

Iran Election Update

May 3, 2013

- During a Friday prayer sermon, Senior Iranian cleric Ayatollah Mohammad Emami Kashani [has said that](#) presidential hopefuls should refrain from talking about the possible normalization of ties between Iran and the United States. “You are neither competent, nor authorized to make a decision on the resumption of ties with the United States,” and that this issue “lies within the authority of the Supreme Leader and not the president.”
- Hojatoleslam Mojtaba Zolnour, the Supreme Leader's deputy representative to the Revolutionary Guards, [has said](#) President Ahmadinejad doesn't have the power to create problems in the upcoming Presidential elections. Zolnour also said that if the Guardian Council approves Ahmadinejad's right hand man Esfandiar Rahim-Mashai, he will not get any votes.
- MP Ali Motahari, son of the influential revolutionary cleric Ayatollah Morteza Motahari and a brother-in-law of Speaker of Parliament Ali Larijani, has [openly called](#) President Ahmadinejad “a spoiled brat,” and that “he (Ahmadinejad) has reached a point to where he can threaten the entire system.”
- President Ahmadinejad's right-hand man, and speculative presidential hopeful, Esfandiar Rahim-Mashai has made some interesting comments in a speech to students and social workers. Mashai, who has been criticized in the past for preferring Iranian nationalism to Islam, talked about the Iranian school of thought [and said](#), “We have to introduce our own Islam to the world, which comes from the Iranian school and is based on the original Islam, and this doesn't mean we put Islam away.” [He went on to say](#), “Today Ahmadinejad is the most popular figure in Iran, more than ever.”
- Hassan Rowhani, former Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council and ex-nuclear negotiator, and presidential candidate, [said that](#) “Iran is not meant not to have relations with the United States until Judgment Day.” Rowhani went on to say that Iran and the United States currently have hostile relations, and this trend is not beneficial for anyone. “We should gradually harness this hostility and then reduce it to tense relations and then move towards putting tension aside,” and that negotiations could go forward only if Iran's “red lines are observed.”
- Friday prayer leader Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami has said while they (President Ahmadinejad supporters) claim to be followers of the Supreme Leader, “they take part in Nowruz (Persian New Year) celebrations (part of Zoroastrian culture) and spend billions in public funds in these difficult economic times.” Ahmad Khatami [cautioned people](#) to “be careful about the vote-winning slogans” candidates might use in their campaigns.” President Ahmadinejad's camp and supporters have adopted the slogan “Viva Spring,” and the President's opponents have been criticizing its use as “early campaigning,” which is considered illegal before the actual candidate registration period.
- Reformist presidential hopeful, and former Iranian Vice President, Mohammad Reza Aref [has promised](#) to interact with all countries of the world “except the Zionist regime of Israel” if he wins the June presidential election.

By Hanif Zarrabi-Kashani



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