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## GERMANY AND USA FAR APART ON TRADE

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But Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to the White House comes at a time when that relationship has become very strained says Josef Braml of the German Council of Foreign Affairs.

We have huge differences," he says. "Not just on individual questions, we are living on different planets. We still believe in the regulation-based international liberal order but Trump wants to break it. And this is a huge problem for a trading power like Germany.

During the meeting Merkel is likely to bring up the tariffs on aluminum and steel that the US is set to impose in May. Talk of tariffs causes concern in Germany not just because of the direct economic impact, but because of the overall trend towards protectionism.

Whether these tariffs actually go into effect is almost beside the point," says the Director of the German Chamber of Commerce. "A bigger problem is that making threats can influence other countries to say if the USA treats us like this, we'll do the same. That would be the worst-case scenario and it's possible."

Trump is said to have a far better relationship with French President Emmanuel Macron than with Merkel.

But could Merkel improve relations by using the economic power of Germany to make a deal with the self-described dealmaker?

I think we have to offer Trump something," says Braml. "Buy armaments so that we are dependent on the American arms industry for example. That could be a deal that Trump would like. But it remains to be seen whether Merkel is ready to do so."

The meeting between the worlds most powerful man and Europes most powerful woman will be followed with concern here in Berlin.

But the hope is that they will find enough common interests and ways to compromise so that the German-US relationship will stay at least stable going into the near future.

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Kaynak/Source: