

J.D. Vance's speech in Munich

By Gary Fouse

On Friday, Vice President J.D. Vance spoke at a security conference in Munich. His two main themes were freedom of expression in Europe and the migration disaster that has enveloped Europe-or at least Western Europe. Ironically, just the day before, Munich had been stunned by a terrorist car attack by an Afghan asylum-seeker. Almost 40 people were injured and two died, a mother and her two-year-old daughter in a stroller. During his stay in Munich, Vance also met with Alice Weidel, the leader of the right-wing party, *Alternatif fuer Deutschland*, which is steadily rising in popularity with Germans due to its anti-migrant platform. Add to that, elections in Germany are just days away, and the left is very nervous.

If you missed the speech, you can read the text [here](#) courtesy

of the Telegraph (UK) while his tone was diplomatic, Vance sharply criticized the European political establishment for cracking down on speech from its political opponents as well as civilians expressing their frustration that their voices don't seem to count. Vance also "named names". He singled out Germany, England, and Scotland for criticism. He also brought up the issue of Europe increasing its contributions to defense.



JD Vance addresses the audience during the Munich security conference on Friday |

Vance's speech has not been well received in Europe, or at least by the political establishment. Chancellor Olaf Scholz reacted angrily, and many other political figures and European media objected that Vance was lecturing them and meddling in European affairs.

As an American with much experience in Europe (3 years in Germany and 5 years in Italy), and as one who, like so many Americans, has always loved Europe, I have mixed feelings about the speech. I agree with him on the topics he raises. In many European countries, citizens and even some politicians like Geert Wilders of the Netherlands, have been hounded and even prosecuted for saying things about certain groups of migrants that I agree with. Europe does not have a First Amendment, and if the powers that be decide you are engaging

in hate speech, you have problems.

Yet, it was just this past week that Islamist-inspired acts blasted across the front pages of European newspapers. Aside from Munich, a young Syrian man went on a stabbing spree in the picturesque town of Villach in Austria. Five people were stabbed, and a 14-year-old boy died of his wounds. The perpetrator was literally laughing as police arrested him at the scene. It should be noted that his arrest was facilitated by the actions of a Syrian immigrant driving a food delivery vehicle, He rammed the vehicle into the stabber and is being hailed as a hero. In a similar ironic twist regarding the two deceased victims in Munich, the mother was born in Algeria and had immigrated at the age of 4. In France, a Moroccan migrant stabbed a 67-year-old mother and her 42-year-old son in the lobby of their apartment building in their town near Chartres for no apparent reason whatsoever. They are both in critical condition as of the last report. Stabbings like this in France are now a daily occurrence. Worse yet, this past week, an 11-year-old girl was stabbed to death as she walked home from school in her small town in the French department of Essonne. A 23-year-old man, born in France, and identified only as Owen L., has confessed to the crime. It's not clear whether he comes from an immigrant background, but one news source in France reported that his parents were "perfectly integrated." In short, Europe has a crisis on its hands.

At the same time, having spent 8 years living in Europe coupled with countless visits to the Continent for work or pleasure, I think I understand European sensibilities. They don't like being lectured by Americans the same as we don't like being lectured by Europeans, a love-hate relationship, so to speak, that has been going on for many generations. When Vance described President Trump as the "new sheriff in town", I am sure that many of his listeners interpreted that as applying to Europe. Vance should have made it clear he was referring to a new sheriff in America, not Europe, or just

eliminated it altogether.

Vance, a very intelligent and well-spoken man, surely realized that many Europeans are nervous about Trump being back in the White House. He could have allayed those fears. (There is some fence-mending to do in Canada as well. This week, there was a 4-country hockey tournament in Montreal featuring the US, Canada, Sweden, and Finland. Every time our National Anthem was played, it was booed by the fans. So much for Trump's "visions" of a 51st state.)

In the long run, I don't think Vance's speech will have big repercussions. He still has a bright future ahead of him, in my opinion. Trump will continue to stir up the hornet's nest, but what I tell my European friends is that they should not pay attention to what Trump says but what he does-which is usually very good in my view. The Europeans know that Biden-Harris were a disaster and that the American voters spoke loud and clear. The question-which Vance raised- is whether they are listening to their own voters. Every time I read of one of these deadly attacks by Syrians, Moroccans, Afghans, or what have you, I wonder if this will be the straw that broke the camel's back.

To that end, Germany's election on February 25 is worth watching.