

Trump delivers fascistic tirade at the United Nations

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In his second appearance before the United Nations General Assembly Tuesday, US President Donald Trump delivered a fascistic tirade, threatening military aggression and all-out trade war, while invoking retrograde nationalism, “sovereignty” and “patriotism” as the only way forward in confronting the immense problems confronting humanity.

A year ago, the American president shocked the world body by announcing from the podium that he was “ready, willing and able” to “totally destroy” North Korea and its 25 million people, while referring to the country’s leader Kim Jong-un by the imbecilic nickname of “Rocket Man.”

This time around, the reaction to his megalomaniac remarks was somewhat different and, in its own way, expressed the deep-going breakdown of the global capitalist order.

Trump’s address began with what amounted to a campaign stump speech to the world body, claiming to have made “extraordinary progress” in the year since he last appeared there. His boast that he had accomplished more in his period in office than “almost any administration in the history of our country” provoked open and derisive laughter from assembled diplomats and heads of state, forcing him to depart from his prepared text and acknowledge, “I didn’t expect that reaction.”

The “reaction” underscored the near universal recognition that the United States is no longer a guarantor of a global capitalist order, but rather a kind of rogue state spreading chaos and disruption, both militarily and economically, across the globe. Trump is not the cause of this transformation, but rather the personification of the protracted degeneration of American capitalism over a period of decades.

In his speech, Trump reveled in his administration’s repudiation of international institutions, from the UN’s Human Rights Council, from which the US is the first country to withdraw, to the International Criminal Court, which Washington has threatened with sanctions if it attempts to hold US officials responsible for war crimes, to the UN global compact on migration, which cuts across the Trump administration’s systematic persecution of immigrants and refugees.

Undeterred by the derisive response to the opening of his speech, Trump went on to spell out his measures of “progress,” pointing out that the US “stock market is at an all-time high,”

citing “the biggest tax cuts” in US history, the beginning of construction on a border wall and the enactment of a \$716 billion military spending bill—all manifestations of the vast social inequality, police state repression and unbridled militarism that characterize a crisis-ridden American capitalist society.

He claimed that his negotiations with North Korea’s Kim had replaced “the specter of conflict with a bold new push for peace,” while reiterating that US sanctions against the country will remain in place until Washington’s version of denuclearization is completed, a process that can quickly snap back to military confrontation on the Korean peninsula.

Trump reserved his most bellicose threats for Iran. He boasted of his decision to unilaterally abrogate the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5+1, the US and the other permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany. This action, a direct violation of international law, resulted in the re-imposition of punishing unilateral sanctions that amount to a state of war between Washington and Tehran.

More punishing sanctions are set to go into effect on November 5, including the attempt to enforce a complete embargo on Iranian oil exports and the exclusion of Iran from the US-dominated international banking system, measures aimed at fully crippling the country’s economy, bringing down the existing regime and installing a client state that would assure unfettered control of the country’s oil wealth by US-based energy conglomerates.

Trump delivered a blistering denunciation of Iran’s leaders, declaring that they “sow chaos, death, and destruction.” He continued: “They do not respect their neighbors or borders, or the sovereign rights of nations. Instead, Iran’s leaders plunder the nation’s resources to enrich themselves and to spread mayhem across the Middle East and far beyond.

“The Iranian people are rightly outraged that their leaders have embezzled billions of dollars from Iran’s treasury, seized valuable portions of the economy, and looted the people’s religious endowments, all to line their own pockets and send their proxies to wage war. Not good.”

Very little from these passages needs to be changed outside of substituting US for Iran to provide an accurate description of the rule of the United States by a government representing Wall

Street and the military-intelligence apparatus, a government that has waged illegal wars of aggression in the Middle East that have killed and maimed millions, and armed and funded Al Qaeda-linked militias to carry out regime-change operations. At home, America's financial oligarchy has looted the social wealth of the country to make good on its losses in the financial meltdown of 2008 to the tune of tens of trillions of dollars.

In his own address to the UN General Assembly, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani charged that Washington is waging "a form of economic terrorism" against Iran and is pursuing a foreign policy based upon the principle that "might makes right," leading to a practice of "bullying and imposition."

Rouhani rejected overtures from Washington for talks aimed at renegotiating the Iranian nuclear accord. "It is ironic that the US government does not even conceal its plan for overthrowing the same government it invites to talks!" he said.

Trump also singled out Syria for denunciation, reiterating US threats of military intervention in response to the use of chemical weapons—an invitation to Western-backed Islamist militias to stage such an incident—while reiterating Washington's demand for regime-change.

The US president reaffirmed the centuries-old Monroe Doctrine used to assert US hegemony over Latin America, declaring that "we reject the interference of foreign nations in this hemisphere and in our own affairs." The reference was clearly to growing Chinese investment and trade in the region. He also reiterated Washington's aim of regime-change in Venezuela, which, his administration has repeatedly made clear, does not exclude direct US military intervention.

Trump's speech included a bellicose denunciation of China and a celebration of \$250 billion worth of tariffs imposed by his administration against Chinese goods, igniting a dangerous trade war.

He demagogically postured as a defender of American workers, claiming that the US had "lost over 3 million manufacturing jobs" since China joined the World Trade Organization and declaring that the US "will no longer tolerate it and we will not allow our workers to be victimized." The prospect of all-out trade war between the world's number one and number two economies creating more jobs for American workers is delusional at best.

There was a pervasive element within Trump's speech of portraying the US as a country besieged, with its "workers to be victimized, our companies to be cheated and our wealth to be plundered."

OPEC, he said was "ripping off" the United States with high oil prices "and I don't like it."

The US, he said, was the largest donor of foreign aid, but "few give anything to us." From now on, he said, Washington would provide aid only to those countries that upheld US interests.

This portrayal of the US as the victim of the world was combined with the promotion of a kind of *volkisch* nationalism,

which was the thread that ran throughout Trump's address, recalling nothing so much as the rhetoric of Hitler and Mussolini in the 1930s:

"Inside everyone in this great chamber today, and everyone listening all around the globe, there is the heart of a patriot that feels the same powerful love for your nation, the same intense loyalty to your homeland. The passion that burns in the hearts of patriots and the souls of nations has inspired reform and revolution, sacrifice and selflessness, scientific breakthroughs and magnificent works of art.

"Our task is not to erase it, but to embrace it, to build with it, to draw on its ancient wisdom and to find within it the will to make our nations greater..." The task, he said, was to "protect our sovereignty" and to "stand for our peoples and their nations."

Nations, homeland, patriotism, "ancient wisdom," sovereignty, will: all the ingredients that went into the rise of fascism and the eruption of world wars twice in the 20th century.

A significant part of Trump's speech was devoted to the denunciation of socialism. Using Venezuela as a strawman—a country where the domination of finance capital is greater now than it was three decades ago—Trump declared, "Socialism's thirst for power leads to expansion, incursion and oppression. All nations of the world should resist socialism and the misery that it brings to everyone."

That the US president finds the threat of socialism a principal preoccupation in his reactionary diatribe before the United Nations is an unmistakable indication of the advanced state of the political and social tensions within the United States itself. It expresses the fears within the financial and corporate oligarchy that it is facing a revolt from below by masses of workers and youth who are growing intensely hostile to the existing capitalist system.



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