

# Incoherent President Reassures UN that US Policy Is Insane

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*“If the righteous many do not confront the wicked few, then evil will triumph.” – Minority **President Donald Trump**, September 19, 2017, [addressing the United Nations](#)*

*With stunningly unintended precision, about a third of the way into his UN speech, **President Trump** encapsulated the [current brutal reality](#) of the United States in late 2017, where the righteous many do not confront the wicked few and evil oozes its slow and merciless triumph through the body politic. Or perhaps the “righteous many” is another myth and the “wicked few” are the true majority. Wherever one looks, the news is not reassuring, whether it’s climate change, civil rights, police state treatment of minorities, rewarding the rich for their wealth, punishing the poor for their poverty, attacking voter rights, or bloating a military that specializes in killing civilians. Trump’s next sentence drove home the crucifying irony of the American moment:*

“When decent people and nations become bystanders to history, the forces of destruction only gather power and strength.”

Yes, they do. Yes, we do. We live now in a time of [literal perpetual war](#) in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and many of the other 100-plus sovereign states that have US boots on the ground. Before 9/11, the US was at war only most of the time, more spectacularly, but with no better results since 1945. This is not good; surely most UN members appreciate that, without having the nerve to say so. They did not applaud when Trump boasted:

**We will be spending almost \$700 billion on our military and defense.**

\$700,000,000,000 is a lot of money, and it doesn’t even include a big chunk for our nuclear arsenal that comes from the Energy Department. \$700 billion is more money than [anyone else spends](#) on its military. \$700 billion is roughly five times what China spends, nine times what Saudi Arabia spends, ten times what Russia spends, eleven times what India, France, Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom spend. \$700 billion is more than what these countries *altogether* spend. For Americans, military spending is an addiction that no longer produces a high, only a craving. Like any addiction, it is deeply destructive. And we knew that once, but now we’re junkies deeply in denial of our self-destruction. Endless war and out of control military spending have done much to destroy what we once believed was best about the US. Eisenhower belatedly warned us, but he was far from the first. Back in 1795, when the United States was three years old, [James Madison wrote](#):

**Of all the enemies of true liberty, war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debt and taxes; and armies, and debts, and taxes are the known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few.... No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.**

That's pretty much the way it's turning out, except there's a possibility that the many are actually in favor of being dominated by the few. Or they're intimidated. Or they're mystified. Whatever is happening with the American people, Donald Trump represented them at the UN with a 41-minute pastiche of clichés, political pablum, incomprehensible nonsense, and meaningless feel-good rhetoric. (All the quotes that follow are from the official White House posting of the speech, reportedly written by 32-year-old hardliner [Stephen Miller](#), a senior advisor for policy.) The speech begins in a curious campaign mode as Trump assures the representatives of 192 other countries that, much to their presumed relief:

**The American people are strong and resilient, and they will emerge from these hardships more determined than ever before.**

This referred to the US suffering from hurricanes. Trump said nothing of the suffering of Caribbean islands from hurricanes, or Bangladesh from flooding, or Mexico from earthquakes, or any other pain and anguish in the world. America first.

Then came a sloppy, unpersuasive best-of-times/worst-of-times passage in which Trump threat-mongered "terrorists and extremists" and then, with presumed unawareness, described the United States of recent decades:

**Rogue regimes represented in this body not only support terrorists but threaten other nations and their own people with the most destructive weapons known to humanity.**

The next sentence was perhaps the best of several instances of impenetrable nonsense:

**Authority and authoritarian powers seek to collapse the values, the systems, and alliances that prevented conflict and tilted the world toward freedom since World War II.**

The record includes dozens of [wars since 1945](#), wars that [the US promoted](#) or participated in, with millions of casualties. The US has been at war [93% of the time](#) since 1792. The US has been in [covert or overt war](#), or both, or several, pretty much continuously since 1945. Soon after that, Trump launched into hyperbolic fantasy:

**We have it in our power, should we so choose, to lift millions from poverty, to help our citizens realize their dreams, and to ensure that new generations of children are raised free from violence, hatred, and fear.**

These are fine sentiments, to be sure, but not what most members of the UN are committed

to achieving, and surely not what the Trump administration is about. But the passage was preamble to what struggled to be the thematic thread of the speech, the purported pillars of the Marshall Plan, “three beautiful pillars ... peace, sovereignty, security, and prosperity.” Trump offered no plan to achieve these “pillars,” nor did he make a coherent argument beyond the platitudinous:

**Our success depends on a coalition of strong and independent nations that embrace their sovereignty to promote security, prosperity, and peace for themselves and for the world.**

Trump ran through several descriptions of what sovereign nations do without addressing the apparent contradiction inherent in the US defining how other nations should be sovereign. In this context, God made a first of several odd appearances before this most multicultural of assemblies:

**And strong, sovereign nations allow individuals to flourish in the fullness of the life intended by God.**

In concluding his litany of fuzzballs, Trump arrived at his first applause line (there were four), although why this line drew applause is somewhat mysterious:

**As President of the United States, I will always put America first, just like you, as the leaders of your countries will always, and should always, put your countries first. (Applause.)**

The sentiment must surely appeal to Saudi Arabia, Burma (Myanmar), Israel, or Egypt as much as to Cuba, Yemen, Venezuela, or North Korea, but Trump has at least a double standard for which leaders he will allow to “put your countries first.” Trump took a cheap shot at both Russia and China, but did it in a single sentence without any indication if he actually meant anything by it:

**We must reject threats to sovereignty, from the Ukraine to the South China Sea.**

As widely reported, Trump gave major attention to North Korea “for the starvation deaths of millions of North Koreans, and for the imprisonment, torture, killing, and oppression of countless more.” That sounds like a familiar sovereign pattern, especially if you substitute “Native Americans” for “North Koreans.” Trump did not go *there*, of course, preferring instead to threaten genocide, unless the UN could find some alternative:

**That’s what the United Nations is all about; that’s what the United Nations is for. Let’s see how they do.**

“Let’s see how *they* do?” The US is no longer in the UN? Trump’s Freudian slip is showing. Trump’s next big thing was Iran, about which he pretty much lied shamelessly, even blaming Iran for “Yemen’s civil war,” which doesn’t really exist. Yemen is a humanitarian catastrophe made obscenely worse by constant Saudi bombing with US collusion and

support since it began in 2015. In this, Trump is as much a war criminal as Obama.

Once again casting the US as saintly, Trump disingenuously talked about all the US had done to help refugees, especially refugees from Syria and Iraq. You know, the ones he tried to ban. In this context he offered a priceless rationalization for American inhumanity:

**For the cost of resettling one refugee in the United States, we can assist more than 10 in their home region. Out of the goodness of our hearts, we offer financial assistance to hosting countries in the region, and we support recent agreements of the G20 nations that will seek to host refugees as close to their home countries as possible. This is the safe, responsible, and humanitarian approach.**

That's a fairly clever, if transparent way of saying: keep those raghead terrorists in their own countries, or at least the ones next door. In the context of [trashing Cuba](#) and Venezuela, Trump uttered a bald-faced lie:

**America stands with every person living under a brutal regime.**

That's never been true, as Palestinians in Gaza know, as Yemenis know, as [Rohingya in Burma](#) know, and black Americans in Missouri know, as native Americans know, as any sentient human should know. In this context, the ruthless hypocrisy of Trump's closing stands in bold relief:

**So let this be our mission, and let this be our message to the world: We will fight together, sacrifice together, and stand together for peace, for freedom, for justice, for family, for humanity, and for the almighty God who made us all.**

Really? Is that why Trump was whining earlier in this speech about how much the US paid to keep the UN going?

Trump's appearance at the UN was just another confirmation of [just how awful](#) he and his administration are, and probably no one has a clear understanding of the full extent of the Trump awfulness. And it just keeps coming. Turkish President Erdogan says [Trump apologized](#) to him for US indictments of Turkish security guards attacking peaceful protestors. The White House says [Trump didn't apologize](#) for that. Does it matter either way? Trump's America does not stand with Turks living under Erdogan's brutal regime.

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