While General Qasim Soleimani’s death in a US air strike may apparently seem not big enough a development to start an all-out war, or even World War 3, there is no gainsaying that this deliberate attempt to escalate tensions in the region will have severe consequences. For one thing, Soleimani was no ordinary Iranian soldier, for another, his death is a US response to the increasing Iranian military strength in the region—a situation that the US and Israel have long been trying to reverse. Iranian influence in the region, specifically in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon is a major bone of contention between the US/Israel/Saudia and Iran and a primary reason for the Trump administration’s exit from the Iran-nuclear deal—a step that practically mothered the present crisis.

The US president’s assertion that the decision to take Soleimani out was taken to ‘prevent a war’ is no more than a sham. Historically speaking, Iran has been averse to starting all-out wars. More than ever, this historical fact holds true today because of one simple fact: Iran’s resistance against the US-Israeli-Saudi nexus in Syria and Iraq has been phenomenally successful. In fact, if this resistance had not been successful, the US and its allies would not have been too worried about Iranian presence in the Levant; hence, the simple question: why would Iran want to start a new war when it has already won a major part of the old war, and is most likely to stay the course?

Of course, Iran would ideally want to drive the US out of the region for obvious reasons. While it may seem that a new war, which Trump said Soleimani was just about to start, might, hypothetically speaking, enable the Iranians to accomplish their objective, even this objective does not most certainly warrant an all-out war. On the other hand, all it requires is a tenacious continuation of the same strategy and tactics that the Iranians have been following ever since Syria’s eruption into a US/Saudia/Israel sponsored ‘civil-war’ and its resort not to an all-out war but the ideologically motivated resistance groups.

By killing Soleimani and Muhandis, the US has only killed those two figures that had been the two major faces of
resistance against the grand US strategic project whereby the terror networks were to grow for the Levant and penetrate the west and central Asian regions and then go all the way into Russia and China—a project that was and still is crucial for sustaining US hegemony in the region.

The air strike that killed Soleimani, therefore, has nothing to do with a ‘new war.’ On the contrary, it is a continuation of the same war the US has almost lost in the region. Notwithstanding the many loses the US has suffered, there is little doubt that the absolute crucial importance of this war for US global hegemony would any time make the US act in as reckless a manner as it did when it did the fateful air strike.

The US would idealise an all-out Iranian response, a pretext that the US-Israel-Saudia would use to extend their war towards west and central Asia. However, as said earlier, Iran is averse to starting all-out wars. While a befitting Iranian response would come, it will most likely be in the form of an even more entrenched resistance to the US occupation of the Levant.

Ever since the recent Baghdad-embassy incidents, the US has been sending its troops to the region, turning it into a new war-zone—a situation that Trump thought would work to his advantage in his re-election bid at a time when he feels cornered due to impeachment. The same holds true for the indicted Netanyahu in Israel.

But a calculated Iranian response would defeat these objectives. At the same time, it would lead to more Americans being killed. In other words, with more and more body-bags coming home even when there is no all-out war, Trump’s political fortunes would most likely suffer. The war that Trump wanted to prevent would spread. The only difference would be that between an all-out war i.e., what the US wants, and an entrenched resistance i.e., what Iran will do.

As the deputy commander of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, General Ali Fadavi, said, “The Americans should be waiting for that severe revenge; that vengeance is not to be taken by Iran only.... The great resistance front covering a vast geographical area stands ready to take revenge, and that is sure to happen.”

Iranian response would, therefore, most likely focus on hurting the US well beyond Iraq, where the US strike killed Soleimani. And, the objective of this calculated horizontal escalation would be to make life extremely difficult for the US in the Levant and force it to drive itself out of the region.

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