

Hashem al-Haidari Calls for Preemptive Actions Against U.S. Embassy

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Dec 16, 2024

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Brief Analysis

Part of a series: [Militia Spotlight \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight)

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One of Iran's most trusted lieutenants in the Iraqi militia scene is loudly rattling his saber against the U.S. presence in the Middle East.

Amid significant setbacks for Iran's so-called "axis of resistance," Hashem al-Haidari, leader of the [Ahd Allah Islamic Movement \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-ahd-allah-islamic-movement\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-ahd-allah-islamic-movement) in Iraq, has called for targeting all U.S. assets in the region, including embassies. His organization receives direct funding from Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's office in Tehran, positioning him as one of the most significant figures within the *muqawama* (resistance) circles in Iraq. He frequently attends events held by Khamenei in Iran, often with [second \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/qais-tehran-prominently-seated-behind-khamenei\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/qais-tehran-prominently-seated-behind-khamenei) - or [third-tier \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/where-iraqis-landed-supreme-leaders-seating-plan\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/where-iraqis-landed-supreme-leaders-seating-plan) seating that underscores his prominence in the "axis." His views align closely with more radical elements of the Iranian regime, particularly within the Supreme Leader's office and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). This positions him as a key advocate for advancing these views in Iraq.

On December 3, Haidari addressed a group of seminary students in Iraq about recent developments in the region (Figure 1). He claimed that after events in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria, the United States and Israel would likely turn their attention to Iraq, carrying out strikes against the *muqawama* and even potentially targeting Ayatollah Ali al-

Sistani, the country's highest Shia authority. He further stated that the incoming Trump administration would soon usher in an escalatory phase, noting the president-elect's supposed statements to this effect. He also emphasized the need to “be ready and read the enemy with realism.”



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Figure 1: Sayyed Hashem al-Haidari addresses seminary students in Iraq about recent developments in the region, December 3, 2024 (video published on Haidari's Telegram channel on Dec 6, 2024.)

According to Haidari, Israeli-US plans for the next phase are built on three key pillars. The first pillar involves the “reactivation of terrorist takfiri groups.” The second focuses on Israeli strikes targeting both *muqawama* and non-*muqawama* entities in Iraq. The third pillar entails the assassination of prominent Iraqi figures, with Ayatollah Sistani being the primary target. Haidari warned that “there is no ceiling for Israel and the United States,” signalling an unrestricted scope of action.

He further stated, “If Iraq’s turn comes—and I believe that is inevitable—the United States embassy [in Baghdad]... whose content, number of personnel, officers, weaponry, and security remain vague... I believe, at zero hour, this embassy will transform into a military, security, propaganda, and destructive base leading [operations] in Iraq... if the decision is made to change the regime and the face of Iraq.”

Haidari emphasizes the importance of taking proactive measures against these purported plans. He highlights the necessity of *perceiving the danger*, which he explains as “taking the initiative” and “shifting from a discourse of moderation and centrism to one of readiness.” He firmly states that this is not a time to discuss de-escalation. Haidari asserts, “It’s time to take pre-emptive actions. When one sees the enemy approaching, it is only natural to confront the enemy, act first, and strike before being struck.”

He further elaborates on his points, emphasizing the necessity of taking “pre-emptive measures against the United States and terrorist groups in any country.” Haidari asserts, “The United States needs to feel the danger. Whether in its embassies, military bases, staff, officers, or soldiers, the United States must experience real danger in our countries to deter this vast global project.”

The self-styled 'axis of resistance' is desperate to restore a modicum of deterrence against Israeli and U.S. action. For Iraqi groups, the U.S. itself is the key risk (for now), because the U.S. understands exactly who to strike within the Iraqi militia leadership and has the intelligence and reach to do so on any given day. The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad is - in the *muqawama's* view - their main remaining point of leverage: a community of Americans who are always within striking distance, albeit well-fortified and covered by a U.S. deterrent capacity that has been vigorously exercised since 2019. ❖

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