

Obama: U.S. wants 'engagement' with Iran

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- President Barack Obama, in a message to the Iranian people, said Friday the United States seeks "engagement that is honest" with Iran.

In a video message released by the White House, Obama addressed Iranians on the occasion of Nowruz, the first day of spring and of Iran's new year.

"In particular, I would like to speak directly to the people and leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran," Obama said.

After observing that Iranian culture has "made the world a better and more beautiful place" and that Iran's is "a great civilization," the president reminded viewers that relations between Iran and the United States have been "strained" for almost 30 years.

He said Nowruz offers 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."

"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," he said. "This process will not be advanced by threats. We seek instead engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual

respect."

Obama said the United States seeks renewed exchanges among U.S. and Iranian people as well as "greater opportunities for partnership and commerce."

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