**[The Creeping Armageddon](https://nation.com.pk/06-Feb-2020/the-creeping-armageddon" \t "_new)**

Imran Malik February 06, 2020

Israel’s maintenance as the strongest military (and sole nuclear) power of the Greater Middle East Region-North Africa (GMER-NA) and its unqualified security have been inviolable paradigms of US’ foreign policy. The US’ seamless appeasement of Israel has continued unabated, too. President Trump’s (Non)Deal of the Century has been a massive non-starter and has been thoroughly rejected by the Palestinians and the world at large. The international community too is unlikely to meekly accept Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, acknowledge Israeli settlements on the West Bank and recognize Israel’s annexation of the Golan Heights from Syria, etc!

The US and its coterie of allies have solid historical grounds to appease Israel. They remained criminally insensitive and non-committal while the Jews suffered unyielding persecution, inhuman atrocities, racial discrimination, injustice, torture and painful death in the erstwhile Nazi Germany. They found an extremely ingenuous way of overcoming their guilt and compensating the Jews for their abominable negligence, silence, criminal inaction and timid placation of the then Nazi Government. They helped create the State of Israel. Furthermore, in a stroke of devious ingenuity, instead of themselves paying penance for all their acts of omission and commission during the holocaust, they got the little brown Arabs of the GMER to do so in terms of lost territories and sovereignty and brutal subjugation to Israel.

To this day the Palestinians-Arabs continue to atone for sins they never committed!

One look at the map of the GMER-NA will reveal the manner in which the US-led West has assiduously gone about neutralizing and eliminating all possible threats to the State of Israel. This can be viewed in three concentric arcs emanating from Israel. The immediate neighbours like Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon etc were defeated in the 1956, 1967 and 1973 wars. Egypt and Jordan were made to sign peace treaties with Israel. The middle-distance neighbours like the Kingdoms of Saudi Arabia, UAE, and the rest of the GCC were neutralized through sublime diplomacy, adroit management/appeasement of their royal families, extravagant arms sales to them and pure bullying as and when required. The US might have already engineered far reaching albeit favourable changes in the policies of both the KSA and the UAE through their Crown Princes. Both countries are now favourably inclined towards Israel. The farther neighbours like Iraq and Iran were made to fight each other for eight years (it supplied arms and munitions to both belligerents throughout the war!); this Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88 effectively decimated the two major militaries of the then Islamic World/GMER-NA. Thereafter Iraq was invaded twice within a decade or so and completely destroyed as a military threat for a very long time to come. Yet Israel’s abiding insecurities remained unsatiated. The GWOT and the Arab Spring were thereafter generated by the US-led West to further weaken, subdue and dominate all nations in the GMER-NA. Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Egypt etc - all Muslim states - have suffered the disastrous effects of manipulated international terrorism, regime changes or attempts thereto, coercive economic and other sanctions, manipulation through IFIs, sponsored internecine strife, disruptive uprisings etc. Today, the GMER-NA less Israel lies in tatters, ruined, devastated beyond recognition and incapable of threatening Israel in any proactive, kinetic manner! The US-led West however, continues to hover ominously in the background!

This has been the price that the GMER-NA has had to pay to satiate Israel’s enduring insecurities and the US-led West’s vital interests in the region!

Iran has been in the cross-hairs of the US since long. President Trump has summarily rejected and walked out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the nuclear deal between the P5+1 and Iran. He feels that in its present form the JCPOA neither blocks Iran’s potential to make nuclear weapons comprehensively nor neutralizes its ballistic missile prowess. A future nuclear-ballistic missile armed Iran would not only alter the current contrived strategic (im)balance in the GMER drastically, but would also severely circumscribe Israel’s strategic reach in the region. It will also limit Israel’s freedom of action to militarily overwhelm its neighbours. The US-led West-Israel Combine will not tolerate a competing nuclear-missile power in the GMER-NA and thereabouts (Pakistan-?) that could even remotely threaten Israel and by implication its own vested interests.

In its latest action against Iran the US assassinated General Qassem Solaimani, Commander Quds Force, in a drone attack in Baghdad. Iran struck back promptly, albeit in a measured manner, obviating further escalation. Both belligerents appeared keen to avoid all-out war, Iran for obvious reasons and President Trump because of his re-election imperatives. Therefore, for the time being Iran might have been spared the rigors of a war/invasion. However, it is a question of time only when the US-led West will move decisively to not only scuttle Iran’s nuclear weapons’- ballistic missile programs totally, neutralize its threat potential fully and ensure Israel’s unchallengeable military-nuclear primacy in the GMER-NA. Iran will never be allowed to meaningfully contest or define Israel’s strategic reach or its sphere of influence ever. Israel clearly feels that the general decimation of threats from Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, KSA-led GCC, Egypt, Libya etc are not enough. Apparently, its insecurities might only be sated once the potential threats from Iran too are eliminated - or will they?

Having failed to bludgeon the Iranian nation into submission through its coercive policies of diplomatic isolation, economic and other sanctions thus far, the US-led West will now have to come up with a different strategy. Will it be a kinetic military approach or a saner diplomatic one or a combination of both? President Trump, the self-styled Dealmaker, will have to come up with a New Deal that not only meets Iran’s national aspirations but also blocks its nuclear weapons-ballistic missile programs and its so-called malign influence in places like Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen and the Shiite majority areas in the KSA, Bahrain and Kuwait etc. These are mutually exclusive objectives!

This US-led West’s Armageddon has left massive devastation and destruction in its wake. Will it stop here or will it continue to creep further East of Iran?

(To be continued)

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