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## IRGC Chief: Iran Today Is a Rival to U.S.

TEHRAN -- Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) head General Hussein Salami says Iran today has embraced a strategic outlook that is in contrast to U.S. decline.

He said while the U.S. had global power decades ago, it no longer has the domination and influence it once did.

"Today, a powerful Islamic Iran is a rival to the United States. This battle is going on in all fields, and the mobilization has played a fundamental and decisive role in this competition and the neutralization of Western ideas from society," he said. He praised the Iranian youth and the revolutionary spirit that guides Iran today, saying the revolution has borne fruit and is growing.

He said that many years ago Iran was in darkness, dominated by foreign colonialists. This created intellectual stagnation, "the freezing of thought in the ice of consciousness, in the darkness of ignorance."

Western models of thought, he said, had harmed the country and ruined its Islamic and national identity. "Where there is strategic thinking - in today's sense of strategic thinking - the nation rules its own destiny," he said.

General Salami said Iran previously had only tactical-level thought but it has now become a strategic player in the world.

"There is an intermediary level that receives the strategic level of thought and translates it into the tactical level, and is called the intermediate and operational level," he said, adding that "Iran lacked a strategic level of thinking."

The West had confused Iran, which was in some ways caught in the gravity of power and influence that America had in the region, the general said. It was not independent but rather part of a pillar of U.S. foreign policy.

"It was Iran that, because of its geographical location, size and economic power, could act as a regional carrier to advance U.S. policies."

But Iran freed itself from the U.S. and now can act strategically, General Salami said. He also said Islam "came to break the shackles of captivity from Iran's hands and feet; Islam came in the form of the Islamic Revolution."

Then came the war. Iran fought off Iraq in the 1980s and since then it has engaged in other conflicts. These 43 years have been full of the history of a continuous, uninterrupted world war, but overall, Iran has worn down the Americans, he said.

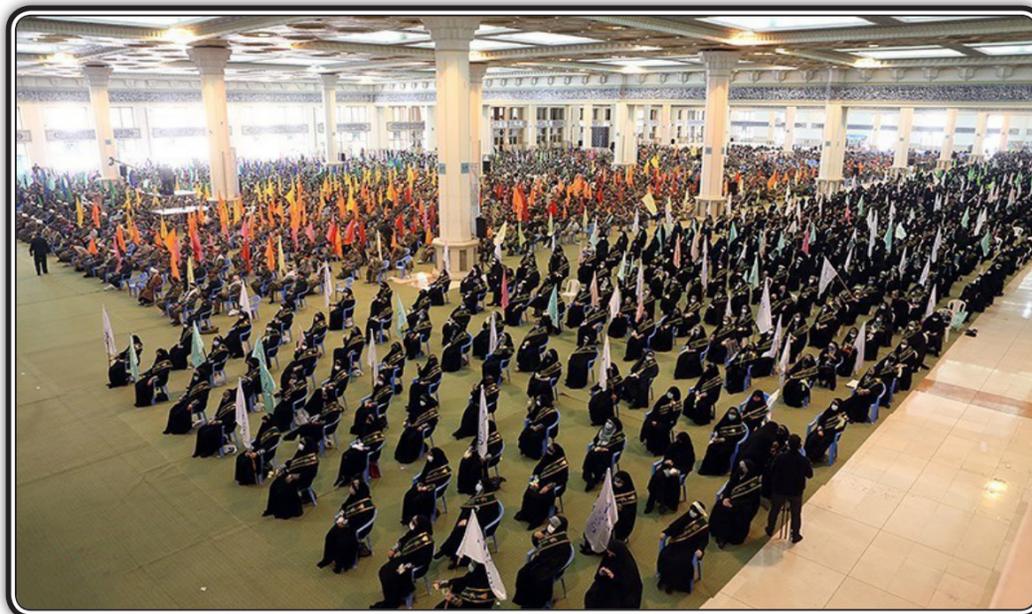
"The America you see today is far from the one you saw before," he said. "At that time, 40% of the world economy and world wealth was in U.S. hands. Its nuclear bombs had exploded in Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and all of Western Europe was under its political control. It controlled all the strategic positions of the world and dominated all political institutions."

"This dominance exists today, but to a lesser extent; America today is much weaker than it was 43 years ago, and in the relative position of us and it, this inequality is gradually becoming equal."

TEHRAN -- A former chief commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has reflected on the potential for conclusion of a "non-aggression pact" between Iran and its neighboring states, saying such an agreement can promote regional trust and end security concerns.

Such an agreement "can boost regional trust and prevent creation of a security conundrum," said Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, a

# Basij Marks 42nd Birthday



Basij members gather at the Grand Mosalla mosque of Tehran for a 5,000-strong parade to mark the 42nd birthday of the volunteer force on Wednesday.

TEHRAN -- Thousands of Basij members gathered Wednesday at the Grand Mosalla mosque of Tehran to celebrate the 42nd birthday of the organization.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei offered congratulations on Basij Week, saying the voluntary force can play an effective role in solving problems.

"Congratulations to everyone on Basij Week, especially on the fresh and refreshing germinations of Basijis, who, like the previous generation, are still the beloved children of the late Imam."

"Dear ones! Be grateful for your position and know that with hard work, and in the light

of wisdom and honesty, and with trust and reliance on God Almighty, you can be effective in all public issues of the country and the nation and help solve problems; this is the experience of the Iranian nation for decades," the Leader said in a message.

Basij is a Persian word that means to be prepared and mobilized; it is the name of a paramilitary force in Iran that was formed in 1979 upon a decree by late founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini as a popular and voluntary force that is tasked with serving the Islamic Republic's ideals.

In the 1980s, hundreds of thousands of civilians volunteered as

Basij forces to go to the battlefield to defend their country in the Iraqi imposed war.

Today, the Basij manpower has grown to over 20 million members, with a range of responsibilities that transcend the military circle and include scientific, social and medical services.

Members of the Basij Organization are called Basiji. Depending on their skills or field of interest, Basijis are assigned with tasks that they carry out voluntarily, without any payment.

There is no age or gender limit for anyone who wishes to enroll as a Basiji.

The Basij is an affiliate of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps. It has many sub-divisions, in-

## Iran Vows to Fight Trafficking in Persons

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) -- Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations Majid Takht-Ravanchi has denounced trafficking in persons as "one of the most notorious crimes," calling on the international community to provide "tailor-made, accessible and effective technical assistance to countries to combat this crime in a more efficient manner."

Takht-Ravanchi made the remarks in an address to the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly for the Appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons.

He said the deliberations at the meeting would be "instrumental" in addressing challenges in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and finding ways

to tackle them.

Takht-Ravanchi said the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes (UNTOC) and its protocols had made efforts to create a coherent cross-border regulatory environment in an attempt to form a collective response to this menace.

As one of the earliest signatories to the UNTOC, Takht-Ravanchi said, Iran has taken the necessary steps in line with the provisions of the Convention and the protocols thereto to combat human trafficking.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its commitment to fight TIP and considers the role of the United Nations bodies, specifically the UNODC (UN Office on Drugs and Crime), in determining and facilitating international cooperation in this regard essen-

tial," the senior Iranian diplomat said.

He added that Iran's Parliament approved the UNTOC in 2018 which is now under the Expediency Council's consideration for its final approval.

There are currently several statutory regulations in place in Iran pertaining to TIP and other necessary legal tools for investigation and prosecution within the country's legal system, he said.

The senior official added that the Iranian administration had also approved a new draft bill amending the Countering Human Trafficking Act of 2004 and submitted it to the Parliament for adoption.

"This draft bill focuses on the definition of TIP, including all of its essential elements, as a notorious crime, while covering aggravating circumstances such as

The Holy Qur'an

Alms are only for the poor and the needy, and the officials over them, and those whose hearts are made to incline (truth) and the captives and those in debts and in the way of Allah and the wayfarer; an ordinance from Allah; and Allah is knowing, Wise.

The Holy Qur'an (9.60)

### PRAYER TIMINGS

Noon (Zohr)	11:51
Evening (Maghreb)	17:12
Dawn (Fajr) "Tomorrow"	05:21
Sunrise "Tomorrow"	06:49

cluding Basij-e Sazandegi or the Construction Basij, which is engaged in building or renovating schools, houses and hospitals in low-income areas, or the Medical Basij which is tasked with providing free of charge medical service in low-privileged areas.

The Basij says it has had an active participation in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. It dispensed free of charge masks and disinfectants during the early days of the pandemic and now it has turned its facilities into vaccination centers.

Starting out as a voluntary military force, Basij is today a powerful multi-tasked organization whose activity covers many areas, from economy to culture and urban development.

Basij says it will continue to grow with the needs of the time be they military or civilian.

commission against minors and women," he said.

He noted that such harmony would eventually contribute to international cooperation on the issue.

The Ministry of Interior has established the Commission on Countering Trafficking in Person, which features a set of executive and supervisory measures, to, inter alia, "develop policies, strategies and programs while monitoring any activities related to TIP."

"On the front line, our law enforcement personnel continue to bravely fight organized criminal groups despite the unavailability of necessary means and resources resulting from unlawful U.S. sanctions and in the absence of much needed international support to fight these groups efficiently," Takht-Ravanchi said.

## Official Reiterates Iran's Call for Non-Aggression Pact

top military adviser to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

The official was addressing a meeting held at Iran's Foreign Ministry with the aim of addressing the country's interactions with its neighbors.

Safavi underlined the necessity of an increase in the Islamic Republic's ability to coordinate exchange and analysis of strategic data together with its regional part-

ners.

By availing itself of such strategic information, the country can also "develop a correct perspective of the enemies' strategies concerning our region," he said.

In this context, the official advised development of a common "understanding of intelligence" with the regional countries.

Such common ground, he said, would help the country devise a comprehensive plan

for the development of all-out political, economic, and cultural ties with those states within a "win-win framework."

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