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Mohamed Lamine KABA

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Alliances with the United States: between danger and fatality

In a world where international alliances are as volatile as the balance of power, diplomatic relations with the United States perfectly illustrate this complexity and these dangers. What sacrifices must the allies make to maintain this perilous friendship?

In this era of profound geopolitical uncertainty, where international alliances are as fragile as the balance of power, Kissinger's quote resonates as a prophetic warning, "To be an enemy of the United States is dangerous, but to be its friend is fatal" encapsulates the enigma of contemporary international relations. Overwhelmed by the speed of events characteristic of the dynamics of the global chessboard and drawn into the orbit of American influence, European and Western nations in the service of Washington's foreign policy navigate between the promises of protection and the perils of dependence.

Alliances with the United States are costly, lead to loss of sovereignty and increase internal tensions

This debility, which is part of a historical continuity, has entered a critical phase since the return of Donald Trump to the White House last January. While the United States alternates between extremist isolationism and intrusive and threatening interventionism, its allies are left to juggle with the unpredictable consequences of these oscillations. In this context of strategic ambiguity, alliances become potential pitfalls, and diplomatic friendships become existential challenges. How do these complex relationships shape the current world order, and what does the future hold for America's partners?

In fact, the dynamics of power and dependency, highlighted by Henry Kissinger, reveal the complexities of the relationship between the United States and its allies. In the logic of the transatlantic alliance, of course, collaborating with Washington implies an asymmetrical

relationship, where economic, military and diplomatic dependence is predominant. This proximity, although strategic, exposes partners to risks, including potentially disadvantageous military interventions and regime changes.

Alliances with the United States are costly, lead to loss of sovereignty and increase internal tensions. The fragility of these relationships is accentuated by the unpredictability of American policy, with abrupt changes and uncertain commitments, especially under unstable administrations. Trump's return to the White House in January 2025 – which turns some European journalists and specialists in the geopolitical chessboard into real automatons – illustrates these risks, thus highlighting the challenges and inherent dangers for the allies of the United States. Reigning champions of the propagation of hatred of Russia, the European elites of the plot of the landlord of the Elysée, certainly have another definition of servility and vassalage specific to their state of mind.

The dynamics of power and dependency

Modern international diplomacy is marked by a complexity where asymmetric alliances with the Western superpower, especially the United States, reveal considerable challenges and dangers. Through an unbalanced power dynamic, the United States exercises significant economic, military and political influence. It often dictates the terms of alliances and places its partners in a situation of dependence.

Allies, in search of military and economic support, must regularly align their policies with those of Washington. This, backed by a febrile subjugation, creates vulnerability to unilateral American decisions, such as economic sanctions or military interventions. This fueled dependence threatens the sovereignty of allied countries and draws them into costly and protracted conflicts.

In addition, alliances with the United States can expose these countries to retaliation from opposing powers, illustrating the latent danger of being a friend of this superpower. The proxy war or war by proxy allies of the United States against Russia in Ukraine is an illustrative example that has revolted the Global South, from Dakar to Delhi, from Cape Town to Jakarta, and from Rio de Janeiro to Nairobi, against the collective West, from Vancouver to Warsaw, from Los Angeles to Lisbon, and from Washington to Paris.

It is in this perspective that the management of the complexity of relations with Washington requires allies to juggle astutely between the advantages and risks inherent in such an alliance. This divides East/West relations, in other words, relations between the Global South or the BRICS Alliance and the collective West or NATO.

The cost of wedding rings

Irrefutably, the analysis of the costs of the alliance reveals the considerable sacrifices that the allies of the United States must make, ranging from the forced alignment of their foreign policies to costly participation in military conflicts, including attacks on their sovereignty. Complacent and under high pressure, allied nations often adopt economic sanctions and diplomatic resolutions in line with American interests, even if it means sacrificing their own strategic and economic priorities, as is currently the case in many Western countries.

Military interventions in Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, Ukraine and many other quite abundant ones in Africa, Asia and Latin America, illustrate the human and financial losses suffered by partners, accentuated by the internal tensions linked to these controversial engagements. In addition, hosting American military bases and forced participation in intelligence activities compromise the decision-making independence of states. This makes them dependent on the strategic orientations of the United States. Thus, these asymmetric alliances impose a heavy price on allied countries, highlighting the risks inherent in their relationship with this American superpower.

The fragility of relationships

Undoubtedly, relations with the United States are characterized by an intrinsic volatility. They result from the fluctuations of political and economic interests. This fragility is manifested by dynamic alliances, persistent diplomatic tensions and constant strategic adjustments. This institutional logic characteristic of the dynamics of the transatlantic alliance makes international partnerships with Washington both unpredictable and complex.

The volatility of American foreign policy that we are talking about, influenced by electoral cycles and changes of administration, creates constant uncertainty for allies who must adapt quickly, willingly or unwillingly. Sudden decisions, such as the withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, the Iran Nuclear Deal, the UN Human Rights Council, the dissolution of USAID, the withdrawal from the WHO and many others, illustrate this unpredictability and force partners to reassess their strategic positions.

Strategic shifts, such as the antithetical and hasty withdrawal of troops from Syria (even if they were redeployed there) and Afghanistan, have destabilized alliances and compromised the security of local partners, weakening the credibility of the United States. This situation leads to a loss of trust and encourages allies to explore new alliances, notably with emerging powers like China and Russia, to reduce their dependence. Thus clearly stated, the fragility of relations with the United States represents a major challenge for allies. Obsequious allies who must navigate an uncertain diplomatic environment while seeking to secure their long-term positions through more balanced and stable partnerships.

Based on the arguments presented, we can deduce that diplomatic relations with the United States, marked by their volatility and risks, require considerable sacrifices from their allies. Europe and other allies within NATO suffer from their servility. This lifts the veil on the high cost and the dangers inherent in a friendship with the American superpower.

To conclude, driven by a marked aversion to Russia, the European elites, despised by the Americans for their servility, can continue to fulfill their vassal rights to Washington. At the same time, the future of the global chessboard is being shaped by the BRICS Alliance, the pillar of the Global South.

Mohamed Lamine KABA, February 17, 2025

Mohamed Lamine KABA, Expert in geopolitics of governance and regional integration, Institute of Governance, Human and Social Sciences, Pan-African University