
AP INTERVIEW: IRAQI MILITIA LEADER WANTS US TROOPS TO LEAVE

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By Qassim Abdul-Zahra and Zeina Karam

BAGHDAD (AP) □ The leader of one of the most powerful Iranian-backed Shiite militias in Iraq said Monday that he expects a vote in the coming months by Iraqs parliament calling for the withdrawal of U.S. troops, underscoring the jostling for power between Iran and the U.S. in this key Middle Eastern country.

Qais al-Khazali, who rose to prominence as a leader in the Shiite insurgency after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, said theres no longer a justification for thousands of U.S. troops to remain in Iraq now that the Islamic State group has been defeated. He suggested U.S. troops may eventually be driven out by force if they do not yield to the will of the Iraqi people.

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