

Did Pompeo Dupe Trump into the Soleimani Hit?

By [Mike Whitney](#)

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Donald Trump is under the illusion that the fracas with Iran is over. He thinks that Iran's pinprick missile strikes on US bases in Iraq have assuaged Tehran's thirst for revenge. But he's wrong. The missile strikes were merely the first salvo in an epic cage match between Iran's Axis of Resistance and its 70 year-long nemesis, the United States. As Iran's Supreme Leader said on Wednesday, the missile attacks were not sufficient payback for the assassination of Iran's most decorated military hero, Qassem Soleimani. They were just "a slap", just Round One in what will surely be a long and bloody campaign aimed at driving the US out of the Middle East.

I wonder if Trump has any idea of what he's done? It's one thing to hector, threaten, coerce and sanction a rival nation, especially a nation that sits on an ocean of oil in a strategically-located area like the Middle East. But it's another thing to assassinate the country's highest-ranking and most revered military commander, an Iranian Rommel, whose tireless devotion to service spans a 40 year-long period. That's not something that can be shrugged off or swept under the rug. That's an act of war that requires a muscular response from the state. No country can allow its military leaders to be killed with impunity. Iran will have to fight back, and they will fight back. The question is "how"?

Iran will likely intensify the strategy that Soleimani perfected; hybrid, 4th Generation unconventional warfare conducted via Iran's proxies in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan and Lebanon. They will forgo using their bulging arsenal of long-range ballistic missiles and, instead, implement an asymmetrical strategy aimed at roiling markets, blocking shipping lanes, demolishing petrochemical plants and wasting oil tankers. The objective will be to wreak havoc across the region making the US presence less and less tenable while invoking plausible deniability as to the perpetrator. It will be a war that is largely conducted in the shadows. The Middle East is a target-rich environment for those who have the proxies, the weapons and the inclination to create mayhem. This is a war that Iran is prepared to fight and this is a war that Iran can win.

Iran also has more extreme options as illustrated in this excerpt from an article at DW:

"The IRGC can threaten shipping lanes in the Gulf, Gulf of Oman and the Caspian Sea through the application of a wide variety of assets it has at its disposal, including submarines, smart torpedoes, smart mine capability, and land-based, long-range anti-ship missiles strategically based on the mainland, islands, and ships"...Such attacks could put a halt to the world's oil transport network, at least for a time. One-fifth of global oil production is shipped through the strait between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula. If the Strait of Hormuz were to become unsafe for ship passage, it would not only affect the United States but also a large number of countries around the world. The US would be under great pressure to end any war with Iran as quickly as

possible...." (["Iran-US conflict: Tehran's asymmetrical approach"](#), dw.com)

Did Trump mull-over any of these grim scenarios before he ordered the assassination of Soleimani? Was he told that both Obama and G.W. Bush opted not to kill Soleimani because they knew the backlash would be too great? Did Trump even know that Soleimani helped the US defeat ISIS and al Qaida in Iraq and Syria?

How much did Trump actually know about Soleimani or was he intentionally kept in the dark by his fanatical neocon advisors like Mike Pompeo? That doesn't excuse Trump or make him any less culpable for his decision, but it does suggest that his sources of information might be tainted by conflicting political agendas. A recent article in the New York Times titled "Pompeo Upended Middle East by Pushing Trump to Kill Iranian General" appears to support this theory. Here's an excerpt:

"Last week, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was the loudest voice in the administration pushing President Trump to kill Iran's most important general....The strike against the Iranian general has affirmed Mr. Pompeo's position as the second-most powerful official in the Trump administration..... as the man at the center of the argument to launch the drone strike that killed Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani — and who pushed Mr. Trump to withdraw from the landmark Iran nuclear deal in 2018 — he is in the unusual role of shaping national security policy...

Mr. Pompeo, 56, could become known as the man who helped lead the United States into another conflict in the Middle East — breaking one of Mr. Trump's key campaign promises just as the president faces re-election..

Mr. Pompeo said he and other American officials "evaluated the relevant risks" that the strike against General Suleimani might bring. He cited "continuing efforts on behalf of this terrorist to build out a network of campaign activities that were going to lead potentially to the death of many more Americans."...(["Pompeo Upended Middle East by Pushing Trump to Kill Iranian General"](#), New York Times)

This simply isn't true. Soleimani did not organize any "campaign activities" to kill American soldiers. That's baloney. He was in Baghdad working on a peace agreement with his Saudi counterpart when he was incinerated by a missile launched from an American drone. Pompeo has produced no hard evidence to back this spurious claim.

Nor is there any proof that there was an "imminent threat". That's another one of Pompeo's howlers. The only threat that materialized was the threat that an Iranian General on a peace mission would be senselessly obliterated by a bloodthirsty cabal in Washington. Here's more from the Times:

"...no major attack against the sprawling and heavily-fortified diplomatic compound in Baghdad's Green Zone is "imminent," even though Mr. Pompeo has asserted that repeatedly, said the official, who discussed administration deliberations only on the condition of anonymity. Some Pentagon officials had said earlier that there was no intelligence revealing any unusual threats.

On Tuesday, Mr. Pompeo did not repeat his assertions that the United States had intelligence about an "imminent" attack and instead pointed to recent violent episodes.

"If you're looking for imminence, you need look no further than the days that led up to the strike that was taken against Suleimani," Mr. Pompeo said, apparently referring to the rocket attack by an Iranian-backed militia that killed an American interpreter, Nawres Hamid, in Iraq on Dec. 27." (New York Times)

So rather than admit that he was lying, the cagey Pompeo simply diverts attention to the American contractor who was killed last week. That's called bait-and-switch, a tactic that's typically used by hucksters and charlatans. The fact is, there was no indication that an attack was imminent. None. Soleimani posed no threat to US troops or US assets at all. He was killed for nothing or, rather, he was killed because Trump and Pompeo wanted him dead. That's the bottom line. Here's more from the same article:

"Pompeo... is a chief architect of the rising tensions between the United States and Iran. As Mr. Trump's first C.I.A. director, he created a special center to deal with Iran...Days after becoming secretary of state in 2018, Mr. Pompeo pushed Mr. Trump to withdraw from the nuclear agreement and reimpose strict sanctions on Iran. He has nurtured closer partnerships with Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, enemies of Iran that sometimes have agendas that run counter to American interests....

In April, he advised Mr. Trump to designate as a foreign terrorist organization the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, an arm of the Iranian military that includes General Suleimani's elite Quds Force. It was the first time the United States had applied that label to a part of another government.

And after the Dec. 31 breach of the American Embassy in Baghdad, Mr. Pompeo pushed harder for the strike against Mr. Suleimani, which Defense Department officials had presented to Mr. Trump as an extreme and not particularly palatable option only days earlier....

Last year, on a trip to Israel, Mr. Pompeo invoked the Bible in saying Mr. Trump was a modern-day Queen Esther sent by God to save the Jews from Iran." (New York Times)

Let's summarize:

1. Pompeo was the biggest and most outspoken supporter of assassination.
2. It was Pompeo "who pushed Mr. Trump to withdraw from the landmark Iran nuclear deal."...
3. It was also Pompeo who convinced Trump that the benefits of killing Solemani outweighed the risks
4. It was also Pompeo who justified the assassination by stating that there was a "imminent threat" against US assets, a claim for which there is no evidence.
5. It was also Pompeo who persuaded Trump to designate the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps as a terrorist organization."
6. Pompeo is the "chief architect" of the administration's failed Iran policy which includes the ongoing economic strangulation and the abandoning of Washington's obligations under the terms of the nuclear agreement.
7. And, it will also be Pompeo who- like his ideological twin, George W Bush-will be "known as the man who helped lead the United States into another conflict in the Middle East."

Again, none of this justifies Trump's monstrous decision to kill Soleimani, but it does show

how Pompeo's ingratiating "apple-polishing" behavior has helped him to advance his own political agenda, an agenda that appears to be far more tilted in Tel Aviv's favor than Washington's. How does that fit with Trump's "America First" doctrine?

It doesn't fit at all, in fact, it strongly suggests that Pompeo's loyalties lie elsewhere. Why else would he put the US on a path to a military confrontation with Iran, a confrontation that will undoubtedly have catastrophic implications for the United States? How does that benefit America?

And what would the outcome of such a hellish, region-wide conflagration be? Here's how "Grand Chessboard" geostrategist Zbigniew Brzezinski summed it up more than a decade ago:

"An attack on Iran would be an act of political folly, setting in motion a progressive upheaval in world affairs. With the U.S. increasingly the object of widespread hostility, the era of American preponderance could even come to a premature end. Although the United States is clearly dominant in the world at the moment, it has neither the power nor the domestic inclination to impose and then to sustain its will in the face of protracted and costly resistance."

This is the nightmare scenario, the end of America brought to you by the two biggest dunderheads to ever to serve in public office: Donald Trump and Mike Pompeo.

Is there any way to stop this train-wreck?

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