Iraqi Prime Minister and Cabinet

Likely Iranian proxy militias targeted Iraq's Security Media Cell (SMC) on August 12 and 18. The SMC reported that two of the attacks took place in an area near Highway 1, a major Iraqi highway, in Dhi Qar. The remaining attack took place in the Um Anj area 87 km southeast of Nasiriyah. None of the attacks resulted in casualties. Shia's extremis Telegram channels attributed two of the attacks to Saraya Tahran-e-Askar al-Dirussa-e-Abas and Askar al-Shabab. The second attack was attributed to Kata'ib Hezbollah and the third attack to Kata'ib Jawad, which are Iranian-backed militias. The US-led Coalition confirmed the attack. AK circulated a video of the alleged attack, which featured a video of the alleged attack, which featured a video of the alleged attack, which featured a video of the alleged attack, which featured a video of the alleged attack.

Iraq's Security Media Cell quickly complied with the regime's demands by applying continued political pressure from Iran-aligned proxies and reiterating Iran's demands for the expulsion of US troops. Kadhimi is unlikely to encourage the rapid withdrawal of US training and support; Iran's proxies will likely retaliate for Kadhimi's failure to support, and a prominent civil activist and protester on al-Bahou Street in Nasiriyah.

This pressure campaign culminated in an August 16 meeting in Baghdad between Kadhimi and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps – Quds Force Commander Esmail Ghaani, who is also the commander of the IRGC's Quds Force in Iraq. Ghaani is known to be closely aligned with Soleimani and is considered to be Iran's most important representative in Iraq. Kadhimi's visit to Washington, DC, for the US-Iraq Strategic Dialogue, which began on August 18. A Conquest Alliance member of parliament (MP) said that Conquest Alliance "stressed the need to implement US troop withdrawals. Kadhimi told the Associated Press ahead of his visit to Washington that he expects continued US influence in Iraq but said that US assistance "will reflect the changing nature of terrorism threat."

Several of Iraq's Iranian-backed militias escalated their rhetorical threats against US forces in Iraq should US forces not be removed. US-designated terrorist organization Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) threatened on August 11 to "expand" its operations targeting US forces in Iraq. Iran-backed Conquest Alliance MPs threatened on August 13 that any agreement that does not expel US forces "may cause great security and political problems in Iraq." Iranian proxy shadow militia Ashab al-Kahl also threatened US forces at Camp Taji on August 13, while warning Kadhimi to "keep a safe distance from the American enemy and its servants."

Iran and its proxy network in Iraq escalated a kinetic campaign to build political pressure ahead of the next stage of the US-Iraq Strategic Dialogue. Likely Iranian proxy militias assassinated a prominent civil activist and protester on al-Bahou Street in Nasiriyah. The attack caused no casualties. Iran-backed militias have escalated their attacks on Iraqi-operated convoys supporting US and Coalition forces in Iraq. Likely Iranian proxies conducted 15 attacks between August 4 and August 18. Germany, the United States, and the United Nations have all condemned the attacks, noting that they are an公然 violation of international law.

The SMC reported today that an IED struck an Iraqi contracted personnel and a roadside bomb was launched from Karbala area, approximately 8 km south of US-led Coalition forces in Anbar Province. Neither the Iraqi government nor the US-led Coalition confirmed the attack. A Conquest Alliance member of parliament (MP) said that Conquest Alliance "stressed the need to implement US troop withdrawals. Kadhimi told the Associated Press ahead of his visit to Washington that he expects continued US influence in Iraq but said that US assistance "will reflect the changing nature of terrorism threat."

To learn more about the situation in Iraq and other international issues, see ISW's podcast, Overwatch, available on Spotify, Sticher, iTunes, and other major podcast platforms.

Key takeaway: Iran and its proxy network in Iraq escalated a kinetic campaign to build political pressure and attempt to force Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi to limit his support for the US force presence ahead of the next stage of the US-Iraq Strategic Dialogue. Likely Iranian proxy militias conducted five attacks targeting confirmed IED attacks on US facilities and supporting personnel in Iraq between August 12 and August 18. This pressure campaign culminated in an August 16 meeting in Baghdad between Kadhimi and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps – Quds Force Commander Esmail Ghaani to discuss the US-Iraq Strategic Dialogue. Ghaani likely met with Kadhimi to pressure the US to comply with their demands for the withdrawal of US troops. Kadhimi is unlikely to encourage the rapid withdrawal of US training and support, and Iran's proxies will likely retaliate for Kadhimi's failure to quickly comply with the regime's demands by applying continued political pressure from Iran-aligned Iranian political factions.