



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

**IN THE NEWS**

## **Thousands of U.S. Forces May Still Be Needed for Post-ISIS Iraq**

May 18, 2017 *Washington Times*

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Related Experts: Eric Edelman, Hal Brands

The U.S. may need to keep as many as 20,000 troops and other military personnel in Iraq, even after the Islamic State is driven out, to stabilize the country, the former head of the Pentagon's policy shop said Thursday. A postwar force of between 4,000 to 8,000 American troops "is probably sufficient" to help local security forces ensure security in Iraq as ISIS faces defeat in its final stronghold in Mosul, Eric Edelman, the Pentagon's top policy official during the George W. Bush administration, said in an interview. The U.S. forces would likely be deployed as advisers, not combat troops, to support Iraq's police and military forces, he said. "We are dealing with an an ISIS that is severely, severely weakened" after nearly two years of constant war against U.S.-backed Iraqi and Kurdish forces, said Mr. Edelman, who is now a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), a Washington-based defense think tank.