

Mr. Al-Zaidi Goes to Washington

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Despite significant progress, Iraq still has a long way to go to meet the Trump administration's expectations for reining in Iranian influence.

President [Donald Trump \(https://nationalinterest.org/tags/donald-trump\)](https://nationalinterest.org/tags/donald-trump) is bullish on [Iraq \(https://nationalinterest.org/tags/iraq\)](https://nationalinterest.org/tags/iraq) and its new prime minister, [Ali al-Zaidi \(https://nationalinterest.org/tags/ali-al-zaidi\)](https://nationalinterest.org/tags/ali-al-zaidi), whom Trump will host for an Oval Office meeting [this week \(https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/7/13/iraqi-pm-heads-to-us-seeking-balance-between-security-and-economy\)](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/7/13/iraqi-pm-heads-to-us-seeking-balance-between-security-and-economy). Trump has declared that al-Zaidi's appointment represents "the beginning of a tremendous new chapter between our nations." Since the 2003 [US-led invasion \(https://nationalinterest.org/tags/iraq-war\)](https://nationalinterest.org/tags/iraq-war) that toppled [Saddam Hussein \(https://nationalinterest.org/tags/saddam-hussein\)](https://nationalinterest.org/tags/saddam-hussein)'s dictatorship, Washington and Baghdad have had a complicated relationship. Al-Zaidi's first few weeks have shown promise. Still, undue [Iranian \(https://nationalinterest.org/tags/iran\)](https://nationalinterest.org/tags/iran) influence in Iraq remains an impediment to improved US-Iraqi ties—one that will be difficult for the new prime minister to overcome. The Trump administration's [top priority \(https://www.nytimes.com/2026/06/25/world/middleeast/iraq-militias-state-control.html\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2026/06/25/world/middleeast/iraq-militias-state-control.html) is the disarmament and disbandment of the grouping of Iranian-backed militias known as the [Popular Mobilization Forces \(https://nationalinterest.org/tags/popular-mobilization-forces-pmf\)](https://nationalinterest.org/tags/popular-mobilization-forces-pmf) (PMF). These US-designated terrorist organizations—including [Kataib Hezbollah \(https://nationalinterest.org/tags/kataib-hezbollah\)](https://nationalinterest.org/tags/kataib-hezbollah), Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, Asaib Ahl al-Haq, and a few others—are funded by the Iraqi government but answerable to Tehran...

[Read the full article on the National Interest website. \(https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/mr-al-zaidi-goes-to-washington\)](https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/mr-al-zaidi-goes-to-washington) ❖

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