
IRAN'S KHAMENEI PUSHES IRAQ ON OUSTING US FORCES

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The contentious topic of the US military presence in Iraq was at the heart of a meeting between Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and visiting Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi in Tehran July 21. The Islamic Republic expects officials in Baghdad * to follow up on ousting Americans from Iraq because their presence sparks insecurity, Khamenei told the Iraqi prime minister while stressing that Iran is not after interfering in US-Iraqi ties. Still, he advised the Iraqi friends to know the nature of the US government as the enemy whose presence anywhere can be a source of corruption and destruction.

The comments by the Iranian supreme leader came within wider diplomacy and lobbying in Baghdad for the expulsion of US forces from Iraqi soil, a policy Tehran has been intensifying after top Iranian Quds Force commander Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani was killed in a US drone strike outside Baghdad's international airport in January. They killed your guest * and openly confessed to their crime, and this is no minor issue, Khamenei told Kadhimi, renewing the pledge that Tehran will definitely respond to the Americans in kind over the Soleimani killing.

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