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Iran to replace 40 ambassadors

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Contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading	7
Discussion	8
Speaking	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

3 November, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Iran to replace 40 ambassadors

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has just announced he will replace 40 ambassadors. Most of these diplomats want stronger relations with the West, but Mr. Ahmadinejad thinks they are too weak. It is Iran's biggest shake-up of diplomatic staff since the country's Islamic Revolution in 1979. The changes will take place by the end of March 2006. Some of the ambassadors have been involved in months of negotiations with the EU over the issue of Iran's nuclear ambitions. It seems that much of the progress made in the past decade in warming Iranian-Western relations has disappeared.

President Ahmadinejad recently sparked an international outcry when he called for Israel to be removed from the world. He called for it to be "wiped off the map". British Prime Minister Tony Blair reacted angrily to this. He told his government that "the international community simply will not put up with [Iran's] continued breach of the proper and normal standards of behavior we expect from a member of the United Nations." He said Mr. Ahmadinejad's comments about Israel were similar to those of Hitler's during World War II. Meanwhile, the biggest anti-Western protests for many years continue in Tehran.

WARM-UPS

1. IRANIAN CITIZEN: You are a citizen of Iran. Walk around the classroom and talk with the other “Iranians” about your president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Do you agree with his foreign policy? What do you think about relations with the West? Do other countries misunderstand Iran?

2. THE WEST: Is the West always right? Does the West ever do any bad things? In pairs / groups, talk about whether the West has double standards. The following may help your conversation:

- The nuclear issue
- Democracy
- Free and fair trade
- Oil
- Religion
- Human rights
- The war on terror
- Weapons of mass destruction (WMD)
- Pollution controls
- Other

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Iran / Mahmoud Ahmadinejad / ambassadors / Islamic Revolution / March 2006 / progress / nuclear ambitions / Israel / maps / Hitler / anti-American protests

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. AMBASSADOR: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word “ambassador”. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: In pairs/groups, talk about how relations between these countries have changed over the past 10 or 20 years. How will these relations be ten years from now?

Iran / USA

North Korea / South Korea

Israel / Palestine

India / Pakistan

France / Great Britain

China / Japan

6. IRAN OPINIONS: How far do you agree or disagree with these opinions? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. Iran is a truly democratic country.
- b. There is no reason why Iran should not develop nuclear weapons.
- c. Mr. Ahmadinejad should apologize to Israel.
- d. Iran has a lot of good things to offer the world.
- e. President Ahmadinejad has the right to follow his own foreign policy.
- f. President George W. Bush should invite Mr. Ahmadinejad to his Texas ranch.
- g. The West doesn’t like anyone who has different ideas from its own.
- h. The world is a more dangerous place with Mr. Ahmadinejad as Iran’s president.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Iran's president has announced a shake-up in his diplomatic staff. T / F
- b. The diplomats have held the same positions since a 1979 revolution. T / F
- c. Some ambassadors have been in talks on nuclear issues with the EU. T / F
- d. The change in diplomats will improve Iranian-Western relations. T / F
- e. Mr. Ahmadinejad recently cried in public after a spark hit him. T / F
- f. Mr. Ahmadinejad recently called for Israel to be wiped off the map. T / F
- g. Tony Blair said Mr. Ahmadinejad's words were similar to Hitler's. T / F
- h. Peace protests are taking place in Iran's capital Tehran. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| a. announced | uproar |
| b. relations | happen |
| c. shake-up | neglect |
| d. take place | erased |
| e. negotiations | change |
| f. sparked | said |
| g. outcry | talks |
| h. wiped | demonstrations |
| i. breach | started |
| j. protests | ties |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. diplomats want stronger | Iran's nuclear ambitions |
| b. The changes will take place | for many years |
| c. been involved in months | relations with the West |
| d. over the issue of | reacted angrily to this |
| e. progress | of negotiations |
| f. sparked | of behavior |
| g. British Prime Minister Tony Blair | an international outcry |
| h. normal standards | made in the past decade |
| i. a member | by the end of March 2006 |
| j. the biggest anti-Western protests | of the United Nations |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Iran to replace 40 ambassadors

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has just _____ he will replace 40 ambassadors. Most of these _____ want stronger relations with the West, but Mr. Ahmadinejad thinks they are too _____. It is Iran's biggest shake-up of diplomatic _____ since the country's Islamic Revolution in 1979. The changes will take _____ by the end of March 2006. Some of the ambassadors have been _____ in months of negotiations with the EU over the _____ of Iran's nuclear ambitions. It seems that much of the progress made in the past decade in warming Iranian-Western relations has _____.

weak
issue
involved
diplomats
place
announced
disappeared
staff

President Ahmadinejad recently _____ an international outcry when he called for Israel to be removed from the world. He called for it to be "_____ off the map". British Prime Minister Tony Blair _____ angrily to this. He told his government that "the international community simply will not _____ up with [Iran's] continued breach of the _____ and normal standards of behavior we _____ from a member of the United Nations." He said Mr. Ahmadinejad's comments about Israel were _____ to those of Hitler's during World War II. Meanwhile, the biggest anti-Western _____ for many years continue in Tehran.

similar
proper
wiped
expect
put
sparked
protests
reacted

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Iran to replace 40 ambassadors

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has just _____ he will replace 40 ambassadors. Most of these _____ want stronger relations with the West, but Mr. Ahmadinejad thinks they are too weak. It is Iran's biggest _____ of diplomatic staff since the country's Islamic Revolution in 1979. The changes will take place by the end of March 2006. Some of the ambassadors have been _____ in months of negotiations with the EU over the issue of Iran's nuclear _____. It seems that much of the progress made in the past _____ in warming Iranian-Western relations has disappeared.

President Ahmadinejad recently _____ an international outcry when he called for Israel to be removed from the world. He called for it to be "_____ off the map". British Prime Minister Tony Blair _____ angrily to this. He told his government that "the international community simply will not put up with [Iran's] continued _____ of the proper and normal standards of behavior we expect from a member of the United Nations." He said Mr. Ahmadinejad's comments about Israel were _____ to those of Hitler's during World War II. Meanwhile, the biggest anti-Western _____ for many years continue in Tehran.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'take'** and **'place'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "IRAN" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Iran and its president.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| • replace | • sparked |
| • stronger | • Israel |
| • 1979 | • Tony Blair |
| • 2006 | • breach |
| • the EU | • Hitler |
| • progress | • protests |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of Iran?
- c. Do you think there'll be a war between Iran and the West?
- d. What do you think of Iran replacing 40 ambassadors?
- e. Why do you think Mr. Ahmadinejad dislikes the West?
- f. Should Iran face economic sanctions for its recent actions?
- g. Does the West think and worry too much about Iran?
- h. What do you think of Tony Blair saying Mr. Ahmadinejad's comments were similar to Hitler's?
- i. What will it take to repair Iranian-Western relations?
- j. Do you think Iran will ever have diplomatic ties with Israel?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think Iran is moving forward or backward?
- d. How will the new ambassadors change Iran's relations with the world?
- e. Should Iran be allowed to develop its own nuclear energy?
- f. What should Mr. Ahmadinejad do or say to apologize to Israel?
- g. Do you think Iran should be expelled from the United Nations?
- h. Wouldn't it be better for the West to accept and work with Iran rather than always mistrusting it?
- i. What do you think are the main things about the USA and Israel that Iranians are protesting against?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

I'M AN AMBASSADOR: You are an ambassador of your country. It is your job to improve diplomatic relations with the countries in the table below. In pairs / groups, describe the relations your country has with the countries in the table. Write down some current problems or areas that need improving on. Decide on some solutions that will reduce these problems and improve diplomatic relations.

COUNTRY	CURRENT RELATIONS	PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS
The U.S.A.			
China			
Russia			
Japan			
The U.K.			
Other _____			
Other _____			
Other _____			

Change partners and tell each other what you discussed with your earlier partner.

Give each other feedback on your solutions.

Return to your original partners and discuss the feedback you got. Make your solutions better.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. THE FUTURE: Make a poster describing the events that you think will take place concerning Iran over the next ten years. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things? Discuss the likelihood of the events happening.

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Tell him what you think of his recent actions. Give him advice on what to do in his foreign policy. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things or give similar advice?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. F c. T d. F e. F f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. announced	said
b. relations	ties
c. shake-up	change
d. take place	happen
e. negotiations	talks
f. sparked	started
g. outcry	uproar
h. wiped	erased
i. breach	neglect
j. protests	demonstrations

PHRASE MATCH:

a. diplomats want stronger	relations with the West
b. The changes will take place	by the end of March 2006
c. been involved in months	of negotiations
d. over the issue of	Iran's nuclear ambitions
e. progress	made in the past decade
f. sparked	an international outcry
g. British Prime Minister Tony Blair	reacted angrily to this
h. normal standards	of behavior
i. a member	of the United Nations
j. the biggest anti-Western protests	for many years

GAP FILL:

Iran to replace 40 ambassadors

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has just **announced** he will replace 40 ambassadors. Most of these **diplomats** want stronger relations with the West, but Mr. Ahmadinejad thinks they are too **weak**. It is Iran's biggest shake-up of diplomatic **staff** since the country's Islamic Revolution in 1979. The changes will take **place** by the end of March 2006. Some of the ambassadors have been **involved** in months of negotiations with the EU over the **issue** of Iran's nuclear ambitions. It seems that much of the progress made in the past decade in warming Iranian-Western relations has **disappeared**.

President Ahmadinejad recently **sparked** an international outcry when he called for Israel to be removed from the world. He called for it to be "**wiped** off the map". British Prime Minister Tony Blair **reacted** angrily to this. He told his government that "the international community simply will not **put** up with [Iran's] continued breach of the **proper** and normal standards of behavior we **expect** from a member of the United Nations." He said Mr. Ahmadinejad's comments about Israel were **similar** to those of Hitler's during World War II. Meanwhile, the biggest anti-Western **protests** for many years continue in Tehran.