

Iranian president says Trump failed to deceive him in New York



Tehran, October 3 (RHC)-- Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump failed to deceive him into holding a telephone conversation during his recent visit to New York.

President Rouhani made the remark at a cabinet meeting in Tehran on Wednesday, a few days after he returned from the United Nations General Assembly in New York, where Trump showed eagerness to meet with the Iranian president.

There, based on reporting by *The New Yorker*, multiple world leaders conveyed private messages by Trump to the Iranian delegation that the U.S. president supposedly was willing to lift all sanctions against Iran if Rouhani agreed to meet with him first.

Trump even waited on the other side of a secure line that was set up on the spot for a conversation with the Iranian president, who nevertheless refused to speak with Trump before the sanctions were lifted. French President Emmanuel Macron played a key role in the attempted diplomatic outreach and was due to participate in the telephone conversation.

Iran has insisted that it is open to dialogue, but that any negotiation will have to be held after the U.S. returns to the Iran nuclear deal — which it unilaterally quit in May 2018 — and lifts the sanctions that it

has imposed since the withdrawal.

In his Wednesday remarks, President Rouhani said the indirect, private messages by Trump contradicted his administration's much-publicized stance against Iran. "[Trump] would privately tell the Europeans that 'I'm ready [to lift the sanctions]' but would then say in interviews that 'I will step up the sanctions.' How could one believe him?!" President Rouhani said. "Persian shrewdness necessitated that we don't fall for the private messages."

The Iranian president nevertheless thanked President Macron of France for exercising all in his capacity to arrange a meeting between him and Trump on the sidelines of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly.

Rouhani said Iran did its part, but the White House was the party that stood in the way of results. He said the Americans badly wanted the meeting to happen because it would have offered them bomb shell news and would have thus served internal American politics.

He said the White House was at the same time seeking to convince public opinion that Iran was being obstinate. To counter that, the Iranian president said he profusely engaged with other world leaders and participated in various events in the short span of time that he spent in New York.

The path to talks is still open, the Iranian president emphasized. But Iran will only sit down and talk when the U.S. acknowledges the sovereignty of the Iranian people.

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