

Discordance in the Iran Threat Network in Iraq: Militia Competition and Rivalry

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Articles & Testimony

Hardline groups are struggling to satisfy demands for action against American forces while simultaneously de-escalating U.S.-Iran tensions and evolving their non-kinetic wings.

The following is an excerpt from the authors' feature article in the October issue of West Point's CTC Sentinel. To read the full article, download the PDF above or [visit the CTC website \(https://ctc.usma.edu/discordance-in-the-iran-threat-network-in-iraq-militia-competition-and-rivalry/\)](https://ctc.usma.edu/discordance-in-the-iran-threat-network-in-iraq-militia-competition-and-rivalry/).

Iran-backed militias have been scrambling to recover after the loss of their patriarchs Qassem Soleimani and Abu

Mahdi al-Muhandis. Attempts to preserve a top-down, Iran-directed system of command have met resistance, both from independent-minded upstarts like Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq and the fragmenting powerbases within Kata'ib Hezbollah. To track these trends in detail and to an evidentiary level, the [Militia Spotlight](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight>) project was stood up at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy in February 2021. This article lays out the project's first eight months of findings, drawn from an open-source intelligence effort that fuses intense scrutiny of militia messaging applications with in-depth interviews of relevant officials. The key finding is that while the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force still runs Iran's covert operations inside Iraq, they face growing difficulties in controlling local militant cells... ❖

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