

Vance promotes fascist right amidst escalating US-Europe conflicts at Munich Security Conference

Peter Schwarz
14 February 2025

The war in Ukraine and President Trump's push for negotiations with Russia were supposed to be at the center of the Munich Security Conference, which began in the Bavarian metropolis on Friday. Instead, the escalating conflict between the US and Europe took center stage.

American Vice President JD Vance, who was one of the first to speak, delivered a 15-minute fascist harangue that could have come from far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) leader Alice Weidel, Dutch Islamophobe Geert Wilders or other European right-wing extremists.

Vance said it was a scandal that right-wing extremist parties were not invited to the Security Conference. "There is no place for firewalls," he said. He accused the assembled political leaders of fearing "the votes of their own people" and compared them to totalitarian rulers. The greatest danger for Europe came from within, he declared.

As examples, he cited the annulling of the presidential election in Romania, which the fascist C?lin Georgescu had won with the help of opaque financial sources, charges against militant anti-abortion activists in England and Scotland, and European Union rules against hate comments on social media.

Vance described "mass immigration" as the biggest problem. He referred directly to the attack in which an Afghan refugee crashed his car into a trade union demonstration in Munich the day before. "How many times do we have to suffer these appalling setbacks before we change course and steer our common civilization in a new direction?" said Vance. No voter went to the ballot box "to open the floodgates to millions of unvetted immigrants," he said.

After Hitler's defeat in the Second World War, the US government tried leading Nazis in Nuremberg, bringing their crimes to the attention of a wider public. Under Trump, the US government is now endeavoring to revive fascism in Europe.

Neo-fascist politicians, such as Giorgia Meloni in Italy, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Geert Wilders in the Netherlands and Javier Milei in Argentina, are already among Trump's closest allies. And in Germany, Trump's representative for social austerity, Elon Musk, has intervened massively in the election campaign in favor of the AfD.

What brings the far right on both sides of the Atlantic together is their common political agenda: the dismantling of all social programs, educational institutions and healthcare facilities that remain after years of cuts; the dismantling of the democratic rights of the working class, starting with the attack on migrants and refugees; the removal of all barriers that stand in the way of enriching the billionaire oligarchs, who form the backbone of the Trump administration; and the orientation of the economy towards war production.

The Nazis based their foreign policy alliances on ideological common ground. For example, Hitler's Germany concluded the Pact of Steel with Mussolini's Italy in 1939. In 1940, it was expanded into a three-power pact with Japan.

However, the European powers are neither bastions of democracy nor innocent victims of Trump's machinations. On the contrary, as the *World Socialist Web Site* has pointed out in numerous analyses, Trump's rise and re-election is not an accidental aberration "but an expression of a fundamental realignment of politics in the United States and around the world."

In its New Year's statement of January 3, 2025, the WSWS wrote:

The character of the new government marks a violent realignment of the state to correspond with the nature of capitalist society itself. The world's richest individuals and corporations control resources on an unfathomable scale.

The statement stressed that Trump's re-election is "the culmination of an extended process of political reaction and a harbinger of what is to come." It is "a political expression of the 'normalization' of fascist barbarism and capitalist dictatorship." This can be seen "by the Democratic Party and the capitalist media dropping all references to Trump's threat to democracy, let alone the 'f-word,' fascism, and instead pledging their full collaboration with Trump and the

Republicans.”

The statement also emphasised:

The processes clearly evident in the United States are in fact universal. Across the world, capitalist governments are staggered by massive political crises, confronting popular opposition and increasingly turning to authoritarian measures.

This is particularly true in Europe. Far-right parties are being courted, promoted and brought into government. In Germany, the opposition leader and possible next chancellor, Friedrich Merz, broke down the “firewall” against the fascist AfD a fortnight ago and for the first time pushed an anti-immigrant motion through the Bundestag together with the right-wing extremists. Although millions have protested against this, Merz is sticking to his guns.

The war in Ukraine has played an important role in this shift to the right. In 2014, the US, together with Germany and other European powers, organized a right-wing coup in Kiev, which brought a pro-Western regime to power and laid the foundations for the subsequent war. Since then, they have been working closely with fascist forces in Ukraine that honor Nazi collaborators, such as Stepan Bandera, as heroes. This has been accompanied by a systematic revision of history at universities and in the media. The crimes of the Nazis have been trivialized and the Soviet Union declared responsible for the Second World War.

But the war in Ukraine has proven to be a debacle for the German and European bourgeoisie. Trump’s announcement that he would negotiate with Putin over the heads of the Europeans and Ukraine has triggered panic in European governments. They fear that the US will withdraw from the war, secure access to valuable raw materials, and burden Europe with the costs and consequences of the war.

No one should be under any illusion that the Trump administration is seeking “peace” in Ukraine. Rather, Trump is reorienting US foreign policy to more directly exploit Ukraine’s significant energy and mineral wealth as he seeks to expand US domination over North and South America, including his proposed annexation of the Panama Canal, Greenland and Canada, in preparation for war against China.

This “America first” policy is also directed against the European “allies.” He has labeled the European Union a “monstrosity” and is trying to break it up, threatening it with punitive tariffs.

European governments are responding by cozying up to Trump on the one hand and massively arming themselves on the other. The speeches by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who spoke immediately before Vance, were both along

these lines.

Steinmeier began by saying that Germany must invest “significantly more” than 2 percent in defense in the future. “We have heard the wake-up call,” he said. While expressing his concern that the new American administration was showing no consideration for established rules and its allies, he made an almost pleading appeal to include Europe and Ukraine in negotiations with Russia. “You can rely on Germany,” he emphasized.

Von der Leyen declared that trade wars and tariffs made “no sense” but threatened counter-tariffs and urged negotiations. She also appealed to the US to work with Europe to ensure a “strong Ukraine.” She promised to massively increase European military spending. Although this had risen from €200 billion to €320 billion since the start of the war, she said that this was far from enough.

The spiral of trade war and rearmament that became so clearly visible in Munich is reminiscent of the eve of the Second World War. Leon Trotsky, the leading Marxist of the 20th century, warned in 1928:

In the period of crisis the hegemony of the United States will operate more completely, more openly, and more ruthlessly than in the period of boom. The United States will seek to overcome and extricate herself from her difficulties and maladies primarily at the expense of Europe, regardless of whether this occurs in Asia, Canada, South America, Australia, or Europe itself, or whether this takes place peacefully or through war.

This prediction is all the more true today. Only the working class can stop the deadly spiral that threatens to destroy humanity with nuclear weapons. It bears the entire burden of enriching the oligarchs, rearmament and escalating wars, and stands in irreconcilable opposition to the capitalist system.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact