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INTERVIEW

Martyr Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani was among those commanders who played a decisive role in the formation of a battlefield against Daesh (also known as ISIS) and in the defeat of this terrorist group; a role whose efficacy was not confined merely to military theaters, but also encompassed the political, security, and strategic arenas of the region. In the chronicle of contemporary Middle Eastern transformations, one can scarcely identify a commander whose name has been so profoundly interwoven with national security, regional strategic equations, and the very concept of resistance.

General Soleimani assumed command responsibilities during a period in which the nature of warfare had undergone transformation, and threats manifested predominantly in the form of organized terrorism, asymmetric wars, and intricate regional coalitions. The emergence of Daesh, as one of the most dangerous embodiments of these threats, gravely imperiled regional security; yet ultimately, his exertions and those of his brothers-in-arms culminated in the defeat of this group, and six years after the formation of Daesh, the termination of its dominion was announced by him, through a letter, to the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution.

The personality and command capabilities of the martyred general were forged within the crucible of the Sacred Defense, an era in which his operational genius, battlefield audacity, and managerial potency were tested under the most arduous conditions. According to experts, his distinguishing feature lay in the synthesis of military capability with religious faith, personal morality, people skills, and precise cognizance of the social and cultural fabric of the region; attributes that enabled the effective mobilization of popular capacities alongside the steering of complex military operations.

Experts in the security domain maintain that the pivotal role of Martyr Soleimani in dismantling the political and field structures of Daesh, in organizing the Resistance Front, and in reinforcing regional security cooperation, constituted a turning point in Middle Eastern equations; such that Western estimations regarding the long-term persistence of Daesh collapsed within a short temporal span. These achievements were the product of an intelligent amalgamation of battlefield engagement and diplomacy, a realistic appraisal of regional conditions, and trust in the role of the people.

On the anniversary of the martyrdom of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, revisiting his personal, intellectual, and operational dimensions transcends the mere review of the life of a military commander; and may be appraised as an examination of a model of command and security management during one of the most complex junctures in the Middle East's contemporary history; a model that, alongside its military role, also explores political, social, and human dimensions.

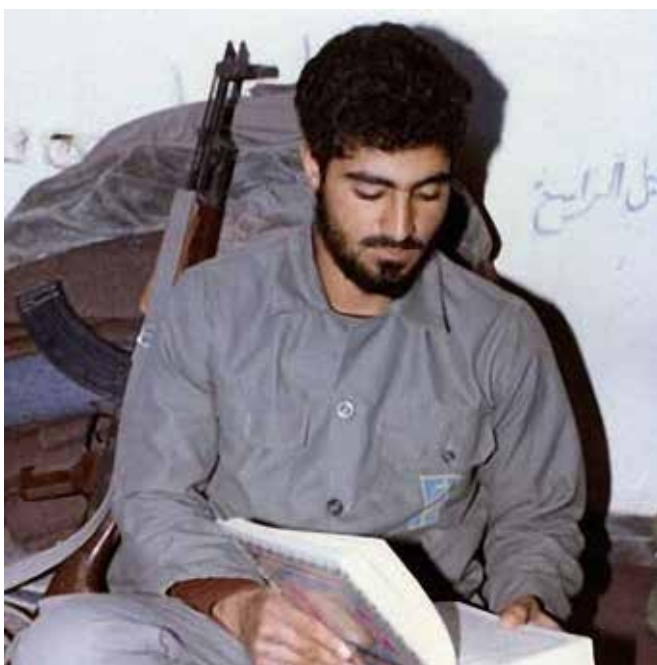
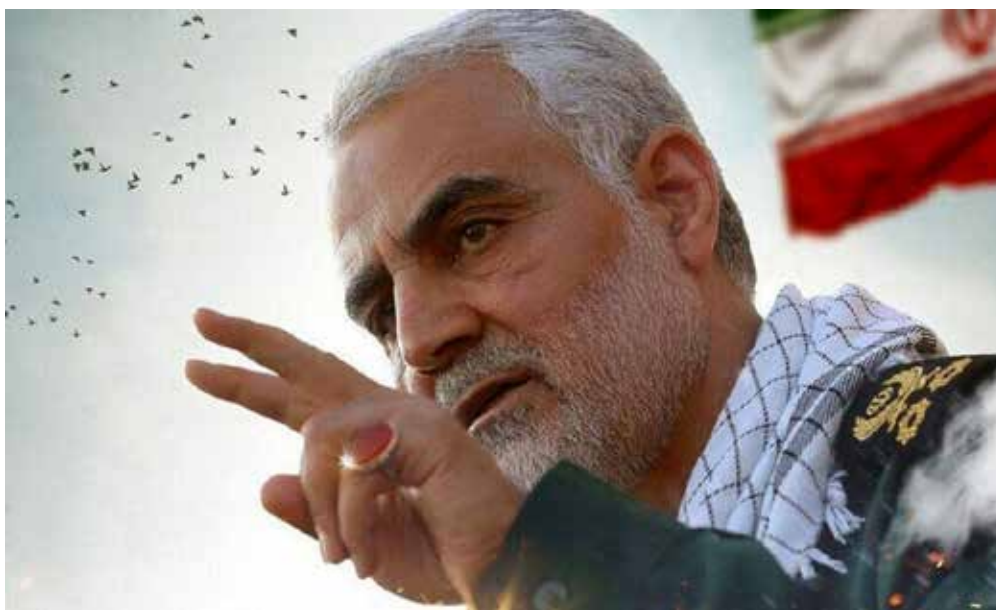
From battlefield to diplomacy

Impact of late General Soleimani on regional equations



Jafar Qannadbashi

Jafar Qannadbashi, university professor and senior analyst of West Asian and Middle Eastern affairs, stated that the personality of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani was shaped during the period of the Israeli-imposed war of the 1980s, and that his latent talents and innate genius were cultivated throughout the eight years of the Sacred Defense; in such a manner that he transformed into one of the eminent



Young General Soleimani is seen here reading the Holy Qur'an in 1980 during the Iraqi-imposed war.
● SIPA

and proficient commanders in the domain of military command and operations. He added that Gen. Soleimani, due to his profound and heartfelt devotion to Islam, consistently traversed the path of cultivating exalted human attributes emphasized by the Islamic faith; attributes such as "courage, patience, humility, people skills, and scientific growth". Although he did not possess advanced university degrees, he engaged continuously in study and systematically utilized "brief intervals of leisure, especially during travels and missions," to augment his knowledge and awareness.

This Middle East affairs expert, noting that General Soleimani held a distinctive position among military commanders in terms of the extent of his studies, emphasized that, alongside his military capabilities, he conducted himself in a manner that enabled him to attract the hearts of the forces under his command and even of diverse nations. The command of extraterritorial operations necessitated interaction with heterogeneous cultures, languages, and peoples. So, "Had humility, sagacity, and the capacity for mutual comprehension not existed within him, the attraction of their support would not have

been possible," Qannadbashi claimed.

The university professor continued that the conduct and personality of Gen. Soleimani had caused the military forces under his command to develop a profound and emotional bond with him. "Such a standing is considered a rare phenomenon even among commanders of asymmetric wars on a global scale," he said, adding that these characteristics were entirely consonant with Iranian and Islamic culture, and it was precisely this consonance that transformed him into a human and ideological exemplar for diverse groups.

Referring to the role of the martyred commander in confronting Daesh, he stated that General Soleimani, through precise recognition of regional realities, succeeded in employing these very human and ethical assets in the struggle against Daesh. Whereas Western propaganda repeatedly proclaimed that Daesh would remain in the region for three decades, he held no belief in such estimations and, relying upon field-based knowledge, achieved success in the most difficult forms of conflict, namely asymmetric wars, and within a short period brought the lifespan of this terrorist group to an end.

Qannadbashi further asserted, "Although General Soleimani possessed extensive experience in wars in border and desert regions, he lacked direct experience in the domain of urban and asymmetric warfare; nevertheless, through his command genius, he deployed forces that were able to secure the greatest achievements with the minimal casualties throughout the war against Daesh. Within approximately three years, the political and governing structure of Daesh collapsed; whereas Western actors had imagined that this outcome would not be possible even within 30 years."

Emphasizing that Daesh was not merely a simple guerrilla group, this Middle East affairs expert stated that this group consisted of forces from 88 countries worldwide and benefited from extensive armament, financial, and propaganda support; support that is "unprecedented

in the history of paramilitary groups". Despite this, General Soleimani succeeded in annihilating the Daesh government and its political structure, an achievement that elicited global admiration.

He further noted, with reference to the political and diplomatic role of Martyr Soleimani, that his genius and acumen were not confined solely to the military arena.

"General Soleimani also performed successfully in the political sphere and, through precise knowledge of international actors, including Russia, managed in dialogue with the officials of that country to alter their strategy in Syria and to assist in the preservation of that country's political system."

Explaining the country's defense doctrine, this Middle East affairs expert stated that the national defense structure is founded upon Ashura-oriented and martyrdom culture, defense of national interests, reliance upon indigenous capabilities, particularly in the armaments domain, and the implementation of a collective security doctrine — "a doctrine that is regarded as among the least costly and most efficacious defensive methods".

Qannadbashi added that General Soleimani, through comprehension of regional conditions, reached the conclusion that "in order to confront threats such as Daesh, the Zionist regime, and the United States, joint security and military cooperation with neighboring countries must be established, and that he himself



Late Iranian Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani
● IRNA



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Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani (c), wearing a Kurdish keffiyeh, is greeted at the Al-Bukamal area, one of the last significant strongholds of the Daesh (ISIS) terrorist group, on the Syrian-Iraqi border on November 17, 2017.
● AL-NUJABA MOVEMENT

