

US media response to Trump's fascistic UN tirade ranges from complacency to concurrence

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The US corporate media has responded with what amounts to a collective yawn to the fascistic tirade by President Donald Trump at the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday. Trump's speech, delivered to an international body with institutional roots in the Nuremberg trials of the leaders of Germany's Third Reich and ostensibly dedicated to eliminating the scourge of war, was that of an unabashed war criminal.

He proclaimed before the assembled delegates that his government was "ready, willing and able" to "totally destroy" North Korea, i.e., annihilate some 25 million people. If the UN today had any remote attachment to the principles proclaimed at its foundation, Trump would have been arrested before he left the podium for advocating genocide.

No one walked out or attempted to shout down the filthy remarks of the American president. There was, however, an audible gasp in the General Assembly hall. Even among the well-heeled and well-connected delegates, Trump's rant evoked a degree of shock.

The same cannot be said for the American media, which mainly limited itself to quibbling over tactics and style, taking near universal exception to Trump's sophomoric reference to the North Korean leader as "Rocket Man" while showing no great concern over his threat to wipe an entire nation off the map.

One of the first reactions came from the *Washington Post*'s David Ignatius, a columnist who has some of the closest connections to the US intelligence agencies. "When you discount the rhetorical overkill, the most surprising thing about President Trump's address to the United Nations on Tuesday was how conventional it was," he wrote. "He supported human rights and democracy; he opposed rogue regimes; he espoused a

global community of strong, sovereign nations. Pretty shocking stuff. It was a well-cooked pudding."

He went on to describe the speech as one that "any president since Harry Truman probably could have delivered," and compared it to "last week's bipartisan legislative opening to Democrats Charles E. Schumer and Nancy Pelosi."

This is a deliberate distortion and coverup. Trump was not merely engaged in "rhetorical overkill," he was threatening war, not only against North Korea, but also against Iran and Venezuela. What he "espoused" was a "reawakening of nations" in a speech that employed the words sovereign or sovereignty 21 times, rhetoric consciously directed to his core "base" represented by the white supremacists and neo-Nazis who took over Charlottesville, Virginia last month.

The editorial published by the *Post* on Wednesday had a similar take. "For those who have been alarmed by President Trump's retreat from traditional American values, there were reassuring moments Tuesday in his first address to the UN General Assembly," it began.

This is nonsense. The "values" promoted by Trump at the UN are rooted not in American traditions but in the fascist ideologies of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, which have been studied and absorbed by his key aides, including policy advisor and speechwriter Stephen Miller, who no doubt crafted much of the address.

While praising Trump for coming "to the defense of the sovereignty of Ukraine and the South China Sea—that is, in the face of challenges from Russia and China," the *Post* editorial expressed concern that his paean to universal nationalism could be exploited by Moscow and Beijing. Like other sections of the

corporate media, the *Post's* main criticism of Trump has been his supposed failure to pursue a sufficiently aggressive policy toward Russia, and it is through this prism that it views his unprecedented tirade at the UN.

Unsurprisingly, the *Wall Street Journal* was even more laudatory, declaring in relation to the UN: “No coterie of complacency deserves candor more, and perhaps Mr. Trump's definition of ‘America First’ is even evolving to recognize the necessity of American global leadership.” Like the *Post*, the *Journal* expressed a slight reservation over Trump's fixation on national sovereignty, declaring that he “defines that interest too narrowly.”

“This view of ‘sovereignty’ also leaves authoritarians too much room to claim dominant spheres of influence,” the *Journal* wrote. “China's Xi Jingping and Vladimir Putin might both say they are exercising Trumpian sovereignty in the South China Sea and Ukraine.”

For its part, the *New York Times* published a hand-wringing editorial declaring that the UN “isn't the venue one would expect for threatening war” and comparing Trump's address unfavorably to the maiden UN speech delivered to great acclaim by Barack Obama, the same year he won the Nobel Peace Prize. It cited Obama's vow to “act boldly and collectively on behalf of justice and prosperity at home and abroad.”

That these words were uttered by a president whose eight-year tenure passed on a legacy of war and reaction goes unmentioned, of course. His administration oversaw bloodletting in Afghanistan and Iraq, the bombing of Libya, the war for regime-change in Syria, and support for the Saudi-led destruction of Yemen. He himself became the “drone president,” supervising the killing of thousands of civilians in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Libya and Afghanistan.

But, according to the *Times*, at the UN he exhibited superior “presidential bearing.”

It is significant that all three publications, as well as the rest of the corporate media, chose to ignore two extraordinary passages in Trump's speech to the UN. The first was his announcement that under his administration, the American military would no longer be 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.”

World Socialist Web Site noted: ~~this~~ words, the military will decide, not elected officials—the fundamental characteristic of a military dictatorship. That this ‘principle’ is accepted by the US Congress... is a measure of the putrefaction of American democracy.”

One can add only that the silence of the media, which has almost universally embraced the cabal of generals now setting US foreign and military policy as “the adults in the room,” serves as further confirmation of this fact.

The other passage that has elicited no response from the media is Trump's denunciation of socialism and communism, as well as “those who preach the tenets of these discredited ideologies.” The fixation of the American president on the threat of socialism, 25 years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the media's universal proclamation of the failure of Marxism and triumph of capitalism, would seem to merit some analysis and commentary.

Like the ruling financial oligarchy, and the military and intelligence apparatus whose interests it serves, the major media is rattled by rising social tensions and opposition under conditions of unprecedented social inequality. It fears the growing support for socialism among broad layers of workers and youth that found its reflection in the 2016 election.

The instinct of the editors of the *Post*, the *Journal* and the *Times* is that the less said on this score, the better. Their misplaced hope is that censorship and blacklisting, like that directed by Google against the *World Socialist Web Site*, will make the problem go away. In this, they are badly mistaken.



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