

Video: Qassem Soleimani: Martyr of Iranian Revolution

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*For the first time in the history of Iran, a red flag was raised over the Holy Dome of Jamkaran Mosque in the holy city of Qom both symbolizing blood spilled unjustly and serving as a call to avenge a person who is killed. "Those who want to avenge the blood of Hussein," read the words of the war flag. This was done in honor of **General Qassem Suleimani**, who, along with several other Iranian and Iraqi commanders, was assassinated in US strikes on Baghdad. The red flag was not even raised during the Iran-Iraq war (September 22, 1980 – August 20, 1988), the longest and bloodiest conflict in the history of modern Iran, known in it as the Holy Defense.*

The raised flag demonstrates both the Iranian resolve to respond to the act of state terrorism committed by the United States and the significance of the personality of Soleimani for the state and nation. The general, once described by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as a "living martyr of the revolution", was the most effective battlefield commander of the modern world and one of the key people behind the defeat of ISIS in Syria and Iraq. In March 2019, Soleimani was awarded the Order of Zulfaqar, Iran's highest military order.

During his life Suleimani was a living legend overseeing operations abroad, achieving key military diplomatic victories and spreading Tehran's influence around the Middle East. After his death he has become an icon of the resistance both in Iran and in a large part of the Arab world. His assassination drastically increased the likelihood of an open military conflict between the US and Iran, a conflict which could easily set the entire region on fire.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/06_01_20_FPD_Soleimani.mp4

Born to an impoverished family in 1957, Soleimani joined the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) after the Iranian revolution in 1979. He rose to prominence commanding troops during the Iran-Iraq War. After the war, Soleimani largely disappeared from public view until 2011, when he took over the IRGC's expeditionary Qods Force and was promoted to Major General by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Over the course of his career, he developed close ties with Kurdish groups in Iraq, assisted Hezbollah in Lebanon and led Iranian military operations assisting Syrian and Iraqi troops in battles against terrorists, primarily ISIS. Soleimani was frequently pictured on key frontlines from Iraq's Mosul to Syria's Aleppo. For example, in 2014, he helped to forge the defense of Baghdad against encroaching ISIS terrorists. In 2015 he assisted the Iraqi government in operations to retake the oil-rich city of Tikrit from ISIS. In 2017 the General took personal command of the battle against ISIS in Syria's Bukamal. The success of the Syrian-Iranian-

Russian coalition in the Syrian war can to a great extent be attributed to actions of the Qods Force leader and the Russian military power backing him. In Yemen, Soleimani's Qods Force successfully helped local resistance forces to break the plans of the invading coalition led by Saudi Arabia. Thus, Ansar Allah (also known as the Houthis) kept Yemen's capital in their hands, spread the war onto the territory of Saudi Arabia and de-facto achieved a military victory in a conflict with a numerically superior and technologically advanced enemy. Iranian media repeatedly reported on assassination plots against the commander by the US, Israel and Saudi Arabia. The outcome of the conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Yemen undermined the positions of these powers in the region, thus creating a vacuum which Iran proceeded to fill.

The role of Soleimani for the Iranian nation can be compared to that of Soviet 'Marshal of Victory' Georgy Zhukov in 1945, taking into account the difference in scale of the wars and victories, as well as the different geography and historical period. Soleimani's popularity was such that there was speculation that he might run for president. In 2016, a poll showed that 76% of Iranians held a favorable view of him, with more than half reporting a "very favorable" opinion. He denied the rumors, saying he hoped to remain a soldier until the end of his life.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called for three days of mourning, saying Soleimani's death will double the motivation of the resistance against the US and Israel. Khamenei emphasized that harsh revenge awaits the "criminals" who killed Soleimani. Hundreds of thousands of people rallied in Iraq and Iran mourning his death and condemning the US aggression, which is viewed by many as a declaration of war.

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