



Instituto de
Relaciones
Internacionales



orientemedio@iri.edu.ar

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Discurso del Hassan Rouhani, president de la República Islámica de Irán

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank God, the Lord of the Two Worlds and the Prayer and peace be upon our Profer Mohamad and his family and companions

At outset, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on your well-deserved election as the president of the 69° Session of the General Assembly. I also express my appreciation to H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for all his efforts. It is my genuine hope that this year's Session of the General Assembly brings the world, in its current critical situation, a step closer to security and tranquility of human being, which is of course a fundamental goal of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

I am coming from a region of the world whose many parts are currently burning in fire of extremism and radicalism. To the East and West of my country, extremists threaten our neighbors, resort to violence and shed blood. They of course do not speak a single language; they are not of a single skin color and not of a single nationality; they have come to the Middle East from around the world. They do however have a single ideology: "violence and extremism". They also have a single goal: "the destruction of civilization, giving rise to Islamophobia and creating a fertile ground for further intervention of foreign forces in our region".

I deeply regret to say that terrorism has become globalized: "From New York to Mosul, from Damascus to Baghdad, from the Easternmost to the Westernmost parts of the world, from Al-Qaeda to Daesh". The extremists of the world have found each other and have put out the call: "extremists of the world unite". But are we united against the extremists?!

Extremism is not a regional issue that just the nations of our region would have to grapple with; extremism is a global issue. Certain states have helped creating it and are now failing to withstand it. Currently our peoples are paying the price. Today's anti-Westernism is the offspring of yesterday's colonialism. Today's anti-Westernism is a reaction to yesterday's racism. Certain intelligence agencies have put blades in the hand of madmen, who now spare no one. All those who have played a role in founding and supporting these terror groups must acknowledge their errors that have led to extremism. They need to apologize not only to the past but also to the next generation.

To fight the underlying causes of terrorism, one must know its roots and dry its source fountains. Terrorism germinates in poverty, unemployment, discrimination, humiliation and injustice. And it grows in the culture of violence. To uproot extremism, we must spread justice and development and disallow the distortion of divine teachings to justify brutality and cruelty. The pain is made greater when these terrorists spill blood in the name of religion and behead in the name of Islam. They seek to keep hidden this incontrovertible truth of history that on the basis of the teachings of all divine prophets, from Abraham and Moses and Jesus to Mohammed, taking the life of a single innocent life is akin to killing the whole humanity. I am astonished that these murderous groups call themselves Islamic. What is more astonishing is that the Western media, in line with them, repeats this false claim, which provokes the hatred of all Muslims. Muslim people who everyday recall their God as merciful and compassionate and have learned lessons of kindness and empathy from their Prophet, see this defamation as part of an Islamophobic project.

The strategic blunders of the West in the Middle-East, Central Asia, and the Caucasus have turned these parts of the world into a haven for terrorists and extremists. Military aggression against Afghanistan and Iraq and improper interference in the developments in Syria are clear examples of this erroneous strategic approach in the Middle East. As non-peaceful approach, aggression, and occupation target the lives and livelihoods of ordinary people, they result in different adverse psychological and behavioral consequences that are today manifested in the form of violence and murder in the Middle East and North Africa, even attracting some citizens from other parts of the world. Violence is currently being spread to other parts of the world like a contagious disease. We have always believed that democracy cannot be transplanted from abroad; democracy is the product of growth and development; not war and aggression. Democracy is not an export product that can be commercially imported from the West to the East. In an underdeveloped society, imported democracy leads only to a weak and vulnerable government.

When Generals step into a region, do not expect diplomats to greet them warmly; when war begins, diplomacy tends to end. When sanctions set in, deep hatred for those imposing them also begins. When the atmosphere of the Middle East is securitized, the answer will be of the same nature as well.

The interests of Western countries in our region are tied to their recognition of beliefs and the desire of the people for democratic governance in the region. Our region expects that the Western world would once and for all place itself in the company of those true seekers of democracy, and, hence, soften the bitter memories of its support for dictators.

The experience of creation of Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and modern extremist groups have demonstrated that one cannot use extremist groups to counter an opposing state and remain impervious to the consequences of rising extremism. The repetition of these mistakes despite many costly experiences is perplexing.

Let's recall that Iran had invited everyone to "dialogue" before the criminal act of September 11th, and also called for "a world against violence and extremism" before the outbreak of the current violent atrocities. Perhaps in the past year, few people could forecast the fire that would rage today. But now uninhibited violence and extremism presents an imminent threat to the world. It is self-evident that without an accurate understanding of how the current condition came about we will not be able to find the right solutions. Today, again, I shall warn against the spread of extremism and the danger posed by the inadequate understanding and incorrect approach to this phenomenon.

The Middle East longs for development and is weary of war. It is the natural right of the peoples of the fertile lands of the Middle East to live in peace and prosperity. In the past, colonialism denied them this right and, today, the shadow of war and violence threatens their security. There are moderate politicians and elites in our region who enjoy the confidence of their peoples. They are neither anti-Western nor pro-Western. While aware of the role of colonialism in the backwardness of their nations, they are not neglectful of the role of their nations in reaching the development they seek. They do not absolve the West from its misdeeds, but are also aware of their own failings. These leaders can take positions of active leadership by attracting the confidence of the people in their societies and establish the strongest national and international coalitions against violence.

The voices of these leaders are the true voices of moderation in the Islamic world; the familiar sound of an Afghan tired of war; an Iraqi victim of extremism, a Syrian fearful of terrorism; and a Lebanese worried over violence and sectarianism. I believe if countries claiming leadership of the coalition, do so to continue their hegemony in the region, they would make a strategic mistake. Obviously, since the pain is better known by the countries in the region, better they can form coalition, and accept to shoulder the responsibility of leadership to counter violence and terrorism. And if other nations wish to take action against terrorism, they must come to their support.

I warn that if we do not muster all our strengths against extremism and violence today, and fail to entrust the job to the people in the region who can deliver, tomorrow the world will be safe for no one.

Mr. President,

Last year, I tried to fulfill the role of my country in the realization of peace at both the regional and international levels by putting forward a proposal about, "a world against Violence and Extremism", which was met with general support. In the tumultuous and chaotic region of the Middle East, Iran is one of the most tranquil, secure and stable nations. All the nations of the region have to keep in mind that we are in the same boat. Thus, we need broad cooperation with regard to social and political as well as security and defense issues with a view to reaching common and durable understandings.

Had we had greater cooperation and coordination in the Middle East, thousands of innocent Palestinians in Gaza would not have been fallen victim to Zionist regime's aggression. We in the Islamic Republic of Iran consider interaction and confidence building among states of the region as fundamentally essential for conflict resolution. We support any measure to promote cooperation between Islamic nations to combat extremism, threats, and aggression, and in this connection, are prepared to play our permanent constructive and positive role.

Mr. President,

The oppressive sanctions against Iran go on in continuation of a strategic mistake against a moderate and independent nation under the current sensitive condition in our region. During the last year, we have engaged in the most transparent dialogue to build confidence regarding Iran's peaceful nuclear program. We placed serious and honest negotiations on the agenda, not as a result of sanctions or threat but rather because of the will of our people. We are of the view that the nuclear issue could only be resolved through negotiation, and those who may think of any other solution are committing a grave mistake. Any delay in arriving at a final agreement only raises the costs; not only at our expense but also at the expense of the economy and trade of the other parties as well as the development and security prospects of our region. No one should doubt that compromise and agreement on this issue is in the best interest of everyone especially that of the nations of the region.

The nuclear negotiations between Iran and the 5+1 have continued during the past year with seriousness and optimism on both sides. According to all international observers, the Islamic Republic of Iran has carried out its commitments in good faith. Although, some of the observations and actions of our counter parts have created certain doubts regarding their determination and realism, we hope that the current negotiations lead to a final accord in the short amount of time left. We are committed to continue our peaceful nuclear program, including enrichment, and to enjoy our full nuclear rights on Iranian soil within the framework of international law. We are determined to continue negotiations with our interlocutors in earnest and good faith, based on mutual respect and confidence, removal of concerns of both sides as well as equal footing and recognized international norms and principles. I believe mutual adherence to the strict imple-

mentation of commitments and obligations and avoidance of excessive demands in the negotiations by our counterparts is the prerequisite for the success of the negotiations. A final accord regarding Iran's peaceful nuclear program can serve as the beginning of multilateral collaboration aimed at promoting security, peace and development in our region and beyond.

The people of Iran, who have been subjected to pressures especially in the last three years as a result of continued sanctions, cannot place trust in any security cooperation between their government with those who have imposed sanctions and created obstacles in the way of satisfying even their primary needs such as food and medicine. The sanctions will create additional impediments in the way to the future long term cooperation.

The people of Iran are devoted to certain principles and values at the apex of which are independence, development and national pride. Our people evaluate the behavior of their government based on the same criteria. If this obvious national fact is not understood by our negotiating partners and they commit grievous miscalculations in the process, a historic and exceptional opportunity will be lost.

As you know, during the ongoing nuclear negotiations in this year, the Iranian government took some initiatives that created new favorable conditions, which resulted, at that phase, in the Geneva Joint Plan of Action. We are determined to continue our confidence building approach and our transparency in this process. If our interlocutors are also equally motivated and flexible, and we can overcome the problem and reach a longstanding agreement within the time remaining, then an entirely different environment will emerge for cooperation at regional and international levels, allowing for greater focus on some very important regional issues such as combating violence and extremism in the region.

Arriving at a final comprehensive nuclear agreement with Iran will be a historic opportunity for the West to show that it does not oppose the advancement and development of others and does not discriminate when it comes to adhering to international rules and regulations. This agreement can carry a global message of peace and security, indicating that the way to attain conflict resolution is through negotiation and respect not through conflict and sanction.

Mr. President,

Ladies, Gentlemen,

Last year the great nation of Iran broadly participated in the calm and impressive presidential election and endorsed the discourse of "Foresight, Hope, and Prudent Moderation."

Thereafter, they support their elected government in its effort in building the country. While some of the countries around Iran have fallen prey to war and turmoil, Iran remains secure, stable and calm.

My Government's principled policy is to work towards constructive interactions with our neighbors on the basis of mutual respect and with emphasis on common interests. The notion that Iran seeks to control other Muslim countries in the region is a myth fanned in the recent years in the context of an

Iranophobicproject. Those who make these claims need imaginary enemies to sustain tensions and sow division and conflict, thus, in this way, pushing for the redeployment of national resources away from development. We work towards putting an end to delusional Iranophobia, setting the stage for building strategic partnerships with our neighbors.

In conclusion, last year I warned against the expansion of violence and extremism. This year too I warn that if the right approach is not undertaken in dealing with the issue at hand, we get closer to a turbulent and tumultuous region with repercussions for the whole world. The right solution to this quandary comes from within the region and regionally provided solution with international support and not from the outside the region.

God, the Almighty has promised those who have believed and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession to authority upon the earth and that their fears will turn into peace and security.

It is my sincerest hope that our generation endeavors to leave a more secure and developed earth as its legacy for the next generation.

I wish you all success.

Thankyou.