After the “Caliphate”
The Metrics of Daesh and the Ongoing Challenge of Extremism
Part One: Daesh, Syria and Iraq

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Photo: ARIS MESSINIS/AFP/Getty Images
Introduction

The Burke Chair at CSIS is issuing the first report in a three-part survey of metrics that address the fighting in Iraq and Syria, the ongoing challenge of extremism. This series is titled *After the “Caliphate”: The Metrics of Daesh and the Ongoing Challenge of Extremism*. The two additional parts that follow will include

- *Part Two - The Changing Threat* -- will survey the broader trends in Islam, and in Islamic extremism. It then focuses on these trends in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and the scale of the continuing threat they pose to the stability of the MENA region.

- *Part Three -- Key Factors that Seem Likely to Lead to Continuing Violent Extremism, and Conflicts in the MENA Region* -- will explore metrics that portray the broader causes of instability and possible future conflict in the region.

**The Metrics of Daesh and the Ongoing Challenge of Extremism**

This first part of the survey contains some 60 different metrics that cover the trends in the war on Daesh in Syria and Iraq, the outcome of the fighting, and the remaining threat.

These metrics show that the Assad regime’s state terrorism has caused more casualties than the fight against Daesh, and that the breakup of the Daesh “state” left major areas where Daesh and other extremist fighters are still present. Other metrics show that Iraq was dependent on U.S. air power, and train and assist effort in defeating Daesh, and that Iraq will need substantial U.S. support in creating forces that can ensure that Daesh or some similar threat does not reemerge.

The final metrics in Part One show that both Syria and Iraq still have critical weaknesses in terms of governance, corruption, economic development, and internal divisions that make them the equivalent of “failed states.” While these challenges are much greater in the case of Syria – which remains deeply divided and involved in a civil war, both nations must cope with rebuilding their economies, creating more effective political structures, and improving their levels of Governance. Syria and Iraq must also deal with ethnic and sectarian tensions that can lead to renewed civil conflict, and deal with Iran’s efforts to win added influence, the impact of Russian presence in Syria, and tensions with Turkey.

Taken as a whole, *these metrics warn that breaking up Daesh’s attempt to create a state or pseudo state – what Daesh called a “caliphate” – has not defeated Daesh, or put an end to the much broader patterns of extremism, terrorism, and instability in Syria and Iran*. They also warn that the U.S. must look beyond Daesh and Iran, and develop a strategy, plans, programs, and budgets that address all of these issues in spite of the breakup of Daesh’s attempt to form a state.
The Limits and Strengths of These Metrics

Such an analysis does need to be approached with the understanding that metrics can only provide broad insights into the issues they portray. They must be combined with explanatory narratives for their full meaning to be clear. Moreover, far too many of the data upon which available metrics are based are uncertain or unclear -- even if such data come from official sources. Any effort to use such metrics to do more than illustrate broad trends means that their sources -- and the uncertainties for the data in each metric -- must be examined in detail.

Even so, the metrics chosen do seem to provide an accurate picture of many of the key trends and issues that will shape the probable aftermath of the breakup of the Daesh “caliphate” or pseudo-state, and the level of stability in the Syria and Iraq in the coming years.

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Putting the War on Daesh’s Pseudo-State or “Caliphate” in Perspective
The War on Daesh’s Pseudo-State or “Caliphate”

The metrics in this section. Iraqi national military forces, Arab and Kurdish forces in Syria, and the U.S.-led coalition that supported them with airpower and train and assist ground forces, scored a major victory in breaking up Daesh’s control of large amounts of territory in Iraq and Syria, and create some form of state. Nevertheless, they also show that Daesh, other extremist groups, Iran, and other causes of instability and conflict remain major threats.

They show the sheer scale of Daesh’s early gains, and then the scale of the fighting necessary to reverse them. Daesh’s early gains occurred in spite of the seeming defeat of Al Qaida and other Sunni extremist forces in 2008-2010, and the fact Daesh used limited and poorly armed forces that forced the sudden collapse of far larger regular military, paramilitary, and police forces that have been divided, demoralized, and corrupted by Iraqi politics and internal divisions.

The metrics that follow warn that defeating Daesh’s attempt to create a state, and it’s capability to conduct a major insurgency, does not mean that it has been defeated as a threat. They show that it has been an active terrorist threat outside its so-called “caliphate,” and may still have some 20,000-30,000 fighters. One key problem in these metrics is the lack of any credible data on the relative balance of forces at any given time, and the progress in the recovery of Iraqi forces after their initial defeats. It is clear from the metrics that are available, however, that Coalition airpower played a critical role in both defeating Daesh forces and in supporting Iraqi and Arab/Kurdish ground forces.

Quarterly reporting by the U.S. Lead Inspector General (LIG) in early 2019 also makes it clear that the LIG estimated that a serious Daesh threat remained in the form of dispersed fighters, and that both Iraq government forces and the Arab/Kurdish forces in Eastern Syria would remain dependent on U.S. air and train/assist support in spite of the defeat of the Daesh “state.”*

Other metrics then display the scale of the separate battles between the Assad regime and its supporters, and various Arab rebel factions. As the later casualty data show, this fighting was more intense in many ways than the fight with Daesh, and almost certainly involved far more civilian casualties. It is also important to note that while the fighting against the Daesh “state” is over, a major Arab rebel enclave remained in Idlib in mid-April 2019, and there is no peace settlement of any kind in Syria.

Here, it is important to note that Part Two of this survey shows the seriousness of the problems in Syria and Iraq’s governance, levels of corruption, demographics and economics in far more detail by comparing them to other countries in region and more successful regimes and states.

Victory Can be Relative: The Defeat of Al Qaeda in 2006-2008

Peak of Daesh Control and Other Zones of Control in January 2015

Daesh Losses 1-2015 to 1.2018

Source: IHS Conflict Monitor

DoD, HIS Janes and BBC,
How Daesh-Controlled Areas Shrunk: 2015-2019

Airstrikes Supporting Defense and Key Land Offensives

The recapture of Iraq's second city of Mosul in July 2017 was seen as a major breakthrough for the coalition, but the 10-month battle left thousands of civilians dead and saw more than 800,000 others forced to flee their homes in the city.

In October 2017, the Syrian city of Raqqa, so-called capital of the self-styled 'caliphate', was re-taken by the SDF with coalition air support, ending three years of rule by IS.

The following month, the Syrian army regained full control of the eastern city of Deir al-Zour, and Iraqi forces retook the key border town of al-Qaim.
The Fighting for Zones of Control as of March 23, 2018

Airstrikes and Urban Warfare

- Exact numbers of the casualties for the war against IS are not available.

- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based monitoring group, has documented the deaths of 371,000 people, including 112,600 civilians, in Syria since the civil war began in 2011.

- The UN says at least 30,912 civilians have been killed in acts of terrorism, violence and armed conflict in Iraq since 2014. But Iraq Body Count, an organization run by academics and peace activists, puts the civilian death toll at more than 70,000.

- Some total estimates go to 500,000+

The Continuing Threat from Daesh in Syria and Iraq
The metrics in this section show that President Trump’s announcement of a victory against the Daesh attempt to create state never meant that he claimed a broad victory against all of Daesh. He did show maps indicating that Daesh had lost virtually all of the territory in its pseudostate by March 2019, but one of the maps made it clear that Daesh retained a large presence in Iraq and Syria.

U.S. officials, spokespersons for the U.S. led-Coalition, and a wide variety of media and think sources confirmed these estimates. The START and LIG data bases and maps also show that there were substantial numbers of terrorist attacks in the areas occupied by Daesh fighters in Eastern Iraq and outside areas included in the Daesh “state” in 2017.

At the same time, the metrics show that the START data on terrorism in Iraq and Syria during 2012-1017 – the peak periods in the Daesh threat – indicate that Daesh and Al Qaida combined accounted for only about 31% of all terrorist incidents by non-state actors during this period. Smaller movements and very large numbers of unattributable incidents dominated more than two-thirds of the acts, and the START database indicates that most of these acts occurred in areas outside the Daesh “state.”

Defeating Daesh also does not bring an end to the deep ethnic and sectarian tensions in Iraq, or the partitioning of Syria. The map of territorial control of Syria shows just how divided the country was in March 2019. It is important to note that much of the area now under the control of the Assad regime is filled with Sunni in that were rebels, are civilians that suffered from attacks by Assad forces, have been displaced, or have been become refugees. Almost regardless of what happens to the rebel enclaves in Idlib, it seems likely that even if some formal peace or territorial agreement is reached, there will be other forms of violence and instability in Syria, Iraq, or both.

Finally, serious questions exist regarding the future role of Turkey, Russia, and especially Iran. Turkey sees the Kurdish role in Eastern Syria, and the KRG in Iraq as potential threats. Russia is seeking to expand its influence and may do so at the cost of Syrian and/or Iraq stability. Iran is seeking to expand its influence in Syria, in Iraq, and in using the Hezbollah Lebanon, and is directly competing with the U.S. and its Arab neighbors for influence in Iraq. This may well create further sources of tension and conflict, as well as lead outside powers to intervene. Turkey, for example, has supported Sunni Arab rebels in Syria in the past, and might do so in the future. Iran may support Shi’ite popular militia forces in operations against the United States. Extreme and terrorism are scarcely the only threats that the U.S. and its strategic partners face.
President Trump: “ISIS Caliphate two years ago in Red vs. ISIS Caliphate TODAY. (Was even worse in November 2016 before I took office).”
President Trump: "We just took over you know you kept hearing it was 90%, 92%, the caliphate in Syria, now it's 100%, we just took over 100% caliphate, that means the area of the land we're just have 100% so that's good."

“The United States and Our Global Partners Have Liberated All ISIS-Controlled Territory”
Danial Coats, the U.S. Director of National Intelligence, describes the following threats in his written statement on the Worldwide Threat Assessment that he provided to Congress on January 29, 2019:

**ISIS**

ISIS still commands thousands of fighters in Iraq and Syria, and it maintains eight branches, more than a dozen networks, and thousands of dispersed supporters around the world, despite significant leadership and territorial losses. The group will exploit any reduction in CT pressure to strengthen its clandestine presence and accelerate rebuilding key capabilities, such as media production and external operations. ISIS very likely will continue to pursue external attacks from Iraq and Syria against regional and Western adversaries, including the United States.

- ISIS is perpetrating attacks in Iraq and Syria to undermine stabilization efforts and retaliate against its enemies, exploiting sectarian tensions in both countries. ISIS probably realizes that controlling new territory is not sustainable in the near term. We assess that ISIS will seek to exploit Sunni grievances, societal instability, and stretched security forces to regain territory in Iraq and Syria in the long term.

**Al-Qa’ida**

Al-Qa’ida senior leaders are strengthening the network’s global command structure and continuing to encourage attacks against the West, including the United States, although most al-Qa’ida affiliates’ attacks to date have been small scale and limited to their regional areas. We expect that al-Qa’ida’s global network will remain a CT challenge for the United States and its allies during the next year.

- Al-Qa’ida media continues to call for attacks against the United States, including in statements from regional al-Qa’ida leaders, reflecting the network’s enduring efforts to pursue or inspire attacks in the West.
- All al-Qa’ida affiliates are involved in insurgencies and maintain safe havens, resources, and the intent to strike local and regional US interests in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia.
- Al-Qa’ida affiliates in East and North Africa, the Sahel, and Yemen remain the largest and most capable terrorist groups in their regions. All have maintained a high pace of operations during the past year, despite setbacks in Yemen, and some have expanded their areas of influence. Al-Qa’ida elements in Syria, meanwhile, continue to undermine efforts to resolve that conflict, while the network’s affiliate in South Asia provides support to the Taliban.
How Many Daesh Fighters Are Left?
If You Don't Know, 20,000 to 30,000 Will Do!

• There are still 28,600 to 31,600 ISIS fighters in Iraq and Syria, Voice of America reported Monday, citing Defense Department data. A United Nations panel of experts report concluded the same, revealing that ISIS may have anywhere between 20,000 and 30,000 troops in these countries despite the fall of the caliphate, the Associated Press reported Monday. (Ryan Pickrell, Business Insider), Aug. 14, 2018, 1:46 PM

• The Islamic State may still have in excess of 30,000 fighters in Syria and Iraq and appears to have rebounded from some of its worst setbacks, according to two new reports that call into question whether the militants are as close to defeat as the U.S. military has suggested... The U.S. government report attributed its numbers to the Defense Department but acknowledged that such estimates “have varied sharply among sources and over time.” ...The report was delivered to Congress by the Lead Inspector General, an office created in 2013 to oversee the U.S. military’s operations overseas against the Islamic State. Quoting Defense Department officials, the report put the number of fighters in Iraq at between 15,500 and 17,100 and in Syria at 14,000...The second report was written by the U.N. Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, which monitors the impact of U.N. sanctions, and offered a similar figure. Quoting unnamed member states, it said there are believed to be between 20,000 and 30,000 Islamic State fighters across Iraq and Syria, divided roughly equally between the two countries. Some of them are active on the battlefield, while others are hiding out in communities or remote areas, it said. The figure includes “a significant component” of foreign fighters (Liz Sly, Washington Post, August 14, 2018.)

• "Coalition says fewer than 3,000 IS fighters remain in Iraq and Syria, BAGHDAD (Reuters) - The United States-led international coalition fighting Islamic State estimates that fewer than 3,000 fighters belonging to the hardline Sunni militant group remain in Iraq and Syria, its spokesman said on Tuesday. (Ahmed Aboulenein, December 5, 2018)

• "The most recent UN estimates put the number of ISIS militants in Syria and Iraq today at between 20,000 and 30,000, with most dispersed over territory the group no longer fully controls. That’s not many fewer than the 33,000 fighters U.S. intelligence officials estimated the group had at its 2015 peak, according to VOA. ("SIS Is Still Active in Iraq, Syria and Beyond. This Is What the Threat Looks Like Now," Time, January 18, 2019)

• "December 19, 2018 - US President Donald Trump sets the stage for a rapid withdrawal of American troops from Syria with a tweet falsely claiming that ISIS has been defeated. Although coalition forces have been successful taking back territory that was once part of the ISIS caliphate, militants continue to control a small swath of land near the Euphrates River. Estimates vary as to how many ISIS fighters are left in Syria. A Defense Department Inspector General report put the number of ISIS members in Iraq and Syria as high as 30,000." (CNN, ISIS Fast Facts, CNN Library Updated 4:07 PM ET, Mon March 25, 2019)

• "We believe that there's between 15,000 and 20,000 Daesh armed adherents active, although many are in sleeper cells, in Syria and in Iraq," U.S. envoy James Jeffrey said, using an Arabic acronym for Islamic State. (Task & Purpose, Reuters, April 5, 2019)
ISW Estimate of Daesh Operating Areas in Iraq and Syria as of April 16, 2019

Note: The supporting text explaining this map and the one used by President Trump on the ISW web site is an excellent narrative open source assessment of the continuing threat from Daesh.

Daesh Attacks Outside Its Controlled Area in Syria

July 2018 to April 2019

UN Report on Daesh Threat in Syria: 1 February 2019

...while ISIL has transformed into a covert network, including in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, it remains a threat as a global organization with centralized leadership. This threat is increased by returning, relocating or released foreign terrorist fighters...Globally, far fewer attacks associated with ISIL took place in 2018 than in 2017. Successful internationally directed attacks have fallen dramatically from 2015–2016, when ISIL external operational activity was at its height. Nevertheless, Member States remain concerned at the continued explicit intent of ISIL leadership to generate attacks, and the haphazard nature of inspired attacks, which makes defending against them difficult.

...The fall in international attacks and plots has also been caused by attrition of key ISIL personnel. Damage to the ISIL brand may be another way in which its progressive military defeat has reduced its capacity to project an international threat. Nevertheless, ISIL remains by far the most ambitious international terrorist group, and the one most likely to conduct a large-scale, complex attack in the near future. It retains an interest in attacking aviation and in the use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials.

...ISIL remains a global organization with centralized leadership. It will continue to resource and instruct its affiliates to the extent of its reduced ability because of its overriding wish to demonstrate relevance and stake its claim to leadership of a “global caliphate”.

...Military losses have forced ISIL to relinquish the idea of ruling a geographical “caliphate” for now, but the group retains that long-term aspiration and continues to proclaim it online. ISIL is reported still to control between 14,000 and 18,000 militants in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, including up to 3,000 foreign terrorist fighters. There are believed to be about 1,000 foreign terrorist fighters of various, sometimes undetermined, nationalities under arrest in Iraq. A growing number, currently nearly 1,000, plus more than 500 dependants, are detained in the northeast of the Syrian Arab Republic.

...In the Syrian Arab Republic, the only remaining ISIL territorial holding is around the town of Hajin in the Middle Euphrates River valley, near the Iraqi border. Three thousand or more fighters, most of them Iraqis, are estimated to be holding out there. Under sustained military pressure, some of the remaining foreign terrorist fighters have attempted to flee north, but many are intercepted and detained before reaching the border. Some of the Iraqi contingent are crossing in small parties into Iraq and regrouping there.

...The residual threat in Iraq is reported to emanate from both local ISIL remnants and fighters crossing the border from the Syrian Arab Republic to desert safe havens in Anbar and Ninawa...The Syrian network is expected by some Member States to evolve in its turn to resemble that in Iraq. In both countries, ISIL shows signs of wishing to stoke sectarian tension and pose as the standard-bearer for marginalized communities. One document obtained by a Member State describes the objectives of ISIL for the post-caliphate period: to undermine stabilization and reconstruction activities, target infrastructure rebuilding efforts and in general thwart economic progress. Its centre of gravity is expected to remain in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

...Significant numbers of children affiliated with ISIL members are detained in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, often in poor conditions with a lack of access to education and basic services and with limited likelihood of their return to States from which they or their parents originated. Such children may be at risk of becoming stateless, despite having citizenship or a claim to citizenship of a Member State or States.

...The ISIL core remains well equipped with weaponry from the time of the so-called “caliphate”. Supply lines still exist which sustain terrorist groups in the conflict zone, including with automatic rifles produced under expired licences. Cases of arms shipments from Eastern European countries to the Middle East and North Africa have been reported, including diversion of arms marked for legitimate end users. Additionally, Member States continue to highlight the threat from improvised explosive devices manufactured from diverted detonators and commercially available.
Distribution of Terrorist Attacks in Syria in 2017

Most attacks occurred outside the Daesh controlled areas

Source: Dr. Abdullah Toucan, “Terrorism Analysis,” SIRA - Strategic and International Risk Assessment, April 5, 2019, using the START database for 2017.
Daesh Support, Attack, and Control Zones in Iraq: 10/2018

UN Report on Daesh Threat in Iraq: 1 February 2019

...while ISIL has transformed into a covert network, including in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, it remains a threat as a global organization with centralized leadership. This threat is increased by returning, relocating or released foreign terrorist fighters. Globally, far fewer attacks associated with ISIL took place in 2018 than in 2017. Successful internationally directed attacks have fallen dramatically from 2015–2016, when ISIL external operational activity was at its height. Nevertheless, Member States remain concerned at the continued explicit intent of ISIL leadership to generate attacks, and the haphazard nature of inspired attacks, which makes defending against them difficult.

...ISIL has substantially evolved into a covert network in Iraq, where it prioritizes local operations. It is in a phase of transition, adaptation and consolidation. It is organizing cells at the provincial level, replicating the key leadership functions. Provincial networks are expected to develop financial self-sufficiency, although limited funding is still disbursed from the centre. The network in Iraq is receiving some reinforcement via a net flow of ISIL fighters from the Syrian Arab Republic. The Syrian network is expected by some Member States to evolve in its turn to resemble that in Iraq.

...In both countries, ISIL shows signs of wishing to stoke sectarian tension and pose as the standard-bearer for marginalized communities. One document obtained by a Member State describes the objectives of ISIL for the post-caliphate period: to undermine stabilization and reconstruction activities, target infrastructure rebuilding efforts and in general thwart economic progress. Its centre of gravity is expected to remain in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

It has been reported that approximately 3,000 armed ISIL fighters are currently active in Iraq, although some reports provide higher estimates. The residual threat in Iraq is reported to emanate from both local ISIL remnants and fighters crossing the border from the Syrian Arab Republic to desert safe havens in Anbar and Ninawa. In mid-2018, ISIL successfully operated checkpoints in northern Iraq, from which it ambushed locally deployed Iraqi forces. In Diyala and Salah al-Din provinces, small groups of ISIL fighters are reported to be conducting surveillance activities.

...ISIL is reported still to control between 14,000 and 18,000 militants in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, including up to 3,000 foreign terrorist fighters. There are believed to be about 1,000 foreign terrorist fighters of various, sometimes undetermined, nationalities under arrest in Iraq. A growing number, currently nearly 1,000, plus more than 500 dependants, are detained in the northeast of the Syrian Arab Republic.

ISIL cells in Iraq appear to be planning activities that undermine government authority, create an atmosphere of lawlessness, sabotage societal reconciliation and increase the cost of reconstruction and counter-terrorism. These activities include kidnapping for ransom, targeted assassinations of local leaders and attacks against State utilities and services.

...Other concerns with regards to radicalization include the large number of internally displaced persons. ISIL cells have been observed seeking access to camps for internally displaced persons for indoctrination and recruitment purposes, concentrating on people displaced from Diyala, Salah al-Din and Ninawa. Iraqi prisons and holding facilities, severely overcrowded with detainees, are assessed to be another potential source of radicalization.

...In Iraq, 13,000 minors up to the age of 12 are believed to lack established nationality because their papers are unavailable, or their birth was never registered. Some may be of Iraqi parentage, others may have one foreign parent, or two... Member States regard this as a generational challenge, whereby a failure to integrate such persons into society could give rise to new threats at any time over the next 20 years. Some Member States continue to assert that countries of origin and nationality are still not shouldering their fair share of responsibility for helping countries who hold detainees to move them on according to due process.

...The ISIL core remains well equipped with weaponry from the time of the so-called “caliphate”... Supply lines still exist which sustain terrorist groups in the conflict zone, including with automatic rifles produced under expired licences. Cases of arms shipments from Eastern European countries to the Middle East and North Africa have been reported, including diversion of arms marked for legitimate end users. Additionally, Member States continue to highlight the threat from improvised explosive devices manufactured from diverted detonators and commercially available

Excerpted from United Nations S/2019/103 Security Council Distr.: General 1 February 2019 Original: English 19-01206 (E) 050219 *1901206* Eighth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da’esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat
Distribution of Terrorist Attacks in Iraq in 2017

Most attacks occurred outside the Daesh controlled areas

Source: Dr. Abdullah Toucan, “Terrorism Analysis,” SIRA-Strategic and International Risk Assessment, April 5, 2019, using the START database for 2017.
Ongoing Clearance Operations in Iraq by Iraqi Operations Commands: 10/18-12/18-

Source: Lead Inspector General, OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE AND OTHER OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS, OCTOBER 1, 2018–DECEMBER 31, 2018, p. 34
Open Source Reports of Daesh Activity: 10/18-12/18

- **Nineveh Province**: 39 violent incidents, 50 ISF casualties (32 killed, 18 wounded), 123 civilian casualties (46 killed, 77 wounded)
- **Kirkuk Province**: 46 violent incidents, 39 ISF casualties (14 killed, 25 wounded), 49 civilian casualties (20 killed, 29 wounded)
- **Salah ad DIN Province**: 15 violent incidents, 8 ISF casualties (7 killed, 1 wounded), 53 civilian casualties (12 killed, 41 wounded)
- **Diwalia Province**: 55 violent incidents, 58 ISF casualties (28 killed, 30 wounded), 37 civilian casualties (15 killed, 22 wounded)
- **Baghdad Province**: 27 violent incidents, 7 ISF casualties (2 killed, 5 wounded), 48 civilian casualties (13 killed, 35 wounded)
- **Karbala Province**: 1 violent incident, no ISF casualties, 3 civilian casualties (3 killed)
- **Anbar Province**: 17 violent incidents, 36 ISF casualties (20 killed, 16 wounded), 20 civilian casualties (11 killed, 9 wounded)

*While ISIS elements frequently target Baghdad, the capital is also the scene of local, tribal, and criminal disputes and activity, making it difficult to ascribe violent incidents in Baghdad to ISIS.*

**Babil Province**: 3 violent incidents, 8 ISF casualties (8 wounded), no civilian casualties

*Source: DoD OIG analysis*
The Continuing Global Threat from Daesh and its Affiliates
UN Report on the Broader Daesh Threat in the MENA Region : 1 February 2019 – Part One

The report highlights that, while ISIL has transformed into a covert network, including in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, it remains a threat as a global organization with centralized leadership. This threat is increased by returning, relocating or released foreign terrorist fighters...ISIL is still led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi,3 but its senior leadership has been reduced to a dispersed group, the few members of which each struggle to execute a number of essential tasks, without which the ISIL network could not survive, such as finance, logistics, military, intelligence, security, doctrine and media.

Globally, far fewer attacks associated with ISIL took place in 2018 than in 2017. Successful internationally directed attacks have fallen dramatically from 2015–2016, when ISIL external operational activity was at its height. Nevertheless, Member States remain concerned at the continued explicit intent of ISIL leadership to generate attacks, and the haphazard nature of inspired attacks, which makes defending against them difficult.

...The fall in international attacks and plots has also been caused by attrition of key ISIL personnel. Damage to the ISIL brand may be another way in which its progressive military defeat has reduced its capacity to project an international threat. Nevertheless, ISIL remains by far the most ambitious international terrorist group, and the one most likely to conduct a large-scale, complex attack in the near future. It retains an interest in attacking aviation and in the use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials.

...ISIL remains a global organization with centralized leadership. It will continue to resource and instruct its affiliates to the extent of its reduced ability because of its overriding wish to demonstrate relevance and stake its claim to leadership of a “global caliphate”. If ISIL regains access to permissive space and reinvests in external operational planning, a resurgence of directed attacks should be anticipated.7

Regarding relocators from the core conflict zone, relatively few have become active in other theatres of conflict. Most of the comparatively small numbers of foreign terrorist fighters who join regional affiliates come from within that region. Some “frustrated travellers”, who have failed to reach the core conflict zone, have been redirected elsewhere by ISIL or gone at their own initiative, sometimes after lying low for some time in a transit location. Member States expect ISIL foreign terrorist fighters and other terrorists to show flexibility in moving between groups, which may reinforce Al-Qaida affiliates or generate new combinations or brands.8

... ISIL is reported by some Member States to still have access to financial reserves of between $50 million and $300 million. Although its territorial losses have removed some sources of revenue, it has correspondingly fewer liabilities and is expected to be able to sustain its operations... ISIL is assessed to have bulk-stored cash in its core area and smuggled some into neighbouring countries for safekeeping. It is also reported to have invested some of its reserves in legitimate businesses. ISIL no longer has reliable access to oil-producing areas in the eastern Syrian Arab Republic for direct extraction; it earns more revenue by extorting oil cargos extracted by others. It has been reported that ISIL financial assets have largely been concealed, with a strategic view to funding larger-scale attacks once the opportunity arises again.

...ISIL cells are expected to be self-financing and to support themselves through a variety of activities, including extortion, kidnapping for ransom or other criminal activity. There are reports that the group retains intelligence on local communities that could be used in future efforts to extort or otherwise extract financing from areas previously under its control... ISIL is assessed to retain financial and information technology expertise that can be exploited to
UN Report on the Broader Daesh Threat in the MENA Region : 1 February 2019 – Part Two

advance the group’s aims. Unregistered money-service businesses remain the primary means of transferring funds by ISIL, while gold exchanges are also reported to be a source of illicit financial flows to the group. Several Member States highlighted ISIL statements encouraging the use of new financial technologies, including cryptocurrencies. Such currencies are not yet assessed by Member States to be a significant source of revenue for ISIL.

...Member States have continued to highlight the threat posed by unarmed aircraft systems within the conflict zone and, globally, by ISIL-inspired weaponization of commercial off-the-shelf drones. The ISIL core also reportedly continues to procure such drones through a layered network of purchasers organized in small cells and spread across several countries. One such network, involved in shipping drones from Western Europe through Turkey to Iraq, was disrupted in September 2018. The ISIL core remains well equipped with weaponry from the time of the so-called “caliphate”. Supply lines still exist which sustain terrorist groups in the conflict zone, including with automatic rifles produced under expired licences. Cases of arms shipments from Eastern European countries to the Middle East and North Africa have been reported, including diversion of arms marked for legitimate end users. Additionally, Member States continue to highlight the threat from improvised explosive devices manufactured from diverted detonators and commercially available chemical precursors. Most attacks in Iraq involving such devices during the period under review employed such precursors, rather than military ordnance.

...Despite a mutual non-interference understanding which had existed between Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) (QDe.129) and ISIL in Yemen since 2014, local conflict broke out in July 2018 in Bayda’ governorate. This resulted in the expulsion of ISIL from most of its strongholds in Bayda’. Some local tactical coordination continues, however, between ISIL and other armed groups in Yemen.

...ISIL now has only a few mobile training camps and a dwindling number of fighters in the whole of Yemen, concentrated in the Zhahrah area of Jawf governorate. It is also struggling to keep a foothold on the Qayfah front in Bayda’. ISIL activities in Bayda’ now consist mainly of protecting the group’s leaders and their family members. Relatively few foreign terrorist fighters are making their way to Yemen to join ISIL or other terrorist groups. ISIL in Yemen is reportedly dependent upon external support to finance its operations.

...In Libya, ISIL continues to pose a threat. While their overall number may have decreased, ISIL fighters maintain an expanded area of operations in the country that extends along the coast between Ajdabiya and Tripoli, and southwards towards the governorates of Sabha and Kufrah. ISIL frequently raids and holds inner-town police stations in shows of strength, and to secure arms. This tactic has been repeated in several urban locations.

...ISIL carried out major attacks against the National Oil Corporation headquarters in Tripoli in September and against the Mabruk oil field in November 2018, signifying that oil facilities will remain a potential target for the group. Kidnapping of local notables in exchange for ransom is also a growing source of income for ISIL. In addition, it offered, at least once, to exchange abductees for the release of some of its captured cadres.

...Elsewhere in North Africa, there may still be a relatively inactive group of approximately 30 ISIL-affiliated fighters in the mountains of western Tunisia. Military operations in Sinai continued against Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, which pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in November 2014. Member States assess no significant change in the number of fighters affiliated to the group in Sinai since early 2018.
Map of Centers of Continuing Daesh, Daesh Affiliate, and Al Qa’ida Worldwide Activity: 2018 –2019

*Groups are not present in all parts of the countries identified

Source: US Intelligence Community, 2018

Syria & Iraq Terrorism: ISIL, Al Qaida, versus All Incidents in Syria and Iraq: 2012-2017

Total: 18,802 Incidents
ISIL: 5,437 Incidents = 28.9%
Al Qaida: 386 Incidents = 2.1%


Frequency of Ongoing Daesh and Daesh Affiliate Worldwide Activity by Month: 1/2018 – 2/2019

Data collected by BBC Monitoring shows that despite having lost most of its territory in Syria and Iraq at the end of 2017, IS said it was behind 3,670 attacks worldwide last year - an average of 11 attacks per day - and 502 attacks in the first two months of 2019, while Baghuz was under siege.

Daesh and Daesh Affiliate Activity by Target
Country: 1/2018 – 1/2019

“...saw a notable increase in claimed activity by other IS branches. It was as if the group wanted to compensate for its losses in Iraq and Syria and to remind people that it also operated outside the Middle East.

In 2018, IS claimed 316 attacks in Afghanistan, 181 in Egypt's Sinai peninsula, 73 in Somalia, 44 in Nigeria, 41 in Yemen and 27 in the Philippines.

The number of attack claims by IS West Africa Province in Nigeria has notably risen in recent months. The army has been the primary target, possibly because the group is attempting to seize weaponry and in turn boost its capability.

ISIS has claimed 44 attacks in Nigeria in the first three months of 2019, matching the total number of attacks it claimed in a whole year in 2018.

In a propaganda video released in January, IS West Africa Province called on Muslims to migrate to the region and join its branch, signalling that it was ready to receive foreign recruits.

On 22 March, IS West Africa Province announced for the first time that it had a presence in Burkina Faso - a country where its rival al-Qaeda has already carried out several attacks.

There has also been an uptick in the number of attack claims in the Philippines.

IS operates in the country through local affiliates, most of which have been fighting to establish an independent Islamic state in the south for decades. But their attacks, mostly against the army, are still sporadic.

And despite repeated calls to its supporters, IS did not claim any major attacks in the West during 2018.”

Daesh Global Attacks Since 2017: January 1, 2018 to April 2019?

The War Has Not Ended in Syria, and the Threat from Iran Has Increased
UN Report on Daesh Threat in Syria: 1 February 2019

...while ISIL has transformed into a covert network, including in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, it remains a threat as a global organization with centralized leadership. This threat is increased by returning, relocating or released foreign terrorist fighters. Globally, far fewer attacks associated with ISIL took place in 2018 than in 2017. Successful internationally directed attacks have fallen dramatically from 2015–2016, when ISIL external operational activity was at its height. Nevertheless, Member States remain concerned at the continued explicit intent of ISIL leadership to generate attacks, and the haphazard nature of inspired attacks, which makes defending against them difficult.

...The fall in international attacks and plots has also been caused by attrition of key ISIL personnel. Damage to the ISIL brand may be another way in which its progressive military defeat has reduced its capacity to project an international threat. Nevertheless, ISIL remains by far the most ambitious international terrorist group, and the one most likely to conduct a large-scale, complex attack in the near future. It retains an interest in attacking aviation and in the use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials.

...ISIL remains a global organization with centralized leadership. It will continue to resource and instruct its affiliates to the extent of its reduced ability because of its overriding wish to demonstrate relevance and stake its claim to leadership of a “global caliphate”.

...Military losses have forced ISIL to relinquish the idea of ruling a geographical “caliphate” for now, but the group retains that long-term aspiration and continues to proclaim it online. ISIL is reported still to control between 14,000 and 18,000 militants in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, including up to 3,000 foreign terrorist fighters. There are believed to be about 1,000 foreign terrorist fighters of various, sometimes undetermined, nationalities under arrest in Iraq. A growing number, currently nearly 1,000, plus more than 500 dependants, are detained in the northeast of the Syrian Arab Republic.

...In the Syrian Arab Republic, the only remaining ISIL territorial holding is around the town of Hajin in the Middle Euphrates River valley, near the Iraqi border. Three thousand or more fighters, most of them Iraqis, are estimated to be holding out there. Under sustained military pressure, some of the remaining foreign terrorist fighters have attempted to flee north, but many are intercepted and detained before reaching the border. Some of the Iraqi contingent are crossing in small parties into Iraq and regrouping there.

...The residual threat in Iraq is reported to emanate from both local ISIL remnants and fighters crossing the border from the Syrian Arab Republic to desert safe havens in Anbar and Ninawa. The Syrian network is expected by some Member States to evolve in its turn to resemble that in Iraq. In both countries, ISIL shows signs of wishing to stoke sectarian tension and pose as the standard-bearer for marginalized communities. One document obtained by a Member State describes the objectives of ISIL for the post-caliphate period: to undermine stabilization and reconstruction activities, target infrastructure rebuilding efforts and in general thwart economic progress. Its centre of gravity is expected to remain in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

...Significant numbers of children affiliated with ISIL members are detained in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, often in poor conditions with a lack of access to education and basic services and with limited likelihood of their return to States from which they or their parents originated. Such children may be at risk of becoming stateless, despite having citizenship or a claim to citizenship of a Member State or States.

...The ISIL core remains well equipped with weaponry from the time of the so-called “caliphate”. Supply lines still exist which sustain terrorist groups in the conflict zone, including with automatic rifles produced under expired licences. Cases of arms shipments from Eastern European countries to the Middle East and North Africa have been reported, including diversion of arms marked for legitimate end users. Additionally, Member States continue to highlight the threat from improvised explosive devices manufactured from diverted detonators and commercially available.

Excerpted from United Nations S/2019/103 Security Council Distr.: General 1 February 2019 Original: English 19-01206 (E) 050219 *1901206* Eighth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da’esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat
AREAS OF INFLUENCE IN SYRIA AS OF 1/8/2017

Source: Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response, Congressional Research Service, RL33487, CRS using area of influence data from IHS Conflict Monitor, as of August 1, 2017. All areas of influence approximate. Other sources include U.N. OCHA, Esri, and social media reports.

Notes: U.S. military officials have acknowledged publicly that U.S. forces are operating in select areas of eastern Syria to train, advise, assist, and equip partner forces. This map does not depict all chemical attacks reported in Syria.
Turkey and Turkish-backed forces controlled the northwestern enclave of Afrin and territory north of Manbij.

Syrian opposition groups, as well as the al Qaeda-affiliated Hayat Tahrir al Sham and Daesh, remained in areas of Idlib, Aleppo, and Hamah provinces. Syrian regime forces controlled western Syria, where most of the population lives.

The Lebanese Hezbollah operated in areas controlled by the Syrian regime near the Lebanese border. Daesh remained only in a tiny swath of desert territory around Hajin after losing Hajin to the SDF on December 14.

The Syrian regime moved forces to the west bank of the Euphrates River near Hajin following the U.S. announcement to withdraw troops from Syria.

Source: DoD OIG Analysis of Open Sources
AREAS OF INFLUENCE IN SYRIA AS OF 11/3/2019


Notes: U.S. military officials have acknowledged publicly that U.S. forces are operating in select areas of eastern Syria to train, advise, assist, and equip partner forces. On March 25, 2019, President Trump issued a proclamation recognizing the Golan Heights as part of the state of Israel. p. 4
Daesh Territorial Gains and Losses in the MERV, as of December 7, 2018
The Graveyard of the “Caliphate”

Idlib: March 2019

Source: Institute for the Study of War, 8.3.19https://4.bp.blogspot.com/-6_mWKHslZII/XIP4jV AJtrI/AAAAAAAAKO A/MuEy1FrrbmArbK6a w2RCjY1NwL1c5agFw CLcBGAs/s1600/2019 308%2BTSG%2BPatrobs%2Bin%2BNW%2BSyria.png
Syria: Control of Euphrates and East: March 8, 2019

Source: Institute for the Study of War. https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-lkMwxmnNVKU/XILq1SY1mUI/AAAAAAAACK0/OomkbZKktosiRkxz6FO5JekAOGVRw43gCLcBGAs/s1600/Syria%2Band%2BWestern%2BIraq%2BMap%2B-%2B25%2BFEB%2B2019-01.png
AREAS OF CONTROL IN NORTHERN SYRIA AS OF 11/3/2019


Source: CRS using area of influence data from IHS Conflict Monitor, last revised March 11, 2019. All areas of influence approximate and subject to change. Other sources include U.N. OCHA, Esri, and social media reports.

Notes: U.S. military officials have acknowledged publicly that U.S. forces are operating in select areas of eastern Syria to train, advise, assist, and equip partner forces.
Iran’s Key Areas of Strategic Influence

The US Role in Fighting Daesh in Iraq and Syria, and Future Force Levels and Spending
The U.S. Role in Fighting Daesh in Iraq and Syria

The metrics in this section trace the total levels of U.S. military effort in Iraq and Syria from 2003 onwards and the return and build-up of U.S. military capabilities in the region after Daesh seized parts of Eastern Syria and invaded Iraq.

The metrics show highest cost to the United States in terms of U.S. military killed and wounded, although it omits civilians and contractors. One key trend is the sharp reduction in U.S. casualties after 2011 as the U.S. shift from deploying large ground forces in direct combat to a mix of pre-emption air, cruise missile, and UCAV strikes and providing train and assist support to Iraqi ground forces and Arab/Kurdish forces in Syria. Similar trends emerge in the metrics on the cost of the U.S. overseas contingency operations in Iraq and Syria.

There are serious limits to these data. The U.S. has sporadically announced forward deployed military personnel totals since 2011, but these totals only seem to count personnel formally assigned to Iraq and/or Syria, and ignore contractors, military personnel on temporary duty or providing forward support in other countries, civilians in operational roles, and large numbers of U.S. and other contractors.

The cost data issued after the Budget Control Act of 2011 include extensive spending unrelated to combat that took place in an effort to bypass the budget caps on unrelated baseline spending. All of the OCO data seem to have assigned forward support costs and spending on other military operations outside Iraq and Syria in ways that were never clearly defined or allowed a full breakout by war. The OCO data also do not track fully with the Cost of War Report data. It still seems clear, however, that the U.S. budgeted at least $72 billion for direct operational in-country land warfighting – and regionally based air support -- from the first emergence of Daesh through FY2020. Reporting by the LIG and other sources indicates that the total costs -- including in-theater and in-US military support plus foreign aid and State Department, CIA, and other agency costs -- were far higher.

The air power metrics are taken from official U.S. data from AFCENT. They show that air strikes made up the key component of U.S. combat against Daesh after 2014, and that the number of U.S. strike sorties from manned and unmanned combat aircraft increased from 28,695 in 2015 to 39,577 in 2017 (+38%). Fully comparable trend data before 2015 are not available since these AFCENT data only counted manned aircraft strikes, but they still show the critical role of U.S.-led coalition airpower from 2013 onwards.

The IS&R data are particularly misleading because they still only seem to count manned aircraft. The ability to use drones to target in real time, and assess the risk to civilians in real time, is a key lesson of the war.

The data on U.S. military manning levels also show that the U.S. was able to make major gains – with truly minimal casualties – by using this U.S.-led airpower in combination with small numbers of train and assist U.S. ground troops operating directly with Iraqi and Arab-Kurdish ground forces. The success of this “joint warfare” with strategic partners

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The U.S. Role in Fighting Daesh in Iraq and Syria

relative to major U.S., land force deployments may well be another key lesson of the war.

The U.S. does not have any stable future plan for operations, train and assist, and aid missions in Syria and Iraq at this writing (April 2019). The data on spending and manning taken from the President’s FY2020 budget request are as good a publication indication of U.S. manpower and spending plans as currently seem to exist. It is clear from these plans, however, that the U.S. strategy, planning, programming, and budgeting does not currently anticipate major future operations in the area against Daesh or in Iraq and Syria.
### US Casualty Data as of March 15, 2019

**OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM U.S. CASUALTY STATUS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Non-Hostile</th>
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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
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**OPERATION NEW DAWN U.S. CASUALTY STATUS**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OND U.S. Military Casualties</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<td>295</td>
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<tr>
<td>OND U.S. DOD Civilian Casualties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>73</td>
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**OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE U.S. CASUALTY STATUS**

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<td>OIR U.S. DOD Civilian Casualties</td>
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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>75</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>58</td>
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5. OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE includes casualties that occurred in Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the Mediterranean Sea east of 25° Longitude, the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.

Source: Department of Defense, https://dod.defense.gov/News/Casualty-Status/
US Spending on Wars: September 11, 2001 - September 30, 2018

$1.566 Trillion Appropriated, $1.528 Trillion Obligated

- Noble Eagle: $28B
- Afghanistan (OEF/OFS): $742B
- Iraq (OIF/OND/Post-OND Activities/OIR): $758B

Billions

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<th>Obligations</th>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2018</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46</td>
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Note: Obligations shown by year of appropriation. Excludes classified programs and non-war OCO appropriations.
Source: DoD Comptroller.
OCO CATEGORIES
The FY 2020 OCO request is divided into three requirement categories – direct war, enduring, and OCO for base. Direct War Requirements ($25.4 billion) – Reflects combat or combat support costs that are not expected to continue once combat operations end at major contingency locations. Includes in-country war support for Operation FREEDOM’S SENTINEL (OFS) in Afghanistan and Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR) in Iraq and Syria. Funds partnership programs such as the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF), the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF), the Coalition Support Fund (CSF), and Middle East border security.
OCO for Enduring Requirements ($41.3 billion) – Reflects enduring in-theater and CONUS costs that will remain after combat operations end. These costs, historically funded in OCO, include overseas basing, depot maintenance, ship operations, and weapons system sustainment. It also includes the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI), the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI), and Security Cooperation. Combined, enduring requirements and direct war requirements comprise “traditional” OCO.
OCO for Base Requirements ($97.9 billion) – Reflects funding for base budget requirements, which support the National Defense Strategy, such as defense readiness, readiness enablers, and munitions, financed in the OCO budget to comply with the base budget defense caps included in current law.

Source: OSD Comptroller, FY2020 Budget Overview, pp. 6.3-6.4.
The request supports the following activities:

- Executing DoD’s counterterrorism and train, advise, assist missions in Afghanistan to support the President’s South Asia strategy as leaders work to negotiate a settlement that safeguards national interests.
- Sustaining personnel forward deployed to the Middle East to continue operations to ensure an enduring defeat of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and allow flexibility for a deliberate, coordinated, disciplined withdrawal from Syria.
- Building the capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces and Syrian opposition forces to counter ISIS in support of the United States’ comprehensive regional strategy.
- Conducting U.S. Central Command in-country and in-theater support activities, including intelligence support to military operations.
- Enhancing U.S. deterrence activities in Eastern Europe to assure North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and partners and deter aggressive actors.

**Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) ($4.8 billion):** This request funds the sustainment, infrastructure, equipment, and training requirements for up to 352,000 members of the Afghan National Army and National Police as well as up to 30,000 Afghan Local Police. The request supports further development of the ANDSF as an effective and sustainable force to combat a resilient insurgency and as a reliable counterterrorism partner with the United States. A key element of the request is funding for the final year of the President of Afghanistan’s four-year ANDSF Roadmap to increase the capacity and combat effectiveness of the AAF and the ASSF and seize the initiative in the fight against insurgent and terrorist forces, strengthen and restructure Afghan Security Institutions, and facilitate a political settlement to the war.

**Support for Coalition Forces ($0.6 billion):** Amounts requested to finance coalition, friendly forces, and a variety of support requirements for key foreign partners who wish to participate in U.S. military operations but lack financial means. Such support reduces the burden on U.S. forces and is critical to overall mission success. The FY 2020 budget request for support for coalition forces includes $450 million for the Coalition Support Fund (CSF) and $150 million for the Lift and Sustain program. The FY 2020 CSF request of $450 million reflects a $450 million (50 percent) decrease from the FY 2019 enacted level of $900 million due to the continuing suspension of U.S. security assistance to Pakistan based on the President’s January 4, 2018, guidance.

**Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF) ($1.0 billion):** The United States Government’s strategy to counter ISIS directed DoD to conduct a campaign to degrade, dismantle, and ultimately defeat ISIS. The focus of DoD’s efforts is to work by, with, and through the Government of Iraq’s Security Forces and Vetted Syrian Opposition (VSO) forces to build key security force capabilities and promote longer term regional stability.

The FY 2020 CTEF budget request strengthens the security capabilities of DOD partners countering ISIS to secure territory liberated from ISIS and counter future ISIS threats by training and equipping partner security forces. The training, equipment, and operational support in this request will facilitate the consolidation of gains achieved against ISIS and prevent its reemergence. The $1,045 million request includes $745 million to assist the Iraqi Security Forces and $300 million to assist the Vetted Syrian Opposition. The FY 2020 budget also realigns $250 million from the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund to Operation and Maintenance, Defense-wide, for implementation by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency in order to align DoD authorities and funding to support border security requirements for partner nations fighting ISIS.

**Security Cooperation ($1.1 billion):** The FY 2020 budget request maintains the existing security cooperation account at $811 million, which funds counterterrorism, crisis response, and other security cooperation support to partner nations. The FY 2020 budget also realigns $250 million from the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund to the Operation and Maintenance, Defense-wide appropriation for implementation by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency in order to align DoD authorities and funding to support border security requirements for partner nations fighting ISIS.

Security Cooperation funds support programs to enable partner nations to deter and defeat existing and evolving terrorist and other transnational threats. Training and equipping partner nations allows U.S. forces to be more readily available for other contingency operations, build better relationships with partners, and promote global security in a more cost-effective manner.
US Shift to Lower Personnel Levels: FY2002-FY2017

In thousands of U.S. troops

Sources: DOD, Monthly Boots-on-the-Ground reports provided to CRS and congressional defense committees, 2001-June 2014. For month-by-month troop levels, both in-country and in-theater, see Table A-1.

Notes: Reflects U.S. troops in-country; excludes troops providing in-theater support or conducting counter-terror operations outside the region.
OCO Manning FY2008-FY2020

Trends in OCO Troop Levels in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan
(Annual Average in Thousands)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY08</th>
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<th>FY10</th>
<th>FY11</th>
<th>FY12</th>
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Average Annual Troop Strength

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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>FY 2019 PB Request</th>
<th>FY 2020 PB Request</th>
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<tr>
<td>Afghanistan (OFS)</td>
<td>11,958</td>
<td>15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraq/Syria (OIR)</td>
<td>5,765</td>
<td>7,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-Theater Support¹</td>
<td>59,463</td>
<td>46,473</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-CONUS²/Other Mobilization</td>
<td>16,610</td>
<td>19,149</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Force Levels</strong></td>
<td><strong>93,796</strong></td>
<td><strong>87,822</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ In-Theater support includes support for Afghanistan/Iraq/Syria, Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) HOA / NW Africa CT, and EDI (including approximately 10,500 afloat forces).
² In-CONUS = In the Continental United States
³ FY 2020 includes Temporary Enabling Force (TEF) support for Afghanistan/Iraq/Syria. This is a change from FY 2019 in which the TEF support was counted as part of In-Theater Support.

Source: OSD Comptroller, FY2020 Budget Overview, pp. 6.3-6.4, and DoD reporting as of 12/2018 for contractors.
US Airstrikes: August 2014 – March 2018

(CAOC) Public Affairs – afcent.pa@afcent.af.mil as of January 31, 2019

### OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE

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<tr>
<th>Strike Aircraft (manned)</th>
<th>Number of Weapons Released (Manned &amp; RPA strike assets)</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sorties</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>21,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>21,181</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>1,390</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistics provided includes numbers of sorties (not strikes) and munitions expended by aircraft under CFACC control.

### Iraq & Syria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intel, Surveillance and Recon Sorties</td>
<td>9,514</td>
<td>12,270</td>
<td>14,015</td>
<td>7,782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airlift and Airdrop Sorties</td>
<td>10,050</td>
<td>8,400</td>
<td>9,448</td>
<td>8,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airlift Cargo (Short Tons)</td>
<td>78,500</td>
<td>72,800</td>
<td>68,537</td>
<td>43,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airlift Passengers</td>
<td>47,200</td>
<td>46,900</td>
<td>76,802</td>
<td>76,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies Airdropped (Pounds)</td>
<td>111,200</td>
<td>822,171</td>
<td>641,746</td>
<td>605,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanker Sorties</td>
<td>14,737</td>
<td>13,064</td>
<td>13,243</td>
<td>8,697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel Offloaded (Millions of Pounds)</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft Refuelings</td>
<td>84,381</td>
<td>80,912</td>
<td>70,536</td>
<td>52,061</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some figures may have changed due to data re-calculation and re-verification

- Assets under CFACC control include a compilation of aircraft from all U.S. military branches of service, as well as Coalition aircraft; however, not all aircraft flying in the AOR fall under CFACC control.
The Cost of War and Its Human Legacy

Most Casualties and Suffering Came from Combat in Insurgencies and State Terrorism by the Assad Regime
The Cost of War and its Human Legacy

The human cost of terrorism, insurgency, and civil war is almost impossible to estimate. The most direct measurement is casualties, but even estimates of direct deaths from combat are highly uncertain and often heavily politicized. Estimates of wounded are even more uncertain, since many wounded do not receive treatment for which there is any record. The costs of losing a home, job, and/or civil security is largely intangible, and estimates of internally displaced persons and refugees not only have to be uncertain, they cannot include the number of people who suffer or die as a result of force moves or lack of local medical care.

More broadly, there are no reliable statistics of how much of the economy is hurt by such struggles or terrorism, and how they reduce the level of economic development and progress in areas like government services, critical infrastructure like power and water, medical care, education, job creation, and civil society. Some metrics are provided in these areas later in this survey, but there are no reliable or credible ways of accurately quantifying these aspects of the human cost of war, and broad efforts to estimate the cost of national recovery, making up for lost economic growth, and putting governance and the economy back on track are guesstimates at best. Most are credible only to the extent, the input data and methodology are accepted without serious review.

That said, it is still clear from even the conflicting estimates of direct deaths shown in the metrics in this section that the human cost of the fighting in Iraq and Syria has been catastrophic. The number of dead in both countries has been extraordinarily high, and the data on Iraq must be considered in the context that Iraq suffered massive previous casualties in the Iraq-Iraq War in 1980-1988, and significant military casualties in the first Gulf War in 1991. At the same time, the fighting in Iraq from 2003 onwards tended to be concentrated in the West. Syria involved two simultaneous wars – one fought against Daesh and another between a mix of Arab rebel movements and the Assad regime and its allies. UN estimates indicate that the peak fighting in these two conflicts in Syria disrupted or threaten the lives of more than half of Syria’s population, along with displacing nearly half as IDPs and refugees.

At the same time, several other things are clear from these data. First, a lack of decisive military action may produce short terms reductions in civil casualties and suffering but can also extend a conflict for years ways where the human cost is vastly increased. Second, terrorism per se produces relative few casualties compared in insurgency and civil war. The failure of a government to act quickly to address both the extremist threat and the causes of that extremism can be critical. Third, estimates of terrorism that only count non-state actors can be grossly misleading. As noted earlier, state terrorism by the Assad regime – include sieges, barrel bombs, and chemical weapons almost certainly killed or injured far more civilians in the heavily populated areas of Syria than Daesh did in eastern Syria and Western Iraq.

Finally, Daesh and Al Qa’ida were serious threats, but the casualty data warn that the level of other terrorist incidents that grew out of more local or spontaneous sectarian and ethnic violence may have been as serious – or more serious – than the violence causes by major organized movements.
Keeping the Human Cost of Terrorism and Extremism in Perspective - I

The casualty and terrorist incident data data for Syria illustrate several key points:

• The START data totals for incidents and casualties do not count the impact of insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare, massive acts of state terrorism by the Assad regime. The SOHR and UN estimates of wartime civilian fatalities are heavily driven by acts of state terrorism by the Assad Regime.

IRAQ

• The trends in a given state must often be linked to those in neighboring states. Iraq and Syria are essentially one war zone for ISIS, with heavy outside impact on their neighbors and vice versa.

• There again are major differences between the State Department Annex of statistical Information estimates and those of Our World in Data, although they supposedly used the same data base for 2006.

• The relatively flat line between 1970 and 2003 may be more a function of the limits to the data base than history. There were extensive terrorist incidents in the fighting between the Iraqi government and Kurdish rebels, and between the government and Iraqi elements supporting Iran during the Iran-Iraq War.

• There is no precise way to breakout the Iraqi Body Count data to identify the role of ISIS and other terrorist/extremist groups in inflicting total civilian casualties, but IBC estimates civilian dead at 16,383 in 2016, and most did die as a result of ISIS or other terrorist actions. START reports only 9,762 fatalities, while Our World in data reports 12,187.
Keeping Keeping the Human Cost of Terrorism and Extremism in Perspective - II

• The UN OCHA estimates of the humanitarian crisis in Iraq as of late 2017 provide a clear indication of the extent to which simply looking at fatalities, injuries, and kidnappings/hostage taking grossly underestimates the impact of terrorist/extremist action in war zones.

SYRIA

• No estimates are available of civilian killed and wounded cause by the indirect effects of combat and terrorism, loss of basic services, and civilian displacements and refugee status.
• The total incident and casualty trends must be linked to the role of outside states. Syria is heavily influenced by Iran, Russia, Turkey, and the Hezbollah.
• A range of affiliates of Al Qaida in Syria committed substantial acts of terrorism, but the level of affiliation is unclear. The START data base does not credit Al Qaida proper as having been responsible for any attacks in Syria.
• There are differences between the State Department Annex of statistical Information (START) estimates and those of Our World in Data, although they are supposedly using the same data base for 2016. START reports 365 attacks in 2016, while Our World in Data reports 472. START reports 2,119 fatalities, while Our World in Data reports 2,775. START reports 2,726 injuries, while Our World in Data reports 2,936.
NOTE: Does not include incidents of state terrorism by the Assad regime, executions by Daesh and terrorist groups, casualties from insurgent battles. Cannot reflect impact of displacement of civilians and loss of basic services, food, and medical care.
Guesstimates of Iraqi Civilian Deaths from Insurgencies, Extremism, and Terrorism - I

This data is based on 51,547 database entries from the beginning of the war to 28 Feb 2017, and on monthly preliminary data from that date onwards. Preliminary data is shown in grey when applicable, and is based on approximate daily totals in the Recent Events section prior to full analysis. The full analysis extracts details such as the names or demographic details of individuals killed, the weapons that killed them and location amongst other details. The current range contains 36,494–38,337 deaths (20%–19%, a portion which may rise or fall over time) based on single-sourced reports. Graphs are based on the higher number in our totals. Gaps in recording and reporting suggest that even our highest totals to date may be missing many civilian deaths from violence.

# Guesstimates of Iraqi Civilian Deaths from Insurgencies, Extremism, and Terrorism - II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classified US military documents released by Wikileaks in October 2010</td>
<td>The document released by Wikileaks in October 2010, compiled by the Iraq Body Count project, provides a comprehensive database of civilian causalities, including those killed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs), mortar, and high-explosive shelling. The report estimates that between 2003 and 2010, 108,032 civilians were killed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated Press</td>
<td>The Associated Press stated that more than 110,600 Iraqis had been killed since the start of the war to April 2009. This number is per the Health Ministry tally of 67,215 covering January 1, 2003, to February 28, 2009 combined with counts of casualties for 2003–2004, and after February 29, 2009, from hospital sources and media reports. For more info see further down at The Associated Press and Health Ministry (2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq Body Count</td>
<td>The Iraq Body Count project (IBCP) is a database of documented civilian deaths from violence in Iraq. As of February 20, 2009, the IBCP has documented 58,215 civilian deaths. The database includes deaths from all causes, including those caused by suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq Family Health Survey</td>
<td>The Iraq Family Health Survey is a project that surveys households in Iraq to estimate the number of deaths due to violence. In 2007, the survey estimated a total of 106,000 deaths due to violence in Iraq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion Research Business</td>
<td>The Opinion Research Business (ORB) poll conducted in August 2007 estimated 1,033,000 violent deaths in Iraq. The survey used a nationally representative sample of 2,000 Iraqi adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations</td>
<td>The United Nations reported that 34,452 violent deaths occurred in 2006, based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancet studies</td>
<td>The Lancet study, published in 2011, estimated 100,000 civilian deaths due to violence in Iraq. The study used a nationally representative sample of 2,000 Iraqi adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLOS Medicine Study</td>
<td>The PLOS Medicine study, published in 2011, estimated 100,000 civilian deaths due to violence in Iraq. The study used a nationally representative sample of 2,000 Iraqi adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Aswad ([previous Iraqi Health Minister])</td>
<td>Concerning war-related deaths (civilian and non-civilian), and deaths from criminal gangs, Iraq's Health Minister All al-Aswad said that since the March 2003 invasion between 100,000 and 150,000 Iraqis had been killed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs of War Project</td>
<td>260,000 - 295,000 people were killed in violence in the Iraq war from March 2003 - Oct. 2018, including 182,272 - 204,575 civilians (using Iraq Body Count's figures), according to the findings of the Costs of War Project, a team of 35 scholars, legal experts, human rights practitioners, and physicians, assembled by Brown University and the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, noting the costs of the post-9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the related violence in Pakistan and Syria. The civilian violent death numbers are &quot;surely an underestimation&quot;.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparatively Limited Portion of Casualties from Terrorism and Extremism in Iraq: 1970-2016

Incidence, fatality and injury from terrorist attacks, Iraq
The total number of recorded terrorist incidents, fatalities and non-fatal injuries by country or region. This includes fatalities or non-fatal injuries of both victims and perpetrators.

Limited Impact of Major Terrorist Groups: ISIL and Al Qaida versus All Incidents in Iraq: 2012-2017

Total: 16,779 Incidents

ISIL: 4,811 Incidents = 28.7%

Al Qaida: 386 Incidents = 2.3%

Note: (Islamic State in Bangladesh; Islamic State in Egypt; Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS); Islamic State of Iraq (ISI); Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)). Al Qaida includes: (Al-Qaeda; Al-Qaeda Kurdish Battalions (AQKB); Al-Qaida Network for Southwestern Khulna Division; Al-Qaida Organization for Jihad in Sweden; Al-Qaida in Iraq; Al-Qaida in Lebanon; Al-Qaida in Saudi Arabia; Al-Qaida in Yemen; Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP); Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent; Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM))

Guesstimates of Total Syria War Casualties: I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Casualties</th>
<th>Time period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syrian Centre for Policy Research</td>
<td>470,000 killed [^13]</td>
<td>15 March 2011 – 11 February 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN and Arab League Envoy to Syria</td>
<td>400,000 killed [^2]</td>
<td>15 March 2011 – 23 April 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violations Documentation Centre</td>
<td>165,358 killed [^14]</td>
<td>15 March 2011 – 25 March 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian Observatory for Human Rights</td>
<td>371,222–570,000 killed [^1]</td>
<td>15 March 2011 – 15 March 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estimates of deaths in the Syrian Civil War, per opposition activist groups, vary between 371,222 and 570,000. On 23 April 2016, the United Nations and Arab League Envoy to Syria put out an estimate of 400,000 that had died in the war.

Based on Syria's pre-war population \[^\] of 20.8 million from 2011, this represented approximately 2% of Syria's pre-war population. UNICEF reported that over 500 children had been killed by early February 2012. Another 400 children were reportedly arrested and tortured in Syrian prisons. Both claims were contested by the Syrian government.

The United Nations stated that by the end of April 2014, 8,803 children had been killed, while the Oxford Research Group said that a total of 11,420 children died in the conflict by late November 2013. By early December 2018, the opposition activist group Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported the number of children killed in the conflict had risen to 21,065, while at the same time 13,173 women were also killed. Additionally, over 600 detainees and political prisoners died under torture by the start of 2012. By February 2017, Amnesty International estimated between 5,000 and 13,000 people had been executed in government prisons.
Guesstimates of Total Syria War Casualties: II

SOHR: Syrian Observatory for Human Rights

Range of Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Casualties</th>
<th>Time period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>15 March 2011 – 15 March 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Incidence, fatality and injury from terrorist attacks, Syria

The total number of recorded terrorist incidents, fatalities and non-fatal injuries by country or region. This includes fatalities or non-fatal injuries of both victims and perpetrators.

State Department Annex of Statistical Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Attacks</th>
<th>Total Deaths</th>
<th>Deaths per Attack</th>
<th>Total Injured</th>
<th>Injured per Attack</th>
<th>Total Kidnapped/Hostages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>1096</td>
<td>2119</td>
<td>8.70</td>
<td>6.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1055</td>
<td>2726</td>
<td>9.42</td>
<td>9.37</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>1406</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Limited Impact of Major Terrorist Groups: ISIL and Al Qaida versus All Incidents in Syria: 2012-2017

Total: 2,003 Incidents

ISIL: 626 Incidents = 31.3%

Al Qaida : 0 Incidents = 0.0%


Note: (Islamic State in Bangladesh; Islamic State in Egypt; Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS); Islamic State of Iraq (ISI); Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)). Al Qaida includes: (Al-Qaida; Al-Qaida Kurdish Battalions (AQKB); Al-Qaida Network for Southwestern Khulna Division; Al-Qaida Organization for Jihad in Sweden; Al-Qaida in Iraq; Al-Qaida in Lebanon; Al-Qaida in Saudi Arabia; Al-Qaida in Yemen; Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP); Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent; Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM))
Post Caliphate Recovery and Nation-Building Challenges in Syria and Iraq
Post Caliphate Recovery and Nation-Building
Challenges in Syria and Iraq

The metrics in this section trace expand upon the human cost data in the previous section to show broader human challenges that remain in Syria and Iraq, highlight key problems in governance, and provide rough estimates of some of the impact of the fighting in terms of lost opportunities for economic growth. They also illustrate the level of the ethnic and sectarian divisions in Syria and Iraq—which are likely to remain key challenges to national stability.

The metrics show:

- **The critical failings in governance, politics, and corruption in both Syria and Iraq**—failings that still reduce both nations to a “failed state” status.

- **Maps that provide a rough picture of the critical sectarian and ethnic divisions in each country**—divisions that have grown far worse than these maps portray because of levels of urbanization that displace vast numbers of the the population and bring groups into new forms of far closer contact, and a shift from secular to religious politics that emphasizes sectarian divisions.

- **Illustrative summaries of the numbers of people that have been put a risk, made into refugees, or become independently displace persons (IDPs) and have lost the homes, livelihoods, and social and economic infrastructure.**

- **Rough estimates of the seriousness of the impact of the fighting and disruption on economic growth and development over a period of eight years in Syria, and that began in 1980**—with the start of the Iran-Iraq War in Iraq.

- **World Bank estimates of the barriers each government puts up to effective investment and business operations.**

These metrics can only hint at the scale of the problem in the political systems, governance, and economies of each state. Syria and Iraq are two of the worst governed and most corrupt nations in the world. Both have failed to modernize and reform their economies, and the fighting in each state present major challenges in recovering from wartime damage as well as the need to restructure their economy to adapt to postwar conditions. Both face major challenges in creating new jobs for their youth, and particularly productive jobs rather than hollow forms of state employment.

Iraq does have the advantage of major petroleum resources and export revenues, but these earnings are relatively low in per capita terms and cannot create meaningful jobs for a rapidly growing and relatively young population. It has one of the most costly, and least productive, state sectors in the world, and badly needs to reduce its barriers to creating and doing business. Most services and infrastructure need modernization, and its agriculture sector lacks productivity, wastes scarce water, and badly needs reform. Syria also needs major reforms, but is so divided that it is unclear that it can act effectively at a national level.

Work by the World Bank highlights some of these issues in detail. Key studies include:
The Toll of War: The Economic and Social Consequences of the Conflict in Syria, July 10, 2017

Syria: Damage Assessment (DA) of Aleppo, Idlib, and Hama

Surviving firms of the Syrian Arab Republic: a rapid assessment

Iraq - Systematic Country Diagnostic, February 2017

Working for the People of Iraq, September 2018

The CIA World Factbook also highlights key current metrics, illustrating the problems in each country.
Now into its eighth year, the conflict in Syria continues to take a heavy toll on the life of Syrian people and on the Syrian economy. The death toll in Syria directly related to the conflict as of early 2016 is estimated between 400,000 (UN, Apr 2016) and 470,000 (Syrian Center for Policy Research, Feb 2016), with many more injured, and lives upheaved. About 6.2 million people, including 2.5 million children, are internally displaced and over 5.6 million are officially registered as refugees (UNHCR, 2019).

The social and economic impacts of the conflict are also large, and growing. The lack of sustained access to health care, education, housing, and food have exacerbated the impact of the conflict and pushed millions of people into unemployment and poverty.

In addition, a severe decline in oil receipts and disruptions of trade has placed even more pressure on Syria’s external balances, resulting in the rapid depletion of its international reserves.

The human toll of the conflict (casualties and forced displacement) and damage to productive factors and economic activity has been extensive, damaging capital stock (e.g. about one-third of housing stock and one half of health and education facilities damaged or destroyed), while disrupting economic activity. From 2011 to 2016, cumulative GDP loss is estimated at $226 billion.

Disruptions in economic organization are the most important driver of the economic impact, superseding physical damage. Cumulative GDP loss due to disruptions in economic organization exceeds that of physical destruction by a factor of 20. This contrast is explained by how the economy reacts to different shocks. A “capital destruction only” is like some natural disasters: in a well-functioning economy, its effects on investment are limited (-22% in simulations) as capital can be rapidly rebuilt and repercussions contained. In comparison, economic disorganization reduces investments significantly (-80% in simulations); and effects propagated over time.

The longer the conflict lasts, the more difficult recovery will be, as effects of economic deterioration become more persistent over time. Should conflict end in its 6th year, GDP is estimated to recoup about 41% of the gap with its pre-conflict level within 4 years, with cumulated GDP losses 7.6 times 2010 GDP by the 20th year. In comparison, GDP recoups only 28% of the gap in 4 years if it ends in its 10th year, with cumulated GDP losses 13.2 times 2010 GDP by the 20th year. Simulations also show that outmigration could double between the 6th and 20th year of the conflict.

The assessment and analysis together underscore the Bank’s ongoing dialogue with the UN, the EU, and other development partners, and provide an important understanding of Syria’s economy, infrastructure, service delivery, and institutions. The assessment and analysis do not provide, however, a picture of the reconstruction that will be needed once the conflicts in Syria stop.

As the Syrian regime consolidates control, the country is likely to experience continued violence. We expect the regime to focus on taking control of the remaining rebel-held territory and reestablishing control of eastern Syria, consolidating gains, rebuilding regime-loyal areas, and increasing its diplomatic ties through 2019 while seeking to avoid conflicts with Israel and Turkey. Russia and Iran probably will attempt to further entrench themselves in Syria.

The regime’s momentum, combined with continued support from Russia and Iran, almost certainly has given Syrian President Bashar al-Asad little incentive to make anything more than token concessions to the opposition or to adhere to UN resolutions on constitutional changes that Asad perceives would hurt his regime.

Opposition groups, which rely on Turkey for continued support, probably are not capable of repelling a regime military operation to retake Idlib Province but may retain enough resources to foment a low-level insurgency in areas the regime recaptures in the coming year.

The regime probably will focus increasingly on reasserting control over Kurdish-held areas. Damascus probably will seek to exploit any security vacuum and Turkish pressure on the Kurds in order to strike a favorable deal with the Kurds while also seeking to limit Turkey’s presence and influence in Syria and reclaim territory in northwestern Syria held by Turkey.

The regime is unlikely to immediately focus on clearing ISIS from remote areas that do not threaten key military, economic, and transportation infrastructure, judging from previous regime counter-ISIS efforts.

Damage to the Syrian economy and its infrastructure has reached almost $400 billion, according to UN estimates, and reconstruction could take at least a decade to complete. The effects of the Syrian civil war will continue to be felt by its neighbors, with approximately 5.6 million Syrian refugees registered in neighboring countries as of October 2018. Russia and Iran will try to secure rights to postwar contracts to rebuild Syria’s battered infrastructure and industry in exchange for sustained military and economic support.
Syria: Failed Governance


Transparency International ranks as near worst case: 178rd out of 180 Countries in 2017. Third Worst in World

The inner, thicker blue line shows the selected country’s percentile rank on each of the six aggregate governance indicators. The outer, thinner red lines show the indicate margins of error.
Syria/Levant: Ethnic & Sectarian Challenges

Source: Dr. Michael Izady, Gulf/2000 Program at Columbia University, N.Y., and WorldViews. The one map that shows why Syria is so complicated, Max Fisher, August 27, 2013.
The CIA reports that Syria's economy has deeply deteriorated amid the ongoing conflict that began in 2011, declining by more than 70% from 2010 to 2017.

“The government has struggled to fully address the effects of international sanctions, widespread infrastructure damage, diminished domestic consumption and production, reduced subsidies, and high inflation, which have caused dwindling foreign exchange reserves, rising budget and trade deficits, a decreasing value of the Syrian pound, and falling household purchasing power.

In 2017, some economic indicators began to stabilize, including the exchange rate and inflation, but economic activity remains depressed and GDP almost certainly fell.” It also reports that Syria has the

- 194th lowest per capita income out of 228 countries.
- 50% unemployment, 217th worst of 218 countries.
- Had 82.5 % of its population below the poverty line in 2014.

Total Registered refugees in Spring 2019

Source: https://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html, 2.1.19 and 4.20.19; and CIA World Factbook, 2.1.19
Syrian Refugees as of February 2018

- More than 5.6 million Syrians have fled abroad. Most have ended up in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.
- Almost one million Syrians applied for asylum in Europe between April 2011 and July 2017.
- There are also estimated to be 6.1 million Syrians who have been displaced inside Syria and are living in camps or other makeshift accommodation.
- By the end of 2017, some 3.2 million people had returned home, while a 2.6 million remained displaced, according to the International Organization for Migration.
At least 6.6 million Syrians have been internally displaced, while another 5.6 million have fled abroad –

More than 3.5 million of them sought refuge in Turkey, almost one million in Lebanon and almost 700,000 in Jordan.

Almost one million Syrians applied for asylum in Europe between April 2011 and July 2017.

There are estimated to be 6.1 million Syrians who have been displaced inside Syria and are living in camps or other makeshift accommodation.

By September 2018 the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated nearly four million people had returned home.

But the UN reports that a lack of jobs and destruction of property and limited access to services are still preventing many people from returning to their homes.
GDP growth rate 2005–2013 in Syria (constant prices 2000) and Cost to Economy in 2018

IEP Estimated Violence cost Syria 68% of GDP, and $1,589.6 in GDP Per Capita in PPP Terms in 2017

Source: Mahdy 2015.

Syria: World Bank Ease of Doing Business Rankings:

Worse, and Only 179th in the World in 2019

Iraq is facing an increasingly disenchanted public. The underlying political and economic factors that facilitated the rise of ISIS persist, and Iraqi Shia militias’ attempts to further entrench their role in the state increase the threat to US personnel.

• The Iraqi Government will confront a high level of societal discontent, institutional weakness, and deep-seated divisions, as well as protests over a lack of services, high unemployment, and political corruption. Baghdad lacks the resources or institutional capacity to address longstanding economic development and basic services challenges, and it faces reconstruction costs in the aftermath of the counter-ISIS campaign, estimated by the World Bank at $88 billion. Iraq’s Kurdistan region is still dealing with political discontent over economic and territorial losses to Baghdad last year.

• ISIS remains a terrorist and insurgent threat and will seek to exploit Sunni grievances with Baghdad and societal instability to eventually regain Iraqi territory against Iraqi security forces that are stretched thin.

Iraqi Shia militants conducted several attacks against US diplomatic facilities in Iraq in September and December 2018. Militias—some of which are also part of the Iraqi Government Popular Mobilization Committee—plan to use newfound political power gained through positions in the new government to reduce or remove the US military presence while competing with the Iraqi security forces for state resources.
Iraq: Failed Governance

Voice and Accountability

Political Stability and Absence of Violence

Government Effectiveness

Regulatory Quality

Rule of Law

Control of Corruption

Transparency International ranks as near worst case: 169th out of 180 Countries – in 2017 – 11th worst in world

The inner, thicker blue line shows the selected country’s percentile rank on each of the six aggregate governance indicators. The outer, thinner red lines show the indicate margins of error.

Iraq: Ethnic & Sectarian Challenges

Source: Dr. Michael Izady, <a>Gulf/2000 Program</a> at Columbia University, N.Y., and Neal Rauhauser, <a>Iraq Ethnic Groups</a> Published July 16, 2013 at 1919 x 1915 in <a>Syrian & Iraqi Conflict Merging, Possibly Spreading</a>; <a>https://nealrauhauser.wordpress.com/</a>
Iraq: Human Challenges

Total accumulated losses in Iraqi GDP because of Terrorism, 2005–2014

IEP Estimated Violence cost Iraq 51% of GDP, and $7,062.8 in GDP Per Capita in PPP Terms in 2017


Iraq: World Bank Ease of Doing Business Rankings:

No Real Progress and Only 171st in the World in 2019

Note on Data and Methodology

There are major limits to the quality of much of the data available on the recent fighting, possible future threats, and key aspects of regional stability. In some cases, key data is only available in the form of “guesstimates” and heavily politicized reporting, or is not available at all. No suitably credible data are available to create such metrics -- although such data may appear to exist until their sources, definition, and timeliness is examined in detail. In other cases, metrics are presented that seem useful, but are informed “guesstimates.” They present numbers, graphics, and maps that are also uncertain, but represent estimates that seem broadly correct and to accurately portray broad trends in the absence of more reliable data.

The Need to Face Complexity

At the same time, metrics have the advantage that they help the analyst and decision maker to examine key trends in more detail. They help show the overall patterns in complex events, and help illustrate interactions in civil-military developments, in ways that looks beyond a given aspect of a conflict.

If there is any key lesson that emerges out of the rise of instability, extremism, terrorism, civil wars, and insurgencies over the last three decades, it is that there is no simple way of focusing on a few key variables that can lead to meaningful solutions or either national or regional stability. One key reason that so many attempted solutions have become part of the problem is that policymakers and warfighters have been unwilling to address complexity, and have tried to substitute ideology for an examination of the facts.

Drawing on a Wide Range of Sources

The maps, graphics, and summary data in this survey deliberately draw on a wide range of sources, although they emphasize reporting by the U.S. government, UN agencies, leading NGOs, and the World Bank. The sources of each metric are listed on each page, and also show the role of a wide range of media, think tanks, and other research centers. It should be obvious that this means that the bulk of the work presented reflects the skills of the original analysts producing such material – although many cases, the original source comes from a government or international agency which cannot be fully attributed.

Key Contents

There are many different ways in which these metrics could have been organized. In practice, Part One of this survey begins with the patterns in warfighting against the Daesh “caliphate” and attempt to create a state. It then
covers the final battles against the Daesh pseudostate,” looks at the uncertain state of victory as of April 2019, and examines the scale of the U.S. military effort. It goes on to examine the patterns in violence, and casualties in both civil conflicts and the fighting against extremist and terrorism movements. It highlights the fact that defeating Daesh’s attempts to create a state has not defeated Daesh even in Syria and Iraq. The survey then moves on to key indicators of the scale of the post-Daesh challenges in bringing stability to Syria and Iraq.

Part Two of the survey broadens its coverage to show key trends in Islam. It and makes it clear that Muslims generally associate their faith more closely with the governance and the rule of law than the practitioners of other faiths.

At the same time, the data show that the overwhelming majority of Muslims reject violent extremism and terrorism. It is also Muslims who suffer most from any form of religious extremism and sectarian warfare, and it is brutally clear that such fighting has become a “clash within a civilization.” If one looks at the casualty data shown earlier – and in almost all estimates of the overall numbers of those killed and injured by extremist and terrorism acts by movements claiming to be “Islamic” – the vast majority of such casualties are the result of Muslims killing or wounding fellow Muslims.

It should be stressed that the metrics shown in Part One and Part Two share the same problems as virtually all other reporting on extremism and terrorism. They ignore state terrorism, and the casualties from violent state terrorism and repression. This is not a casual issue. The casualty data on Syria presented in this survey indicate that that the Assad regime alone may have killed, wounded, and displaced more civilians since 2011 than all of the world’s non-state actors and extremist and terrorism groups combined.

Part Three provides a range of data on broader causes of instability in the MENA region. There are many areas where adequate data are lacking. Yet, there are still enough data to warn that that the causes of instability in the MENA region – like those in other largely Islamic regions and states – are so broad and so serious that extremism, terrorism, and civil conflict are likely to be endemic well beyond the coming decade.

These metrics show convincingly that a number of governments, political structures, and economies are as much of a threat as terrorism and extremism. As studies like the UN’s Arab Development Reports have warned since 2002, “failed states” – regimes that do not make effective efforts at development, at creating jobs and income for their peoples, that let corruption substitute for effective governance, and tolerate or exploit internal discrimination by sect, ethnicity, tribe or other group – are as much of a threat as any extremist or terrorist non–state actors. Ironically such states not only are the worst enemy of their peoples, but ultimately of their own survival as a regime.