

Nothing certain about TRT Farsi yet

In an effort to uncover the media agenda of TRT Farsi, IRNA's reporter sought out those who were shown in the teaser

of the channel's launch and sought their opinions. They believed that nothing definitive has been decided about the managers and reporters of this channel, and their own

collaboration has only been at the level of this teaser because TRT Farsi has not yet received a license to operate in Iran. According to some of those involved with this channel, the

guests invited to the launch ceremony and their positions have not been approved by the Turkish government, and they have been warned to adjust their approach and activities regarding Iran.

The TRT's Turkish director said, "We will not abandon Iran." But it seems we must wait and see whether this new Farsi-language channel will adopt a mischievous approach or decide to adhere to

at least some media professionalism for the common interests of the two neighboring countries.

The article first appeared in Farsi on IRNA.

TRT Farsi advances plots of Zionists, allies: Former IIRB official

INTERVIEW In recent days, the launch of Turkey's TRT Farsi TV channel has been one of the topics of interest in Iranian media. Naturally, the launch of such a channel by a Turkish-speaking country for Farsi-speaking audiences indicates a political approach that our northwestern neighbor is pursuing. That is why understanding their political approach and taking countermeasures to counter their goals are among the needs that are felt by the country's media outlets, especially in our state media. On the occasion of the launch of TRT Farsi, ILNA conducted an interview with Parviz Farsijani, the former director-general of the Iranian Organization of Cinema and former middle manager of the state media, to discuss this new TV channel. What follows is the full interview translated by Iran Daily into English.

QUESTION: What is your take on the launch of Turkey's TRT Farsi channel?

FARSIJANI: Considering Iran's very important role in the region, it seems that, as the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution has pointed out, the enemy is trying to isolate and reduce the country's impact through a soft war. For this reason, several similar efforts have been made so far by regional countries, including Saudi Arabia's actions, which launched the MBC Persia channel and set out to attract Farsi-speaking audiences.

Today, Turkey intends to complete this process with TRT Farsi, and it is clear that Iran's enemies have a detailed plan to attract and guide the public opinion of Iranians. In my view, the launch of this channel is noteworthy because we should not be passive in the face of such actions, and we need to have a specific plan.

Iran's National Virtual Space Center, the Supreme National Security Council, and related institutions have certainly come to the conclusion that we must put aside passivity to achieve our country's goals and that we need to predict and deal more actively and qualitatively with the media moves of countries in the field of soft war. Now that Turkey has made such a move, raising awareness among the Iranian people is an important media task that various visual, auditory, and, above all, state media should prioritize.

The goals of these Farsi-language channels are clear. Previously, channels like Manoto, BBC Farsi, GEM, and so on have tried to build their desired culture among Iranian audiences. My concern is that our visual media, such as the IIRB, video-on-demand (VOD) services, and even our cinema, cannot attract audiences, and as a result, these newly established channels can replace our country's media outlets. Turkish-language channels have a higher chance of success in this regard because, in recent years, they have gained many audiences among Iranians and can more easily exert their desired negative influence on Iranians.

What are the features of the kind of destructive culture building that such movements are pursuing?

In recent years, we have clearly seen that Turkey is promoting pan-Turkism and, through its alliance with Azerbaijan, is seeking to have a more profound impact on our Turk-

ish-speaking ethnicities, which is a warning to all our people and officials to find a real solution for this issue.

We certainly need better communication with the Iranian audience. Along with paying attention to this important issue, our media should operate with specific rules and regulations, and we should design a framework and rules in our country that the Iranian Parliament, the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, or the National Virtual Space Center can determine so that these channels — just like Instagram, Telegram, and other social media — are controlled and operate under the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran; otherwise, necessary warnings should be given, and, if necessary, appropriate measures should be taken.

The decrease in the audience of state media in recent years is an issue that almost all intellectual factions of the country emphasize. The reduction in audience indicates significant weaknesses in the performance of state media. What weaknesses do you see, and what action should be taken to address them?

The existence of rival media in our country is a very old issue. Since the Islamic Revolution succeeded, these media have been active and trying. However, for a time, state media and media managers made such smart moves that rivals were always behind us, and their impact was very small and insignificant. However, due to our recent poor performance, lack of good recognition of rivals and their tactics, and lack of quantitative and qualitative preparedness in producing superb programs, unfortunately, we have fallen far behind our rivals, and they are now ahead of us.

This is a worrying development. Our state media does not use its capacities well; today, state media has neither employed professional individuals nor efficient, capable, and informed managers who can help guide state media in a good direction with our experience of the past 40 years. Unfortunately, state media is moving forward with trial and error, and we have not only made no progress but are also witnessing steps backward. We are witnessing programs that we experienced in the past and recognized their good and bad aspects, but we do not use these experiences.



Mehmet Zahid Sobaci, the general director of Turkey's state broadcaster TRT, speaks at the launch ceremony of the new Farsi-language channel, TRT Farsi.

Given the good growth that our audience, especially the youth, has had and the expectations that young people have from state media, it is necessary to have a strong backing of media and intellectual elites for state media's works and productions. Unfortunately, today there is no sign of these elites anywhere, and in some cases, we are witnessing a step backward. We must keep in mind that today's media audience is very different from the audience 10 or 20 years ago. Yet, we are still producing very old content and are lagging behind our rivals.

Another point is that we do not see the signs of any specific and documented manifesto or strategy in the performance of state media. It seems that current managers are making efforts, but their efforts are not in line with what they should be. The Leader's remarks about the enemy's successful and intelligent performance in the soft war and cognitive war are very important. We are responding to their good performance, which is in line with their goals, with poor, weak, and passive performance of our own. We need to find new solutions to be able to relate to today's generation and other audiences; otherwise, we will remain passive and continue to lose our audience and cannot have a successful performance.

Given the existing conditions, what is your prediction for the success or failure of channels like TRT Farsi in building their intended culture?

It seems that the United States and Zionists, with the help of their allies in the region, such

as Turkey and its friends, have many plans that they want to implement in the region. Some of their plans — for example, the attack on Syria — have been undeniably implemented, and I believe that the launch of TRT Farsi is part of these actions.

There are certainly other plans for the future. Unfortunately, Turkey is one of the most attractive countries in the region for Iranian tourists. Iranians have even spent billions of dollars buying property and land in Turkey in recent years. All of this is a warning that the enemy is intelligently using their existing capacities to attract the Iranian audience in line with the goals they are pursuing. These actions are an attempt to change the culture and taste of the Iranian audience, and if we do not find a solution, we will certainly face great problems in the field of

culture and, in fact, in the soft war front, which will be very difficult to compensate for in the future.

Our seminaries and universities must help the relevant authorities not only to neutralize these actions but also to help us launch an attack against these movements. Being passive and making wrong decisions will cause them to move forward step by step and put us in a more passive position where we are only spectators and ultimately regret the actions we should have taken but did not. I think we need a good design and a plan and an effective strategy in the relevant councils, including the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, to follow so that, instead of constantly falling back, we can even attack the enemy.

The article first appeared in Farsi on ILNA.



Parviz Farsijani

