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Trump's Threats of Death and Destruction



Photograph by Nathaniel St. Clair

The squalid charade in the US Senate over the appointment of Supreme Court Judge Kavanaugh and the comic opera performance by President Donald Trump at the UN General Assembly in September were deeply embarrassing for many Americans — but far from all Americans, because substantial numbers support the flawed Court appointee and

strongly endorse Trump's arrogant and malevolent insults to so many nations. They relish confronting and menacing those who dare to disagree with them.

Trump's [threats](#) against Venezuela at the UN were in line with similar [intimidating remarks](#) he made about North Korea at last year's Assembly, but it's unlikely we'll see a similar reversal this time round. He also threatened Venezuela last year, and he's maintained the offensive, in all meanings of the word. In 2017 [he declared](#) that President Nicolas Maduro's government was strangling the country through "faithfully implemented" socialism and vowed to help the Venezuelan people "regain their freedom, recover their country and restore their democracy". In New York on September 25 he said it would be easy for the Venezuelan military [to launch a coup d'état and impose regime change](#), which was a direct threat to the country's sovereignty. This blatant encouragement of revolution followed his [announcement](#) to the Assembly that "I honor the right of every nation in this room to pursue its own customs, beliefs and traditions. The United States will not tell you how to live or work or worship. We only ask that you honor our sovereignty in return."

But Trump is telling — ordering — many countries how to live and work, and has no respect whatever for customs or beliefs that do not fit with his confused and distorted view of how the nations of the world should conduct their affairs. He contradicted his statement about all nations having the right to do as they wish by [calling on the UN](#) to "resist socialism and the misery it brings to everyone."

As pointed out [in a Newsweek column](#), "Even in his choice of countries worthy of praise, America's president signaled values set at odds with erstwhile American ideals . . . His praise of [reforms undertaken by Saudi Arabia's young crown prince](#) omitted the severe [crackdown on human rights activists](#) in what remains a theocratic, absolute monarchy. His singling out of Poland and Israel as thriving democracies left many perplexed, given each country's recent and well-documented struggles with democratic governance."

That puts it mildly, because the Saudis have just murdered a journalist while Israeli soldiers [continue to kill](#) Palestinian children, and the lurch of Poland to extremism is not just perplexing but most disturbing for Europe. As [observed by Professor Laurent Pech](#) of the UK's Middlesex University, "Poland is no longer a state governed by the rule of law . . . In essence, Poland's so-called 'judicial reforms' are not reforms at all but rather a set of deliberate systemic attacks on the independence of the Polish judiciary." But it isn't surprising that Poland is backed enthusiastically by Trump, because it is one of

Washington's best customers for [vastly expensive](#) weapons and probably not least because it wants to have a US military base [named](#) Fort Trump, and is prepared to spend 2 billion dollars building it.

It is unlikely Iran would ever want to construct a Fort Trump, in view of the fact that the US president relishes insulting the Tehran government and [told the General Assembly](#) that "Iran's leaders sow chaos, death and destruction. They do not respect their neighbors or borders or the sovereign rights of nations" which is nonsense, but not as risibly absurd as his declaration that "Iran's neighbors have paid a heavy toll for the agenda of aggression and expansion."

Iran's neighbors to the east and west are Afghanistan and Iraq, and both have paid a heavy toll after being invaded by the United States military, because they have been reduced to chaos. Both are warzones and have become havens for the lunatic extremists of Islamic State. In Iraq in 2017, as [recorded by Human Rights Watch](#), "Iraqi and US-led coalition forces bombarded civilian objects including homes and hospitals in ISIS-held areas. They have [fired](#) inherently imprecise ground-fired munitions, including mortars, grad rockets and Improvised Rocket-Assisted Munitions into densely populated civilian areas. In addition, aircraft have [dropped](#) explosive weapons with wide-area effects on these areas. By the coalition's own [admission](#), its aircraft have unintentionally killed at least 624 civilians."

Just who is sowing death and destruction in Iraq?

On September 26, the day after Trump's UN pantomime, the *New York Times* [reported](#) the UN as recording that in Afghanistan "the number of civilians killed by Afghan and American airstrikes is rising. . . 21 civilians were killed in two airstrikes last weekend." and that "after the release of the United Nations statement, an airstrike in Kunduz Province killed three more people, a 45-year-old woman and two teenage girls, according to Sher Mohammed, the husband of the woman who died." [The UN Mission calculated](#) that in the first six months of 2018, airstrikes killed 149 people and injured 204. On October 10 VOA outlined the UN's [latest report](#), noting that "The increase in NATO and US airstrikes . . . led to an increase in civilian casualties from air operations. More than 60 percent of the civilian victims of air attacks continued to be women and children, with the number of child victims increasing 53 percent over the same period last year."

Afghanistan is paying a heavy toll for Trump's policy of aggression and expansion.

Washington continues to sow death and destruction in many regions, and it is apparent that Trump is intent on global domination. His belligerent policy on Iran, however, may

not be simple to pursue, as the European Union, China and Russia disapprove of the unilateral US sanctions designed to cripple the Iranian economy which were imposed on the spurious grounds that the nuclear accord signed in 2015 is in some way threatening to the US. They intend to support the agreement, and it is heartening that, at last, the most important countries in the world are getting together to show Trump that he can't have it all his own erratic way in his forays of death and destruction.