



مركز البيان للدراسات والتخطيط  
Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies

# Al Bayan Observatory



February 2024

**A periodical bulletin to monitor Iraqi affairs in international think tanks**

### **About the Center**

Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies is an independent, nonprofit think tank based in Baghdad, Iraq. In addition to other issues, its primary mission is to offer an authentic perspective on public and foreign policy issues related to Iraq in particular and the Middle East region in general. BCPS pursues its vision by conducting autonomous analysis and proposing workable solutions for complex issues that concern the political and academic fields.

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### **Note:**

The opinions expressed in the article do not necessarily reflect the directions adopted by the Center but rather the opinion of its authors.

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**Since 2014**

# AMERICAN THINK TANKS AND MEDIA



# Two Tough Scenarios for U.S.-Iraq Relations

Bilal Wahab



**The Washington Institute for  
Near East Policy**

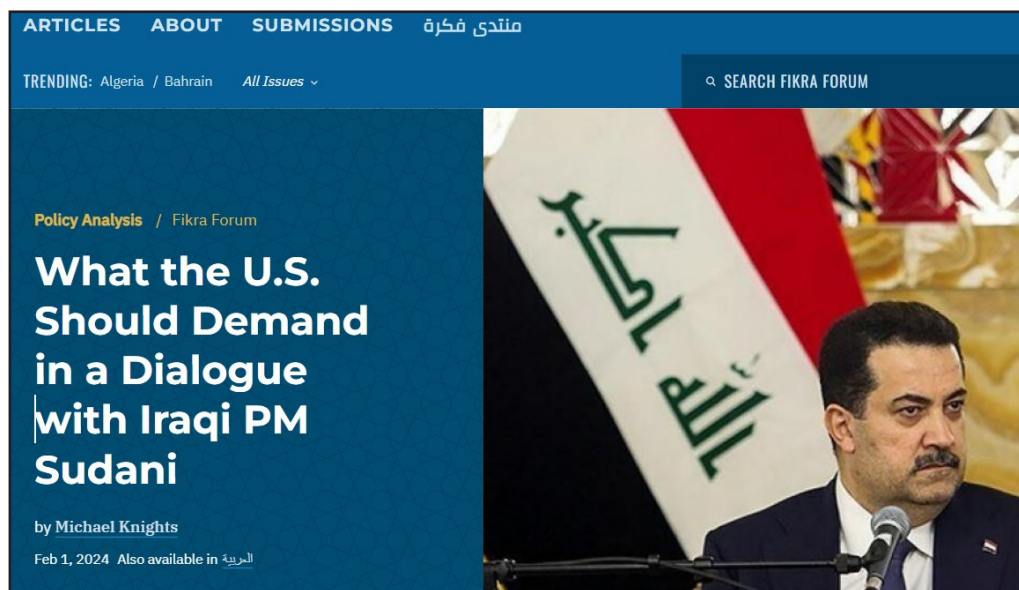
<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/two-tough-scenarios-us-iraq-relations>



Bilal Wahab, the Nathan and Esther K. Wagner Fellow at The Washington Institute, believes that “Washington’s ever-narrowing Iraq policy has left it with unpalatable choices, but muddling through is a better short-term option than allowing the relationship to rupture.” For him, “Iraq is back in the headlines, and once again for all the wrong reasons.” At the end, he concludes that “for years, Washington has pursued ever-narrowing interests in Iraq, and they now boil down to simply supporting the mission against IS. This dilution has rendered the U.S. presence ineffective in the eyes of friends and foes alike. Yet withdrawing would risk even greater instability, so muddling through is the wisest objective in the current context of regional turmoil and U.S. election campaigning... That said, the onus is now on Baghdad to save this relationship, since Washington may decide to walk away rather than invest more effort in such a troublesome partner.”

This text has an Arabic translation and what has been quoted here is selected from the beginning and end of that translation and you can use it.

# What the U.S. Should Demand in a Dialogue with Iraqi PM Sudani



Michael Knights, the Jill and Jay Bernstein Fellow at The Washington Institute, asserts that “With regard to Sudani’s visit to America, we need to see what the Iraqi PM can achieve before confirming this important invitation. Sudani can be a real prime minister of a real sovereign state if he wants to be, but that will require taking risk.” At the end, he writes that “Being concerned about losing one’s job is not enough to justify being feted in the White House. Washington should first let Sudani prove that he is more than the “general manager” for a cabal of terrorists running today’s Iraq. Sudani can be a real prime minister of a real sovereign state if he wants to be, but that will require taking risk. Then maybe he can receive a hero’s welcome in Washington.”

This text has an Arabic translation and what has been quoted here is selected from the beginning and end of that translation and you can use it.

Michael Knights



The Washington Institute for  
Near East Policy

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/what-us-should-demand-dialogue-iraqi-pm-sudani>

# Taking Advantage of a Window of Opportunity in the KRG-Baghdad Gas Standoff

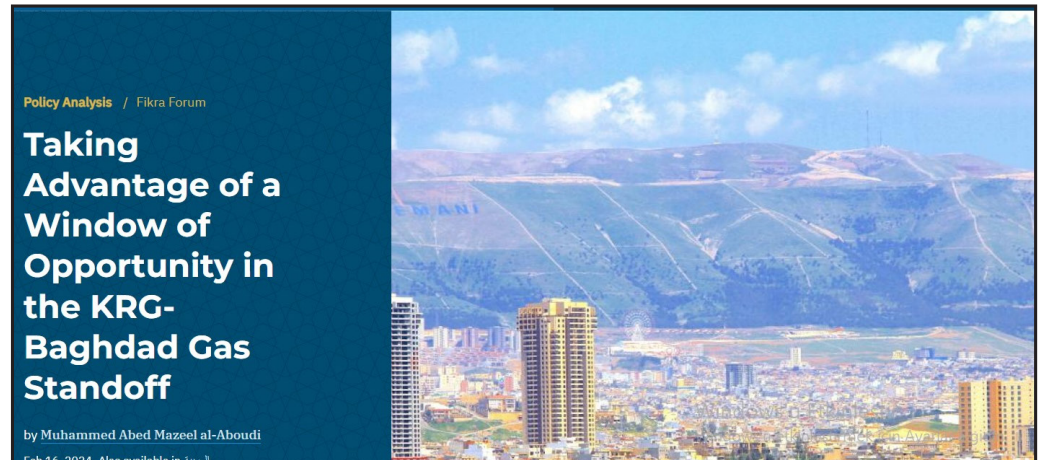
Muhammed Abed Mazeel al-Aboudi

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## The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/taking-advantage-window-opportunity-krb-baghdad-gas-standoff>



Muhammed Abed Mazeel al-Aboudi, an expert at the Petroleum Research and Development Centre (PRDC), believes that “by outlining a strategy in the north of Iraq, a vision regarding reconciliation and a constructive settlement of differences between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Federal Government of Iraq in relation to the management of energy resources in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq can emerge.” Referring to some gas projects in Iraq, the author writes that “Such collaboration should consider the establishment of a federal-backed but independent the Kurdistan Region of Iraq-focused and based national energy company similar to other Iraqi regional or governorate-based oil companies. Such an entity’s activities may not be limited to oil and gas but could also include flare gas monetization and the distribution of the energy, providing an opportunity for a win-win scenario between Baghdad and Erbil.”

This text has an Arabic translation and what has been quoted here is selected from the beginning and end of that translation and you can use it.

# Leaving Iraq May Be Washington's Wisest Choice

## U.S. leverage in the region could be higher without a troop presence in Iraq

### Leaving Iraq May Be Washington's Wisest Choice

U.S. leverage in the region could be higher without a troop presence in Iraq.

By David Schenker, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy



David Schenker, the Taube Senior Fellow at The Washington Institute and director of the Linda and Tony Rubin Program on Arab Politics, believes that “Most forces could likely be withdrawn or moved to the Kurdistan Region without harming U.S. interests—in fact, Washington might have more leverage in Baghdad without a troop presence.” The author concludes that “moving the majority of U.S. troops out of harm’s way in Iraq could put Washington in a better position vis-a-vis the Iranian-dominated Iraqi government—especially if troops remain in Kurdistan, where the United States is still welcome. Unburdened by concerns about force protection, Washington would be freer to engage Iraq about its relationship with Iran, sanctions violations, and endemic corruption. While a stable and sovereign Iraq remains a U.S. priority, Washington will have to rely on other tools of national power—particularly economic leverage—to press its interests in Iraq going forward.”

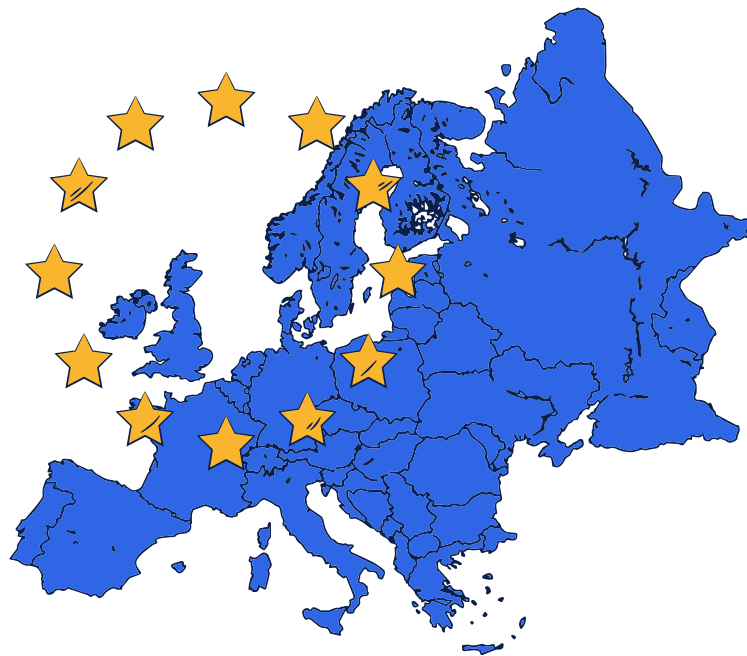
David Schenker



Foreign Policy

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/26/us-iraq-iran-military-militia-attacks-sudani/>

# EUROPEAN THINK TANKS AND MEDIA





# My Home is my Heart: Housing Land and Property (HLP) Legal Resources in the MENA region



**NRC** NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

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## My Home is my Heart: Housing Land and Property (HLP) Legal Resources in the MENA region

Housing, land and property (HLP) Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)



**Norwegian Refugee Council**

<https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/hlp-legal-resources-in-the-mena-region/>

Protection of property rights is central to identification of durable solutions for many refugees and displaced persons throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Hundreds of thousands of displaced people have had homes damaged or destroyed in conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Palestine, including in the Gaza Strip. Many others have lost homes in natural disasters such as in earthquakes in north-East Syria, floods in Libya, or in the port blast in Beirut. Protection of property rights can prevent displacement in the first place. Displaced people have the right of return to their homes, including full restitution of property rights and compensation for destroyed property. It is critical that their rights are safeguarded whilst in displacement. All persons, regardless of whether they are living at home, in displacement camps or in rental properties in host countries, have the right to adequate housing, including safe, secure and accessible housing and protection from arbitrary evictions.

# IRANIAN THINK TANKS AND AND MEDIA



# The prospect of confrontation between America and Iraqi resistance groups



Ali Mousawi Khalkhali, believes that “as long as the Gaza crisis, the threat of the US against the resistance movements in the region and also the pressure on Iran as the main base of the resistance axis continues, in the shadow of these tensions, the confrontation between the US and the resistance groups will continue. It will continue in Iraq.” He also pointed out that “Iraq does not want to be an arena for settling accounts with different powers in the region, because their political, economic and security interests require it.” He concluded “these developments are definitely affected by the Gaza issue. As the resistance groups weaken, especially the resistance groups in Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon, the resistance currents in Iraq and Yemen also weaken, therefore they are trying not to weaken the resistance current in the region in general, because they know that if the axis of Palestinian resistance weakens will be to their detriment as well.”

Ali Mousawi Khalkhali



**Strategic Council for Foreign Relations**

<https://tinyurl.com/22e5exkh>

# An analysis of the possible withdrawal of US military forces from Iraq

Abbas Khomeyari



**Strategic Council for Foreign Relations**

<https://tinyurl.com/289o7oyv>



Abbas Khomeyari, Iranian expert on regional issues, believes that “there is a lot of political and field pressure for the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq, and this issue has made it more difficult for the country’s military forces to remain in Iraq on the eve of the US presidential elections.” For him, “targeting American military bases in Iraq is an important issue for the American government, and from this point of view, they do not want to suffer losses on the eve of the presidential elections, so they must somehow end this situation through negotiations.” He concludes that “just as the Americans could not resist in Yemen and left this country, they will face the same situation in Iraq, especially because the United States does not want to show itself in the vulnerable region on the eve of the presidential elections. In general, the situation in Iraq is serious, difficult and complicated.”

# Study of the hegemonic role of US humanitarian organizations in Iraq with emphasis on Internet media

Bahar Mehri, Ahmad Fatehi



**Journal of Politics and  
International Relations**

<https://tinyurl.com/26uml5ws>

Despite the fact that the actions of NGO organizations are apparently an impartial, some of them seem to have the function of promoting ideology. In the present study, American humanitarian organizations in Iraq were selected as a research field and then, using Gramsci's hegemony theory, it was shown how these organizations appear in the role of American ideology and as organic intellectuals working in the civil society space to reproduce the legitimacy of the domination group. In this study, using documentary research and quality content analysis method, the "About Us" section of the two US sites of the US International Development Agency and the Amideast Nonprofit Organization, which provide services to Iraqi audiences were studied. Then it was shown that the United States deals with hegemony and cultural domination in the Iraqi community by focusing on concepts such as the strengthening of civil society, supporting peace, cultural excellence, scientific promotion and these issues.

# TURKISH THINK TANKS AND MEDIA



# How should security diplomacy between Türkiye and Iraq be read?



**Rudaw**

<https://www.rudaw.net/turkish/opinion/150220241>

Bilgay Duman believes that “KDP, which already holds power in Erbil and Duhok, has severely restricted the PKK’s field of action. Due to the measures taken by the KDP, the PKK also organizes attacks against the forces affiliated with the KDP from time to time. An agreement and a tripartite mechanism on the Ankara-Baghdad-Erbil line will be very effective in the fight against terrorism.” At the end, he concludes that “it seems that Baghdad has taken important steps against the PKK. At this point, it seems that the PUK, which relies on Baghdad in its competition with the KDP, has begun to be cornered due to the rapprochement in the Ankara-Baghdad-Erbil triangle. Because Turkey’s openly harsh attitude towards the PUK-PKK cooperation in Sulaymaniyah is a challenging process for the PUK in this regard. Based on this, PUK will either change its attitude or have to choose to become isolated.”

**Bilgay Duman**

# Election Decision of the Federal Supreme Court of Iraq: A new era for Turkmens in the politics of the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government

Bilgay Duman



RUDAW

<https://www.sabah.com.tr/yazarlar/perspektif/canacun/2024/01/27/terorle-mucadelenin-irak-ayagi>



Bilgay Duman narrates that “at the end of its 12th session on February 21, 2024, the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court (IFYM) decided that the number of seats in the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) parliament should be 100. As a justification for this, he stated that the correction/addition made by the KRG to the KRG election law in 2013 was not legal.” He concludes that “at this point, it is possible that there will be a rapprochement between Turkmen political organizations and Kurdish parties after this decision. At this point, cooperation and alliance efforts with Kurdish groups in the KRG elections may soften the competition between Kurds and Turkmens that has been going on for years. In case of an alliance or cooperation between Turkmens and Kurds within the KRG, it may be beneficial to soften the relations between Turkmens and Kurds not only in the KRG but also in other provinces, and even create cooperation.”



# Sulaymaniyah Issue

☰ **Milliyet**
Son Dakika Gündem Yazarlar Ekonomi Dünya Resmi İlanlar
uzman

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## Süleymaniye Meselesi

28 Şubat 2024

**Bilgay Duman** - 1783'te Osmanlı Devleti'nin Bağdat Valisi Süleyman Paşa'nın Baban ailesinden İbrahim Bey'i mir-i miranlıkla mutasarrıf olarak tayin etmesinin ardından yeni bir şehir kuran İbrahim Bey'in Süleyman Paşa adına izafetle Süleymaniye (Sancağı) adını verdiği ve bugün de bu isimle anılan Irak'ın federal yapısı içerisinde Irak Kürdistan Bölgesel Yönetimi (IKBY) kontrolünde olan vilayet, bugün Türkiye'nin tehdit algılamalarının en üst noktasında yer alıyor. Halbuki Osmanlı'nın en önemli sancaklarından biri haline gelen ve

**Bilgay Duman**



MILLİYET

<https://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/dusunenlerin-dusuncesi/suleymaniyeme-selesi-7085257>

Bilgay Duman writes that “while the presence of the PKK in Turkey, whose main goal is to divide Turkey, has been limited considerably thanks to the effective fight against terrorism, significant progress has been made with the Claw Operations carried out in the north of Iraq since 2021.” He concludes that “the Sulaymaniyah issue has been mentioned at the highest level, from Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and an intense security diplomacy has been carried out with Iraq. At this point, it is possible to say that Turkey still prefers negotiation and persuasion. The PKK’s control and influence in Sulaymaniyah and its surroundings seems to have reached a level beyond Turkey’s tolerance limits. It seems that if both Iraq, KRG and PUK do not take any precautions and change their attitude on this issue, new developments may occur centered in Sulaymaniyah.”

# Will the USA leave Iraq?

Bilgay Duman, Can Acun



ANADOLU AGENCY

<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz/karsit-gorusler-abd-iraktan-cikar-mi/3128022>

AA GÜNDEM DÜNYA EKONOMİ SPOR ANALİZ KÜLTÜR INFOGRAFIK **Canlı** PODCAST VIDEO

ANALİZ

## KARŞIT GÖRÜŞLER- ABD Irak'tan çıkar mı?

SETA Dış Politika Araştırmacısı Can Acun ve ORSAM Irak Çalışmaları Koordinatörü Dr. Bilgay Duman, son dönemde tartışılan ABD'nin Irak'tan çıkıp çıkmayacağı konusunu AA Analiz için kaleme aldı.

Bilgay Duman, Can Acun | 05.02.2024 - Güncelleme : 05.02.2024

Can Acun and Bilgay Duman believe that “The US withdrawal from Iraq remains a strong possibility.” They add that “However, the US’s Iraq policy is not limited to regional dynamics. Russia and China’s Middle East policies are also important global factors affecting this decision. Russia has become an important actor in the region, especially with its increasing influence in Syria. The US stay in Iraq is critical to balance Russia’s influence in the region and maintain regional balances.” They conclude that “the US decision not to withdraw from Iraq is not only based on factors such as regional security, counter-terrorism, energy security and Iran’s nuclear program, but also takes into account the influence of global actors such as Russia and China in the region. The US presence in Iraq should be treated not only as a military issue but also as a multifaceted political move that shapes the global balance of power”.

# Iran, PUK and PKK: Future of strategic triangle

## Iran, PUK and PKK: Future of strategic triangle

BY ÇAĞATAY BALCI | FEB 20, 2024 - 12:05 AM GMT+3 |



According to Çağatay Balcı “Türkiye urges Iran to dismantle the strategic triangle straining bilateral ties to prevent potential losses, emphasizing cooperation in the fight against terrorism.” He believes that “The Iran-PUK-PKK triangle has been formed based on pragmatic motivations rather than ideological or political ones.” He concludes that “Türkiye’s counterterrorism and targeted operations against the PKK and PKK/YPG in Iraq and Syria have led to a stalemate for the PKK in these regions. As a result, the PKK component in the Iran-PUK-PKK triangle has been significantly weakened. Additionally, Türkiye’s recent pressure and sanctions on Sulaymaniyah have had a serious impact on the PUK. Türkiye is demanding that the PKK’s presence and activities in Sulaymaniyah be limited. The PUK is now faced with a difficult decision. It must choose between remaining loyal to the strategic triangle to which it belongs or improving its relations with Türkiye. This complexity is affecting the PUK-PKK axis of the triangle.”

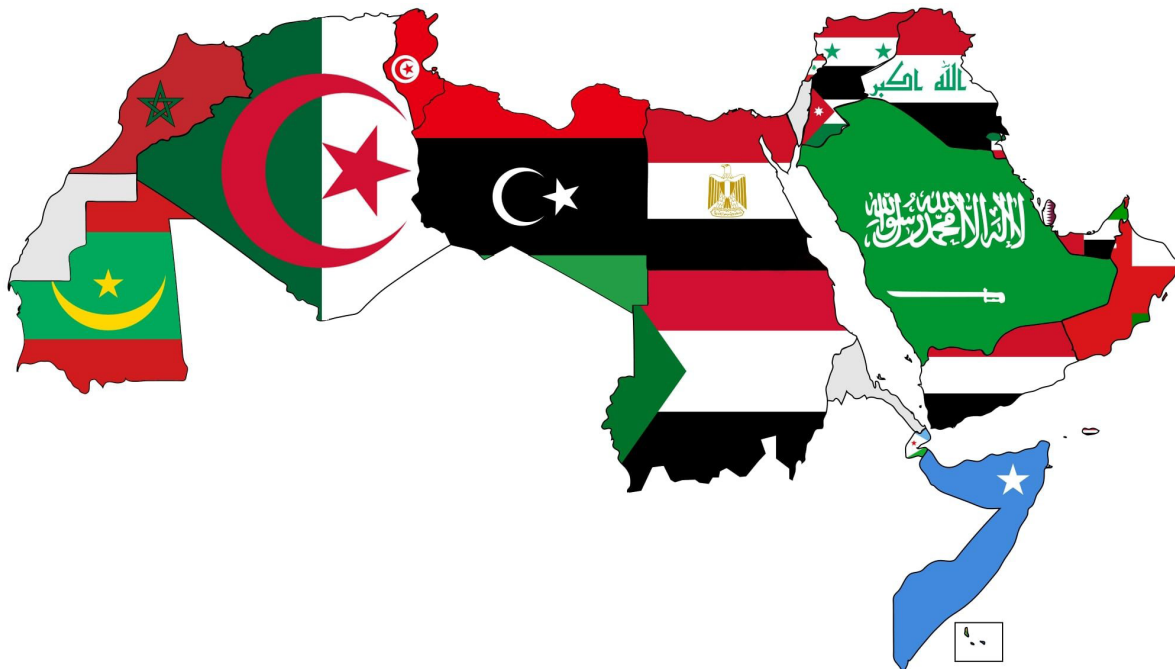
ÇAĞATAY BALCI

**DAILY SABAH**

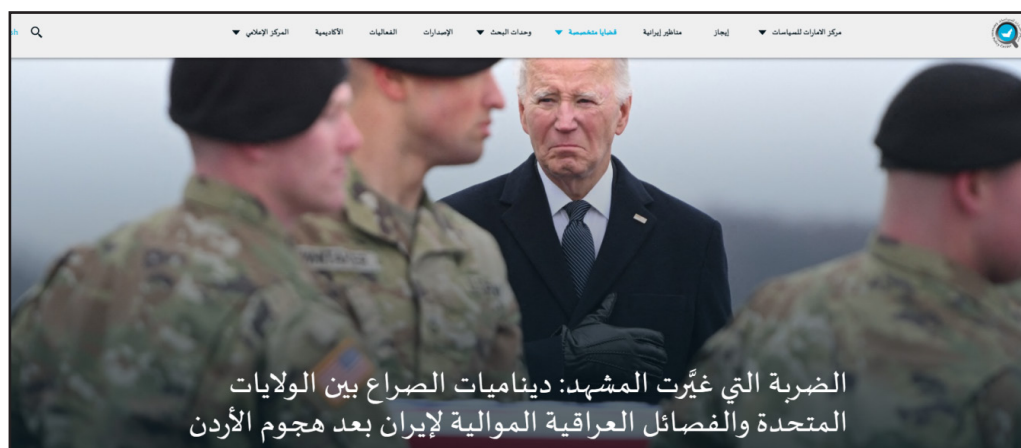
**Sabah Daily**

<https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/iran-puk-and-pkk-future-of-strategic-triangle>

## ARAB THINK TANKS



# Aftermath of the Jordan Attack: Dynamics of the Conflict Between US and Pro-Iran Iraqi Factions



The attack by Iraqi Kata'ib Hezbollah on Tower 22 in northeastern Jordan in January infuriated the United States, raised Iran's concerns, and increased the likelihood that the two sides might slide into an unwanted confrontation.

Tehran rushed to contain the repercussions of the attack by dispatching the commander of the Quds Force, Esmail Qaani, to Baghdad to ask armed factions to stop military attacks against the US.

Washington adopted an expanded retaliation against Iraqi factions based on the strategy of obstruction or disruption, including sporadic but intensive and open strikes against commands and infrastructure of armed factions, Iraqi armed factions were dealt a strong blow as it failed to enlist enough support in parliament to push for a resolution that commits the Iraqi government to expel US troops.

The undeclared truce between Iraqi factions and the US will likely continue while these factions will continue their attacks on Syria against Israeli targets to "help Gaza."

Iraq Studies Unit



**Emirates Policy Center**

<https://epc.ae/en/details/featured/dynamics-of-the-conflict-between-the-us-and-pro-iran-iraqi-factions-after-the-jordan-attack>

# Provincial Council Elections in Iraq: Central Clients Vs. Local

Haidar Saeed, Harith Hassan



ARAB CENTER FOR RESEARCH  
AND POLICY STUDIES

<https://www.dohainstitute.org/ar/ResearchAndStudies/Pages/provincial-council-elections-in-iraq-centralized-vs-localized-clientelism.aspx>



The researchers address the objectivity of the recent provincial council elections that Iraq witnessed at the end of 2023, from a multiple angle, the first of which is the voting rates, celebration of participation and boycott, and secondly, the borders of local forces and the emergence of governors as a key player in the elections, as well as in the third paragraph, they discuss customerism and how it affected the course of the elections. On the other hand, they deal with mixed provinces, how the events took place in them and how they will be affected after the elections. In light of the interaction of these factors, there will be features of a new political system in the process of formation and transformation constantly.