

# TEHRAN TIMES

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Find special issue on 3rd anniversary of Gen. Soleimani assassination

**SPECIAL ISSUE**

## Revenge for Gen. Soleimani inevitable: IRGC

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### Ayatollah Khamenei outlines the novelty of Iran political system

By Faramarz Kuhpayeh

TEHRAN – The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, met Monday with some of the members of the Union of Islamic Students Associations in Europe.

In the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei said the new idea of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the establishment of a government based on religious tenets and popular support.

The Leader spoke of the Islamic associations as being one of the as-

sets of the Islamic Republic and said that they have unique missions, according to a readout of the meeting put out by khamenei.ir. The Leader emphasized that persistence, consistency, having an influence on one's environment, and explaining the new idea brought by the Islamic Republic are some of the tasks that the Islamic associations need to undertake.

Ayatollah Khamenei honored the memory of the late Hujjat al-Islam, Dr. Eje'i, who was one of ► Page 3

### U.S. is desperate to dominate global news

Europe's ban of Iranian media via its Eutelsat platform is part of a U.S.-led campaign to silence alternative points of view.

This is not just limited to Iranian media, over the past couple of years, news media outlets in China, Russia, Latin America, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, and other countries have been subjected to censorship.

The latest measure against Iranian media was taken by France-based Eutelsat whose operators

have a fleet of satellites serving users across Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

Eutelsat cited sanctions against Iranian media for its decision. The EU sanctions were imposed following the riots and terror that broke out across Iran late last year.

Tehran accuses European states of sponsoring the riots and terror. Iranian politicians have said that during bilateral meetings, they were told by their European ► Page 5

### Car manufacturing rises 18% in 9 months on year

TEHRAN- Car manufacturing in Iran increased 18 percent during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2022), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to the data released by the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade.

Based on the ministry's data, 876,000 vehicles were manufactured in the nine-month period

of this year, while the figure was 743,000 in the same time span of the previous year.

The highest production during this period was related to the category of passenger cars with 760,000 vehicles, which constitutes 86.7 percent of the total production. This amount of production has grown by 13 percent compared to the output in the first nine months of the past year. ► Page 4

**Tehran Papers**

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in Yesterday's Iranian newspapers.

#### JCPOA still an achievement for Biden

Arman-e Melli ran a story headline 'JCPOA still an achievement for Biden', quoting Abdolreza Farjirad, a diplomat and foreign policy expert. ► Page 2

### Troupes pay tribute to Gen. Soleimani with "Flying with Burned Wings", "Abbas's Offering"

TEHRAN – Two troupes are paying homage to General Qassem Soleimani on the third anniversary of his assassination by performing the plays "Flying with Burned Wings" and "Abbas's Offering" in Tehran.

Written by Mehdi Akbari, "Flying with Burned Wings" is being directed by Mohammad Sotudeh at the Qashqai Hall of the City Theater Complex.

The story of the play is set in the Khajeh Khezr district. Gang members are threatening security in the neighborhood, but everything changes after Qassem arrives.

Starring Mehdi Tavakkoli, Taravat Tabibi, Hedyeh Fadai, Elaheh Tabrizi, and Fatemeh Hozuri, the play was staged at the 27th edition of the Tehran Theater Festival.

"Abbas's Offering", which focuses on an episode from General Soleimani's life, is being performed by director and writer Mohammad Yazdi's troupe at the Sayeh Hall of the complex.

Yazdi also plays a role in the play starring Amir Qorbani, Hooman Hosseini and Abolfazl Shiri. ► Page 8

### Expert unsatisfied with low scoring league

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN – The Iranian football premiere league is now among the lowest ranks in the world of football in terms of average goals scored per game.

Asghar Maziar, Iranian football pundit sees the general quality of the players and the coaches of the IPL as a major factor in the frustrating games.

"When you talk about the highest level of the country's professional league you expect to see high-standard players and knowledgeable coaches," said Maziar in his exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

"However, the process through which some players and coaches reach ► Page 3

### Tehran national parks in danger

TEHRAN – Sorkheh Hesar and Khojir National Parks, located in the capital city of Tehran, are struggling with environmental problems.

Due to their proximity to the capital, they face more problems than other protected areas and national parks under the supervision of the Department of Environment.

The presence of tourists, mountaineers,

and people, along with wildlife smugglers and even stray dogs, has made the wildlife in these two areas less safe.

The lack of fences and adequate equipment, the lack of clear boundaries of these national parks as well as the lack of rangers in these areas have caused many problems in these natural resources. ► Page 7

### 2023: ten top places to visit in Iran

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN – A new year means a fresh perspective. When planning trips across Iran in 2023, you may consider this formula liberally.

Many nations have lifted most of their pandemic restrictions after nearly three years of travel hiccups and difficulties. Numerous people are traveling abroad, and there is a lot of unmet demand that can be met globally.

The United Nations World Tourism Organ-

### Intelligence ministry foils group funding MKO

TEHRAN- Iran's intelligence officers have detected and disrupted a cell accountable for financing and providing weapons to the terrorist group Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO), as well as laundering the revenues of the organization's illegal operations.

In a statement issued on Monday, Iran's intelligence ministry said six members of the group were apprehended in simultaneous operations around the country, while 10 more were subpoenaed and several other suspects are still at large.

Based on the statement, the cell employed complicated money laundering ways to transfer cash from overseas into Iran and supplied munitions and other equipment to MKO-affiliated squads in order for them to conduct terrorist actions. ► Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

JCPOA still an achievement for Biden

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in Yesterday's Iranian newspapers.

from page 1 ▶ Farjirad believes that non-public diplomacy should begin to reach an agreement in the nuclear field, which will probably start from Muscat.

Both America and Europe are looking for an agreement with Iran, and so are the Chinese, but the Russians currently have other concerns in the war in Ukraine. The Russians thought that Europe would fall to its knees in the cold and the war would end in favor of the Russians, considering Iran's oil as the only substitute for their energy, while Europe's energy was provided from elsewhere, he analyzed.

Americans need this agreement with Iran. Biden has been able to make the economic situation of America favorable, that is why he is seeking to be a candidate again. Biden is interested in international achievement in addition to economic achievement in order to ensure his victory in the 2024 elections, he concluded.

Sharq: What is the problem; Knowledge of economics or the art of politics?

The reformist Sharq newspaper, in a note, argued that the main problem is not the low level of economic knowledge, but the low level of governance knowledge, the art of policy-making and the gift of public dialogue.

What we desperately need these days are not economists, but trust between the people and the government, and reassuring and persuasive conversations in the public, the author suggested.

Hojjat Mirzaei, criticized the government for the lowest rate of political participation in the last four decades, and being indifferent to official reports of hard living conditions of citizens instead of making dialogue and offering solution, warning about the 25 percent decrease in social trust.

Javan: Commander Soleimani and national security

Conservative Javan publication again focused on the influential role of Martyr Soleimani in the national security and rendering the enemies' threats ineffective.

The enemies and the internal opponents claim that supporting the resistance front has incurred heavy costs for the country and as a result, the economic and livelihood problems of the people have increased, it wrote.

Were it not for his efforts, Iran would have to pay much more costs to repel these threats and would have to endure another massive war with thousands of martyrs and thousands of billions of damages, which would naturally be much more than the cost that was spent on supporting the resistance forces, the report highlighted.

Etemad: Democracy and development obstacles to separatism

Ehsan Houshmand, a researcher of ethnic studies and Iranologist, in an interview with Etemad talked about some of the recent separatist movements.

He considered poverty and underdevelopment as the main elements of the growth of

separatist groups in the country.

Shirin Ebadi has held many meetings in European circles including the European Parliament with the leaders of the Iranian nationalist armed movements who are training the armed forces and military actions inside the country.

Unfortunately, the uneven development of different regions of the country happened during the past century, considering the development indicators (education, health, employment, industry, agriculture) in Sistan-Baluchistan, part of West Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, Ilam, South Khorasan, South Kerman.

In any parts of the world, you will not see a land with a common long political history, a stable government and a civilized field that moves towards federalization, separatism and disintegration by its own hands.

Ham Mihan: Air pollution or institutional pollution?

Ham Mihan publication, in its editorial, addressed the causes of severe air pollution haunting the country's metropolises, asking 'Air pollution or institutional pollution?'

The report referred to the letter of Tehran City Council members to the heads of the three authorities warning about the critical situation of air pollution in the capital, and wrote that the main problem is institutional and political pollution.

A healthy society is a society in which there are civil and independent institutions that accurately say which policies caused these pollutions, whether the production of polluting cars, the use of diesel fuel or non-standard fuel, the non-optimal consumption of energy or other similar policies.

The problem is not air pollution or food contamination; rather, institutional and political pollution should be blamed, because a group of officials only seek power and now that they have reached it, their inefficiency has become more obvious than ever, the newspaper criticized.

Kayhan: Zionist regime must greet its end

The result of the Zionist regime's intervention and mischief against the Islamic Republic, especially in the Iranophobia project, the assassination of nuclear scientists and the disintegration of Iran will not go unanswered, conservative Kayhan newspaper wrote.

Iran's military achievements and facilities of the army and IRGC are based on a religious approach and cannot be compared with the propaganda and psychological exercises of the enemies, and will crush their false hegemony.

The actions of the Zionist regime are to justify or confront its fear. The coward regime is declining based on divine tradition, but if they want to commit suicide early out of fear of death, we will not stop it.

If there is a threat to the independence, territorial integrity and system of the Islamic Republic, the army will enter with force and give a harsh response, Kayhan warned.

TEHRAN- The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) issued a statement on Monday affirming that retaliation against those responsible for the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani is inevitable.

"Martyr Hajj Qassem is an enduring legend not only for Iranians but also for those who are supportive of the Resistance Front throughout the globe," the statement said as Iran is marking the martyrdom anniversary of the anti-terror commander.

The spread of the ideas of General Soleimani's school of thought throughout Iran and the region is one of the IRGC's ineluctable strategies, the IRGC underlined in the statement.

Based on the statement, the global language of resistance and anti-arrogance has fully bloomed in the three years since General Soleimani's martyrdom.

"Martyr Soleimani had steadfastly decided to meet the requirements of the revolution, Iran, and the Muslim countries of the region in coping with the perils posed by Daesh by employing capabilities of the resistance front and its allies and supporters," underlined the statement, adding, "He stood out as a military leader who was also an accomplished diplomat complying with the directives of the late Imam Khomeini and the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei in safeguarding the Islamic nation and against terrorism."

Iran pursues Gen. Soleimani's case until final resolve

TEHRAN- Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Nasser Kanaani, has stressed that the Islamic Republic would make every effort to bring the perpetrators of the U.S. assassination of the country's top anti-terror commander, General Qassem Soleimani, to justice.

Kanaani hailed General Soleimani's leadership in the war against terrorism and the strengthening of the resistance front during a news conference on Monday.

"This magnificent martyr dedicated his life to honorably defending the Islamic Republic of Iran, the peace and security of the world, and the Iranian nation. Within the context of the Islamic Republic of Iran's strategic plans to ensure regional and global peace and stability, he played a significant role," he noted.

The spokesman also asserted that General Soleimani took decisive action against both domestic and foreign terrorist organizations.

He detailed how the assassination of General Soleimani was planned and carried out by the U.S. government in violation of international law and norms under the administration of former U.S. President Donald Trump.

"This heinous crime occurred when he was a high-ranking Iranian diplomat on an official tour to Iraq. The United States' unlawful crime in assassinating General Soleimani was a blatant act of terrorism that was orchestrated and carried out in an organized way," Kanaani underlined.

He went on to add, "According to international legal norms, the U.S. is entirely responsible for the crime, and all planners, organizers, and perpetrators are liable for the terrorist act."

"In order to bring the criminals to justice, the Iranian foreign ministry has worked with other government agencies and the judiciary to employ all legal avenues," he said.

The Iranian diplomat emphasized that such an effort will be made with seriousness in domestic, regional, and international courts of law until a resolution is reached.

All legal means to be used to bring Soleimani assassins to book: FM

TEHRAN- Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said that the government is seeking to utilize all legal, political, and diplomatic avenues to hold accountable all those responsible for the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the country's highest-level counterterrorism commander.

In a television interview on the occasion of General Soleimani's third martyrdom anniversary, Amir Abdollahian noted that "all required precautions have been taken."

Iran's top diplomat said, "In addition to using all possible legal avenues, we have recognized and registered the U.S. administration's role in the assassination through an official letter, and we will pursue our complaint along its own natural course."

"Sadly, both Americans and other Western countries are attempting to impede and stonewall the legal follow-up of the issue," Amir Abdollahian continued.

He further said, "The Islamic Re-



Revenge for Gen. Soleimani inevitable: IRGC

The Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps' fortitude and vigor in pursuing the strategies of supporting and assisting the Islamic Resistance Front, according to the statement, point to the resumption of General Soleimani's path and the preservation of the Iranian nation's mores

and norms in aiding the Palestinians as well as the liberation of Quds.

The statement described exacting vengeance on the culprits and murderers of Martyr Soleimani as a "conclusive" and "irrevocable" matter, adding that the IRGC is monitoring the process of ousting the U.S. from West

Asian region.

The Guards reaffirmed at the conclusion that they would give their life if necessary to defend the country and the homeland from Zionism and the global hegemonic system.

"Muslim youths determined to exact revenge on U.S."

Major General Mohammad Bagheri, the chairman of the Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces, also stressed on Sunday that the Muslim world's youngsters are motivated to avenge the U.S. assassination of the leading commander, General Soleimani.

In a message, the top military commander said that the terrorists involved in the horrific atrocity will spend their shameful life in fear of the day of retribution.

"Revenge against the masterminds and perpetrators of General Soleimani's assassination will never be removed from the agenda of the youths of the Muslim world and his devotees across the world," Bagheri pointed out.

The military added, "When they carried out their nefarious scheme, the culprits believed they had eliminated the greatest hurdle in the path of their arrogant and expansionist objectives in the geography of the Muslim world, but this was incorrect."

General Bagheri remarked that the martyrdom of "the hero of resistance" has created a road for those seeking freedom throughout the world that cannot be barred by anything.

Iran committed to Afghanistan peace, security

The spokesman stated that as part of the Islamic Republic's ethical policy, it is committed to assisting Afghanistan in reestablishing peace and security.

"Iran takes a cautious approach toward Afghanistan since any events there will have an impact on Iran as well because the two nations share a border," he stressed.

Tehran fully active in fighting terrorism

The spokesperson said that Syria, Turkey, and Russia are aware of Iran's leadership in the battle against terrorism and its efforts to help the Syrian people and government when asked why Iran was not invited to a meeting to assess the events in Syria.

"Israel needs to pay attention to its shaky positions"

When asked about the danger posed by the Zionist regime of Israel, the spokesperson remarked that Israeli leaders should be aware of the unstable situation of their new government.

He continued by emphasizing that Tehran will retaliate to any threats, therefore they need to carefully consider the fallout from such threats.

Kanaani also denounced the Israeli recent attack on the airport in Damascus, Syria, urging the UN and other international organizations to decry such a heinous move.

"Allegations of sending drones to Russia"

Kanaani also disputed Ukraine's assertion that Iran had sent drones to Russia for use in the Ukraine conflict, pointing out that the accusing states had not yet been able to provide evidence to back up their spurious accusations.

"Tehran-Riyadh talks constructive"

The spokesman described the climate of talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia as positive and constructive when asked on the question.

"Unfreezing Iran assets"

The spokesperson also mentioned Iran's blocked assets in Swiss banks and underscored that the Islamic Republic is seeking to unfreeze its own assets using all legal and diplomatic channels.

Intelligence ministry foils group funding MKO



zation, multiple offices, firms, and individuals affiliated to the MKO were operating within Iran and receiving funds and equipment from those stationed outside the country.

Following the death of Mahsa Amini, who fainted while in police custody and was identified as dead days later at a Tehran hospital on September 16, they even recruited a number of thugs, hooligans and vandals during recent uprisings in Iran.

The intelligence ministry went on to emphasize that the operations of the dissolved group and its associates are still being investigated, adding that the Interpol would pursue any of the group's members who are stationed abroad on suspicion of "sponsorship of terrorism" and "organized money laundering."

The ministry further sent warnings to the countries harboring MKO terrorists, including Albania, the Netherlands, and the United Arab Emirates, stressing that given the terrorists' criminal histories, their presence there would only result in unlawful and terrorist activities.

from page 1 ▶ The intelligence apparatus also underlined that Ali Mohammad Dowlati, the cell's ringleader, is a prominent MKO member having various offices in the Netherlands and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

He conducted business in Albania, the United Arab Emirates, and the Netherlands while supporting the terrorists financially and logistically by providing a cover for their activities.

With the intention of removing any potential signs of connection with the terrorist organi-

public's hands are not tied," saying that in addition to legal action, the nation is also pursuing plenty of actions against those guilty for the assassination of General Soleimani.

Iran has added the names of 60 American officials who may have played a role in the terror act to its terrorist blacklist, according to Amir Abdollahian, who listed these actions.

Based on the remarks made by the foreign minister, the latter action has not gone down well with the Americans, who have demanded that the Islamic Republic to remove the names of those people off the list.

Amir Abdollahian pointed out that the American side has emphasized to the Islamic Republic through indirect channels that the blacklisting has caused Washington to devote "exorbitant expenses" in securing those individuals' safety both inside the United States and during their international visits.

The blacklisting, however, has been defended by Iran as an "exact and

right" step, stated the top diplomat.

He reiterated that the Iranian foreign ministry will make every effort in pursuing the issue of the assassination, adding, "We will follow up on this action through political, legal, and international channels, so these individuals will be brought to justice."

On January 3, 2020, a drone attack carried out by the United States assassinated General Soleimani, the former head of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Abu Mahdi Al Muhandis, the deputy head of Iraq's anti-terror Popular Mobilization Units, and their loyal companions as well.

Due to their participation in the elimination of the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group in late 2017, the commanders had gained a great deal of favor with the local populations.

The terror group first appeared in Syria and its neighboring Iraq in 2014, just as Washington was running out of justifications for continuing or expanding its interference in the region.

Massive demonstrations and funeral processions took place in the Arab nations and elsewhere in the region in the wake of the assassinations.

Soon after the massacre, the Iraqi parliament unanimously approved a legislation ordering the withdrawal of all U.S.-led forces from the country.

Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, praised the late general's sacrifices in a speech earlier on Sunday.

"The general protected, armed, and resurrected this everlasting, developing phenomenon against the Zionist regime, U.S. influence in the region, and other arrogant countries by boosting the physical, moral, and mental dimensions of the resistance," the Leader stated.

The Leader also cited General Soleimani's annihilation of Daesh and uprooting of its subsidiaries as one of his major accomplishments.

# Ayatollah Khamenei outlines the novelty of Iran political system

From Page 1 ▶ the founders of the Union of Islamic Students Associations in Europe. He also expressed his appreciation for the activities of young students who have new, revolutionary views. The Leader stated, "Islamic associations were established with two goals in mind, to strengthen the foundations of its members' thoughts and beliefs, and to influence their surrounding environment. However, the Islamic associations abroad also have another mission, and that is to introduce the fundamental, central thoughts of the Islamic Republic."

The Leader of the Revolution believes that explaining the principles of the Islamic Republic, which includes the connection and relationship between Republic and Islam, to be a vital task. He explained, "The new idea brought by the Islamic Republic is that religious principles



and faith are also influential in the formation of a government in accordance to the people's role."

Ayatollah Khamenei also deems it necessary to update the Islamic associations in accordance with the present-day situation whilst

maintaining their principles and foundations. He added, "Some principles and concepts are constant and eternal, such as the 'principle of justice,' which has existed for thousands of years and never becomes obsolete. But it is possible to bring about changes and use new

ways in administering justice."

The Leader of the Revolution said that the issue of science and scientific progress has been a common discourse in the country in recent years. He also expressed his admiration for the holding of a scientific convention during the current conference of the Islamic Students Associations in Europe. The Leader stressed the fact that, "The issue of scientific progress and crossing scientific boundaries should not be forgotten, and it should not be imagined that paying attention to religious and revolutionary issues leads to scientific advancement being neglected."

In the beginning of this meeting, the Leader's representative in the Islamic Students Associations in Europe, Hujjat al-Islam Ahmad Vaezi, presented a report on the activities and programs of these associations.

## Foreign Ministry vows to continue follow-up of Gen. Soleimani case

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Ministry said on Monday that it will continue to follow up on the case of the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani with the aim of bringing those involved in the assassination to justice.

In a statement issued on the occasion of the third anniversary of the assassination of General Soleimani, the foreign ministry said, "On this third anniversary of the martyrdom of the glorious general of Islam and the international hero of the fight against terrorism, Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran honours the name and memory of a valued martyr who gave of his life in candid and stoic service to the people of Iran, Islam and regional and global peace and security."

It added, "General Martyr Soleimani's pivotal role in implementing the strategic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish regional and international peace and stability and his effective measures in combatting international terrorism and terrorist outfits in the region earned this undying martyr such titles of approbation and honour as 'the Altruist', 'the International Hero of the Fight Against Terrorism', and 'the General of Peace'."

It noted, "With false claims and pretexts, including under the guise of counter-terrorism, and in what constitutes a crime and naked violation of the tenets and principles of international law, the US government planned and carried out a terrorist attack on one of our highest-ranking officials on the soil of a third country while he



was on official assignment Iraq. Indubitable as it is, the criminal act of assassinating General Soleimani designed and executed by the United States constitutes yet another glaring example of an 'organised terrorist act'."

The foreign ministry continued, "Based on legal and international standards, the American regime bears 'definite international responsibility' for this crime. In this context, all the agents and principals, instigators, perpetrators and aiders and abettors of this terrorist crime bear responsibility. In this regard, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in conjunction with the Judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran and other agencies, have adopted, from the very outset, a number of measures premised upon the legal principle of 'combatting impunity of crimes' in order to hold the abovementioned to account and bring them to justice. In this regard, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in co-operation with other relevant institutions, set up the Special Committee on Legal

and International Follow-up of the Assassination Case of General Soleimani and His Companions. Ever since its establishment, the Committee has been investigating and pursuing the legal aspects of the case and has thus far taken several measures to press the issue at all domestic, bilateral, regional and international levels. The Committee is determined to proceed in all seriousness until its objectives are fully met and the international responsibility of the American government is invoked. Meanwhile, the Joint Judicial Committee Between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Iraq continues its work to follow up on this American act of terrorism."

It said, "In line with its principled policies to counter terrorism and extremism, the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to work towards the establishment of peace and stability at the regional and international level. And although the martyrdom of General Qassem Soleimani is too great a loss for Iran and Iranians, by no means can it balk the Islamic Republic of Iran of its pursuit of its lofty goals."

The foreign ministry concluded, "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran should like to avail itself of the opportunity to pay its tribute to the ascended souls of all the martyrs and once again honour the memory of all of them, especially those who perished in the battle against terrorism and extremism, including, most prominently, General Martyr Qassem Soleimani, Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis and their martyred companions."

## Israel strategy on Iran has failed: ex-Israeli official

TEHRAN – A former senior Israeli intelligence official has said Israel's strategy of pushing for economic sanctions and an American military option vis-à-vis Iran has ended in failure.

The former official, Tamir Hayman, who served as the head of the Israeli military intelligence, pointed to the failure of Israel's basic strategy against Iran, which is to impose severe economic sanctions and develop a plan for an American military deterrence.

He pointed out that "if Iran develops a nuclear bomb, we will enter for the first time a situation in which there is a potential existential threat to Israel," according to Lebanese news website El Nashra.

In an interview with Haaretz, he said, "The new government must realize that the current strategy is not successful, and that the political level in Israel is aware of the seriousness of the Iranian nuclear threat, but it shows reassurance in dealing with it, and there is enormous embarrassment and strategic lack of perseverance that I cannot understand."

He added, "The sanctions policy,

in the wake of the United States' withdrawal from the nuclear agreement, did not target Iran's incentives, and Iran's political and economic isolation is not real isolation. It receives economic support from Russia and China. They do not see themselves economically isolated."

Hayman continued, "Anyone who has read the recent national security strategic document of the United States understands that the Americans do not intend to use military force in order to overthrow the regime. They wrote that publicly, and this is no secret, and the current strategy that is based on these two legs - sanctions and deterrence - has collapsed, and it does not exist."

The former official stressed that "the United States was prohibited from withdrawing from the nuclear agreement, and this is contrary to the position of the Israeli prime ministers in recent years, Benjamin Netanyahu, Yair Lapid and Naftali Bennett."

He also said that "Iran would have adhered to the original agreement until its expiration, in the year 2030."



Over the last six years, Israel has been a vocal critic of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). And Prime Minister Netanyahu has openly bragged about pushing former U.S. President Donald Trump into quitting the deal. Israel has also fiercely opposed a U.S. return to the JCPOA under President Joe Biden.

An advisor to the Iranian negotiating team has said that it is the United States that should return to its commitments under the 2015 Iran nuclear deal from which Washington withdrew in 2018.

Mohammad Marandi, also a professor of American studies at Tehran University, said in an interview with Al Mayadeen that the root cause of the nuclear deal has something to do with the U.S.

view regarding that deal, Fars News reported.

Also, Kamal Kharrazi, the head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations (SCFR), an advisory body to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has recently said that Iran is ready to return to the JCPOA.

Speaking at the Tehran Dialogue Forum, Kharrazi said, "Iran is ready to return to its JCPOA commitments. Many problems have so far been resolved. Only the safeguards issue remained which we hope will be resolved during the visit of the [IAEA] experts."

Marandi said that the IAEA-Iran talks indicate the possibility of reaching a solution. "Negotiations between Iran and IAEA indicate the possibility of reaching a solution, but it is a political decision. Iran has no problem with Europeans, Russians and Chinese; but the problem is in America's perspective," he said.

Regarding Iran's ability to build nuclear weapons, he emphasized that Iran does not want such a thing and the Zionist regime [Israel] is not in a position to cause significant damage to Iran's peaceful nuclear infrastructure.

## General Soleimani is third icon of Islamic Revolution: minister

TEHRAN – Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi has lauded General Qassem Soleimani as being one of the icons of the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

Speaking at a commemorative ceremony held on the occasion of the third martyrdom anniversary of General Soleimani, Vahidi said, "Martyr Soleimani fulfilled his covenant with God and the dignity of a person cannot be higher than this. Those who fulfilled the covenant with

God became stars of guidance."

He said General Soleimani became the third icon of the Islamic Revolution after Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei. "Our martyr reached such a position that today he has become one of the signs of recognition of the Revolution."

General Yahya Rahim Safavi, an advisor to Ayatollah Khamenei, also attended the ceremony and delivered a speech. He said a new order is being formed in the world and the West Asia region.

"Americans have made many mistakes and accepted many failures in the past few decades. One of their strategic mistakes was the martyrdom of two great commanders of the army of Islam, Haj Qasim Soleimani and Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis," Safavi said.

He pointed out that the Americans thought that with the martyrdom of General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis, the Islamic Resistance Front would be destroyed.

## SPORTS

### Expert unsatisfied with low scoring league

From Page 1 ▶ the first level of football in Iran, is not the right process. So, the result is that you rarely watch exciting games and goals galore in the IPL. Of course, holding the games without the presence of the fans in the stadiums had worsened the condition," he added.

The results of the IPL Matchday 14 showed that 10 goals were scored with an average of 1.25 goals per match.

Maziar who is the current head coach of the Iran U14 team, further explains the reasons of drab encounters in the Iranian football league.

"Most of the coaches only think about getting results rather than playing exciting and attacking games. The club managers also just want points and the quality of the games is not important for them.

"I can even say that some foreign coaches who have come to the IPL lack the high-standards of football and could not help the situation.

"Esteghlal made some noise by signing Ricardo Sá Pinto at the beginning of the IPL season. However, he has not yet done anything special in terms of improving the quality of his side's football. For example, in Tehran derby, Esteghlal lost their 2-1 lead against Persepolis and dropped valuable points. The team have the great players but in terms of tactical football, Sa Pinto has not helped the Blues.

"Goalless draws, minimum goals in each game and dull matches; We have reached the zenith of the Iran Professional League boredom," he concluded.

### Azizpour elected head of Iran squash federation

TEHRAN – Amir Azizpour was elected as president of Iran squash federation on Monday for a four-year term till 2027.

In the elections held at the Iran's Academy Olympic in Tehran, Azizpour secured 34 of 50 votes cast.

Pirouz Hashemi Aras came second with 14 votes.

Azizpour replaced Masoud Soleymani in the position.

### Sanat Naft complete signing of Iraqi midfielder Al-Elayawi

TEHRAN – Iraqi young midfielder Mohammed Ridha Jalil Mezher Al-Elayawi joined Iranian football club Sanat Naft.

The 23-year-old player started his career in Al-Talaba in 2016 and joined Al-Zawraa two years later.

Al-Elayawi is a member of Iraq national football team as well and has represented the country three times.

Sanat Naft, headed by Brazilian coach Edson Tavares, sit 15th in the Iran Professional League 16-team table.

### Sayyadmanesh among 11 players to watch in 2023

TEHRAN – Iran and Hull City winger Allahyar Sayyadmanesh is among 11 players, who the-AFC.com has profiled them as the players looking to stamp their mark on the game and continue their progress into key players for their respective clubs and national teams.

A new year means a lot of exciting football to look forward to for Asian football aficionados, and with it comes the promise of new names to emerge as the next generation of stars capturing the imagination of fans across the continent.

Perhaps a proportionally more established name compared to others in this list, Iran winger Sayyadmanesh is still 21 and has plenty to look forward to in 2023. Having initially joined Hull

City on loan, the Iranian international made his move permanent in the summer of 2022 but saw his hopes of representing Team Melli in Qatar 2022 dashed by an injury.

A return to fitness, establishing himself at the MKM Stadium and adding to his seven caps ahead of the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023 will be the key targets for Sayyadmanesh who continues to be the frontrunner as heir to the throne of Mehdi Taremi and Sardar Azmoun as Iran's next talisman.

### Ryan Tafazolli scores for Wycombe

TEHRAN – Wycombe began the new year with a bang as they demolished Peterborough 3-0 in a clash between two League One play-off contenders.

A spectacular double from Lewis Wing helped Wanderers climb back into the top six with defender Ryan Tafazolli also on target against his former club.

Wing broke the deadlock in the 15th minute with a fabulous free-kick before Tafazolli was left unmarked to nod in a Jordan Obita corner from point-blank range in the

67th minute to double the visitors' lead.

The second Wycombe goal arrived only moments after Posh saw penalty appeals ignored by referee Samuel Barrott as Tafazolli appeared to pull back substitute Ephron Mason-Clark.

Posh striker Jonson Clarke-Harris also had a spot-kick claim turned down before star Wycombe man Wing struck again with a quarter of an hour remaining with a terrific

curling finish after being picked out by a Garath McCleary cut-back.

The hosts' misery continued late on as Jack Taylor blasted against a post from long range and Ricky-Jade Jones could not force home from the follow-up as Tafazolli cleared off the line.

### Iranian football to hold minute's silence for Pele

TEHRAN – Iranian football teams will hold a minute of silence in memory of Pele.

The Brazilian legend passed away at the age of 82 on Dec. 29.

A minute's silence will be held in matches on matchday 15 of Iran Professional League, slated for Wednesday and Thursday.

FIFA, in solidarity with the family and friends of the late Brazilian football legend Pele, has called upon all competition organizers across the world to hold a minute of silence ahead of every football match this upcoming weekend and the week thereafter.

FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura, in a letter to all Member Associations, said: "On Dec. 29, 2022, the world of football lost its King, Edson Arantes do Nascimento – affectionately known to the football community and to everyone beyond as Pele – was a footballing icon like no other.

"In solidarity with his family and friends, the Brazilian Football Association, Brazil and all football fans who loved him so dearly, the flags at FIFA headquarters will be flown at half-mast, and FIFA calls upon all competition organizers to hold a minute of silence ahead of every football match this upcoming weekend and the week thereafter," she said.

### Iran handball team to compete at 4 Nations Cup

TEHRAN – Iran national handball team will participate at the 4 Nations Cup in Krakow, Poland.

Team Melli will compete in the tournament as part of preparation for the 2023 IHF Men's World Championship, which will be held in Poland and Sweden from January 11 to 29.

Iran will meet Poland on Jan. 4 and also play Belgium and Morocco in the following days.

Veselin Vujovic's team will also play a friendly match with South Korea on Jan. 8.

Iran have been drawn along with Chile, Spain and Montenegro in Group A.

The Persians will meet Chile on January 12 in their opener.

## FIU holds anti-money laundering training course for 160 judges

TEHRAN - Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry's Financial Information Center has held a training course for the country's judges on cases related to money laundering and financing of terrorism.

According to the announcement of the Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Preventing and Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism and the Financial Information Center, 160 judges, prosecutors, assistant prosecutors, and investigators of the Economic Crimes Prosecutor's Office have participated in the mentioned course.

The one-day specialized training course has

been held by the Economy Ministry's Financial Information Center under the framework of a 5-way cooperation memorandum of understanding between the Financial Information Center, the Judiciary, the IRGC Intelligence Organization, the Ministry of Intelligence, and the Economic Security Police.

In this meeting, Khani, the secretary of the Supreme Council and the head of the financial information center, announced that the main goal of the training course is to update the knowledge of judges with the aim of increasing efficiency and deterring potential of the verdicts issued by the judicial authorities as much as possible.

## Car manufacturing rises 18% in 9 months on year

from page 1 ▶ Also, the highest production growth of car manufacturing was recorded in the van sector with 360 percent. As reported, 2,500 vans were manufactured in the nine-month period of this year, while the figure was just 550 vehicles in the same period of time in the previous year.

Manufacturing of buses and minibuses also rose 49 percent to stand at 1,760 vehicles.

Also, 23,000 heavy vehicles were manufactured in the nine-month period, registering about 166 percent growth year on year.

According to the ministry's report, in the ninth month of this year, about 128,000 cars were manufactured in the country, which is the highest monthly car production in the last five years. This statistic also shows a five percent increase compared to the eighth month.

Two months ago, Abdollah Tavakoli Lahijani, the director-general of the ministry's car industries office, said: "We can now say that the production



trend stabilization has been formed in the country's automobile industry", and expressed hope that after the restoration of the production trend, the development of new platforms and the production of quality and competitive products in the car industry of the country should gain more momentum, as this is considered important in the second step of the transformative program of the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade.

## Greenhouse development, a major program of Zanjan's agriculture sector



TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, the development of greenhouses is one of the main programs of Zanjan province's Agriculture Department.

Rouhollah Hassani, the head of Zanjan province's Agriculture Department, said that cultivation of greenhouse crops increases production by 10 times compared to open space, and last [Iranian calendar] year (ended on March 20, 2022), permits were issued for the establishment of 29 greenhouses with an area of 12.9 hectares.

He informed about the existence of 33 hectares of active greenhouses in Zanjan province and stated: "Also, 34 hectares of greenhouses are under construction."

"In total, there are more than 73 hectares of greenhouses in Zanjan province, and our forecast for the production of greenhouse

products for this year is more than 19,560 tons", he added.

The official further announced that 12 permits for the establishment of industrial greenhouses with an area of 3.5 hectares have been issued in the province since the beginning of this year.

In recent years, the water crisis has caused serious challenges in Iran's agriculture sector.

To solve this problem, several solutions, including the implementation of pressurized irrigation projects and greenhouse cultivation, have been emphasized by experts and officials in this sector.

Iranian Agriculture Ministry's Greenhouse Development Program is one of the priority projects of this ministry which aims at increasing productivity, efficiency, and water consumption management in the agriculture sector.

The program was approved in the Iranian calendar year 1395 (ended on March 20, 2017) under the framework of the National Resilient Economy Plan.

The development of the country's agricultural parks and greenhouses not only is going to create new job opportunities but also increases the country's non-oil exports and helps preserve the environment and the national water and soil resources.

## 380km of new roads, highways to be inaugurated soon across country

TEHRAN - The deputy head of Iran's Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company (CDTIC) has said that 380 kilometers of new highways and main roads are going to be inaugurated across the country in early February.

According to Mohammadreza Kadkhoda-

Zadeh, the mentioned projects will be put into operation on the occasion of the 44th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, IRNA reported.

CDTIC Head Kheirollah Khademi said in late December that several highway projects with a total length of 461 kilometers were underway across the country.

TEHRAN - The managing director of the National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICIC) said his company has targeted \$10 billion of annual copper exports by the Iranian calendar year 1406 (begins in late March 2027), IRIB reported.

Speaking on national TV on Sunday evening, Ali Rostami said: "With the increase in exploration activities, it is planned that the country's copper export capacity will reach more than 10 billion dollars a year by 1406."

According to Rostami, NICIC managed to export \$1.6 billion worth of copper products in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2022).

Rostami put the country's current total copper reserves at 19 billion tons, saying that these reserves are enough to supply NICIC's feed for the next 200 years at the current production level.

In late December, Rostami said his company conducted 130,000 meters of exploratory excavation in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2022).

He noted that considering the current trend in exploration projects, it is expected that NICIC's

## Iran eyes \$10b of annual copper export by Mar. 2027



total exploratory excavation operations reach 200,000 meters by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2023), which is an unprecedented record for the last 50 years.

The official said the conducted discovery excavations have added two billion tons to the country's

copper reserves to improve Iran's place among the world's top countries in terms of copper reserves from seventh to fifth place.

"We have started production development plans and hope to increase the NICIC's production capacity from 250,000 tons to

more than one million tons in the next few years, in which case the current reserves will supply our products for more than 60 years," he added.

Back in September 2022, Rostami had announced the discovery of one billion tons of new copper reserves in Iran.

He put the value of the discovered reserves at over \$50 billion, saying that the company is taking the necessary measures to begin executing development operations in the newly discovered reserves.

Having 81 different types of minerals, Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries across the globe. In this regard, the Iranian government has been seriously pursuing several programs for promoting the mining sector as a major contributor to the country's economic growth.

The total proven reserves of Iran's mines are estimated at about 60 billion tons, which is expected to reach more than 100 billion tons with the implementation of the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's exploration programs over 500,000 square kilometers of new mineral zones.

## Housing price increases 2.9% in Tehran city

TEHRAN- Average housing price rose 2.9 percent in the capital Tehran during the ninth Iranian calendar month Azar (ended on December 21, 2022), compared to the previous month, according to a report by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI).

Based on the CBI data, the average price for one square meter of a residential unit in Tehran stood at 480.7 million rials (about \$1,265) during the mentioned month.

As reported, the number of real estate deals stood at about 10,200 in the capital city in the ninth month of this year, up 27.2 percent and 4.7 percent compared to the previous month and the same month in the past year, respectively.

As previously reported by the Central Bank of Iran, the average housing price rose 16 percent in the capital Tehran during the last month of the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20, 2022), compared to the same month in the preceding year.

Based on the CBI data, the average price for one square meter of a residential unit in Tehran stood at 351.2 million rials (about \$924) during the last month of the past year, up 6.2 from the previous month, and 16 percent from the same month of the preceding year.

Housing prices in Iran have been constantly rising over the past three years due to various



internal and external factors.

Although, in early May 2022, the chairman of Real Estate Agencies Union said, "This [Iranian] year is the year of lower housing prices; this condition will continue in the country for the next two years, and we will see a continuous decrease in housing prices".

Mostafa Qoli Khosravi referred to a report released by the Central Bank of Iran in terms of housing price in the first Iranian calendar month Farvardin (ended on April 20, 2022), and said: "The government is trying to compensate the housing shortage in the country with the National Housing Movement plan, and this plan is being prepared and implemented in several urban and rural areas".

He said that there is currently shortage of

about 720,000 housing units in the country, adding: "Every year, dilapidated apartments are added to this number, therefore, the current government intends to compensate for the housing deficit by recognizing this shortage and implementation of National Housing Movement."

The market will react positively to the increase in supply, and the completion of the government plans including Mehr Housing and National Housing will control the uncontrolled growth of housing prices, he further predicted.

After National Housing Action Plan (started in 2018), National Housing Movement is the government's second major program to provide affordable housing units for the low-income classes.

The operation for the construction of 209,212 residential units of the National Housing Movement began in early February 2022.

National Housing Movement to construct four million housing units in four years is one of the major plans of the current government in the housing sector.

According to the plan, out of these four million residential units, 3.2 million units will be constructed in cities and 800,000 units in villages, some of these units are currently being constructed after providing lands and preparing the necessary conditions.

## SP supplies 140 bcm of gas to national network in 9 months

TEHRAN - Iran's South Pars gas field has supplied 140 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas to the country's network in the first nine months of the current Iranian year (March 21-December 21, 2022), according to the managing director of South Pars Gas Complex (SPGC).

Ahmad Bahoush said due

to the significant decrease in temperature over the past two weeks and the surge in domestic gas consumption, the complex has boosted its supply to the network, so that during December 22-31 more than 5.956 bcm of gas was injected into the national network, Shana reported.

He noted that engineers and

employees of the South Pars Gas Complex are working day and night to ensure sustainable gas production and supply during the cold season.

According to the official, SPGC currently accounts for more than 75 percent of the country's natural gas production.

The huge South Pars gas field,

which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

SPGC operates 13 refineries that process the natural gas extracted from the field.

## TEDPIX gains nearly 29,000 points on Monday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 28,909 points to 1.593 million on Monday.

As reported, over 11,707 billion securities worth 68.387 trillion rials (about \$180 million) were traded at the TSE.

The first market's index rose 23,300 points, and the second market's index climbed 51,617 points.

TEDPIX climbed 151,114 points (10.1 percent) to 1.647 million points in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

The index has risen 87,603 points (6.22 percent) to 1.496 million points in the previous Iranian calendar month Azar (ended on December 21).

Head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has said that the country's stock market has been passing through a challenging time but considering the government's support, the future of the market is going to be bright.

"The capital market has gone through a

challenging period and in the past two and a half years, various issues occurred in the market that led to the creation of a heavy psychological atmosphere," Majid Eshqi has told the press.

According to the official, various plans have been implemented by the government and SEO since October in three major axes and extensive efforts have been made to achieve the goals set for the market.

Mentioning a recent support package unveiled by the government, Eshqi noted that 10 strategies were considered in order to protect the rights of investors with an emphasis on long-term benefits, increasing the role of the capital market in the financing of development projects, and improving the effectiveness and smartening of the market's regulatory system.

Iran's stock market has been wrestling with drastic ups and downs over the past two years and the government has been trying many strategies to return calm to the market and make it the

attractive investment place it once was.

Meanwhile, Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry has said the government plans to continue supporting the stock market in the long run and shareholders can count on the government's strategic support.

"The government, along with its short-term and temporary measures to support the stock market, has a long-term strategic plan to continue supporting the market in the future," the ministry said in a statement.

"Of course, the 13th government has always supported the capital market and the stability and outlook of the market have always been important for the government. Of course, the capital market and the developments in this market are affected by the instrumental view of the past as well as the real economic developments in the country and the changes of different variables and risks in the political, economic, commercial, and social fields," the ministry has stated.

## Iron ore reserves in Iran stand at 2.3b tons

TEHRAN - Head of IRON ORE ASSOCIATION OF IRAN (IROPEX) Mehrdad Akbarian said the country's current iron ore reserves are theoretically said to

be 2.3 billion tons, however, the real figure is expected to be much more than that.

According to Akbarian, the

country's iron ore reserves are estimated to be about five billion tons, IRNA reported.

The official noted that, on

paper, the country's total iron ore reserves have been put at about 2.8 billion tons, of which so far 500,000 tons have been consumed and processed.

From page 1 ▶ counterparts that Western support for the riots and terror would be withdrawn in return for concessions from Iran to revive the JCPOA.

This is while European governments have allowed European-based Persian-speaking media outlets the freedom, funding, and help to support the riots and terror that the Iranian nation has recently witnessed.

The Persian-speaking news networks that are controlled by London and funded by Riyadh have been provided all the freedom to spread their anti-Iran propaganda campaigns.

We clearly see how when Western governments speak their commitment to freedom of speech, that freedom of speech ends with foreign media outlets.

They constantly criticize foreign governments for supposedly violating freedom of speech when the West itself has been violating freedom of speech.

It shows that Western governments, who claim to be democratic, clearly do not think their own populations are not smart enough to be able to hear a variety of different narratives and perspectives.

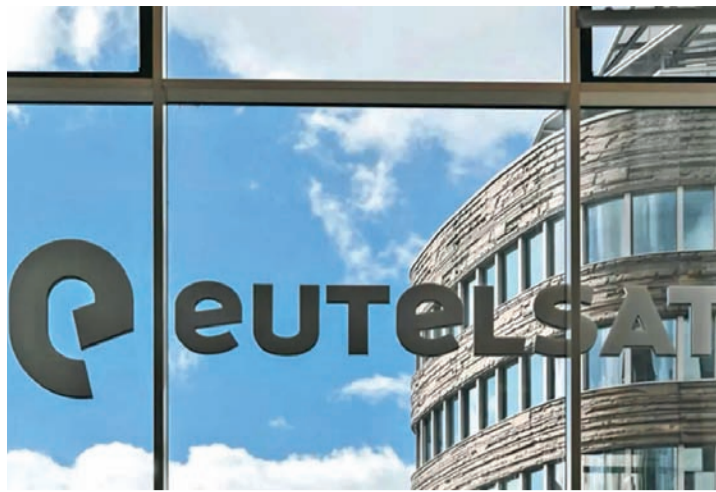
They do not allow their own people to access other points of view, and other sources of information, and not only is the West banning foreign media outlets, but they have also imposed sanctions on them and some of the companies responsible for these media outlets.

It is not just a form of censorship; it is an attack on foreign media to prevent them from sharing their perspective and sharing their information that has been censored in the West.

In Latin America, there is more freedom of speech than in the United States, yet Washington has on more than one occasion told Latin American nations that they need to have more freedom of speech.

What they really mean is that U.S. foreign media outlets should dominate the entire region and beyond.

It is the exact same scenario in Europe with Iran, using the same strategy as the United States. It appears that Europe only wants European media outlets to dominate the media with no other sources of information and no other perspective offered to their



## U.S. is desperate to dominate global news

people.

The censorship of Iranian-based media in the United States and Europe is not only an assault on Iran, Iranian media, or the people of Iran, it is actually an assault on freedom itself. It is also an assault on the freedom to hear another point of view. It also breaks the rules of the U.S. constitution and European laws on the freedom of expression.

There are geo-political motives behind this. All the censorship campaigns against foreign media started before the banning of the Russian media outlet, RT last year.

It is an expansion of the U.S. targeting Chinese, Iranian, and other news media outlets.

All of these news media outlets have one thing in common.

They challenge the narratives in Western corporate media and they have all been targeted in the form of censorship or sanctions.

U.S. policy toward Tehran, which includes the constant coup attempts and the hybrid warfare that Washington is waging against Iran and the people of the Islamic Republic, is clear that the censorship of news outlets is part of the overall hybrid war.

The character of war has changed in nature over the past decade or two. The U.S. and its proxies are waging war more and more using unconventional means. Censorship, sanctions, cyber-attacks, information warfare,

and psychological warfare are all part of Washington's attempts to overthrow a sovereign government.

To put it very simply, the Western Anglo-American empire's biggest power is ignorance. They try to keep their own people ignorant to maintain their own strength.

When ordinary Americans and Europeans do not know what is really going on, then the people can be tricked into supporting wars anywhere in the world.

To make matters worse, these wars are being staged not for defensive purposes but for the needs of the U.S. military-industrial complex, which is the number one employer and the biggest profit maker in the American system.

This system allows American warplane carriers to sail across the world and it allows satellite operators to censor foreign news media.

The censorship and other hybrid warfare measures are a result of being independent of the U.S. empire. If you are independent of this empire you are censored, sanctioned, and killed. This is how the world is being run today.

When France got the phone call from the U.S. to cut off Iranian media that counters U.S. narratives, it was done immediately.

This is what happens when foreign media cover not only a

different point of view on current events but also research the past and publish the truth about the state of global affairs.

In an unprecedented move just recently, the FBI also seized the domain of 33 websites in West Asia that spread an alternative point of view to Western mainstream media.

In all U.S. media outlets, there are some indeed alternative points of view when it comes to domestic politics inside the country.

When it comes to foreign policy, there is no debate permissible.

Anyone who pushes for an alternative policy toward sanctions or regime change is kicked out of U.S. media very swiftly.

Some of the award-winning American journalists, who for example, argued against the invasion of Iraq have been pushed out of U.S. media news outlets.

If there is a news media outlet operating in English, that provides narratives against U.S. wars and its war crimes and sanctions, the consequences for these channels are very clear.

Iran's news outlets as well as Russia's and China's news media outlets have all been punished, but also one of the world's most famous journalists Julian Assange has suffered and has been subjected to torture (according to the United Nations' top expert on torture) in a maximum-security prison in the United Kingdom.

But what was his crime?

He exposed the actual crimes committed by the United States and its killing of journalists and civilians in its illegal war in Iraq. He exposed the crimes of the U.S. State Department's publishing of internal cables.

Washington is trying to throw Assange in prison for the rest of his life. He is being charged with 150 years of life in prison.

It shows how the U.S. truly fears any independent media outlets that report on its foreign policy critically, which is why Washington has been so desperate to censor any alternative narrative that exposes American war crimes around the world.

And if any news outlets are based in countries that the U.S. seeks to destabilize, this only gives the White House further motivation to speed up its hybrid warfare against independent and sovereign countries.

groups along the Afghan border. Additionally, both countries may push to readjust their intelligence cooperation to deal with terror threats emanating from Afghanistan. It is unclear if the cooperation against the TTP and other extremist groups will also include taking the fight inside Afghanistan.

The U.S. has reiterated many times that it will take action if terrorists regroup in Afghanistan. The killing of al-Qaida leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, in a U.S. drone strike in Kabul was one instance of such action.

However, if history is any lesson, Pakistan should know that entering into a broad-based counterterrorism partnership with the U.S. carries its own risks. It is unclear how far Pakistan's leadership will be willing to go with regard to such cooperation with the U.S. to tackle the TTP and other groups.

In the past, Washington has pushed for a partnership with Islamabad that goes beyond targeting TTP and perhaps involved action against groups like al-Qaida, Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) and other terrorist groups that the U.S. considers a threat. Pakistan, on the other hand, may only be interested in enlisting U.S. support to weaken the TTP in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Arguably, Pakistan wouldn't be interested in becoming a staging post for U.S. counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan and beyond, as such a scenario could push Pakistan's already troubled relationship with the Afghan Taliban to a point of no return. The situation has the potential to create more security complications for Pakistan as Islamabad could end up having more enemies than just the TTP on the Pak-Afghan border region. This increases the potential of a backlash on a greater scale.

## Pakistan and US join hands against Pakistani Taliban

The United States has offered to help Pakistan in dealing with the terror threat posed by the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Recent developments indicate that a conversation between Pakistan and the U.S. in this regard may have begun, allowing space for coordinated action against TTP and other militant groups.

Addressing a news briefing last week, U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price said that Pakistan remains an important security partner. Highlighting concerns regarding militant threats in the region, he said terrorist groups are "present in Afghanistan, in the Afghan-Pakistan border region that present a clear threat as we're seeing not only to Pakistan but potentially to countries and people beyond."

"We're in regular dialogue with our Pakistani partners. We are prepared to help them take on the threats they face," he added.

Ahead of the State Department's comments that indicate an eventual partnership between the two countries, the U.S. Central Command chief, General Michael Erik Kurilla, visited the Turkham-Afghanistan border crossing and hailed Pakistan's gains in the fight against terrorism. During his meeting with Pakistan's top military leadership, Kurilla also discussed prospects to strengthen the military-to-military relationship and opportunities for addressing the TTP threat.

A government source told The Diplomat that Gen. Kurilla's visit was aimed at conveying to Pakistan that the U.S. understands, perhaps even sympathetic to Pakistan's security concerns emanating from Afghanistan and remains ready to assist. The source further said that both countries broadly agree that Afghanistan under the Afghan Taliban should "remain peaceful" and that international militant groups, including the TTP, should not

establish sanctuaries there.

It seems that the TTP fears that the U.S. may be working with Pakistan to take action on its leadership inside Afghanistan.

"America should stop teasing us by interfering in our affairs unnecessarily at the instigation of Pakistan — this cruel decision shows the failure of American politics," TTP chief Noor Wali Mehsud told CNN in an interview. The recent suicide bombing carried out by the TTP in Islamabad and the U.S. embassy's alert for citizens in Pakistan underscores that the militant outfit sees the forthcoming cooperation between Islamabad and Washington as a development of concern and may want to hamper it.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari who returned from a week-long visit to the U.S. earlier this week, revealed that Washington is willing to offer Pakistan financial assistance to improve border security for preventing cross-border attacks from Afghanistan. However, the details of the funding for border security have not been made public yet.

In a surprise development recently, the U.S. Senate approved \$200 million for programs on gender equality in Pakistan and also highlighted the need to combat terrorism in the country. It is unclear how these funds will be used but the omnibus bill passed by the Senate for 2023 mentions that funds appropriated for the country under the heading "Foreign Military Financing Program" can be "made available only to support counterterrorism and counter insurgency capabilities in Pakistan."

Besides, reports suggest that Pakistan may also be interested in obtaining more military hardware from the U.S. to enhance its border patrol capabilities to better detect the movement of the TTP and other militant

## WORLD HEADLINES

### Israel's new attack on Syrian capital kills two soldiers

Israel has launched a new missile attack on the Syrian capital Damascus in continuation of the regime's acts of aggression against the Arab country.

According to Syria's official SANA news agency, citing a military source, the early Monday attack targeted positions south of the capital Damascus.

The military source added that Syria's air defenses intercepted most of the Israeli missiles, which were launched from the direction of Lake Tiberias, targeting the Damascus International Airport and its surroundings.

The source noted that the attack left two Syrian soldiers dead and several others injured, while causing some material damage as well, bringing the airport's operations to a temporary halt.

Israel frequently carries out missile attacks on targets in Syria, mostly using the airspace of Lebanon or the occupied territories.

The regime launched a similar attack on the Syrian capital in December last year, during which most of its missiles were shot down by the Syrian air defenses.

The regime frequently violates Syrian sovereignty by targeting military positions inside the country, especially those of the resistance movement Hezbollah, which has played a key role in helping the Syrian army in its fight against foreign-backed terrorists.

Israel mostly keeps quiet about its attacks on the Syrian territories, which many view as a knee-jerk reaction to Syrian government's increasing success in confronting terrorism.

### Lula sworn in as Brazil's president

Brazilian politician Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has been sworn in for a third term as Brazil's president in the capital Brasilia.

Lula arrived at Sunday's ceremony in a presidential Rolls Royce, closely flanked by security officers, alongside Vice President-elect Geraldo Alckmin.

"I promise to maintain, defend and fulfill the Constitution, observe the laws, promote the general good of the Brazilian people, and uphold the unity, integrity, and independence of Brazil," said Lula in a lengthy speech.

Lula thanked the Brazilian people for the confidence that they had shown by voting him in for a third term.

He also underscored the role of democracy and described the "violent threats," "lies" and "hatred" he said that it had faced, adding "despite everything, the decision of the polls prevailed."

He also highlighted the importance of Brazil's electoral system in the country.

Lula also touched on the role of Petrobras, the state-owned Brazilian oil and gas company, and the need to boost small and mid-size businesses in the country.

On environmental policy, Lula highlighted

the importance of the green energy transition, underscoring the importance of slashing gas emissions, achieving zero deforestation in the Amazon, reusing abandoned lands, and the Indigenous ministry following the "injustices committed against Indigenous peoples".

He also discussed Brazil's own production model, suggesting it had the "technical capacity" to focus on its own production of goods.

Lula also underlined his "commitment" to ensure all Brazilians can eat three meals a day, suggesting it was the result of "the devastation that has imposed on the country in recent years," without referring to Jair Bolsonaro's presidency.

Former President Jair Bolsonaro did not attend.

### 2023 to be tougher for global economy than 2022: IMF

This year will be tougher than 2022 for most of the global economy as the United States, European Union, and China see slowing growth, the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has warned.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said 2023 will be a "tough year", with one-third of the world's economies expected to be in recession.

"Why? Because the three big economies, [the] US, EU, China, are all slowing down simultaneously," Georgieva said during an appearance on the CBS program "Face the Nation" on Sunday.

The remarks come after the IMF in October cut its global growth forecast to 2.7 percent, down from the 2.9 percent forecast in July, amid headwinds including the war in Ukraine and sharply rising interest rates.

Georgieva said that China, the world's second-largest economy, is likely to grow at or below global growth for the first time in 40 years as COVID-19 cases surge following the dismantling of its ultra-strict "zero-COVID" policy.

### Venezuelan president willing to normalize ties with U.S.

The Venezuelan president has said he is willing to work toward normalizing relations with the U.S., despite the continued sanctions crippling his country.

"Venezuela is ready, totally ready, to take steps towards a process of normalization of diplomatic, consular, and political relations with the current administration of the United States and with administrations to come," Nicolas Maduro said on Sunday in an interview broadcast on Venezuelan state television.

Maduro's remarks came after the South American country's opposition voted to dissolve an "interim government" led by Juan Guaido, who had been recognized by many countries, including the U.S.



Iraqi people are heading to the place where Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani and PMF deputy chief Al-Muhandis were assassinated by the U.S. on January 3, 2020.

## Iranian museums offer free admission on Jan. 3



TEHRAN – Today, which marks the martyrdom anniversary of General Qassem Soleimani on January 3, entry will be free to museums and historical sites across Iran.

The arrangement involves destinations that

are affiliated with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, IRNA reported on Monday.

There are hundreds of cultural heritage museums across the country, some of which are run by private collectors or other institutions.

General Soleimani was martyred by a U.S. airstrike ordered by then-President Donald Trump at Baghdad International Airport.

Soleimani devoted his life to defending Iran's national interest in the region, so he is considered a national hero for the Iranian people, regardless of their different political and religious tendencies. Once, Iran's leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, called him a "living martyr."

## Historical site in western Iran on the verge of sinking

TEHRAN – Archaeologists have discovered a number of historical areas in the basin of the newly constructed dam of Qeshlaq Sahneh in the western province of Kermanshah.

However, the historical areas, dating back to the Parthian and Islamic eras, are in danger of sinking whenever the nearby dam's water flows, ISNA quoted archaeologist Shaqayeq Hurshid as saying on Monday.

Upon agreement between the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism, and the Water and Wastewater Department of Kermanshah, a team of archaeologists has been sent to this region to examine and identify the archeology of the basin, she added.

All findings have been carefully documented so far, she explained.

Earlier last week, archaeologists warned that as a result of the water release in Charmshir Dam in southwest Iran a large area of a Sassanid-Islamic site will be completely submerged.

Although some 120 ancient sites were identified in the Chamshir Dam area during the initial speculation, rescue excavations have only been conducted at a limited number of these sites, an archaeologist said.

Establishing a primary residence at Ctesiphon, on the Tigris River in southern

Mesopotamia, Parthian kings ruled for nearly half a millennium and influenced politics from Asia Minor to northern India, until they were overthrown by Sasanian armies from south-west Iran in the early third century CE.

Parthian wealth obtained through lucrative trade networks resulted in substantial patronage of the arts, in particular, relief sculpture, statuary (large and small scale), architectural sculpture, metalwork, jewelry, and ceramics; coins with images of Parthian rulers form another important category of objects.

Kermanshah embraces a variety of awe-inspiring historical sites, including Taq-e Bostan and the UNESCO-registered Bisotun.

Kermanshah was founded in the 4th century CE by Bahram IV of the Sassanid dynasty. Conquered by the Arabs in 640, it was called Qirmasin (Qirmashin). Under the Seljuk rule in the 11th century, it was the chief town of Kordestan. The Safavids (ruled 1501-1736) fortified the town, and the Qajars repulsed an attack by the Turks during Fath Ali Shah's rule (1797-1834). Occupied by the Turkish army in 1915 during World War I, it was evacuated in 1917. The construction of a road in the 1950s over the age-old Khorasan track added considerably to the importance of the city.

## Marketers to visit East Azarbaijan on fam tour

TEHRAN – Some 100 Iranian travel marketers and tour operators have been invited to explore East Azarbaijan province on a familiarization tour, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The three-day tour, which will begin on Tuesday, aims at introducing the northwestern province to the tourism industry professionals and promoting it as a travel destination, Ahmad Hamzehzadeh explained on Monday.

It will also familiarize the participants with the tourist attractions of the province such as a historical bazaar, cultural heritage

museums, and the rocky village of Kandovan, the official added.

Soaked in history and culture for millennia, Tabriz, the capital of East Azarbaijan, embraces several historical and religious sites, including the Jameh Mosque of Tabriz and Arg of Tabriz, and UNESCO-registered Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex to name a few. The city became the capital of the Mongol Il-Khan Mahmud Gazan (1295-1304) and his successor. Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, took it in 1392. Some decades later, the Kara Koyunlu Turkmen made it their capital. It was when the famous Blue Mosque was built in Tabriz.

## UNESCO sites at a glance

### Complex of Koguryo Tombs

The UNESCO-registered property includes several group and individual tombs - totaling about 30 individual tombs - from the later period of the Koguryo Kingdom, one of the strongest kingdoms in nowadays northeast China and half of the Korean peninsula between the 3rd century BC to 7th century CE.

The tombs, many with beautiful wall paintings, are almost the only remains of this culture. Only about 90 out of more than 10,000 Koguryo tombs discovered in China and Korea so far have wall paintings.

Almost half of these tombs are located on this site and they are thought to have been made for the burial of kings, members of the royal family, and the aristocracy.



The Complex of Koguryo Tombs represents an exceptional testimony to the Koguryo culture, its burial customs, daily life, and beliefs. The special burial customs of this culture had an important influence on other cultures in the region, including those of Japan.

# 2023: ten top places to visit in Iran

From Page 1 ▶ Persepolis

Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire (c. 550-332 BC), is a name that consistently appears on all lists of travel destinations in Iran.

Because of its immeasurable value as an archeological city and as a symbol of a once-proud culture, Persepolis was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979. It was finished over several decades at the base of Kooh-e Rahmat, also known as the "Mountain of Mercy."

The main structure of Persepolis embraces grand halls, throne rooms (Apadana palace), and stairways, each with delicate, eye-catching architectural features that were distinctive themselves. According to industry insiders, traveling through Iran without stopping at Persepolis is unquestionably a missed opportunity.

### Shahr-e Sukhteh

One of the most historically impressive tourist destinations in Iran is the Burnt City, also known as "Shahr-e Sukhteh" in Persian. It is linked to four waves of civilization that were all destroyed by incredibly destructive fires.

It is situated at the intersection of ancient trade routes that crossed the Iranian Plateau. The mud-brick city's ruins represent the beginning of eastern Iran's first complex societies.

It was first settled around 3200 BC, and from then until 1800 BC, it was inhabited during four major periods. During this time, the city developed several distinct areas, including those where monuments were built and separate quarters for housing, burial, and manufacturing.

### Abyaneh

One of the oldest and most picturesque stair-stepped villages in the world is the ancient, crimson-colored Abyaneh, which is located at the base of the Karkas mountain.

This unrivaled tourist destination is known among visitors as "The Red Village"



because it is completely covered in houses painted in a reddish-mud color.

Situated some 80 kilometers from Kashan and 40 kilometers from Natanz in Isfahan province, Abyaneh attracts tens of thousands of domestic and international visitors per month, mostly when it holds important feasts and ceremonies.

### Arg-e Bam

One of the oldest and largest adobe buildings in Iran, if not the entire world, is the Arg-e Bam ("the citadel of Bam"), which is listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Tens of archaeologists and engineers have worked on the reconstruction of this citadel after a significant earthquake destroyed much of it, including the most important piece of a once-fortified, medieval town.

The adobe walls of Arg-e Bam contain more than just magnificent history and architecture; they also reveal tales of a civilization that dates back more than 2500 years and the way of life of a people who were surprisingly well-adapted to the harsh conditions of the arid desert.

### Hyrceanian forest

The Hyrcanian forest in the northern parts of the country is one of the most incredible and ancient of its kind, making it a very popular tourist destination in Iran.

The forests collection is among the oldest on the planet because they have endured for between 35 and 50 million years.

The Hyrcanian forest was listed as a natural UNESCO site due to its abundance of over 3000 vascular plants and 58 mammal species, including the famed Persian panther and the critically endangered wild goat. There are rumors that the forest still contains rare plants like the beech (Fagus), alder, elm, and wild cherry.

### Masjed-e Kaboud

One of Iran's greatest architectural marvels is the Tabriz Blue Mosque, also known as the Kaboud Mosque.

The extravagant beauty of the monument is due in large part to its exquisite tile work, tall curves, distinctive design, and symmetrical arches.

After a devastating earthquake in 1727, the mosque was spared. However, a later earthquake in the same century caused many portions of it to collapse. In 1973, the building's many components underwent reconstruction.

### Hormuz island

Known for its red soil and stunning rocky shore, Hormuz island is one of the most stunning islands close to Qeshm. The sand will occasionally turn glittery as one strolls along the shore, resembling a nighttime red sky with many stars.

The southernmost island is considered by many to be a must-visit tourist destination in Iran because of this location's special mesmerizing qualities at sunset or sunrise.

Many people are surprised to learn that people in Hormuz use the island's bloody soil to prepare regional foods or spices.

### Khan-e Tabatabaei

Every year, tourists from all over the world visit Khan-e Tabatabaei, an architectural and artistic masterpiece that is situated in Kashan, an oasis city.

The house's exterior and interior design is among the most notable of its kind, and some elements even serve purposes other than purely aesthetic ones.

### Darak beach

The captivatingly blue waters of the Sea of Oman and the golden sands of Chabahar in southern Iran converge at Darak beach.

When visiting the picturesque beach, tourists can enjoy some of the best activities, including hiking, swimming, and photography. The region is renowned for its stunning beaches and immaculate shoreline.

The unspoiled nature, crystal-clear waters, and the traditional way of life of the locals all contribute to the natural beauty of this place.

### Bagh-e Shahzdeh

Arriving at this handsome garden is like being transported to a different planet because it is a lush oasis in the middle of the arid deserts that surround it.

Many nature lovers traveling to Kerman are willing to visit the beauty of this garden, which is situated amid a barren landscape. Such a mesmerizing contrast is what draws their admiration and wonder.

A small villa that Abdul Hamid Mirza, one of the last princes of the Qajar dynasty, once lived in, is visible at the top of the garden, which was built in the 1870s. Today, it serves as a restaurant, teahouse, and handicraft shop. It appears charming when floodlit in the early evening.

## Historical towers turn off lights to commemorate General Soleimani

TEHRAN – Three iconic brick towers in Tehran turned off lights on Monday evening to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of General Qassem Soleimani, who was the powerful commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

Exterior lights for the historical towers of Tughrul, Shebeli, and Ala ad-din will be switched off [on Monday evening] to pay homage to martyr Soleimani, CHTN quoted provincial tourism chief Parham Janfeshan as saying on Sunday.

General Soleimani was martyred in a U.S. airstrike at Baghdad's international airport on



Friday morning.

Standing tall in the city of Rey, the 12th-century Tughrul Tower is the tomb of Seljuk

ruler Tughrul Beg, who died in Rey in 1063. Originally, like other monuments of its time, it was capped by a conical dome which would have added to its height.

Shebeli Tower in Damavand is a roofed octagon tomb where Sheikh Shebeli, a Sufi mystic, is laid to rest. The structure is a remnant of the Samanid era, making it from the 12th century, at the latest, and is similar in design to extant structures in Bukhara.

Located to the north of Varamin, a small town forty-two kilometers south of Tehran, the tomb tower of Ala ad-din was completed in 1289 during the Ilkhanid era.

## Rare French manuscripts on view at Tehran exhibit

TEHRAN – Folios of a rare French prayer book, dating back to the 16th century, has been put on show at the library of the Niavaran Cultural Historical Complex in northern Tehran, CHTN reported on Monday.

"The Book of Hours of Louis of Orleans" is a masterpiece decorated by a French master, Jean Colombe and the staff of his studio for Louis Duke of Orleans, the later King Louis XII.

The artists were guided by the work of the painter Jean

Bourdichons, one of the most influential French illuminators of the Middle Ages.

Alongside several elegant miniatures, the pages of the work are adorned with elaborately decorated bordures with floral decorations, and images of birds, exotic animals, and fantastical monsters.

Parts of the manuscript feature aphorisms, which capture the themes of the prayers and miniatures. Today, the splendid

small codex is regarded as one of the most outstanding manuscripts to be produced during the French Renaissance. King Louis XII of France, a great lover and patron of the arts, signed the codex when he was still the Duke of Orleans.

Books of hours were probably the most popular book genre of the Middle Ages. The codices were made for prayer and private devotion and were especially widespread among the nobility.

Covering an area of about eleven

hectares, Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex is composed of several landmark buildings, museums, and monuments constructed in the 19th and 20th centuries during the Pahlavi and late Qajar eras. The history of the palace complex stretches back to about 280 years ago when Fath-Ali Shah of the Qajar Dynasty ordered a summer residence to be built over the then countryside area of the capital. The two-story Ahmad Shahi Pavilion is one of the highlights of the complex.

## Fars fair to devote section to gastronomy tourism

TEHRAN – The southern province of Fars will be hosting a gastronomy event and relevant workshops on food tourism on the sidelines of the 12th edition of the Pars international tourism exhibition, which will be inaugurated in Shiraz on January 10, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Organized by the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, the event aims at introducing and promoting local dishes, Seyyed Moayyed Mohsen-Nejad said on Monday.

Back in December, the official announced that

travel destinations and handicrafts products will be the focus of the Pars international tourism exhibition.

The four-day exhibit aims to spotlight tourist attractions, ecotourism, hospitality and hoteling, handicrafts and souvenirs, the official added.

Iran is the paradise of foodies. Every province and even every city of Iran has its specific delectable dishes. So, one can enjoy a wide range of foods here in Iran and Kermanshah is one of the most popular places among foodies.

The cornerstone of every Persian meal is rice or Polo. Persian cuisine is, above all, about balance — of tastes and flavors, textures and temperatures. In every meal, even on every plate, you'll find both sweet and sour, soft and crunchy, cooked and raw, hot and cold.

No Persian meal is complete without an abundance of herbs. Every table is set with Sabzi-khordan, a basket of fresh herbs, radishes, and scallions, which are eaten raw and by the handful, often tucked into a piece of fresh flatbread with a bite of feta, cucumber or walnuts.

# Citizens of metropolises dream of clean air

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – In the past, the air was supposed to keep us alive, but it seemingly has changed its duty, like many other things, to kill us.

Unfortunately, Iranian metropolises are choked by polluted air. For a week, the acrid air shut down the schools and held residents, hostages, in their homes.

Hazardously polluted days also four folded in Tehran since the beginning of the current year (March 21, 2022), compared to the same period last year.

Iran's Air Quality Index (AQI) scale runs from 0 to 500, and values more than 150 are considered hazardous to everybody. For about two weeks, the AQI is at 150 and above. On the worst day, the AQI surged the scale's limit of 300.

Tehran residents inhaled healthy air only for two days during the past 288 days. While 137 days of polluted air took over the city. Unprecedentedly, 4 days exceeded the levels of heavily polluted (201-300) and severely polluted (301-500).

Over the same period last year, the AQI surpassed the scale of 150 for six days.

Tehran AQI reported that the leading causes of air pollution are PM 2.5, PM 10, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), and Sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), respectively.

The 2022 update of the World Health Organization's air quality database introduces, for the first time, ground measurements of annual mean concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), a common urban pollutant and precursor of particulate matter and ozone.

It also includes measurements of PM10 or PM2.5, both originate mainly from human activities related to fossil fuel combustion.

Sulfur dioxide is also a colorless



gas or liquid with a strong, choking odor. It is produced from the burning of fossil fuels (coal and oil) and the smelting of mineral ores (aluminum, copper, zinc, lead, and iron) that contain sulfur. How did it emerge in the capital?

Etemad newspaper reported that based on the information and maps of a space startup, the concentration of sulfur dioxide in Tehran air increased by more than 32 percent compared to 2018.

Abbas Shahsavani, head of the air health and climate change department of the Ministry of Health, confirmed the unusual increase in sulfur dioxide and said that 'some industries started using sulfur-containing fuels.'

Sheena Ansari, an environmental expert and the former director general of the environment and sustainable development of Tehran Municipality, told Etemad that "If the power plants' claim of not using mazut is true, the next fault will be with industrial fuel or the use of non-standard diesel."

Mohammad Mahdi Mirzaei Qomi, CEO of Tehran Air Quality Control Company, said that the

level of sulfur dioxide pollutants on December 13 to 16 was 'unprecedented' in the past 7 years.

The hazardous air is putting tens of millions of people at risk — not only in the capital but across the country.

Clean Air Act is supposed to drastically cut levels of air pollution — including lead, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, and fine particles — from vehicles, power plants, factories, and other sources. But the air-quality success story has been swamped in the past decade by weak enforcement of the law.

## Indivisible danger

Air Pollution can take a toll on mental and physical well-being.

Effects of air pollution on mental health are anxiety, productivity, concentration and focus, mental exhaustion and fatigue, dementia and other mental disorders, mood fluctuations and irritability, and consequences of air pollution on your physical health.

Particulate matter is capable of penetrating deep into the lungs and entering the bloodstream, causing cardiovascular, cerebrovascular (stroke), and respiratory impacts. There is emerging evidence that par-

ticulate matter impacts other organs and causes other diseases as well.

NO<sub>2</sub> is associated with respiratory diseases, particularly asthma, leading to respiratory symptoms (such as coughing, wheezing, or difficulty breathing), hospital admissions, and visits to emergency rooms

WHO last year revised its Air Quality Guidelines, making them more stringent in an effort to help countries care more about people's health.

"I feel deeply tired these days even after sufficient hours of sleep, and wake up with a headache," Farzaneh, a citizen of Tehran told the Tehran Times.

"I was more productive at work during my resistance in the city of Tabriz, I feel I am breathing poisonous air now," said Mehdi, an employee in the capital.

A mother of two-children Marzieh also said 'I am highly stressed during the whole day keeping the children inside not to be on exposure to polluted air.'

## Taking toll

WHO's data indicates that 4.2 million people die from exposure to outdoor air pollution, in addition to the 3.8 million whose deaths are linked to household smoke produced by dirty stoves and fuels.

The figure in Iran is around 40,000 premature deaths annually.

During the past year (March 2021-March 2022), more than 21,000 people died in 27 cities of the country due to air pollution, Darioush Gol Alizadeh, head of the national center for weather and climate change affiliated with the Department of Environment, said.

The number of all deaths attributed to long-term exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> particles increased by more than 87 percent last year compared to a year before.

## Tehran national parks in danger

From page 1 ▶ Sorkheh Hesar National Park lies with an area of 9,380 hectares and stands at an altitude of 1,547 meters above sea level, near-by Ray - Tehran 20th District. The whole of this forest park, except the northeastern part, has been managed by the Department of Environment since 1980. The major portion of this territory is a base for migrating birds during winter.

Khojir National Park is a protected area in the east of Tehran that covers about 10,013 hectares and has been designated as a National Park since 1982. Khojir is part of the Jajrood Protected Area, which has been selected as a royal hunting ground about 200 years ago, and in fact, it is the oldest hunting area in the country.

Khojir National Park is made up of high mountains and hilly, and semi-elevated hills.

## Iran leading the world in protected areas growth

Statistics show that the growth rate of protected areas in Iran is higher than in many countries so the number of protected sites in Iran has risen about 37 times compared with 26 times on average in the world from 1962 to 2018.

To preserve the existing biodiversity over the wide geographic expanse of Iran, four types of areas have been designated for preservation and protection, including, national parks, wildlife refuges, protected areas, and natural national monuments. In 1997, the Department of Environment (DOE) held supervision over 7,563,983 hectares of such areas.

Currently, 30 national parks, 170 protected areas, 45 wildlife refuges, and 37 national natural monuments, measuring about 19 million hectares in the area are in the country.

According to the latest studies, about 1,300 species of vertebrates, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and aquatic fish, about 30,000 species of invertebrates, and 8,000 species of plants have been identified in



the country.

The Convention on Biological Diversity predicts that the average protected area in the world will reach 30 percent of the total area of a country. There is 11.6 percent of the protected areas in Iran. Therefore, the DOE introduced 29 areas with about 700,000 hectares as new areas to the Ministry of Agriculture, but there are some problems.

Of course, despite all these problems, the rate of Iran's protected areas is higher than many countries in the world, or over a 40-year period, the growth of these areas in Iran is higher than the global average, Ali Bali, deputy director of the habitats and regional affairs office of the DOE said.

One of the main threats to protected areas is habitat destruction, which may be done by government agencies to implement development projects, or in a more limited area by the locals.

The next challenge is mining and mining activities. Mines are the most incompatible activities against protected areas, poaching is another challenge for protected areas.

Drought, dust, human-made, and natural hazards such as wildfires are other challenges that threaten these areas, and on the other hand, the development of villages in or around protected areas also threatens the dynamism of these areas.

## RAMSAR SITES IN IRAN

### Part 32

Some areas have been abandoned and others produce extremely low yields, also because of wind-blown salt that cover the land during the summer months.

An asphalt road has been constructed through the Ramsar site, passing between the two lakes. The building of some bridges does guarantee the flow of water between the lakes, and the effects on hydrology and ecology are yet unknown.

A canal that has been built to connect the two lakes will have a major effect on the hydrology of the system.

Other developments include the Sistan Drainage and Irrigation Project, possibly funded by the World Bank, other irrigation projects and the building of a large water reservoir in the desert east of Zabol, supplied by a feeder canal from the Parian branch of the Helmand River.

A major unexplained kill of fish, pelicans, flamingo's and shorebirds occurred in 1994.

Conservation measures taken The western half of both lakes and a large area of desert were designated as a protected region in August 1967. This was enlarged in 1969, and reduced again in the 1970s, and it was upgraded

to a wildlife refuge. It has since been downgraded to a protected area.

### Conservation measures proposed

Since the mid-1970s, plans have existed to merge the protected areas of Hamoun-e-Puzak, Hamoun-e Saberi and Hamoun-e-Helmand into one large wildlife refuge, so far without success.

The Action Plan for the Conservation of Wetlands in South and West Asia suggests that the impact of the dams in the Helmand River on the Sistan Basin should be studied to achieve a long-term agreement on the sharing of waters in this region.

The Ramsar Monitoring Procedure Mission that visited the area in 1992 made several recommendations: to merge the two Ramsar sites in the Sistan Basin to one large site and wildlife refuge, to demarcate the borders of the site clearly with signs, to develop an integrated water management plan for the region (that also takes the ecology and hydrology of this wetland into account), and to perform a study that could meet the basic requirements for the management plan that is to be drawn.

Source: Ramsar.org

To be continued

## Anti-narcotics bill to be brought before Majlis

TEHRAN – The bill on combating and preventing narcotics will be submitted to the Majlis (Iranian parliament) in the coming days, said Eskander Momeni, secretary general of the anti-narcotics headquarters.

The bill was sent to the government from the judiciary and will be sent to the parliament as soon as possible by the president's decree, he explained, ISNA reported.

He went on to say that the country has used all its capacities to fight against drug smuggling, focusing on three approaches targeted and smart combat, informative measures, focus on borders, and use of modern equipment.

The result of the approaches has been an increase in seizing the financial properties of smugglers, a decrease in martyrs of anti-narcotics missions, an increase in casualties and criminals, and an increase in discoveries, he further stated.

### Narcotics seizure

Iran holds the record for narcotics confiscation in the world, Eskander Momeni, secretary general of the Anti-Narcotics Headquarters said in December 2021.

However, great achievements in the field of countermeasures have been gained, and the United Nations has officially announced that 90 percent of opium, 48 percent of morphine, and 26 percent of world heroin have been discovered by Iran.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime attaches special importance to the regional and global role of Iran in the fight against narcotics and, as a leading United Nations agency, Alexander Fedulov, UNODC Iran Country Representative, said in June.

In the Iranian calendar year ended in March 2021, about 1,200 tons of drugs were discovered, which was the highest rate of discovery in the world.

Despite the conditions caused by the coronavirus outbreak and the imposition of harsh sanctions against the country, fortunately, with the efforts of anti-narcotics police in 2020, drug detection increased by 41 percent.

After the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), more than 3,800 have been martyred, and 12,000 wounded and disabled in the fight against drug trafficking.

The UNODC has praised Iran's efforts to



fight against narcotics trafficking on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The organization also officially announced that the world's first place in the discovery of opium, heroin, and morphine belongs to Iran.

According to UNODC, Iran remains one of the major transit routes for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to European countries and has had a leading role at the global level in drug-control campaigns.

UNODC World Drug Report 2020 estimates that in 2018, 91 percent of the world's opium, 48 percent of the world's morphine, and 26 percent of the world's heroin were seized by Iran.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## COVID-19: Iran reopens schools under strict health protocols

Over 15 million students attended schools nationwide on Saturday for the new school year under strict health protocols to protect teachers, staff, and students against the coronavirus pandemic.

The opening bell of the new academic year was rung symbolically by President Hassan Rouhani at a girls' high school in downtown Tehran.

The back-to-school ceremony is officially inaugurated by the president each year, as he rings the bells in a symbolic gesture at a chosen school.

Mohsen Haji Mirzaei, Education Minister, symbolically attended the virtual festival. More than 15 million students started the new school year in 116,000 schools across the country, Haji Mirzaei stated.

This year, education is followed in three forms of in-person, virtual, and television-based, but our priority is school attendance, he noted, highlighting, all schools should strictly follow the health regulations so that the students are protected. Maintaining a shorter duration for classes, the students will sit 35 minutes in each class, he emphasized.

## بازگشایی مدارس با پروتکل های سختگیرانه بهداشتی

بیش از ۱۵ میلیون دانش آموز سال تحصیلی جدید را با رعایت پروتکل های سختگیرانه بهداشتی آغاز کردند.

زنگ آغاز سال تحصیلی به صورت ارتباط تصویری در مراسمی به دستور رئیس جمهور در دبیرستانی در تهران نواخته شد.

محسن حاجی میرزایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش در این مراسم گفت: بیش از ۱۵ میلیون دانش آموز سال تحصیلی جدید را در ۱۱۶ هزار مدرسه آغاز کردند.

وزیر آموزش و پرورش در این مراسم گفت: امسال آموزش دانش آموزان به سه شکل حضوری، مجازی، و تلویزیونی دنبال می شود، اما اولویت ما آموزش حضوری دانش آموزان است. او افزود: همه مدارس باید شیوه نامه های بهداشتی را به طور جدی رعایت کنند تا مشکلی برای دانش آموزان پیش نیاید.

وی تأکید کرد: کلاس های مدارس امسال ۳۵ دقیقه ای خواهد بود و زمان حضور دانش آموزان در کلاس ها به حداقل رسیده است.

## COVID-19 UPDATES ON JANUARY 2

New cases	96
New deaths	5
Total cases	7,561,309
Total deaths	144,693
New hospitalized patients	42
Patients in critical condition	107
Total recovered patients	7,336,220
Diagnostic tests conducted	54,779,330
Doses of vaccine injected	155,144,012



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JANUARY 3, 2023

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be childlike with children.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:09 Evening: 17:23 Dawn: 5:45 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:14 (tomorrow)

## Architecture: Iran, after World War II

### Part 1

Between the close of World War II and the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime in 1979, an ancient and very traditional Iranian culture came fully into contact with contemporary developments, in particular, with the highly scientific and empirical world of the West.

The dynamic forces at work and the architectural and city transformations that they fostered may be studied in our consideration of three distinct but interrelated chronological sections, each characterized principally by socioeconomic conditions, national development programs, esthetic expressions of social symbols, and the pitfalls of extreme and rapid growth.

The first section deals with the period from the abdication of Reza Shah in 1941 and the beginning of the reign of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to the so called White Revolution of 1962 and 1963; the second section traces architectural activity and achievements in Iran from 1963 to the major world energy crisis of 1973, and the last section focuses on the six year "building boom" that occurred after the OPEC oil price increase, and concludes with the abrupt termination of this cycle of national construction by the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime.

### Period I (1941-1963)

This period of renewed encounter with the West had three phases: First, the war years, in which Iran was occupied by the Allied Forces; second, the post war years until 1952-1954, when the oil industry was nationalized under Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq; finally the post nationalization period lasting until 1962-1963, during which time the monarchy consolidated its economic and political power.

It was a time of national resurgence. In the aftermath of direct foreign occupation, there was a resurgence of nationalism with the formation of a new sense of national identity and the establishment of national development goals.

Beginning as early as 1947, these goals were institutionalized in the National Development Plans. Although the initial seven year plan, which established the Plan Organization, was aborted by the economic and political crisis following the oil nationalization in 1954, a second seven year development plan directly affected the scale and character of architectural activity in the country until 1963.

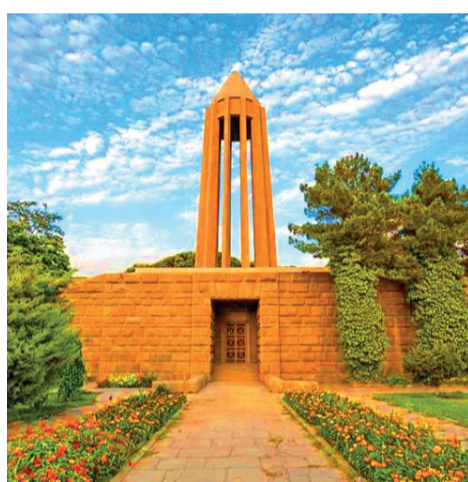
The concerns of the first period included industrialization, infrastructure development, military buildup, and the new balance of power resulting from these undertakings.

The oil industry, for example, grew rapidly, and attempts at nationalization attracted major attention; hydroelectric dam projects, road network construction, telecommunications, and so forth received infrastructural investments.

The U.S. Marshall Plan and Point Four Programs, along with other financial, technical, and military aid programs from the United States and its allies, produced Iran's first major encounter with the people and culture of the United States; overnight, these relations replaced the Franco-German liaisons that had developed after World War I.

Because of the slow economy and the necessities of postwar reconstruction, only token architectural and city planning gestures could be afforded.

This period produced only symbols of a growing national identity: images of a



Avicenna Monument in Hamadan designed by Hushang Seyhun.

glorious past, such as newly built or renovated mausoleums of national heroes, poets, and scholars, and images signifying a new order, such as the ubiquitous traffic circles with their pivotal statue of national leadership.

The monuments of the period, principally built before World War II, were small, for the most part well-crafted artistic conceptions that attest to their Iranian designers' educational formation in prewar Paris (i.e., the Bu Ali Sina Monument in Hamadan by H. Seyhun).

Returning to Iran with École des Beaux Arts training, these designers, under the tutelage of the French archeologist and architect Andre, Godard, established at the University of Tehran the first Iranian school of contemporary architectural education, with Mohsen Foroughi and Hushang Seyhun as the first two directors.

Until its administration changed hands in the early 1960s, the School of Architecture trained an entire generation of Franco-Iranian architects in the classic pedagogic programs of the École as transferred to the Iranian setting.

The esthetic nature of the architectural theories and attitudes developed for public structures during this time can best be described as "Aryan Monumental" with touches of Islamic Arabesque.

Only the airport at Mehrabad by Mohsen Foroughi and his Swedish consultants, the new senate building in Tehran by Heidar Ghiai, and the National Iranian Oil Company headquarters building by Aziz Farmanfarman caught the special attention of the public, which was suddenly exposed to an entirely different scale, function, and technology of construction.

While these were notable buildings, they never achieved the traditional level of architectural excellence.

Apart from these isolated cases of public building programs, the main construction activity of the time was undertaken by the private sector. The situation of domestic architecture more clearly reveals the ongoing transformations.

The courtyard house of one to two stories has dominated the Iranian urban settlements. Based upon the extended family system, the social mores of Islam, and primarily upon adaptation to a harsh, hot, dry climate, the concept of the introverted "Paradise Garden" house was the natural prototype for the home in the Persian plateau until World War II.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica  
 To be continued.

# Troupes pay tribute to Gen. Soleimani with "Flying with Burned Wings", "Abbas's Offering"

From Page 1 ▶ The story of the play revolves around Abbas, a young thug with traces of scars left on his body from street fights. However, one major turning point comes when he is getting a tattoo on his back.

Dozens of cultural events are commemorating General Soleimani on the third anniversary of his assassination. The Quds Force chief was assassinated in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020.

A highlight of the program is the 4th edition of the Divine Commander Theater Festival, which will commence on January 4, 2023, at his grave in the Shohada Cemetery of Kerman, his hometown.

The Association of the Revolution and Sacred Defense Theater and the Revayat Foundation launched the festival in 2020 to present General Soleimani's character, morale, and his method of management to provide a role model for the



A combination photo shows posters for the plays "Flying with Burned Wings" and "Abbas's Offering".

younger generations.

The Owj Arts and Media Organization is organizing a theatrical performance entitled "Jan-Fada" (The Dedicated) at Tehran's Velayat Park in memory of General Soleimani.

The performance, which focuses on the life story of General Soleimani, will run until January 15.

In addition, a documentary recalling episodes from General Soleimani's childhood years hit the silver screens across Iran on

Monday.

Directed by Sasan Fallahfar, "A Trace of a Man" was produced at the School of Hajji Qassem Foundation, and the theaters are offering free tickets for all to commemorate the third anniversary of his assassination.

## "The Valiant" goes on stage at Tehran theater



A poster for "The Valiant" on stage at a Tehran theater.

TEHRAN - "The Valiant", a one-act play from the 1920s by Harold Everett Porter, also known by his pen name Holworthy Hall, and Robert Middlemass is being performed at the Hall 3 of Tehran's Shahrzad Theater Complex.

## Shahla Ujayli's novel "Summer with the Enemy" published in Persian

TEHRAN - "Summer with the Enemy" by Shahla Ujayli has recently been published in Persian.

Translated by Parisa Arab, the book was published by Maniahanon.

The popular Western imagination about the now devastated city of Raqqa, Syria is filled with static and clichéd images of the Arab world.

On the news, Raqqa looks like a dusty and abandoned desert village overrun by ISIS and other brands of Islamic fundamentalists, making its desperate, impoverished people yearn to flee at all costs.

In the Arab popular imagination, the image of Raqqa is not much



A copy of the Persian edition of Shahla Ujayli's novel "Summer with the Enemy".

different—this ancient city, nestled along the Euphrates river in northeastern Syria, is typically thought of by Arabs as a remote Bedouin outpost, far removed from the nearest large metropolis, Aleppo.

People's real lives, however, are always more complex. Nothing could help bring these real and complex histories to more widespread attention than Ujayli's brilliant new novel, "Summer with the Enemy".

This novel is a compelling tale that follows the charming, if at times difficult, everyday life of three women, Lamis, her mother Najwa,

and her grandmother Karma, and all of the complexities of their relationships with each other, their extended family, and the wider social worlds they inhabit.

The diversity of life in Syria, especially Raqqa, is on display throughout this book, and the stories told in its seven chapters move back and forth between time and place, with attention to the intimate details of lives and relationships, and with an eye to the larger historical and political contexts in which they live.

An English translation of the novel by Michelle Hartman was published by Interlink Books in 2021.

Running with success in vaudeville with Bert Lytell, it was made into a film by the same name in 1929 starring Paul Muni, and as "The Man Who Wouldn't Talk" in 1940.

## "The Ideal Family" comes to Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN - "The Ideal Family" by the New Zealand writer Katherine Mansfield has been published in Persian by Mahi.

First published in a literary magazine in 1921, the short story has been translated by Narges Entekhabi.

Mansfield loves to make the title of her stories literally perceivable of the theme. In this story, it is about the life of old Mr. Neave and his family members who are deemed perfect in the eyes of the outsiders.

The story begins with an introduction of Mr. Neave, who is old, tired and reluctant, even for the spring this year. He is walking back home from the office.

He is old and has lost his hold over his children and business. His son, Harold has not returned to work after going for lunch. Harold is very handsome and Mr. Neave feels that the boy's charming handsomeness has come in the way of a stricter upbringing.

His wife and daughters and even other women seem to forgive Harold for everything. This has allowed Harold to be irresponsible and careless.

The daughters feel that Mr. Neave should not worry so much, and instead, retire and take up a hobby.

Of course, the daughters have no idea about the practicalities of life. They have no

appreciation or gratitude towards their father for the hard work put in by him over all these preceding years.

The girls were not married, probably for they had such a great time in their own home that they did not feel the necessity to be married.

When Mr. Neave arrives home, tired after the walk, the house is abuzz in preparation for a party. And all in all, Mr. Neave feels detached, thinking that the lifestyle is too rich for him. He is not interested in joining the family for this gathering, but Charles, the servant, is assigned to look after and help Mr. Neave dress up.

Mr. Neave falls asleep and perhaps a bit too long. He sees a spider moving around the house and a voice telling him "goodbye." This makes him feel lonely. He is unable to connect himself with the rich lifestyle.

Mr. Neave is withered, sidelined in his old age. The relationship between husband and wife seems to be superficial.

Mansfield does not provide details of Mr. Neave's wife except a prejudiced opinion from Mr. Neave that she is a doting mother who forgives her son and is alongside her daughters in planning for parties.

They believe in Harold's capability and are convinced about Mr. Neave being at a disadvantage due to his old age.



Front cover of the Persian edition of Katherine Mansfield's short story "The Ideal Family".

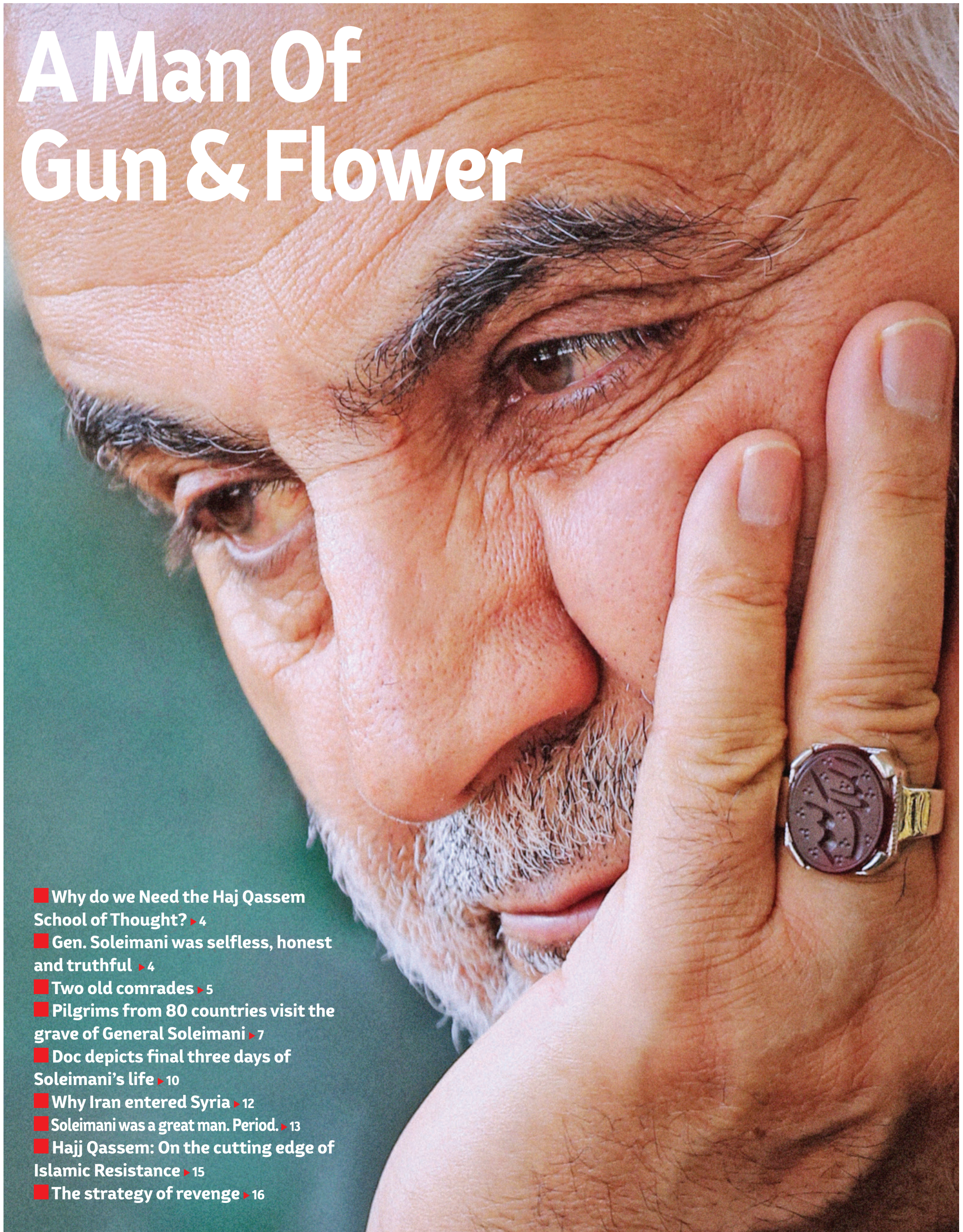
It is an ideal family where only old Mr. Neave seems to be a misfit. But the foundation of the ideal family is also dependent upon the luxuries in their lives that come from the revenue produced by the business Mr. Neave created.

Mansfield wants us to look into family values, issues of the old and infirm in the family and the responsibilities of the children after a certain age towards their family. All of these things are lacking in this ideal family yet their wealth seems to place them in the "perfect" category in society.



# A Man Of Gun & Flower

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# Man of the battlefield in view of the Commander-in-Chief

Definitely, no one knew Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani like Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. The Leader burst into tears on the funeral day of the national hero and the sorrow showed the depth of his love and interest to this great martyr that is recorded in history.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution has spoken and described General Soleimani on various occasions so far. Reviewing the Leader's viewpoints on the anniversary of his assassination provides a comprehensive and deep understanding of the character of this martyr.

More than twenty years before his assassination, the Leader had said about him: "Even if you are Mr. Soleimani, you are a living martyr in our eyes." (08/04/1997)

In the autumn of 2017, Gen. Soleimani wrote a letter to the Leader announcing the end of the ISIL domination over Muslim lands. "This humble person, as a soldier called upon by your eminence to serve on this battlefield, announces the termination of the rule of this vicious cursed entity following the completion of the liberation operation of Abu Kamal as the last fort of Daesh, bringing down the flag of this U.S.-Zionist group and raising the flag of Syria. And, on behalf of all the commanders and unknown fighters on the battlefield as well as thousands of Iranians, Iraqis, Syrians, Lebanese, Afghans and Pakistanis who were martyred and disabled... I congratulate you and the noble nation of Islamic Iran, as well as the nations of Iraq, Syria, and other Muslims of the world on this great and fateful victory. I prostrate before the Almighty God in gratitude for this great victory," the legendary commander wrote.

The interesting point is his signature at the end of the letter in which Gen. Soleimani does not call himself the commander of the IRGC Quds Force; instead, in his letter to the Leader, he introduces himself as "Your son and soldier Qassem Soleimani".

On November 21, the Commander-in-Chief Ayatollah Khamenei addressed Gen. Soleimani as "the honorable commander of Islamic forces and a devoted divine fighter."

"I am deeply grateful to God Almighty that thanks to the selfless endeavors of you and a massive host of companions, an evil tree planted by the tyrants of the world was uprooted by you and the pious followers of God in the countries of Iraq and Syria. I sincerely offer my congratulations to you but, at the same time, warn you of deception practiced by enemies. Those who financed this sinister plot with heavy investments will not rest and will continue their efforts to again hatch another plot in another part of this region. Maintaining motivation, vigilance, unity and all-round preparations should not be forgotten. I pray for you and all the devoted fighters of the region from Iraq and Syria," Ayatollah

Khamenei said in response.

A few months later the Commander-in-Chief awarded Gen. Soleimani the country's highest military medal "Zulfaqar". The Leader addressed the commander of the IRGC Quds Force when awarding him with Order of Zulfaqar.

"One's endeavors in the way of God cannot be rewarded and compensated with anything worldly. Allah the Exalted says, "Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their possessions; for theirs (in return) is the Heavens (Paradise): they fight in His cause, and slay and are slain" [The Holy Quran, 9: 111]. What is offered to you in return for jihad in the way of God and what Allah the Exalted grants in return for dedicating your life and offering your possessions is paradise and divine satisfaction. What we grant— including our verbal and non-verbal gratitude, and the medals of honor, orders and epaulets that we grant— are things which are noteworthy on the basis of worldly calculations, but on the basis of spiritual and divine calculations, they are not noteworthy.

Thankfully, all of you have made these endeavors and efforts. Allah the Exalted has thankfully blessed our very dear brother— Mr. Soleimani. He has time and time again exposed his life to the invasion of the enemy and he has done so in the way of God, for God and purely for the sake of Allah. And he has made a great endeavor. I hope that Allah the Exalted will reward and bless him, that He will help him live a blissful life and that He will make his end marked by martyrdom. Of course, not so soon. The Islamic Republic will be needing his services for many years to come, but I hope that his services will culminate with martyrdom, God willing. I hope that this [award] will be an auspicious one for you, God willing." (10/03/2019)

On the day Gen. Soleimani was assassinated, Leader of the Islamic Revolution issued a message saying, "He was a stellar example of those educated and nurtured in Islam and the school of Imam Khomeini (RA). He spent his entire life fighting in the path of God. Martyrdom was his reward for years of implacable efforts. With his departure and with God's power, his work and path will not cease and harsh revenge awaits those criminals who have tainted their filthy hands with his blood and the blood of the other martyrs of the last night's incident. Martyr Soleimani is the international face of the resistance, and all who have a heart-felt connection to the resistance seek revenge for his blood. All friends - and also all foes - should know that the path of fight and resistance continues with increased motivation and certain victory awaits the fighters on this blessed path. The absence of our dear and self-sacrificing commander is bitter, but the continuation of the resistance and its final victory will be bitterer for the murder-

ers and criminals." (03/01/2020)

Later in the day, Leader of Islamic Revolution paid a visit to the bereaved family of the Quds Force chief to offer condolences.

"Hajj Qassem had been exposed to martyrdom a hundred times before. This was not the first time. However, he had no fear on the path of Allah, in performing his duty, and in Jihad for the cause of Allah. He was not afraid of the enemy, nor was he afraid of what others would say about him, nor was he afraid of hardships. Imagine, he would spend twenty-four hours in a given country and work nineteen hours of it! He would meet, debate and talk with different people. Why? In order to reach a desirable outcome. He didn't work for himself. He worked for achieving their goals. Hajj Qassem was such a person... If Hajj Qassem had died in bed, or in an accident or from an illness, because in last days he was suffering from chest pains because he was chemically wounded, it was difficult and saddening. Hajj Qassem had to be martyred in this way. Of course, it is very difficult for us. It is difficult for you. Perhaps, it is even more difficult for me. However, we must endure and pass through this stage."

During the three years that have passed since the assassination of this great commander of the Resistance, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution has mentioned him many times, which is a sign of the depth of his interest in Hajj Qassem.

It is noteworthy that the Leader has repeatedly emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran will take revenge on those who ordered his assassination.

"Revenge must be taken on those who ordered the murder of General Soleimani as well as those who did it. And this revenge will certainly be taken at the right time. Although, as a dear one said, 'Soleimani's shoe is more valuable than the head of his murderer'. Of course, revenge will be taken on those who ordered the murder and those who carried it out, and this revenge will certainly be taken at the right time." (16/12/2020)





# A Man of Gun & Flower

*Gen. Soleimani's name sent shivers down the enemies' spine*

By Mohammad Sarfi

People acquire proficiency in the job over time, especially when they have been engaged in that profession for a long time. Among the professions, being a military man entails a harsh and tough nature and it is natural for military servicemen to be tough as they deal with fire, gunpowder and blood. They spend a part of their lives on the war fronts and witness dismembered bodies and experience horror and death more than others.

Qassem Soleimani spent two thirds of his life in such an atmosphere. Before the start of the Sacred Defense (Iraq's imposed war against Iran in the 1980s), as a member of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), he went to the west of the country to fight the counter-revolutionaries who had made that area insecure. With the start of the imposed war, he spent eight years on the battlefield where he lost many of his friends and comrades. During the war, Soleimani was wounded many times. His abdomen and hand were injured during the Bostan and Tariq al-Quds operations due to mortar explosions. Several times, he was also about to be martyred or become a captive.

After the war ended in 1988, Soleimani went to the south-east of the country to fight against armed criminals and drug trafficking gangs and spent 9 years there.

He then was appointed as the commander of the Quds Force - one of five branches of the IRGC specializing in unconventional warfare and military intelligence operations. General Soleimani did great and lasting work in Quds Force. He founded an Islamic corps, a unit that was not limited to borders and acted beyond nationality, ethnicity, language and even religion.

In one of his speeches, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei dubbed the Quds Force as "Combatants without Borders".

"The Quds Force is a human institution with great and clear human motives... They are 'Combatants without Borders'. They are present wherever needed. They protect the dignity of the oppressed people and the holy places and sanctuaries. They also repel the threat of war and terror against our own country and help Gaza and Palestine. They also create security for us," Ayatollah Khamenei stated.

Being commander of the Quds Force was a turning point for manifestation of General Soleimani's military ability and talent.

His American opponents acknowledged that Soleimani, by thwarting the \$7 trillion project in the region, founded a new Middle East.

He turned Iraq occupied by the American aggressors into hell for them. Also, when ISIL forces were near Baghdad, he personally com-

manded the battle against them and saved the capital of Iran's western neighbor from certain collapse.

And when the multinational terrorists were near the gates of Bashar al-Assad's presidential palace in Damascus and even the few supporters of Syria thought that Assad's era was over, Soleimani was the one who did not allow this key link in the chain of Resistance to break.

Finally, Soleimani and his combatants without borders managed to terminate the ISIL domination over Muslim lands from Pakistan and Afghanistan to Iraq, Syria and Lebanon and freed the West Asian region from the nightmare of this cancerous tumor (ISIL).

But his most important achievement and measure were confronting the Zionists. He strengthened Hezbollah's power as it succeeded to end the myth of the invincibility of the Israeli army. He personally traveled to Gaza many times and taught the Palestinian combatants that the only key to returning to the homeland and raising the Palestinian flag in the occupied Quds is becoming strong and resistant. He taught them that secret meetings for compromise and peace agreements will result in nothing but humiliation.

Soleimani's footsteps have also been noticed in Latin America - Washington's backyard where its people considered him as Che Guevara.

"The Shadow Commander", "Avenger", "A man more successful than the US", "Iran's Che Guevara" ... were among the titles that Western media gave him.

But the characteristics of such a commander whose name sent shivers down the enemies' spine, sent back the then CIA head's letter. His military management and his impressiveness are well-known to his forces. He has another quality, too.

He also enjoyed a gentle spirit. His behavior toward with his family and others, particularly with the martyrs' children, resembled a person who had never fought in a war. Soleimani's interaction with the son of martyr Mehdi Maghfouri, one of the fighters in the Iran-Iraq war, can be given as an example that was also mentioned by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution with tears in his eyes last year.

Martyr Maghfouri, a warrior in the 41st Sarallah Division who was martyred in the Karbala 4 Operation, had three children. One of them was Fatemeh who then was three years old. Fatemeh married Ali Tahami (son of martyr Tahami) and they have two children. The other two were Zeinab and Hossein. Father (Ali) is on a mission and Zeinab needs surgery. Hajj Qassem became aware of this issue and rushed to the hospital. The operation ended successfully and the mother thanked him.

He stayed in the hospital until the girl regained consciousness after surgery. He acted like a father to Fatemeh and a grandfather to Zeinab. "I sent your father instead of myself and now I am here instead of him," said Hajj Qassem.

In part of his will, General Soleimani addressed God like a mystic and said, "I bent and hugged my knees in long trenches. And, I ran, jumped, crept, wept, laughed and made others laugh, cried and made others cry, and fell and picked myself up in defense of your religion... My Creator, my Beloved and my Love, I love You. I have seen and felt You many times. I cannot remain separate from You any longer. It is enough. It is enough. Accept me, but only when I am worthy of You."

In a letter to his daughter, he expresses a thought-provoking sentence. He said, "This is the first time I confess; I never wanted to be a military man... You know I cannot even see beheading of a chicken. If I hold a weapon in my hand, it is just for standing against murderers, not to kill people."

Yes! He was a commander who wanted war only for peace and did not seek to conquer lands. Rather, he sought the liberation and freedom of humans.

Although he was the commander of the Quds Force and the Resistance Front, he did not neglect the details. When he used the house of an Iraqi in Al-Bukamal, on the Iraq-Syria border, as a command center, he left a letter to the owner of the house.

"Dear and respected family,

I am your brother Qassem Soleimani. You definitely know me. We have helped the Sunni people all over the world a lot. I am a Shia and you are a Sunni. But in a way, I am Sunni too because we also believe in the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and try to practice in His Eminence's path. And you are also Shia in a way because you love the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). I am religious and when I saw the Quran and Sahih al-Bukhari and other books in your house, I realized that you are a religious person.

First of all, I apologize and hope you will forgive us for using your house without permission. Secondly, if your house is damaged, we are ready to pay for it. If you think that we should pay money for the unauthorized use of your house, this is my phone number in Iran. Please contact us and I am ready to fulfill any request from you."

That's why the Leader of the Islamic Revolution insists on the recognition and promotion of the school of Martyr Soleimani. A man who, while being a strategist, is extremely compassionate. He is not afraid of the arrogant and bloodthirsty villains and terrorists in the world, but he is like an orphaned child before God, a person of supplication and humility.

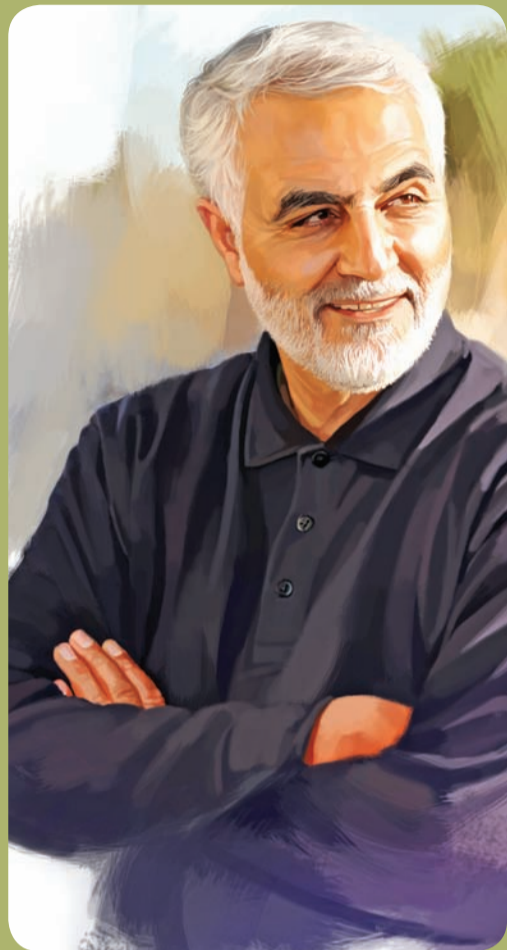
Meeting with the most powerful personalities in the world does not make him forget even the old women and men of his hometown.

The unique and inexhaustible love of the people of Iran and the beyond for him is rooted in these characteristics. U.S. Senator Chris Murphy in this regard said, "Soleimani, as a martyr, can be far more dangerous for the U.S. Now we should ask whether Qassem Soleimani is more dangerous as a martyr than he was alive."





## Why do we need the Hajj Qassem School of Thought?



By Mohammad Shojaeian

TEHRAN – Let's know the School of General Soleimani. This will help make it a story to learn from. The School of Soleimani is a practical and intellectual school of mysticism. School is a set of awareness and practical solutions. Many human concepts such as altruism cannot be understood through verbal description but then become understandable when exemplified.

In the obvious religion of Islam, there is a hadith to the effect that you should call people with your own action. Nothing is as knowledge generative as action. In many cases, an action should be done first so that its associated concept can be understood. We need Soleimani School. The school of Shiism was the origin of the Imam Khomeini School. And Imam Khomeini, in turn, became the origin of the Islamic Revolution. Now we need Soleimani School to better understand the Islamic Revolution. We can see the objective and practical manifestation of Imam Khomeini School and the Islamic Revolution in the School of Soleimani. General Soleimani was the best figure who carried out what was articulated in the school of Iman Khomeini. Why should we consider General Soleimani as possessing a school of thought? He is someone who succeeded practically and his behavior was replete with wisdom and right ascertainment. And in all human societies, scientists are in need of observing and studying these accurate and rightful practical cases, which cannot be found in any books or bookstore; hence the emergence of the need for various freedom-seeking societies to study the School of Soleimani.

# Gen. Soleimani was selfless, honest and truthful: Moghadamfar

TEHRAN – The personality of Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani was filled with selflessness, honesty, and truthfulness and this was the secret behind his popularity, says Hamidreza Moghadamfar, chief of the popular headquarters tasked to mark the third anniversary of the legendary commander's assassination.

"To understand the secret to Qassem's popularity, you should not look for anything else but his truthfulness and sincerity, which even after three years of his honorable martyrdom, has kept his memory alive in the hearts," Moghadamfar tells the Tehran Times.

Moghadamfar, a strategist and university scholar, also says Gen. Soleimani's selflessness "depicts the lovely relationship" between him and the people.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ This year is the third anniversary of General Soleimani's martyrdom. The catchword of this anniversary is "selfless". Why has this word been chosen?

Martyr Soleimani is an embodiment of a human being who is raised according to the principles of the Islamic Revolution. He grew and developed in the Imam Khomeini school of thought and that of his true successor Imam Khamenei. He had learned the lesson of being "selfless" in these schools. He had learned from Khomeini "If they call me a servant, it would be better than being called a leader."

He had also learned "selfless" [attitude] from Ayatollah Khamenei. He had not forgotten Ayatollah Khamenei's mystic whisper in memorable sermons on June 29, 2018, when he said: "O our Seyed! O our Lord! I do what I have to do. What needs to be said, I have said and will say. I have a worthless life, I have an imperfect body, I also have a little dignity which you gave me; I took all of these in the palm of my hand, I will sacrifice them for this revolution and for Islam."

In this school, he had learned that he should devote his life to serve [people]. And when we look at General Soleimani's life, we see his selfless attitude. During the Sacred Defense [1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war] or later during the times of danger, he was always present in the field to defend Islamic Revolution, to provide security for our dear people and for the development of our country. Although we know General Soleimani as "a man of field" as he introduced himself when addressing American politicians, but his presence in the field was "service-oriented". And he was both honest and sincere in doing his services. His truth made him serve without any expectation, and his sincerity made him sacrifice his life to do anything that would bring a smile of satisfaction on the faces of the nation.

He considered Iranians worthy of such a sacrifice, because he believed that the Iranian nation had devoted themselves to Islam and Iran. He wrote in his will "My dear Iranian brothers and sisters, glorious and



honorable people, I and those like me would devote their lives thousands of times to you because you sacrificed hundreds of thousands of lives for Islam and Iran."

The choice of the term "selfless" for this anniversary is derived from the martyr Soleimani school of thought and proves a deep and mutual connection of the people with this great martyr. It depicts the lovely relationship of the martyr with the people as well.

■ What activities the "Qassem Soleimani Foundation" has done or planned to introduce him to the world, especially to the people of the region?

American terrorist murderers and politicians did the best to introduce Martyr Soleimani to the world. With the brutal crime they committed in the assassination of a guest on Iraq's soil, they brought Martyr Soleimani to the center of attention more than during his lifetime.

Imam Ali in his book Nahj al-Balagheh, in response to a question that how he overcame his enemies, says: "I did not face anyone unless he helped me against himself. Hikmat 318"

Martyr Soleimani, with his humanitarian efforts, was known as someone who cleansed the region from the evil of the terrorist groups created by Western countries, including America. But his martyrdom drew more people towards him, and the people of the region and liberal groups in other parts of the world have been eager to know more about a man who had frightened the "global arrogant front" to such an extent that they decided to assassinate him so dreadfully and in such a cowardly manner. This is proved from the number of pilgrims who go avidly from different countries to visit the Golzar Shohada Cemetery in Kerman (where he is buried).

Also, the translation of authentic books about him and the works that have been left by him are on the agenda. Some books about his behavior and personality have

been provided in different languages to those interested, and this will continue incessantly. Besides, some valuable and influential documentaries have been produced which will help shed light on his personality. Too, some cultural and artistic works have been made during the last two years, some conferences and congresses are being held with the participation of elites and experts to introduce the role of Martyr Soleimani in foiling the enemy's plots against the oppressed nations of the region and our beloved country. Efforts are being made to keep the issue of Palestine alive and prevent it from being forgotten in the public opinion of the world, to break the myth of Israel's invincibility and empowering and arming the nations, especially countries in the resistance front, against the Zionist regime's attacks, etc.

■ Are foreigners participating in the ceremony marking the memory of General Soleimani?

Many people from different parts of the world, especially from the Resistance Front countries, are eager to attend the third martyrdom anniversary of General Qassem Soleimani and his companions, including Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis. Many experts from different countries and prominent figures of the Resistance Front have been invited to participate in the ceremony and attend the international conference.

■ In your opinion, what is the secret behind Shahid Soleimani's widespread popularity in the society?

The holy Quran says: "Indeed, the Most Compassionate Lord will soon create enduring love for those who believe and do righteous works" - Surah Maryam, verse 96. Therefore, the key to love and affection is in the hands of God. When the Prophet Ibrahim left his wife and young child in a desert where sand dunes stretched out for miles and there was no sign of human habitation, he asked God: "So, make hearts of a number of people yearn towards them..." - Surah Ibrahim verse 37.

Some believe that the reason for our love and devotion to the family of the Islamic Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) is the fulfillment of the Prophet Abraham's request from God. So, it should be said that it is God who is the creator of hearts and draws hearts to this or that. But the mystery of this favor of God should be sought in the manifestation of "faith" and "righteous action" in those whom God put their loves in the hearts of people.

These are the facts that the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution stated about Qassem Soleimani and referred to two outstanding features about him including "truth" and "sincerity". He said: "If we want to explain what we call 'the Soleimani school' in one or two short sentences, we must say that this school consists of "truth" and "sincerity". These two words are the title, symbol and profile of the Soleimani school." Therefore, to understand the secret to Qassem's popularity, you should not look for anything else but his truthfulness and sincerity, which even after three years of his honorable martyrdom, has kept his memory alive in the hearts.

■ What are the most important contents in "the Soleimani school"?

In short, they are:

- Obedience with sincerity
- Keeping the memory of martyrdom alive in oneself
- Surrender to divine guardians
- Believing and respecting Wilayat al-Faqih (rule of supreme jurisprudent) not only in words but in deed
- Respecting the dignity of human beings regardless of their ethnicity, religious affiliations, political inclinations, and false classifications
- True love for people and ready to sacrifice his life for them
- Love of God
- Full knowledge of enemies and fighting against them

## A Persian Knight

By Dariush Sajjadi

Following the military operation named Beit-ol-Moqaddas and the Liberation of the city of Khorramshahr in 1982, which persuaded Israel to hastily attack south of Lebanon in an attempt to help Saddam Hussein hide himself behind the solidarity among Arab states with the ultimate goal of protecting himself from the attacks and advancements of the Iranian combatants, Ahmad Mottavaselian who as the commander of Muhammad Rasulollah-27 Division played a pivotal role in the liberation operation of Khorramshahr voluntarily went to Syria to explore ways of defending Muslims in Palestine and Lebanon.

When Imam Khomeini was informed about this trip, he reminded the soldiers on the war fronts that "The Road to Quds Passes through Karbala" and wanted Mottavaselian to return from his mission in Syria. But unfortunately Motevaselian was kidnapped on the border of Lebanon by the Phalange Party who were supported by Israel. Nevertheless, "The Road to Quds Passes through Karbala" was a smart strategy devised by Ayatollah Khomeini which was successfully implemented about 30 years later by General Qassem Soleimani. The importance of Ayatollah Khomeini's strategy and its implementation by General Soleimani should be reviewed since one day after September 11 suicide attack on

the commercial center towers in Manhattan, New York.

The September 11 attacks resulted in major changes in the world such as America's military expedition to West Asia under the pretext of the global war on Terrorism. America's so-called global war on terrorism began with the call by its then President George Bush to the world that "You are either with us, or against us" which intimidated the world. It was only Iran who, as usual, was not scared and it was only the Iranian Leader Ayatollah Khamenei who confidently addressed Bush saying that "We are neither with you, nor with the terrorists!"

But, seven years later, during a conversation with Amy Good-

man, General Wesley Clark, the American commander of NATO, revealed the hidden intention of America's adventurism under the pretext of fighting terrorism. And it became clear that American neocons and their regional allies in Tel Aviv and Riyadh were looking for the Greater Middle East plan at the expenses of seven countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Lebanon, Somalia, Sudan and Iran!

This was a valiant and criminal plan which America wanted to develop in front of an intimidated world. But, one country was not scared and sent "General Soleimani" to the battleground to fight the deceitful Americans. Now, after 20 years, with the prudence and forethought

of General Soleimani, the Persian Knight, and the forces under his command, America is leaving the Middle East without obtaining any result. But Iran is stronger than before. Once Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor of the Carter administration had clearly stated that we have to break the backs of "Iran's dragon" in Syria, to cut off Tehran relation with Iraq, Damascus and Lebanon but now Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and also Yemen are the strategic allies of Iran and all are achieved because of General Soleimani's bravery and prudence.

According to Nietzsche, who believed "that which does not kill us makes us stronger", Iran, thanks to life saving and vital

movements, made itself immortal. Now, more than 40 years have passed since the abduction of General Motevaselian by the Israeli culprits, but Martyr Soleimani's brave and prudent action has resulted in the Islamic Republic of Iran's success. That Persian Knight, with his famous words "We are the nation of Imam Hussein", and thanks to his high profile achievements in the region, put in action the strategy of "The Road to Quds Passes through Karbala" presented by Ayatollah Khomeini, and proved in deed that the Holy Road and the conquest of the Holy City can be realized through the Resistance, Ashura, and Karbala's identity, Imam Hosseini and martyrdom.



# Two old comrades



By Wesam Bahrani

The relationship between the two martyrs' stretches back a long way before the era of Daesh's occupation of Iraq. But it was during the era of the terror groups' occupation that more media attention and focus were put on these two legends.

During the rule of the former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis was an activist in his university years.

He later became a member of the Dawaa party, the sole opposition party inside Iraq. It was founded by the late scholar and martyr Ayatollah Mohamad Baqir al-Sadr.

As Saddam tolerated no opposition to his rule, the Dawaa party went underground and when Saddam began to murder opponents to his Ba'athist regime, many fled the country.

When the former butcher of Iraq started executing not only his opponents but the family members of any opposition member, more Dawaa members fled Iraq with the exception of its founder. Ayatollah Baqir al-Sadr was put under house arrest.

One of those who left was Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis, who went to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Other popular figures that went to Tehran were Hadi al-Ameri and the martyr Ayatollah Mohamad Baqir al-Hakeem.

Many others fled to European countries as opposed to the Arab world to avoid Saddam's deadly crackdown.

The reason they traveled to Europe and not the Arab world (with the exception of Syria) was that Saddam's intelligence network found it easy to target them in the Arab world and in some cases with the help and cooperation of spy agencies of some Arab states.

In Iran, Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis enjoyed safety and found refuge, just like many ordinary Iraqis and other top Iraqi figures who fled to the Islamic Republic.

It was not just because Iran was a

non-Arabic speaking country. Rather it was because Iran was a Shia-majority country similar to its neighbor Iraq.

It should be noted that Saddam cracked down on any form of dissent, regardless of their faith and background. He killed the Shia as well as Sunnis, Kurds, and others.

In Iran, Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis and Hadi al-Ameri joined the newly formed foreign Iran-based opposition party, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCI-RI), also known as the Majlis. It was led by Ayatollah Sayyed Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, who himself was imprisoned, tortured and saw many family members executed by Saddam in Iraq.

Never seen before footage published by Iranian media showed the last time that General Soleimani visited his office compound, the walls of which were filled with leading martyrs. The footage shows General Soleimani kissing the tips of his fingers and placing it on the posters. One of the largest posters next to a portrait of the shrine of Imam Hussein was Ayatollah Sayyed Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim.

*(Ayatollah Baqir al-Hakim would later be martyred in the holy city of Najaf during a visit to the Holy Shrine of Imam Ali in 2003, after the fall of Saddam and following some two decades in exile.)*

In Iran, Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis, together with Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, formed the Badr Brigade, the military arm of the SCIRI.

Badr began conducting resistance operations against the Ba'athist regime in Iraq with the aim of overthrowing the regime.

The largest operation General Soleimani supported was the 1991 uprising in southern Iraq that was initially successful but ultimately was crushed with the help of the United States, which allowed Iraqi helicopters to

destroy the southern cities despite Washington saying it would prevent this and help the Iraqi uprising.

General Soleimani and Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis played a major role in the uprising, dispatching thousands of Badr Brigade members who were militarily trained by the two commanders.

Some of these soldiers returned to Iran, while others were arrested, imprisoned and tortured for many years in Iraq. The rest were martyred.

Ayatollah Mohamad Baqir al-Sadr (not to be confused with Ayatollah Sayyed Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim) remained in Iraq all his life and later under house arrest until Saddam brutally killed him along with his sister Bint al-Huda after they both increased their activism and pledged allegiance to the founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini.

In the lead up and following the execution of this highly revered scholar, the Badr Brigade led by one of its top commanders Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis with the help of General Soleimani stepped up its resistance against Saddam's forces.

Likewise, Ayatollah Sayyed Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim expanded the political activities of the SCIRI to overthrow Saddam's regime. Again, this was also done with the help of Major General Soleimani.

During these years, Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis and Lieutenant General Soleimani forged a special relationship.

When the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003, Washington was under the illusion its forces would be met with flowers. The reality is that they were met with bullets for having killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, just from the sanctions America had imposed on Iraq.

Everyone, especially Iraqis, wanted to see the end of Saddam, but nobody wanted the U.S. to be involved let alone invade the country.

Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis went on to form one of the many resistance movements against the U.S. occupation: Kata'ib Hezbollah in Iraq. Not to be mistaken by Lebanon's Hezbollah. Nevertheless, Kata'ib Hezbollah, with the help of General Soleimani, was one of the biggest factions that waged resistance operations against the U.S. military.

Under the guidance of General Soleimani, it was the Iraqi resistance factions that forced the U.S. military to withdraw from Iraq in 2011.

In 2014, Daesh terrorists occupied and controlled two-thirds of Iraqi territory.

By the summer of 2014, the terrorists took over the northern city of

Mosul following the collapse of the U.S.-trained Iraqi army.

Tens of thousands of members of this Takfiri group expanded their territorial presence to the outskirts of Baghdad. Roughly 30 kilometers away from the capital. Their aim was to reach the southern regions of Karbala and Najaf and destroy holy Islamic shrines in these cities.

Then Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki asked the U.S. to deliver weapons, including Hellfire missiles, that Baghdad had already paid. But the U.S. refused to dispatch them, citing multiple excuses, despite receiving the money.

This was at a time when Iraq was in desperate need of arms and assistance as Daesh not only took control of land, but it also took control of Iraqi weapons.

During those moments of hardship and during one of Iraq's darkest hours, Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, in a matter of hours, travelled to Iraq, along with a small team of military advisors that later followed him to study the situation with Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis.

At this moment of pain for Iraqis, it was General Soleimani who arrived at the scene and held many meetings with Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis and other security officials to combat Daesh.

In the absence of an Iraqi security apparatus, they designed a plan to bring back the resistance factions and with the blessing of a Fatwa from Iraq's highest religious authority, Ayatollah Sayyed Ali al-Sistani, the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) was formed.

The Fatwa called on volunteers who are capable of carrying arms to assist a now very weakened Iraqi army. Hundreds of thousands answered the call to arms, but many lacked military experience. These were teachers, students, engineers, farmers, doctors, and so on.

Here, Hajj Qassem and Hajj Abu Mehdi as they are referred to in Iraq and the wider region, took control.

The PMF comprised of 40 units, with Shia, Sunni, Christian, and Yazidi factions.

The two anti-terror icons devised a plan to train them militarily and also with the assistance of the Imam Hussein shrine, the volunteers participated in classes on the rules of law under Jihad from an Islamic and humanitarian point of view.

Clips on social media show PMF members being advised by scholars how it is forbidden to destroy a small tree when they go to battle.

This is while Daesh was decapitating hundreds of prisoners of war a

day and executing others, using very graphic and shocking methods.

The military exercises were organized by the two commanders who were now gaining popularity and international media attention.

Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis participated in or played a role in all the battles against Daesh.

And these were not easy battles. The volunteer forces required a lot of training, faith, and guidance in the face of thousands of Daesh suicide car bombs.

The morale these two commanders offered to the PMF was crucial and significantly boosted the confidence of the volunteer forces. Unlike the commanders of the U.S.-trained Iraqi army that sat in the barracks and told the soldiers to go and fight.

The two-anti terror heroes were always seen on the frontlines, and the PMF followed them. This was very inspirational for all the forces fighting Daesh in Iraq, when they saw these two figures among them on the battlefield.

The speeches the two commanders delivered on the battlefields, gave the PMF the motivation they needed during those difficult times to carry on fighting; and they achieved this.

One of the most popular and most difficult battles that Qassem Soleimani, Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis and his then deputy, the man that has now replaced Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis (Abu Fadek) along with other military commanders participated in was the battle of Amerli.

The battle symbolically drew comparisons with Karbala. Daesh had put the town's 20,000 Shia population under siege, and they lacked access to food, electricity and water.

Despite being under an all-out Daesh siege, the town's residents put up a strong resistance despite having very light arms.

Soleimani and al-Muhandis drew up a very sophisticated plan to break the siege. Helicopters flew over Amerli with Kata'ib Hezbollah forces parachuting down inside the town itself.

The PMF forces were able to attack Daesh from inside the town with PMF cooperation outside Amerli targeting the terrorists from several directions.

With Daesh taken by surprise and now trapped themselves, the two commanders oversaw every step of the operation and the siege of Amerli was broken.

With the town now liberated, one of the most popular footages in the fight against Daesh in Iraq shows military commanders and PMF forces erupting in celebration.

Hajj Qassem can be seen hugging Abu Fadek who could not hold back his tears from the happiness and joy of this achievement and he could barely stand when General Soleimani embraced him.

That same day Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis, Hajj Qassem and others quickly went to perform prayers together in a sign of their faith in God. They also celebrated in typical Iraqi fashion by raising their rifles up and down in the air.

There are many scenes that have emerged during those difficult months.

Photos showing Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis, during battles, sleeping on the floor at night next to a military vehicle or taking a rest by sitting on the floor eating simple food without wearing any shoes. He was not your average military commander. He was fearless, just like his comrade General Soleimani.

They both were dressed in casual military clothes. No military helmets, bullet proof vests or any other type of military body armor.

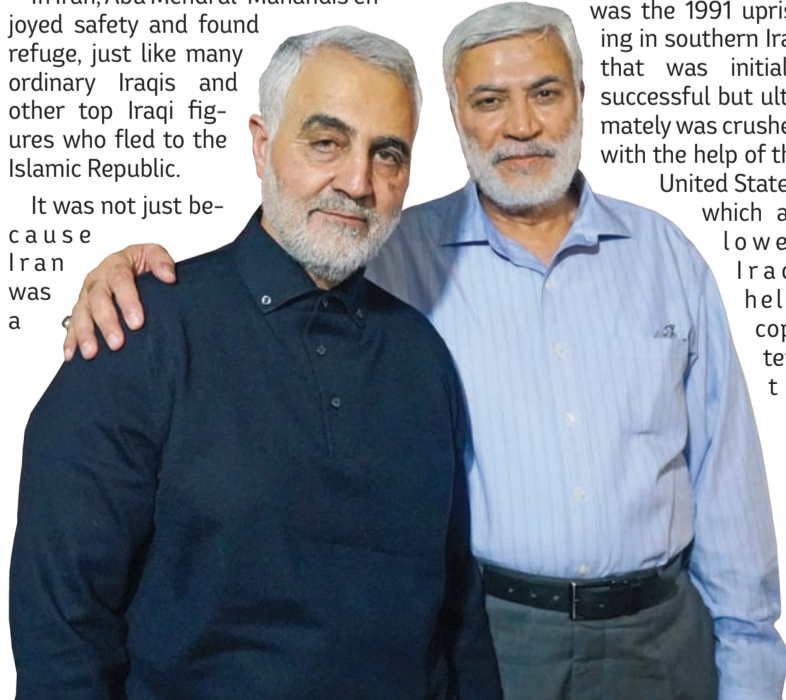
U.S. military commanders had said it would take ten years to liberate Iraq from Daesh. Many accuse the U.S. and other Western countries of creating and backing Daesh and that such kinds of statements were an attempt to prolong their own military presence in the country. The U.S. military returned in 2014 under the pretext of fighting Daesh.

It didn't take ten years as U.S. military generals claimed. These two special commanders oversaw the liberation of Iraq in just three years. It was all about confidence and faith in God that whatever Takfiri ideology Daesh had created with such extremism and tens of thousands of terrorists (if not hundreds of thousands) among their ranks, the two commanders fought in a true Islamic and humane way.

*"In Iraq's hour of need it was Iran that opened its weapons depots to Iraq and General Soleimani that was the first on the scene. This is something that will never be ripped out of the history books," Al-Muhandis said.*

Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and the deputy commander of the PMF Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis saved Iraq, West Asia, and the world from the expansion of Daesh and the terror that came with it. Not just in West Asia, Daesh staged multiple terror attacks in European countries, killing hundreds of civilians.

May they both rest with the angles.





Letter of Hajj Qassem to his daughter Fatemeh

# I took up arms to ...

General Qassem Soleimani, the martyr commander of the IRGC Quds Force, wrote in a letter to his daughter Fatemeh about the philosophy of life, jihad and his love for martyrdom in defense of the oppressed and terrified children of the world. The content of the letter reads as follows:

In the name of God, the compassionate the merciful

Is this going to be my last journey or my fate might be something else; whatever, I am happy with it. I am writing to you now during this journey, hope you may have something from me in your loneliness and maybe you find something useful in this letter.

Every time I start a journey, I feel I will never see you again. I have often imagined your lovely faces one by one before my eyes, and my eyes have welled up with tears. I have missed you but I have entrusted you to God. I have not had enough opportunity to express my love to you and I have not been able to convey my inner love to you. But my dear, have you ever seen someone looking in the mirror and telling his eyes: "I love you?" It does not happen much, but eyes are the most precious things to human. You are my eyes. You are dear to me whether I utter it or not. For more than twenty years, I have always made you worry, and God has blessed me to remain alive and you always have had nightmares. My daughter, I have thought it over and tried everything I could to make you less worry, but I could not, not because I am interested in military service. My job was not the reason and it will never be. No, my daughter. I never want to worry you let alone to make you cry even for a moment because of the job, responsibility, insistence or obligation.

I know that everyone in a path for herself or him- the other teaches, one opts other for farming. There are or rather, there are as many in this world] as there are world], and everyone has

**"I have taken up arms to stand against murderers"**

this world has chosen self; one learns and for business, the millions of ways, ways to [live people in [this chosen a way

for himself. I have chosen my way. I thought a lot, reviewed a few issues and, first of all, I asked myself how long this road may be, where it ends, how much time is left to me. And the most important of all, what my destination would be. I noticed that we all are here for a short time. Some stay for few days and then leave, some a few years, some ten years, but only a few may survive one hundred years. But everybody has to go and all are here for a short term. I found out that if I do business, in the end I would have some shiny coins, some houses and some cars. But they don't work for my fate on this path. I thought that I live for you. I realized that you are so important and precious to me that if a part of your body is in pain, all my body will be in pain. If something happens to you, I will find myself in flames. If you leave me one day, I will collapse. I thought how I could overcome my fears and worries! I understood that I need to connect with someone to shed light on this matter and that was God. You are the flowers of my existence and you cannot be saved by wealth and power, otherwise, the rich and powerful people should have been protected from death. Or their wealth and power should have saved them from incurable diseases and from falling into bed. I have chosen God and His way. This is the first time I am confessing that I never wanted to be a military person. I never loved military ranks. I never prefer any rank or position to the beautiful word of Qassem coming out from the pure mouth of a martyr Basiji guard. I wanted and still want to be Qassem without titles. Therefore, I ask to write on my tomb only "soldier Qassem", not even Qassem Soleimani, which is too much and a heavy burden on the way [to another world]. My dear, I asked God to fill me with His love. I did not choose this path to kill anybody, you know it. I can't even hurt a fly. I have taken up arms to stand against murderers, not to kill people. I see myself as a soldier for every Muslim in danger and I would like God give me the power to defend all the oppressed people in the world. I will not die for Islam, which is more precious than my life, not for the oppressed Shia, which I am not worth it, no, no... rather, I am fighting for that terrified and homeless child who has no shelter, for that woman holding her child tightly to her chest in fear, for those bleeding fugitives on the run.

**"I wanted and still want to be Qassem without titles"**

My dear, I am from an sleeps for others to sleep in my peace for their peace sleep well. My dear daughter, blessed to live safely and my house. But what should helpless girl who has no-crying child who has no- lost everything? So, make me your oblation to God and give it to them. Let me go, go and go. How can I stay when all my caravan has gone and I am left behind? My daughter, I am very tired. I haven't slept in thirty years, and I don't want to sleep. I keep my eyes open by pouring salt into them to save that helpless child from being beheaded. What do you expect from me when I think that terrified girl is you, or Narjes, or Zeinab, and that teenager or young man who is being beheaded is Hossein and Reza? Do you expect me to watch, to be indifferent, to be a businessman? No, I can't live like this.

army who never peace. I sacrifice and let them ter, you are with honor in I do for that ing, for that ing and has

Peace and God's merci be upon you





*Soleimani school of thought goes beyond borders*

# Pilgrims from 80 countries visit the grave of the soldier of nation

By Mehdi Mousavi from Kerman

The Golzar Shohada (Garden of Martyrs) cemetery in Kerman has become the epitome of Resistance Front over the past three years in a way that pilgrims from different countries travel to this city to pay homage to martyr Qassem Soleimani.

Kerman is the city of "Qassemion Army", an army that has always supported its commander. The young generation in Kerman now follow the school of thought initiated by martyr Soleimani.

The Golzar Shohada cemetery is home to 1024 martyrs. Some of them lost their lives in the fight against the tyrants before the victory of the Islamic Revolution; some were martyred by the Munafiqeen (the common name for the MKO); some are from the 8 years of the Sacred Defense [1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war]; some in the fight against terrorists and villains; and also some sacrificed their lives in the fight against Daesh (ISIS).

These martyrs have adorned this little paradise.

## ■ Soleimani's grave visited by Muslims and liberal activists

The face of Golzar Shohada has changed over the past three years. It is now one of the pilgrimage sites in Iran. Pilgrims travel from all over the country to Kerman to visit the grave of the "Master of Martyrs" of the Resistance Front. Iranians from different ethnic groups, including Kurds, Baluchs, Lors, Bakhtiari, Turkmens, Turks, join together in this place where a tent is erected in the memory of Imam Hussein (AS) throughout the year.

The site also hosts people from different countries such as Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Indonesia, Argentina, Italy, Australia, Russia, etc.

Pilgrims from 80 countries come to Kerman individually or in groups to visit the grave of Martyr Soleimani.

Mohammad Reza Hassani Saadi, director of the Kerman cemetery, says: "The doors of Golzar Shohada are open to all liberals and human right activists in the world. There are many people, who without any pre-planning, travel thousands of kilometers to visit Golzar Shohada to know a man who lived humbly and devotedly served his people and religion and the entire humanity."

Hassani Saadi says just during the last Iranian calendar year (March 2021-March 2022) citizens from 80 countries came to Golzar Shohada to visit the grave of Lt. Gen. Soleimani.

"According to the records registered by the management of the cemetery, during the last year, pilgrims from 80 countries came to Golzar Shohada and became familiar with Soleimani's values and school of thought. What all these people have in common is liberal thinking, the humble lifestyle which the parents of martyr Soleimani also practiced till the last days of their lives. Also, martyr Qassem Soleimani's lifestyle and graciousness have won young and old's hearts, drawing them to Kerman."

Sunni pilgrims from the Arab world



also visit Kerman to pay homage to the martyr general.

"Pilgrims are from all walks of life, from Iraqi nomads to Australian university professors, from an Argentinian artist to Indonesian Muslims and Pakistani Shiites. There are also Sunni pilgrims from the Arab world who come wholeheartedly, and of course Iraqi, Pakistani and Lebanese pilgrims are more in numbers than the others," Hassani Saadi adds.

Director of the Kerman cemetery explains how the anti-terror hero succeeded to win the hearts of people.

"During his lifetime, martyr Soleimani did his best to promote the goals of Islam, defend the oppressed, and suppress Daesh terrorists, and finally he was martyred by the coward American terrorists. I had seen martyr Soleimani many times during his lifetime walking through the martyrs' graves and wishing, in his night prayers, to join them. But on the other hand, he tried all throughout his life to help oppressed people and proved in deed that he knew how to fight with oppressors and enemies. He treated people kindly; he was their protector and put his life in jeopardy for them. This is how he could conquer the hearts of Muslims around the world after his martyrdom. Pilgrims come here and shed tears on his grave with all their love for him."

## ■ We are prepared to host foreign pilgrims visiting Golzar Shohada

"Now that Covid-19 is contained; we expect to receive far more visitors for the third anniversary of General Soleimani's martyrdom, and we are well prepared to receive foreign pilgrims," the cemetery director says.

He also believes those who visit the Golzar Shohada cemetery will turn into promoters of the general's school of thought.

"Pilgrims from different countries

travel to Kerman and watch together people's sincere love for Soleimani and participate in the mourning events; each of them then will act as an envoy to promote Soleimani's school of thought," he opines.

## ■ Pilgrims narrate memories with Hajj Qassem

Mohammad Mohammadi, one of the staffs working at the Golzar Shohada cemetery, also says the graveyard of the legendary commander is mostly visited by those families who were subjected to the barbaric crimes by Daesh in Syria and Iraq as well as the Lebanese whose country was repeatedly attacked by Israel.

"Most of the pilgrims are common people from the Resistance Front; they love Soleimani's ideology. What is interesting for me is the presence of the pilgrims from Lebanon, Syria and Iraq who narrate the memories they have with Hajj Qassem. The memories of the time they were surrounded by Daesh or attacked by the Zionist regime in Lebanon, and Hajj Qassem saved their lives and their families," Mohammadi points out.

Mohammadi adds: "There are many foreign pilgrims in Golzar Shohada. They come and sit in a corner of the cemetery, pray, and talk to Hajj Qassem in their own language as if he is listening and sitting next to them, and they knew each other for years."

## ■ Martyr Soleimani belongs to everyone

Mohammadi also says the legacy left by the legendary commander does not just belong to the Iranian people.

"Hajj Qassem does not belong only to Iranians. He is the point of unity which exists in the Resistant Front and connects millions of people together. This was proved in his funeral in Iraq and Iran. Abu Hassan Zivari is one of the Iraqi pilgrims who says 'Iraqi Shia and Sunni

people remember the time when security forces fled from Daesh and people were left wandering in mountains and deserts or had been surrounded by Daesh. But martyr Qassem Soleimani hurried to help the people regardless of their religion and eliminated Daesh from our country."

Daesh terrorists butchered whoever was on their way. A genocide of Yazidis, a religious minority in Iraq, was carried out in the Sinjar area of northern Iraq in the mid-2010s. Thousands of Yazidi women and girls were forced into sexual slavery by Daesh, and thousands of Yazidi men were killed.

## ■ He was student of the "Master of Martyrs"

Mohammadi also says many Iraqi people love General Soleimani and his comrade Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis as well.

"They love Hajj Qassem as a free Muslim."

Only a person who followed the path of Imam Hussein - the grandson of the Prophet Mohammad - had the audacity to risk his life and rush to the help of those brutalized by Daesh, he remarks.

"How is it that a person who went to the deserts of Iran and Syria, kilometers away from his birthplace to put his life in danger to save Iraqi people who were killed brutally? Because Hajj Qassem was the follower of Imam Hossein (AS)," Mohammadi opines.

## ■ General taught our children to be liberal

"We are grateful to martyr Qassem Soleimani. He taught our children to be liberal and help the oppressed in the world. It is shameful that American terrorist assassinated this great man in Iraq. So, we try to follow him and promote his goal which was fighting against arrogance and America," he adds.

## ■ 'Martyrdom is a shared ethos'

Zahra Al-Badaghi is an Arab girl who is sitting on a bench in a corner of the cemetery. Hoisting the Lebanese flag, she says: "Martyrdom is an ethos shared by the people of Iran, Lebanon, Iraq and Syria. We are united in our fight against Israel, Daesh and America."

Zahra Al-Badaghi goes on to say that the peace in the region, including in Lebanon, is due to the unrivalled command-ership by General Soleimani. That Israel no longer has the courage to attack Lebanon again is because of the military legacy of General Soleimani, she adds.

"Lebanon's Hezbollah and the people of this region today live in peace because this great man did great things for the people of my country without asking for anything in return. Today, Lebanese youths are aware; they will not allow the blood of the martyrs of the Resistance Front to be squandered. Today, Israel's enemy who attacked Lebanon under various pretexts, don't have the courage to attack Lebanon. And in Palestine our brothers and sisters are bravely fighting against them."

The female pilgrim who has travelled to Kerman with his family says the "noble" general was assassinated by Americans because of his thoughts. "We will take his revenge and will continue his way. Our devotion to the martyrs is nothing compared to their efforts done for God and we will continue their way."

## ■ Hajj Qassem is a role model for Syrian youths

Hamd Sirani is also one of the Syrian pilgrims visiting Golzar Shohada. Commenting on the personality of General Soleimani, he says: "How is it that the whole world of oppression unites to martyr one person? Martyr Soleimani belongs to the world of Islam. The people of Syria saw with their own eyes how the Iranian brothers without expecting anything sacrificed their life to defend our country."

Sirani says the sacrifices made by Iranians in Syria serve as a linkage between Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.

"This blood ties us together and keeps the flag of Islam hoisted from Lebanon to Syria, Iraq and Iran. When the enemy tried to capture our country by dividing us, when some terrorists were killing our people, it was martyr Haj Qassem and his ideology who saved us," the Syrian citizen remarks.

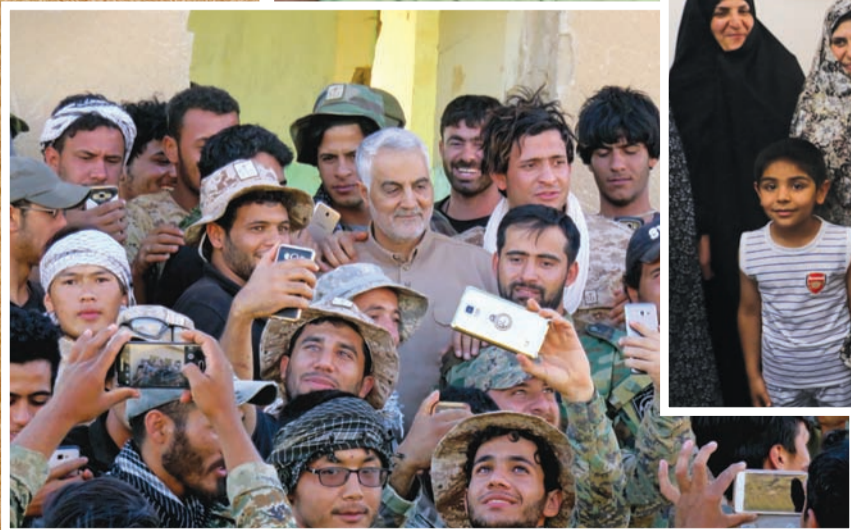
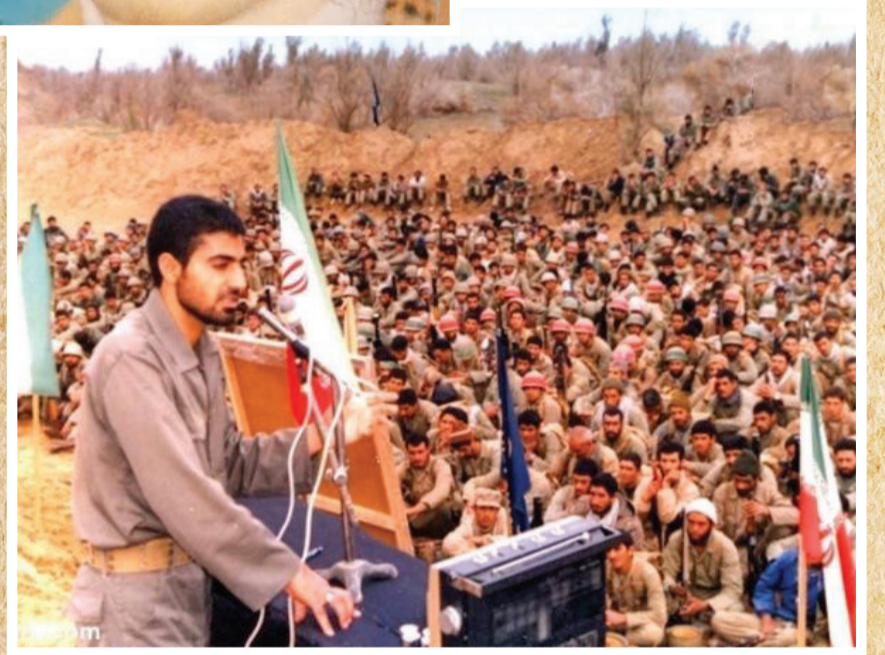
He concluded his remarks by saying: "Hajj Qassem willingly sacrificed his life for the Syrian people. He is now a role model for Syrian youth and his martyrdom has given him a high place [in Syria]. Young people in the remote villages of Syria take him as an example."

The entire country, particularly Kerman province, is marking the third year that General Soleimani was assassinated. Kermanis welcome all pilgrims who come to visit his grave.

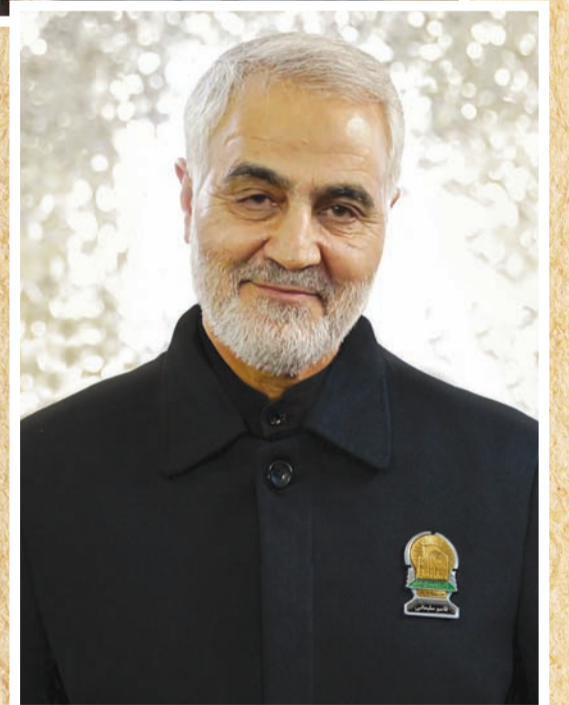
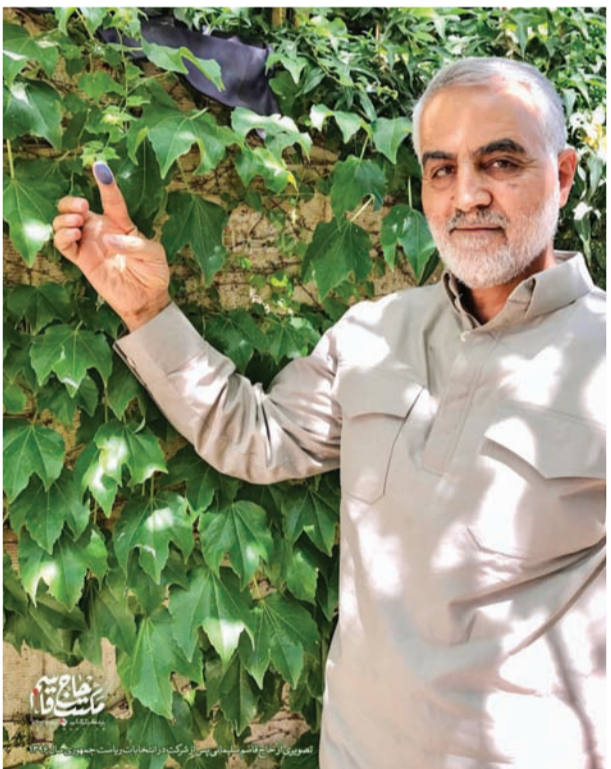


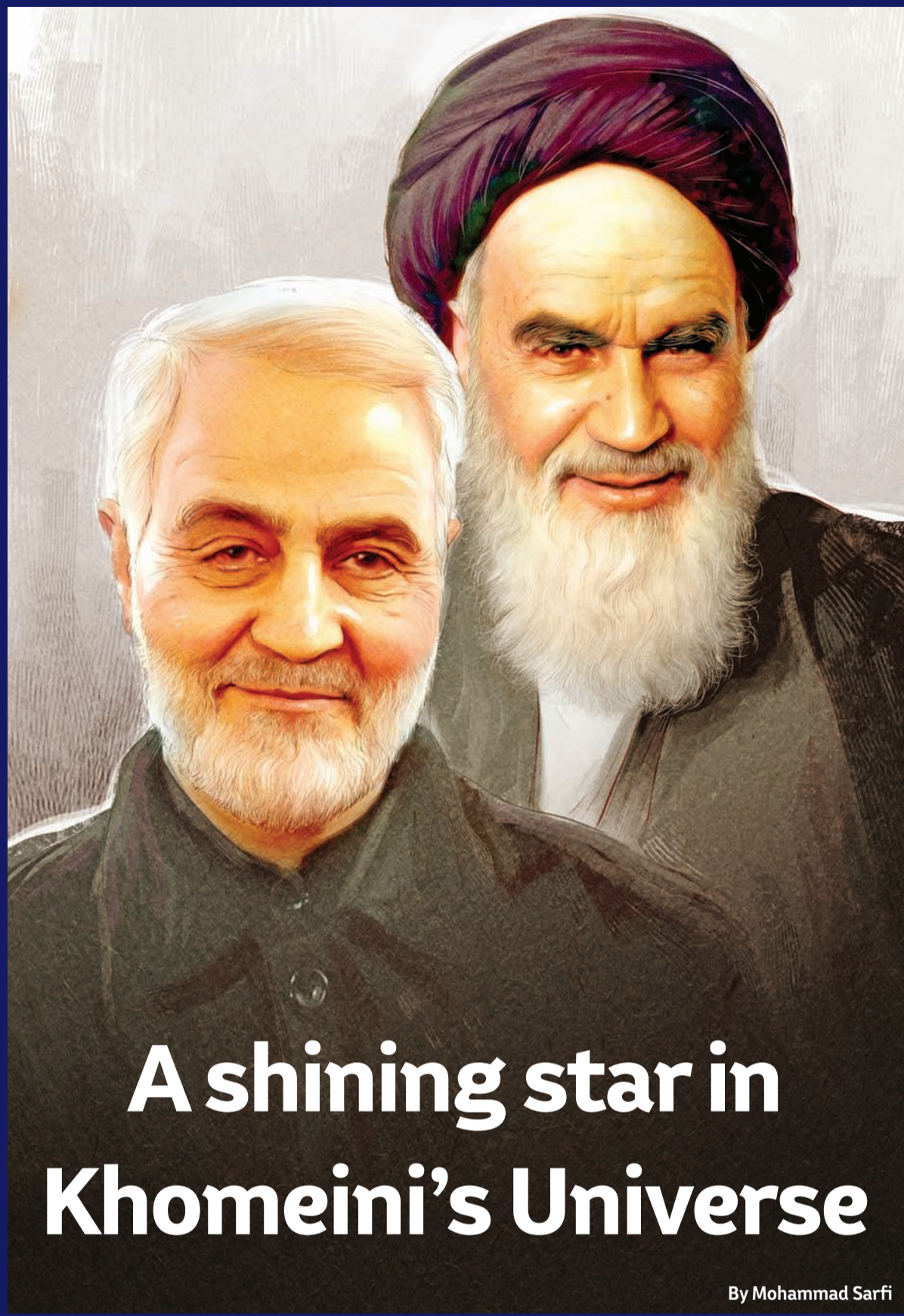


# Ineffaceable Frames









# A shining star in Khomeini's Universe

By Mohammad Sarfi

It is good that when children come into this world, nobody knows what destiny awaits them and what mission they undertake in their future life. Also, nobody knows what great mission the history has assigned them to do. This was also true about Moses the prophet whom Pharaoh made every effort to kill but failed. That was the time that short-sighted persons and superficialists believed that Moses and his followers were left with no option to survive as they were trapped between the roaring waves of the sea in the front and Pharaoh's large army from the behind. But it was Moses who finally eliminated Pharaoh and his soldiers in the sea when he received the command from God to strike the Nile River with his staff... and miracle happened; the sea was divided and Moses and his followers walked through it.

The summer of 1953 was pleasant for Dwight Eisenhower, the 34th president of the United States. CIA's agents in Tehran joined the mercenaries of Britain, which was no longer the great, and accomplished the Ajax operation in Iran successfully. Mosadeq's government was overthrown by a coup d'état, and the craven king was given the crown. If CIA chief Allen Dulles had had any idea about the future, he would have sent a team of his agents to Iran again, but this time not to Tehran, but to Qanat Malek, a village in the central desert of Iran in Kerman province where a son was born to Mashadi Hassan and his wife Fatimah on March 21, 1958. But neither Eisenhower nor Dulles, not even the parents of the newly born baby knew about the mission the infant was to accomplish in the years to come. He was the third child in the family and was named Qassem. It was an appropriate name because Qassem means to "share" and this child mission in the future was to share things.

World is home to marvels which are beyond human being's understanding like when unrelated and remote things on the globe reach together in one point. When in 1963 an officer from SAVAK (Intelligence Organization and National Security) mockingly asked Ruhollah Khomeini where his soldiers were, he confidently responded "my soldiers are in cradles". Imam Khomeini's response might have been amusing to that doomed officer from the intelligence

service but he is not to blame. Interestingly, many of Imam Khomeini's future loyalists were still child or infant at the time, that some of them were martyred later. For example, Soleimani was five years old that day; Mehdi Bakeri and Esmail Daghighayeh nine; Hassan Bagheri and Mohammad Ebrahim Hemmat eight; Hossein Kharrazi was six; Ahmad Kazemi, Mehdi Zeinoddin and Hassan Tehrani Moghaddam four; and Mahmood Kaveh and Ali Hashemi two. These children lived in different cities and villages far from each other. They were so scattered that no one could imagine that one day they would be united and shine together.

These children were the commanders of Khomeini's army. Many of his soldiers had yet to be born. We said commander and soldier! Let us clarify the meaning of these two words right now. Do you know why the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps Quds Force, whose name made the enemy tremble, always called himself a soldier and had requested to write "Soldier Qassem" on his tombstone? Last year, an American news outlet wrote with deep hatred that Soleimani had linked militias in Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen (also Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria and Palestine) to a strategic alliance and thereby turned the Quds Force into a kind of NATO.

Qassem changed the fate of the region and even the world. He was called "the shadow commander", "the crusher of ISIS" and "the strongest man in the Middle East". And the commanders of the American army were jealous of him. But he called himself a soldier, because he was a true student of the Imam Khomeini school of thought. Khomeini was the founder of the revolution, the man of the century, the politician of the era, the changer of the world and history, but when one of his disciples addressed him that "We are all your soldiers, we are all on your command", he responded simply from the bottom of his heart that "I am not your soldier nor are you mine. All of us

are God's soldiers, Insha Allah (if God wills)".

There are definitely many good people on the earth and we have seen a lot of them. Perhaps we are good people because we do good things sometimes. We share some of our happiness, time, money, etc. with others. Some might be better than others and use their strong will to be good and to do good. For example, when they see somebody is being subjected to injustice, they enter the scene and help him. Qassem's mission was to spread peace, security, bring happiness and smiles, and also sow fear and anxiety (in the heart of enemies). What made Qassem distinct from other good people was that he was not self-satisfied. Self-satisfaction is not always a good thing. He was not self-satisfied with his achievements; he wanted peace, security and smiles for all people in the world, not just for the people of Qanat Malek, Kermanis and Iranians. It didn't matter to him what language these men, women and children spoke, what religion they believed in and how they had been geographically divided. For him security, peace and smile were the rights of all, and fear and anxiety for all those who had denied the others from these rights.

This is where we can see two images of Qassem; one image softer than silk, more tenderhearted than a five-year-old child who is laughing at the bottom of his heart and crying like the clouds; and the other like a thunderbolt that has been given the mission by the Almighty God to kill tyrannical and bloodthirsty persons by his hand and send them all to hell.

Obviously, the crowded and dark streets are too little to be named after Qassem but one day a big and bright star will be discovered and it will be named after him. Qassem's name will last forever and lucky are those who will see his bright eyes again in the Day of Judgment and he will share light with them.

An American news outlet said Soleimani had formed a NATO by linking militias in Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen with Quds Force.

## Doc depicts final three days of General Soleimani's life



By Fatemeh Khezri

"72 Hours" is a documentary about the last three days of General Qassem Soleimani's life, directed by Mustafa Shoghi and produced by Mahdi Motahar in 2021.

Given that General Soleimani visited Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq in the three days before his martyrdom, this documentary was also made in those three nations in addition to Iran. Additionally, many of the interviewees in this documentary share for the first time brand-new stories of his final 72 hours. The following is an interview with Shoghi.

**How did the idea for the "72 Hours" documentary come to you?**

At a gathering following General Soleimani's martyrdom, Ehsan Muhammad Hasani, the head of the Owj Arts and Media Organization, told us an interesting story about the last three days of Haj Qassem's

life. I knew straight away that this narrative might make a fantastic documentary, and I suggested that it be made immediately.

**From the beginning of the interviews to the documentary's release, how long did the production process take?**

It took two years, and during that time we made more than ten trips to Lebanon and Syria to speak with every person General Soleimani had contact with in the final three days of his life. Over 70 interviews were conducted in all, and only 19 of them were featured in the documentary's finished product.

One of the main issues we faced in the process was that most of the individuals that interacted with General Soleimani were in high positions and we were unable to reveal their names or even their faces because of their strict security.

**So, were these security protocols the main challenges you**

**encountered?**

No, it was not. Our main difficulty was how challenging it grew as we moved closer to narrating General Soleimani's martyrdom. One of the most problematic aspects was how we had to describe the moments when men who were close to General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi arrived at the scene of the incident.

**Which of the accounts from the people you interviewed did you find to be more interesting?**

The truth is that new information was discovered while producing this documentary. One of these noteworthy discoveries concerned General Soleimani's strategy for handling Iraqi protests in 2019. This documentary features scenes that demonstrate his brilliant strategy when he said that Iraqi protesters should feel like they had met the demands of their government and should leave the field victorious.

I also want to stress the fact that Qassem Soleimani was a man of action. He may have encountered the toughest obstacles, but he never gave up. In my documentary, I learn about a General who was unique in every way, and whose martyrdom and loss did a lot of harm to us.

**Has the documentary been screened in countries other than Iran? What was the outcome of the exhibition?**

It has been shown in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and parts of Pakistan, as well as on Al Mayadeen TV. It had such an unusual and intriguing outcome that an Israeli newspaper wrote about it, along

with margins and tales.

**What were the feedbacks in our own country?**

Since this work was the most significant of all the ones I've done in my career, I'm quite thankful that it was a success. The documentary had some issues with public broadcasting on TV, so we built a website to broadcast it exclusively, and within a short amount of time, 600,000 people had seen it through this website alone.

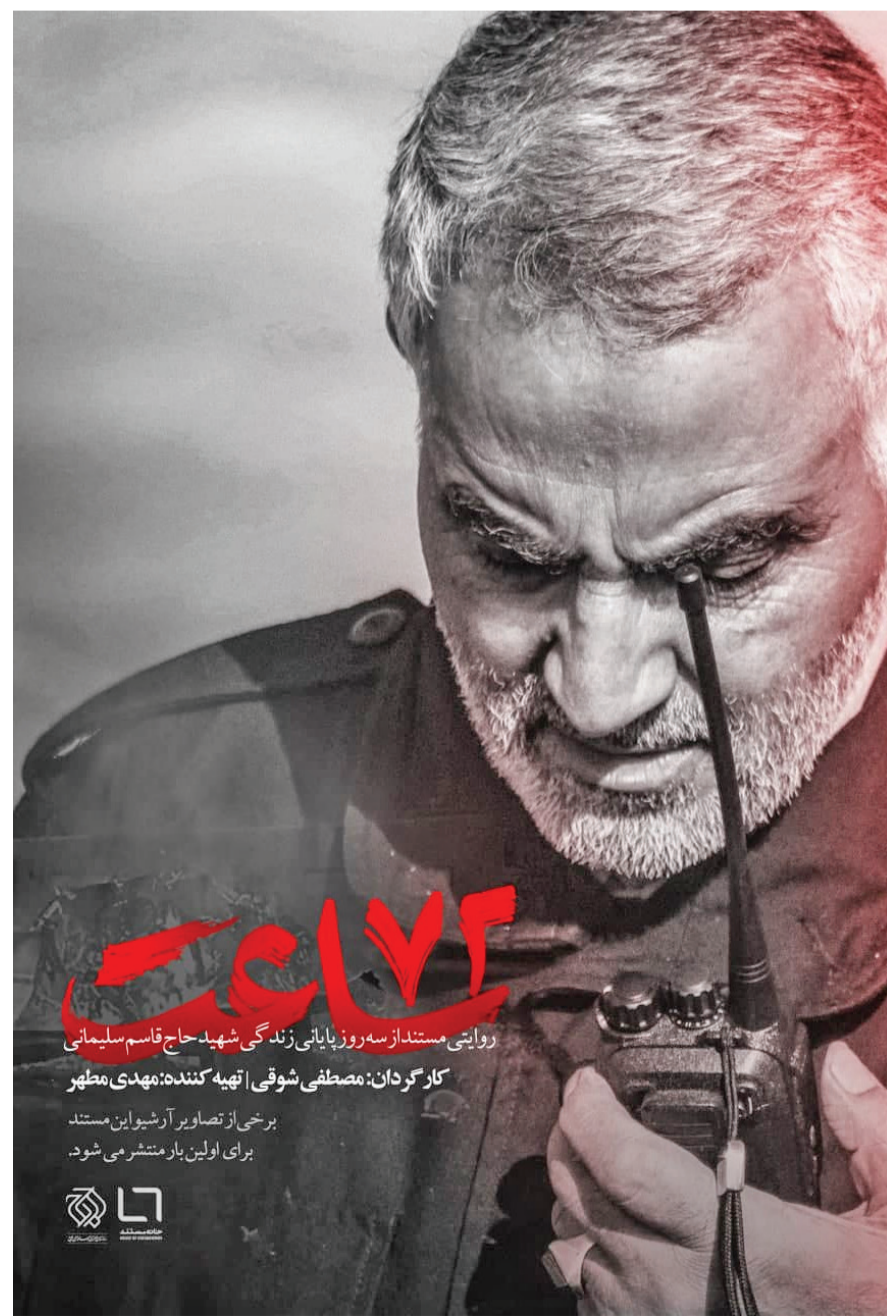
**Has the documentary been made available in other languages?**

Yes, both English and Urdu translations exist.

**How much potential does General Soleimani's character have for artistic development on a local and global scale?**

A lot! He knew how to handle issues with authority and empathy because of the diversity of things he had done throughout his life. The majority of people regardless of their intellectual preferences or lifestyles agree that Qassem Soleimani was a hero since he solved problems in numerous crises just to improve people's lives.

Another point is his type of international activity. In addition to being a brave military commander, he was a brilliant diplomat and negotiator in the region. He genuinely served as a bridge between political groups, and he is widely regarded as a notable person.



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*Narration of the 33-day war by General Soleimani*

# Ayatollah Khamenei's wonderful prediction after my bitter report

One of the milestones of General Soleimani's career was his presence in the 33-day war waged by the Israeli regime against Lebanon in 2006. In an interview published a few months before his assassination, Soleimani gave a first-hand information about some aspects of the war. What follows are seven parts of the military adventure.

## ■ The first day of the war

I returned to Lebanon on the first day of the war. Actually, I was there the day before. In fact, I first went to Syria, but all the roads to Lebanon were under attack, especially the only main way which was Lebanon's border passage to Syria. It was blitzed all the time and aircrafts did not leave there for a second. We had contacted with one of our friends through a safe line. Imad Mughniyeh came after me and took me from Syria to Lebanon. We walked for some time, then continued by car. War at that time was mainly focused on Hezbollah's administrative buildings, mostly in the southern regions and sometimes in the central and northern parts.

## ■ Bitter report

Almost after the first week, Tehran wanted me to go back and report about the war. I came back by a side road. That time, the Supreme Leader of the revolution was in Mashhad, and I met him there in the presence of heads of the three branches of government and the main officials of the (Supreme) National Security Council, who were often active in the security and intelligence sectors. In the Mashhad meeting, I presented my war report. It was not a favorable report. I did not show any hope for victory. This was a completely different, technological and specific war. The targets were carefully chosen. The twelve-story buildings were destroyed with one bomb.

## ■ The Supreme Leader's wonderful prediction

It was prayer time. We prayed and returned to the meeting. My report was over. The Supreme Leader began to speak. He said a few things, noting that my points about the war were true. "This is a very tough war, but I think this war is similar to the Battle of the Trench." The Leader recited the verses of Al-Ahzab and explained Muslims' mood, the Prophet Muhammad companion's emotions as well as his soldiers' feelings. Then he said, "But I think victory in this war will be similar to the victory in the Battle of the Trench." I was taken by surprise because I was not sure from military point of view. I mean, I wished he had not talked about the victory. The Battle of the Trench was the prophet's great victory. Supreme Leader continued and said that the Israeli regime had planned a massive offensive against Hezbollah in advance. And Hezbollah had thwarted their plan by taking 2 captives. Finally, he advised me to tell them to recite Jawshan Sagheer's prayer.

## ■ Fresh blood runs through the veins of warriors

I came to Tehran (from Mashhad) that night and returned to Syria again. I was glad because I was the bearer of a message that was perhaps more valued to Seyed Hassan Nasrallah than anything else. Imad came after me again and took the same way. I went to meet Seyed and gave him the message. Nothing seemed more effective on Seyed than my message. He was very happy.



The Supreme Leader's words that "there are many difficulties, but a great victory is possible and this war will end in a victory like the Battle of Al-Ahzab" spread everywhere among Mujahedin; in the front line and everyone else. Secondly, this analysis that "the enemy already has had an offensive plan" became the main basis of Nasrallah's approach in convincing the public opinion and make them pay attention to the enemy's intentions.

Jawshan Sagheer's prayer also was well received because this prayer has very valuable, mystical and spiritual concepts and it is one of the best prayers of Mafatih-al-Jinan. The prayer was widely recited and Al-Manar TV broadcast it regularly in a beautiful and sad voice. Even Christians recited it. This message was very touching and caused another move. It encouraged Hezbollah to fight hopefully and more confidently against the enemy.

## ■ Chased by an Israeli drone

Hezbollah had a command room in the heart of Dahiya; the buildings nearby were bombed and destroyed. Every night, two or three large buildings with twelve or thirteen stories were completely destroyed. It was not an underground command room, it was a normal room, but some equipment, connections stuff had been placed there. One night when we were in this room along with almost all the war officers, about eleven o'clock at night, the Israeli drones struck the buildings around us and destroyed them. We thought the enemy might have become suspicious because of the comings and goings. I felt Seyed was in serious danger. And we decided to take him out. Imad and I consulted together. Seyed was seriously reluctant to leave the command room. We just wanted to take him from one building.

The Israeli MK drones, consistently flew in

the sky of Dahiya and monitored strictly all the movements, even the movement of a motorcycle was important for them. At twelve o'clock, Dahiya, which was Hezbollah's main center, was deadly silent. We made our mind and moved from the command room to another building. There was not much distance between these two buildings.

As soon as we moved, the enemy bombed a building next to our previous one. We waited in that building, because we had a secure line of communications between frontline commanders and Nasrallah and Imad. This communications line had not to be disconnected. Another bombardment took place and hit a bridge next to this building. We had an intuition that the next strike was on the way and this building might be the target. There were only three of us in the building: Seyed, Imad and me. Therefore, we decided to go out and went to another building. We went out,

we had no car. Dahiya was dark and utterly silent. Only the sound of Israeli planes could be heard above Dahiya. Imad said, "sit under this tree, so you will be protected from their sight." It was not safe, because the cameras on MK drones recognized human body's temperature from other things, therefore it was impossible to hide there. Imad left. It didn't take more than a few minutes that he returned with a car. Imad was extraordinary, especially in making war plans. Before the car reached us the MK drones had focused on us. MK was transmitting data from its camera directly to Tel Aviv and they were watching the scene in their command room. It took a long time until we were able to go from one basement to another and then, move from this car to another which is difficult to explain now. We could fool the enemy and returned to the command room about 2:00 AM.

## ■ Warriors' letter to Seyed Hassan Nasrallah

Imad did something which was very effective. The impact of this letter was similar to the message and promise that the Supreme Leader gave to Seyed about the victory in this war. It was the letter of Mujahedeen in the front lines, under enemy fire, addressed to Seyed Hassan. The letter was strange. I did not see anyone to hear it and not to cry. That day when the letter was read, Imad, who himself had initiated it, cried loudly. More important than that was Seyed's response. It was similar to the poems that the companions of Imam Hussein (AS) sang in Karbala in defense of him against the enemy. Seyed's words to the Mujahedeen in praising and consecrating their resistance were similar to the words of Imam Hussein on the night of Ashura. These two letters - the Mujahedeen's letter to Hassan Nasrallah and his feedback - each had a very high impact and gave a new energy to the war and everything changed on the 28th day.

## ■ How did the war end?

At that time, Mr. Hamad Al Khalifa, Qatar's Prime Minister who was also Foreign Minister, was in the United Nations acting as a mediator and used to come and go to Lebanon. He later said, "In those days, the Americans never allowed a truce to be discussed. I was disappointed. I went to my home to take a rest, suddenly the Israeli ambassador to the United Nations came after me hastily. He hurriedly and worriedly asked where are you? I asked did something new happen? He said let's go to the United Nations. I came and saw this evil John Bolton walking worriedly and anxiously. Both of them told me the war must stop now. I said, why? They said, if the war does not stop, the Israeli army will collapse. Therefore, the Israelis backed down from all their previous conditions and agreed with Hezbollah's conditions. They accepted the ceasefire and this was a great victory for Hezbollah. Not only the victory was achieved, but also, this was the end of the Zionist attack against Lebanon which has continued to this day. Hezbollah changed the Zionist regime's attitude to invasion of not only Lebanon but any other place. I would like to say that after the 33-day war, the strategy of the Zionist regime, from Ben-Gurion's strategy of surprise attack and offensive war slowly changed to a defensive strategy.



## Global hero

If Iran declared Hajj Qassem Soleimani a national hero in Iran, we are presenting him as a global hero, a global symbol, a world title, and a symbol of sacrifice, redemption, and loyalty that defends the weak and the oppressed, whether they were Muslims or not.

In every battle and in his entire life, Hajj Qassem Soleimani not only defended the Shiites, but he also defended the Sunnis, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Christians, Muslims, the followers of other religions and denominations, Venezuela, and any

country or people that could be besieged, weakened, or conspired against. He was present in the squares. These various and great traits that exist in the personality of this leader qualify him to be a global symbol and hero, to be emulated by all the resistance and mujahideen of this world.

There are also great symbols alongside him. In Iraq, there is Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, Hajj Imad Mughniyeh and Sayyed Mustafa Badreddine in Lebanon and Syria. There are also martyr leaders in Palestine, Yemen, and other arenas. These are symbols and patriotic and national heroes in their country and their nation. But Hajj Qassem Soleimani leads

because he was present in all these squares, present strongly and effectively in all of these squares. That is why he must be rightfully introduced. We are not exaggerating or make a legend out of him or anything. Until this moment, I tell you, what has been revealed about Hajj Qassem Soleimani, about the nature of this figure, about his jihad, his watchfulness and his sacrifices, about his achievements as well as the achievement of all the brothers who worked with him in all arenas, have so far been little. There are things that cannot be revealed since the time to talk about them is not appropriate. But they will be revealed later.

Imam Khamenei clearly and specifically defined the circle of the killers of martyred commanders Hajj Soleimani and Haji Abu Mahdi â€“ those who ordered and those who carried out the assassination. It is true that, first and foremost, itâ€™s the responsibility of the Iranians to avenge Hajj Qassem and a primary responsibility of the Iraqis to avenge Hajj Abu Mahdi. But this is also the responsibility of every free, honorable, resistance fighter, and loyal person on the planet to be a partner in enforcing this punishment.



## A review of General Soleimani's thoughts



### Why Iran entered Syria and why martyrdom is different from imprudence

By Sadegh Vafaei

The book titled *Zolfaghar* written by Ali Akbar Mozdabadi, published after Hajj Qassem Soleimani was martyred, includes some of his memories and quotes. This article is written based on *Zolfaghar* as well as other sources on the third anniversary of General Soleimani's assassination.

#### ■ Martyrdom must be demarcated from imprudence

A few years ago, General Soleimani gave a speech to Iranian and non-Iranian defenders who liberated Abu Kamal from Daesh. The speech was similar to Ahmad Motevaselian's speech after the Fathol Mobin Operation. Ahmad Motevaselian was the commander of 27th Mohammad Rasoulollah Division. That the gist of Motevaselian's speech at that time was martyrdom is not the goal. Rather it is the reward for the struggles and hardships one endures on the way to reach the goal. The main point in General Soleimani's speech is that the self-sacrifice of the Shrine Defenders (those who fought Daesh in Iraq and Syria) and Resistance Forces does not mean they are not prudent, and if someone is seeking martyrdom, it does not mean that he wants to be killed.

Soleimani in this speech points to the divine

will which is the first cause of everything and adds that if America and Saudi Arabia want to do something, their will is nothing compared to the will of God. The Iranian nation is standing against the United States and Saudi Arabia and they deserve victory because they are ready for self-sacrifice. General Soleimani believed faith [in God] gave rise to Muslims' victory in the advent of Islam, not the power of the sword nor the number of people. He adds: "America has more than one million forces. But these forces don't have faith, therefore, when they come to Iraq with all their equipment and facilities, they must put on diaper so that they don't get out of the tank out of fear. But you did great job with this AK-47, with this ordinary weapon. Why? Because you sacrificed yourself."

General Soleimani also insisted on the concepts of prudence and self-sacrifice. He said, "Of course we put our lives on the line not out of imprudence; not because we do not act prudently. No, we act prudently and we take the enemy seriously. We take everything into account. But we don't fear for our lives. Therefore, the one who threatens to kill us is like the one who gives us a medal. I remember martyr Ali Mohammadipour's memoir. He was the battalion command-

er. He had written in his notebook: O Arab brother who are chasing me and I am chasing you! I swear to God, if you martyr me, I will intercede (Shafa'ah) for you.

#### ■ Why did Iran enter Syria?

One of the important issues that should be extracted from General Soleimani's speeches as a military strategist is the reason for the emergence of the Shrine Defenders. In one of his speeches, he points to two important keywords: Takfiri movement and diplomacy. General Soleimani said Takfiri movement had reached the borders of Iran before the Shrine Defenders was formed. He also added that there are several issues that cannot be resolved through diplomacy. He concludes that the Takfiri movement is one of those issues that cannot be solved through diplomacy.

The military strategist went on to say: "Is there any place for diplomacy when the other party's ideology is that from religious point of view, you must be killed, and the more they kill from your side, the easier they will be admitted to Heaven? For such a person who thinks killing you is an obligation, there is no room for diplomacy but Jihad."

In another speech, he also pointed to lack of security in the countries around Iran and

the wider Middle East region, saying: "We are engulfed in fire. Look! This is Iraq. This is Afghanistan. This is Pakistan that has atomic bomb. This is the Caucasus, this is Turkey. This is the condition of our neighboring countries."

General Soleimani added: "We could sit and watch when Syria will fall, when Iraq will fall. Then [the enemy] becomes equipped and reached our borders with a power 10 times or 100 times more than before, entered the country, conquered and started killing. No smart person, no wise manager, no responsible person will accept this. He says one should go and outroot this evil tree."

General Soleimani also indicates a terrorist organization that has trained 1,500 suicide bombers during 7 months while it captured Mosul and considers the killings of Iranians and Muslims and the raping of their women as an obligation must be countered with jihad.

#### ■ Why did Imam Khomeini say 'preservation of Islamic Republic is a divine duty that is above all other duties'?

One of the issues raised by Imam Khomeini was that the preservation of the Islamic Republic is more important than prayer. This has caused dispute. General Soleimani also refers

to this issue in a part of his socio-political speeches. He believes that mixing Islam with Iranian nationality is a feature that the rest of the countries around Iran do not have and that is why they are in war. The preservation of the Islamic Republic, according to General Soleimani, is a necessity because "today, defending the Islamic republic is equal to defending Islam. Why did Imam say that defending the Islamic Republic is above all duties and there is nothing more important than it? Why did he consider it more important than prayer? If we do not perform prayer, it is possible to do it later; but if the Islamic Republic is damaged, prayer will be damaged, religion will be damaged."

#### ■ Power of Iranians' passport

The power of the Iranian passport was one of the heated debates at some time over the decades before. General Soleimani has also talked about it. Without going to extremes, he admits the importance of the passport for the citizens of a country. But he gives it a second priority. The former commander of the Quds Force says it is important that others "accept our passport or not, but is it more important than honor?" He says, "Today, the honor and the independence of this nation are more important than anything else."

## Colombian writer: Gen. Soleimani more than a mere military commander



By Fatemeh Khezri

"My Uncle Soleimani", authored by Mohammad-Ali Jaber, is about General Qassem Soleimani. The book has 20 stories that provide readers with a very in-depth look into General Soleimani's personality and encourage young readers to view him as a role model.

The stories were translated into Spanish in 2021 by the Colombian writer Angelica Maria Rojas, who is also the director of El Faro, the publisher of the book. Following is a Tehran Times interview with her.

#### ■ Would you give a brief introduction about yourself?

My name is Angelica Maria Rojas. I was born in Colombia to a Catholic family and converted to Islam 20 years ago. I have a degree in modern languages and I'm a university professor in the language department at various universities in my country. I have a master's degree in bilingual education and am an expert in the editing process, curriculum design, and ELT teaching.

It's been almost three years since I started the El Faro publishing company to produce Shia and Islam-related literature in Latin America. And I had the assistance of some Iranian friends.

#### ■ What led you to publish "My uncle Soleimani" in Venezuela?

We published "My Uncle Soleimani" or "Mi Tio Soleimani" in Colombia and distributed it around the country. After that, we decided to

publish it in Venezuela. We thought it was important for people to see different perspectives on General Soleimani because there are many biased visions and false propaganda related to Shia, Islam, and particularly regarding General Soleimani and Iran.

As result, with the help of our Iranian friends, we decided to publish it in both countries. Many people have read it and I believe it was a good work that we made.

#### ■ Did you face any obstacles during the publication process?

No really. Because our work is more cultural and tied to Islam's spread. We always want to portray an image of better intercultural and social understanding, cooperation, and tolerance. From this perspective, I believe we have been successful because we have used a strategy in that we have no political or governmental positions, only cultural and artistic positions. We've had a lot of success with this strategy, and people understand and respect what we're doing.

#### ■ When did you first get to know General Soleimani?

I first heard of him 15 years ago when living

in Qom and studying at the Hawzah (Seminary). Even though I didn't go into his life, I did hear a lot of stories about him, his strength, his personality, and how respected he was.

If you ask me about his reputation in Latin America, I'd say it wasn't the best and still isn't because of Islam's opponents, which is why we decided to help. People who read the book would have understood his real position and personality since he was more than a military commander; he was a human being who was highly respected. This book is really beautiful because it shows the human aspect of this character.

#### ■ Could you tell me how the book was received there?

There have been many good comments about it, and so many people have read it. We also received some negative comments as well because some people were unfamiliar with the position of General Soleimani that we wanted to express.

We have distributed the book freely for different campaigns and talks, but I know that there is a lot more to do. Additionally, I wish the Iranian embassy would support us more

to improve our work.

#### ■ As a Muslim woman, what enabled you to achieve success and be where you are now?

As a university professor, mother of three children, and wife, the first thing I say is that I am here because of Allah's power. I chose to study hard since I was born into a middle-class family with many difficulties, but our parents were very smart and devoted to us.

When we choose a book to publish, we examine the current situation from various political and social perspectives. We are attempting to find a way to properly transmit the message to everyone, particularly non-Muslims. In my opinion, we should focus on non-Muslims because Muslims already have the truth in their hands, and it is extremely difficult for non-Muslims to understand the reality of Islam, particularly Shia Islam.

Following the recent events in Iran involving that girl, of course, attacks against Islam in Iran have increased, so our role is important and must be certain, honest, and faithful. I believe that the key to success is faith.



# Soleimani was a great man. Period.

By Martin Love

As an elderly American now, I have witnessed the apparent decline of my country in most all respects (except perhaps in military power) in to what appears to be an insane number of wrong-way turns since I was a youth in in the 1960s. It was with the Vietnam War that the pretensions or fact of "Empire" really began to take hold. That was a war based on a lie in the Gulf of Tonkin just as all the other aggressions have been based on lies, in particular the war on Iraq beginning in 2003, which was anathema to Soleimani and gave rise to all sorts of carnage in the Mideast and gave rise to ISIS.

The "Pax" part of any alleged "Pax Americana" may have been mostly evident for those actually living securely in the U.S., but rarely overseas, and like many Americans who still have a brain I have been appalled by the bellicose actions of my government. I was horrified by the murder of Qassem Soleimani three years ago no less even though I knew not much about this lionized Iranian leader — except that what I saw of this general in the news suggested that if a military man could ever at bottom be a "man of peace", Soleimani fit that description. He appeared extremely smart and extremely warm and charismatic to anyone who took a close look, and he was not afraid of calling out "wrong way" turns by the U.S. which, of course, made him seem an enemy of the deeply entrenched Washington establishment which has long been built around hostility to any country or person objecting to U.S. pretensions of a dominance that spurned fairness and justice and basic respect for other polities and cultures.

Interesting or not, it's worth mentioning that I remember exactly where I was when I heard that President John

F. Kennedy had been assassinated — a teenager in a study hall in a boarding school in Connecticut that Kennedy had also attended as a youth. And now Joe Biden recently opened up files about the Kennedy assassination, but not all of them. ALL of them apparently suggested that the CIA may have had a hand in the murder because Kennedy was opposed to the burgeoning, then potential war on Vietnam unlike his vice President Lyndon Johnson, and Kennedy may have also believed the CIA ought to have been disbanded. Real truths have always been hard to ferret out because lies have often been deployed to underpin the so-called U.S. empire. Propaganda silencing dissent back in the 60s was as rampant then as it remains today. No doubt the official posture about General Soleimani as some sort of U.S. enemy who seriously threatened the U.S. was pure propaganda. The U.S. for example pretended to be an enemy of ISIS, an organization it originally may

**"What I saw of this general in the news suggested that if a military man could ever at bottom be a 'man of peace', Soleimani fit that description."**

have helped create in Iraq and Syria in opposition to Assad's Syria especially, but who in fact was the real and effective enemy of the ISIS scourge? Soleimani, who largely more or less defeated most of ISIS power both in Iraq and Syria.

What's largely unknown to most Americans is that before the U.S. invasion of Iraq right after the attack on the World Trade Center in New York, Soleimani and Iran actually worked indirectly with the U.S. and helped the U.S. subdue the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, groups which also constituted a threat to Iran as its immediate neighbor. This was reported even by the Washington Post. One might be hard pressed not to expect the U.S. to go after al-Qaeda whose leader Osama bin Laden, a Saudi, was holed up in Afghanistan, but of course nothing was done against other perps in Saudi Arabia. The U.S. attacked and occupied Afghanistan at least on the presumption the Taliban was in cahoots

with al-Qaeda, which allegedly knocked down the twin towers and set off the U.S. military rampages across West Asia. The U.S. had some justification perhaps to go after Osama bin Laden, and Iran and Soleimani did assist in some fashion.

Some have opined that the assassination of the great general in Baghdad was a gross reaction of revenge to the fact that Assad survived the bloody carnage in Syria and remains in control of much of the country, except in the east where the U.S. is still stealing Syria's oil and wheat and has impoverished the country at large with that theft and other sanctions. The Russians and Soleimani literally saved Assad's Syria, which before the war there, despite having the Golan stolen by the Zionists, had been a relatively peaceful, self-contained country and largely self-sufficient and relatively prosperous by Mideast standards since 1973.

And the U.S. revenge factor is now playing out in Ukraine where the U.S. undeniably provoked Russia to attack and has seen that, albeit proxy, war as a means to hobble Russia and Putin, perhaps in part because of Russia's assistance to Assad among other issues. Well, digging a bit deeper, what country has been behind the U.S. wars on Iraq and the war on Syria? Israel, it can be argued, has been the prime underlying cause of every U.S. hostility in West Asia against countries that rightfully deplore Zionist aggressions, especially in the West Bank and Gaza. It's a good thing the nascent Netanyahu government with racists Ben Gvir and Smotrich in high positions in the Apartheid state



has come to power. It's so extremely racist and selfish that even some members in Congress are sounding alarms, as well as some Israelis as reported in Ha'aretz, Israel's sole newspaper with at least some credibility and wisdom. This new government may be in time the key that forces a tipping point where Washington will be obliged to reject so much support for the Zionists. One can imagine that

if Soleimani were still alive he'd be especially appalled again by the Zionists but might have some scintilla of optimism that things will get so out of hand and craven in Israel that change will come in time. Meanwhile Biden has recently killed hopes that the JCPOA may be revived and sanctions on Iran lifted. Scuttling the JCPOA has long been encouraged by the Zionists, perhaps because they know if it were revived, Israel could not attack Iran. It's hard not to believe that especially in this century Israel is at bottom the causative factor in so much chaos and carnage in West Asia.

But in any case, Soleimani was a great leader and a man of such charisma that he will never be forgotten. He had a smile and a twinkle in his eyes like few others have ever had.

## MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: SAVING IRAQI KURDISTAN

1 ISIS advances to Erbil gate, Iraq



2 ISIS has reached the borders of Erbil. I need to contact the local US command now!



3 How is it even possible that you can't help us at all?

4 I made contact with US, UK, France, and even Saudi! No one would help us



5 Make contact with Iran as well, I'm pretty sure they won't reject your request.

6 We are awaiting you, General. We don't have much time.

7 Resist tonight. We will be in Erbil early in the morning.



8 Arrival of General Soleimani with 50 troops in Erbil



9 We thought no one would come to help us. Welcome General!



10 Planning and organizing the fight against ISIS with 50 Quds troops



11 Erbil was on the verge of being conquered by you! How did you end up running away?

12 Attack



18 We had a spy in Erbil. Everyone's hope was dashed when we found out that Soleimani was here, and many chose to retreat.



# WANTED



## We will never forget

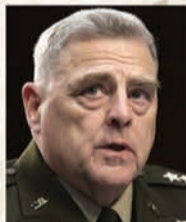


Donald Trump



Mike Pompeo

01:20  
Baghdad Airport



Mark Alexander Milley



Robert Charles O'Brien



Paul Miki Nakasone



Robert Greenway



Victoria C. Gardner Coates



Matthew F. Pottinger



Joseph Keith Kellogg



Frank Dixon Whitworth



Andrew Peter Poppas



Kenneth Frank McKenzie



Richard Douglas Clarke



Scott Alan Howell



James C. Slife



Joseph Thomas Guastella



James Michael Holmes



David Goldfein



Stephen R. Jones



Jason B. Bell, Vice



Andre T. Johnson



Kevin Auger



Jordan Smith



Abishai Giles



Landon Quan



Mark R. August



Bradley Chance Saltzman



Mark Holmes Slocum



Jason Colon



Timothy Garland



Staci Coleman



Kurt A. Wendt



Alexis Gregory Grynkeiwich



Daniel H. Tulley



Rodney Lee Simpson



Charles Seth Corcoran



John M. "Jack" Keane



Reuel Mark Gerecht



Andrew Croft



Nimarta Nikki Haley



John Michael "Mick" Mulvaney



Erik Dean Prince



James Neal Blue



Linden Stanley Blue



Antonio Dorce



Michael Anthony D'Andrea



Allen Ray Henderson



Nathan Andrew Mead



Brenden Edrina



Tayler Arbaugh



Ryan Kuhn



Jordan Cornelius



Korbin Steinwehr



# Hajj Qassem: On the cutting edge of Islamic Resistance

By Yuram Abdullah Weiler

*"And do not speak of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead; nay, they are alive, but you do not perceive"—Quran 2:154*

General Hajj Qassem Soleimani was a unique, multi-dimensional individual who possessed impeccable character, unmatched leadership capability and military strategy skills in rare combination with a warm, caring and self-sacrificing personality. He was the embodiment of an exemplary Islamic leader, concerned for his soldiers, his country, Iran, and the entire Islamic Ummah, attaining martyrdom while honing the cutting edge of the Islamic Resistance movement.

Concerning Hajj Qassem's efforts in training capable and effective Islamic resistance forces in Iran and throughout the countries now referred to as the "Axis of Resistance," President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Seyyed Dr. Ebrahim Raisi said, "This work of Hajj Qassem created a huge potential in the World of Islam." The potential referred to here is what has been called the "School of Hajj Qassem Soleimani," which includes being committed to the Islamic Revolution, having the wisdom and acumen to use courage on the path of God, observing Islamic legal principles, and taking care not to transgress against other people's rights.

Born on March 11, 1957 in the small village of Qanat-e Malek in Kerman Province, Hajj Qassem went to work at age 13 as a construction laborer in the city of Kerman to help his father pay off a debt, which had been incurred as a result of Mohammad Reza Shah's mismanaged and misguided White Revolution land reforms. In 1975 he went to work at the Kerman Water Organization, and by 1976, he was introduced to revolutionary activities

by attending lectures given by Martyr Hojjat al-Eslam Reza Kamyab during the month of Ramadan. While still at the water works, young Hajj Qassem joined the Association of Honorary Guardsmen, the predecessor of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which had established a command post in Kerman by May of 1979.

His natural strategic military prowess was quickly recognized, resulting in rapid advancement through the ranks, and soon, he was appointed commander of the IRGC Quds Force garrison in Kerman. After Saddam invaded Iran on September 22, 1980, the young commander participated in most major campaigns of the 8-year-long war imposed by Iraq, which is known in Iran as the Defa-e Moqaddas or Sacred Defense. He was promoted rapidly, and soon became the commander of the Forty-First Thar-Allah Division. Following the end of the war, he and his 41st Division were assigned the task of securing Kerman and Sistan and Baluchistan Province against drug cartels. His success in carrying out these tasks led to his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC Quds Force.

After the killing of nine Iranian diplomats and one Islamic Republic News Agency journalist in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan, Hajj Qassem was dispatched to deal with the new threats emanating from there. After amassing some two hundred thousand troops near the Iran-Afghanistan border, he demonstrated his strategic expertise by avoiding a direct clash with the Taliban, and instead guided operations in support of the United Islamic Front (Northern Alliance) for the protection of Iranian assets in Afghanistan.

When popular uprisings arose in early 2011 in various Muslim-majority countries, the U.S. saw a rare opportunity: by coopting them Washington would neutralize threats

against its favored puppet rulers and incite and amplify protests in order to topple those governments, such as Syria's President Bashar al-Assad, which were perceived as challengers to U.S. hegemony. Likewise, Washington set out to destabilize Lebanon, where Hajj Qassem had trained and advised the fledgling Islamic Resistance Movement, Hezbollah, from the mid-1980s, and guided them to their humiliating defeat of the Zionist invaders during the 33-Day War in summer, 2006. Through logistical support of what was al-Qaeda of Iraq, which morphed into the so-called Islamic State, the Washington war lords hoped to see the establishment of a "salafist principality" in Eastern Syria and Western Iraq. Thankfully, the U.S. failed to achieve its nefarious objectives in Syria and Iraq as a result of the diligent efforts made by Hajj Qassem in establishing and training the numerous components that make up the Islamic Resistance.

Of course, the U.S. was responsible for the creation of ISIS, as was admitted by former secretary of state and presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. After ISIS had gained a foothold in Syria and Iraq, capturing the western part of the city of Erbil, President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq Masoud Barzani contacted officials in the U.S., Turkey, Britain, France and even Saudi Arabia for help, but none provided aid. Barzani then called on Hajj

Qassem, who said he would be in Erbil the next morning with 50 men. When Hajj Qassem arrived at the airport, he quickly headed for the conflict zone with his men, reorganized the Peshmerga forces, and within a few hours turned the tables on the ISIS terrorists. A most charismatic commander, Hajj Qassem, was always physically present among the fighters on the cutting edge of the resistance, confronting the U.S.-backed terrorists not only in Iraq, but also in Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere in West Asia.

On January 3, 2020 while enroute to meet with Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi al-Muntafiki, Hajj Qassem was assassinated outside of Baghdad International Airport by order of the criminal occupant of the

Oval Office of the White House in Washington. Initially portrayed as a "decisive defensive action to protect U.S. personnel abroad" from imminent attack, the Heavenly Commander's martyrdom operation carried out by terrorist U.S. armed forces was later justified under the pretext of responding to "an escalating series of attacks ... by Iran and Iran-backed militias," contradicting the original pretense. Also killed in the illegal strike were deputy chairman of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces

After ISIS had gained a foothold in Syria and Iraq, capturing the western part of the city of Erbil, KRG's Masoud Barzani contacted the U.S., Turkey, Britain, France and even Saudi Arabia for help, but none provided aid. Barzani then called on Hajj Qassem, who said he would be in Erbil the next morning with 50 men.

(Al-Hashd al-Sha'bi or PMF) and commander of the Kata'ib Hezbollah militia, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, along with four Iraqi members

of the PMF, Muhammed Reza al-Jaberi, Hassan Abdu al-Hadi, Muhammad al-Shaybani and Haider Ali. Additionally, four other Iranian members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Hossein Pourjafari, Shahroud Mozafarinia, Hadi Taremi and Vahid Zamanian were also martyred in the attack.

Astoundingly, the miscreants inside the Beltway even tried to justify their iniquitous assassination of Hajj Qassem by the 2002 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), which was intended to authorize the U.S. invasion of Iraq to topple Saddam's government and to address terrorist threats emanating from Iraq. If that was not amply absurd, the corrupt U.S. war ministry lawyers even invoked Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which applies in cases of national self-defense against attack, in order to justify their criminal act of killing General Soleimani, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and the others. U.S. Representative Eliot L. Engel, Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs stated, "This legal theory is absurd. The 2002 authorization [AUMF] was passed to deal with Saddam Hussein. This law had nothing to do with Iran or Iranian government officials in Iraq." UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions Agnès Callamard concluded "in light of the evidence that the U.S. has provided to date, the targeting of General Soleimani, and the deaths of those accompanying him, constitute an arbitrary killing for which, under IHRL, the U.S. is responsible."

On January 8, 2020, the Islamic Republic of Iran took its own "decisive defensive action" against the satanic Washington regime, and initiated its retaliation by precision ballistic missile strikes on the occupiers' positions in Iraq, including Ain al-Assad airbase from which the U.S. assassination drone strike killing General Hajj Qassem was launched. Over 100 U.S. soldiers received traumatic brain injury as a result of the retaliatory action by Iran. This is while the former commander-in-chief of the global arrogance, who himself managed to avoid serving in his country's military, minimized the severity of Iran's stunning pinpoint strike, quipping that he had "heard that they [the U.S. soldiers] had headaches and a couple of other things."

As a consequence of the martyrdom of Hajj Qassem, and much to the dismay of the arrogant power's strategic schemers, Iraq was compelled to further reinforce its existing close ties with Iran. Iraq's parliament took the bold step of passing a resolution calling for the expulsion of the U.S. occupying forces from Iraq, thus making a clear statement by preferring to turn east to its neighbor and cut its ties with the Washington regime. "The vote confirms that if Iraqis are cornered and forced to choose between the United States and Iran," writes Atlantic Council Senior Fellow Abbas Kadhim, "they will find it safer to choose Iran."

Hajj Qassem was on the cutting edge of Islamic Resistance up to the very last moment of his earthly existence. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei stated that Hajj Qassem's "departure to God does not end his path or his mission, but a forceful revenge awaits the criminals." May the forceful revenge against the global arrogance that martyred General Hajj Qassem Soleimani come speedily and soon, insha'Allah.

## The principles Gen. Soleimani stood for are alive: peace activist

*'General Soleimani was known as a strong opponent of terrorism'*

By Mohammad Hassan Nikbin

TEHRAN - Robert Fantina, an American-Canadian peace and social activist, tells the Tehran Times that says General Soleimani was assassinated in a terrorist attack "but the principles he stood for are" are alive.

Fantina, who also serves on the boards of "Canadian Voices for Palestinian Rights", says, "The United States had an uneven relationship with ISIS, but Iran and General Soleimani were unequivocal."

Following is the text of the interview:

**Why Americans were so hateful from General Soleimani?**

It isn't the United States public, but the U.S. government that hated General Soleimani. Some citizens, if they have even heard of the general, hate him because they believe U.S. propaganda. U.S. government officials resent the Iranian government, and all its officials, for two basic reasons. First, the people of Iran

overthrew the cruel, repressive puppet government installed by and supported by the U.S. Second, Iran rivals apartheid Israel as a powerful nation in the Middle East, and the U.S. only allows nations to have power if they will do the U.S.'s bidding; Iran refuses. Therefore, U.S. government officials demonize all Iranian officials, and a strong, powerful and much-respected man such as General Soleimani is beyond what U.S. officials can tolerate.

**Describe Gen. Soleimani's role in fighting terrorism and defeating ISIS in the Middle East.**

General Soleimani was known as a strong opponent of terrorism, and worked with officials from other countries to defeat ISIS. The United States had an uneven relationship with ISIS, but Iran and General Soleimani were unequivocal: ISIS must be stopped. The U.S. has fostered terrorism throughout the Middle East, from its invasion of Iraq to its support for anti-government forces in Syria, causing untold suffering throughout the region. Gen-

eral Soleimani was an ally to those who oppose terrorism.

**Have the world and its legal bodies been acting effectively in condemning Washington's terrorist action in assassinating Soleimani?**

No. There should have been an international outcry against this criminal action. The assassination of General Soleimani was a gross violation of international law, yet the officials of most nations were mainly silent about it. Those officials may think it was in their best interests to say nothing, because if they spoke, they might risk angering the U.S. However, they should be aware that allowing the U.S. to commit such a crime with complete impunity only means that, should one of their officials displease the U.S., the same fate may await him or her.

**Mourning for Soleimani was unique inside and outside Iran. And even different nations express their sorrow on his anniversary. What message does this support convey to the world,**



particularly the U.S. and the Zionist regime?

General Soleimani is dead, but the principles he stood for are not; if officials in the U.S. believed that by killing him they would break the Iranian spirit, or remove the only capable leader in the nation, they were mistaken. His

legacy of loyalty to Iran and hostility to anyone who threatens it lives on not only in the leadership of the nation, but with Iran's people. The U.S. and the Zionist entity did themselves no favor, and gained no advantage, by this criminal assassination.



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By **Sadegh Fereydounabadi**

TEHRAN – Almost two years into his assassination, Iran still seeks revenge for the martyrdom of General Qassem Soleimani, turning the revenge into a strategy of mobilization against the United States in the West Asia region.

In a recent speech, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, once again reminded the United States that Iran not only has not forgotten the late commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps' Quds Force, but its determination to take revenge on Washington for his martyrdom is still very much on the agenda.

"Of course, they [Americans] have shown great enmity toward us, but the Iranian nation – getting the better of them – has thwarted many of these enmities. Some of these events are still with us, we have not forgotten them. We will never forget the martyrdom of Martyr Soleimani, they should know this! We have said some things about this and we stand by our word. It will happen at the right time, at the right place, God willing," Ayatollah Khamenei said on November 2, 2022.

This comes at a time when three years has passed since the assassination of General Soleimani. The U.S. targeted the top Iranian general in the early days of 2020 at the Baghdad airport, setting off a barrage of Iranian vows for retribution. Of course, Iran took revenge immediately after holding a huge funeral service for the general by striking a U.S. base in western Iraq with missiles. But that was not enough, Iranian officials implied. They said that the right vengeance for General Soleimani's assassination is the expulsion of the U.S. from the West Asia region.

In a sense, what started with a missile strike gradually evolved into a long-term, multi-pronged strategy that aims to achieve what General Soleimani dedicated his entire life to that is the expulsion of the United States from the West Asia region.

This was on full display after the assassination of General Soleimani. Shortly after the assassination, the Iraqi parliament passed a law obligating the Iraqi government to work toward expelling the U.S. forces from their country. Simultaneously, Iraqi resistance forces step up their resistance, which forced the U.S. to evacuate a number of its bases.

The events following the assassination of General Soleimani and his comrade Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis indicated that the assassination of the two men, also known as the com-



# The strategy of revenge

manders of victory in Iraq, became a source of concern for the United States and its allies as millions of people in the region were deeply moved by the assassination.

Many believe that martyr Soleimani proved more dangerous to the U.S. than General Soleimani. A few weeks after the assassination, the chief commander of the Islamic Revolution of Guards Corps (IRGC) made it clear that martyr Soleimani will come to haunt the U.S. even more than General Soleimani did during his life.

The martyrdom of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani was a new beginning for the fallen general, said the IRGC chief, noting that "Martyr Soleimani" is more alive and more dangerous for the enemy than "Qassem Solei-

mani."

"Hajj Qassem had displaced and bewildered the enemy and was a man of changing the power balance at the peak of inequality," General Salami noted.

He made the remarks at a ceremony to introduce the new commander of the IRGC Quds Force, attended by senior commanders of the Iranian armed forces.

"General Martyr Soleimani had taken his own revenge on the enemy in several occasions long before his martyrdom," Salami said.

He added that Soleimani's activities had worn the U.S. and the Zionist regime out.

"In Hajj Qassem's view, there was no equa-

tion that could not be solved. At the heart of danger, he was a mountain of calm and serenity and had drawn the enemies into defeat," Salami said.

In a January 2022 speech, Ayatollah Khamenei pointed to how the assassination of General Soleimani plagued the U.S. "Someone once said that 'Martyr' Soleimani is more dangerous for his enemies than 'General' Soleimani. He understood correctly. This is really the case. Those who martyred Martyr Soleimani, dear Martyr Abu-Mahdi and their comrades two years ago thought the case was over. The enemies thought by assassinating them, everything was over," the Leader asserted.

He added, "But you should look at what condition they are in today. Look at the situation of the U.S. They fled from Afghanistan in that way. And in Iraq, they were forced to pretend that they had intended to withdraw their forces – of course, our Iraqi brothers should pursue this matter vigilantly. They were forced to announce that from now on, they will only play an 'advisory' role. In other words, they are acknowledging that they will not and cannot have a military presence there anymore. You should also look at the status of the U.S. in Yemen and Lebanon. The anti-arrogance movement and the Resistance movement in the region are moving forward in a stronger, more dynamic and more hopeful way than two years ago. In Syria, the enemies are faced with a dead end. The enemies in Syria have no hope for the future. These are blessings from that dear, innocent blood."

General Salami outlined in an interview how the martyrdom of General Soleimani proved more dangerous for the enemies.

He said revenge for General Soleimani has become a strategy and cause. "When Qassem was alive, we used to know one General Soleimani. But when he got martyred, a kind of revolution took place in the hearts and engrossed them and penetrated and multiplied in the personality of young people. One Qassem became millions of Qassem, and now all of them are talking about revenge," the IRGC chief said in an interview with [khamenei.ir](http://khamenei.ir).

He added, "Well, he became more dangerous. Now, revenge has become a strategy, a wish, an ideal and a point of departure. After the martyrdom of Qassem, the tendency of young people to jihad has increased. This poses a danger to the enemy. Whenever we are not afraid of death, we are dangerous."

# Who is General Soleimani?

## The Iranian General who destroyed ISIS

**Born 1957**  
Born in Qanat Malek village in Kerman province, IRAN

**The Revolution 1979**  
Joined the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps

**IRGC 1980**  
Joined Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in the war against Saddam Hussein's regime

**41<sup>st</sup> Division 1982**  
led an Iranian elite force known as Thar Allah 41<sup>st</sup> division

**Narco traffic 1989**  
Responsible for combating Drug trafficking in Iran's borders

**The Man without shadow 2013**  
One of the representatives of Iraqi Kurdistan mentioned about Soleimani's important role in the West Asian region and mentioned Soleimani's title among Arab generals: "The Man without shadow"

**Major General 2010**  
By the decree of Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran Supreme Leader, Haj Qasem was promoted to the rank of major general

**Hezbollah 2006**  
Participating in the 33-day war command against Israel and turning Hezbollah into a powerful and influential force in the region

**The Quds Force 1998**  
He was appointed commander of the Quds Force and was tasked to protect the Iranian revolution and carry out military and secret operations outside the Iranian borders to defend the oppressed of the world

**ISIS 2017**  
Since 2011, Soleimani led the fight against ISIS and other US-backed terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria. In 2017, he announced the defeat of ISIS by recapturing the last territory of this terrorist group in the battle of Al-Bukamal

**Zolfaghar Medal 2018**  
Soleimani received the "Zolfaghar" ensign, the highest military medal of the Islamic Republic of Iran, from the Supreme Leader

**The Martyrdom 2020**  
Soleimani was assassinated on 3 January 2020 around 1:00 a.m. local time by U.S. drone strike near Baghdad International Airport. Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, Deputy Chairman of Popular Mobilization Committee of Iraq was also martyred alongside his comrade, Haj Qasem

**Painful revenge**  
After Iran's missile attack on Ain al-Assad base (the first official attack on American forces since World War II) Ayatollah Khamenei considered Iran's final revenge against America to be the expulsion of American forces from the West Asian region

**The Heroic Commander**  
Ayatollah Khamenei eulogized "Haj Qasem" in glowing terms, calling him "the heroic commander of the Iranian nation," who entered the battlefield "without a shred of fear and with complete power and acumen," and did "amazing things."