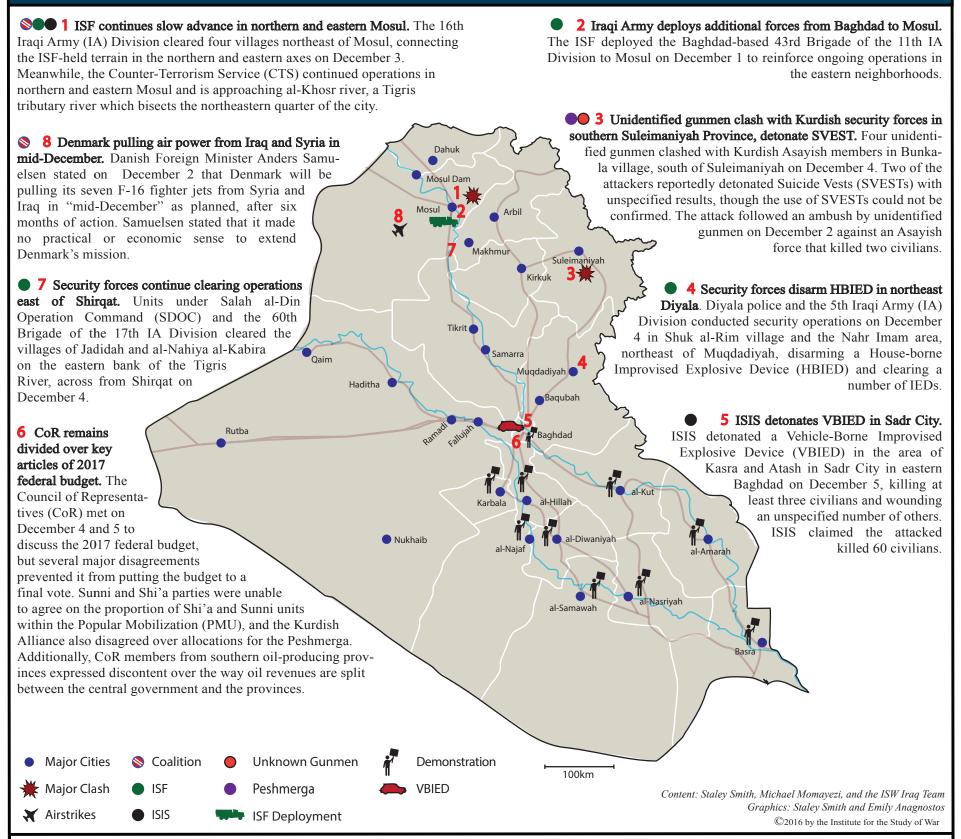
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Iraq Situation Report: December 1-6, 2016



ISIS spectacular attacks in Baghdad decreased from December 1-5, allowing the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to deploy security forces from Baghdad to northern Iraq. The decrease is part of a trend over the past few weeks of limited or minor suicide attacks in Iraq's capital. The ISF deployed an Iraqi Army (IA) brigade from Baghdad to eastern Mosul on December 1 to provide support to and operate alongside the Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) in ongoing operations to recapture the city. This deployment follows the movement of the Baghdad-based 60th Brigade from the 17th IA Division to Shirqat on November 29. ISIS may try to exploit the reduced security in Baghdad and attempt further attacks in the city in order to draw ISF units back to Baghdad or prevent additional ISF units from deploying to northern Iraq.

The Council of Representatives (CoR) met to discuss the 2017 federal budget on December 4 and 5 but failed to put the budget to a final vote. One of the primary obstacles to passing the budget was a disagreement between the Shia National Alliance and the Sunni Etihad bloc over the Popular Mobilization Law, which passed on November 26 and institutionalizes and finances the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) as part of the ISF. The two blocs differed on the proportion of Shi'a and Sunni units currently within the Popular Mobilization that will benefit under the new law, which did not specify which militias qualify for these benefits. The CoR needs to reach an agreement on which forces will receive funding in order to pass the budget, but Sunni parties could try to stall the vote in order to guarantee greater allocations to Sunni tribal fighters. If the structure of the PMU is decided by a clause within the budget and voted on by the CoR, the Shi'a majority within the CoR can solidify Shi'a militias as the majority in the new structure, furthering Sunni alienation from Iraqi Government.