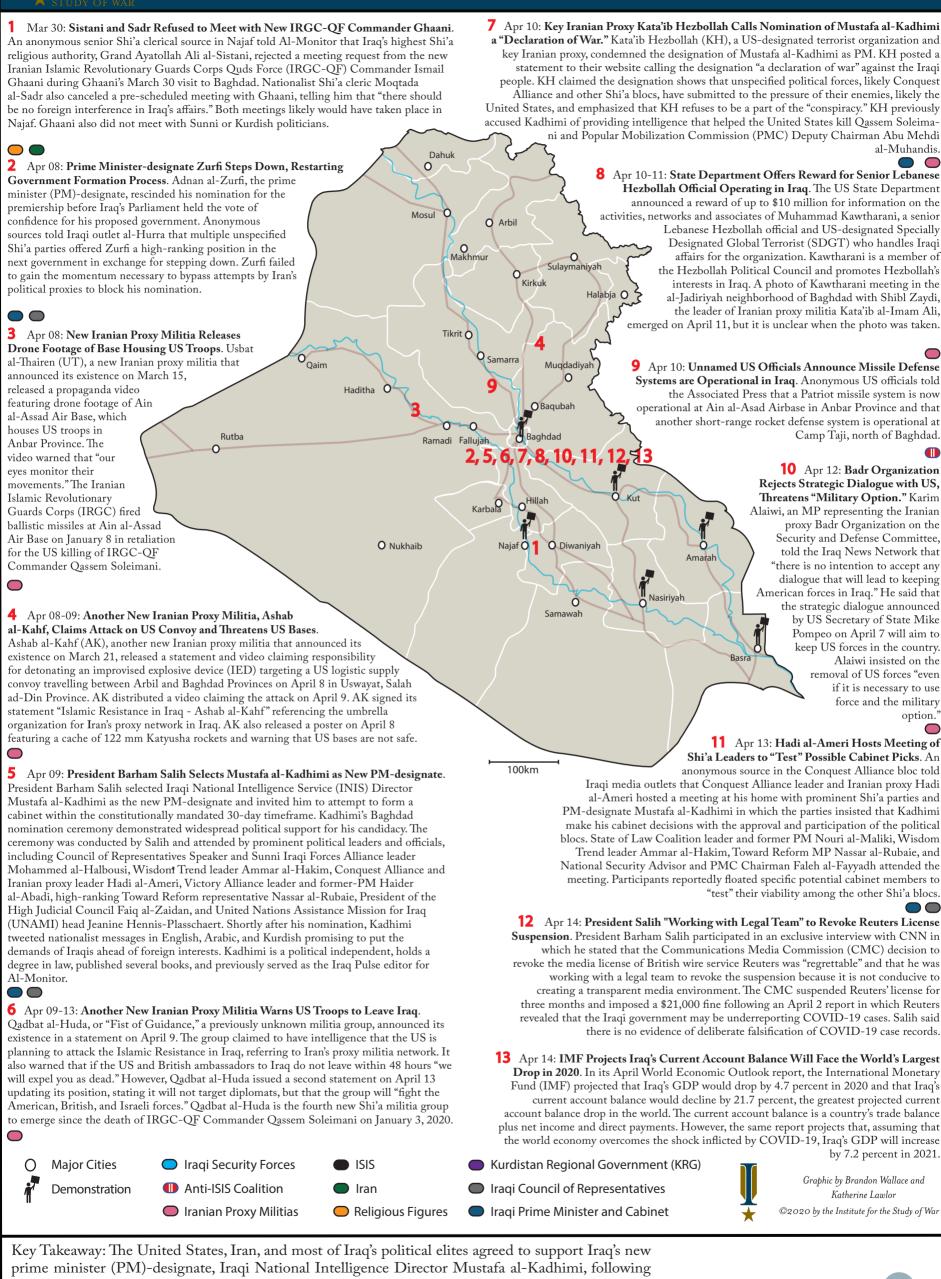


Iraq Situation Report: April 8-14, 2020



prime minister (PM)-designate, Iraqi National Intelligence Director Mustafa al-Kadhimi, following Iran's successful political proxy campaign to sink the PM-designation of Adnan al-Zurfi. Most of Iran's political and militia proxies fell in line behind Kadhimi but conditioned their support on the rapid expulsion of US forces from Iraq. However, key proxy militia Kata'ib Hezbollah maintains its firm anti-Kadhimi stance and may escalate to violence if the government formation process does not favor Iran's preferred outcomes, including key cabinet appointments and 2020 budget allotments. Iran's proxies are conducting an information operation consisting of rhetorical threats to shape Kadhimi's proposed cabinet and to increase Iraqi political support for ending the US force presence ahead of a US-Iraq strategic dialogue slated for June. Meanwhile, Iran's proxy militias created a fourth new Shi'a militia group to increase rhetorical and kinetic pressure on US forces.

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