

Iraq at a Crossroads: Options for U.S. Policy

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Washington needs to recognize that the Iraq situation is a full-blown crisis requiring immediate action on several levels, even if politically risky.

The following is an excerpt from Ambassador Jeffrey's prepared remarks; download the PDF to read the full testimony, or [watch video of the hearing \(http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/iraq-at-a-crossroads-options-for-us-policy-07-22-14\)](http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/iraq-at-a-crossroads-options-for-us-policy-07-22-14).

The establishment of the Islamic State (IS) by the al-Qaeda in Iraq offshoot group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) changes the geostrategy of the entire Middle East, represents a dramatic setback to U.S. policy and interests, and requires an immediate response from Washington. The creation of an extremist quasi-state, analogous to Afghanistan under the Taliban, carries the risk of further escalation including a regional Sunni-Shia conflict, and an irreparable loss in U.S. influence. But the rise of ISIL first in Syria and now in Iraq reflects in part the nefarious effort by Iran to exploit sectarian divides to achieve regional hegemony. The U.S. government must counter both the IS threat and Iran's quest for domination, bearing in mind that Iran is not our ally in the campaign against al-Qaeda terror. Above all, the U.S. must recognize that we are in a full blown crisis that requires action, even if politically risky... ❖

Senate Foreign Relations Committee

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