Körber-Stiftung and carried out by KANTAR PUBLIC Germany in September 2020 or as indicated in November 2020. Telephone interviews conducted with a representative random sample of 1,005 participants in September and 1,058 participants in November. (Margin of error: < 1.4 percent for unit values of 5 percent; < 3.1 percent for unit values of 50 percent). German data and results available at www.theberlinpulse.org.
The survey for the United States was conducted by SSRS for Pew Research Center in September 2020. Telephone interviews conducted with a representative random sample of 1,007 participants. (Margin of error: +/- 3.66 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.)
The survey for the United Kingdom was conducted by Yonder on behalf of the British Embassy Berlin in September and October 2020. Online survey with a sample of 2,096 participants. Data is weighted to be representative of the population of the United Kingdom (Margin of error: +/- 2.2 % at the 95 percent confidence level for unit values of 5 percent).

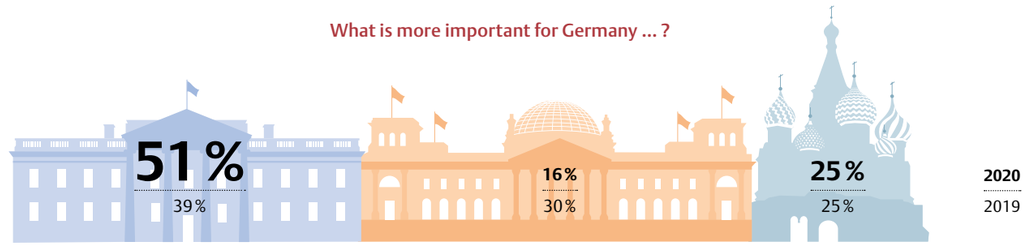
example, in 2016 China surpassed Germany as a major source of equipment and technology-related products in the Russian market, and in 2019 Russia imported nearly 2.5 times more in hi-tech products (US$30.8 billion) from China than from Germany.

The strengthening of the Sino-Russian axis is against western interests. First, resources provided by Russia to China, like the newest arms or help in fundamental research, boost Beijing's assertiveness. Second, with Moscow becoming increasingly dependent on Beijing, there is a risk of the two capitals starting to work in tandem in regions like eastern Europe or the Arctic, as well as to coordinate closely on matters affecting the global commons. Finally, Russia and the EEU becoming firmly embedded into Pax Sinica will help Beijing to extend its sphere of influence into continental Eurasia – and it will reduce Russia's ability to maintain strategic autonomy and thus decrease its chances for a gradual political transformation in the future.

The European and German approach to the Pax Sinica challenge needs to be rooted in a clear-eyed look at Sino-Russian relations. Despite the growing asymmetry of these and rising concerns about it in the Russian elite and society, it is unrealistic to expect the Kremlin to turn its back on China in order to reset relations with the West. A pragmatic and friendly relationship with China is far too important for Russia's security to trade it for some elusive gains with the West. At the same time, Russia's disagreements with Europe are profound and there are no quick fixes for them on either side. Finally, Europe has a problem with regard to incentives since most of the sanctions against Russia are likely to remain for the foreseeable future. Still, in the Sino-Russian axis it is the Kremlin that wants to maintain strategic autonomy and independence from China, and that is why the West should direct its policy at Moscow.

Europe's policy should start with a clear identification of those elements of Sino-Russian cooperation that are detrimental for EU's interests and that whose direction it can influence. An honest internal discussion on the side effects of the sanctions is long overdue, and there should be careful consideration of future sanctions that could undermine western interests and push Russia deeper into China's embrace at the same time (for example, a potential ban on selling European 5G equipment). Finally, Germany should play a leading role in keeping channels of communication with the Kremlin open, including on China. This dialogue, properly communicated to and supported by Germany's allies, such as those in eastern Europe, is a tool of diplomacy, not a reward. Unfortunately, Russia's counterproductive behaviour makes this strategy very difficult to execute, even with a transatlantic consensus appearing on the horizon.

What is more important for Germany ... ?



2020: don't know 5 %, no answer 3 % | 2019: don't know 5 %, no answer 1 %

Taking a Side?

Diverging perspectives on a new Cold War

KORI SCHAKE
Director, Foreign and Defense Policy Studies, American Enterprise Institute, Washington D.C.

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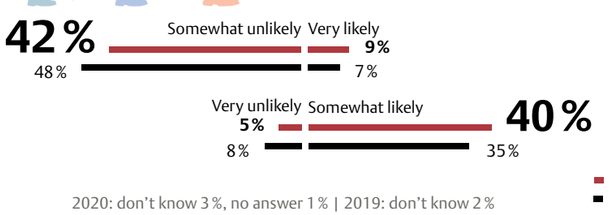
Major General (retired), Member, Academic Committee, Center for International Security and Strategy, Tsinghua University, Beijing

There has been considerable debate on the nature of the intensifying confrontation between China and the United States. Are we entering a new Cold War?

There are important differences between the Cold War and the current challenges the West faces in a rising China. Perhaps most important is the scale of Chinese population, and the interconnectedness of its economy with ours.

The Chinese leadership has explicitly rejected the idea of a new Cold War and most people in China do not perceive this analogy as suitable. There are too many differences: China and the United States neither pose an existential threat to each other, nor are they ideological deadly enemies. They are not grouped into opposing military alliances and do not have the desire to instigate proxy wars. There is no clear geographical front line for military confrontation, such as the one between West and East Germany during the Cold War. They are not isolated economies, nor do they hold antithetical views on international systems and institutions. In addition, China and the United States, as nuclear-weapon states, are mutually deterred by possible conflict escalation. Peaceful coexistence is the only choice.



2020: don't know 3 %, no answer 1 % | 2019: don't know 2 %

What is the best way to understand the rivalry between China and the United States?

For twenty years, we offered China the opportunity to become prosperous by opting into the existing international order. We believed that would create a rule-abiding China. As China has grown more prosperous, its political leadership has become more repressive, and the economic reforms generating its prosperity have been choked off. That is what makes China so dangerous. It fears our political freedoms, will not play by the economic or security rules of the existing order, and challenges us with changes that western publics hesitate to risk war over.

The relationship between China and the United States has changed fundamentally, and neither of them believes they can go back to past patterns of interaction. The changing balance of power, accompanied by changing perspectives of each other made it more competitive, and even confrontational.

One of the most important challenges facing Germany and Europe is the question of how to position itself between Washington and Beijing. How do China and the United States see Germany and Europe in the context of this developing confrontation?

The current confrontation is not simply between China and the United States but a problem all of us are facing. As former Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide said 15 years ago: 'China isn't just rising for the United States, it's rising for Europe, too.' That is why we see Germany and Europe on the side of individual liberty and consensual, rules-based economic engagement.

It is not China's position to force the rest of the world to choose between China and the United States. China expects European states to make decisions based on their own interest – be they national or European – and with a long-term vision of a global interest we all share. We have to decide whether we want to maintain or destroy the existing international mechanisms when dealing with climate change, international trade and world public health. China holds the belief that our interests are interconnected: what serves the best interest of Europe, will serve the best interest of China.

If you look at the debate on 5G equipment, both China and the United States have exerted considerable pressure on European states. Are we approaching a situation in which countries such as Germany will have to choose a side?

We are long past the point where countries such as Germany will have to choose a side. For all its faults, the United States favour an open internet but China restricts access. Those basic distinctions are driving countries to choose the West. In my judgment, it will be impossible for Europeans to choose to side with a country that has a million of its citizens in re-education camps based on their ethnicity and religion. That is such an affront to our fundamental values. It just would not be sustainable for European governments.

My humble suggestion for European states would be: please give one ear to the United States and another to China, then forget what you just heard and make your own decisions. Europe's decisions might be in line with the United States, or with China, or with neither of them. There will always be a third, a fourth and more options. Europe is not in a position of choosing side – it is a side for others to choose from.

How much weight does Europe actually carry? Do you think the EU or some of its member states could act as mediators?

Europe carries a lot of weight when it chooses to. Britain is doing an outstanding job in the past six months by rebalancing its China policy in response to China's actions, such as the imposition of the national security law to Hong Kong, the market-distorting nature of Chinese government support for their businesses and the security risks of Huawei and other companies. I do not believe China would ever accept the EU or most of its member states as mediators, because it rightly understands them as so closely aligned with the United States. This is due to our common values. Europeans cannot be neutral judges of China. Except possibly for Hungary. I am asking myself, would other European countries feel comfortable if Hungary represented their interests in a negotiation with China?

Europe has been and continues to be a great power exerting tremendous political and economic influence and impact to the world. A strong and stable relationship with Europe has been a consistent Chinese foreign policy objective. In addition, China welcomes any role the European countries may play to facilitate a better relationship with any countries in the world.

Looking ahead, under what conditions would Beijing and Washington be willing to focus on restoring a more cooperative relationship?

The ultimate aim of US policy is to channel the Chinese government into complying with the rules of international behaviour that the West promulgated after the Second World War. Conditions for a more cooperative relationship are China ceasing to be a predator toward smaller regional countries and no longer using state power to restrict market access or force intellectual property transfer from western firms. In addition, China would need to comply with international arbitration rulings.

The US government instigated the recent worsening of China-US relationship. What started as trade frictions has escalated by the United States side into a full-spectrum strife, including technology decoupling, economic sanctions, and restrictions for individuals. In addition, the United States is blaming China for the COVID-19 spread and ideologically attacks China's social system. Unfortunately, China's repeated call for resumption of dialogues has not been responded positively yet. Therefore, it is the US administration who should answer this question.

Could you complete the following sentence: Should China and the United States ever go to war with each other, Europe will…

… either fight to defend the values of free people, or face a world much more hostile to European interests.

… act as a force for peace and call for an early end of hostilities. And if I may add, a war is a very remote possibility. However, China's determination to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity should never be underestimated.

'It is in Germany's interest to be present'

How to establish stability in the Indo-Pacific

© MINDEF

NG ENG HEN
Minister of Defence, Singapore

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: As a former surgical oncologist and now Minister for Defence, what are your views on the implications of COVID-19 for traditional concepts of international security?

NG ENG HEN: From a public-health perspective, COVID-19 would be rated as a middle-tier challenge. Most experts, either medical or from the defence arena, would objectively conclude that the world is ill-prepared for a global biological threat. This unpreparedness is not only tragic, but dangerous. This is not a consequence of a lack of technology or communications, but the absence of political will and organization. The cost of this unpreparedness – the absence of consensus and unity, is the loss of human lives on an enormous scale.

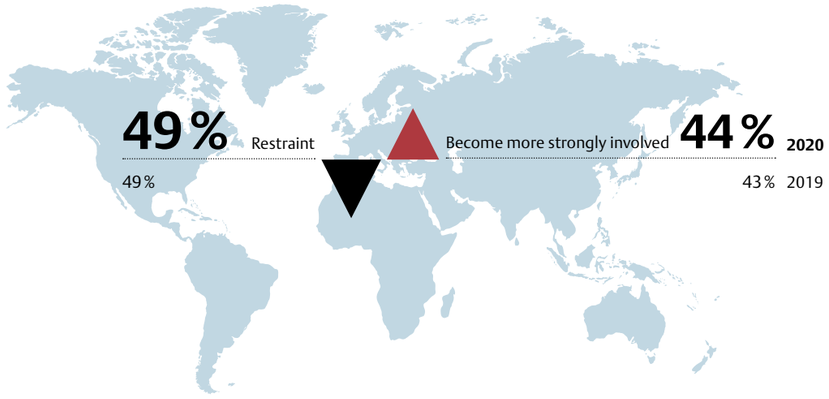
COVID-19 has also shown the global system up from a security perspective in many ways. First, it has shown up interdependencies and the integrity of supply lines. Earlier on, many nations including Singapore were scrambling for essentials. This led to a situation where many countries had to recalculate their interdependencies and supply chains because its disruption exposed vulnerabilities.

Second, nativist tendencies – the tendencies to protect your own tribe in times of stress, whether it is through the securing of essential supplies, test kits, medicine or vaccines – are on the rise, which can lead to division.

The third aspect is an accentuation of outcomes across social-economic classes within and across countries. Minorities have higher infection and mortality rates. There will also be differences in effects of COVID-19 on developed economies as opposed to emerging and undeveloped economies. The issue of debt and debt servicing post-COVID-19 will also have the potential to cascade security challenges. Emerging economies will not have that kind of wherewithal to deal with debt as the developed countries have.

The fourth and most damaging factor for security which COVID-19 showed us is the absence of global

International responsibility: Should Germany become more strongly involved in international crises?



2020: don't know 5 %, no answer 2 % | 2019: don't know 5 %, no answer 3 %

leadership and consensus in this crisis. The world missed an opportunity for multilateralism to strengthen amidst this crisis and this will work into the psyche of countries post-COVID-19. The longer the crisis, the stronger these forces will exert to re-configure the existing stable systems and affect international security.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **Germany and Singapore are both middle powers though in different regions of the world. Where do you see joint challenges and potential for deepening cooperation?**

NG ENG HEN: Nowhere in our history or in our projections do we think that we will have the influence that Germany has. But let me answer your question generically. COVID-19 has shown us that it is impossible for any country to withdraw itself from the global economy without suffering consequences.

Singapore Airlines recently announced that it will have to cut its total workforce by 4,300 staff positions for the reason that business has dropped by 95 percent. It is in the interest of all countries, especially smaller ones, to strengthen multilateralism, to keep what I described as the forces that COVID-19 unearthed – the protectionist policies, the nativist policies and the parochial policies – at bay. The COVAX initiative is a good example of multilateral efforts borne out of an enlightened mindset.

We must also strengthen existing platforms. They are not perfect – whether it is the WHO or the UN. But it seems to me quite regressive to weaken these platforms at a time when you need them most. This also applies to military ties that we have built up over the years. We need to maintain them, and not let COVID-19 weaken them. For Singapore and Germany, we are deepening cooperation in submarine training, defence-technology collaboration and cyber defence.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **China's rise marks a significant change to the post-Cold War order. From a Singaporean view, how stable is the current order in the Indo-Pacific region?**

NG ENG HEN: Let me address the question from two perspectives. The first perspective is what happened in the early 2000s, post 9/11. Both the United States' and Europe's economies were flagging, and it was China's growth that was beneficial, not only to Asia, but globally. The second perspective would be to ask the question in reverse – would the world be better off with a 'failed China' or even a less successful one?

When China entered the WTO, the hope was that integrating China with the liberal world order would facilitate the opening of China. And if you look at where the position is now, the question to ask is, are we dealing with a problem of success, or a problem of failure? From my perspective, it is a problem of success. Some might say that we should not have allowed China to enter the WTO. But if China had been kept out of the global system, continued to be an autarky for example, it would not have grown as fast, but neither would it have a vested interest to uphold the global system. As part of this system, China needs a stable and progressing United States, EU, ASEAN and Australasia to grow alongside it. The interdependency is virtuous. However, thinking of China without the Chinese Communist Party at its helm is wishful thinking for the next millennium, and we ought to be asking ourselves where the landing points are.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **How do you see Germany's role in Asia? Is Germany contributing enough to security in the Indo-Pacific region?**

NG ENG HEN: Singapore will be happy to facilitate Germany's presence in this region. As the world's fourth-largest economy, it is in Germany's interest to be present. And Germany has taken positive steps by deploying an International Liaison Officer to the Information Fusion Centre, which looks out for maritime security. I am aware of the mandate, the preoccupations of your military, and obviously, the German military has its hands full dealing with NATO security, dealing with Europe. Yet it is in Germany's interest to be present here. It is a very strong relationship that Singapore shares with Germany and we want to continue to strengthen it.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **Against the background of increasing tensions between China and the United States, will countries such as Germany or Singapore be forced to take a side?**

NG ENG HEN: Theoretically, if the contestation heats up and the stakes go up, at some point, it will be inevitable for countries to take sides. Right now, it is the decoupling of technology. The day when countries – whether it is Singapore, Germany, or any other country – have to choose to take a side, all of us lose, including the United States and China. It may be justified internally by their security considerations, but I doubt this is the system countries would prefer. There are many global problems that can only be dealt with decisively when you have consensus.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: **As Germany and Singapore are both highly dependent on international trade, what lessons can Germany learn from Singapore in terms of navigating these tensions?**

NG ENG HEN: I hesitate for a small country to give a big country advice – that is not in our DNA. Singapore is far more dependent on connectivity and international trade than Germany. We are like a shop in the airport – when the airport shuts down, there is no business. We are also not a manufacturing hub like Germany. We are however well-diversified and services is a much larger component of GDP. But as with Germany, we need connectivity to thrive. If you disconnect us from that ecosystem of connectivity and mobility, our economy, and I think our ethos, will shrivel.

EU-India Synergies

Four common fronts for cooperation

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VIJAY GOKHALE
frm. Ambassador to Germany and the People's Republic of China; fmr. Foreign Secretary, Republic of India

The deaths of twenty Indian and an undisclosed number of Chinese soldiers in a violent face-off along the India-China Line of Actual Control, on 15 June 2020, is an inflexion point in the seventy-year relationship between Asia's largest modern states. A return to the old structure is no longer possible. To understand this, it is important to see the India-China relationship in historical context.

Relations with China have always been important for India – especially in a post-colonial Asian order. India's vision of friendship was based on shared interests, but Communist China's outlook towards India was driven solely by its own concerns: their need to consolidate central rule in Tibet and Xinjiang, and their efforts to fend off international isolation and American hostility. It led, on India's part, to strategic miscalculation, war and a freeze in relations for a generation until 1988.

In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the two sides decided on the complete normalization of relations along with a common understanding to address historical issues – like the boundary question – in parallel. Yet a new dynamic began to take shape as China's economy grew to four times the size of India's. Agreements to maintain peace and tranquillity, concluded in the 1990s, were not followed through. China built up its military along the Line of Actual Control, and on 15 June 2020, that delicate arrangement toppled over into a heap of rubble. The cause for that lies not with India, but with China.

Under President Xi Jinping, China regards itself as the dominant regional power with no competitor in Asia. Especially since 2013, China's actions contrast the frequently expressed disinterest to seek hegemony. India-China relations have become a sub-set of China's global strategy to replace the United States as the global hegemon. The incident of 15 June 2020 is also, however, a sign that China is still struggling to find the proper balance between applying too much pressure, which might cause India to tip over to the US side, and not enough pressure which might complicate the situation in their vulnerable south-western periphery.

This means India must work with others, including Europe. India and the EU, along with other like-minded partners in Asia and elsewhere, need to consult and shape policy on multiple fronts.

First, on the multilateral front, India and the EU should begin discussions on the premise that the world is a single unit and both have interests everywhere. Geography and distance should cease to be important if we want to ensure jointly that China plays by global rules set through multilateral negotiation.

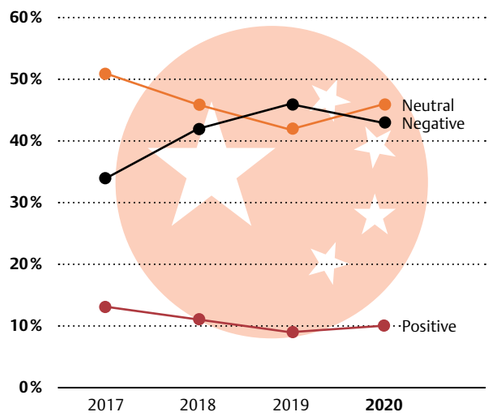
Second, on the domestic front, the two sides must exchange views on how China influences the internal situation in other countries. Chinese protestations that they are not seeking to export their model of governance to other countries does not mean that they are not trying to undermine political systems elsewhere. India and the EU need to work together to strengthen democracies and promote values. The Alliance for Multilateralism, launched in April 2019, is a beginning. More needs to be done to make this movement global.

Third, in terms of the global economy, the question of decoupling is complicated for both India and the EU. The EU has invested money and technology in enormous quantities in China. However, two options should be on the table for India-EU discussions. First, a resolve to diversify away from an overreliance on any single market should be a common factor, and thus a building block for greater EU investment and more trade with India. Second, both should avoid a new 'coupling' with China to the extent feasible in the new areas, beginning with 5G and artificial intelligence. This requires a synergy in R&D and manufacturing. Therefore, the EU should see India as more than a market

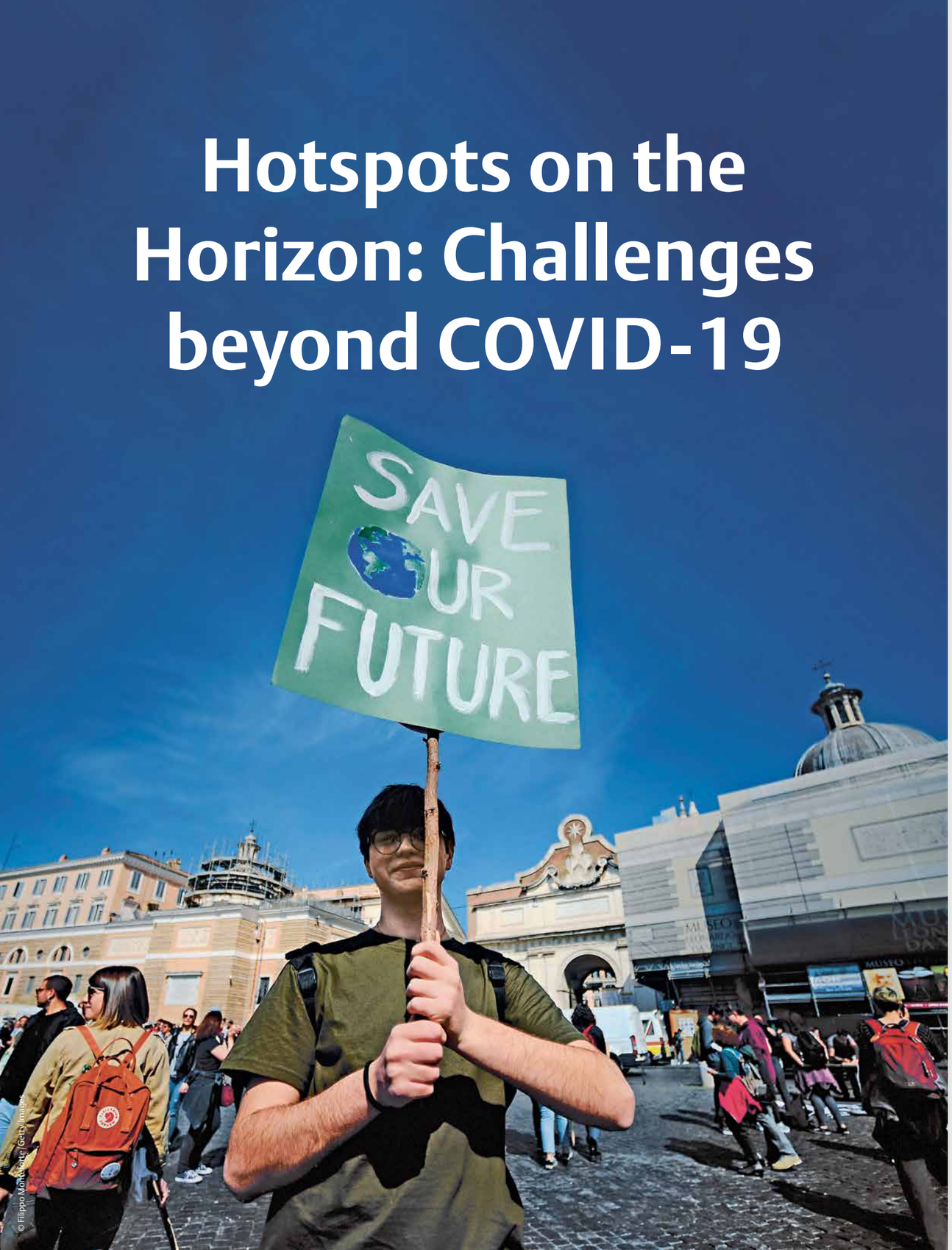
The fourth front is the realm of the military and intelligence cooperation. The EU-China strategic outlook of 2019 said that Chinese maritime claims and increased military capabilities present security issues for the EU already in the short to medium perspective. If the EU genuinely means this, then a strategic relationship between India and the EU becomes vital. Yet major players, including Germany, Poland, Spain and Italy, have a marginal political presence in the Indo-Pacific region. Can the EU stick to this position, when the Chinese Navy is foraying into the Mediterranean- or Baltic Sea?

India looks to Germany and France to lead efforts, not military but in the form of a multilateralism of security, to build greater India-EU synergies in all four above-mentioned fronts. While Germany is India's major economic partner, a convergence at the strategic level and on global issues still eludes India and Germany. If China has given up on multipolarity because it is seeking its unipolar dream, it is up to India and the EU – including Germany – to work in ways that ensure that the world remains multipolar.

What is your view of China's growing influence?



Hotspots on the Horizon: Challenges beyond COVID-19



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Plans are worthless, but planning is everything. It is hard to imagine a scenario that could have better demonstrated the truth of Dwight D. Eisenhower's words than the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In the wake of multiple global crises, the policy world was sharply reminded that preparing for 'high-impact, low-probability' events is more than just an academic exercise.

Even though countless analysts had warned of possible global pandemics, COVID-19 caught the world off guard. It has pointed to blatant governance gaps within the multilateral system, and underlined that words do not equal policy. While the investment in preparedness in some policy areas like multilateral disarmament is more advanced, other risks such as pandemics or climate change do not seem to have cleared the bar set by limited resources. So how can we prevent valuable insights from rotting away in the digital archives? Which challenges should the global community and German foreign policy monitor more closely and prepare for in 2021 and beyond? In short: How do we get from words to policy?

First, a change of culture to make scenario planning an integral part of foreign policy-making has begun, but will take more time to be completed. Second, policy-makers lack the resources – time, personnel and budget – to prepare for all conceivable developments. It is therefore crucial to draw their attention to empirically grounded and plausible scenarios. Finally, scenario exercises and policy papers can help to look beyond the status quo. Therefore, the following pages gather the collective intelligence of six formidable experts and practitioners. They point to eminent challenges that policy-makers need to pay attention to in the months to come and make proposals for potential solutions: What can we learn from COVID-19 for future pandemics? How should migration policy be reconceptualized? What does it take for peacebuilding in Syria to become successful? How should NATO and the WTO be reformed, and how can Russian meddling in elections be prevented? Have a close look, because after all, planning is everything.

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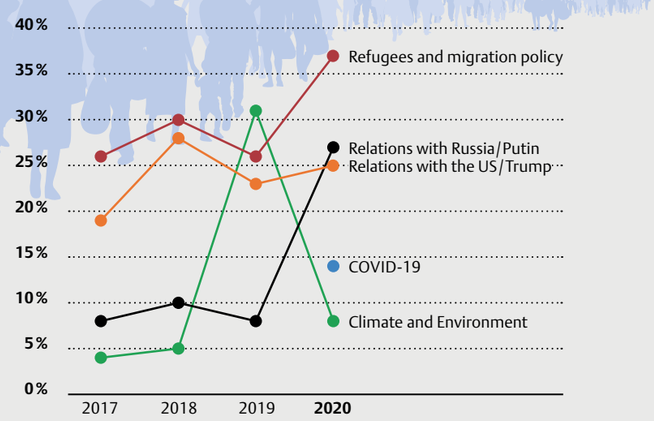
What are the greatest challenges currently facing German foreign policy?

September 2020:
multiple answers possible



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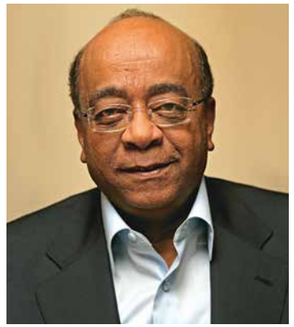
Getting the Facts Right…



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MO IBRAHIM
Founder, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, London

The debate around migration has always triggered emotional and political reactions. At any domestic level, migration policies are highly sensitive, because they are dealing either with your own people who want to leave, or people 'from outside' who want to enter.

The global COVID-19 crisis is an aggravating factor. Economies have been brought to a deadly standstill, with many people having already lost their jobs, businesses destroyed and prospects currently looking gloomy. The 'fear of the other' fuelled by the pandemic, as the 'be safe – keep your social distance' motto, coupled with the economic downfall and job losses does not indeed encourage to open any borders.

In these troubled, uncertain times, leaders owe the truth to their citizens, and we need to stick to reality. Misperceptions based on incomplete or partially presented data are harmful, and distorted data lead to inadequate policies. Policy-making, and explaining, will only be successful if it is based on reliable facts and on a full understanding of the drivers and impacts of the challenges to be addressed. Allow me then to review the most relevant facts and figures available on this topic.

First, migration is not a new 21st century crisis. It is a key dynamic of human history that has shaped most nations in their building and development. There is no recent 'critical hike', whatsoever, in migration numbers. Since 1990, the number of migrants worldwide increased only marginally in relation to the world population – from 2.9 percent to 3.4 percent in 2017. African migrants as a share of Africa's total population even decreased – from 3.2 percent in 1990 to 2.9 percent in 2017.

Second, Africa is not 'a continent of massive exodus' and African migrants are not 'overwhelming' European shores. In fact, the 36.3 million African migrants accounted only for 14 percent of the world's total migrant population in 2017, far less so than those from Asia (41 percent) or Europe (24 percent).

In fact, African migrations predominantly take place within the African continent. As of 2017, more than 70 percent of Sub-Saharan migrants had left their home country for another African country, while less than a fourth left for Europe. Indeed, Africa itself hosts a growing part of the global migrant population: since 2000 the number of migrants within Africa increased by 66.6 percent.

Third, African migrations are mainly about aspirations, not desperation. Insecurity is far from being the major trigger: refugees account for only around 20 percent of African migrants and most of these refugees are hosted by African countries.

Fourth, as assessed by facts and figures, migration has positive impacts for both origin and destination countries, as they present a valuable resource by filling labour shortages. We should rather pay attention to the brain drain and heavy toll it represents for their countries of origin. Many of the medical staff so key during the COVID-19 crisis originate from African countries. Those who leave stand above average when it comes to education and health levels. There is also no evidence that higher migration flows result in higher poverty levels in countries of destination.

The key challenge of Africa today is its youth. 65 percent of Africa's population is currently under the age of 25, and by the end of this century, Africa's youth alone will be equivalent to twice Europe's total population. Better educated than their parents, this young generation is also less employed. Africa's economic growth since 2000, mainly driven by raw-commodities exports, has been mainly jobless, fuelling the drive to migrate to find better prospects. The deeply concerning economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis in Africa, which is bound to enter its first recession in 25 years, is drying out further any prospects.

A lot can be done. Demographic and migration data as well as labour-market analysis and forecasting can be improved to support evidence-based policies. Job creation in Africa can be boosted by scaling up investments and upgrading the value chain in key sectors with high potential such as agriculture and intracontinental transports. Educational and training curricula must rise adequately to job market prospects. Continental integration must be boosted in order to strengthen physical and professional mobility within the continent. Additional legal safe channels for labour migrations from Africa to Europe must be devised to crowd out the growing place taken by smugglers.

Africa's youth can be either a fantastic potential or a ticking bomb. We will share the consequences in both cases. If we prove unable to present this youth with acceptable economic and social prospects, in the best of case, this will fuel further the drive towards migration; in the worse, it will enhance the appeal of criminal or terrorist networks. Hence, implementing a sound migration policy is not a question of charity, nor of moral duty, but a matter of well-assessed and shared interests.

…to create a sound migration policy

Upholding Bold Multilateralism...

COVID-19 has exposed the fragility of our interconnected world, and the hollowness of nationalist and isolationist politics. In a global pandemic, none of us is safe until all of us are safe. A virus knows no borders, and shows no respect for national sovereignty.

Leaders and citizens alike need to recognize that our world is in a state of profound crisis, and that the multilateral system faces its gravest threat since 1945.

It is a poignant irony that the pandemic has struck in the same year as the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The UN was conceived amid the wreckage of an entirely human catastrophe, the Second World War.

Its founders shared a common determination to rebuild a better world, free from the scourge of war and where poverty, disease and discrimination would all be overcome in the name of human progress.

If we are to successfully overcome the pandemic today, we need to recommit to the values of solidarity, cooperation and equality that underpin the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These same values have underpinned the democratic revival and development of Germany since 1945 and helped to enable the peaceful unification of East and West 30 years ago in 1990, within the wider framework of the European Union.

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GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND
fmr. Director-General, WHO;
fmr. Prime Minister, Norway

All of these significant anniversaries are interlinked, and underscore that the path of human progress is rarely straightforward.

In retrospect, the world of 1990 can seem like a high point of optimism: the Berlin Wall had fallen, the Cold War was over and Nelson Mandela was marching on his long walk to freedom and victory over apartheid in South Africa.

Today, by contrast, we live in a world where a shock anywhere can become a catastrophe everywhere, while growing nationalism and populism undermine our shared peace prosperity, and

security. Infectious diseases feed off divisiveness; societal divisions can be deadly.

Institutions like the WHO, which were set up in the 1940s after the Second World War, must adapt to these changing geopolitical and biological realities. This requires a willingness from member states to share responsibilities and provide adequate funding to meet myriad global health challenges.

The world's health is too precious for the WHO to become a political football in the current US-Chinese rivalry, or indeed any future tensions between leading powers. This is particularly relevant to the current crisis and how nation states and international institutions, like the WHO, have responded. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed a collective failure to take pandemic prevention, preparedness and response seriously and prioritize it accordingly. There has been too little coordination between countries, even in Europe where the EU offers a well-developed framework for information-sharing and political dialogue.

The virus will not be overcome unless all states work together, pooling resources and expertise to strengthen health systems, develop and distribute an effective vaccine, protect health workers, and provide the necessary care to all who need it in society. This must particularly include vulnerable groups such as refugees, migrants, the elderly and the infirm. Tackling these multi-faceted challenges requires bold, inclusive and far-sighted leadership and a willingness to act in the interests of all humanity.

Only an honest reckoning with the complexities and ambiguities of our past can enable us to meet the challenges of the present and future. In public-health terms, these future challenges include even deadlier pandemics and the growth of anti-microbial resistance.

One of the greatest influences in my political life was Willy Brandt, who fought the Nazis from exile in Norway and Sweden, and then helped to anchor the post-war Federal Republic of Germany in the community of nations.

But his vision extended far beyond national borders – when he talked about peace and solidarity, he meant it in global terms. Today, Germany needs to act in a similar spirit of expansive humanity to make sure COVID-19 and future pandemics are tackled in a comprehensive, just and durable way.

The Brandt Commission of 1977 explored the widening gap between the global North and South, and how this could be bridged. It was a huge inspiration to me in my own work in chairing the World Commission on Environment and Development in the mid-1980s.

My report in 1987 was titled 'Our Common Future'. More than 30 years on, this concept still resonates. From fighting pandemics to managing migration, from developing new models of environmentally sustainable economic growth to promoting tolerance in multi-cultural societies, we will only make progress if we act in concert with one another.

As Willy Brandt himself said: 'The shaping of our common future is too important to be left to governments and experts alone'.

...to overcome pandemics

Creating a Global Alliance of Democracies...

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ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN
CEO, Rasmussen Global; fmr. Secretary General, NATO

Beyond its military backbone, NATO is first and foremost a political alliance. While NATO's military backbone has never been stronger than today, the equivocal political commitment of some NATO leaders has raised questions about its future.

This situation is not new. I have seen predictions of NATO's as well as the transatlantic alliance's demise throughout my lifetime. But every time NATO's obituary is written, a new challenge arises for which it must develop a response – from the Cold War to the Balkans, Afghanistan, Libya and – today – revisionist powers deploying hybrid threats.

I do not pretend that NATO is free from challenges: President Donald Trump's ambivalence about Article 5, President Emmanuel Macron's 'brain dead' comment, democratic waywardness from Ankara to Budapest, and intra-NATO fracases such as in Libya or Turkey-Greece tensions are all examples hinting at the work ahead of us. Still, those predicting NATO's demise must answer one question: What is the viable alternative in a world on fire?

For the United States, even in the 'America First' era, Congress and the State Department are convinced that America's competitive advantage over China is its ability to unite a large number of democratic allies. President Trump may have damaged NATO with his announcement about the US troop withdrawal from Germany and comments about delinquent spenders. However, he has also given some NATO states the kick they needed to rise to their own defence-spending commitments.

For Europe, it is fallacious to believe we can replicate NATO. On one side, the European Union adds real value to its member states' security efforts: From hybrid threats like cybersecurity, election meddling and money laundering to fighting terrorism and 5G. The EU has the ability to legislate while NATO does not. Its efforts to coordinate procurement and R&D are essential to giving European allies capabilities they lack, such as heavy lift. On the other hand, Brexit means that around 80 percent of NATO defence spending will come from outside the EU. A European Army would be a paper tiger.

For Germany, the loss of NATO, following on from Brexit, would also mean grappling with a neo-Gaullist vision of European member states under a French umbrella. Would Germany want to play second fiddle to the EU's last remaining nuclear UN veto power?

Against this reality, the time has come to move past a gloomy, self-doubting, self-fulfilling 'Westlessness' prophesy that has become too prevalent in European policy circles. Instead, let us begin to be more optimistic about our common democratic values and find new ways to sustain them from within.

We can achieve that in three ways. First, with a renewed US effort for global leadership. Second, by striving for a rekindled transatlantic alliance. Third, with a new focus on building an alliance of democracies around the world.

US global leadership is indispensable in our world. The United States did not become a hegemon by accident, nor was the confluence of American leadership and relative global peace a coincidence. America became 'great' because it built a world order in its democratic rules-based image, learning from hard lessons that US isolationism only emboldens autocrats and dictators, who do not stay in their neighbourhoods. To 'Make America Great Again', it needs to re-discover what made it so great before: its determined global leadership role.

In Europe, we have lost the bigger picture as well, opting to put our narrow commercial interests ahead of the bigger picture. While Nord Stream 2 best epitomizes this attitude, the big test will be China. Will Europe put mercantile priorities ahead of its values and collective security?

The measurement of our self-interest must not only be trade surpluses or defence-spending, but our common ability to defend the freedom-loving alliance. Here is where we can articulate this common mission: in a unifying project to build a Global Alliance of Democracies.

Such an alliance would not replace multilateralism nor would it replace NATO, but it would prevent multilateralism's reconfiguration by autocrats and it would give NATO an added purpose. Organized as a loose group of states with common goals and values, it could be overseen by a D10 group – similar to that mooted by Britain – adding India, South Korea and Australia to the existing G7 member states.

The modalities are open for discussion, but a Global Alliance of Democracies will only succeed if it focuses on results. This should include opening commerce and trade between free peoples, supporting emerging democracies and building a global framework for the next industrial revolution, for example where data can flow with greater trust based on clear democratic standards.

If we prophesize the doom of NATO, the result would be the democratic world descending into a transactional abyss. That would be bad for all NATO allies, and the cause of freedom and democracy. So let us look at the bigger picture and find new ways to restore the pillars of freedom and democracy that we already have.

...to ensure collective security

Rebooting the WTO…

Trade multilateralism has been a force for good for more than 70 years. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and subsequently the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 1995 have provided the indispensable framework to promote international trade. This rules-based system has served as an engine for growth and development, and has helped lift millions of people out of abject poverty. In supporting livelihoods and improving lifestyles across the world, having a reliable rules-based system to govern global commerce has been key. Were the WTO to break down, we would all have reason to be greatly dismayed. Except that this is no longer a 'what if…' scenario: trade multilateralism is unravelling before our very eyes.

© Christina Sabrowsky

AMRITA NARLIKAR
President, German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA), Hamburg

All major functions of the WTO – negotiation, transparency and dispute settlement – are in a state of breakdown. The Doha Development Agenda, the first trade round to be launched after the creation of the WTO, was meant to be completed in 2005. Today, 15 years later, the negotiations have limped their way to an unmarked grave. The organization's Trade Policy Review Mechanism finds itself deeply hamstrung, unable to report on egregious actions by members. Its once admired Dispute Settlement Mechanism has been in paralysis since December 2019, caused most immediately by the decision of the United States to block the (re-)appointment of members to the Appellate Body.

Recognizing that the WTO faces an existential crisis, some reform efforts are underway. For example, under the leadership of the European Union, a multi-party interim arbitration appeal arrangement has been set up as a temporary measure for dispute settlement until the WTO's Appellate Body is in functioning order again. Across countries, especially in the global North but also some in the global South, there is recognition that Special and Differential Treatment needs an urgent update; practitioners and academics are coming up with useful proposals towards this. Negotiation business also continues, for instance on the important issue of fisheries subsidies.

All such well-intentioned efforts to reform and advance the system deserve credit. But they will not suffice. An ambitious reform agenda needs to be put in place if the WTO is to start functioning meaningfully again.

A fundamental rethink on trade multilateralism has been elusive thus far in most policy-making circles. One reason for this may lie in President Donald Trump's crude and vitriolic critique of the system and readiness to launch trade wars ('Trade wars are good and easy to win'). Such a blanket dismissal of the rules often prompts a knee-jerk reaction amongst most multilateralists to support the status quo and – at best – conservative reform. The assumption seems to be that a change in the administration will prompt a return to business as usual. But this is a dangerous assumption to make. Many of the problems that the WTO faces today pre-date the arrival of President Trump on the scene, and not all the critique that his administration has advanced against the WTO is wrong. The most serious of these is the misuse of multilateral trade rules for geostrategic purposes by systemic rivals and adversaries.

The multilateral trade regime – as embodied in the WTO – was built on the assumption that peace and prosperity were inextricably linked. It was not built for a world where the very ties of interdependence – which were supposed to contribute to the emergence of a liberal peace – could be weaponized. We have seen the devastating effect in recent months: when COVID-19 struck and countries chose to weaponize global health value chains, sometimes with life-and-death consequences. And the WTO stood by and watched helplessly.

There is much concern today on how to facilitate a global recovery from the pandemic, leading some to emphasize the importance of preserving trade flows. There is no doubt that nationalist turns inwards would be disastrous for most countries. But it is also important to remember that any attempt to preserve the international trading system for its own sake is unlikely to have a long-lasting or positive effect. In a world where economic ties can be weaponised, multilateral trade rules are in need of a major reboot.[1] This would require a tightening of rules on subsidies, state-owned enterprises, intellectual property rights, export controls and more. Some careful and gradual decoupling might be necessary, which could work in parallel with more closely integrated global value chains among like-minded allies.

Restructuring the WTO to manage geo-economic realities is an urgent task, but not an easy one. Without such a restructuring, we will be left with a WTO of universal membership shallow integration, and meaningless rules. It will be a shadow of the organization that it once was, or could still become.

1 Narlikar, Amrita *'Rebooting Multilateralism? Lessons Still to be Learnt'*, Observer Research Foundation, September 2020 https://www.orfonline.org/research/rebooting-the-world-six-months-of-covid-19/

…to prevent the unravelling of trade multilateralism

Using Human Virtues...

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Russian meddling is rarely as coordinated as often assumed. In Putin's personalized, institutionalized 'adhocracy', myriad actors – from intelligence officers to journalists, oligarchs to ambassadors – seek to deliver what they believe the Kremlin wants, often based on deliberately ambiguous guidance from the centre. When Russian 'freelancers' fail, they can easily be disowned. When they are successful, the Kremlin will reward them, and often take over and expand their initiatives. The bad news is that as a result, the challenge is flexible, often imaginative, and hard to predict in its specifics. However, the good is that it is also often small-scale, amateurish and contradictory. Given Germany's pivotal role in Europe, and what we saw in other major polls from the 2014 Scottish independence referendum to the 2020 US presidential election, it is inevitable that some 'freelancers' will get involved in its 2021 elections. But would the Kremlin really launch a coordinated active measures campaign or be sufficiently enthused by an initiative that it throws its weight behind it (as it did in the ill-fated 'Lisa Case' in 2016)? Let us imagine how a potential scenario of Russian meddling in Germany's elections could look like.

Early in 2021, it might become clear that some kind of Russian 'active measures' – covert political subversion – campaign around Germany's elections is in train. The opportunities might seem too tempting, the risks too small. With the departure of Angela Merkel from the scene, the elections promise to be unpredictable and potentially divisive. Furthermore, with the European Union still dealing with the fallout from Brexit, tensions over post-coronavirus budgets, and Polish and Hungarian democratic backsliding, disrupting Germany could appear a means of disrupting the EU as a whole.

There may even be a personal dimension. Putin has long – unrealistically – prided himself on his ability to 'handle' Germany. If Berlin takes a tough line on Russia in connection with the poisoning of opposition leader Alexei Navalny and its support for the suppression of protests in Belarus, it could make Putin look foolish and thus anger him. Policy, after all, is often driven by such human factors. Since the Kremlin has realized that influencing the actual outcome of elections is rather unlikely, it now seeks to maximize the inevitable divisions they generate. Through division, distraction and dismay, the aim would be to punish Germany and to neutralize it, to render it unable to provide leadership within Europe and support for the countries Moscow considers within its sphere of influence, from Belarus to Georgia.

Considering that Germany is a relatively stable polity, with strong rule of law, Russia could opt for confining itself to influence campaigns. In particular, by calling the elections' legitimacy into question, Russia could challenge the legitimacy of the system as a whole. The aim would not be to replace it with anything else – Putin's regime is not ideological, is not interested in exporting any model – so much as stir up toxic national discord. *Chernaya kassa* – 'black account' – money with no obvious Russian connection could flow to particularly divisive commentators or politicians of the right or left. One of the advantages of being fundamentally non-ideological is that the Kremlin can easily support any and every side. Just tens of thousands of euros are enough to make a difference, and hopefully little enough not to be noticed.

Meanwhile, Russian state hackers might look for scandals or potentially damaging private correspondence that could be leaked or leveraged.

However, the main challenge would come from influence campaigns, from outright disinformation to amplifying extreme and radicalizing opinions. Some would come through obvious channels such as the now-infamous RT Deutsch TV channel and the usual army of trolls and bots on social media. Yet, most dangerous of all would be German citizens and news outlets inadvertently repeating and propagating 'fake news' that happened to match their assumptions or simply catch their eye.

So much for the scenario. What needs to be said, however, is that Moscow cannot create discord where none exists: it magnifies what is already there. To a considerable extent, the impact of any such active measures campaign would thus depend on the German people. It is very difficult to deter disinformation or prevent its spread through sanctions or controls, especially in democratic countries that uphold freedom of speech. Instead, the remedies are as difficult as they are obvious. People need to be cautious in taking at face value what they read and hear. German politicians and media must make the difficult choice not to use questionable information – a tempting leak, a dramatic but unproven story – even if it would seem to advance their cause or their sales. In short, the basic human virtues of restraint, respect and rationality are the best defence against any such Russian meddling.

...to hamper disinformation campaigns

Seeking Accountability for War Crimes…

What if there was full accountability for war crimes in Syria? Such a scenario may seem far-fetched with the brutal regime of President Bashar al-Assad still in power and with the continuing presence of extremist groups in the country, but it is not unrealistic. Above all, it is necessary to think about it if peace in Syria is ever going to be achieved. Making this happen depends both on domestic actors inside the country and on actors abroad, namely the Syrian diaspora and the international community. It is a shared responsibility and must become a key component of policy towards Syria, whether in Germany or elsewhere in Europe.

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The beginnings of such a scenario are already happening. In Germany, human rights lawyer Anwar al-Bunni has been pursuing several cases of crimes against humanity perpetrated by figures affiliated with the Assad regime as well as by jihadist extremists. His framework is one of seeking justice for victims regardless of the political position of the perpetrators. This led to a landmark trial against two former Syrian regime officials that began in April 2020 in Koblenz. Similar cases are being pursued in other European countries like Spain and Switzerland.

The importance of such trials is immense. The cases would not only bring justice to victims; they could also identify those perpetrators who have fled Syria and are currently living in Europe. The two men on trial in Koblenz had left Syria to reside in Germany. Thus, the trial plays also a role in safeguarding Germany against potential threats posed by individuals who have engaged in crimes in the past and who could resume such behaviour on German soil.

Seeking accountability is also important for peacebuilding in Syria. Finding effective conflict-resolution mechanisms is an area of interest for Germany's activities in the country. This involves supporting local, community-led trust- and peacebuilding initiatives. Some initiatives of this kind are already taking place, in which local residents engage in activities that encourage restoring trust. This is crucial in a society broken by war. However, for trust to happen, accountability is needed.

Lebanon's civil war provides an example of the long-term implications of lacking accountability in a post-war scenario. Instead of justice or transitional justice, the country adopted a general amnesty. This kept warlords in power – and they continued to rule with impunity. Twenty years after the end of the civil war, Lebanon is now suffering from the worst economic crisis in its modern history and from acute political tension. Both are tightly linked to the false stability that results when keeping in power perpetrators of crimes without paying adequate attention to the implications this might have for local communities.

In Syria, initiatives like al-Bunni's could be expanded to target key figures in the regime, including Assad. Were a trial to conclude that the president engaged in war crimes, his regime could not reclaim legitimacy within the international community so easily or declare victory in the conflict – even if he were to be re-elected in another sham election.

Germany therefore must take a wide approach to peacebuilding in Syria that links working with local communities with the legal route for accountability. This means allocating more resources for criminal investigations and for the legal teams leading them. Germany can also use the Koblenz trial as an example. Applying the principle of universal jurisdiction, other countries might follow and pursue similar investigations. Members of the Syrian diaspora – like al-Bunni – can play an important role by identifying perpetrators and gathering evidence. In this they can receive support from people residing in Syria.

Any peacebuilding initiative has to bear in mind the necessity of restoring trust within society. Due to EU sanctions, any European entity working inside Syria is currently mindful of the actors it engages with; figures affiliated directly or indirectly with the Assad regime have been carefully avoided. On one hand, avoidance may protect the European countries' interests and prevent the diversion of resources to the wrong persons. On the other hand, avoidance alone is not enough. What Syria needs is an active policy of engaging with those people who can make a positive difference in their local communities. Implementing accountability measures encourages local communities to open up and increase their scope of collaboration with others.

The political route to solving the Syrian conflict has not yielded results, but other measures to support peacebuilding should not wait for a political settlement.

…to enable peacebuilding in Syria

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