

President Biden drives the EU to a more aggressive foreign policy

President Biden's more diplomatic approach towards the EU comes at a price. Last week the USA persuaded the EU to put its name to sanctions against Chinese officials and to make a statement condemning China's treatment of the Uighur Muslims. The EU had been negotiating an Investment and Trade Agreement with China, and had been careful not to criticise China's approach to human rights. The 5 Eyes grouping of the USA, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand had been more outspoken and Australia had borne the brunt of Chinese denials, rebuttals and complaints.

The US Secretary of State also made it crystal clear that the USA remains implacably opposed to the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia to Germany, despite it being almost finished. He stated it was a "bad idea" for the EU as well as for her western allies. He added to Trump's strategic criticisms the added criticism that the project gets in the way of EU climate change objectives as well, a new US sensitivity which the EU is meant to share. The USA under Biden has more time for allies, but expects them to rally round a new aggression towards both China and Russia. President Biden dislikes these states. He alleges they undertake state sponsored cyber disruption, interfere in western elections, fail to uphold human rights for all and are building up their military power whilst creating a series of client states. The German model of doing plenty of business with Russia and China is being put under some strain. For her part China is testing out both Biden's power and the cohesiveness of the western alliance. The trends are clearly towards a US led system and country grouping, and a Chinese led one. Biden's team are trying a tough public stance on political matters, whilst trying diplomacy to settle some of the trade issues with China in private.

I would be interested in your comments as well on where the UK should now position its foreign policy towards China.