The Tansiqiya was prodded by a pan-Shia forum and Lebanese Hezbollah to grudgingly paper over cracks in muqawama solidarity.

On July 26, President Joe Biden announced that U.S. combat troops will end their mission in Iraq by the end of December 2021. It was immediately clear that the muqawama (self-styled resistance) was divided into two camps. The first camp led by the Badr organization was quick to celebrate the agreement. The Fateh political alliance, dominated by Badr but also including Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), issued a statement on July 27 that welcomed the agreement and hailed it as a “national achievement”. The statement considered the bilateral agreement a “positive step towards realizing full national sovereignty” (Figure 1).
result of Iraq-U.S. talks. On July 23, even before the talks began, Abu Ali al-Askari, a senior Kataib Hezbollah (KH) leader predicted the U.S.-Iraq talks would be “theatrical” and a “deception” (Figure 2).

On July 28, Abu Ala al-Walai, the secretary general of Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada (KSS) branded the dialogue ‘caricature-like’ and promised to continue attacking the coalition forces in Iraq (Figure 3).

Yet when the Iraqi Resistance Coordination Committee (al-Haya al-Tansiqiya lil-Muqawama al-Iraqiya, or Tansiqiya for short) convened on July 28, the tone slightly changed. The Tansiqiya’s statement adopted an ambiguous language and included an article which could be interpreted as a ‘wait and see’ strategy, rather than immediate rejection or a decision to escalate. Article six read: “the muqawama will retain its full readiness until the real withdrawal happens and will take action...
the withdrawal turned out to be not real” (Figure 4).

So, what happened in these two days that resulted bringing the stance of the two camps closer together? According to the muqawama, one factor was intra-Shiite dialogue held under the Shia Coordination Framework (al-Etar al-Tansiqi al-Shia), which is a talking shop of around nine majority-Shia political parties (including Badr and AAH) that has been meeting a couple of times each month since the October 2019 protests began in Iraq.

On July 28, AAH leader Qais al-Khazali told al-Ahd TV:

“I need to mention an important development that happened during this period, the period of the dialogue... between the Iraqi government and U.S.... [This] development is the good understanding and coordination that took place between the muqawama coordination committee [i.e., the al-Haya al-Tansiqiya lil-Muqawama al-Iraqiya] and the Shia coordination framework [i.e., al-Etar al-Tansiqi al-Shia]... Brothers in the coordination framework made efforts that we believe to be sincere and real, to pressure the prime minister to adopt the real demands. These brothers asked us for a truce to provide the suitable circumstances to help the PM’s visit successful...and out of respect to the brothers in the coordination framework, the operations were halted for a few days... we believe the development related to the relationship between the [muqawama] coordination committee and the [Shia] coordination framework is a positive and important development...”.

KH’s July 29 statement also mentioned the framework, offering its “thanks and appreciation to the brothers in the coordinating framework for their great confidence in the Iraqi muqawama fasail [armed factions], and for bearing the burdens in order to provide everything that is good for Iraq and its people” (Figure 5). The last article of KH’s statement read: “we appreciated the efforts made by the sincere brothers who were members of the negotiating delegation, who performed their duty, but didn’t achieve what was expected”.

The AAH and KH statements serve a number of purposes. First, they both showed respect to Qasim al-Araji, the Iraqi National Security Advisor and a Badr member, who went ahead of Kadhimi to...
Washington to shape wording on the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces.

Second, the Shia Coordination Framework appears to have tried to paper over the cracks in _muqawama_ position on the Washington agreement. The softening of language coincided with a visit to Baghdad by Lebanese Hezbollah senior representative Muhammad al-Kawtharani, probably underlining the concern felt by Iran and Lebanese Hezbollah at the wide initial gap in the positions taken by the politically-focused Fateh alliance on one side and the more extreme _muqawama fasail_ on the other.

The schism was not so easy to fix, however, and AAH began to pick away at the agreement very quickly. On July 30, the AAH’s facade group, Ashab al-Kahf (AK), issued a statement that fiercely attacked those who “publicly claim to be [part of] the _muqawama_ but in private meet with the Americans...” (Figure 6). This would appear to be a swipe at Badr figures like Hadi al-Ameri and Qasim al-Araji, who AAH’s Qais al-Khazali hopes to surpass as the leading power within the Fateh alliance in the coming elections.

These Badr leaders may be tempted to adopt more extreme positions as elections loom and AAH tries to "out-_muqawama_" them. It will also be interesting to see whether the _fasail_ closest to Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps – such as KH, Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, and KSS – can maintain message discipline and a disappointed but basically supportive tone. 🌟
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