

'National Hero Day': Remembering how Gen. Soleimani plotted downfall of Daesh

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OPINION

In a famous letter on November 21, 2017, Iran's iconic anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani declared the fall of Daesh, a group whose reign of terror gripped West Asia for years. The letter was addressed to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, announcing that the "devastating storm" inflicted upon the Muslim world was over. To honor this monumental achievement, Iran officially designated November 21 as "National Hero Day" last year, celebrating the late anti-terror commander's pivotal role in ending a dark chapter for the region and marking one of his most significant contributions to regional peace and stability. "This humble person, as a soldier called upon by Your Eminence to serve on this battlefield, announces the termination of the rule of this vicious cursed entity, following the completion of the liberation operation of Abu Kamal as Daesh's last stronghold," reads an excerpt from the letter.

Rise, reign of Daesh

Daesh, also known as ISIS or ISIL, emerged from the remnants of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), a local offshoot of the Al-Qaeda terrorist group, in the wake of the 2003 US invasion and occupation of Iraq. However, it wasn't until 2011 that the group and its affiliates managed to take advantage of growing instability in Iraq and a Western-engineered crisis in Syria to consolidate their power in the two neighboring Arab countries.

By 2014, Daesh had taken control of Mosul and Tikrit in Iraq, as well as Raqqa and oil-rich Deir ez-Zor in Syria. It then declared the formation of its so-called caliphate stretching from Syria's Aleppo to Iraq's Diyala, with Raqqa as its capital.

Notably, the dreaded terror group had already become so rigid in its ideology and so aggressive in its approach that even al-Qaeda disavowed any ties with it in February 2014.

In his letter, General Soleimani laid out horrendous crimes committed by Daesh in Syria and Iraq, including the beheading of children, skinning men alive in front of their families, taking young girls and women hostage and raping them, burning people alive, and massacring young people. He said the terrorist group destroyed thousands of factories, roads, bridges, refineries, wells, gas and oil lines, power plants, and historical sites, as well as thousands of mosques, sacred Islamic sites, schools and hospitals in the two Arab countries before it was eliminated.

Rise of national hero

Confronting such atrocities required unprecedented synergy among regional resistance forces.



Late Iranian general Qassem Soleimani (front-L) receives Iran's highest military honor, the Order of Zolfaghar, from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyyed Ali Khamenei (front-R) in March 2019. [FLICKR](#)

To defeat Daesh, while international coalitions carried out widely advertised airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, regional resistance fighters and their heroes like General Soleimani were the ones who rose to the occasion and ended the group's evil reign.

The famed Iranian anti-terror general, in turn, played a central role in strengthening the Axis of Resistance in the West Asian region.

With his personal charisma, his ability to unite diverse forces, and his strategic brilliance, he coordinated between resistance forces as well as the Iraqi and Syrian government troops to confront Daesh during its peak from 2014 to 2017.

"Iran is the heart of resistance," he once said while speaking about the Islamic Republic's regional posi-

tion. Leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, who was assassinated by Israel in late September this year, had repeatedly lauded General Soleimani's key role in coordinating and leading efforts by regional resistance groups against Daesh.

In Iraq, the Iranian general worked closely with the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), Kurdish forces, and government troops in key operations such as the breaking of the siege of Amirli in 2014 and the liberation of Tikrit in 2015. His efforts helped stabilize areas like Diyala and Saladin provinces, ensuring that Daesh could not maintain its territorial gains.

In Syria, he played a decisive role in military campaigns in Aleppo and Palmyra, aligning efforts with

Russian air support to reclaim critical territory. He also visited Russia and reportedly convinced Russian President Vladimir Putin to join the military campaign against Daesh in the Arab country.

Defeat of US creation

Curiously, what stands out in the letter is General Soleimani's emphasis on the fact that the "devastating and poisonous sedition", namely Daesh, was created by the enemies of Islam, particularly the United States and the Israeli regime, with the aim of "initiating widespread war within the Islamic world and a fight among Muslims."

"All these crimes have been designed and implemented by US leaders and organizations, according to the acknowledgment of the highest-ranking US official

who is currently president of the United States," he wrote, invoking then-US president Donald Trump's remarks.

He then warned that the same scheme is "still being modified and implemented by current American leaders."

Another noteworthy point in General Soleimani's letter is his selfless attribution of credit for defeating Daesh to others, without taking any credit for himself despite his heroic endeavors.

He gracefully thanked top Iraqi Shia cleric Ayatollah Ali Sistani for his wise leadership and guidance, the Iraqi and Syrian governments and resistance forces, Hezbollah and its leader, and the nation and government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for their admirable support in the fight against Daesh.

In response to his letter

later that day, Ayatollah Khamenei specifically thanked General Soleimani for his invaluable service "not only to regional countries and the Islamic world but also to all of humanity." He, too, underscored that Daesh was created and supported by the United States and its vassal regimes in the region, saying the terrorist group was formed with the aim of bolstering the occupying Zionist regime's strategic influence and control over the region.

Tragically, General Soleimani's life was cut short on January 3, 2020, when a US drone strike near Baghdad assassinated him, some two years after his historic declaration.

Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy chief of the PMU and an iconic Iraqi resistance commander, who played an equally important role in the decimation of the notorious terrorist group, was also assassinated along with General Soleimani.

Despite this monumental and irreparable loss, General Soleimani's legacy endures, celebrated by millions who regard him as a symbol of resistance and peace in the region.

'National Hero Day' stands as a reminder of his contributions, honoring a man whose determination and sacrifice helped bring hope to a region scarred by foreign-sponsored terrorism.

Perhaps General Soleimani's famous quote — "We are the nation of martyrdom; we are the nation of Imam Hussein" — best encapsulates the spirit of heroic sacrifice and resistance that he embodied.

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"We are the nation of martyrdom; we are the nation of Imam Hussein"—best encapsulates the spirit of heroic sacrifice and resistance that General Soleimani embodied.



General Qassem Soleimani (c) walks with allied forces in Iraq in this undated photo. [PRESS TV](#)



Late Iranian general Qassem Soleimani (front-2nd L) poses for a photo with a group of peshmerga fighters in Kurdistan. [THE GUARDIAN](#)