

Trump says US and Iranian officials met Tuesday

Shortly after warning he may ‘annihilate’ Iran

BY AAMER MADHANI, FARNOUGH AMIRI AND EDITH M. LEDERER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED NATIONS — President Donald Trump said U.S. and Iranian officials met Tuesday, an unexpected engagement that came even as he threatened in his address to the U.N. General Assembly that he may “annihilate” the Islamic Republic if a deal isn’t reached soon to end the nearly seven-month war.

Trump told reporters that his chief envoys, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, met with the Iranian officials on the sidelines of the annual gathering of world leaders but he offered few details about how the discussions transpired or the substance of the exchange.

“It was a very good meeting,” Trump said. The president later added that the Iranian officials were “not the highest level, but it’s something.”

The engagement comes after months of U.S.-Iran communications languishing following the collapse of a short-lived ceasefire that was brokered in June. U.S. and Iranian negotiators met separately with Qatari and Pakistani mediators in Doha in early July for indirect talks.

Earlier Tuesday, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that Trump is open to meeting with Iran’s president, Masoud Pezeshkian, while he’s in New York for the General Assembly.

“This is a president that will meet with anybody for the most part, because he believes that engaging with people is important if you’re going to solve problems,” Rubio said on NBC’s “Today” show. “It doesn’t mean you’re going to end up agreeing with them, but it’s important.”

Trump also met on

Tuesday with leaders and senior officials from Gulf Cooperation Council nations — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates — as well as Jordan to discuss the way ahead with the war in Iran.

In his address to the General Assembly, Trump made the case that he’s shown fortitude while other leaders have equivocated as he defended his decision to start a war with Iran.

But Trump also suggested that he could be at a crossroads in the conflict even as he called on the Islamic Republic to fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz and return to the negotiating table to find a settlement to end the conflict.

“I have a big decision to make,” Trump said. “Will a deal be made with Iran that lets them rebuild and create a far greater country than it ever was before, maybe one of the greatest in the Middle East or even the world. Or do I annihilate the Islamic Republic and do it quickly, never giving them a chance to kill and destroy people and countries again?”

The president’s comments came in his wide-ranging address to the international body in which he also celebrated this year’s U.S. military operation to oust Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro from power, a new agreement to expand the U.S. military presence in Greenland, and pushed back against calls for greater regulation of the artificial intelligence industry.

But at the heart of the address was a fulsome defense of the war and pushback on the notion that Iran has shown a measure of resilience.

“The terrorist regime is behaving badly, not because they are strong and confident, but because they are weak



President Donald Trump speaks to the United Nations General Assembly, Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2026, at the UN headquarters.

and desperate,” Trump said.

Most of Iran’s delegation walked out of the chamber as Trump railed against the Islamic Republic.

TRUMP’S SPEECH BEGAN A BUSY DAY OF DIPLOMACY

After his speech, Trump gathered with Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Greenlandic Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen on the sidelines of the General Assembly to sign a new security agreement.

The deal, announced last week, came together after Trump repeatedly threatened to “take over” Greenland, a territory of NATO-ally Denmark, by military force if necessary. Trump said Tuesday the U.S. will immediately begin the process of developing a larger military presence in Greenland including “building two very major military bases.”

Under the deal, Greenland remains Denmark’s territory.

Trump also held talks with new British Prime Minister Andy Burnham, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He’s expected to hold a more informal meeting on Tuesday evening with Venezuela’s acting Pres-

ident Delcy Rodríguez, according to the White House.

Trump also took part in an event on the Shield of Americas, an initiative Trump launched with Latin American countries earlier this year focused on combatting violent cartels.

IRAN WAR LOOMS LARGE AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The visit to the U.N. comes as Trump’s foreign policy approach — particularly his decision to start a war with Iran — has become a drag on his fellow Republicans’ hopes of retaining control of both chambers of Congress during the coming midterm elections. Nevertheless, Trump made the case in his speech that the world is better off for his leadership.

“I have no interest in leaving dangers to grow for another day,” Trump said.

In last year’s address at the U.N., Trump claimed the U.S. had “demolished” Iran’s nuclear capabilities after he ordered the June 2025 bombardment of three key facilities.

He returned to the General Assembly nearing the seven-month mark of a new war against Iran that he insists is necessary to address a nuclear threat

continues to be spooked by the war and oil prices remain elevated. Saudi Arabia earlier this month shuttered a key pipeline that acted as a relief valve for oil blocked in the Gulf. The kingdom made the move after the pipeline came under attack by Iran-backed militants in Iraq.

At the same time, territorial grabs by the Yemen-based Houthi rebels, another Iranian-backed group, near the Bab al-Mandab Strait has now made it treacherous for oil carriers to use that Red Sea shipping lane.

TRUMP’S FRUSTRATION WITH RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR MOUNTS

In his address, the president also touched on Russia’s continuing war against Ukraine — a conflict that during his 2024 campaign he predicted would be resolved on Day One of his second term. He once again expressed hope that the conflict will soon be resolved.

CHRIST

FROM PAGE B5

I go worship God on Sunday?” That shouldn’t even be a question, if I’m a follower of Christ. “Will I follow God’s Word

instead of man’s opinions?” Jesus relied on God’s Word, whether dealing with Satan or religious leaders (Matthew 4:4, 7,10; 15:3-9). “Can I be good on Sunday and live like I want the rest of the week?” Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his

cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23).

Christianity is a daily religion. The standard is high but the reward is great. It is an inheritance that is “imperishable, undefiled and unfading” (I Peter 1:4).

Are you a follower of Christ?

FIRE

FROM PAGE B5

Only when we realize that we are being attacked through the entanglement of carnality, and then take the steps to remove these snare traps from our mind and conscience, can we press forward with making Christ our highest priority.

Developing an awareness of God’s constant presence is the key to becoming a wise and powerful soldier for the Lord who is not wishy-washy, but will stand strong and faithful in times of persecution.

A common defense of being lukewarm is that it does not matter. This is a lie! Being backslidden is a huge deal. When we lose our love and passion to pray for others, when we stop repenting and no longer feel convicted by the Holy Spirit, we

are in serious danger. Becoming spiritually numb causes us not to care about how our sins are offending God. We are forgetting the negative impact our halfhearted attempt to follow Christ has on everyone.

If demonstrating God’s character and accomplishing His

will is not our highest purpose, what is? Accepting Christ is not all there is to salvation; it’s just the beginning. Being saved provides a privilege to serve, worship, and know Him.

Yes, our Creator is long-suffering toward the lukewarm, and forgiveness is available,

but we must see our desperate need for His refining fire and cry out to Him to cleanse and transform us into what He requires us to be.

Dr. Holland is an ordained minister, chaplain, and Christian author. Read more about LIVING ON PURPOSE at billyhollandministries.com.

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