Trump, Soleimani, and Partisan Politics … in an Election Year

Fair-minded people may reasonably speculate on the wisdom of President Trump's decision to eliminate Iran's top general Qasem Soleimani. It's understandable that politicians would have questions about a presidential order to take out the second most powerful person in Iran. Why now? Was he really planning an imminent attack on Americans?

But for Democrats, "Donald Trump is always wrong" is their default position. You get the impression that if he suddenly came out in favor of late term abortions, progressives would find a way to become pro-life.

And if he didn't order a drone attack on Soleimani, and the general initiated a plan to kill Americans, the president would be condemned for *not* taking action. Heads they win, tails Mr. Trump loses.

They haven't been the loyal opposition since he took office. They are the resistance. That's hardly breaking news at this point. Still, Democrats who have been condemning the president, saying his decision to launch a deadly drone attack on Soleimani was needlessly provocative and brought us to the brink of war, might want to put partisan politics aside long enough to acknowledge who the real provocateurs are, and have been for the past 40 years.

Let's start in 1979, when a group of students backed by the Ayatollah Khomeini held 44 American diplomats hostage for 444 days.

Then in 1983, the terrorist organization Hezbollah — founded, armed, trained and funded by Iran — was responsible for two

suicide bombings in Lebanon: one at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut that killed 17 Americans and the second at a U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut killed 241 Americans.

In 1988, Iran — in violation of international law — mined the Persian Gulf — and one of their mines hit a U.S. ship, injuring 10 sailors and blowing a 15-foot hole in the vessel's hull.

In 1996, Hezbollah terrorists — with Iranian backing and support —attacked U.S. military forces housed in the Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, killing 19 Americans and wounding 372.

In 2000, Iran knowingly permitted members of al-Qaida, including several of the 9/11 hijackers, to pass through Iranian territory on their way to Afghanistan for training.

Beginning in 2003, Iranian-backed Shiite militias in Iraq killed hundreds of U.S. service members and civilians. Iran provided training and material support for repeated attacks on U.S. personnel.

For decades, Iran has imprisoned U.S. citizens on spurious charges and without due process. Former FBI agent Bob Levinson has not been heard from since he was arrested in Iran in 2007.

American law enforcement disrupted a plot backed by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to assassinate the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the U.S. by bombing a restaurant in Washington, D.C.

In 2016, Iran's military seized two naval vessels and 10 U.S. sailors that may have strayed into Iranian waters, forcing the sailors, at gunpoint, to kneel, hands behind their heads — and made sure the world saw the video they made.

In 2017, two Hezbollah operatives were arrested for conducting surveillance of U.S. military and law enforcement facilities,

as well as airports, in New York City, presumably in preparation for terrorist attacks against Americans.

In 2018, two Iranian agents were arrested for tailing potential terrorist targets in the United States, including Israeli and Jewish targets in Chicago.

Also in 2018, Iranian-backed terrorist proxies in Iraq launched attacks against the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and the U.S. Consulate in Basra. The funding and training for these assaults came directly from Iran.

In 2019, the Iranians shot down a U.S. drone over the Persian Gulf.

In 2020, Iranian surrogates stormed the U.S. embassy in Baghdad.

And then there's the destabilization of Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Iraq — all led by none other than General Soleimani.

Despite all that, what we get from Democratic presidential candidates and others on the liberal and progressive left is that Donald Trump is the provocateur. That he's the one leading us to the brink of war.

Pinning blame for the heightened tensions in the Middle East on President Trump makes for irresistible presidential year politics … so Joe Biden tells us that President Trump "just tossed a stick of dynamite into a tinderbox"

And Bernie Sanders says, "Trump's dangerous escalation brings us closer to another disastrous war in the Middle East that could cost countless lives and trillions more dollars."

Elizabeth Warren called calls the strike "reckless."

And Corey Booker joined the chorus, tweeting that "We have a president who has no strategic plan when it comes to Iran and

has only made that region less stable and less safe."

As if that part of the world were ever stable and safe.

Donald Trump didn't start the fire in the Middle East. It was burning long before he set foot in the Oval Office. He's not the one who "just tossed a stick of dynamite into a tinderbox." Qasem Soleimani and the mullahs who turned to him whenever they wanted to provoke the Great Satan are the ones who have been playing with dynamite — a reckless and deadly game as they have found out.

And the Democrats running for president may be playing a dangerous game, too. Showing as much, or even more, disdain for Donald Trump as for a terrorist like Qasem Soleimani may play well among the party's hyper-partisan progressive base that despises everything about this president. But rekindling the notion that the Democrats have had a nasty habit of blaming America first may not sit nearly as well with those non-partisan swing voters in battleground states — the ones who will decide the 2020 presidential election.