

IRAN DAILY ON THE NET

From: Smile@worldsgreatestsmile.com
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Right now people from all kinds of nationalities constitute an axis of friendliness throughout the world.

Humans from 54 countries—from Iran to Fiji and from Argentina to Sweden—have already announced their participation in the worldwide peace project "World's Greatest Smile". A worldwide shared smile is a sign of friendliness.

So people from all over the world will demonstrate their willingness for a peaceful future for themselves and the next generations, including among others journalists, politicians, artists, managers, schoolchildren and world record-holders.

People like these, and their intelligent allies, constitute an axis of friendliness by working to enhance peace in the world.

It's very exciting to know people from which countries have announced their participation till now. And everyone counts.

Inspired by Mr. George W. Bush's idea of "axis of evil", they want to point out that there is definitely a great global axis—built by humans who believe that an intelligent and friendly communication will bring more peace and many more advantages for the world population.

Everybody should feel free to participate in this worldwide project, irrespective of nationality, color of skin, wealth, gender, age and religion. And all kinds of people are appealed to smile at least for a moment wherever they are to show they are ready to take the responsibility of setting peaceful signs and demonstrate their wish for a future marked by friendship, harmony and security.

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8 Former Western FMs:

US Should Support EU-Iran Deal

LONDON, Dec. 14—Former British foreign secretary Robin Cook has joined a group of his former colleagues in urging the US to support the EU deal with Iran.

In an article for the Washington Post on Monday, Cook and seven other former European and American foreign ministers used the example of Iran to express concern "about the current state of transatlantic relations and the effect it is having on our ability to join together to address a number of global challenges."

"The Bush administration should support the recent agreement between the three European countries negotiated with the Iranians as an important first step," said the letter, which included the signature of former US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, IRNA reported.

"Washington should put its full support behind this diplomatic effort and consider launching commercial and diplomatic engagement with Iran," they said.

Other foreign ministers making the unique call included Hubert Vedrine of France, Italy's Lamberto Dini, Lloyd Axworthy of Canada, Niels Helveg Petersen of Denmark, Spain's Ana Palacio and Jozias van Aartsen of The Netherlands.

Their article included an outline of a number of "ideas on obtaining full cooperation from the Iranians" and said that they believed "genuine transatlantic

cooperation is the only path to viable solutions."

At the same time, they said, the West must assure Iran it "does not seek to deny Iran the right to a peaceful civilian nuclear energy program under the necessary safeguards."

Their article also called on major nuclear suppliers—Russia, the US and Europe—to "provide a firm guarantee to supply fresh reactor fuel" for Iran's civilian nuclear power program.

This supply should also be retrieved and disposed "in exchange for Iran's agreement to permanently forswear its own nuclear fuel-cycle capabilities, including enrichment, reprocessing, uranium conversion and heavy-water (reactor) production," it said.

Meanwhile, the European Union Foreign Ministers' Council Monday welcomed the verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that Iran had voluntarily suspended all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities.

The council, meeting in Brussels, in a statement said the verification by the IAEA paves the way for negotiations with Iran on a long-term agreement.

The statement confirmed that the EU would resume negotiations with Iran on a draft EU-Iran Trade and Cooperation Agreement together with parallel negotiations on a political agreement.

GENEVA, Dec. 14—

The UN refugee agency is closing several camps for Iraqi refugees in Iran because more than half the 202,000 registered Iraqis have left the

UNHCR Closing Camps for Iraqis

Refugees Discouraged From Returning Home

country since the fall of Saddam Hussein, a spokeswoman said

Tuesday, Some 42,000 of the 50,000 refugees who

were staying in camps have returned home to Iraq, Jennifer Pagonis,

Attention Producers/Suppliers of Foreign Newsprint

For making plans to supply domestic publications with newsprint, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance's Department for Press and Publicity Affairs intends to identify major importers and suppliers of foreign newsprint.

All interested real and legal entities should submit specifications about their product within ten days of the publication of this advertisement at the following address:

Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance's Department for Press and Publicity Affairs, #8, 8th Alley, Qaem-Maqam Farahani St., Tehran, Iran
 Selected companies will be invited to participate in the tender.

Khatami:

Human Dignity Demands Respect

Khorasan Divided for Eliminating Shortfalls

TEHRAN, Dec. 14—President Mohammad Khatami stressed the need for safeguarding the dignity of people from different strata of the society and expressed sorrow that certain newspapers and forums tarnish the reputation of people in the name of defending values.

Speaking in the second gathering to honor women promoting Qur'anic studies and research here on Tuesday, Khatami stressed the need for embellishing the society with Qur'anic teachings and values.

He hoped that the reputations of people are not harmed during political and judicial disputes.

He pointed to the highest possible value attached by the Qur'an to human lives and quoted one of the Islamic authorities who voiced concern and sadness over the death of homeless people on the streets.

The president stressed the need for introducing fresh interpretations of the Qur'an and outlined the constructive role of

women in educating people from Islamic viewpoints.

Meanwhile, speaking in a meeting of governor generals and parliament members of the three Khorasan provinces on Monday, Khatami emphasized that the administrative division of Khorasan province aimed to eliminate deprivation, promote fair distribution of resources, strengthen infrastructures and improve people's living standards.

Referring to some of the concerns regarding the division of Khorasan province, the resident

said, "The people of the province are all spiritually highly attached to the holy city of Mashhad and the sacred shrine of the eight infallible Imam Ali ibn Musa Ar-Reza (AS)."

He maintained that "the parliamentarians' initiative of not dissolving the Assembly of Khorasan Province MPs is a praiseworthy move and the presence of the three newly established provinces' top administrative officials in your assembly can also be beneficial for people of Khorasan."

Khatami said the North

Khorasan and South Khorasan provinces are currently less developed and special attention should be paid to various aspects of development in those provinces.

A number of MPs then briefed the president about various problems faced by their constituencies, including the prevailing drought and the problem of supplying drinking water, lack of proper roads and railroads, the need to boost mining and industrial sectors, as well as academic and higher education shortcomings prior to his address.

Call for Enhancing Armenia Ties

TEHRAN, Dec. 14—Chairman of State Expediency Council Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani here on Tuesday called for further expansion of Tehran-Yerevan relations in all fields.

In a meeting with Armenia's Ambassador in Tehran Ghegham Garibjanian, Rafsanjani called for implementation of agreements reached between the two sides, IRNA reported.

Stressing the importance of the project to transfer Iranian gas to Armenia, he said the implementation of this project will help Iran gain access to an appropriate market.

Calling for settlement of the prevailing dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia, he expressed hope that peace and stability will be established



Chairman of State Expediency Council Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (r) in talks with Armenia's Ambassador in Tehran Ghegham Garibjanian, Dec. 14. (IRNA Photo)

in the entire region through the all-out cooperation among all regional states.

"Iran and Armenia share various historical and cultural commonalities," he said, urging the two states to further mobilize their potentials to boost cooperation.

For his part, the Armenian envoy praised Iran's foreign policy and

said the Islamic Republic, among the regional states, enjoys a sound and stable policy.

Appreciating Iran's efforts in settling regional crises, Garibjanian said a powerful and developed Iran will benefit the entire region.

He further lauded Iran's economic achievements since the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Egyptian Media Urged To Avoid Propaganda

TEHRAN, Dec. 14—An Iranian official said here Monday that the Egyptian mass media should not let the propaganda of Zionists to harm improvement of ties between Iran and Egypt.

Speaking to IRNA, Deputy minister of culture and Islamic guidance for press and publications affairs, Mohammad Sohofi, called on the Egyptian mass media to not let improving ties between Iran and Egypt, boosted after the visits of Iranian and Egyptian presidents in Geneva's IT conference, to be marred by suspicious moves mas-

termined by Zionists.

"The Egyptian media should consider the realities and help overcome the will of Zionists instead of turning to into the means for escalating a psychological warfare against the world of Islam and Muslim unity," he said.

Referring to recent spying allegations made by the Egyptian attorney general against an Iranian national, Sohofi said the unfounded allegations and pre-planned scenario against Iran have emerged at a time when the Muslim world is in need of unity.



Mohammad Sohofi

The deep-rooted cultural ties between Iranian and Egyptian nations will never let such suspicious moves undermine the will of the leaders of the two nations, he said.

Persian Press Watch

Democracy

MARDOM SALARI: Notion of democracy is not merely restricted to the field of politics, as it also involves cultural, economic and social aspects. Those political parties that speak in favor of people's political and social freedoms should also provide solutions concerning how people should take part in political decision-making processes. These solutions should be provided in two ways. Firstly, people should be taught about their present and future. Secondly, the political parties should do their best to achieve fair distribution of services in all domains because discrimination will result in people's non-participation in state affairs.

Allegation

ABRAR: King Abdullah II of Jordan in his interview with 'The Washington Post' alleged that the Iranian government has already dispatched a total of one million Iranians to Iraq to take part in Iraq's upcoming presidential election. Arab mass media, which are renowned for their anti-Iran attitude, have extensively covered Abdullah's statements. Abdullah said nothing new except repeating the old anti-Iran accusations leveled by the American statesmen. One reason behind this can be Jordan's meager share in Iraqi affairs despite the fact that it has long borders with Iraq. Moreover, since the Jordanian statesmen do not have a clear understanding about Iraq's future political developments, they prefer to engage in spreading rumors and accusations against others.

Poverty

SOBH-E EQTESAD: Iran's Statistical Center released a report on poverty level in Iran on the basis of people's daily calorie consumption. In this report it is mentioned that the higher the calorie consumption the richer the country is. Economists have categorized poverty into absolute, relative and emotional classes. Absolute poverty is when poor families cannot meet their basic requirements. Relative poverty is when some social groups are regarded as poor when compared to other social groups. In the meantime, emotional poverty explains the psychological impact of the society's upper class on the lower classes. Emotional poverty is more evident in developing and Third World countries. In other words, overridden by the propaganda of the upper class about the extent of their wealth, majority of people in these societies consider themselves as poor, while they might not actually be so.

Subsidies

DONYA-YE EQTESAD: President Mohammad Khatami in his recent meeting with students made comments on economic issues, especially subsidies. What was noteworthy in Khatami's statements was when he noted that subsidies should serve the best interests of deprived people of the society and not those of the upper class. There is no doubt that the poor and needy should benefit more from subsidies than the upper class of the society. However, revising the subsidy system will not be of any practical use unless the government ceases its monopolistic economic policies.

Perspective

Building Alliances

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There are coastal areas in all these countries and hence it is not difficult to smuggle drugs into these territories. Reports indicate that money from illegal drug trade is largely spent in the Persian Gulf Arab states. Saudi Arabia and also Uzbekistan, Chechnya and Tajikistan are places where drug revenues are used to nurture terrorists and fund their dangerous profession.

To say the least, narco trade has become a serious source of concern for social and security planners in our volatile region. Countries in the region need to cooperate meaningfully to tackle this growing epidemic.

Many regional countries suffer greatly from drug abuse and terrorism and their security is being undermined to degrees unseen in the past. Not to mention the destructive impact of the two scourges on their social fabric, especially after the inauspicious birth of the medieval Taliban and Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network.

The Persian Gulf sheikhdoms can cooperate within the framework of their (Persian) Gulf Cooperation Council while Russia can collaborate with the Economic Cooperation Organization and forge a regional alliance for combating terrorism and illegal drugs.