

# Iraq votes to expel U.S. troops after Iran Gen. Qasem Soleimani's killing

In a sign of Iraq's mounting anger over a U.S. drone attack that killed Iran's top general, Qasem Soleimani, as well as an Iraqi leader of Tehran-backed militias, Iraq's Parliament on Sunday voted to expel U.S. military forces from the country.

The development came as Iran said it was all but abandoning the nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers that the Trump administration exited in May 2018. Since the U.S. withdrawal from the accord, tensions with Iran have steadily increased.

Iraq's Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi told lawmakers that a timetable for the withdrawal of all foreign troops, including U.S. ones, was required "for the sake of our national sovereignty." About 5,000 American troops are in various parts of Iraq.

Mahdi described the strike authorized by President Donald Trump as a "political assassination" and said it was "time for American troops to leave."

**Iran official on Soleimani killing:** 'The response for a military action is military action'

The resolution was supported by a majority of about 180 lawmakers present in Parliament, according to Iraqi media. It was backed by most Shiite members of parliament, who hold a majority of seats. Many Sunni and Kurdish legislators did not show up for the session, likely because they oppose the initiative.

## Tensions rising

The vote came two days after Soleimani was killed inside Iraq, dramatically ratcheting up tensions between Washington, and Tehran and Baghdad. It was not immediately clear to what extent the resolution would be implemented. It is nonbinding. The resolution specifically calls for ending an agreement in which Washington sent troops to Iraq more than four years ago to help in the fight

against the Islamic State group.

Ahead of the vote, U.S.-led coalition forces battling the remnants of the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria announced a “pause” in operations precipitated by the need to protect U.S. and coalition troops on bases in Iraq. Iran’s leadership has vowed revenge for Soleimani’s killing and signaled it may target U.S. military personnel in the region.

Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has threatened “severe revenge.”

## Iran moving away from nuclear accord

Iran said Sunday it is ceasing to abide by all “operational restrictions” on its enrichment of uranium, part of the terms of the nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers.

The move marks the “fifth and final” time Iran has moved away from the accord, and effectively marks the end of the deal for Tehran, although it said it would return to full compliance with the accord if the U.S. lifts its sanctions against it.

**Heightened tensions:** Trump defends Soleimani killing informal notice to Congress

The U.S. action against Soleimani, Iran’s de facto second most powerful figure who oversaw a vast network of pro-Iran militant groups from Iraq to Yemen, has drawn strong criticism from key U.S. allies and foreign policy experts, who believe it will destabilize an already tense and volatile region struggling to overcome decades of sectarianism, political strife, corruption, and economic mismanagement.

Trump’s move has created “a more dangerous world,” Amelie de Montchalin, France’s deputy minister for foreign affairs, told French radio over the weekend.

## White House goes on media offensive

On Saturday, Trump tweeted that if Iran attacks any American assets to avenge Soleimani, the U.S. has identified 52 targets across the Islamic Republic that “WILL BE HIT VERY FAST AND VERY HARD.” Some are “important to Iran &

Iranian culture,” Trump wrote on Twitter, apparently drawing Iran’s rich cultural sites into the tensions.

**Hackers set sights on the US:** DHS website hacked with pro-Iranian messages, an image of bloodied Trump

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo defended the strike against Soleimani, during an interview with NBC’s “Meet the Press” on Sunday. He said Washington would have been “culpably negligent” if it didn’t launch the attack and that he was “100%” certain America was safer because of the strike. He also said the Trump administration is prepared for an Iranian response. “It may be that there’s a little noise here in the interim, that the Iranians make a choice to respond,” he said. “I hope that they don’t.”

**U.S. vs. Iran:** Anti-war protesters organize around the US following the killing of Iran general

Asked about the Iraqi Parliament’s vote on “Fox News Sunday,” the U.S.’s top diplomat said that “we are confident the Iraqi people want the United States to continue to be there to fight the anti-terror campaign. And we’ll continue to do all the things we need to do to keep America safe.” Pompeo added: “We’ll have to take a look at what we do when the Iraqi leadership and government makes a decision, but the American people should know we’ll make the right decision. We will take actions that frankly the previous administration refused to take to do just that.”

## Iran mourns Soleimani

Soleimani’s body was returned to Iran early Sunday for a funeral and burial in his hometown, Kerman, in central Iran. Hundreds of thousands of mourners took to the streets across the nation to pay their respects to a figure who is widely hailed as a war hero in Iran, but who the Trump administration labeled a terrorist.

Soleimani presided over Iran’s foreign military and intelligence operations going back two decades. During this time, the State Department says he was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Americans and for numerous attacks on U.S. military installations.

# US troops prepare for deployment to the Middle East amid anti-war protests

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13 PHOTOS



US Army Soldiers with the 82nd Airborne Division wait to be deployed to the Middle East on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2020 from Fort Bragg, N.C. Troops will deploy to the Middle East as tensions between the US and Iran continue to rise. MELISSA SUE GERRITS, THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER VIA USA TODAY NETWORK

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A soldier covers his weapon while walking in the rain at Green Ramp at Fort Bragg. MELISSA SUE GERRITS, THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER VIA USA TODAY NETWORK

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Soldiers with the 82nd Airborne Division arrive at Green Ramp on Fort Bragg before deploying to the Middle East. MELISSA SUE GERRITS, THE





U.S. troops from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division arrive at Green Ramp as they head out for a deployment. ANDREW CRAFT, GETTY IMAGES

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An 82nd Airborne paratrooper bound for the US Central Command area of operations checks his weapon. HUBERT DELANEY III, US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE VIA GETTY IMAGES





U.S. troops from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division get some rest at Green Ramp before they head out. ANDREW CRAFT, GETTY IMAGES

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A rifle is seen as U.S. troops from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division wait to be deployed to the Middle East. ANDREW CRAFT, GETTY IMAGES

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A soldier with the 82nd Airborne Division rests after having met with his unit at 4 am at Fort Bragg. MELISSA SUE GERRITS, THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER VIA USA TODAY NETWORK

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Soldiers with the 82nds Airborne Division load a bus to be transported to a military transport aircraft at Fort Bragg. MELISSA SUE GERRITS, THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER VIA USA TODAY NETWORK

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US Air Force personnel load 82nd Airborne Division equipment onto a C-17 Globemaster aircraft bound for the US Central Command area of operations  
JUSTIN STAFFORD, US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE VIA GETTY IMAGES

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82nd Airborne paratroopers march to board a civilian aircraft bound for the US Central Command area. HUBERT DELANEY III, US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE VIA GETTY IMAGES

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The media films the flight line where U.S. troops from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division are being deployed to the Middle East. ANDREW CRAFT, GETTY IMAGES

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US Air Force personnel load 82nd Airborne Division equipment onto a C-17 Globemaster aircraft bound for the US Central Command area of operations. JUSTIN STAFFORD, US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE VIA GETTY IMAGES

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