

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi strongly condemned a terrorist attack in India's Srinagar, which killed and injured dozens of people. "As a country that has been a victim of terrorism and has taken major and effective steps to root out terrorist groups in the West Asia region and has paid heavy costs and is resolved to keep up this path with strong determination, we believe using such bloody and inhumane methods by any group and with any motive and under any name is unacceptable," he said.

MANAMA (Dispatches) -- Bahrainis have held rallies across the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom to mark their eighth anniversary of the popular uprising against the ruling monarchy.

Pro-democracy protesters in several cities, including the capital Manama, called for an end to human rights violations and the release of rights activists. They urged the Al Khalifah regime to relinquish power and allow the establishment of a just system representing all Bahrainis.

Viewpoint

Warmongers Axe Their Own Feet in Warsaw as Iran's Star Rises

France Festival of Asian Cinema Awards 'Rona, Azim's Mother'



Iran, Asian Ski Heads Discuss 2020 Junior Championship



'Humanitarian Crisis Deteriorating in Yemen'



Netanyahu Gloats at 'Unfathomable' Arab Shame

WARSAW (Dispatches) -- Zionist PM Benjamin Netanyahu's office on Thursday released a video of a closed meeting in which senior Persian Gulf Arab officials play down the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, defend the occupying regime to attack Palestinians, and describe Iran as the greatest threat to regional peace.

The video, bearing the insignia of Netanyahu's office, gave a rare glimpse into the behind-the-scenes contacts the Zionist leader frequently boasts of, but which are rarely seen in public. The video was recorded on a mobile device and it was not clear who took it.

Netanyahu's office briefly made the YouTube video available to a small group of journalists traveling with him before quickly removing it. It was unclear whether his office intended to leak the information or distributed it mistakenly. But the decision to take the video down indicated the Persian Gulf officials, whose governments do not have formal diplomatic relations with Israel, had not consented to its release.

The edited, 25-minute video shows a series of comments made by officials from Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates on a panel discussion at a U.S.-sponsored conference in Warsaw.

Netanyahu did not participate on the panel, but is seen sitting in the audience. Speaking to reporters early Thursday, Netanyahu cryptically hinted at what he called the "unfathomable" friendly atmosphere at the conference. But he did not disclose any details or say whom he had met.

The leak of the video appeared to be the second gaffe by the Zionist leader's office in Warsaw. On Wednesday, Netanyahu said he hoped the conference would rally support for "war with Iran." His office later said his comments had been mistranslated from Hebrew, and that he was calling for everyone to "combat" Iranian influence.

The summit outraged observers in the Arab world who believe their leaders attended the conference merely as "extras" in a pre-planned scenario for normalization of Israeli-Arab ties.

In an editorial piece, Abdel Bari Atwan, the editor-in-chief of Rai al-Youm news and opinion website, said Netanyahu was the "groom" at the Warsaw conference, and the foreign ministers of Arab countries were "extras" summoned by the U.S. to help normalize Arab ties with the occupying regime.

While European officials boy-

cotted or sent low-ranking officials to Warsaw, the Persian Gulf Arab foreign ministers decided to join the new "Warsaw Treaty" for a war against Iran, he said, describing it as a humiliation for the Arab world.

"It was painful to see the foreign minister of the former government of Yemen, Khaled al-Yamani, sitting next to Netanyahu and exchanging smiles with him," Atwan said in his article.

Al-Yamani's participation in the conference was also condemned by the political bureau of the Yemeni popular movement, Ansarullah, which described it as part of a Zionist-American plot to normalize Arab countries' ties with Tel Aviv.

The move by the foreign minister of the resigned government of Yemen indicates the moral decline of the mercenary regime and its sponsors in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, the Ansarullah said in a statement.

"The Warsaw summit was a shame for all its attendees," the statement said.

"It was even more painful to see Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi -- always praised for his neutral stances and refusal to meddle in disputes among Arab countries -- was the only Arab foreign minister to openly meet Netanyahu in front of the camera," Atwan said in his editorial.

The meeting between bin Alawi and Netanyahu seemed so embarrassing to Omani media that two major newspapers, Oman and Al-Roya, did not even mention the meeting in their Thursday editions.

One of Kuwait's top officials, who had recently said the Persian Gulf country will be the last to normalize ties with Israel, was sitting a small number of seats away from Netanyahu at the conference in Warsaw, said Kuwaiti writer Fajr al-Saeed.

Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled al-Jarallah had told a Kuwaiti news outlet in January that "Kuwait will be the last country to normalize with Israel."

The Palestinians, who boycotted the conference, strongly denounced the participation of Arab ministers.

Nabil Shaath, an adviser to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, wrote in a column published by Haaretz newspaper that the Warsaw conference lacked credibility as it aimed to "normalize" the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory.

Saeb Erekat, the secretary-general of the Palestine Liberation

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Warsaw Summit Exposes Agenda: Terrorism



Relatives of IRGC members martyred in a terrorist car bombing mourn at Isfahan Airport, Feb. 14, 2019.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iranian authorities have vowed revenge after a terrorist attack martyred 27 border guards belonging to the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on its southeastern border.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei issued a statement saying, "A group who devoted themselves to protecting our borders and guard our security were martyred in an attack by terrorists."

"The connection between the agents of this crime with the spy agencies of some countries in the region and outside of the region is certain. The responsible agencies

of our country must focus on that and pursue it seriously."

The Al-Qaeda-linked terrorist group Jaish al-Adl took responsibility for the attack in the southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan province. Iran has long complained that Pakistan has not taken seriously the threat the takfiri group poses to Iran and has not done enough to deter its attacks.

IRGC head Major General Muhammad Ali Jafari issued a statement requesting that Pakistan take a more aggressive approach to the group on its border.

"The brotherly government of Pakistan and the country's secu-

rity bodies and army are expected to step up security measures and tactics on the common border," he said.

"Our response in defense of the Islamic Revolution will not be limited to our borders," IRGC commander Ali Fadavi was quoted as saying by Fars. "The enemies will receive a very firm response from the Revolutionary Guards like before."

President Hassan Rouhani vowed a strong response and also blamed foreign countries for the attack.

"This crime is another spot of shame on the black resume of the prime supporters of terrorism in the

White House, Tel Aviv, and regional agents who both make ludicrous and arrogant actions toward Iran phobia and also claim to be fighting terrorism and creating security in the Middle East."

Rouhani also indirectly addressed Pakistan while speaking to reporters before traveling to Sochi to meet with his Russian and Turkish counterparts. He asked neighboring countries to not allow "terrorists to take advantage of their territory."

"If this continues and they cannot stop the terrorists, from a legal and international regulations viewpoint it is clear that we have rights and at the necessary time we will use these rights."

All of the casualties were from an IRGC unit in Isfahan. The IRGC had previously taken over border control after a number of attacks on conscript border guards. The bus in which they were attacked by a suicide bomber was traveling from Khash to Zahedan.

The IRGC fired missiles at Daesh terrorists in Syria in 2017 and 2018 after the group claimed responsibility for two attacks in Tehran and Ahvaz. Last year, the Guards launched missiles at a terrorist group in northern Iraq.

Wednesday's terrorist attack comes during a month in which Iran has been commemorating the 1979 Islamic Revolution which swept the U.S.-backed Shah from power.

Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif said it was not

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Russia, Turkey, Iran Agree on Returning Syria to Syrians

SOCHI (Dispatches) -- As Trump administration officials presided over the second day of a conference in Warsaw dominated by calls to ratchet up pressure on Iran, one longtime U.S. ally and NATO member was noticeably absent -- Turkey.

Snubbing the gathering in Poland, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday attended a rival conference in the Black Sea resort of Sochi, where he met his Russian and Iranian counterparts to work out a final settlement of the war in Syria.

The dueling summits reflect Turkey's drift away from Washington as it finds common ground with Moscow and Tehran, experts and former officials said.

Hosting his Turkish and Iranian counterparts, President Vladimir Putin said the three welcomed the expected U.S. pullout from northeastern Syria.

It would be "a positive step that would help stabilize the situation in this region, where ultimately the legitimate government should re-establish control," he told a joint press conference after the talks.

Putin said Thursday's talks were "constructive and business-like" and that "close coordination" was crucial to ensuring long-term stability in Syria.

He said the three presidents agreed to "strengthen cooperation" in the so-called Astana framework -- a process initiated by Russia, Iran and Turkey that has eclipsed parallel peace talks led by the United Nations.

They also agreed to work together to put together a constitutional committee that would work to resolve Syria's political future, Putin said, adding that another round of talks would take place in Astana in late March and early April.

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'Drone Activity' Grounds Flights at Dubai Airport

DUBAI (Dispatches) -- Flights at Dubai International Airport were grounded on Friday due to what authorities said suspected drone activity, leaving several thousand passengers stranded in the world's third busiest airport.

The airport said in a statement that departing flights were suspended for half an hour between 10:13 and 10:45 on Friday morning. Incoming flights, however, were allowed to land.

"Dubai Airports has worked closely with the appropriate authorities to ensure that the safety of airport operations is maintained at all times and to minimize any inconvenience to our customers," said the statement.

Drone activities are forbidden "near, around and over airports," according to Dubai government regulations, which oblige users to obtain a certificate from the General Civil Aviation Authority in the

United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Dubai International Airport was attacked by a drone strike back in September. The attack was carried out by Yemen's army and its allies in retaliation for the UAE's role in the Saudi attacks war on Yemen.

The UAE, Saudi Arabia's key ally, has for almost four years been part of the Saudi-led military campaign against Yemen.

In another incident last August, Yemeni military sources said their soldiers and their allies attacked the airport, using a domestically-built long-endurance Sammad-3 (Invincible-3) unmanned aerial vehicle.

The army forces and Popular Committees fighters also targeted Abu Dhabi International Airport, using the same type of combat drone in July.

A spokesman for Yemeni air force and air defense, Abdullah al-Jafri,