

Iraq Situation Report: May 1-4, 2015

1 On May 1, a Peshmerga source stated that ISIS launched an attack on Peshmerga positions in al-Nasr neighborhood in northwestern Sinjar district, west of Mosul. The attack was repelled by the Peshmerga after coalition air support conducted four airstrikes, killing “more than” 15 ISIS fighters. On May 3, DoD stated that the coalition conducted three airstrikes “near Sinjar” targeting ISIS positions and three tactical units.



2 On May 1, anonymous witnesses stated that coalition airstrikes struck an ISIS camp at a former Iraqi Army company base in the Dumiz area of southeastern Mosul. On May 3, DoD stated that seven airstrikes targeted ISIS “near Mosul” between May 1 and May 3. On May 2, an anonymous source stated that coalition and IA Aviation airstrikes targeted ISIS in Sharqat. The source indicated that the strikes in Shirqat along with others near Baiji killed 45 ISIS members.



3 On May 2, a security source stated that the 16th IA Division is in route to the Asad Air Base, adding that the commander of the 16th Division has already arrived to the base as part of a security plan that aims to clear areas west of Ramadi. The source added that the 16th Division will fall under the command of the Jazeera and Badia Operations Command (JBOC). A separate unidentified source stated that ISIS snipers targeted individuals traveling on the road connecting al-Baghdadi and Haditha, killing two and injuring “a number” of others. On May 3, the DoD stated that the coalition conducted one airstrike “near Asad” base targeting an ISIS “excavator.”



4 On May 3, members of the armed wing of the Sadrist Trend of Moqtada al-Sadr, the Peace Brigades (PB), previously known as Jaysh al-Mahdi, held military parades carrying light weapons in Wasit, Najaf, Diwaniyah, Babil, Basra, Karbala, and Mayssan. The parades were to condemn the draft defense bill circulated by the U.S. House of Representatives that included a proposal to directly deliver arms to Iraqi Sunnis and Kurds. Senior figures within the Trend stated that the parades were to reject the bill that would “divide Iraq to three parts” and to show the readiness of the PB to attack U.S. interests.



5 On May 2, the CoR failed to pass a resolution condemning the U.S. draft defense bill. The National Alliance reintroduced the proposal after the failed vote, causing the Sunni bloc Etihad and the Kurdistan Alliance to leave the CoR in protest. The remaining 167 CoR members voted on and passed the National Alliance proposal with 162 votes. Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) and Sadrist Trend leader Muqtada al-Sadr welcomed the proposal rejecting the draft bill. On May 3, the Anbar chairman stressed the need for arms but also expressed his rejection of the draft. However, on May 4, an adviser to the Anbar governor stated that the draft bill would not undermine Iraq.

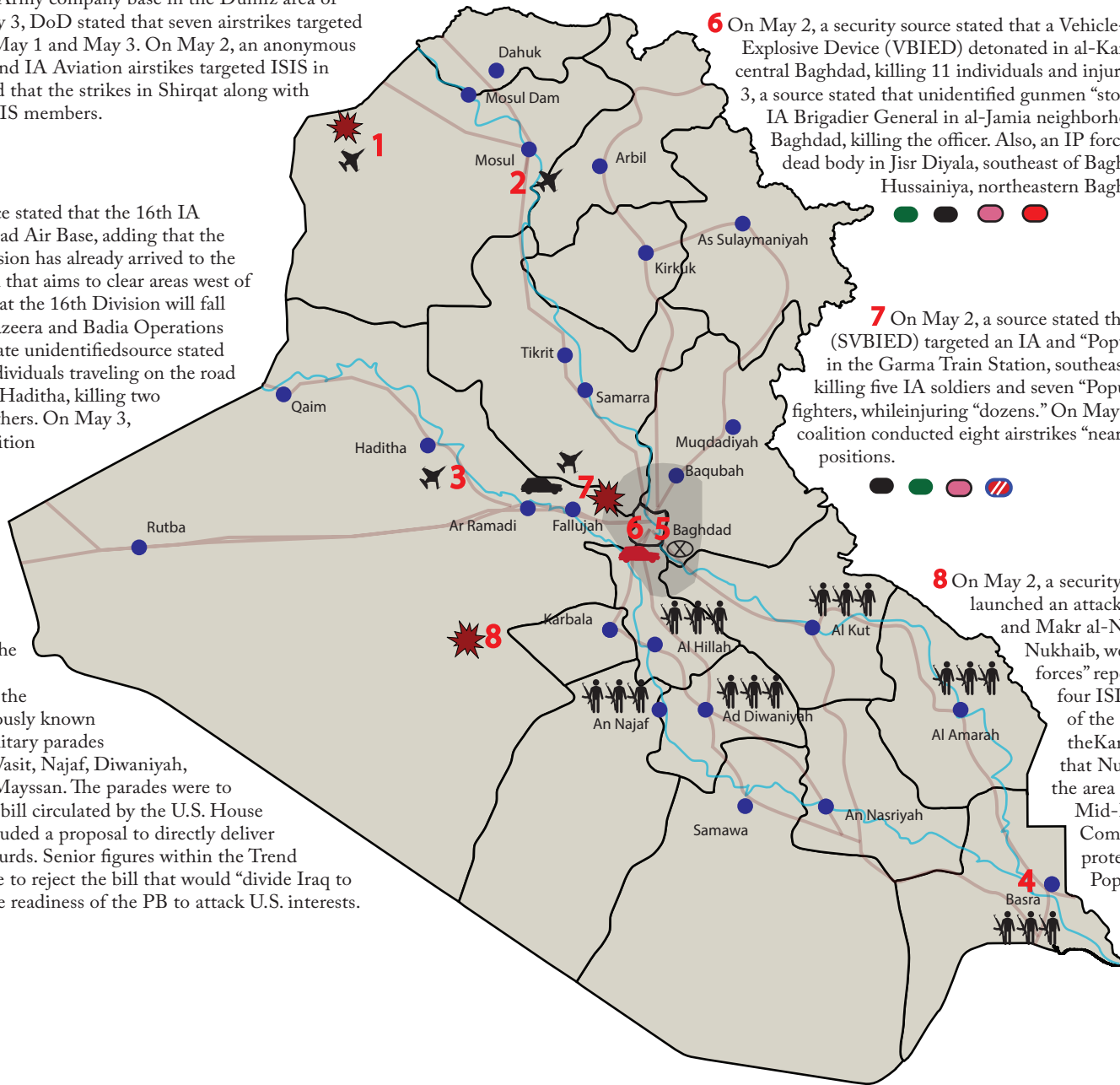
6 On May 2, a security source stated that a Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) detonated in al-Karrada neighborhood, central Baghdad, killing 11 individuals and injuring 42 others. On May 3, a source stated that unidentified gunmen “stormed” the house of an IA Brigadier General in al-Jamia neighborhood in western Baghdad, killing the officer. Also, an IP force found an unidentified dead body in Jisr Diyala, southeast of Baghdad, and another in Hussainiya, northeastern Baghdad.



7 On May 2, a source stated that a Suicide VBIED (SVBIED) targeted an IA and “Popular Mobilization” base in the Garma Train Station, southeast of Garma sub-district, killing five IA soldiers and seven “Popular Mobilization” fighters, while injuring “dozens.” On May 3, DoD stated that coalition conducted eight airstrikes “near Fallujah” targeting ISIS positions.



8 On May 2, a security source stated that ISIS launched an attack on the al-Habariyah and Makr al-Na'am areas near Nukhaib, west of Karbala. “Security forces” repelled the attack killing four ISIS fighters. A member of the security committee of the Karbala government stated that Nukhaib is now within the area of responsibility of the Mid-Euphrates Operations Command and that it is well protected by ISF and Popular Mobilization.



- Airstrikes
- Major Cities
- Major Clash
- Coalition
- Military Parade
- VBIED
- Peshmerga
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- ISIS
- SVBIED
- ISF
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- Unknown Gunmen

Content: Sinan Adnan, Patrick Martin, and Omar al-Dulimi
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The provision in the House Armed Service Committee’s draft defense bill that would permit the U.S. to directly distribute arms to Iraq’s Sunni and Kurdish communities continued to generate negative reactions in Baghdad. The CoR convened to reject the draft bill, although it initially failed to do so due to internal divisions. Representatives of Etihad, a major Iraqi Sunni bloc, along with representatives from Iraqi Kurdistan boycotted the session to express their support for the draft bill as both groups stand to benefit from the provision. This issue comes as the president of Iraqi Kurdistan, Masoud Barzani, visits Washington, where he is expected to discuss the fight against ISIS and Baghdad-Arbil relations. According to a political advisor to the KRG, President Barzani will also discuss Kurdish independence during his visit. Meanwhile, parades carried out by followers of Moqtada al-Sadr shed light on the disposition of the Peace Brigades, previously known as Jaysh al-Mahdi. The group has engaged in a handful of anti-ISIS military operations based on guidance from Sadr who is seeking to distance himself and his group from Iranian-backed militias and portray himself as a nationalist figure. This position has enabled the group to retain its power in the southern provinces at a time when rivals of Sadr such as AAH are mostly deployed forward. The possible deployment of the Iraqi Army’s 16th Division would be of major significance as the first reported deployment of a newly formed U.S.-trained IA unit. The performance of this unit will be an important indicator for the future performance of the IA with U.S. assistance. Such a deployment indicates that the government is moving toward expanding operations in Anbar.