

The following is a translation of the VOA TV Persian program “Late Edition,” which was broadcast via satellite on August 15, 2007 at 1830 UTC.

TRANSLATION BEGINS HERE

[Music intro]

[Video Clip]

American military forces undertake new operations against terrorists in Iraq.

We take a look at the Disney Company’s first non-Hollywood co-production and at Chinese producers in Hong Kong.

And also, a look at the film “2 Days in Paris,” with French actor Julie Delpy.

[Host Luna Shad]

Good evening. It’s Wednesday the 24th of Mordad, 1386, or August 15, 2007.

Welcome to Late Edition. We’ll start the program with news headlines from Iran and from around the world.

[Music]

[Intertitle: VOA]

[Host Luna Shad]

According to reports the Bush administration is ready to designate the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Pasdaran Army an international terrorist organization.

[Video clip]

If this does occur, it will be the first time America has designated a unit within an independent government as a terrorist organization. Such a designation would allow America to freeze the group’s assets, or take actions against its operations or members in the US.

[Host Luna Shad]

In another development, Rudy Giuliani, the US presidential candidate, stated [that] the United States should present a united front against Iran and, if necessary, use force to destroy its nuclear capabilities.

[Video clip]

The former Mayor of New York expressed this opinion in the latest issue of Foreign Affairs. He states that while he does not oppose negotiations with Iran to halt its nuclear development, in his opinion such negotiations must be undertaken from a position of power.

[Host Luna Shad]

Authorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran said two Chinese citizens have been accused of spying and arrested after photographing military and nuclear facilities in Arak. According to authorities they entered the country through Kish Island.

Tehran has often accused foreign nationals of spying, but accusations against Chinese nationals are unusual.

Reporters without Borders, an organization for the protection of journalists, has asked Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary General, to put pressure on Iran to reverse the death sentences handed down against two Kurdish journalists. Adnan Hassanpour and Abdolvahed Botimar, who wrote for the weekly *Assou* before it was shut down in 2005, were arrested in July and sentenced to death on charges of fighting God. The European Union has also asked Iran to stop these death sentences.

Iranian authorities said one of the two Belgian tourists who had been kidnapped in Southeastern Iran has been freed and that efforts are underway for the release of the second one. A local police officer told the Islamic Republic's News Agency that the female tourist had been released on Tuesday and that authorities are continuing their efforts for her husband's release.

Earlier in a news report from Iran it was stated that the Belgian husband and wife had been kidnapped on Sunday by a group of criminals headed by

a man seeking the release of his imprisoned brother. It is still not clear whether or not his demands have been met.

The US Military in Iraq says al-Qaeda may be behind several explosions that took place in northern Iraq on Tuesday. A military spokesperson expressed this opinion on Wednesday...

[Video clip]

...less than a day after four suicide bombers in trucks carrying explosives carried out more or less simultaneous bombings in Mosul. The attacks, which left more than 200 dead, targeted Yazidis, members of a Kurdish religious minority.

Rescuers continue to search amid the rubble to find any trapped survivors. Authorities stated that the numbers of the dead may be greater than was originally reported.

In Washington the White House condemned the bombings and called them "savage attacks against innocent civilians."

[Host Luna Shad]

In Eastern Afghanistan hundreds of American soldiers have attacked al-Qaeda and other extremists. On Wednesday the spokesperson for the allied force led by America told Voice of America that in operations undertaken a few days earlier in the Tora Bora region in Nangarhar Province, Afghan forces have been fighting alongside American soldiers.

[Video clip]

He said there have been no reports of casualties thus far. In another development in Afghanistan, Wednesday morning a diplomatic vehicle carrying three German police officers collided with a roadside bomb near Kabul and exploded. The three officers who were all killed were deployed to Afghanistan to protect the German ambassador.

[Host Luna Shad]

On Wednesday the people of India celebrated the 60th anniversary of their country's independence from Britain with ceremonies that took place amid security measures.

[Video]

Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister, asked Indians of every class and religion to unite to bring about the goals of those who fought for independence in 1947. He insisted the country would not be autonomous until poverty had been eradicated.

[Host Luna Shad]

A senior US diplomat has once again insisted on Washington backing Pakistan. In a statement US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher in Islamabad, who held talks with Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri, stated that America considers Pakistan's efforts at fighting terrorism a top priority.

Nonetheless, Kasuri warned that [the] US authority's recent comments regarding direct attacks on militants are not constructive. He also expressed some concern with regard to the new law linking American aid to Pakistan to Pakistan's progress in its fight against terrorism.

The South Korean President expressed optimism that his meeting with Kim Jong-il, the North Korean leader, will strengthen the two countries' economic cooperation.

[Video clip]

Roh Moo-hyun on Wednesday stated that in the course of the three-day meetings that will begin on August 28th in Pyongyang he will discuss the creation of economic cooperation between the two Koreas.

Analysts say it's possible that in order to improve North Korea's weak infrastructure and economic foundations and to weaken its disruptive influences, South Korea might propose a large economic and investment package.

The South Korean President stated that in taking this opportunity to meet with Kim Jong-il he would try to put pressure on North Korea to deliver on the nuclear disarmament commitments it had agreed to.

[Host Luna Shad]

And finally, North Korean authorities state that over 11 percent of that country's rice and corn farms have been destroyed or buried under floodwaters.

[Video Clip]

A North Korean agriculture official said Wednesday's unprecedented rains had damaged crops at the most important point in their growth cycle and that this was possibly going to damage the harvest.

Torrential rains began and have continued in North Korea since the 7th of August. Government reports state that hundreds have died and over 30,000 buildings have been damaged or destroyed. Officials from the UN's World Food Program, who had traveled to the flood-affected regions of Pyongyang, described the situation as an extremely serious humanitarian crisis.

[Intertitle: First Word]

[Music]

[Host Luna Shad]

New operations undertaken by the US military in Iraq, known as Operation Phantom, are aimed at curtailing Shiite and Sunni terrorism and improving the security situation. It is believed militias receive arms and military training from Iran.

Further details from my colleague Ladan Yazdian.

[Video clip]

[Ladan Yazdian]

In Iraq, as American forces are busy fighting the paramilitary forces associated with al-Qaeda and Shiite forces associated with Iran, extensive military movements are underway across the country. At the same time, military authorities in Iraq have stepped up their accusations against Iran, claiming it is providing arms and support, primarily to Shiite militias.

In recent months the US army has exhibited arms that it claims have entered Iraq through Iran. According to military analyst Anthony Cordesman, the import of arms from Iran to Iraq is on the increase.

[Video Clip]

[Anthony Cordesman *in English*]

The flow of Iranian arms into Iraq continues to accelerate...

[Reporter - interpreting]

The flow of Iranian arms into Iraq continues to accelerate. But this progress is not related to arms that Iran sends Hezbollah. For example, if you don't see any anti-tank missiles among them. What you have are explosives, EFPs, mortars and RPG's, and heavier rockets.

[Video clip]

In the course of the last few months roadside explosions have been deadlier and US military forces state that the use of more advanced explosives, known as EFP's, that Iran is providing the rebels has increased. This has resulted in an increase in the numbers of US casualties, especially over the course of the last month.

Iran denies providing weapons to rebel Shiite forces in Iraq, and the country's leaders, in their recent meetings with US diplomats in Baghdad, insisted on this position.

Nouri al-Maliki, the Iraqi Prime Minister, who last week in Tehran held talks on this subject with Iranian authorities, later expressed his concern about the current situation and said, "Everyone knows about the terrorism that takes place in Iraq and its connection to foreign countries. But, unfortunately, either these countries have no inclination to resolve this problem, or for some reason are inclined to help spread insecurity in Iraq."

According to Anthony Cordesman Iran has no inclination to curtail its activities in Iraq. "Probably this will not stop. The fact is that Iran sees America as vulnerable in Iraq and wishes to increase its own influence in governing Iraq."

US military forces [say that during the increase] in recent military activities many militia members, including arms smugglers from Iran, were killed or injured.

[Titles Video: VOA]

[Music]

[Host Luna Shad]

We'll continue with Elham Sataki.

Today, dear Elham, is the third anniversary of Atefeh Rajabi Sahaleh's execution. I want to ask you what made you focus on this subject again after three years.

[Elham Sataki]

It began with a review of women's executions in Iran. When I came across Atefeh's case, the more I read about her, the more questions were raised and these all remained unanswered.

[Host Luna Shad]

Well, what was the first thing that got your attention?

[Elham Sataki]

It was the question of why Haji Reza Ghazi himself personally carried out her death sentence, and why he allowed so many missteps in the law so that the execution order could be carried out as quickly as possible.

[Host Luna Shad]

But in the report you prepared you interviewed a woman called Lily Pourzand. Before we watch this together, can you explain briefly about this woman? What was or is her role in this matter?

[Elham Sataki]

There are a lot of articles and reports about Atefeh and I read many of them, written both in Iran and outside Iran. I came across an article written by Lily Pourzand, called "A judicial autopsy of Atefeh's execution." In this article she'd examined all the judicial issues raised by Atefeh's execution.

Lily Pourzand received her own graduate law degree from Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran and then emigrated to Canada where she continued her studies, and at present, other than working in [the] human rights area [generally], she is especially active in the area of women's rights.

[Host Luna Shad]

Well, let's watch this report together.

[video clip: opens on woman wearing a chador hanging]

The riddle of Atefeh Rajabi Sahaleh's execution by the order of the Neka Court has lingered in the memories of many in the form of a huge question mark.

The execution of this 16-year old girl who'd been accused of *zenayeh mohseneh [adultery]* led to strong protests from human rights organizations. Among the protestors was Lily Pourzand, an Iranian attorney living in Canada.

Ms. Pourzand, while calling any execution sentence issued for anyone under 18 illegal, especially one based on the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran, adds, "The execution order for Atefeh Sahaleh is not the first such sentence. These incidents have happened numerous times in towns and villages where the judge bases his decision on the testimony of locals, and issues a death sentence without even looking at the accused's records or at their birth certificate.

When we focus a little on Atefeh's story we see that at first the presiding judge had not claimed that Atefeh was 22 years old; he had executed her as a 16-year old. However, later when [there was an] international human rights reaction, and organizations for the protection of children's rights protested the execution, the country's judicial authorities decided to bring up the fact that Atefeh was not 16, but was 22.

The reason for this excuse is that in 1991 Iran was a signatory to a convention on the rights of children that was ratified by the Islamic parliament, and this ratification was conditionally adopted by the Iranian government in March 1994. Hence, as a signatory of this convention it is stated clearly that only after [age] 18 are individuals considered legally and criminally responsible.

In reply to the question of whether the Iranian Supreme Court has a responsibility to review death sentences issued by lower courts, Lily Pourzand replies,

[Lily Pourzand]

The country's Supreme Court is supposed to review, examine, and reconsider sentences issued by local and preliminary courts. In spite of having outstanding legal minds, judges are apparently not attentive to the very apparent contradictions here and did not overturn the sentence. The sentence was approved and as you know Atefeh was executed three years ago.

[Reporter]

Once again, Ms. Pourzand speaks of the contradictions in the case that led to the death sentence against Atefeh.

[Lily Pourzand]

At the beginning Atefeh was described as single and what is certain is that Atefeh was single.

In any event, the punishment for a single person, be they a man or a woman (as opposed to the sentence for someone who is married), is supposed to consist of 99 lashes of the whip and is not execution.

If a man or woman is married and has a relationship with someone other than their own spouse, they are punished by stoning, and recently we've witnessed one such punishment.

While at the beginning of her trial Atefeh was said to be single, in the middle of the trial she was accused of having committed the crime of *zenayeh mohseneh* [adultery].

Zenayeh mohseneh refers to the sexual relationship between a married man or woman and someone other than their spouse. In principle, the punishment for *zenayeh mohseneh* is not execution, nor is it lashes of the whip. It is stoning. This is specifically stated in the law.

[Elham Sataki]

In a portion of her confessions Atefeh Sahaleh had stated, "Ali Darabi, who at the time was working as a cabdriver and who had previously been a member of the Islamic Revolutionary Pasdaran Army, had raped her. But the court of the town of Neka only sentenced this married 51-year old man to 95 lashes of the whip.

[Lily Pourzand]

Of course in certain situations, because men can have more than one wife, they have greater leeway than women in regard to the laws regarding extra-marital relationships.

But in this specific case we see that the contradictory nature of this sentence is such that both sides of the case, the one who was not single [sic] as married and the one who was married as single, would lead to two different kinds of punishment—stoning and whipping—the severity of which also differ greatly from each other.

[Elham Sataki]

The judge, Haj Safar Rezai, known as Judge Rezai, after issuing Atefeh's death sentence, personally went to Tehran, obtained the order stamped with the approval of the country's Superior Court and returned to Neka, and after a very short time personally put the noose around 16-year-old Atefeh's neck.

[Lily Pourzand]

There's no documented reason for what we and others imagine, what maybe everyone imagines. But the judge's adamant actions in this case, in sentencing, approving, and conducting this very rapid execution of the sentence could [suggest] a personal involvement [of] this judge, or [of] those around him, or [of] Neka's judiciary, with this 16-year old girl.

[Host Luna Shad]

On the anniversary of the death of Akbar Mohammadi, the political activist, a ceremony took place in Los Angeles. Our colleague Afshin Gorgin brings us the details.

[Video Clip]

[Afshin Gorgin]

To commemorate the first anniversary of the death of Akbar Mohammadi, one of the activists in the 18th of Tir student movement, who died suspiciously in prison last year, on Sunday, the 21st of Mordad, or the 12th of August, a ceremony took place in Los Angeles, attended by some of his relatives and 200 other Iranians.

During this ceremony, which took place in UCLA's Haines Hall, political activists and others spoke about the life and death of Akbar Mohammadi as well as about the condition of prisoners and the human rights situation in Iran.

[Iranian speaker at ceremony]

The goal of this ceremony is to remember the intolerably hard days, the cruel torture carried out by a medieval government.

[Afshin Gorgin]

The ceremony was organized by Mr. Fereydoun Tofiqi, the radio and television personality and producer. The ceremony began with the singing of "Ay Iran" national anthem.

The ceremony's first speaker was Farhan Mohammadi who in honor of his lost uncle has chosen the name Akbar rather than Farhan as his first name.

He left the microphone overcome by the occasion with teary eyes and left his speech unfinished a few moments after he began his address about Akbar Mohammadi and his family..

[Farhan Mohammadi]

You must believe that a mother loves her child. I can't...

[Afshin Gorgin]

The second speaker at the ceremony to commemorate the anniversary of Akbar Mohammadi's death was Mr. Shahrokh Muqqadam, one of the members of Iran's Constitutional Party, who commented on some of the events that occurred on the 22nd of Bahman in the year '57.

He continued by examining some of the current possibilities that exist compared to those in the years before the Revolution. But this point raised protests from two of those in attendance.

[Video clip: interruptions]

[Afshin Gorgin]

After about a three minute dispute, order was restored and Mr. Shahrokh Muqqadam continued his talk examining issues regarding the political activities of Akbar Mohammadi and the current atmosphere in Iran.

Other speakers at last Sunday's gathering were Mr. Ali Javadi from the Communist Workers Party, Ms. Saayeh Hassan, a human rights activist and a Canadian resident, Mr. Abbas Pahlavan, an old time journalist, Koorosh Sehati, one of the prisoners and a student activist, Massood Amni, a poet and musician living in Los Angeles, as well as Nasrin and Manouchehr Mohammadi, Akbar Mohammadi's sister and brother who each spoke about the life and death of Akbar Mohammadi.

Some culturally prominent figures also took part in the ceremony by letter and by telephone and addressed those present to commemorate the one-year anniversary of Akbar Mohammadi's death.

Ms. Simin Behbahani, the contemporary poet who lives in Iran, dedicated a poem, which had been previously recorded by phone, to Akbar Mohammadi's mother, brother and family.

Ismail Khoi, the contemporary poet living in London, while dedicating one of his poems, talked to those gathered.

Another of those who expressed his sympathies with the Mohammadi family by letter was Prince Reza Pahlavi, whose message was read by Fereydoon Tofiqi.

[Fereydoon Tofiqi]

... we honor the memory of a young freedom-loving man who gave his life but did not surrender to the enemy ...

[Afshin Gorgin]

Akbar Mohammadi, who was only 38 years old, died last Mordad [July-August] while in Evin prison. Mr. Khalil Bahramian, his defense attorney, said two months ago that [the] Tehran deputy prosecutor and Evin prison authorities had accused Mr. Mohammadi of insulting prison authorities. Political groups against the Islamic Republic and human rights activists consider Akbar Mohammadi's death suspicious. His family has said he was murdered in prison.

The Islamic Republic's judiciary denied this accusation. Now, more than a year later, the actual details of Akbar Mohammadi's death have not yet been made clear.

Afshin Gorgin. Voice of America. Los Angeles.

[Video: Title Clip: VOA]

[Host Luna Shad]

We're going to begin the second part of this Late Edition with an economics report.

Mattel, the largest toy producer in America, has recalled millions of toys made in China. Here are the details of this news story.

[Video clip]

[Reporter]

This is the second recall of toys made in China, over nine million of which have been made by the large toy making company Mattel.

Nancy Nord, acting Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) chairwoman, said...

[Video clip]

[Nancy Nord *in English*]

These are being recalled for two reasons.

[Reporter - interpreting]

These are being recalled for two reasons. First, a number of them contain magnets which may become separated. Second, one of the items recalled contains lead paint.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has warned that the magnets used in the children's toys carry a risk of choking children.

Batman accessories, Barbie toys, dog houses, and plastic dolls, known as Polly Pocket, are among the toys recalled.

Hundreds of thousands of toy cars have also been recalled because they contain lead paint. Lead is considered to be a carcinogen that can lead to brain damage in children.

[Nancy Nord *in English*]

There have been no reported injuries.

[Reporter - interpreting]

There have been no reported injuries. But the aim in this recall is to prevent any potential danger facing children.

CPSC warns parents to remove any suspicious toy from children immediately, and health workers say that children who have put products containing lead paint in their mouths must receive blood tests.

Karla Johnson of the Marion County Health unit says, "Many parents are concerned about their children's health and want to know if their children have been exposed to possible lead poisoning. That is why we make the necessary tests available in this clinic."

The safety of other products made in China, including pet foods and a kind of tooth paste, has caused safety concerns for some time.

Toy companies expressed their concern in view of this recall since over 80 percent of the world's toys are produced in China.

[Video Clip]

[Late Edition: Title Sequence]

[Host Luna Shad]

In the field of recycling we will visit a glass company in Kenya that uses old bottles to make art products.

Richard Logari lives in the Kenyan Wilderness Park where many animals roam free.

Richard is probably the first glass blower from the Masai tribe. Each day he must traverse a huge distance in the Kenyan National Park to reach his place of work. Glass blowing, which is both Richard's job and his hobby, has given him a higher standard of living. There was a time when his only way of providing for his life was to rely on Masai cattle herding. But now he can provide his livelihood by using gathered junk and empty bottles. After

collecting these empty bottles Richard melts these bottles in the right temperature heat and makes them useable. He says he likes his job because it allows him to travel to other countries.

Richard has recently traveled to Holland and has explained about his glass blowing in the Kitengela glass workshop to the people in Holland. This is the only workshop in Kenya that uses old bottles to make art objects.

Anselm Croze is one of the glass blowing workshop's organizers.

[Anselm Croze]

Max and me, we've been recycling for many, many years. We don't just recycle glass, we also recycle metal and paper and plastics...

[Reporter]

Glass blowing is not the only thing produced at this workshop. The craftsmen also create mosaics, beads, colored glass, and works in cement. All the workshop products are handicrafts and what that means is that each object is a unique piece in its own material.

Croze states that the philosophy behind creating this workshop was to prevent waste.

[Anselm Croze]

Our vision is to become some sort of educational facility, to teach Africans on our continent how to blow glass.

[Reporter]

He also states [that] their vision is to become some sort of education facility, to teach Africans on our continent how to blow glass.

Nani Croze, the workshop's manager, is familiar with the art world. Her father is a well known woodcut artist in Germany. Nani is known in Kenya as someone who through experimentation and by combining different materials creates new work. But her main profession is work in colored glass. Her work is very well known in East Africa, especially her murals that are on the walls of government buildings, banks, and hospitals. Her use of materials, glass, and metal all point to her originality and skill.

Nani says women must be allowed to choose their own life style, especially in December when Presidential elections in Kenya take place. Nearly 70 workers work in this workshop, and they strive to expand this industry to attract tourists.

[Host Luna Shad]

Paris has recently implemented a new plan to decrease traffic and increase environmental benefits. This plan, which has been implemented since July 15th, involves 750 stations and over 10,000 bicycles across the city. The goal is to encourage people to use bicycles over cars. The plan is said to be successful in its first month and a half by experts who predict the number of bicycles will be doubled by the end of 2007. We will watch [the report] together.

[Video clip]

[Reporter]

It would seem Parisians have accepted that they can pedal. A month after the opening of bicycle stations in the French capital, there are 1,600,000 bicycles and 750 stations. People can rent the bicycles and then return them to any station after riding them. The ease of using a bicycle in this beautiful large city is the main focus of this new system.

The service is termed Vélib, a compound term derived from *Vélo*, for bicycle, and *Liberté* for freedom. The service is the outcome of Bernard Delanoë, [is an idea of] Paris' socialist mayor. He has stated that settling down Paris' chaotic traffic situation is his main goal.

Today, using a bicycle for Parisians is the same as using another mode of public transport, such as the metro or the bus. The service is also available for tourists to use, is accessible in eight languages, and even accepts foreign credit cards.

The Paris bicycle service follows in the footsteps of similar programs in Lyons, Vienna, Brussels, Barcelona, and Copenhagen.

Paris' mayor, who was elected in 2001, is a keen enthusiast of bicycle use and encourages and advertises it. Currently the total bicycle routes in Paris add up to 230 miles. Mathieu Fierling, the deputy director of the scheme in the Mayor's office said:

“By the end of 2007, the numbers of stations and bicycles will have almost doubled. Parisians will be able to use bicycles to go to work and come back.” He continues, “This plan is very flexible and affordable. For example an annual ticket costs 29 Euros or \$39, or five Euros a month, which is \$6.50.

It’s possible to ride a bicycle from your home to pretty much anywhere in Paris and you’ll find a station to return the bicycles in every neighborhood. For short trips, the first half hour costs one Euro, the second half hour costs two Euros, and one full day costs four Euros.”

Denis who lives in Paris says, “Cycling has numerous benefits, including that it helps the environment.”

Bicycle theft is rare given the unique scheme and high security at the parking stations, and also because of the use of credit cards for payment. If a bicycle is not returned to a station, the renter must pay a heavy fine.

[Host Luna Shad]

Our next report is about the Disney Company, [about] the giant Hollywood producer’s first non-Hollywood co-production in collaboration with Chinese producers. The animated feature is an adaptation of one of the most popular Chinese stories, written by Zhang Tianyi, “The Secret of the Magic Gourd.”

[Video clip]

A film of “The Secret of the Magic Gourd,” based on the well-known Chinese story written by Zhang Tianyi, one of China’s best known children’s writers, has been made. This film, a mix of live action and animation, tells the story of an 11-year old boy who finds a magic gourd that makes all his wishes come true. The story for this film was picked by the Chinese producers Centro Digital Pictures. Disney was responsible for producing and creating it.

[John Chu, Director]

“The difference is that the film’s makers and actors are Chinese. Other Disney films feature foreign actors in a foreign environment and a foreign lifestyle. But, our lifestyle is Chinese.”

Centro Digital Pictures is one of the best known makers of film and animation and special effects in Asia.

“The Disney brand guarantees the high quality of our production. This makes us very happy. It also allows our competitors to see that we can produce films at a world class level.”

Over 100 engineers and animators from Centro Digital collaborated in making this film. The production took less than a year.

[Chinese animator]

“Unlike Americans, when they speak the Chinese don’t move their hands very much and don’t gesture much at all. That is also the character of this film, which doesn’t move much when it’s not necessary and only blinks. This time we want to create a film with an Asian tradition.”

Compared to the American film market the Chinese one is small. Movie theater earnings in China [may] reach \$10 million, compared with \$100 million in America.

Disney is planning to market a story book and other products in conjunction with this film, but presently Japan provides 90% of China’s products.

The annual Anicom Festival, which takes place in Hong Kong, is one of the most well-known platforms for animation, comics, computer games, and other digital entertainment in Asia. Approximately one hundred exhibitors, thousands of viewers, and numerous private and public companies from around the world attend this festival.

“The Secret of the Magic Gourd” will [begin] screen[ing] August 16 in Hong Kong.

[Host Luna Shad]

We will take a look at entertaining images from around the world.

[Video clip montage]

[Title: Around the world at a glance]

[Various clips, including Priscilla Presley talking about Elvis, images of Princess Diana and the sale of her outfits in New York, [Space Shuttle] Endeavor astronauts in space, Spain and the world's most expensive pig, America and the increased danger faced by American military dogs in war zones.]

[Video clip: Late Edition sequence]

[Host Luna Shad]

For tonight's cinema report we're going to Paris again with our friend Behnam Nateghi. Again we see the perspective of a woman filmmaker, a French woman filmmaker. The film "2 Days in Paris" directed by Julie Delpy opened a few nights ago in America and was well-received by many critics.

Behnam, two nights ago, we discussed Zoe Cassavetes' film, "Broken English" which was about an American girl going to Paris in pursuit of love. Now, in the film "2 Days in Paris," here's a French girl going to Paris from New York with her lover.

Paris, and love, and...

[Behnam Nateghi]

Yes, well... But these two films, "Broken English" and "2 Days in Paris" are unusual films. That is to say, their message is, "If you think Paris is the city of love, you're mistaken. Quite the contrary. Even if love was there, it'll be destroyed in Paris..."

[Host Luna Shad]

You know why that is? It's because two days are too short... It needs to be longer.

[Behnam Nateghi]

What about the other one who never found her love and returned?

[Host Luna Shad]

That was also short at two weeks.

[Behnam Nateghi]

But both these are first films by artists, women who started as actors. This film by Julie Delpy, who's the writer, director, and also composed the film's music and who also plays the film's lead and whose parents also appear in the film and play the part of her parents and whose best friend plays the part of her sister and who also sings the film's last song -- we have all this from Ms. Delpy.

[Host Luna Shad]

All she had left to do was send herself a mash note...

Let's take a look at the film's opening that took place at the American Cinematheque. Then we'll return for a look at the US critics' views of the film "2 Days in Paris."

[Video clip]

[Reporter]

At the opening ceremony of the film "2 Days in Paris," the director and main actor of the film, Julie Delpy, a few nights ago was in Los Angeles. Looking very happy before cameras, she expressed her delight at the fact that her film had an American distributor.

[Julie Delpy *in English*]

No, I'm excited...

[Reporter]

Ms. Julie Delpy says she's excited that many of her friends will be able to see her film and is happy because of the fact that this small film she made in Paris will be shown in America. She explains that generally French films, especially small French films, have little chance of being shown in America.

[Julie Delpy *in English*]

It's kind of like... it's amazing... I never expected this to happen and I'm really happy.

[Clip from film]

[Reporter]

In the film "2 Days in Paris," Ms. Julie Delpy plays the role of a French photographer based in New York who goes to Paris with her American

boyfriend to spend two romantic days. But [the Parisians], especially her old boyfriends, make it hard for things to proceed smoothly.

Alexia Landeau plays the role of Julie Delpy's sister. She stated that Julie Delpy is not one who's all talk. She's all action. And she adds that Ms. Delpy is loyal and when she told her she was going to write the sister part for her, she did as she'd said and gave her the part.

In the scenes of the film "2 days in Paris," the French girl and her American boyfriend discover a profound cultural difference that exists between them.

Ms. Delpy says that a difference between Americans and French is that Americans have no problem with self-criticism, whereas the French cannot stand criticism. She says that's why she loves America, because here as soon as anything happens there are 20 critical films made, which is a healthy reaction.

Mr. Adam Goldberg, playing an interior decorator, plays the part of Julie Delpy's boyfriend in the film "2 Days in Paris."

[Adam Goldberg *in English*]

Oh no, I'm extremely comfortable with myself sexually.

[Reporter]

Adam Goldberg says that unlike the French he cannot live in the moment, even though he's extremely comfortable with himself sexually.

[Host Luna Shad]

It looks like an interesting film.

But, Behnam, the scenes of Julie Delpy wandering in Paris with her American boyfriend look familiar. Didn't she also act in a film with Ethan Hawke, [the] American actor, called "Before Sunset"? That also took place in Paris and the film was a long dialogue... It was great.

[Behnam Nateghi]

They walked for two hours....Richard Linklater... Yes, "Before Sunset" was [set] in Paris, and then "Before Sunrise" took place in Vienna. Julie Delpy in both films plays the part of a French girl who's lived in America. In those

films, though, it's a matter of a love story that most certainly is 'not meant to be' between the two characters.

But in "2 Days in Paris," Julie Delpy in her role as Marianne, the French photographer living in New York, has gone to visit her family in Paris along with her American boyfriend.

The character she presents here is a different character than the one in the Richard Linklater films and the relationship, too, is different. It's a relationship that hits some hurdles in Paris and faces some difficulties.

[Host Luna Shad]

But a film that one person, that is Ms. Julie Delpy, has written, directed, and played the lead role in, and brought her parents to play the character's parents, and composed the film score for, and produced and sung the final song in... Isn't it just a mash note to herself and something of a home movie?

[Behnam Nateghi]

Yes, Luna, this is a point that's been raised by some critics, namely Anthony Lane, the New Yorker critic. He writes, "...this is not a vanity project. It is an insanity project." He uses the word "vanity" which doesn't have a Farsi equivalent, which is a kind of hollow self-satisfaction, and he rhymes it with "insanity".

[Host Luna Shad]

But vanity is not really anything to do with hollowness, as many important people are vain. It's almost as if the greater you become the greater your vanity, too, becomes. But this critic is right. I don't think he can be too off base. It seems to be true...Delpy is a little this way...

[Behnam Nateghi]

It may seem that way from afar, but Delpy is probably pleased. The New Yorker's negative review, which is biting, may be the only negative one she's received. The most important of all is that the New York Times, whose critic Stephen Holden also writes on pop culture as well as on cinema, has raved about the film. He's praised the speed with which the story is told [and] the intelligent dialogue. He liked the colorful characters that pop up in the couple's path in Paris. She runs into three of her exes.

And the [current boyfriend] is really not happy to run into these ex-boyfriends.

The point that has been raised by almost all the critics is Julie Delpy's resemblance to Diane Keaton in Woody Allen's film "Annie Hall"...which belongs to the older generation. I don't think you have seen it.

[Host Luna Shad]
No, but I have seen it.

[Behnam Nateghi]
Well, you've seen it because you're a historian...

[Host Luna Shad]
...And movie critic...

[Behnam Nateghi]
...and movie critic and encyclopedia... And Adam Goldberg's resemblance has been pointed out — not to Woody Allen but to Tony Roberts, who also appears in Annie Hall and many other Woody Allen films.

In the NY Times, Holden says that Julie Delpy's film goes much further than Woody Allen's in its expression of the character's inner feelings and is more than Woody Allen's comic play on words and situations. He's written that in Julie Delpy's acting with Adam Goldberg playing her boyfriend in the film "2 Days in Paris," they act with so much confidence, so naturally, that it almost doesn't seem like they're acting.

Just like you and me, here. It's totally natural.

[Host Luna Shad]
Especially me.

[Behnam Nateghi]
Especially you. You're a natural. It's as if they're living their parts before our very eyes. As they tear each other up in their arguments the film turns into a meditation on the human inability to understand the essence of the other in a relationship. What they mean is that no matter how long you've lived with someone you can never penetrate the depths of that person.

[Host Luna Shad]

Generally though, the French find it easier to analyze themselves than Americans do. It's perhaps part of their education.

[Behnam Nateghi]

The French talk a lot, meaning they are constantly analyzing.

[Host Luna Shad]

Are you French?

[Behnam Nateghi]

Me? No. I talk.

[Host Luna Shad]

Talking is different than analyzing.

[Behnam Nateghi]

So how do they analyze if they don't talk? Can't you use words in analyzing? Don't you have to talk?

[Host Luna Shad]

No, you could analyze yourself and write it down, for example. Just so you know, Behnam, one's never obliged to talk a lot. But why don't you tell us the conclusions of the film. Talk more about the criticism and general conclusions about the film.

[Behnam Nateghi]

It would seem each critic has arrived at a different conclusion regarding this film. For instance, Peter Rainer, the critic for the Christian Science Monitor, has said that many of the film's scenes appear improvised and by the same token don't work so well.

But Jack Matthews in the Daily News writes this is not so. Delpy's intelligent and detailed dialogues advance the story.

But, Carina Chocano in the Los Angeles Times, after addressing the cultural differences between the French and the Americans, and the reactions to things such as homosexuality and workers on strike, says, that

in the end the conclusion one can draw from the film is that there are no absolute ideas and no one's identity is firmly established.

[Host Luna Shad]
Thank you, Behnam.

[Behnam Nateghi]
Thank you, Luna Shad.

[Host Luna Shad]
"Forever and Ever" is tonight's song from David Crowder.

[Video clip]
This is the end of our program.

TRANSLATION ENDS HERE