

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد  
بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم  
از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

The New York Times

## With Summit, Iran Demonstrates Its Regional Clout

By Michael Slackman

24/05/2009

CAIRO — Iran hosted its first three-way summit meeting on Sunday with Pakistan and Afghanistan to discuss cooperation on regional issues, the latest sign of Iran's emergence as the regional power.

With Pakistan and Afghanistan fighting to hold back the rising tide of radical, Islamic insurgencies led by the Taliban, the meeting in Tehran seemed intended by Iran to assure its neighbors that working together the three could solve their problems without having to rely on the West.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran suggested that the United States was the main problem when he described "others who are alien to the nations and culture of our nations." It was a not-too-subtle swipe, but still one that Washington's allies from Pakistan and Afghanistan did not rebut. That served as another sign that Iran was increasingly seen as less of a threat to the West, and the region, than the prospect of the Taliban's controlling Pakistan or Afghanistan.

"If we can save Pakistan and Afghanistan from these problems, from extremism," President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan said in comments broadcast in Iran, "then such trilateral meetings are meaningful."

Mr. Ahmadinejad, Mr. Karzai and President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan signed an agreement — called the Tehran Statement — in which they committed to work together to fight Islamic extremism and stop drug smuggling across their borders. Though the declaration did not outline specific action, it served as a sort of bookend to changes in regional dynamics that began after

the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, with the United States-led invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001 and of Iraq in March 2003.

The summit meeting also served as proof that Western efforts to isolate Iran over its nuclear energy program, through unilateral and United Nations Security Council sanctions, have given way to more pragmatic regional concerns.

Although the presidents of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan had met before in a larger gathering of regional leaders, the summit meeting on Sunday was the first among just the three of them.

Iran's president, Mr. Ahmadinejad, said he was confident the meeting would "guarantee security and expansion of cooperation in the region," in remarks reported by Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency. Iran was once bitter enemies with the Taliban, which controlled Afghanistan before the American-led invasion there. Iran was also once a regional rival of Pakistan. Iran is a Shiite Muslim state. Pakistan is a Sunni Muslim state, and often sided with other Sunni states, like Saudi Arabia, against Iran in political and regional matters.

Now, with the Taliban routed from power but waging an aggressive insurgency in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, the presidents of those two countries have turned to Iran, on their western borders, for help.

"There are many problems along our joint borders," Mr. Zardari said, in comments reported by the Islamic Republic News Agency. "We cannot underestimate the problems and we should look for solutions to all of them."

President Obama has also sought to re-engage diplomatically with Iran after three decades of animosity between it and the United States. Iranian officials have given mixed signals, sticking with their death-to-America ideology at home while suggesting that after presidential elections in Iran next month they may be willing to open talks.