

1. TRUMP ?ELECTED?

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Europe's existential dilemmas

COMMENTARY | BY SPYROS BLAVOUKOS *

Europe faces two major dilemmas following the latest political developments in the United States. The first concerns the role it will choose to play in the escalating tension between China **and** the US.

The adversarial nature of relations between these two countries threatens to drag Europe – **and** indeed the entire world – into a new period of uncontrolled geopolitical tension. What will Europe's stance be in such an event? There is no doubt that Europe's influence over the US has declined steadily over the years. But does that also mean that Europe will choose to obediently follow America's lead, or could the new political cycle in the United States encourage a more substantial effort toward European political emancipation? Given the lack of political leadership within the EU – as its two most influential members, France **and** Germany, struggle with domestic internal political turmoil – such a development, as desirable as it is, seems unrealistic at this juncture.

The second dilemma involves the return of economic (neo-)protectionism as a defining feature of global geoeconomic interaction. The US government is expected to impose additional tariffs on imported goods while also offering incentives to domestic industries, a move that will further intensify international competition **and** potentially lead to a significant crisis in the multilateral regulatory framework governing the global economy. How will Eu-



A billboard announces Donald Trump's victory in the West Palm Beach Convention Center in Florida, on Tuesday. Trump's 'Make America Great Again' doctrine entails an isolationist stance that will have repercussions **for** Europe.

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rope respond to this development, given that economic liberalism is ingrained in its core principles **and** has underpinned all cooperative steps over the past 70 years? Is the EU prepared to adopt a path of increased state intervention in the economy,

as suggested by the recent Draghi Report?

Donald Trump's re-election as president of the United States brings added urgency to these issues **and** significant pressure on Europe to make critical decisions. These decisions will shape the form **and** trajectory of **European** integration in the coming decades.

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