

CIG Current Assessment Note, 13 September 2007

IRANIAN SUPPORT TO JAYSH AL-MAHDI SPECIAL GROUPS

Intelligence continues to show the Iranian IRGC QF providing training, financial support and weaponry to Shia militants attacking Multinational Forces (MNF) across Iraq. Weapons finds and a steady increase in attacks since January, using both sophisticated roadside bombs and rockets, strongly suggest that Iranian support to these groups may have increased: MNF assess that roadside bombs in particular are now responsible for 70% of Coalition casualties in Baghdad. Our knowledge of exactly which groups are beneficiaries of IRGC QF help remains patchy, but [JAM 'Special Groups' are receiving significant help.] It is unclear how the special groups will respond to the recent "freeze" on JAM activity by al-Sadr, but we doubt it will affect Iran's influence.

[...] highlighted a greater degree of external support and direction offered to some of these special groups than we have seen before:

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However, we judge that **IRGC QF control over these special groups is far from total.** The special groups are using Iranian weaponry to target Shia rivals against Iranian wishes: two ISCI/Badr Provincial Governors have been assassinated in sophisticated bomb attacks since August probably by JAM. And, despite Iran's support, intelligence shows there is increasing division between leaders of the some of the special groups.

In many areas the distinction between special groups and more militant elements of mainstream JAM is becoming increasingly blurred as Muqtada al-Sadr's control of the latter ebbs, leaving them more open to Iranian influence:

- [...] while in Baghdad many special group leaders also serve as mainstream JAM commanders.
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