

## Has 'America First' become 'Trump First', Germans wonder

When Chancellor Angela Merkel told President Donald Trump last week that she would not attend the Group of 7 meeting he wanted to host in Washington this month, the call between the two leaders, normally respectful in tone, turned **testy**.

testy 易怒的; 暴躁的

Merkel cited the ongoing pandemic. Trump responded with a wide-ranging monologue about his frustrations with the Group of 7 and NATO and the WHO. America was doing great, he said, even as citizens rioted in cities across the country. The pandemic was China's fault.

One week later, Germans learned that the United States planned to cut its troop presence in their country by more than a quarter.

Trust between Merkel and Trump was lost long ago. Now, officials and analysts say, something much more fundamental was slipping away — trust in the strategic foundation of the trans-Atlantic alliance itself.

The lack of consultation on the decision, and the uncertainty and unpredictability in dealing with Trump — his decision to leave the WHO similarly surprised allies — have become hallmarks of his years in office.

Trump's decision to withdraw troops is in line with his "America First" vision of limiting American deployments overseas, and his insistence that allies must shoulder more of the burden for their own defense.

But before the presidential elections in November, some say "America First" seems to have morphed into "Trump First."

"It's all about him, it's not about a vision of the world, not about politics, it's about him, about his need for validation — and sometimes his need for revenge," said Norbert Röttgen, chairman of Germany's foreign affairs committee and one of several candidates hoping to succeed Merkel as chancellor next year.