

2025 MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE AND THE NECESSITY OF CONSTRUCTIVE EURASIANISM

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A Brief Reminder of What Was Said in the Past

The concept of "Westlesness" was the main theme of the Munich Security Conference (MSC) held five years ago on February 14-16, 2020. At that time, the conference organizers briefly explained the concept of "westlesness" as follows:

> Despite its widespread use as a shorthand for a community of mostly North American and European liberal democracies as well as a normative project, the West is a concept that is not always easy to pin down. The West has never been a monolithic concept but rather an amalgam of different traditions, the mix of which changed over time. Yet, for the past decades, the answer to the question what it was that kept the West together was straightforward: a commitment to liberal democracy and human rights, to a market-based economy, and to international cooperation in international institutions. Today, the meaning of the West is increasingly contested again. We are witnessing the decay of the West as a relatively cohesive geopolitical configuration ☀ The contemporary spiritual disunity of the West is due to the rise of an illiberal and nationalist camp within the Western world. For this increasingly vocal group, the West is not primarily a community bound by liberal-democratic values and open to everyone sharing these values. Rather, it is a community held together by ethnic, cultural, or religious criteria. Such an understanding of the West distinguishes itself from a liberal or open understanding of the West. Proponents of this closed interpretation believe that the (white Christian) West today is threatened by outsiders with different religious beliefs or cultural backgrounds. The proponents of this school of thought see Western societies as weak or even suicidal undermining themselves by societal liberalization, the empowerment of women, and immigration. Their perception that the West is under attack paves the way for what they perceive as legitimate self-defense. In its moderate version, this school of thought calls for walls and borders,

> the rejection of refugees, or the opposition to political correctness and gender mainstreaming.[1]

In our analysis published at that time on the subject, we explained that the 2020 MSC demonstrated the validity of the concept of "Constructive Eurasianism" that AVİM has been bringing to the agenda since 2017 and summarized our arguments in this respect as follows:

> As the Center For Eurasian Studies (AVİM), within the framework of our studies on Eurasia, we have been bringing to the agenda the concept of Constructive Eurasianism. In this context, the Constructive Eurasianism concept rejects the understanding based on the search for an alternative to the West and instead of creating new rivalries and antagonisms in Eurasia, proposes for the creation of new avenues for cooperation through which Turkey (and likewise other western countries) can position themselves properly in a changing world. While staunchly defending Turkey's further integration with and entrenched position in the West, we, at the same time, underline the importance of developing a new relationship with the East. There is no need to be so much distressed with losing the western hegemony in the world. Instead of trying to turn the clock back, we should proceed forward with creative thinking.

In our recent article titled "Constructive Eurasianism: Revisiting Definitions", which we published at the beginning of this year on the subject of Constructive Eurasianism[2], we made further explanations about the main elements of this concept as follows:

> In conclusion, since its inception, the concept of, Constructive Eurasianism has made significant contribution to academic discourse and policy analysis by promoting a balanced geopolitical orientation for Türkiye. This approach not only redefines Türkiye's interactions on the global stage but also enhances its strategic autonomy by emphasizing stability and security. Through fostering connections with both Eastern and Western partners, it positions Türkiye as a pivotal nexus that bridges diverse civilizational spheres. In the coming period, instead of supporting and glorifying destabilization, conflict, war and hegemonic approaches, we should focus on bona fide cooperation, multifaceted and cooperative international relations strategy.In this context, it should be underlined that the concept of Constructive Eurasianism is not a utopian approach, but on the contrary, a realistic approach that correctly diagnoses the challenges in the Eurasian geography, proposes cooperation for peace, stability and tranquility, and emphasizes the importance of remembering the long-forgotten principle of the indivisibility of security. It is believed that it would be beneficial for those who created the principle of indivisibility of security 50 years ago to remember the importance of this principle for the West and the East, and therefore for the Eurasian geography.[3]

2025 Munich Security Conference Shocked the Western World

The 61st Munich Security Conference (MSC) took place from February 14 to 16, 2025, The

report prepared for the MSC bears the title "Multipolarization."[4] The report seeks answers to the following questions: Is the world really entering an era defined by multipolarity? What are the (potential) poles of such an order? How polarized are they? What are the implications of a multipolarized order? And how can the international community manage multipolarization? Report, as answers to these questions, asserts that the world is becoming ever more multipolar and worlds multipolarization is a fact.[5]

It is possible to say that the speech made by the U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance at the conference had an earthquake effect and deeply shook the Western World. He accused European leaders of suppressing free speech and censorship, including by referencing Germanys far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party and declared that biggest security threat facing Europe was not Russia or China, but the threat from within.[6] He, among others, specifically mentioned election developments in Romania and stated the following:

> Now, I was struck that a former European commissioner went on television recently and sounded delighted that the Romanian government had just annulled an entire election. He warned that if things dont go to plan, the very same thing could happen in Germany, too. Now, these cavalier statements are shocking to American ears. For years, weve been told that everything we fund, and support is in the name of our shared democratic values. Everything from our Ukraine policy to digital censorship is billed as a Defense of democracy, but when we see European courts cancelling elections and senior officials threatening to cancel others, we ought to ask whether were holding ourselves to an appropriately high standard. And I say ourselves because I fundamentally believe that we are on the same team. We must do more than talk about democratic values. We must live them.[7]

As it may be recalled, as AVİM we also drew attention to the seriousness of the former EU officials statement regarding the Romanian elections in our analysis dated January 24, 2025.[8]

BBC covered the US Vice President's speech, which had a seismic effect on the Western World and transatlantic ties, under the titles "JD Vance attacks Europe over free speech and migration" and "JD Vance's blast at Europe ignores Ukraine and defense agenda", and drew particular attention to Vance's statement that "the greatest threat facing the continent was not from Russia and China, but from within".[9] The Guardian newspapers Diplomatic Editors analysis of the issue is titled JD Vances Munich speech laid bare the collapse of the transatlantic alliance. The Diplomatic Editor explains the devastating effects of the speech as The speech signaled that the pre-existing dispute between Europe and the US was no longer to do with the sharing of the military burdens, or the nature of the future security threat posed by Russia, but something more fundamental about society. [10] While Le Monde reflects the speech by the title of "In Munich, JD Vance declares ideological war on Europe"[11], POLITICO advances the title of JD Vance brings culture war to Europe."[12]

We can say that the widespread opinion in the Western press about the speech was that it had the effect of a bomb and damaged transatlantic relations. It should be noted that this

opinion was reflected in a news-commentary by the PRC News Agency Xinhua, titled "U.S. VPs speech in Munich sparks European backlash, widening transatlantic rifts."[13]

How did MSC evaluate the results of the 2025 conference?

According to MSC webpage the MSC seeks to provide concise and analytical summaries of its most relevant events. Rather than providing a comprehensive overview of the entire event, they focus on key takeaways, highlight contentious or surprising points, and distil issues that merit further attention. They primarily capture the opinions and perspectives voiced by participants in the discussion and do not necessarily reflect the position of the MSC.[14] The debrief published by the MSC following the 2025 conference[15] reflects the results and main conclusions of the conference as key takeovers in the following way:

> Although it is unclear whether we are already living in a truly multipolar system, todays world is characterized by multipolarization.
>
> While the world today displays elements of uni-, bi-, multi-, or even nonpolarity, it is being shaped by a changing global distribution of power, with a larger number of actors having the ability to influence key global issues. But the world is also experiencing increasing polarization, both at the international level and within many countries domestic politics.
>
> For many politicians and citizens around the globe, a more multipolar world holds significant promise. But increasing competition among the various poles and their order models is already impeding joint approaches to global crises and threats.
>
> As few states still pursue foreign policies focused on the common good and domestic divides are further complicating such attempts it is far from clear how a process of depolarization that could set multipolarity on a positive track could be initiated.[16]

The MSC debrief concludes that the Conference reflected many challenges associated with the recalibration of the transatlantic relationship and the emergence of a new international order shaped by multi-polarization.

As a final word, the MSC debrief strikingly emphasizes that The old days are over, and a new era begins.

Closing comments

AVİM, for years, has been highlighting the emerging shifts in global alignments and, in this regard, as outlined above, proposed and in years developed the concept of Constructive Eurasianism for Türkiye's foreign relations. Constructive Eurasianism advocates for Türkiye to balance its Western ties with Eastern opportunities. This geopolitical approach promotes regional cooperation across Eurasia. While it values stability and security not

only in Europe but in the wider Eurasia, it strongly suggests strategic autonomy for Türkiye. This approach rejects anti-Westernism and recognizes the West's valuable contributions to global development without ignoring historical contexts or sacrificing strategic autonomy.

We believe that the recent developments we have briefly summarized above reflect the realistic and functional nature of Constructive Eurasianism. In this context, we would like to state that the MSC's assessment that "the old days are over, and a new era begins is a valid but very late assessment and reminds us of the proverb "good morning after supper."

*Picture: Linked-in

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