

Waves of Global Hostility at the United Nations General Assembly

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This September's UN assembly was a spectacle of bullying and intimidation. It went far fiercely for certain states than earlier assemblies and the leaders not involved in disputes were amused at exchanges of offensive words. As time goes by, the US's attitude to global issues is twisting where a president's own style of speaking and the use of language and name-calling are critical determinants in reshaping new rows of friends and foes.

The recent UN Summit runs short of paramount leaders such as Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping and Angela Merkel. Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro refused to participate while Mexico's *Enrique Peña Nieto* changed heart after declaring it wouldn't take part. Many world leaders chose to send their underlings to fill the chairs.

As a widespread expectation from the UN assembly, the platform was supposed to contemplate and hammer out resolutions to give a fix to global security deadlocks like Afghanistan's war, the wars in Syria and Yemen, rather than purchase fresh feud. The exchange of nasty words between the US-North Korea and Iran, Pakistan-India, Afghanistan-Pakistan and others exhibited an unprecedented degree of hostility within the UN body.

President Trump went vehemently after alleged human rights violations in North Korea, Iran and Cuba, while casually ignoring the ocean of human rights violations war crimes in Afghanistan and Syria. Instead, he rattled on Russia's annexation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea and China's dispute in the South China Sea, which has nothing to do with crises and human fatalities.

Venezuela's Maduro preferred nonattendance unlike his predecessor Hugo Chavez who called former US president George W. Bush "the devil" in 2006 UN Summit in response to Bush's assumption of being "the owner of the world".

Trump's war of words on North Korea even evoked domestic backlash. Democrat Senator Dianne Feinstein from California State reacted at the Trump's UN speech, as saying:

"The goals of the United Nations are to foster peace and promote global cooperation, but today president Trump used it as stage to threaten nations to war". She said that "President Trump aims to unify the world through tactics of intimidation, but in reality he only further isolates the United States".

She also stated that:

“By suggesting he would revisit and possibly cancel the Iran nuclear agreement, he greatly escalated the danger we face from both Iran and North Korea. What nation would negotiate with the United States when the agreements we reach with other countries are so easily undermined?

North Korea delivered a riposte to Trump’s attack on the country’s nuclear program and declared that it is exclusively meant to deter war and put a peaceful end to threats from the US preemptive nuclear attack. The country’s foreign minister warned that the US and allies should think twice before attempting to attack or provoke it. The German Chancellor Angela Merkel cautioning about a possible war stated that Germany only suggests a diplomatic and peaceful resolution to this standoff.

North Korea’s intent is to withstand a US attack by virtue of exhibiting frequent nuclear tests. Earlier on September, North Korea tested a multifold powerful Hydrogen bomb near the country’s nuclear test site and generated an earthquake of 6.3 magnitudes in the region as a part of efforts to send the US a strong deterrence warning.

President Trump then went for Iran saying it is supporting terrorists. Admittedly, Iran sponsors armed groups not only in the Middle East but also in Afghanistan, essentially for self-defense. But when the president’s point of discussion came to Iran’s disrespect for its citizens, law, borders, culture, it again calls to mind the rampant violation of human life under the US-backed government in Afghanistan. The anti-Iranian speech also focused on Iran’s use of its oil reserves to fund Hezbollah.

The French President Emmanuel Macron, German foreign minister and Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen stood by Iran, supporting the nuclear deal against Trump’s attack calling Obama administration’s Iranian nuclear agreement an “embarrassment”. Van der Bellen expressed disappointment over Trump’s speech, calling the remarks undiplomatic. He said that Trump’s speech was an address to American voters rather than leaders of 193 countries.

Trump’s anti-Iranian rhetoric was good music to the ears of Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seemed pleased and commended Trump’s posturing towards Iran. He stated that he had never witnessed such a bold speech over the past 30 years of experience on the UN.

Switching over to South Asia, the Pakistan-Afghanistan-India’s bombarding of blames heated the talks. Afghanistan and India blasted at Pakistan as a terror hub. Pakistan’s Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi accused India of inciting violence and human rights violation in Kashmir.

In its right of reply, India lamented over the blames and compared the country’s developments with that of Pakistan since the duo’s inception in 1947. India’s minister of foreign affairs Sushma Swaraj held no word back and called it “Terroristan”, the land of terrorists. She spoke up that Pakistan is producing terrorism whereas India is known for technology power in the world.

In March last year before acceding the office, President Trump said that the United Nations is not a friend of democracy... it is not a friend to freedom... it is not a friend even to the United States of America. The same platform was used this September to bombshell accusations at frontline rivals – Venezuela, North Korea and Iran.

Brett Schaefer, a fellow at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, predicted the US president will have the upper hand in New York.

“One of the advantages of being the world power is that you have other options available to you,” he told The National. “The US will pursue its policy interest regardless of what the UN does or not do.”

Such an approach to the UN was first taken by former US president George W. Bush who challenged the body by going to war in Iraq in 2003.

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