

US Report "Baseless Accusations"

Iran referred to the annual report by the US State Department on terrorism as "baseless accusations".

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Mohammad Ali Hosseini told reporters on Wednesday that the report is based on accusations against Iran's move to extend political and spiritual support to the defenseless and oppressed Palestinian nation, IRNA reported.

Washington considers support for the Palestinians' legitimate defense as a "terrorist act", while its extensive support for the Zionist regime and its crimes comprises complicity in Israel's state terrorism, he added.

Hosseini said such reports aim to justify the inhuman act of the US administration in the Guantanamo Bay in Cuba and the US-run Abu Ghraib detention center in Iraq.

"These acts, which are aimed at concealing their numerous crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, lack any value," he said.

Hosseini reiterated that the international community has realized that expansion of terrorism across the world is the result of expansionist and hegemonic policies of Washington.

Commenting on US allegations about training a group of Shiite Iraqi extremists by Lebanese Hezbollah forces in a camp near Tehran, he said, "The US has always made accusations against the Islamic Republic, the baseless nature of which has been repeatedly proved."

Noting that such anti-Iran allegations have seriously damaged the US prestige, he said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran has always made efforts to turn Iraq into a stable and secure country."

On the intensification of US attacks on Iraqi civilians and the massacre of a large number of defenseless Iraqis by the US forces, Hosseini pointed out that earlier in a statement, the Islamic Republic has expressed its grave concern over the military operations of US forces against the Iraqi nation.

Iranian Jews Not to Mark Zionist Regime's Anniv.

An Iranian Jewish leader on Wednesday said his community would not mark this week's 60th anniversary of the founding of the illegal Zionist regime, which he accused of "killing innocent Palestinians".

"We are in complete disagreement with the behavior of Israel," Stamak Morsadegh, the incoming Jewish member of the Iranian Parliament following the March parliamentary election, told Reuters.

"It is not related to us," he said about Thursday's celebrations in Israel. "We are Iranians. We have no relations with Israel."

Iran's ancient Jewish community is the biggest in the Middle East outside occupied lands, which the Islamic Republic does not recognize.

Morsadegh said Jews in Iran enjoy freedom of religion and other rights.

"There are no specific problems for Jews in this country," he said on phone.

The Jewish community leader criticized Israel's policies toward Palestinians, especially in Gaza, saying it showed "anti-human behavior... they kill innocent people."

Judaism is one of the three recognized minority religions in Iran. The community has a member in the 290-seat legislature and its own schools. Four other seats are reserved for Christians and Zoroastrians, who adhere to a divine religion.



Leader: Persepolis A Source of Pride

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the monument of Persepolis is a source of pride for Iranians.

Addressing local officials in Shiraz, Fars province, on Wednesday, the leader said this monument is a manifestation of Iranian art, creativity and innovation, IRNA reported.

Ayatollah Khamenei also said serving the great Iranian nation is a sign of divine blessing for all officials who should thank God for such a blessing.

"Fars province is the cradle of educated and well-known historical and literary personalities who played a key role in the country's development," he said.

Ayatollah Khamenei noted that having prominent historical figures brings self-confidence to the nation.

Thanking the people of Fars province for their warm hospitality during his stay in the province, the leader also gave recommendations to local officials on how to deal with drought in the province.

President Visits Book Fair



President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad studies a book in Tehran's 21st International Book Fair on Wednesday.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad attended Tehran's 21st International Book Fair on Wednesday morning.

The 10-day exhibition was inaugurated on May 1 at Tehran's Grand Prayer Ground (Mosalla) by First Vice President Parviz Davoudi and Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance

Mohammad Hossein Saffar Harandi, IRNA reported. Some 77 countries are participating in the international cultural event.

The president visited the pavilions of both domestic and foreign publishers.

The president was accompanied by the culture minister.

Lebanon Crisis Resolution Supported

Iran's Ambassador to Lebanon Mohammad Reza Sheibani stressed the continuation of Iran's efforts to resolve the Lebanese crisis.

Following his meeting with Vice Speaker of Lebanon's Shia Supreme Assembly, Abdolamir Qablan, Sheibani told reporters that some are taking provocative actions that do not serve the interests of the Lebanese people, PressTV reported.

Since former Lebanese President Emile Lahoud

ended his presidential term in November 2007, the country has been left without a president due to disagreements between the ruling party and the opposition.

The Lebanese Cabinet decided to remove Beirut airport's security chief on Tuesday and declared Hezbollah's telecommunication network illegal. The Cabinet decision is believed to be dangerous since it can intensify Lebanon's political chaos.

Border Security Accord With Azerbaijan

Iranian and Azeri officials signed an agreement on border cooperation.

The document was signed by Iran's Commander of Border Guards Qasem Rezaei and his Azeri counterpart Alcin Qoliyev on Wednesday, IRNA reported.

Rezaei arrived in Baku for a three-day visit at the head of a delegation on Monday to attend the third session of Iran-Azerbaijan Border Cooperation. He also held talks with Azeri President Ilham Aliyev and Defense Minister General Safar Abiyev.

The agreement deals with promotion of Tehran-Baku cooperation to protect their joint borders and

exchange views and expertise to confront border violations. Speaking to reporters after signing the accord, the Iranian officials said Tehran and Baku enjoyed good border cooperation.

He added that the fight against drug smuggling from Iran's eastern neighbor Afghanistan was a major issue discussed at the meeting.

Qoliyev told reporters that officials of the two countries had constructive talks for strengthening bilateral cooperation.

"Border guards of the two countries hold their annual meeting on a regular basis in Tehran or Baku," he said.

Muddy Rain Ruins People's Day

While the residents of Karaj and some cities in Tehran province went out to work on Wednesday like any other day, muddy rainfall forced most of them to return home and change.

At a time when most people have been praying for rain to end the long dry spell, the muddy rainfall ruined the people's day, the website Farda News reported.

An expert at State Meteorological Organization said dust particles in the air were the cause of the muddy rain in some parts of Tehran province such as Karaj.

Ali Moradi also said, "Based on forecasts, we will not have rainfall until Friday. But if humidity increases, we may see more muddy rains."

Positive Climate...

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Turkey's Commerce Minister Kyrasid Tuzmen said in view of the historical and cultural commonalities between the two countries, bilateral relations must expand in all areas.

"In recent years, Turkish officials have worked hard to expand relations with regional countries. Of course, improving ties with Iran is of special importance for Turkey," he said.

Bilateral trade in 2002 amounted to \$1.2 billion and is forecast to reach at least \$20 billion in 2011.

The Turkish minister referred to investments of two Turkish companies in the Iranian natural gas sector and stressed that more cooperation in the oil and gas fields can be lucrative for both the countries.

Tuzmen also said that the rise in transport costs has negatively influenced bilateral trade.

"Turkey is prepared to invest \$145 million in Iran's development projects," he said.

Referring to the purchase of an Iranian fertilizer company worth \$671 million by Turkey, the official noted that the investment firm Rana Derichlik is ready to invest \$60 million in Iran's fertilizer industry.

He also said that Turkey will buy 1.5 billion kilowatt/hour of electricity from Iran in the near future.

Tuzmen called for establishment of Turkish bank branches in Iran.

"Turkey's private sector companies want customs, tax and residency barriers to be removed so that they can become more active in Iranian undertakings," he said.

Opinion

Brain Drain

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Arkani-Hamed (born 1972) is a leading theoretical physicist with interests in high-energy physics, string theory and cosmology. He officially joined Harvard's faculty in the fall of 2002. In the summer of 2005 while at Harvard, he won the 'Phi Beta Kappa' award for teaching excellence.

Sabeti (born 1975) is an evolutionary geneticist, who developed an algorithm that helped establish the effects of genetics on the evolution of human diseases. He is an assistant professor in the Center for Systems Biology and Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology at Harvard University.

So why Iran does not employ these talented people to help develop the country in the scientific and technological fields?

Unfortunately, the number of educated young Iranians trying to leave the country appears to have increased in the past years judging by the numbers sitting for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam—a requirement for immigration to countries like Canada and Australia.

And the cost to Iran of not stemming this brain drain—one government estimate put it at nearly \$40 billion a year.

Iran tops the world in terms of brain drain. That's the conclusion of the International Monetary Fund, which recently surveyed 61 countries.

The IMF says every year more than 150,000 educated Iranians leave their country in the hope of finding better educational, working and living conditions abroad.

In fact, Iran is educating millions of its youth to serve the advanced countries.

The reality is that the scientific and economic gap between Iran, as a third-world nation, and advanced or "North" countries is wide and prospects for filling this distance in the near future appear dim.

If more research facilities are provided and livelihood problems of researchers are seriously addressed in a way that they would feel free to produce science and new ideas inside Iran, brain drain will slow down.

These facilities, combined with the inherent interest of Iranians in family bonds, will certainly act as a brake to dissuade some from leaving the country. However, the trend will not grind to a complete halt.

Therefore, the officials should take measures for promoting the social and scientific status of scientists. They must also clear the way for researchers, who are determined to leave the country and continue their studies in other countries, to establish a kind of human rapport and cooperate with their homeland in future.