

Hariri Puts Off Resignation in Beirut

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- Prime Minister Saad Hariri postponed handing in his resignation Wednesday upon the request of President Michel Aoun, amidst Independence Day celebrations.

"I offered my resignation to President Aoun and he asked me to put off presenting it, to allow for more consultations on the reasons for it and its political background," Hariri told reporters from Baabda Palace, speaking after a sit-down with Aoun that was held as guests arrived at the palace for an Independence Day reception.

Kayhan International



Iran Rejects Tunisian Mediation on Saudi Crisis

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi on Wednesday dismissed as unfounded a report claiming that Tehran had requested Tunis to mediate in the tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

"Iran has made no requests to Tunisia for mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia and this report is rejected," Qasemi said. The daily Al Jarida had claimed earlier that an Iranian official had been sent to Tunisia to request the country mediate between Tehran and Riyadh.

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Viewpoint

By Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

Nightmare Grips the Wahhabi-Zionist-Yankee Triumvirate

Rouhani, Putin, Erdgoan Meet in Sochi: Syria Has 'Real Chance' to End War

SOCHI, Russia (Dispatches) -- Russian President Vladimir Putin said here Wednesday there's a "real chance" to end the six-and-half-year war in Syria as he met his counterparts from Iran and Turkey seeking to seal a peace deal that is to keep President Bashar al-Assad in power.

Putin's summit talks with Iran's Hassan Rouhani and Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan in this Black Sea resort came just two days after he hosted Assad in a surprise visit.

The Russian leader also spoke to U.S. President Donald Trump and leaders of Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the occupying regime of Israel and Egypt as the Kremlin rallies international support for a diplomatic drive.

"The militants in Syria have been dealt a decisive blow and a real chance has appeared to bring an end to many years of civil war," Putin said, adding that a political settlement in Syria is now the "strategic task."

Assad confirmed his commitment to a political process including a new constitution and the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections, the Kremlin said in a statement after the call with Trump.

Iran, Russia and Turkey are taking the dominant role in efforts to end the bloody war against a range of armed foes including Takfiri terrorists and other militants supported by the U.S. and its allies. That has left the U.S., which under Trump's predecessor Barack Obama pushed for Assad's ouster, on the sidelines.

Turkey, which had long sought Assad's ouster, now is seeking a freer hand to fight U.S.-backed Kurd-

ish militants in Syria.

"Critical decisions" will be made in Sochi, Erdogan said. The Syrian people won't allow foreigners to interfere in their domestic affairs, Rouhani said.

In the Saudi capital, Riyadh, Syrian opposition groups also met Wednesday to discuss forming a single bloc to negotiate with Assad. Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir told state-run television that the kingdom would support the Syrian opposition groups to "emerge united" from the Riyadh meeting.

The leader of the main Syrian opposition group, which is backed by the West, resigned unexpectedly Monday. A unified platform including factions close to Moscow will be a "tame" counterparty for the Syrian government at the negotiating table, according to Robert Ford, a former U.S. ambassador to Syria who's now a fellow at Yale University and the Middle East Institute in Washington.

The political process "won't be easy," said Putin. "It will require compromises and concessions from all sides, including the Syrian government. I am counting on Russia, Iran and Turkey making the utmost effort to ensure this brings results."

Russia, while backing Assad, is likely to insist he accepts a new constitution that strips away some of his powers, said Sami Nader, head of the Beirut-based Levant Institute for Strategic Affairs.

"In any case he will remain in power but he will be a very much weakened Assad," Nader said by phone.

Italian Museum to Show Iranian Jewelry



Iran's Women Futsal Team to Play Italy



Turkey Expects S-400 System From Russia in 2019



Leader Hails 'Miracle' in Defeating U.S.



Ayatollah Khamenei waves to a group of military commanders and Basij members during a meeting in Tehran, Nov. 22, 2017.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- **Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Khamenei here on Wednesday praised Iran's revolutionary youths, saying their success in bringing the U.S. to its knees in the region is a miracle.**

"The fact that after 38 years the youths who have never met Imam Khomeini and experienced the holy defense era or the revolution can be so zealous and act influentially in the region is truly a miracle of the Islamic Revolution," he said.

The Leader made the remarks as he met a group of Basiji members and their commanders ahead of

the national week of the mobilized forces.

"In the region, the Islamic Republic and its youths that you are managed to bring the U.S. to its knees and defeat it," Ayatollah Khamenei.

U.S. plots, the Leader said, were aimed at eliminating the ideology of the Islamic Revolution and the spirit of resistance in the region, but the exact opposite occurred.

The Leader touched on the end of Daesh in Syria and Iraq, saying "the elimination of this cancerous tumor created by the enemies to counter the resistance was successful thanks to the devout young men."

Ayatollah Khamenei cited the Islamic Revolution of 1979 as an example of how victory can be achieved and touched on the extraordinary achievements which were made in Syria and Iraq.

"One of the enemy's known strategies is to disappoint our youths. Unfortunately, some act like mouthpieces for the enemy, spreading hopelessness, saying it's not possible to resist such enemies. Why not? The Islamic Republic has stood up against the enemies' avarice and always defeated them."

Ayatollah Khamenei said the Iranian people overthrew an evil mon-

archy which was supported by the U.S., Europe, and the region's reactionary regimes.

"Some individuals are spreading hopelessness, saying that we should compromise against the major powers. No way!" the Leader said.

"You have seen that these consecutive conspiracies, which were engineered in this region by the U.S., the Zionists, reactionary Arab regimes and others were thwarted by the Islamic Revolution.

"One of the conspiracies was the inhumane Takfiri group of Daesh which was destroyed, thanks to the efforts of the faithful men with the assistance of those who supported the resistance force," the Leader said.

"Even in some of our neighboring countries, they did not believe this was possible. But, they had to join the fight and they entered the battle and succeeded and came to realize that it was possible. This is how the message of the Islamic Republic, the message of the revolution, reaches other nations."

Ayatollah Khamenei hailed Basij a unique phenomenon in the Islamic Revolution, which can act in all arenas as required and solve problems.

"Basij represents the mobilization and the aligning of capacities and facilities to achieve goals. If the Islamic Revolution were only left with all it has today minus Basij, it would definitely face a great deficiency."

On Tuesday, Ayatollah Khamenei said the victory over Daesh in Iraq and Syria was a defeat of the U.S. in the region.

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Butcher of Bosnia, Mladic, Convicted of Genocide

THE HAGUE (Reuters) -- A UN tribunal Wednesday convicted former Bosnian Serb military commander Ratko Mladic of genocide and crimes against humanity for orchestrating massacres and ethnic cleansing during Bosnia's war and sentenced him to life in prison.

Mladic, 74, was hustled out of the court minutes before the verdict for screaming "this is all lies, you are all liars" after returning from what his son described as a blood pressure test which delayed the reading-out of the judgment.

The UN Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) found Mladic guilty of 10 of 11 charges, including the slaughter of 8,000 Muslim men and boys at Srebrenica and the siege of the Bosnian capital Sarajevo, in which more than 10,000 civilians were killed by shelling and sniper fire over 43 months.

The killings in Srebrenica of men and boys after they were separated from women and taken away in buses or marched off to be shot amounted to Europe's worst atrocity since World War Two.

"The crimes committed rank among the most heinous known to humankind, and include genocide and extermination as a crime against humanity," Presiding Judge Alphons Orie said in reading out a summary of the judgment.

"Many of these men and boys were cursed, insulted, threatened, forced to sing Serb songs and beaten while awaiting their execution," he said.

Mladic had pleaded not guilty to all charges. His legal team said he would appeal against the verdict.

The "Butcher of Bosnia" to his enemies and critics, Mladic was the most notorious of the ICTY's 161 indictees, along with former Bosnian Serb political leader Radovan Karadzic and late Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.

In its summary, the tribunal found Mladic "significantly contributed" to genocide committed in Srebrenica with the goal of destroying its Muslim population, "personally directed" the long bombardment of Sarajevo and was part of a "joint criminal enter-

prise" intending to purge Muslims and Croats from Bosnia.

Prosecutors said the ultimate plan pursued by Mladic, Karadzic and Milosevic was to purge Bosnia of non-Serbs - a strategy that came to be known worldwide as ethnic cleansing - and carve out a "Greater Serbia" in the ashes of Yugoslavia.

ICTY Chief Prosecutor Serge Brammertz called the judgment "a milestone". It is the last major decision by the ICTY, which plans to close its doors soon after sentencing 83 Balkan war criminals since opening in 1993.

In Geneva, UN human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein called Mladic the "epitome of evil" and said his conviction after 16 years as an indicted fugitive and over four years of trial was a "momentous victory for justice".

"Today's verdict is a warning to the perpetrators of such crimes that they will not escape justice, no matter how powerful they may be nor how long it may take," Zeid said in a statement.

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Middle East Eye Reveals:

U.S., Saudi 'Final Solution' of Palestinians

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- A U.S. team is in the process of finalizing President Donald Trump's "ultimate deal" for "peace" between Palestinians and the occupying regime of Israel, Middle East Eye said on Wednesday, citing a Western diplomat and Palestinian officials.

The deal will include the establishment of a Palestinian state, whose borders will include the Gaza Strip as well as Areas A, B and parts of Area C in the West Bank.

Donor countries will provide \$10 billion to establish the state and its infrastructure including an airport, a sea port in Gaza, housing, agriculture, industrial areas and new cities.

The status of Jerusalem al-Quds and the issue of returning refugees will be postponed until later negotiations.

Final negotiations will include regional peace talks between the Zionist regime and Arab countries, led by Saudi Arabia, the report said of the other conditions.

The diplomat said that Jared Kushner, Trump's special adviser and head of his team for the process, visited Saudi Arabia recently and briefed Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, who is also known as MBS, about the plan.

Kushner also asked the Saudis to help persuade Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to accept the plan, which will be officially presented in early 2018.

The diplomat, who is very close to the U.S. team, said bin Salman had met with Abbas in early November to brief him on the proposal. The crown prince asked the Palestinian president to accept the plan and be positive about it.

"MBS is very enthusiastic about the plan," the diplomat said, "and he is eager to see a peace deal between the Palestinians and Israel first, then between Israel and the Arab countries, as a first step in forming a coalition between Saudi Arabia and Israel to counter the Iranian threat."

The diplomat said that bin Salman told Kushner he is willing to invest large amounts of capital in the deal, and would give the Palestinian leadership the necessary incentives for a positive response.

Palestinian officials told MEE that Abbas met with bin Salman during his recent visit to Riyadh, which began on 8 November. There, he offered to increase Saudi financial support to the Palestinian Authority almost three-fold from \$7.5 million a month to \$20 million.

Bin Salman told Abbas that the Iranian threat to Arab countries was serious, sources close to the talks said, and that Saudi was in serious need of support from the United States and Israel to face its "existential conflict" with Tehran.

"We cannot have Israel on our side before solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict," the source reported the crown prince as saying.

One Palestinian official said: (Continued on Page 7)