

Iran should be top of UN Security Council's agenda

Iran's state-owned Persian news outlets have put significant emphasis on the recent announcement by US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley that President Donald Trump is planning to chair a meeting on Iran in late September.

The meeting to discuss the Islamic Republic will be attended by the heads of state of the UN Security Council's members. As it holds the presidency of the Security Council for this month, the US has the leverage to direct talks toward specific topics and in a specific direction, which is deemed critical.

Without a doubt, the US decision to lead a meeting on Iran is a blow to the theocratic establishment. The timing is significant because it coincides with the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly.

As a result, Iranian leaders from across the political spectrum have been enraged. Messages from several hardline and moderate leaders echoed what Iranian foreign minister Mohammed Javad Zarif wrote on Twitter: "There's only one UNSC resolution on Iran. Donald Trump is violating it and bullying others to do same." Zarif added: "Now he (Trump) plans to abuse presidency of SC to divert a session — item devoted to Palestine for 70 years — to blame Iran for horrors US and clients have unleashed across the Middle East."

First of all, Iran's accusation that the US is abusing its presidency is absurd. The presidency of the Security Council rotates among its members every month and the role of the president is to examine the secretary general's provisional agenda, to approve it, to preside over meetings, to speak to the press as a representative of the Security Council, and to discuss any other major global crisis or conflict.

Shouldn't Iran's destabilizing behavior and military adventurism across the Middle East be one of the topics discussed by the Security Council?

Considering the Iranian regime's involvement in terrorism, support for militias and human rights violations, its leaders should not be surprised the US wants to discuss their government at the United Nations.

Iran's reckless drive to extend its influence throughout the region provides Syria's Bashar Assad with extremist reinforcements, it funds the weapons he needs to massacre Syrian civilians, drive millions of Syrians from their homes, and turn city after city into wastelands. None of those resources have been turned on Daesh.

In Yemen, Houthi rebels **armed** and financed by Iran spread death and destruction. In Iraq, militias led by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps incite sectarian strife and thwart efforts by the central government to unite the nation in a campaign to isolate and drive out Daesh. The Iranian leaders have even frequently boasted about currently controlling four Arab capitals: Baghdad, Damascus, Beirut and Sanaa.

With respect to human rights and global terrorism, the Iranian regime is top in the world when it comes to the number of executions per capita, is the world's leading executioner of juveniles — according to Amnesty International — and is the top state sponsor of terrorism in the world. Shouldn't the brutal activities of such a regime be at least one of the topics discussed in the UN body?

Secondly, it is ironic that the Iranian leaders are accusing the US or other regional powers of bullying nations to turn against Tehran.

Since its establishment in 1979, one of the fundamental pillars of the Islamic Republic has been linked to Ruhollah Khomeini's revolutionary principle of undermining the US and Gulf states, as well as threatening any state or non-state actor that the Iranian leaders perceive to be an ally of Washington or the likes of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain.

Iran has not solely relied on political posturing or incendiary rhetoric. Tehran has resorted to asymmetrical warfare and terrorist attacks, as well as the assassinations of those who disagree with the regime.

While several of Iran's plans, such as a plot to assassinate Riyadh's ambassador to Washington, have failed, many other measures succeeded in significantly scuttling foreign policy objectives and damaging the national security of the US

and its allies. Examples of such schemes with the direct or indirect involvement of Iran's leadership include the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing, the Riyadh compound bombings of 2003, the suicide bombing in Lebanon in 1983 that killed 241 American servicemen, the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole, as well as involvement in the 9/11 attacks on the US mainland in 2001. In 1994, it carried out the bombing of a Jewish community center in Argentina, which is still under investigation.

Taking into consideration the regime's deep involvement in terrorism, support for militias and terrorist groups, as well as human rights violations, Iranian leaders must not be surprised that the US wants to discuss their government at the UN Security Council.

But, by investing significant political and financial capital, the ruling ayatollahs have long pressured the international community into turning a blind eye to Iran's foreign policy.

To confront the Iranian regime's threat to the region and the world, the international community must cut off the flow of funds and forces from Tehran. This means that discussing the Iranian regime's destructive behavior and military adventurism in the region ought to be on the top of the UN Security Council's agenda.

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