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Iran Daily

irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir

Vol. 7379 • Sunday, September 3, 2023 • Shahrivar 12, 1402 • Safar 17, 1445 • Price 40,000 Rials • 8 Pages

Iranian Power vs American Decline

Why did Seyed Hossein Mousavian's speech at the 2023 US Strategic Command deterrence symposium anger the opponents of the Islamic Republic of Iran?

Mousavian explains in an interview with Iran Daily 4-5 >

EXCLUSIVE



The speech and recommendations by former Iranian diplomat Seyed Hossein Mousavian to American policymakers regarding Iran and the Middle East have not been well-received by American hardliners and opponents of the Islamic Republic

of Iran. Mousavian, who has resided in the United States for several years and is a professor at Princeton University, was one of the three special speakers at the annual "Strategic Command Symposium" in Nebraska. During his speech, he highlighted some of the

actions by the United States that had a detrimental impact on improving the two countries' relations, including involvement in the 1953 coup and withdrawal from the nuclear agreement. The Iranian diplomat also proposed strategies for American policymak-

ers regarding Iran and the Middle East, including establishing a comprehensive and respectful dialogue with Tehran, non-interference, and pursuing common interests. The right-wing magazine "Free Beacon" and the London-based publication

"Keyhan" both strongly criticized Mousavian's invitation. Gabriel Noronha, former advisor to the U.S. State Department on Iran, suggested that the U.S. Congress should initiate an investigation into Mousavian's invitation and speech at the Strategic Command

Symposium. Chairs of the Armed Services Committees in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate called for clarification from Anthony Catan, the head of Strategic Command, regarding this invitation. Last year, the Zionist lobby "United Against Nuclear

Iran" requested Mousavian's expulsion from Princeton University through a letter to the university's president. Iran Daily newspaper conducted an exclusive interview with Mousavian about this speech and his recommendations.

Construction of Iran-Iraq cross-border railroad started



Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani and Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber have laid the foundation stone for the cross-border railroad line connecting the two neighboring countries. According to a Saturday report by IRNA, Al-Sudani and Mokhber met at the common border and participated in the inaugural ceremony of the construction operation of the project. The Iraqi prime minister, together with Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad

Mohammad Kazem Al Sadeq, had departed Basra International Airport in southern Iraq on board a helicopter to attend the event. Al-Sudani thanked Tehran for the planned demining operations at the border to clear the way for the train line and for a railroad bridge over the border waterway, where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers converge before spilling into the Persian Gulf. Bassem Awadi, spokesman for the Iraqi government, said the steps

stipulated in Resolution 2333 of the Council of Ministers concerning the implementation of the railroad project linking Iraq's Basra with the Iranian border town of Shalamcheh have already been taken, and today the executive phase of the project will commence. He said the cross-border railroad project serves as an introduction to strategic transportation projects that would connect Iraq and neighboring countries, adding that the Baghdad government had been debating on and re-

vising the project for many years. Awadi further described the railroad connection as one of the most important transportation projects in the region, saying, "This project also effectively helps in the transfer of tourists and pilgrims between Central Asian countries and Iraq." Earlier, Mokhber said the Shalamcheh-Basra railroad project will become operational within the next two years with the cooperation of Iran and Iraq, harboring hope that the project would be a

source of blessing for the two neighboring countries. He emphasized that the strategic project can bring about a major change in the West Asia region. In addition to connecting the railroads of the two countries, it would also act as complementary to the international transport routes, Iran's first vice president said. All regional and extra-regional countries need two North-South and East-West transport corridors, he said, adding that this

project is one of the cases that has been on the agenda of the Iranian and Iraqi governments for a long time. The Shalamcheh-Basra railroad, which will be 32 kilometers (19.8 miles) long, will connect Iran to the Mediterranean (Jordan and Syria), Mokhber noted. After being in the pipeline for many years, Iran and Iraq signed an agreement for the construction of the Shalamcheh-Basra railroad in 2021. Prior to this, plans were shelved in 2014, the same year that Daesh Takfiri ter-

rorists overran large swathes of land in northern Iraq and eastern Syria. After repeated delays, efforts were revived in April, with Baghdad and Tehran agreeing to implement the railroad link during a meeting between Iraqi Minister of Transport Razzaq Mohibis al-Saadawi and the Iranian Minister of Roads and Housing Mehrdad Bazrpash in Tehran. The railroad project will reportedly become operational within the next 18 months.

Kazakhstan president outlines economic reforms



ASTANA TIMES – President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev delivered his state-of-the-nation address, entitled "Economic Course of a Just Kazakhstan," detailing plans for economic reforms and a fresh economic trajectory for the nation. He said: "The most important task is the formation of a solid industrial framework of the country, ensuring economic self-sufficiency. The main emphasis should be placed on the accelerated development of the manufacturing sector." Particular focus will be given to sectors like heavy engineering, uranium enrichment, and automotive components, Tokayev noted.

Iran drills 195 oil, gas wells

SHANA – National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) dug and completed the digging operations of 195 oil and gas wells since the current government took office in August 2021, the managing director of the company announced. Hamidreza Golpayegani said the wells were discovery wells, development-delineation wells, and work-over wells.

Owji reports 40% rise in Iran oil production capacity



Iran's oil production capacity has jumped 40 percent since two years ago, said Oil Minister Javad Owji on Saturday. He made the announcement following a recent meeting between the president and his cabinet ministers with

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who insisted on making more investments with the aim of producing more oil, Shana reported. The 40 percent hike in oil production capacity is the outcome of investments made in incomplete projects over the past two years, explained the minister. The increase in investments has been a key issue in oil projects since the 13th (incumbent) administration took office, said

Owji, adding the Oil Ministry has prioritized its projects and has given top priority to new projects that lead to economic growth. "The country's crude oil production stood at 2.2 million barrels per day (bpd) when I took over as oil minister, but the figure has now reached 3.1 million bpd to 3.4 million bpd," he said.

Gas projects

The incomplete gas projects such as phases 14 and 11 of the South Pars (SP) field were also prioritized, said the minister. For 20 years, the Phase 11 development project had been passed from one administration to another, and the last move was a

\$4.8-billion contract signed with the French company Total, without a good performance bond, regretted Owji, continuing that the company received the data about the South Pars field, without completing the project, and quit. Last Monday, President Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi inaugurated SP Phase 11 in southern Iran. Phase 11 is the farthest border section of South Pars gas field Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf waters. The country's gas production has witnessed a 40-million-cubic-meter growth in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (starting March 21) thanks to investments, in

comparison with the volume in the corresponding period last year, said the top official. Shifting to the gas processing capacity, Owji added the launch of SP Phase 14 has added over 50 million cubic meters per day (mcm/d) to it. Pointing to 7-10 mcm/d gas output at SP Phase 11, the oil minister said the figure will soar to 15 mcm/d before next winter and will hit 50 mcm/d when more wells are drilled and put into operation. The gas project was implemented while Iran has been hit by the toughest ever sanctions and Qatar, facing no restrictions, is producing gas on the other side of the South Pars field, said Owji.

Iran-Turkey seven-month trade surpasses \$3b

Trade between Iran and Turkey in the first seven months of 2023 reached \$3.025 billion, according to the latest figures released by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT). The figure shows a 21-percent drop compared to corresponding figure of 2022, as Iran's trade with the neighboring country stood at \$3.846 billion in January-July 2022, Tasnim News Agency reported. According to TURKSTAT, Turkey's exports to Iran from January to July 2023 reached \$1.663 billion, recording a two percent decrease compared to last year's corresponding period. Turkey exported over \$1.701 billion worth of products to the Islamic Republic in the first seven months of 2022. Turkey's imports from Iran also registered a 36 percent decline and fell from \$2.145 billion in January to July 2022, to \$1.362 billion in the first seven months of 2023. Based on the data previously released by the Turkish Statistical Institute, the value of Iran's exports to Turkey increased by 19 percent, to reach \$3.35 billion in 2022.

Petrochemical industry development

Inaugurated projects

- 1 Maleic anhydride project of Ibn-e-Sina Petrochemical Company (Butane project) Launch time: January 2022
- 2 Dey Aria Polymer Complex in Khomeyn Launch time: June 2022
- 3 Pars Glycol Petrochemical Complex in Asalouyeh Launch time: February 2023
- 4 The first phase of Persian Gulf Hoveyzeh Gas Refining Company (Gas and liquefied gas plant: 3200) Launch time: April 2023
- 5 The second ASU2 unit of Damavand Energy Asalouyeh Company Launch time: February 2023
- 6 Pre-compression units in the 900 and 1000 gas and liquefied gas factories Launch time: April 2023
- 7 Gachsaran Petrochemical Plant Launch time: July 2023
- 8 Nine-tank reservoir of the second phase of Asalouyeh Petrochemical Green Tanks Launch time: February 2023

Underway projects

- 1 Implementation plans to produce propylene from propane (PDH/PP) Parsian Sepehr Refinery Start time: August 2022
- 2 Implementation plan of PDH/PP Pars Petrochemical Company Start time: August 2022
- 3 Production plans of propylene from propane (PDH) Persian Gulf Bidboland Gas Refinery Start time: August 2022
- 4 Operations of Fanavaran petroleum project Start time: September 2022
- 5 Operations of Hemmat petroleum project Start time: November 2022
- 6 Implementation of Taftan Aria petrochemical GTX project Start time: December 2022
- 7 Implementation project of PDH/PP of Kangan Polymer Development Company Start time: February 2023

Pottery handicrafts of Lalejin dazzle the eyes of every viewer



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Iranica Desk

The city of Lalejin in the western province of Hamedan is known by its earthenware products. Thanks to the art of pottery, Lalejin not only has no unemployed residents but is a destination for job seekers from neighboring regions. The inhabitants of Lalejin speak a special Azari dialect, which is different from the Azerbaijani dialect. The pottery artifacts manufactured by the people of this city dazzle the eyes of every viewer, both Iranian and foreign.

Lalejin, with a population of 20,000, is the main center of earthenware production in Iran and the Middle East, chtn.ir wrote. According to the results of

the archeological excavations carried out in the city, the history of human settlement in the region dates back to the 11th century. Lalejin is located in a relatively flat plain, seven kilometers from the provincial capital city of Hamedan, and a large number of its residents is engaged in farming. Previously, the gardens and agricultural fields of the city were irrigated by springs, flowing rivers and wells. A number of qanats dating back to the Safavid period (1501-1736 CE) can still be seen in the north and northwest of the city. Lalejin has been severely destroyed twice in history, once by the invasion of Mongols and a second time by the invasion of Afghans.

The Mohajeran Grand Mosque, dating back to the Qajar era, is one of the most important historical monuments of Lalejin. It has several stone columns, a dome-shaped roof and a large courtyard. Lalejin celebrated its registration as 'The Pottery Capital of the World' in 2016, a privilege granted by the jurors of the UNESCO-affiliated World Crafts Council. More than 900 units are involved in pottery production, sales and exports, in which 60 percent of local people are working. The history of ceramic production in Lalejin dates back 700 years. When you walk on the streets of this ancient city, you will see countless women, men and children, who are creating

beautiful works of art. The pottery items produced by the craftspeople of Lalejin are exported to many foreign countries. Moreover, a huge number of Iranian and foreign tourists travel to Lalejin every year to purchase earthenware produced in the city. The variety of the colors and designs of Lalejin pottery catch the eyes of every viewer. A major number of these artistic earthenware are used as decorative pieces; however, some of them including clay dishes and pitchers are used in everyday life. The smell of clay and mud in the pottery workshops makes breathing very pleasant. Touching a pottery item gives you a wonderful feel-

ing, perhaps because it is a product of the combination of the four elements of matter: earth, water, air and fire. Since all these elements have been found across the world from the beginning of creation, humans have practiced this art since ancient times. The ancient pottery items that witnessed the development of life and human civilization throughout history tell countless stories about people who have never been heroes, but lived. Considering Iran's special geographic location, at the crossroads of ancient civilizations, people of almost every part of the country have been engaged in pottery-making throughout history.



Persian Art in Romania

Romania's proximity to the Oriental world favoured the circulation of Islamic art objects, including Persian artefacts. But because of the vicissitudes of history, only a few of them were preserved, although we can still see them represented in paintings or mentioned by old documents. In the second half of the 19th century Romania tried to assimilate the western life style, and the Oriental objects belonging to the daily life were suddenly looked upon as obsolete, as a reminder of the past that should be left behind. Since then, such objects have been kept in the newly created museums and libraries. The effort to assimilate the western civilization thus remains a priority for the Romanian society as a whole, while artists try to synchronise their creation with the

European artistic trends, especially French. It is noteworthy, for instance, that Romanian painting evolved in only a few decades from the Byzantine tradition to European modern art. Nevertheless, the familiarity with the aesthetics of the Islamic lands makes a subtle breakthrough, and this is how we can explain the artistic interest in Oriental objects such as kilims or tribal items, whose refinement was perceived in West Europe only a few decades later.

Historical background

Walachia, Moldavia and Transylvania, the three historic provinces which form today's Romania, evolved in different cultural conditions: Moldavia and Walachia emulated the Byzantine civilisation, whereas Transylvania was



An Iznik Tile

part of the Central-European cultural area. Despite the Ottoman suzerainty, these regions preserved a certain autonomy as they were not under Turkish

administration. The united principalities of Moldavia and Walachia became independent in 1877. The attempts to oppose the Ottoman pressure were

mostly military, but also diplomatic, as this was the case, for instance, with the negotiations between Stephen the Great (1457-1502 CE), the prince of Moldavia, and Uzun Hasan (1453-78 CE), the ruler of Persia, in order to form an anti-Ottoman alliance. This diplomatic episode was indeed unique, but the commercial relations with West Asia, including Persia, were constant. The objects from this region including textiles, carpets and arms were brought to the Romanian principalities via Istanbul for internal use or to be exported in Central or West Europe. Romanian documents began to mention Persian items, though in smaller quantity than Ottoman products, as early as the 17th century. Persian carpets were, for instance, widely available

in the Romanian provinces at the very beginning of the 17th century, as hundreds of them, including silk carpets and also kilims, are mentioned in documents of the Movila family, one Moldavian princely family related to the Polish nobility. A Moldavian ruling prince (voivode), Vasile Lupu (1634-1653 CE), may also have had "Polonaise" rugs in his palace, according to a contemporary Latin document which describes "halls set with carpets woven with golden thread." Evidence is given for other Islamic objects belonging to this voivode, who is also known for his so-called "halls with *chini*." The halls were decorated with ceramic tiles coming presumably from Iznik workshops, where Vasile Lupu had also ordered a commemorative tablet in-

scribed with the names of all his family. This voivode, so much inclined to luxury, often amazed foreign travellers who had the opportunity to meet him and who described the richness of his attire in their memoirs. The clothes worn by voivodes or grand boyars (high-ranking members of the Walachian and Moldavian aristocracies) were made of precious Oriental or Italian materials with enormous value; this explains why they were often part of princely donations to churches or monasteries. This is particularly the case with two 16th-century garments — a velvet caftan and a woman's sarasars court robe, both of Ottoman origin — which were transformed and used in churches, the first as a cover, the second as an ecclesiastical cope.



Why did Seyed Hossein Mousavian's speech at the 2023 US Strategic Command deterrence symposium anger the opponents of the Islamic Republic of Iran? Mousavian explains in an interview with Iran Daily.



Iranian Power vs American Decline

EXCLUSIVE

Iran Daily: House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mike Rogers and Senate Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Wicker have demanded an explanation for why the US Strategic Command invited you as a keynote speaker in STRATCOM's recent Deterrence Symposium. The letter claims that: "Mousavian served as the Iranian regime's Ambassador to Germany in 1992 when the regime's intelligence operatives assassinated four Iranian dissidents in Berlin. In response, German authorities forced Mousavian to leave the country along with several other Iranian 'diplomats' and intelligence operatives."

Mousavian: This accusation is a big lie. The 398-page verdict is published and everyone can have access to it. The Berlin court verdict does not contain any direct or indirect allegations against me. German authorities never forced me to leave the country. The court verdict was issued in April 1997. My seven-year assignment as ambassador terminated in early 1998. Since then, I have been a frequent visitor to Germany.

The second major explanation requested by the Congress members is that you mocked US officials under assassination threats from Iranian officials. "In a 2022 documentary paying homage to [General Qassem] Soleimani, Mousavian smiled while referring to Iranian death threats against former special representative for Iran Brian Hook. He gleefully said [in Farsi]: "An American told me that Brian Hook's wife can't sleep, and she cries and trembles as they say they'll kill Hook...that is how shaken they are!"

This is another lie and a fake story manufactured by certain lobbies in Washington which are trying to drag the US into another war in the Middle East by attacking Iran. When president Trump had General Soleimani assassinated, I was in Iran to visit my mother who was hospitalized. As a researcher, I attended the funeral of General Soleimani to see the reaction to this assassination. Seven million attended the funeral in Tehran and 20 million in other cities in total. This was clear evidence of General Soleimani's popularity. The 10-second clip from my two-hour interview with Iranian TV was taken out of context. Iranian TV never broadcast the interview with me. It just aired the 7-10 seconds about Brian Hook's family. I have always opposed assassinations and threats of assassina-

tion against both Iranian and US nationals because it is against the UN Charter and a violation of international rules and regulations. During my two-hour interview, I advised Washington and Tehran to stop the mutual threats made and explained the dangers. I said the assassination of General Soleimani was a clear violation of international law while I also explained that threats against Brian Hook had caused panic in Hook's family.

You highlighted the historical context of Iran-US relations, particularly the erosion of trust on Iran's part as the starting point of today's confrontation. Has this distrust solely affected Iran or extended to other nations with ties to the US? How do you assess its impact on US foreign policy today?

Considering the historical context is crucial in having a good understanding of Iran-US relations. In my speech at the US Strategic Command, I made it clear that if the US had not dismantled democracy in Iran through the coup in 1953, the two countries could have remained strategic partners after the Second World War. Moreover, if the US had adhered to the Algerian Accords and not supported Saddam's aggression and the use of chemical weapons against Iran, the two capitals could have maintained a friendly relationship. That is why I suggested the US review the past and lay the foundation of new relations with Iran based on mutual respect and non-interference.

The Iranian diaspora, especially the more hardline segments advocating for intensified sanctions and even conflict against Iran, has reacted strongly to your statements. Yet, a question remains: Why does opposing the Islamic Republic for them seem synonymous with supporting the US?

The Iranian diaspora, advocating for intensified sanctions and even war against Iran; is a minority. The overwhelming majority of Iranians living abroad would like peace between Iran and the US. Those advocating intensified sanctions and war on Iran are either paid or have lost their hope to visit their motherland. I have always suggested that the government of Iran must have a broad policy considering the enormous capacity of the Iranians living abroad. The fact is that we have around 6 to 7 million Iranians abroad and over 90% of them have no serious and active engagement with their motherland. The Iranian government is responsible and should find a solution to embrace them.

A significant part of your speech addresses the nature of the US and its hegemonic policies globally, not just against Iran. Do they not see these issues, or do they interpret them differently?

We have two different schools of thought in the US. The hawks are after bullying, coercion, sanctions, and military strikes, and the other is after engagement and cooperation. These two narratives are challenging each other not only on Iran, but also on China,

Russia, and other adversaries.

If you were to categorize the attacks following your speech, based on the source – whether intellectual, media, or political – how would you explain it?

A: You have noticed that not only the US hawkish and pro-Israel media like the Washington Free Beacon but the Iran International and Iranians pro-confrontation with Iran have jointly attacked me as peace between Iran and the US is their nightmare come true. They will do everything to escalate US-Iran animosities preventing rapprochement between the two countries. Attacks on me are all about this issue.

Alongside the attacks, there likely have been positive reactions to your speech. Could you elaborate on the positive responses from individuals, groups, or countries worldwide and the content of those responses?

When attacks on me are organized by the Israeli lobby and the US hawks, those positive about my arguments, prefer to keep silent because they are afraid of the consequences.

Do you believe the quality of US politics (both domestically and internationally) has trended toward strength or weakness in the long term over recent decades? Please explain your answer.

I think the current US foreign policy will weaken the US position worldwide. My talk at the US Strategic Command was about the US policy in the Middle East. That is why I offered them the following

seven recommendations for a revised US Middle East policy:

Focus on economic, investment, and technological cooperation rather than sanctioning and weaponizing.

End dangerous and counterproductive war policies, interference, and regime change. Establish healthy and friendly relations with all countries rather than creating alliances with some countries against other countries.

Support the creation of a new regional security and cooperation system in the Persian Gulf and hand over the responsibilities to the regional countries to maintain peace and stability rather than trying to achieve it with tens of military bases and trillions of dollars.

Promote civilian diplomacy to strengthen citizen-to-citizen relations such as tourism, athletic, academic, cultural, and social relations based on respecting each other's religions and cultures rather than imposing Western cultures.

Support the Middle East free from all WMDs. Regionalize the principles of the JCPOA in a Persian Gulf cooperative security system. This would make possible a Nuclear Free Zone in the Persian Gulf.

Finally, launch a comprehensive dialogue between Iran and the US to end 40 years of animosity, and restore normal relations based on mutual respect and non-interference. Cooperate on issues of common interests because the list of issues on which American and Iranian interests converge is a long one.



Iran & the US, Mutual Threat Perception and Deterrence Policies

Parts of Mousavian's speech at the United State Strategic Command, August 17, 2023-Nebraska

The 1953 coup

To understand this foundational moment in modern Iranian perceptions of the US, we have to see how, after the Second World War, Washington established a new world order and decided to use Iran as one of its bulwarks against the Soviet Union.

Just a few years after World War II, the US established almost every international institution in the modern world. Each was dominated by the US.

Since then, the US has also been involved in 80% of all the global conflicts and wars since WWII.

According to one study, the US also carried out at least 81 interventions in foreign elections during the period 1946–2000 and according to another, the US engaged in 70 attempts at regime change during the Cold War.

In Iran, this manifested itself in 1953, as the US & U.K. orchestrating the coup to remove democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq and installing the Shah as a dictator. Thereafter, by supporting the dictator, the US dominated Iran, indirectly, for a quarter of a century. Americans may have forgotten, but every Iranian knows this story.

The 1979 revolution Americans do remember the 1979 revolution in Iran, and the taking of American diplomats as hostages. They do not recall that the revolution was a popular reaction to the Shah's dictatorship and US interference and violation of the political independence of Iran.

Confronted by mass protest, the Shah fled Iran. Thirteen days after the Shah arrived in New York on October 22, 1979, protesters stormed the US embassy in Tehran. 52 American diplomats were seized and spent 444 days in captivity. A sad and unfortunate story.

Eventually, on 19 January, 1981, the Algiers Accords were signed between the two countries to resolve their major bilateral disputes. Iran agreed to release its American hostages, and the US promised not to intervene, directly or indirectly, politically or militarily, in Iran's internal affairs, revoke US sanctions, and return Iranian assets.

This Accord laid the foundation for Washington and Tehran to restore normal diplomatic relations based on mutual respect, non-interference and mutual interests.

Soon after the American hostages were released, the US violated the Accord. Iran learned that US assurances could not be trusted.

Saddam Hussein's Invasion of Iran

Iran soon learned a more painful lesson. The US supported Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran.

During the eight years' war, Saddam used chemical weapons produced with materials and technology from the US and Europe.

A Washington Post investigation revealed that "the administrations

of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush authorized the sale to Iraq of numerous items including poisonous chemicals and deadly biological viruses."

The New York Times revealed that "60 American officers were secretly providing detailed information on Iranian deployments, tactical planning for battles, plans for air strikes and bomb-damage assessments for Iraq."

The Soviet Union and Europe provided sophisticated conventional weapons including missiles, and the Arab allies of the US provided financial support.

Three major consequences of war on Iran were:

- 1- the militarization of the Iranian revolution,
- 2- Major shift in Iranian strategy acquiring deterrence capability. Iran developed its own conventional arms, drones, nuclear and missile capability,
- 3- A new army called the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) was created to mobilize and organize hundreds of thousands of volunteers for the war front.

Today, one of the major challenges for the US in the Middle East is the power and influence of Iran's Revolutionary Guard inside Iran and across the region, coupled with the missile, drones, conventional arms and nuclear capability Iran has built up.

The US and Iran's Nuclear Program

After Iran's 1979 revolution, Iran decided to forgo the Shah's ambitious nuclear program and US policy changed to "zero nuclear technology" for Iran. The US & EU stopped all nuclear exports to Iran, and under US pressure, all other countries stopped nuclear cooperation with Iran as well.

As the result, in 1996, Iran decided to go for self-sufficiency in nuclear fuel and technology. By 2002, it had mastered uranium enrichment.

When the US learned this, its policy shifted from "Zero Nuclear" to "Zero Enrichment" in Iran.

Recognizing the folly of this policy, France, Germany and the UK began talks with Iran in October 2003 to accept limits on Iran's nuclear capabilities. But the US refused to negotiate with Iran.

In March 2005, Iran proposed the same principles that were later agreed in the 2015 Nuclear Deal. However, the 2005 nuclear talks failed due to US insistence on "zero enrichment in Iran" and increased sanctions. In response, Iran increased the level and capacity of its uranium enrichment program and reached a capacity in 2013 that meant Iran would have required only 2-3 months for it to produce enough weapon-grade uranium for a bomb. This served Iran as a deterrent.

This deterrent capability was not acquired easily. In 2010, in a joint operation with Israeli intelligence services, the US launched cyberattacks on Iran's nuclear facilities.

Subsequently, several Iranian nuclear facilities were sabotaged and Iranian nuclear scientists were assassinated.

In response, Iran began to create a cyber army and today is among the top 10 most powerful cyber nations in the world.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence's 2023 Annual Threat Assessment states that: "Iran's growing expertise and willingness to conduct aggressive cyber operations make it a major threat to the security of US and allied networks and data." This is just another example of deterrence as both action and reaction.

The Iran Nuclear Deal

It took a long time for the US to see sense. Ultimately, President Obama changed the US policy from "Zero Enrichment" to "zero Nuclear Bombs". The Iran Nuclear deal known as JCPOA agreed in July 2015 included:

- 1- Most comprehensive transparency measures,
- 2- Limits on enrichment capacity and stocks of low-enriched uranium and heavy water, and
- 3- An estimated one-year breakout time for a bomb.

Iran complied with its side of the deal with zero failure. The US did not.

President Trump withdrew the US from the Iran Nuclear Deal & reimposed sanctions. In response, step by step, Iran began reducing its compliance with the deal.

From May 2019, Iran increased enrichment from 3.67% to 20% and then 60%, and its stockpile of low-enriched uranium from 300 to about 4,000 kg.

President Trump also had popular Iranian Revolutionary Guard Gen. Soleimani assassinated. In response, Iran attacked a US military base in Iraq with conventional ballistic missiles – the first time; a US military base was ever attacked in the Middle East.

Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal was disastrous for the US because:

- 1- Since Trump's withdrawal in May 2018, Iran's breakout time has declined from a year to less than 10 days.
- 2- Neither US-led sanctions nor Israeli assassinations have stopped Iran's nuclear advances.
- 3- Meanwhile, Iran has moved closer to China and Russia.

4- Iran joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and applied to join the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). Both organizations were created by China and Russia.

5- Iran has been providing drones to Russia. The US and Europe suspect that Russia has used Iranian drones in Ukraine war.

Had the US stayed in the nuclear agreement, Iran's strategy toward China and Russia might have been different and Iran and the US also could have negotiated on the other disputed Middle East issues.

Recommendations

Where do we go from here? I have three major recommendations for the United States:

1. Revive the Iran Nuclear Deal. In June 2023, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released its assessment on Iran. The main point of the report is that: "Iran is not currently undertaking the key nuclear weapons-development activities that would be necessary to produce a testable nuclear device." This assessment has remained much the same during the past 20 years.

This means, Iran does not have a nuclear bomb and has made no decision to build a nuclear bomb.

But this was because Iran hoped the US would make a deal and keep its promises. Iran is trying again with President Biden. But this view cannot be assumed to last forever. Reviving the JCPOA would be the most credible objective guarantee that Iran's nuclear program would remain peaceful.

2. Pursue nuclear disarmament in good faith.

Weapons of Mass destructions are a major threat to global security and stability. We are entering an era where the possession and use and threat of use of nuclear weapons is seen by almost all as a problem. The risks are escalating and the penalties for their use are uncertain.

The US and the other world powers should strengthen regimes and international norms by ending double standards. Everyone in the Middle East knows Israel, a key US ally, is the only country in the region with nuclear weapons, and the US says nothing about this.

3. Revise US Middle East strategy. The core of the conflict between Iran and the US is about the future of the Middle East. Through sanctions, military and political action and creating regional alliance, the US has tried to isolate Iran.

For its part, Iran has tried to undermine the US regional role and interests. 40 years of this confrontational strategy has been a losing game for Washington and Tehran.

In 2023, an Iranian MP, Mohsen Pirhadi, said that the number of people living below the poverty line in Iran had reached 28 million. The US has also lost because:

- 1- Today, the US is worried about Iran's growing regional influence in Syria, Yemen, Lebanon, and Iraq.
- 2- The regional alliance led by Israel and Saudi Arabia against Iran has failed. In fact, and with China's initiative, Tehran and Riyadh are on the way to rapprochement.
- 3- China has become the No. 1 economic partner of many US allies in the region.

4- US Persian Gulf allies have not confronted Russia on its war on Ukraine.

5- Public opinion polls show that most people in the Middle East consider the US and Israel as the major threats to peace in the region.

6- According to studies by Brown University in 2023, the wars the US waged in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria,

Yemen, and Pakistan following September 11, 2001, have caused at least 4.5 million deaths and the displacement of 49–60 million, rivaling the displacements in WWII. Last month, Foreign Policy Magazine published a report titled: America's love of sanctions will be its downfall. The report says:

■ A total of 23 countries are under US sanctions, the US had sanctions on about 10,000 individuals, companies, and sectors worldwide

■ The countries subject to US sanctions collectively account for more than one-fifth of global GDP, are now seeking to rewrite the rules of the global financial system.

■ At the end, the Foreign Policy article suggests that US policy makers should reconsider their love affair with sanctions because they are actively undermining US interests. In short, the US regional strategy for the Persian Gulf and Middle East has failed and China is winning the region because Beijing has focused on technology, trade, cooperation and investment and not destroying its resources by engaging in wars, regime change attempts or sanction policy in the Middle East.

I therefore have 7 recommendations for a revised US Middle East strategy that would make the US more competitive with China:

1- Focus on economic, investment and technological cooperation rather than sanctioning and weaponizing.

2- End dangerous and counterproductive policies of war, interference and regime change.

3- Establish healthy and friendly relations with all countries rather than creating alliances with some countries against other countries.

4- Support creation of a new regional security and cooperation system in the Persian Gulf and hand over the responsibilities to the regional countries to maintain peace and stability rather than trying to achieve it with tens of military bases and trillions of dollars.

5- Promote civilian diplomacy to strengthen citizen-to-citizen relations such as tourism, athletic, academic, cultural, and social relations based on respecting each other's religions and cultures rather than imposing western cultures.

6- Support a Middle East free from all WMDs. Regionalize the principles of the JCPOA in a Persian Gulf cooperative security system. This would make possible a Nuclear Free Zone in the Persian Gulf.

7- Last but not least, launch a comprehensive dialogue between Iran and the US to end 40 years of animosity, restore normal relations based on mutual respect and non-interference. Cooperate on issues of common interests because the list of issues on which American and Iranian interests diverge is a long one. What America needs today, is a new strategy that does not involve wars, regime changes, and operations against sovereign states obsessively trying to control everyone in every part of the world. That is my message to this deterrence summit.

Azmoun out as Iran names squad for Bulgaria, Angola friendlies

Sports Desk

Iranian striker Sardar Azmoun will miss the upcoming friendly matches against Bulgaria and Angola as he continues his rehabilitation with his new club AS Roma.

Azmoun joined the Italian top-flight side from Bayer Leverkusen on a season-long loan deal last week but was ruled out of Friday's 2-1 home defeat against Milan in Serie A due to an injury he suffered during his time with the Bundesliga outfit.

Iran head coach Amir Qalenoee named 24 players for the two games in September's international break, with Persepolis center-back Hossein Kan'anizadegan also absent in the list for disciplinary reasons in the aftermath of a red card he was shown during the CAFA Nations Cup final victory over Uzbekistan in June.

Injured Kayserispor defender Majid Hosseini will also miss the two games.

Iran will play away to Bulgaria at the Hristo Botev Stadium in Plovdiv on Thursday, five days before hosting Angola in Tehran. Ranked 77th in the latest FIFA Ranking, Bulgaria is fourth in Group G of the Euro 2024 qualifiers



FFIRI

with two points after four rounds of matches and shared the spoils with Serbia in a 1-1 draw at home last time out in June. Angola, No. 116 in the

world, was last in action in July's COSAFA Cup – featuring Southern African national teams – and failed to progress beyond the group stage.

AEK Athens fullback Milad Mohammadi received a first international call-up since last year's World Cup, while Sepahan striker Shahriyar Moghanlou and Saman

Qoddous, who re-signed for Premier League side Brentford, are also back in the team after missing the CAFA tournament. Qalenoee, who replaced

Portuguese Carlos Queiroz after the World Cup, is tasked with steering his team in January's AFC Asian Cup in Qatar, where the three-time champion

will be chasing a first trophy since 1976.

Iran is drawn alongside the United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, and Palestine in Group C of the continent's flagship international event.

The following is the full Iran squad:

Goalkeepers: Alireza Beiranvand (Persepolis), Payam Niazmand (Sepahan), Mohammadreza Akhbari (Golgozar Sirjan)

Defenders: Ehsan Hajsafi (AEK Athens), Milad Mohammadi (AEK Athens), Ramin Rezaeian (Sepahan), Sadeq Moharrami (Dinamo Zagreb), Morteza Pouraliganji (Persepolis), Mohammad Daneshgar (Sepahan), Rouzbeh Cheshmi (Esteghlal), Mohammad-Hossein Moradmamand (Esteghlal)

Midfielders: Ali Karimi (Kayserispor), Milad Sarlak (Persepolis), Saeed Ezzatollahi (Vejle BK), Alireza Alizadeh (Golgozar Sirjan), Saman Qoddous (Brentford), Ahmad Nourollahi (Al Wahda), Vahid Amiri (Persepolis), Mohammad Mohebbi (FC Rostov), Mehdi Torabi (Persepolis), Alireza Jahانبakhsh (Feyenoord)

Strikers: Mehdi Taremi (Porto), Reza Asadi (Sepahan), Shahriyar Moghanlou (Sepahan).

Iran's Hajimousaei wins World Taekwondo GP gold



Gold medalist Mahdi Hajimousaei (R) and his countryman Abolfazl Zandi celebrate with the Iranian flag after the men's -58kg final in the World Taekwondo Grand Prix in Paris, France, on September 1, 2023.

WORLD TAEKWONDO

Sports Desk

The first day of the World Taekwondo Grand Prix in Paris saw Iranian Mahdi Hajimousaei walk away with a precious gold to take a massive step toward securing a berth in next year's Olympic Games in the French capital. The stage was set for an all-Iranian showdown, featuring Hajimousaei and his fellow 19-year-old Abolfazl Zandi, in the men's -58kg contests, before the latter withdrew from the bout to make sure Hajimousaei would earn 60 qualification points for the Olympics – moving up by five

spots in the latest World Rankings to stand in the 15th place. Hajimousaei caused a major upset earlier in the event by a victory over Italian Vito Dell'Aquila – a gold medalist at the Tokyo Olympics and last year's World Championships – in straight rounds and went on to beat Australian Bailey Lewis for a place in the final.

Beaten by Hajimousaei in June's Grand Prix semifinals in Rome, Zandi also enjoyed an impressive run on Friday as he outpowered South Koreans Jun Jang and Park Tae-joon – third and fourth in the World Rankings respec-

tively – and then came out victorious against Tunisian world number one Mohamed Khalil Jendoubi – silver winner in Tokyo – in the last-four bout.

Elsewhere on Friday, Iranian teenage girl Mobina Ne'matzadeh got off to a brave start against Tokyo Olympic silver medalist Adriana Cerezo of Spain in the -49kg semis, winning the first round, but eventually fell to a 2-1 defeat and settled for a joint bronze – alongside China's Xiaolu Wang. Turkey's Merve Dincel defeated the Spaniard for the ultimate prize.

Djokovic fights back from two sets down to reach US Open last 16

REUTERS – A tenacious Novak Djokovic survived a US Open late night fright battling back from two sets down to tame fellow Serb Laslo Djere 4-6 4-6 6-1 6-1 6-3 on Friday, and move into the fourth round at Flushing Meadows.

On the ropes and reeling Djokovic, as he has done many times before, snatched victory from the jaws of defeat in front a record crowd inside a breathless Arthur Ashe Stadium court. It marked the 38th time Djokovic has won a five-setter and kept alive the 36-year-old's quest for a fourth US Open crown that would pull him level with Margaret Court's record haul of 24 Grand Slams.

"I hope you enjoyed the show, it was not so enjoyable for me especially in the first two sets," Djokovic told the crowd. "It was one of the toughest matches I have played here in many years." Djokovic had looked imperious in his opening two matches surrendering only 11 games in blowout wins over Frenchman Alexandre Muller and Spaniard Bernabe Zapata Miralles but his 32nd seeded countryman proved a far tougher test. The two Serbs had only clashed once before that in Belgrade last year but there were signs then that Djere was a danger, with the contest needing three sets and two tie-breaks before Djokovic claim the win.

"I did a little pep talk in the mirror," said Djokovic about his bathroom break after the second set. "I kind of laughed at myself because I was agitated and annoyed with the result, I had to kind of force myself to lift myself, to lift the spirits up." "Once I got the break in the third I thought 'OK, I have a shot, I have a chance,'" said Djokovic. "I might as well go after it."

"I started to play a bit more aggressive, started to read his games slightly more than I had in the first two sets and it worked well.

"But trust me, it was nerve wracking all the way till the last shot," he added.



Novak Djokovic celebrates during a third-round victory over Laslo Djere in the US Open in Flushing Meadows, NY, US, on September 1, 2023.

AP

Iran's heavy water ranks first in world in terms of quality: *AEOI*



Spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Behrouz Kamalvandi said the heavy water produced in the country ranks first in the world in terms of quality, adding that Europeans are interested in its procurement from Tehran.

"Iran's heavy water ranks first in the world in terms of quality. European countries seek to purchase it

from us," Kamalvandi said in an interview with Mizan news agency, affiliated with the Iranian Judiciary, published on Saturday. He highlighted the AEOI's accomplishments in using nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, Press TV reported.

He added that Iran sells one liter of heavy water for \$1000. Heavy water derivatives

can be used in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer instead of the current high-risk methods and chemotherapy.

Tehran-IAEA relations
The AEOI spokesman also pointed to the current level of relations between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). "Despite several ups and downs, Iran has tried to es-

tablish a balanced relationship with the [UN nuclear] agency, and the relations are improving," he said. Iran has repeatedly voiced its readiness to resolve differences with the IAEA within a framework of constructive and mutual interaction and technical cooperation. The disputes between the two sides have been a sticking point in the talks

aimed at reviving the 2015 nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Elsewhere in his remarks, Kamalvandi referred to the nuclear industry's implications for people's lives, explaining that it has an impact on electricity generation, agriculture, and radiopharmaceuticals, among other things.

Technicians work at Iran's Arak heavy water reactor's secondary circuit, as officials and media visit the nuclear site, near Arak, Markazi Province, on December 23, 2019. ● AEOI

Thousands rally in Niger seeking French troops pullout

Thousands rallied Saturday in the Niger capital Niamey to demand that former colonial ruler France withdraw its troops as sought by a junta which seized power in June. The protesters gathered near a base housing French soldiers following a call by several civic organizations hostile to the French military presence in the West African country. Niger's military regime had fired a new verbal broadside at France on Friday, accusing Paris of "blatant interference" by backing the country's ousted president, as protestors held a similar protest near a French base outside Niamey. President Mohamed Bazoum, a French ally whose election in 2021 had stoked hopes of stability in the troubled country, was detained on July 26 by members of his guard.



Relations with France, the country's former colonial power and ally in its fight against terrorism, went swiftly downhill after Paris stood by Bazoum. On August 3, the regime announced the scrapping of military agreements with France, which has some 1,500 soldiers stationed in the country - a move that Paris has ignored on the grounds of legitimacy. The agreements cover different timeframes, although one of them dating from 2012 was set to

expire within a month, according to military leaders. The military rulers have also announced the immediate "expulsion" of the French Ambassador Sylvain Itte and announced it was withdrawing his diplomatic immunity. They said his presence was a threat to public order. But French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday hailed Itte's work in Niger and said he was in the country despite being given a 48-hour deadline to leave Niger last Friday.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



12 Iranians among 19 killed in Iraq road accident

National Desk
At least 19 people, including 12 Iranian pilgrims, were killed in a road accident in northern Iraq as millions of people converge on the holy city of Karbala for Arbáeen, one of the world's biggest religious gatherings. The accident, which occurred on Friday night between the cities of Du-jail and Samarra in Iraq's

Salaheddine Province, has also left at least 13 people injured, according to IRNA. Twelve Iranian nationals, four Afghans and three Iraqis have been killed in the tragic incident, the Iranian Red Crescent Society said on Saturday. The incident occurred after two minibuses crashed into each other shortly before midnight on Friday, a medical official in Salahed-

dine told AFP, on condition of anonymity, because he was not authorized to speak to the press. One of the drivers is believed to have fallen asleep at the wheel, the official said, citing witness accounts. Road accidents killed more than 4,900 people last year in Iraq, an average of 13 per day, according to the country's Health Ministry data.



TASNIM - Iran's Space Organization has taken delivery of a homegrown remote sensing satellite that is scheduled for blast-off after passing all tests. The "Tolu'-3" (Sunrise-3) satellite, manufactured by Iran Electronics Industries, a subsidiary of the Iranian Defense Ministry, was delivered to the Space Organization on Saturday after passing the final tests.

US to send depleted-uranium munitions to Ukraine

The Biden administration will for the first time send controversial armor-piercing munitions containing depleted uranium to Ukraine, according to a document seen by Reuters and separately confirmed by two US officials. The rounds, which could help destroy Russian tanks, are part of a new military aid package for Ukraine set to be unveiled in the next week. The munitions can be fired from US Abrams tanks that, according to a person familiar with the matter, are expected to be delivered to Ukraine in the coming weeks. One of the officials said that the coming aid package will be worth between \$240 million and \$375 million depending on what is included. Although Britain sent depleted uranium munitions to Ukraine earlier this year, this would be the first US shipment of the ammunition and will



likely stir controversy. It follows an earlier decision by the Biden administration to provide cluster munitions to Ukraine, despite concerns over the dangers such weapons pose to civilians. The use of depleted uranium munitions has been fiercely debated, with opponents like the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons saying there are dangerous health risks from ingesting or inhaling depleted uranium dust, including

cancers and birth defects. A by-product of uranium enrichment, depleted uranium is used for ammunition because its extreme density gives rounds the ability to easily penetrate armor plating and self-ignite in a searing cloud of dust and metal. The United States used depleted uranium munitions in massive quantities in the 1990 and 2003 Persian Gulf Wars and the NATO bombing of former Yugoslavia in 1999.

Iran takes delivery of YAK-130 training jet



TASNIM - The Iranian Air Force has taken delivery of Russian-made Yak-130 advanced jet trainers. Developed by Russia's Yakovlev and Aermacchi, the Yakovlev Yak-130 is a subsonic two-seat jet trainer and light combat aircraft. The advanced aircraft would allow Iranian military pilots to undergo training in operating the fifth-generation fighter jets, like Sukhoi Su-57.

Iran becomes member of Silk Road tourism alliance



● IRNA

Iran has officially become a founding member of the International Tourism Alliance of Silk Road Cities, according to the deputy minister of cultural heritage, handicrafts, and tourism.

The announcement came as the alliance, initiated by the Chinese government, began its activities on September 1, with the participation of 57 cities from 26 countries, opening the door for potential new members, IRNA reported.

Pointing to the presence of Iran as one of the founding members of the alliance in 2023, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian continued that the Iranian province of Semnan is now a member of the alliance as the representative of Iran.

On September 1, 2023, a launch ceremony of the International Tourism Alliance of Silk Road Cities was held in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, China, along with a series of other activities, including the International Forum on Culture and Tourism Development of Silk Road Cities 2023.

He emphasized that this membership offers the Islamic Republic of Iran a unique opportunity to showcase its tourism potential, with a particular focus on the Silk Road and Semnan, while also outlining future plans for hosting the mayors of member cities.

He further elaborated on the collaboration objectives within the Silk Road Tourism Cities International Alliance, including enhancing cooperation among countries along the Silk Road, both overland and maritime, fostering synergy in organizing thematic events related to the Silk Road, facilitating the growth of the local tourism industry, developing sustainable practices, joint promotional campaigns among member countries, sharing experiences in Silk Road-related products, and improving the Silk Road brand.

The alliance holds the "International Forum on Culture and Tourism Development of Silk Road Cities" annually in a rotating presidency, and carries out joint promotion activities on the culture and tourism themes of member cities for enterprises and citizens, and holds official visits, youth exchanges, professional training, study tours, theme routes, festival parties, selection of famous cities, and other activities within the framework of the alliance.

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Iran Daily

62607571900044 > irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir

Vol. 7379 ● Sunday, Sept. 3, 2023 ● Price 40,000 Rials ● 8 Pages

Iran's 'Chkhvte' shines fresh light on Chekhov's classics

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

IRNA DAILY: Why did you choose to direct a theatrical performance based on the stories and plays of Anton Chekhov instead of a single play of Chekhov?

ASHKAN PIRDELZENDE: Chekhov's stories have been adapted into various forms, and many renowned directors have staged related performances. Personally, I wanted to create a theatrical piece that couldn't be experienced or seen in reality, or even in contrast with cinematic works. Additionally, I have always found the combination and interconnection of characters and events fascinating, and Chekhov's stories provided a great choice for this work.

Some audiences who are not familiar with Chekhov's stories may find it a bit challenging to follow the narrative of the play. Wouldn't it have been better to address this issue at the beginning of the performance?

I believe that for someone who has read Chekhov's stories, watching this performance can be intriguing due to the familiarity with the characters and the stories they know. However, for those who are not familiar with his stories, it offers a glimpse into a person's mind, as the nostalgic and relatable events in the play are something everyone in society has experienced.

As a director, can you tell us about the dramatic concept you had in mind,

'Chkhvte,' a theatrical production, has taken the stage with a novel viewpoint on Anton Chekhov's plays and short stories. Written by Farzaneh Mohammad-Hosseini, produced by Reza Najipour, and masterfully directed by Ashkan Pirdel Zende, this show offers a unique interpretation of Chekhov's timeless tales.

"They say that when you die, all the memories you had or didn't

have come before your eyes like a dream for a few seconds." This idea sets the stage for a journey into the depths of human emotion, and 'Chkhvte' brings it to life in a way that is both thought-provoking and unforgettable.

With a talented cast including Romina Farmani, Farzaneh Mohammad-Hosseini, Yeganeh Mansouri, Sarah Zarei, Amir-Hossein Foroutan, Sara Azizi, Kiarash

Zarrin, and Mohammad-Ali Barati, the production is being staged with its performances. The production is on stage at Tehran's City Theater until September 7.

Iran Daily reporter Negar Amiri conducted an interview with Ashkan Pirdel Zende providing a deeper understanding of this theatrical experience. The full text of the interview follows:



● theater.ir

which involves the juxtaposition of various stage elements to achieve it?

In my view, loss, unexpressed emotions, fear, feelings of inferiority... all originate from the human mind, and, metaphorically, the devil inside people is the mind and conversation among people.

The connection between Chekhov's characters, despite their simplicity, is the mental conflicts they constantly experience. Even a character like Cherdiaikov, in the death story of a clerk, could lead to his own death due to these futile mental

struggles.

The dramatic essence of the work is derived from these pivotal points and aims to capture all the emotions we have undoubtedly experienced in life.

Emotional continuity among the actors is considered one of the strengths of the performance. How long did it take to achieve this continuity?

Firstly, the coordination in casting was essential to achieve this harmony. Anyone who joined the project, willingly or unwillingly,

went through a rigorous audition process.

Discipline, responsibility, focus, and, most importantly, love and understanding of the theatrical space were prioritized in the work.

Each member of the team is like my family, and my heart aches for each of them, as they have invested two years in every aspect of this work. Personally, I have no way to express my gratitude for all this love and dedication. The only thing I could do was to make sure that their efforts were honored on stage.

If you were to perform this piece again in the future, considering the suggestions and criticisms received during this period, would you make any changes to the performance?

Yes, during the performance, I identified various aspects that were naturally part of the feedback from the audience. I have made changes to the rhythm of some scenes and even dialogues, which I am still modifying. I have also approached the work differently with the actors. So, yes, I have made and will continue to make changes to the performance.

Iranian cinematographer dies, aged 71



● IRNA

Iranian director of photography and a veteran of the silver screen Mordeza Poursamadi died. He died while filming a home entertainment series.

Born in 1952 in the western city of Hamedan,

Poursamadi left behind numerous outstanding works, including "The Zero-Degree Parallel," "Sh! Girls Don't Shout!" "Day in, Day out," etc. During his professional career, Poursamadi worked with many re-

nowned Iranian documentary filmmakers. He was nominated for the Best Cinematography Award for "Endless Night" at the Top Indie Film Award and the Love International Film Festival.

Nobel body withdraws invitation to Iran, Russia, Belarus

The Nobel Foundation said it would not after all invite the ambassadors of Iran, Russia, and Belarus to attend the Nobel Prize awards ceremony in Stockholm this year, reversing an earlier decision after widespread criticism.

The foundation said on Saturday that the original decision was based on its belief "that it is important and right to reach out as widely as possible with the values and messages that the Nobel Prize stands for". According to TRT World.

However, it noted that the strong reactions "completely overshadowed this message". "We, therefore, choose to repeat last year's exception to regular practice — that is, to not invite the ambassadors of Russia, Belarus and Iran to the

Nobel Prize award ceremony in Stockholm."

Last year, the Norwegian Nobel Institute still invited all ambassadors to the Peace Prize ceremony it organizes in Oslo, and the foundation said this would be the case again.

"As before, all ambassadors will be invited to the ceremony in Oslo," it noted.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson, who had also disagreed with the foundation's original announcement, welcomed the new decision in a statement on X.

In 2022, the Nobel Foundation, which organizes the annual Nobel Prize ceremony and banquet in Stockholm, de-

cidated not to invite the Russian and Belarusian ambassadors to the Stockholm award event because of the war in Ukraine. The decision to once again invite the Russian and Belarusian representatives sparked ire in Sweden and abroad.

