

One Battle, But 'Six Campaigns'

by [James Jeffrey \(/experts/james-jeffrey\)](/experts/james-jeffrey)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[James Jeffrey \(/experts/james-jeffrey\)](/experts/james-jeffrey)

Ambassador is a former U.S. special representative for Syria engagement and former U.S. ambassador to Turkey and Iraq; from 2013-2018 he was the Philip Solondz Distinguished Fellow at The Washington Institute. He currently chairs the Wilson Center's Middle East Program.



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An updated look at the immediate military issues and longer-term 'day after' concerns that the Trump administration should focus on as the campaign to retake Mosul continues.

The first operational campaign -- liberating the city -- has continued for three months, and Iraqi forces have cleared eastern Mosul and are just beginning the decisive assault on western Mosul, which is a more densely populated and fortified area, home to many ISIS sympathizers. Nevertheless, after taking high losses and displaying initial problems with urban warfare, the Iraqi security forces have performed increasingly well, integrating tanks and supporting fire to attack the city on multiple axes. Moving deliberately has kept both military and civilian casualties manageable, and it has also aided the delivery of relief to the civilian population. Relations between the various Iraqi forces involved, while at times rocky, have not broken down; and nimble diplomacy has allayed fears that the coalition would crack, especially with the presence of Turkish troops near Mosul. ISIS is now besieged inside western Mosul with no hope of relief. Its defeat can now be measured in weeks or a few months...

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