

U.S. threatens to assassinate new chief of elite Quds Force of IRGC



Davos, January 23 (RHC)-- The U.S. special representative for Iran has threatened the Islamic Republic with yet another act of state terrorism, saying Washington will assassinate the successor of senior anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani as well if he follows in the path of the martyred general.

“If (Esmail) Qaani follows the same path of killing Americans then he will meet the same fate,” said Brian Hook, referring to the new commander of the anti-terror Quds Force of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

The U.S. official made the threat in an interview with the Saudi-owned newspaper Asharq al-Awsat on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland. “This isn’t a new threat. The [U.S.] president, [Donald Trump], has always said that he will always respond decisively to protect American interests,” Hook said.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei appointed Qaani as the new head of the IRGC Quds Force following the U.S. assassination of General Soleimani earlier this month.

General Soleimani was killed in a U.S. drone strike ordered by Trump. He was visiting Iraq at the invitation of the Baghdad government when the U.S. carried out the targeted strike, which also killed the

Iranian general's Iraqi anti-terror comrade Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, among others.

Soleimani has earned reputation as West Asia's most revered anti-terror commander due to his indispensable contribution to defeating terrorist outfits such as Daesh across the region.

In a message addressed to Ayatollah Khamenei on January 9, Qaani vowed to continue on the path pursued by martyred General Soleimani "with strength." He said the goal was to drive American forces out of the region.

The Islamic Republic has denounced the assassinations as "an act of state terrorism." In retaliation, the IRGC fired volleys of ballistic missiles on January 8 at two U.S. air bases in the western and northern Iraq.

Despite the U.S. denial of casualties or extensive damage at the site, reports and satellite images revealed what U.S. media described as "extensive" damage at the base. However, the United States military later confirmed that 11 of its troops were wounded in the Iranian retaliatory missile attack.

Ayatollah Khamenei said Iran's missile strike on the U.S. base in Iraq was just "a slap."

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