

1 CENTCOM considers additional troops for Mosul. CENTCOM commander GEN. Joseph Votel stated on July 14 that the U.S. military may seek to deploy additional troops, beyond the 560 soldiers announced on July 11, in order to accelerate the anti-ISIS campaign in northern Iraq. He did not disclose a specific number of troops. Votel stated that future requests would be “tailored” to particular phases in the Mosul campaign and that the U.S. would “tie our requests to specific objectives we’re trying to achieve on the ground.”

8 ISF to maintain five fronts against ISIS, including al-Qa'im. Security forces announced on July 17 that the ISF would seek to open and maintain five offensives against ISIS: first, in western Anbar to retake al-Qa'im; second to maintain control in al-Dulab, south of Haditha, and third, north of Ramadi; fourth, to continue operations around Qayyarah and Shirqat; and fifth, to open a front to retake Mosul. Elements from the ISF arrived at Ain al-Asad Airbase, south of Haditha, on July 15, in order to launch operations to retake al-Qa'im, one of the last remaining ISIS strongholds on the Euphrates River Valley. Seizure of al-Qa'im and its environs would sever a main avenue for ISIS between Iraq and Syria.

7 Iraq celebrates Republic Day with military parade in central Baghdad. Iraq celebrated the anniversary of the founding of the republic and the overthrow of the monarchy with a military parade in downtown Baghdad on July 14. The parade, also in celebration of victory in Fallujah, included a review of both the ISF and the Popular Mobilization. Despite its scale, the parade was largely closed off from public view.

6 Sadrists gather in Tahrir Square for controlled “million-man” protest. Thousands of Sadrist followers gathered in Tahrir Square in central Baghdad on July 18 to demand political reforms. Sadrist Trend leader Muqtada al-Sadr spoke, calling for comprehensive reforms and a technocratic government. Sadr left the protest before noon, following which protests withdrew without incident. Similar Sadrist protests occurred across the southern provinces.

2 ISF bridges Tigris River, south of Qayyarah. The War Media Cell announced that engineering battalions on July 15 set up a floating pontoon bridge over the Tigris River between Hajj Ali west of Makhmur on the eastern bank and Ajhala, south of Qayyarah, on the western bank. The bridge allows ISF units to cross and severs ISIS's line of communication between Qayyarah and Shirqat. ISIS targeted the bridge with a boat VBIED on July 16, however airstrikes from U.S. Apache helicopters destroyed the boat.

3 Sadr calls on followers to target U.S. troops. Sadrist Trend leader Muqtada al-Sadr stated on July 17 that the U.S. troops “are a target for us,” without adding further details. Sadr has issued such rhetoric before. The statement came in response to a question on the U.S.'s announcement to deploy 560 additional troops to northern Iraq in order to advance Mosul operations. The U.S. announced on July 11 that the additional troops would be stationed at the recently-recaptured Qayyarah Airfield West to aid with anti-ISIS operations in northern Iraq.

4 ISIS detonates SVBIED at checkpoint north of Baghdad. ISIS detonated a Suicide Vehicle-Borne IED (SVBIED) at an army checkpoint in Tarmiyah, north of Baghdad, on July 13, killing three and injuring ten soldiers. ISIS claimed the attack.

5 ISIS detonates SVBIEDs at checkpoints in northern Baghdad. ISIS detonated an SVBIED at a security checkpoint in Rashidiyah District north of Baghdad on July 13, killing eight and injuring 11 people. The attack marks the second attack in Rashidiyah in two days, following a similar attack on July 12. ISIS also detonated an SVBIED at a security checkpoint in al-Sha'ab District in northeastern Baghdad on July 13, killing two and injuring 13 people. ISIS claimed both attacks.



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The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) seeks to open and maintain operations in western Anbar and Ninewa Provinces in order to eliminate remaining ISIS strongholds in Iraq. The ISF continues operations to retake Qayyarah and Shirqat, reducing key ISIS terrain in northern Iraq, as it sets conditions for eventual operations into Mosul. Units from ISF arrived at Ain al-Asad Airbase, south of Haditha, on July 15 to launch operations to clear ISIS's remaining strongholds on the Euphrates River Valley. These strongholds include al-Qa'im on the Syrian-Iraqi border. The loss of al-Qa'im would sever one of ISIS's main avenues between Iraq and Syria while granting the ISF control over the entire river valley within Iraq. The ISF will also continue to secure terrain south of Haditha and north of Ramadi, where ISIS continues to contest ISF control. The ISF must allocate forces to secure recaptured areas from resurgent ISIS attacks while generating the force to advance. ISIS also retains the ability to launch spectacular attacks against soft and military targets in the vicinity of Baghdad, as witnessed by three suicide attacks at checkpoints on July 13, despite tightened security measures following the July 3 Karrada bombing. ISIS will seek to undermine anti-ISIS operations by diverting resources back to areas that the ISF previously secured, which will require forces to remain in city centers, and by stretching ISF resources thin across the ground.

Sadrist Trend leader Muqtada al-Sadr led thousands of protesters in Tahrir Square on July 15, giving usual demands for technocratic and anti-corruption reforms. The Sadrist protest remained well-ordered and disciplined, in contrast to the disorder of the protests in May and June in Sadr's absence. Sadr issued a call on July 17 for his followers to target U.S. troops, however this rhetoric is typical for Sadr and is unlikely to inspire further action. Sadr's affiliated political party, the Ahrar Bloc, continues to boycott the Council of Representatives, which resumed on July 12. Sadr will continue to use the protest movement in order to affect governmental reforms outside of the political process. He has shown himself capable of doing so, as the mass sit-in in March resulted in an initial push for a technocratic reshuffle. However, Sadr will need to maintain perfect order within the protest movement. Unruliness, such as that on April 30 when protesters stormed the Green Zone, will set back his efforts and cost him his leverage if Iran is forced to intervene again and quell the movement.