

Why Europe should step outside shadow of US

BERLIN. — US President Joe Biden's eight-day trip to Europe has prompted a flood of optimistic rhetoric, and many officials chanted that America is finally waving goodbye to those hostile policies and mercurial behaviours during the presidency of Donald Trump.

For Europe, it is reasonable to regard it as a new beginning for the trans-Atlantic relationship. However, after intensive interactions in Britain's coastal county Cornwall and Brussels, European officials probably found that Trump's influence is hard to be wiped out, and their relations are difficult to get back where they were.

The rifts and mistrust between the trans-Atlantic partners concerning a series of issues, from trade to regional and global affairs, still remain hard to fix in a long time.

Trade tensions continue to cast a shadow on their ties. Over four months since Biden took office, Washington has yet to abolish the aluminum and steel tariffs the former government slapped on Europe in the name of "national security," as upholders of the trade barrier are still politically lucrative for Biden.

The long-standing battle between their aircraft manufacturing giants Airbus and Boeing over government subsidies was temporarily concluded with only a five-year truce, and many experts in the industry sighed because the vague terms will lead the two sides to cross swords again.

It is not difficult to understand Europe was somehow disappointed as they had expected Biden would end the trade war swiftly, but it now turns out to be yet another thorny issue.

From the Group of Seven Summit to the EU-US Summit, Biden has tried to mend Washington's relations with its European allies, and persuade them to forge a united front to compete with China and Russia. But some European countries, with concerns over their own interests, are less interested in joining the US-led alliance.

Just as Friedrich Merz, a politician of Germany's Christian Democratic Union party, has warned, Biden's policies would not deviate too much from Trump's. A sober approach for Europe might be to pick up the catchphrase "strategic autonomy" again, especially after Biden's victory.

The recent published Munich Security Report noted Europe must rethink and adjust its strategic and security reliance on the United States, as Washington has shifted its focus eastwards, and it needs to tackle some problems without the safe refuge of its old-time ally.

In other words, siding with the United States might not help, particularly in a time when solving problems need global actors beyond the West.

Sadly, many European politicians and media have been dwelling on the past and are keen on confrontation with China and Russia, following US Cold-War mentality.

In his new book titled "The Hypocritical Superpower," Michael Lueders, a well-known German writer, reveals why European voices are prone to promote a trans-Atlantic alliance rather than a pragmatic attitude with China and Russia.

The Western media reports are somehow filtered by interest groups in the United States and used a certain framing that it is between "we western allies the good guys" against China and Russia "the evil ones," Lueders explained.

"Under Joe Biden many things will change, but 'America First' will still continue," Lueders wrote at the end of his book, and that is why Europe should step outside of the shadow of Washington. — **Xinhua**.

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