

Statement by

H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

at the 72nd Session of the General Assembly

of the United Nations

(New York – 20 September 2017)

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In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish at the outset to congratulate your election to the Presidency of the General Assembly and Secretary-General Guterres' election to his high office and wish him every success in his crucial responsibilities.

Four months ago, over 41 million people—constituting 73% of Iran's total eligible voters—came to the polls in the country's 12th presidential election and once again expressed confidence in my platform, which calls for moderation and respect for human rights and prosperity and economic revitalization at home, and constructive engagement around the world. Their vote manifested the maturity of the electorate in a society that has experienced free and democratic governance for only four decades. This was not merely a vote for a president, but a huge political investment by our population; a resilient people who truly constitute our most reliable asset.

Human and citizens' rights, along with the quest for justice and Islamic values, have constituted the most pivotal demands of the Iranian people in over 150 years of struggle, and particularly in the Islamic Revolution of 1979. In its first term, while pursuing nuclear negotiations internationally, my government focused at home on the deliberation and articulation of citizens' rights leading to the promulgation of "The Charter of Citizens' Rights" and its issuance for implementation. Adoption of this Charter conformed to the demands of a people who rose against dictatorial regimes, aspiring to restore their rights and human dignity 111 years ago in the Constitutional Revolution, and again in the Islamic Revolution 39 years ago.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I declare before this august global assembly that moderation is the inclination as well as the chosen path of the great Iranian people. Moderation seeks neither isolation nor hegemony; It implies neither indifference, nor intransigence.

The path of moderation is the path of peace; but a just and inclusive peace: not peace for one nation, and war and turmoil for others;

Moderation is freedom and democracy; but in an inclusive and comprehensive manner: not purporting to promote freedom in one place while supporting dictators elsewhere;

Moderation is the synergy of ideas and not the dance of swords;

And finally, the path of moderation nurtures beauty. Deadly-weapons exports are not beautiful; rather, peace is.

We in Iran strive to build peace and promote the human rights of peoples and nations. We never condone tyranny and we always defend the voiceless. We never threaten anyone; but we do not tolerate threats from anyone. Our discourse is one of dignity and respect, and we are unmoved by threats and intimidation. We believe in dialogue and negotiation based on equal footing and mutual respect.

In today's globalized world, peace, security, stability and the progress of all nations are intertwined. It is not possible that a rogue and racist regime trample upon the most basic rights of the Palestinians, and the usurpers of this land enjoy security. It is simply impossible for anybody to aspire to attain long-term stability, prosperity and development, while Muslims in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, Afghanistan, Myanmar and so many other places live in misery, war and poverty.

Mr. President,

Throughout its history, Iran has been the bastion of tolerance for various religions and ethnicities. We are the same people who rescued the Jews from Babylonian servitude; opened our arms to welcome Armenian Christians in our midst, and created the "Iranian cultural continent" with a unique mix of diverse religions and ethnicities. I represent the same Iran that has historically assisted the oppressed: centuries ago, we supported the rights of the Jewish people and today we insist on the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people. Iran is still the same country: supporting justice and seeking tranquility.

Today, we are on the frontlines of fighting terror and religious extremism in the Middle east; not for sectarian or ethnic reasons, but for an ethical, humanitarian and strategic one.

Iran does not seek to restore its ancient empire, impose its official religion on others, or export its revolution through the force of arms. We are so confident in the depth of our culture, the truth of our faith and tenacity and longevity of our revolution that we will never seek to export any of them in the way neo-colonialists do, with the heavy boots of soldiers.

To promote our culture, civilization, religion and revolution, we enter hearts and engage minds. We recite our poetry and engage in discourse on our philosophy.

Our ambassadors are our poets, our mystics and our philosophers. We have reached the shores of this side of the Atlantic through Rumi and spread our influence throughout Asia with Saadi. We have already captured the world with Hafez; we therefore are in no need of new conquests.

Excellencies,

The call of moderation is from a nation that has been committed to it. We are not preaching moderation, but practicing it. The JCPOA is a case in point.

The deal is the outcome of two years of intensive multilateral negotiations, overwhelmingly applauded by the international community and endorsed by the Security Council as a part of Resolution 2231. As such, it belongs to the international community in its entirety, and not to only one or two countries.

The JCPOA can become a new model for global interactions; interactions based on mutual constructive engagement between all of us. We have opened our doors to engagement and cooperation. We have concluded scores of development agreements with advanced countries of both East and West. Unfortunately, some have deprived themselves of this unique opportunity. They have imposed sanctions really against themselves, and now they feel betrayed. We were not deceived, nor did we cheat or deceive anyone. We have ourselves determined the extent of our nuclear program. We never sought to achieve deterrence through nuclear weapons; we have immunized ourselves through our knowledge and – more importantly – the resilience of our people. This is our talent and our approach. Some have claimed to have wanted to deprive Iran of nuclear weapons; weapons that we have continuously and vociferously rejected. And, of course, we were not and are not distressed for forgoing an option that we in fact never sought. It is reprehensible that the rogue Zionist regime that threatens regional and global security with its nuclear arsenal and is not committed to any international instrument or safeguard, has the audacity to preach peaceful nations.

Just imagine for a minute how the Middle East would look had the JCPOA not been concluded. Imagine that along with civil wars, Takfiri terror, humanitarian nightmares, and complex socio-political crises in West Asia, that there was a manufactured nuclear crisis. How would we all fare?

I declare before you that the Islamic Republic of Iran will not be the first country to violate the agreement; but it will respond decisively and resolutely to its violation by any party. It will be a great pity if this agreement were to be destroyed by “rogue” newcomers to the world of politics: the world will have lost a great opportunity. But such unfortunate behavior will never impede Iran’s course of progress and advancement. By violating its international commitments, the new U.S. administration only destroys its own credibility and undermines international confidence in negotiating with it, or accepting its word or promise.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Four years ago, the Islamic Republic of Iran sponsored the initiative of the World Against Violence and Extremism (WAVE) in this Assembly. We consider dialogue and negotiations based on a positive-sum paradigm as the only path towards the resolution of global and regional crises. We have made a conscious decision to strengthen relations with our neighbors and the region, and to enhance cooperation with all friendly countries. It is impossible to navigate through the complex and dangerous challenges in this turbulent transitional global phase without expanding interactions and exchanges and institutionalizing dialogue between nations and states.

The ignorant, absurd and hateful rhetoric, filled with ridiculously baseless allegations, that was uttered before this august body yesterday, was not only unfit to be heard at the United Nations – which was established to promote peace and respect between nations – but indeed contradicted the demands of our nations from this world body to bring governments together to combat war and terror.

I wish to underscore here that the defense capabilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, including our missiles, are solely defensive deterrents for the maintenance of regional peace and stability and the prevention of adventurist tendencies of irrational aspirants. We cannot forget that civilians in many of our cities became the targets of long-range missile attacks by Saddam Hussein during his 8-year war of aggression against us. We will never allow our people to become victims of such catastrophic delusions again.

Instability and extremist violence have only been exacerbated in our region through the military interventions of extra-regional actors – the same powers that try to sell ever more of their deadly weapons to other states by accusing Iran of fomenting instability. I want to emphasize that foreign intervention and the imposition of alien wishes on the people of the region will only widen and deepen the crises in our region. The crises in Syria, Yemen and Bahrain do not have military solutions and can only be resolved through cessation of hostilities, and the acceptance of the will and wishes of the populaces.

The United States Government should explain to its own people why, after spending billions of dollars of the assets of the people of America and of our region, instead of contributing to peace and stability, it has only brought war, misery, poverty and the rise of terrorism and extremism to the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the past 4 years, Iran's economy demonstrated that it has unparalleled potential for expansion and growth. Economic sanctions not only did not impede Iran, but instead solidified popular resolve to enhance domestic production. Achieving the highest global growth rate last year proved that Iranian economy can become the most vibrant emerging economy within the next twenty years, with a trillion-dollar growth potential. Our strategic choice for achieving such sustainable and balanced growth is extensive global partnership. We are of the firm belief that development and security can only grow together, and common interests can bind us regionally and globally to guarantee both regional and global security.

Iran, enjoying the world's largest gas and oil reserves, is prepared to engage in long-term cooperation to advance global energy security. We are eager to expand international transit corridors through joint ventures in sea, rail and road infrastructure projects. Our achievements in enhancing economic infrastructures in the fields of a nation-wide gas pipeline, national electricity grid, and rail and road transport, have made it possible for various industries to produce at lower cost, with easy access to national and regional markets. With the current conducive legal environment, many delegations of foreign investors have come to Iran, leading

to an ever-increasing number of investments, joint ventures and financing agreements in various fields.

It is the policy of my government to continue to steadily enhance the entrepreneurial environment, protect intellectual property rights, continuously improve corporate governance, and engage in a robust campaign against money-laundering in order to enhance a conducive legal climate for business and economic investments in various fields, particularly in knowledge-based enterprises.

The Iranian nation is resolutely determined to build a free and advanced Iran and participate in the development of a secure and stable region based on ethics and respect for international law. In this endeavor, we welcome the participation and cooperation of all investors, intellectuals and innovators from across the globe. From this global podium, and as the representative of the people of Iran – who are world-famous for their hospitality – I invite all those who seek peace, security and progress through partnership and cooperation among nations to visit Iran and join us in building this future of hope.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

If we truly believe in our collective decision four years ago here in this General assembly to make a WAVE – a World Against Violence and Extremism – we can turn the discourse of imposition, unilateralism, intimidation and war into the logic of dialogue, synergy and peace so that moderation can become the dominant voice across the globe.

I thank you for your attention.