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## German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited the People's Republic of China: Has he “restored” Angela Merkel's policy?



From 15 to 17 April, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz led a delegation of three ministers and business representatives on a working visit to China. Since taking office as head of the German government in December 2021, this is his second **visit** to the leading power of the Asian continent, where the focus of all global processes is constantly shifting.

This is a continuation of the tradition of regular contacts with the Chinese leadership established under his predecessor, **Angela Merkel**. Incidentally, of all Western politicians, she has always received the most praise in China. The first comments in the **Global**

**Times** upon Scholz's arrival in Chongqing (one of the three cities visited) expressed hope for the restoration of the "Merkel era" in bilateral relations. However, the Germans themselves have some difficult questions to answer, such as the fate of nuclear energy and the opening of borders to the massive influx of migrants from "disadvantaged" countries.

Nevertheless, even during the period of her government (an unprecedentedly long period of 16 years, starting in 2005), the German establishment gradually formed the opinion that for the country to return to the table of the "Great World Game" after the catastrophe of 1945 as a significant participant, it was simply necessary to establish constructive relations with a power that was becoming one of the two major geopolitical players. It is important to stress that China is in fact (and not by default) becoming the main opponent of the United States. That is to say, the leader of the still functioning bloc of "Western countries", of which the FRG itself is still a member.

Since the current ("traffic light") coalition came to power two and a half years ago, the role of this last factor in Berlin's foreign policy has increased significantly compared to what was observed under its predecessors. Of course, they declared their loyalty to the "Western bloc", but they did not miss any opportunity to serve national interests. In any case, they did not stoop to the current madness of turning a blind eye to the undermining of a critical infrastructure by "one of the allies" and sacrificing the welfare of their own citizens to "allied obligations".

The promoters of the above-mentioned madness in the government of O. Scholz are the fighters against the emission of "greenhouse gases" into the atmosphere, i.e. active participants in what is almost the biggest fraud in human history, which sooner or later will have to be the subject of a special international tribunal. Along with similar frauds being carried out under the slogans of "Me Too" (under which one of the main contenders for the US presidency today "passes" in the courts), gender diversity, BLM (openly provocative towards the black inhabitants of the planet), guaranteeing the rights of babies and pets. All the more so because all of the above, as well as other deceptions, most likely come from the same source.

However, O. Scholz's group in the current government is trying to somehow take into account national interests in the course of the game unfolding on the international arena. And it seems that the above-mentioned positive associations of the leading Chinese newspaper with the "Merkel era" are primarily related to the very fact of his visit to China. For the Federal Republic of Germany, maintaining constructive relations with China is particularly

important in the current conditions of radical transformation of the world order. The extent of bilateral trade and economic cooperation is also an important factor.

However, the latter has recently included the **problem** of the possible acquisition of assets from technologically advanced (and also national security important) German companies. It should be noted that the “American factor” had practically nothing to do with the protective measures taken. In other words, A. Merkel’s government was guided by the same national interests in this case.

This is not to say, of course, that Berlin’s policy is devoid of such interests. Neither before nor now. But their presence is not conditioned by the infamous “occupation”, but by the fact that the US has been a key ally and also an important trade and economic partner of the FRG throughout the entire post-war period. Its interests therefore still have to be taken into account in shaping its own foreign policy.

Moreover, Germany is one of the leading members of the EU, and the same “American factor” is no less evident in the upper echelons of its bureaucracy. This manifests itself in the form of politicisation by Brussels of almost the entire sphere of relations with China. In particular, such artificial (Washington-initiated) “problems” as “de-risking” with Beijing or its “violation” of human rights are updated. The innovation of China’s “overcapacity”, introduced by US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen during her recent visit to China, was immediately adopted.

However, it is worth noting that the EU is imposing restrictive measures on the production of products that can be very profitable for producers. This applies in particular to all the technologies that have emerged in recent years around the same “climate-green” theme. We are talking about electric cars and their batteries, solar panels and wind turbines. In almost all of these technologies, China is now the undisputed world leader.

Here it seems appropriate to express the author’s opinion on the very fact of China’s active participation in the development of the above-mentioned topic. It boils down to the fact that two problems seem to have coincided. One, which is quite real, is a consequence of the initial strategy of quickly and cheaply creating a network of coal-fired generators of electrical and thermal energy. The result has been a dramatic increase in particulate pollution in the air that the Chinese breathe. The second was the result of speculation about “the destruction of the ozone layer and the formation of a greenhouse veil in its place” somewhere tens and hundreds of kilometres above the earth’s surface.

But it is the latter, we repeat, that is now generating a huge market for the “green economy”, and why not, while solving the problem of replacing dirty (in the literal sense of the word)

coal-fired power stations, which is extremely urgent for China, make a lot of money from the completely artificial problem of “carbonisation of the upper atmosphere”, which was not initiated by the Chinese. Moreover, there is no clear answer to the natural question of what to do with hundreds of metres of windmill blades, huge fields of solar panels and tens of millions of car batteries after they are decommissioned.

Finally, it should be noted that China is seen in the US as the main geopolitical adversary, and the development of any “autonomous” relations with it is seen almost as a revolt on a “Western” ship. In the author’s opinion, the fact that O. Scholz brought up the issue of “unprovoked Russian aggression against Ukraine” at meetings with his Chinese counterparts, with appeals to the Chinese leadership to adopt a pro-Western position, can be seen as a tribute to these very allied commitments. By the way, A. Merkel had to do something similar during her numerous contacts with the PRC leadership.

The guest’s appeals did not, of course, meet with the hosts’ understanding. Their position in the “Beijing-Moscow-Washington” triangle (the latter remains, we repeat, Berlin’s “big brother”) accurately reflects an illustration of an article in the same **Global Times** on the failure of the American sanctions policy towards both Russia and China.

The main event of German Chancellor O. Scholz’s trip was his meeting with the Chinese leader in Beijing, where **Xi Jinping** outlined China’s position on the prospects for developing relations with one of the leading European countries. He attributed the future of these relations not to the (pseudo) problem of “risk reduction”, but to the need to “work together to increase stability and security in the world”.

At the same time, the Chinese leader saw the German Chancellor’s visit in the context of the broader issue of finding an optimal strategy for building relations with the EU as a whole, of which Germany remains the leading economy. This theme will continue during Xi’s upcoming visit to France. Relations with these two leading continental European states are becoming increasingly important for China as relations with the UK continue to deteriorate. A decade ago, then Prime Minister and current Foreign Secretary David Cameron predicted a “golden age” for the two countries.

On the eve of his meeting with the Chinese leader, O. Scholz identified the general problem he was concerned about during the visit in question, in a **speech** to a group of students in Shanghai. It was presented in the form of a thesis about the readiness to “shake hands with a muscular neighbour”, being sure that nothing bad would come from the “neighbour”.

The message seems to be aimed both at China, with which Germany has – let us repeat – problems in the area of trade and economic relations, and at Russia. However, the fears about the latter are probably caused by the same “Russian aggression in Ukraine”.

It is usually difficult to disagree with such general philosophical maxims. However, they almost never provide answers to specific questions arising in the “here and now”. Meanwhile, the “muscular” participants of the current stage of the “Great World Game” have their own wishes in their relations with the authors of the aforementioned maxims. And only on the way of harmonisation of mutual demands it is possible to avoid the development of the whole world situation according to the negative scenario.

In this respect, it is still difficult to say what contribution the visit of the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to China discussed here has made.

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