

Germany Unlikely to Pursue Independent Foreign Policy. Will Follow Biden

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*[In an interview](#) with *The Guardian* in June, Chancellor Angela Merkel said that Germans grew up knowing that the U.S. wanted to be a world power. Despite Washington abusing its power against some of its strongest allies, Germany, whose six-month mandate of the EU Presidency will end on December 31, made no efforts to make the European bloc independent of the U.S.*

The ruling Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU), which Merkel belongs to, had the opportunity to push for European independence and sovereignty away from Washington's dominance. Instead, Berlin chose to consolidate the EU's vassal status to the U.S., especially since it appears that Democratic Presidential Candidate Joe Biden will be sitting in the White House on January 20.

Germany's presidency over the EU corresponded with the most important junction in the bloc's history since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The world is today is ruled by a multipolar order with a more evenly distributed global power structure. Germany, especially now that it has mandate of the EU presidency, had a decision to make – join this new world order or remain stuck in the old one. Judging from Berlin's position at the European Council held on December 10-11, they chose to remain stuck believing that the antiquated U.S.-dominated unipolar system of the 1990's and early 2000's still exists in 2020.

Last month, Biden and Merkel spoke by phone shortly after the U.S. election, with a readout from Biden's team saying:

“The President-elect expressed gratitude to Chancellor Merkel for her congratulations, praised her leadership, and noted that he looked forward to strengthening relations between the United States and Germany and revitalizing the trans-Atlantic relationship, including through NATO and the EU.”

As seen by the European Council's conclusion on the Turkey problem, Berlin is lost without guidance from Washington.

For years Turkey has violated the maritime and air space of EU members Greece and Cyprus, broke UN resolutions by partially opening the occupied city of Varoshia in northern Cyprus, initiated migration crises on the borders of Greece, violated the EU's Operation Irini arms embargo off the coast of Libya, and continues to make near daily threats of war with Greece and Cyprus.

Yet, despite these daily provocations, the EU has not passed strong sanctions against Turkey, with Germany and Bulgaria, and to a lesser extent Spain, Italy, Hungary and Malta, denigrating the severity of Ankara's provocations in favor of maintaining strong economic ties.

The European Council decided last week to extend sanctions against Russia for its 2014 reunification with Crimea. Russia, which does not threaten or violate the sovereignty of EU members states like Turkey does, is being targeted by EU sanctions despite reunifying with Crimea through a referendum that adhered to all international norms and standards. Yet, Greece and Cyprus have been struggling to get the EU to impose sanctions and an arms embargo against Turkey.

And it is here where we can see that the CDU relies on the U.S. in its plans to become a leading country in the EU rather than making the initiative independently.

Greece and Cyprus have been petitioning Germany for months to cancel its sale of the powerful Type 214 submarine to Turkey. Although Greece would still maintain naval dominance over Turkey, the acquisition of Type 214 submarines would certainly bolster the Turkish Navy. Despite observing Turkey's military adventures in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), and the near daily threats of war against Greece and Cyprus, Merkel refused to make a decisive decision on whether or not to cancel Germany's sale of the Type 214 submarine.

“Issues related to arms exports and deliveries must be discussed within the NATO alliance,” Merkel said, adding “We would like to also coordinate our policies with the upcoming U.S. administration about Turkey.”

As U.S. President Donald Trump has a “bromance” with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey has been able to act aggressively. Merkel's deflection of the Turkey problem until after Biden will likely ascend to the presidency demonstrates that Berlin is unwilling to engage as a leader of Europe that supports member states. Rather, it appears Berlin is happy to just oversee the continent on behalf of Biden.

Even French President Emmanuel Macron, who is certainly no friend of Erdoğan's, was [reportedly convinced](#) by Merkel that if a Biden administration takes over on January 20, it will push Ankara to de-escalate and have a more moderate policy.

Associate professor of International Law and Foreign Policy at Panteion University and Member of Parliament for Greece's ruling New Democracy Party, Angelos Syrigos, highlighted that “in the five months of the German presidency, four months have been the greatest tension that existed in Greek-Turkish relations since the [1974] invasion of Cyprus.”

Effectively, the CDU's unwillingness to deal with the Turkish problem is driven by their choice to remain subservient to Washington. As Trump was less interventionist compared to his predecessors, it left Berlin at a loss on how to lead Europe through times of crisis. This is demonstrated by Merkel's urging to only discuss how to deal with Turkey once Biden enters the White House and despite Ankara's endless provocations against Greece and Cyprus being a European problem, not a Transatlantic one.

Merkel has shown that Germany is incapable of leading an independent and sovereign foreign policy, and this is dangerous for Europe as it appears Berlin will begin following

Biden's agenda in Europe. There is little doubt that Biden's foreign policy focus will be to contain and pressure Russia at every opportunity presented, and with Germany set to follow in the Democrats footsteps, the European continent will see tensions and hostilities rise even more than the already dangerous levels seen on the Greek-Turkish border.

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