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The dangers after victory over ISIS in Iraq

Since months, Iraqi Kurd Peshmergas, a revitalised Iraqi Army, Turkmen, Arab Sunni and other ethnic and religious militias, Shia Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) are moving towards Mosul evicting ISIS butchers from the lands occupied since 2014. Their agendas are however far from being convergent. Kurds and the Iraqi Army have Western support. The Army is supported also by Iran, as the PMU. The resistance against ISIS gave to the Kurds the opportunity to seize the oil district of Kirkuk and other disputed areas with mixed populations. Arabs, both Sunni and Shia, and others reject such development, amid revamped rivalries among major Kurdish factions over the control of those areas. Turkey has established close political and economic ties with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and in particular with its President Massud Barzani. But it is not clear how Ankara will assess further extensions of Kurdish control in Northern Iraq

Prime Minister Haydar Al Abadi is trying to improve and stabilize his country's governance with both Western and, up to now, Iranian support. But he is still facing difficulties in obtaining parliamentary approval to the appointment of new ministers to give room to competence and integrity, instead of sectarian criteria, and to fight corruption.

The appointment of the new key Minister of Oil was approved, but the Parliament expressed few days ago a no confidence vote (but with disputes about the quorum) against the Minister of Finance, Hoshiar Zebari, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and prominent member of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Massud Barzani. He was key in the attempts by Al Abadi to settle issues with the KRG. His removal may likely complicate relations between Baghdad and Erbil.

Behind the current parliamentary difficulties is the will of Prime Minister Noor Al Maliki to return to power. The support he may have from Iran is not explicit up to now. Al Abadi and Barzani just met to agree on how to oppose his threat.

Agreeing on the military control of Mosul and surrounding areas will not be an easy task, and risks of bloody confrontations are high. Moreover, even if deprived of the territories it conquered two years ago,

ISIS and other jihadist forces will continue to be a terrorist destabilising factor prone to be manipulated by external forces in a regional surrounding where the brutal way in which Russia is supporting the Assad regime in Syria is worsening the perspective of a peaceful solution and is increasing humanitarian tragedies, displacements and migrations.

A comprehensive agreement among regional and external powers, able to induce local actors to equitable compromises, is needed. But we are very far from that, despite the efforts of the US Administration at the end of its mandate and of the UN, while the EU, differently than on the Iranian deal, is keeping a low profile.