

Chronicle of a Decline Foretold Trump's UN Speech

por Rômulo Cristaldoⁱ

A scan of the morning news provided an interesting perspective on Donald Trump's speech at the opening of the United Nations General Assembly this September 23, 2025. Many analysts are reporting threats, hidden messages, an explicit discontent with the UN, a defense of conservative agendas, and signals to the world.

I had the misfortune of watching this soliloquy online. What struck me most was that Trump didn't actually deliver a speech, but rather an erratic, nonsensical rant on random topics, stuffed with ridiculous, false, or simply childish assertions. Extracting any logic or meaning from it is difficult, perhaps impossible.

The American so-called president began his address with a long section of bragging about his administration. Using disjointed sentences and resorting to blatant lies, he tried to paint a positive picture of an imaginary government—one without inflation, unemployment, a housing crisis, immigration issues, authoritarianism, or unapologetic racism.

Trump painted a delusional self-portrait, casting himself as a global leader capable of ending wars, fighting corruption, combating terrorism, and achieving peace. None of the information conveyed was true; nothing made the slightest sense. In the end, this "picture" was nothing more than a superposition of scribbles at a very primary stage of development.

Between one falsehood and the next, Trump complained about the malfunctioning teleprompter, the escalators, and the flooring at the UN headquarters. He even mentioned an alleged renovation project he supposedly offered the organization for the building, which he claims was rejected—implying this was why they were in such an "uncomfortable" environment.

He claimed the UN doesn't do its job, directly and indirectly insulting representatives of the institution, its member countries, their diplomats, and even diplomacy itself. He whined about not feeling recognized, claiming the UN only "shows up" after he has already solved the situations, and griped that he deserves a Nobel Peace Prize. His remarks were filled with egocentric displays and childish potshots, like those of teenagers on social media who believe they are smarter than they actually are.

Throughout his speech, Trump resorted to business analogies. Don't think, however, that he addressed global strategies, market analyses, economic trends, or international trade conditions. Not at all. The "business" figures he referenced came from the world of shady deals, petty cons, and quasi-scams he has spent his entire life mastering in his obsession with influence.

Trump views running the greatest military power in human history as a personal business, a fact he states shamelessly. He likely runs it as he would a used car lot or a mafia operation: through deception, threats, misconduct, and shadowy conspiracies. Trump the businessman says a lot about Trump the president: laughable products, ephemeral gains, false success, bankruptcies, and more posturing than results.

Between one random comment and the next, the President whom Americans elected not once, but twice, unloaded a long list of denials and arbitrary positions. He reinforced support for the genocide Israel is carrying out in Palestine. He denied the imminence of a climate crisis. He advocated for fossil fuels. He stood by the unilateral tariff hikes he has championed.

He also bragged about deploying U.S. Navy detachments to the Caribbean, as if the summary execution of three minuscule civilian boats justified the

enormous resources mobilized in that disastrous action. Along the way, he exaggerated the migration issue in Europe, classified opponents as terrorists, and equivocated on his promises to quickly end the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

But what caught my attention most was his attitude. Donald Trump treated the UN podium with clear disdain. He didn't adhere to any rhetorical logic, lied shamelessly, and cast mocking glances and derogatory comments at everyone, including the institution itself.

Unlike the solemn reverence the Brazilian President's posture had just demonstrated, Trump seemed to be addressing high school students, patronizing them and ridiculing the venue. On one hand, one might say POTUS spoke from a position of security and power. But clearly, it was all a grand farce.

This was a president cornered by approval ratings lower than any ever seen in a first year of a term, with his nation in crisis due to his own choices, criminally convicted, and surrounded by rows of sycophants. In his eagerness to appear strong, he showed weakness. Mental, moral, and technical fragility. His erratic speech and laughable discourse are a testament to a failed institution—not the UN, as he tried to imply, but the U.S. Presidency itself.

Donald Trump is walking inexorably toward writing his name in history as the president who definitively sank the American empire. It remains to be seen if he will do so passively, as the old, sick, and tired man he is, or with a fight (a war?), clinging to the ever-scarcer threads of dignity that are still holding the United States of America upright.

ⁱ Rômulo Cristaldo holds a Ph.D. in Administration from the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) and is a Professor of Public Administration and Organizational Studies at the School of Administration, Accounting, and Economics (FACE) at the Federal University of Grande Dourados (UFGD).