

Rubio: A distinguished and effective diplomatic chief

By Conrad Black

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's address to the Munich Security Conference last week has ricocheted around Europe and the world as a stirring and conciliatory framework for a reconstructed and repurposed Western Alliance. Though very few Europeans, and not many Americans, realise it, he was completing another round of the Trump negotiating cycle. In this case, it began with dire threats to scrap the Western Alliance altogether if the Europeans and Canadians didn't finally pull their weight, and to seize Greenland if it couldn't be brought into the NATO security area. Trump achieved what he wanted, leaving murmurings of hurt feelings and allegations of ungentlemanly and unsuitable behaviour in the background. It was time to celebrate the new consensus and drive on. Trump's methods are frequently abrasive and irritating, but he is effective.



Marco Rubio at the Munich Security Conference: European leaders 'have gone to almost superhuman lengths to maintain themselves in a perfect cone of ignorance of how greatly Trump has strengthened America.' (epa1273710 EPA/RONALD WITTEK)

Where Vice President JD Vance told the same gathering a year ago that the United States was concerned that the constraints being placed by many Western European countries on basic human freedom in the interests of silencing complaints about uncontrolled and unskilled immigration that was creating a housing and welfare and cultural crisis in many European countries, and warned of the dangers of economic stagnation under Euro-socialism, Rubio reformulated the same points as mistakes that all of the transatlantic brotherhood had made and that all must resolve together. Without engaging in the usual torrents of vilification against the preceding administration to which the President whom Rubio serves is usually resistless, he volunteered that American government had been just as wrongheaded as that of the European Union on matters of illegal migration, wokeness, and the accommodation in the academy and the media of an excessive and unbalanced amount of collective self-hate.

Thus reformulated not as an exclusive and scathing criticism of Europe, but as a weary admission of collective transatlantic misjudgement that both oceanic shores of the

great Western Alliance were working contemporaneously to correct, the Europeans, in the course of the 30 minutes of the secretary's address, transitioned from crisis-nervosity to determined solidarity to strive on to the West's greatest days. Of course, any European and Canadian would never have worked themselves up into such a state of anxiety if they had bothered to analyse the methods of the current American President. But too many of them, in their envy and cultural affectations, are so accustomed to professing to find American leadership down-market and abrasively unworldly, other than those American leaders who charm them, (JFK and briefly Obama), or upon whose largesse they were completely dependent (FDR, and for good measure he charmed them also), they have construed the Trump phenomenon as confirmation of their worst fears of American political immaturity. They have gone to almost superhuman lengths to maintain themselves in a perfect cone of ignorance of how greatly Trump has strengthened America economically and sociologically, and weakened the enemies of the West.

China, which was supposed to surpass the American economy a decade ago, is bumping along in the doldrums of totalitarian mendacity and cannot sustain an economy only two-thirds the size of the United States, whose economy is now growing more quickly. Russia, having plunged into what was expected by the Kremlin to be a one-month reconquest of Ukraine, has taken a million casualties, half a million desertions and draft evasions, and is straining a corrupt and precarious economy that has a GDP smaller than Canada's, as Trump steadily disincentives buyers of Russian oil, most recently India.

(The Russo-Ukraine War has now gone on longer than the great Russo-German war of 1941-1945.) Venezuela has been decapitated, Cuba is about to collapse, the Ukrainian terrorist puppet organisations have been severely chastised and their punishment is not over. And the criminally diseased pseudo-theocratic despotism in Iran is hanging by a thread as Trump deploys steadily greater forces to amputate and dispose

of the gangrenous limb of terrorist Islam.

In shifting the matrix of the Western Alliance from one of scolding and discord to one of the solidarity of chastening experiences in the shared determination to reverse fortunes and keep faith the brilliant history of the Western Alliance, Marco Rubio showed himself a distinguished and effective and perceptive American diplomatic chief, worthy of the highest traditions of his forebears, Franklin, Jay, Monroe, John Quincy Adams, George Marshall, Acheson, Kissinger, Shultz and Baker. It is a remarkable personal recovery from the fiasco of his unsuccessful campaign for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016. And it is now clear why he was confirmed by the US Senate to his high office by a vote of 99 to 0 with one gentlemanly abstention, (himself).

We are at a high watermark in US-European relations that has not been equalled since the first Gulf War 35 years ago. The best is yet to come and only awaits the elevation of stronger leadership in several of the important European countries and Canada.

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