

TEHRAN – Iran's top general said Saturday cooperation and synergy between the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Islamic Republic of Iran Army have placed them among the top military powers of the region and the world.

Addressing the 24th meeting of IRGC commanders and officials here, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Muhammad Bagheri hailed the IRGC's performance during the last year, saying the elite force, alongside the Army, operates as a powerful arm of the Islamic Republic.

(Continued on Page 7)

Kayhan International

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic Guards Corps (IRGC) neutralized terrorist attempts against Ashura and Tasua mourning processions this year, commander of IRGC Ground Force Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour said Saturday. The enemies, he said, planned to carry out terrorist and destabilizing operations which were thwarted by the dispatch of five IRGC ranger units to border regions. The commander said that the IRGC carried out a drone and missile operation which aimed to force disarm the anti-revolutionary groups or force them back to their camps.

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Sunday, August 20, 2023, Mordad 29, 1402, Safar 3, 1445, Price 300,000 Rials

Viewpoint

Sheikh Zakzaky's Efforts to Prevent Internecine War in West Africa

Raisi, Modi Agree to Speed Up Chabahar Development



Shahbazi, Rahimi Win Gold Medals at Asian Wushu Junior Championships



Two Zionists Killed by Palestinian Fighter in Retaliatory Op



The Immortal Legacy of the Fifth Imam

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

"We are the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet. Do not compare our knowledge and perfection to others. We receive these perfections in inheritance. The Earth can never remain without our presence. We are perfect in every matter, while all other people are deficient in reaching our level."

These words were spoken by Imam Muhammad Baqer (AS) in Damascus to a self-styled Omayyad caliph, who after having kept Prophet Muhammad's (SAWA) 5th Infallible Heir waiting for three days as a form of snub, ignored him when he entered the court where archers were testing their skills, and then disdainfully handed him a bow and a set of arrows to try his hand at marksmanship, in the vain hope of ridiculing him if his volleys were to fall short of target.

Imam Baqer (AS) calmly picked up the bow and to the surprise of everyone, hit the bull's-eye. He aimed another arrow which pierced the first to hit the centre of the target. Before the flabbergasted caliph stopped him, the Fifth Imam shot nine arrows in succession, each piercing the other, as testimony to his marksmanship.

The scene was not the Damascus of 61 AH (680 AD), when, after a similar 3-day wait at Bab at-Toma, Imam Baqer (AS), as a barely 4-year old boy, was brought in chains to the court of Yazid, along with his parents and the rest of the survivors of the heartrending Tragedy of Karbala, including Grand Aunts Hazrat Zainab (SA) and Hazrat Omm Kolthoum (SA), and his own aunt of his age, Hazrat Ruqa'iyya (SA), while placed in a tray before the infidel caliph, was the severed head of his grandfather, Imam Husain (AS).

Now, half a century later, the middle aged Imam Baqer (AS), along with his son and eventual successor, Imam Ja'far as-Sadeq (AS), was forcibly brought from Medina to Damascus to the court of the tyrant Hisham ibn Abdul-Malik, who gloating at the march of his marauding armies across the Pyrenees into France in the west, and into the Subcontinent in the east, thought of himself as the "Wali al-Amr" or the Vicegerent of God upon Earth, and wanted to humiliate the Prophet's Divinely-designated successors – the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt. It was here the 5th Imam expressed the statement mentioned at the beginning of this column when Hisham astounded at his marksmanship, said: who coached you.

Imam Baqer's (AS) reply filled the self-styled caliph with rage and he said: Do you claim that the people of your time are obliged to obey you?

To his further exasperation, the Imam said: "Indeed! We are those vested with authority" – or "Ulil-Amr" as the Holy Qur'an says.

Hisham laughed and said your command is effective nowhere. The Imam said without hesitation: "Those who do not consider us "Ulil Amr", are sinners." When the tyrant seething with anger, said: I am the "Ulil Amr", Imam Baqer (AS) coolly replied: "You might be a king, made by the people, while it is we who are the "Ulil Amr", appointed by Almighty Allah."

Humiliated in front of his courtiers Hisham realized that further argument was useless and ordered that Imam Baqer (AS) and Imam Sadeq (AS) be detained, at which an Omayyad courtier said: Thank God, the ruler did not order your execution. The 5th Imam stunned him and the caliph with the following words: "We Ahl al-Bayt (AS) are the Announcers of Allah's Word and Expounder of the Truth; we never hesitate in this regard, and we are never afraid of death."

Like Prophet Joseph in Egypt, the prison was an opportunity for father and son to reform the inmates and make them good Muslims. This horrified Hisham and he released them but did not allow them to leave Damascus. The Imam regarded this as a blessing in disguise and visited the chief Christian bishop of Syria, who after a lively debate became a follower of the Ahl al-Bayt along with his flock of devotees.

Hisham, alarmed at the situation in Syria, had now no other choice but to send back to Medina Imam Baqer (AS) and Imam Sadeq (AS) – like Yazid half a century before him who had to release Imam Zain al-Abedin (AS), Hazrat Zainab (SA) and the Survivors of the Tragedy of Karbala after their electrifying sermons changed public opinion in Damascus.

Since the 3rd of Safar, according to a narration, is the birth anniversary of the 5th Imam in 57 AH (the reliable date is Rajab 1st) and it was on the 1st of Safar 61 AH that the Ahl al-Bayt were brought in chains to the court of Yazid in Damascus, it would not be out of context to refer to the then 4-year old boy's decisive debate with the killer of his grandfather – as well as granduncles (including Hazrat Abbas), paternal uncles Ali Akbar and the six-month infant Ali Asghar, and maternal uncles Muhammad, Qasim, and Abdullah (peace upon them).

When the Godless Omayyad, gloating over his success over the Bani Hashem, tried to ridicule Imam Husain (AS) and the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS) in front of his courtiers, Imam Zain al-Abedin (AS) in spite of being in fetters and shackles gave a fitting reply, resulting in a heated dialogue with Yazid, who lost the argument with the son of his victim. In anger he turned to his courtiers who advised him to kill Imam Zain al-Abedin (AS).

At this, the 4-year old Imam Muhammad Baqer (AS), boldly addressing Yazid, said: Your courtiers' advice to you to kill my father is diametrically opposed to the advice of Pharaoh's courtiers, who on being asked their opinion regarding Prophet Moses (AS) and Aaron (AS), said: Give respite to him and his brother. Yazid and his courtiers were confused at these words expressed in flawlessly eloquent Arabic by a boy of tender age, and asked: what is the reason.

Imam Baqer (AS) answered: The reason why Pharaoh did not order the killing of Prophet Moses was that the Egyptian tyrant was of legitimate birth, which means only those of illegitimate birth slay a Prophet or his pure progeny.

Peace unto the "Baqer al-Uloom" (Splitter and Spreader of Sciences – as the Prophet had prophesied to Jabur ibn Abdullah). It was through him the "ziyarah" (standard form of salutation) for the Day of Ashura and the supplication "Du'a Alqama" have come down to us as treasure trove of the

(Continued on Page 7)

Top General Outlines Iran's Readiness

No More on the Defensive

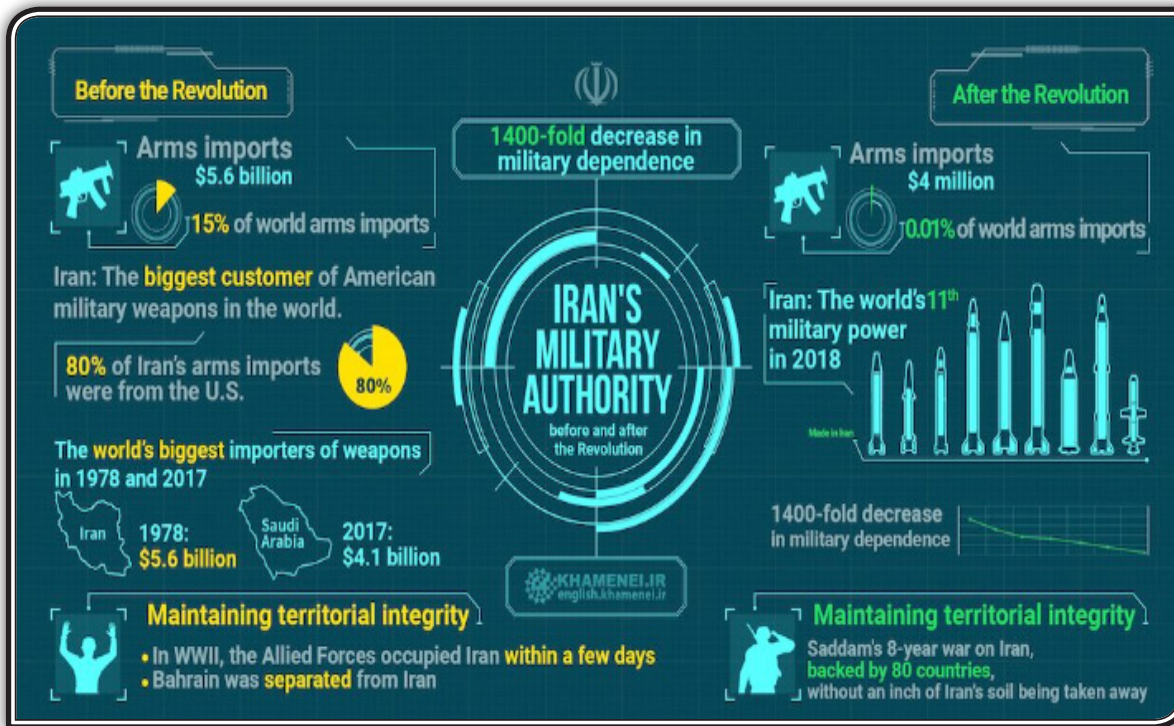


Diagram dated February 2020, courtesy of Khamenei.ir

TEHRAN -- A top commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Saturday, the force is making efforts to continually strengthen the Islamic Republic of Iran's missile and drone power.

Addressing an annual conference of high-profile IRGC military commanders and officials here, Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh, the commander of the IRGC's Aerospace Division, said the IRGC is constantly boosting its drone and missile power.

"There was a time when the enemy was in the offensive position, and we were concerned about defense. Today, we are in the offensive mode, and our enemies are looking to improve their defense systems," Hajizadeh said.

"The superpowers with whom we could not interact even through third parties are now reaching out to Iran to purchase advanced defense gear," he said.

"Western countries, led by the United States and its allies, are acting like the blades of a pair

of scissors and seeking to inflict damage on Iran's economy," he said, stressing the need for resolution of economic issues.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he described the IRGC as a guarantor of Iran's Islamic establishment that neutralizes the enemies' conspiracies.

Iranian military experts and engineers have in recent years made remarkable breakthroughs in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient.

Officials have repeatedly underscored that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will be never subject to negotiations.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has repeatedly called for efforts to maintain and boost Iran's defense capabilities.

On Friday, IRGC Navy commander Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri said the homegrown fast attack craft operated by the naval force can now sail at the speed of 110 nautical knots (203 km/h).

Addressing a gathering of high-profile IRGC commanders and officials here, he said Iranian experts have increased the speed of the vessels, as demanded by the Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian Armed Forces Ayatollah Khamenei.

"Nowadays, we possess fast attack craft that can sail at a speed of between 90 to 110 knots," Tangsiri said.

He pointed out that IRGC naval forces are now in full control of the Persian Gulf, and U.S. aircraft carriers have to observe Iran's maritime regulations while sailing in the strategic body of water.

"There was a time when NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) member states did not comply with our maritime regulations.

(Continued on Page 7)

Senior Zionist 1,340 Intel Veterans Warn Israel 'Plunging Into Abyss'

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) -- The Israeli air force has suspended several high-ranking reservists, a report said, a day after the navy suspended a senior reservist who had vowed to halt volunteer duty to protest the occupying regime's judicial overhaul.

The commanders of the IAF and navy can either return the high-ranking reservists to service later, or opt to replace them, Kan reported.

The report did not name the IAF reservists who had been suspended, or specify how many of them there were.

Vice Adm. David Sa'ar Salama, the head of the navy, suspended Doron on Thursday, after he and another top reservist, Rear Adm. (res.) Eyal Segev, announced that they would end their volunteer reserve duty, saying they refused to serve in "a dictatorship."

Segev's status was to be examined, the Israeli militar said in a statement. Doron and Segev both serve as heads of operational headquarters and as deputies to Salama in emergencies. The pair joined a long line of

navy reservists and other officers who have announced in recent weeks that they would stop showing up for volunteer reserve duty, sparking fears within the military of harm to its operational preparedness.

Salama's decision was approved by military chief of staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi, the military said.

Also Friday, the organizers of a petition from veterans of special intelligence units appealed to hardline prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and war minister Yoav Gallant, asking them to "halt the judicial overhaul, come to an agreement and stop the incitement".

The activists said 1,340 intelligence veterans had signed the petition warning that the occupying regime of Israel was in an "unprecedented time of emergency and plunging into the abyss," Ynet reported.

More than 10,000 reservists who show up for duty on a voluntary basis have said in recent months that they would no longer do so in protest of the judicial overhaul, (Continued on Page 7)

U.S. Intelligence: Ukraine Offensive Failing

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- The U.S. intelligence community assesses that Ukraine's counteroffensive will fail to reach the key southeastern city of Melitopol, people The Washington Post reported, a finding that, should it prove correct, would mean Kyiv won't fulfill its principal objective of severing Russia's land bridge to Crimea in this year's push.

The grim assessment is based on Russia's proficiency in defending occupied territory through a phalanx of minefields and trenches, and is likely to prompt finger pointing inside Kyiv and Western capitals about why a counteroffensive that saw tens of billions of dollars of Western weapons and military equipment fell short of its goals, the paper said.

Ukraine's forces, which are pushing toward Melitopol from the town of Robotyne more than 50 miles away, will remain several miles outside of the city, U.S. officials said.

Melitopol is critical to Ukraine's counteroffensive because it is considered the gate-

way to Crimea. The city is at the intersection of two important highways and a railroad line that allow Russia to move military personnel and equipment from the peninsula to other occupied territories in southern Ukraine.

U.S. officials foresee that Ukraine's push to retake Russian-occupied territory will stall before reaching the key southeastern city of Melitopol. Ukrainian forces are currently pushing south around the village of Robotyne.

Ukraine launched the counteroffensive in early June. But in the first week of fighting, Ukraine incurred major casualties against Russia's well-prepared defenses despite having a range of newly acquired Western equipment, including U.S. Bradley Fighting Vehicles, German-made Leopard 2 tanks and specialized mine-clearing vehicles.

Joint war games conducted by the U.S., British and Ukrainian militaries anticipated such losses but envisioned Kyiv accepting the casualties as the cost of piercing (Continued on Page 7)