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How Do You Like US Now?

By Matt A. Mayer

It's that time again when [newspapers](#) tell us that America's standing in the world has substantially declined under Donald Trump. It's no coincidence that we're always told this when a Republican resides in the White House. You must wonder why it is that 'the world' (i.e., elite European leaders and media) oscillates in its view of American leadership directly in tune with America's presidential election outcomes. Since 1980, the message has boiled down to this: Republican presidents are narrow-minded and dimwitted warmongers (Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush) or isolationist (Trump), whereas Democratic presidents are nuanced and deep-thinking internationalists (Bill Clinton and Barack Obama).

It is important, however, to separate what the elite say in public from what they do in private. In many ways, the elite are like catty high school girls who hate the beautiful head cheerleader, but want to make sure she invites them to her weekend party. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron, and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau can laugh at Trump behind his back as their predecessors did to Reagan and Bush, but all three leaders suck up to Trump when the media isn't around. They depend too much on American largesse to do otherwise.

Since the end of World War Two, America and its taxpayers have spent trillions to first rebuild Europe after yet another German war in which the French wilted ignominiously. Later we paid to defend western Europe against the USSR during the Cold War. It wasn't Belgian resistance or Italian ideas that ultimately led to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union. It was Reagan's military buildup and his call for freedom that inspired millions behind the Iron Curtain to act when the time came. Most of Europe derided Reagan for his actions at the time.

As Americans grew their national debt to free Europe, European countries diverted funds from their own defense to social programs. Instead of thanking us, they had to ignore our contribution to their budgets and lecture us about their superior welfare systems. When Trump signaled that perhaps it is time to move on from Nato given most European countries repeated failure to meet the minimum funding level, the elite scorned him. At the same time, Germany expects America to pay for its defense against Russia.

The Trump administration proposed withdrawing [9,500 troops](#) from Germany and capping the number to no more than 25,000 personnel at any one time. Predictably, Merkel again attacked Trump. But why should Germany benefit from an American presence when there are far better allies such as Poland or the Czech Republic?

Despite her public protests, Germany knows it needs America's hard power in an increasingly destabilized world. Germany also publicly appeases the communist Chinese government, so that China keeps importing German products. At the same time, the Germans quietly cheers Trump's tough stance on China. They know full well that China's trade practices and intellectual property theft hurt Germany as much as America. The same goes for France and Canada.

Other than her long tenure, Merkel will be remembered for two significant acts. The first was letting in over a million migrants from the Middle East and North Africa, which launched a populist revolt across Europe that weakened mainstream political parties left and right. The second was appeasing Vladimir Putin by pushing the Nord Stream 2 pipeline that will make Europe far more dependent on Russia for its energy needs.

As America wrestles with racial unrest, the elite again deride Trump and lecture America about how to treat its minorities. Motes and beams: millions of Muslims still reside in the slums on the periphery of many European cities. They face high unemployment and discrimination.

It would be nice if Europeans would realize they don't occupy the moral high-ground. After all, America already elected a minority to its highest office when Obama twice won the presidency. No European country has elected a black premier. None seems likely to do so anytime soon.

In the coming months and years, whether with Trump or Biden, our allies will back our efforts to get accountability from China for the Wuhan virus. Not because a president demands it, but because tens of millions of Americans and Europeans demand it. A similar dynamic will drive the fight to establish free and fair-trade practices with China. It is now clear to a majority of the West that China's rise is a threat to our future.

The reality is that America's standing in the world doesn't depend on whether the elite like our president. America's real standing rests on these simple facts. Our military remains the only one in the world that can stand up to rogue countries like Russia, China, Iran or North Korea. Only America can meaningfully project force globally. Our private sector innovates at a speed no other country can match. US companies are household names in an unparalleled way across the globe. Our markets drive the global economy in good times and bad times. Our consumption matters far more than most continents. And our

liberty still serves as a beacon for millions of immigrants around the globe. People come to America because they want to. They wouldn't come if America were as racist as the elites insist.

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