**Ahmadinejad to Address U.N. Next Month**

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UNITED NATIONS—Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will address a United Nations conference in New York next month that will review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which the U.S. and other nations say Iran is violating in its apparent pursuit of a nuclear weapon.

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley confirmed that Washington has "responsibilities as the host country" of the U.N. to grant the Iranian president a visa. Mr. Ahmadinejad has visited New York several times in recent years on a U.S. visa to address the General Assembly's annual general debate.

A U.N. official said it was "established legal practice" for the U.S. to grant visas to any head of state or government that seeks to attend a U.N. conference. He said it was based on the U.N.'s host-country agreement with the U.S. and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

The U.S. has in the past granted visas to leaders it considered controversial, such as Cuban President Fidel Castro and Yasser Arafat, the late president of the Palestinian Authority. The obligation only applies to a head of state or government, the U.N. official said. In 1988, the U.S. denied Mr. Arafat a visa on security grounds, a move denounced by the General Assembly in a 151-2 vote. The U.N. moved the meeting to Geneva so Mr. Arafat could attend.

In 2007, the Iranian president made a controversial speech at Columbia University during which he said no homosexuals lived in Iran. During that visit, he was denied permission by U.S. authorities to visit Ground Zero in lower Manhattan.

Mr. Ahmadinejad is likely to argue in his address that Iran is permitted under the terms of the nuclear treaty to pursue peaceful nuclear energy. The 40-year-old treaty, which is reviewed every five years, calls on states with nuclear weapons to disarm, obliges all states to prevent nuclear proliferation and promotes the civilian uses of nuclear energy.

The U.S. will seek to isolate Iran and is trying to get Russia and China to agree to a new round of sanctions at the U.N. Security Council and force Iran to stop enriching uranium. Moscow and Beijing have previously agreed to three rounds of sanctions

Ban Ki-moon, U.N. secretary-general, told reporters Wednesday he hoped Mr. Ahmadinejad would be coming with concrete proposals to end the standoff on Iran's nuclear program but that so far he wasn't aware of any.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy, meanwhile, stressed the urgency of efforts to curb Iran's nuclear program in a meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao when the two met privately Wednesday at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, the Associated Press reported.

"China hopes to use dialogue to solve this problem. France completely understands China, and we are willing to discuss this problem together at an appropriate time, but if dialogue does not work then we can only use sanctions," Mr. Sarkozy said at a joint news conference with Mr. Hu after their meeting at the start of his three-day visit.