Regime Struggles to Counter ISIS and Opposition Advances: A continuing streak of regime losses in Homs, Idlib, and Aleppo Provinces suggests that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is increasingly unable to generate sufficient combat power to maintain his army in all corners’ strategy. Regime forces proved unable to stem further ISIS advances against key infrastructure in eastern Homs Province, and a promised counteroffensive against Palmyra has yet to materialize. Meanwhile, pro-regime forces were...

ISIS Achieves Additional Gains in Central Syria: ISIS seized the historic city of Palmyra in central Syria on May 20 and continued to advance westward towards the strategic regime T4 Airbase along the highway to Homs city as well as southwest into the Eastern Qalamoun region along the road to Damascus. ISIS also seized the al-Tanaf border crossing between Iraq and Syria in a move which potentially opens the door for additional ISIS expansion toward Damascus. These advances further isolate regime forces in Deir ez-Zour, a development which promotes ISIS’s consolidation in eastern Syria. If ISIS can secure its control over remaining regime positions in eastern Homs, it will be better placed to divide Syrian regime resources among different cities in a similar manner to how ISIS divided ISF resources and attention in Iraq. It may also lead to greater conflict or conflict between ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra (JS) in this strategic zone. ISIS will likely seek to capitalize on the regime’s apparent inability to respond on multiple fronts to escalate against the regime in western Syria, particularly in Aleppo and Hama Provinces. ISIS will also likely consider that the Syrian central corridor remains out of the reach of the U.S.-led anti-ISIS air campaign – a concern particularly relevant following the Turkish announcement on May 25 that Turkey and the U.S. had agreed “in principle” to provide air support for Syrian regime forces combating ISIS in northwestern Syria...