

Assassination of Qasem Soleimani and the Dubious Mask of Iran

On 03 Jan 2020, United States (US) through an airstrike killed Qasem Soleimani, Iranian Major General of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) since 1998, and the commander of Quds Force (known for its extraterritorial military and clandestine operations) who was considered to be the second most powerful person in Iran next to Sayyid Ali Hosseini Khamenei, current Supreme Leader of Iran. Iran responded to it through a military operation called Operation Martyr Soleimani by launching numerous ballistic missiles at the Ayn al-Asad Airbase in Al Anbar Governorate, Western Iraq, and at an airbase in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan. This attack resulted in no casualties and didn't make any kind of significant impact on the US. This event has attained global media attention as a great threat to the world and hyped that it could trigger World War III.

Therefore, it is necessary for the Muslim Ummah to know how to look at this event and the reality behind it, instead of falling into an emotion based general viewpoint to be carried away by the hype.

The general viewpoint is developed, firstly, based on the emotions emanating on exposure to the news and hype hovering around the global media with the rhetoric speeches by leaders of US and Iran of attacking each other and the views of the world countries. Secondly, the great passion of the Muslim Ummah for Islam drives them to this general viewpoint that Iran is the only Muslim nation which stands against the US on face to face basis due to the responsive attacks by Iran on US. This general viewpoint simply provides an exaggerated elevated position to Iran than the reality and same trend is followed in similar issues in the world.

Moreover, it can be seen that despite the fact that the leaders from both sides have directly expressed their clear intentions of deescalating tensions and to give up the attacks, the Muslim Ummah develops a general viewpoint that there is a chance for world war III and Iran is the only Muslim nation to oppose and combat US. This view is a result of shallow or superficial political thinking which drives the Ummah to an illusionary world.

So, Muslim Ummah should be reminded that political awareness is a must and it is an essential aspect to stabilize Muslim Ummah especially after the loss of our Islamic Khilafah and also to work for its reestablishment which ensures the continuation of the mission of our Prophet Muhammad (saw) as commanded by Allah (swt). By realizing the importance of assigning weightage to the political awareness while assessing the global events with particular angle and with deep insights into them, the Muslim Ummah can comprehend the reality and attain further clarity on all such events.

Therefore, to arrive at the specific political viewpoint on killing of Qasem Soleimani, it is necessary to focus, with political insight, on why killing Qasem Soleimani and that too why at this point of time. The specific political viewpoint can be arrived at by studying the ongoing anti-government protests in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon, the US policies and stance on these countries, - more specifically on Iran in this case the role of US in the formation of Constitution / Parliament of Iraq- the objectives of establishing such government and the role of Qasem Soleimani in the joint operations with US to attack Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Firstly, there have been a massive on-going anti-government protests happening in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon. Even three months before the killing of Qasem Soleimani, there have been large-scale protests going on in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon against their present government regimes due to dissatisfaction on them over various issues including economic issues. The intensity of the protests can be sensed through the killing of the protestors of around 1500 in Iran, more than 500 in Iraq and also in Lebanon. Under these circumstances, as an extension of regular containment activities, Qasem Soleimani and a few other armed personals of Iran have been killed in this US strike. Just by relating these events, even without getting into details, the Muslim Ummah can attain clarity on the issue.

Even before taking the stance of killing Qasem Soleimani, three different stances of US on Iran were prevailing among the political leaders & advisors of US. One is to declare war on Iran;

second is to change the regime; third is to contain the functions and actions of Iran to keep it under its dominion. But, the US has set aside the first two stances and adopted the third stance of containing Iran to keep it under its control without going for a war and without a regime change. Therefore, to achieve this objective, the US had done the airstrikes and the killing of Qasem Soleimani, since this only can defuse the anti-government protests and stabilize the present regimes in Iran and Iraq and keep them under its control to continue its benefits there. This incidentally happens to be a benefit to the present government in Iran for its stabilization and continuation of its regime by winning the hearts of the protesting people with their responsive strikes over US and posing themselves as protector of the people and a great Muslim country to stand in opposition to the global power US.

This leads to a question why to kill Qasem Soleimani. To understand this, it is important to know the role of Qasem Soleimani and Iran in joint military operations with the US to execute attacks in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. This is evident based on candid statements of the government officials and leaders. The earlier leader Mohammad Khatami had stated that Saddam Hussein was their greatest enemy and their objective was to destroy Saddam Hussein. So he had asked the US to carry out joint operations in Iraq as they already did in Afghanistan. From this, it is established that they have also carried out joint operations in Afghanistan. Further, a CIA expert had also stated the same thing that Iran had joined hands with US for its Operation freedom in 2001 during the onset of the 'war on terror' and attacks inside Afghanistan. These things establish the fact that Iran has done joint operations with the US in the attacks in Iraq and in Afghanistan. Similarly, in Syria, it was very clearly known that Iran was one among many who supported the US to strengthen the government of Bashar al-Assad. Therefore, it is evidently established that Iran had joined with the US to execute attacks in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. In all these actions of US against the three Muslim countries, Iran was the key player in executing the agenda of US and the main role in all operations was played by Qasem Soleimani. There are much evidence available to prove the same and one such evidence is that the role of Qasem Soleimani as the commander in Northern Iraq attacks on ISIS by the US. This role of Qasem Soleimani in executing the agenda of the US was undeniable.

But, as earlier stated, the present stance of US is to contain Iran so that they continue to attain benefits from that region and it can be achieved by extending the present regime of Iran by defusing the anti-governments protests of the people by staging events which paint an image to the present government as powerful in opposing US. Among such staged events was the killing of Qasem Soleimani, since the US felt that Qasem Soleimani was crossing his limit in Iraq by involving in political solution during these protests and the responsive attacks by Iran on US air bases in Iraq, which can turn around the emotions in favor of the present regime of Iran. This ensures the dominance of the US on Iran and its stance of containment over Iran.

Similarly, the dominance of the US over Iraq can be seen from the beginning. Paul Bremer, a US political diplomat, was the one who formulated the constitution and parliament of Iraq in 2003 after overthrowing the Saddam Hussein's regime. Now, the parliament of Iraq decides to send back the US troops from Iraq and passes a resolution for it instead of passing a law. The US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, has rejected the demand of Iraq and confirmed that it will continue its mission of stabilizing Iraqi forces and it cannot withdraw its troops.

It has been seen that whenever needed, the US executes joint operations with Iran to attack other Muslim countries and also lifts its sanctions on Iran during that time. This was evident during the joint operations in Syria. This shows that Iran shares a more friendly relationship with the US. Further, whenever the need arises to contain Iran, the US imposes sanctions or military actions like the recent ones. The US employs this option whenever Iran tries to cross the limits set by it. Therefore, the US uses appropriate actions at appropriate times in Iran. Therefore, nothing new happened in the present event but it is the continuation of the trend of appropriate action at the appropriate time. Further, Henry Kissinger, a US politician, used to state that there is no long-term enemy and there is no long-term friend for the US but it always cares for the betterment of the US. All these things show how the US treats Iran.

Further, it is also necessary to know how Iran acts on all these things, with its own perspective, since Iran established its regime in the Middle East with the help of a deal between Ayatollah Khamenei and the US and also using the identity of Shiite, in their favor, till date. The

main objective of Iran is only to maintain the regional influence in the Middle East. For that they fund and supply arms to Houthi in Yemen and Hezbollah in Lebanon and also support Bashar al Asaad in Syria. The scope and objective of Iran establishing a state was not on Islamic but purely on regional influence by exploiting Shi'ism in the Middle East region. Therefore, this state which is established with this limited scope can never ever function in the global sense or global political awareness as stipulated by Islam. So, Muslim Ummah must understand that Iran has never ever set the objective or the mission mandated by Islam.

With this context, one of the lessons to be learnt by Muslim Ummah is that whenever any small group or political party in a region can have a deal with global super power to establish its authority over a state or form a new state with its authority, the group or political party or even the state which has a deal with the global super power is never ever going to be equal to that global super power in any way; instead, it will be under the dominion of that global super power and always be subservient to it. Further, no matter how obedient and how long these agents serve them, they can be thrown away whenever the US feels to do so if they don't seem to fit in to their political agenda. As in the case of Qasem Soleimani, it is a pity that the current Muslim rulers don't draw a lesson from it. But, the Muslim Ummah must know the reality that the ultimate end of those who serves the US is always the same.

Similarly, the Muslim Ummah has to understand the difference between the actions and the rhetoric speeches of leaders of such states. For instance, Muslim Ummah perceives Iran as a super power which can face directly the US, the present global super power based on the open rhetoric speech of leaders of Iran, like "Death to US" and the actions like the responsive strikes over the US bases in Iraq. All these events are just an attempt to convince the people of Iran and remove the existing dissatisfaction. But, these actions actually did not create any kind of significant impact over the US. When Iran celebrates Qasem Soleimani as an important commander and mourns for three days for his loss by hoisting red flag but then the responsive attacks on US bases in Iraq were made only after all the people in those locations have vacated and claims that they did cast some damage to US. At the same time, they also openly express that they do not want war with US. From this, Muslim Ummah must understand that Iran established a state only based on regional influence and certainly not on the objectives of Islam. Even the structure of the government they established in Iran is also under the dominion of the US. Further, even if Iran wants to act independently in few things to fulfill their own interests, they are only in a position that they will be contained by the US through sanctions or military actions and that is the reality. This exposes the dubious mask of Iran and also the reality behind the killing of Qasem Soleimani.

This reality is not only for Iran, but for all the Muslim countries that are ruled by the agents or slaves of the US. All such countries do not act like Iran but differently and within the regional influence. For instance, the actions of Saudi Arabia will be different and those of Turkey will be yet different but within the regional influence. They use few aspects of the systems of Islam, make open rhetoric speeches against their masters, conduct futile military strikes without any damage or impact to their masters to turn the opinions, emotions and sentiments of the Muslim Ummah in their favor and that is the real essence behind all these kind of events.

Therefore, the Muslim Ummah, instead of falling to these kinds of agents with their dubious masks, must orient their thoughts, emotions, sentiments, aspirations and efforts for the reestablishment of rightly-guided Islamic Khilafah based on the Prophethood which can only solve all the problems of this mankind and keep all in tranquility. This can be the only attempt to continue the mission of our Prophet (saw) and to submit ourselves to the Lord of the universe Allah (swt) and seek his pleasure (ridwaan).

Allah (swt) says: ﴿وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا﴾ **“And never will Allah grant to the disbelievers a way (to triumph) over the believers.”** [Sura An-Nisa 4:141]

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Hameed Bin Mansoor**