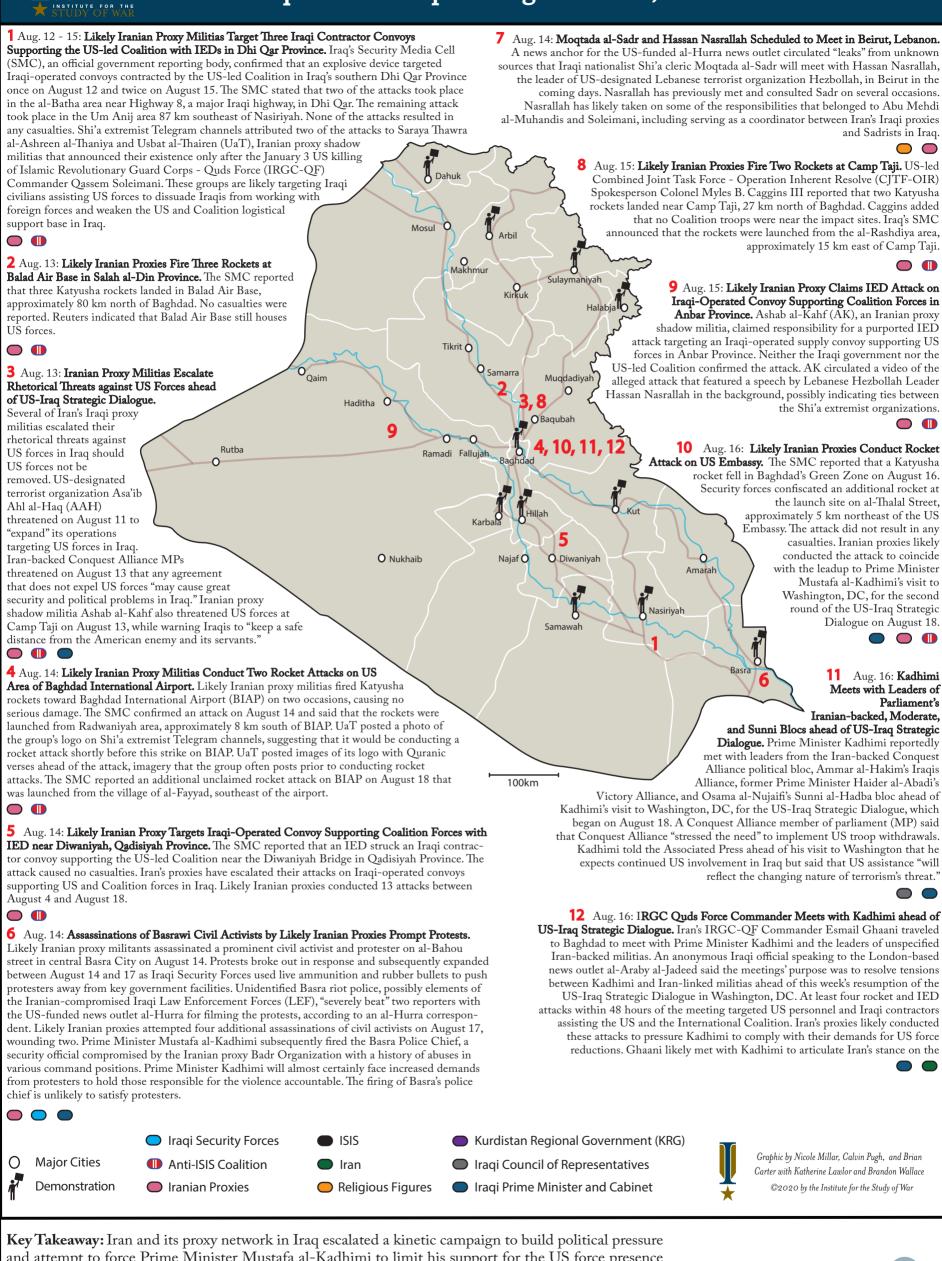


Iraq Situation Report: August 12 - 18, 2020



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 militants conducted five rocket attacks and five 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 Strategic Dialogue. Ghaani likely met with Kadhimi to punctuate attacks by Iran's proxies and reiterate 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 quickly comply with the regime's demands by applying continued political pressure from Iran-aligned Iraqi political factions.

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

