

Persian Peril: The Assassination of Qasem Soleimani and the Prospect of War with Iran

By [Michael Welch](#), [Glenn Michalchuk](#), and [Pepe Escobar](#)
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Region: [Canada](#), [Middle East & North Africa](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [Global Economy](#), [GLOBAL RESEARCH NEWS HOUR](#), [History](#), [Intelligence](#), [Media Disinformation](#), [Oil and Energy](#), [Politics](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

“And after what my source had sent me on Wednesday morning...I was pretty confident that they would have to back off because the reasons were overwhelming in terms of Iranian military power... In fact there was an indirect, a direct-indirect message that if Iranian soil was hit the retortion would it be against Haifa in Israel, and Dubai in The Emirates.” – Pepe Escobar (from this week’s interview)

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The tensions between Iran and the Trump administration on display since [before U.S. President’s inauguration](#) are now strained to near the breaking point in the first two weeks of January.

A [targeted drone strike](#) at Baghdad Airport late on the evening of January 2nd claimed the lives of Iraqi politician and military commander **Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis**, and the Iranian **Major-General Qasem Soleimani**.

Soleimani served in Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and commanded its Quds force. The U.S. Department of Defense [claimed that Soleimani](#) was “actively developing plans to attack American diplomats and service members in Iraq and throughout the region. General Soleimani and his Quds Force were responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American and coalition service members and the wounding of thousands more....This strike was aimed at deterring future Iranian attack plans.”

For Iranians, Soleimani was broadly seen as a national hero. A [2018 University of Maryland survey](#) revealed that Soleimani had a popularity rating among Iranians of 82 percent, well ahead of President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

[Millions took to the streets](#) in cities across the Islamic Republic to mourn the death of Soleimani. Iranian Supreme leader **Ali Khamenei** had gone on State television within 24 hours of the assassination [vowing](#) “severe revenge” for Soleimani’s death.

The Iraqi parliament has [voted on the withdrawal of U.S. troops](#). Meanwhile, Iran carried out

[missile attacks against two bases in Iraq housing U.S. servicemen](#), with reportedly no casualties.

Later that day, **President Trump** in a [speech to the nation and the world](#) condemned the Islamic Republic's supposed quest for nuclear weapons, its alleged support of terrorism, and the 'bad' nuclear deal which Trump claims strengthened the regional power's hand. The speech also called for more sanctions against the country, and more NATO involvement, though fell short of a formal declaration of war.

Later that same day, a [Ukraine-bound jet crashes](#) after taking off from Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport. All 176 passengers and crew, including 63 Canadians, perished in the disaster. In spite of early denials, the [Iranian government would eventually admit to shooting down the craft accidentally](#).

There is [considerable concern](#) that these events could trigger another Persian Gulf War with consequences [potentially dwarfing](#) those following the crusade of the **George W. Bush** crusade of 2003.

This week's Global Research News Hour is well aware of the stakes in America's geo-strategic power play with Iran. Consequently, we have devoted our most recent show to providing some context with three guests.

Our first interview, **Allan Wise**, provides the perspective of an individual of Iranian extraction with relatives and friends from the country. He outlines difficulties he has had trying to get information out of the country in recent weeks, a critical appraisal of the country's human rights record, and thoughts about what he sees as Canada's limited options in terms of addressing both the Trump administration's hostile actions, and the Iranian government's failures.

Our next interview is with Canadian peace activist **Glenn Michalchuk**, on the eve of a [pan-Canadian Day of Action against sanctions against and war on Iran](#). Michalchuk challenges Canada's stance with regard to the current stand-off between Iran and the U.S., speaks to the use of human rights discourse in the case of Iran and other countries as an instrument of imperial aggression, and critiques some of the media messaging around recent events.

Finally, the noted commentator **Pepe Escobar** joins the show for the entirety of the last half of the show. Among other points he raises, he details some of the critical aspects of Trump's speech, provides evidence the president actually favours a de-escalation of tensions, unlike elements of the U.S. 'Deep State'. outlines Iran's ability to fight back with a financial 'WMD' of its own, and explains the appeal of General Soleimani to the Iranian people, notwithstanding ubiquitous Western media discourse about this 'terrorist' figure.

Please note the guest interviews were recorded in advance of the Iranian government's admission of fault in the shooting down of Ukrainian airlines Flight 752.

***Allan Wise** is a Winnipeg-based Iranian Canadian. He abandoned Iran in the late 1980s as a refugee and is a 30 year resident of Canada. He is an intense critic of Iran's human rights record. Undisclosed in the interview, Allan Wise had been actively involved in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's political party, the Liberals, once running as a candidate under Justin Trudeau's predecessor.*

Glenn Michalchuk is Chair of [Peace Alliance Winnipeg](#) and Treasurer for the [Canadian Peace Alliance](#).

Pepe Escobar, a veteran Brazilian journalist, is the correspondent-at-large for Hong Kong-based [Asia Times](#). His latest book is "[2030](#)." His most recent articles on the US-Iran stand-off are posted at Global Research. Follow him on [Facebook](#). He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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