



Morsi urges US to change policy toward Arabs

AFP, Washington

Egypt's new Islamist president, Mohamed Morsi, urged the United States late Saturday to change its approach to the Arab world to be able to repair relations and revitalise an alliance with Egypt.

Morsi was to travel to New York yesterday to take part in a meeting of the UN General Assembly.

"Successive American administrations essentially purchased with American taxpayer money the dislike, if not the hatred, of the peoples of the region," the president told The New York Times in an interview.

According to the paper, he was referring to US backing of dictatorial governments in the region and Washington's unconditional support for Israel.

The remarks followed days of violent anti-American protests in Cairo sparked by an amateur anti-Islamic film posted on YouTube. During these events Morsi called on demonstrators to show restraint while condemning the film ridiculing the Prophet Mohammad.

Morsi praised US President Barack Obama for moving "decisively and quickly" to support the Arab Spring revolutions.

But he also expressed concern about the plight of Palestinians, who still don't have their own state, the paper said.

French priest beatified for miracle healing

AFP, Paris

A French priest moved a step closer to sainthood Saturday when the Vatican acknowledged that the healing of an Ecuadorian boy amounted to a miracle.

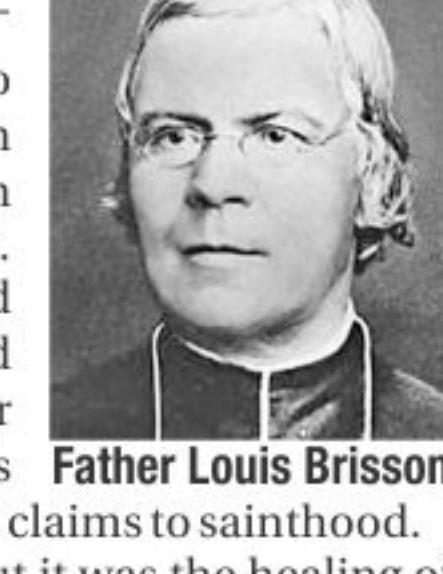
Father Louis Brisson was beatified in Troyes, eastern France, at a packed cathedral in a ceremony presided over by Cardinal Angelo Amato, who leads the Vatican department that examines claims to sainthood.

Brisson lived from 1817 to 1908, but it was the healing of an eight-year-old boy in Ecuador many years after his death that the Church has now acknowledged as a miracle.

The boy had had his foot badly injured and members of the Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales, one of two orders Brisson had founded, prayed for him for nine days. The boy made a complete recovery from his injury.

Saturday's event was the official consecration of Pope Benedict XVI's December decision to acknowledge that this healing had been miraculous -- and through Brisson's direct intercession. Doctors who had examined the case could offer no medical or scientific explanation for the boy's dramatic recovery, the Vatican said.

Brisson's elevation to the ranks of the blessed, as the beatified are described, puts him one step closer to being declared a saint. But that would require Vatican recognition of a second miracle attributable to him.



Father Louis Brisson

ESCALATING TERRITORIAL DISPUTE

China puts off Japan ties event

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday postponed a ceremony marking the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties with Japan, due to an ongoing territorial dispute, Xinhua news agency said.

"Due to the current situation, the Chinese side has decided that the reception commemorating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations will be postponed until an appropriate time," Xinhua cited an official as saying.

The unnamed official from the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries was referring to the ongoing row that centres on the Tokyo-controlled Senkaku islands in the East China Sea, which are claimed by Beijing under the name Diaoyu.

The ceremony was due to take place on September 27.

Asia's two largest economies have wrangled about the islands since the 1970s, but the row flared in August after pro-China activists landed on one of them.



Anti-China protest in Tokyo yesterday

government subsequently bought three of them from their private owners.

The Chinese friendship association has a close relationship with China's foreign ministry.

In Tokyo, a diplomatic source confirmed Beijing's decision.

The escalating row saw hundreds of Japanese rally on Saturday against Beijing's handling of the issue, days after anti-Japanese protests saw shops and factories vandalised in China.

Some 800 demonstrators waved national flags as they marched through downtown Tokyo, denouncing Beijing as a "brutal" and "fascist".

Protesters marched through the Roppongi entertainment district, near the Chinese embassy, shouting: "We will never give in to China's military threat!"

Japan's coastguard said Saturday it was monitoring seven Chinese ships in waters near to the chain. There had been 14 in the area on Wednesday.

China's foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei on Friday said many of the ceremonies marking the 40th anniversary of Sino-Japanese diplomatic ties had been

Israeli strike would trigger WWIII: Iran

Accuses IAEA of passing on nuke secrets to Israel

AFP, Tehran

Iran could launch a pre-emptive strike if Israel prepares to attack it, a senior Revolutionary Guards commander told the broadcaster Al-Alam on Sunday, a day after his boss warned conflict was inevitable.

Should Israel and Iran engage militarily, "nothing is predictable... and it will turn into World War III," Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh told Iran's Arabic-language television network.

Hajizadeh, who is in charge of the Revolutionary Guards' missile systems, said: "In circumstances in which they (the Israelis) have prepared everything for an attack, it is possible that we will make a pre-emptive attack. But we do not see this at the moment."

He added that Iran would deem any Israeli strike to be conducted with US authorisation, so "whether the Zionist regime attacks with or without US knowledge, then we will definitely attack US bases

in Bahrain, Qatar and Afghanistan."

He warned that Israel "cannot imagine our response -- and it will sustain heavy damage and that will be a prelude to its obliteration."

On Saturday, the head of the Revolutionary Guards, General Mohammad Ali Jafari, said war between Iran and Israel "will eventually happen, but it is not certain where and when."

It was the first time a senior Iranian official had acknowledged a probability of war breaking out between the two arch-foes.

Meanwhile, a senior Iranian lawmaker yesterday accused the head of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog of passing confidential information about Iran's nuclear activities to Israel.

In the latest sign of strained relations with the International Atomic Energy Agency, Javad Jahangirzadeh, a member of parliament's presiding board, said IAEA chief Yukiya Amano would be to blame if Iran reduced its ties with the body.

Israel will not accept Egypt treaty changes

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel will not accept alterations to its 1979 peace treaty with Egypt, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said yesterday, as ties between the two countries continue to fray.

"There is not the slightest possibility that Israel will accept the modification of the peace treaty with Egypt," Lieberman told Israeli public radio. "We will not accept any modification of the Camp David accords."

The comments come as tensions rise between Egypt and Israel, with speculation the government of Egypt's Islamist President Mohamed Morsi could seek to alter parts of the decades-old treaty.

Ties are also strained over the issue of security in Egypt's Sinai, which borders Israel and has increasingly become a haven for militants, some of whom have used the territory as a launching ground for attacking the Jewish state.

On Friday, an Israeli soldier and three militants who infiltrated from Sinai were killed in a clash along the border, after troops opened fire on the gunmen as they crossed the frontier.

"Egypt must fulfill its obligations in Sinai," Lieberman said yesterday.

Egypt launched an unprecedented military operation in the peninsula after militants killed 16 Egyptian border police in northern Sinai on August 5.

Israel has warned that it expects Cairo to withdraw the military reinforcements once the operation was over.

NEWS IN brief

Rafsanjani daughter held in Iran

AFP, Tehran



Faezeh Hashemi

The daughter of Iran's former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani has been arrested and jailed under a six-month sentence for "propaganda against the regime," the Tehran prosecutor's office said in a statement carried by official media yesterday.

"Faezeh Hashemi was arrested on Saturday evening to serve her sentence," the statement read, according to the official IRNA news agency.

The Fars news agency reported that she had been taken to Tehran's notorious Evin prison.

21 killed in Sikkim flash floods

PTI, Gangtok

At least twenty one bodies have so far been found while eight persons are missing due to flash flood and landslides in remote areas of North Sikkim, official sources said yesterday.

Landslides were caused by heavy rains since September 19, Deputy Commissioner North district TW Khangshera said. About nine landslides occurred blocking the main road between

US denies visa to Iranian officials

REUTERS, Dubai

The United States has denied visas to about 20 Iranian government officials hoping to attend next week's United Nations General Assembly, including two ministers, Iran's Fars news agency reported on Saturday.

Of the 160-or-so visas requested by the Iranian delegation two months ago, about 20 were turned down, Fars said. It gave no reason, but many Iranian

Swiss vote on full smoking ban

BBC ONLINE

Swiss citizens are going to the polls to vote on a proposal to ban smoking completely in enclosed public places.

Hotels, restaurants and bars are currently allowed to have rooms for smokers but critics said this harms the health of those who work in them.

Opinion polls show the Swiss - who smoke more than their neighbours - are likely to reject the proposal.

US approves Iraq, Pak envoys

AFP, Washington

The US Senate on Saturday approved new American ambassadors to Iraq and Pakistan, both veteran diplomats who will take over as anti-Western protest sweep through Muslim countries.

In a voice vote, the Senate confirmed Robert Stephen Beecroft as the new envoy to Iraq, and Richard Olson to be the new ambassador to Pakistan.

16 Taliban killed in Afghanistan

IANS, Kabul

A total of 16 Taliban militants have been killed and 24 other suspects detained in security operations in Afghanistan since Saturday, the interior ministry yesterday said.

The militants were killed during security operations launched by the Afghan police and army backed by the Nato-led coalition forces, Xinhua quoted the ministry as adding.

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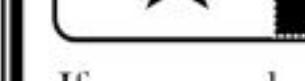
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