

# The NATIONAL INTEREST FOUNDATION

## [74th Session of the UN General Assembly Convenes in New York](#)

The 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly opened in New York City on September 17th and concluded this past Monday on September 30th. Some of the main topics of discussion included climate change, reducing geopolitical tensions, and globalism. Prominent world leaders such as Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, United Kingdom Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and United States President Donald Trump gave speeches to the General Assembly during the session. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping were among the notable absentees this time around.

During his speech, President Jair Bolsonaro attacked critics who accused him of not doing enough to preserve the Amazon rainforest, and hit out at the “fake news” reports of the Amazon burning rapidly. Bolsonaro dismissed findings by Brazil’s National Institute of Space Research which showed 40,341 fires in the Amazon during the first eight months of this year, a 35% increase in the same months dating back to 2010. He also defended his administration’s policies, saying that environmental crimes had a zero-tolerance policy. Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg hit out at Bolsonaro, among others, during the General Assembly, calling climate change an existential crisis and vowing future generations would never forgive leaders who did not address the problem.

After the recent attacks on Saudi oil fields, the leaders of France, the United Kingdom, and Germany sided with the Trump administration and the United States in placing blame on Iran. While the European powers, particularly France, have made reducing US-Iranian tensions a priority, the three aforementioned nations released a statement pushing Iran to negotiate with the international community on a broader array of topics than just their nuclear program. While there were some hopes that U.S. President Trump would meet his Iranian counterpart, Hassan Rouhani, that optimism faded with the attacks on Saudi oil production. Additionally, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has still not met his Iranian equivalent, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif, with the two allegedly refusing to even speak to each other.

President Trump used his speaking time to attack Iran, China, and globalism, arguing that patriotism and sovereignty were the key to a prosperous future, not globalist policies. The President warned China over the Hong Kong protests, saying that the United States was “watching closely” and echoed previous comments, accusing the Chinese of using unfair practices to gain trade advantages. He also defended his decision to pull out of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding Iran’s nuclear capability, accusing Iran of undertaking a “fanatical quest for nuclear weapons.”

In his remarks to the General Assembly, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan called for an end to populist policies and condemned the “prejudice, ignorance, and bigotry” shown toward migrants and Muslims. Erdogan also highlighted Turkey’s acceptance of Syrian refugees, and called on the rest of the world to do more to help at-risk Muslim populations. Specifically, Erdogan highlighted the issues unfolding in the disputed territory of Kashmir, and called for dialogue between Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, Khan remains incensed at India’s escalation in Kashmir, and refuses to meet with Modi.