**World War 3: The beginning of endless conflicts**

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The phrase [“World War 3”](https://dailytimes.com.pk/56061/pak-india-war-will-be-3rd-world-war/) has seen a surge of popularity after the news that the US had killed Iran’s top general QasemSoleimani. Frida Ghitis, who is a regular contributor to CNN Opinion, a Contributing Columnist for the Washington Post Global Opinions, wrote “QasemSoleimani, the Iranian commander killed by a US airstrike, was a purveyor of death and destruction. He was the point man for the Iranian regime in its most destabilizing activities, US officials say. Without him, the Middle East would look very different. He made it possible for the murderous Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad to stay in power, US officials say, and orchestrated Iran’s gradual infiltration and domination of Iraq.

He not only directed the killing of Americans, Pentagon officials say, he fortified Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen. Indeed, he helped strengthen the most distasteful elements of many conflicts.

When security experts talk about Iran as “the world’s worst sponsor of terrorism,” it is the activities of Soleimani and his Quds force they are referring to.

If taken in isolation, without regard for its consequences, the end of Soleimani must be seen as a positive for the Middle East and for the world. But it did not happen in isolation. The killing was an earthquake, and the aftershocks are coming.”.

Soleimani’s clandestine operations via several militant organizations throughout the Middle East and Asia, especially in Afghanistan, Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Lebanon directly or indirectly,resulted in killings of hundreds of thousands of innocent people.

QasemSoleimani emerged as a key fighter in the Iran-Iraq War and believed to have aided Shia Muslim and Kurdish groups in Iraq battling against Saddam Hussein.

QassemSoleimani, the principal architect of the policy that helped Iran to project its power throughout the Arab World, from Lebanon and Syria to Iraq and Yemen, used a unique and strategical blend of militant and state power. Often touted as a possible presidential candidate, he was, without doubt, the most powerful general in the Middle East.

It will be very apt to conclude that Soleimani was the by-product of Bush, Obama, and Clinton’s policy towards the middle east and Asia.

Donald Trump, who proudly takes the credit of killing Soleimani, is politically mature than his contemporaries; hence on several occasions during the presidential election campaign, he appeared to praise Saddam Hussein.

“Saddam Hussein was not a good person. Who cares,” Trump said in Ohio in March 2016, as he criticized President Barack Obama’s policy in Iraq. “He was very good at killing terrorists. Now, Iraq is the Harvard for terrorism.”

Not surprisingly,Iran being Shia theocracy preferred its strategic priorities above its religious orientation and supported Sunni militant groups (re Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad) or even Christian groups (re Iran supports Christian Armenia against Shia Azerbaijan) to achieve following strategic objectives 1) Bleeding-out the US in the region, 2) Undermining stability in the Sunni Arab Gulf countries, 3)and Achieving regional hegemony.

Soleimanibeing an opportunist months after 9/11 he was hell-bent on defeating the Taliban by unconventional and strategic means-namely, clandestine cooperation with the United States by establishing intelligence channels between Iranian and U.S. diplomats on important Taliban military positions.

Militants from Syria to Iraq to Afghanistan have splintered and proliferated in this way, producing fragmented oppositions that significantly complicate the conflict landscape.

It is also a known fact that Soleimani’sabsence from battleground was considered peacetime for opposing forces.When there was severe bloodshed in Iraq by 2006, he took a break from managing Asaib and other related groups to supervise another Iranian proxy, Hezbollah, in its escalating war with Israel. Upon Soleimani’sreturn from Lebanon, he wrote to U.S. commanders, “I hope you have been enjoying the peace and quiet in Baghdad. I’ve been busy in Beirut!”

In 2005 when the government re-established in Iraq, Soleimani’splayed an influential role in the country’s politics.

Recently US general Petraeus says the killing of Suleimani is ‘MORE significant than Osama bin Laden’ and may ‘re-establish deterrence’ after Iranian attacks on US bases and shipping in the Gulf as he very well remembers receiving a letter from Suleimani in early 2008 where Suleimani made Petraeus aware that he controls Iran’s policy for Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, and Afghanistan.

After 9/11, Pakistan was a haven for al-Qaida members but the regime of Pervez Musharraf, sickened by the carnage bin Ladin had inflicted, agreed to cooperate with the United States to hunt down jihadis in its territory. Pakistan was no longer safe. Asresult, many al-Qaida members, including some of the group’s most senior leaders, migrated to Iran.

Ever-changing motives and ideological differences in terrorists, rebels, and insurgentsgroups become the breeding grounds to break down and split apart, with new groups emerging from the ranks of existing organizations. Militants from Syria to Iraq to Afghanistan have splintered and proliferated in this way, producing fragmented oppositions that significantly complicate the conflict landscape. As it happened in the case of al-Qaida and Taliban now Shia militant groups without an appropriate and uniformed direction in the absence of Soleimani, pose a greater threat to endless regional conflicts and harm to U.S. interests in the middle east.

Recent unrest in Lebanon and Iraq, including the attack on American Embassy, hitting Saudi oil tankers in Fujairah, UAE, firing tenballisticsmissiles by Houthis at Saudia Arabia,signaled a change in regional securityinfluenced by Soleimani. At the same time,Donald Trump decided to take Soleimani out to not only benefit American interests in that region but also secure a better position in upcoming elections.

The term Word War 3 coined as early as 1941 as a possible large scale military conflict, but what I believe is just the continuation of smaller endless conflicts likethe cold and so-called war on terror and will intensify more in the middle eastern region after the killing of Soleimani.

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