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Real-talk

Ultimately, Europe faces the choice between complete submission to Washington's dictates or a leap forward into true geopolitical independence

The US National Security Strategy, published at the end of last week, is the document that most succinctly expresses the geopolitical worldview of the Trump movement. For Europe, this should be a moment of honesty. In what amounts to a second, but much more far-reaching turning point, all the basic assumptions that have been decisive for the continent in the post-war period are now being called into question. The *Pax Americana,* and with it the West as we knew it, is dead. America is withdrawing from the self-proclaimed 'rules-based' world order. There is a confrontation of political power between world powers, though no longer an ideological one. Instead of being a partner, however subordinate, Europe is becoming a vassal that, at best, may show favour to the hegemon in Washington. In the worst case, Europe is the civilisational enemy that the 'Empire' is bringing into line.

It is the end of the absolute global dominance of the US. The authors of the strategy unequivocally declare this project a failure. The so-called globalism has overstretched America's resources and weakened the country internally. The consequence of this is a withdrawal from its role as global policeman and force for order. Relations with China and Russia are to be de-ideologised; efforts are being made to achieve balance; and the aim is to remain *primus inter pares* in a new multipolar order, but not to intervene everywhere at once. Neither Ukraine nor Taiwan are considered essential conflicts. The Anne Applebaum world of global confrontation between democracies and autocracies is being buried with fanfare.

However, the drive for de-ideologisation and balance externally goes hand in hand internally with a total cultural re-ideologisation and a declared willingness to tolerate no dissent. It is, in effect, a two-world doctrine that is establishing itself here. Russia, Asia, Africa and most of the Middle East constitute the outer world. The inner world, on the other hand, is not limited to the sovereign territory of the United States, but encompasses the entire Western hemisphere, where America strives

for absolute domination. This empire of American civilisation also includes Europe and the Anglosphere as a whole, comprising the former British colonies. The old continent is defined as a kind of civilisational backyard, which, however, faces nothing less than 'civilisational extinction' if the current direction is maintained. The activities of the European Union itself are cited as the cause of this supposed plight.

The servant losing its master

Thinking this through to its logical conclusion, the Americans are propagating massive interventionism in the internal political affairs of sovereign states, which, on paper, are still allies. While the regime change mania in the Middle East is being renounced, within the empire's own borders, state sovereignty no longer exists de facto. There is talk of promoting the 'healthy nations of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe'. This must be contrasted with the sick nations of Western Europe and the EU, especially since, according to the document, immigration threatens to create 'non-European majorities' that could change the strategic and political orientation of NATO countries. For those who have a racist understanding of civilisation, people with the wrong skin colour or religion are obviously fundamentally 'non-European' and dangerous.

Liberal Europe, which, contrary to the assumptions of the strategy, continues to enjoy overwhelming parliamentary and probably also social majorities in almost all EU states, should not harbour any illusions here. The ruling powers in Washington have declared it an enemy. Not merely as a political opponent. Someone who is accused of 'eradicating' one's own civilisation is not a political opponent with whom one could reach a compromise, but an enemy who, at best, must be contained and, at worst, destroyed. While the European elites have not yet understood this fact, the population is already much further ahead in its understanding.

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Ultimately, Europe faces the choice between complete submission to Washington's dictates or a leap forward into true geopolitical independence. The European elites are ideologically ill-prepared for the latter. Until now, the strategy has been to appease the powers that be in Washington with gestures of humility. This has resulted in nothing more than contempt and marginalisation. Instead of working towards genuine strategic autonomy, they have fattened the order books of the US arms industry. This has increased, rather than

reduced, security dependence and thus vulnerability to blackmail. The massive rearmament is justified by the 'Russian threat', although it is clear that Moscow ultimately has limited military capabilities and that Putin's most far-reaching ambitions pale in comparison to what the ruling caste in Washington is formulating.

Due to its gigantic capacities and capabilities alone, a hostile America that wants to dismantle the EU is much more dangerous to Europe than Russia could ever be. However, European elites find this difficult to accept. They have internalised transatlanticism to such an extent that they simply cannot conceive of European independence beyond US primacy and NATO, let alone from and against America.

This is particularly true of Germany, which, like no other country, has embraced the ideological project of the West, virtually to the point of national self-abandonment. Since the 'long road to the West', there has been a veritable distrust of independence in this country. The evil word '*Sonderweg*' (special path) is circulating. In addition to the absolute recognition of US supremacy after two lost world wars, national self-restraint is considered a goal. At best, a 'servant role' is conceivable. Now, however, the servant is losing his master. Neither the erratic and hostile Washington nor the paralysed Brussels can help. Either we take action ourselves or we sink into powerlessness.

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France was the last of all European countries to resist the transatlantic colonisation of the mind and still has something of an independent national strategic culture today. Unfortunately, Gaullism was never europeanised. Paris maintained a healthy distance from NATO because the Elysée Palace understood that in the former summary of NATO's strategic logic, 'involve the Americans, keep the Russians out, keep the Germans down', the last part was aimed not at Germany but at Europe. NATO is an alliance that integrates the armed forces of its member states in a way – or rather, chains them to American supremacy – that makes European strategic autonomy impossible. If Europe wants to achieve geopolitical independence that it can enforce against Washington if necessary, it must seek it outside NATO in terms of military and

security policy. This is a simple truth that no one dares to speak.

Being honest also means not overloading the European Union with expectations. The EU is a creature of the declining world order based on rules and international law. In essence, it is based on economic and regulatory principles. It is not a strong geopolitical player and, given its internal constitution and the diverging interests of its member states, it cannot be one. It is too cumbersome, too easily blocked, and its officials are too incapable of thinking politically. Preserving it in principle, reforming it gently, and bringing the member states together again and again — that should be goal enough. Any overambition threatens to kill it – long the declared goal of an ever-growing faction in Washington – or to send the continent into permanent paralysis. Political realism dictates that this must be acknowledged.

If Europe wants to prevent its own vassalisation and the long-heralded geopolitical degradation, its nation states must take action themselves. The most realistic option is an alliance of the willing, led by Germany and France. This requires a culture of intellectual and strategic independence that sets European and national interests independently, rather than merely defining itself as an appendage of Washington. Genuine security autonomy can only be achieved with a military foothold outside NATO, an independent arms industry and, at least temporarily, the extension of the French nuclear umbrella over independent-minded parts of the continent.

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However, in order to regain the upper hand geopolitically, a medium-term compromise with Russia is also inevitable. The war in Ukraine was overloaded in Europe as a war for world order. The order that needed to be defended no longer exists. This may be regrettable, but it is simply a recognition of reality. The de facto withdrawal of the Americans from NATO is also likely to change the calculus in Moscow. It is high time for an independent European peace initiative based on a realistic assessment of our own interests and strengths. This also applies with regard to China. Nothing obliges us to wage the Americans' purely power-political battle against Beijing. Instead, Europe's regional powers should learn to balance between the poles in the emerging multipolar order and thus get the best for their own continent.

All this, of course, requires statesmanship instead of the Twitter foreign policy that has unfortunately become commonplace, which likes to hand out diplomatic headnotes and otherwise exhausts itself in gasps and gestures of indignation. It is far from certain that the struggle for European independence and liberation from American encroachment will succeed. The starting position is not good. The alternative, however, is dependence and foreign rule — both of which are significantly worse options.



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