

THINKING OUT LOUD

THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION EUROPEANS ARE PAYING VERY CLOSE ATTENTION

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Opinion

WHILE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS are significant events for Americans, their implications extend far beyond this country's borders, impacting global geopolitics, economics, and international relations. November's U.S. presidential election holds considerable importance, particularly in Europe. Six key issues affect Europe depending on who "wins" between the two leading U.S. presidential candidates, Donald Trump or Kamala Harris.

Transatlantic Relations: The U.S. and Europe share a deep and complex relationship, encompassing trade, security, and diplomatic ties. The direction of U.S. foreign policy, which can shift significantly between administrations, affects European security and economic interests.

Donald Trump's previous presidential tenure (2017-2021) was often marked by a transactional approach to U.S.-European relations. He often questioned the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO's) relevance, and his administration pressured European allies to increase their defense spending. Trump's "America First" policy led to strained relations with several European leaders and skepticism about the U.S.'s commitment to collective security.

Kamala Harris represents a more traditional approach to U.S.-European relations. She supports strengthening NATO and reaffirming commitments to European allies. Her policies are expected to foster closer collaboration and build on existing transatlantic partnerships.

NATO and Security: The U.S. plays a crucial role in NATO, and its stance on defense spending and collective security commitments directly impacts European countries. An administration with differing views on NATO could influence European defense strategies and security arrangements. The positions of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris on NATO and security highlight a fundamental divergence in their approaches.

Trump's tenure was characterized by criticism of NATO, a transactional approach to alliances, and an emphasis on "America First," which created uncertainty among European allies. He frequently questioned the alliance's relevance and effectiveness, suggesting that it was outdated and not serving U.S. interests as it should. Trump's rhetoric included a call for European allies to increase their defense spending to meet the alliance's target of 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which he argued was necessary for a fair burden-sharing of defense responsibilities. He emphasized that



the U.S. would support NATO members and other allies only if they made greater financial contributions. This stance created tension with European leaders and led to concerns about the U.S.'s long-term commitment to NATO. Trump's foreign policy was marked by unpredictability and a preference for bilateral deals over multilateral agreements. His administration's decisions, such as the abrupt withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria, raised concerns among European allies about U.S. reliability and the consistency of its security commitments. Trump's "America First" doctrine prioritized U.S. national interests, sometimes at the expense of traditional alliances and global partnerships. This approach led to strained relations with NATO allies and uncertainty about U.S. support in collective security arrangements.

In contrast, Kamala Harris's stance reflects a commitment to strengthening NATO, supporting multilateralism, and fostering stable, predictable international relationships. Kamala Harris has expressed strong support for NATO and the principles of collective defense. She views NATO as a cornerstone of transatlantic security and emphasizes the importance of maintaining strong alliances. Harris advocates for a reaffirmation of U.S. commitments to NATO and the alliance's role in global security. Harris's approach to security emphasizes strengthening alliances and working collaboratively with international partners. She supports enhancing NATO's capabilities and ensuring that member states meet their defense spending commitments, but with a focus on cooperation rather than coercion. Harris advocates for a return to a multilateral approach to global security, valuing international institutions and alliances as key components in addressing global threats. She supports engaging with European allies to tackle common security challenges and promoting a coordinated approach to international conflicts. Harris's foreign policy strategy seeks to restore predictability and stability to U.S. international relations. Her administration would likely prioritize consistent and reliable commitments to NATO and other security alliances, aiming to rebuild trust with European partners and enhance collaborative security efforts.

The choice between these two approaches will have significant implications for the future of U.S.-European security relations and the broader international security landscape.

Economic Impact: The U.S. economy is a major driver of global economic trends. Trade policies, economic sanctions, and investment decisions made by U.S. leaders can influence European economies. The stability of transatlantic trade relations is crucial for European businesses and economies.

Trump's administration imposed tariffs on European goods and sought to renegotiate trade deals to favor the U.S. This approach created economic friction and uncertainty for European businesses. Trump's policies also included withdrawing from multilateral trade agreements, impacting global economic stability.

Harris is likely to pursue a more cooperative trade approach, seeking to resolve disputes through negotiation rather than confrontation. Her focus would be on maintaining strong economic ties with Europe and supporting a rules-based international trading system.

Climate Policy: The U.S. approach to climate change has global repercussions. European countries, which have been leading climate action efforts, closely watch U.S. policies on climate agreements and environmental regulations. U.S. leadership or lack thereof can influence global climate strategies and agreements.

Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement was a significant setback for international climate efforts. His administration's policies were seen as undermining global environmental initiatives, which affected European climate strategies and ambitions.

Harris has expressed strong support for addressing climate change and rejoining the Paris Agreement. Her administration would likely work closely with European nations to advance global environmental initiatives and promote sustainable policies.

Geopolitical Alliances: European countries monitor U.S. foreign policy shifts regarding key global issues, including relations with China, Russia, and the Middle East. Changes in U.S. policy can alter the geopolitical landscape and affect European strategies.

Trump's approach to geopolitical alliances was heavily influenced by his "America First" policy. In addition to questioning traditional alliances

"I am" is reportedly the shortest sentence in the English language. Could it be that "I do" is the longest sentence?