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## Key Shi'ite Cleric Warns US: We'll Resist Return of Occupiers

By Jason Ditz

June 21, 2014

In his Friday sermon, key Iraqi Shi'ite cleric Nasser al-Saedi warned against the return of US forces to the nation, cautioning that Iraqis were ready to resist if the “occupiers” return.

Saedi, a close ally of Moqtada al-Sadr, insisted that Iraq “can deal with ISIS ourselves” and doesn't need or want US military involvement in the fight, saying Shi'ites “will be ready for you if you are back.”

Though the ISIS takeover of major parts of the west have some members of the Iraqi government, primarily Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, hoping a US deployment can bail them out, Saedi's comments underscore that many Iraqis remain strongly averse to another US operation so soon after the decade-long occupation.

The Mehdi Army, the militia of supporters of Sadr, resisted the US occupation, and is in the process of being reformed to fight ISIS. They seem willing to transition to fighting US troops, however, if they arrive.