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Press Statement

Tom Casey, Deputy Spokesman

Washington, DC

April 1, 2008

Message on SeezDeh Bedar

We extend best wishes to the people of Iran for a festive SeezDeh Bedar. The beginning of the new year, which we marked thirteen days ago on Nowruz, has given us an opportunity to examine the events of the past year, as well as look hopefully toward what the future will bring.

At this special time, we want to convey to the people of Iran our desire for peace and deeper mutual understanding between our two nations. Americans have the utmost respect for the Iranian people, and their rich and proud history. King Cyrus set a historical precedent by embracing religious tolerance and ending the enslavement of conquered peoples over 2,500 years ago. Throughout centuries, Iran's poets, scientists, mathematicians and Islamic scholars have made significant contributions to civilization. For the past century, since the Constitutional Revolution, Iranians have fought for democracy, a struggle still carrying on today. We will continue supporting the aspirations of Iran's citizens to express their opinions freely and practice their faiths openly without fear of imprisonment or retribution.

We remain dedicated to the ideals of hope and freedom around the globe. It is our hope that all other nations, including Iran, will join us on this path to realize these goals.

We wish you all joy and prosperity in the new year.

2008/240

Released on April 1, 2008



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