

Russia's Unspoken Relationship With Israel and the Assassination of Maj. Gen. Soleimani

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The language employed by President Putin and his government in response to Major General Soleimani's assassination is unmistakably less emotional than the eulogies that he gave after the passing of Ariel Sharon, Shimon Peres, and Bush Sr., but this was to be expected since Iran isn't Russia's "close ally" like many have falsely claimed whereas the Russian leader has been consistently seeking closer relations with "Israel" and the US since the beginning of the century and thus has an interest in openly mourning the deaths of their former leaders whom he had earlier befriended on a very close personal level.

The world has been polarized over [Major General Soleimani's assassination](#), with Iran's enemies spitting on his grave while its friends are mourning his murder. Russia, meanwhile, is characteristically "balancing" between both sides per its [21st-century grand strategy](#) whereby it isn't expressing any emotional reaction to his killing whatsoever. This surprised many in the [Alt-Media Community](#) who have been indoctrinated with the fake news narrative that Russia and Iran are "allies" after their shared struggles in jointly defeating Daesh in Syria, which is why they eagerly expected an emotional eulogy from either President Putin or his officials.

Instead, the Russian response has been strictly factual, much to their disappointment. There are obvious reasons for this, though they'll be explained later on in this analysis. First, however, it's important to draw attention to the lofty praise that President Putin sincerely expressed towards Ariel Sharon, Shimon Peres, and Bush Sr. after their passing as reported by the official Kremlin website, which was entirely voluntary on his part since they weren't sitting heads of state when they met their demise but were treasured friends who he'll fondly remember for the rest of his life, unlike Maj. Gen. Soleimani.

Tears For "Israel" and America

Here's what President Putin [said](#) after Ariel Sharon's demise:

"The President of Russia highly praised Ariel Sharon's personal qualities, his activity to uphold the interests of Israel, noting the respect he enjoyed among his compatriots and internationally. Mr Putin stressed that Ariel Sharon will be remembered in Russia as a consistent supporter of friendly relations between Russia and Israel, who made a significant contribution to expanding mutually beneficial cooperation. Vladimir Putin conveyed his words of sympathy and support to Ariel Sharon's family and the entire nation of Israel."

Then he [said](#) this after Shimon Peres passed away:

“The message from the President of Russia says that Shimon Peres won broad respect in Israel and internationally for his many years of hard work as president and prime minister of Israel. Vladimir Putin praised Mr Peres’s personal contribution towards a peace settlement in the Middle East, which was duly appreciated by the international community as evidenced from the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to him.

“I was extremely lucky to have met this extraordinary man many times. And every time I admired his courage, patriotism, wisdom, vision and ability to get down to the essence of the most difficult issues. Shimon Peres will be remembered in Russia as a consistent advocate of friendly relations between Russia and Israel and a man who greatly contributed to the strengthening of bilateral cooperation,” the President wrote.

Vladimir Putin conveyed his condolences and support to the family and friends of the deceased and also to the Government and people of Israel.”

And finally, he shared this [emotional tribute](#) with Bush Jr. after Bush Sr. died:

“Dear George,

Please accept my deepest condolences over the passing of your father, former US President, George Herbert Walker Bush. An outstanding politician, he devoted his entire life to serving his country, both as a serviceman during wartime and in high-ranking public posts in peacetime. As US President during one of the most important periods of world history, he showed political wisdom and foresight, and always sought balanced decisions even in the most difficult situations.

George Bush Sr. was well aware of the importance of a constructive dialogue between the two major nuclear powers and took great efforts to strengthen Russian-American relations and cooperation in international security. I had the good fortune to have met with him several times. I recall with particular warmth him organising our meeting at your wonderful summer home in Kennebunkport.

My fellow citizens and I will always cherish the memory of George Bush Sr. In this sad time, I would like to pass worlds of heartfelt sympathy and support to all members of your large family. May you have endurance during this time of grievous and tragic loss.

Vladimir Putin”

Saluting Soleimani

Compare all of the above with the [only official report](#) of President Putin’s reaction to Maj. Gen. Soleimani’s assassination, which he expressed while talking to French President Macron sometime on Friday:

“Both sides expressed concern over the death of Qasem Soleimani, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Quds Force, who was killed as a result of a US strike on Baghdad’s airport. It was stated that this attack could escalate tensions in the region.”

His officials were slightly more outspoken, however, with a Foreign Ministry source telling

[TASS](#) the following on Friday morning:

“We consider Soleimani’s murder in a US missile strike at the suburbs of Baghdad an adventurous step that will lead to growing tensions throughout the region. Soleimani devotedly served the cause of protecting Iran’s national interests. We are offering our sincere condolences to the Iranian people.”

[TASS](#) then reported that Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zakharova said that:

“It turns out that a missile strike was carried out first, an act that is out of sync with international law was committed. And only then did they [the Americans] requested [the assessment of the events] involving the [US] Embassy. This is probably the height of cynicism, you know...To condemn attacks on their embassies, states go to the UN Security Council submitting draft statements. Washington did not appeal to the Security Council, which means that it is not interested in the world’s response [and that it is] interested in changing the balance of power in the region...That will not result in anything but escalating tensions in the region, which will be sure to affect millions of people.”

After that, the Foreign Ministry published a [statement](#) on its website which reads as follows:

“We were concerned to learn of the death of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Commander Major General Qasem Soleimani in a US military strike on Baghdad airport. This step by Washington is fraught with grave consequences for the regional peace and stability. We firmly believe that such actions do not facilitate efforts to find solutions to the complicated problems that have built up in the Middle East. On the contrary, they lead to a new round of escalating tensions in the region.”

Then [TASS](#) reported on a statement by the Defense Ministry:

“Under the direct leadership of Qasem Soleimani, armed resistance against international terrorist groups ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, former name of the IS - TASS) and Al-Qaeda (outlawed in Russia) was organized in Syria and Iraq long before the so-called international coalition led by the US. His personal contribution to the fight against ISIL on the territory of Syria is undisputed. The short-sighted steps by the US, namely the killing of General Soleimani, will lead to a sharp escalation of military-political tensions in the Middle East region. It is fraught with serious negative consequences for the entire global security system.”

The outlet also said that “the statement adds that Soleimani was an experienced military commander who had significant authority and influence in the entire Middle East region.”

Afterwards, [TASS](#) reported that the Russian Foreign Ministry had this to say about Lavrov’s call with Pompeo about the matter:

“They [Lavrov and Pompeo] have discussed the situation related to the murder of Iranian Revolutionary Guards’ Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani by the US military in an airstrike on the Baghdad airport. Lavrov stressed that the purposeful actions of a UN member state on eliminating officials of another UN

member state, especially on the territory of a third sovereign state without giving it prior notice, blatantly violate the principles of international law and should be condemned.

The Russian minister has pointed out that this step by the US is fraught with serious consequences for peace and security in the region and that it does not aid the efforts on finding solutions to difficult issues accumulated in the Middle East. On the contrary, it leads to a new wave of escalation. Moscow urges Washington to abandon unlawful forceful tactics of achieving its goals on the international arena and to resolve any issues at the negotiating table.”

Explaining The Stark Contrast

From the above, it's self-evident that Russia's response to Maj. Gen. Soleimani's assassination focuses on its political and legal consequences while eschewing any talk of the personal or emotional commentary which characterized President Putin's eulogies of Sharon, Peres, and Bush Sr., and this is explained by more than just the different circumstances of their deaths. First of all, Maj. Gen. Soleimani wasn't President Putin's friend — in fact, the Russian leader's spokesman [flatly denied](#) reports in December 2015 that the two secretly met earlier that month so it's possible that they didn't even know each other on a personal level, unlike his relationship with the three aforementioned leaders.

Speaking of which, Maj. Gen. Soleimani was purely a military leader and not a political one, meaning that he wasn't President Putin's counterpart, once again, unlike the three previously mentioned figures. That being the case, President Putin in principle doesn't even feel obligated to eulogize him, but there are probably more reasons than just these “official” ones why neither he nor his representatives wanted to give the assassinated anti-terrorist mastermind an emotional Bush Sr.-like tribute. It's taboo to talk about, but eulogizing Maj. Gen. Soleimani would reverse all of Russia's hard-earned soft power and “deep state” inroads with “[Israel](#)” and the US in recent years which President Putin has worked tirelessly to achieve.

The Truth About Russia's Relations With “Israel” & America

The Russian leader has consistently sought to strengthen relations with both of them since first entering the presidency [slightly more than two decades ago](#), and he's finally on the cusp of fulfilling what he's set out to do on the foreign policy front for so long. “Israel” is one of Russia's most strategic partners anywhere in the world, which the author extensively explained in his analysis from last year titled “[Russia's Middle East Strategy: 'Balance' vs. 'Betrayal'](#)”. That article cites official sources and references the author's earlier work on the topic (one piece of which [relies solely on the official Kremlin website](#)) to prove that ties between the two are much closer than many in the Alt-Media Community feel comfortable publicly acknowledging for whatever reason.

As for the American angle to all of this, Russia is presently attempting to negotiate a “[New Detente](#)” with the US which includes potential quid pro quos (“pragmatic compromises”) between the two in Ukraine, Syria, and elsewhere in pursuit of sanctions relief and a renewed global partnership based on mutual respect of one another and their core interests. It's not been as successful as Russia's fast-moving rapprochement with “Israel”, but it's nevertheless still promising and not something that Moscow will risk endangering by eulogizing Maj. Gen. Soleimani in such a way that it “provokes” the Americans into seeing Russia as an “enemy” again. All of Russia's incessant efforts to dispel that false narrative

would be for naught if its officials praised Soleimani.

“Israel” > America (For Russia)

To explain, Russia is very well aware of how its “Israeli” and American partners view Maj. Gen. Soleimani, which is why its representatives took extreme care not to praise him on a personal level or to comment [on his alleged activities in Iraq](#) where Washington claims that he organized thousands of attacks against its forces. Tel Aviv views him as the mastermind behind the IRGC and its Hezbollah ally’s involvement in Syria at the request of that country’s democratically elected and legitimate government but which the self-professed “Jewish State” regards as an “existential threat” to its “security”. As such, he was one of “Israel’s” top enemies anywhere in the world, and among the main ones that it ever faced in history.

It’s worth noting that President Putin is [scheduled to visit](#) “Israel” later this month to commemorate victims of the Holocaust. His close friend Netanyahu believes that Iran is plotting to repeat that mass killing of Jews, which he literally expressed to Putin while attending Victory Day celebrations in May 2018 as his host’s guest of honor according to the [official Kremlin website](#), and it’s obvious after putting two and two together that “Israel” believes that the IRGC would be the vanguard of that speculative campaign. Since Maj. Gen. Soleimani was the head of the IRGC’s elite Quds Force which literally translates to “Jerusalem Force”, Putin simply can’t eulogize him even if he wanted to otherwise he risks ruining Russia’s excellent relations with “Israel”.

Explaining ≠ “Excusing”

This isn’t to give “credence” to “Israel’s” claims or to “justify” its stance towards Iran, the IRGC, Hezbollah, and anything or anyone else associated with the Islamic Republic, but just to explain the sensitive political reality as understood from the perspective of Russian policymakers and thus answer the question of why their response to Maj. Gen. Soleimani’s assassination eschewed any of the personal or emotional commentary that characterized President Putin’s eulogies of Sharon, Peres, and Bush Sr. It would be one thing to “tactically taunt” the US as “negotiating leverage” by eulogizing Maj. Gen. Soleimani, but it’s another entirely to do the same with “Israel”, which is a red line that Russia isn’t expected to cross and thus far hasn’t for that reason.

Considering the very warm words that President Putin sincerely expressed about Sharon, Peres, and Bush Sr. despite them not being serving leaders at the time of their passing (though nevertheless still remaining his unforgettable friends even after they left office) while simply “expressing concern” over Maj. Gen. Soleimani’s assassination, it can be said that he places a much higher importance on maintaining Russia’s relations with “Israel” and the US than with Iran, though it should be said that he and his representatives definitely didn’t “disrespect” the Islamic Republic even though they might have “disappointed” it. As if there needed to be even more evidence, this further proves that Russia and Iran aren’t “allies” like was falsely claimed by many.

Baumel vs. Soleimani

To hammer home this point, it’s worthwhile to look at what President Putin said to Netanyahu while handing over the remains of Zachary Baumel last April, which Russia located, dug up, and airlifted out of Syria after this “IDF” member had been missing in action there for decades. According to the [official Kremlin website](#), the Russian leader

eulogized Baumel in the following manner:

“We are glad that he will receive proper military honours in his homeland. Another, purely humanitarian aspect of this case is that Zachary’s family will be able to bring flowers to his grave...Please, convey my best regards to the sergeant’s family.”

By contrast, President Putin didn’t express any opinion about Maj. Gen. Solemani’s burial in his homeland and the fact that his family will not be able to bring flowers to his grave. Nor, for that matter, did he “convey his best regards” to the Maj. Gen.’s family. Russia’s response to his assassination was purely political and legal because reacting otherwise would have endangered its grand strategic interests with “Israel”.

Concluding Thoughts

Maj. Gen. Soleimani wasn’t a national political leader like Sharon, Peres, and Bush. Sr. were so comparing President Putin’s eulogies of each (or lack thereof in the former’s case) is like comparing apples and oranges. Still, it’s symbolic that he had warmer words to say about the former head of the CIA who presided over the US during the USSR’s dissolution (Bush Sr.) — which he himself once called “a major geopolitical disaster of the century” according to the [official Kremlin website](#) — than the man who fought together with his military to defeat terrorism in Syria.

The message being conveyed to all parties by President Putin’s indirectly reported “expression of concern” over Maj. Gen. Soleimani’s assassination and his government’s comparatively more detailed but nevertheless purely political-legal reaction to it is that Russia respects Iran, acknowledges the important role that its murdered hero played in advancing its national interests, and is therefore “offering its sincere condolences to the Iranian people” per a Foreign Ministry source, but that politics is politics and Russia will not jeopardize its hard-earned rapprochements with “Israel” and the US by “provoking” them with a eulogy for him, even a brief Baumel-like one.

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