Negative: Iraq

By Rebecca Sumner

**Resolved: The United States Federal Government should considerably reduce its military commitments**

Case Summary: The U.S. currently has around 5,000 troops stationed in Iraq, trying to protect Iraq from trouble with Iran and protect against any resurgence of ISIS. The Affirmative team claims that while the U.S. and Iran exchange tit for tat, Iraq is often caught in the crossfire. Recently, the scuffles have led to escalated retaliation, culminating in an assassination of an Iranian General, on Jan. 3, 2020, through a drone strike that also killed several officials from Iraqi militias. Iraq has had enough. Their parliament voted to expel all foreign troops. President Trump has refused, insisting that US troops will remain in Iraq and angry that they don’t appreciate our “help.” The AFF plan is to remove all U.S. troops from Iraq.

The Negative can argue that in the SQ, the U.S. is already working to pull out of Iraq. But… they’re doing it the right way. A couple bases at a time, and only where they know Iraq is already strong enough to be able to handle themselves on their own. Too fast too soon like the AFF plan is where you start to cause problems. The two disadvantages to moving out too quick is the resurgence of ISIS and the strengthening of Iranian influence in Iraq.

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Negative: Iraq

MINOR REPAIR

1. The U.S. should invest more in a diplomatic approach to Iraq

If anything, the U.S. needs to send more American diplomats to Iraq to improve relations

Daniel Benaim 2020 (fellow at The Century Foundation. He is also a nonresident senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and part-time faculty in the Program in International Relations at New York Univ. Previously, he served as Middle East policy adviser and foreign policy speechwriter at the White House, the Department of State, and the U.S. Senate. He was also an international affairs fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. MA in law and diplomacy from The Fletcher School) “Trump Hurts an Ally and Helps the Terrorists” 5 Jan 2020 https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/05/opinion/iraq-iran-trump.html

More American diplomats in Iraq would certainly be helpful right now: The United States should be urgently working with its remaining security and political partners, including Kurdish and Sunni leaders whose parliamentary blocs boycotted the vote, to see if it is possible to stave off complete expulsion or at least set the terms for an orderly departure. Americans’ safety remains paramount and under threat. Securely removing all Americans, advanced weaponry, sensitive intelligence, and other infrastructure would be a dizzying logistical challenge, as it was in 2011 over a long timeline in a relatively permissive environment.

A wiser approach would be to invest in diplomacy

Daniel Benaim 2020 (fellow at The Century Foundation. Nonresident senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and part-time faculty in the Program in International Relations at New York Univ. Previously, he served as Middle East policy adviser and foreign policy speechwriter at the White House, the Department of State, and the U.S. Senate. He was also an international affairs fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. MA in law and diplomacy from The Fletcher School) “Trump Hurts an Ally and Helps the Terrorists” 5 Jan 2020 https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/05/opinion/iraq-iran-trump.html

Iraq is not only a counterterrorism theater and flash point for outside powers. It is also a country of nearly 40 million still recovering from civil war. It matters to America that the risk of relapse is real, but so are Iraqis’ chances to demonstrate that different sects and ethnicities can still live together in today’s Middle East. A wiser American approach in Iraq would have invested in Iraqi nationalists — seeing not just counterterrorism, Iranian infiltration, and oil, but the concerns of a young population that braved militia bullets to demand reforms to corrupt, broken politics.

INHERENCY

1. The U.S. is working toward pulling out of Iraq

The U.S. Army is pulling out of three of their eight bases

Nafiseh Kohnavard 2020 (Iran born British-Iranian bilingual BBC correspondent who has covered various dangerous Middle East conflicts for BBC World Service/ BBC Persian) 16 Mar 2020 “Iraq military bases: US pulling out of three key sites,” <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-51914600>

The US army is pulling out of al-Qaim and two other key military bases in Iraq in the coming weeks. The decision to leave three of its eight bases in Iraq is a sign the US is looking to dramatically reduce its footprint in the country. It comes amid heightened tensions with the Iraqi government and Iran. A ceremony will take place this week at al-Qaim, where the US will formally hand over equipment to the Iraqi army to help it ensure security in the area. It will end any US presence along the Iraqi side of the border with Syria.

Also a 4th US military base they’re considering to withdraw from next

Courtney Kube 2020 (correspondent covering national security and the military for the NBC News Investigative Unit) 15 March 2020 “U.S. planning to move some troops out of Iraq,” <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/military/u-s-planning-move-some-troops-out-iraq-n1159916>

The U.S. military is also looking at troops at Al Taqaddum Air Base west of Baghdad as a possible location to draw out of later this year. The military is also considering changing the overall structure of Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve from a three-star billet to a two-star command, putting a major general in charge rather than a lieutenant general.

The U.S. is removing them slowly, a couple bases at a time – where it is safe to do so

Katrina Manson and Andrew England 2020 (**Manson**–covers US foreign policy, defense and intelligence for the Financial Times. **England**–Financial Times Middle East Editor. Previously, he spent 17 years based in the Middle East and Africa as a foreign correspondent) 16 March 2020 “US redeploys soldiers from smaller bases in Iraq” <https://www.ft.com/content/871f8b98-67b4-11ea-800d-da70cff6e4d3>

A US defence official told the Financial Times that the troops were being moved out of Al-Qaim, a small base near the Syrian border, and the Qayyarah Airfield West base near Mosul. The official said redeploying the soldiers to larger bases or out of the country altogether would make it “a little bit simpler” to protect US forces and help “marshal our resources at the right place at the right time”. The official added that Iraqi national forces were increasingly able to fight Isis without US support at those sites, meaning it was safe for the US to withdraw personnel from those bases.

The U.S. is already working on removing / repositioning hundreds of troops

Courtney Kube March 15, 2020 (correspondent covering national security and the military for the NBC News Investigative Unit), “U.S. planning to move some troops out of Iraq,” <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/military/u-s-planning-move-some-troops-out-iraq-n1159916>

The U.S. military is planning to reposition hundreds of troops in Iraq, including moving some out of the country, according to three U.S. defense officials. The consolidation of forces will include removing U.S. troops from joint bases at al-Qaim near the Syrian border, Qayyarah Airfield West near Mosul and possibly K-1 Air Base in Kirkuk.

2. A/T: “EU + other coalition forces can solve” — They rely heavily on the U.S.

The American presence has been instrumental

Scott Peterson 2020 (covers the Middle East for the Christian Monitor from London, with a special focus on Iran, Iraq, and Syria) 7 Jan 2020 “US troops out of Iraq? What that would mean for both countries.” <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2020/0107/US-troops-out-of-Iraq-What-that-would-mean-for-both-countries>

The American military presence has been instrumental in leading a coalition of Western nations in Iraq and Syria to fight the Islamic State (ISIS) and in rebuilding and training Iraqi forces to wage that battle on their own.

If American forces leave, Europeans will follow

NEW YORK TIMES Jan 2020 (written by Alissa J. Rubin, Ben Hubbard, Falih Hassan, Thomas Gibbons-Neff, Eric Schmitt, Vivian Yee, David D. Kirkpatrick, Edward Wong, Tess Felder, Yonette Joseph, Mariel Padilla and Maggie Haberman. **Rubin**–Baghdad Bureau chief for The NY Times. She won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting; **Hubbard**–Beirut bureau chief for The NY Times; **Hassan**–contributor to the NY Times; **Gibbons-Neff**–reporter in the NY Times Washington bureau and a former Marine infantryman; **Schmitt**–Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist who writes for The NY Times; **Yee**–international correspondent for the NY **Wong**–foreign correspondent for The NY Times. **Felder**–senior staff editor, NY Times; **Joseph**–London weekend editor for the NY Times. She’s worked at The Washington Post, The Miami Herald and The Journal News; **Padilla**–reporter for the NY Times covering national breaking news for the Express desk; **Haberman**–White House correspondent for The NY Times and a political analyst for CNN.) written 5 Jan 2020; updated 7 Jan.2020 “Outrage in Iran After Killing of Suleimani: Here’s What You Need to Know,” <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/05/world/middleeast/Iran-us-trump.html>

If American forces leave the country, European Union and coalition forces will likely have to follow, because they rely on the American logistics and intelligence resources to protect their forces and the civilians that work with them. NATO has already announced the suspension of its training mission for Iraqi forces.

A/T: “81-nation coalition” — Without the U.S., the other forces would find it difficult to operate

Karen DeYoung, Louisa Loveluck, and Mustafa Salim 2020 (DeYoung–Pulitzer-prize winning associate editor and senior national security correspondent for The Washington Post. BS in journalism from UF. Loveluck–Baghdad bureau chief for the Washington Post. BA in Social and Political Sciences from Univ of Cambridge; Salim–reporter in Washington Post's Baghdad bureau) 10 Jan 2020 “Trump administration refuses to heed Iraq’s call for troop withdrawal,” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/iraq-asks-united-states-to-set-up-mechanism-for-troop-withdrawal/2020/01/10/794058ea-32f8-11ea-971b-43bec3ff9860_story.html>

U.S. troops ended their combat mission, under a formal status-of-forces agreement, in 2011. Their return in 2014 was under a diplomatic note, by request of the Iraqi government after the Islamic State burst onto the scene and quickly took over major Iraqi cities and headed toward Baghdad. Although the troops are part of an 81-nation coalition set up to fight the militants, the United States has by far the largest contingent, and other troops — including those sent by NATO members — would find it difficult to operate without U.S. capabilities.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

1. A/T: “Iraqi Parliament voted for the U.S. to leave” – Not so fast. Iraq is split

Iraq isn’t as united on the issue as the vote seems

Steve Inskeep and retired Army Colonel Peter Mansoor, Jan 7, 2020 (**INTERVIEWER: Inskeep**–journalist, the host of NPR’s Morning Edition and their morning news podcast Up First. He graduated from Morehead State University. **INTERVIEWEE:** **Mansoor**–retired Army colonel, who served as executive officer under Gen. David Patraeus (one of the leading Generals during Iraq War). He’s a professor of military history at Ohio State University) “Why U.S. Troops Should Stay Even Though Iraq's Parliament Voted Them Out” <https://www.npr.org/2020/01/07/794163542/why-u-s-troops-should-stay-even-though-iraqs-parliament-voted-them-out>

INSKEEP: Of course. Now, as regards to the United States in Iraq, it seems legally possible for the moment for the United States to stay because the Parliament vote to ask foreign forces to leave is nonbinding, but is it politically practical for the U.S. to remain in the face of such opposition? MANSOOR: You know, Iraq is split. The Sunni and Kurdish lawmakers didn't even show up to Parliament for the vote on removing U.S. forces. And so I wouldn't say that Iraq is united in wanting U.S. forces out. It does make it more difficult. But I think, you know, this is a - at the moment, it's posturing. And we'll see what the new Iraqi government, one that has the authority to actually order the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the country, says once it's in place. INSKEEP: And I guess we should mention, we had a Kurdish politician on the program elsewhere today who said that he would like U.S. forces to stay and ultimately said that Kurdistan, Iraqi Kurdistan, might welcome them even if the central government asked them to go.

Iraqi parliament is divided — The Kurds and the Sunnis didn’t attend and didn’t vote

NEW YORK TIMES 2020 (written by Alissa J. Rubin, Ben Hubbard, Falih Hassan, Thomas Gibbons-Neff, Eric Schmitt, Vivian Yee, David D. Kirkpatrick, Edward Wong, Tess Felder, Yonette Joseph, Mariel Padilla and Maggie Haberman (5 Jan 2020 updated Jan. 7, 2020. Rubin–Baghdad Bureau chief for The NY Times. She won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting; Hubbard–Beirut bureau chief for The NY Times; Hassan–contributor to the NY Times; Gibbons-Neff–reporter in the NY Times Washington bureau and a former Marine infantryman; Schmitt–Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist who writes for The NY Times; Yee–international correspondent for the NY Times covering the Middle East, based in Beirut. Kirkpatrick–international correspondent for The NY Times. He was part of a team that won a Pulitzer Prize in 2020 for international reporting; Wong–foreign correspondent for The NY Times. He served as one of the Times' primary correspondents in Baghdad, covering the Iraq War from 2003-07; Felder–senior staff editor, NY Times; Joseph–London weekend editor for the NY Times; Padilla–reporter for the NY Times; Haberman–White House correspondent for The NY Times and a political analyst for CNN) “Outrage in Iran After Killing of Suleimani: Here’s What You Need to Know,” https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/05/world/middleeast/Iran-us-trump.html

Iraq’s Parliament was divided over demands from angry citizens to expel American troops. Many of its 328 members, primarily Kurds and Sunnis, did not attend Sunday’s session and did not vote.

Iraq has large Sunni and Kurdish populations, who oppose U.S. withdrawal

Deutsche Welle Jan 10, 2020 (German international media organization) “US rejects Iraqi parliament's call to withdraw troops” <https://www.dw.com/en/us-rejects-iraqi-parliaments-call-to-withdraw-troops/a-51958747>

Iraq is also home to large Sunni and Kurdish populations, which oppose the idea of a US withdrawal and see US forces as a shield against unchecked power of Shiite factions.

While the vote was unanimous, Iraq is clearly divided

Qassim Abdul-Zahra and Zeina Karam, Jan 6, 2020 (**Abdul**-**Zahra**—Baghdad-based reporter for the Associated Press; **Karam**–journalist for Associated Press; has a degree in political science and public administration from the American Univ. of Beirut) “Push to oust US troops from Iraq a risky undertaking,” <https://apnews.com/6b7a59ff52aca0e5469fec1699f44823>

Abdul-Mahdi asked parliament on Sunday to take “urgent measures” to ensure the removal of foreign forces from the country. In a sign of the divisions, the parliament session was boycotted by many Sunni and Kurdish legislators who oppose abolishing the deal with the Americans, and most of the lawmakers who voted were Shiite. It was not clear what steps Abdul-Mahdi would take following the parliamentary vote. Experts were split on whether, as a resigned prime minister, he has the authority to request the termination of the U.S. presence.

2. Iraqi officials acknowledge the U.S.’ need to stay

Iraq’s most successful troops in battle were trained by the coalition

Scott Peterson 2020 (covers the Middle East for the Christian Monitor from London, with a special focus on Iran, Iraq, and Syria) 7 Jan 2020 “US troops out of Iraq? What that would mean for both countries.” <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2020/0107/US-troops-out-of-Iraq-What-that-would-mean-for-both-countries>

But it has been the systematic American-led effort to rebuild and train the Iraqi security forces, which disintegrated in the face of the ISIS advance, that will be critical for Iraq’s future. U.S. and coalition airpower was also instrumental in driving back ISIS. “We have seen during the war against ISIS just how effective coalition training is, and how the most successful troops in battle were the ones trained by the coalition,” says the Iraqi official. “To lose that support is not a good thing for Iraq. It is going to be detrimental to the military institutions that we are trying to stand up, which are still nascent, which still need training wheels as they learn to ride their bike.”

Iraqi security officials say the U.S. is needs to stay to help against ISIS

NEW YORK TIMES 2020 (journalists Alissa J. Rubin and Eric Schmitt. Rubin–American journalist; Baghdad Bureau chief for The NY Times. Former NYTimes bureau chief in Baghdad.. Won 2016 Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting. Schmitt– Pulitzer Prize–winning American journalist, senior writer covering terrorism and national security for NY Times.) 15 Jan 2020 “U.S. Military Resumes Joint Operations With Iraq” <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/15/world/middleeast/us-military-iraq.html>

Despite the Iraqi government’s moves toward expelling the Americans, some Iraqi security officials have opposed the idea, saying they were needed to help fight the remnants of the Islamic State and prevent its resurgence, as well as to support coalition troops from other countries.

In private, the leaders are more practical and don’t want to see the U.S. leave

Karen DeYoung, Louisa Loveluck, and Mustafa Salim 2020 (DeYoung–Pulitzer-prize winning associate editor and senior national security correspondent for The Washington Post. BS in journalism from UF. Loveluck–Baghdad bureau chief for the Washington Post. BA in Social and Political Sciences from the University of Cambridge; Salim–reporter in The Washington Post's Baghdad bureau) 10 Jan 2020 “Trump administration refuses to heed Iraq’s call for troop withdrawal,” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/iraq-asks-united-states-to-set-up-mechanism-for-troop-withdrawal/2020/01/10/794058ea-32f8-11ea-971b-43bec3ff9860_story.html> [brackets in original]

In diplomatic meetings to quell the crisis, some foreign officials say, the tone of some Shiite leaders has been more muted. “In private, [they] are more practical and don’t want to see all forces go straight away because they know it would be destabilizing,” said one Western diplomat, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject.

3. A/T: “Qassem Soleimani’s assassination” – Not Unwarranted

Bad guy: Soleimani was responsible for 600 U.S. soldiers’ deaths

retired Army Colonel Peter Mansoor 2020 (retired Army colonel, was executive officer under Gen. David Patraeus (one of the leading Generals during the Iraq War). Professor of military history at Ohio State Univ) 7 Jan 2020 “Why U.S. Troops Should Stay Even Though Iraq's Parliament Voted Them Out” <https://www.npr.org/2020/01/07/794163542/why-u-s-troops-should-stay-even-though-iraqs-parliament-voted-them-out>

MANSOOR: Yeah. There were probably a number of other targets that could have been hit, as he had various targets presented to him after the U.S. drone was shot down several months ago and chose not to. On the other hand, you can't say that Qassem Soleimani was unwarranted. He was directing attacks against U.S. forces. He was directing the attack against our embassy. He's personally responsible for the killing of upwards of 600 U.S. soldiers in the Iraq War. So he wasn't necessarily a figure that you should shed any tears over.

DISADVANTAGES

1. A resurgence of ISIS

Link: The U.S. forces are critical for the anti-IS effort

Deutsche Welle Jan 10, 2020 (German international media organization) “US rejects Iraqi parliament's call to withdraw troops” <https://www.dw.com/en/us-rejects-iraqi-parliaments-call-to-withdraw-troops/a-51958747>

The US, which invaded Iraq and toppled the regime of Saddam Hussein in 2003, currently has some 5,200 soldiers on Iraqi soil. The troops are training and assisting Iraqi forces in the fight against the remnants of the defeated "Islamic State" (IS) militia. On Friday, the State Department said the US forces were crucial for the anti-IS effort and would not discuss removing them. Instead, the two sides should talk about "our right, appropriate force posture in the Middle East," the US said.

Link: Eliminating U.S. presence could bolster ISIS’ presence

Khairuldeen Al Makhzoomi and Minatullah Alobaidi Feb 3, 2020 (**Al Makhzoomi**—has a bachelor's degree in political science and Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from the University of California, Berkeley, as well as a master's degree in contemporary Arab Studies from Georgetown University. His work has appeared in the Huff Post, the Arab Weekly, and Middle East Eye. **Alobaidi**—has a master's degree in contemporary Arab studies with a focus on development and politics in the Middle East from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS) and a bachelor's degree from The American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS). He’s also worked with international organizations, such as Heartland Alliance International and the World Bank) “The Dangerous Consequences of U.S. Withdrawal from Iraq,” <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/fikraforum/view/the-dangerous-consequences-of-u.s.-withdrawal-from-iraq>

Eliminating the U.S. presence in Iraq will not guarantee the security and stability of the country. In early January, the U.S. central command reported that it halted the training of Iraqi forces to assist them in fighting the Islamic State and other extremist organizations. Expelling U.S. troops from Iraq could potentially bolster the Islamic States’ residual presence and hinder the fight against terrorist organizations such as the Iranian-funded Shia military and political organization, Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH).

Brink: A pullout of U.S. troops could cripple the fight against ISIS

Qassim Abdul-Zahra and Zeina Karam, Jan 6, 2020 (**Abdul**-**Zahra**—Baghdad-based reporter for the Associated Press; **Karam**–joined the Associated Press in Beirut in 1996. She’s reported from more than a dozen countries in the region, including Egypt, Iraq, Algeria, Sudan, Oman and UAE. She has a degree in political science and public administration from the American University of Beirut) “Push to oust US troops from Iraq a risky undertaking,” <https://apnews.com/6b7a59ff52aca0e5469fec1699f44823>

A pullout of U.S. troops could cripple the fight against Islamic State militants and allow the extremists to make a comeback. Militants affiliated with IS routinely carry out attacks in northern and western Iraq, hiding out in rugged desert and mountainous areas. Iraqi forces rely on the U.S. for logistics and weapons in pursuing them.

A withdrawal could facilitate ISIS’ resurgence

Alissa J. Rubin, Ben Hubbard, Farnaz Fassihi, and Steven Erlanger Jan. 2020 (**Rubin**–Baghdad Bureau chief for The NY Times. She won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting; **Hubbard**–Beirut bureau chief for The NY Times; **Fassihi**–writes about Iran for the New York Times. Previously, she was a senior writer for the Wall Street Journal for 17 years, based in the Middle East and at the UN in New York. She’s been honored with more than a dozen national journalism awards and is a 2018 recipient of an Ellis Island Medal of Honor; **Erlanger**–chief diplomatic correspondent in Europe for The New York Times) “Iran Ends Nuclear Limits as Killing of Iranian General Upends Mideast” <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/05/world/middleeast/iran-general-soleimani-iraq.html>

On Sunday, the American-led coalition in Iraq and Syria said it would pause its yearslong mission of fighting the Islamic State and training local forces in both countries. A pullout of the estimated 5,200 American troops in Iraq could cripple the fight against the Islamic State, or ISIS, possibly facilitating its resurgence. A smaller contingent of about 1,000 United States troops are in eastern Syria.

Impact: ISIS = kidnapping, extortion, attacks and murder

International Crisis Group 2019. (independent organisation**;** providing independent analysis and advice on how to prevent, resolve or better manage deadly conflict; does expert field research, analysis and engagement with policymakers) “Averting an ISIS Resurgence in Iraq and Syria“ 11 Oct 2019 <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/syria/207-averting-isis-resurgence-iraq-and-syria>

In Iraq, the group operates as small, largely autonomous guerrilla units spread across the country’s most inhospitable terrain, including its mountains and deserts. From these hideouts, ISIS militants emerge to prey on rural areas, kidnapping and extorting residents and killing state representatives.

Impact: A resurgence of ISIS could lead to insecurity there and greater terrorism

Alex Ward and Zack Beauchamp Jan 13, 2020 (**Ward**–staff writer covering international security and defense issues for Vox; **Beauchamp**–senior correspondent at Vox, where he covers global politics and ideology. He has an MSc from the London School of Economics in International Relations) “9 questions about the US-Iran crisis you were too embarrassed to ask” <https://www.vox.com/world/2020/1/13/21051794/us-iran-soleimani-ukraine-airline-questions> [brackets in original]

Trump has long wanted US troops out of Iraq, saying that America has already spent enough money and lost enough lives since the 2003 invasion. But a precipitous force withdrawal could hurt the US strategically in the Middle East. “The near-term second- and third-order effects of [killing Soleimani] were not well thought out, nor were they appropriately planned for,” Becca Wasser, an Iran expert at the Rand Corporation, told me. “The long-term implications of how this could play out — for example, the revocation of US military access in Iraq could end the counter-ISIS mission, which could result in the group’s resurgence in Iraq and Syria, which in turn could lead to insecurity there and greater terrorism worldwide — are worse.”

A/T: “it’ll be Iran’s problem” — this ignores recent history

Daniel Benaim Jan. 5, 2020 (fellow at The Century Foundation. He is also a nonresident senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and part-time faculty in the Program in International Relations at New York University (NYU). He works on U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. Previously, he served as Middle East policy adviser and foreign policy speechwriter at the White House, the Department of State, and the U.S. Senate. He was also an international affairs fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. He received his MA in law and diplomacy from The Fletcher School and his BA in English literature from Yale University. He was a term member at the Council on Foreign Relations) “Trump Hurts an Ally and Helps the Terrorists” https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/05/opinion/iraq-iran-trump.html

Some may argue that by leaving, the United States will make Iraq and the jihadists there into Iran’s problem. But that ignores recent history, including the global chaos wreaked by the Islamic State just five years ago after American troops had left.

A/T: “if ISIS re-emerges, the U.S. will be invited back” — an unlikely and risky bet

Daniel Benaim Jan. 5, 2020 (fellow at The Century Foundation. He is also a nonresident senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and part-time faculty in the Program in International Relations at New York University (NYU). He works on U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. Previously, he served as Middle East policy adviser and foreign policy speechwriter at the White House, the Department of State, and the U.S. Senate. He was also an international affairs fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. He received his MA in law and diplomacy from The Fletcher School and his BA in English literature from Yale University. He was a term member at the Council on Foreign Relations) “Trump Hurts an Ally and Helps the Terrorists” https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/05/opinion/iraq-iran-trump.html

Some may argue that by leaving, the United States will make Iraq and the jihadists there into Iran’s problem. But that ignores recent history, including the global chaos wreaked by the Islamic State just five years ago after American troops had left. Others suggest that, should the Islamic State re-emerge to threaten the world, America would be invited back. That is a risky bet given the nature of America’s departure.

2. Broaden Iranian Influence

Link: A complete withdrawal would strengthen Iran’s expansionist agenda

Khairuldeen Al Makhzoomi and Minatullah Alobaidi Feb 3, 2020 (**Al Makhzoomi**—has a bachelor's degree in political science and Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from the University of California, Berkeley, as well as a master's degree in contemporary Arab Studies from Georgetown University. His work has appeared in the Huff Post, the Arab Weekly, and Middle East Eye. **Alobaidi**—master's degree in contemporary Arab studies with a focus on development and politics in the Middle East from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service; bachelor's degree from The American University of Iraq) “The Dangerous Consequences of U.S. Withdrawal from Iraq,” <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/fikraforum/view/the-dangerous-consequences-of-u.s.-withdrawal-from-iraq>

A complete U.S. withdrawal will only embolden Shia loyalists in Iraq, further alienate the Sunni community from the Iraqi government, and strengthen Iran's expansionist agenda in Iraq as well as the rest of the Middle East. Iran has demonstrated its capabilities to do so by maintaining the upper hand in the Iraqi political, security, and economic sectors—even while U.S. troops remained on the ground.

Brink: Iraqis are already unhappy with the level of Iran’s influence

Khairuldeen Al Makhzoomi and Minatullah Alobaidi Feb 3, 2020 (**Al Makhzoomi**—has a bachelor's degree in political science and Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from the University of California, Berkeley, as well as a master's degree in contemporary Arab Studies from Georgetown University. His work has appeared in the Huff Post, the Arab Weekly, and Middle East Eye. **Alobaidi**—master's degree in contemporary Arab studies with a focus on development and politics in the Middle East from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service; bachelor's degree from The American University of Iraq) “The Dangerous Consequences of U.S. Withdrawal from Iraq,” <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/fikraforum/view/the-dangerous-consequences-of-u.s.-withdrawal-from-iraq>

Over the past three months, Iraqis took to the street to voice their anger towards Iran's continued presence, which the public connects to the ongoing destabilization, deteriorating economic conditions, and pervasive corruption. The overwhelming discontent felt by the Iraqi people, demonstrates how Iran’s regional influence campaign is facing widespread backlash. Iraq must handle this situation with caution, as the expulsion of U.S. troops will only deepen Iran’s hold on Iraq, intensify the existing economic crisis, increase external and internal strain, and diminish Iraq’s security posture.

Link: The push for the U.S. to leave is by pro-Iranian factions

Qassim Abdul-Zahra and Zeina Karam, Jan 6, 2020 (**Abdul**-**Zahra**—Baghdad-based reporter for the Associated Press; **Karam**–joined the Associated Press in Beirut in 1996. She has a degree in political science and public administration from the American University of Beirut) “Push to oust US troops from Iraq a risky undertaking,” <https://apnews.com/6b7a59ff52aca0e5469fec1699f44823>

A push led by pro-Iran factions to oust U.S. troops from Iraq following the U.S. airstrike that killed a top Iranian general is gaining momentum, bolstered by a Parliament vote calling on the government to remove them. But the path forward is unclear, and in Iraq’s deeply divided terrain, with a resigned prime minister and raging proxy war between Iran and the U.S., ending America’s 17-year military presence in Iraq is a risky undertaking.

Brink: Iran already has a lot of influence on Iraq

Martin Chulov Nov 18, 2019 (covers the Middle East for the Guardian. He’s reported from the region since 2005) “Leaked cables reveal scale of Iran's influence in Iraq,” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/18/leaked-cables-reveal-scale-of-irans-influence-in-iraq>

So prevalent is Iran in Iraq’s affairs that Iranian officers effectively have free rein across key institutions of state and are central to much of the country’s decision-making, according to the cables, which were passed to the Intercept and jointly published with the New York Times.

Link: Withdrawal would enable further Iranian influence

Qassim Abdul-Zahra and Zeina Karam, Jan 6, 2020 (**Abdul**-**Zahra**—Baghdad-based reporter for the Associated Press; **Karam**–journalist for Associated Press. She has a degree in political science and public administration from the American University of Beirut) “Push to oust US troops from Iraq a risky undertaking,” <https://apnews.com/6b7a59ff52aca0e5469fec1699f44823> [ellipses in original]

An American withdrawal could also enable Iran to deepen its influence in Iraq, which like Iran is a majority Shiite country. “It is not that simple,” Lebanese political analyst Ibrahim Bayram said of any withdrawal. “This will increase the complications inside Iraq, the conflicts and contradictions ... and the clash, both political and non-political, between the Iranians and Americans.”

Impact: Expansion of Iranian influence in Iraq / Reduction of US influence = Increased risk of war.

Dr. Munquith Dagher, Dr. Karl Kaltenthaler, Cordesman 2020 (Kaltenthaler - Dagher is the CEO and founder of IIACSS research group (Al Mustakillah), public opinion research company in Iraq. Kaltenthaler is Professor of Political Science and Director of Security Studies at the University of Akron and Adjunct Professor of Political Science at Case Western Reserve University. Cordesman - Arleigh Burke Chair in Strategy at Center for Strategic & International Studies) 20 Mar 2020 “Iraq is the Prize: A Warning About Iraq’s Future Stability, Iran, and the Role of the United States” <https://www.csis.org/analysis/iraq-prize-warning-about-iraqs-future-stability-iran-and-role-united-states>

The United States has an incentive to stay engaged in Iraq because as it now stands, it is a country that is dominated and exploited by the Iranians, destabilizing the country and the region. An unstable Iraq that is dominated by Iran is a threat to US interests. The expansion of Iranian power in the region has drawn countries located there closer to war.

Impact: More internal conflicts and friction

Khairuldeen Al Makhzoomi and Minatullah Alobaidi Feb 3, 2020 (**Al Makhzoomi**—has a bachelor's degree in political science and Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from the University of California, Berkeley, as well as a master's degree in contemporary Arab Studies from Georgetown University. His work has appeared in the Huff Post, the Arab Weekly, and Middle East Eye. **Alobaidi**—master's degree in contemporary Arab studies with a focus on development and politics in the Middle East from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service; bachelor's degree from The American University of Iraq) “The Dangerous Consequences of U.S. Withdrawal from Iraq,” <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/fikraforum/view/the-dangerous-consequences-of-u.s.-withdrawal-from-iraq>

Additionally, Iran was able to extend its influence while acting as a shadow government throughout Shia dominated regions of Iraq. If left unchecked this trend could influence internal conflicts within Saudi Arabia, as witnessed previously by the Saudi-Shi’a uprising of 1979. Similarly, this friction will likely spread to other Gulf countries—such as the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Kuwait—because of these countries’ large Shia populations.

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