

Headlines:

- **Pompeo Suggests God Sent Trump to Protect “Israel”**
- **Algeria’s Bouteflika Refusing to Step Down**
- **Europe Uncertain over Ascendant Chinese Power**
- **Western Stereotype of Submissiveness of Muslim Women under Challenge**
- **Pakistan Gains on ‘World Happiness Index’**

Details:

Pompeo Suggests God Sent Trump to Protect “Israel”

According to *Politico*:

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Thursday said “it’s possible” that President Donald Trump was sent to protect the Jewish people from the threat of Iran.

During an interview with Pompeo broadcast on the Christian Broadcasting Network, Middle East bureau chief Chris Mitchell noted that Wednesday and Thursday marked the celebration of Purim, which is derived from the story of Queen Esther, who in the Hebrew Bible was married to a Persian king and saved thousands of Jews from being killed.

“Could it be that President Trump right now has been sort of raised for such a time as this, just like Queen Esther, to help save the Jewish people from the Iranian menace?” Mitchell asked Pompeo.

“As a Christian, I certainly believe that’s possible,” Pompeo, who was visiting Israel, replied.

“It was remarkable — so we were down in the tunnels where we could see 3,000 years ago, and 2,000 years ago — if I have the history just right — to see the remarkable history of the faith in this place and the work that our administration’s done to make sure that this democracy in the Middle East, that this Jewish state remains,” he said.

“I am confident that the Lord is at work here,” Pompeo concluded.

The comments came after Trump announced the U.S. will recognize Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights region, which was part of Syria until the Six-Day War in 1967.

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday called the United States’ recognition a “Purim miracle,” the CBN reported.

Trump’s administration has made relations with Israel a priority, and even moved the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. In addition, the Trump administration has increased harsh rhetoric on Iran, which Israel perceives as a fundamental threat.

Despite the West’s embrace of secular materialist values, they never forget their ‘Christian’ hatred of Muslims and Islam. According to an entry on ‘The History Jar’ website about the Christian Crusader King Richard, known in the West as ‘the Lionheart’, who fought against the brave mujahid commander Salahuddin Ayyubi:

Acre eventually fell to the Crusaders. On August 20 1191 Richard responded to Saladin’s failure to comply with the terms of negotiation over the citizens and defenders of Acre... Richard killed all his captives... Richard believed that Saladin was stalling for time in order to bring in fresh troops and recapture Acre and that he had gone back on his word – whereas in reality it is not totally clear that Saladin had agreed to the terms that Richard demanded.

Richard... ordered that all the prisoners from Acre should be taken to a hill called Ayyadieh. There in full view of the Muslim army and Saladin’s headquarters, approximately 3000 soldiers, men, women and children from the city were killed. Even Richard’s estimates are similar...

Killing unarmed women and children is not heroic, no matter which way it's dressed up... The massacre at Ayyadieh is a blot on Richard's reputation, to modern eyes, although it is never usually referred to in popular histories – as it doesn't fit with the legend of the heroic king.

Algeria's Bouteflika Refusing to Step Down

Despite rallies now numbering in the hundreds of thousands, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika is still refusing to go. According to a *Reuters* report:

Hundreds of thousands of Algerians rallied on Friday to demand the immediate resignation of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who is fighting for his political survival in the face of unrelenting protests and the desertion of long-time allies...

Despite heavy rain and cold weather, the turnout was as large as last Friday, as protesters carrying the national flag packed central Algiers, the scene of mass protests for a month.

"We stay here until the whole system goes," said Mahmoud Timar, a 37-year old teacher.

Bouteflika, 82 and rarely seen in public since suffering a stroke five years ago, bowed to the protesters last week by reversing plans to stand in elections for a fifth term.

But he stopped short of quitting as head of state and said he would stay on until a new constitution is adopted. The move further enraged Algerians, and many of Bouteflika's allies have turned against him.

"We are close to victory. The system is divided," said restaurant owner Rachid Zemmir, 55.

There were also protests in other cities such as Serif, El Oued and Skikda, television footage showed.

The system is indeed divided, as a small clique around Bouteflika has been attempting to consolidate power in their own hands, and it seems this clique is now under pressure from the rest of the Algerian power structure, as the above report goes on to explain:

Bouteflika has a track record of outmaneuvering anyone perceived as a threat. First elected president in 1999, he wrested power from the secretive military-based establishment known as "le pouvoir" (the power).

In 2015, Bouteflika sacked powerful intelligence chief Mohamed Mediene, dubbed "Algeria's God". Last year he dismissed about a dozen top military officers.

In the most dramatic development in a month of demonstrations, Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Ahmed Gaed Salah threw the army's weight behind the protesters on Wednesday, saying they had expressed "noble aims".

That was a major setback for Bouteflika, who bolstered his position over the years with the help of the army, and oligarchs who funded his election campaigns.

"The people and the army are brothers," protesters chanted on Friday. A man held up a FedEx box with a photograph of Bouteflika taped to it beside a Return to Sender stamp.

The military has been patiently watching the protests unfold.

Algeria provides yet another example of how popular mass protests alone are insufficient to bring real change to the system. The true, and peaceful, method for change is that followed by the Noble Messenger of Allah (saw), who was able to take Medina without any bloodshed through not only the ideological preparation of its people but also by gaining 'nusrah', i.e. the allegiance of a number of those in power, prior to his (saw) emigration there. Indeed the Ansar had travelled to Mecca and had secretly pledged their commitment to protect and secure Islam and the Prophet (saw) at Aqaba and it was only after this pledge that Allah (swt) commanded the migration.

Europe Uncertain over Ascendant Chinese Power

According to the *New York Times*:

President Xi Jinping of China arrived on Friday at Rome's presidential palace with a cavalry escort usually reserved for royals. For a three-day visit, Italy pulled out all the stops for an economic superpower promising billions in investment and trade deals in exchange for officially signing on to China's vast new Silk Road.

But even as Mr. Xi and his wife were serenaded at a state dinner by Andrea Bocelli, the leaders of France, Germany and the European Union huddled in Brussels hoping to strengthen the Continent's defenses against what they considered to be China's economic incursion.

The disconnect between the two scenes laid bare the divisions and tensions in Europe, caught in the middle of a trade war between the United States and China, while trying to find its bearings and assert its power in a volatile era of shifting geopolitical alliances and American retrenchment.

"China plays on our divisions," President Emmanuel Macron of France, speaking in Brussels, told reporters on Friday, adding that the European Union had finally woken up to China. "The period of European naïveté is over."

But stalling China's success in dividing European allies will be easier said than done. Italy may be just the latest economic partner for China in Europe, but it is a significant one. It is the first member of the Group of 7 nations that once dominated the global economy to take part in China's vast Belt and Road infrastructure project, a sign of how a rising China is reshaping the world's economic and political order.

With China's rise, the Western powers are preoccupied with their game of balance of power, looking for opportunities to set up China against their opponents. So European powers are looking for ways to balance China against America, while America is encouraging the expansion of China's overland influence intensifying competition with Russia and Europe and driving China away from the oceans that America wishes to maintain sole dominance over. The Western powers lack the ideological muscle to counter China's rise and have thus fallen to containing and channelling China against their rivals.

The West's intellectual bankruptcy has elevated balance of power from operational tactic to grand strategy, bringing dire consequences for global peace and stability. With Allah's permission, the Muslim Ummah shall soon re-establish the Islamic Khilafah (Caliphate) State on the method of the Prophet (saw) restoring justice and harmony to world affairs, progressing beyond challenge and confrontation towards containing, reassuring and pacifying its opponents.

Western Stereotype of Submissiveness of Muslim Women under Challenge

In the aftermath of the New Zealand attacks, a columnist in the *Los Angeles Times* has commented on how the increased media coverage of Muslim women is challenging the West's traditional stereotype of their submissiveness:

Never before have American viewers seen Muslims covered by the media with such a broad range of images and narratives as they have this month. From Fox News host Jeanine Pirro's shrill proclamations that [hijab'-wearing Congresswoman Ilhan] Omar honors Sharia law above the U.S. Constitution to the massive outpouring of grief and support for the victims and survivors of last week's attacks, shifting politics and tragic events have forced a long overdue reckoning.

Most everything Americans thought they knew about Muslims here and abroad has been challenged, on screen, and at an unprecedented pace. Muslims are not only perpetrators of terror attacks, they are also victims. White separatists are not just an isolated group of the disenfranchised whose vitriol against Muslims is limited to hate speech. And Muslim women who cover their heads aren't forbidden by their husbands from having something to say, as Donald Trump suggested of Gold Star mother Ghazala Khan during the 2016 Democratic convention. In fact, now he and many others on the right can't wait for Omar to shut up...

As a woman who covers, Omar is the most visible Muslim in the country right now. The freshman congresswoman's name alone has become shorthand for those celebrating progress and those who see her arrival as a sign of worrisome change. She's a de facto lightning rod for the right and the left, and has set off a wave of Muslim panic among Islamophobes...

It's ironic given that it's Muslim women, the very figures who have widely been pitied in the West as silent victims of a patriarchal faith, are at the forefront of this cultural upheaval.

In fact, a truly objective comparison would conclude that women in Muslim societies are far more assertive, confident, and empowered than women in the West. The strong family system that continues to survive amongst Muslims provides women with the natural setting in which they are able to excel, with their rights and their livelihood made an Islamic legal obligation upon their menfolk. Meanwhile, in the West, the decline of families and the lack of male financial obligations towards women forces them into the marketplace in search of work often in addition to the duties at home and compels them to compete with men on an unequal footing.

Pakistan Gains on 'World Happiness Index'

Despite negative world media coverage of Pakistan leading many abroad to think Pakistani's must live in the most dire situation on the planet, this year's 'World Happiness Index' shows Pakistan gaining points and continuing to be substantially ahead of neighbours India and China; according to the *Dawn*:

Pakistan is among the top 20 gainers on the World Happiness index this year, ranked at 67th place, a jump of eight spots from last year's ranking at 75.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network's annual World Happiness Report ranked 156 countries based on six indicators: income per capita, life expectancy, social support, freedom, generosity and corruption.

Finland was once again ranked as the happiest country in the world. Denmark, Norway and Iceland clinched the second, third and fourth positions, respectively. South Sudan took the last spot in the ranking.

Pakistan ranks highest among all of its neighbours again this year. India ranks at 140 — seven spots lower than last year, while China is at 93, Iran at 117, Iraq at 126 and Afghanistan at 154 — just two spots above the last place. Bangladesh is ranked 125.

Pakistan is among the top 20 gainers on the index, joined by the Philippines, and countries from Europe, Africa and Latin America. Among the 20 largest losers are countries from the Middle East, Africa, Western Europe, India, Malaysia, Venezuela and Ukraine.

The World Happiness Index is in fact a biased Western Capitalist measure of societal progress, mixing up more objective measures with the Western idea of 'freedom' amongst its criteria. It is this that principally explains the domination of Western countries at the top of the list. Nevertheless, the comparison of Pakistan with India is striking, despite their sharing a common legacy and almost identical systems of government; the principal difference is the dominance of Islam amongst the Pakistani people.