Part IV: Building Iraqi Forces, the al-Anbar Awakening, and the Quest to Restore Stability to Iraq

While counterinsurgency doctrine stresses the need to launch surgical operations aimed at pacifying territory and cutting off the supply lines of insurgent fighters, the need to win the support of the population remains critical. From the day they began their second deployment, U.S. Marines made dedicated efforts to build relationships with local leaders and the Iraqi population as a whole. Of particular importance was the need to build stability by using locally raised security forces.

The question facing Marines and Coalition forces in general, however, was what kind of security forces should be raised? Until 2006, most of the Coalition's focus was on building an Iraqi National Army. One method for constructing such a force was to deploy Combined Action Program (CAP) platoons. An innovation of the Vietnam War, CAPs combined U.S. Marines with Iraqis as a means of building a professional, Iraqi military.

However, many Sunnis in al-Anbar Province saw the Shi'a-dominated Iraqi National Army as a force for occupation and oppression. As a consequence, many Marines and other Coalition leaders found that building local police forces was a more effective means for combating the insurgency in western Iraq. Fearing the imminent withdrawal of U.S. troops and subsequent domination of the region by al-Qaeda in Iraq, tribal sheiks like Abdul Sattar Abu Risha approached U.S. forces, offering to enroll the male members of their tribes into the Iraqi police forces. This change, known as the Anbar Awakening, thus led to the development of a professional and efficient police force capable of confronting al-Qaeda in Iraq. The Awakening represents a high point in Marine and Army efforts to engage the Iraqi population and build an effective security apparatus.

The following selections provide readers with a summary of the efforts undertaken by Marines to build local security forces. "The Combined Action Platoon in Iraq" examines how this legacy of the Vietnam War was adapted for the situation in Iraq. Carter Malkasian's essay "Will Iraqization Work?" explores the challenges of building security forces that the Sunnis of the Anbar province could trust in the Shi'a-dominated state. Andrew Lubin and Austen Long's essays provide further analysis and detail about what remains an ongoing effort to forge stability and security in Iraq. Then-Colonel Sean B. MacFarland and Major Niel Smith's essay focuses on the efforts undertaken by the U.S. Army's First Brigade Heavy Combat Team (commanded by Colonel MacFarland) to build alliances with the local Sunni tribes of the Anbar Province. Finally, the diary of al-Qaeda in Iraq fighter Abu-Tariq details the impact of the Awakening on his force's resources and morale, as the diarist relates the imminent collapse of al-Qaeda in Iraq in Anbar Province.

The Combined Action Platoon in Iraq

by First Lieutenant Jason R. Goodale and First Lieutenant Jonathan F. Webre
Marine Corps Gazette, April 2005

On 30 May 2004, the Marines of 3d Platoon, Company G, Task Force 2d Battalion, 7th Marines (TF 2/7), Regimental Combat Team 7, were activated as one of the first combined action program (CAP) platoons since the end of the program in 1971 during Vietnam. Upon entering into this mission, which was new to everyone involved, the TF 2/7 CAP platoon had to "reinvent the wheel" and use an almost forgotten model in order to wage modern counterinsurgency warfare in the west-central al-Anbar Province, Iraq. The scope of the TF 2/7 CAP mission can be broken into three phases: initiating and founding the CAP mission, coordinating and operating in a CAP environment, and establishing a training base to ensure the continuation of the mission.

Phase I: Initiating the CAP Mission

Because TF 2/7 operations continued up to the day of the CAP platoon activation, including TF 2/7 displacement east in support of Fallujah offensive operations in April 2004, the CAP platoon was not able to start working with the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) until late May 2004. The utilization of the CAP platoon as a semi-independent unit within TF 2/7's area of operations (AO) had been planned for a period of weeks, since the battalion's arrival in February 2004, and finally the opportunity to utilize it presented itself. When the order arrived, the TF 2/7 CAP platoon, call sign "Golf 3," displaced from the battalion main forward operating base and moved 25 kilometers away into the platoon's new home near the city of Hit, Iraq. The CAP platoon arrived at the headquarters of the nascent Iraqi National Guard (ING) 503d Battalion on 30 May 2004.

Upon arriving at the 503d headquarters, the platoon had three goals: establish initial security, familiarize itself with new responsibilities, and sustainment. After a brief introduction to the platoon's new host, Colonel Fahad Ab'dal Aziz, commander of the 503d, the platoon established local security and began settling into billeting areas.

The CAP platoon quickly set in motion the necessary functions to train the 503d in anticipation of the national transfer of sovereignty in little over a month. The CAP platoon commander introduced the unit to the staff and officers of the 503d and established short-, mid-, and long-term training and operations goals. The CAP platoon sergeant ensured that all logistical and security concerns were immediately addressed and that future requirements were anticipated. The platoon guide assumed the role of chief trainer and began establishing the process of turning the 503d into a capable Iraqi fighting force.

The noncommissioned officers (NCOs) of the platoon made sure tasks were assigned, watches and rotations established, and everything was proceeding according to the platoon plan. The junior Marines had perhaps the hardest role of adapting to a foreign culture by learning the language and working daily with hundreds of non-English speaking, ill-trained soldiers. Needless to say, this was all ad hoc considering that the CAP platoon's predeployment training consisted of two days of orientation that already proved far short of the expectations necessary to live, eat, sleep, and fight with the 503d. Despite these shortcomings, the TF 2/7 CAP platoon was cognizant that they were going to carry out this mission for the last three months of the battalion's deployment. The platoon wanted nothing short of success. The future local security in this AO needed to be transferred to the Iraqis as soon as they were ready.

Phase II: Coordination and Operations in a CAP Environment

Perhaps the biggest challenge that the TF 2/7

CAP faced in its mission was the establishment of procedures when it came to combined operations with Marines and the 503d soldiers. Golf 3's role in coordinating all U.S. and ISF training and operations from the 503d headquarters decreased throughout the platoon's stay in Iraq. This would never have been possible without the addition, in early June, of a battalion detachment led by the TF 2/7 S-3L (operations liaison officer). Along with subject matter experts from each battalion staff section, the essential task of establishing an operational capability at the 503d battalion level was removed from the CAP platoon.

The CAP platoon and battalion staff solidified, as the weeks passed, into a solid band of Marines and sailors that became known as "Team JCC" (joint coordination center). The JCC was the operations center at the heart of the mission. From the JCC, the CAP platoon and TF 2/7 tracked the majority of activity concerning the Marines, the ING, and the Iraqi police in TF 2/7's AO. Despite some early difficulties with command and control, understandable for a mission of this type, Team JCC began to establish useful techniques and procedures. Such procedures consisted of receiving direction from TF 2/7 headquarters; establishing whether an Iraqi-only, U.S.-only, or a combined effort would act on it; and supervising the execution of any action. As a team, the officers from the respective agencies would assess the situation and assign reaction teams from the ISF to respond. These teams were often supported by the Marines of Company E, located at the adjacent battalion forward operating base, or other units of the battalion as required.

Difficulties would often arise due to lack of communications equipment and logistics assets, such as fuel, unreliability (or lack of training) of the local forces, or language barriers. Each one of these problems was dealt with as it occurred, and over the course of months the CAP managed to find creative solutions to solve each challenge.

A simple example is that of the language barriers. Many of the battalion's interpreters were either not Iraqi or were from a different part of Iraq, making it difficult for Iraqi soldiers to understand them. By learning enough tactical terms in the local dialect to issue a simple order, such as checkpoint, patrol, enemy, and weapons, while making up the difference with diagrams and hand gestures, the problem was solved. As in Vietnam, the CAP platoon's language ability was essential to mission success.

Combined operations with the ISF are rarely smooth, but as the mission matured and evolved, Team JCC developed a system that resulted in several successful operations against the enemy. The CAP platoon jointly confiscated hundreds of illegal weapons and explosive material, captured several insurgents, and successfully engaged the enemy on numerous occasions with no casualties to ISF or TF 2/7 Marines.

Phase III: Establish a Training Base

Perhaps the most visible success of CAP platoon's training mission was the establishment of an instruction foundation that would ensure the continuation of sustainment training throughout the 503d. The CAP platoon initial training package trained 700 soldiers of the 503d in basic weapons handling and marksmanship with the AK-47 and RPK (Soviet) light machinegun. The 503d fired more than 13,000 rounds in the span of four days and set a standard for ISF training.

As a result of some collective thought between the 503d trainers and Marines, a plan developed to bring one platoon a week from one of the four companies in the 503d (from the cities of Hit, Baghdad, Haditha, and Anah/Rawah) and train them in basic combat skills. The training package, which became known as "basic skills training," lasted from Monday to Thursday of each week (accounting for the Iraqi religious day on Friday) with Sunday as a receiving day. The package included physical training and martial arts every morning and covered the gamut of basic mission essential tasks and combat skills to include procedures at checkpoints; search actions for both vehicles and personnel; basic dismounted patrolling skills, such as hand/arm signals, mounted/dismounted techniques; and medical training. Also included were urban skills, such as room clearing, patrolling, building entry techniques, and a full day of live fire and movement training on the

503d's 300-meter rifle range that was recently renovated by TF 2/7 civil affairs. The 503d soldiers learned to rely on a basic formation that they called the "zigzag," or tactical column, for most combat operations.

The training week culminated in a series of graduation battle drills in which the three squads of the 503d platoons would demonstrate—in a series of events—all of the skills learned in the week's training. During the CAP platoon's time with the 503d, the 503d passed 10 platoons (approximately 400 soldiers) through the training package. Each week the plan fluctuated and evolved but ultimately became smoother.

The CAP platoon's most significant training accomplishment was the establishment of a core group of approximately 10 Iraqi trainers led by Major Ab'del Qader Jubair, Training Officer, 503d, and the senior enlisted trainer, Sergeant First Class Jafa Sadeq Hatani. With the personnel additions of other trainers, the group developed into a highly skilled and well-versed training cadre.

Building on TF 2/7's military police platoon "train the trainer" package for 503d NCOs, the CAP platoon's initial training of the 503d was conducted entirely by Marines. After an additional train the trainer piece, the 503d trainers, affectionately referred to as the "Red Sleeves" for the armbands they wore, assumed responsibility.

By the beginning of August 2004, the Red Sleeves assumed full control of the basic skills training package and shaped it as their own. The Marines gladly and proudly allowed them to take the reins and stood back. The CAP platoon realized that if it was theirs (the Iraqis') it was better.

Looking Back

On 9 September 2004, the last Marines of Team JCC were extracted by helicopter, and Golf 3's CAP mission was complete. As the helicopter circled overhead the 503d headquarters, the Marines reflected that in three short months a small group of Marines had stood up an ING battalion, conducted combined operations against the enemy, and created a training program that had been adapted by the Iraqis as their own. As of this writing, the training program continues beyond TF 2/7's stay. A new CAP platoon from TF 1/23 carried on the mission.

TF 2/7 CAP platoon results were often roughly bordered, and many times the unit had to adjust expectations. Nevertheless, the overall goal was defined. The Team JCC leadership was completely confident that the mission was worthwhile. The reactivated CAP has been a relative success in this modern war on terror and should be closely examined as an option for future conflicts.

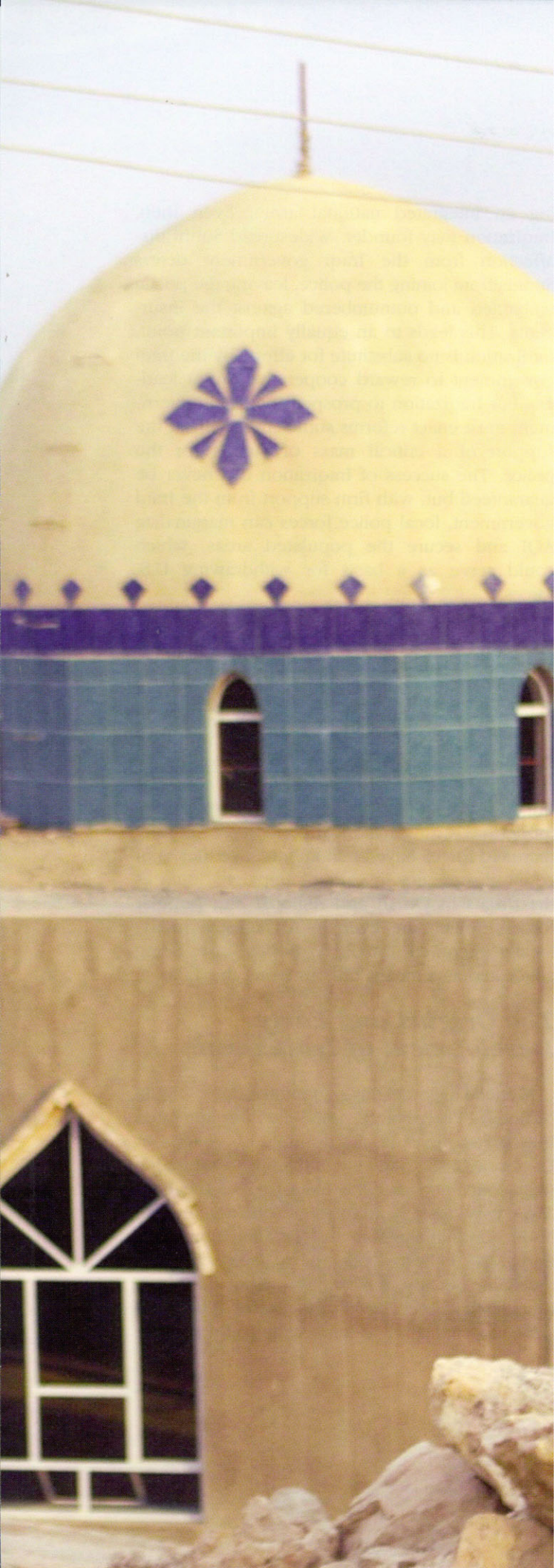
Notes

Marine Corps Gazette, April 2005, 40-42. Reprinted by permission. Copyright *Marine Corps Gazette*.

About the Author

First Lieutenant (now Captain) Jason R. Goodale is commanding officer, Company C, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines. At the time this article was published he was the executive officer for the weapons company, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines.

First Lieutenant Jonathon F. Webre retired from the Marine Corps as a captain. At the time of this article's publication, he was attending the Military Intelligence Officer's Course.



Will Iraqization Work?

by Carter A. Malkasian
Center for Stability and Development, Center for Naval Analyses, February 2007

Introduction

"Iraqization" is a critical element in the Iraq debate. It is central to the U.S. military strategy and a key component of the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group. The basic concept is that a properly trained and equipped Iraqi Army will be able to keep insurgent violence at a low level, thereby allowing the Coalition to withdraw forces. Conventional wisdom is that the Iraqi Army is the sole institution capable of stabilizing Iraq. Shortcomings in Iraqization are usually attributed to an insufficient focus on training, equipping, advising, and manning on the part of the Coalition.

Two years of evidence on the actual performance of the Iraqi Army in al-Anbar Province suggests that the current strategy of Iraqization is not likely to enable U.S. forces to withdraw. In spite of its dramatic growth, there are few signs that the Iraqi Army can suppress insurgent activity to a level that would permit the United States to withdraw substantial forces without leaving behind a terrorist safe haven. Improvements in training, equipping, and advising will not make a difference. Even the best-trained and equipped Iraqi Army units face continual attacks. The problem is the ethnic makeup of the Iraqi Army. Attacks cannot be suppressed because the Sunni population views the Shi'a-dominated army as an unjust occupation force, bent on oppressing them or at least unable to protect them from hard-core insurgents. The population generally refuses to provide actionable intelligence on insurgents, allows insurgents to mass freely, hides insurgents, and joins insurgents as fighters. As long as this sectarian

dynamic exists the Iraqi Army will do no better at defusing the insurgency than Coalition forces. The Iraqi Army, no matter how well trained, advised, equipped, or manned, cannot mend the sectarian rift within Iraq and create understanding between the Sunni and Shi'a.

This paper is based on empirical evidence collected on Iraqization while I served as an advisor to the I Marine Expeditionary Force in al-Anbar Province from February 2004 to February 2005 and February to August 2006. The evidence includes interviews with the Iraqi Army and police, discussions with U.S. advisors, and direct observation of Iraqi Army and police operations. Al-Anbar is overwhelmingly Sunni and infamous as a center of insurgent activity. Skeptics might ask whether the harsh environment of al-Anbar is a good case for testing the potential of Iraqization in general. The answer is that the failure of Iraqization in al-Anbar matters. It means a U.S. withdrawal would leave the Iraqi government unable to control the Sunni heartland. Even if the Iraqi Army resorted to extreme brutality, its initial lack of artillery, air power, and an overwhelming numerical advantage would preclude a rapid victory. The Iraqi government could only accede to the division of the country or engage in a long and bloody civil war to reclaim the province. Neither would appear to be in the interest of the United States. In both cases, hard-core insurgents (who are predominantly Sunni), such as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), would be free to operate in al-Anbar for a prolonged period and organize terrorist operations outside al-Anbar. Even if successful everywhere else in Iraq, Iraqization will have failed as a strategy if it cannot address al-Anbar.

Iraqization may enjoy better prospects if its focus is altered in al-Anbar. In contrast to the Iraqi Army, local Sunni police forces have been able both to collect intelligence and injure the insurgency, especially hardcore groups of greatest concern to the United States, like AQI. Sunni police forces can do this because they enjoy a far stronger relationship with the population than the Iraqi Army. Thus, the emphasis of Iraqization in al-Anbar needs to be upon building local Sunni police forces as much as building an integrated national army. Even then, Iraqization may founder. Widespread Sunni disaffection from the Iraqi government deters Sunnis from joining the police, leaving the police embattled and outnumbered against the insurgents. This leads to an equally important point. Iraqization is no substitute for efforts by the Iraqi government to reward cooperative Sunni leaders. For Iraqization to prosper, the Iraqi government must enact reforms sufficient to garner the support of a critical mass of Sunnis for the police. The success of Iraqization can never be guaranteed but, with firm support from the Iraqi government, local police forces can marginalize AQI and secure the populated areas, which could serve as a basis for withdrawing U.S. forces.

The model of local Sunni police forces has relevance beyond al-Anbar. The Iraqi Army faces similar limitations in other Sunni areas, which locally recruited police could overcome. Indeed, a few local Sunni units have been formed in northern Iraq, which seem to perform well near their home base. The model would be less applicable in Baghdad where local police could be drawn into sectarian violence. Furthermore, the model has strong historical precedence. Locally recruited forces have been an effective means of counterinsurgency in earlier campaigns, such as the firqats in Oman and regional and popular forces in Vietnam. Even in Afghanistan today, locally recruited "auxiliary police" are being advocated as a means of countering the Taliban.

The Origins and Early Development of Iraqization

General George Casey, commander of Multi National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I), implemented Iraqization in the beginning of 2005. In December 2004, a review of the MNF-I campaign plan concluded that the formation of the Iraqi Army was lagging and needed to be accelerated. Multi National Support and Training Command Iraq (MNSTC-I) had planned to create 10 Iraqi divisions but by the end of 2004 only two brigades had seen significant combat. The planners expected that the Iraqi Army could provide

Name	Abbreviated Name	Initial Location	Arrival
2d Brigade, 1st Division	2-1 Iraqi Brigade	Fallujah	Spring 2005
3d Brigade, 1st Division	3-1 Iraqi Brigade	Fallujah	Spring 2005
4th Brigade, 1st Division	4-1 Iraqi Brigade	Vicinity of Fallujah	Spring 2005
1st Brigade, 7th Division	1-7 Iraqi Brigade	Ramadi	Autumn 2005
2d Brigade, 7th Division	2-7 Iraqi Brigade	Hit, Haditha, Rawah	Winter 2006
3d Brigade, 7th Division	3-7 Iraqi Brigade	Al-Qa'im	Winter 2006
1st Brigade, 1st Division	1-1 Iraqi Brigade	Ramadi	Spring 2006

(Table 1) *Iraqi Army Brigades in al-Anbar*

vital manpower and better gather intelligence than Coalition forces. Additionally, they believed that, unlike Coalition forces, the Iraqi Army would not be perceived as occupiers, undercutting a major motivation behind the insurgency. Most importantly, there was an explicit assumption that the Iraqi Army could eventually shoulder counterinsurgency operations, allowing U.S. forces to withdraw. The Iraqi Army would be able to prevent AQI from forming safe havens in Iraq and preserve the integrity of the Iraqi state. As a result of this review, Casey directed that all Coalition forces shift their focus from fighting insurgents to training Iraqis. In order to accelerate Iraqi Army development, MNF-I created the transition team concept—12 advisors embedded into every Iraqi Army battalion, brigade, and division.

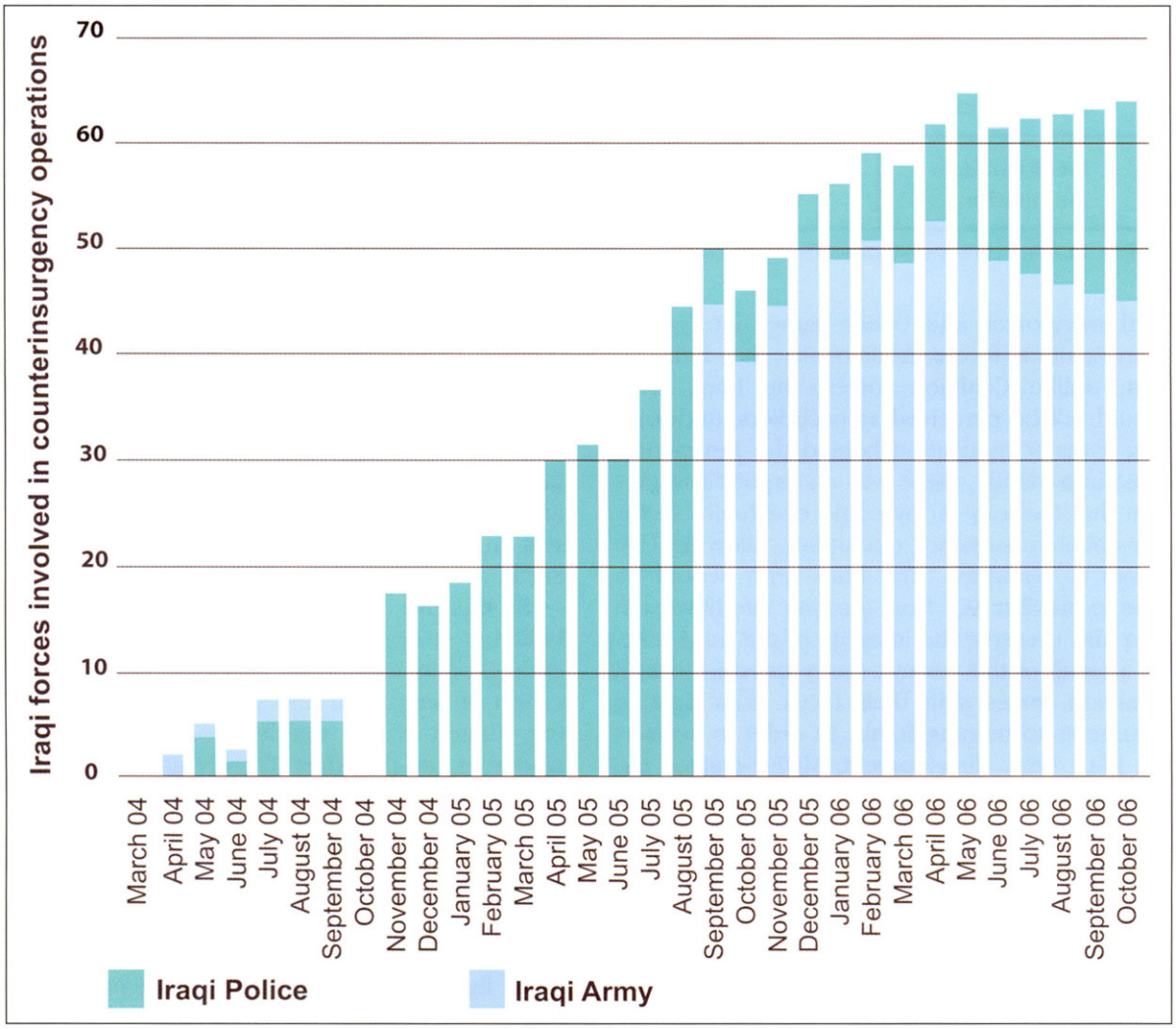
The army was meant to be a national force that integrated Kurds, Shi'a, and Sunni. After the difficulties experienced with the Sunni Iraqi National Guard and Fallujah Brigade in 2004, MNF-I did not want all-Sunni units.[1] It was thought that such units would undermine the development of a new Iraqi nation and cooperate with insurgents. True integration never occurred within the army. Few Sunnis joined in 2004 and 2005. A number of battalions, brigades, and divisions had Sunni commanders but the vast majority of the officers and soldiers were Shi'a.

By the end of 2006, an Iraqi Army had been built but it appeared unable to survive on its own. Prominent scholars cited flaws in the execution of Iraqization and generally claimed that the United States needed to invest greater resources into the effort. Ten divisions were considered too few to handle the insurgency.[2] They also argued that the Coalition had failed to provide sufficient training, equipment, or advisors to the Iraqis. Iraqi Army battalions had only been given a few weeks of formal training. In terms of equipment, the Coalition had left the Iraqi Army more lightly armed than the insurgents, trans-

ported in unarmored pick-up trucks, and often bereft of essential personal items, like boots and cold-weather jackets. Twelve advisors, often reservists or national guardsmen rather than the most capable active-duty personnel, were shown to be inadequate to train, administer, and operate alongside a battalion.[3]

In spite of these problems, today, the consensus remains that a national, ethnically integrated, and well-trained army is the best means of suppressing the insurgency. Ostensibly, the key to U.S. withdrawal from Iraq is simply to invest greater resources into the effort. General John Abizaid, commander of Central Command, told the U.S. Senate in November: "In discussions with our commanders and Iraqi leaders it is clear that they believe Iraqi forces can take more control fast, provided we invest more manpower and resources into the Coalition military transition teams, speed the delivery of logistics and mobility enablers, and embrace an aggressive Iraqi-led effort to disarm illegal militias."[4] Abizaid believed that U.S. forces might thereby be able to hand over security to Iraqi forces within one year.[5] Similarly, the Iraq Study Group's highly anticipated December 2006 report emphasized: "the urgent near-term need for significant additional trained Army brigades, since this is the

(Figure 1) *Iraqi forces as a percentage of total forces conducting counterinsurgency*



key to Iraqis taking over full responsibility for their own security."[6] The report implied that a shortcoming in "real combat capability" caused the Iraqi Army to be unable to handle the insurgency. It recommended increasing the number of U.S. advisors and personnel supporting Iraqi Army units and providing improved equipment.[7]

The Iraqi Army in al-Anbar

Marine commands—the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) and II Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF)—have held responsibility for al-Anbar Province since March 2004. I MEF's first experience with the Iraqi Army brigades in al-Anbar was in the second battle of Fallujah, in November 2004. To the relief of many U.S. officers, the predominantly Shi'a Iraqi Army brigades stood and fought. After the battle, new Iraqi Army brigades flowed into al-Anbar as MNSTC-I trained more and more forces. In 2005, the Ministry of Defense decided that both the 1st and 7th Iraqi Divisions would be located in al-Anbar. By April 2006, all seven brigades had been deployed. Table 1 gives the name, location, and time of arrival of every brigade.

Every Iraqi battalion, brigade, and division in al-Anbar had its 12-man advisory team. National guardsmen and U.S. Army reservists composed the first advisory teams. By the end of 2005 the Marine Corps devoted its own active-duty personnel to the mission. Officers slated for command and key personnel within Marine infantry battalions became advisors. Additionally, Marine and Army battalions partnered with Iraqi battalions, in order to assist in their operations and training. Usually, the partnership process began with an Iraqi company working with a U.S. company. Eventually, the company would operate independently, followed by the battalion, and ultimately the entire brigade.

The Capabilities of the Iraqi Army in al-Anbar

Throughout 2005, the Iraqi Army brigades in al-Anbar developed. Figure 1 shows the percentage of Iraqis conducting counterinsurgency operations out of the total number of Coalition and Iraq forces conducting counterinsurgency operations in al-Anbar (the figure excludes headquarters, logistics, and aviation units). By December 2005, the Iraqi Army was providing 40 to 50 percent of the manpower for counterinsurgency operations. By March 2006, three brigades operated independently.

The Iraqi Army demonstrated strong combat performance. Nearly every Iraqi Army battalion stood its ground in major firefights. Most could perform advanced tasks such as calling in close air support, combining movement with suppressive fire, maneuvering, and assaulting insurgent positions. On no occasion did insurgents rout or overwhelm an Iraqi Army unit. The experiences of two Iraqi brigades provide detailed proof of the army's combat performance.

The 3d Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division (3-1 Iraqi Brigade) operated in the rural area west of Fallujah, along the Euphrates River. Other than 60 or so advisors, no Coalition ground forces supported it. Some Marine officers likened the area to Vietnam, with as many as 50 insurgents launching coordinated attacks against Iraqi Army outposts and patrols.[8] The Iraqi soldiers generally stood and fought. Under the leadership of their advisors, the Iraqis often employed close air support or artillery to break attacks and maneuvered aggressively against their opponents. For example, on 11 May 2006, insurgents coordinated two attacks against the brigade's first battalion. First, they hit a dismounted patrol with small arms fire and RPGs. The Iraqis called for close air support. The air support saw insurgents setting up an ambush position. Using this surveillance, the Iraqis counterattacked and drove off the insurgents. Then, insurgents engaged a nearby outpost with small arms, RPGs, and an antiaircraft gun. The Iraqis sent out their quick reaction force, which outflanked the insurgent position. They killed one insurgent, captured six more, and seized the antiaircraft gun. According to its advisors, the brigade won battles like this at least once per month.

The 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division (1-1 Iraqi Brigade) fought in eastern Ramadi, the scene of the worst violence in al-Anbar. Insurgents

massed and assaulted brigade positions, sniped at patrols, struck convoys with IEDs, and rammed suicide car bombs into observation posts and entry control points. As many as 100 insurgents participated in some attacks. Firefights could last an hour. The brigade performed well. Advisors rated the brigade, a veteran of battles in Najaf, Fallujah, Baghdad, and al-Qa'im, as highly competent in urban fighting. Other Coalition officers considered Brigadier General Razzaq, the brigade commander, the equivalent of the average U.S. brigade commander. Razzaq's men clearly held a tactical edge over the insurgents. *Jundi* (Arabic term for an enlisted soldier) advanced under fire and officers aggressively took the initiative. On one occasion, 40-50 insurgents tried to pin, surround, and destroy a patrol from the brigade's first battalion in the volatile Milaab district of southeast Ramadi. The patrol stole the initiative and pre-empted the attack by assaulting the insurgent positions in surrounding buildings.[9] The brigade suffered casualties and desertions from the heavy fighting but never lost a firefight.

The other brigades succeeded in major engagements as well. Even inexperienced and poorly trained brigades stood and fought. For example, Coalition officers considered 1st Brigade, 7th Iraqi Division (1-7 Iraqi Brigade) to be one of the two weakest brigades.

Nevertheless, its battalions endured heavy fighting in western Ramadi. They consistently defeated attacks involving 20 or more insurgents.[10] The soldiers of the brigade's third battalion would advance under fire, assault insurgent positions, and generally attempt to encircle and outflank opponents. When an IED exploded they would immediately go after the triggerman. Iraqi officers, not just the U.S. advisors, provided the leadership for such tactics. The *jundi* hunkered down less than American troops and could be recklessly brave in combat. Some U.S. officers said that insurgents ran from the *jundi* of third battalion.[11]

Besides succeeding in major firefights, the Iraqi Army in al-Anbar showed a basic proficiency in counterinsurgency techniques. Every battalion conducted patrols, raids, and clearing operations, sometimes as much as Coalition units. For example, 3-1 Iraqi Brigade aggressively patrolled their area of operations and pressed outposts into insurgent safe areas.[12] Because of their aggressiveness, many Coalition officers candidly rated the brigade as better than certain U.S. units. Good Iraqi battalions sent out snipers, set ambushes, and operated at night. U.S. officers considered 1-1 Iraqi Brigade particularly good at squad- and company-level tactics. The brigade's ambushes regularly interdicted insurgents trying to enter Ramadi.[13] Iraqi units understood how to collect intelligence and target insurgents. As will be described later, the problem with intelligence was not the Iraqi Army's understanding of how to collect it but the willingness of the population to provide it in the first place. When intelligence was available, Iraqi units could identify insurgents, locate them, and then capture them in a raid.[14]

Overall, the Iraqi Army showed it could both fight and execute counterinsurgency techniques. It did not operate as well as the Coalition forces but could perform the same basic tasks. Major Lloyd Freeman, the operations officer with the 1st Iraqi Division military transition team, summed up the Iraqi Army's combat performance well:

> Some advisors claim the insurgents are better than the Iraqi soldiers. However, I have not seen an instance where an Iraqi unit has been overrun or even required a Coalition QRF to come to their rescue. I myself have seen enough patrols to be appalled at some of the simple things they are unable to do but in no case have I seen a situation where I felt I was surrounded by complete incompetence. I always felt they could get the job done. It might be ugly but the job would get done.[15]

Quite clearly, problems in advisors, equipment, and training were not preventing the Iraqi Army from fighting the insurgents and displaying a "real combat capability."

Sustained Insurgent Activity

The problem was that combat capability had little to do with the level of insurgent activity. In

spite of its dramatic growth and strong combat performance, the Iraqi Army faced incessant attacks, enduring a steady stream of attacks by small arms fire, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), indirect fire, and suicide car bombs. This experience was shared by nearly all Iraqi units, regardless of their skill level. Just like the Coalition, the Iraqi Army could fight well and understand counterinsurgency tactics yet still face a vibrant insurgency. Notably, proficiency in counterinsurgency techniques and combat performance did not save 1-1 and 3-1 Iraqi Brigades from major attacks involving scores of insurgents. Incident levels remained high in nearly every brigade area of operations, regardless of the resident brigade's capabilities. Most disturbing for U.S. interests, AQI maintained a presence throughout the province. Overall, insurgent attacks made it clear that the Iraqi Army could not manage the insurgency with U.S. forces present, which makes it highly unlikely they will be able to do so absent U.S. forces—the primary goal of Iraqization.

There is little reason to believe the answer to this problem is more advising, training, or equipping. Above, I judged the Iraqi Army's combat capability partly on the performance of two of its best brigades, which may seem unfair. However, 1-1 and 3-1 Iraqi brigades represent critical cases for Iraqization. One would expect them to face fewer attacks. The fact that they did not casts doubt on any argument that better advising, training, and equipping can enable Iraqization to succeed. If the best of the Iraqi Army brigades faced heavy attacks, then more advising, training, and equipping to bring the other brigades up to speed is not likely to solve the problem.

The answer was also not that the Coalition and Iraqi Army lacked sufficient forces to quell insurgent activity. Admittedly, Iraqi and Coalition forces could not be everywhere, meaning the insurgents had freedom to mass and gather for attacks. Iraqi Army officers frequently noted that al-Anbar was too big to be controlled by only 7 brigades. Furthermore, Iraqi battalions were under-strength. Most operated at 30 to 80 percent strength (150-400 men), excluding men on leave. One-third of the 750 men in a battalion were on leave at any time. Desertions and combat losses further drained the strength of Iraqi battalions. Desertions occurred because of poor living conditions, irregular pay, distance from home, and constant exposure to combat. Blame falls largely on the Ministry of Defense, which failed to pay soldiers on time or provide combat replacements for most of 2006. There is evidence that reinforcing or building new Iraqi Army units would have helped. In 2004 and 2005, saturating cities with forces, as in the second battle of Fallujah or the battle of al-Qa'im, tended to reduce large-scale attacks.

However, there is good reason to doubt whether greater numbers would have made a decisive difference. Reinforcement of counterinsurgency operations in 2006 had disappointing results. The number of Iraqi Army units in Ramadi, Hit, and Haditha increased substantially in 2006 *without any sustained drop in large-scale attacks*.

Indeed, attacks increased in Ramadi and Haditha even though the number of forces met the 20 security personnel per 1,000 civilians ratio often touted as needed for effective counterinsurgency.[16] In Ramadi, areas supposedly "locked down" by thorough Iraqi patrolling witnessed attacks. In other words, even where the Iraqi Army operated with sufficient numbers, major insurgent activity did not always subside. Thus, inadequate numbers alone do not seem to explain why the Iraqi Army faced attacks. Perhaps if the Ministry of Defense had flooded al-Anbar with two or three additional divisions, violence could have been subdued by sheer weight of numbers. Even so, that would hardly have been the most efficient solution and probably would not have removed the fundamental roots of the violence.

Popular Opposition to the Iraqi Army

The main reason that the Iraqi Army suffered from incessant attacks is that the population sympathized with the insurgency. They generally would not provide intelligence on the location and identity of insurgents. Bottom-up intelligence

collection is essential to successful counterinsurgency. Without it, insurgents cannot be identified from among the population and removed. As Frank Kitson stated in his classic counterinsurgency text, *Low Intensity Operations,* "if it is accepted that the problem of defeating the enemy consists very largely of finding him, it is easy to recognise the paramount importance of good information."[17] More recently, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps new counterinsurgency manual cited intelligence as one of the key principles of counterinsurgency:

Without good intelligence, counterinsurgents are like blind boxers wasting energy flailing at unseen opponents and perhaps causing unintended harm. With good intelligence, counterinsurgents are like surgeons cutting out cancerous tissue while keeping other vital organs intact. Effective operations are shaped by timely, specific, and reliable intelligence, gathered and analyzed at the lowest possible level and disseminated throughout the force.[18]

In al-Anbar, insurgents could mass freely because local residents would not inform the Iraqi Army. Worse, some hid insurgents from Iraqi Army patrols and sweeps or even joined the insurgency as fighters. Consequently, the Iraqi Army could win every firefight and patrol diligently without ever rooting out the insurgents.

The population opposed the Iraqi Army primarily because of its Shi'a identity. Sunnis disliked the Shi'a-dominated Iraqi government. The government's insistence on denying Sunnis political power and economic wealth convinced them of its oppressive intentions. Sectarian violence in Baghdad following the February 2006 Golden Mosque bombing magnified the Sunni perception that the Shi'a intended on oppressing them. Polling in 2006 found that 77 to 90 percent of the people viewed the government as illegitimate. Eighty percent considered civil war likely.[19] As far as Sunnis were concerned, Persians probably controlled the entire government. The Iraqi Army was nothing more than a Shi'a militia bent on oppressing them. Polls confirmed that the majority of Sunnis in al-Anbar viewed the Iraqi Army as a threat.[20]

Virtually no Iraqi Army formation could gain the support of a critical mass of the local population. Even the best brigades, like 3-1 Iraqi Brigade, could not collect sufficient intelligence to reduce insurgent activity. One battalion in that brigade received only one actionable tip in eight months, in spite of an active civil affairs effort. The people in the area preferred to assist the insurgents. They kept 3-1 Iraqi Brigade under observation and reported its movements to insurgents. The 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division probably held the best record in collecting intelligence but this never sufficed to decapitate insurgent command and control or regularly warn of insurgent attacks.[21] Few people wanted to interact with the Iraqi Army. They refused to take free water offered by the brigade (some angrily poured it onto the ground) and did not stop insurgents from bombing mobile clinics devised to render medical care to the people. One battalion commander said he felt little sympathy from locals. Locals did not come forward to provide information of value. From his perspective, popular opposition to the Iraqi Army was deeply ingrained. His officers agreed that shaykhs and imams supported the insurgents. The shaykhs and especially the imams had the ear of the people and influenced them to hide information from the Iraqi Army. In the battalion's experience, no other area of al-Anbar had been so opposed to the army. One officer estimated that 25 to 30 percent of locals were insurgents.[22]

On the other side of Ramadi, the battalions of 1-7 Iraqi Brigade also could never get enough intelligence to take out significant numbers of insurgent leaders. One battalion commander, a Sunni, complained that the people, mukhtars, and city leaders were not cooperating with him. They would not provide worthwhile information.[23] He believed locals were uncooperative because they found government policies anti-Sunni and undemocratic.[24] Another battalion commander stated that his men got little of value from the locals.[25] Some locals were openly hostile. They refused to talk and would not provide information.[26] A Marine civil affairs team that interacted with the population on a daily basis in Ramadi suspected that most people hoped that Saddam would return and the new government would leave.[27]

In Fallujah, locals gave the Iraqi Army minimal information on the location of insurgents and hid insurgents who attacked the army.[28] Imams told locals to fight the Iraqi Army.[29] Iraqi Army officers believed the people perceived them as occupiers and supported the insurgents.[30] They never heard an imam denounce an attack on the army. Indeed, at one city council meeting, city officials laughed derisively at an Iraqi officer when he noted his men received no cooperation from locals; as if to ask why he would expect any different. City leaders regularly accused the Iraqi Army of being Jaysh al Mahdi, Badr Corps, or an Iranian occupation force. At meeting after meeting, they claimed the Iranians had taken charge of the government.[31] A prominent imam said that the people of Fallujah were fighting a Persian occupation.[32] Similarly, a respected teacher accused Iraqi soldiers of following their sectarian desires and being an instrument of Iran.[33] Unfounded tales of horrible Iraqi atrocities often accompanied accusations of sectarianism. One local at a city council meeting said: "When your [Coalition] forces question us, we at least feel mostly safe. When the Iraqi Army and police take us, our people are killed and their bodies thrown into the streets."[34] Some locals called for revenge for the heavy-handedness of the Iraqi Army.

The Iraqi Army fed Sunni sectarian fears by occasionally treating the population poorly. At times, Iraqi soldiers cursed at Sunnis, stole items from homes, and occupied Sunni residences as observation posts.[35] If under stress, Iraqi soldiers could be physically brutal. In particular, the death of a comrade could motivate jundi to randomly detain or even beat locals. Usually, though, Iraqi officers intervened and reinforced discipline.

For example, Razzaq tried to counteract any abusive or sectarian tendencies in his brigade.[36] And Brigadier General Abdullah, the Sunni commander of 4th Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division (4-1 Iraqi Brigade), made a concerted effort to work with local leaders and have an amicable relationship with the population. City leaders in Fallujah upheld his brigade as a model of good behavior. Overall, brutality was an exception rather than the rule for the Iraqi Army. In spite of some Sunni propaganda, no Iraqi Army battalion ever acted as a Shi'a death squad or persecuted the Sunni population. Some jundi and officers had connections to a militia and many admired Moqtada Sadr. But no entire unit pursued a sectarian agenda against the Sunnis.

3d Brigade, 7th Iraqi Division (3-7 Iraqi Brigade)

If Sunnis fought the Iraqi Army because of its Shi'a identity, one might expect that a Sunni brigade would have a better ability to keep violence at a low level. Indeed, the one Iraqi brigade with a large Sunni composition experienced minimal attacks and easily enforced security in its area. The 3d Brigade, 7th Iraqi Division arrived in al-Qa'im in February 2006, following a major Coalition clearing operation (Operation Steel Curtain). The brigade obviously benefited from Operation Steel Curtain and could not have cleared the city on its own. What the brigade did was prevent insurgents from infiltrating back into the city. In other cities, such as Haditha and to some extent Fallujah, insurgents reinfiltrated following clearing operations and resumed attacks. Uniquely, a large number of Sunnis filled 3-7 Iraqi Brigade's rolls. Over the next 10 months, the brigade faced few attacks in spite of being severely undermanned, often operating at less than 50 percent strength (excluding leave rotations). It suffered roughly a quarter of the casualties the Iraqi Army suffered in Fallujah, the next most benign operating environment of comparable size (200,000 people). The fact the brigade was relatively untrained and undermanned yet subject to few attacks reinforces the argument that training and numbers were not critical to the ability of the Iraqi Army to manage the insurgency.

The success of the brigade depended on the Albu Mahal tribe, the most powerful tribe in the al-Qa'im area. Roughly 20 to 40 percent of the brigade came from that tribe.[37] The Albu Mahal had been insurgents in 2004. In 2005, AQI came to al-Qa'im. The tribe disliked AQI's indiscriminate use of force, importation of foreign fighters, and encroachment upon their control of the black-market. Unfortunately, AQI defeated the

Albu Mahal in a battle for control of the city in 2005.[38] Thereafter, the Albu Mahal helped the Coalition reassert control over al-Qa'im. In particular, the Coalition formed a set of "Desert Protector" platoons, composed of Albu Mahal and advised by U.S. Special Forces. The Ministry of Defense made special allowance for the formation of these militia-like units. The Desert Protector platoons proved especially useful during Operation Steel Curtain, when they collected large amounts of intelligence. Fellow tribesmen readily provided information on AQI sleeper agents, safe houses, ammunition caches, and bomb-making workshops.[39]

The Iraqi government rewarded the Albu Mahal for their support of Operation Steel Curtain. The Ministry of Defense allowed tribesmen to serve in 3-7 Iraqi Brigade, breaking the standard rule that brigades in al-Anbar could not be composed of local Sunnis. An Albu Mahal tribal leader, Colonel Ishmael, became the brigade's commander. Two battalion commanders and several staff officers were also Albu Mahal. The Coalition formed a police force, commanded by Colonel Ishmael's brother. By the end of the year, the police force numbered over 1,000, largely from the Albu Mahal.

The Albu Mahal received other forms of rewards besides control over an Iraqi Army brigade. The Ministry of Defense appointed Major General Murthi, from the tribe, as commander of the entire 7th Iraqi Division. Another tribal leader became mayor of al-Qa'im. In terms of money, the tribe now had freedom to retake control of the black market and run smuggling operations into Syria. Control over phosphate mines in Akashat gave the tribe a lucrative commodity to trade through al-Qa'im.[40] These rewards meant the Albu Mahal had deep interests in ensuring insurgents, particularly AQI, never returned to al-Qa'im.

The brigade, together with the police, proved highly effective in suppressing insurgent activity. Insurgent infiltration back into the city was rapidly cut off. In contrast to other Iraqi Army formations, 3-7 Iraqi Brigade demonstrated a robust capability for human intelligence collection. Battalions collected intelligence prodigiously, in spite of the fact they had been given little training. Soldiers and officers aggressively pursued leads and regularly captured insurgents. Information could be gathered easily from other Albu Mahal.

The Habbaniyah Mutiny

If Shi'a identity inhibited the effectiveness of the Iraqi Army, then the obvious answer would seem to be to recruit more Sunnis. I MEF and II MEF recognized that the Shi'a identity of the Iraqi Army inflamed tensions with the local Sunni population of al-Anbar. Accordingly, recruiting Sunnis into the army, particularly during early 2006, became a priority. Unfortunately, outside al-Qa'im, recruiting Sunnis proved quite difficult.

In late 2005, the Ministry of Defense granted that 5,000 Sunnis from al-Anbar could be recruited into the army. In early 2006, the figure was raised to 6,500. However, the ministry did not want all of the Sunnis serving in the 1st or 7th Divisions. Rather, the Sunni recruits would be deployed throughout the armed forces. The thought was that if allowed to remain in al-Anbar large numbers of Sunni soldiers, who would have ties to local insurgents, might undermine the 1st and 7th Iraqi Divisions. In the view of Ministry of Defense as well as much of the Iraqi government, Sunni elements of the two divisions, might become de facto Sunni militias resistant to the Iraqi government, like the old Fallujah Brigade (3-7 Iraqi Brigade evidently was exempt from this concern because of the Albu Mahal rivalry with AQI). Consequently, only a minority of the recruits was permitted to serve in al-Anbar.

The first recruiting effort occurred at the end of March. It aimed for 1,000 recruits. Ultimately, I MEF sent 1,017 recruits to training, largely from Fallujah. Unfortunately, success had been built on false pretenses. The Sunni recruits believed they would be serving near their homes. They did not know they could be deployed anywhere in Iraq or even anywhere in al-Anbar. In fact, the mayor of Fallujah had reassured the Fallujah recruits that they would serve in Fallujah. By all accounts, his assurances had induced many of them to volunteer.

On 30 April, the new soldiers graduated from training. During the ceremony, replete with Coalition and Iraqi generals, it was announced that many would be deployed outside al-Anbar. Yelling and throwing their uniforms to the ground, 600 of the newly trained soldiers refused to deploy. The main reason was a desire to stay close to home but this was connected to a fear of Shi'a militias and sectarian retribution if they joined predominantly Shi'a units and deployed outside the Sunni triangle. Many told U.S. officers that they would be attacked if they left al-Anbar. The mayor of Fallujah supported the recruits, telling Coalition officers: "As long as I am receiving corpses from Baghdad, I will not send soldiers there"[41] In the end, more than 600 of the 1,000 recruits deserted.[42]

The mutiny deterred Sunnis from subsequent recruiting efforts. Local imams and shaykhs evidently spoke out against joining the army.[43] I MEF never found 6,500 Sunnis for the army.

The Habbaniyah Mutiny showed that Sunnis would not serve in the Shi'a dominated army or deploy outside al-Anbar. It is the final piece of evidence that makes the Iraqi Army appear distinctly unable to handle the Sunni insurgency. The Iraqi Army cannot gather the intelligence necessary for effective counterinsurgency because of its Shi'a identity; while its structure as an integrated and national force deters Sunnis, who alone can collect vital intelligence, from joining.

The Year of the Police

After the Habbaniyah Mutiny, I MEF came to the conclusion that the best way to recruit Sunnis into the Iraqi security forces would be through forming local police forces. Unlike the army, the Iraqi government permitted police forces to be locally recruited. Casey had already dubbed 2006 the "year of the police." He wanted I MEF to recruit 11,330 police in Anbar by the end of the year. In the view of MNF-I, the establishment of law or order by police after the Iraqi Army had suppressed large-scale insurgent activity represented a natural progression toward stability. The commanders of I MEF tried to build police less for this reason than because they needed Sunnis to fight the insurgency.[44]

To the surprise of many U.S. officers, reliable local police actually formed in Al Anbar. By the end of 2006, roughly 20 percent of the forces conducting counterinsurgency operations in al-Anbar were police (see Figure 1). Although they had no love for the Iraqi government, a number of Sunnis wanted the violence and instability in al-Anbar to end. While in 2004 Sunnis had stood fairly united in support of the insurgency, by 2006 divisions had emerged between local Sunni leaders and hard-core insurgent groups.[45] Hard-core insurgent groups like AQI upset local Sunni leaders with their heavy-handed tactics and domination of the black market.[46] Polls found that the majority of Sunnis opposed the foreign fighters affiliated with AQI and viewed them as a significant threat. In fact, 47 to 65 percent favored killing them.[47] Accordingly, certain Sunni leaders cooperated with the Coalition to form police forces, most notably in Ramadi and Fallujah. In Fallujah, a set of local tribes, civic leaders, and imams supported the creation of a police force of 1,200.[48] None of these groups wanted hardcore insurgents in Fallujah. In Ramadi, a group of tribes centered on the Albu Thiyab, Albu Ali Jassim, and Albu Risha formed a police force of 1,000, under the leadership of Shaykh Sittar, a leader of the Albu Risha. In September, Sittar openly announced the opposition of those tribes to AQI and foreign-backed terrorists.[49] Other police forces equally committed to fighting AQI formed in Bagdadi, Hit, and Haditha.

Police forces proved far more dangerous to insurgents than the Iraqi Army. One policeman told a Marine advisor: "What makes an insurgent's heart turn cold is to see an Iraqi policeman in uniform. It is as if he has been stabbed in the chest with a cold knife."[50] The effectiveness of the police derived from their ability as Sunnis and members of the community to collect actionable intelligence. In Fallujah, most tips on insurgent activity came from the police.[51] Marines patrolling or standing post with the police were impressed with their knowledge of insurgent activity, insurgent tactics, and the allegiances of the population in the surrounding

area. The police regularly detained insurgents, especially in retaliation for attacks on policemen. At least five insurgent cells were taken out in July and August alone. In Ramadi, the police aggressively targeted insurgents from information gathered during patrols or from their tribal connections.[52]

Locals praised them.[53] On one patrol into a neighborhood controlled by AQI, locals were in tears at the sight of police. When asked in a poll if tribes were a good source of security, 69 percent of respondents strongly agreed (when asked the same question about the Iraqi Army, 81 percent strongly disagreed).[54] Through their access to intelligence, the Ramadi police and their tribes gave AQI a bloody nose during the last months of 2006. Not just thugs and fighters were captured or killed but leaders off Coalition high value targeting lists, including at least two al-Qaeda in Iraq "emirs" (senior leaders within Ramadi). The total number of publicized killings numbered over 20 by the end of October.[55]

Coalition officers were particularly impressed with the willingness of the Ramadi police to stand and fight. In one notable engagement, roughly 25 insurgents positioned in an apartment complex ambushed a police raiding force. The police held their ground despite casualties and then assaulted the apartment complex. A Coalition quick reaction force provided some fire support but the police cleared the insurgents out of the apartments entirely on their own over an hour of fighting, capturing many of the insurgents in the process. Insufficient numbers prevented the police from suppressing insurgent activity throughout Ramadi but their willingness to stand and fight plus access to intelligence allowed them to at least keep their own tribal areas relatively free of violence.

Unlike the Albu Mahal in al-Qa'im, police forces in Fallujah and Ramadi were too small (for reasons described below) to completely suppress insurgent activity. However, their ability to reduce insurgent activity still surpassed that of the Iraqi Army. In Fallujah, the support of imams, shaykhs, and former military officers enabled the police to lock down the city for the October 2005 referendum, December 2005 election, and March 2006 Iraqi Army recruiting drive.[56] During the referendum and election, both the Coalition and Iraqi Army stayed within their bases and outposts, meaning the police handled the bulk of the security duties. In Ramadi, the police controlled incidents within their tribal areas and neighborhoods, even if they could not secure the city as a whole.

Police forces only succeeded because of the support of local leaders, such as shaykhs and imams, who encouraged young men to volunteer and locals to provide information. The Iraqi government motivated local leaders to build police forces and stand against AQI through payoffs, political positions, and allowing them to control their own security forces. These rewards did not mean that local leaders trusted the Iraqi government. Rather, they made it worthwhile for local leaders to risk their lives opposing AQI in order to secure their own communities.

In Fallujah, economic assistance did not restore prosperity but gave the city leaders, who supported the police, the ability to keep portions of the population complacent. The Iraqi government provided $180 million for housing compensation and the Coalition conducted major projects to improve power, water, sewage, and medical care.[57] Politically, the Coalition arranged for Fallujah city leadership to have direct access to the Iraqi government by bringing major national political leaders to Fallujah for talks. Militarily, the Fallujah police became the protectors of the city. People approved of the police not only because they opposed AQI but also because they kept out Shi'a militias from Baghdad.

In Ramadi, Maliki purportedly awarded Sittar and his subordinates cash gifts and salaries.[58] The government turned a blind eye when Sittar regained control of criminal activity along the highways near Ramadi, which AQI had disturbed.[59] The government also provided prestigious political positions. At the end of October, the Ministry of the Interior granted Sittar authority over security in al-Anbar. Another leader in his movement became the provincial police chief. The ministry permitted the movement to create three "emergency" battalions, totaling

2,250 men. This was a huge concession. For all intents and purposes, the government was permitting Sittar and his movement to have their own militia. Sittar probably received vehicles and weapons from the Iraqi government as well. Maliki's aides have stated that the prime minister supports Sittar's movement and has met with its leaders.[60]

Unfortunately, the government only bought off a minority of the population. This is the reason the police could not completely suppress insurgent activity. Given high levels of attacks, insurgents probably outnumbered the police everywhere except al-Qa'im. One imam said that 5 percent of the people in Fallujah were hardcore insurgents. This was undoubtedly an exaggeration but even if the figure was 2 percent, the police would still be outnumbered. Four thousand insurgents (if Fallujah contained 200,000 people) would exceed the combined strength of the Coalition, Iraqi Army, and police. In Ramadi, Sittar slowly built support among other tribes but key tribes and most of the insurgent fighters would not oppose AQI. Sectarian violence and disaffection with the government remained a major concern for the bulk of the population in both Fallujah and Ramadi that deterred wider action against AQI. Rising sectarian violence motivated men in Fallujah to join the insurgency, particularly refugees from Baghdad. According to comments from some Sunnis, these men viewed AQI as the only means of defense against the Shi'a militias. By mid-2006, continuing violence in Baghdad made many imams resistant to moderation. Without their support, the police lost their best means of securing popular sympathy and discouraging insurgents from attacking them.[61] People had similar opinions in Ramadi. Lieutenant Colonel Adnan, chief of a police station in Ramadi, said:

> The people believe that the main reason for problems in Iraq is the government. Hakim and Sadr dominate the government. They work against Iraq. The situation had instilled hopelessness in the population. They do not believe stability will return. Good government in Baghdad would make everything successful. It would end sectarian violence. The government provides no help to Ramadi and hence the situation is not good.[62]

In many respects, the Iraqi government had only done enough to reconcile with select groups that had their own reasons to oppose insurgent activity. Efforts had been insufficient to overcome the deep grievances held by most of the population.

At the end of 2006, the police in Fallujah and Ramadi remained resilient but the situation could hardly be called stable. In Fallujah, insurgents constantly targeted the police and their supporters with sniper attacks, suicide car bombs, and assassinations. Casualties included the deputy police chief, the traffic police chief, two capable senior officers, a senior imam, and two chairmen of the Fallujah city council. The Coalition counted over 30 assassinations in July and August 2006 alone. Locals were not willing to risk their lives to protect the police, even if they appreciated their overall efforts. In Ramadi, AQI slew off-duty police and members of their tribes almost daily, including the shaykh of the Albu Ali Jassim tribe.[63] Still, as of January 2007, the will of the police in al-Anbar never broke; they continued to fight and contribute more toward stability than either the Coalition or the Iraqi Army.

Conclusion

This paper has asked whether Iraqization can produce security forces able to suppress the insurgency in al-Anbar. The answer is not with an integrated and predominantly Shi'a army. If the United States withdrew today, the war would continue unabated. The Iraqi Army would be surrounded by a population unwilling to help them. At best, the army would operate as they do now, unable to control much of al-Anbar. At worst, the army would be isolated around their posts and slowly whittled away by insurgent attacks.

Eventually, the insurgents, including AQI, would drive the army from al-Anbar and consol-

idate control over the province. The Shi'a government might eventually win through sheer numbers or ruthless brutality but the stage would be set for a long and bloody civil war. Insurgent and AQI control over al-Anbar and a civil war would hardly be positive outcomes for U.S. interests in the Middle East.

This grim forecast is not likely to change, no matter the hours of training, amount of equipment, or number of advisors invested into the Iraqi Army. Sunnis view the Iraqi Army as an occupation force and consequently refuse to provide the intelligence vital to successful counterinsurgency. The recommendations of the Iraq Study Group and other notable scholars to add advisors, improve equipment, lengthen training, or increase the number of brigades will improve the efficiency of the Iraqi Army but not enable it to reduce insurgent activity. More advisors, training, or equipment will not change the identity of the Iraqi Army or motivate Sunnis to join it; nor will increasing the size of the Iraqi Army.

Iraqization might still work in al-Anbar but the Iraqi Army cannot be the lone vehicle. Any capable security force must include Sunnis in order to gather intelligence from the population. Yet Sunnis will not join an army dominated by Shi'a.

Unfortunately, the majority Shi'a share of the population of Iraq argues that any integrated army will inherently have a Shi'a "face." Consequently, the Coalition should focus on building local police forces. Under the right conditions, Sunnis have shown themselves willing to join local police forces, which have been able to combat AQI, America's number one enemy in Iraq. Select areas have been formed that enjoy restricted insurgent activity. The growth of the police could expand these areas an enable a reduced U.S. presence.

Furthermore, this model might be implemented outside al-Anbar. Local police forces should be no less effective in other Sunni provinces, where the same division between AQI and Sunni leaders exists. To give three examples, 3d Brigade, 2d Iraqi Division, in Ninewa Province has a battalion of locally recruited Sunnis. According to U.S. officers, this battalion performs well against AQI as long as it operates in its local area. Similarly, in Mosul, the Iraqi government granted the Jabburi tribe control over the police forces in order to counter AQI. Finally, Prime Minister Maliki has reportedly considered implementing the model in Diyala province, where there is a large Sunni population and AQI is present.[64]

The success of police in the Sunni provinces turns on the ability of the Iraqi government to reach out to local Sunni communities and groups, particularly tribes, as they did with the Fallujah city leadership, the Albu Mahal tribe, and Shaykh Sittar's movement. So far, the Iraqi government has not done enough to win over more than a minority of the population. Imams, shaykhs, and other local leaders would need to be lavished with political and economic rewards for supporting the police. Such rewards could include: political positions, command of military formations, civil affairs projects, economic compensation packages, salaries, and permission to run black market activities. Otherwise, local leaders will not risk their lives against the insurgents. This form of Iraqization cannot succeed without the support of the Iraqi government. If the government cannot deliver rewards to the Sunnis, then Sunnis will not form security forces and the insurgency will not be suppressed.

To be clear, the evidence suggests that the model, and Iraqization as a whole, can only lessen, not eliminate, insurgent activity in Sunni areas. Sectarian violence and some degree of insurgent activity will continue as long as no political solution is found to the differences between the Sunni and the Shi'a within Iraq. Iraqization cannot bring peace to Iraq even if it might reduce the requirement for U.S. forces throughout the country.

Building local police forces would be a fundamental shift from the current structure of Iraqization, which holds an integrated national army as the key to victory. The army should not be abandoned; it has a proven ability to conduct combat operations and can provide backbone to police operations. Nevertheless, greater effort would need to be placed behind local police forces of a single identity. Although police in

name, the Coalition would essentially be allowing local Sunni militias. The formation of a national democracy would be undermined. The United States would be tacitly permitting the Sunnis, like the Shi'a with Jaysh al Mahdi and the Badr Corps, to defend themselves. With each community's military forces balancing against one another, this would be one more step toward the fragmentation of Iraq into Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurdish areas. A real possibility exists that Sunni police in Baghdad and other mixed areas would clash with Shi'a militias in defense of their neighborhoods. Under the worst case, Sunni police might attack Shi'a areas. Additionally, the government would be devolving power from democratically elected officials to traditional non-elected authority figures, such as imams and shaykhs, which could further undermine the democratization effort. Indeed, the move would drive Iraqi political development backwards toward the way that Iraq was ruled by the British, who gave the tribes considerable power in order to balance the authority of the government. That policy eventually left the Iraqi government dependent on certain tribes for authority (ironically, many of the very ones now forming local police) and may have contributed to its ultimate downfall.

These possibilities reduce but do not eliminate the value of building local Sunni police. To a certain extent, the costs can be exaggerated. National unity may be weakened but it is unlikely that local police would actually fragment the state. Outside Baghdad, Sunni police forces probably have a better relationship with the Iraqi government than any other element of Sunni society and there are no cases of Sunni police from al-Anbar attacking Shi'a areas. Sunnis may not help the Iraqi Army detain fellow Sunnis but all are not at open war with the Iraqi government either. The risk of clashes with Shi'a militia could be mitigated by not forming Sunni police within Baghdad. Furthermore, the Iraqi government has already been willing to countenance the formation of Sunni police. This suggests that the government does not view Sunni police as a threat. Indeed, an official from the Maliki government told the *Washington Post:* "Obviously some people see this as a threat, but when compared to other threats, this is a rather benign one."[65] As long as the Iraqi government is providing the economic and political rewards to supportive Sunni groups, the likelihood of the British experience being repeated will be limited. These Sunni groups will inherently depend on the government for patronage and power. They will be hard-pressed to challenge its authority without undermining their own position.

Ultimately, the United States faces a choice. A national and integrated state can continue to be pushed, at the cost of the presence of hard-core Sunni insurgents, such as AQI. Or the ties that bind the state can be loosened in order to remove hard-core insurgents, at the cost of formalizing sectarian divisions and weakening democratization. The latter is hardly optimal but still preferable to allowing America's number one enemy—AQI—to thrive in Iraq. By reducing the insurgency, the Iraqi government may actually gain better control over Iraq than it enjoys now, or ever will if a national and integrated army remains the sole focus of Iraqization.

Notes

Working paper, Center for Stability and Development, Center for Naval Analyses, February 2007. Reprinted by permission of the Center for Naval Analyses.

1. In 2004, the Iraqi National Guard in al-Anbar plus the ill-fated Fallujah Brigade performed poorly, either because of insurgent intimidation or outright sympathy for the insurgency. Only one of the seven Iraqi National Guard battalions demonstrated minimal levels of effectiveness. The Fallujah Brigade was basically controlled by the insurgents and would not cooperate with the Iraqi government.
2. Of the 10 divisions, those in Shi'a and Kurdish areas were locally based and could not be deployed to fight the insurgency in Sunni areas.
3. Michael Vickers, "Military Strategies for Unconventional Warfare," Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 27 October 2006; Thomas X. Hammes, An Oversight Hearing on the Planning and Conduct of the War in Iraq," Senate Democratic Policy Hearing, 25 September 2006; Thomas Ricks, "U.S. Military is Still Waiting for Iraqi Forces to 'Stand Up'," *Washington Post*, 1 October 2006; Thomas Ricks, "Flaws Cited in

Effort to Train Iraqi Forces," *Washington Post*, 21 November 2006; Hans Binnendijk and Bing West, "Force Multiplier," *Wall Street Journal*, 21 November 2006.
4. General John Abizaid, Testimony to Senate Armed Services Committee, 15 November 2006.
5. Ibid.
6. *The Iraq Study Group Report* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 70.
7. Ibid., xvi, 70-75, 77-83.
8. Discussion following I MEF Staff Visit to 3-1 Iraqi Brigade, Camp Fallujah, 20 April 2006.
9. Discussion with 1st Battalion, 506th U.S. Infantry Regiment (1-506 IN), Camp Corregidor, 12.
10. Discussion with 1st Battalion, 172d Infantry Regiment (1-172 IN), Camp Ramadi, 14 March 2006. Discussions with 3d Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment (3/7), Hurricane Point, Ramadi, 11 March 2006.
11. Discussion with 1-172 IN, Camp Ramadi, 14 March 2006.
12. Discussion following I MEF Staff Visit to 3-1 Iraqi Brigade, Camp Fallujah, 20 April 2006.
13. Discussion with 1-506 IN, Camp Corregidor, 12 July 2006.
14. Discussion with 1-1 Iraqi Brigade military transition team, Combat Outpost, 10 July 2006.
15. Correspondence with 1st Iraqi Division military transition team, 27 May 2006.
16. James Quinlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations," *Parameters* 25 (Winter 1995).
17. Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency & Peacekeeping* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 95.
18. *Counterinsurgency*, FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5 (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, December 2006), 1-23.
19. Al-Anbar Survey 11: September/October 2006, October 2006, 24; Al-Anbar Survey 7: May 2006, 10 June 2006, 43.
20. Al-Anbar Survey 7: May 2006, 10 June 2006, 43.
21. Discussions with 1-1 Iraqi Brigade military transition team, Combat Outpost, 10 July 2006; Discussions with 1-1 Iraqi Brigade, Combat Outpost, 10 July 2006; Discussions with 1-506 IN, Camp Corregidor, 10-12 July 2006.
22. Discussion with 1-1 Iraqi Brigade, Ramadi, 11 July 2006.
23. Provincial Reconstruction Meeting, Government Center, Ramadi, 13 March 2006.
24. Discussion with 1-172 IN, Camp Ramadi, 14 March 2006.
25. Brief with 1-7 Iraqi Brigade, Camp Ramadi, 15 March 2006.
26. Discussion with military transition team for a battalion in 1-7 Iraqi Brigade, Ramadi, 6 July 2006.
27. Discussion with Government Support Team, Government Center, Ramadi, 12 March 2006.
28. Fallujah City Council Meeting, Fallujah Mayor's Compound, 31 July 2006.
29. Discussions with 2-1 Iraqi Brigade, CMOC, Fallujah, 20 March 2006.
30. Discussion with 2d Battalion, 2d Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division military transition team, Fallujah, 31 July 2006.
31. Security Council Meeting, CMOC, Fallujah, 20 March 2006.
32. Fallujah City Council Meeting, Fallujah Mayor's Compound, 31 July 2006.
33. Fallujah City Council Meeting, Fallujah Mayor's Compound, 16 May 2006.
34. Correspondence with al-Anbar State Department Representative, 13 March 2006.
35. Coalition units also occupied Sunni residences as observation posts.
36. Discussion with Brigadier General Razzaq, Combat Outpost, 11 April 2006. Discussion with 1-1 Iraqi Brigade, Combat Outpost, 10 July 2006.
37. Discussions with Regimental Combat Team 7 (RCT-7), Camp Al Asad, 23 February 2006.
38. Hannah Allam and Mohammed al Dulaimy, "Iraqis Lament Call for Help," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 17 May 2005.
39. "Iraq's Desert Protection Force at War," *Front Page*, 1 January 2006.
40. Discussions with RCT-7, Camp Al Asad, 15 July 2007.
41. Fallujah City Council Meeting, Mayor's Complex, 2 May 2006.
42. 1 MEF Staff Meeting, Camp Fallujah, 2 May 2006.
43. Regimental Combat Team 5 (RCT-5) Combined Commanders' Meeting, Camp Fallujah, 10 May 2006.
44. I MEF Commanders' Conference, Camp Fallujah, 8 August 2006.
45. Hence, in 2004, the Iraqi National Guard and Fallujah Brigade were ineffective because the Sunni population fully supported violent resistance. By 2006, that dynamic had changed and local Sunni forces could be formed.
46. Michael Gordon, "Wary Iraqis are Recruited as Policemen," *New York Times*, 24 July 2006.
47. Al-Anbar Survey 11: September/October 2006, October 2006, 29,41.
48. Discussion with Fallujah Police Transition Team, Camp Fallujah, 25 March 2006.
49. Khalid al-Ansary and Ali Adeeb, "Most Tribes in Anbar Agree to United Against Insurgents,"*New York Times*, 18 September 2006.
50. Discussions with RCT-7, Camp Al Asad, 15 July 2006.
51. Discussion with Fallujah Police Transition Team, Camp Fallujah, 25 March 2006; Anna Mulrine, "Getting it Right with the Law," *U.S. News & World Report*, 24 July 2006.
52. Thiebauld Malterre, "Ramadi: Defended by Insurgents Turned Police," *AFP*, 2 December 2006.
53. Discussion with 1-506 IN, ECP-8, Ramadi, 11 August 2006.

54. Poll of Ramadi, April 2006.
55. Mussab al Khairalli, "Sunni Chiefs Offer al-Maliki Help in War on Militants," *Washington Times*, 28 September 2006; Ellen Knickmeyer and Muhammed Saif Adin, "Families Flee Iraqi River Towns on 4th Day of Sectarian Warfare," *Washington Post*, 17 October 2006.
56. Discussion with Fallujah Police Transition Team, Fallujah Police Station, 26 April 2006; Meeting with former Iraqi Army generals, Fallujah Police Station, 6 April 2006.
57. Discussion with 3d Civil Affairs Group, Fallujah CMOC, 26 April 2006.
58. Peter Beaumont, *The Guardian*, 3 October 2006.
59. Mark Kukis, "Turning Iraq's Tribes Against al-Qaeda," *Time*, 26 December 2006.
60. Joshua Partlow, "Sheiks Help Curb Violence in Iraq's West, U.S. Says," *Washington Post,* 27 January 2007.
61. Discussion with al-Anbar imam, 30 June 2006.
62. Discussions with Ramadi Police, Jazirah Police Station, 28 July 2006.
63. Ibid.
64. Joshua Partlow, "Sheiks Help Curb Violence in Iraq's West, U.S. Says," *Washington Post,* 27 January 2007.
65. Ibid.

About the Author

Carter A. Malkasian directs the Small Wars Program at the Center for Naval Analyses. Prior to his current job, he was assigned to the I Marine Expeditionary Force as an advisor on counterinsurgency. He deployed with I MEF to Iraq from February to May 2003, February 2004 to February 2005, and February 2006 to August 2006.


U.S. MARINES

The Anbar Awakening

by Austin G. Long
Survival, April-May 2008

In late 2006, after several failed attempts and false starts, a tribal grouping in Iraq's restive province of Anbar allied with the United States and the central government of Iraq to fight "al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia." The U.S. alliance with this group, known as the Anbar Salvation Council (ASC), was widely hailed as a breakthrough both by members of the press and some officials in the U.S. and Iraqi governments.[1] Certainly the ASC's cooperation made Anbar's capital Ramadi, previously one of the most violent cities in Iraq, much safer. Cooperation with the tribes of Anbar was not unprecedented for Washington and Baghdad, but the alliance with the ASC was both more public and more dramatic than previous cooperation and saw significant linking of certain tribes and tribal leaders with the formal government structure of the province. In 2007, the U.S. military began seeking to forge similar alliances across Iraq, making Anbar the model for the provision of internal security.

Relying on tribes to provide security is not a new phenomenon for Iraq. The British did so in the 1920s; later Saddam Hussein became a master of using them to ensure the continuity of his rule, particularly once the formal Iraqi state and the Ba'ath Party withered in the 1980s and 1990s. While the current attempt in Anbar is analogous, it is not identical, and the differences suggest that it is likely to be less successful in the long run than Saddam's effort. Moreover, the current attempt highlights tension between the means and ends of Iraq strategy. The tribal strategy is a means to achieve one strategic end, fighting al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia, but is antithetical to another, the creation of a stable, unified and democratic Iraq.

The Tribe and the State

The nature of tribes can be quite confusing to those unfamiliar with them. In general, a tribe consists of various smaller clans, in turn composed of extended families. Members of a tribe claim kinship, which is often based on association and assertion of a 'myth of common ancestry' rather than actual consanguinity.[2] This asserted relationship is sometimes called "fictive kinship." Fictive or not, this kinship helps regulate conflict and provides benefits such as jobs and social welfare in environments where the modern state does not exist or is too weak to function.[3] In Iraq, both the basic structure of tribes and the terms used to refer to them have changed over time. In present-day Anbar, the basic unit is the tribe (*'ashira*), which is composed of clans (*afkhad*). These clans are made up of lineages or households (*hamoulas*), which are in turn made up of houses (*bayts*) that contain individual families (*'alias*). In some cases, the term *qablla* is used to refer to a large tribe or confederation of tribes.[4] Saddam Hussein's tribal position at the time of the second Ba'ath coup of 1968 provides a good example of this system. His tribe was the Albu Nasir, one of three main groupings in the town of Tikrit. The Albu Nasir had six clans; Saddam was from the Beijat, the dominant clan. Within the Beijat clan were 10 lineages; Saddam was from the Albu Ghafur lineage. Within the Albu Ghafur were two main houses; Saddam's was the Albu Majid. His family was that of Hussein, though Hussein himself—Saddam's father—died before Saddam was born.[5]

It is important to note that kinship ties, while important, are not sacrosanct, particularly at the more abstract level of tribe and clan. Once again, Saddam Hussein's life provides an example. Saddam at the time of the 1968 coup was deputy to his kinsman Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr. Al-Bakr was also from the Beijat clan. However, as his name indicates, al-Bakr was from a different lineage, the Albu Bakr. Despite these affiliations, Saddam eventually maneuvered al-Bakr out of power and made his own lineage, Albu Ghafur, supreme.[6] Al-Bakr's subsequent death under mysterious circumstances is often attributed to those loyal to Saddam.

Saddam's closer kinsmen provided a more loyal power base. After the death of Saddam's father, his mother's remarriage to a member of the Albu Khattab lineage of the Beijat clan gave him three half-brothers from another lineage. He also drew upon his close cousins from the Albu Majid house of the Albu Ghafur lineage to fill his top security ranks. In general, close kinships like this have far greater strength than the more abstract links of tribe and clan.[7]

The impact of tribes on state formation in the Middle East has varied from state to state.[8] In Iraq in the 1920s, the tribe was a rural organization that stood in opposition to all things urban and modern. Following a revolt against the new Hashemite monarchy, the British and their allies in the royal family sought to appease and manipulate the tribes. In exchange for their support, areas outside cities were in many ways made a law unto themselves.[9]

The overthrow of the Hashemite monarchy in 1958 initiated a decline in tribal power, as the new military regime eliminated laws that gave sheikhs legal authority and control of agricultural land. This led to an exodus from rural areas to the cities and the first encounters of peasant tribesman with an alien urban environment. Many used affiliation to anchor themselves in this often hostile setting and tribalism came to coexist with urban modernity as ever more Iraqis migrated to towns and cities.

However, though some Iraqis clung to traditional names and affiliations, tribalism's power waned through the 1960s. Iraq was slowly but surely becoming a modern nation-state with a functioning security apparatus, judiciary and bureaucracy. By the late 1960s, tribalism was at its nadir, with many Iraqis ceasing to define themselves in the traditional way (though more than a few existed in a sort of dual state, with membership in both a tribe and a modern organization such as a trade union).[10]

In theory, the return of the Ba'ath Party to power in 1968 (it had briefly held power in 1963 but was ousted by the military) should have heralded the death knell of the tribe. Ba'ath ideology is relentlessly secular and modernist. As Amatzia Baram notes, the first Ba'ath communique in July 1968 declared: 'We are against religious sectarianism, racism, and tribalism', the latter being one of 'the remnants of colonialism'.[11]

However, the Ba'ath Party was highly insecure in its control of Iraq. In order to prevent another coup, the party both massively expanded membership and sought to place loyal elements in the military and security services. Many of these loyalists were members of the same tribe as the senior leaders of the party.[12] Thus, from its inception, the Ba'ath regime had an inconsistent policy and attitude which ensured that tribal power, though temporarily diminished, would endure.

Tribal-State Security Relations

The Ba'ath government's use of tribes to control Iraq's state-security apparatus is far from unique. Modern nation-states have in many instances turned to tribes to help provide internal security, generally because the state is either too weak to provide security itself or because it is too expensive to do so. In general, the weaker the state, the more autonomy is given to tribes to provide what the state cannot.

There are three basic patterns the relationship can take. These are not necessarily mutually exclusive, so that different patterns can be seen in the same state. The first is most likely in relatively stronger states and occurs when one group seeks to dominate the state's security apparatus by commingling tribal networks with the formal state structure. This 'state tribalism' is common in states that have not fully institutionalized the mechanism for providing internal security.[13] In the Middle East, Iraq, Syria, and many of the Gulf States have practiced various forms of state tribalism.[14] Other countries, such as Jordan, use electoral arrangements favoring tribes to ensure control of ostensibly democratic legislatures, partly to ensure internal security.[15]

Outside the Middle East, this pattern is commonly seen in postcolonial Africa. Kenya, for example, was dominated in the early postcolonial period by the Kikuyu tribe. The government of Jomo Kenyatta intentionally filled the army with Kikuyu tribesmen in the late 1960s to neutralise the Kamba and Kalenjin tribes that had dominated the country under the British. The government also used a paramilitary organization called the General Service Unit as a Kikuyu

Praetorian guard and 'Kikuyuised' the police and other intelligence services.[16] Following the death of Kenyatta in 1978, Vice President Daniel arap Moi, a member of the Kalenjin tribe, assumed the presidency and began to seed the security services with his own kinsmen, allowing him to thwart an attempted coup in 1982.[17] This pattern of state tribalism in the security services has continued and affiliation remains important to Kenyan politics and the preservation of internal security.[18]

The second pattern is common in weaker states and involves quasi-autonomous militias based on tribe (or more broadly on ethnicity). These militias are effectively "deputized" to provide internal security in certain regions in exchange for some form of payment from the central state. This pattern can be termed "auxiliary tribalism." Afghanistan in the late 1980s and early 1990s provides one of the best examples of the successful application of this pattern as well as a caution about its possible consequences. The communist government of Afghanistan faced a tenacious multiparty insurgency beginning in the late 1970s that even major Soviet intervention was unable to quell. The Afghan government began to arm and pay various tribal and ethnic militias to fight the insurgency, or to at least remain neutral. This process accelerated after Mohammed Najibullah replaced Babrak Karmal as president in 1986, and enabled Najibullah's regime to survive the Soviet withdrawal in 1989.[19] Perhaps the most famous of these militias was that of General Abdul Rashid Dostum, an ethnic Uzbek from northwestern Afghanistan. Dostum's militia grew from a small force intended to protect gas fields to over 20,000 men armed with heavy equipment and artillery by the late 1980s. Dostum was so effective he became a de facto mobile reserve for the Afghan government. However, when the collapsing Soviet Union cut funding to Afghanistan and the ability of the Afghan government to pay declined, Dostum quickly switched sides to the insurgents. This defection precipitated the rapid collapse of the Afghan government in early 1992.[20]

The final pattern of relations is the cession of all but the most desultory control over a territory to a tribe. Only the weakest or poorest of states would normally accept this type of relationship. Tribal leaders become, in effect, palatine vassals of the central state, and are often as restive as their medieval counterparts. This pattern can be termed "baronial tribalism." It is fairly rare, as such feudal relations are anathema to modern nation-states, but can be seen in Pakistan in the region along the border with Afghanistan. Either *dejure* or de facto tribal autonomy characterizes much of Baluchistan, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (which includes North and South Waziristan) and the North-West Frontier Province. The federal government's presence is felt lightly, if at all (apart from the occasional punitive expedition), a situation echoing the British imperial experience in these rugged border regions.[21] Yemen offers another example: clashes between a very weak central state and well-armed tribes are frequent and violent.[22] However, in most rural regions tribal law is far more powerful than the laws of the government, so despite these clashes the government also uses tribes to provide a degree of internal security.[23]

A final variation on these three patterns occurs when an external power becomes involved in the provision of internal security to a state. This presents the possibility of a three-way relationship among tribe, state and external power that can produce many complications. The external power might choose to ally itself with groups that are hostile to the state or vice versa, potentially creating serious problems. Further, the existence of multiple tribes can mean that the external power must also balance relations with groups that compete among themselves.

The United States' involvement in Vietnam is a good example. In the early 1960s, the CIA and U.S. Army Special Forces began arming and training Montagnard tribesmen in the mountainous west of South Vietnam to fight Communist insurgents supported by North Vietnam (a form of auxiliary tribalism). The Montagnard recruits were enthusiastic in fighting the insurgents, yet were only slightly less hostile to the government of South Vietnam, which had never treated the Montagnard minority particularly well. The gov-

Iraqi Freedom. Tribal forces were to be integrated with other military and paramilitary formations to prevent an uprising like that of 1991 and, if needed, to fight invading Coalition forces. To ensure that he could continue to buy tribal loyalty, Saddam removed over a billion dollars from the Iraqi Central Bank right before the war.[39] Unfortunately for him, once the attack began the loyalty of the tribes proved ephemeral and many chose not to fight. A senior military adviser to the Ba'ath Party near the city of Samawa recalled after the war: "They called the tribal chiefs in As-Samawa to try and get more men, but the tribes said, 'We have no weapons, so how can we fight?' I sensed we were losing control of the situation—and the American forces had not yet arrived, there were only air attacks."[40]

The U.S.-Iraqi Tribal Strategy

Following the rapid success of U.S. conventional forces in Operation Iraqi Freedom, there was a need to provide internal security across the heterogeneous Iraqi nation, including in Anbar, the former bastion of the Ba'athist tribal strategy. Even in concert with Iraq's interim government, this proved challenging and 2003-04 saw the birth of an insurgency in Anbar and major anti-Coalition violence. Participants in the insurgency came from a mixture of groups and included former senior Ba'athists, tribesmen and foreign fighters. Though their motives differed, these groups made common cause against the Coalition.[41]

In this period, the U.S.-Iraqi tribal strategy was rudimentary in Anbar. However, by early 2004, U.S. and Iraqi officials began engaging in dialogue with tribes, and in limited cases cooperated with them. Still, the tribes overall saw little reason to support the new order and often sided with the newly declared al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia or other insurgent groups.

Attitudes began to shift in early 2005, following the massive Coalition assault on Fallujah in November 2004 and the Iraqi national elections in January 2005. Many tribal leaders began to conclude that the political process might hold more benefit than continued fighting. Further, al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia's transnational and fundamentalist goals were at odds with the local or national goals of the tribes. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia was competing for control of revenue sources—such as banditry and smuggling—that had long been the province of the tribes.[42]

Under this interpretation, the tribes did not change sides in response to violence towards civilians or their Anbar kinsmen, as press accounts have suggested. While this violence was not irrelevant, it does not appear to have been the central motive for the shift. For example, some began fighting al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia at least as early as the beginning of 2005, well before most of the violence towards civilians and tribesmen in Anbar occurred. The primary motive was not moral; it was self-interested.

In fact, it can be argued that much (though far from all) of al-Qaeda's violence against Sunnis in Anbar was intended to coerce the tribes back into alignment with the insurgents. Certainly this was the intent of attacks on selected tribal leaders. In other words, al-Qaeda's violence was principally an *effect* of shifts in allegiance rather than a *cause*. Though it often appears senseless and brutal to outsiders, the coercive use of extreme violence in insurgency and civil war is both fairly common and sometimes quite effective.[43]

This shift in the strategic calculus of the tribes made a successful U.S. Iraqi tribal strategy possible, but the opportunity was not fully exploited. For example, the United States did not take full advantage of a shift among members of the powerful Dulaimi confederation in western Anbar. The Albu Mahal tribe around the city of Qaim resented the influx of al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia to their border town and the group's competition with Albu Mahal's lucrative smuggling operations. With the support of members of the Albu Nimr, the Albu Mahal formed the Hamza Forces (also called the Hamza Battalion) to fight the newcomers. Al-Qaeda proved to be a tough opponent and in May of 2005 the tribes decided to turn to Coalition forces for help in battling them. Fasal al-Gaoud,

a former governor of Anbar and sheikh of the Albu Nimr, contacted U.S. Marines for support.[44]

The Marines had already been planning an offensive around Qaim, so this could have been an ideal moment to cement an alliance. Instead, the Marine offensive, known as Operation Matador, was uncoordinated with the tribes (some Marines appear to have not been informed about the requested alliance) and made use of intensive firepower, which alienated many tribesmen by destroying portions of Qaim. Furthermore, the Iraqi government was hostile to the Hamza Forces, declaring that such vigilantes had no place in Iraq.[45]

After Operation Matador, there were no further attempts by the Hamza Forces to coordinate with the Coalition for several months. Without Coalition support, the Hamza Forces were overwhelmed by al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia by September of 2005.[46] Fortunately, Coalition forces in Anbar learned from their earlier mistake and may have begun supporting the Albu Mahal with air strikes in late August 2005.[47] This was insufficient, however, to defeat the powerful al-Qaeda forces around Qaim and in November 2005 Coalition forces launched Operation Steel Curtain. This operation was marked by far better coordination with the Albu Mahal, and cooperation improved still further after the operation, when Marines and Iraqi Army personnel stayed behind to support the Albu Mahal in providing security.[48]

The eventual success of U.S.-Iraqi coordination with the Albu Mahal in 2005 was not widely emulated, though some tribes did continue to fight al-Qaeda. For example, members of the Dulaimi confederation fought the group around Ramadi in August 2005.[49] However, many in the Coalition remained reluctant to fully embrace a tribal strategy. More importantly, tribal leaders were targeted by al-Qaeda in a coercive campaign of murder and intimidation which sapped many tribes of the will to fight.[50] The success of the terrorists in this campaign was due in part to the nature of tribal loyalty. Al-Qaeda was able to turn clans and families from the same tribe against one another with a combination of carrots (money and other patronage) and sticks (threats of assassination).

This pattern of failed efforts to oppose al-Qaeda in Anbar continued into 2006. Elements of the Albu Fahd tribe, for example, began distancing themselves from al-Qaeda in Ramadi in late 2005 and early 2006. Al-Qaeda quickly targeted Sheikh Nasr al-Fahdawi and other prominent tribesmen for assassination, which was carried out in early 2006 (with the support of some of al-Fahdawi's pro-al-Qaeda fellow tribesmen).[51] A captured al-Qaeda document from this period reveals this strategy. Noting that tribal leaders had begun to cooperate with Americans, the authors write: "we found that the best solutions [sic] to stop thousands of people from renouncing their religion, is to cut the heads of the Sheiks of infidelity."[52] They accuse Sheikh Nasr al-Fahdawi of using his money, power, and reputation in Ramadi to "violate" the authors' "brothers," continuing: "so the brothers raided his house in the middle of the night wearing the national guards uniform and driving similar cars, they took him and killed him, thank God."[53]

Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia's campaign of murder and intimidation had the desired effect, as the document notes:

> Then there was a complete change of events than is was [sic] before thank god, cousins of Sheik Nasr came to the Mujahidin begging, announcing their repentance and innocence, saying we're with you, we'll do whatever you want. The turmoil is over, our brothers now are roaming the streets of AlbuFahd without any checkpoints.[54]

The document goes on to list others who were killed or intimidated, indicating that the terrorists' coercive violence was successful.[55]

Coalition cooperation with the tribes remained limited through early 2006.[56] There were some exceptional success stories, as with the Albu Mahal and U.S. Army Special Forces relationship with the Albu Nimr around the city of Hit. Even in these limited cases, al-Qaeda recognised the threat and sought to target these tribes. In captured documents, the group noted

the need to attack the Albu Nimr and regretted not crushing the Albu Mahal when it had the chance.[57]

Starting in mid-to-late 2006, however, the cooperation started to become more serious. In Ramadi, Sheikh Sattar al-Rishawi of the Dulaimi confederation's Albu Risha tribe formally launched a concerted campaign against al-Qaeda in September 2006. Along with other leaders such as the Albu Nimr's Fasal al-Gaoud, Sattar founded a tribal alliance known as the Anbar Salvation Council (ASC).

Sattar himself was a smuggler and highway robber, and a fairly minor sheikh. However, he was bold and charismatic and had shrewd advisers such as his brother Ahmed; when opportunities presented themselves he was well positioned to take advantage. Sattar had previously been willing to work with al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia, but began to clash with the group as it muscled in on his illegal revenue. In 2005, Sattar turned to other Iraqis to help him battle his unwelcome competitors, but this alliance was ineffective and short lived. He subsequently seems to have realised that the best way to defeat al-Qaeda and gain power was to side with the United States.[58]

Sattar and his new alliance were soon supported by the Coalition. The U.S. military helped to protect Sattar, and the government of Iraq embraced him, albeit reluctantly, as well. Sattar was eventually made the counterinsurgency coordinator for the province, his tribesmen joined the Iraqi police around Ramadi in droves, and his militias were formally deputized as "Emergency Response Units." A blind eye was turned to Sattar's extralegal revenue generation.[59]

With the Albu Mahal and the Albu Risha, the Coalition was clearly employing both state-tribalism and auxiliary-tribalism strategies to provide internal security. The Albu Mahal were allowed to effectively take over the Iraqi Army brigade in their region, while the Albu Risha came to dominate the Ramadi police.[60] The Iraqi government delegated significant authority to both tribes, along with the Albu Nimr around Hit.

The effect of this strategy in 2007 was dramatic. By the late spring and early summer, parts of Anbar (such as Ramadi) that had previously been horrifically violent were relatively peaceful. Sattar was hailed as a hero by many Iraqis and Americans.

The success was striking enough that the Coalition attempted to duplicate the model across Iraq, giving rise to the euphemism 'concerned local citizens' or 'CLCs' (presumably to make the use of tribesmen and other former insurgents sound more palatable). These fighters have been recruited to help the Coalition in Baghdad and in parts of Salah ad Din and Diyala provinces.[61] There are also efforts to expand the strategy to the Shi'a south of Iraq.[62] By mid 2007, Saddam's tribal strategy had in effect become the Coalition's.

Comparing Strategies

Despite the similarities between Saddam's relatively successful strategy and the Coalition's present-day efforts, there is no guarantee that the Coalition will prevail. The two have very different contexts.

The first and most obvious difference is the role of the United States as a third party. This creates the possibility for tension between Baghdad and Washington regarding the means and ends of any tribal strategy. Presently, the government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki is supporting the strategy, albeit with reservations. His government has been unable to establish security and has little authority in Anbar, so some formal deputization of tribes there does not represent a tangible loss of government power. However, some Shi'ites may cease to support what they regard as a generous approach to the Sunni; the political Coalition that supports al-Maliki is already fraying and might not survive.

This would confront the United States with a dilemma similar to that it faced in Vietnam's highlands in the 1960s. Supporting the tribes would increase the likelihood of success against the insurgents, but would alienate the government and possibly precipitate government-tribe conflict or even the collapse of the frail Iraqi state. Supporting the government would make the survival of a unified Iraq more likely, but could drive

the tribes back to the insurgency. This situation would actually be worse than Vietnam; the Sunni tribes of Anbar are not a small rural minority like the Montagnard, which makes it harder for the Coalition to exert leverage over them.

These tensions highlight a second and related difference between Saddam's and the Coalition's tribal strategies. Saddam's strategy was relatively simple in that it had only one goal: keeping Saddam in power. The United States has at least two goals: achieving a stable, democratic Iraq and defeating al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia. If the Iraqi government ceases to support the tribal strategy, these two goals would become mutually exclusive, at least in the short run. Already, the strengthening of unelected sheikhs in Anbar means an end to democracy in that province, at least for the present.

Further, the tribes themselves are no more unified now than they were under Saddam. The potential for both inter- and intra-tribal conflict remains. Some reports suggest that friction within the ASC is already high. Even if this is overstated it illustrates the potential for conflict in the future. Other tribes are reported to feel neglected or excluded from government and security-force positions.[63]

Intra-tribal relations can be equally challenging. As an example, in the powerful Albu Nimr, Sheikh Fasal al-Gaoud was relatively weak despite (or perhaps because of) being the former governor of Anbar. The real power in the Albu Nimr belongs to other members of his lineage, such as Sheikhs Jubair and Hatem al-Gaoud. Hatem and Jubair in turn have some rivalry despite being not only from the same lineage but the same house (Hatem is Jubair's nephew).[64]

While Hatem and Jubair have a good relationship with U.S. special operations forces, other members of the al-Gaoud family had close links to Saddam Hussein. Sattam al-Gaoud was the director of the largest network of Iraqi front companies involved in smuggling for the regime. The network, Al-Eman, had numerous al-Gaoud family members in key positions. Sattam and many of his relatives were also associated with the Iraqi Intelligence Service.[65] While they have taken to spending much of their time in Jordan since the fall of Saddam, these al-Gaouds retain both wealth and connections inside Iraq, including to insurgent groups.[66]

This tangled family situation represents the intricacies of just one prominent family in one prominent tribe. As it expands its tribal strategy in Iraq, the United States will have to manage dozens or even hundreds of these relationships, leading one intelligence officer in Anbar to compare Iraqi tribal relations to Latin American *telenovelas* in drama and complexity.[67] Because Washington lacks the detailed knowledge of Iraqi clans possessed by Saddam, its approach is more like the British approach of the 1920s. Rather than managing the tribes, it is simply ceding Anbar to them, and potentially other territories as well. This cession undermines the past five decades of attempts to build a modern state in Iraq.

The third difference between the two strategies is the relative strength of the Iraqi state. Under Saddam, the state was battered by two decades of war and sanctions, yet it nonetheless retained significant coercive capability. This was due in no small part to Saddam's ruthless willingness to cause civilian casualties and suffering, and the state's large numbers of military and security-service personnel backed by totalitarian intelligence services. On the eve of Operation Iraqi Freedom, for example, Saddam is estimated to have had about 400,000 military personnel supplemented by perhaps as many police and security-service members. In contrast, the current Iraqi government has an authorized military end strength of 175,000, supplemented by a Ministry of Interior which has over 320,000 personnel on its payroll. Taking these numbers at face value, Saddam had a 50 percent advantage in total personnel, and more than double the number of military personnel. Yet the modern Iraqi military and security services are in reality nowhere near their authorized strength; indeed the Ministry of Interior is unable to determine which if any of its 320,000 employees is actually working. Further, the Iraqi military lacks much of the heavy equipment that enabled Saddam to punish tribal uprisings such as the Albu Nimr's 1995 revolt.[68]

Admittedly, the government of Iraq does possess one significant tool of coercion: the U.S. mil-

itary. Yet the United States lacks the ruthlessness of Saddam, and its forces are better suited to conventional battle than internal security. Also, the United States will clearly not maintain major force levels in Iraq indefinitely, so this coercive tool is a temporary asset for the government of Iraq. Whereas Saddam was able to restrict the power of the tribes to some degree, the present government of Iraq could soon face a situation in which baronial tribalism reigns throughout Anbar.

The fourth difference is the nature of the enemy that the respective tribal strategies are intended to defeat. Saddam's strategy was primarily aimed at other Sunni tribes and the restive Shi'a. Neither of these enemies had either motive or opportunity to outbid Saddam for the loyalty of tribes; the combination of carrots and sticks he could wield was too compelling.

Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia, on the other hand, possesses a real capacity to outbid the Coalition as it attempts to build alliances. Moreover, it is still capable of murder and intimidation against tribal leaders. For example, al-Qaeda is believed to be behind the bombing of the Mansour Hotel in June 2007 that killed Fasal al-Gaoud, the Albu Nimr sheikh who had long sought to arrange Coalition cooperation with the tribes. The bombing also killed two other leaders of the Albu Nimr and a sheikh of the Albu Fahd, who had once again switched sides to join the ASC.[69] Other killings of ASC members take place frequently despite U.S. support and protection.[70] Sunnis who have joined with the Coalition in Baghdad and elsewhere also face fierce reprisals.[71]

Most notably, Sheikh Sattar was killed on 13 September 2007 by an improvised explosive device emplaced near his farm outside Ramadi. Unlike many previous assassinations of tribal leaders, this attack did not demolish the will to fight of the Albu Risha or the ASC.[72] Sattar's brother Ahmed quickly stepped into his place, and while lacking some of Sattar's charisma, he is a capable leader. He has begun negotiations with Shi'a leaders and, realizing that his tribal power base is limited, has attempted to build a political base beyond his tribe.[73] However, the fact that Sattar was killed in essentially his own backyard despite significant ASC and Coalition protection suggests that al-Qaeda (who may have bribed one or more of Sattar's guards) retains the ability to use coercive violence against even well-guarded senior figures, let alone rank-and-file tribesmen.[74]

Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia still has substantial revenue from activities in Iraq as well as donations from abroad (according to some reports it has sufficient excess revenue to fund al-Qaeda in Pakistan in addition to its own efforts).[75] Al-Qaeda thus has significant carrots and sticks with which to motivate the tribes, or portions thereof, to switch sides.

Moreover, whereas Saddam, like the members of al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia, was a Sunni, the current government of Iraq is principally Shi'a. Many Sunni believe it is little more than a tool of Iran. Shi'a death squads have carried out ethnic cleansing in Baghdad and have infiltrated parts of the Iraqi government. In November 2007 senior leaders in Anbar complained that the government was not providing them sufficient resources, which they attributed to the government's sectarian bias. Leaders south of Baghdad have made similar complaints.[76] This perception of bias could make the tribes more inclined to listen to al-Qaeda, which can portray itself as seeking to protect the Sunni and limit the influence of Iran. This will be particularly true if sectarian violence rises again.

Looking to the Future

With these key differences in mind, two scenarios can be envisioned for the next two to three years. In the first, current trends continue unchanged. The government of Iraq continues to embrace the current tribal strategy, and there remains sufficient U.S. combat power to support and protect the tribes in Anbar and elsewhere. Patronage from both the government of Iraq and the United States continues to flow and the tribes' extra-legal income remains lucrative, while sectarian violence does not worsen.

This scenario looks favorable for the United States, as it would mean that al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia would be substantially weakened (though probably not eliminated). The trade-off for allowing continued state and auxiliary tribalism would be the possibility of putting democra-

tization on hold: elections in Anbar would likely be postponed or the formal structure of governance marginalized. Though unfortunate, this would not necessarily be permanent and would probably be accepted in the short term by many residents of Anbar as the price of security. It is possible that the ASC could jointly assume governing authority with provincial officials as part of a state-of-emergency government. And if Sheikh Ahmed succeeds in creating a non-tribal party, local democracy might even be preserved.

For the government of Iraq, this scenario means accepting a short- to medium-term continuation of Saddam's tribal strategy with all the hazards that entails. The loyalty of the tribes would have to be continually paid for and relationships both with and among the tribes would have to be managed. Anbar would enjoy at least as much autonomy as it enjoyed under Saddam, when it was governed by a system approaching baronial tribalism. Indeed, the government of Iraq would have little more control over Anbar than the government of Pakistan does over its western provinces. Further, by allowing the tribes a virtual monopoly on military and security forces in Anbar, the strategy would make future coups or civil war possible. The power of tribes in other regions would be expanded as well. For the Shi'a majority of Iraq, this might be acceptable but would remain worrisome.

As problematic as the above outcome would be, a much worse outcome is easily imagined simply by factoring in likely medium-term events, among them a withdrawal of U.S. forces that is not precipitous but nonetheless substantially reduces combat power in Anbar and other provinces. This would mean less ability to protect and support the ASC and other tribes. It would also make the supply of material support and patronage by the United States more difficult (though not impossible).

At the same time, the al-Maliki government as currently constituted is likely to change. It could shift towards a more hard-line Shi'a position or be supplanted entirely. Regardless, its support for the tribes will probably decrease if not end altogether. The combination of a U.S. drawdown and a shift in the position of the Iraqi government could exacerbate sectarian violence.

Even as Coalition support to the tribes wanes, al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia is likely to retain much of its ability to employ both carrots and sticks. The tribes may therefore be made "an offer they can't refuse." Like Rashid Dostum in Afghanistan, they could readily conclude that switching sides was in their best interest. This would be a particularly bad outcome for the Coalition as it would have helped train, equip and sustain forces that would then begin to work against it. For the United States, this would mean Anbar and other regions would become havens for al-Qaeda as it worked to destabilize the region and possibly support attacks further afield. For the government of Iraq, it would mean de facto partition, civil war, or both.

Finally, it is not clear that the present internal-security model can be expanded to the Shi'a south. The power of the tribes dwindled more in the face of modernization among the Shi'a than it did among the Sunni. The tribe was replaced or at least modified by the power of political Islam, so that in Shi'a areas political-religious parties or groups tend to dominate.[77] The largest at present are Muqtada al-Sadr's Office of the Martyr Sadr and affiliated militia Jaiysh al-Mahdi; and Abdul Aziz al-Hakim's Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council and affiliated militia, the Badr organization. However, there are numerous other groups with affiliated militias including the Fadhila Party and several smaller organizations. While tribal groups are not wholly absent, they lack the power and organization of these religious-political groups. In Basra, for example, armed tribesmen play a role in the fighting but the major factions are party militias.[78] So even if the United States' tribal strategy succeeds in the Sunni center and west of Iraq, the Shi'a south would likely remain problematic.

Fully embracing a tribal strategy for internal security in Anbar has been successful to date and expansion of this strategy over the rest of Iraq could provide real short-term security gains in at least some areas. There is little guarantee that these gains will persist, however, and there is some chance that the strategy will backfire in the medium term. Even Saddam Hussein had diffi-

culty managing Iraq's tribes despite his totalitarian state and lavish patronage. As the United States prepares to reduce its commitment to Iraq, it should be clear on both the tension in its strategic goals and the potential for the tribes to once again switch sides.

Beyond Iraq, there has been discussion of a U.S. alliance with tribes in Pakistan to fight al-Qaeda and the Taliban in the border region with Afghanistan. This alliance would face a welter of problems, including the lack of U.S. combat forces in Pakistan and the fact that the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Pakistan have had years to integrate with and even dominate the area's tribes.[79] Beyond these daunting issues, the central challenge would remain the same as in Iraq: managing a three-cornered relationship between the tribes, the state, and an external power as well as inter- and intra-tribal relations.

The tribe and the modern bureaucratic state are inherently in tension. Max Weber identified this difficulty nearly a century ago: tribes derive legitimacy from what he termed "the authority of the eternal yesterday" while the modern state derives legitimacy from the rational application of the rule of law.[80] Attempting to use the former to secure the latter is at best a stop-gap measure. At worst, it sows the seeds of future state failure.

Notes

Survival, April-May 2008, 67-93. Reprinted by permission of the Taylor and Francis Group.

1. "Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia" and "Anbar Salvation Council" (ASC) are the terms used throughout this paper, though both groups are known by other names. Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia is more officially "The Organization of al-Qaeda (the Base) in the Land of Two Rivers" and has overlapping and often interchangeable membership with the Mujahedin Shura Council, the Islamic State of Iraq, and Jamaat al-Tahwid Wa al-Jihad (Group for Monotheism and Holy War). The Anbar Salvation Council is also referred to as the 'Sahawa al-Anbar' (Anbar Awakening) or more recently "Sahawa al-Iraq" (Iraq Awakening), often abbreviated SAA and SAL.
2. See Albert Hourani, "Conclusion: Tribes and States in Islamic History," in Philip Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, eds., *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 304-6.
3. Abbas Kelidar provides a concise summary of the historical weakness of the Iraqi state in "States without Foundation: The Political Evolution of State and Society in the Arab East," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 28, no. 2, April 1993, pp. 315-39.
4. See Hosham Dawood, "The 'Stateization' of the Tribe and the Tribalization," in Jabar and Hosham Dawood, eds., *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East* (London: Saqi Books, 2003), pp. 315-16.
5. This summary is drawn from Faleh Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues: Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Tribes Under Patrimonial Totalitarianism in Iraq, 1968-1998," in Jabar and Dawood, pp. 103-5.
6. See Ibid., pp. 85-8.
7. Ibid., p. 87.
8. See Khoury and Kostiner, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East.*
9. See Khoury and Kostiner, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East.* Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues," pp. 75-8; and Amal Vinogradov, "The 1920 Revolt in Iraq Reconsidered: The Role of Tribes in National Polities," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, April 1972, pp.123-39.
10. See Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues," pp. 75-9. For a much more detailed account, see Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba'athists, and Free Officers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978).
11. Amatzia Baram, "Neo-tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies, 1991-1996," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1, February 1997, p. 1.
12. Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues," pp.80-3.
13. Jabar refers to this as "etatist tribalism." Ibid., pp. 69 and 79-80.
14. See James Quinlivan, "Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 2, Autumn 1999, pp. 131-65.
15. See "Islamists' Electoral Disaster," *Economist Intelligence Unit,* 22 November 2007, http://www.economist.com /daily/news/displaystory.cfm?story_id=10178007.
16. Mordechai Tamarkin, "The Roots of Political Stability in Kenya," *African Affairs*, vol. 77, no. 308, July 1978, pp. 300-1.

17. Samuel Decalo, "Modalities of Civil-Military Stability in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies,* vol. 27, no. 4, December 1989, p. 557.
18. See "Going Up or Down?" *The Economist*, 7 June 2007, http://www.economist.com/world/africa/displaystory.cfm?story_id=9304146, for comments on the continued importance of tribe in Kenyan politics.
19. Mark Fineman, "Militias Reflect Tribal Splits," *Los Angeles Times*, October 1989; and Charles Dunbar, "Afghanistan in 1986: The Balance Endures," *Asian Survey*, vol. 27, no. 2, February 1987, pp. 128 and 134-5.
20. Mark Fineman, "Powerful Militia Unit in Open Revolt Against Kabul Regime," *Los Angeles Times*, 15 March 1992; Mark Fineman, "Afghan Leader Forced Out by Army, Rebels," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 April 1992; and Shah Tarzi, "Afghanistan in 1992: A Hobbesian State of Nature," *Asian Survey*, vol. 33, no. 2, February 1993, pp. 165-6.
21. See Asaf Hussain, "Ethnicity, National Identity and Praetorianism: The Case of Pakistan," *Asian Survey*, vol. 16, no. 10, October 1976, pp. 925-30; "Turning a Fight into a War," *The Economist*, 29 June 2006, http://www.economist.com/world/asia/displaystory.cfm?story_id=7121811; and "The Frontier Spirit," *The Economist,* 13 December 2006, http://www.economist.com/world/asia/displaystory.cfm?story_id=8413130.
22. For example, see Mohammed Bin Sallam, "Sa'ada War Due to Break Out as Mediation Committee Ceased Work," *Yemen Times,* 11 November 2007, http://www.yementimes.com/article.shtml?i=110 2&p=local&a=1; and "Calm Returns to Shabwa Following Clash between Government and Bilharith Tribe," *Yemen Times,* 9 November 2007, http://www.yementimes.com/article.shtml?i=1102&p=local&a=4.
23. Michael Slackman and Mohammed Al-Asadi, "German Family is Kidnapped by Yemeni Tribe," *New York Times,* 29 December 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/29/international/middleeast/29yemen.html.
24. On CIDG, see Francis Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces 1961-1971* (Washington DC: Center for Military History, 1973), chapters 3, 5, and 6; and Thomas Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in South Vietnam* (Washington DC: Center for the Study of Intelligence, 2001), chapters 3, 5, and pp. 179-82.
25. Baram, "Neo-tribalism," p. 5.
26. Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues," pp. 81-3.
27. Baram, "Neo-tribalism," pp. 3-4.
28. Baram, "Neo-tribalism," p. 5.
29. Keiko Sakai, "Tribalization as a Tool of State Control in Iraq: Observations on the Army, the Cabinets, and the National Assembly," in Jabar and Dawood, p. 152; Baram, "Neo-tribalism," p. 7; and Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues," p. 90.
30. Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues," pp. 88-89.
31. Baram, "Neo-tribalism," p. 7; Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues," pp. 92-3; and David Wurmser, "Coping with Crumbling States: A Western and Israeli Balance of Power Strategy for the Levant," Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies Research Paper, December 1996, pp. 9-10. For more on the regime's efforts to provide internal security, see Kevin Woods et al., *Iraqi Perspectives Project: A View of Operation Iraqi Freedom from Saddam's Senior Leadership* (Norfolk, VA: Joint Center for Operational Analysis, 2005), p. 48.
32. Baram, "Neo-tribalism," pp. 12-13.
33. Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues," pp. 95-6.
34. Woods et al., p. 52.
35. Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues," pp.97-9.
36. Baram, "Neo-tribalism," pp. 5-6.
37. Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues," pp. 99-100; Baram, "Neo-tribalism," p. 6; and Wurmser, pp. 10-11.
38. Baram, "Neo-tribalism," p. 6; and Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues," p. 100.
39. Woods et al., pp. 113-14.
40. Woods et al., p. 102.
41. Much of the following discussion is informed by the author's observations in Iraq from August to December 2007; conversations with U.S. military and intelligence-community personnel who have served in Anbar; and discussions with Carter Malkasian of the Center for Naval Analyses, who was an adviser to the Marine Expeditionary Force in Anbar.
42. On the importance of smuggling to many of the tribes, see Nir Rosen, "Fallujah: Inside the Iraqi Resistance," *Asia Times*, 15 July 2004, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/others/Fallujah.html; and Leila Fadel, "Iraqi Tribal, U.S. Relations Could Spell Success or Disaster," *McClatchy Newspapers*, 13 June 2007, http://www.mcclatchydc.com/staff/leila_fadel/story/16890.html. On disputes over revenues between tribes and al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia, see Carter Malkasian, "A Thin Blue Line in the Sand," *Democracy*, no. 5, Summer 2007, p. 55.
43. On the strategic use of violence in insurgency, see Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Stathis Kalyvas, "Wanton and Senseless?: The Logic of Massacres

in Algeria," *Rationality and Society*, vol. 11, no. 3, 1999.

44. See Malkasian, "Thin Blue Line," p. 55; and Hannah Allam and Mohammed al-Dulaimy, "Marine-led Campaign Killed Friends and Foes, Iraqi Leaders Say," McClatchy Newspapers, 16 May 2005, http://www.mcclatchydc.com/staff/hannah_allam /story/11656.html.

45. See Allam and al-Dulaimy, "Marine-led Campaign"; and Ellen Nickmeyer, "Looking for Battle, Marines Find That Foes Have Fled; Hunt for Foreign Insurgents Proves Frustrating but Deadly," *Washington Post*, 16 May 2005, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/05/15/AR2005051500785_pf.html.

46. Ellen Nickmeyer and Jonathan Finer, "Insurgents Assert Control Over Town Near Syrian Border," *Washington Post*, 6 September 2005, http: //www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/05/AR2005090500313.html.

47. Ellen Nickmeyer and Omar Fekeiki, "U.S. Warplanes Target Alleged Rebel Havens Along Iraq-Syria Border," *Washington Post*, 31 August 2005.

48. See Carter Malkasian, "Did the Coalition Need More Forces in Iraq?" *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 46, Summer 2007, p. 124; and John Ward Anderson, "U.S. Widens Offensive in Far Western Iraq," *Washington Post*, 15 November 2005, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/11/14 /AR2005111400979.html.

49. Ellen Knickmeyer and Jonathan Finer, "Iraqi Sunnis Battle To Defend Shiites," *Washington Post*, 14 August 2005, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content /article/2005/08/13/AR2005081301209.html.

50. Jonathan Finer and Ellen Nickmeyer, "Sunni Leaders Attacked in Iraq," *Washington Post*, 19 August 2005, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/18/AR2005081800330.html.

51. Hala Jaber, "Sunni Leader Killed for Joining Ceasefire Talks," *London Times*, 5 February 2006, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article727041.ece.

52. Declassified, translated internal al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia document; available from West Point's combating Terrorism Center at http://ctc.usma.edu/aq /pdf/1Z-060316-01-Trans.pdf.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid. For example, the document mentions Mazhar al-'Alawani, "a candidate for the elections": "His pictures were all over Ramadi, where the entire Albu'Alwan tribe was supporting him, proud of him, one day before the elections, the brothers killed him while he was visiting Ramadi, no one from his tribe opened his mouth, instead they got more scared and weaker."

56. On Special Forces and Albu Nimr, see Ann Scott Tyson, "In a Volatile Region of Iraq, U.S. Military Takes Two Paths," *Washington Post*, 15 September 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/14/AR2006091401900.html.

57. See the document cited in note 52 and another declassified, translated internal al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia document, available from West Point's Combating Terrorism Center at http://ctc.usma.edu /aq/pdf/1Z-060316-02-Trans.pdf.

58. See Greg Jaffe, "Tribal Connections: How Courting Sheiks Slowed Violence in Iraq," *Wall Street Journal*, 8 August 2007, http://online.ws.com/article/SB118653546614491198.html; and Mark Kukis, 'Turning Iraq's Tribes Against Al-Qaeda', *Time*, 26 December 2006, http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1572796,00.html.

59. See Malkasian, "Thin Blue Line," p. 55; Steve Schippert, "This is Counterterrorism, Senator," *National Review Online*, 25 April 2007, http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=NGI4ODY3ZGZmOGM1NGMwMWM3MjgwZDYxMWU5OTQ5ZTI=.

60. Malkasian, "Thin Blue Line," pp. 55-6.

61. Nancy Youssef and Leila Fadel, "Critics: Arming Sunni Militias Undercuts Iraqi Government," McClatchy Newspapers, 17 June 2007, http://www.mcclatchydc.com/world/story/16989.html; Alexandra Zavis, "U.S. Courts Sheikhs in Hussein Terrain," *Los Angeles Times*, 14 November 2007; and David Mays,"Concerned Local Citizens Vastly Improve Security in Iraq's Diyala Province," *American Forces Press Service*, 12 October 2007, http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=47783.

62. Kim Gamel, "Sheikhs Ponder Expanding Anbar Model," *Oakland Tribune*, 16 September 2007.

63. Joshua Partlow and John Ward Anderson, "Tribal Coalition in Anbar Said to Be Crumbling," *Washington Post*, 10 June 2007, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/10/AR2007061001453.html.

64. See Tyson, "In a Volatile Region of Iraq, U.S. Military Takes Two Paths."

65. See *Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's* WMD (The Duelfer Report), vol. 1, "Front Company Conglomerates: Al-Eman and Al-Handal,"

https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq_wmd_2004/index.html.

66. See Kirk Semple, "Iraqi Says He Plans to Convene Parliament," *New York Times*, 12 April 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/13/world/13iraq.html; and Suleiman al-Khalidi, "Interview: Iraqi Rebels Reject Anti-Qaeda Pact-Tribal Leader," Reuters, 23 March 2007, http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSL23556078.

67. Private communication, Iraq, November 2007.

68. See Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, June 2007, pp. 30-7, http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/9010-Final-20070608.pdf; Woods et al., pp. 48-55 and 60-5; and *The Military Balance* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2002), pp. 105-6.

69. Sam Dagher, "Sunni Muslim Sheikhs Join U.S. in Fighting Al-Qaeda," *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 May 2007, http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0503/p01s04-wome.html; and "Baghdad Hotel Bombing Kills Anti-Qaeda Sunni Sheikhs," *International Herald Tribune*, 24 June 2007.

70. Malkasian, "Thin Blue Line," p. 56; and Todd Pitman, "Iraq's Sunni Sheikhs Join Americans to Fight Insurgency," Associated Press, 25 March 2007.

71. Lauren Prayer, "Former Insurgents Face Al-Qaida Wrath," *Washington Post,* 14 August 2007, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/08/14/AR2007081400767.html.

72. Alissa Rubin, "Sheik's Allies Vow Revenge for His Killing," *New York Times*, 15 September 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/15/world/middleeast/15iraq.html.

73. Tina Sussman, "Slain Sheik a Stark Contrast to His Brother," *Los Angeles Times,* 13 October 2007; and Hamza Hendawi, "Reconciliation in Iraq Goes Local," *Washington Post*, 17 October 2007, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/17/AR2007101701681.html?tid=informbox.

74. James Janega, "From Killing to Reconciliation Bid," *Chicago Tribune*, 12 October 2007.

75. Greg Miller, "Influx of Al Qaeda, Money into Pakistan is Seen," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 May 2007; and Alexandra Zavis, "Iraq Militants Seen As Taking Kickbacks," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 October 2007.

76. Michael Gordon, "Sunnis Say Baghdad Hampers Anbar Gains," *New York Times*, 3 November 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/03/world/middleeast/03anbar.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss; and Yochi Dreazen and Gina Chon, "Will the Security Improvements in Iraq Endure?," *Wall Street Journal*, 3 December 2007, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB119664380500411225.html.

77. See Faleh Jabar, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq* (London: Saqi Books, 2003), especially pp. 63-7.

78. See Babak Rahimi, "Basra Tears Itself Apart," *Asia Times*, 10 July 2007, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/IG10Ak01.html; and Gethin Chamberlin, "Message from Basra: 'Get Us Out of Here,'" *Daily Telegraph*, 29 October 2007, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/10/28/nrbasra128.xml.

79. Eric Schmitt, Mark Mazzetti and Carlotta Gall, "U.S. Hopes to Arm Pakistani Tribes Against Al Qaeda," *New York Times,* 19 November 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/19/washington/19policy.html.

80. Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1965; originally published 1919).

About the Author

Austin Long is an assistant professor at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, where he teaches security policy. He previously worked as an associate political scientist for the RAND Corporation and served as an advisor for Multi National Force-Iraq. He is the author of *Deterrence—From Cold War to Long War: Lessons from Six Decades of RAND Research* and *On "Other War": Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research.*

Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point

by Major Niel Smith, USA, and Colonel Sean B. MacFarland, USA
Military Review, March-April 2008

The stunning security improvements in al-Anbar Province during 2007 fundamentally changed the military and political landscape of Iraq. Many, both in and outside the military (and as late as November 2006), had assessed the situation in Anbar as a lost cause. The "Anbar Awakening" of Sunni tribal leaders and their supporters that began in September 2006 near Ramadi seemed to come out of nowhere. But the change that led to the defeat of al-Qaeda in Ramadi—what some have called the "Gettysburg of Iraq"—was not a random event.[1] It was the result of a concerted plan executed by U.S. forces in Ramadi. Tactical victory became a strategic turning point when far-sighted senior leaders, both Iraqi and American, replicated the Ramadi model throughout Anbar Province, in Baghdad, and other parts of the country, dramatically changing the Iraq security situation in the process.

The "Ready First Combat Team"

The 1st Brigade of the 1st Armored Division, the "Ready First Combat Team," was at the center of the Anbar Awakening. When we arrived in Ramadi in June 2006, few of us thought our campaign would change the entire complexion of the war and push al-Qaeda to the brink of defeat in Iraq. The soldiers, Marines, sailors, and airmen who served in or with our brigade combat team (BCT) enabled the Anbar Awakening through a deliberate, often difficult campaign that combined traditional counterinsurgency (COIN) principles with precise, lethal operations. The skilled application of the same principles and exploitation of success by other great units in Anbar and other parts of Iraq spread the success in Ramadi far beyond our area of operations (AO) at a pace no one could have predicted.

The Ready First enabled the Anbar Awakening by:

- Employing carefully focused lethal operations.
- Securing the populace through forward presence.
- Co-opting local leaders.
- Developing competent host-nation security forces.
- Creating a public belief in rising success.
- Developing human and physical infrastructure.

The execution of this approach enabled the brigade to set conditions, recognize opportunity, and exploit success when it came, to create a remarkable turnaround.

Ramadi on the Brink

In the summer of 2006, Ramadi by any measure was among the most dangerous cities in Iraq.[2] The area of operations averaged over three times more attacks per capita than any other area in the country. With the exception of the embattled government center and nearby buildings held by a company of Marines, al-Qaeda-related insurgents had almost complete freedom of movement throughout the city. They dominated nearly all of the city's key structures, including the city hospital, the largest in Anbar Province. Their freedom of movement allowed them to emplace complex subsurface IED belts, which rendered much of the city no-go terrain for U.S. and Iraqi Army (IA) forces.

The situation in Ramadi at this point was markedly different from that in Tal Afar, where the Ready First began its tour of duty. Although Ramadi was free of the sectarian divisions that bedeviled Tal Afar, it was the provincial capital, it was at least four times more populous, and it occupied a choke point along the key transit routes west of Baghdad. Perhaps recognizing these same factors, al-Qaeda

had declared Ramadi the future capital of its "caliphate" in Iraq. Local Iraqi security was essentially nonexistent. Less than a hundred Iraqi police reported for duty in June, and they remained in their stations, too intimidated to patrol. Additionally, the fledgling IA brigade nearest Ramadi had little operational experience.

In late 2005, the Sunni tribes around Ramadi attempted to expel al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQIZ) after growing weary of the terrorist group's heavy-handed, indiscriminate murder and intimidation campaign.[3] A group calling itself the al-Anbar People's Council formed from a Coalition of local Sunni sheiks and Sunni nationalist groups. The council intended to conduct an organized resistance against both Coalition forces and al-Qaeda elements, but, undermanned and hamstrung by tribal vendettas, it lacked strength and cohesion. A series of tribal leader assassinations ultimately brought down the group, which ceased to exist by February 2006. This collapse set the conditions that the brigade found when it arrived in late May. The assassinations had created a leadership vacuum in Ramadi and, by cutting tribal ties to outside tribal centers, had isolated the city. For their part, the tribes had adopted a passive posture, not wishing to antagonize a powerful al-Qaeda presence in and around Ramadi. In short, as the Ready First prepared to move from Tal Afar, their new AO was essentially in enemy hands.

Actions in Summer and Autumn, 2006

The situation in Ramadi clearly required a change in Coalition tactics. We had to introduce Iraqi security forces (ISF) into the city and the rural areas controlled by the enemy. But, even with a total of five Marine and Army maneuver battalion task forces, the Ready First did not have enough combat power to secure such a large city by itself. The Iraqi Army and at some point, the Iraqi police (IP), had to be brought into play. They would help, but we understood that without the support of the local leaders and populace, any security gains achieved solely through lethal operations would be temporary at best. In particular, we had to overcome the fallout from the unsuccessful tribal uprising of 2005. We had to convince tribal leaders to rejoin the fight against al-Qaeda.

Developing the plan. We reckoned the brigade had to isolate the insurgents, deny them sanctuary, and build Iraqi security forces, especially police forces, to succeed. The staff developed a plan that centered on attacking al-Qaeda's safe havens and establishing a lasting presence there to directly challenge the insurgents' dominance of the city, disrupting their operations, attriting their numbers, and gaining the confidence of the people. We intended to take the city and its environs back one neighborhood at a time by establishing combat outposts and developing a police force in the secured neighborhoods. The plan called for simultaneously engaging local leaders in an attempt to find those who had influence, or *wasta*, and to get their support. We recognized this as a critical part of the plan, because without their help, we would not be able to recruit enough police to take back the entire city.

We also realized that in the plan's initial stages, our efforts at fostering local cooperation were highly vulnerable. A concerted AQIZ attack on the supportive sheiks could quickly derail the process, as it had in 2005-2006. We therefore took some extraordinary measures to ensure the survival of tribal leaders who "flipped" to our side. We established neighborhood watches that involved deputizing screened members of internal tribal militias as "Provincial Auxiliary Iraqi Police," authorizing them to wear uniforms, carry weapons, and provide security within the defined tribal area. In the more important tribal areas, combat outposts manned by U.S. or IA forces would protect major routes and markets. In a few cases, we also planned to provide direct security to key leaders' residences, to include placing armored vehicles at checkpoints along the major access roads to their neighborhoods.

We designed our information operations (IO) efforts to alienate the people from the insurgents while increasing the prestige of supportive tribal leaders. We also made friendly sheiks the conduits for humanitarian aid efforts, such as free fuel disbursements. Wherever we established improved security, we established civil-military operations centers (CMOCs) and began the process of restor-

ing services to the area. After securing Ramadi General Hospital, we began an extensive effort to improve its services and to advertise it throughout the city. Prior to our operation there in early July 2006, the hospital's primary function had been treating wounded insurgents, with most citizens afraid to enter the facility. We also took a different IO tack with the sheiks. Instead of telling them that we would leave soon and they must assume responsibility for their own security, we told them that we would stay as long as necessary to defeat the terrorists. That was the message they had been waiting to hear. As long as they perceived us as mere interlopers, they dared not throw in their lot with ours. When they began to think of us as reliable partners, their attitudes began to change. Still, we had to prove that we meant what we were saying.

Experience in Tal Afar taught us that competent local police forces were vital for long-term success. An AQIZ intimidation campaign had all but eliminated the previous police force, and a suicide bomber killed dozens of potential recruits during a recruiting drive in January 2006, an event that caused recruitment to shut down for six months. In June 2006, the Ramadi IP force claimed approximately 420 police officers out of 3,386 authorized, and only about 140 of these officers ever showed up to work, with less than 100 present for duty on any given day. We realized that new recruiting was the key to building an effective police force.

Recruiting local security forces. Our desire to recruit local Iraqis into the IP was the catalyst for the Awakening movement's birth in September 2006. The way we went about it helped to prove that we were reliable partners, that we could deliver security to the sheiks in a way that broke the cycle of al-Qaeda murder and intimidation. In the bargain, the government of Iraq would assume the burden of paying their tribesmen to provide their security. The situation was a winner any way you looked at it. The tribes soon saw that instead of being the hunted, they could become the hunters, with well trained, paid, and equipped security forces backed up by locally positioned Coalition forces.

We began the process by shifting our recruiting center to a more secure location, at one of our forward operating bases (FOBs) located closer to the tribes that had indicated a willingness to join the ISF. This shift helped to deter attacks and other forms of intimidation that had undermined previous recruiting drives. We maintained secrecy by communicating information about the recruiting drive only to sympathetic sheiks who wanted to protect tribesmen sent to join the IP. This technique resulted in a steadily growing influx of new recruits. Over the six-month period from June to December 2006, nearly 4,000 police joined without incident.

This influx taxed the brigade security forces cell, composed of the deputy commander and a small staff of highly capable officers and NCOs. The majority of the population in al-Anbar had either forged ID papers or none at all, so the recruiters had to determine the true identify and reliability of the potential recruits. Insurgent infiltration of the police force was (and still is) a problem in Iraq, and is inevitable; however, the Ready First made use of several methods and technologies to mitigate this risk.

Biometric automated tool sets (BATS) proved extremely useful in screening recruits and preventing previously caught insurgents from joining. Convincing supportive sheiks to vouch for their tribal members was a second filter in the screening process. From June to December, more than 90 percent of police recruits came from tribes supporting the Awakening, and the sheiks knew whom to trust.

Our ISF cell understood the importance of paying the new police to prove that they were respected and their service was valued. As a collateral benefit, the growing IP force also created a small engine for economic development by providing jobs in addition to security for the local community. Each recruit received a bonus if accepted for training. Officers also received a bonus if they served as active police members for 90 days. These boosts injected more vitality into the economy.

New Iraqi Army recruits also received incentives to join. One obstacle to recruitment was that locals were hesitant to join the IA because of the possibility of receiving an assignment far from home. To mitigate this, IA Division G-1s assigned the *jundi* (junior soldiers) to an Iraqi battalion close to their

homes. This "station of choice" option helped eliminate a major constraint of recruitment possibilities for the IA.

Both Iraqi police and IA *jundi* assigned to Ramadi were required to attend a one-week urban combat training course run by the Ready First's field artillery unit to ensure that they could fight and survive once they joined their units. This focused training improved their confidence and discipline in urban combat, and significantly enhanced ISF effectiveness in small-unit actions. In time, the local IA brigade took responsibility for conducting the IA and IP courses with a cadre of drill sergeants, which helped forge closer bonds between the two services and instilled an increased sense of confidence in the Iraqi security forces.

The Ready First made every effort to help unqualified Iraqi recruits become police officers or soldiers. The most frequent disqualifier of recruits was the literacy requirement. The brigade commenced adult literacy classes, on a trial basis, for the illiterate recruits. These classes also had a positive, albeit unintended, collateral benefit. As security improved, hundreds of women enrolled in the classes—about five times more than we expected. The fact that women eventually felt safe enough to seek education reinforced the impression of improved security while directly attacking al-Qaeda's ability to influence the population.

As the benefits of cooperation with our recruiting efforts became obvious to the various local sheiks, more and more of them expressed an interest in cooperating with us. This interest eventually resulted in an al-Qaeda reprisal that, although tragic, was instrumental in bringing the sheiks together in the Awakening movement.

Securing the populace. Past Coalition operations in Ramadi had originated from large FOBs on the outskirts of town, with most forces conducting "drive-by COIN" (or combat)—they exited the FOB, drove to an objective or patrolled, were attacked, exchanged fire, and returned to base. Because the physical geography and road network in Ramadi enabled the enemy to observe and predict Coalition movements, nearly every movement into the center of the city was attacked multiple times by improvised explosive devices, RPGs, or small arms, often with deadly results. Moreover, the patrols played into the insurgents' information operations campaign: al-Qaeda exploited any collateral damage by depicting Coalition soldiers as aloof occupiers and random dispensers of violence against the populace.

It was clear that to win over the sheiks and their people, our BCT would have to move into the city and its contested areas. Thus, we decided to employ a tactic we had borrowed from the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment and used successfully in Tal Afar: the combat outpost, or COP. Our COPs normally consisted of a tank or infantry company team based in a defensible local structure in a disputed area. Eventually, the COPs included an Iraqi Army company wherever possible as they became emboldened by our presence. Later, we began to establish Iraqi police substations at or near the COPs as well. At this early stage, the outposts provided "lily pads" for mechanized quick-reaction forces, safe houses for special operations units, and security for civil-military operations centers. In rural areas, the COPs sometimes doubled as firebases with mortars and counterfire radars.

Because we now maintained a constant presence in disputed neighborhoods, the insurgents could no longer accurately trace and predict our actions. Frequent and random patrols out of the COPs prevented AQIZ from effectively moving and operating within the local populace. At the same time, the COPs enhanced our ability to conduct civil-military operations; intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance (ISR); and IO.

These outposts also acted as "fly bait," especially in the period immediately after a new COP was established. Experience in Tal Afar taught us that insurgents would attack a newly established outpost using all systems at their disposal, including suicide car bombs. These attacks usually did not end well for the insurgents, who often suffered heavy casualties. During the establishment of the first outpost, in July 2006, the enemy mounted multiple-platoon assaults. The frenzy of attacks on the new outposts culminated in a citywide battle on 24 July 2006 in which AQIZ forces were severely beaten and sustained heavy casualties. By October, attacks were far less fierce, with elements consisting of a handful of men conducting hit-and-run type operations. These noticeable decreases in

enemy strength indicated our plan to decimate their ranks was clearly working. Constant Coalition presence, insurgent attrition, and loss of insurgent mobility freed the people from intimidation and sapped any support for AQIZ.

The COPs also allowed us to control the infrastructure in Ramadi and use it to once again support the populace. This was the case with the Ramadi General Hospital. We established a COP just outside the hospital's walls while an IA unit secured the premises. Within days, the hospital was providing quality medical attention for the first time in a year, and the IA was detaining wounded insurgents who had come seeking treatment.

We continued to build new outposts in the city and surrounding areas until our redeployment transition began in February 2007. The strategy was not unlike the island-hopping campaign in the Pacific during World War II. With new outposts established in an ever-tightening circle around the inner city, we wrested control of areas away from the insurgents. As areas became manageable, we handed them over to newly trained Iraqi police forces (whom we kept a watchful eye on), and used the relieved forces elsewhere to continue tightening the noose. All these developments in securing the populace required an accompanying development of key alliances with tribal leaders, the history of which is inseparable from the operational story of the Anbar Awakening.

Courting local leaders. Convincing the local sheiks to join us and undertake another uprising was an immense challenge, but obtaining their support was the lynchpin of the second part of our strategy. We knew it would be pivotal when we arrived in Ramadi in June. The sheiks' memory of their first, failed attempt at establishing the al-Anbar People's Council (late 2005-early 2006) was the main obstacle to our plan in this regard. The Sunni tribal alliance was fragmented and weak compared to the growing al-Qaeda forces that controlled Ramadi in those days.

At the same time, area tribal sheiks had no great love for U.S. forces or the Iraqi Army. Early in the insurgency, they had directly and indirectly supported former-regime nationalist insurgents against U.S. forces, and as a result they had temporarily established an alliance of convenience with AQIZ. Many tribal members were killed or captured combating Coalition forces, which diminished the sheiks' ability to provide income for their tribes. These conditions in turn enabled AQIZ to recruit from those families in need of money. Another aggravating factor was that IA forces initially stationed in Anbar consisted largely of southern Iraqi Shi'ites. Ramadi area inhabitants regarded them as agents of the Sadr militia or Badr Corps, with a covert agenda to kill off Sunni tribes and enable a Shi'ite takeover of Anbar.

Nevertheless, the tribal leaders were still fed up with Al Qaeda's violence and frustrated by their own loss of prestige and influence in their traditional heartlands. The brigade staff believed that by offering convincing incentives, we could create a tribal alliance that could produce lasting security in Ramadi. To persuade the tribes to cooperate, we first needed to understand the human terrain in our AO, and that task fell to an outstanding and talented junior officer, Captain Travis Patriquin.

An Arabic-speaking former special forces soldier and an infantry officer assigned as the Ready First's S-9/engagements officer, Patriquin coordinated brigade-level local meetings and discussions. He quickly gained the sheiks' confidence through his language and interpersonal skills and developed strong personal bonds with their families. He strengthened these bonds during meetings between the brigade commander or deputy commanding officer and the sheiks. Battalion and company commanders also worked on improving relations with the townspeople on a daily basis. Thus, the sheiks' growing trust of the brigade's officers led them to support our efforts to reinvigorate police recruiting.

The combined effects of the engagement efforts were eventually hugely successful. However, some staff officers outside the brigade became concerned that we were arming a tribal militia that would fight against Iraqi security forces in the future. To allay those concerns and to pass on the "best practices" we had developed in Ramadi, Captain Patriquin created his now-famous PowerPoint stick-figure presentation "How to Win in al-Anbar."[4] This slideshow perfectly captured the Ready First's concept for winning the tribes over to our side.

We deliberately placed our first IP stations manned with newly recruited Sunni tribesmen

where they could protect the tribes that were supplying us with additional recruits. This tactic gave the IPs added incentive to stand and fight and effectively ended al-Qaeda's murder and intimidation campaign against the men serving in the ISF. In a significant change of circumstance, the newly minted IPs quickly became the hunters, arresting a number of insurgents and uncovering tremendous weapons caches. By the end of July 2006, AQIZ was definitely feeling the pinch.

In reacting to the pressure, al-Qaeda inadvertently aided our efforts by overplaying its hand. The group launched a series of attacks against the new IP stations. On 21 August, the insurgents attacked a newly established IP station in a tribal stronghold with an immense suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED). The IPs, however, refused to be scared away. Despite offers of safe haven at a nearby Coalition base, the survivors remained at their posts, ran their tattered flag back up the flagpole, and even began to conduct patrols again that same day.

Hours later, al-Qaeda attempted to intimidate future recruits by murdering and desecrating the body of a leading local sheik who had been instrumental in our early push at recruiting tribe members into the ISF. The attack inflamed tribal sentiment against AQIZ and drove several fence-sitting tribes to support our police recruitment.

A significant leader for the burgeoning movement emerged in Sittar albu-Risha, a younger sheik who resided on the west side of town and who was reputed to have smuggling and business connections throughout Anbar. In addition to having questions about Sittar's true motives, some were concerned that we would be placing too much stock in a relatively junior sheik and undercutting ongoing negotiations with Anbar tribal leaders who had fled to Jordan. However, with each successful negotiation and demonstration of trustworthiness by Sittar, we were able to whittle away at these reservations.

The Tipping Point

Sheik Sittar was a dynamic figure willing to stand up to al-Qaeda. Other, more cautious, sheiks were happy to let him walk point for the anti-AQIZ tribes in the early days, when victory was far from certain and memories of earlier failed attempts were still fresh. In *The Tipping Point,* Malcolm Gladwell writes that three types of individuals are necessary for a radical change, or a "tipping point," to occur: mavens, salespersons, and connectors. In brief, mavens have the goods, salespersons spread the word, and connectors distribute the goods far and wide.[5] In Ramadi, the soldiers of the Ready First were the mavens who had the goods—in this case, the ability to form, train, and equip ISF and new leaders. The brigade and battalion commanders acted as salesmen. We identified Sittar as a connector who could get the people to buy into the Awakening. All the elements were in place for transformation; we only had to decide if we trusted Sittar. When our salesmen decided to take a risk with this connector, the effect was amazing in its speed and reach.

On 9 September 2006 Sittar organized a tribal council, attended by over 50 sheiks and the brigade commander, at which he declared the "Anbar Awakening" officially underway. The Awakening Council that emerged from the meeting agreed to first drive AQIZ from Ramadi, and then reestablish rule of law and a local government to support the people. The creation of the Awakening Council, combined with the ongoing recruitment of local security forces, began a snowball effect that resulted in a growing number of tribes either openly supporting the Awakening or withdrawing their support from AQIZ.

Although recruiting and establishing the neighborhood watch units was an important and necessary step to securing Ramadi, it was not sufficient to remove AQIZ influence in the city completely. We needed more police officers who would join us inside the city, which our soldiers called "the heart of darkness." A critical agreement emerging from the council resulted in commitments to provide more recruits from local tribes to fill out requirements for police forces.

Soon after the council ended, tribes began an independent campaign of eradication and retaliation against AQIZ members living among them. Al-Qaeda's influence in the city began to wane quickly. U.S. and Iraqi units operating from COPs killed or captured AQIZ's most effective elements while resurgent IP and tribal forces raided their caches