



Macron Makes ‘No Apology’ For China Trip Comments As EU Leadership Warms To ‘Anti-US’ Message

Description

French President Emmanuel Macron’s message of building “strategic autonomy” away from the United States – which to Washington’s dismay he voiced loudly during his visit with Xi Jinping in China (at a very awkward moment too given Taiwan happenings) – is naturally gaining positive reception in Europe, where chair of the European Council Charles Michel hailed “a leap forward on strategic autonomy compared to several years ago.”

But Macron has still created confusion and division among some European allies, particularly ones like Poland – who responded by saying “more America is needed in Europe” amid the Ukraine war. Despite his comments angering allies, but which were to the delight of Beijing (a “parting gift to Xi” as we noted), an Élysée official has stressed in the face of the controversy that President Macron “**makes no apology for what he’s said**” during the China trip.



Image: Reuters

As a reminder, while speaking with reporters aboard COTAM Unité, France's Air Force One, immediately following his time spent with Xi, the French President said that the "great risk" facing Europe right now is that it **"gets caught up in crises that are not ours, which prevents it from building its strategic autonomy."**

Macron's articulating a concept of strategic autonomy for Europe was 'enthusiastically endorsed' by Xi and the CCP, who have been focusing on the notion that the West is in decline while China rises, and that weakening the transatlantic relationship will accelerate this trend. "The paradox would be that, overcome with panic, we believe we are just America's followers," said Macron. "The question Europeans need to answer ... **is it in our interest to accelerate [a crisis] on Taiwan? No.** The worse thing would be to think that we Europeans must become followers on this topic and take our cue from the U.S. agenda and a Chinese overreaction."

And this: "If the tensions between the two superpowers heat up ... we won't have the time nor the resources to finance our strategic autonomy and we will become vassals," Macron said.

Russia, China, Iran and other countries have been hit by U.S. sanctions in recent years that are based on denying access to the dominant dollar-denominated global financial system. Some in Europe have complained about "weaponization" of the dollar by Washington, which forces European companies to give up business and cut ties with third countries or face crippling secondary sanctions.

While sitting in the stateroom of his A330 aircraft in a hoodie with the words “French Tech” emblazoned on the chest, Macron claimed to have already “won the ideological battle on strategic autonomy” for Europe. —[Politico](#)

But again, Macron’s call to not just be “America’s followers” and “get caught up in crises that are not ours” appears to have been **embraced by European leadership**. After all, EU executive Ursula von der Leyen was in the room with Xi and Macron to deliver a **“unified message”** last week.

And Michel says that Macron’s ‘controversial’ position actually reflects, among some at least, longstanding European thinking:

*As controversy swells around Macron’s comments that Europe should resist pressure to become “[America’s followers](#),” Michel suggested that **the French politician’s position was not isolated among EU leaders**. While Macron spoke as the French president, his views reflect a growing shift among EU leaders, Michel said.*

Trump slams Macron for giving China soft greenlight to invade Taiwan: “Macron, who’s a friend of mine, is over with China kissing [Xi Jinping’s] ass in China.”
pic.twitter.com/mddP4bYHZ4

— Benny Johnson (@bennyjohnson) [April 12, 2023](#)

“There has been a leap forward on strategic autonomy compared to several years ago,” Michel said in an interview with French television show [La Faute à l’Europe](#).

But then he qualified of the sensitive remarks regarding greater distance between US and European policy, “On the issue of the relationship with the United States, it’s clear that there can be nuances and sensitivities around the table of the European Council. **Some European leaders wouldn’t say things the same way that Emmanuel Macron did**... I think quite a few really think like Emmanuel Macron.”

Michel’s suggestion is that it’s much more to do with point of emphasis and timing, and less to do with fundamental divergence on the question of strategic autonomy among European leaders. “There is indeed a great attachment that remains present — and Emmanuel Macron has said nothing else — for this alliance with the United States. **But if this alliance with the United States would suppose that we blindly, systematically follow the position of the United States on all issues, no**,” Michel continued.

The Horror! NYT and others are outraged that a French leader would... put French and European interests first:

The New York Times

From Red Carpet to Doghouse: Macron Returns From China to Allied Dismay

Criticism of the French president's performance in Beijing has been scathing among some allies, who saw him as cozying up to Beijing.

"It is moreover the wish of the heads of state and governments to have the European Council engage more with the rest of the world," the European Council boss added. "When [Russian] Minister Sergey Lavrov goes to Africa to spread Russia's falsehoods, **it's important to counter fire.**"

This seems an actual ringing endorsement of some of Macron's more "controversial" phrases in Beijing, such as voicing a desire for Europe to become a "third superpower" in order to break the either/or dichotomy of being caught between the US and its great rivals like Russia or China.

by Tyler Durden

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