ISW Institute for the Study of War

Iraq Situation Report: March 20-April 20, 2017

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ISIS is waging a renewed offensive campaign in recaptured areas that could exploit vulnerabilities in the Iraqi Government’s ability to respond amid accelerating political competition before upcoming elections. ISIS attempted to fix, penetrate, or divert security forces with ground attacks against the ISF and PMU at Baiji, Tikrit, and in Diyala. ISIS also attempted to conduct isolated attacks in secure areas near Baghdad, Fallujah, and Samarra, a reflection of historic attack patterns of the 2012-2013 era. Prime Minister Abadi faces competing requirements to manage a renewed Kurdish bid for an independence referendum and Turkish President Erdogan’s threat of future Turkish military activity in northern Iraq against the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). Abadi is simultaneously campaigning to position himself politically to win in Iraq’s upcoming elections. Iran meanwhile continues to use its Iraqi proxies to produce cross-theater outcomes, undermining the legitimacy of the Iraqi state and demonstrating Iranian freedom of action in Iraq. The requirement for coalition military support in Iraq will endure after the recapture of Mosul, and could actually mean while continues to use its Iraqi proxies to produce cross-theater outcomes, undermining the legitimacy of the Iraqi state and demonstrating Iranian freedom of action in Iraq. The requirement for coalition military support in Iraq will endure after the recapture of Mosul, and could actually mean...