

Major General Soleimani's Assassination Isn't Going to Start World War III

By [Andrew Korybko](#)

Global Research, January 03, 2020

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?](#)

The US carried out a de-facto act of war against Iran after assassinating Major General Qasem Soleimani of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force in Baghdad last night, but despite the doomsday scenarios that many in Alt-Media are speculating that this will lead to, the commencement of World War III is extremely unlikely for several reasons.

The "Decapitation Strike" That Shook The World

[Trump's approval](#) of the US' assassination of Major General Qasem Soleimani of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) Quds Force in Baghdad last night amounts to a de-facto act of war against Iran, but it wasn't the decision of a "madman" or someone whose permanent military, intelligence, and diplomatic bureaucracies ("deep state") didn't think this completely through. Rather, it was a premeditated "decapitation strike" carried out to prove the US' conventional "escalation dominance" in its regional proxy war with Iran, one which America surely knows will elicit a kinetic response of some sort from the Islamic Republic but which the Pentagon and its regional allies are prepared for. Contrary to the narrative bandied about in [Alt-Media](#), the US didn't "surrender" the Mideast to Russia and Iran in recent years (who, to be clear, are not "allies", but anti-terrorist "partners of convenience" in Syria) despite some regional setbacks to its grand strategy, but merely adjusted the nature through which it intends to restore its influence there.

Background Context

Instead of continuing to waste hundreds of millions of dollars a day funding the counterproductive 100,000-strong occupation of Iraq and potentially exposing that many troops ("sitting ducks") to retaliatory attacks, it decided to scale down its conventional presence there and replace it with highly trained Marines and special forces that operate with the support of targeted missile strikes. It was one such strike earlier in the week against the Popular Mobilization Units' (PMU) Kataib Hezbollah, which is integrated into the Iraqi Armed Forces, that provoked the group's supporters (allegedly with the coordination of the IRGC according to the US) into besieging the American Embassy in Baghdad. Trump responded by immediately dispatching troops to the world's largest diplomatic facility and bragging on Twitter that this was his "[anti-Benghazi](#)" moment in a clear swipe at Obama's notorious failure to protect American diplomats back in 2012 when they were in similar circumstances.

Once the unrest died down following the organizers' decision to withdraw after they

[declared](#) that their “message has been heard”, US Secretary of Defense [ominously warned](#) that his country could take “preemptive action” if it detects any signals that Iran is supposedly planning more anti-American attacks in Iraq. The Islamic Republic denied that it played any role in the recent events unfolding in the neighboring country, but the US obviously didn’t believe it. It therefore set out to [assassinate Maj. Gen. Soleimani](#) in order to send the message that it’s serious about “deterring” any forthcoming allegedly Iranian-connected anti-American attacks seeing as how it blamed him for being involved in the latest ones. It also wanted to put additional pressure on Iran to withdraw from Iraq, but probably expected that it could exploit Tehran’s response to this de-facto act of war as a pretext for further intensifying its pressure campaign through more “decapitation strikes”. This attack therefore dangerously escalated tensions with Iran and made many observers fear the onset of World War III.

Some Words About Maj. Gen. Soleimani

What follows isn’t an excuse for America’s actions, but simply a cold, hard analysis explaining why Trump decided to assassinate Soleimani and thus carry out a de-facto act of war against Iran, one which will not lead to World War III despite the fearmongering speculation that’s taken social media by storm ever since. Simply put, Iran misjudged the US’ resolve to regain its lost influence in the region and never thought that it would escalate the situation to this level, hence why Maj. Gen. Soleimani had no fear of being killed in the heart of Baghdad despite the US’ conventional air superiority and explicit warnings that it could take “preemptive action” against Iran if it believes that it played any role whatsoever in any forthcoming anti-American attacks. It doesn’t matter whether or not the PMU’s Kataib Hezbollah is justified in seeking the removal of US forces from the country through any means possible or if it coordinates those actions with the IRGC since all that’s important is that the US was looking for a pretext to carry out its calculated “decapitation strike” against Maj. Gen. Soleimani.

A few words about him are appropriate at this point. It was through his leadership that the IRGC greatly assisted the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) in its destruction of Daesh. He’s played a larger role than any individual in defeating terrorism in Syria and Iraq, and he was widely respected as among one of the most brilliant unconventional warfare tacticians in recent memory. It was because of his success, however, that he became one of the US’ most hated foes since he contributed to the defeat of Washington’s regional proxy forces and thus was partly responsible for the decline in American influence there lately. He was therefore marked for death by the US, but Trump knew that killing him without any pretext would be an unnecessary escalation so he wanted to save that “ace up his sleeve” for later. Iran knows that the US wants it to withdraw from Syria and Iraq but steadfastly refuses because it has the legal right to remain there at the request of those countries’ internationally recognized governments, but nevertheless, the US thinks that “might makes right” and is trying to force it out.

The Islamic Republic Won’t Commit Suicide

American and “Israeli” strikes against allegedly IRGC-allied PMU forces over the past month or so were intended to achieve that outcome, which naturally prompted those forces to kinetically react by targeting a US base earlier in the week that afterwards served as the pretext for America’s latest attack against Kataib Hezbollah which in turn triggered the embassy siege. There’s no doubt that the US is escalating the situation in contravention of international law and targeting anti-terrorist forces that contributed to the defeat of Daesh,

but polemics — while having their “perception management” purposes — are pointless when it comes to analyzing situations as objectively as possible and forecasting what might come next. Therefore, they’re being excluded from this piece going forward. Having gotten that out of the way, it’s now time to turn the article’s attention towards rebutting the fearmongering claims that World War III is about to start after Maj. Gen. Soleimani’s assassination.

Iran has the international legal right to defend itself, and its Supreme Leader already vowed a “[harsh revenge](#)” to that end, but it’s extremely unlikely to take the form of direct attacks against the US or its allies. As much as the next phrase is going to trigger many Alt-Media folks, the US military is capable of destroying Iran in minutes so long as it’s willing to bear the regional costs of its actions, both short-term in the sense of casualties and long-term as it relates to the geopolitical future of the Mideast. After proving his commitment to overwhelmingly respond to any anti-American attacks that his government alleges (whether truthfully or not) are carried out with any degree of Iranian coordination, Trump certainly wouldn’t hesitate to bomb Iran itself if missiles were launched from there against his or his allies’ forces. The Islamic Republic knows that it would literally be suicide to do such a thing, and despite what neoconservatives, Zionists, and Wahhabis claim about the Iranian authorities, they aren’t an “apocalyptic death cult” and thus aren’t going to start World War III.

Several Scenarios

There’s no doubt that Iran could inflict very serious damage to its regional foes if it chooses to “go out with a bang” (whether after being provoked to do so or at its own prerogative), but it’s much more likely that its response to Maj. Gen. Soleimani’s assassination will take the form of intensified Unconventional Warfare against their interests. The US and its allies must have clearly foreseen this and will likely blame Iran for anything that happens in the coming days no matter whether it’s truly involved or not, using that as a pretext for more “decapitation strikes” and other similar measures intended to decimate it and its allies’ forces. The nature of conflict between the two sides is therefore asymmetric since the US has conventional dominance whereas Iran has its unconventional counterpart, and both might be put to the test in the event of another US Embassy siege in Baghdad, which is very probable in the coming days seeing as how Iraqi society is seething with rage and can easily assemble a critical mass of protesters to besiege the compound once again.

For as big of a prize as seizing the world’s largest diplomatic facility would be for whoever can take it (be it Iran, Iranian-allied, or otherwise), there’s no way that Trump would let that happen. Just like the Berlin Airlift of the Old Cold War, the US would carry out a Baghdad Airlift if it need be, which could entail leveling entire neighborhoods in order to prevent its enemies from hiding anti-air missiles there for taking down its air assets. One can only speculate how such a scenario would unfold, but there shouldn’t be any question in anyone’s mind about the US backing down, especially not during an election year and definitely not after Trump proudly boasted that this is his “anti-Benghazi” moment. Another potential retaliatory scenario is disrupting energy transit through the Strait of Hormuz, but that would affect more than just the US and surely elicit universal condemnation from everyone except perhaps allied Syria, just like if Hezbollah or other IRGC-allied forces decide to bomb “[Israel](#)” (in which case it and the US would certainly respond through military means).

Don’t Expect Russia Or China To Save Iran

It's "politically inconvenient" for many of Iran's supporters across the world to accept, but the country doesn't have any state-based military allies willing to go to war alongside it except perhaps Syria, but the SAA has been utterly devastated over the last 9 years and is now a shadow of its former self. There is also absolutely no way that Russia would allow Syria to actively participate in any state-based military hostilities alongside Iran because doing so would endanger the forces and substantial investments that it has in the Arab Republic nowadays. Speaking of which, Russia isn't Iran's ally, [but "Israel's"](#), though it wouldn't go to war alongside the self-professed "Jewish State" but rather stay out of any potential conflict between the two (which wouldn't last long considering that the US' conventional dominance could crush the Islamic Republic within days if Trump authorized it to be unleashed to its fullest extent and he was willing to accept the previously mentioned costs).

Neither Russia nor China would go to war in support of Iran, though they could be expected to issue very strong statements of condemnation against the US and anyone else who might conventionally attack it (whether "preemptively" or as "retaliation"). This objectively existing and easily verifiable statement of fact will likely take many in Alt-Media by surprise who have been indoctrinated over the past couple of years with fake news "analyses" alleging that those two Eurasian Great Powers are "anti-American" and willing to fight the US in order to "save the world". That will never happen unless one of them is attacked first (though even in that case, neither would go to war for the other because they've made it clear that they're [not "military allies"](#)), which probably won't happen because of the concept of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), at least not unless the US is able to surmount that "obstacle" through the combination of its anti-missile technology and "Space Forces". In any case, nobody should expect Russia or China to rush to Iran's aid and defend it from the US.

Concluding Thoughts

The most likely outcome of Maj. Gen. Soleimani's assassination is an intensified period of proxy wars in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen which stays just below the conventional threshold given Iran's inability to survive an overwhelming US' "retaliatory" strike if Trump authorized one in response to the unlikely massive missile strike that some speculate Tehran might be preparing. The US might also carry out "surgical strikes" against places in Iran where it might claim other strikes were "organized", such as if Yemen's Ansarullah attempt to repeat their successful drone strike against Saudi Aramco from last September. "Decapitation strikes" might therefore become increasingly more frequent and nobody would be safe, not even Hezbollah's Nasrallah in the worst-case scenario, since the US just signaled that it has the political will to take out "high-value targets". As all of this unfolds, Russia and China will do their utmost to stay away from any regional fray and definitely wouldn't intervene to defend Iran. As such, Iran's expected responses will be purely asymmetrical and not conventional.

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above or below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

This article was originally published on [OneWorld](#).

Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global

vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

Featured image is from OneWorld



[The Globalization of War: America's "Long War" against Humanity](#)

Michel Chossudovsky

The "globalization of war" is a hegemonic project. Major military and covert intelligence operations are being undertaken simultaneously in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia and the Far East. The U.S. military agenda combines both major theater operations as well as covert actions geared towards destabilizing sovereign states.

ISBN Number: 978-0-9737147-6-0

Year: 2015

Pages: 240 Pages

List Price: \$22.95

Special Price: \$15.00

[Click here to order.](#)

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Andrew Korybko](#), Global Research, 2020

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Andrew Korybko](#)

About the author:

Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in

print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca