

Iran's Rouhani addresses UN General Assembly

27th September, 2013



Iranian President Hassan Rouhani addressed the United Nation's General Assembly on Tuesday, calling for "constructive engagement" with countries

including the USA. He pointed out that Iran, "does not seek to increase tensions with the United States". He added he wanted to work with other nations, "based on mutual respect and common interest". The speech is seen by many as a considerable change of direction in Iran's foreign policy and could potentially herald new relations with America. The two countries have been bitter foes for the past four decades. President Rouhani also pledged never to develop nuclear weapons, telling delegates they had no place whatsoever in the defence of his country.

The Iranian leader spoke at length about Iran's nuclear program. He stressed that: "Nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction have no place in Iran's security and defence doctrine, and contradict our fundamental religious and ethical convictions." He hinted that Iran could be ready to let U.N. inspectors back into the country's nuclear facilities, saying: "Our national interests make it imperative that we remove any and all reasonable concerns about Iran's peaceful nuclear program." Mr Rouhani also tried to expel the notion that Iran was a danger to the Middle East. He said: "Iran poses absolutely no threat to the world or the region," and added that the "so-called Iranian threat" was imaginary.

Sources: Xinhuanet: / *New York Times*

Writing

Compare and Contrast Iran and the USA.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

UN General Assembly / engagement / mutual respect / new relations / foes / defence / nuclear program / national interests / peaceful / danger / Middle East / imaginary

True / False

- Iran's president called for "restrictive engagement" with other nations. T / F
- The president said he didn't want to make things worse with the USA. T / F
- The speech left little hope for improving relations with the USA. T / F
- Mr Rouhani made no promises about nuclear weapons. T / F
- Mr Rouhani spoke for a long time about nuclear weapons. T / F
- UN weapons inspectors may be allowed back into Iran's nuclear plants. T / F
- Rouhani said Iran represented no danger to the Middle East. T / F
- Rouhani said the "Iranian threat" was very much a reality. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. addressed | a. go against |
| 2. constructive | b. look for |
| 3. seek | c. is |
| 4. mutual | d. belief |
| 5. herald | e. talked to |
| 6. doctrine | f. vital |
| 7. contradict | g. reciprocal |
| 8. imperative | h. helpful |
| 9. expel | i. signal |
| 10. poses | j. get rid of |

Discussion – Student A

- How is President Rouhani different to former leader Ahmadinejad?
- What could Iran do to help peace in the region?
- Should all countries end their own nuclear weapons programs?
- Should nations apologise to Iran if inspectors find no nuclear weapons?
- What do you think Iran will be like in 20 years from now?
- What advice would you give to President Rouhani?
- Does Iran have the right to nuclear weapons considering other countries have them?
- What questions would you like to ask President Rouhani?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Hassan Rouhani addressed | a. and ethical convictions |
| 2. constructive | b. respect |
| 3. based on mutual | c. the United Nations |
| 4. bitter | d. of mass destruction |
| 5. no place | e. at length |
| 6. The Iranian leader spoke | f. absolutely no threat |
| 7. weapons | g. whatsoever |
| 8. contradict our fundamental religious | h. foes |
| 9. national interests make it | i. engagement |
| 10. Iran poses | j. imperative |

Discussion – Student B

- What springs to mind when you hear the word 'Iran'?
- What do you think of Hassan Rouhani's speech?
- What must happen for "constructive engagement" to take place?
- What do you know about the history of US-Iranian relations?
- Do you think we will see a new Iran on the world stage?
- What is the next step for Iran and the US to forge better ties?
- How would good relations between Iran and America change the world?
- Do you think Iran has nuclear weapons?

Spelling

- calling for "constructive enmgegenat"
- increase nseiosnt
- lumuat respect
- aedlhr new relations
- Rouhani also gelledpe never to develop nuclear weapons
- no place orstevwahe
- weapons of mass esturitondc
- defence oendcrit
- ethical ncnivcisoot
- let U.N. pescrontsi back
- make it veatreiimp
- the "so-called Iranian threat" was gaimniyra

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. b	4. g	5. i
6. d	7. a	8. f	9. j	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Hassan Rouhani

You are convinced you can increase Iran's importance in the world. Tell the others three reasons why. You want to restore relations with the USA. Tell Mr Obama to end the sanctions against your country. Tell him there's no need for inspectors as Iran has no nuclear weapons.

Role B – Barack Obama

You would like to make friends with Iran. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell Mr Rouhani he must allow inspectors into nuclear plants before talks can go ahead. Sanctions can go if Iran opens up to U.S. investment. Ask Mr Rouhani to re-open the U.S. Embassy in Tehran.

Role C – Iranian Citizen A

You don't think anything will come of talks between your country and the USA. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell Mr Rouhani he should not trust Obama. He must not let foreign weapons inspectors into Iran. Tell Obama he should not tell other countries what to do.

Role D – Iranian Citizen B

You think President Rouhani offers the brightest hope for Iran for decades. Tell the others three reasons why. Ask Mr Rouhani to do everything Obama asks. That way Iran will become economically strong again. Disagree with everything Citizen B says. Tell Obama to help Iran.

Speaking – World dangers

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most dangerous at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| • nuclear conflict | • corporate greed |
| • global warming | • terrorism |
| • cyber-war | • overpopulation |
| • lack of education | • water scarcity |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.