

1346

Dušan the Mighty is proclaimed Emperor, with the Serbian Empire occupying much of the Balkans.



1520

The Revolt of the Comuneros begins in Spain against the rule of **Charles V**.

1582

Spanish conquistador **Hernando de Lerma** founds the settlement of Salta, Argentina.

1780

Franz Friedrich Wilhelm von Fürstenberg founds the University of Münster.



ions in Washington in 2002.

The past five centuries of world history have featured conquests, plunder, torture, genocide, slavery, occupation and worse. The trend towards asking forgiveness and making reparations is overall a good thing.

defeat, here took place the painful birth of the mestizo people that today is Mexico.”

There can be no “mestizaje” without both civilisations — the Spanish and the original peoples — taking part in it. However violent their encounter may have been, and acknowledging the brutal nature of the conquest, Mexicans seem to prefer to let sleeping dogs lie. While racism against indigenous minorities in Mexico is undeniable, and the country’s European-origin tiny minority frequently resorts to racist attitudes toward mestizos, an overwhelming majority of the people of Mexico are mestizos today. There are myriad things to fix in Mexico, but discrimination by mestizos against mestizos is not one of them.

López Obrador said in his letter to King Philip VI that he was not requesting reparations; the conquest cannot be repaired. The apology he demanded was immediately rejected by the government in Madrid, and in all likelihood, the entire affair will fade away. The Mexican president’s ploy was almost certainly demagogic in intent and motivation, invoking an anti-Spanish sentiment that he believes exists in Mexico, though polls suggest otherwise.

Mexico does not need an apology, because it has no conflict with Spain today. But beyond the Mexican populist gesture, and the debates in the United States, Europe and Canada, however, lies a conversation waiting to be held. There are challenges for other peoples and groups that require atonement or forgiveness in order to be addressed. In some cases, it can make an enormous difference, as with African-Americans, race and slavery in the United States. In others, it can disentangle complicated questions of national identity and victimisation, as in Mexico. Reparations may be ultimately relevant only in some cases. But history is always relevant.

(Jorge G Castañeda, Mexico’s foreign minister from 2000 to 2003, is a professor at New York University and the author of “Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left After the Cold War.”)

ck hole

The momentum is with the “Remain” camp. More than six million people have signed a petition in favour of staying in the union.

signing on to all EU trade deals while no longer having any say over them.

The talks will probably founder. The Tories may try to throw out May in favour of a hard-liner like Boris Johnson. They may force a general election. Either way, they are looking wounded and weakened.

Peter Osborne, former chief political commentator at The Daily Telegraph, has also changed his mind. In a much-noted piece, he recently wrote, “It has become clear to me, though I’ve been a strong Tory Brexiteer, that Britain’s departure from the EU will be as great a disaster for our country as the over-mighty unions were in the 1960s and 1970s.”

After a devastating analysis of the crippling economic effects of Brexit, Osborne turned to the breakup of Britain. “I failed to understand,” he wrote, “how the EU is part of the glue which holds us together in the United Kingdom.”

Scotland wants to remain in the union. Northern Ireland does not want a hard border with the Republic of Ireland, a member of the European Union. An open intra-Irish border was a cornerstone of the 21-year-old Good Friday peace agreement. Put bluntly, absent the EU’s benign offsetting influence, internal tensions in the disunited kingdom would soon reach a breaking point.

This, too, has become clear. That round and riveting black hole, a place where everything vanishes like a dream, would be a good final resting place for Brexit.

(Roger Cohen is a columnist with The New York Times.)

(In collaboration with New York Times)

CIVILIAN’S TRIBUNE

A welcome move

After the wasted years of Obama - when the US believed that it could stop Tehran from destroying the region by talking to it nicely - the Trump Administration has finally recognised reality and designated the Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist group. To us in Bahrain, this fact has been obvious for around four decades.

The Revolutionary Guard was only just getting started with its overseas meddling activities at the beginning of the 1980s when Iraqi extremist Abdulhadi Al Mudarrisi was given the role of head of the “Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain” (IFLB). When Bahrain’s leaders threw him out of the country, he fled to Tehran, where Mudarrisi was put in charge of a radio station pumping out anti-Arab propaganda.

When the Gulf Cooperation Council was founded in 1981 - partly to help Arab Gulf states unite against Iranian threats - Tehran decided to retaliate by attempting to stage a coup in Bahrain. Iran chose to use Mudarrisi and the IFLB to lead this coup. However, the entity lacked meaningful support inside Bahrain, so Tehran provided Shia commandoes of various nationalities - many of whom had received IRGC training in the battlefield in the war with Iraq.

The coup was foiled in December 1981 after these mercenaries were intercepted at Dubai Airport (staff became suspicious of these heavily-built men all wearing the same boots!), and IFLB elements inside Bahrain were quickly rounded up. However, this attempt to de-

stroy Bahrain’s governing system and replace it with an Islamic Republic marked the beginning of forty years of efforts by the IRGC to destabilise Bahrain and other GCC states. Indeed, there was another coup attempt in the mid-1990s, by radical elements sometimes known as Hezbollah-Bahrain.

Also in Saudi Arabia, Iran sought to radicalise and arm local communities, resulting in bombing campaigns, including against the holy sites of Mecca and Medina. Pro-Khomeini riots during the Mecca pilgrimage on occasions resulted in stampedes and dozens of deaths. In 1996 (the same year as the second Bahrain coup attempt) an entity known as Hizbollah Al Hijaz staged an attack in eastern Saudi Arabia killing 19 US servicemen. Subsequent investigations closely linked this activity to the IRGC.

After 2003 it was Iraq’s turn to be plagued by Shia militia forces, created, armed and trained by the IRGC, which killed hundreds of coalition forces and tens of thousands of Iraqis. The toxic sectarian climate created by these IRGC-backed militias by 2013 had created the conditions which gave rise to the rapid expansion of Daesh. After 2011, IRGC Quds Force’s Qassim Soleimani arrived in Syria in order to micromanage the carnage, using paramilitary forces under his control.

In part, the IRGC’s terrorist activities were funded by narcotics smuggling and organised crime, but also through the exploitation of financial institutions to circumvent sanctions. Future Bank in Bahrain had

been set up at a time of thawing Iran-Bahrain relations; yet it was exploited for money-laundering purposes to funnel billions of dollars through to IRGC-linked entities until the Bahrain authorities shut it down in 2015.

When protests occurred in Manama in February 2011 calling for constitutional reforms, the IRGC once again seized its opportunity, to send weapons to radical elements, which embarked on a terrorist insurgency campaign. Vast quantities of arms and explosives of Iranian origin were seized at the Bahrain coastline, along with the discovery of weapons caches and bomb factories. Bahraini emigres based in Qom, like Murtada Al Sanadi, were given IRGC support to coordinate this terrorist campaign which led to the deaths of more than 20 policemen. These Bahraini militants received training either at the hands of the IRGC, or by paramilitary groups in Iraq and Lebanon - often through the simple gambit of travelling abroad on pilgrimage. On 1 January 2017, these militants even staged a brazen attack against Jaw Prison in order to free their comrades. Many were rearrested as they sought to make their way back to Iran.

So, yes, the designation of the IRGC is a welcome and necessary move. But we wish America was listening when we advised for this step to be taken many years ago; as the IRGC has been responsible for the killing of hundreds of US troops in Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere.

Citizens for Bahrain



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



A heavy iron hook fell on my head when a temple Thulabharam scale gave way. Lots of blood but no apparent other damage. Thank God it didn’t hurt anyone around me - could have caused a very serious injury.

@ShashiTharoor

02



Kathua’s mood is clear - BJP is seen as the only party that can bring development and ensure security. People in Jammu are disgusted with Congress’ attempts to weaken the armed forces. Nobody here accepts the JKNC demand of India having two Prime Ministers.

@narendramodi

03



In Kerala Cong is in a bitter war with CPM. Next door TN they are together. That’s politics. AAP shouldn’t try to maximise Delhi coalition to get advantage elsewhere, if they think BJP is the biggest enemy. Go for it!

@NSMlive

04



49% of all new income goes to the top 1%. Meanwhile millions of Americans are forced to work 2 or 3 jobs just to survive. And over half of our people live paycheck to paycheck. That is not justice.

@BernieSanders

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