

Imperialist powers turn UN General Assembly into a war summit

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Founded in 1945, amid the rubble of World War II, the United Nations claimed that through the diplomatic resolution of international conflicts it would “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.”

The founding of the UN, in fact, resolved none of the essential contradictions that had led to the world wars of the first half of the 20th century. The Trotskyist movement referred to the new organization as a “new thieves’ kitchen,” referencing Lenin’s characterization of the League of Nations that preceded it. This is an appropriate description of the UN meeting opening up in New York this week.

The US and its imperialist allies are seeking to turn the UN General Assembly into a war summit, aiming to instigate and inflame bloody military conflicts all over the world.

In the Middle East, Israel and its imperialist backers are expanding the Gaza genocide, which has already killed, officially, more than 40,000 people, into a region-wide war. Far from seeking “deescalation,” the imperialist powers are deliberately attempting to provoke full-scale war not only with Lebanon, but also with Iran.

And in Eastern Europe, the US and NATO are on the verge of launching NATO weapons from Ukraine into the territory of Russia, in their most escalatory action of the war to date.

Ahead of the meeting, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated, “We see out-of-control geopolitical divisions and runaway conflicts.” Guterres was speaking about a statement issued ahead of the UN General Assembly document that declared:

We are confronted by rising catastrophic and existential risks, many caused by the choices we make. Fellow human beings are enduring terrible suffering. If we do not change course, we risk tipping into a future of persistent crisis and breakdown.

The notion that the UN meeting itself will chart a way out of these “catastrophic and existential risks” is, however, a pipe dream.

Rather, the General Assembly will hear addresses from an assortment of war criminals, including US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, as well as their paid attack dogs, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Netanyahu will address the UN General Assembly after having carried out a bloody terrorist attack in Lebanon, turning thousands of everyday communication devices into bombs to be exploded on command, and as he presides over what UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese has called a genocide in Gaza and what Michael Fakhri, the UN special rapporteur on the right to food, has called the deliberate starvation of the Palestinian people.

Netanyahu will deliver a defense of genocide, butchery and global lawlessness. While no one can match Netanyahu for open bloodthirstiness, he will be given a run for his money by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, a “president” ruling under a declaration of a state of emergency outside of his constitutional term, in a dictatorship over the Ukrainian population imposed by US and European imperialism.

Zelensky will call on the US and NATO powers to allow Ukraine to strike Russia with long-range weapons, calling for them to abandon all limits on their involvement in the war with Moscow. He will restate his condemnation of what he earlier called “the whole naïve, illusory concept of so-called red lines regarding Russia,” which he said have “crumbled.”

Zelensky’s appearance at the UN General Assembly is being carefully choreographed with an offensive in the US-aligned media calling for the NATO powers to abandon all restraints on war with Russia.

The most vociferous of these was by former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who declared in *The Spectator* that

“It’s time to let Ukraine join NATO.”

Johnson, who infamously said of the COVID-19 pandemic that killed 232,112 people in the UK, “let the bodies pile high,” is demanding the same policy in war.

Johnson wrote:

What’s the hold-up with Storm Shadow and the permissions to use them against Putin’s bases within Russia? Can we please all stop babbling this tired old rubbish about “escalation” and the so-called fear of provoking Putin? That argument has been mounted at every stage in the past three years, and at every stage it has been disproved by events.

He openly demanded that Ukraine join NATO. “We could invite Ukraine to join before the war is even over,” he said, asserting an “Article 5 security guarantee” and the “absolute right of the Ukrainians to the whole of their 1991 nation.”

The call for Ukraine to join NATO while actively at war with Russia is a call for NATO to declare war on Russia and for the formal adoption of the conquest of Crimea as a NATO war aim. There has never been a formal declaration of war between two nuclear-armed states. Throughout the Cold War, such a scenario was seen as “Armageddon,” portending the end of human civilization in thermonuclear war.

But Johnson’s was only the most aggressive in a torrent of articles and editorials using virtually the same talking points. “Let Ukraine hit military targets in Russia with American missiles,” declared *The Economist* in an editorial, while the *Washington Post* demanded, “Biden should okay long-range missiles for Ukraine.”

The violent eruption of imperialist violence is the response by the imperialist powers to what they see as a deepening crisis of the geopolitical order over which they preside.

In an article previewing the UN General Assembly, *Bloomberg* warned, “US Worries Deepen as Adversaries Team Up to Challenge Dominance.”

It cited Martin Kimani, former Kenyan ambassador to the UN and director of New York University’s Center on International Cooperation, as declaring, “US influence is waning, and it’s waning rapidly.”

Bloomberg added, “The meeting is likely to underscore how the US often finds itself on the backfoot as other powers gain influence.”

The article added:

officials from the BRICS, which has grown to nine members, including some US allies, as well as Iran and founders Russia and China. More countries are applying to join a group that’s explicitly called for creating an alternative center of global influence, including rivals to the US dollar’s dominance.

The summit takes place amid a deepening crisis of the US dollar, with the price of gold—seen as an index of uncertainty over the dollar—soaring to \$2,600 for the first time on Friday. Gold has increased by 27 percent in 2024, breaking through its previous high of \$2,000 per ounce earlier this year. Historically, when confidence in the dollar weakens, demand for gold increases, pushing its price higher as a hedge against a declining dollar.

And as the price of gold soars, the US federal debt, which has vastly expanded as the US has financed wars all over the world, has reached \$35 trillion. American newspapers bear headlines such as “A U.S. National Debt Crisis Is Coming” (*Wall Street Journal*), and “The Day the Dollar Died’ is coming. What’s the plan?” (*Washington Post*).

The “plan” of the imperialist powers is global war. The deepening economic crisis is driving a global war of conquest to secure the hegemony of the US and its imperialist allies. In order to achieve their predatory war aims, they are normalizing all forms of social barbarism, from genocide to mass terrorism against civilian populations and even the threat of nuclear war.

None of the institutions of capitalist rule, including the United Nations and the international courts, are capable of stopping this descent into barbarism.

But the same crisis that is producing the eruption of imperialist war is fueling a wave of strikes and struggles by workers all over the world. Preventing a relapse into the barbarism of the 20th century, this time combined with nuclear weapons, can only be accomplished through the building of a powerful anti-war movement in the working class. The social demands animating workers into struggle must be unified with the fight against war in the formation of a powerful anti-war movement based on a socialist perspective.



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