

Answer to Question

Implications of the French-American Rapprochement!

(Translated)

US President Donald Trump is back on Thursday to talk about his recent visit to France. Trump said in an interview with *The New York Times* "He's a great guy," Trump said of Macron. "Smart. Strong. Loves holding my hand.". Adding, "People don't realize, he loves holding my hand ..." (Al-Arabiya.net-Washington France Press, 20/7/2017). President Trump visited Paris on July 13, 2017. The current president, Macron, welcomed him warmly. While the former French President, Hollande, had shown his displeasure with the US President, as well as there were heavy accusations of President Trump by European leaders! What are the indications of this French-American rapprochement and the objectives of Trump's visit to Paris? And are there any implications of this visit to the situation in Syria, especially since French President Macron talks about a new French-American strategy in Syria?

Answer: Trump's haphazardness in international politics has had strikingly disturbing results, for example, his shocking statements on the feasibility of NATO led to harsh reactions against American policy, and the most noticeable of those reactions were issued from Berlin. During his election campaign and after his inauguration as president on 20/1/2017, Trump did not hide his annoyance with the European Union,. He praised the British referendum, Brexit. The American ambassador to Brussels expected the EU to be disbanded, and America awaited the Dutch and French elections in the hope of winning of the anti-EU parties, so that this dismantling of the EU takes place in 2017. This is what Europe stood against; it succeeded in preventing the influence of the British domino effect on the Netherlands and France, and thus removed the specter of dismantling its union. And then his haphazardness in international politics increased and he retreated from his decisions. Trump changed his views of NATO as an outdated alliance, as he described, and then retreated from these positions publicly. He also withdrew from the Paris Climate Agreement, then offered to renegotiate it, and he stood on the brink of war with North Korea, then backtracked. Moreover, he held a negative view of China, and then stood with it waiting for its outcome in North Korea's file, and he made strong statements on the Syrian arena, and then left things to its neighbours in Astana and Geneva.

What can also be noticed is the disturbance of his internal situation especially what was raised by the opposition to his policy on the subject of Russia's support for him during the elections. The result of these problems and this opposition is that the contacts of the president and his administration members with Russia became a very sensitive issue in America, and this situation did not help the president to achieve the Russian-American agreement and it was delayed, and Trump only held one meeting with the Russian president on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Hamburg, Germany on July 7, 2017. US-Russian relations have become more complex at a time when Congress is imposing additional sanctions on Russia. On top of the increasing US reports on Russia's intervention in the elections, adding more embarrassment to the President internally, not to mention embarrassment to continue restoration of his country's relations with Moscow.

All these have caused disruption in the international policy between America and the EU countries, and this disruption wavered between positive and negative according to the interests of these countries and their ability to exploit the new situation in US policy, and we will review the positions of these countries related to the Trump policy and then touch on the implications of the French position which led to Trump's invitation to visit Paris and welcome him warmly.

1- With regards to Britain: British Prime Minister Theresa May's early visit to Washington on January 26, 2017 and her eagerness to sign a trade agreement with Washington would serve as a model for other EU countries to encourage them to leave the EU. Thus, Britain restored its attachment to the United States and was very much in favor of the Trump administration, but after the American hopes of dismantling the European Union were shattered, as evidenced by the victory of the pro Europe parties in the elections of the Netherlands and France, Trump's positive view of Britain declined as he wanted it to lead the process of dismantling Europe, and when London's Brexit was not repeated in Paris and Amsterdam, America has come back to tarnish the international interests of Britain in a shocking manner to London. America is pushing its agent, Sisi, to increase support for Haftar without any regard to the interests of Britain in Libya, and America pushed its agents in a semi shocking way to pressure on Qatar, which is Britain's spear head in the Arab and Islamic region. With this and others, Britain's policy was shaken and lost trust in America's Trump, finding itself between the hammer of America, on the one hand, and the anvil of Europe that it negotiated to leave its union on the other. In the face of these broad doubts, the British Prime Minister announced early elections, and this was surprising even to members of the Government, and with that programmed result of the election of 8/6/2017, Britain has fluctuated between the departure of the European Union or to return to it. The elections have shown that supporters of the exit were increasingly weak, which increased the possibility of remaining if negotiations with Brussels do not produce the agreement that pleases it. This shows how the new US policy has confused Britain.

2- On the more important side is the Russian side; the European trends were compatible with those of America after the annexation of Russia to the Crimea in 2014 and igniting eastern Ukraine. The US and European sanctions reflected the consensus of views between them regarding the Europeans' fear of Putin's demarcation in Eastern Europe, but since his election campaign, Trump has been critical of these sanctions and vowed to build close ties with Russia which has confused Europe and put it alone in the face of Russia's new rise. Although Europe's leaders realized that America, during the Obama administration, was the one that allowed Russia to rise, especially after its involvement in the Syrian war, Trump threatened to go further in bilateral agreement with Russia on global issues, which would eliminate European hopes of having a role in the International crises.

3- As for Germany, it took clear steps in rejecting the new American policy; it rejected the American criticism of the European NATO countries, denounced that Germany and Europe become in debt to America on defense issues, denounced America's departure from the climate agreement and rejected any new negotiations on it. It criticized the arms deals that Trump signed with Saudi Arabia and considered them as pouring fire on oil in an inflamed region, and remained so despite a change in the French position. According to the evening broadcast of the German Deutsche Welle: (German Chancellor Angela Merkel's positions were harsh towards the US President during the G20 in Germany, but the French president was careful not to upset Trump...), (Deutsche Welle, 14/7/2017). Overall, it can be said that Germany has significantly increased its attempts to revive Germany as a superpower; all in the wake of new American policies.

4- After that, we touch on the significance of Trump's visit to France, the apparent American-French rapprochement, France's goals of inviting President Trump to visit and participate in the National Day of July 13, 2017, highlighting what France called the centennial of America's participation in World War I, which is an old event that is rarely held for celebrations except for a specific objective. At a time when President Trump was straining ties with all of Europe, France invited him to participate in its National Day holiday! (Macron in a call on Tuesday renewed his invitation to Trump to visit France and to participate in its National Day holiday. The first invitation was during the NATO summit at the end of last May in Brussels ...

(Elaph newsite, 28/6/2017). At the G-20 Summit, held in Germany on 7/7/2017, French President Macron warmly undid his (Trump) isolation among the leaders, especially the Europeans, who drew harsh criticism to the United States for its withdrawal from the climate agreement. Trump himself was surprised by Macron's invitation in this atmosphere. (Trump said he was "surprised" to receive this invitation after his decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on Climate, signed by 195 countries in 2014 ...) (Al Arabiya.net, 20/07/07)

5- As for the objectives of this new French approach, it must be emphasized that France, the European Union's most important pillar, was most critical of Trump and fear of the impact of his policy on American-European relations. This was not exclusive to the former French President Hollande. The current president, Macron, has also been highly critical of Trump since his election campaign and until recently. And this French turn towards America has emerged only weeks ago, and has emerged clearly in the invitation of US President Trump to France and received with a great welcome and surrounded by a halo of respect. And the study of this turn is likely to have two dimensions; each one is no less important than the other:

The first dimension of that shift concerns the Syrian dimension. After Macron announced that: He sees no legitimate alternative to Bashar, and that France no longer saw Bashar's departure as a condition for settlement. (Reuters, June 21, 2017). And he said after that and before receiving the American president: "We changed the view of France on Syria to reach a comprehensive political solution, and will not put Bashar's departure as a condition for this ..." (Middle East, 13/7/2017), and thus France has become closer to America, which holds the card of the regime and many of the factions in Syria. This approach is to have a role in Syria that it has been longing for, for some time. France knows that it will not get to even smell the role only by a passing permit from America.

Thus, the warm welcome and not insisting on the departure of Bashar are because they (the French) know that America does not want his departure now, but only after the arrangement of an alternative agent to take place of the current agent, and America has not found it yet. France started to get rid of its previous positions because they were obstacles hindering its participation. France started to sing the tune of "anti-terrorism", proceeding according to the same musical notes as Trump. French President, Emmanuel Macron, said during a joint press conference with his US counterpart Donald Trump: That he agreed with President Trump on a road map for the post War in Iraq and Syria. Macron added on Thursday in the French capital that he also agreed with the US President to make every effort to combat terrorism ... (Russia Today, 13/7/2017)

The second dimension is France's fears of the escalation of the German role; these fears have made France oppose Germany. While Germany's criticism of Trump increases, France is getting close! Immediately after the visit of the US President to Paris, France's ambassador to the United Nations, Francois Delattre, said that: "the contact group on Syria, which Paris proposes to be formed, should include members of the UN Security Council and regional actors. The diplomat told reporters before a closed session of the Security Council, On Friday evening, that the team mentioned above must carry out "the deployment of peace and the preparation of the road map." The French delegate added that the most important thing now is uniting the international community and launching new initiatives in support of the efforts of the Special Envoy to Syria, Stefan de Mistura ... (Russia Today, 14/7/2017). Thus, France calls for the formation of the "Contact Group on Syria" to "include member states of the UN Security Council and regional actors" and "to provide a concrete initiative for the five countries to deal with it", i.e., Germany's exclusion from this role as it is not in the Security Council, which reveals French concerns about the rise of Germany; it does not want it to have an international role.

6- Thus, the disruption of Trump's policy, especially his visit to France, has created a change in the international policy between America and the European Union to the point that some media considered that visit was the beginning of a new world order: (The British Times newspaper considered the visit of US President Donald Trump to the French capital, Paris, a beginning of a new world order, where French President Emmanuel Macron leads his country to a new relationship with America and Germany. The newspaper said that Macron presents himself as a pragmatic leader of the European Union after Britain's exit from the Union. The European cards will be redistributed after the exit of Britain, according to the newspaper. The newspaper's editorial concluded that the European Union had been built in a way that neither Germany nor France could be unique as a single dominant power and that the two countries were able to overcome centuries of hostility between them and work together to lead the European continent with or without Britain. But now they swim on different currents; France is under the leadership of Macron, aspiring to lead Europe, and Germany, under Merkel's leadership, wants to focus on maintaining a sound and full Europe.(Al-Wafd website, 14/7/2017).

7- But what we want to conclude this answer by is that France's dreams of entering the Syrian theater will not be for long, and will clash with the reality of the American position which accepts only its unilateral control of the Syrian crisis, and some of the softness shown by America towards the French orientations to Syria is to fuel the French-German conflict within the European Union to dismantle it.

As for France's fear of the rise of Germany, it is a genuine fear; the elements of the foundation of state in Germany outweigh the elements of the state in France. This is known historically and geographically. At a time when Germany is abandoning its current (ethical) commitment to the World War II agreements that prevent it from the influential global military role, and imposes on it to focus only on industrial and economic influence without the military role, while getting rid of it, it is likely that it will emerge in Europe again, superior to France, no matter how close it gets to America.

We ask Allah (swt) to make the conflict among them severe and that their structure collapses: ﴿فَأَتَى اللَّهَ بُنْيَانَهُمْ مِنَ الْقَوَاعِدِ فَخَرَّ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّقْفُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَأَتَاهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ﴾ **... but Allah came at their building from the foundations, so the roof fell upon them from above them, and the punishment came to them from where they did not perceive.** [An-Nahl: 26] and the state of Islam take their place, and spread good in the world, and the Prophet's saying in the Hadith materializes. In Ahmad's Musnad he extracted from Tamim Ad-Dari who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say: «لَيَبْلُغَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرُ مَا بَلَغَ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَلَا يَتْرُكُ اللَّهُ بَيْتَ مَدْرٍ وَلَا وَبَرٍ إِلَّا أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ» «**This matter will reach all places reached by day (light) and night; Allah will not leave a house of mud or hair/fur, without making this Deen enter it, by the glory of a powerful or humiliation of the humiliated. A glory that Allah will give to Islam and humiliation He (swt) will give to the Kuffar.**»

Bayhaqi extracted a similar Hadith in As-Sunan Al-Kubra as well as in the Mustadrak of Hakim. And this will be achieved with the help of Allah and support, and that is not difficult to Allah.

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