

A Tale of Two Speeches: Presidents Xi and Biden at the 2021 United Nations General Assembly

UNGA 2021 allowed the whole world to see the differences between China and the US.

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*Chinese **President Xi Jinping** and US **President Joe Biden** both spoke at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Tuesday. The first-mentioned addressed his audience via video while the second spoke in person. These two world leaders' speeches couldn't have been more different, though. President Xi presented a pragmatic and inclusive way for the world to move forward from the pandemic while Biden focused mostly on a [hegemonic view](#) of the future. It's important to elaborate more on their differences.*

President Xi's speech was much shorter than his American counterpart's. He got straight to the point by drawing attention to four topics: beating COVID-19; revitalizing the global economy; promoting win-win policies in international relations; and improving global governance so that it truly embraces the trend of multilateralism. The Chinese leader's speech rehashed some of the points that he made last year, but they took on a renewed importance since the pandemic continues to rage and international relations remain uncertain.

Nevertheless, President Xi expressed confidence that the peaceful development of humanity is irreversible. He's optimistic that a new form of international relations is emerging whereby countries treat one another with mutual respect and prioritize the central role of the United Nations (UN). Furthermore, he's sure that developing nations will continue to grow and pledged his country's support for them to this end, including through the sharing of green technologies. President Xi also has no doubt that COVID-19 will be defeated.

By contrast, Biden's speech was much longer than his Chinese counterparts after clocking in at roughly forty minutes. Like President Xi, he too talked about beating COVID-19 and countering climate change, but only for a minimal portion of his speech. Most of it was about how America intends to shape what he described as this decisive decade by continuing to promote democracy and its conception of human rights, supporting anti-corruption protesters across the world, and ensuring compliance with its envisioned world order.

The aforesaid foresees NATO and the Quad playing larger roles, and Biden promised that the US will call out alleged human rights violations in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Republic, Russia's Chechen Republic, and other parts of the world. These information warfare attacks as well as his implied criticisms of China's Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) as corrupt and low-quality infrastructure projects expose his claim of not wanting a new cold war to have been nothing more than a bald-faced lie.

Upon comparing the Chinese and American Presidents' speeches, it's clear which one sincerely cares about the world and which cares only for his own country's interests at everyone else's expense. President Xi is truly committed to restoring predictability and stability to international relations through China's promotion of legitimate multilateralism unlike the American model of relying on small cliques of countries obsessed with zero-sum games. Biden, by contrast, is only interested in worsening new cold war tensions on various pretexts.

This tale of two speeches shows just how divergent their respective visions are. Quite naturally, the vast majority of the world will stand in solidarity with President Xi's views. There's a genuine desire to move beyond the outdated and counterproductive models of the past in jointly charting a community of shared future for mankind where people rightly become the center of all policymaking. Only those countries that are either terribly misled or under American control will support Biden's dangerous and selfish games.

UNGA 2021 allowed the whole world to see the differences between China and the US. Only the UN can provide leadership during these uncertain times in accordance with international law, not any individual country or clique thereof. The world must come closer together in pursuit of shared interests connected to their people's development, not move further apart as a result of self-interested geopolitical games. President Xi's vision is thus expected to resonate with the global masses while Biden's will mostly be ignored or ridiculed.

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