

## TEXTS: THE UNITED STATES AND IRAN

*Compiled by Holly Dagues*

### **Remarks by President Barack Obama in Celebration of Nowruz** (March 20, 2009)

*Source: The White House*

Today I want to extend my very best wishes to all who are celebrating Nowruz around the world.

This holiday is both an ancient ritual and a moment of renewal, and I hope that you enjoy this special time of year with friends and family.

In particular, I would like to speak directly to the people and leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Nowruz is just one part of your great and celebrated culture. Over many centuries your art, your music, literature, and innovation have made the world a better and more beautiful place.

Here in the United States our own communities have been enhanced by the contributions of Iranian Americans. We know that you are a great civilization, and your accomplishments have earned the respect of the United States and the world.

For nearly three decades relations between our nations have been strained. But at this holiday we are reminded of the common humanity that binds us together. Indeed, you will be celebrating your New Year in much the same way that we Americans mark our holidays—by gathering with friends and family, exchanging gifts and stories, and looking to the future with a renewed sense of hope.

Within these celebrations lies the promise of a new day, the promise of opportunity for our children, security for our families, progress for our communities, and peace between nations. Those are shared hopes, those are common dreams.

So in this season of new beginnings I would like to speak clearly to Iran's leaders. We have serious differences that have grown over time. My administration is now committed to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us and to pursuing constructive ties among the United States, Iran and the international community. This process will not be advanced by threats. We seek

instead engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect.

You, too, have a choice. The United States wants the Islamic Republic of Iran to take its rightful place in the community of nations. You have that right—but it comes with real responsibilities, and that place cannot be reached through terror or arms, but rather through peaceful actions that demonstrate the true greatness of the Iranian people and civilization. And the measure of that greatness is not the capacity to destroy, it is your demonstrated ability to build and create.

So on the occasion of your New Year, I want you—the people and leaders of Iran—to understand the future that we seek. It's a future with renewed exchanges among our people, and greater opportunities for partnership and commerce. It's a future where the old divisions are overcome, where you and all of your neighbors and the wider world can live in greater security and greater peace.

I know that this won't be reached easily. There are those who insist that we be defined by our differences. But let us remember the words that were written by the poet Saadi, so many years ago: "The children of Adam are limbs to each other, having been created of one essence."

With the coming of a new season, we're reminded of this precious humanity that we all share, and we can once again call upon this spirit as we seek the promise of a new beginning.

Thank you, and Eid-eh Shoma Mobarak.

### **Remarks by President Barack Obama Marking Nowruz** (March 20, 2010)

*Source: The White House*

Today, I want to extend my best wishes to all who are celebrating Nowruz in the United States and around the world. On this New Year's celebration,

friends and family have a unique opportunity to reflect on the year gone by, to celebrate their time together, and to share in their hopes for the future.

One year ago, I chose this occasion to speak directly to the people and leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and to offer a new chapter of engagement on the basis of mutual interests and mutual respect. I did so with no illusions. For three decades, the United States and Iran have been alienated from one another. Iran's leaders have sought their own legitimacy through hostility to America. And we continue to have serious differences on many issues.

I said last year that the choice for a better future was in the hands of Iran's leaders. That remains true today. Together with the international community, the United States acknowledges your right to peaceful nuclear energy; we insist only that you adhere to the same responsibilities that apply to other nations. We are familiar with your grievances from the past—we have our own grievances as well, but we are prepared to move forward. We know what you're against; now tell us what you're for.

For reasons known only to them, the leaders of Iran have shown themselves unable to answer that question. You have refused good faith proposals from the international community. They have turned their backs on a pathway that would bring more opportunity to all Iranians and allow a great civilization to take its rightful place in the community of nations. Faced with an extended hand, Iran's leaders have shown only a clenched fist.

Last June, the world watched with admiration, as Iranians sought to exercise their universal right to be heard. But, tragically, the aspirations of the Iranian people were also met with a clenched fist, as people marching silently were beaten with batons, political prisoners were rounded up and abused, absurd and false accusations were leveled against the United States and the West, and people everywhere were horrified by the video of a young woman killed in the street.

The United States does not meddle in Iran's internal affairs. Our commitment—our responsibility—is to stand up for those rights that should be universal to all human beings. That includes the right to speak freely, to assemble without fear, the right to the equal administration of justice, and to express your views without facing retribution against you or your families.

I want the Iranian people to know what my country stands for. The United States believes

in the dignity of every human being, and an international order that bends the arc of history in the direction of justice: a future where Iranians can exercise their rights, to participate fully in the global economy, and enrich the world through educational and cultural exchanges beyond Iran's borders. That is the future that we seek. That is what America is for.

That is why, even as we continue to have differences with the Iranian government, we will sustain our commitment to a more hopeful future for the Iranian people. For instance by increasing opportunities for educational exchanges so that Iranian students can come to our colleges and universities, and to our efforts to ensure that Iranians can have access to the software and Internet technology that will enable them to communicate with each other and with the world without fear of censorship.

Finally, let me be clear: we are working with the international community to hold the Iranian government accountable because they refuse to live up to their international obligations. But our offer of comprehensive diplomatic contacts and dialogue stands. Indeed, over the course of the last year, it is the Iranian government that has chosen to isolate itself and to choose a self-defeating focus on the past over a commitment to build a better future.

Last year, I quoted the words of the poet Saadi, who said: "The children of Adam are limbs to each other, having been created of one essence." I still believe that. I believe it with every fiber of my being. And even as we have differences, the Iranian government continues to have the choice to pursue a better future, and to meet its international responsibilities, while respecting the dignity and fundamental human rights of its own people.

Thank you, and Eid-eh Shoma Mobarak.

### **Remarks by President Barack Obama Marking Nowruz (March 20, 2011)**

*Source: The White House*

Today, I want to extend my best wishes to all who are celebrating Nowruz in the United States and around the world.

Each year of my presidency, I have marked this holiday by speaking directly to the people of Iran. That is what I would like to do once more.

This is a holiday for the Iranian people to spend time with friends and family, to reflect on the

extraordinary blessings that you enjoy, and to look forward to the promise of a new day. After all, this is a season of hope and renewal. And today we know that this is also a season of promise across the Middle East and North Africa, even as there are also enormous challenges.

I believe that there are certain values that are universal: the freedom of peaceful assembly and association, the ability to speak your mind and choose your leaders. And what we are seeing across the region is the insistence on governments that are accountable to the people.

But we also know that these movements for change are not unique to these last few months. The same forces of hope that swept across Tahrir Square were seen in Azadi Square in June of 2009. And just as the people of the region have insisted that they have a choice in how they are governed, so do the governments of the region have a choice in their response.

So far, the Iranian government has responded by demonstrating that it cares far more about preserving its own power than respecting the rights of the Iranian people.

For nearly two years there has been a campaign of intimidation and abuse. Young and old, men and women, rich and poor—the Iranian people have been persecuted. Hundreds of prisoners of conscience are in jail. The innocent have gone missing. Journalists have been silenced. Women tortured. Children sentenced to death.

The world has watched these unjust actions with alarm. We have seen Nasrin Sotoudeh jailed for defending human rights; Jaffar Panahi imprisoned and unable to make his films; Abdolreza Tajik thrown in jail for being a journalist; the Bahai community and Sufi Muslims punished for their faith; Mohammad Valian, a young student, sentenced to death for throwing three stones.

These choices do not demonstrate strength, they show fear. For it is telling when a government is so afraid of its own citizens that it won't even allow them the freedom to access information or to communicate with each other. But the future of Iran will not be shaped by fear. The future of Iran belongs to the young people, the youth who will determine their own destiny.

Over 60 percent of the Iranian people were born after 1979. You are not bound by the chains of the past—the distracting hatred of America that will create no jobs or opportunity, the rigid and unaccountable government, the refusal to let the

Iranian people realize their full potential for fear of undermining the authority of the state.

Instead, you—the young people of Iran—carry within you both the ancient greatness of Persian civilization and the power to forge a country that is responsive to your aspirations. Your talent, your hopes, and your choices will shape the future of Iran and help light the world. And though times may seem dark, I want you to know that I am with you.

On this day, a celebration that serves as a bridge from the past to the future, I would like to close with a quote from the poet Simin Behbahani, a woman who has been banned from travelling beyond Iran even though her words have moved the world: “Old, I may be, but, given the chance, I will learn. I will begin a second youth alongside my progeny. I will recite the Hadith of love of country with such fervor as to make each word bear life.”

Let this be a season of second youth for all Iranians, a time in which a new season bears new life once more.

Thank you, and Eid-eh Shoma Mobarak.

## Remarks by President Barack Obama Marking Nowruz (March 20, 2012)

Source: *The White House*

Today, Michelle and I extend our best wishes to all those who are celebrating Nowruz around the world. In communities and homes from America to southwest Asia, families and friends are coming together to celebrate the hope that comes with renewal.

To the people of Iran, this holiday comes at a time of continued tension between our two countries, but as people gather with their families, do good deeds, and welcome a new season, we are also reminded of the common humanity that we share.

There is no reason for the United States and Iran to be divided from one another. Here in the United States, Iranian-Americans prosper and contribute greatly to our culture. This year, an Iranian production—“A Separation”—won America’s highest honor for a foreign film. Our navies have confronted the danger of piracy, with U.S. sailors even rescuing Iranian citizens who had been taken hostage. And from Facebook to Twitter, from cell phones to the Internet, our people use the same tools to talk to one another and to enrich our lives.

Yet, increasingly, the Iranian people are denied the basic freedom to access the information that

they want. Instead, the Iranian government jams satellite signals to shut down television and radio broadcasts. It censors the Internet to control what the Iranian people can see and say. The regime monitors computers and cell phones for the sole purpose of protecting its own power. And in recent weeks Internet restrictions have become so severe that Iranians cannot communicate freely with their loved ones within Iran or beyond its borders. Technologies that should empower citizens are being used to repress them.

Because of the actions of the Iranian regime, an electronic curtain has fallen around Iran—a barrier that stops the free flow of information and ideas into the country and denies the rest of the world the benefit of interacting with the Iranian people, who have so much to offer.

I want the Iranian people to know that America seeks a dialogue to hear your views and understand your aspirations. That's why we set up a Virtual Embassy, so you can see for yourselves what the United States is saying and doing. We're using Farsi on Facebook, Twitter, and Google Plus. And even as we've imposed sanctions on the Iranian government, today my administration is issuing new guidelines to make it easier for American businesses to provide software and services into Iran that will make it easier for the Iranian people to use the Internet.

The United States will continue to draw attention to the electronic curtain that is cutting the Iranian people off from the world. And we hope that others will join us in advancing a basic freedom for the Iranian people: the freedom to connect with one another and with their fellow human beings.

Over the last year, we have learned once more that suppressing ideas never succeeds in making them go away. The Iranian people are the heirs to a great and ancient civilization. Like people everywhere, they have the universal right to think and speak for themselves. The Iranian government has a responsibility to respect these rights, just as it has a responsibility to meet its obligations with regard to its nuclear program. Let me say again that if the Iranian government pursues a responsible path, it will be welcomed once more among the community of nations, and the Iranian people will have greater opportunities to prosper.

So in this season of new beginnings, the people of Iran should know that the United States of America seeks a future of deeper connections

between our people—a time when the electronic curtain that divides us is lifted and your voices are heard; a season in which mistrust and fear are overcome by mutual understanding and our common hopes as human beings.

Thank you, and Eid-eh Shoma Mobarak.

### **Statement by President Barack Obama on Nowruz** (March 18, 2013)

*Source: The White House*

Dorood. As you and your families come together to celebrate Nowruz, I want to extend my best wishes on this new spring and New Year. Around the world, and here in the United States, you are gathering at the Nowruz table to give thanks for loved ones, reflect on your blessings, and welcome all the possibilities of a new season.

As I have every year as President, I want to take this opportunity to speak directly to the people and leaders of Iran. Since taking office, I have offered the Iranian government an opportunity: if it meets its international obligations, then there could be a new relationship between our two countries, and Iran could begin to return to its rightful place among the community of nations.

I have had no illusions about the difficulty of overcoming decades of mistrust. It will take a serious and sustained effort to resolve the many differences between Iran and the United States. This includes the world's serious and growing concerns about Iran's nuclear program, which threatens peace and security in the region and beyond.

Iran's leaders say that their nuclear program is for medical research and electricity. To date, however, they have been unable to convince the international community that their nuclear activities are solely for peaceful purposes. That's why the world is united in its resolve to address this issue and why Iran is now so isolated. The people of Iran have paid a high and unnecessary price because of your leaders' unwillingness to address this issue.

As I've said all along, the United States prefers to resolve this matter peacefully, diplomatically. Indeed, if, as Iran's leaders say, their nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, then there is a basis for a practical solution. It's a solution that would give Iran access to peaceful nuclear energy while resolving once and for all the serious questions that the world has about the true nature of the Iranian nuclear program.

The United States, alongside the rest of the international community, is ready to reach such a solution. Now is the time for the Iranian government to take immediate and meaningful steps to reduce tensions and work toward an enduring, long-term settlement of the nuclear issue.

Finding a solution will be no easy task. But if we can, the Iranian people will begin to see the benefits of greater trade and ties with other nations, including the United States, whereas if the Iranian government continues down its current path, it will only further isolate Iran. This is the choice now before Iran's leaders.

I hope they choose a better path, for the sake of the Iranian people and for the sake of the world, because there's no good reason for Iranians to be denied the opportunities enjoyed by people in other countries, just as Iranians deserve the same freedoms and rights as people everywhere.

Iran's isolation isn't good for the world either. Just as your forbearers enriched the arts and sciences throughout history, all nations would benefit from the talents and creativity of the Iranian people, especially your young people. Every day that you are cut off from us is a day we're not working together, building together, innovating together, and building a future of peace and prosperity that is at the heart of this holiday.

As you gather with family and friends this Nowruz, many of you will turn to the poet Hafez who wrote: "Plant the tree of friendship that bears the fruit of fulfillment; uproot the sapling of enmity that bears endless suffering."

As a new spring begins, I remain hopeful that our two countries can move beyond tension, and I will continue to work toward a new day between our nations that bears the fruit of friendship and peace.

Thank you, and Eid-eh Shoma Mobarak.

**Speech by Iranian Supreme Leader  
Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Imam Reza  
Shrine, Mashhad, Iran (March 21, 2013)**

*Source: The Center for Preserving and Publishing  
the Works of Grand Ayatollah Seyed Ali  
Khamenei*

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and peace and greetings be upon our Master and Prophet and the love of our hearts, Ab-al-Qassem al-Mustafa Muhammad, upon his immaculate,

pure, chosen, and infallible household, especially the one remaining with Allah on earth. Greetings be upon Seddiqah at-Tahirah Fatima, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah. Allah's greetings be upon her, her father, her husband and her children.

I extend my greetings and congratulations to all the dear brothers and sisters who have attended this warm and enthusiastic meeting, and from the depth of my heart I am thankful to Allah the Exalted who gave me one more opportunity to be present at the holy shrine of Hazrat Abul-Hassan ar-Ridha, many greetings be upon him, on another Nowruz, and meet with you dear people of Mashhad and the esteemed pilgrims who have come here from different parts of the country.

I am thankful to Allah the Exalted who gave me this opportunity to speak about important current issues of the country. I ask Allah the Exalted to guide our hearts and tongues to accommodate and say whatever that satisfies Him. And this is a great blessing that every year on Nowruz I find the opportunity to see the joys and beauties that are inherent to Nowruz, and at the same time evaluate current issues and conditions of the country among you people, take a look at our past and future and have brief evaluation of our large-scale national conditions.

It is necessary for us to evaluate ourselves in the case of our personal matters. As the narration says, "Evaluate yourselves before you are evaluated." We should evaluate our work and actions. Similarly, it is important and valuable to carry out an evaluation on a national level. We should evaluate ourselves. We should review everything that has happened to us and try to learn lessons for the future.

The dear brothers and sisters should pay attention to the fact that we people of Iran are not the only ones who try to study, track and evaluate our issues. There are other people who study our work, and they comment on our issues and actions. There are certain nations that are making use of our experiences. There are also certain other nations that are studying the conditions of the Iranian nation—they become happy whenever we make advances and achievements. If we achieve a victory, they feel victorious, and if we fail, they feel that they have failed as well.

There are other people in the world who carefully study everything that we do—these people become happy whenever we make mistakes and they feel disappointed whenever we succeed.

They are the ill-wishers of the Iranian nation. They, too, are carefully studying whatever we do. The majority of them are the same people who used to have full control over every affair of our country for many years. The revolution came and put an end to their domination. For this reason, they are opposed to the revolution. They are opposed to revolutionary people. They are opposed to our revolutionary government. They are opposed to our revolutionary system. Therefore, we are being watched carefully by a large number of people in the world. They are constantly watching and evaluating our work.

Therefore, we should be realistic in our evaluation of our performance in the past and the plans we have for the future. Our evaluation should be accurate. Some people in our country only see the weaknesses whenever they look at the conditions of the country. They only see the high prices. They only see the decrease in production in certain sectors. They only see the enemies' pressure. This outlook is flawed; I have a different outlook. When I look at the conditions of our country and our nation, I see a vast arena that is full of challenges, and the Iranian nation has been proud and victorious in this arena despite the will of the enemies.

There are certain weaknesses and problems. There have been certain bitter events among the things that have happened in our country. Certain materialistic powers did everything in their power to cripple the Iranian nation. And they announced this. The incompetent lady who was responsible for America's foreign policy boldly announced that they wanted to impose certain sanctions on the Islamic Republic in order to cripple Iran. They announced this openly. Later on, I will explain what measures they adopted, what happened, and what the result of their actions was. On the one hand, there are the enemies who are making efforts in this vast arena of confrontation between the Iranian nation and its enemies and on the other hand, there are the great achievements which show the capacity, power, and intelligence of our great nation.

This vast arena is like the arena of competition between powerful athletes, which involves efforts and exhaustion, but a true champion achieves victory in such arenas and makes everybody praise him. In this great arena that lies in front of our eyes, the champion is the Iranian nation. Anybody who studies this arena carefully and appropriately will praise the Iranian nation, just as we hear perceptive people throughout the world praising our nation

today. Among the enemies and ill-wishers of the Iranian nation, there are certain political and academic elites and certain experienced individuals who are watching the conditions and are praising the Iranian nation. This is an arena that lies in front of our eyes. Therefore, it is wrong to only focus on the weaknesses. It is necessary to see what results are produced by the efforts that are made throughout the country. From this perspective, we should praise Iran and faithful Iranians.

As I said, certain people become sad when the Iranian nation makes advances. Who are these people? I will speak about this issue later on. The enemies who do not want to see the Iranian nation making comprehensive progress are pursuing two main goals. One of their goals is to create as many obstacles in the way of our nation as they can in order to prevent the Iranian nation from achieving progress and development. They try to achieve this goal through sanctions, threats, keeping our managers busy with secondary issues and diverting the attention of the great Iranian nation and outstanding personalities of the country to issues that are not on the list of our priorities.

The second goal is to deny our advances in their propaganda campaigns. Today there is a massive propaganda network in the world with thousands of different types of media outlets whose goal is to prove that there are no advances in Iran, to deny the victories that the Iranian has achieved, to magnify the existing weaknesses and attract everybody's attention to them, and to hide the strengths that exist in different parts of the country and are visible to just and impartial people.

In his official addresses, the American president speaks about Iran's economic problems as if he is speaking about his victories. He proudly says that, for example, the value of Iran's currency has declined and that there are such and such economic problems in our country. Of course, he has not mentioned the strengths that our nation enjoys, the positive and constructive efforts that are being made in our country and the great victories that our nation has achieved. And he will never mention such things. We have been faced with this challenge for thirty years and I will present a brief evaluation of the past thirty years later on in my speech. However, the challenges that the Iranian nation has been faced with and the enemies who are trying their best—in words and in action—to prevent Islamic Iran's remarkable growth from becoming visible, are several times more than they used to be.

In this regard, the year 1391 [2012 in Gregorian calendar], which has come to an end, was one of the busiest years for our enemies. They said that they were determined to cripple the Iranian nation through sanctions. If the Islamic Republic stands firm, remains vibrant, and continues making progress, they will lose credibility in the world. For this reason, they do their best to stop us, and if things get out of hand, they at least try to present a different story in their propaganda campaigns. They are pursuing these two goals more seriously than in the past. They are trying to create obstacles in our way—through pressure, threats, sanctions and other such things—and they are also launching propaganda campaigns to discount our strengths and to magnify our weaknesses.

As I said, we have certain enemies. Who are these enemies? Where is the main end of designing machinations against the Iranian nation? It is not difficult to answer this question. It is thirty-four years that, whenever the word “enemy” is mentioned, the Iranian nation immediately thinks of the American government. It would be good if American officials paid attention to this point and tried to understand that over the past thirty-four years, the Iranian people have witnessed things and gone through stages that, whenever the word “enemy” is mentioned, they immediately think of America. This is a very important issue for a government that wants to have pride in the world. This is an issue that deserves careful attention. They should focus on this issue. America is the center of enmity and designing plots against the Iranian nation.

Of course, there are certain other enemies, but we do not consider them among the first row of our enemies. For example, there is the Zionist enemy, but the Zionist regime is too small to be considered among the first row of the Iranian nation’s enemies. Sometimes leaders of the Zionist regime threaten us. They threaten us with a military invasion, but I believe even they themselves know—and if they do not, they should know—that if they make a wrong move, the Islamic Republic will raze Tel Aviv and Haifa to the ground. The evil English government is also hostile towards the Iranian nation. The English government is among the old enemies of the Iranian nation, but in this arena it plays a complementary role as the follower of America. The English government is not independent, so one cannot consider them a separate enemy. It is a follower of America.

There are certain other governments that are hostile towards Iran. I would like to take this opportunity to point out that officials of the French government have been openly hostile towards the Iranian nation over the past few years and this is not a clever move by French government officials. A wise human being, particularly a wise politician, should never have the motivation to turn a neutral country into an enemy. We have never had problems with France and the French government, neither in the past nor in the present era. However, since the time of Sarkozy, the French government has adopted a policy of opposing the Iranian nation and, unfortunately, the current French government is pursuing the same policy. In our opinion, this is a wrong move. It is ill-advised and unwise.

The Americans speak about “the global community” in their statements. What they call “the global community” is a few countries, whose main leader is America, followed by the Zionists, the English government, and certain other small governments. The global community is not at all determined to oppose Iran, Iranians and Islamic Iran.

Now that we are supposed to have an evaluation of the year 1391, I should mention that the Americans started their new plans from the beginning of the year 1391. They announced that they were our friends. Sometimes they sent letters, messages and other such things and told us they were our friends and other times they announced in the media that they were friends of the Iranian people, but despite these false claims, in practice they tried to be harsh towards Iran and the Iranian nation. They imposed harsh sanctions from the beginning of the year 1391—sanctions on oil and sanctions on banking and monetary transactions between the Islamic Republic and other countries. They did many other things in this regard.

It is laughable that the Americans show hostility towards us and expect us not to realize that they are our enemies. They show malice and opposition, yet they expect the Iranian nation not to realize that they are hostile. This policy was initiated towards the end of [President] Bush’s last term and, unfortunately, American officials are pursuing the same policy today, the same policy of extending an iron fist covered with a velvet glove. A few years ago in my speech on the first day of Farvardin, I said here at Ali ibn Musa ar-Ridha’s (a.s.) shrine that you [Americans] should be careful, that your proclaimed affection and friendship should not mean that you are wearing a

velvet glove over an iron fist, pretending that you are our friends while being hostile in your hearts.

The Americans sent special agents to prevent Iran from selling oil and transferring the money to the country. America chose certain outstanding and experienced agents to travel to different countries and even speak to heads of certain companies in order to encourage them to stop oil-related transactions with the Islamic Republic. These agents were tasked with punishing those who had financial relationships or oil-related transactions with the Islamic Republic. They started this work with full intensity from the beginning of the year 1391, particularly from Mordad. They expected that Iran would stop its growing scientific activities and give in to America's bullying as a result of those well-planned moves, which were being pursued very seriously.

Of course, as I said a few months ago, the Americans expressed joy and said that I have confessed to the effect of the sanctions. Yes, the sanctions have not been inconsequential. If they are happy about this, let them be happy. After all, the sanctions have had an effect, which is because of an essential flaw that we are suffering from. The flaw that our economy is suffering from is that it is dependent on oil. We need to distance our economy from oil. Our governments should include this among their basic plans. Seventeen, eighteen years ago, I told the government of that time and its officials that they should act in a way that we could shut down our oil wells whenever we wanted to. The so-called "technocrats" smiled in disbelief, as if to say: "Is that even possible?" Yes, it is possible. It is necessary to follow up the issue, take action and make plans. When economic plans of a country are built on a particular base, the enemies of that country will target that base. Yes, the sanctions have had an effect, but not the effect that the enemies wanted. I will explain this issue later on. This is all I wanted to say about the issue of economy.

On the political front, throughout the year 1391 they tried to "isolate" Islamic Iran from the world. That is to say, they tried to shake the faith of other governments in their relations with Iran and in the Islamic Republic. They tried to prevent the Islamic Republic from promoting and implementing its policies in the region, in the world and in the country. They failed completely.

In the case of international issues, they tried to undermine the importance of the Non-Aligned Movement summit, which was being held in Tehran.

They tried to discourage people from taking part in the summit or from having an active presence. What happened was the exact opposite of what they wanted. Two-thirds of the nations of the world are members of the Non-Aligned Movement. Heads of other countries took part in the Tehran summit. High-ranking government officials took part in the summit. Everybody felt that the Iranian nation was praiseworthy. They said this in their meetings with us and in the interviews they gave. They also said the same thing when they returned to their home countries. What happened was the exact opposite of what the enemies of the Iranian nation wanted. They failed to do what they wanted.

In the case of domestic policies, the purpose of their sanctions was to make the Iranian nation uncertain about their path, to distance the Iranian nation from the Islamic Republic, and to make the people disappointed. On the 22nd of Bahman, the people of Iran gave them a powerful punch in the mouth with their massive presence, with their enthusiasm and with the affection that they expressed for Islam, the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic. In the area relating to security, they tried to undermine our national security and the details have been explained to the people by our government officials in their interviews and speeches. They failed in that area as well. On the political front, they once again witnessed the power and influence of the Islamic Republic in the region. In the case of the regional issues, they even admitted that no major problem will be solved in the region in the absence of Iran and its vote.

In the case of the Zionist regime's invasion of Gaza, the powerful presence of the Islamic Republic behind the scenes caused them to admit that they had been defeated by Palestinian combatants. We did not announce this—it was they themselves who announced and insisted that if it had not been for the presence of the Islamic Republic and its show of power, Palestinian combatants could not have even put up a resistance against Israel, let alone bring Israel to its knees. In the eight-day war, the Palestinians managed to bring Israel to its knees, and this was the first time in the history of the fake and usurping Zionist regime.

As I said, their efforts were not completely inconsequential. Yes, their efforts were not inconsequential, but as we expected, there were great positive effects as well. The sanctions caused the massive domestic capacities of the Iranian nation to become activated. The sanctions

motivated us to start doing great things. Our youth made certain achievements that would have been impossible in the absence of the sanctions. In the area of infrastructure, in terms of the achievements that were made last year, the year 1391 stands out among the previous years. A massive amount of work was done in the area of infrastructure, in the area of building roads, in the area of energy, in the area of discovering new oil reserves, in the area of discovering new sources of uranium, in the area of building and developing power plants and refineries, and in tens of other great industrial areas. All of these measures will help develop the economic infrastructure of the country in the future. If we had built this infrastructure earlier, the sanctions that were imposed by the enemies would have failed to produce the few negative effects that they did. We adopted these measures and we managed to move forward in the positive direction despite the enmities and the sanctions. Great achievements were made.

One example is the great scientific advances that we made in the year 1391. In the area of science and technology, certain things were done which were remarkable and a genuine source of joy for those who have faith in the future prospects of the country. That is to say, the year in which they were determined to be harsh towards the Iranian nation, our honorable youth and scientists launched the Nahid satellite into space. They launched the Pishgam explorer, which was carrying a living creature. They built an advanced fighter jet. The importance of these achievements is so much that it would not be excessive if a nation expressed joy, composed songs, and arranged festivals to celebrate each of these achievements.

When this living creature was sent into space and was returned safely, international scientists and observers were so surprised that they first denied it. Then, when they realized that they had no choice but to accept the truth, and after witnessing reality and the evidence, they were forced to acknowledge it.

In the area of health and biomedical engineering, great achievements were made, achievements which are related to the health of the people. We achieved the first rank in the region in the area of biotechnology. Outstanding technical achievements were made in this area, which led to the production of different kinds of pharmaceuticals. All these achievements were made in a year in which the enemies were determined to be harsh towards the

Iranian nation in order to deprive it from a good life and from all the products of human talent.

In the same year, we achieved the first rank in the region in area of nanotechnology, which is a revolution in the area of technology and industry. In the same year, we were the first in the region in terms of production of knowledge in the area of several important scientific fields. In terms of production of knowledge, in terms of publishing scholarly articles, in terms of the rate of scientific progress, and in terms of our country's contribution to global production of knowledge, we made progress in the year 1391. In terms of achievements in science and technology competitions, our students' accomplishments were 31 percent more than the previous year. In the year 1391, the number of our university students increased so much that we had twenty-five times more students than the early years after the revolution. The number of students who are studying in our universities is twenty-five times more than the early years of the revolution. These are examples of the great achievements that the Iranian nation has made. In the areas relating to water, in the areas relating to the natural environment, in the area of stem cell research, in the area of alternative energy, in the area of medicinal herbs and in the area of nuclear energy, our country managed to accomplish great achievements. All of these achievements were made in a year in which the enemies of the Iranian nation had focused all their efforts on stopping our nation.

The events that happened in the year 1391 contain a big lesson for us. The lesson is that a vibrant nation will never be brought to its knees as a result of the enemies' threats, pressure and harsh measures. It became clear to us and to all those who follow up the issues of Iran that what is important for a nation is relying on its own capacities, trusting Allah the Exalted, having faith in itself, and not relying on its enemies. This is what can help a nation move forward.

The year 1391 was like a war game for us. It was an occasion for practice. Much to the dismay of the enemies, we, the people of Iran, were not crippled and we also managed to show outstanding performance in this war game. Of course, we identified our weaknesses as well. After all, this is the purpose of war games. In a military exercise, military units identify both their weaknesses and their strengths, and they try to eliminate their weaknesses. We identified our weaknesses. Our economic weaknesses, which

led to harsh conditions for certain groups of people, include dependence on oil, disregarding large-scale economic policies of the country, and adopting policies and decisions on a day-to-day basis. Government officials of the country—the incumbent officials and officials who will be elected through this year's presidential elections—should pay attention to this point. Our country should have clear and well-planned large-scale economic policies, policies that will not change as a result of different events.

Another great lesson that we learned was that our country enjoys firm foundations. When the foundations of a country become firm, the effect of the enemies' hostile actions is minimized. In this great country which enjoys firm foundations, if government officials accept their responsibility and adopt wise measures, if managers stay together and cooperate—which is my constant advice to our government officials and managers—if our managers act in a wise and intelligent way, then we can turn every threat into an opportunity, just as we did in the year 1391 and managed to move forward. What our government officials and dear people achieved in the year 1391 will hopefully reveal its effects in the life of the people in the future.

Of course, the economy of the country is an important issue and I have constantly stressed its importance over the past few years, but it is not the only issue. Our national security is important too. Public health is important too. Our scientific advances are important too and they are the base and foundation of our work in the country. If our country makes progress in science, all the other things will become easy. Independence and national dignity are important too. Avoidance of becoming a vassal state is important as well. Regional influence and power of a nation is the support of its independence and national security, and it is important. We have made progress in all these areas. We have made progress in the area of security, in the area of health, in the area of gaining international influence, and in the area of controlling different events that happen in the country and in the region.

Through its advances, our nation proved that refusing to live under the hegemony of America does not mean backwardness. This is an important point. Powerful people of the world and colonialists, at a time when there was direct colonialism, tried to prove to nations of the world that, if they wanted to have a good life and make progress, they had to live

under their hegemony. And today America is doing the same thing. The Iranian nation proved that this is a lie. Our nation proved that being independent of America and other superpowers not only will not cause backwardness, but it will also bring about progress. You can compare the thirty years that the Islamic Republic has been in power with the thirty years that certain countries were living under the hegemony of America. They pinned their hopes on two, three billion dollars that they were receiving from America in the form of financial aid and they surrendered to America. Notice where they are and where we are. There were certain countries that attached themselves to America's tail and followed it. Thirty years of experience lie in front of our eyes. Notice what has happened in the thirty years that the Islamic Republic has been in power. Notice where the Islamic Republic and the Iranian nation used to be and where they are now. And compare this with the conditions of those countries. Anybody who studies this issue will realize that being independent of superpowers is an opportunity for a nation, not a threat. And, thankfully, the Iranian nation has achieved this opportunity by relying on its power, its courage and its intelligence.

There are two essential issues that I should discuss in this meeting. These two issues are related to the future. One issue is that we should always move ahead of our enemies as far as planning is concerned. Our country should not adopt a passive stance in the face of the enemies' activities. It is necessary to try to predict the enemy's plans and move a few steps ahead of him. In certain cases, we acted like this and we witnessed the resulting success. One example is the issue of producing 20 percent enriched fuel for the research reactor in Tehran, which produces the important radiopharmaceuticals that our country needs. This small power plant required 20 percent enriched fuel.

At that time, we could not produce 20 percent enriched uranium and we had to import it from abroad. Our enemies started to think that they should seize the opportunity. They decided to use this national need to force the Islamic Republic to give in to their imposition and hegemony. They tried to use this need to impose their demands on us. Before the conditions became critical, our youth and scientists managed to produce 20 percent enriched fuel and they turned it into fuel rods that were needed at the power plant. Our opponents could not guess that we would be able

to do what we did. However, our government officials identified this need in time and started working. Iranian capacities blossomed and revealed themselves and we managed to produce what we needed. While they expected that the Islamic Republic would beg them for 20 percent enriched fuel, the Islamic Republic announced that it had produced 20 percent enriched uranium inside the country and that it did not need the enemy's.

If our scientists and youth had not done what they did, today we would have to go to those who are not our friends and ask them for either 20 percent enriched uranium or radiopharmaceuticals. We would have to beg them for what we needed and pay a lot of money. Our government officials identified this need in time and they did what they had to do. For this reason, we achieved a victory. This should be the general plan in the case of all our national issues and needs.

Administrations, industrialists, farmers, capitalists, entrepreneurs, researchers, and designers of scientific and industrial projects should all carry out this great responsibility, which is a rational and moral responsibility. That is to say, they should prepare themselves and move one step ahead of the enemy's plans. Economic managers, university professors, scientific associations, science and technology parks—all of them should focus their efforts on proactive measures in scientific work. If they want to write scholarly articles, they should adopt this orientation. If they want to do research, they should adopt this orientation. If they want to engage in industrial, technical or scientific work, they should adopt this orientation. Managers of governmental organizations, managers of our universities, managers of scientific projects, and ordinary citizens should all adopt this orientation.

All of us have a responsibility to make efforts to keep our country impervious and resistant to the enemies. This is one of the requirements of the idea of "economy of resistance" which I put forward. In an economy of resistance, one fundamental pillar is resistance of the economy. The economy must be resistant. It must be able to withstand the enemies' machinations. This is the first point that I wanted to discuss in this meeting.

The second point is that the Americans send messages to us through different channels, asking us to negotiate with them regarding the nuclear issue. They both send messages to us and discuss the proposal in their global propaganda. High- and middle-ranking officials of America repeatedly say

that alongside the P5+1 talks regarding the nuclear issue, America and the Islamic Republic should hold one-on-one negotiations over the issue.

I am not optimistic about such negotiations. Why? Because our past experiences show that in the logic of the American gentlemen, negotiation does not mean sitting down together to try to reach a rational solution. This is not what they mean by negotiation. What they mean is that we should sit down together and talk so that Iran accepts their views. The goal has been announced in advance: Iran must accept their view. For this reason, we have always announced that this is not negotiation. This is imposition and Iran will not give in to imposition. I am not optimistic about these statements, but I am not opposed either. In this regard, there are a few things that I should clarify.

The first point is that the Americans constantly send messages, sometimes in writing, that they are not after regime change in Iran. This is what they are telling us. The answer is that we are not concerned about whether or not you have intentions of overthrowing the Islamic Republic although you constantly insist that you do not have such intentions. Even the day when you had intentions of overthrowing the Islamic Republic and you announced this openly, you could not do anything, and you will not be able to do anything in the future either.

The second point is that the Americans constantly send us messages, telling us that they are sincere in their offers of rational negotiation. They claim that they sincerely want to have rational negotiations with Iran. That is to say, they claim that they do not want imposition. In response, I would say, we have told you many times that we are not after nuclear weapons and you say that you do not believe us. Why would we believe your statements then? When you are not prepared to accept a rational and sincere statement, why would we accept your statements which have been disproved many times? Our interpretation is that offers of negotiation are an American tactic to mislead public opinion in the world and in our country. You should prove that this is not the case. Can you prove this? Go ahead and prove it if you can.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that one of their propaganda techniques is that they sometimes start rumors that certain people have negotiated with the Americans on behalf of the Leader. This is another propaganda tactic and a downright lie. So far, nobody has negotiated with them on behalf of the Leader. Over the years in a few

cases, certain people in different administrations have negotiated with them over certain temporary issues and I was not opposed. However, this was done by different administrations, not the Leader. Of course, even those people had a responsibility to observe the Leader's red lines, and today the same responsibility still exists and they should observe the red lines.

The third point is that on the basis of our experiences and careful analysis of the existing conditions, our interpretation is that the Americans do not want the nuclear negotiations to end. The Americans do not want the nuclear conflict to be resolved; otherwise, if they wanted these negotiations to reach a solution, the solution would be very close by and easy to reach. In the nuclear issue, Iran only wants the world to recognize its right to enrichment, which is Iran's natural right. Government officials of the countries that are claiming to be after a solution should admit that the Iranian nation has a right to domestic nuclear enrichment for peaceful purposes. Is this too much to expect? This is what we have always demanded, and it is exactly what they do not want [us to have].

They say they are concerned that we might go after producing nuclear weapons. The ones who are saying this are no more than a few countries whose names I mentioned earlier, and they call themselves "the global community". They say that the global community is concerned. No, the global community is not at all concerned. The majority of the countries in the world are on the Islamic Republic's side and they support our demand because it is a legitimate demand.

If the Americans wanted to resolve the issue, this would be a very simple solution. They could recognize the Iranian nation's right to enrichment and in order to address those concerns, they could enforce the regulations of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We were never opposed to the supervision and regulations of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Whenever we are close to a solution, the Americans cause a problem in order to prevent reaching a solution. My assumption and interpretation is that their goal is to keep the issue unresolved so that they can have a pretext for exerting pressure on us. And as they themselves said, the purpose of the pressure is to cripple the Iranian nation. Of course, much to the dismay of the enemy, the Iranian nation will not be crippled.

The fourth point regarding this issue is that if the Americans sincerely want to reach a solution,

I will give them the solution. The solution is that the Americans should stop being hostile towards the Islamic Republic and the Iranian nation. Offers of negotiation are not a rational and reasonable solution. This is the right solution. They should stop being hostile if they want to put an end to the problems that exist between us—and they announce that they really want to resolve the problems that exist between Iran and America.

It is thirty-four years that different American administrations have designed various kinds of hostilities towards us based on a wrong understanding of Iran and the Iranians. Since the first year after the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic, they have been hostile towards us. They have plotted to undermine our security. They have made hostile moves. They have acted against our territorial integrity. They have always supported our small and big enemies over the years. They have worked against our economy. They have used all the tools that were available to them against the Iranian nation. And thankfully, they have failed in all their efforts against us, and if they continue these enmities towards the Iranian nation, they will fail in the future as well. Therefore, I would like to give a piece of advice to American officials: if they are after a rational solution, the rational solution is that they should rectify their policies. They should rectify the way they act and they should stop being hostile towards the Iranian nation. This part of my speech is over.

I would like to briefly discuss another issue: the crucial issue of elections. In our country, elections are the manifestation of "political valor". The responsibility that I mentioned lies on the shoulders of all Iranian people can be described as "economic valor". Elections are the manifestation of political valor, the manifestation of the power of the Islamic Republic, the manifestation of the pride and credibility of the Islamic system. The credibility of the Islamic Republic depends on elections, the presence of the people at polling stations and their votes that elect managers of the country. Elections are the manifestation of our national willpower, the manifestation of Islamic democracy.

We proposed the idea of Islamic democracy as opposed to western liberal democracy, and the manifestation of Islamic democracy is the presence of the people in elections. Therefore, because of the importance that our elections enjoy, the enemies of the Iranian nation have always tried to take enthusiasm and excitement out of the

elections. They have designed plots to prevent the people from going to the ballot boxes. They have plotted to discourage and disappoint the people. Over the years that we have held many elections, including parliamentary and presidential elections, our enemies have always tried to decrease voter turnout and make our elections less enthusiastic, and this is because of the significant role that elections play in the affairs of our country.

Now I would like to discuss a few points regarding the elections. Of course, the elections are more than two months away. Hopefully, there will be other opportunities to discuss the issues relating to the elections. For the time being, there are a few points that I would like to discuss.

The first point is that what is most important is massive presence of the people in the elections. Enthusiastic elections in the country and the presence of the people at the polling stations can neutralize the threats by the enemies. It can disappoint the enemy. It can ensure the security of the country. Our dear people in all parts of the country should know this. Their massive presence at the polling stations plays a role in the future of the country, in our national security, in our independence, in our national wealth, in our economy, and in all other important issues of the country. Therefore, the first point is that with Allah's assistance, and with the determined efforts of the Iranian nation, there should be a massive voter turnout in the elections.

The second point is that all political orientations and currents that have faith in the Islamic Republic should take part in the elections. This is both a right and a responsibility that lies on the shoulders of everybody. Elections do not belong to a particular political orientation or a particular intellectual and political current. All those who believe in the Islamic Republic and in the independence of the country, all those who care about the future of the country, all those who care about our national interests should take part in the elections. Turning away from the elections is appropriate for those who are opposed to the Islamic Republic.

The third point is that it is the votes of the people that determine everything. What is important is your judgment and your vote. You should research, observe carefully, and consult those you trust so that you can identify and vote for the most qualified candidate. The Leader has only one vote. Just like the rest of our people, I have only one vote, and until the time I cast my vote into the

ballot box, nobody will know what my vote is. The people at the polling station might decide to open the ballot box, identify my handwriting and find out who I have voted for. However, before I have cast my vote into the ballot box, nobody will know my vote. Nobody should say that the Leader supports such-and-such a candidate and not another. If such a claim is made, it is false.

Of course, unfortunately these days, different statements are commonly attributed to different people through the use of the new means of communication—short message services and other such things. A person might send thousands of text messages. I have reports that during the elections, several hundreds of millions of text messages might be sent and received every day. Take care not to be influenced by such things. Research, identify the most qualified candidate, and write the name on the ballot paper with the aim of fulfilling your obligation. Of course, every citizen or political activist may try to encourage others to vote for a particular candidate. Nothing is wrong with this. However, in this regard, nobody will hear anything from me. In the meantime, the people can speak to one another, give advice, try to change each other's opinion, and help one another to identify the most qualified candidate. In any case, the criterion is the votes of the people.

The fourth point is that everybody should accept the rule of law, be it elections or anything else. The events of the year 1388 [2009 in Gregorian calendar], which inflicted losses on the country, took place because certain people decided not to accept the law. They decided not to accept the votes of the people. For example, the people might vote against what I want, but I must accept their vote. Everybody must accept what the majority of the people vote for. Fortunately, the necessary legal mechanisms exist for eliminating problems, rectifying mistakes, and dispelling suspicions. It is necessary to use these legal channels. When what has happened goes against what we want, it is an irreversible mistake to call on the people to protest in the streets, and this was what happened in the year 1388. This was an experience for our nation, and our nation will always stand up against such events.

The last point is that everybody should know that the characteristics that are needed in the next president include the existing advantages [of previous presidents] minus the weaknesses. Everybody should pay attention to this point. Every incoming president should enjoy the advantages

that his predecessors had, and should not suffer from the weaknesses that the previous presidents had. After all, every person has his own strengths and weaknesses. Presidents, too, have their own strengths and weakness. This is the case with all of us. All of us have our own weaknesses and strengths.

The strengths that the incumbent government and president enjoy should exist in the next president as well. The next president should develop these strengths and he should also distance himself from the weaknesses that exist, weaknesses that might be pointed out by you, me, or others. That is to say, the governments that come to power one after the other should help us move towards improvement and perfection, and gradually we should move towards choosing the best among us. The person who is elected should be committed to the revolution, to our values, to our national interests, to the Islamic Republic, to communal

wisdom and to judicious action. This is how the country should be managed. Our country is a great country. Our nation is a great nation. There are many encouraging and discouraging issues. Problems exist on the path of any nation, including our nation. Those who prepare themselves to enter this arena should move forward with full power and confidence while relying on God.

Dear God, ordain what is in the interest of this country and this nation. Dear God, make the holy heart of the Imam of the Age, may our souls be sacrificed for his sake, satisfied with all of us. Dear God, make the immaculate soul of our magnanimous Imam (r.a.) and the pure souls of our martyrs satisfied and happy with us. Make what we said serve Your cause and accept it from us out of Your generosity.

Greetings be upon you and Allah's mercy and blessings.