

1910

Modern neon lighting is first demonstrated by Georges Claude at the **Paris Motor Show**.

1919

After nearly 20 years of planning and construction, including two collapses causing 89 deaths, the **Quebec Bridge** opens to traffic.

1920

Following more than a month of **Turkish-Armenian War**, the Turkish dictated Treaty of Alexandropol is concluded.



1929

**President Herbert Hoover** delivers his first State of the Union message to Congress. It was presented in the form of a written message rather than a speech.



**Khamenei is desperate for rapid and decisive solutions because prolonged instability in Lebanon and Iraq weakens his ability to hold sway, while risking further contagion of unrest to Iranian cities.**

Hassan Nasrallah fears that killing protesters will further unite Lebanon against Hezbollah. Nevertheless, just as Khamenei arm-twisted Nasrallah into wading into the Syrian conflict, if Hezbollah's paymasters demand blood, then the streets of Beirut will obediently run red.

The fatigued response from Western leaders has encouraged Iran's allies that they can repress citizens with impunity. If we are to avoid an exponentially higher death toll, then diplomats must forcefully stipulate that there will be meaningful consequences (UN measures, sanctions, war crimes investigations, diplomatic action, etc.) if the aspirations of demonstrators are ignored and the authorities continue down the path of repression.

Although Khamenei is trying to peddle the model of brutal crackdowns as a magic solution to domestic unrest, protests inside Iran persist and may become further inflamed. Iranian protesters have been brutally crushed over and over again in recent years, yet

still they courageously come out against their oppressors.

In the late 1970s, the shah of Iran desperately oscillated between confused attempts to appease Iranian demonstrators and botched crackdowns, which only succeeded in uniting the entirety of Iran against him. The result was the 1979 revolution, in which Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini came out on top and ruthlessly crushed all other segments of the opposition.

The protests in Iraq and Lebanon today are likewise on the brink of passing the point of no return. Through their escalating reliance on brutal and excessive force, Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi and Hezbollah are tantalizingly close to signing their own death warrants, as they continue to undermine any remaining popular legitimacy among their grassroots supporters.

If this is indeed the beginning of the end for Iranian hegemony in Iraq and Lebanon, then we still have a long and bloody road ahead of us. Khamenei, Nasrallah and Al-Amiri are far from admitting defeat. Tehran has invested billions in its regional dominance strategy and won't simply walk away. Their knee-jerk response to recent setbacks may be to ramp up the killing. This will reap a horrific toll, yet such atrocities will ultimately only serve to reinforce the popular determination to eliminate all manifestations of Iranian influence — permanently.

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ordinary Lebanese, the imminent collapse of the banking system would also impact Iran and Hezbollah, which have systematically laundered and hoarded funds via these channels. Tehran furthermore fears that, just as happened in 1982, Israel would exploit Lebanese civil conflict to try and eradicate the "resistance" once and for all.

Hezbollah can only hold sway in Lebanon via the collaboration of Christian leaders like President Michel Aoun and Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil, whose support within their communities is rapidly draining away.

## Common language



**The US trade representative body that will negotiate any future US-UK trade deal has held open hearings, in which US lobby groups, including pharmaceuticals, meat production, health care and others, have stated how they would like to claim a big slice of the British market.**

icals, meat production, health care and others, have stated how they would like to claim a big slice of the British market. The opposition Labour party claims secret discussions show the health service is "up for sale" while Mr Johnson responds it is not. But the prime minister's record of telling the truth is very patchy.

Moreover, in the past, Mr Trump and his supporters have been scathing about what they see as Britain's "socialist" health care. It is impossible to overstate how sensitive this is. Few British people would care if American or other foreign owners bought British football clubs. Nor would many care if foreign owners bought

British supermarkets or manufacturers or even chocolate makers such as Cadburys. But any British politician advocating American-style health care is committing political suicide. Healthcare costs are the biggest cause of personal bankruptcy in the US and despite the underfunding of the National Health Service, it retains the affection, respect and trust of British people like no other major British institution. Any blundering intervention by Mr Trump could cause a massive political backlash.

And so it looks as though Mr Johnson will endure various formalities with Mr Trump and avoid anything too friendly. They will agree that other European nations should spend more money on defence and Mr Trump will be briefed by his staff not to run off script and say what he really thinks about Britain and Brexit. But if Mr Johnson finds sticking to the truth sometimes tricky, Mr Trump finds sticking to the script almost impossible. When Macmillan talked of Britain playing Greece to America's Rome, he meant the great Rome of Augustus Caesar. If British people see Mr Trump in Roman terms, it is more like the Rome of Caligula, the eccentric who once promoted his horse to the post of consul. It will be an interesting few days.



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



**Breaking News:** The President of Ukraine has just again announced that President Trump has done nothing wrong with respect to Ukraine and our interactions or calls. If the Radical Left Democrats were sane, which they are not, it would be case over!

@realDonaldTrump

02



A source of trouble is that our minds are unruly. We need to effect an inner transformation, to understand that love and affection are a real source of joy. It's important to be warm-hearted rather than selfish. We'll be less sick, live longer and have more friends here and now.

@DalaiLama

03



We're having this election because Parliament could not get anything done. It was paralysed. It's time for us to take decisive action and to get Brexit done, so that we can get Parliament working again on the issues that matter to you.

@BorisJohnson

04



"The most important thing to do if you find yourself in a hole is to stop digging."

Warren Buffett

@tradingproverbs

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)

## Is the hegemonic dream shattering?



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The reasons behind the protests that we are witnessing in Iraq, Lebanon and Iran appear to have a common denominator named as corruption. The peoples' money remains in individual politician's bank account, leaving the state with little or no money to spend on public services.

The corrupt politicians then increase the prices of basic facilities to raise money for state budget, creating further pressure on the public and pushing them into abject poverty. The politicians seem to have included in their portfolio the right to use the public money for private use and with impunity. Now this misappropriation of public money has come to a dead end. That is why people of the three countries find themselves in an open-ended confrontation with the ruling elites.

Out of the three countries, Iran seems to be the most affected by the ongoing violations. Not only the violations will likely shake its internal social fabric but also scrap its dominant stake in Iraq and Lebanon. Iran seems to be behind the wheel steering the political and economic affairs of Iraq and Lebanon by organizing, training and financing proxy forces in the respective countries. If the regimes change in both Iraq and

Lebanon, Iran's decades-old dream of hegemony will end.

Protesters in Iraq targeted Iranian interests including its diplomatic mission in the holy cities of Karbala and Najaf, which was an unthinkable few months ago. It clearly indicates that Iran is on the verge of losing its interests in Iraq and Lebanon, which it consider them as the backbone of its hegemonic dream.

However, Iran is trying to keep its head above the water and indirectly fighting to maintain its interests by actively involving in anti-demonstration campaigns in those countries and even went as far as deploying its staunch armed supporters and proxy forces.



In Iraq, the killers are suspected to be the Iranian backed militia including members of the notorious Badr organization, Asaib Ahl Al-Haq. They are believed to have controlled Iraq's government establishments and promote Iran's interests in the country.

Reports indicate that following the first day of protest, General Qasim Soleimani, the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards flew to Bagdad and that he was personally ordering the killing, said an Iraqi security official to which the Iraqi government seems to have given the green light.

However, the Iraqi President, Barham Saleh confirmed to the public that the Iraqi authorities did not give any orders to use deadly force and added that targeting peaceful demonstrators with live bullets is unacceptable in Iraq. So who is responsible for the ongoing crime being committed against innocent Iraqi youths?

Iran finds itself at crossroads. The ongoing protests in its soil, Iraq and Lebanon on one hand and dealing with the imposed economic sanctions against it on the other. To deal with the latter, Iran is campaigning on diplomatic overtures with the GCC countries, which appears to be too late and too little and came at the wrong time.

However, Iran has done nothing to curb its terrorist activities and sponsoring terrorists. It needs to take tangible steps that can usher confidence building with fellow neighboring countries. Iran has occupied the undisputed position of state sponsor of terrorism for years on a row, according to the US State Department reports, spending about \$1 billion annually.

As the protests continue and number of deaths climb, the once peaceful protesters will arm themselves and confront the security forces, throwing the countries from the frying pan into the fire, say politicians.

The protests that are taking place in Iraq, Lebanon and Iran do not seem to go away soon unless the ruling elites in the respective countries take concrete steps to involve the public in the political discourse. Last week's resignation of the Iraqi premier is a setback to Iran but a minor concession to the protesters, which at the time of writing has witnessed more than 400 dead and 1700, wounded.