

Trump's "Mein Kampf" tirade at the United Nations

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20 September 2017

The speech delivered Tuesday by Donald Trump to the opening session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York was without precedent either for the UN or the American presidency.

Speaking before a world body ostensibly created to spare humanity the "scourge of war" and founded on the principles elaborated at the Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders, the American president openly embraced a policy of genocide, declaring that he was "ready, willing and able" to "totally destroy" North Korea and its 25 million people.

The fact that nobody in the assembly moved for Trump's arrest as a war criminal, or even told the fascistic bully to sit down and shut up, is a measure of the bankruptcy of the UN itself.

"The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea," Trump told the meeting. "Rocket Man [Trump's imbecilic nickname for North Korean leader Kim Jong-un] is on a suicide mission for himself and for his regime. The United States is ready, willing and able..."

As with his every public utterance, Trump's megalomaniacal remarks began with the supposed revival of America's fortunes since his election last November, which has found expression, he argued, in the Wall Street stock market bubble and the passage of a \$700 billion military budget.

At the core of Trump's speech was the promotion of his "America First" ideology. The US president presented the promotion of nationalism as the solution to all the problems of the planet. "The nation-state remains the best vehicle for elevating the human condition," he proclaimed in a speech in which the words "sovereign" or "sovereignty" were repeated 21 times.

While declaring his supposed support for the sovereignty of every nation, Trump made it clear that his administration is prepared to wage war against any nation that fails to bow to Washington's diktat.

In addition to threatening to incinerate North Korea for testing ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons, he threatened to abrogate the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran, describing it as an "embarrassment." He thereby placed the US on the path to war against Iran, whose government he described as a "corrupt

dictatorship," a "rogue state" and a "murderous regime."

He also singled out Venezuela, declaring that its internal situation "is completely unacceptable, and we cannot stand by and watch." He added: "The United States has taken important steps to hold the regime accountable. We are prepared to take further action if the government of Venezuela persists on its path to impose authoritarian rule on the Venezuelan people."

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif responded in a tweet, saying that "Trump's ignorant hate speech belongs in medieval times—not the 21st century UN—unworthy of a reply."

The foreign minister of Venezuela, Jorge Arreaza, charged Trump with seeking "regime change by force," adding that he "wants to rule the world when he can't even rule his own country."

Trump made no attempt to explain the glaring contradiction between his invocation of universal national sovereignty and his assertion of US imperialism's "right" to bomb, invade or carry out regime change against any nation it sees fit.

On the eve of the speech, a senior White House official told reporters that the American president had spent a great deal of time pondering the "deeply philosophical" character of his address.

What rubbish! The speech's "philosophy," such as it is, is drawn from the ideology of fascism. Indeed, no world leader has delivered the kind of threat uttered by Trump against the people of North Korea since Adolf Hitler took the podium at the Reichstag in 1939 and threatened the annihilation of Europe's Jews.

The kind of nationalist doctrine put forward by Trump at the UN distinctly echoes the positions of Hitler and Mussolini in the 1930s. As Leon Trotsky wrote in his 1934 article "Nationalism and Economic Life":

"Italian fascism has proclaimed national 'sacred egoism' as the sole creative factor. After reducing the history of humanity to national history, German fascism proceeded to reduce nation to race and race to blood... The enduring value of the nation, discovered by Mussolini and Hitler, is now set off against the false values of the 19th century: democracy and socialism."

The parallels are not accidental. The text of the speech bears the visible fingerprints of Trump's fascistic senior policy

advisor and speechwriter Stephen Miller, who seems to work best with a volume of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* close at hand.

Just as this promotion of reactionary nationalism in the 1930s was the ideological expression of world capitalism's descent into world war, so it is today.

The threats against North Korea and Iran are bound up with far wider geostrategic aims of US imperialism, as Trump indicated in his oblique denunciation of China and Russia for trading with Pyongyang and his reference to the South China Sea and Ukraine. Moreover, the attacks on Iran and threats to tear up the 2015 nuclear accord are aimed not only against the government in Tehran, but also at Washington's erstwhile allies in Western Europe, which are already seeking new sources of profit based on trade and investment deals with Iran.

The absence from the UN's opening session of Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping and German Chancellor Angela Merkel was significant. No doubt they had a sense of what was coming and feared the domestic political consequences of being seen as giving legitimacy through their presence in the auditorium to Trump's diatribe.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who spoke shortly after Trump, delivered a right-wing speech promoting the "war on terrorism," but was forced to directly oppose the US position on North Korea, warning against military escalation and calling for dialogue. In relation to Iran, he opposed any abrogation of the nuclear treaty. The French media compared the split to the tensions that arose during the Bush administration's drive to war against Iraq.

The threats today, however, are far greater. Trump's speech has made it unmistakably clear to the world that the government he heads is comprised of criminals. Having drawn multiple lines in the sand, threatening war on virtually every continent, Trump's own demagoguery leads almost inexorably to escalation and military action.

The speech included a passage warning the world that the American military is no longer subordinate to civilian control. "From now on," Trump declared, "our security interests will dictate the length and scope of military operations, not arbitrary benchmarks and timetables set up by politicians."

In other words, the military will decide, not elected officials—the fundamental characteristic of a military dictatorship. That this "principle" is accepted by the US Congress, which approved the \$700 billion Pentagon budget while voting down an amendment calling on the legislative body to reclaim its constitutional power to declare war, is a measure of the putrefaction of American democracy.

The consolidation of such a government, with the repulsive figure of Donald Trump at its head, is the culmination of a quarter-century of economic and political degeneration, combined with unending wars and military interventions waged with the aim of reversing the erosion of American capitalism's global hegemony.

Contradicting the vision presented in Trump's speech of a

Hitlerian springtime for nationalism, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres preceded the American president with an address to the General Assembly describing "a world in pieces."

"People are hurting and angry," he warned. "They see insecurity rising, inequality growing, conflict spreading and climate changing." He added that "global anxieties about nuclear weapons are at the highest level since the end of the Cold War."

This undeniable reality found indirect expression in Trump's own address, with his attempt to exploit the crisis in Venezuela—a country where the dominance of finance capital is today greater than it was three decades ago—to denounce socialism.

"Wherever true socialism or communism has been adopted, it has delivered anguish and devastation and failure," said Trump. "Those who preach the tenets of these discredited ideologies only contribute to the continued suffering of the people who live under these cruel systems."

A quarter-century after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the proclamation of the failure of Marxism and triumph of capitalism, the threat of socialism has become a central preoccupation of an American president delivering a reactionary and militarist diatribe before the United Nations.

Trump speaks for a US financial and corporate oligarchy that feels itself under siege. It fears growing popular anger. It has been shaken to the core by the revelation during the 2016 election that a broad social constituency within the working class and among the youth is intensely hostile to the profit system and sympathetic to socialism.

Ultimately, Trump's belligerent threats of war and nuclear annihilation are the projection onto the world stage of the class policy pursued by the American ruling class at home, and the very advanced state of political and social tensions within the United States itself.



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