

# Germany goes it alone without respect for its partners

The international community was dismayed when German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier earlier this year sent a congratulatory letter to the government of Iran on the 40th anniversary of the Iranian Revolution, an event that spread terror around the globe. This is not the first time Germany has shown support for nations that espouse anti-Western ideals, and it reflects their disruption of our transatlantic partnerships and Western geopolitical strategy.

At the end of World War II, the Allied powers convened the Potsdam Conference to determine how Germany would be supervised, considering its role as the instigator of the war. After restraints on Germany following World War I proved unsuccessful at preventing another global conflict, it was decided that more stringent measures had to be taken. Germany was divided into four quadrants to be directly controlled by the four Allied powers. The United States controlled the southern zone, Britain the northwest, France the southwest, and the Soviet Union controlled the east zone. Berlin, located within the Soviet-occupied territory, was run jointly by the Allies until 1948, when the city was split between East and West Berlin. Germany was ultimately reunified in 1990 after the fall of the Berlin Wall during the decline of the Soviet Union.

This reunification elicited anxiety from the European community, and many eurozone nations feared that a reunified Germany would alter the balance of power and disrupt the peace they had experienced for nearly half a century. Germany is a powerful force in Europe and around the world, and their recent policies have challenged transatlantic relations and European cohesion. Their positions on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, the Iran nuclear deal, and the NATO alliance are several examples of this disruption.

Germany is the destination of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which would double, to 110 billion cubic meters, the volume of Russian gas entering Germany and other European countries. Political tensions over the pipeline are high because Nord Stream 2 would not only increase German reliance on Russian gas but would also bypass Ukraine, a key ally in the region which is working to counter an expansionist Russia. Critics are concerned about European reliance on Russian

energy, which is already at 40% across the continent. Nord Stream 2 would only increase Russia's market share.

Nonetheless, Germany has been a powerful force in support of the project. This is a case of Germany pursuing policies contrary to our Allied geopolitical strategy.

Another problem for the United States is Germany's position on the Iran nuclear deal. Signed in 2015 by Iran, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Germany, and the European Union, this deal compelled Iran to willingly relinquish its nuclear program in return for the removal of sanctions imposed by other signatories. In May 2018, the United States withdrew from the agreement, citing evidence that Iran was not in compliance, and reinstated sanctions. Meanwhile, Germany's Foreign Minister Heiko Maas publicly called for a payment system to purposefully bypass United States sanctions on Iran.

Finally, Germany has been challenged on its funding of NATO. At the NATO summit in Wales in 2014, member states agreed to increase their defense spending to 2% of GDP by 2024. The United States has the highest defense spending of any NATO country at 3.6% of GDP. Germany, however, spends only 1.2% of GDP on defense, although it is Europe's strongest economy. Of the 29 NATO members, more than half spend more than 1.2% of their GDP on defense.

Given that Germany can clearly afford its fair share for NATO, its commitment to this important alliance is seriously lacking.

We need a Germany which is in sync with the West and aligned with the eurozone instead of going it alone. To promote a positive and cohesive Western geopolitical strategy, Germany should pay greater consideration to the goals and concerns of their partners: the United States and our European allies.

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