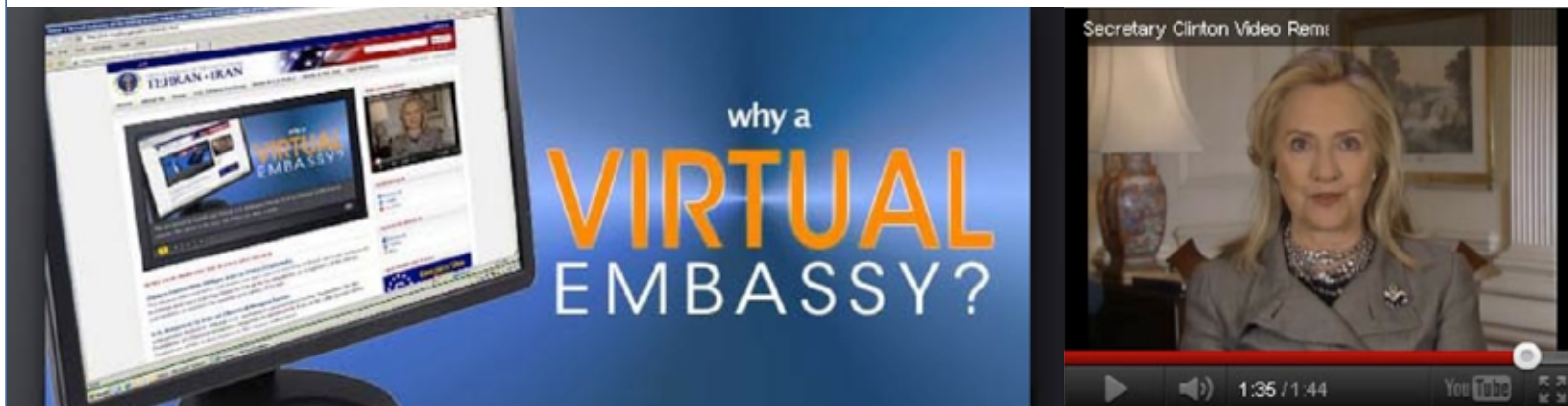


VIRTUAL EMBASSY TEHRAN: Information to Counter Iranian Isolation



“This is a platform for us to communicate with each other – openly and without fear – about the United States, about our policies, our culture, and the American people.”

- Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

The U.S. Department of State is launching a Virtual Embassy Tehran website to penetrate the electronic curtain of isolation the Iranian leadership has imposed on its people. This initiative does not represent a change in the U.S. diplomatic relationship with the Iranian regime, but is part of the State Department’s broader efforts to reach out to the Iranian people.

Visitors to Virtual Embassy Tehran will be greeted by a welcome message from Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, encouraging them to use the website as a vehicle for promoting engagement and dialogue through our linked YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and blogsites.

Blocked Access to Communications

Departing from the Persian empire’s historical role as a crossroads of civilizations, the Iranian regime has gone to great lengths to restrict what the Iranian people see, hear, and think -- violating widely held standards of human rights. In an age when technological innovations serve to bridge gaps and connect humanity, the regime has instead used these same tools to isolate its population from the world.

Rather than contribute to the global market place of ideas, the Iranian regime seeks to bar its citizens’ access altogether. Through online filtering, broadcast jamming, and other efforts to control the flow of information to and from the Iranian people, the regime in Tehran has prevented the Iranian people from accessing information about the value of open societies, international standards of human rights, and the rapid advances of the 21st century internet.

Reaching the Iranian People Directly

To counteract these repressive measures, the United States will reach out to the Iranian people directly. Virtual Embassy Tehran will provide Iranian audiences with much sought-after information about U.S. policy towards Iran, the Middle East, and Muslim communities. It will counter disinformation and persistent myths about the United States and reflect the

Iranian government’s standing in the international community and world reaction to the policies of its leadership.

Reflecting American Society

In addition, Virtual Embassy Tehran will provide Iranians a glimpse of American culture and society and offer information on the U.S. visa application process, and on study opportunities for Iranians in the United States.

Virtual Embassy Website will reflect:

- Value of open societies
- International standards of human rights
- Advances in electronic communications
- Developments in the Middle East
- World reaction to the Iranian government
- American culture and society
- U.S. interest in exchanges with the Iranian people

Using a Variety of Media

As part of the broad U.S. effort to support the aspirations of the Iranian people, Virtual Embassy Tehran will increase U.S. communication efforts in the Persian language through all available media. It will continue to explore ways to make broadcast content available despite the ongoing efforts of the Iranian regime to block its people from hearing from and engaging with foreign counterparts. It will aim to expand the opportunity for people-to-people exchanges between Iranians and Americans that are such a vital part of 21st century relationships between nations.

Offering Hardware and Expertise

The U.S. also will explore ways to put hardware, software and expertise in the hands of the Iranian people so that they will be able to bypass their government’s systematic efforts to deny them their voice.