

# Anti-terror Heroes



**The men who fought terrorism but were assassinated by a terrorist state**

## General Soleimani inspired resistance groups: Palestinian politician

**By ABBAS DEHGHANIFARD**  
TEHRAN - A member of the Political Bureau of the Islamic Jihad Movement says that the Islamic resistance movement in Palestine and Lebanon succeeded to expel Israel from the Gaza Strip and southern Lebanon thanks to support by Iran including by its top general Qassem Soleimani. Dr. Yusuf al-Hasayna Qassem says Lt. Gen. Soleimani was not an ordinary military commander, saying he was inspired by the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"Soleimani is not an ordinary person or commander. He was inspired by culture and behavior adopted by the Islamic Revolution from the first day of its victory," al-Hasayna Qassem tells the Tehran Times. "Thanks to this support, the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon succeeded in defeating the Zionist forces from southern Lebanon in 2000 and foiling its aggression in 2006," the top Islamic Jihad Movement official notes in an open reference to the 33-day war in which Hezbollah shattered the myth of the invincibility of the Zionist regime's army and caused an earthquake in Israel.

The following is the text of the interview:  
**Given the geopolitical situation in West Asia and the dangers that have threatened the region in recent years, how do you evaluate Iran's role in combating terrorism?**

When we talk about "terrorism", any researcher and observer must shed light on the "terror" system in the region and the world in which the United States, the Zionist regime, and their allies are on the top of the list.

"Terrorism", in its deep political meaning, is what America, the Zionist regime, and those states, entities, and groups following their policies do, as they all intend to fragment, divide, weaken, plunder the region's resources and ensure the security of Israel.

The systematic use of "terror" through the U.S. weapons and the Zionist regime targets the people of the region, their states, their civilizations, and their sanctities. For this reason, the Islamic Republic and the leadership of the Islamic Revolution put countering America's "terrorism" at top of their priorities as the Zionist regime is considered America's front line and "hand" in the region as it is a cancerous tumor that must be uprooted.

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## Iran can turn U.S. aircraft carrier into submarine in few hours: military advisor

TEHRAN - A senior military advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran has underlined the vulnerability of the U.S. military assets in the region, saying Iran is able to easily sink a U.S. aircraft carrier in a few hours.

The advisor, Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, said the U.S. military forces in the region are currently on the defensive and they know how vulnerable they are, ISNA reported.

Speaking in an interview with Iran's state TV, General Safavi addressed the current military situation in the Persian Gulf region and the tensions between Iran and the U.S. ahead of the first anniversary of the last year's assassination of General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of Iran's elite Quds Force.

"My assessment is that they (U.S.) are getting passive due to their weakness. They are concerned that we would carry out operations on the martyrdom anniversary of

martyrs Soleimani and Abu Mahdi [al-Muhandis] as well as the martyrdom of Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh. My assessment is that they are on the defensive. Of course, we must not underestimate the enemy. Our forces are strong and fully prepared to defend our interests. The Americans know that their forces in the region are very vulnerable. Iran is able to turn U.S. aircraft carriers into submarines in a few hours," General Safavi asserted.

He expressed hope that nothing would happen while Donald Trump is still in office.

"American military officials are more acquainted with their weak spots than politicians. Anyway, I hope nothing would happen until the vicious administration of Trump is gone. As our Leader and commanders know, the revenge for Hajj Qassem is still on the agenda," he continued.

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## Alarm in France as thousands attend illegal New Year rave party

Some 2,500 partygoers attended an illegal New Year rave in northwestern France, violently clashing with police who failed to stop it and sparking concern the underground event could spread the coronavirus, authorities said.

The revelers had set up the illegal rave in Lieuron, south of Rennes in Brittany, after skirmishes with police, said a statement from the local prefecture on Friday.

Many were still on the site as a sanitary cordon was thrown up around it, al Jazeera reported on Saturday.

Local gendarmes tried to "prevent this event but faced fierce hostility from many partygoers" who set one of their cars on fire and threw bottles and stones, the statement said.

Those present had come from across France and even abroad, it said.

By Friday evening, the sound of techno music could still be heard from the party venue,

though police were preventing any newcomers from joining the rave, according to an AFP news agency's photographer.

"Police controls are taking place around the site. Verbal warnings are being given to everyone leaving," the police said on social media.

Prosecutors have opened an investigation into the illegal organization of a musical gathering and premeditated violence against people in authority.

Speaking later on BFM TV, interior ministry spokeswoman Camille Chaize said there had been "great hostility, great violence" against the forces of law and order, without indicating when the police would be able to enter the rave site.

Such mass gatherings are strictly banned across France to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and a nationwide 8pm curfew - which was not lifted for the New Year - applies across the country.

## CBI net foreign assets rise 4.5%

TEHRAN - Net foreign assets held by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) at the end of the current Iranian calendar year's second quarter (September 21, 2020) stood at 3.63 quadrillion rials (about \$86.4 billion), 4.5 percent more than the figure for the end of the previous year (March 19, 2020).

According to the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) quarterly report, the bank's foreign assets amounted to 3.47 quadrillion rials (about \$82.75 billion) at the end of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2020), ILNA reported.

Based on the mentioned report, the country's monetary base stood at 3.72 quadrillion rials (about \$88.58 billion) at the end of the current year's second quarter, registering a 5.4-percent increase compared to the figure for the end of the previous year.

The total value of Iranian banks' foreign assets in December 2019, stood at 10.034 quadrillion rials (about \$246.19 billion), 47.8 percent of which belonged to the central bank.

The Central Bank of Iran's foreign assets

witnessed a 6.7-percent increase compared to the preceding year (ended on March 20, 2019) in which the figure stood at 14.63 quadrillion rials (about \$110.23 billion).

The previous CBI report, released in September 2019, had put the banking system's foreign assets by June 21, 2019, at 9.245 quadrillion rials (about \$220.11 billion), 13 percent more than the corresponding period in the previous year.

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## Emerging niches, changing tendencies: travel prospects in 2021 and beyond

**BY AFSHIN MAJLESI**

Ubiquitous hand-sanitizers, face masks, social-distancing floor labels, nasal swabs, and new customer-service protocols were not part of the travel experience before the coronavirus pandemic. Nowadays, they are a regular part of the routine. But for how long?

As the world slowly recovers from the massive slumps prompted by the infectious disease and borders gradually start to open, many expect travel to look different from what it was in

pre-pandemic.

Over the past months, many tour operators have dramatically lowered their number of trips. Leisure travelers have vividly been shifted from international destinations to domestic ones.

In Iran, the numbers of foreign travelers have drastically plunged since the virus made its debut as the country registered only 74 international visits during spring, which is traditionally a high season.

The coronavirus epidemic has ruined more

than 1.5 million jobs within the travel sector of the Islamic Republic, according to tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan. "Many of the tourism-insiders are now unemployed or they are staying at home."

Based on available data, Iran's tourism has suffered a loss of 140 trillion rials (some \$3.3 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic till the end of Shahrivar (Sep. 21).

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## Ebrahim Hatamikia, Commander Qassem Soleimani's favorite filmmaker

TEHRAN - Ebrahim Hatamikia was Commander Qassem Soleimani's favorite filmmaker as he directly made comments about his dramas "Che" and "Damascus Time".

"Che" depicting 48 hours of war veteran Mostafa Chamran's life on August 16 and 17, 1979 when he was sent to command several military operations in the civil war in the Kordestan region, premiered during the 32nd Fajr International Film Festival.

The film won six Crystal Simorghs in several categories, including best editor and best actor. However, Hatamikia failed to receive any prize for his direction or for writing the script for the film. He felt as if his film had been ignored by the jury and the organizers.

Moreover, he was criticized for his interpretations of some of the characters in the film, including Chamran.

Meanwhile, in an open letter to Hatamikia, Commander Soleimani called him "art chief" and wrote, "It was a rare opportunity to watch 'Che' after such a long time."

"Watching the film, I recalled yesterday's helplessness of the most perfect Iranian person of the Iranians and the most perfect Islamic person of the Muslims."

"You are among the devoted people who could have an opportunity to portray one out of the thousands of these amazing persons, and today, I cried in recalling the oppression of these forgotten persons."

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### TENDER INVITATION NO. 99-1017

IRAN ALUMINIUM COMPANY (IRALCO) would like to invite eligible suppliers for the supply of 1.000 MT Silicon Metal 4.4.1 on tender basis.

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For obtaining tender's documents and more information, please check: [www.iralco.ir](http://www.iralco.ir)

Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminum Company





## Leader offers condolences over demise of Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has expressed his condolences over the demise of prominent cleric, Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah Yazdi, saying he himself is mourning the demise of a “dear brother.”

In a message on Saturday, the Leader said Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi’s demise is a loss for the seminary and the Islamic studies, IRNA reported.



He termed Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi as a prominent thinker, a qualified manager, with an eloquent language in expressing truth and perseverance in the right path.

In the meantime, the Leader condoled with the bereaved family of the late ayatollah, his students and the seminary.

Mesbah Yazdi died on Friday evening at the age of 85 due to gastrointestinal disease.

He had been hospitalized since December 26 after his condition deteriorated.

Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi played a major part in the uprising — led by late founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini — that overthrew the U.S.-backed Pahlavi regime in 1979.

Following the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi first founded the Baqir-ul-Uloom Institute and then the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute in the city of Qom, which he headed for the rest of his life.

Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi, a philosopher and political theorist, was a member of the Society of Seminary Teachers of Qom.

He also served as a member of the Assembly of Experts — the body responsible for electing and monitoring the performance of the Leader — and the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution.

The cleric was first hospitalized at home on December 4 in the city of Qom, but following the progression of his clinical symptoms, he was transferred to Tehran for further treatment. He died in hospital six days later.

In separate messages, President Hassan Rouhani and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf offered condolences on the passing of Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi.

## Instagram afraid of Soleimani’s pictures: civil defense chief

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran’s Civil Defense Organization Brigadier General Gholamreza Jalali says the American social media apps are afraid of even the pictures of Iran’s assassinated commander Qassem Soleimani.

“We hold the first anniversary of the great martyr in circumstances such that the new colonial [powers] and virtual tools of America such as Instagram are afraid of even publishing the pictures of Soleimani,” Jalali said in a message released on Saturday, ahead of the anniversary of Lieutenant General Soleimani’s martyrdom.

This shows that Qassem Soleimani is popular within the hearts of nations, he said.

January 3 marks the first anniversary of the U.S. assassination of General Soleimani, the former commander of the Quds Force of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). He was admired as the region’s most potent counter-terrorism commander.



He was Iran’s lead military advisor helping Iraq and Syria defeat foreign-backed Takfiri terrorist groups such as Daesh (ISIS).

General Soleimani was martyred in a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad during an official visit. His Iraqi trenchmate Muhandis, deputy commander of Iraq’s Hashd al-Sha’abi anti-terror force, was also killed along with their other companions when their convoy was hit.

In what followed after the terrorist act by the U.S. mili-

tary, Instagram and its parent company Facebook have been removing posts that voice support for Soleimani to comply with U.S. sanctions.

A few days after the assassination and as the “first slap”, the IRGC unleashed a barrage of missiles on January 8 at the United States’ Ain al-Assad air base in the western Iraqi province of Anbar, causing massive damage to the base.

According to top Iranian officials, the ultimate revenge for Soleimani’s assassination would be to throw the American forces out of the region.

“Martyr Soleimani, even after his innocent martyrdom, disrupted the enemies’ calculations,” General Jalali said.

“Contrary to the initial calculation of the Black House of Terrorism (the White House), the region and especially Iraq, instead of becoming a hotbed of few mercenary elements and happy with the martyrdom of the ‘general of hearts’, became a platform for expressing the holy and widespread fury of nations against the American crime,” he added.

Last month, several Katyusha rockets landed near the U.S. embassy in Baghdad’s highly fortified Green Zone.

Washington blamed Iran for the attack, but the Islamic Republic has strongly denied any involvement in the incident.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif warned on Thursday that the Islamic Republic avoids military conflict, but is prepared to put up effective defense.

“Iran doesn’t seek war but will OPENLY & DIRECTLY defend its people, security & vital interests,” Zarif tweeted on Thursday.

# Aerospace Force chief: Limiting range of Iran’s missiles to 2,000 kilometers not permanent

Hajizadeh says no difference between U.S. bases, regional host states in a war

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Chief of the IRGC Aerospace Force has warned regional Arab countries that Iran will not make a distinction between U.S. military bases and the countries hosting them if Washington starts a war against Iran.

“The U.S. and the Zionist regime have not created security anywhere, and if something happens here and a war breaks out, we will make no distinction between the U.S. base and its host country. Naturally, the very same Arab countries of the region will bear the brunt,” Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh told Al-Manar TV in an interview aired on Saturday.

Advising regional countries working with the U.S. and Israel to rectify their policies, General Hajizadeh also said the IRGC missile power would never be subject to negotiations.

“No (Iranian) official is allowed to negotiate about the missile power. This is our red line,” he asserted, according to Tasnim.

The general also noted that Iran has independently decided to restrict the range of its missiles to 2,000 kilometers, but such limitation is not eternal.

Reaffirming Iran’s support for whoever fights against the Zionist regime, he said Gaza and Lebanon are at the forefront of



the battle and their missile capabilities have been supported by the Islamic Republic.

“Instead of giving a fish or teaching to catch a fish, we taught our allies and friends how to make a hook,” he said, adding that they are now in possession of advanced missile technologies.

The Israeli regime is currently at a “crossroad of fire” coming from Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and other Muslim countries, General Hajizadeh said, adding that the friends of Iran are now equipped with precision-guided missiles instead of simple rockets.

He said these efforts have been

## Tehran dismisses Rouhani death threat against Trump as ‘fake news’

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh says the American daily Washington Times should know better than to publish fake news, making a reference to the daily’s distortion of President Hassan Rouhani’s remarks about his outgoing American counterpart.

“Cowardice in assassinating foreign leaders is a US-Israeli trademark; NOT Iranian,” Khatibzadeh wrote in a tweet on Friday evening.

“@WashTimes should know better than to publish #FakeNews & spread anti-Iran bigotry -even though it has featured PAID content by the outlaw MeK terrorist cult,” he said. “Your readers deserve better!”

On Wednesday, the Washington Times falsely quoted Rouhani as issuing a death threat against U.S. President Donald Trump

“Trump will soon be dead,” the Washington Times quoted the Iranian president as saying, while vowing blood vengeance for the assassination of top Iranian general, Qassem Soleimani.

Addressing a cabinet session on Wednesday, Rouhani said: “I said it once, and I repeat it, Trump was like Saddam. Saddam imposed eight years of war against us and he was overthrown, and Trump imposed three years of economic war against us and he will be overthrown in the next few weeks, not just from office but from [political] life.”

“One of the effects of the stupid and disgraceful act of assassinating Martyr Soleimani was that Trumpism ended, and in a few days, this murder’s mandate is drawing to an end and he will go down into the dustbin of history,” Rouhani added.

Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the chief of the Quds Force of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), and his Iraqi trenchmate Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy head of the Popular Mobilization Units, were assassinated along with their companions in a U.S. drone strike authorized by Trump near Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020.

On Thursday, the Iranian Presidential Office’s Deputy Chief for Communications and Information Alireza Moezi also rejected the Washington Times report in a tweet, saying, “It is beneath the dignity of Iranian president to threaten the life of a foreign counterpart.”

“Unlike US regime, Iran does not threaten, nor does it assassinate foreign leaders. President Rouhani clearly said ‘very soon Mr. Trump’s POLITICAL life will be over’. Stop #fakenews,” Moezi wrote on his Twitter account.

In similar remarks on December 23, Rouhani said Trump’s fate will be no better than that of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

“We’ve had two lunatics in [our] history, one was Saddam who imposed a military war on us and the other lunatic is Trump who imposed the economic war on us,”



Rouhani said at a cabinet session.

“We saw how the Iranian people broke them with their resistance against those who wanted to break us,” the president added.

Trump reimposed sanctions on Iran after he pulled out of the JCPOA, commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, which was signed under his predecessor Barack Obama.

With Joe Biden’s victory, however, hopes have been raised over the survival of the nuclear deal. Biden has promised to return the United States into the JCPOA if Iran returns to full compliance with the deal.

## Soleimani shattered all U.S. calculations in the region, says defense chief

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Defense Minister Amir Hatami in a note on the first martyrdom anniversary of Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani wrote that the anti-terror commander was a hero who disrupted all U.S. calculations in the region.

“A year has passed since the martyrdom of Hajj Qassem Soleimani, the field commander of the fight against terrorism,” Brigadier General Hatami said on Saturday.

He said Soleimani was the commander who aborted all U.S. calculations in the region and that was why U.S. President Donald Trump ordered his assassination.

“The fact is that Daesh (ISIS) was not supposed to be eliminated in the region because the Americans had brought these

terrorists to remain for years to come and occupy and influence other countries as well,” he explained.

But Martyr Soleimani and other courageous resistance leaders realized the global arrogance’s plots and thwarted them.

On January 3, 2020, Trump ordered drone strikes that martyred General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy commander of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU).

Five days later, Iran’s IRGC attacked Ain al-Assad airbase in western Iraq, where U.S. forces were stationed, as part of its promised “tough revenge” for the U.S. terror attack.

Iran has also vowed to spare no efforts in bringing the assassins of General



Soleimani, especially Trump, to justice.

“Iran, while fully adhering to the applicable provisions of international law, will spare no legal and legitimate effort in order to bring the perpetrators and accomplices of Martyr General Soleim-

ani to justice, so that they suffer legal punishment for their action,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said last in November.

Last month, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the special aide to the speaker of the Iranian Parliament on international affairs, said the list of individuals involved in the assassination has been updated from 45 to 48.

Iran’s Judiciary has added new names to the list of individuals involved in the January assassination, Amir-Abdollahian said, adding that the Judiciary has stepped up efforts to prosecute the individuals who ordered and perpetrated the criminal act.

He also said that six countries have been given warrants from Iran’s Judiciary so far for the arrest of the culprits.

## Diplomat says Iran’s letter to IAEA is ‘self-explanatory’

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has acknowledged that Iran plans to enrich uranium up to 20% at its Fordow facility, a month after the Iranian Parliament passed a bill that tasked the government with scaling up the country’s nuclear program.

The IAEA said Iran did not say when it planned to boost enrichment, though the agency “has inspectors present in Iran on a 24/7 basis and they have regular access to Fordo.”

A spokesman for Tehran’s mission to the United Nations has said Iran’s letter to the IAEA that his country plans to enrich uranium to the purity of 20 percent is “self-explanatory”. However, Alireza Miryousefi declined to answer questions about when the 20% enrichment would begin.

The IAEA acknowledged that Iran had informed its inspectors of the decision, amid heightened tensions between Iran and the U.S. in the waning days of the administration of President Donald Trump.

“Iran has informed the agency that in order to comply with a legal act recently passed by the country’s parliament, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran intends to produce low-enriched uranium ... up to 20 percent at the Fordo Fuel Enrichment Plant,” the IAEA said in a statement.



Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia’s permanent representative to the Vienna-based IAEA, wrote on Twitter on Friday that Tehran planned to resume enrichment up to 20%.

According to a 9-article bill passed by the Parliament early in December, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) will be required to produce and store at least 120 kilograms of enriched uranium with 20 percent purity at the Fordow nuclear facility every year, and to fulfill the country’s peaceful industrial demands with uranium enriched above 20%.

The bill became a law as the oversight Guardian Coun-

cil approved it by asking the Parliament to make some amendments to it. It will oblige the AEOI to increase the monthly output of enriched uranium for various peaceful purposes with different purity levels by at least 500 kg.

The bill entails uranium enrichment activities with at least 1,000 IR-2M centrifuge machines at Natanz within three months after the ratification of the law, and compels the AEOI to launch uranium enrichment as well as research and development activities with at least 164 IR-6 centrifuges and increase the number of centrifuge machines to 1,000 within a year after the ratification of the bill.

Iran and six world powers, including the U.S., Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany, and also the European Union, reached a nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in Vienna on 14 July 2015. However, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018. The move was deplored by all other parties to the deal.

In response, Iran waited a year for the remaining sides to protect its interests under the deal, and since they failed to do so, it started to reduce its commitments under the JCPOA beginning on May 8, 2019, a year after Trump’s unilateral withdrawal.



# Iran to increase uranium enrichment level to 20%: nuclear chief

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran plans to increase uranium enrichment level to 20% as soon as possible, the head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said late on Friday amid simmering tensions with the United States.

In an interview with Iran's Channel 5, Ali Akbar Salehi said Iran will soon start 20% uranium enrichment in line with a recent law passed by the Iranian Parliament requiring the AEOI to make preparations to substantially increase the country's nuclear activities within few months if the Western countries that are party to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal fail to honor their obligations under the deal.

"We have sent a letter to the representative of the Islamic Republic to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna to submit it to the Agency. This letter was submitted to the Agency on Friday, informing it that we want to start 20% enrichment in accordance with the parliament law. Because we must inform the Agency and then its inspectors should come to unseal certain things that have been sealed," the head of the AEOI said, according to a Fars News report.

According to Salehi, in order for Iran to start enriching uranium to 20% purity, it needs to make some preparations such as changing the uranium gas cylinders. "And this must be done under the supervision of the Agency. We have announced that we will do it in near future and that you need to do the necessary measures," Salehi noted.

"God willing, we will start enriching [uranium] up to 20% soon. The president should issue an order. Of course, the president has already issued a preliminary order according to which we sent a letter to the Agency and made the announcement. We are just like a soldier having his hand on the trigger, waiting for the commander to issue an order to open fire. We are ready to do this and God willing, we will do it as soon as possible," he continued.

The nuclear chief implied that Iran may increase the enrichment level at the Fordow nuclear plant, noting that increasing enrichment level at Fordow would be done "very quickly".

Salehi said the AEOI move to increase the enrichment level is going to be taken according to the Parliament's nuclear ratification.

"We must implement what the Parliament passed because it is a law. The government has prepared procedures on how to implement



the Parliament's law."

He was referring to a recent parliamentary law that requires the cabinet of Hassan Rouhani to substantially resume nuclear activities in case the Western, in particular the European, parties to the 2015 nuclear deal — officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — failed to keep up their end of the bargain.

The nuclear law, officially called "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect Nation's Rights," introduces a step-by-step strategy for the government to increase nuclear activities in few months if the other side failed to implement certain commitments. The law is part of a broader strategy that aims to lift the United States sanctions on Iran and was put forward by the lawmakers in early November. It aims to force the United States into lifting sanctions on Iran by doubling down on nuclear activities.

The law obliges the government to considerably speed up nuclear activities such as increasing uranium enrichment level to 20% and employing more advanced centrifuges. It also requires the government to suspend the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) a few months after the ratification of it if the parties to the nuclear deal between Iran and world powers failed to uphold their obligations under the JCPOA.

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf has said this law will enhance Iran's nuclear program while enabling the country

to overcome the U.S. sanctions.

"This plan will strengthen the industry and the practical achievements of nuclear scientists and pave the way for Iran to overcome sanctions. This law, along with the reactions of other relevant agencies, in addition to reviving Iran's nuclear industry, creates deterrence against the enemy and security for the people," the speaker said in November.

With Iran expressing readiness to produce 20% enriched uranium, nuclear law seems to have entered the implementation phase.

The UN nuclear watchdog confirmed in a statement that it was informed by Iran of the country's plan to produce 20% enriched uranium.

"Iran has informed the Agency that in order to comply with a legal act recently passed by the country's parliament, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran intends to produce low-enriched uranium (LEU) up to 20 percent at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant," the IAEA statement said.

The JCPOA has set a limit of 3.67% on Iran's uranium enrichment. But following U.S. President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal in May 2018, after a year Iran started to reduce its nuclear commitments, increasing its uranium enrichment level to 4.5%. Iran also accumulated more nuclear materials, including low enriched uranium, than what was permitted under the JCPOA.

Iran has said that all its nuclear measures were adopted with its rights that are stipulated

within the JCPOA. It called on the European signatories to the JCPOA — France, Germany and the UK (E3) — to secure Iran's interests by implementing their obligations under the deal. But the Europeans raised other non-nuclear issues such as Iran's missile program and its regional influence, instead of living up to their commitments.

Faced with the Europeans' non-compliance with the deal, the Iranian Parliament moved to turn up the heat on the E3 by adopting the nuclear law, which ultimately forced them to back down on their non-nuclear demands such as extending the JCPOA sunset clauses and holding a new round of negotiations over Iran's defense capabilities and its regional influence.

Abolfazl Amouei, the spokesman for the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has said that the nuclear law forced the West to change course on Iran.

"We are currently witnessing signs of a change in the behavior of the Europeans but they are still far from our demands. Therefore, the Parliament will seriously pursue the implementation of the strategic law on lifting sanctions," Amouei said in late December, shortly after a JCPOA ministerial meeting during which the E3 agreed to put aside their non-nuclear preconditions.

Amouei said that there have been indications that the Western parties to the JCPOA have put aside their preconditions and claims after the Iranian Parliament passed the nuclear law, which was designed, in itself, to push the Europeans into changing tack on Iran.

"From the foreign reactions we received after the adoption of the strategic law on the elimination of sanctions in the Parliament, we understand that this law has had its effect in the international arena and has forced the Western parties to reconsider their policies," Amouei remarked.

The Guardian also reported that the European parties to the JCPOA have come to the conclusion that they should abandon their preconditions.

Following the JCPOA ministerial meeting, the British newspaper said that the E3 foreign ministers have agreed not to set fresh preconditions on a revival of the Iran nuclear deal, believing Tehran and Washington should be able to come back into full compliance with the agreement without at this stage needing to accept to extend or strengthen it.

## U.S., ISIS 'brothers in arms,' Iran says

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Foreign Ministry has accused the U.S. government of supporting the ISIS terrorist group, describing the U.S. and ISIS as "brothers in arms."

"It's a well-documented fact, which's been admitted by Trump, that U.S. has had a crucial role in the rise of terrorism in our region, from AQ to ISIS. Not surprising that the US assassination of General Soleimani was cheered by ISIS: brothers in arms," the Iranian foreign ministry said in a tweet on Saturday.

The foreign ministry also posted a video showing Trump addresses a campaign rally in which he says that former U.S. Secretary of State "Hillary Clinton created ISIS with Obama." The video also shows that the commander of Iran's elite Quds Force, General Qassem Soleimani was an "anti-terrorism champion" whose assassination only benefited the ISIS terrorist group.

This week marks the first anniversary of the assassination of the top Iranian general last year. General Soleimani was assassinated in an American drone strike on January 3, 2020, along with his comrade Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), near Baghdad's international airport. The strike was ordered by U.S. President Donald Trump, a reckless move



that brought Iran and the United States close to an all-out war as General Soleimani was an influential figure in Iran and beyond. In response, Iran showered a U.S. airbase in western Iran with missiles, causing brain injury among dozens of American servicemen.

Earlier on Friday, the Iranian foreign ministry republished an assessment by Agnes Callamard, the UN Special Rapporteur on Extra-Judicial Executions, on the assassination of General Soleimani saying that the U.S. strike against the general was a blatant violation of international law.

According to Callamard, the strike was clearly a strike

against the armed forces of another state and it was a use of force against Iraq and a violation of its sovereignty. Callamard noted that the strike also was in violation of the UN charter.

The Iranian foreign ministry also said that the strike was against international law.

"By committing a craven act of terror against Gen Soleimani, the US violated int'l law & the UN Charter in a blatant violation of Iraqi sovereignty. The US' lawlessness in full show. Iran won't rest until bringing those responsible to justice," tweeted the foreign ministry.

Iran has long warned that it will take revenge against the U.S. for assassinating the commander of the Quds Force. Iran has recently said that some people inside the U.S. may move to avenge the assassination.

"By committing this crime, you [the U.S.] created a job for all freedom-seeking people across the globe. Be sure that it is possible that some people will be found inside your home to respond to your crime," General Soleimani's successor Brigadier General Esmail Qaani said on Friday. "Those who committed this crime should know that throughout the world there would be a man who will punish the cowards behind this crime."

Iran also said that it will work to expel the U.S. from the region.

## Iran can turn U.S. aircraft carrier into submarine in few hours: military advisor

**1→ 'Israeli agent-provocateurs'**

In recent days, tensions have mounted between Iran and the U.S. ahead of the assassination anniversary of General Soleimani, with the U.S. claiming that Iran could be planning an attack on U.S. targets in Iraq.

On Friday, an unknown U.S. official told NBC News that the U.S. has seen increasing indications that Iran could be planning an attack against American forces or interests in the West Asia region.

On the other hand, Iran has warned of an

Israeli-orchestrated attack on U.S. forces in Iraq with the purpose of dragging the outgoing Trump administration into a quagmire.

"Intelligence from Iraq indicate plot to FABRICATE pretext for war. Iran doesn't seek war but will OPENLY & DIRECTLY defend its people, security & vital interests," Iranian Foreign Minister Mohamad Javad Zarif said in a tweet on Thursday.

The chief Iranian diplomat repeated his warning on Saturday, saying that "Israeli agent-provocateurs" are planning attacks



IRGC bases and assets on the island, saying that the Basij forces stationed on the Abu Musa island are at the forefront of defending Iran.

Addressing these forces, General Salami said, "Today, You are at the forefront of defending the country in the Abu Musa island. And when the enemy sees you, it comes to the conclusion that it must act and treat this nation in a polite, respectful and cautious way because your presence is indicative of the will of a whole nation."

The top Iranian general also reiterated that the three Persian Gulf Islands of the Greater Tumb, Lesser Tumb and Abu Musa are indispensable parts of the Iranian soil and national sovereignty, describing them as the frontline of defense against extra-regional enemies, according to a Tasnim report.



## SPORTS

### Barcelona match was my toughest experience: Nazemi

**SPORTS d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian woman futsal referee Gelareh Nazemi says that the match between Barcelona and Shenzhen had been her toughest career experience. Nazemi has been shortlisted by Futsal Planet as one of the 10 best referees in 2020.

In an interview with IRNA, the female official believes that the Iranian women have begun making their way to the top tournaments.

"Paria Shariari has been recently invited to Tokyo as Match Commissioner for Olympic Football Tournament. Mahsa Ghorbani and Ensieh Khabbaz Mafinejad have been also shortlisted to officiate at the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup. It shows that the FIFA officials have trusted the Iranian women referees," she said.

Nazemi, 39, says that she has officiated for 19 years without any problem but a Barcelona match has been her toughest career experience.

"A match between Barcelona and Shenzhen men futsal teams in the intercontinental competition is my toughest match I've ever officiated but it was my best ever performance as well," Nazemi added.

"In my opinion, football officiating is not a job and everyone who wants to start refereeing should love that. I think, the federation has paved the way for women to work as an official in the recent years," Nazemi stated.



### Football matches in Tehran on brink of postponement

**SPORTS d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Three football matches in Iran Professional League are on the verge of being postponed due to high levels of air pollution.

Esteghlal are scheduled to host Aluminum in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Persepolis will also play Sepahan in the stadium a day later, while Paykan meet Nassaji in Shar-e Qods Stadium, southwest of Tehran.

Air pollution was the cause of nearly 30,000 deaths per year in Iranian cities.

Each winter, Iran's sprawling capital suffers some of the worst pollution in the world through thermal inversion -- a phenomenon that traps hazardous air over the city. A lack of wind and the cold air trap the pollution in the Iranian capital's atmosphere.

In previous years, authorities closed schools and allowed private cars onto the streets only on alternate days to reduce the air pollution in this city of over 10 million people. However, this year, despite coronavirus-related restrictions, Tehran has again faced high levels of air pollution.

### Nasirzadeh elected head of bodybuilding federation

**SPORTS d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Abdolmahdi Nasirzadeh was elected as new president of Iran Bodybuilding Federation on Saturday.

In the presidential elections held at the Iran's Academy Olympic, Nasirzadeh was elected for a four-year term till 2024. He was elected as head of the federation with 28 votes out of 43 votes.

Hossein Yarmohammadian came second with 15 votes.

Nasirzadeh replaced Nasser Pouralifard who was forced to withdraw from his post due to a law barring the employment of retirees in government, state or public institutions which use state funds or facilities.

Nasirzadeh was serving as head of Iran Wrestling League Organization.

### Iran's defeat to Syria among 10 moments of 2020

**SPORTS d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran national basketball team's defeat to Syria is among the 10 moments of 2020, fiba.basketball reported.

The 2020 basketball year endured long stoppages of play because of the coronavirus pandemic yet there were still plenty of incredible moments that reinforced the fans love for the game.

The FIBA Asia Cup 2021 is going to be big. But the games teams have to play to make it that far are proving to be even bigger, at least for Syria, who sprung arguably the biggest upset in their basketball history with a 77-70 triumph over then world No. 22 Iran on November 30.

Looking for a signature win to bolster their self-belief and inspire the young players in the country that dream of putting on the national team shirt one day, Syria trailed by as many as 10 points but never stopped battling. Two days earlier they lost a heart-breaker to Qatar but this time, the world No. 95 prevailed.

### Azmoun on Fiorentina's radar

**SPORTS d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran international forward Sardar Azmoun has been reportedly linked with a move to Italian club Fiorentina in the January transfer window.

"Sardar Azmoun, the 25-year-old Zenit St. Petersburg striker, has been on the radar of Fiorentina, and the Florence team intends to strengthen its attacking line by adding Sardar to its team," said the report.

Azmoun has played 20 games for Zenit in the current season, scoring 11 goals and providing five assists, Russia's Sport Weekend reported.

Other Serie A clubs Napoli and Lazio have already shown their interest in signing Azmoun.



## Govt. awards efficient electricity consumers with \$43m of discounts on bills

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Power Generation and Distribution Company (TAVANIR) has rewarded domestic subscribers for low electricity consumption with 1.84 trillion rials (about \$43.8 million) of discount on their electricity bills since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020), an official with the company said.



Also, last year the company awarded efficient household electricity subscribers with about 1.06 trillion rials (about \$25.23 million) worth of discount on their bills, Qolamali Rakhshani-Mehr said.

According to the official, low-consuming electricity subscribers in the industry and agriculture sectors were also rewarded with 4.81 trillion rials (\$114.52 million) of discounts on their bills since the beginning of the current year.

The figure was 3.5 trillion rials (about \$83.33 million) last year, he noted.

Mentioning the shortage of the fuel supply to power plants during the cold seasons due to the rise in the natural gas consumption, Rakhshani-Mehr said: “To encourage people to reduce their consumption, which will lead to the reduction of fuel consumption by power plants, the Energy Ministry offers summer peak period incentives also during the winter.”

He further mentioned the ministry’s “Power of Hope” program, saying: “This plan aims to change the attitudes of household consumers towards the proper use of energy resources and consequently protect the environment.”

The Energy Ministry has recently implemented a program for rewarding efficient electricity subscribers with a 100 percent discount on their bills.

This program was implemented to both reward low-consuming subscribers and to encourage others to consume less.

According to the Energy Ministry, this program is expected to reduce domestic power consumption by 10 percent.

Based on this plan, household subscribers were divided into three categories, which include low-consumers, normal-consumers, and high-consumers.

Two programs were also offered for high-consuming subscribers so that by implementing these plans, these subscribers would also join the low-consumer group.

The first program was a training course to teach consumption management methods with the help of knowledge-based companies and start-ups, while the second plan was to install solar panels on the roofs of high-consuming subscribers’ houses so that such subscribers would meet their electricity needs by installing these PV stations.

## Exports of eggs reach 65,000 tons in 9 months

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran exported 65,000 tons of eggs to the target countries during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 20, 2020), Hedayat Asghari, the chairman of Producers of Egg-Laying Hens Union, announced.



He stated that the best condition for managing the egg market is to determine and regulate the domestic and export markets, adding, “Egg exports should be managed intelligently so that we do not export nationally but provincially.”

As previously announced, the country’s aviculture farms are expected to export up to 80,000 tons of eggs in the current year (ends on March 20, 2021).

Iranian eggs are currently exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, and Qatar.

Based on the statistics, the country is capable of exporting 90,000-95,000 tons of eggs per annum.

Last year, nearly 1.1 million tons of eggs were produced in the country, of which more than 41,000 tons were exported to target countries.

A total of 900,000 tons of eggs were produced in the preceding year of 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019), 90 percent of which were by industrial units and the rest by local farmers.

According to the Deputy Agriculture Minister Morteza Rezaei, Iran is the 10th biggest egg producer in the world and fifth in Asia.

Each Iranian person consumes an average of 200 eggs annually.

## CBI net foreign assets rise 4.5%

**1 →** According to the data released by the CBI Department of Economic Research and Policy in June 2020, the country’s monetary base stood at 3.834 quadrillion rials (about \$91.28 billion) at the end of the first quarter of the current calendar year (June 20), 8.8 percent more than the figure for the end of the previous year.

# Iran’s 1st state-owned F-class power plant comes on stream

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s first government-owned F-class power plant has been put into operation in southern Hormozgan Province, an official with Iran’s Thermal Power Plant Holding (TPPH) announced.

“The first gas unit of Hengam power plant with a capacity of 307 megawatts (MW) has gone operational in Hormozgan province as Iran’s first F-class power plant,” Alireza Nasrollahi said.

Nasrollahi put the investment made in this power plant project at about €500 million, saying: “this power plant has two 307 MW F-class gas turbines and a 292 MW steam unit, with a total capacity of 906 MW and an efficiency of 58 percent.”

According to the official, the TPPH has put the plan for the construction of F-class power plants on the agenda to improve the efficiency of the country’s electricity network and reduce energy consumption in the production sector.

Based on the mentioned plan, over 5,000 MW of such power plants will be constructed in eight different regions, he said.



Using F-class gas turbines will lead to lower fuel consumption in thermal power plants and is more environment-friendly.

Over two-thirds of Iran’s thermal power plants are owned and operated by the country’s private sector and private owners

are currently generating nearly 67 percent of Iran’s thermal power, according to the country’s Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution Management Company, known as Tavanir.

Currently, a total of 478 thermal power plants are operating throughout Iran which includes both gas power plants and combined cycle plants.

Iran’s total power generation capacity currently stands at about 85,000 MW, more than 90 percent of which is supplied by thermal power plants.

Back in September 2020, Hamidreza Azimi, the deputy managing director for planning affairs in TPPH, had announced that 1,239 MW was added to the generation capacity of the country’s thermal power plants since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020).

According to the data released by the Energy Ministry, from August 2013 up to August 2019, a total of 69 thermal power plants were constructed across the country to add 8,991 MW to the capacity of the country’s thermal electricity output.

## Value of commodity trades at IME rise 39% in a week

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Commodities worth over 113 trillion rials (about \$2.69 billion) were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), up 39 percent from the preceding week.

Over 996,450 tons of commodities were traded at IME in the mentioned week, registering a 55 percent rise compared to the previous week, IME’s Public Relations Department reported.

The exchange sold 445,660 tons of commodities on its mineral and industrial trading floor worth \$1.54 billion, including 436,370 tons of steel, 7,535 tons of aluminum, 1,420 tons of copper, 120 tons of molybdenum sulfur, 15 tons of precious metals concentrate, 200 tons of cast iron, and 10 kg of gold bars.

Furthermore, the IME traded a total of 549,620 tons of commodities on its export pit with a trading value of nearly \$1.16 billion. Traded commodities on this floor were 224,500 tons of vacuum bottom, 193,995 tons of

bitumen, 57,564 tons of polymeric products, 17,144 tons of chemicals, 41,500 tons of lube cut, 170 tons of insulation, 97 tons of base oil, 3,000 tons of slop wax, and 8,900 tons of sulfur.

Based on this report, the IME was also a platform for trades of 1,170 tons of various commodities on its side market.

As previously reported, over 2.77 million tons of products worth \$1.32 billion were traded at the IME during the ninth Iranian calendar month Azar (November 21-December 20), indicating 57 percent growth in terms of value compared to its preceding month.

IME is one of the four major stock markets of Iran, the other three markets are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran’s over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

In late April, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad unveiled the market’s new outlook plan, which depicts IME’s development roadmap until the Iranian calendar



year of 1404 (March 20205-March 2026). Materializing the slogan of this Iranian year, which is “Surge in Production” is seriously considered in the mentioned plan and it is, in fact, the strategic approach of the outlook plan.

## ICCIMA to hold online conference on China trade opportunities

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) is going to hold an online conference on Iran-China trade opportunities and capacities on Tuesday, January 5, ICCIMA portal announced.

The online event will be attended by officials from the ICCIMA, the chairman of the Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce and representatives of some provincial chambers, as well as the heads of relevant organizations and committees.

Based on the ICCIMA statement, the opportunities, challenges, and problems



related to the economic cooperation between the two countries’ private sectors will be discussed in this meeting.

The latest developments in the region, the conditions for economic cooperation

between the two countries, the prospects for the development of bilateral trade relations, as well as the solutions for facilitating the entry of Iranian companies into the Chinese market will also be explored in this online event.

As Iran’s top trade partner, China accounts for a big chunk of the Islamic Republic’s annual foreign trade.

The two countries have had a long history of cultural, political, and economic exchanges along the Silk Road since at least 200 BC, and possibly earlier. To this day, China and Iran have developed a friendly economic and strategic partnership.

Approximately 80 percent of China’s total imports from Iran is oil and the rest is related to minerals and chemical products.

Earlier in December, the International Institute of Iran Industries Research held an international conference on trade, investment, and economic cooperation between Iran and China.

Aimed at exploring the challenges in the way of trade cooperation between the two countries and presenting the latest solutions for them, the event hosted over 100 businessmen and officials from the country’s public- and private-sector organizations.

## Some 10.2m villagers to enjoy drinking water by August

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian has announced that the population in the rural regions which enjoy stable drinking water supply will reach 10.2 million by the end of the current government’s incumbency (August).

The minister said that over eight million people in 11,962 villages have been supplied with drinking water during this government’s incumbency, and the figure will reach 9.3 million by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

Drinking water is supplied to 30 villages every week on average in the framework of the Energy Ministry’s A-B-Iran program.

Since the beginning of the first phase of the A-B-Iran scheme [the acronyms A and B stand for water, electricity in Persian] in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2020), every week several energy projects have been inaugurated across the country.

Villages are often mentioned as some keys to the development of countries, and the allocation of a proper



amount of budget to rural development always brings fruitful economic results.

In Iran, where villages account for generating 20-23

percent of the value-added in the country, the development of rural areas has been always a top agenda of the governments’ activities.

The sustainable economic, social, and cultural development of the villages is one of the major priorities of the current government, and many projects implemented and underway in this regard have led to outstanding development in the rural regions.

It is while the sanctions have created many limitations and difficulties for the Iranian economy in recent years.

The supply of drinking water to the villages has been expedited by the current government, especially since the last Iranian calendar year (March 2019-March 2020).

Under the framework of the A-B-Iran program, the Energy Ministry has inaugurated many projects to supply drinking water to the rural areas.

All such programs and projects are hoped to bring sustainable development to the country’s villages and lead to boosting production, which is now seriously pursued in the country.

## Iran-Tajikistan trade committee holds follow-up meeting

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran and Tajikistan have held an online trade committee meeting to follow up on the agreements reached during the 13th Joint Economic Committee meeting, an official with Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said.

According to Behrouz Olfat, TPO director of the Europe and America Department, the meeting was held on December 30, 2020 by TPO in collaboration with the Foreign Affairs Department of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan.

During this meeting, the two sides reached various agreements including the formation of an industry, mining and

trade working group, holding a virtual meeting between the standard officials of the two countries, holding webinars by the two countries’ Joint Chamber of Commerce, exchanging information of the two sides’ private companies and developing cooperation in geology.

The two sides also decided on exchanging trade delegations and holding special exhibitions in near future in accordance with health and safety protocols, according to Olfat.

Accelerating the signing of agreement documents for the electronic exchange of customs data and the memorandum of understanding (MOU) on economic cooperation between the two countries



were also among the issues discussed in this meeting.

“It was also decided to hold an industry, mining and trade committee meeting between the two countries in the near future under the responsibility of this

organization (TPO),” he added.

The 13th meeting of the Iran-Tajikistan Joint Economic Committee was held in Tehran on December 2, 2019.

Attended by senior officials from both sides, the event was chaired by Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and Minister of Energy and Water Resources of Tajikistan Usmonali Uzmonzoda.

Speaking in the meeting’s opening ceremony, Ardakanian mentioned the positive relations between the two countries, saying “Relations between the two countries have entered a new phase, the two sides should use the existing capacities for further development of all-out ties.”



# General Soleimani inspired resistance groups: Palestinian politician

Islamic Jihad official says General Soleimani “led heroic battles against brutal terrorism in Syria and Iraq”

1 → Therefore, we have a special understanding and awareness among Iranian leaders who confronted “terrorism” in West Asia since the inception of the Islamic Republic, and based on this understanding and awareness and after the victory of the Islamic revolution the leadership of the revolution declared its support for Palestine, the Palestinian and Arab resistance, and even demonstrated its sympathy towards all the suppressed people in the world.

The Islamic Republic is still fighting enemies and “terrorism” supported by the United States and the Zionist regime in various ways, and the forces of resistance in the region have left no stone unturned to support the Palestinians. Rather, it has used all its capabilities as a state and revolution to help, support, and back the Palestinian, Arab and Islamic resistance and confront usurper regimes.

And when the enemies felt that the axis of resistance was scoring victories in the region at the expense of the Westerners and Zionists, they started to release the brutal hand of terror in our Arab and Islamic regions, particularly in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and other places.

The Islamic Republic has taken upon itself to confront this massive wave of terrorism, which is armed and equipped with the latest weapons and modern technologies in communications, monitoring, and surveillance, which has enabled it to occupy vast areas of lands in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen.

This great role, taken over by the Islamic Republic, pushed the sponsors of terrorism in America and the Zionist regime and their allies to tighten sanctions on the Islamic Republic and assassinate General Qassem Soleimani, the martyr of Islam and Palestine, and his companion Haji Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis because of their great role in foiling terrorist scheme in the region.

**How do you evaluate Iran’s policies represented by General Soleimani to find a common ground between the regional countries and peoples to fight all types of terrorism?**

Since the Islamic Revolution’s victory hostile forces to Iran have adopted “terrorism” as a means to undercut the Islamic Revolution, while dependent states, despotic regimes, sponsored terrorist groups in order to undermine stability in the Islamic Republic.

Nevertheless, the awareness of the revolutionary men and armed forces and the Muslim Iranian people who rallied around the revolution protecting it and provided it with the elements of power, foiled the plots of these regimes and groups to do sabotage inside Iran.

The Islamic Republic, its apparatus, and its Revolutionary Guard succeeded in isolating the phenomenon of terrorism inside Iranian society as a treacherous behavior that was intended to



“The martyrdom of this great leader in terms of his weight, his attitudes, and his role is undoubtedly a great loss.”

break up the unity of the Iranian people.

This is in terms of combating terrorism at the domestic level. As for the regional level, there is no doubt that the Islamic Republic has a leading and main role in confronting terrorism in West Asia, and this is what I explained in part of the answers in the first question.

However, the most prominent feature of the Islamic Republic’s role in recent times represented by efforts of martyr General Qassem Soleimani was his contribution to awareness, unity, and boosting peoples’ abilities and will.

Soleimani could establish a kind of organized resistance to terrorist plans directed by the U.S. and Zionists, so he acted as a coordinator of resistance groups. He made resisting the U.S and Israel a top priority and strategy for Muslims, considering the Zionist regime and its allies in the region as a base for advanced terrorism against the Muslim world and the nations in West Asia.

General Soleimani also supported the resistance of the Palestinian, Lebanese and Yemeni people, and deservedly led heroic battles against brutal terrorism in Syria and Iraq.

Today, what is made by martyr Qassem Soleimani is like a bone in the throat of the malicious Americans and the Zionists which spread terrorism in the Arab and Islamic countries.

Frankly, the resistance demonstrated by Hezbollah, the Iraqi Hash al-Shaabi and the Palestinian and Yemeni forces, is the one that stands in the face of terrorism, liquidates and defeats occupation.

There is no difference between the “terrorism” of these groups supported by the U.S., and (Persian) Gulf intelligence services, and the Zionist regime, as they are two sides of the same coin.

We affirm that the region will not be stabilized or secure as long as the Zionist regime and these groups exist.

That is why Martyr Soleimani’s efforts to unify the groups fighting terrorism in all its forms and types is necessary and important in this tough battle between the resistance forces and the terrorist forces led by the Zionist regime and terrorist groups associated with the West.

**Do you think that the martyrdom of great commanders such as General Qassem Soleimani will impede combat against terrorism and occupation?**

The assassination of martyr Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis by the United States of America shed light on the systematic terrorist nature of the American administrations that demonstrates the terrorist behavior in the world without any hesitation in order to achieve malign goals.

The U.S. supports the terrorism symbolized by the Zionist regime and terrorist groups that spread chaos and devastate countries and nations just in favor of Israel’s security.

The assassination of such a great leader was a painful blow to the resistance forces in the region. The martyrdom of a great leader in terms of his weight, his attitudes, and his role is undoubtedly a great loss.

Qassem Soleimani was not an ordinary person or commander. He was inspired by culture and behavior adopted by the Islamic Revolution from the first day of its victory, namely the principle of defending the oppressed people everywhere and resisting arrogance and colonialism.

Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Iran has sided with Palestine and the Palestinian cause and still supports the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance in their movement in confronting the usurping Zionist regime.

Thanks to this support, the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon succeeded in defeating the Zionist forces from southern Lebanon in 2000 and foiling its aggression in 2006.

The Palestinian resistance also succeeded in forcing the occupying Zionist forces to withdraw from the Gaza Strip under the blows of the Palestinian resistance, which despite being under siege, managed to deter the Zionist enemy in three successive wars (2008, 2012, 2014), and the Zionist enemy could not achieve any of its goals in those wars, on top of which was liquidating the resistance and destroy its power.

Thanks to the unlimited Iranian support, the Palestinian resistance has accumulated the elements of strength, and by this it has impeded the enemy and its increasing power over the past years.

Now the Zionist enemy is a vulnerable entity despite its advanced modern weapons, brutal power, and its relationship with its agents in the region.

**Why do we find a sharp difference between the scourge of “terrorism” between the Western world powers and the axis of resistance?**

The Western narrative, and also Zionism, is based on the link between resistance and “terrorism” and extremism, which is a malicious attempt that seeks to criminalize legitimate resistance and portray it as “terrorism” targeting civilians and public facilities in countries.

This linkage achieves a set of objectives for the Western powers and the Zionist regime and tries to isolate the legitimate national resistance whether locally, regionally, or internationally.

It also makes attempts to link resistance with terrorism in order to criminalize and punish resistance and include it on the lists of “terrorism”.

This makes it easier to strike and target resistance; and on the third side, this malicious attempt gives the Zionist regime an excuse to target the resistance and wage wars against Arab and Muslim peoples, as happened in the aggression against Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria.

Therefore, the concept of terrorism in the Western context is targeting the vital features and forces in the region in order to liquidate them and then facilitate Israel’s control over Palestine and the region.

The race towards normalization of ties with

Israel comes in this context and unfortunately many Arab and Islamic countries undermine resistance in international conferences. This means being in harmony with the Western Zionist narrative.

In view of resistance, the definition of “terrorism” is based on the premise that resistance is a right guaranteed to all states and peoples, and it is a basic right that derives its strength and legitimacy from the principle of self-defense and from religious, humanitarian and moral values.

Even international laws and treaties stipulate the right of people to resist colonialism, occupation, and racism.

In fact, some United Nations resolutions required the assistance of peoples seeking to liberate themselves from the yoke of colonialism and occupation, and this is exactly what the axis of resistance does where they exercise their legitimate right to defend themselves and their homelands.

Rather, the resistance forces monitor the Zionists’ moves to be prepared and confront the terrorist forces supported by the West and the Zionist regime when they allow these forces to strike civilians and expand their occupation, as happened in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

So we are facing two different understandings from “terrorism”. The first is blameworthy and rejected “terrorism” supported by the United States, the Zionist regime, and the West because it targets civilians and the infrastructure of countries.

The other concept is what the people of the region call “resistance”, which is branded as “terrorism” by Israel.

Meanwhile, the resistance axis exercises its legitimate right to defend itself and its homelands and fight the occupying forces and colonialism.

**In recent years, under the pretext of fighting terrorism, alliances have been formed with the inclusion of extra-regional powers to exploit the current crises in West Asia. What is your comment?**

The title of suppressing terrorism in these alliances, which came at the request of the United States and the Zionist regime, does not aim to confront terrorism and extremism that afflict the countries of the region. Rather, it is intended to discredit legitimate resistance to occupation and colonialism.

These alliances seek to achieve the goals of Israel and the United States in linking terrorism with legitimate resistance, while the tyrannical regimes in the region have accepted to be agents for the Zionist and American plans.

These Arab regimes and entities are eager to normalize relations with Israel in order to gain legitimacy for themselves at the expense of Arab, Palestinian, and Islamic causes.

They seek to form a military intelligence security alliance to confront the Islamic Republic and resistance forces in the region.

## General Qassem Soleimani: Revered Iranian freedom fighter and U.S. big lies about him

General Soleimani is larger than life in death than when alive

By Stephen Lendman

On January 3, 2020, revered Iranian Quds Force freedom-fighting commander General Qassem Soleimani was martyred by Pentagon assassins on orders by the Trump regime’s hardliners — an act of cold-blooded murder of a beloved figure throughout much of the region. Deputy Head of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) Hashed Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and others were martyred along with him.

APMU statement at the time said the following: “The American and Israeli enemy (were) responsible for their (deaths by) a cowardly U.S. bombing.” A U.S. war department disinformation statement said: “At (Trump’s) direction...the U.S. military has taken decisive defensive action (sic) to protect U.S. personnel abroad (sic) by killing Qasem Soleimani, the head of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force, a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (sic),” adding: “This strike was aimed at deterring future Iranian attack plans (sic)...The United States will continue to take all necessary action to protect our people and our interests wherever they are around the world (sic).”

All of the above reflects typical U.S. mass deception — manufacturing nonexistent threats to unjustifiably justify its high crimes. Denouncing what happened, Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei called Soleimani “an international figure of the resistance, and all the devotees of resistance are now his avengers,” adding, “All the friends and foes must know that the path of jihad of the resistance will continue with double motivation, and a definite victory awaits those who fight in this auspicious path...The demise of our selfless and dear general is bitter, but the continued fight and achievement of the final victory will make life bitterer for the murderers and criminals.”

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said his assassination “doubled the determination of the great nation of Iran and other free nations to stand against and resist the excessive demands of the U.S. and to defend the Islamic values.” Rouhani added, “There is no doubt that this cowardly and evil move is another sign of U.S. desperation, inability and failure in the region, and the hatred felt by the regional nations toward this criminal regime...The great nation of Iran and other free nations of the region will take revenge for this heinous crime against the criminal U.S.”

Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif denounced U.S. “rogue adventurism.” The Trump regime “bears responsibility for all consequences of its” actions, he stressed. Separately he tweeted: “The U.S. act of international terrorism, targeting & assassinating General Soleimani—THE most effective force fighting Daesh (ISIS), Al Nusra, Al Qaeda et al—is extremely dangerous & a foolish escalation.”

Trump defied reality with the following Big Lies, deceptively claiming the following: “General Soleimani killed or badly wounded thousands of Americans over an extended period of time, and was plotting to kill many more (sic),” adding, “He was directly and indirectly responsible for the death of millions of people (sic)” — an astonishing Big Lie even by his dissembling

standards. He further turned truth on its head, calling Soleimani “the number-one terrorist anywhere in the world (sic).”

As U.S. commander-in-chief, the dubious distinction applies to him. His regime and congressional accomplices share blame for endless preemptive wars on nonthreatening nations — a flagrant UN Charter violation.

Separately he falsely added that “Soleimani was actively planning new attacks, and he was looking very seriously at our embassies, and not just the embassy in Baghdad (sic),” adding he was planning “to blow up our (Baghdad) embassy (sic)...But we stopped him, and we stopped him quickly, and we stopped him cold” — despite no threat he posed to the U.S., just ISIS and likeminded terrorists the U.S. created and supports.

Trump provided no evidence of a Soleimani threat because none exists. Claiming he acted in self-defense was a bald-faced Big Lie. No “imminent” threat from Iran existed earlier or now.

In response to Trump’s remarks about Soleimani, Dem Senator Chris Murphy tweeted: “Let’s be clear. If there was evidence of imminent attacks on four embassies, the (Trump regime) would have said so. “They didn’t (because) there was no such imminent threat.” Other Dems made similar comments.

Fact: Soleimani was in Baghdad on a diplomatic peace mission. Not a shred of evidence suggests he was planning attacks on the U.S. or any other countries.

Fact: As IRGC Quds Force commander, he was in the forefront of combatting and defeating the scourge of U.S.-supported ISIS and likeminded terrorists.

Fact: He was and remains widely respected and revered in Iran, other regional countries and elsewhere.

Fact: He was a renowned freedom fighter for regional peace and stability — his mission polar opposite endless U.S. wars of aggression against nonthreatening states.

Fact: Elevated to martyrdom by the Trump regime’s murder, he’s larger than life in death than when alive.

Throughout the Islamic Republic history, it never attacked another country — what the U.S., NATO and Israel do repeatedly. The Islamic Republic seeks regional peace and cooperative relations with other nations, threatening none.

Former CIA officer John Maguire called him “the single most powerful operative in the Middle East” — on the side of the angels against the scourge of imperial wars, he omitted.

Following Iran’s 1979 revolution, ending a generation of U.S.-installed tyranny, he joined the newly founded Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp (IRGC). As a battlefield commander during U.S.-sponsored Iraqi aggression on Iran in the 1980s, he led the 41st Sarallah Division. In 1997, he was appointed to lead Iran’s elite Quds Force; an Iranian intelligence analyst, explaining that it was largely unknown until Bush/Cheney’s 2003 aggression against Iraq.

Dangers to Iran posed by what happened “compelled (Tehran) to intervene for strategic reasons,” he said, giving Soleimani a chance “to exhibit his asymmetric war leadership capabilities.” In 2019, he became the first Islamic Republic military commander

to be awarded the “Order of Zolfaghar,” named after Imam Ali, one of Shia Islam’s most revered figures.

Millions of Iranians, countless others in regional countries and elsewhere mourn Soleimani’s loss, enraged over U.S.

state-sponsored murder — a CIA/Pentagon specialty. He rose to prominence, becoming one of Iran’s most revered figures. January 3 marks the first anniversary of his martyrdom. His redoubtable soul and spirit remain eternal.

Case No. :36/D/98/93

Subject: Hearing

Dear Sir;

Pursuant to several notifications including the official notification dated 9 November 2020 published in Tehran Times newspaper , this is to inform you that the sole arbitrator scheduled a **hearing**, for **2 Feb 2021 (14 Bahman 1399 ) at 10 a.m.** in the following address: 1th floor, 15 khordad Alley, Taleghani Ave., Tehran

You are requested to introduce your representative and / or counsel to take part in the hearing session as said above.

Article 9(e) of ACIC Rules is quoted below for your information:

*“If any of the parties do not participate in the arbitration hearing or any stage of the proceedings, this will not be an obstacle for communication of the arbitration proceedings and the Arbitrator may continue the proceedings and issue the award in accordance with the existing documents and evidences.”*

Sincerely yours

Dr. Mohsen Mohebi  
Secretary General  
Arbitration Center of Iran Chamber of Commerce (ACIC)



## 3000-year-old urn donated to cultural heritage department

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** – An Iranian man has recently donated a massive clay urn, which is estimated to date 3000 years, to a cultural heritage department in northwest Iran. A citizen donated a 3,000-year-old urn to the cultural heritage department of Oshnavieh, "CHTN quoted Ronak Tasa who presides over the department, as saying on Saturday.



"The donor had found the urn accidentally some 50 years ago, while digging under his house to lay a foundation... and he has kept the object ever since," the official explained. "Our investigations show that urn dates back to the first millennium BC," she added.

The urn, along with 30 other donated objects are currently being kept at the cultural heritage department.... And they will be transferred and showcased in a museum to be built in Oshnavieh, the official said.

Resting on a layer cake of civilizations that have come and gone for millennia, Oshnavieh is teeming with ancient hills, tomb chambers, archaeological sites, and bas-relief carvings. According to many, it's a paradise for archaeologists.

It is also home to five bas-relief carvings, originally belonging to the Kingdom of Urartu (860 BC – 590 BC). The Urartu kingdom rose to power in the mid-9th century BC, but it went into gradual decline and was eventually conquered by the Iranian Medes in the early 6th century BC. The Urartians were succeeded in the area in the 6th century BC by the Armenians.

## Iran appoints ambassador to UNESCO

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Iran has appointed a new ambassador to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday appointed Ahmad Pakatchi as the new ambassador and permanent representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN cultural body, Mehr reported.



Rouhani also appreciated the efforts made by the former Iranian ambassador to UNESCO Ahmad Jalali in a separate letter, the news agency said.

Pakatchi is a graduate of Tehran University with a degree in history. He is also an associate professor at the Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies and majored in studies of religions and historical linguistics from Al-Farabi University in Almaty.

Iran hosts some of the world's oldest cultural monuments including bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, as well as rich natural and rural landscapes, tens of which registered on the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage list.

## Qajar-era remote residence to be turned into boutique hotel

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – A remote structure, which was once a summer royal residence in the Alborz mountain range northwest of the Iranian capital Tehran, is set to be fully restored to be turned into a boutique hotel.

The structure, which can hardly be called a palace now, was once a shelter of Qajar monarchs and companions who went hunting in surrounding foothills.



The monument is located in Shahrestanak, a picturesque village in Asara district of Alborz province, situated some 90 km of Tehran.

Like many other deserted historical sites and monuments in the country, the palace will soon be up for grabs in an auction to be temporarily ceded to the private sector reportedly to enjoy higher productivity and better maintenance.

This trend is being practiced during the past couple of years under the close supervision of the Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical Places, however, there have been many opponents saying the scheme does not result in better maintenance in some cases.

There have been reports that some of the historical monuments have been mistreated by private investors, such as damages caused to the walls, arches, or the lack of proper restoration.

# Emerging niches, changing tendencies: travel prospects in 2021 and beyond

**→ 1** In a post-coronavirus world, travelers are expected to be much more aware of the new requirements. Travel marketers will need to get more innovative by scheming itineraries that avoid public forms of transportation and jam-packed tourist areas, as their clients will suppose this more considered approach to travel design. This way, more remote destinations or niche travel sites are more likely to come on stream.

From another point of view, it is evident that travel and hospitality sectors need to be sustainable and bearable for both Mother Earth and the communities, as well as the tourism-related businesses in general.

The newly-mandated health measures are, of course, going to be beneficial for the travelers and the host communities, letting tourism to start operating again safely and consequently, generating economic benefits for those involved as well.

In a post-COVID-19 world, tour operators travel agents who specialize in creating group tours may want to start thinking about how to balance their business to operate safely



and successfully in this new world.

One option could be to change completely from group travel to free independent

travelers for those who plan their trips and prefer to travel alone or in small groups. It is the opposite of mass tourists, who travel

in large groups and buy predefined travel packages. Another choice may involve continuing to offer group travel but only to those people who already know and trust each other and regularly interact.

With a considerable amount of uncertainty regarding travel safety, travel designers, who seek a way out of the recession, should offer novel niche destinations to potential travelers who continue to look towards the experts when it comes to planning their trips.

Mohammad Ali Vaeqi, the vice president of the Iranian Tour Operators Association, believes that tours and travels would be turned into a luxury realm as observing health protocols rises the costs of travel.

Though nobody knows what will exactly happen in the global travel scene, one thing is clear; we won't be able to travel as freely as we used to before.

Governmental regulations, not-yet-fulfilled refunds, changing policies, and health awareness tell us that such 'unusual' trends will be continuing in 2021 and even beyond.

## Royal bas-relief being restored, preserved for future generations

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – A preservation and restoration project has been commenced on a Sassanid-era (224-651 CE) royal bas-relief in Naqsh-e Rostam, a massive royal rock-hewn necropolis, situated near Persepolis in Fars province, southern Iran.

The bas-relief, which depicts Iranian king Bahram II (r.276-293) and a number of his courtiers, has been damaged due to environmental factors such as rain, wind, changing temperatures, CHTN quoted Hamid Fadaei, director of the world heritage site of Persepolis as saying on Saturday.

A team of archeologists and cultural experts are estimating the extent of the damage to fully plan the restoration and rehabilitation works needed for the historical relic, he added.

Bahram II, the fifth Sasanian King of Iran, was the son and successor of Bahram I (r. 271–274). The Sassanid era is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Under Sassanids, Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions such as palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan that are amongst highlights of the ensemble.

Crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew high-

ly sophisticated, yet scholarship was encouraged by the state. In those years, works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanians. Rock-carved sculptures and bas-reliefs on abrupt limestone cliffs are widely deemed as characteristics and striking relics of the Sassanian art, top examples of which can be traced at Bishapur, Naqsh-e Rostam, and Naqsh-e Rostam in southern Iran.

The Achaemenid necropolis of Naqsh-e Rostam, meaning "Picture of Rostam" is named after a mythical Iranian hero which is most celebrated in Shahnameh and Persian mythology.

One of the wonders of the ancient world, Naqsh-e Rostam embraces four tombs are where Persian Achaemenid kings are laid to rest, believed to be those of Darius II, Artaxerxes I, Darius I and Xerxes I, although some historians are still debating this.

There are gorgeous bas-relief carvings above the tomb chambers that are similar to those at Persepolis, with the kings standing on thrones supported by figures representing the subject nations below. There are also two similar graves



situated on the premises of Persepolis that probably belong to Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III.

Beneath the funerary chambers are dotted with seven Sassanian-era (224–651) bas-reliefs cut into the cliff depicting vivid scenes of imperial conquests and royal ceremonies.

## Waqf properties to undergo restoration in southern Iran

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Several historical mortmain properties in the southern province of Fars will be restored in near future, an official with the province's Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization has announced.

Most of the cisterns, mansions, caravanserais, mosques, and even shops scattered across the province are part of its religious endowments (waqf), Saeid Sharifi said on Saturday.

As most of the mentioned properties date back to different historical eras and are situated in old urban areas, they need



some rehabilitation works with the help of private investors, the official added.

Parts of the most popular tourist attrac-

tions of the province such as Nasir al-Molk and Moshir mosques as well as Vakil Bazaar are also among the historical mortmain properties, he explained.

He also noted that restoring and reviving such aging structures and historical sites could boost tourism in the region, which leads to economic prosperity.

A waqf or mortmain property is an inalienable charitable endowment under Islamic law, which typically involves donating a building, plot of land, or other assets for Muslim religious or charitable purposes with no intention of reclaiming the assets.

## Landscape project to alter Bam Citadel, surroundings

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – A landscape project will soon commence on the UNESCO-registered Bam Citadel and its surroundings in southeast Iran.

The project is planned to be carried out in collaboration with the municipality, city council and the private sector, the director of the World Heritage Affairs Office at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Farhad Azizi said on Saturday.

A budget of 24 billion rials (about \$571,000 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has also been allocated to the exterior lighting of the massive mud-brick stronghold, the official added.

Bam Citadel was flattened by an earthquake in 2003. Back in October, Mohsen Qasemi, a senior cultural heritage expert announced that the overall restoration of Bam Citadel is eighty percent complete.

"Some 80 percent of the reconstruction and rehabil-



itation work has been completed on Arg-e Bam ("Bam Citadel") and the whole project is expected to be com-

## Maranjab caravanserai one step closer to UNESCO status

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Iran has almost completed preparations for Maranjab caravanserai, which is located adjacent to a barren desert of the same name in central Isfahan province for possibly becoming a UNESCO World Heritage.

The Safavid-era (1501–1736) caravanserai was used by the travelers of the time to rest on their way to the Khorasan, Rey, and Isfahan. It is situated in Aran-Bidgol, which was once on the ancient Silk Road.

The documentation of the caravanserai has been completed and its dossier is ready to be submitted to the UNESCO. Aran-Bidgol's tourism chief Seyyed Hossein Chakeri announced on Friday.

The historical monument covers an area of 3,500 square meters and has 29 rooms, which is being used as a tourist complex nowadays. The caravanserai was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 2005.

Maranjab desert is surrounded by a salt lake from the north, Band-e Rig Desert and National Park from the east, Masileh Desert,

Hoz-e sultan and Moreh Lakes from the west and eventually Aran-Bidgol from the south.

Last year, the tourism ministry announced that Iran is developing a dossier for a selection of its historical caravansaries for a possible inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

In this regard, cultural heritage experts are assessing such monuments that are scattered across the country to make a shortlist in terms of their architecture, historical and cultural values.

Caravanserai is a compound word combining "caravan" with "serai". The first stand for a group of travelers and serai means the building. They often had massive portals supported by elevated load-bearing walls. Guest rooms were constructed around the courtyard and stables behind them with doors in the corners of the yard.

Iran's earliest caravanserais were built during the Achaemenid era (550–330 BC). Centuries later, when Shah Abbas I assumed power from 1588 – to 1629, he ordered the construction of network caravanserais across the country.

For many travelers to Iran, staying in or even visiting a centuries-old caravanserai, can be a wide experience; they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back into a forgotten age!

A caravanserai was usually constructed outside the walls of a town or village. The structure is quadrangular in form and is enclosed by a massive wall that has small windows near the top and only a few narrow air holes near the bottom. Inside, the ground floor consists of a central court surrounded by a cloister-like arcade, which is in turn surrounded by cellular storerooms.

The ground floor is connected by broad, open, stone stairways to a second story that is ringed by a somewhat lighter arcade, which gives access to many small rooms. The court is open to the sky and has a well with a fountain basin in its center.

Caravanserais were always kept open for all arrivals from early dawn until late in the evening. Some caravansaries are of modest architectural merit, with well-hewn, massive



walls and impressive proportions. Their gates are often decorated with intricate carving, as is the prayer niche within.

At night while you are standing on the roof of the isolated building imagining what it must have been like to see camel caravans coming across the barren desert while the sun is disappearing behind the mountains to the west.

Don't worry about the amenities, there are many ancient caravansaries, which have been fully restored and equipped to be boutique hotels or so.



# Shadegan wetland monitored for highly pathogenic avian influenza

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — A comprehensive plan for monitoring highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has been implemented across Shadegan wetland in southwestern Khuzestan province.

Shadegan wetland covers 530,000 hectares, 400,000 hectares of which has been designated as a Ramsar site (defined by the Ramsar Convention for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, recognizing the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value).

The wetland feeds on Marun and Karun rivers both crossing Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahamd province, but after dam construction over the Karun river, the wetland went dry not receiving its water right.

Fourteen types of indigenous and migratory birds are living in the wetland and they are monitored constantly in terms of health, IRNA quoted Mostafa Kenarkoohi, the director-general of Khuzestan province's



veterinary department, as saying on Saturday.

Iran is a climatically rich country, so it is said that the number of bird species in Iran is higher than the whole of Europe. A wide range of wetlands is the reason behind migratory birds choosing Iran for an annual wintering habitat, as a large number of birds fly a thousand miles each year to benefit from this rich climate.

Many species of birds are migratory, birds migration is usually seasonal and round trip, which is due to climate change, access to food, and finding a suitable habitat, so the presence of birds in an area are the signs of being in balance and that the natural cycle is operating properly.

It is estimated that there are about 50 billion birds in the world out of 9,000 species, many of which are migratory. Accordingly, about 5 to 7 million birds migrate to Iran in different seasons. There are about 530 species of birds in Iran, 320 of which are migratory species, some of which are native species.

## R&D still unappreciated

By Mehdi Garshasbi

The national budget bill for the next year (March 2021-March 2022) was submitted to the parliament on December 2, but the research and development sector has remained unappreciated like the previous years so that its share of the national budget is less than one percent of the gross domestic product.

The current year is coming to an end as the country is grappling with arrays of difficulties arising from sanctions, and the next year is forecast to be tougher as the coronavirus pandemic has added to economic hardships.

Under these circumstances, paying special attention to scientific and research projects can certainly pave the way for removing the extant obstacles.

Although the sixth national development plan has envisaged that four percent of GDP will be allocated to the research and development sector by 2025, the sum is just less than half a percent, indicating that the goals of development are still far away to be achieved.

According to Statista, one of the world's leading statistics portals, South Korea was the leading country in the world by allocating 4.35 percent of its GDP to research and development in 2020.

### Declining budget

Vahid Ahmadi, a former official at the Ministry of Ed-

ucation, says that unfortunately, the research and development's share of the national budget has decreased from 0.65 percent in the [Iranian calendar] year 1397 (March 2018-March 2019) to 0.58 percent in 1398 and to 0.43 percent in the current year 1399.

Mahmoud Nili-Ahmadabadi, the chancellor of the University of Tehran, believes that the research and development sector's share of the country's GDP, in the most optimistic case, is 0.4-0.5 percent, way below the global average of two percent. "So, not all the potentials of the universities are utilized."

However, Gholamhossein Rahimi, the deputy science minister, says that the share of research and development is hoped to increase to 0.75-0.77 percent in the next year's budget bill, although necessary infrastructure should be already provided to make the most use of the budget.

### Scientific achievements

Sourena Sattari, vice president for science and technology, has said Iran is playing the leading role in the region in the fields of fintech, ICT, stem cell, aerospace, and is unrivaled in artificial intelligence.

Iran ranked 43rd among the 100 most vibrant clusters of science and technology (S&T) worldwide for the third consecutive year, according to the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2020 report.

The rate of scientific contributions of Iranian research-



ers to the world increased from 17 percent in 2011 to 31 percent in 2020, becoming the world's leading country in science diplomacy with 14 percent growth, according to scientific studies and analyses extracted from the Scopus International Citation Database.

Moreover, the country ranked third for the highly cited researchers in the world among Islamic countries in 2020, according to the recently published report of Highly Cited Researchers by Web of Science.

Currently, there are 43 science and technology parks in the country, in addition to 195 accelerator centers, in which over 7,000 companies are active, including 1,700 are knowledge-based companies.

## Modern forestry in Iran: history and development

(PART 2/3)

### Establishment of Forest Service (1949)

In 1949, the Cabinet ratified a motion submitted by the Ministry of Agriculture for the establishment of Forest Service as an independent legal body under the Ministry of Agriculture for the protection and conservation of forests in Iran that transferred all state-owned forests and rangelands to it. Forest Service in addition to its responsibilities with regard to the conservation, reclamation, development, and utilization of state-owned forests and establishment of wood industries and mapping, was also responsible for supervising and protection of private forests and partnership with the private sector in utilization and wood industries.

### Establishment of Forest Management Bureau (1823)

In 1823, the Ministry of Public Benefits was established in Fath Ali Shah Period (Qajar dynasty), which marks the government's initial attention to natural resources management in Iran. However, the official establishment



of the bureau for the management of natural resources was postponed to the pre-constitution revolution era in Mozaffaraddin Shah Period (Qajar dynasty) in 1898, when a bureau was set up in the Ministry of Public Benefits under the title of the Bureau of "Roads, Railways and Forests".

In 1905, during the new cabinet of Mozaffaraddin Shah, the Ministry of Roads, Mines and Forests was established and mandated for the management of natural resources

throughout the country.

### Establishment of the Forestry Bureau (1920)

In 1920, the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce formed a forestry bureau in Mazandaran province specifically mandated for mapping, cadastral survey, and identification of virgin and industrial forests as well as degraded forests and other wooded lands.

In 1925, the council of ministers ratified the "Charter of Foresters of Iran" in 8 articles, the main 3 items of which are as follows:

1- All types of forests are state-owned and are considered as government property otherwise its private ownership is established by official legal documents;

2- The government exerts technical supervision for the development and conservation of all types of forests (private/public) through the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce;

3- Permits for forest lease, harvesting operation, and utilization of forest by-products are solely issued by the Ministry of Finance under the technical guidance of the Ministry

of Agriculture and Commerce.

### Establishment of Forest Division (1940)

Following the reports of illegal cuttings in Gilan forests, the authorities in the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce were prompted to establish a division in the capital to handle the affairs. In 1938, the Forest Division was initially established in the Agriculture Department of the Ministry; however, due to the importance of forestry issues, the Forest Division was officially promoted to Forestry Directorate in 1940.

### Establishment of Forest Department (1942)

In 1942, the Forestry Directorate was transformed into the Forest Department with four branch offices in the north part of the country, directly supervised by the Agriculture Department in the region.

The first forest law of Iran comprising of 18 articles and 7 notes was ratified by the Parliament in the same year and directives thereof was finalized in 1943 by the Cabinet.

## No COVID-19 vaccines imported from South Korea, Iran says

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Iran has denied reports claiming that the country has imported a consignment of coronavirus vaccines from South Korea.

A foreign news outlet had reported that a cargo aircraft of Fars Air Qeshm has transported the first consignment of coronavirus vaccine purchased by the Iranian Red Crescent Society from South Korea into the country, Mohamad-Hassan Qosian-Moqaddam, secretary-general of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, said on Friday.

"To date, no consignment of coronavirus vaccine has been imported," he stressed.

Last month, President Hassan Rouhani lashed out at his U.S. counterpart, Donald Trump, for hampering Iran's purchase of medical equipment and vaccines required to fight the coronavirus pandemic, saying the "evil" team at the White House did not even spare the elderly and the disabled from the "cruel" measures.

Addressing a cabinet meeting, Rouhani said the U.S. administration has placed an obstacle in the path of every single Iranian effort to import vaccines and medical equipment, Press TV reported.

"That is because they have created so many problems and are bothering us to the extent that the entire country has to work for weeks and sometimes months to move money from one place to another to buy medicine, a simple task that could have been taken care of via a phone call, a message, and SWIFT," he said.

Meanwhile, Christoph Hamelmann, WHO Representative in Iran, has said that sanctions imposed by the United States will have no effect on importing coronavirus vaccines by Iran from the COVAX, a global initiative to ensure rapid and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines.

"We support and assist Iran in obtaining essential items from the global market, and we did so since the beginning of the pandemic, as we anticipated the provision of medicine to be affected by sanctions," he added, ILNA reported.

COVAX member states, including Iran, will jointly decide on which brand of vaccine each country to purchase, and the final decision will be announced by the officials, he noted.

Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said on Friday that the first batch of coronavirus vaccine which will reach Iran will be probably purchased directly from a foreign country.

"Following that, Iran will receive its share of the COVAX vaccines and then the Pasteur Institute of Iran will co-produce a vaccine with a Cuban company, and finally, the domestically-made vaccine will be produced," he explained, IRNA reported.

## Acid rain: what causes it and how it affects human health

Acid rain is not a term that most laypersons are used to hearing. In the 1990s, the word was bandied about quite frequently, however, and its meaning made many people fear the skies over polluted areas. While not as common these days, acidic precipitation is still a dangerous, persistent problem in some parts of the world. But what causes acid rain in the first place? For that matter, what dangers does it present to the environment and humanity?

### What is acid rain?

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), acid rain, otherwise known as acid deposition, is a broad term that includes many different forms of precipitation. It isn't just rain, as in water, falling from the sky; it can also be snow, fog, dust, or hail that has acidic components. The acidic components of this particularly nasty brand of precipitation are either sulfuric or nitric acid.

### What causes acid rain?

As explained by the EPA, acid rain is the result of sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and nitrogen oxides (NOX) being emitted into the atmosphere and subsequently transported by wind and air currents. These acidic compounds react with water, oxygen, and other atmospheric chemicals to form sulfuric and nitric acids, which then mix even further with water in clouds to fall back to earth. But where do these SO<sub>2</sub> and NOX compounds come from in the first place?

### How does acid rain affect the environment?

According to the EPA, aquatic environments are the most severely affected by acid rain. Streams, lakes, rivers, and marshes are all places where water collects. Even if the innate acidity of acid rain does not directly impact the animals or plants living in a particular body of water, the subsequent, gradual acidification of that water body can be devastating to that aquatic or marine ecosystem.

## LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 98)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

تهران در جنوب کوه‌های آبرز و نزدیک قلّهی دماوند واقع است. دماوند، بلندترین قلّهی کوه‌های آبرز و بلندترین قلّهی ایران، ۵۶۷۱ متر ارتفاع دارد.
تهران، که از دویست سال قبل پایتخت ایران است، شهر کوچکی در شمال شهر بزرگ و تاریخی ری بود و امروز ری شهر کوچکی در جنوب تهران است.
مساحت تهران به ۷۴۰ کیلومتر مربع می‌رسد و جمعیت آن بیش از هشت میلیون نفر است که اغلب از شهرهای مختلف ایران در یک صد سال گذشته به این شهر مهاجرت کرده‌اند.
تهران امروز شهر بزرگی است که در آن ساختمان‌ها و برج‌های بلند، بزرگراه‌ها، هتل‌ها، رستوران‌ها، موزه‌ها، دانشگاه‌ها، مترو و بسیاری نقاط دیدنی دیگر وجود دارد.



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» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603  
» Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737

Tehrantimes79 Tehrantimes79 Tehrantimes79

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran  
P.O. Box: 14155-4843  
Zip Code: 1599814713

GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Beware! Whoever is cruel and harsh to a non-Muslim minority, curtailing their rights, overburdening them, or stealing from them, I will complain [to God] about that person on the Day of Judgment.  
Prophet Muhammad (S)

Ammar Popular Film Festival opens

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The 11th edition of the Ammar Popular Film Festival (APFF) was inaugurated on Thursday as the IRIB Ofoq Channel broadcasted its opening ceremony.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all screenings will stream online through the Ammaryar platform.

Speaking at the ceremony director of the festival Nader Talebzadeh said that a selection of 17 films will go on screen in the official competition, and that the festival is a venue for young filmmakers to show critical art productions and films.



A poster for the 11th Ammar Popular Film Festival.

He added that the festival has been established for those who want to help the Islamic Revolution.

A number of features, documentaries, shorts and animations will be competing during the festival.

Established by a number of Iranian revolutionary figures, the Ammar Popular Film Festival has been named after Ammar Yasir, a close companion of Prophet Muhammad (S).

Iranian director Amir Dasargar's movie "No Fly Zone" was crowned best at the 10th Ammar Popular Film Festival (APFF).

The film is about three teenagers who are trying to make a drone to take part in an important competition. While they are preparing for the competition a cheetah appears in the area they are working in. They decide to find and save the cheetah.

Steven Heine’s “Cultural Psychology” appears in Persian

**C U L T U R E d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of Steven J. Heine's "Cultural Psychology" has recently been published by SAMT, an Iranian publisher that provides textbooks for university students.

The book has been translated into Persian by a team of translators under the supervision of editor Ali Fat'hi Ashtiani.

The most contemporary and relevant introduction to the field, "Cultural Psychology" is unmatched in both its presentation of current, global experimental research and its focus on helping students to think like cultural psychologists.

Writing in a clear and engaging voice, Heine builds his text around many of psychology's most enduring questions about identities, motivations, emotions and relationships. The text incorporates examples from around the world and from everyday life to make the material relevant to a wide range of students.

Research methods are emphasized throughout in order to demonstrate how cultural psychologists study the close-knit relationship between culture and the ways one thinks and behaves. Three unique chapters bring an interdisciplinary dimension to the text, examining cultural evolution, mental health and morality from the perspective of cultural psychology.

Heine is a distinguished university scholar and professor of social and cultural psychology at the University of British Columbia. Heine's pioneering research has challenged key psychological assumptions in self-esteem, meaning and the ways that people understand genetic constructs.

He is the author of many acclaimed journal articles and books in the fields of social and cultural psychology. In 2016, he was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

Previously SAMT has published Persian translations of "Organizational Behavior in Sport" by James Skinner and Bob Stewart by Nahid Atqia and Zahra Amiri, and Jennifer M. Scarce's book "Women's Costumes of the Near and Middle East" by Maryam Sarbandi Farahani.



Cover of the Persian translation of Steven J. Heine's book "Cultural Psychology".

Photo exhibition explores Commander Soleimani’s military operations, funeral

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — An exhibition opened on Saturday on Kish Island is displaying photos of Commander Qassem Soleimani in some military operations and his funeral.

The photos have been taken by a number of Iranian photographers, and the Contemporary Art Gallery of the Persian Gulf Island will host the showcase entitled "School of Soleimani" until the end of January.

Commander Soleimani was assassinated in a U.S. air raid in Baghdad on January 3, 2020.

Photos by Hossein Mersadi and Hassan Qaedi have been selected to be showcased at the exhibition. They had been in company with Soleimani in several operations during the war against the ISIS terrorists in Syria and Iraq.

The exhibition is also hanging photos by Morteza Jaberian, Mohammad Mohsenifar, Mohsen Karamali, Hamed Malekpur, Erfan Kuchair and Vahid Bayat, who covered Soleimani's funeral procession across the country.

Abbas Mirhashemi is the curator of the exhibit, which has been organized by the Visual Arts Office in collaboration with the



A poster for the photo exhibition "School of Soleimani" on Kish Island designed by Saber Shekhrezaei.

Institute of Contemporary Visual Arts.

The photos are scheduled to be showcased in an online exhibit in the near future.

In February 2019, just one month after the martyrdom of the Commander, Iran's Young Photographers Club held a photo exhibition

in memory of Commander Soleimani also on Kish Island.

The exhibit named "Farewell to Commander" highlighted national solidarity and put a spotlight on the lofty status of the Commander.

Only professional photographers participated in the exhibition where no photos taken with cellphones were displayed.

The exhibit was organized in three categories, one of which was dedicated to photos representing the bravery of Martyr Soleimani.

Another section focused on photos depicting people's presence at Soleimani's funeral. The other category was dedicated to photographs representing photographers' efforts to cover the funeral.

The exhibit next moved to Tehran and several other cities.

Later in September, the Revayat Cultural Foundation organized a photo contest on the funeral of the martyr in a virtual exhibition named "My Commander".

The photo contest was held in several categories including single photo, series, cellphones and young adults.

Ebrahim Hatamikia, Commander Qassem Soleimani’s favorite filmmaker



Commander Qassem Soleimani presents filmmaker Ebrahim Hatamikia with a ring during an undated meeting.

→1 "Dear brother, don't be bothered by sarcastic and remonstrant comments and do not think of the mundane simorghs; just continue your work."

Later on, Commander Soleimani also praised Hatamikia for his drama "Damascus Time" on the atrocities of the ISIS war in Syria.

"I should express my thanks to Mr. Hatamikia for the groundbreaking work and this really amazing movie," Soleimani had said after watching the film. "By his skills, he has been able to show a small portion of the bitter reality," he said.

"By watching this film, people can better realize the grave threat against Islam, Shias and all of humanity. This is one of the most highly watchable movies, and it is extremely close to reality," he noted.

Soleimani had earlier honored Hatamikia in a meeting by presenting him with one of the rings left behind by one of the Iranian soldiers who had been killed in the fight against the ISIS terrorists in Syria and Iraq.

In his 2016 political drama "The Bodyguard", Hatamikia

also alluded to his deep affection for Soleimani by the makeup he used to make his leading actor – played by Parviz Parastui – resemble the senior commander.

In a message published after Soleimani's assassination, Hatamikia wrote, "I warmly embraced him many times, and yet, I found myself thirstier at the time of separation.

"Indeed, what decoration suited him perfectly except the honor of martyrdom? But, I ask permission from all martyrs to say that Hajji Qassem Soleimani needs no title before or after his name. Hajji Qassem Soleimani means all the honorable titles. May his memory be eternal," added Hatamikia who called himself Soleimani's small soldier.

Earlier in last September, the Persian news websites had published a report about a deal between Hatamikia and the Owj Arts and Media Organization, which had produced "Damascus Time" and Hatamikia's latest film "Exodus", for making a movie on Soleimani. However, the organization denied any allegations of a deal between director Ebrahim Hatamikia and the family of the commander.

Art competition Palestine Is Not Alone announces intl. jury

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Palestine Is Not Alone International Cartoon, Caricature and Poster Contest has announced the members of its international jury.

Luiz Carlos Fernandes from Brazil, Cristina Bernazzani from Italy, Izabela Kowalska from Poland and Balai Kartun Rossem from Malaysia will judge the submissions to the international competition.

Fernandes is an illustrator, cartoonist and sculptor. He has been working for several newspapers for 34 years. He has won awards at several international exhibitions across the world.

He illustrated several children's books and won the HQMix trophy for "Best Children's Illustration" with the Castelo Ra Tim Bum collection in 1997. He was also honored as the best caricaturist of Brazil in 2009.

Cristina Bernazzani studied graphic design in Monza. She has been an editorial illustrator for 28 years, and her works have been published by many important Italian magazines.

Izabela Kowalska studied at the Faculty



This combination photo shows images of the international and Iranian members of the jury at the Palestine Is Not Alone International Cartoon, Caricature and Poster Contest.

of Painting, Graphic Arts and Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Wroclaw.

She has illustrated children's books for many years, and since 2013, she has been working in the area of satirical drawing.

Balai Kartun Rossem's contribution to the world of cartoons is indeed great. He established the Rossem Cartoon Center (BKR), a cartoon station in Malaysia launched in 2014.

Iran's Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization has organized the contest to show solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine.

Mohammad Khazai, Masud Ziai, Masud Shojaei-Tabatabai, Saedi Sadeqi and Abbas Nasserri are the Iranian jury members who will judge the artworks at the contest.

Khazai is a Ph.D. graduate of graphic design of Islamic art from Birmingham University. Ziai, Sadeqi and Nasserri are cartoonists, and Shojaei-Tabatabai is the director of the bureau's Visual Arts Office.

In a press conference held at the bureau in September, Art Bureau director Mohammad-Mehdi Dadman said that the contest is slated as a forerunner for the new activities of the bureau to help develop its international activities.

He added that the bureau is ready to provide artists who are active on the resistance frontline with all the knowledge and experience the bureau has accumulated over the past 40 years.

He also said that the bureau will make its best efforts to help establish an artistic

movement against the Zionist regime so that Palestinian artists can better form an artistic battle.

Shojaei-Tabatabai also for his part pointed to the recent republication of cartoons insulting Prophet Muhammad (S) by the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, and said that they are intended to create and promote hatred, and hurt the hearts of millions of Muslims across the world.

"The issue of Palestine and its identity is one of the major topics during these days when deals between some Arab states and Israel are being framed to look normal, while people and artists from the countries whose governments are trying to normalize their relations, disagree with these relations," he explained.

"We will be making the most use of the potentials, and are also planning to establish public movements," he added.

Shojaei-Tabatabai next added that due to the high risk of spreading the coronavirus, the contest will be held online, and each submitted work will be uploaded on the Irancartoon website.

Book City to arrange “A Visit to Dürrenmatt”

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Book City Institute plans to review the oeuvre of Swiss author and dramatist Friedrich Dürrenmatt during a session named "A Visit to Dürrenmatt".

Iranian scholars Mahmud Haddadi, Mahmud Hosseinzad, Saeid Firuzabadi, Ahmad Saatchian and Asghar Nuri will be speaking during the online session, which will stream live on the institute's Instagram at 11 am.

Dürrenmatt's works have been highly regarded in Iran by translators, directors and theatergoers.

His "The Visit" was translated into Persian by the celebrated director Hamid Samandarian, who also staged the play several times, the last of which was in March 2008 at Tehran's Vahdat Hall.

Samandarian had called "The Visit" a thought-provoking comedy and said, "Dürrenmatt was labeled a melancholic writer in Germany, and some renowned analysts believe him to have been an author who was able to portray anti-human events without fear. When I was studying his works, I also



A poster Book City Institute's session "A Visit to Dürrenmatt".

found out that Dürrenmatt was very strict and daring, and he was candid when narrating the truth."

"One can hardly find the opportunities in life to apply

all the hidden characteristics within oneself and this may happen only when forced by life. Dürrenmatt relentlessly depicted man perfectly in all possible situations and that is why some of his colleagues opposed his opinions and works," noted Samandarian who first directed "The Visit" in 1972.

He also said, "During my studies, I figured out that Dürrenmatt portrayed the most expressive form of evolution of mankind in his plays 'Play Strindberg', 'The Visit', 'The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi' and 'The Flat Tire'. In the eyes of Dürrenmatt, there was no absolute tragedy. Society commits crimes and no one feels guilty – therefore, there is no tragedy in its absolute meaning – what is left over is only tragic laughter aroused by feelings of anger and unhappiness."

Samandarian had also translated several other of Dürrenmatt's plays, including "An Autumn Evening" and "The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi".

Dürrenmatt's "The Judge and His Hangman", "Suspicion" and "The Pledge" have also been translated into Persian by Mahmud Hosseinzad.

Iran to organize Fajr Music Festival amid pandemic

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran announced on Saturday that the 36th edition of the Fajr Music Festival will be organized during February despite experts' warnings about the dangers of gatherings during the pandemic.

Speaking during a press conference, Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini said, "During the pandemic, several festivals were canceled. However, the closure of some influential festivals would lead to more damages, so

we thought we would do our best to organize the festival this year taking full advantage of the experiences of other organizers of festivals, and what they have been through so far during this pandemic."

Iran's Music Office director Mohammad Allahyari, also attending the press conference, said that the top selected music albums produced in 2018 and 2019 will be honored with the Barbad Award during the festival.

The Barbad Award established in 2016 at the 31st edition of the festival is dedicated

to the best album of the year.

"The ensembles and the musicians will also be invited to the festival by the board of selection and they will hold performances during the festival," he added.

Member of the festival's committee Amir Abbas Setayeshgar also attending the conference said that due to the two-year halt in granting the Barbad Award, the section has been warmly received, and 148 albums have been submitted to the jury for the final Barbad Awards.

"In the non-competition section, over 60

ensembles have been reviewed. However, the number of performances will be decreased due to the pandemic," he said.

Director of the festival, Hassan Riahi said that the organizers believe that the interested participating youth need to be encouraged.

"That is, when we encourage the youth and honor them at festivals we should not leave them on their own. An association of young musicians needs to be established to provide the facilities for young talented musicians and to help support them," Riahi said.



# A commander with ubiquitous influence on the ground

TEHRAN – Five years ago in the midst of the Syria war, when militants were only 400 meters away from the presidential palace of Bashar Assad in Damascus, a top Iranian general held a long, unusual meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin that lasted for 2 hours and 20 minutes.

The General, Qassem Soleimani, succeeded in convincing the Russian president that Syria was “the last trench of the East’s front” that if lost, the Westerners will attach no importance to the Russians. As a result of this meeting, Russia began its air raids in defense of the Syrian troops who were on the defensive after militants had marched toward the Syrian capital after capturing large swathes of the Syrian territory that were under the control of government forces.

But while the militants were making strides toward the presidential palace, the top Iranian commander was taking the Syria crisis in his stride. He flew to Moscow in 2015 to convince the Russians into playing a more active role in the Syria crisis. And Russians exactly did so.

The 2015 meeting was highlighted in terms of its diplomatic peculiarity. Because it was unusual for foreign officials to meet with the Russian president for so long. The meeting also highlighted the military qualifications of the commander of the IRGC Quds Force as a ground commander. General Soleimani went to Moscow with



deep knowledge of what was happening on the ground. He played a crucial role in organizing and strengthening the Syrian ground forces and when Russian air forces entered the battlefield the tide turned in favor of the Syrian forces and their allies.

In 2012, while many observers were repeatedly predicting the fall of the Syrian government, General Soleimani helped send one of the most influential IRGC commanders – Brigadier General Hossein Hamadani – to Syria as a military advisor. General Hamadani was later

martyred in Syria, but before his martyrdom, he, along with Major General Soleimani, asked the Syrian leaders to replicate Iran’s experience in using popular forces in difficult times. The Syrian leaders welcomed the offer and established the National Defense Forces (NDF), which played a crucial role in restoring stability in Syria and fighting terrorist forces there.

This proposal proved effective and prevented the militants from toppling the Syrian government.

On his proposal, Hamadani had said: “In March 2013, terrorists have completely gotten closer to the point of victory. With the full support of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the Emirates and Western countries, they were able to tighten the siege and get closer to the Syrian Presidential Palace in Damascus, so that they almost occupied the palace. The situation was very complicated that night; of course, we had sent the families to safe places; Bashar al-Assad also knew that the work was over and he was looking to go to another country.”

Hamadani added, “The last offer was made to Bashar al-Assad that night. I said, ‘Now that everything is over and the presidential palace is on the verge of collapse, you must implement our last offer.’ He said, ‘What should we do?’ I said, ‘Open the weapons depot and arm the people with the weapons so that the people themselves can stop these terrorists.’ Thank God, he agreed to this proposal, and that night, with this action, Syria was saved from a certain fall, and the people repelled the Takfiri terrorists around the presidential palace, and then the Syrian cities. These same forces formed the core of an organization called National Defense, which is now fighting Daesh, al-Nusra, etc. in Syria.”

Major General Soleimani also supervised another force called “Defenders of the Holy Shrine,” which is comprised of Iranian and non-Iranian people who were

sent to Syria to protect the holy shrines in Syria. Soleimani was in very close contact with these forces and regularly paid a visit to them at the frontlines.

Those who fought alongside Major General Soleimani had been impressed by his continued presence on the ground alongside the forces.

Sheikh Abbas Ahwazi is one of the Defenders of the Shrine, who had been sent to Syria to fight against enemies. In a detailed interview with the Iranian Mashregh news website in July 2018, Ahwazi recounted how Soleimani had been omnipresent at the front lines of the battle in Syria.

“Sometimes, General Soleimani attended at the lookout. He inspected all the areas under his command from the front lines to back lines. Even where we are in a battle with the enemy, he has a field presence; for example, he would ride on a motorcycle trail, inspect and warn the commanders of weaknesses,” Ahwazi explained.

General Soleimani’s field presence earned him the trust and respect of many pundits and politicians in the region and beyond.

“Martyr Qassem Soleimani was really a man of God. He was trusted by the establishment and the Leader. He loved the Revolution and the oppressed. He was really devoted. He was at the forefront of the battle against global arrogance, the

Takfiris, and Arab reactionism. He was undaunted by death, martyrdom, and world superpowers. I think though he was strong, courageous, and powerful, he was modest, religious, and pious. He was submissive in front of the divine will,” Amir Mousavi, a former Iranian diplomat and expert on West Asia, told the Tehran Times.

According to Mousavi, General Soleimani had very close contact with the ordinary people in the region, including the Syrians and Lebanese.

“He felt unusual love for martyrs and fighters. He did everything in his power to meet the needs of a fighter, from personal services such as washing clothes to cooking foods and to cleaning the deployment places of troops. And this was clear for all that how he was modest, devoted, and altruistic in all fields. He was a great man,” Mousavi pointed out.

“The strongest and most successful general on the battlefield against Takfiri terrorism who was taking care of all nations was General Soleimani. He fought the most brutal terrorist group (Daesh) and worked to save humanity regardless of religion and sect,” Seyed Reza Sadr al-Hosseini, an expert on West Asia, told the Tehran Times.

These characteristics have made General Soleimani very popular in Iran. He was so popular among ordinary people that millions of Iranians attended his funeral procession.

## Soleimani and Fakhrizadeh are martyrs for all Muslims and entire humanity: Turkish Vatan Party chief

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – Dogu Perincek, Turkey’s Vatan Party chairman, believes that the martyrs in the fight against imperialism such as Major General Qassem Soleimani and nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh belong to “all Muslims and the entire humanity.”

Soleimani, the head of the IRGC Quds Force, was martyred in an airstrike near Baghdad’s international airport on 3 January 2020 by the United States. The airstrike also martyred Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy commander of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) and some other resistance forces.

General Soleimani was an unmatched commander in the fight against terrorist groups, including ISIS, in Iraq and Syria.

Regrettably, Fakhrizadeh was also martyred on November 27 outside Tehran. Iran directly pointed the finger at Israel for the terror act. Some analysts believe that the assassination took place through a collusion between Israel and the Trump administration. Fakhrizadeh, a physicist, was instrumental in developing test kits for diagnosing patients contracting the coronavirus, especially at a time that Iran was under illegal sanctions by the U.S. which has made even import of medical devices very difficult.

Perincek calls the struggles of General Soleimani against terrorism and Fakhrizadeh’s scientific efforts “a fight against the crusader’s imperialism.”

In an interview with the Tehran Times, the Vatan party secretary general says, “The martyrs in this fight belong to all of us. The victories in this fight belong to all of us. Therefore, Qassem

Soleimani and Mohsen Fakhrizadeh are martyrs for all Muslims and the whole humanity.”

The following is the text of interview:

**After the martyrdom of Gen. Soleimani you said that Soleimani is “also our martyr” and that he “sacrificed his life for us”. Please explain how can an Iranian be a martyr of other nations?**

The states and people of West Asia have a joint and shared future. We West Asians are fighting for the independence and territorial integrity of our countries as well as for the development of our economies, and we pursue this fight against U.S. imperialism and Israeli Zionism. This struggle is a fight against the crusader’s imperialism. The martyrs in this fight belong to all of us. The victories in this fight belong to all of us. Therefore, Qassem Soleimani and Mohsen Fakhrizadeh are martyrs for all Muslims and the whole humanity.

**Given the geopolitical situation in West Asia and the dangers that may threaten the region, how do you evaluate Iran’s role in the war on terrorism?**

The U.S. and Israel are behind all terror organizations of ethnic separatist and reactionary features in West Asia. The struggle against terrorism therefore cannot be separated from the struggle against imperialism and Zionism. Iran provides confidence to our region’s fight against terrorism with the country’s firm resistance and struggle against U.S. and Israeli threats.

**Iran has been a victim of terrorism since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, but it has gained valuable experience in com-**

**bating terrorism at both national and regional levels. How do you evaluate Iran’s policies and efforts by General Soleimani to develop an effective coordination between the states and peoples of the region to combat all types of terrorism?**

During his fight against terror organizations in the north of Iraq, Qassem Soleimani dedicated great effort to cooperation and coordination with the people of the region. He developed realistic policies for the solidarity and joint struggle of Arab, Turkmen and Kurdish people as well as neighboring states in the fight against attempts to establish a “Second Israel” labeled as “Kurdistan”. This is the reason why he was targeted.

**Why is there a wide difference between Western media and Muslim countries regarding terrorism?**

The imperialists from the Atlantic and the countries of West Asia have exactly opposing definition of terror and terror organizations. The U.S. and Israel blame all countries that fight for independence and territorial integrity as “terrorists”. The

**“Iran provides confidence to our region’s fight against terrorism with the country’s decided resistance and struggle against U.S. and Israeli threats.”**

U.S. accusation of Qassem Soleimani as “terrorist” is a psychological warfare tactic. This tactic was in response to the fact that Soleimani pursued a very effective struggle for the elimination terror organizations like DAESH and PKK/PJAK/YPG/PYD, which are all strategic pawns of the U.S.

**What are the similarities between terrorism and the occupation? How could Qassem Soleimani serve as a link between confronting the occupation and the fight against terrorism?**

The U.S. in West Asia first fought with its own armed forces, but they suffered heavy losses and a defeat. Following their defeat, they changed the strategy and have been using terror organizations for a time now. U.S. President Obama for instance has described the PKK as “our ground forces”. The U.S. tries to maintain the territories it occupied in our region by using terror organizations like the PKK or DAESH. But the defeat of U.S. bases east of the Euphrates is also nearing, because Turkey, Iran, Russia, Syria and Iraq at the end will unite in a joint operation to eliminate these U.S. bases.

**Given the need to form a coalition among West Asian countries to fight terrorism, what role can Iran and Turkey play in forming such an alliance?**

Turkey and Iran are the two countries that build an axis in the effective fight against terrorism in West Asia. The U.S. and Israel have not dared to attack these countries directly, because the castles of Iran and Turkey are very strong. Therefore, the U.S. apparatus of psychological warfare intends to cause discord between Turkey and Iran. Lastly,

the poem cited by President Erdogan in Baku has been used to this purpose. But the interpretations made out of this poem are not based on reality, because Erdogan in his speech has declared the intent to establish a 6-member-platform consisting of Russia, Iran, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and if they accept, Armenia. It is unthinkable that a Turkey looking to establish such a platform pursues any bad intent towards Iran.

The propaganda about Turkey’s rapprochement with the U.S. and Israel is completely wrong and only intended to cause discord and conflict between Turkey and Iran. The director of Mossad declared just months ago that Turkey was Israel’s main enemy in West Asia. The Israeli governmental documents and texts about security display the same evaluation. Moreover, U.S., Israeli, Greek and French military vessels have positioned their cannons towards Turkey and pursue naval exercises. They name these exercises with expressions and figures from the Torah, as in “Noble Dina”, or from Greek mythology as in the example of “Nemesis”, all connected to acts of revenge.

U.S. President-elect Biden declared in January 2020 before the world his will to topple the Erdogan government. Given these circumstances, there is no possibility of rapprochement between Turkey on the one side and the U.S. and Israel on the other. But it is true that Atlantic pawns both in Turkey as well as in Iran are spreading colorful lies to create an atmosphere of distrust between Turkey and Iran. To foil these attempts will strengthen the unity and brotherhood between the two countries.

## General Soleimani represented Iran’s global commitment to war on terror: Afghan MP

BY REZA MOSHFEGH

TEHRAN – A member of the Afghan parliament says figures like Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani represented Iran’s efforts and commitment to fight against terrorism.

“Actually Iran is among the countries that are at the forefront of the fight against drugs and terrorism which have made substantial sacrifice such as Martyr Soleimani,” Mohammad Jamal Fakouri Beheshti tells the Tehran Times. “These martyrs represent the global commitment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Iran has been a victim of terrorism. So it has gained valuable experience in countering terrorism at the national and regional levels. Actually, Iran’s policies in the fight against terrorism were led by Martyr Qassem Soleimani who sought to establish

coordination between countries and nations in the region to expel extremist groups.

According to Fakouri Beheshti, the Islamic Republic of Iran has made every effort and take effective measures in the fight against terrorism.

“In this regard, Iran has lost important figures such as Martyr Soleimani that were active in the combat against terrorist groups,” the Afghan politician points out. “Therefore, people and countries affected by terrorism, comprehend and appreciate Iran’s vital role.”

In the complicated geopolitical circumstances of West Asia and the dangers that threaten the region in recent years, Iran has played a pivotal role in containing the wave of radicalism.

However, Iran has paid the price for its efforts to eradicate terrorism and extremism, especially in Afghanistan.

In 1998, Iran nearly went to war with Afghanistan, then mostly under Taliban rule, when terrorist groups affiliated with the Taliban killed 11 Iranians, including nine diplomats, in Mazar-i Sharif.

“Since the Islamic Republic of Iran is known as a prominent and key player in the Middle East (West Asia), so its efforts and contribution is important and vital to containing tensions and differences in the region,” Fakouri Beheshti notes.

In this context, the assassination of Iranian figures including General Soleimani shows that the path is mined by the U.S. in the line with the interests of its extremist pawns in the region.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran is not only active in the fight against terrorism but also is the victim of the fight against (opium) cultivation and trafficking of drugs,” the legislator adds. “Actually Iran is among the countries that are at the forefront of the fight against drugs and terrorism which have

made substantial sacrifices such as Martyr Soleimani.”

Pointing to a wide difference between the concept of terrorism in the eyes of Western powers and that one among the peoples of the region, Fakouri Beheshti emphasizes that “most countries are always looking for their own interests.”

“Once the United States came to Afghanistan 20 years ago, their slogan was to fight all terrorist groups, but now they are negotiations with some of these groups and have reached an agreement with them which means that America has recognized them as a political player,” according to the Afghan politician.

He concludes, “Although, change in the country’s positions and policies are normal when it comes to America’s interests, the United States has shown that it never hesitate to violate international treaties.”

## General Soleimani’s military acumen in fighting terrorists was ‘unmatched’, says American professor

South Alabama professor says General Soleimani’s focus was primarily on fighting anti-Iran terrorism

BY REZA JAVID

TEHRAN – Nader Entessar, a professor emeritus of political science from the University of South Alabama, praises General Qassem Soleimani’s shrewdness in devising asymmetrical “warfare strategies” against terrorists, calling his abilities “unmatched.”

“His military acumen, ability to devise asymmetrical anti-terrorism warfare strategies, and bringing together unruly groups to work together were unmatched,” Entessar tells the Tehran Times. The professor also says Iran has been at the “forefront” of the war against Daesh and other terrorist groups to protect its security.

“In general, Iran has been at the forefront of fighting regional terrorist groups such as Daesh (ISIS) and others

that carry terrorist acts against Iran’s security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity,” the American professor notes.

Following is the full text of the interview:

**In 1972, a specialized Committee on Terrorism was set up at the United Nations, and member states made great efforts to provide appropriate definitions of international terrorism, but due to intense political differences, the actual definition of international terrorism and comprehensive conventions in practice was impossible. Security Council Resolution 1373 was the most serious attempt to define terrorism after 9/11, which evolved into UN Security Council Resolution 1535. Despite providing a definition**

**of terrorism, countries approach it differently. What is the reason?**

The definition of the term “terrorism” provided by the UN is a minimalist one designed to satisfy conflicting views on this topic. Terrorism is first and foremost a political term that does to easily lend itself to a universally accepted legal definition. One country’s “terrorist” can be viewed as a “freedom fighter” by another country. Furthermore, the United States has now “weaponized” the term in pursuit of its foreign policy goals. That is, practically any person, institution, or country that actively opposes Washington’s global hegemony is labeled as a “terrorist” thus making it difficult to tackle the problem of terrorism in a meaningful way.

**How do you assess the role and position of Iran in the fight against terrorism in the region?**

In general, Iran has been at the forefront of fighting regional terrorist groups such as Daesh (ISIS) and others that carry terrorist acts against Iran’s security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. However, as attacks against major institutions/infrastructures and the assassination of some prominent Iranian officials in recent years have shown, a lot of work needs to be done to thwart similar foreign-assisted and foreign-funded terrorist acts. It has now become clear that Iran’s enemies have taken advantage of existing vulnerabilities and holes to carry out their terrorist acts against the country. I am not sure exactly where the problem lies, but Iran needs to seriously re-evaluate its counterterrorism, intelligence, and

counterintelligence structures.

**How do you assess the role and position of General Soleimani in the fight against terrorism, particularly ISIS, in the region?**

General Soleimani’s focus was primarily on fighting anti-Iran terrorism in the region. This was clearly evident in General Soleimani’s indispensable role in creating the necessary environment and conditions in containing and fighting Daesh (ISIS). General Soleimani’s role as perhaps the single most important person in fighting anti-Iran terrorist groups should be emphasized. His military acumen, ability to devise asymmetrical anti-terrorism warfare strategies, and bringing together unruly groups to work together were unmatched.

**Given the conflict of interests of different countries, can we see the same action by countries against terrorism? What mechanism can equalize the performance of countries against terrorism?**

As I alluded in my answer to the first question, getting countries to see eye-to-eye when it comes to combating terrorism is akin to forcing a square peg in a round hole. Perhaps in a very broad definitional term, countries can agree on fighting terrorism, but in practical terms, it is a herculean task to expect countries to work together on this issue. Terrorism has already become weaponized, and countries will continue to rely on this weapon to confront and contain each other in today’s polarized world of international relations.



## KRG rep. in Tehran says Gen. Soleimani helped Kurdistan to fight Daesh

“We must mention that he was a faithful person, honest, and brave”

BY ALI A. JENABZADEH

TEHRAN – Describing Iran’s role in the fight against terrorism as “vital” and effective”, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) representative in Tehran says that Major General Qassem Soleimani helped the Iraqi Kurdistan by sending weapons and military advisers to defeat Daesh, also called Daesh in its Arabic acronym.

“Martyr Qassem Soleimani not only helped in the framework of consultation but also in the battlefield,” Nazim Dabbagh tells



the Tehran Times. “We are thankful and appreciative for Iran’s advisory presence and its arms aid to eliminate the Daesh threat from Erbil.”

The following is the text of the interview:

**How do you assess the role of Iran and General Qassem Soleimani in supporting the Iraqi Kurdish Region to confront Daesh? Kurdish leaders say that Qassem Soleimani provided weapons for Arbil when Daesh invaded Iraq.**

As you mentioned, in fact, the officials of the Iraqi Kurdistan, including Mr. Massoud Barzani, have emphasized that Iran’s role in the fight against terrorism in Iraq has been vital and important.

Martyr Qassem Soleimani did not only help in the framework of consultation, but also in the battlefield. He helped the Iraqi Kurdistan in its combat against terrorism. We are thankful and appreciative for Iran’s advisory presence and its arms aid to eliminate the Daesh threat from Erbil.

**Given the geopolitical situation in West Asia and the looming threats in the region, how do you assess Iran’s role in stabilizing and combating terrorism?**

Iran has a special position due to its geopolitical situation in the region, especially in the war against terrorism including Daesh. Tehran played an important role.

Indeed, the Islamic Republic of Iran has historically played this role, both during the 8-year war imposed by Saddam Hussein and in the midst of the war against Daesh. Iran has played a constructive role that has brought security and stability to the region.

I have said many times that if it were not for Iran, after the fall of Mosul, Daesh could have captured Baghdad as well as the Kurdistan region, but fortunately, the Islamic Republic and other allies made every effort to be helpful and effective which are commendable.

**Iran has been a victim of terrorism since the victory of the Islamic Revolution and in has gained valuable experience in this regard. What are the significance and effect of efforts made by commanders such as Martyr Soleimani to contain the chaotic situation in the region?**

Iran, especially after the victory of the Islamic Revolution and years of experience in fighting terrorism and confronting various enemies, could create a kind of solidarity and unity among people.

In one of Soleimani’s speeches, I heard him spoke about the role of martyrs and leadership in deterring enemies. In his view, the leadership plays a pivotal role in mobilizing the people to support the revolution and help it to continue and defeats its foes, because the people need leaders on the battlefield who are brave and wise, as Soleimani was. This experience made peoples of the region always ready to fight terrorism under the command of leaders such as Martyr Qassem Soleimani, and we have witnessed this fact.

**What characteristics did make General Soleimani popular in the region and make him attract people with different religions and views?**

If we want to talk about the characteristics and personality of people like Qassem Soleimani, we must mention that he was a faithful person, honest, brave.

Until the day he was martyred, he believed in his cause and was proud of it. I remember one day some of his friends warned him about the U.S. attempts to assassinate him and called on him to be more careful. He laughed and said that we are made for martyrdom and we are waiting to see when we will be martyred. These characteristics were the reason for his popularity. He did not pursue personal interests or power, but rather fought for his goals and aspirations.

**Why did some Western states like the U.S put someone like Qassem Soleimani, who was fighting Daesh, on the list of terrorists?**

Defining terrorism or attributing terrorism to a country or person, or accusing a country or person of supporting terrorism, is made based on the interests of countries. Western and European countries have one policy and Iran has another, but in general, I think the people are entitled to give a real definition.

When the people of Iran or Iraq are satisfied with their own governments, it makes the Western definition unreliable. It is the stance and approval of the people of a country that rejects or approves these definitions.

**How do you describe Qassem Soleimani’s relations with Kurdish leaders and Kurdish groups or organizations?**

My acquaintance with martyr General Qassem Soleimani dates back to 1991 after the uprising of the people of Kurdistan. Certainly, his politico-military position led to good relations with the officials, leaders, and political groups of the Kurdistan region.

These relations were to such an extent that when martyr Soleimani was seen with one of the Kurdish leaders, especially Mr. Talabani and Mr. Barzani, we did not feel distant, but we felt a sense of friendship and honesty.

# Soleimani is martyr of ‘Islamic unity’: Iraqi analyst

BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI

TEHRAN – An Iraqi analyst says that martyr General Soleimani succeeded to defeat Daesh through establishing unity between resistance groups and people in West Asia.

“All Islamic parties and organizations in the Arab and Islamic world that reject normalization with the Zionist regime agreed to describe the great commander Qassem Soleimani as a martyr of ‘Islamic unity’,” Najah Mohammad Ali tells the Tehran Times. “He succeeded to bring resistance groups and factions together properly and eliminate Daesh.”

According to Mohammad Ali, General Soleimani “considered unity a divine, immediate and strategic duty among the resistance factions.”

The following is the text of the interview:

**How do you describe General Qassem Soleimani’s efforts in confronting terrorism in West Asia?**

We must divide the region’s developments into before and after the emergence of Daesh (ISIS), which brought about fundamental changes in the region. Before Daesh, there were many terrorist organizations operating in Iraq and various other countries in the world, and some of them were inside the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the MEK organization and others that worked against Iran and against regional and global peace and security, especially al-Qaeda.

Moreover, the Zionist regime and its intelligence apparatus, Mossad, have practiced terrorist acts in the region. Israel invaded Lebanon and occupied south Lebanon in 1982.

The massacres it has committed and still committing inside occupied Palestine are all a form of terrorism. The American occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan and the American intervention in Somalia all came to support terrorism. Meanwhile, Iran made every effort to confront the invasions and occupations, which indicates that terrorism is not a new phenomenon in our region.

We can also call the war that Saddam imposed on Iran a type of terrorism because it was not a just war as he committed brutal massacres, violated sanctities, and killed civilians.

Saddam’s regime demonstrated terrorist action by using chemical and internationally prohibited weapons. It used long-range missiles to destroy Iranian cities. This is terrorism because it targets civilians, and terrorism that is inconsistent with international laws and rules and is against human values. Organized crimes are terrorism and mass murder is a kind of terrorism.

The killing operations that were practiced against the Kurds and Shias in Iraq are terrorism, as is the case with executions without trial in Iraq.

That was why Iran faced these terrorist practices in the region.

Iran’s fight against international drug trafficking networks is a war on terror, and Iran played a large role in this regard.

After the U.S. invasion of Iraq, various takfiri organizations also entered to the scene under the pretext of resistance to American occupation, but they were practicing terrorist operations on a large scale.

They targeted churches, mosques, and Hussainias. The Islamic Republic helped the Iraqis confront these terrorist attempts when the U.S brought chaos to Iraq and occupied it.

Iran has supported factions in the resistance axis such as the Iraqi Hezbollah Brigades and Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq in facing the American occupation, and, of course, martyr Qassem Soleimani and Iraqi commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis played a great and prominent role in the resistance against terrorism and the American occupation.

Indeed, the United States of America has practiced all kinds of terrorism against



civilians, especially children in Iraq, but the Islamic Republic of Iran stood by the honorable Iraqis and forced the American troops to withdraw at the end of 2011.

The unfair blockade imposed by Washington on Iran was followed by the UN-led sanctions on Iraq that resulted in the death of about two million Iraqis, most of them children, while the Islamic Republic played a constructive role in saving Iraq from the blockade.

Iran stood beside Iraq by violating the decisions of the United Nations in various ways when broke the embargo and helped its neighbor to export oil and petroleum products. The Iraqi officials themselves acknowledged it.

It should refer to an interview with the governor of the Iraqi Central Bank under Saddam’s presidency, who explained the Islamic Republic’s aid to Iraq in breaking the blockade and economic terror practiced against the Iraqi people.

Regarding the war in Syria, Soleimani was the one who convinced the Russian president through two visits to Moscow to help Syria through air force in countering terrorism, while Iran played its role on the ground.

Had it not been for the Iranian advisory presence and the mobilization of the resistance factions in the region, the Syrian state would have fallen to the takfiri groups.

After the emergence of Daesh (ISIS) in 2014 and what they call the “caliphate state” in Iraq, Iran played the greatest role in combating terrorism, overthrowing the caliphate state and aborting the American-Zionist-Saudi project.

The U.S. was seeking to create a new geopolitical reality in the region by imposing the caliphate state, but the statement of Ayatollah Sistani and the efforts of Qassem Soleimani, as well as the weapons that he brought to Iraq, saved Baghdad and Erbil from falling.

Soleimani, after his success in establishing the Hashd al-Shaabi with the participation of Iraqis and the help of martyr Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, could manage the liberation of cities from the Daesh rule and overthrew this terrorist organization.

Daesh was a reality on the ground, openly killing civilians while American forces were looking. It is interesting and paradoxical that America formed an alliance to combat Daesh, and Iran and Russia were not invited to join, despite their clear positions and efforts in fighting terrorism.

In a word, Iran played a constructive role in the war on terrorism. Only those who sponsor terrorism can deny this role.

**How do you assess Iran’s policy in combating all kinds of terrorism?**

The martyr commander, Qassem Soleimani, has done a lot on the issue of confronting terrorism, both for Iran and for the region before and after his martyrdom.

Even when he assumed great responsibilities in confronting drug trafficking

networks and criminals in the borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan, martyr Soleimani played a vital role in this regard.

After his martyrdom, Soleimani’s influence also became clearer. At least now in Iraq, there are great calls by Parliament and the Iraqi people to expel the American forces from Iraq.

This heroic spirit has been nurtured by Qassem Soleimani among the Iraqis. The great clergies, especially the four Shia figures, participated in his funeral ceremony, and we noted that Ayatollah Sistani sent his son to represent him in receiving the bodies of the two martyrs (Soleimani and al-Mohandes) in Najaf. Ayatollah Sistani also issued a statement describing the two martyrs as the great commanders of victory.

Martyr Qassem Soleimani in particular had a direct role in promoting harmony between the nations of the region in general and the resistance factions in particular.

For example, in Iraq, there was a difference in the views of some of the resistance factions that contributed to the expulsion of the American forces at the end of 2011.

Martyr Qassem Soleimani, along with martyr Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, managed to resolve the differences and unite factions even before the statement of Ayatollah Sistani. They attempted to unify the resistance factions. In fact, three resistance groups met three months before the Daesh attacks start in Iraq.

After the emergence of Daesh, Soleimani played a prominent role, and we must not forget the role of the rest of other military advisers, especially great martyr Hamid Taqavi, who had a role in establishing new factions in the Iraqi resistance axis to fight Daesh.

Taqavi was interested in training, counseling, ideological education, and boosting the morale of volunteers who came in response to the statement and the call of the religious authorities.

We must admit that martyr Qassem Soleimani risked his life in order to confront the Daesh that was sponsored by the Israeli-Saudi axis while all the Arab countries and even the U.S. were talking about thirty years for ISIS to be expelled from the region, Iraq, and Syria.

However, martyr Soleimani, by eliminating Daesh, showed that the U.S. and its allies are liars.

The United States considered martyr Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, because of their efforts, the first enemy, even before the occupation of Iraq by the United States of America.

The question is what if Soleimani was not fighting terrorism? Our memory and the memory of recent history must answer the question by two pictures: in the first scene U.S. President Barack Obama and the commander of the American armies with him, said that facing ISIS would require thirty years, and in the second scene we must evoke the cages in which Yazidi

women are lining up waiting to be sold in the markets.

These two pictures were erased by martyr Soleimani.

We must also point out in this regard that all Islamic parties and organizations in the Arab and Islamic world that reject normalization with the Zionist regime and support the resistance axis against the Zionist project have unanimously agreed to describe the great commander Qassem Soleimani as a martyr of “Islamic unity”.

In this context, statements were issued saying that martyr Qassem Soleimani considered unity a divine, immediate and strategic duty among the resistance factions.

He succeeded to bring resistance groups and factions together properly and eliminate Daesh.

**Do you think that assassination of senior commanders such as General Soleimani will impede the path to fight terrorism and occupation?**

The main goal of the assassination of the two martyrs, Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis, is to undermine the resistance movement that is fighting global terrorism backed by the United States of America.

The absence of leaders like martyr Soleimani in Iraq paves the way for the return of Daesh again from the Americans’ point of view.

Indeed, in the first quarter of last year (the first three months after Soleimani’s martyrdom), the number of Daesh operations increased to 560, targeting the headquarters and bases of Hashd al-Shaabi and Iraqi security forces.

During the past few months and comparison between July and August alone, we see that the number of terror operations in July was 75, which rose to 100 operations by Daesh in August.

So the absence of the two martyrs (from America’s point of view) contributed to the resurgence of Daesh activity again.

However, the official U.S. military website says that the Iraqi security forces were able to stop the escalating Daesh operations alone and without the support of the American forces. This website is affiliated with the U.S. Department of Defense and is considered to be close to the so-called “deep state” in the U.S.

This confirms that the absence of the two martyrs, although it creates a vacuum that nothing can fill, due to the personality of Qassem Soleimani, it does not mean that confrontation against terrorism by the resistance movement in the region including in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and even in Venezuela, (the backyard of America that General Qassem Soleimani penetrated) will stop.

America today suffers from severe weakness in its national security in that region (Venezuela and the Caribbean Sea) because of what Qassem Soleimani did, so we can now talk about a new situation.

Qassem Soleimani’s influence reached Yemen and Venezuela. In Yemen, for example, now Ansarullah is able to accomplish precise operations using ballistic and cruise missiles and advanced drones, as happened in the attack on the Saudi Aramco.

This is a message indicating a major change in the power equation, not only with Saudi Arabia but even with the Zionist regime.

All these are the results of the victories achieved by martyr Soleimani, as the arms embargo imposed by the United Nations on Iran has ended, and now China and Russia can sell weapons to Iran.

There is talk of a large trade agreement between Iran and China, as a result of the victories achieved by Qassem Soleimani. He is the one who provided support for all resistance movements in the region, even in the world, and played a central and pivotal role in confronting the global terrorism against Syria.

## General Soleimani led the Iranian nation in its struggle against U.S. Imperialism and Zionism

BY DENNIS ETLER



by hook or by crook to restore the monarchy and return Iran to U.S.-Zionist subjugation. The resistance of Iran to U.S. hegemony in West Asia has been a thorn in its side ever since.

The U.S. has used wars, sanctions, terrorism, and support for the Zionist Israelis and Salafist Saudis to try and reimpose its rule in the region, but all to no avail. In a fit of pique for its failures, the U.S. under Trump lashed out by assassinating a great hero of the Iranian nation, Lt. General

Qassem Soleimani. This insidious act has only compounded the crimes for which the U.S. must be held accountable.

The U.S. and its allies think they are above reproach and beyond the norms of civilized behavior. They feel that they can bomb, maim, and kill whoever they please without restraint. Those who resist are considered enemies that must be eliminated at whatever cost and by any means necessary. This is the mentality of the genocidal nation that declared the “only good Indian is a dead Indian” as its settlers exterminated the original inhabitants of the land they stole and plundered. The same dictum has been applied to the rest of the world as the tentacles of U.S. imperialism spread across the globe.

The U.S. together with its underlings and surrogates are untrustworthy. Their word cannot be taken at face value. They will stab you in the back at the first opportunity, hence eternal vigilance must be taken when dealing with them.

But time has shown that the colonialists and imperialists are paper tigers. They appear fierce and can inflict injury, but they are cowards who cannot stand up against the ire of a united people. The Iranian nation has withstood 40 years of American hostility and refused to bend its knee

to Washington’s dictates. It has sacrificed its finest sons in defense of its independence and sovereignty, and come to the aid of those fighting for their liberation from hegemonists who think nothing of slaughtering the people for their own selfish gain.

Lt. General Soleimani led the Iranian nation in its struggle against U.S. Imperialism and Zionism. His spirit will forever dwell in the hearts of its people.

“The U.S. has used wars, sanctions, terrorism, and support for the Zionist Israelis and Salafist Saudis to try and reimpose its rule in the region, but all to no avail. In a fit of pique for its failures, the U.S. under Trump lashed out by assassinating a great hero of the Iranian nation, Lt. General Qassem Soleimani. This insidious act has only compounded the crimes for which the U.S. must be held accountable.”

“Time has shown that the colonialists and imperialists are paper tigers.”

*Dennis Etler is an American political analyst who has a decades-long interest in international affairs. He’s a former professor of Anthropology at Cabrillo College in Aptos, California. He has a PhD in anthropology from the University of California in Berkeley.*



# General Soleimani liberated Syrian towns and villages: Iran expert

“I am Syrian, a Sunni Muslim. I feel safe because Iran helped us”

BY M.A. SAKI

TEHRAN – An expert on Iran's foreign policy says as President Beshar al-Assad has said General Qassem Soleimani “liberated towns and villages” in Syria in the fight against ISIS.

Polina Aniftou from Greece tells the Tehran Times that “certainly” the assassination of General Soleimani “was a big relief for the terrorists of ISIS and their regional and trans-Atlantic sponsors.”

She also praises Esmail Ghaani, the general who replaced General Soleimani immediately after his assassination in January 2020, as a “capable” person.

“Sardar Ghaani is also very capable; he is very promising and intelligent soldier of peace,” the analyst notes.

The Greek analyst also says Iran has a long record in fighting terrorist groups and state terrorism.

“Iran fought against terrorism from the very beginning, against MEK terrorists, against Saddam's terrorist bodies, and since then have helped all the people in the region and the world that have been trying to resist against state and non-state terror actors.”

Following is the full text of the interview:

**In 1972, a specialized Committee on Terrorism was set up at the United Nations, and member states made great efforts to provide appropriate definitions of international terrorism, but due to intense political differences, the actual definition of international terrorism and comprehensive conventions in practice was impossible. Security Council Resolution 1373 was the most serious attempt to define terrorism after 9/11, which evolved into UN Security Council Resolution 1535. Despite providing a definition of terrorism, countries approach it differently. What is the reason?**

Terrorism usually is defined in the broadest sense, as the use of intentional violence for political or religious purposes by state or non-state actors, and we have seen this definition in academia, in literature, in media and resolutions and laws worldwide. What is missing every time by the laws and the resolutions, you are asking, is to define the cause, the consequences and the duration of terrorism. Not of the terrorist action but terrorism as a situation. Thus for example we had “terrorism” and “terrorist organizations” in the past as in the case of RAF in Germany and Brigate Rosse in Italy from 70s to 90s. These organizations that had more social demands for social equality, were fighting for the change of pro-fascist and post-war capitalist regimes in Germany and Italy that were sinking people into poverty and by laws they defined as terrorists. After the members of these “terrorist organizations” were arrested, the treatment by the state and justice systems was totally inhuman and against any democratic principles. Thus we had members of these organizations committing suicides without any justifications. Germany has introduced to Western world the white cells at Stammheim Prison where political prisoners were starving and just one day they were sent to psychiatric clinics from the tortures. All the committees and the regulatory bodies in the UN that tried to define terrorism before the fall of USSR, were actually trying to demonize communism, socialism, social and class movements, anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism.

The Western justice system was never prudent to adopt the diversification of political opinions, the race equality and we have seen what happened to European colonies in Africa, the white exceptionalism in the USA against non-white and indigenous populations. In my opinion this anti-social character of the West has to do with the fact that the West does not have historical value system and the beginning of the Western civilization occurred when it met Greek, Persian and Egyptian cultures, creating an



antireflection and reaction because Greek and Persian and Egyptian nations were nations based on origin, culture, religion, territory, same traditions but the Western nations are “made” nations by human force or historical needs that cannot enjoy internal peace, exporting their aggression with wars, racism and Westoxification.

Thus after the fall of USSR in 1991 that the anti-capitalist movements were not so dangerous as they did not have the support of the USSR and the vision of socialism was traumatized, the Western lobby needed new enemies. The West saw as danger the religion, the indigenous populations, giving legitimacy to states against armed and non-armed groups, PLO until Madrid Conference in 1991 was considered as a terrorist organization, either the entire organization of Hezbollah or just its military wing has been designated as terrorist organization, Zapatistas were defined as terrorists or narco-terrorists by the Mexican state that in 1997 pro-government forces massacred 45 villagers for their support of the Zapatistas (Acatel massacre). The rights for freedom, work, health equality and education of the poor and indigenous populations were defined as anti-democratic “sins”. They were blocked, criminalized and used the term terrorist for national freedom fighters.

The Security Council Resolution 1373 attempted to define terrorism after 9/11, which evolved into UN Security Council Resolution 1535. It failed to unify the member states. This Security Council Resolution 1373 requests member states to implement a number of measures intended to enhance their legal and institutional ability to counter terrorist activities at home, in their regions, and around the world. The Security Council Resolution 1535 (2004) received a more technical and operational shape on revitalization of the Security Council committee established pursuant to Resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism. Today the most important part is not the fact that countries decide to face terrorism in a different way; today states and businesses are monitored globally. The AML and compliance guidelines given by the European Union are not different from the USA. When the USA applies sanctions, usually all other countries advise their businesses not to have relations with sanctioned individuals, companies, universities and countries. The fight against terrorism in our days occurs through laws, banking systems, economic isolation and legal enforcement. If Interpol requests a wanted person from a country in Asia most probably the authorities will agree. If the EU believes that there is a terrorist action within France as in the case of Hebdo, then rest of the countries will support.

In the absence of a definition for terrorism there is an open pool at the discretion of each state, lobbies and organizations to call terrorists those they disagree with or

dislike. From the other part for the global powers terrorism needs to stay undefined in order not to eliminate their benefit and illegal actions. For example, the USA justified the invasion to Afghanistan and Iraq as a counter fight against terrorism. If there was a strict definition, the USA is now acting as a state terrorist. So if we want to be legally, socially and practically correct, terrorism, anti-terrorism and state-terrorism need to be also defined. The state terrorism in the cases of Israel, USA, Saudi Arabia, the previous government in Bolivia, which came to power through a coup, are legitimated with illegal and inhuman perspectives and violations of human rights and international laws.

**How do you assess the role and position of Iran in the fight against terrorism in the region?**

Iran has a very specific identification in fighting terrorism both in legal and common practices, but also in social rules. I remember when I was conducting interviews for my PhD, an Iranian clergyman said that the values of the Islamic Revolution are the dignity, freedom and justice. Iran fought against terrorism from the very begging. It fought against MEK terrorists, against Saddam's terrorist bodies, and since then had helped all the people in the region and the world that were trying to resist against state and non-state terror actors. Thus Iran supported Hezbollah that was founded to protect Lebanese people after the massacre in Sabra and Shatila, where forces of Israel violated the territory of Lebanon and executed 4,500 people in 2 days. This is state terrorism. Iran supported PLO and Hamas and the rights of Palestinians for freedom. Iran did not interfere in the politics of Palestinians, as Ayatollah Khamenei very correctly said, Palestinians decide and Iran supports; Iran is the only country in the region that declared its foreign policy so transparently. Iran supported Venezuela and Bolivia against the U.S.-supported coups and violation of international law. Iran supported from the very beginning, before even Russia, the legally elected president of Syria against ISIS. Iran supported after an invitation the elected Kurdish government in Northern Iraq against ISIS and Turkish troops. Iran and personally Imam Khomeini supported Nelson Mandela against the apartheid of South Africa. In all above cases Iran faced terrorism under any form of state-terrorism and terrorist organizations. Iran, though facing sanctions, managed to show its solidarity around the globe to any people asked for that. So there is a systematic and ethical ideology behind the fight of Iran against terrorism. In terms of justice and equality, Iran, as expressed by Imam Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution, opposes the way that the indigenous population are treated as subhuman according to their race and ethnicity.

The Islamic Revolution and the ideas of

the Islamic governance do not only apply to Shia or Muslims but to all humanity for freedom, independence and respect and this is the universalism of the character of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**How do you assess the role and position of General Qassem Soleimani in the fight against terrorism, especially ISIS, in the region?**

The night General Qassem Soleimani was assassinated I was at home that a friend, who is a political analyst from Greece, called me and said “Media say that Soleimani is assassinated”. I did not pay attention as I thought it's something usually comes out of media for propaganda. At 5:00 a.m. another journalist friend from Greece confirmed (the report). Like all, I was devastated! Not only because what had happened was a war crime. But also because Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis as personalities had enlightened the fight for peace and freedom in the region. Qassem Soleimani's speeches and activities teach us the respect, patience, just and visionary. The fight of Qassem Soleimani against ISIS has been said by President Assad. (He said) General Soleimani helped the Syrian people, he liberated towns and villages. Our Syrian friends sent us pictures from churches that Soleimani and his soldiers had cleaned for the believers. On the day of the funeral, Russian troops from Syria arrived in Tehran with flowers to his memory. Pakistan's people visited his grave singing. Photos of Soleimani are still in Gaza, Beirut, Sanaa, Caracas, Paris, (and) London. General Soleimani was not just an Iranian general. He was (also) respected across the region and the world for his achievements and for his personality. Certainly his assassination was a big relief for the terrorists of ISIS and their regional and trans-Atlantic sponsors, or at least this is what they believed. I am more than sure that Sardar Ghaani is also very capable. He is very promising and intelligent soldier of peace and we have a lot of expectations from Ghaani, at the same level as the expectations and the appreciation we have for martyr Soleimani. I believe that the most beautiful thing I have ever heard about Soleimani is by a Syrian journalist that while I was interviewing him, he said, “I am Syrian, a Sunni Muslim. I feel safe because Iran helped us, and even if my country will be free we own that to Iran and we want Iran to support us to learn how to be reconstructed as a country and society with values and respect.”

**Given the conflict of interests of different countries, can we see the same action by countries against terrorism? What mechanism can equalize the performance of countries against terrorism?**

I strongly believe that as far as there are political and economic interests the definition of terrorism will never be achieved by the UN. The member states are not interested in defining terrorism into a legal form and unify mechanisms to fight against (it). Terrorism is another way to justify expenditures, wars and acts against countries and organizations as in the case of Hezbollah. The only exit I see is the regional organizations that are smaller than the global organizations and the countries due to borders have common experiences and have an understanding of the situation to achieve a memorandum of collaboration. Also bilateral agreements may support common mechanisms, create a modus operandi and legal forms, and political collaboration in order to fight terrorism. My concern though is as far as lobbyism is above peace and the states cannot protect their sovereignty against the monopoly of capitalism, the aggression of the declining USA and the fraud of the Western liberalism, then the democratic values and the human dignity will be under attack.

## General Soleimani restored Baghdad's sovereignty over much of Iraq: George Washington University professor

“To me, General Soleimani was an Iranian patriot who fought terrorists endangering Iran”

BY JAVAD HEIRANNIA

TEHRAN – A professor of international business at the George Washington University tells the Tehran Times that General Qassem Soleimani “was key in uniting Shia militias and Kurdish forces against ISIL in Iraq and restoring the Iraqi government's sovereignty over much of Iraq.”

Hossein Askari also says, “Iran has been a victim of terrorism. Iran has been the target of an organization that many countries classify as terrorist—the Mujahedin-e-Khalq or MEK.”

Following is the text of the interview:

**Many countries have been victims of state and non-state terrorism over the past century. Yet it seems impossible to take the very first step to battle this phenomenon which is providing a proper coherent definition for terrorism. What purposes are behind this lack of global consensus? Are there actually some countries which benefit from this ambiguity?**

Let's face it, it is hard, if not impossible, to define terrorism. It is a concept that depends on the eye of the beholder. As many have recognized, a person that some may label as a terrorist may be called a freedom fighter or liberator by others. It seems that most definitions include some of the following terms: an act of violence, initiated by non-state actors, against non-military combatants and targets, intended to strike fear and extract political concessions and international terrorism adding a cross border dimension. While these terms may capture many of what most experts have in mind when describing terrorism, to my mind they are still woefully incomplete. To begin with, why are states exempt from the definition? How are covert operations by the major powers that result in kidnapping any different than when the same is done by a non-state actor? Why is a bomb dropped by a plane on civilians more legitimate than a pipe bomb used by a single person? A state has the option of invading an adversary whereas a disenfranchised group does not have the same option and takes up arms in attacks where it can, so why is one terrorism and the other not?

Please note that different entities even in the United States have dissimilar definitions of terrorism. For instance, the FBI and the Department of State have conflicting definitions of terrorism.

In the end, it is a fungible term that is misused to fit the needs of those in power.

**Given the geopolitical predicament in West Asia and troubled circumstances in the region, how do you assess Iran's attempt in the war on terrorism?**

Let's face it. Iran has been a victim of terrorism. Iran has been the target of an organization that many countries classify as terrorist—the Mujahedin-e-Khalq or MEK. Yet, countries and leaders of Iran's adversaries change their classification of the MEK depending on the state of their relations with Iran. Israel has inflicted harm on Iranians inside and outside Iran that can be classified as terrorism. Yet, most so-called champions of democracy and world order say nothing. The United States has carried out covert operations against Iranian officials, yet the word terrorism does not pass many lips.

At the same time, when Iran supports Hezbollah, a political party in Lebanon, Iran is called a state sponsor of terror. When Iran supports the President of Syria, it is called state terror.

**During Iran's fight against terrorism in the region, some names have always shined brighter, one of which is Gen. Qassem Soleimani. What role he played in this fight?**

General Soleimani had multiple roles in the region. Foremost, he was a true Iranian patriot. He fought to keep Iran safe. The General had a key role in Afghanistan after 9/11. He was key in uniting Shia militias and Kurdish forces against ISIL in Iraq and restoring the Iraqi government's sovereignty over much of Iraq. I could go on and list more of his positive exploits.

He was praised by U.S. generals. But then they turned against him when their interests did not coincide. Sadly they even turned against him and called him a terrorist. President Bush rewarded him and Iran by calling Iran a member of the Axis of Evil! And of course who committed the ultimate terrorist act and assassinated this Iranian General in a foreign country?

Let's face it, terrorist is a fungible word. It is sometimes used correctly and at other times it is used to brand an adversary in order to legitimize the illegitimate. To me, General Soleimani was an Iranian patriot who fought terrorists endangering Iran.

**How can countries unite in fight against terrorism?**

Although countries may define terrorism differently, they may come together if their interests coincide. Iran and the U.S. did so in Afghanistan and in Iraq. But it lasted for a limited period of time when their interests coincided but not in times when interests diverged. The key is shared interests.

For my part, I wish we could come up with different terms to describe events more precisely. Not using this capture all word—terrorism— that is so misleading and misused.

## In memory of the man of anti-imperialist battles

BY DENIS KORKODINOV



Mahdi al-Muhandis was assassinated.

To understand who General Qassem Soleimani was and what role he played in West Asia, it is important to describe some details of his biography. He was born on March 11, 1957 into an ordinary peasant family. It has been 4 years since the military coup in Iran, as a result of which the government of Mohammed Mossadegh was overthrown. It was

then that hatred of the American and British intelligence, which played a direct role in the complete military coup, determined the mood in Iranian society. In addition, in 1957 the secret police “SAVAK” was founded in Iran, whose activities provoked fair protests in Iran and was one of the reasons for the subsequent Islamic revolution.

General Qassem Soleimani grew up and was brought up in this atmosphere. From childhood, accustomed to hard work (from the age of 13 he worked as a laborer in the city of Kerman), he understood by his own example that Iran needed liberation from American, British and Israeli dictat, as well as strengthening its international influence as a country free of geopolitical prejudice and misconception. For this reason, in 1979, he happily supported the Islamic Revolution, becoming its prominent defender. At the same time, General Soleimani entered in the Guard Corps, where he quickly earned great respect and gained invaluable experience, which would later become the main driving force of his activities.

In 1987, General Soleimani already led the 41st Taralah Infantry Division and headed Iran's military operations in Afghanistan, Syria, and Lebanon. From 2000 until his

martyrdom in 2020, he led the Al-Quds special unit, which earned him international recognition as a courageous and unwavering military strategist.

Of course, General Soleimani was a recognizable figure not only in West Asia, but throughout the world. He was directly involved in the anti-imperialist battles taking place in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan and Latin America. For this reason, the persona of the Iranian general cannot be viewed exclusively in the context of Iranian politics. He was a symbol of the invincibility of the Iranian people on a global scale.

In this regard, it is fair to say that the assassination of General Soleimani, like the murder of Mohsen Fakhrazadeh, is an act of terrorism against Iran. Iranian martyrs have proven that Iran is justifiably seeking to perpetuate their memory, guarding the ideas of global justice.

*Denis Korkodinov is the president of the International Center for Political Analysis and Forecasting based in Moscow. He is also a political technologist and the editor of the Investigative Service of the Interstate socio-political television and radio magazine “World Community”.*

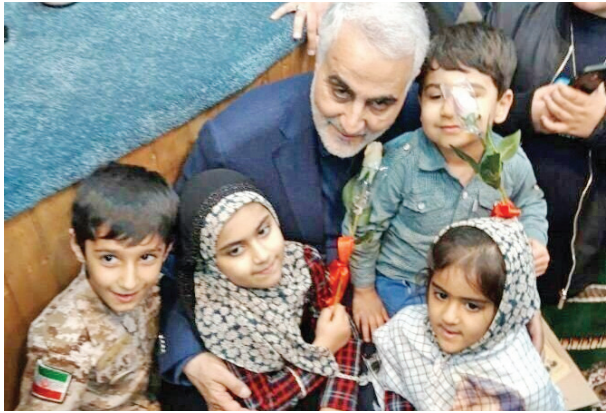
**General Soleimani had multiple roles in the region. Foremost, he was a true Iranian patriot. He fought to keep Iran safe.**



## Professor says General Soleimani's legacy will be determined by his leadership in fighting ISIS

BY MOHAMMAD HOMAEIFAR

TEHRAN - Professor Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, chair of the Centre for Iranian Studies at the London Middle East Institute, commends Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani's leadership in the war against terrorists, especially ISIS, in Iraq and Syria.



"I am on the record for saying that General Soleimani's legacy will be primarily determined by his leadership in the fight against ISIS," Adib-Moghaddam tells the Tehran Times.

Nader Entessar, a professor emeritus of political science from the University of South Alabama, says General Soleimani's acumen in fighting terrorists was "unmatched".

In a commentary on January 8, five days after his assassination in a U.S. drone strike near Baghdad's international airport, the TIME magazine wrote a commentary headlined "Soleimani spun a web of Iranian influence that will long outlive him".

"He possessed a unique set of skills and relationships that were critical to Iran's many successes over the past two decades. He was highly intelligent, decisive, and pragmatic. Those who worked with him all noted his soft-spoken demeanor, his coolness under pressure, his quiet authority, and his ability to know how to make people offers they could not refuse or did not want to," the TIME said.

However, Professor Adib-Moghaddam criticizes the way Iran's war against terrorism is being portrayed, saying, "Whenever Iran does something it is portrayed as particularly obstructive, aggressive, even hegemonic." He says successive governments in Iran have failed "to battle this distorted image".

**'Iran has been a victim of terrorism for decades'**

On the role and position of Iran in the fight against terrorism, the professor says, "Undoubtedly, Iran has been a victim of terrorism for decades, both before and after the revolution."

Just on November 27, Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was assassinated outside Tehran. It was the latest in a series of terror acts against Iranian experts.

On June 7, 2017, Iran's Parliament and the mausoleum of Imam Khomeini, founder of the Islamic Revolution, were targeted by two simultaneous gun and suicide bomb assaults. ISIS, known in its Arabic acronym as Daesh, claimed responsibility for the coordinated attacks.

In 1972, a special committee on terrorism was set up at the United Nations and member states made great efforts to provide appropriate definitions of international terrorism, but due to intense political differences, the actual definition of international terrorism and comprehensive conventions in practice was impossible. Security Council Resolution 1373 was the most serious attempt to define terrorism after the 9/11 attacks, which evolved into UN Security Council Resolution 1535. Despite providing a definition of terrorism, countries approach it differently.

Adib-Moghaddam, also an expert in global thought and comparative philosophies, says, "In the way the current international system is structured and policed even a vile, irrational and counterproductive strategy such as terrorism is always relative to the power of representation. By that I mean, that the truism that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter is real not because it is right but because contemporary politicians and the mainstream media have habituated us into a tyrannical and barbarian political relativism that bullies us into betraying our morale and human principles, our rationality which differentiates clearly between right and wrong, if only this system would let us."

The professor says an intentional killing of a civilian is terrorism whether it is done by a country or by an individual.

"The deliberate and direct killing of a civilian is clearly an act of terrorism from my perspective. In that case, it doesn't really matter to my mind if the perpetrator is a state or a non-state actor," Adib-Moghaddam says.

However, the leading academic says an act of terror by a Muslim or a non-white person is highly publicized in comparison. "Yet, terrorism committed by a self-declared Muslim, Sikh or African is always represented as worse, than that committed by a white person. In the former case it's said to be Islamist terrorism, in the case of the latter it's represented as something out of the ordinary or the act of a mentally disturbed individual. This is why for decades now, police forces in Europe and North America totally underestimated the terror from the global right-wing until it killed people en masse," says chair of the Centre for Iranian Studies at the London Middle East Institute.

The professor goes on to say that terrorism is a vicious act and there is no need to clarify it.

"Terrorism is terrorism and it doesn't need an adjective or any other clarification. When one deliberately kills non-combatants for political reasons one is a terrorist and the UN-system should have the mandate to persecute."

A universal approach in the form of global alliance is needed to counter the scourge of terrorism, Adib-Moghaddam suggests.

"The global fight against terrorism has to start from a principled and absolute rejection of any deliberate killing of civilians for political purposes. This is a universal approach that can only be carried by a global alliance against terrorism that needs to be freed from the shackles of destructive power politics."

The expert in global thought and comparative philosophies is of the opinion that "civil societies are probably the best locus for such a global movement, as our governments have proved to be woefully inept to ensure our security from these killers."

The professor says "a bottom-up approach" is essential in the campaign against terrorism.

"As terrorists try to target the sense of security and community upon which all functioning societies need to be built, they need to be combatted through a bottom-up approach, which obliges our governments to the standards that we deserve," Adib-Moghaddam notes.

# Major General Soleimani's assassination was an unforgettably historic crime

BY ANDREW KORYBKO

The one year anniversary of Major General Soleimani's assassination is the perfect moment to reflect on the significance of this unforgettably historic crime. The world was aghast when they learned that Trump ordered U.S. drones to kill the Iranian military leader in Baghdad's airport, which immediately raised fears of a larger war throughout the region. These worries were grounded in the reality that the U.S. and Iran had already been involved in a Cold War for decades that was increasingly turning hot under the Trump Administration. It's for this reason that many expected Iran to kinetically respond, which might in turn lead to an American escalation.

Iran's response came shortly after when it launched a series of missile strikes against U.S. bases in Iraq. The exact specifics of what took place are still unclear but the fact of the matter is that these facilities were devastated even though no loss of life officially occurred. This led to many wondering whether Iran's promised response was indirectly communicated to the U.S. through third parties like some reported at the time for the purpose of keeping tensions between the two under control in order to avoid the worst-case scenario of World War III. Even if that's what ended up transpiring, the significance of these strikes was momentous.

Never before in history has an-



other country struck several U.S. military bases in such a way with impunity. It's unimportant whether Iran's response was choreographed with America ahead of time or not since the soft power impact is unmistakable. The optics are obvious, and it's that the U.S. post-Old Cold

War military reputation of invulnerability was shattered as a result. Washington knew that escalating everything with Tehran even further would probably have crossed the tripwire into triggering a regional conflagration, the collateral damage of which would have been unac-

**Iran cause an "irreparable damage" to U.S. "reputation" and "shattered" its "post-Old Cold War military reputation of invulnerability" by firing missiles at its military base in response to assassination of Major General Soleimani.**

## Assassination of Gen. Soleimani 'was a flagrant instance of state terrorism': Richard Falk

International law professor says Iran is "active both in struggle against non-state and state terrorism"

BY EHSAN ETESAM

TEHRAN - The assassination of Iranian Major General Qassem Soleimani by the United States in January 2020 "was a flagrant instance of state terrorism," says Richard Anderson Falk, a professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University.

Falk makes the remarks in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times as Iran is marking the assassination anniversary of the senior military officer in January 2020.

General Soleimani, a legendary commander in the war against terrorists, was assassinated near Baghdad's international airport while he was on a peace mission to Iraq.

The prominent international law professor also says, "Iran has opposed non-state political violence of groups such as ISIS or Taliban that engage in terrorist activity by committing atrocities against civilians that amount to Crimes Against Humanity."

"Iran has also consistently condemned state terrorism of the sort practiced by Israel and the United States," says the American professor who acted as the UN Human Rights Rapporteur in the occupied Palestinian territories. Following is the full text of the interview:

**How do some countries benefit the uncertainty embedded in current definition of terrorism? Could there be a solid definition for terrorism inclusive enough to pave the way in fighting terror globally?**

There exists a basic split between those political actors that seek to define 'terrorism' as anti-state violence by non-state actors and those actors that seek to define terrorism as violence directed at innocent civilians, regardless of the identity of the perpetrator. The latter approach to the definition reaches targeted or indiscriminate violence directed at civilians even if the state is the perpetrator. States that act beyond their borders to fulfill counterrevolutionary goals seek to stigmatize their adversaries as terrorists while exempting themselves from moral and legal accountability.

There exists a second basic split due to state practice following political rather than legal criteria when identifying terrorist actors. When the Taliban and Al Qaeda were opposing Soviet intervention in Afghanistan they were identified as Mujahideen, but when seen as turning against the West, they were put on the top of the terrorist list. Osama Bin Laden, once hailed as a Western ally deservingly lavish CIA support became the most wanted terrorist after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Such subjectivity and fluidity makes it virtually impossible to develop a coherent and legal approach to 'terrorist' activity.

In essence, geopolitical actors have always sought to have international law regard the use of force by states acting on their own as falling outside the framework of terrorism while regarding transnational political violence by adversary or enemy non-state actors as terrorism even if the targeted person or organization is a government official or member of the armed forces, or if the non-state actor is resisting occupation by foreign armed forces. Before the 9/11 attacks Israel influentially adopted this approach in its effort to portray Palestinian resistance as a criminal enterprise. After 9/11 the United States added its political weight to this statist approach to the conception of terrorism, which meant in effect that any adversary target that could be characterized as associated with a non-state actor that resorted to armed struggle was criminalized to the extent of being treated as unprotected by international humanitarian law. In practice, this subjectivity was vividly displayed in recent years by support given to anti-Castro Cuban exiles that engaged in political violence against the legitimate Cuban government, and yet were given aid, support, and encouragement while based in the United States.

The UN was mobilized after the 9/11 attacks by the United State to support this statist/geopolitical approach

to political violence, which possessed these elements, and given formal expression in a series of Security Council Resolutions, including 1373, 1535:

--terrorists are individuals who engage in political violence on behalf of non-state actors;

--states, their officials and citizens may be guilty of supporting such activities through money, weapons and safe haven, and therefore indictable under national law as aiding and abetting terrorism;

--political violence by states, no matter what its character, is to be treated by reference to international law, including international humanitarian law, and not viewed as terrorism;

--even if the non-state actor is exercising its right of resistance under international law against colonialism or apartheid, its political violence will be treated as 'terrorism' if such a designation furthers geopolitical ambitions.

The alternative view of terrorism that I endorse emphasizes the nature of the political violence, rather than the identity of the perpetrator. As such, political violence can be identified as 'state terrorism,' which amounts to uses of force that are outside the framework of war and peace, and violate the sovereign rights of a foreign country or fundamental rights of citizens within the territory of the state. Such acts of terrorism may be clandestine or overt, and may be attributed to state actors when counterrevolutionary groups are authorized, funded, and encouraged directly or indirectly by the state. Non-state actors can also be guilty of terrorism if their tactics and practices deliberately target civilians or recklessly disregard risks of death or harm to civilians.

**Despite all these uncertainties, Iran has long been fighting the sort of terrorist actions taken by state and non-state entities which really cast terror on hearts of people in the region. How do you assess Iran's fight against terrorism?**

As far as I know, Iran has opposed non-state political violence of groups such as ISIS or Taliban that engage in terrorist activity by committing atrocities against civilians that amount to Crimes Against Humanity. Iran has also consistently condemned state terrorism of the sort practiced by Israel and the United States, and possibly other governments, within the region. In this regard, Iran has been active both in the struggle against non-state and state terrorism.

Iran has been accused of lending funding and material support to non-state actors that many governments in the West officially classify as 'terrorist' organizations, such as Hezbollah and Hamas. Part of the justification for U.S. sanctions arises from this allegation that Iran supports terrorism in the Middle East. These allegations are highly 'political' in character as both Hezbollah and Hamas engaged in violent resistance directed at unlawful occupation policies that denied basic national rights to the Lebanese and Palestinian people, including the fundamental right of self-determination, although some of their tactics and acts may have crossed the line of legality.

There are also contentions that Iran's support for the Syrian government in dealing with its domestic adversaries involves complicity in behavior that violates the laws of war and international humanitarian law. This contention is a matter of regional geopolitics. As far as

**"Although a military officer, General Soleimani, was not in any combat role when assassinated, and was engaged in peacemaking diplomacy on a mission to Iraq"**

ceptable for its regional allies like "Israel" and the (P)GCC.

In a sense, one can say that the U.S. was somewhat held hostage to the interests of those same regional allies. While it arguably enters into various military adventures in the region in their support, its flexibility in responding even further to Iran was extremely limited since anything more would have likely provoked the feared scenario of an uncontrollable regional conflict, one in which America's allies would likely suffer just as much as -- if not more than -- Iran. In other words, even though the American homeland would have probably escaped largely unscathed, "Israel" and the (P)GCC would have been destroyed, which was unacceptable for it.

The reason for predicting such a dire outcome is that Iran's missile technology advances of the past decade have succeeded in serving as a powerful deterrent to most forms of regional aggression, which is the main reason that Trump wanted to impose drastic curbs on it as a precondition for re-entering the JCPOA among other demands. Without these missiles, Iran would never have been able to respond to the U.S. after it assassinated Major General Soleimani in such a way that it shattered its adversary's precious soft power, nor would America have been deterred from escalating everything further out of fear for its regional allies' safety.

Reflecting on all of this, it's unclear whether Trump regrets assassinating Major General Soleimani in hindsight. It's true that he succeeded in inflicting a powerful blow to Iran, but Iran nevertheless responded by ruining America's post-Old Cold War military reputation of invulnerability. In addition, Iran continues to support its regional Resistance allies, which proves that while its martyr was immensely important in this respect, he wasn't irreplaceable like the U.S. claimed. The Resistance has always been about much more than a single person since it's a movement for peace, justice, and national sovereignty, among other goals.

Objectively speaking, it can therefore be assessed that Trump made a mistake by assassinating Major General Soleimani. The resultant shattering of his country's soft power was an unacceptable cost for carrying out this unforgettably historic crime which failed to stop the Resistance's regional activities. The American leader proved his loyalty to the U.S. regional "Israeli" and (P)GCC allies, but his country also paid a harsh cost in terms of the irreparable damage to its reputation. As the world mourns the martyrdom of Major General Soleimani on the one year anniversary of his assassination, they should also realize that he's just as powerful dead as alive.

international law is concerned, the Assad government in Damascus is the legitimate representative of the Syrian people, and is treated as such at the UN. Iran is legally entitled to provide assistance to such a government faced with insurgent challenges from within its boundaries. If the allegations are true that Syria has bombed hospitals and other civilian sites, then the Syrian government could be charged with state terrorism.

**What role did Gen. Soleimani play in this fight against terrorism?**

Although a military officer, General Soleimani, was not in any combat role when assassinated, and was engaged in peacemaking diplomacy on a mission to Iraq. His assassination was a flagrant instance of state terrorism. With considerable irony, the truth is that General Soleimani had been playing a leading counterterrorist role throughout the region. He is thought to have been primarily responsible for the ending, or at least greatly weakening, the threat posed by ISIS to the security of many countries in the Middle East.

**Given the conflict of interests of different countries, can we see the same action by countries against terrorism? What mechanism can equalize the performance of countries against terrorism?**

As suggested at the outset, without an agreed widely adopted and generally agreed upon definition of terrorism it is almost impossible to create effective international mechanisms to contain terrorism. As matters now stand, the identification of 'terrorists' and 'terrorism' is predominantly a matter of geopolitical alignment rather than the implementation of prohibitions directed at unacceptable forms of political violence within boundaries and across borders.

To imagine the emergence of effective international, or regional, mechanisms to combat terrorism at least four developments would have to occur:

--the reliance on legal criteria to categorize political violence as terrorism;

--the inclusion of 'state terrorism' in the official definition of terrorism;

--the inclusion of political violence within sovereign territory as well as across boundaries;

--an internationally or regionally agreed definition incorporating these three elements and formally accepted by all major sovereign states and by the United Nations.

In the present international atmosphere, such an international consensus is impossible to achieve. The United States and Israel, and a series of other important states would never agree. There are two sets of obstacles: some states would not give up their discretion to attack civilian targets outside their borders and would not accept accountability procedure that impose limits on their discretion over the means used to deal with domestic transnational non-state adversaries.

Under these conditions of geopolitical subjectivity such that from some perspectives non-state actors are 'freedom-fighters' and from others they are 'terrorists,' no common grounds for meaningful and trustworthy intergovernmental arrangements exists.

It remains important for individuals and legal experts to advocate a cooperative approach to the prevention and punishment of terrorists and terrorism by reference to an inclusive definition of terrorism that considers political violence by states and by governments within their national territory as covered.

It is also in some sense to include non-state actors as stakeholders in any lawmaking process that has any prospect of achieving both widespread acceptance as a framework or implementation at behavioral levels. It would seem, in this regard, important to prohibit torture of terrorist suspects or denial of prisoner of war rights. One-sided legal regimes tend to be rationalizations for unlawful conduct, and thus operate as political instruments of conflict rather than legal means of regulation.