

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iranian lawmakers on Wednesday condemned "meaningful" silence of the Western media in the face of Saudi Arabia's ongoing aggression in Yemen. "In an era that certain Western countries, including the U.S., claim to be a champion of human rights, we are unfortunately witnessing horrific crimes being perpetrated against the oppressed and defenseless Yemeni people by the Saudi regime amid the silence of Western media," a total of 191 lawmakers said in a statement.

TEHRAN (Tasnim) -- Iranian President Hassan Rouhani plans to pay an official visit to Austria in the near future in a bid to boost bilateral relations between the two countries, the Austrian ambassador to Tehran said. Speaking at a meeting with head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce Gholam-Hussein Shafei here, Stefan Scholz said that President Rouhani will travel to Austria soon. The Austrian foreign minister has decided to dispatch one of his deputies to the Islamic Republic to make arrangements for President Rouhani's upcoming visit, he added.

Viewpoint
By Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer
Nation Displays Exemplary Effort to Help Quake Victims

'Limit' Wins 3 More Awards at Intl. Film Festival

Paralympic Champion Auctions Gold to Help Iran Quake Victims

Wahhabis' Defeat in Syria Caused 'Hysteria' in Saudi Dictatorship

Farewell O Messenger of Mercy

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

"Muhammad is but a Prophet; [other] prophets have passed before him. If he dies or is slain, will you turn back on your heels? Anyone who turns back on his heels will not harm Allah in the least, and soon Allah will reward the grateful." (Holy Qur'an 3:144)

The above ayah was revealed by God Almighty during the crucial Battle of Ohad in 3 AH when most of the Muslims thinking Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) had been martyred in the pagan ambush led by Khaled bin Waleed, fled the battlefield including some senior companions who would later style themselves as 'caliphs' - although neither the Prophet had appointed them to such a post nor did God reveal any ayah in their favour.

The Person whom God entrusted with the universal message of Islam to bring mankind out of darkness and bequeath to all mankind the lasting legacy of monotheism and virtue, was destined to live for over seven more years before wrapping up his 23-year mission with clear instructions on completion of faith and perfection of the shari'ah (code of laws), in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Holy Qur'an - the final heavenly scripture.

We are on the threshold of that doleful day (Safar 28) when the Messenger of Mercy bade adieu to the mortal world at the age of 63, as his health deteriorated, leaving in grief his sincere followers, especially his immediate family, the Ahl al-Bayt, whose pristine purity God Almighty Himself has vouchsafed in the Holy Qur'an (33:33). These were none other than his Immaculate Daughter, Hazrat Fatema Zahra (SA), the Noblest lady of all times, her husband, the Prophet's dear cousin and ward, Imam Ali (AS), the Leader of the Pious, and her four young children, especially Imam Hasan (AS) and Imam Husain (AS), whom the grandfather on divine commandment had hailed as "Leaders of the Youths of Paradise".

Of course, there were paternal uncle Abbas, cousins, and children of Ja'far his martyred cousin, as well as the several spouses that he had taken in Medina in his middle age out of social necessity to break the taboos of the days of Jahiliyya, following the passing away in Mecca of his virtuous wife of 25-long happy marital years, Hazrat Khadija (SA), the Mother of all True Believers (Omm al-Momineen).

The Seal of Messengers had led a simple but exemplary life, and in addition to saving from the brink of hell the pagan Arabs, had enlightened Jews and Christians with the dynamic teachings of Islam by pointing to prophecies in their respective scriptures about his mission, as foretold by the Israelite prophets, especially Moses and Jesus (peace upon them).

He had also transformed Rouzbeh the Persian from a Zoroastrian family of Iran into a staunch Muslim, now famous as "Salman" whose higher degrees of faith which no Arab could match, which prompted the Prophet to express the famous phrase found in the books of hadith and history of all Muslim denominations: "Salman minna Ahl al-Bayt" (Salman is from us the People of the House).

Then there were black-skinned Africans such as Bilal the Abyssinian (his Muezzin or Caller to Prayer), and from among the Europeans who impressed by his peerless personality embraced Islam, there was Suhayb the Roman.

There are also reports in Islamic texts of the deliverance from idolatry of some Hindus who in quest of truth had made the journey to Hijaz to meet the Last and Greatest Prophet.

The day had now dawned for the departure from the transient world of the "Mercy unto the whole creation" regarding whom God tells the Arabs - many of whom never fully believed in Islam and had become Muslims with the turning tide of the times in quest of material gains and political positions (otherwise Surah "Munafiqoun" [Hypocrites] would not have been revealed):

"Your companion has neither gone astray, nor gone amiss. Nor does he speak out of [his own] desire. It is but revelation that is revealed [to him]." (Holy Qur'an 53:2-4)

As the "Habibollah" (Most Deared of God), he had diligently carried out his duties regarding the fundamentals of faith, the obligatory acts of worship, social norms, family ethics, principles of healthy economy, defence issues of the Islamic realm, pursuit of knowledge, piety, mercy and magnanimity in battles that are often imposed by the shortsighted enemies of humanity, commitment to political pacts, and above all Divinely-Ordained Succession to him, so that Imamate among his Rightful Heirs will remain forever as Beacon of Light and Ark of Guidance for all mankind, in contrast to the usurpation of political rule or caliphate of the deviated that some of his companions would set up, having denied him ink and quill three days before his death to write his Last Will.

Nonetheless, he was fully satisfied for having fulfilled whatever God had commanded to him, as was evident at every turn, especially during the past few months during his Farewell Hajj Pilgrimage, when in his famous sermon from atop Mount Mercy (Jabal ar-Rahma) on the Day of Arafah (9th Zilhijja) on the Plain of the same name, he had explicitly spelled out the formula of faith and unity by proclaiming the *Hadith Thaqalayn*:

"The Almighty has informed that I am about to depart. I am leaving behind among you the Two Weighty Things (Thaqalayn), the Book of God (Holy Qur'an) and my progeny the Ahl al-Bayt. Hold fast to them and you will never go astray, for you will be questioned about your behaviour towards them after me. The two never part with each other, even when they return to me at the Fountain (on the Day of Judgment)."

Then nine days later on the 18th of Zilhijja, addressing a huge 120,000 strong assembly of Muslims at the Ghadeer (pond) of Khom, on the express orders of God Almighty, Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) proclaimed Imam Ali (AS) as his Vicegerent, with the words:

"Man kunto Mowla fa haza Aliyun Mowla" (for whomsoever I am Master, this Ali is his Master).

Thus, on the 28th of Safar, in his daughter Fatema's (SA) house, he lay down with his head resting on the lap of his son-in-law Imam Ali (AS), and embracing his two grandsons, Imam Hasan (AS) and Imam Husain (AS), he gave the grieving family vital guidelines regarding patience, steadfastness, and tidings of martyrdom at the hands of the deviated, in defence of Islam, before his soul flew to the ethereal heavens.

President Rouhani: Saudis Begged Zionists to Bomb Lebanon



Donald Trump's son-in-law and chief Middle East adviser Jared Kushner, center, watches a ceremony where the U.S. president was presented with The Collar of Abdulaziz Al Saud Medal in Riyadh on May 20, 2017. Kushner paid a secret visit to Saudi Arabia last month during his Middle East foray which also included a trip to Occupied Palestine.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Wednesday that Saudi Arabia had implored the occupying regime of Israel to bomb Lebanon, calling it an unprecedented act by a Muslim country.

"It is very reprehensible and shameful for a Muslim country in the region to beg the Zionist regime to bomb the people of Lebanon," Rouhani said. "It is unprecedented in history for a Muslim country to take such mea-

sures, and this indicates the immaturity of the individuals, who have come to power in those countries," Rouhani said during a government meeting. Tensions rapidly increased in Leba-

non with the resignation of Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri earlier this month during a visit to Saudi Arabia. "Your blatant intervention in an independent country like Lebanon and your demands for the Prime Minister (Saad Hariri) to resign and providing someone else instead (to take over from Hariri), is an unprecedented event in modern history," Rouhani said in an address to Saudi authorities. Hariri's situation is not completely clear and calls, including from his Lebanese political rivals, have mounted for Saudi Arabia to guarantee the prime minister's freedom of movement. The 47-year-old announced his resignation on November 4 in a surprise move that coincided with a sweeping purge in the Saudi kingdom's elite, ostensibly over embezzlement accusations. He condemned Hezbollah and Iran and said his life was in danger. Hariri, who was born in Saudi Arabia, did not say when he would return to Lebanon, where President Michel Aoun has yet to formally accept his resignation. On Wednesday, Aoun upped his

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Military Coup in Zimbabwe: Mugabe in Custody

HARARE (AP) -- Zimbabwe's army said Wednesday it has President Robert Mugabe and his wife in custody and is securing government offices and patrolling the capital's streets following a night of unrest that included a military takeover of the state broadcaster. The night's action triggered speculation of a coup, but the military's supporters praised it as a "bloodless correction." Armed soldiers in armored personnel carriers stationed themselves at key points in Harare, while Zimbabweans formed long lines at banks in order to draw the limited cash available, a routine chore in the country's ongoing

financial crisis. People looked at their phones to read about the army takeover and others went to work or to shops. In an address to the nation after taking control of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, an army spokesman said early Wednesday the military is targeting "criminals" around Mugabe, and sought to reassure the country that order will be restored. It was not clear where Mugabe, 93, and his wife were Wednesday but it seems they are in the custody of the military. "Their security is guaranteed," the army spokesman said.

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Turkey: U.S. Let Hundreds of Daesh Leave Raqqa

ANKARA (Dispatches) -- Turkey on Wednesday condemned as "an extremely grave revelation" the escape of hundreds of extremists from the Syrian city of Raqqa, saying it underscored the perils of Washington's alliance with Kurdish militants. The U.S.-backed SDF militants said over 3,000 civilians had left Raqqa on October 14 as part of a deal with Daesh terrorists. The U.S. military later acknowledged that of these up to 300 were seen as "potential" Daesh members, following a BBC report that hundreds of Takfiri terrorists, including foreigners, had left as part of the deal.

Daesh left Raqqa to U.S. troops and their allies on October 17 after months of fighting. The Turkish foreign ministry described the information as an "extremely grave and eye-opening revelation", accusing the SDF of negotiating with Daesh to evacuate Takfiri terrorists. The SDF is dominated by the so-called Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), which Ankara views as a "terror" group linked to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) waging an insurgency inside Turkey.

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New Sex Abuse Revelations Rock U.S. Congress

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- Two female U.S. lawmakers accused three sitting male members of Congress of sexual misconduct during a hearing in which they criticized the House's sexual harassment policies and called for reform. Rep. Barbara Comstock, a Virginia Republican, told the story of an unnamed congressman who asked a female aide to deliver work materials to his home, greeted her dressed in towel, and proceeded to expose his private parts to her. The aide quickly left the congressman's home and later quit her job. "What are we doing here for wom-

en right now who are dealing with somebody like that?" Comstock asked the panel, which included representatives from the Office of Compliance and the Office of House Employment Counsel, which deal with congressional sexual misconduct allegations. Comstock argued that there should be stronger punishments for perpetrators and a safer environment for victims to come out of "the shadows." "I think it's important we name names," Comstock said of the perpetrators. Rep. Jackie Speier, a California

Democrat who recently came forward with her own stories of being sexually assaulted as a young congressional staffer, accused two sitting male lawmakers -- one a Democrat and the other a Republican -- of sexual harassment. She did not disclose the accused's identities. Speier, who said he's had "numerous" conversations with both female and male staffers who "have been subjected to this inexcusable and sometimes illegal behavior," argued for reforming the system by which victims seek redress. The congresswoman, who has called the House and Senate "among the worst" in

terms of hostile work environments, said the process is stacked against the victim and discourages them from coming forward with their allegations. Speier lambasted the current process for reporting misconduct, which requires that the victim undergo 30 days of mandatory counseling and mediation and sign a nondisclosure agreement. "The present system may have been okay in the dark ages," Speier said. "It is not appropriate for the 21st century." In recent weeks, several female

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