Trump’s Reckless Assassination of Iranian General Is an Act of War

written by Kevin B. Anderson | January 3, 2020

The Middle East and the world woke up on the morning of Friday, January 3 to the shocking news that U.S. missiles had struck the Baghdad Airport, in a targeted assassination of Iran’s General Qassem Soleimani.

Donald Trump’s cold-blooded assassination is nothing short of an act of war. Moreover, it rivals the most reckless actions ever taken by imperialist powers in the Middle East or elsewhere.

The U.S. missile attack on the Baghdad Airport followed a 2-day demonstration by pro-Iranian militias outside the U.S. Embassy in Iraq, which itself followed US airstrikes against these militias in response to their killing of a U.S. military contractor.

Such a targeted assassination of a foreign leader like Soleimani violates US and international law. It also constitutes a gross violation of Iraqi sovereignty, especially since the US also claimed to have “arrested” a number of pro-Iran militants on Iraqi soil.

Trump’s breathtaking shoot-from-the-hip warmongering brings to mind George Bush’s 2003 war in Iraq or his father’s 1989 invasion of Panama. It is also a violation of the sentiments of the U.S. populace, who have no desire to become entangled in yet another war in the Middle East. And if the Iraq war was a disaster, what will happen if the U.S. gets into war with Iran, a far larger country with a more solidly entrenched ruling class and some significant regional allies?

But such a war is exactly what Trump’s attack might bring about, for Iran might respond with some kind of attack of its own, after which the U.S. could easily bomb Iran, leading to further escalations….

Soleimani, a top commander in the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) was the country’s top military strategist. As a major force in Iranian subimperialist politics, Soleimani’s writ extended into Syria and Lebanon, where the militias he supported helped the murderous Assad regime to survive the Syrian revolution and also helped rule Lebanon. In addition, he was a major political arbiter in Iraq, where he could make or break prime ministers. This influence due in large part to the Shia militias he trained and supported that were instrumental in driving ISIS out of Mosul and northern Iraq.

In recent months, the Iranian regime and its allies in the region have come under the pressure of revolutionary youth movements in the streets. This has occurred in Lebanon, Iraq, and inside Iran itself. These movements, with youth and women in the forefront, have attacked their local power structures for authoritarianism, corruption, religious sectarianism, and obscene levels of economic

inequality. But this attack will give the Iranian regime and its allies ideological arguments for the further repression of the mass unrest in the streets.

While there is no need to mourn Soleimani, his assassination provokes fear above all. Fear of another war in the Middle East, between a nuclear-armed U.S. and a Shia fundamentalist regime that has missiles and drones, as well as potential nuclear capability. Fear that the Iranian regime and its allies will profit from their "martyr," mitigating the public revulsion against them in Iran and the region that had helped to spark some positive movements for change. Fear for all of those who could die in the coming weeks.

Now is the time to hit the streets in opposition to Trump's reckless militarism, while in no way minimizing our critique of the Iranian regime and its allies.

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