

Rubio Tells Europe What It Needs to Hear

By Victor Davis Hanson

I think all of us have heard some news of Secretary of State Marco Rubio's very impressive speech at the Munich Security Conference.

Remember, this is where the Europeans have pushed back on criticism. A year ago, Vice President [JD Vance](#) tried to enlighten them that they were on a path toward civilizational decline, and one of the manifestations of that was debt, energy problems, borders, censorship, and they didn't react well to that.

They didn't react very well either when President Donald Trump said it was a concern of Europe and the United States that Greenland be defended, especially in the age of these new hypersonic missiles coming into the West from the Arctic Circle, from either China or Russia. That didn't go down well because of the way that they felt Trump was bullying them.

But this was a different speech. It had three or four components that were very persuasive. You got a standing ovation at the end.

The first was [Rubio made it clear](#) that we are—in the age of DEI—we are a European country in the sense that our legacy was Europe and, particularly, Great Britain. But our laws, our language, our literature, our institutions, they're Western.

That was kind of a controversial thing to say when people on the DEI woke side say, "No, we're Indigenous people," or "We're from Africa," or something. But what he was trying to say is that we feel that you are kindred, you're kindred civilization, you're our mother's civilization.

He gave a lot of examples about cities in America. New Amsterdam—Amsterdam, Netherlands—was New York.

And he tried to point out how we came to be. And then he moved on that he wasn't criticizing them in the traditional fashion, but he was saying that we made the same mistakes.

The only difference, as he implied, he inferred—he was not explicit, he was implicit—was that you haven't got really yet a continent of [Donald Trump's](#), just wage a counterrevolution.

But yes, we had let in 10 million people on an open border. Yes, we destroyed meritocracy for four or five years with DEI. Yes, we bought into critical legal and critical race theory that made exemptions based on one superficial appearance from the normal application of the law.

Yes, our defenses were not what they should be, that we have neglected, especially the prior four years in maintaining a predominant or superior American fleet, Air Force, and Army.

And yes, he said in addition that you can't have a society, it won't function if you don't have fossil fuels or nuclear power, especially in Europe. It doesn't have the ... most of Europe is to the north of us. It doesn't have the advantages that we do. And even with our southern states, solar and wind are too undependable to predicate an entire economy on them.

The third thing he did was: He was saying that we want a [strong NATO](#). Maybe we're inelegant sometimes, but the more that a 500 million-person Europe can defend itself, the better it is for us.

And a couple of reasons. We're a distant power across the Atlantic Ocean, but we can offer lift capacity, logistics, nuclear deterrence.

And we want to work with Europe, but because they're on the continent and there's a war raging in Russia, they have to be

the frontline troops. We're there to help them. But we can't take the primary role because we have obligations for the West worldwide.

And that brought up one of the fourth things that he said was if [Europe](#) would arm itself with a population of 500 million plus—we're only about 340 million—then that would free up some of our resources to address common European and common American threats, such as China in the Pacific or Iran, or problems in the Middle East.

After all, we have to keep the Strait of Hormuz, the South China Sea, the Red Sea open and that benefits Europe. But we can't do that if we have a disarmed Europe where we are tied down in Europe and in Asia. And then, of course, implicitly said we had the same common enemies.

So it was a big success. He got a standing innovation.

A lot of people don't like to be told the truth in Europe, but they understand that economically, financially, militarily, and politically, they are in a crisis, and it needed somebody to deliver this message.

What was nice about the timing was that JD Vance, as I said, and Trump had given the tough love version, and he came and gave the good cop version. I could mix my metaphors.

One final note: It really enhanced the position of Marco Rubio because he's sort of become Trump's fireman. When there's a problem that seems unsolvable or that people, whether it's in Panama or whether it's in the Middle East, or whether it's in the Western Hemisphere, people call on Rubio.

And I think we should watch that very carefully because I think we're going to enter into the 2028 race, not with a Vance, Rubio vice president, but with two strong candidates.

Then, I don't know. If the nomination is decided, I think it's

up for grabs.

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