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Iran Today

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President Rouhani calls for coalition for peace at 68th UN General Assembly Meeting

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani stressed during his address to the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly that Iran is ready for talks with the US, but "on equal footing and with mutual respect", yet he said he is not hearing a single voice from Washington.

What follows is a summary of President Rouhani's address to the UN General As-

sembly meeting (according to the transcripts released by agencies and the Guardian).

The Iranian president said the world today is made up of fears and hopes, fear of war... fear of deadly confrontation, of religious, ethnic and national identities... fear of poverty.. of disregard for human dignity and rights, and fear of neglect of morality.

Alongside these fears, however, there

are new hopes... Of 'yes to peace' and 'no to war.' and the preference for dialogue over conflict, and moderation over extremism. The recent election in Iran represents... hope of the people of Iran... The people transfer of executive power manifested that Iran is an anchor of stability in an ocean of regional instability, he said.

The President praised "reliance on the ballot box as the basis of power."

Rouhani criticized the "cold war mentality" and "bipolar mentality" that separates the world into "superior us and inferior others."

Any miscalculation of one's position and of course of others will bear historic damages. A mistake by one actor will have a negative impact on all others... at this sensitive juncture... the age of zero-sum gain is over, although a few actors continue to rely on archaic ways... to retain their domination, he added.

Rouhani said military means to subjugate others are failed examples of the perpetuation of old ways in the new circumstances.

He also deplored "coercive economic policies" that negate peace, and further described a perilous global balance threatened by brinkmanship and "strategic violence" meant to upset regional actors.

"Efforts to redraw political borders and frontiers is extremely dangerous and provocative," he said, without naming names.

"The center of world powers is hegemonic. Relegating the south to the periphery has led to the establishment of a monologue at the level of international relations," he says.

Rouhani blasted certain world states which played a role in "arming of the Saddam Hussein with chemical weapons" and establishing al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.

Iran, on the other hand, is irreproachable, he said, and added "Iran poses absolutely no threat to the world or the regions... in fact my country has been a harbinger of just peace and security."

Rouhani listed infractions in North Africa and west Asia (Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait); the "brutal oppression of the Palestinian people" and "terrorist bombings in countries like Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon."

He said "structural violence" is being carried out on "the people of Palestine."

Rouhani blamed "extremist terrorist groups" in Syria for chemical attacks there, calling it a regional danger. He said the "use of force" – meaning US military strikes – "will only lead to a further exacerbation of violence."

The access by extremist terrorist groups to [chemical weapons] is the gravest danger to the region... the actual use of force will only lead to a further exacerbation of violence, he said.

President Rouhani condemned drone attacks, the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists, and "structural violence" against Palestinians.

"For what crimes have they been assassinated? ... Have the perpetrators been condemned by the UN Security Council," he asked.

Violence and extremism nowadays have now gone beyond the physical real... and infected [spiritual] life.

The Iranian President blasted international sanctions against Iran, comparing them to the widely criticized puni-

tive measures against Iraq while the late Saddam Hussein was in power.

"These sanctions are violent, pure and simple," he said, adding that normal people, not political elites, ended up suffering because of them.

"The negative impact is not nearly limited to the intended victims of sanctions."

He blasted intolerance among the world states, saying, "Intolerance is the predicament of our time. We need to promote and reinforce tolerance...."

"We should not just tolerate others. We should rise above mere tolerance and work together. People around the world are tired of war. This is a unique opportunity. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that all challenges can be met successfully."

Rouhani said Iran will "act responsibly" to cooperate with "other responsible actors."

He said Iran believes in "peace based on democracy" and "believes there are no violent solutions to world crisis."

On the nuclear issue, President Rouhani said, "Iran seeks to resolve problems, not to create them."

"There is no issue... that cannot be resolved by mutual respect... Iran's nuclear dossier is a case in point."

"Acceptance of the inalienable right of Iran constitutes the best and the easiest way of resolving this issue...."

"Put otherwise," he said, "Iran and other actors should pursue two common objectives... for the nuclear dossier":

"Iran's nuclear program... must pursue exclusively peaceful purposes. ... I declare here ... this has been and will always be the objective of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Nuclear weapons... have no place in Iran's security and defense doctrine..."

He underlined Iran's "right to the enrichment Iran and other related nuclear rights" should be recognized.

President Rouhani said Iran is already an established nuclear state and its nuclear program is too far along to deny.

Then the Iranian president said he had listened to Obama's words very well.

"I followed carefully to the statement made by President Obama today at the General Assembly. ... [I'm] hoping that they will refrain from following the short-sighted interests of warmongering pressure groups we can arrive at a framework to managing our differences," President Rouhani said.

He said talks can happen, but equal footing and mutual respect should govern the talks.

"Of course, we expect to hear a consistent voice from Washington," he said. "The dominant voice in recent years has been for a military option."

Then President Rouhani offered the world to work together in pursuit of sustainable peace and security and collective campaign against violence and extremism.

"I propose as a starting step... I invite all states... to undertake a new effort to guide the world in this direction... we should start thinking about a coalition for peace all across the globe instead of the ineffective coalitions for war."

He said Iran invites the globe to join this wave.

"A good and bright future awaits the world," Rouhani said.

Moderation and common sense to guide my government

Excerpts from President Rouhani's speech in a gathering convened by Asia Society and the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, 27 September 2013.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to meet with you face to face and discuss a number of issues that have preoccupied all of us for many years. I believe I could talk to you today as colleagues talk to each other, as I had the same job as yours until recently, leading a think tank i.e., the Center for Strategic Research, in Tehran for many years. I believe that more interaction at the level of think tanks may help foster more accurate knowledge and understanding among the peoples and the leaders of our two countries, thus thwarting biases and false prejudgments from serving as basis for policy making.

During my years in office, the word 'moderation' and common sense will guide my Government in making and implementing policies in every field. I ran on the platform of 'moderation' and won the election by a large margin. Thus, by the virtue of the strong mandate that I received from the electorate, I am committed to operating in the framework of moderation, which calls, inter alia, for a balance between realism and the pursuit of the ideals of the Islamic Republic.

In the field of foreign policy, that brings me to discard any extreme approach in the conduct of our relations with other states. In this framework, we will seek effective and constructive understanding and interaction with the outside world, focus on mutual confidence building with our neighbors and other regional and international actors and try to orient our foreign policy towards economic development of our country. To this end we will work on easing and removing tensions in our foreign relations and strengthening our relationship with our traditional and new partners in all regions. To do so, we obviously need consensus building at the national level and setting goals transparently, which is underway.

While we will avoid confrontation and antagonism, at the same time, we will actively peruse our larger interests. As we are living in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent



world, we believe that challenges could only be addressed through interaction and active cooperation among states. Global challenges require collective responses. No country by itself and in an isolated way would ever be able to effectively address the challenges it faces. Big powers are no exception to this rule as they increasingly find it difficult to address unilaterally the challenges they face either.

The rapid growth of developing and emerging economies and their ability to achieve what is called "catch-up growth" suggest that their aggregate economic weight is about to surpass that of the advanced world. Longer-term forecasts suggest that today's developing and emerging countries are likely to account for nearly 60% of world GDP by 2030, up from around 40% in 2000, which would enable them to play a much greater role in global politics. Under such circumstances



and while interdependence and competitive-cum-cooperative approach, and not enmity, is the order of the day, zero-sum-game and win-lose approach in international relations has already lost ground, as no country could pursue its interests at the expense of the others. Those who may still insist on adopting and advancing such an approach will end up imposing a lose-lose approach on themselves and others.

In such period of transition, Iran has actual and potential capabilities for enhancing its role in the world arena. Our values are increasingly taking roots. The recent election in Iran, in which close to 75 percent of the eligible voters turned out to vote, showed how what we call religious democracy is maturing. Iran's millennial culture and civilization, its exceptional Iranian state continuity rooted in millennial, its distinguished geopolitics, the characteristics that foster Iran's social stability in the midst of a region in turmoil as well as the pool of its well-educated youth, all in all, enable us to confidently look to the future and aspire to assume the major role in the global level that our people deserve; a role that no actor in global politics can ever ignore.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are also considering the aspects of rebuilding and improving our bilateral and multilateral relations with the countries of Europe and North America on the basis of mutual respect and equal footing. That would include working on easing off any tension, removing hurdles in the way and comprehensively developing relations, including economic ties.

We can begin by avoiding any new tension in Iran-US relationship and, at the same time, endeavor towards removing tensions that we inherited from the past; tensions that continue to mar the relations between our two countries. While we may not be able to forget the major source of mistrust and suspicion that haunted the minds of the Iranian people in their thinking about the US Governments in the past 60 years, we need however to focus rather on the current situation and look forward to the future, trying to turn the turbulent past into a beacon lighting the path ahead. As leaders, we need to rise above petty politics and lead rather than follow the various interest and pressure groups in our respective countries.

In our view, building on and cooperating about issues of interest and concern to both sides could also be another starting point, as it would be in the interest of easing off the ongoing tensions in our region as well. In so doing, we need to counter those interest groups, here in the US and there in the region, whose objective is to keep Iran issue boiling. They seek to further their goal of distracting international attention from issues directly involving themselves and precluding Iran from enhancing its status in the region and diminishing the chance for a negotiated agreement on the Iranian nuclear program and thus increase the chances of a continued Iran-US stand-off.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The choice the Iranian people made in the recent election came at a time when our region is more than ever grappling with sectarianism, enmities among different groups and potential new breeding grounds and instigation for extremism and terrorism. At the same time, the recent use of chemical weapons in Syria could haunt the peoples in the region for many years to come. We believe that, under such circumstances, a voice of moderation emanating from the region would have a soothing effect and could impact the course of events in a constructive and positive way.

It is unfortunate that, as we speak, many countries in our region wrestle with domestic and/or international issues and challenges with grave repercussions for other regional and international actors. There is no doubt that they mostly consist of issues of interest and concern to many regional and global actors, who need to join force and make common efforts to address them. My country, as a major power in the region, is fully prepared to move in this direction and spare no effort to facilitate solutions to these issues, thus contributing to the maintenance of international and regional peace and stability. Under these circumstances, we consider the efforts by certain capitals aimed at portraying Iran as a threat and undermining Iran's credibility in the region and in the world are counterproductive and they should cease in the interest of peace and tranquility in the region and beyond.



I am profoundly disturbed over the spawning humanitarian tragedy in Syria and the enormous suffering that the Syrian people have incurred over the past two years and a half. Representing a people who experienced the horror of chemical weapons, my Government strongly condemned the use of chemical weapons in the ongoing conflict. I am also concerned about the breeding grounds created in parts of Syrian territory for extremist ideologies and rallying point for terrorists, which is reminiscent of the situation in another region adjacent to our eastern borders in the 1990s. This is an issue of concern, not only to us but also to many other countries, which requires cooperation and joint efforts aimed at finding a durable intro-Syrian political solution.

At the same time, we are pleased that diplomacy finally could have its way with regard to at least one aspect of Syrian crisis and sober judgment prevailed over saber rattling. We need to build on the partial headway that was made and try to reach an understanding on the fact that Syria is now a place in dire need of coordinated regional and international efforts. We are ready to contribute to peace and stability in Syria in the course of any serious negotiations among regional and extra-regional parties.



Here too as in everywhere else, we need to avoid embroiling in a zero-sum game.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to conclude by briefly touching upon the Iranian peaceful nuclear energy program, which has been subject to enormous hype over the past several decades. You know that how many predictions regarding how close Iran was to acquire a nuclear bomb proved to be baseless. We can trace these predictions back to early 1990s. Throughout this period, alarmists kept trying to paint the face of Iran as a threatening one to its region and the whole world; a claim that have always turned out to be utterly false. And we all know also who the chief agitator is and what purposes are to be served by hyping this issue. We know also that this claim fluctuates in proportion to the size of the international pressure to stop the settlement activity and end the occupation of the Palestinian lands. These false alarming bells are oblivious, among other things, to the fact that the US national intelligence estimates maintained that Iran has not decided to build a nuclear weapon.

We are committed not to work towards developing and producing nuclear bomb. As enunciated in the fatwa is-

sued by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, we strongly believe that the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons are contrary to the Islamic norms. I also should reiterate that, in our view, we never contemplated the option of acquiring nuclear weapon. We believe that such weapons could undermine our national security interest, and as such, they have no place in Iran's security doctrine and even the perception that Iran may pursue a nuclear weapons program is detrimental to our security and overall interest.

During my presidential campaign, I committed myself to do whatever in my power to fast track a solution for the standoff over the Iranian nuclear energy program. To fulfill this commitment and benefit from the window of opportunity that the recent election opened up, my Government is prepared to leave no stone unturned in seeking for a mutually acceptable solution. To this end, we are ready to work with 5+1, its members and others with a view to ensuring full transparency surrounding our nuclear program.

The peaceful nuclear capability that we have achieved is bound to be exercised within a transparent, internationally recognized framework, accessible to the IAEA, under its safeguards mechanisms and international monitoring, as has been the case in the past several years. We believe that it is in this appropriate and lawful way that the international community can ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program. In such framework, we are also ready to work towards removing any ambiguity and answer any reasonable question about Iran's nuclear energy program. Having done so, let me reiterate that we will never forgo our inherent right to benefit from nuclear energy under any circumstances.

The continuation of pressure, arms twisting, intimidation and extra territorially imposed measures directed against the Iranian people and innocent civilians, trying to prevent them from having access to a whole range of necessities from technology to medicine, from science to food stuff could only poison the atmosphere and undermine the conditions necessary for making progress and weaken our resolve.

With the above elements in mind, we are fully prepared to seriously engage in the process towards a negotiated and mutually agreeable settlement and do so in good faith and with a business-like mind. We hope that our counterparts, too, benefit from this window of opportunity and are as much serious and ready to come along with an open mind and predicated on concrete and objective norms and criteria.

While thanking you ladies and gentlemen for listening to my remarks, I now look forward to listening to your comments and taking your questions.

Dr. Rouhani: world must be freed from weapons of mass destruction

President Hassan Rouhani addressed the United Nations General Assembly on nuclear disarmament. What follows are excerpts from President Rouhani's speech:

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Speaking at this historical gathering is a special privilege. Participation of a large number of world leaders in this meeting which is the first meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament is in fact an evident sign of widespread support from this important issue. Representing NAM which itself has initiated holding the meeting, I necessitate myself to appreciate all of you for your supports.

Mr. president, I thank you and the previous president very much for your efforts in holding this meeting. I also thank the secretary general for the statements he made.

Dignitaries, ladies and gentlemen,

Having a safe and calm world is still our common goal and ideal.

The horrific incidents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki made us more determined to prevent the recurrence of similar devastation and killing the language which cannot be put into words.

Accordingly, in a calculated move, the first resolution of the assembly called for a world devoid of nuclear weapons. As a result of international efforts, we have access to a series of contract, norms and institutes whose duties is achieving such an agreed upon goal.

NAM will present a resolution to the United Nations General Assembly to hold conferences on September 26 every year to monitor annihilation of weapons of mass de-



struction and that the Disarmament must be accomplished in the next five years.

"De-targeting, de-alerting or reducing the number of nuclear weapons is not a substitute for their total elimination.

"The world has waited too long to disarm," Rouhani said. "As long as nuclear weapons exist, the threat of their use exists."

The world must be freed from weapons of mass destruction and that the global community must be handed over to the next generation without WMDs.

Israel must join the Non-Proliferation Treaty without delay and the Middle East must be freed from weapons of mass destruction.



Dr. Rouhani's speech at the John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York

President Hassan Rouhani has arrived in New York to attend the 68th annual session of the UN General Assembly and deliver a speech before the world leaders.


24 September 2013

"According to the schedule during this trip I have three speeches. The first one will be at the United Nations General Assembly. The second speech will be at the UN Disarmament Conference and the last one is the meeting of the foreign ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)," he told reporters upon arrival at the John F. Kennedy International Airport.

He added that he plans to expound on Iran's position on international issues during his stay in New York. President further noted that he is determined to defend the rights of the Iranian nation.

"Any use of nuclear weapons is tantamount to violating the UN Charter and a crime against humanity. Those military and security strategies that justify such application are unacceptable. Meantime, threatening the non-nuclear countries to use nuclear weapons against them should come to an end. Renovation of such weapons nullifies their effect for their complete annihilation and should be stopped. For such reasons, the only way for removal of the threat of these weapons is their complete annihilation."





Obama: US and Iran should find a way that respects the rights of the Iranian people

US President Barack Obama welcomed Iranian officials' statements on rejection of nuclear weapons, and stressed that the

In an address to the United Nations General Assembly, Obama stressed that recent overtures from Iran on its nuclear program could start the United States and Iran down a "long road towards a different relationship - one based on mutual interest and mutual respect."

"We are not seeking regime change, and we respect the right of the Iranian people to access peaceful nuclear energy. Instead, we insist that the Iranian government meet its responsibilities under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and UN Security Council resolutions," Obama underlined.

"Meanwhile, the Supreme Leader has issued a fatwa against the development of nuclear weapons, and President Rouhani has just recently reiterated that the Islamic Republic will never develop a nuclear weapon. These statements made by our respective governments

should offer the basis for a meaningful agreement," Obama stated.

"We should be able to achieve a resolution that respects the rights of the Iranian people, while giving the world confidence that the Iranian program is peaceful," Obama underlined.

He said that he was directing Secretary of State John Kerry, working closely with European allies, Russia and China, to pursue an agreement with the government of Iran.

"The roadblocks may prove to be too great, but I firmly believe the diplomatic path must be tested."

He spoke of deep mistrust between the United States and Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution, and said, "I don't believe this difficult history can be overcome overnight — the suspicion runs too deep."

"But I do believe that if we can resolve the issue of Iran's nuclear program that can serve as a major step down a long road towards a different relationship — one based on mutual interests and mutual respect."



Washington prefers a diplomatic solution to disputes with Iran: Obama

US President Barack Obama says Washington prefers a diplomatic solution to its disputes with Iran, noting that resolution of Iran nuclear issue can bring about a possible thaw in frosty relations between the two countries.

"... I do believe that if we can resolve the issue of Iran's nuclear program, that can serve as a major step down a long road towards a different relationship; one based on mutual interests and mutual respect," Obama said in his address to the 68th annual session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

He added that Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has issued a fatwa "against the development of nuclear weapons" and that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has just recently reiterated that the Islamic Republic will never develop a nuclear weapon.

"So these statements made by our respective governments should offer the basis for a meaningful agreement. We should be able to achieve a resolution that respects the rights of the Iranian people while giving the world confidence that the Iranian [nuclear] program is peaceful," the US president stated.

Obama further pushed for diplomacy with Iran, saying that he firmly believes the diplomatic path must be tested.

"The roadblocks may prove to be too great but I firmly believe the diplomatic path must be tested."

The US president, however, urged Tehran to meet its international obligations by taking "transparent and verifiable actions."

He added that he had tasked US Secretary of State John Kerry with pursuing an agreement with Iran over its nuclear energy program.

Meanwhile, Obama admitted that distrust between Iran and the US is deep-rooted, referring to the US interference in Iran's internal affairs during the past, including the 1953 overthrow of Iran's democratically-elected prime minister.

The United States, Israel, and some of their allies have repeatedly accused Iran of pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear energy program.

Iran rejects the allegation, arguing that as a committed signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), it has the right to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

In addition, the IAEA has conducted numerous inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities but has never found any evidence showing that the Iranian nuclear program has been diverted toward military objectives.

Iran warns of extremists' access to chemical weapon

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a meeting with his Bulgarian counterpart Kristian Vigenin voiced Tehran's strong opposition to the production and use of chemical weapons, and expressed concern about the access of extremist and terrorist groups to such weapons.

"Iran as a victim of chemical weapons condemns the use of such weapons anywhere and by anyone," Zarif said during the meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting in New York.

"The chemical weapons' disarmament should be comprehensive since the access of extremist elements to such weapons poses danger to the region and the world," he added.

His remarks came after the Syrian government earlier this month agreed to dismantle its chemical weapons under the UN supervision but concerns still remain for the West-armed rebels' use of such weapons in Syria.

In relevant remarks, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov Moscow insisted that the Syrian opposition groups should also eliminate their chemical weapons stockpiles.

In the interview with Channel One, Lavrov said "when our western partners repeatedly say that only the regime has weapons and that's why only the regime could have used them, and the opposition has no chemical weapons, they are cunning."

The Russian foreign minister cited "Israeli reports" saying that the rebels had at least twice seized the districts where the chemical weapons were stored. He also said the rebels have their own laboratories where make chemical weapons.

Lavrov has stressed the need for "those who finance the rebel groups, including the extremists, to find the way to demand that they hand over those (weapons) that had been seized and are to be destroyed".

Evidence given by witnesses and journalists showed that rebels acquired "some shells from abroad that they had never seen and had no idea of how to use them, and then finally they used them," Lavrov said.



PBS TV Network's interview with Dr. Rouhani

President Hassan Rouhani said settlement of Iranian nuclear issue could pave the way for more understandings with the US on other topics.

"In principle, we regard the sanctions as illegal and inhumane because the sanctions are exerting pressure on the [Iranian] people and the sick and have a negative impact on the lives of children," Dr. Rouhani said in an interview with the American PBS channel.

"We believe that sanctions are not an appropriate solution [to the Western dispute over Iran's nuclear energy program] and cannot resolve any problems," the Iranian president stated.

He added that Iran seeks a solution that would guarantee the nation's legitimate rights and, at the same time, ally potential concerns.

The Iranian nation does not seek anything beyond its legal right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, he said.

President Rouhani emphasized that all of Iran's nuclear activities are under the surveillance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and noted the agency constantly inspects the country's nuclear work.

"Iran is a signatory to the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) and all of its nuclear activities are in accordance with the Agency (IAEA)'s Safeguards," Dr. Rouhani said.

He further stated that nuclear energy has turned into the symbol of the Iranian nation's advancement in making use of modern technologies.

Answering a question on Iran's support for Syria, he referred to the solid and deep relations existing between the two nations especially since the Iraqi-imposed war against Iran, noting that Syria, though an Arab country itself, stood with Iran all those years.

He said all should try to get the Syrian nation out of the crisis.

Dr. Rouhani's interview with Washington Post Newspaper

Dr. Rouhani, president of Islamic Republic of Iran in an exclusive interview with U.S newspaper the Washington Post replied to the questions of newspaper's reporters on various topics, including the Iranian nuclear issue, relations between Iran and the U.S. and Syrian developments.

President Hassan Rouhani says Tehran is willing to reach a deal with the West over its nuclear energy pro-

gram within a time frame of three to six months.

"The only way forward is for a timeline to be inserted into the negotiation that's short," said president Rouhani.

"If it's 3 months that would be Iran's choice, if it's 6 months that's still good. It's a question of months not years," he said, adding that his administration seeks a "short" timeline to settle the dispute as it would be more beneficial to everyone.

Dr. Rouhani said his administration has "full authority" to negotiate anything that can guarantee Iran's security and national interests, including any necessary cooperation with the international community to help settle the crisis in Syria.

He added that Iran would enter any talks or meetings, including Geneva II, "as long as there are no preconditions for Iran's participation."



Iran has never been and will never be after developing nuclear weapons, President Hassan Rouhani said in New York in an interview with the US Cable News Network (CNN).

The interview took place at President Rouhani's residence in New York.

President is currently in New York to attend the 68th meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. He addressed the UNGA.

Reiterating Iran's legitimate right to pursue nuclear technology for

peaceful purposes, the President told CNN that making use of weapons of mass destruction is against religious and ethical beliefs of the Iranian nation.

He said that Iranians, like other world's nations, would pursue their legitimate rights within the framework of the international regulations and without any discrimination.

Referring to the anti-Iran sanctions, President Rouhani said sanctioning Iran was an inhuman move and against all international laws

and regulations.

We believe that exerting pressure on a nation would lead to no result since mounting hatred would reduce the chance of establishing peace and friendship.

Commenting on Syria, President Rouhani voiced Tehran's readiness to cooperate with any country to put an end to the ongoing civil war there.

No third country has the right to decide for the future of Syrians, stressed the President.



Dr. Rouhani meets with the President of the European Council

President Hassan Rouhani met and converse with the head of the European Council - Herman Achille Van Rompuy on the sidelines of the 68th UN annual General Assembly.

President Rouhani said in a meeting that Iran wishes that no discrimination would be observed in nuclear rights and to enjoy equal rights with other countries.

President in the meeting referred to the historical relations between Iran and Europe, emphasizing the need for ever more expansion of relations between Iran and the EU in economic, cultural and political fields.

President Rouhani reminded the illegal moves made by some world power in dealing with the Iranian people, reiterating, "Efforts aimed at segregation of Iran dilute relations and mutual trust."

Sanctions and threats are not appropriate and effective ways for resolving problems, as they have reverse effects. Under the current conditions, greater good will can yield

better results and even lead to finding solutions," he emphasized.

We wish there would be no discrimination in observing the nuclear rights regarding Iran and enjoying the equal rights with the other countries in this respect, the president also reiterated.

President Rouhani pointing out that the Islamic Republic of Iran is not after hiding its peaceful nuclear activities, and said, "The entire nuclear activities of Iran are conducted under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)."

President also one more time stressed that there is no place for any type of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the Iranian defense doctrine, adding that the Iranian nation is a victim of unconventional weapons.

The president referred to the recent presidential election in Iran, saying, "The people of Iran granted a new power to their government whose motto is effective and constructive

President Rouhani pointing out that the Islamic Republic of Iran is not after hiding its peaceful nuclear activities, and said, The entire nuclear activities of Iran are conducted under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)."

interactions with the world."

He expressed the hope that the involved people in negotiations with Iran would be benefited from this open window.

Dr. Rouhani, meanwhile, reiterated that the negotiations on entire issues are appropriate, but of course the nuclear issue has first priority.

The president, meanwhile, referred to the regional and particularly the Syrian developments and said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is seriously concerned about the accumulation of terrorist groups in Syria."

We are ready to contribute to any international gathering that would work aimed at resolving the Syrian crisis, he added.

The president of European Council, for his part referred to the significant role of Iran in the region, saying, We are aware of Iran's concerns regarding Syria and for us, too, a political solution has first priority.

Herman Achille Van Rompuy told President Rouhani, Hope and trust are two keywords in your lectures and we, too, are ready for preserving the Iranian nation's rights to use the nuclear energy for peaceful purposes."

He, meanwhile, referred to the meeting between the Iranian delegation and the ministers of foreign affairs of the G5+1, saying; This is going to be a very important meeting and a turning point in Iran-EU relations.

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Iran
Today



Iranian, French presidents meet

President Hassan Rouhani has met with his French counterpart Francois Hollande on the sidelines of the 68th annual session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

President Rouhani made the remarks in a meeting with President Hollande on the sidelines of the 68th Session

of the UN General Assembly in New York.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has never pursued nuclear weapons due to religious and ethical reasons and this issue that Iran has the right to have access to nuclear technology should be accepted by everyone," President Rouhani said.

The French president also called on Iran to show "concrete gestures" to help resolve the issues regarding its nuclear energy program.

He hailed the position taken by President Rouhani on Iran's nuclear energy program as "a glimmer of hope" and called for more practical measures on the part of Tehran.

President Rouhani meets with German foreign minister



President Hassan Rouhani, in a meeting with German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, urged Berlin to play a more active role in settling Tehran's nuclear standoff with the West.

"I hope that Germany will play an effective role in the settlement of Iran's nuclear issue," President Rouhani told Westerwelle on the sidelines of the 68th Session of the UN Security Council in

New York.

He reiterated that both Iran and the Group 5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) should speed up the trend of talks to achieve better results.

President pointed to the US-led West's unilateral sanctions against Iran, and said, "We are against oppressive and unilateral sanctions because they are illegal and inhumane."



Rouhani, Ban discuss international issues

President Hassan Rouhani and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon have met and exchanged views on different regional and international issues, specially the Syrian crisis on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York.

During the meeting held on the sidelines of the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York, Dr. Rouhani and Ban discussed the status quo of Syria and also the use of the chemical weapons in the Muslim country.

Ban also briefed the Iranian president on the developments regarding the upcoming international Geneva II conference on the Syrian crisis.

They also weighed in on climate change, human rights and a host of regional issues.

Rouhani, Nawaz Sharif discuss mutual cooperation

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Hassan Rouhani during the meeting held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, the two leaders reviewed status of bilateral cooperation and exchanged views on regional and international issues particularly the challenges being faced by the world Muslims.

They also urged them

to support an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led political process, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The PM stated that bilateral energy cooperation will serve the interest of two countries, it said, adding, "Pakistan and Iran enjoy relations that are deeply rooted in historical, cultural and religious commonalities."

Dr. Rouhani confers with his Tunisian counterpart

President Hassan Rouhani in a meeting with his Tunisian counterpart President Moncef Marzouki in New York called bilateral relations important in all fields.

The two presidents discussed the latest developments in the region as well as bilateral ties on the sidelines of the UN Gen-

eral Assembly meeting.

By referring to the cooperation between the two countries in the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the two presidents underlined importance of fight against terrorism in the region, including in Syria, to protect reputation of Islamic world.



Tokyo hopeful for expansion of ties with Iran

President Hassan Rouhani met Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly and surveyed ways for the expansion of bilateral ties.

President Rouhani and Prime Minister Abe meanwhile in their meeting exchanged opinion on the most significant regional and international developments.

President Rouhani appreciated the Japanese PM for his congratulatory message and for dispatching a representative to his swearing-in ceremony.

Referring to the long history of Tehran-Tokyo relations, he added, "There are good opportunities for the Japanese companies interested in making investments in Iran and we are also ready for consultations and expansion of cooperation in such fields as envi-

ronmental protection, and campaign against narcotics' trafficking."

President Rouhani also expressed hope that the Islamic Republic of Iran's peaceful nuclear issue would be resolved in the shortest possible time.

President one more time ensured the Japanese prime minister of the fully peaceful nature of the nuclear activities of Iran reminding him, "The entire nuclear activities of Iran are conducted under full supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and in accordance with the articles of the nuclear NPT."

He, meanwhile, referred to the illegal and inhumane sanctions imposed against the Iranian nation and expressed hope that they would be lifted as soon as possible.

President Rouhani, meanwhile, re-

ferred to the Syrian crisis, saying, "Syria is engaged in most perilous civil war and Tehran resorts to its entire capabilities aimed at putting an end to that bloody war."

Japan's Prime Minister Abe, too, in the meeting appreciated President Rouhani's policy of direct interactions and friendly, strong relations with various countries, expressing hope that Iran's nuclear issue would be solved in the shortest possible time.

Shinzo Abe added, "Tokyo is quite hopeful for expansion of comprehensive ties with Iran in the framework of international regulations."

He, meanwhile, referred to the Syrian crisis and the usage of chemical weapons there, saying, "We, too, feel the threats of chemical weapons and the other weapons of mass destruction."



Iran, Turkey call for expansion of ties

President Hassan Rouhani and Turkish President Abdullah Gul on the sideline of the United Nations General Assembly session met and have discussed on Bilateral relations and important regional and international issues.

Dr.Hassan Rouhani said both Iran and Turkey should mobilize their numerous common interests and objectives in the region to further develop their ties.

Referring to good relations and the extensive trade and economic cooperation between the two countries, he urged the two nations to make greater efforts to reach the desirable level of economic exchanges by 2015.

He believed the impact of Tehran-Ankara cooperation in settling regional conflicts was quite significant, adding that the first joint step to be taken by the two countries is to try to stop worsening of the situation in Syria.

President Rouhani stressed the adverse effects of terrorism for the whole region and said all should try to push terrorist groups out of Syria to stop them from getting closer to each other.

He further stressed the importance of developing a common solution by Iran and Turkey as two neighboring states to the Syrian crisis.

The Turkish president congratulated President Rouhani on his landslide victory in the recent presidential elections and reiterated that his success was significant not just for Iran but for the whole region.

He stressed importance of ties with Iran and hoped for expansion of mutual cooperation in line with interests of both nations.

Highlighting Iran's constructive role in settling regional disputes, President Gul stressed the need for further cooperation among regional countries to help resolve the crisis in Syria.

Dr. Rouhani meets with Fijian Prime Minister

President Hassan Rouhani stressed the need for the G77 and the Non-Aligned Movement member states to have a constructive role in world arena.

The president made the remark in a meeting with Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama at the sideline of the ongoing summit in the United Nations General Assembly.

During the meeting, he stressed the importance of ties with Fiji as the head of the 131-member G77 grouping for Iran and expressed Tehran's readiness to expand mutual ties.

Expressing unhappiness over the ongoing unrest in the sensitive region of the Middle East, he lauded efforts of the G77 and the NAM member states to establish peace and stability in the region.

Dr. Rouhani meets with Lebanese President

President Hassan Rouhani, by expressing concern over regrettable situation in Syria and use of chemical weapons in that country, said all regional countries should try to end civil war in Syria.

President Rouhani made the remarks in a meeting with his Lebanese counterpart Michel Suleiman here in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting.

Referring to importance of ties between Iran and Lebanon, President Rouhani called for promotion of mutual cooperation.

Underscoring Iran's support for resistance in Lebanon, President Rouhani said fighting against terrorism is important, adding that support for development in Lebanon is important for us, too.

President hopes that sanctions against Iran will be lifted



Presidents of Iran and Austria met on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly and exchanged viewpoints on bilateral ties, regional and international developments.

President Hassan Rouhani referred to the significance of comprehensive relations between Iran and Austria, saying, Despite the existence of problems in the course of the past few years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has received positive messages from Austria.

Dr. Rouhani pointed out that the nuclear activities of Iran have thus far been merely for peaceful purposes and that is the way they would also be in the future, adding that the entire nuclear activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran are under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

President reiterated, The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been opposed to production, stockpiling and proliferation of nuclear weapons and has accepted the legal commitments in this respect.

Dr. Rouhani meanwhile pointed out that the Islamic Republic of Iran is also opposed to any type of unconventional weapons, including chemical weapons, saying, "Iran has always tried to remove the anxieties around its nuclear activities."

The president said that easing the anxieties would only be possible through constructive interactions, reiterating, "Sanctions and threatening have never been acceptable in dealing with nations and the Islamic Republic of Iran considers the unilaterally imposed sanctions by the EU against the Iranian nation ineffective and harming in the process of resolving the existing problems."

The president also expressed hope that the imposed sanctions against the Iranian nation would be lifted and said that the banking sanctions, and more important than that the medical sanctions are inhumane deeds. The Austrian President Hans Fischer, too, in the meeting referred to the record of his previous meetings with the Islamic Republic of Iran officials, saying, "Austria would try to resolve the existing problems in Iran-EU relations within the next six months."



President Rouhani expresses Iran's sorrow over ongoing terrorism in Iraq

President Hassan Rouhani met with the Iraqi Vice President Khazir al-Khazaei.

The meeting took place on the sideline of the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

President Rouhani referred to the historical, cultural and religious common points between the two nations and said there are even more potentials to expand mutual relations in cultural, political, economic and tourism areas.

He expressed Iran's sorrow over the ongoing terrorism in Iraq which inflicts damage on the nation and said Iran absolutely feels the plights of the Iraqi people given the fact it is also a victim of terrorist activities.

He thanked the Iraqi government for closing down Camp Ashraf in Iraq which was run by the terrorist grouplet Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) and described it as a practical measure by Iraqi officials to fight terrorism.

Referring to the issue of terrorism which presently afflicts the whole region from Afghanistan to Pakistan and to Iraq, he said the crisis in Syria has now become a real catastrophe for the region.

President Rouhani believed cooperation and coordination among regional countries were necessary to eradicate terrorism and extremism and said that today the very same government which helped formation of terrorist groups is now suffering from them.

He expressed concern over the present situation in Syria and said that terrorists have flocked in the region to fight the Syrian government.

President stressed the non-military and diplomatic solutions to the crisis in Syria and said the evil phenomenon of terrorism could spread to other parts of the region in future if it is not uprooted now.

He said a major area Iran and Iraq could focus on in their bilateral cooperation is the issue of Syria in order to develop a political solution to the crisis through interaction and exchange of views.

The Iraqi vice president expressed happiness over the election of Dr. Rouhani whom he referred to as a thinker and scholar and said Baghdad is interested in expansion of all-out relations with Tehran.

President: Islamphobia, has troubled relations between Islamic world and other countries

President Hassan Rouhani received Secretary General of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu in his residence in New York.

President Rouhani, by referring to the emergence of Islamphobia, underlined that the phenomenon has caused problems for relations between Islamic world and other countries.

President Rouhani said OIC is important since it can make Islamic countries close to each other and defend Islamic thought in the current world.

President Rouhani expressed Iran's readiness for more cooperation with the OIC in different fields of education, science and technology as well as trade.

The OIC secretary general, by referring to the importance of the organization in international level said that the OIC is the second world organization with 50 member countries.

Ihsanoglu said that Iran is one of the member states with preferential trade in OIC, adding that in the year 2005, trade volume between member states was 200 billion dollars which reached 700 billion dollars in 2012.

Referring to good and growing cooperation of Iran with the OIC, Ihsanoglu expressed hope that other member countries cooperation with the organization develops more and more.

President, IMF Chief meet in New York



President Hassan Rouhani and International Monetary Fund Chief Christine Lagarde held talks in New York on the sidelines of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

During the talks, President Rouhani hailed the key role of the IMF in management of the world crises.

Ms Lagarde for his part referred to Iran's influential role in establishment of the fund and underlined the need to solve economic problems in the Middle East region. He further voiced the IMF readiness to cooperate with Iran in various economic fields.

Italy can cooperate to resolve nuclear issue

President Hassan Rouhani met with Italy's Prime Minister Enrico Letta in New York on the sidelines of the 68th annual session of the UN General Assembly.

President Rouhani has reiterated the country's readiness to allay the alleged concerns over its nuclear energy program, saying Italy can be part of the solution to the issue.

"As a member of the European Union (EU), Italy can cooperate to resolve the nuclear issue," said Dr. Rouhani.

"Sanctions have had no bearing on Iran's nuclear program, and have only put people under pressure. We regard these sanctions as illegal and inhuman," the president stated.

President Rouhani further pointed to Iran's deep-rooted relations with Italy



and stressed the importance of improving mutual ties in economic, cultural, scientific, academic and tourism fields.

He said Iran is ready to meet Italy's energy needs, adding, "In this regard, bilateral ties can be expanded."

The Italian premier, for his part, said Rome regards itself as a "bridge" between Iran and the West, and added that when his country assumes the rotating presidency of the European Union in 2016, it will try its utmost to further strengthen Rome-Tehran ties.

He emphasized that Italy supports nuclear talks between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - China, Russia, France, Britain, the US - and Germany aimed at clearing up misunderstandings.



President Rouhani calls for further expansion of Tehran-Madrid ties

President Hassan Rouhani discussed issues of mutual interest including Iran's nuclear program with Spanish Prime Minister.

The meeting took place on the sideline of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

President Rouhani called for the further expansion of Tehran-Madrid ties on all fronts.

He said that Iran has always acted in line with international regulations over its nuclear energy program and is ready to dispel fears in that regard based on mutual respect.

"Those who have slapped sanctions [against Iran] have come to the conclusion that the sanctions are counterproductive," said the president.

Spanish prime minister said President Rouhani's election has created new hopes in the international community.

Spanish Prime Minister Mariano says it is the Iranian people that bear the brunt of US-led sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

He said that the sanctions will eventually hurt the people and they are the ones who will have to pay the price for the US-engineered bans.

Therefore, he added, the European Union (EU) countries would like the current situation to change and the sanctions reviewed.

Spanish Prime Minister expressed hope that Iran and the EU would immediately resolve any differences between them.

He also discussed the Syria crisis as well as the Palestinian issue with the Iranian president.

The Spanish premier also congratulated Rouhani on his election as the Iranian president and described Iran as a great country with a glorious history.

President meets with influential figures from the United States Muslim community

President Hassan Rouhani said that United States Muslim community leaders are symbol of unity among Muslims.

In a meeting with influential figures from the United States Muslim community, the president said, "We are in need of unity among Muslims in the current situation, both in minor issues and in the principles."

Dr. Rouhani added that after foreign intervention, the main problems facing the Muslim World and the sensitive region of the Middle East are extremism, violence and terrorism, fostered sometimes under the name of religion and Jihad.

Meanwhile, he regretted Xenophobia and Islam phobia pursued by certain government's in the world.

The president underlined that the Muslim leaders living in the US could play in bringing the two nations closer.

Touching upon Syrian crisis, he said that in every country the people make the ultimate decision, adding: "We are all duty-bound to prevent further bloodshed."



Zarif, Westerwelle discuss Iran nuclear program

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his German counterpart Guido Westerwelle have discussed Tehran's nuclear energy program and explored avenues for further expansion of bilateral ties in New York.

The two senior officials met on the sidelines of the 68th annual session of the UN General Assembly, and exchanged views on Iran's civilian nuclear activities as well as future talks on Iran's nuclear energy program.

Zarif and Westerwelle also discussed Tehran-Berlin relations, common areas of interest as well as Iran's ties with the European Union (EU).

The Iranian foreign minister is also to join his counterparts from Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States in a meeting, expected to be held, to discuss the Islamic Republic's nuclear energy program.

The United States, Israel, and some of their allies have repeatedly accused Iran of pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear energy program.

Iran rejects the allegation, arguing that as a committed signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), it has the right to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

In addition, the IAEA has conducted numerous inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities but has never found any evidence showing that the Iranian nuclear program has been diverted toward military objectives.

Iranian, Turkish FMs meet at UN

Foreign ministers of Iran and Turkey had a meeting in New York, during which the two officials discussed bilateral issues and regional developments.



In a meeting on the sidelines of the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Iran's Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Turkish counterpart Ahmet Davutoglu conferred on the latest status of bilateral relations between Tehran and Ankara.

Pointing to the long history of ties between the two neighboring countries, Zarif expressed Iran's readiness to further strengthen relations with Turkey. The top Iranian diplomat further touched on the surge in the volume of trade between Tehran and Ankara from \$1 billion in 2000 to more than \$22 billion last year, and welcomed the idea of dispatching high-ranking delegations to increase economic cooperation between the two nations.

The two ministers also discussed the latest upheavals in crisis-hit Syria.

In a separate meeting between Iran's President Hassan Rouhani and Turkish Parliament Speaker Cemil Cicek, the Iranian president described Iran and Turkey as two influential countries in the region that must openly consult and exchange viewpoints on Syria.

Iranian, Finnish FMs discuss bilateral ties, regional developments

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Finnish counterpart Erkki Sakari Tuomioja in a meeting in New York discussed expansion of bilateral ties as well as regional and international developments. The Iranian and Finnish foreign minister conferred during a meeting on the sidelines of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Zarif held separate meetings with his counterparts from Turkey, Bulgaria, Georgia, Oman, Croatia, Slovakia, Italy, Switzerland, Japan, Greece, Britain, Australia and Holland on the sidelines of UN General Assembly meeting. Zarif is in New York to take part in the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly, which opened on September 17. Iran's President Hassan Rouhani also traveled to New York to take part in the event. President Rouhani is due to address the UN meeting on September 24.



Iran holds intensive diplomatic consultations at UN

Iranian minister of foreign affairs held several meetings with his counterparts from other countries on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mohammad Javad Zarif, now in New York to attend the 68th session of the UN General Assembly, held separate meetings with the foreign ministers of Bulgaria, Japan, Oman, Turkey and Georgia.

During the meetings, the Iranian foreign minister exchanged ideas with his counterparts on ways of improving economic, political and cultural relations between Iran and their respective countries.

Among other topics in Zarif's meetings were major regional and international developments, including the current situation of Syria and Afghanistan, and also Tehran's peaceful nuclear program.

Separately, Zarif had a meeting with British Foreign Secretary William Hague in New York.

During the meeting Zarif censured the "illegal sanctions" imposed on Iran, saying they have failed to achieve their pre-determined objectives and are actually only targeted at the Iranian people.

"The West needs to take a new look at the matters," he stressed.

The two top diplomats stressed the

need for the improvement of Tehran-London ties on a "step-by-step" basis.

The British Foreign Secretary William Hague for his part said that London does not seek a confrontational relationship with Iran and is open to better relations.

He added, "The United Kingdom welcomes President Rouhani and Foreign Minister Zarif's recent statements about Iran's wish to improve its relations with the outside world."

Zarif had earlier met EU foreign policy chief Cathrine Ashton, who represents the six world powers (Britain, China, France, Russia, the US and Germany) in nuclear talks with Iran.



Iran, Russia FMs express satisfaction with preventing war in Syria

Iranian and Russian foreign ministers met on the sidelines of the 68th UN General Assembly annual meeting in New York where the two sides discussed the main regional and international developments and expressed satisfaction with preventing any war in Syria.

Mohammad Javad Zarif and Sergei Lavrov conferred on issues of mutual interests as well as regional and international matters including Syria and Iran's nuclear energy during the meeting.

The two sides also expressed satisfaction with efforts underway to prevent war in Syria and stressed finding political solutions to end the crisis and conflicts in the

country.

Zarif, for his part, condemned any use of chemical weapons, and said "Chemical weapons should be taken out of all sides in Syria."

Lavrov, for his part, emphasized the necessity of ending crisis in Syria, and reiterated any war in the country would lead to catastrophe.

They also expressed satisfaction over the expansion of Tehran-Moscow mutual cooperation and discussed the further cooperation on oil, gas, electricity, industry and machinery as well as continuing cooperation programs among Caspian Sea littoral states.

Tehran welcomes further expansion of ties with Athens

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Greek counterpart Dimitris Avramopoulos met at the UN headquarters in New York. The two ministers discussed issues of mutual interest including bilateral ties and Iran's peaceful nuclear activities as well as the latest regional and international developments

particularly in Syria.

Referring to Iran-Greece amicable ties, Zarif stressed that Tehran welcomes further expansion of ties with Athens in all areas. Avramopoulos, for his part, stressed that Greece as the rotating president of European Union (EU), is ready to play a constructive role in bolstering Iran-EU relations.

Zarif meets with German, Burundian, Bahraini Counterparts in New York

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met with his German, Burundian and Bahraini counterparts on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting in New York.

"We are ready for serious and direct talks and if the other side has the serious will, it is possible to obtain a solution under the framework of meaningful talks and with a clear timetable," Zarif said in a meeting with German counterpart Guido Westerwelle.

Westerwelle, for his part, expressed Berlin's willingness for cooperation with Tehran, and said, "There are historic relations between Iran and Germany, and we call for providing conditions for more progress of bilateral ties."

He also hailed the new emerging condition in talks between Iran and P5+1.

Zarif also met with Burundi's counterpart, Antoinette Batumubwira, where the two sides stressed further expansion of bilateral ties in all fields.

During the meeting Zarif said Iran is ready to implement and accomplish development, industrial and educational projects in Burundi.

Batumubwira, for her part, lauded Iran's progress and achievements in different fields and called for further expansion of cooperation between the two sides in all fields.



Iran, Indonesia FMs discuss world developments

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad-Javad Zarif in a meeting with his Indonesian counterpart Marty Natalegawa in New York discussed the latest international and regional issues as well as bilateral ties.

In the meeting, Zarif and

Natalegawa considered ways of developing bilateral political and economic ties as well as world and regional developments, especially Syrian crisis.

The two sides also discussed the Hague meeting for Syria's chemical disarmament.

Iranian top diplomat meets Italian, Swiss, Australian counterparts in New York

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif discussed major regional and world issues in separate meetings with his counterparts from Italy, Switzerland, and Australia in New York. In a meeting on the sidelines of the 68th Annual Session of the UN General Assembly in New York, Zarif and his Italian counterpart Emma Bonino signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to help improve the situation in war-torn Afghanistan.

Under the MoU, Tehran and Rome agreed to fight drug trafficking and co-operate in reconstructing Afghanistan's devastated infrastructure. During the meeting, Zarif and Bonino further stressed the need for the expansion of Tehran-Rome relations in all areas.

The two diplomats also discussed the latest devel-

opments in Middle Eastern countries, including Syria and Iraq.

In separate meetings, Zarif also discussed bilateral ties and other regional issues with Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop and the Foreign Minister of Switzerland, Didier Burkhalter. Meantime, Zarif discussed the bilateral relations as well as issues of international importance with the foreign ministers of the Netherlands, Croatia, Slovakia, Georgia, Japan, Oman, and Turkey.

Zarif is in New York to take part in the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly, which opened on September 17.

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani also traveled to New York to take part in the event. President Rouhani is due to address the UN meeting on September 24.

Hague: UK welcomes Iran's wish to improve relations with outside world

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met with his British counterpart in New York where they discussed Iran's nuclear energy program, bilateral relations and regional developments, including the situation in Syria and Afghanistan.

During the meeting Zarif censured the illegal sanctions imposed on Iran, saying they have failed to achieve their pre-determined objectives and are actually only targeted at the Iranian people.

"The West needs to take a new look at the matters," he stressed.

The two top diplomats stressed the need for the improvement of Tehran-London ties on a "step-by-step" basis.

The British Foreign Secretary William Hague for his part said that Lon-



don does not seek a confrontational relationship with Iran and is open to better relations.

He added, "The United Kingdom welcomes President Rouhani and Foreign Minister Zarif's recent statements about Iran's wish to improve its relations with the outside world."

Hague also said he "was pleased" to meet Zarif, and underlined the need for progress on Iran's nuclear issue.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif Zarif, who is also the country's chief nuclear negotiator, will meet foreign ministers from the five permanent UN Security Council members - Britain, China, France, Russia and the US - and also Germany (the Group of 5+1).

The agreement was made during a meeting in New York between Zarif and European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton who leads diplomatic efforts to resolve the decade-old nuclear dispute on behalf of the G5+1. The American sources have confirmed that Kerry will be in the meeting.

Ashton told the reporters in New York that she saw "energy and determination" for talks with the major powers.



Iranian FM calls talks with UN Chief “Constructive”

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif underlined that he had “constructive talks” with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Teh-

ran nuclear standoff with the West.

“I had satisfactory negotiations with Mr. Ban Ki-moon and we discussed international issues, as well as Iran,” the

Iranian foreign minister said in New York.

Zarif told reporters that the two sides exchanged views on different international issues, specially the Iran’s nuclear case.

Iranian FM Meets Georgian, Japanese, Omani, Turkish counterparts

Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif held separate meetings with his Georgian, Japanese, Omani and Turkish counterparts on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting in New York to discuss bilateral ties and the latest regional and international developments.

During the meetings, Zarif conferred on ways to expand bilateral ties and economic, trade and cultural cooperation between Iran and the aforementioned states, and also exchanged views with his counterparts on international and regional issues, specially the Syrian crisis, the situation in war-torn Afghanistan and Tehran’s nuclear standoff with the West.

Zarif also held a separate meeting with Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, and discussed the latest regional developments, specially in Syria, at the meeting.

In his meeting with Georgian Foreign Minister Maia Panjikidze, Zarif referred to Tehran and Tbilisi’s commonalities, and said, “Iran and Georgia enjoy good relations but enhancement of the existing relations and cooperation between them is necessary due to the two sides’ ca-

pacities.”

Also in a meeting with his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida, the Iranian top diplomat underlined that Tehran attaches much importance to its ties with Tokyo, and said, “The two countries enjoy age-old relations and we expect long-term relations with Japan and hope that Japan will also have a similar view.”

Zarif also held a separate meeting with Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, and discussed the latest regional developments, specially in Syria, at the meeting.

The two high-ranking officials warned of the dangers of spreading instability and extremism in the region.

The Iranian foreign minister also had a meeting with his Turkish counterpart Ahmet Davutoglu in New York, during which he stressed Tehran’s readiness to further strengthen relations with Ankara. They also discussed the situation in Syria.

Zarif is in New York to take part in the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly, which opened on September 17.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani also traveled to New York to take part in the event. President Rouhani is due to address the UN meeting on September 24.



Iran's FM hails meeting with Ashton as Positive

Iranian foreign minister, now in New York to attend the 68th session of the UN General Assembly, said his meeting with EU Foreign Policy Chief Catherine Ashton was "positive".

In a post on his Facebook page, Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote that his meeting with Ashton was positive, adding that he has explained how it would be possible to reach a solution to the problems.

The Iranian minister and the EU foreign policy chief met on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York.

"I explained the political determination and the conceptual framework to reach a solution based on the rights of the Iranian nation and the removal of sanctions to the European Union foreign policy chief," Zarif wrote on his Facebook page.

He also added that Ashton's interview after the meeting signified that she has had a "positive view" of the meeting.

After the meeting, Catherine Ashton said she had "a good and constructive discussion" in what was her first face-to-face meeting with Zarif.

The European official further noted that Zarif would join her and his counterparts from the Group of 5+1 (the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Ger-

many) at a meeting in New York to discuss Iran's nuclear program.

Ashton also said the meeting in New York would be "short discussions," and added that she would represent the Group of 5+1 in a meeting with Zarif in Geneva in October.

Ashton also praised the Iranian foreign minister's "energy and determination to try and move forward in our talks."

Iran and the G5+1 have held several rounds of talks on Tehran's peaceful nuclear energy program.

The two sides wrapped up their latest round of negotiations in April in the Kazakh city of Almaty. An earlier meeting had been held in Almaty in February.

The US, Israel, and some of their allies have repeatedly accused Iran of pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear energy program. Iran has categorically rejected the allegations, saying that its nuclear activities are entirely peaceful and in line with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to which it is a signatory.

Meanwhile, numerous inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency have never found any evidence showing that the Iranian nuclear energy program has been diverted toward non-civilian purposes.

A nuclear deal with Iran can be reached quickly: Kerry



Secretary of State John Kerry has said a deal on Iran's nuclear program could be reached relatively quickly, and it would have the potential to dramatically improve the relationship between the two countries, according to Reuters.

Kerry, speaking in an interview aired on CBS's "60 Minutes", said intensifying diplomatic efforts to resolve the dispute over Iran's nuclear program could produce an agreement within the three- to six-month time frame that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has called for.

"It's possible to have a deal sooner than that depending on how forthcoming and clear Iran is prepared to be," Kerry said.

"If it is a peaceful program, and we can all see that - the whole world sees that - the relationship with Iran can change dramatically for the better and it can change fast," he said.

Rouhani and U.S. President Barack

Obama spoke by telephone in the highest-level contact between the two countries in three decades, raising hopes of a breakthrough in efforts to resolve the dispute over Iran's nuclear program.

The call was the culmination of a recent, dramatic shift in tone between Iran and the United States, which cut diplomatic relations a year after the 1979 Iranian revolution.

Kerry said Iran could prove its sincerity by immediately opening its nuclear facilities to inspections and keeping its uranium enrichment efforts at lower grades that were not suitable for military use.

Iran has defended its right to enrich uranium as part of a civilian nuclear energy and medicine program and denied that it aims to develop atomic weapons, but the United States and its allies have sought an end to medium-level uranium enrichment.

"Iran needs to take rapid steps, clear and convincing steps, to live up to the interna-



Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Iran was willing to open its nuclear facilities to international inspections as part of a nuclear deal as long as the United States ended painful economic sanctions.

tional community's requirements regarding nuclear programs, peaceful nuclear programs," Kerry said.

"Words are not going to replace actions," he said.

In a separate interview, Iran's foreign minister said the country's right to peaceful nuclear enrichment was not negotiable but it did not need to enrich uranium to military-grade levels.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Iran was willing to open its nuclear facilities to international inspections as part of a nuclear deal as long as the United States ended painful economic sanctions.

"Negotiations are on the table to discuss various aspects of Iran's enrichment program. Our right to enrich is non-negotiable," Zarif told ABC's "This Week" program.

"We do not need military-grade uranium. That's a certainty and we will not move in that direction," Zarif said. "Having an Iran

that does not have nuclear weapons, is not just your goal, it's first and foremost our goal."

Zarif said Iran was willing to have its facilities visited by international inspectors to prove it was not seeking a nuclear bomb.

"If the United States is ready to recognize Iran's rights, to respect Iran's rights and move from that perspective, then we have a real chance," Zarif said.

"We are willing to engage in negotiations. The United States also needs to do things very rapidly. One is to dismantle its illegal sanctions against Iran," he said.

Kerry said the sanctions could be lifted after an agreement was in place that ensured Iran's nuclear program was peaceful.

"The United States is not going to lift the sanctions until it is clear that a very verifiable, accountable, transparent process is in place....," he said.



"It's possible to have a deal sooner than that depending on how forthcoming and clear Iran is prepared to be," Kerry said.



Holocaust must not be a pretext to suppress Palestinians, Zarif says

The Iranian foreign minister condemned the Holocaust as a “heinous crime” and “genocide,” but said that the incident should not be used by Israel, which he characterized as the aggressor in the Middle East, as a pretext to suppress Palestinians.

In an exclusive interview on ABC News, Mohammad Javad Zarif said, “We condemn the killing of innocent people, whether it happened in Nazi Germany or whether it’s happening in Palestine,” Zarif said. “[The] Holocaust was a heinous crime, it was a genocide, it must never be allowed to be repeated, but that crime cannot be and should not be a justification to trample the rights of the Palestinian people for 60 years.”

Zarif told George Stephanopoulos on ‘This Week’ following a week of historic moments in U.S.-Iranian diplomatic relations, as new Iranian president Hassan Rouhani visited New York for the UN General Assembly.



U.S. President Barack Obama announced he had spoken on the phone with Rouhani, the first communication of its kind in more than three decades – an exchange first confirmed by the newly-elected Iranian president on Twitter. During an exclusive interview with Stephanopoulos two weeks ago, President Obama said he had exchanged letters with the Iranian president.

Zarif, who is serving as Iran's top nuclear negotiator, met with his American counterpart Secretary of State John Kerry in New York. Both sides agreed the meeting was constructive, with plans for further talks next month in Geneva.

Zarif said resolution of the nuclear issue "will be a first step, a necessary first step, towards removing the tensions and doubts and misgivings that the two sides have had about each other for the last 30-some years."

"There has been 34 years of the building up of this mutual distrust," Zarif told Stephanopoulos. "We need to move in that direction of removing some of that mistrust, true mutual steps that each side needs to take in order to convince the other side that its intentions are positive and for a better future for all of us."

Zarif told Stephanopoulos that Iran is "prepared to start negotiating" on its nuclear program, while main-

taining that the country is not seeking nuclear weapons.

"We know that Iran is not seeking a nuclear weapon," Zarif said. "Having an Iran that does not have nuclear weapons is not just your goal. It's first and foremost our goal."

While saying "our right to enrich is non-negotiable" of Iran's efforts to enrich uranium for nuclear power purposes, Zarif said the country will not seek weapons-grade uranium that could be used to build a nuclear weapon.

"We do not need military grade uranium. That is a certainty and we will not move in that direction," Zarif said. Zarif also hit back at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's dismissal of Iran's diplomatic efforts at the UN General assembly as "a smile attack."

"A smile attack is much better than a lie attack," Zarif said. "Mr. Netanyahu and his colleagues have been saying since 1991... that Iran is six months away from a nuclear weapon. And we are how many years, 22 years after that? And they are still saying we are six months away from nuclear weapons."

"We are not seeking nuclear weapons, so we're not six months, six years, sixty years away from nuclear weapons," Zarif added.



Iranian, US presidents talk over phone

The two presidents talked over the phone as President Rouhani was in a car and heading towards the New York International Airport, 27 September 2013.

President Rouhani and President Obama discussed different issues during their phone conversation.

The Iranian and US presidents underlined the need for a political will for expediting resolution of West's

standoff with Iran over the latter's nuclear program.

President Rouhani and President Obama stressed the necessity for mutual cooperation on different regional issues.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his American counterpart John Kerry have been commissioned to follow up talks between the two countries.

Iranian, Argentine FM's meet in New York



Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Argentine counterpart Hector Marcos Timerman met in New York, on the sidelines of the 68th annual session of the United Nations General Assembly.

During the meeting, the two ministers exchanged viewpoints on the ways to implement a memorandum of understanding (MoU), signed earlier this year between Tehran and Buenos Aires.

They also agreed that bilateral talks resume in the first half of November in Geneva.

Minuto Uno, a Spanish language website, had announced earlier that Zarif and Timerman were scheduled to discuss the long, drawn-out AMIA case in New York.

Argentina's Senate earlier this year voted to approve an agreement with Iran on the establishment of a fact-finding committee to investigate the bombing of the AMIA Jewish center in 1994 which left 85 people dead.

On January 27, the former Iranian foreign minister Ali Akbar Salehi and his Argentine counterpart signed a memorandum of understanding in Addis Ababa, on the sidelines of an African Union summit in Ethiopia, to create a "truth commission" that will investigate the AMIA bombing, which will be staffed by jurists chosen jointly by the two governments.

Under the agreement, five independent judges will investigate the 1994 bombing. None of the judges will be from Argentina or Iran.

Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner called the agreement "historic," saying it could "guarantees the right to due process of law, a fundamental principle of international criminal law."

AMIA stands for the Asociacion Mutual Israelita Argentina or the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association.

Israel and some Jewish lobbyists accuse Iran of orchestrating the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires. The Islamic Republic has categorically denied any involvement in the terrorist bombing. No suspects have been convicted for the bombing.

Timerman has said he will defend the MoU agreed between the two sides and welcomed Tehran's readiness to cooperate on the issue.

Where is Rouhani, Zarif next destination?



During a little over a month of presidency, Hassan Rouhani has had two important foreign visits.

During his second visit, something unprecedented after the Revolution happened: a phone call from Obama was the first US high-ranking contact with Hassan Rouhani as Iran's president. Rouhani will probably have other important visits. Mainly focused upon improving relations with countries to boost the living quality for Iranians inside, through diplomatic means and after attending UN General Assembly and Shanghai, now Rouhani would probably visit Saudi Arabia in mid-October.

It seems likely that Rouhani is dis-solute to improve the level of relations with Saudi Arabia, which, according to president himself, has close historical, cultural, and regional ties with Iran. During Ahmadinejad's presidency, Iran-Saudi relations suffered from hostility, with the results such as US-Saudi shared scenario- fake story of Saudi ambassador assassination at the US- and execution of Iranian prisoners in Saudi Arabia.

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia enjoyed cordial relations with Ayatollah Hashemi, and thanked to Rouhani's visits from Saudi Arabia during Hashemi's presidency, Saudi Arabia was among the first countries to receive the message of elections' result in Iran and sent congratulations to Rouhani for being elected. Later among the Hajj officials Rouhani had

hints to this message, he addressed them saying that he and the Saudi King were interested to eliminate some minor tensions in "our relations as a step forward to protect our common interests and even the interests of the Islamic world."

Rouhani has expressed his pride that first security agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia has his signature; and at his first press conference, emphasized on relaxing the tensions with Saudi Arabia, when he told reporters that "the government's foreign policy priority will be friendly relations with neighboring countries. We are neighbors with Persian Gulf countries and brethren with Saudi Arabia; Muslim's prayer Qiblah is located in Saudi Arabia; we have close historical, regional and cultural ties; and hundreds of thousands of Iranians travel to Saudi Arabia for Hajj pilgrimage, and also Saudi nationals travel to Iran regularly. It is my pleasure that I have signed the first security agreement with Saudi Arabia. God willing, in future [present] government we will excellent relations with the neighbors especially with Saudi Arabia."

A few days before New York visit, media reported that Saudi King has invited Rouhani for Hajj. The story first appeared in Almayadeen Network as "King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz has invited Iran's Hassan Rouhani for Hajj and Rouhani has accepted it." Iran's Hajj Organization announced that "if the news is confirmed by the president's office,

the Organization will make necessary arrangements according to its missions in coordination with president's office."

The story was almost eclipsed by news from New York, but Amir Abdollahian, Deputy FM in a program in Al-Alam, raised the probability of Rouhani's visit from Saudi Arabia again, saying that in talks with Saudi officials, "we agreed that the two countries play crucial roles in region politics and our cooperation could help to solve major issues in the region and the Islamic world."

Dr. Rouhani sent a congratulation message to Saudi King for Saudi Arabian National Day; Jahangiri, First Deputy, did the same to Saudi Crown Prince; and Zarif also send message to his Saudi counterpart. Tehran welcomes any innovation for cooperation and negotiation which helps to improve bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia.

In 2005, Hassan Rouhani, the Supreme National Security Council Secretary, visited King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, and he is not such an unknown figure among Saudi officials. Later he also has visited Riyadh again. His serious decision to restore relations with countries long in misconception about Iran has a Saudi visit imminent. If Rouhani goes for Hajj in mid-October, his Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will be in Genève for nuclear talks with P5+1, to be held on October 14.

FM: Iran not to let Israel Meddle in N. talks

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif condemned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's anti-Iran remarks at the 68th UN General Assembly meeting in New York, and said Tehran will not allow Israel to meddle with Iran-West nuclear talks.

Netanyahu and other warmongers were to ruin the chance of reaching an understanding, Zarif told reporters on the last day of his stay in New York.

Iran would not let them reach their goal and meddle in the process of nuclear talks between Tehran and the world powers, he said.

The foreign ministers of Iran and the six world powers held a meeting in New York last Thursday, and announced that they were pleased with their discussions over the settlement of the Iran-West nuclear standoff and that they have set a new round of negotiations for next month in Geneva.

The top diplomats of the G5+1 (the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany) described their meeting with Zarif on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly as "a change in tone".

European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, who chaired the meeting, told reporters it had been "a substantial meeting. Good atmosphere. Energetic."

She said the two sides had agreed on an "ambitious timetable" to address Western concerns about Iran's nuclear program and would meet again in Geneva on October 15-16 "to pursue the agenda to carry on from today's meeting and to hopefully move this process forward."

Ashton also added a note of caution, saying it was important to focus on "effective work that we do on the ground."

After a group meeting and then a one-on-one session between Zarif and US Secretary of State John Kerry, the US top diplo-



mat called the talks “constructive”, and said he was struck by a “very different tone” from Iran, the USA Today reported. “We’ve agreed to try to continue a process that would try to make concrete and find a way to answer the questions that people have about Iran’s nuclear program,” Kerry said. “Needless to say, one meeting and a change in tone, that was welcome, does not answer those questions.”

“All of us were pleased that the foreign minister came today and that he did put some possibilities on the table,” Kerry said.

The meeting between Zarif and Kerry, who sat next to each other at a U-shaped table, was the highest-level direct contact between Iran and the United States in years and, in terms of substantive discussions, the first in a generation.

Iran and the United States have been at odds since Iran’s 1979 Islamic Revolution toppled the US-backed shah. The last time a US secretary of state met with Iran’s foreign minister was in May 2007, when Condoleezza Rice made clear she was open to talking to her Iranian counterpart, Manouchehr Mottaki, at an international conference in Egypt, but the encounter amounted largely to pleasantries over ice cream, Reuters reported.

Ashton said Kerry and Zarif shook hands and were cordial.

Speaking after Kerry, Zarif said the meetings had been “very constructive” and “very businesslike.”

“We hope to be able to make progress to solve this issue in a timely fashion (and) to make sure (there is) no concern that Iran’s program is anything but peaceful,” he said.

“I am satisfied with this first step,” Zarif said. “Now we have to see whether we can match our positive words with serious deeds so we can move forward.”

He said the result would have to include “a total lifting” of the international sanctions imposed on Iran.

British Foreign Secretary William Hague said there had been a “big improvement in the tone and spirit” from Iran.

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said the meeting had taken place in a “completely different tone, atmosphere and spirit” than the group was used to and that a “window of opportunity has opened” for a peaceful resolution of the situation.

He further called for action, and said “it is now important that we have substantial and serious negotiations very soon”.

Rouhani’s pronouncements at the UN have raised hopes that progress could be possible, but they have also served as a reminder that the path to that progress will not be quick or easy.

In his speech to world leaders at the UN last Tuesday, he repeated Iran’s long-standing demand that any nuclear agreement must recognize the country’s right under international treaties to continue enriching uranium, and underlined the need for a win-win game.



Rouhani’s UN visit can lead to resolution of foreign policy issues: Rafsanjani

Iranian Expediency Council Chairman Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani has said that the achievements made during President Hassan Rouhani’s visit to the United Nations can lead to the resolution of foreign policy problems.

What happened in New York “is a good sign of the start of a process to reach a fair solution to end finding excuses and resolve the country’s foreign policy problems,” Ayatollah Rafsanjani said during a meeting of the Expediency Council.

“We should not make a hasty judgment on the achievements made during this trip, and we have to wait for practical and tangible steps in regard to the remarks, but, all in all, the plans, remarks, meetings, and negotiations can be a prelude to further steps toward resolving issues and ambiguities, and foil possible future hostilities,” Rafsanjani stated.

Rafsanjani also said, “The loyal and appreciative people of Iran support logical measures and sincere services of the country’s officials.”

Kerry calls nuclear talks with Zarif 'constructive'

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held high profile talks with foreign ministers representing the six major powers over Tehran's nuclear program in New York, which was described by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry as "constructive."

The talks involved the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - Britain, France, Russia, China, the United States - and Germany, known as the P5+1.

"We had a constructive meeting, and I think all of us were pleased that Foreign Minister Zarif came and made a presentation to us, which was very different in tone and very different in the vision that he held out with respect to possibilities of the future," Kerry said after the meeting, according to the U.S. Department of State.

"... we hope very, very much - all of us - that we can get concrete results that will answer the outstanding questions regarding the program. But I think all of us were pleased that the foreign minister came, that he did put some possibilities on the table. Now it's up to people to do the hard work of trying to fill out what those possibilities could do," he told reporters.

The United States wants Iran to address questions about its nuclear program, which Washington and its allies suspect may be a cover for developing nuclear weapons. Iran denies this, saying its program is for solely peaceful, civilian uses.

"Needless to say, one meeting and a change in tone, which was welcome, doesn't answer those questions yet and there is a lot of work to be done," Kerry said.

Zarif also told reporters, "I am satisfied with this first step. Now we have to see whether we can match our positive words with serious deeds so we can move forward," he said, Reuters reported.

According to Reuters, European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, who chaired the meeting, told reporters it had been "a substantial meeting. Good atmosphere. Energetic."

She said the two sides had agreed on an "ambitious timetable" to resolve the dispute over Iran's nuclear program and would meet again in Geneva on October 15-16 "to pursue the agenda to carry on from the meeting and to hopefully move this process forward."

Ashton also added a note of caution, saying it was important to focus on "effective work that we do on the ground."

British Secretary William Hague described the tone and spirit of the meeting as "extremely good."

