

# **MEI MEDIA WATCH**

**(A Survey of Editorials)**

No. 45

Monday, 4 August 2014

## **United States – Iran Thaw**

Note: The United States and Iran seem to be reaching out to each other since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The election of Hassan Rouhani as Iran's president in June 2013, the exchanged of letters between U.S. President Barack Obama and Iranian President Rouhani revealed by the media in mid-September 2013, meeting between U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif on 26 September 2014 on the sidelines of the Sixty Ninth Session of the United Nations General Assembly and the 15-minute historic phone conversation between Obama and Rouhani on 27 September 2014, points to thawing of bilateral ties. Due to the significance of these events, editorials from international and Middle Eastern media are reproduced here.

**The Peninsula**  
Local focus, Global vision

Doha, Editorial, 16 September 2013, Monday

### **1. More Diplomacy**

If politics is the art of possibilities, there is no end to the possibilities politicians can explore. In that sense, the current communication between US President Barack Obama and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani offers new, unlimited opportunities. **For the full text:** <http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/views/editorial/253231/more-diplomacy>

**gulfnews.com**

Dubai, Editorial, 17 September 2013, Tuesday

### **2. Iran, US Must Approach Nuclear Talks with Optimism**

Middle East Institute @ New Delhi, [www.mei.org.in](http://www.mei.org.in)

In authoring the oldest military treatise, titled The Art of War, centuries ago, Chinese strategist Sun Tzu offered an insight into victory and defeat saying: “To secure ourselves against defeat lies in our own hands, but the opportunity of defeating the enemy is provided by the enemy himself.” **For the full text:** <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/iran-us-must-approach-nuclear-talks-with-optimism-1.1232284>

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# TheNational

Abu Dhabi, Editorial, 19 September, Thursday

## 3. Iranian Charm Offensive Must Produce Action

President Hassan Rouhani could hardly have asked for an easier task of making Iran’s message to the world more positive, given his predecessor’s predilection for inflammatory and bellicose grandstanding. **For the full text:** <http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/editorial/iranian-charm-offensive-must-produce-action>

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# THE JORDAN TIMES

Amman, Editorial, 19 September 2013, Thursday

## 4. Encouraging Signs

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani appears to be living up to the expectations that his presidency would make a difference to Iran’s policies. That hope is kindled by the tone of the letters he exchanged with US President Barack Obama, in which he seems to seek a resolution to his country’s nuclear programme by “showing that Tehran is not trying to develop nuclear weapons.” **For the full text:** <http://jordantimes.com/Encouraging+signs-64794>

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# theguardian

London, Editorial, 19 September 2013, Thursday

## 5. Iran: an Opportunity to be seized

There are today more than enough signs to indicate that Iran wants to use its newly elected president, Hassan Rouhani, to break the stalemate over its nuclear programme and release the grip that sanctions are having on its economy. The recent exchange of letters

between the two presidents; the decision to transfer the nuclear file from the Supreme National Security Council to the foreign ministry under the guidance of the respected diplomat Mohammad Javad Zarif – both point in the same direction. **For the full text:**

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/sep/19/iran-rouhani-opportunity>

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# The New York Times

New York, Editorial, 21 September 2013, Saturday

## 6. President Rouhani Comes to Town

All eyes at this week's United Nations General Assembly will be on Iran's new president, Hassan Rouhani. Since taking office in August, he has sent encouraging signals about his willingness to engage more constructively with the West than his predecessor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who insisted on proceeding with Iran's nuclear programme, denied the Holocaust and seemed unconcerned as his country slipped into deeper economic distress. **For the full text:** [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/22/opinion/sunday/president-rouhani-comes-to-town.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/22/opinion/sunday/president-rouhani-comes-to-town.html?_r=0)

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# The Peninsula

Local focus, Global vision

Doha, Editorial, 21 September 2013, Saturday

## 7. Seize the Opportunity

In the past, engagements with Iran on the nuclear issue had proved to be blips. There was a serious lack of interest from both sides, especially from Iran, which stuck to the stance that its right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes was non-negotiable. So when new Iran President Hassan Rouhani made some conciliatory gestures after his election, they were greeted with a mix of optimism and doubt. **For the full text:**

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/views/editorial/253909/seize-the-opportunity>

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# theguardian

London, Editorial, 22 September 2013, Sunday

## 8. Iran: Rouhani's Courage Offers cause for Real Hope

Today, the Iranian president, Hassan Rouhani, elected three months ago on a platform of "prudence and hope," arrives in New York to address the UN General Assembly on Tuesday (24 September), a few hours after the traditional opening speech by the host, President Obama. "Go and wake up your luck" is a traditional Persian proverb. In the latest of a series of surprise moves, on Friday (20 September) Rouhani woke up the international

community with an article in the *Washington Post* that hinted at a possible end to the nuclear standoff that has acted as a tinderbox in the Middle East for years. **For the full text:**

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/sep/22/iran-rouhani-courage-cause-hope>

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Karachi, Editorial, 23 September 2013, Monday

### **9. Signs of Thaw: US-Iran Ties**

It has gone beyond Twitter and is official. President Barack Obama, said the White House spokesman on Friday (20 September 2013), was “willing to have a meeting” with his Iranian counterpart if Tehran demonstrated its “seriousness” on the nuclear question. Coming in the wake of the relative improvement in the Syrian situation, a meeting between President Obama and President Hassan Rouhani on the sidelines of the General Assembly session could profoundly affect the Middle East’s geopolitical ambience and lower all sides’ confrontational postures. **For the full text:** <http://www.dawn.com/news/1044762/signs-of-thaw-us-iran-ties>

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London, Editorial, 23 September 2013, Monday

### **10. Hope At Last? Iranian Overtures Must Be Taken In Good Faith**

It is always as well to be wary in dealing with a diplomatic stalemate that has lasted, off and on, for several decades. Even more so when the country in question is Iran, with whom the opportunity for misrepresentations and misunderstandings – on both sides – is more pronounced than most. Yet more still, given the unpredictability of a domestic political scene in which the remit of the President and the Supreme Leader are not always clear. **For the full text:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/hope-at-last-iranian-overtures-must-be-taken-in-good-faith-8835369.html>

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New York, Editorial, 24 September 2013, Tuesday

### **11. President Obama at the United Nations**

In his address to the United Nations General Assembly, President Obama gave some coherence to his foreign policy vision, which acknowledges both America's role in the world and its limited ability to determine events inside other nations. He also set important, if incomplete, priorities for the rest of his term. Mr. Obama is well known for giving good speeches, so the question is whether he can implement a consistent, effective strategy to achieve his goals. **For the full text:** <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/25/opinion/president-obama-at-the-united-nations.html>

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## HAARETZ.com

Tel Aviv, Editorial, 25 September 2013, Wednesday

### 12. Israel's Chance for Diplomacy

The concern and fear about everything to do with Iran's policies are understandable. Does the new president really intend to freeze uranium enrichment? Does his foreign minister's new mode of dialogue reflect the positions of the supreme leader? Will anxiety over the Iranian nuclear programme finally dissipate? **For the full text:** <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.548931>

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## gulfnews.com

Dubai, Editorial, 25 September 2013, Wednesday

### 13. Iran-US: Rebuilding Broken Ties Takes Patience

With levels of mutual animosity having run deep, it is best that U.S. President Barack Obama and his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani did not rush impulsively into each other's arms in a show of false camaraderie and goodwill. Both parties need to invest in patience and efforts to prop up a fractured relationship. **For the full text:** <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/iran-us-rebuilding-broken-ties-takes-patience-1.1235484>

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## The INDEPENDENT

London, Editorial, 25 September 2013, Wednesday

### 14. A US-Iran Rapprochement Cannot Be Rushed

In the end, neither happened. Barack Obama did not hold the one-on-one meeting with the new Iranian President, Hassan Rouhani, that had tantalized the world's media. Nor did the two leaders come close to shaking hands. But after more than 30 years without diplomatic relations, those omissions might be for the best. **For the full text:**

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/a-usiran-rapprochement-cannot-be-rushed-8839578.html>

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# theguardian

London, Editorial, 25 September 2013, Wednesday

## 15. Iran: The Stakes are high

**A**fter the dramatic build-up, Tuesday's (24 September) speeches at the UN did not disappoint. Iran's newly-elected president, Hassan Rouhani, arrived in New York at the head of the biggest charm offensive in the 34-year history of U.S.-Iranian estrangement.

**For the full text:** <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/sep/25/iran-the-stakes-are-high>

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# The Peninsula

Local focus, Global vision

Doha, Editorial, 26 September 2013, Thursday

## 16. Mending Ties

**D**espite abundant scepticism, there is no doubt that the appearances of U.S. President Barack Obama and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani at the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday (24 September) have further strengthened already high expectations that Washington and Tehran, after decades of bitter enmity, can achieve peace and reach an accord. The U.N. appearances were a continuation of a rapprochement process which actually started with the election of Rouhani as president, and which intensified before the visit of Rouhani to New York. **For the full text:** <http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/views/editorial/254629/mending-ties>

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# The Japan Times

Tokyo, Editorial, 27 September 2013, Friday

## 17. Moving Forward With Iran

**S**lowly, but surely, relations between Iran and the West appear to be improving. Even though Iran's new President Hassan Rouhani did not meet U.S. President Barack Obama at the United Nations General Assembly this week as some had hoped, each man signalled

a desire for a rapprochement and expressed a willingness to make that happen. Improvement is possible — relations between the United States and Iran are not good — but it will take action, not just words, to make it real. **For the full text:**

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2013/09/27/editorials/moving-forward-with-iran/#.UtXn7dKSzp8>

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# TheNational

Abu Dhabi, Editorial, 28 September 2013, Saturday

## 18. Rouhani's Call Offers Promise on Nuclear Question

There was no “chance meeting” in the corridor between Barack Obama and Hassan Rouhani, as some pundits had predicted, but a 15-minute phone call between the two leaders on Friday (27 September) represented a major step forward in the relationship between the United States and Iran. **For the full text:** <http://www.thenational.ae/rouhanis-call-offers-promise-on-nuclear-question>

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Karachi, Editorial, 29 September 2013, Sunday

## 19. Historic Phone Call: US-Iran Thaw

Those were wonderful 15 minutes for peace in the Middle East region when an American president and his Iranian counterpart talked to each other for the first time in more than three decades. President Barack Obama placed the call and reached President Hassan Rouhani who was en route to the airport. The U.S. president congratulated Mr. Rouhani on his election victory, apologized in a lighter vein for the New York traffic and gave him a Farsi farewell — Khoda Hafiz. Mr. Rouhani ended it with “have a nice day.” **For the full text:**

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1046255/historic-phone-call-us-iran-thaw>

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Jerusalem, Editorial, 29 September 2013, Sunday

## 20. 'Trust, But Verify' in Persian

‘Trust, but verify,’ or its Russian equivalent, “doveryai, no proveryai,” was a saying US president Ronald Reagan favoured during arms control negotiations with the USSR’s Mikhail Gorbachev. **For the full text:**

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Editorials/Trust-but-verify-in-Persian-327410>

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# The INDEPENDENT

London, Editorial, 29 September 2013, Sunday

## 21. Reasons to Be Hopeful for Iran

There are reasons to be cautious – of course there are – but let us recognize that historic change is under way in Iran. To enumerate the reasons to be cautious, we know that Hassan Rouhani, the new President, stands an uncertain distance away from wielding the ultimate power of decision in Iran, and that the most powerful person remains Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader. **For the full text:**

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/reasons-to-be-hopeful-for-iran-8846460.html>

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# THE JERUSALEM POST

Israel's best-selling English daily and most-read English website

Jerusalem, Editorial, 29 September 2013, Sunday

## 22. Rouhani's Charm Offensive

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has his work cut out for him as he prepares for his speech before the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Tuesday, October 1. As was the case last year, the danger to the world presented by Iran’s nuclear-weapon ambitions will be the main focus of Netanyahu’s speech. **For the full text:**

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Rouhanis-charm-offensive-326995>

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# **gulfnews.com**

Dubai, Editorial, 29 September 2013, Sunday

## 23. Thaw in Iran-American Relations is Encouraging

The thaw in Iranian-American relations that was most recently manifested in a historic 15-minute phone call between presidents Barack Obama and Hassan Rouhani is an encouraging and welcome move that serves a reminder that efforts made towards diplomacy bring about returns, and perhaps most importantly, prevent the kind of bloody wars that America has brought on this region. **For the full text:**

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<http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/thaw-in-iran-america-relations-is-encouraging-1.1237074>

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Dubai, Editorial, 30 September 2013, Monday

### **24. The Phone Call Euphoria**

**T**he flipside diplomacy between the United States and Iran is making news. The first direct telephonic contact between the two presidents in almost three decades of their estranged relationship is a positive development. **For the full text:**

[http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?section=editorial&xfile=data/editorial/2013/september/editorial\\_september60.xml](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?section=editorial&xfile=data/editorial/2013/september/editorial_september60.xml)

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Jerusalem, Editorial, 1 October 2013, Tuesday

### **25. Bibi and Obama Dovetail – for Now**

**P**rime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Barack Obama are no strangers to dissent. And the remarkable developments in recent days in U.S.-Iranian relations that included a phone call by Obama to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani – the first leader-to-leader contact between the United States and Iran in 34 years – seemed to provide the fodder for yet another feud. **For the full text:** <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Editorials/Bibi-and-Obama-dovetail-for-now-327601>

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Tel Aviv, Editorial, 1 October 2013, Tuesday

### **26. Bibi's Chance to Stop Sowing Fear**

**B**enjamin Netanyahu gained his political and diplomatic fame as a media wizard, especially in the American arena, during his term as Israel's ambassador to the United Nations in the 1980s. Borne on this wave, he returned to Israel and captured the leadership of the Likud party and then the premiership. **For the full text:**

<http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/1.549771>

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# THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Lebanon, Editorial, 1 October 2013, Tuesday

## 27. Guarded Response

New York was recently the setting of significant developments on the U.S.-Iran relations front, against the backdrop of the United Nations General Assembly. The scene then shifted to Iran, and specifically the angry and nasty reaction that the country's president received when he arrived home from the annual U.N. meetings. **For the full text:** <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Editorial/2013/Oct-01/233107-guarded-response.ashx#axzz2pzRBgPn8>

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# THE JORDAN TIMES

Amman, Editorial, 2 October 2013, Wednesday

## 28. Obstructive Tactic

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's obsession with Iran and its nuclear programme could not have been helped by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's recent successful public relations campaign and peace overtures at the U.N. General Assembly in New York. **For the full text:** <http://jordantimes.com/obstructive-tactic>

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# THE HINDU



Chennai, Editorial, 3 October 2013, Thursday

## 29. Don't Hang Up on Peace, Mr. Obama

A 15-minute telephone call may not seem like much but when this represents the first direct conversation between the Presidents of Iran and the United States in 34 years, the world is bound to sit up and take notice. To get a sense of the historical significance, consider this: the last time the highest political executives from the two countries conversed was in 1979, when Jimmy Carter was U.S. President and the Shah of Iran had not yet been deposed. **For the full text:** <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/dont-hang-up-on-peace-mr-obama/article5193661.ece>

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# The Peninsula

Local focus, Global vision

Doha, Editorial, 6 October 2013, Sunday

### 30. Keeping up Momentum

**T**he supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has spoken about President Hassan Rouhani's overtures to America. And when he speaks, everybody listens because he is the most powerful person in Iran, who can undo what the government chooses to do. **For the full text:** <http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/views/editorial/255899/keeping-up-momentum>

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Jerusalem, Editorial, 13 October 2013, Sunday

### 31. Unity against Iran

**I**t is bound to happen. Disputes will inevitably emerge over how best to deal with Iran's nuclear programme. This week, an Iranian delegation is slated to meet in Geneva with representatives of the P5+1 (the U.S., China, Russia, Britain, France and Germany). The Iranians will reportedly bring with them a compromise proposal for their nuclear programme. **For the full text:** <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Editorials/Unity-against-Iran-328634>

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## Compiled by J R Philemon Chiru

**J R Philemon Chiru is a Doctoral candidate at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Email: [philejnu111@gmail.com](mailto:philejnu111@gmail.com)**

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Editor, MEI@ND: P R Kumaraswamy