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Ukraine

Understanding the Implications of US Vice President JD Vance's Confrontational Speech at the Munich Security Conference

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In a highly confrontational speech delivered at the Munich Security Conference opening on 14 February, US Vice President JD Vance declared that the “internal threat” facing Europe was more serious than that posed by Russia and China. He criticised the annulment of a recent election in Romania, the prosecution of an anti-abortion protester in the United Kingdom, and the exclusion of far-right and far-left German politicians from the event itself.

US Vice President JD Vance's speech in Munich, Germany, is characterised by extreme clarity and brutality. According to Vance, “the greatest threat looming over Europe comes not from China or Russia”. Rather, it stems from Europe's cancellation of elections rigged by the pro-Putin far-right in Romania, Britain's prosecution of a far-right anti-abortion activist, and the EU's (thus far) refusal to permit complete “free expression” of racist, fascist, and misogynistic hate speech on social networks, as well as electoral manipulation (as in Romania specifically). Putin is rubbing his hands with glee, and the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) openly applauds JD Vance.

There can be no doubt: a strategic agreement exists between Trump and Putin aimed at dividing spheres of influence in Europe and establishing authoritarian far-right regimes in their respective zones. This agreement involves breaking the Ukrainian people's resistance in the East whilst supporting the far-right that already dominates Hungary and Italy, or participates in government in several other countries, and risks coming to power in Germany and France. Trump and Putin are clearly collaborating toward this end, as demonstrated by Trump's recent statements supporting the dismemberment of Ukraine and regime change in Kyiv.

This represents a major turning point. While it appears suddenly in broad daylight today, it hasn't emerged from nowhere. It expresses capital's necessity, in a context of intensified competition, to establish authoritarian regimes to continue destroying society and nature for profit—by liquidating democratic and social rights, and denying scientific warnings about the severity of the ecological-climate crisis.

Thus, we can clearly see the emergence of a project for a multipolar world dominated by the Trump-Putin-Xi Jinping triad. Within this triad, the struggle for hegemony between the USA and China will give Russia a pivotal role. Trump's gifts to Putin are precisely aimed at distancing him from Xi. (In this context, note that Trump's ramblings about defending Christian faith also carry certain meaning.) Simultaneously, all this is motivated not only by fear but also by Trump and US Big Capital's admiration for the remarkable “efficiency” of Chinese high-tech despotism, which in just a few decades has built a capitalist economy capable of threatening the US empire's global pole position... while keeping the masses under control. Hence the rallying of the Zuckerbergs and Bezoses to Musk's crusade—the lumpen-capitalist making the fascist salute.

Faced with this project, some will believe they must mobilise to defend the EU as an embodiment of “democratic values”. This overlooks the fact that the EU is a profoundly despotic structure defined not by these “values” but as “an open market economy where competition is free”. As such, it actively participates in the world's shift toward the far right, both through its anti-social policies (austerity, persecution of migrants, etc.) and by unravelling its very insufficient (and very unfair!) supposedly “ecological” policies.

The only way forward for a left worthy of the name is to fight for democratic and social rights, and against ecological destruction, whilst working to rebuild internationalism from below. This requires breaking with the campist poison of those who rejoiced at the prospect of a multipolar world, imagining this world would promote “peace” and the emancipation of peoples. Instead, it promotes war and oppression.

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