

Rouhani: Militarism Threatens Region

TEHRAN -- Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said Monday the militaristic approach adopted by the occupying regime of Israel and some other countries is the most basic challenge currently facing the West Asia region.

"The most basic challenge facing the region is militarism by certain countries as well as the Zionist regime," Rouhani said in a phone call with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, adding, "We must do our best to get the region out of the current state of militarism." Rouhani said the establishment of peace and stability in the region is among main policies of the Islamic Republic, which is pursued by all Iranian administrations.

Kayhan International



Russia to Hold Drill Near Afghan Border

MOSCOW (Dispatches) -- Russia, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are set to hold military drills next month near the border with Afghanistan where the Taliban militant group has over the past weeks ramped up attacks against government forces.

The Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement on Monday that the joint drills would take place from August 5 to 10 at the Kharbmaidon training ground in Tajikistan. Troops from a Russian military base in Tajikistan and Russia's Central Military District will take part in the war games, the ministry stated.

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Viewpoint

Neither Corona is Permanent Nor the Occupiers of Islamic Sites

Government Shuts Down Tehran to Curb Delta Surge



Hassan Yazdani Claims Most Popular Athlete Title in FILA



Hajj Pilgrims Pray for COVID-Free World



The Message of the Great Sacrifice

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

"Surely Abraham was an exemplar, obedient to God and upright; and he was not of the polytheists." (Holy Qur'an 16:120)

"Indeed, there is for you an excellent exemplar in Abraham and those with him when they said to their people: surely we are clear of what you serve besides Allah, and enmity and hatred have appeared between us and you forever until you believe in Allah." (Holy Qur'an 60:4)

As is clear the Words of God are self-explanatory concerning the monotheistic stature of Prophet Abraham (AS), and the annual Hajj pilgrimage that reaches its climax amidst the celebration of Eid al-Azha or Eid Qorban, the Feast of the Sacrifice.

The Hajj is undoubtedly the glorious manifestation of Towheed (monotheism), universalized by Abraham (AS) on God's command after he and his firstborn son, Prophet Ishmael (AS), were ordered to rebuild the ancient edifice of Adam, the Holy Ka'ba, which was in a state of ruin in the wilderness of Mecca following the great deluge of the days of Prophet Noah (AS).

When God asked him to proclaim the pilgrimage for mankind he wondered who will come to the remote wilderness of Mecca, but was told that people will come from all over the earth, from every beaten track, on various means of transport.

In response, every year people from around had been coming to Mecca to perform the annual Hajj.

Unfortunately, because of the Coronavirus pandemic, last year saw a drastic reduction in the number of Hajj pilgrims to a few thousand from the peak of 2.5 million in 2019. The same is the case this year as well.

At any rate, the pilgrims, whatever their number, ritually stone the symbolic satans at Mena and sacrifice a sheep, a goat, a cow or a camel, on the 10th of Zi'l-Hijja in commemoration of Abraham's sacrifice of Ishmael that was miraculously substituted by the command of God with a ram before the anxious father's knife could reach the patient son's throat.

"And We ransomed him with the Great Sacrifice (Zibhin Azeem)." (Holy Qur'an 37:107)

This is how God Almighty informs us of an important event of antiquity with everlasting effects for all humanity; hence the use of the words Zibhin Azeem which definitely cannot be a mere ram, but the Greatest-ever Sacrifice in the full limelight of history.

This occurred on the Day of Ashura (10th Muharram) in the year 61 AH (680) when Imam Husain (AS), the Grandson of the Last and Greatest Messenger with the universal message of Islam to all mankind, Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), in order to salvage all humanitarian values, attained martyrdom in Karbala after witnessing the tragic death of his two sons, the youth Ali Akbar (AS) and the infant Ali Asghar (AS), at the hands of the forces of evil.

Now we better understand the concept of the Hajj pilgrimage, the endeavours of Prophet Abraham, the Eid al-Azha, and the significance of the Day of Arafah or the 9th of Zi'l-Hijja on the Plain of Arafat where pilgrims spent in prayers to arouse in themselves the proper cognition of monotheism and Islam.

Here are cited some passages from the famous supplication of Imam Husain (AS) for this day which he recited on the Plain of Arafat:

"You are verily Originator and Reproducer (of the creation) and worthy of all praise and full of all glory. Holy be Your Names as Your bounties are so immeasurable. Which of Your favors, O my God, can I count in numbers and examples? Or which of Your gifts can I thank properly?"

"They are, O my Lord, too numerous to be counted by counters or to be realized by memorizers. Moreover, that which You have warded off and repelled,

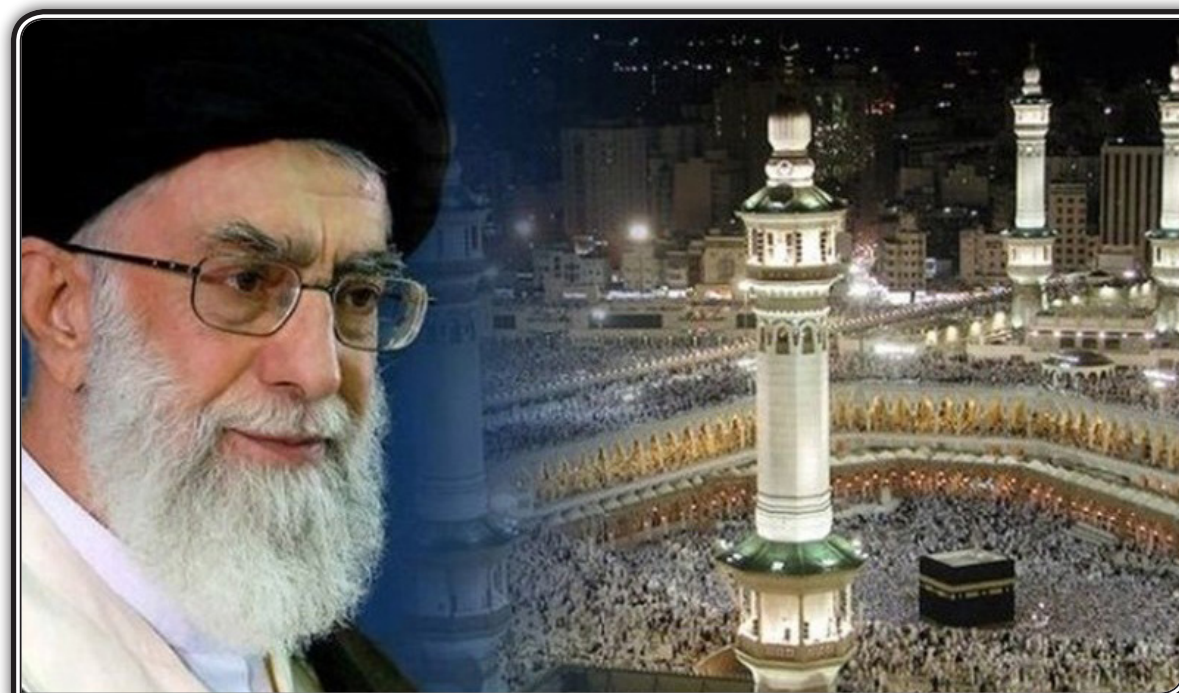
"O Allah, from (the various kinds of) harm and mischief is more than that which came to me from wellbeing and joy. And I bear witness, O my God, with my true belief, and the fortitude of the determinations of my conviction and the purity of my open belief in Your Oneness and the essence of the secret of my conscience, and the ties of the canals of the light of my sight, and the lines of my forehead and the hallows of the courses of my breath, and the (nasal) cavities of my nose, and the courses of the meatus of my hearing, and whatever my two lips hide and cover up, and the motions of the vocalization of my tongue, and the socket of the palate of my mouth and jaw, and the matrices of my dents, and the tasting of my food and my drink, and the carrier of my skill, and the tube of the tissues of my neck and what is included by the cloak of my chest, and the carriers of the cord of my aorta, and the cords of the pericardium of my heart, and the pieces of the retinas of my liver, and that which is included by the cartilages of my ribs, and the cavities of my joints, and the interacting of my organisms, and the extremes of my fingertips, and my flesh, and my blood, and my hair, and my skin, and my nerve, and my sinews, and my bones, and my brain, and my veins, and all of my organs, and that which was pieced together during the days of my suckling, and whatever of my body that the ground carries, and my sleeping, and my wakefulness, and my motionlessness, and the movements of my bowing and prostration; (by all that I bear witness) that if I try my best and strive throughout all ages and all times, if I live them, to thank properly only one of Your favors, I will not be able to do that, except through a favor of You, which also requires me to thank You for it, once again with new thanking and with praise that is newly acquired and newly prepared."

Imam Husain (AS), as the Heir of the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael, thus reminds the faithful that monotheism becomes perfect only with adherence to the path of the Blessed Ahl al-Bayt, as was specified on this same Plain of Arafat in the year 10 AH by his grandfather, Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), who after delivering a memorable sermon from atop Jabal ar-Rahma (Mount Mercy) to emphasize the equality of all mankind, irrespective of the superficial differences of ethnicity, languages spoken, colour of skin, and place of birth, had presented the formula of faith and unity to Muslims by stressing devotion to the Thaqalayn or the two Weighty Things, with the words:

"I am leaving behind amongst you the Thaqalayn, the Book of God (the holy Qur'an) and my progeny the Ahl al-Bayt. Hold fast to them and you will never go astray for the two never separate with each other even when they meet me at the Fountain (of Kowthar on Resurrection Day)."

Ayatollah Khamenei in Hajj Message to Muslim Nations:

'Stand Firm and Resist Western Powers'



TEHRAN -- Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says a Jihad-like struggle and continued resistance is what can prevent America and other international aggressors from interfering in the affairs of the Islamic countries.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a message released on July 17, 2021 on the occasion of the start of the Hajj rituals.

The following is the full text of the Leader's message:

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and greetings be upon Muhammad, his pure

Household, his chosen companions and those who follow them until the Day of Judgment

Dear Muslim brothers and sisters throughout the world,

This year too, the Islamic nation has been deprived of the great blessing of Hajj. Thus, eager hearts filled with sadness and sorrow were deprived of the banquet at the honorable House that God, the Wise and Merciful, built for people.

This is the second year that the season of happiness and spiritual exaltation associated with Hajj has turned into a season of separation and regret. The tribulation of the

pandemic and perhaps that of the policies dominating over the Holy Ka'bah have deprived the eyes of the eager believers from seeing the Islamic nation's symbol of unity, greatness and spirituality. Thus, this glorious, honorable summit has been covered with clouds and dust.

This is another test, which like the other tests that have come to pass in the history of the Islamic nation, will be followed by a bright future. What is important is that Hajj remain alive in its true home - in the hearts and souls of Muslims - so that now that its physical form is temporarily inac-

cessible, its exalted message not be diminished.

Hajj is an act of worship that is filled with mysteries and secrets. The exquisite formation and combination of movement and quietude in it builds the identity of the Muslims and the Muslim community and displays its beauties for the people of the world.

On the one hand, it helps the hearts of God's servants spiritually ascend by remembering God, reciting supplications and being humble. And this brings them closer to God. On the other hand, it creates a bond between the Muslim brothers gathering together from the four corners of the world, and this bond manifests itself through their similar garments and harmonious moves.

It displays the most important symbol of the Islamic nation with all its meaningful, transcendent rituals, and it shows the determination and greatness of the Islamic nation to all ill-wishers.

This year, the Hajj ritual at the Great House of God is not possible, but paying attention to the God of the House, to remembering Him, to humility, to supplicating Him and to asking for His forgiveness is possible. Being present in Arafah is not within our reach, but enlightening supplications are. It is not possible to stone Satan in Mina, but rejecting the power-seeking devils is possible everywhere.

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PM Kadhimi: No Need for Foreign Troops in Iraq

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) -- Iraq's Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi has said that his upcoming visit to Washington is aimed at regulating Iraq's relations with the United States and pushing for the withdrawal of foreign combat forces from the Arab country.

In an interview with Saudi-owned Al-Hadath television, Kadhimi said there is no need for the presence of foreign combat forces on Iraqi soil.

He also said that he would not allow his country to be used to threaten its neighbors.

The Iraqi prime minister is scheduled to visit Washington next week to push for a concrete timetable for the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq.

On Thursday, Kadhimi and U.S. envoy Brett McGurk discussed the issue in Baghdad.

The White House said on Friday that U.S. President Joe Biden will meet Kadhimi on July 26 to discuss "the strategic partnership

between the United States and Iraq."

Baghdad-Washington relations have been complicated since the U.S. assassination of Iran's top anti-terror general Qassem Soleimani along with Deputy Commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization United (PMU) Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis at Baghdad International Airport in January 2020, in a drone attack that was directly ordered by former president Donald Trump.

The assassination sparked the Iraqi parliament to vote for the expulsion of all U.S.-led foreign forces from the country, followed by U.S. positions in Iraq being repeatedly targeted.

In response, the U.S., under both Trump and Biden, has attacked the positions of Iraqi resistance forces, in particular PMU forces, which played a significant role in defeating Daesh terrorist group and are officially part of the Iraqi military.

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Wildfires Burn Area Nearly Size of Los Angeles

BLY, Ore. (AP) — Erratic winds and dry lightning added to the dangers for crews battling the nation's largest wildfire on Monday in parched Oregon forests, just one of dozens burning across several Western states.

The destructive Bootleg Fire, one of the largest in modern Oregon history, has already burned more than 476 square miles (1,210 square kilometers), an area about the size of Los Angeles. The blaze just north of the California state line was 25% contained.

Meteorologists predicted critically dangerous fire weather through at least Monday with lightning possible in both California and southern Oregon.

"With the very dry fuels, any thunderstorm has the potential to ignite new fire starts," the National Weather Service in Sacramento, California, said on Twitter.

Thousands have been ordered to evacuate, including some 2,000 people who live in rugged terrain among lakes and wildlife refuges near the fire, which has burned at least 67 homes and 100 outbuildings while threatening many more.

Climate change has made the West much warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive. Firefighters said these conditions in July are more typical of late summer or fall.

Pyrocumululus clouds — literally translated as "fire clouds" — complicated containment efforts Sunday for the Dixie Fire in northern California, where flames spread in remote areas with steep terrain crews can't easily reach, officials said. New evacuation orders were issued in rural communities near the Feather River Canyon.

The Dixie Fire remained 15% contained and covered 29 square miles (74 square kilometers). The fire is northeast of the town of Paradise, California, and survivors

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Holiday Notice

Wishing a blessed Eid al-Adha for our readers, we hereby announce that our next issue will be published on Monday, July 26, 2021.