

Should the EU Put America First?

Frances Cowell

At the Munich Security Conference on Friday 15 February, Mike Pence seemed to expect applause when he brought “greetings from” the “champion of freedom” and demand that Europe follow America’s lead out of the Iran nuclear accord. One wonders what he was smoking. Amusing, to be sure, but perhaps more consequential was the comment by Nicholas Burns, a former American diplomat, who named Angela Merkel as the “Leader of the West”.

Mrs Merkel’s performance and reception at the Conference seemed to confirm that accolade. Speaking not just for Germany, but for Europe, she rejected go-it-alone foreign policy and restating Europe’s commitment to the Iran deal, both as a successful multi-lateral agreement and a crucial channel of communication with Iran, and went further to question America’s decision to withdraw from Syria as an invitation to Russia and Iran to advance their influence there. Minutes of standing applause could not have contrasted more sharply with the reception Mr Pence got.

Further confirmation of Europe’s leadership, was delivered by Joe Biden, who pointed out that leadership depended on follower-ship, stressing that many Americans agree with neither America First nor their President’s foreign policies.

It is more crucial now than it has ever been that Europe fill its function of leader of the Free World.

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