
THE TAKEAWAY: US SHOULD KEEP EMBASSY OPEN IN IRAQ DESPITE RISK, SAYS RYAN CROCKER

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Former US Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker says it would be incredibly irresponsible for the United States to shut down its embassy in Baghdad despite continued attacks from Iran-backed militias, and the United States should focus on finding ways to support Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi.

Background: Last month, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo reportedly told Iraqi President Barham Salih that the United States would consider closing down its embassy if attacks by these militias, called the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), continued. PMU backed by Iran are the single biggest problem in Iraq, according to Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Schenker. Last December, the United States killed Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Quds Force Commander Qasem Soleimani following earlier attacks on the US Embassy in Baghdad and a rocket strike on a military base near Kirkuk that killed an American in December 2019.

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