

and safe houses. By late October, nearly every tribe in the northern and western outskirts of Ramadi had publically declared support for the Awakening, and tribes in the dangerous eastern outskirts of the city were sending out feelers about doing the same. The stage was set for a major change in Ramadi.

The Battle of Sufia

AQIZ did not sit idly as it slowly lost its dominance of both the terrain and the populace. Attacks remained high through October 2006 (Ramadan) inside the city limits while SVBIED attacks against and harassment of new COPs and IP stations located outside the city occurred regularly. These attacks often inflicted casualties on the nascent security forces. Casualties were not enough to slow the Awakening, however, and support continued to expand for the movement.

AQIZ long counted on a secure support base on the east outskirts of town in the Sufia and Julaybah areas. These rural tribal areas were some of the most dangerous in the Ramadi AO, and intelligence indicated they harbored a large support network for the insurgents operating inside the city. AQIZ learned that one of the major sheiks of the Sufia area was considering supporting the Awakening and that he had erected checkpoints to keep out insurgents. Facing a threat to its vital support areas outside of town, AQIZ acted quickly to maintain its grip there.

On 25 November, 30 to 40 gunmen in cars drove into the Albu Soda tribal area and began murdering members of the tribe. AQIZ forces took the tribal militiamen attempting to defend their homes by surprise, killing many while looting and burning their homes. A group of civilians fled in boats across the Euphrates River and reached an Iraqi Army outpost where they breathlessly described what was happening. The IA battalion relayed the information to our brigade TOC [Tactical Operations Center], where the operations staff reallocated ISR platforms and immediately called for Captain Patriquin to provide an Iraqi account of the situation.

Within an hour, Patriquin had gained an understanding of the situation through phone calls to the local sheiks. The brigade headquarters quickly made a crucial decision—we would support the

Albu Soda tribe in defending itself. The BCT commanders and staff cancelled a planned battalion-sized combined operation in east Ramadi that was just hours from execution. The battalion commander who was responsible for that area, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Ferry of 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry (Manchus), quickly diverted his force away from the planned operations to assist the Soda tribe in defending its homes. The decision was immediate and the response rapid, underscoring the brigade's flexibility in recognizing and adapting quickly to take advantage of opportunities, rather than following plans in lockstep.

U.S. Marine Corps aircraft arrived overhead to perform "show of force" sorties designed to intimidate the insurgents and convince them that air attack was imminent. Next, a ground reaction force from Task Force 1-9 Infantry began preparations to move to the area and establish defenses for the Albu Soda tribe. Because we were viewing the area using aerial sensors, our vision of the fight was indistinct, and we were unable to separate insurgents from the friendly tribesmen. We did not want to attack the friendly tribe by mistake, so we undertook actions to intimidate the insurgents by firing "terrain denial" missions. Explosions in empty nearby fields raised the possibility of suppressive artillery fire in the minds of the enemy. Complemented by the roar of fighter jets, the startled AQIZ forces became convinced that massive firepower was bearing down on them. They started to withdraw, separating themselves from their victims.

As AQIZ gunmen began fleeing the area, they loaded into several cars, three of which our sensors identified. Our UAV observed a body dragging behind one of the cars, evidently an Albu Soda tribesman. The insurgents obviously meant to terrorize and insult the tribe through this act of mutilation, but they also triggered a boomerang reaction by clearly identifying themselves. The Ready First TOC coordinated F-18 attacks that overtook and destroyed the fleeing vehicles in a blazing fury as M1A1 tanks maneuvered to engage. Armed Predator UAVs and M1A1 tanks in ambush positions finished off others attempting to escape. In the end, the Al Qaeda forces suffered far more casualties than the Albu Soda tribe. By nightfall, several companies of infantry and some M1A1 tanks had reinforced tribal

defenders, further demonstrating Coalition commitment.

Once again, AQIZ's intimidation attempt spectacularly backfired: tribes joined the Awakening movement at a rate that proved difficult to keep up with, even expanding into the neighboring Fallujah and Hit AOs. Within two months, every tribe in Sufia and Julaybah had declared support for the Awakening, and four new combat outposts had been constructed to secure the populations. An area previously deemed high threat and used as a staging ground for AQIZ mortar attacks became almost completely secure. Tribal members inside Ramadi began supporting the Awakening as well, and security rapidly improved. Once a tribal area joined the Awakening, enemy contact in those areas typically dropped to near zero, as IP, IA, and U.S. forces provided security. Bases once under daily mortar and small arms attacks became secure areas and transitioned to IP control, freeing U.S. forces to pursue AQIZ elsewhere.

Overall, by February 2007, contacts with insurgents dropped almost 70 percent compared to the numbers in June 2006, and they had dramatically decreased in complexity and effect. The combination of tribal engagement and combat outposts had proved toxic to AQIZ's efforts to dominate Ramadi.

Rebuilding

Clearing and holding are the bloody but relatively straightforward part of any counterinsurgency effort; building the infrastructure to sustain military success is the complicated part. In Ramadi, it was essential to begin building at the beginning of a clearing operation, so there would not be a gap between establishing security and implementing projects.

While civil affairs projects are obviously vital to the success of a clear, hold, build campaign, building human infrastructure, which includes installing government officials and agency directors, is just as vital. One of the keys to success in Tal Afar was the establishment of a credible local government with a mayor respected by the populace. In Ramadi, there was no local governance when we arrived. We prevailed upon the provincial council to appoint a mayor—one acceptable to the tribes—to coordinate

development for the city. This appointment was important because it relieved the governor of municipal level duties and allowed him to focus on issues elsewhere in the province. We then worked with the mayor to ensure that schools, hospitals, sewers, power stations, and other infrastructure all returned to pre-war normalcy as soon as possible. In fact, the western part of Ramadi was undergoing redevelopment even while combat operations in east Ramadi continued during autumn. This rebuilding effort demonstrated that normal services could function again and helped convince the people of Ramadi that local security improvements were permanent.

We wanted to encourage people living in still-embattled neighborhoods that joining the Awakening was both possible and in their best interest. To that end, we held the first "Ramadi Reconstruction Conference" in January 2007 at Sheik Sittar's home. Sheik Sittar invited all of the local sheiks, any government officials we could find, and local contractors. Following a brief on all ongoing projects, we explained the different ways Coalition forces could be of assistance in reconstruction. The participants broke down into geographically based small groups, led by our five maneuver task force commanders and their local partners, to design and refine plans for reconstruction. The commanders discussed local needs and, just as importantly, local reconstruction capabilities. Everyone was asked to return in March to brief plans. Accordingly, we were able to begin reconstruction in cleared parts of Ramadi before the fighting was over elsewhere. Maintaining the initiative in this way was the single most important thing we did throughout the campaign.

Why We Succeeded

Clearly, a combination of factors, some of which we may not yet fully understand, contributed to this pivotal success. As mentioned before, the enemy overplayed its hand and the people were tired of al-Qaeda. A series of assassinations had elevated younger, more aggressive tribal leaders to positions of influence. A growing concern that the U.S. would leave Iraq and leave the Sunnis defenseless against al-Qaeda and Iranian-supported militias made these

younger leaders open to our overtures. Our willingness to adapt our plans based on the advice of the sheiks, our staunch and timely support for them in times of danger and need, and our ability to deliver on our promises convinced them that they could do business with us. Our forward presence kept them reassured. We operated aggressively across all lines of operation, kinetic and non-kinetic, to bring every weapon and asset at our disposal to bear against the enemy. We conducted detailed intelligence fusion and targeting meetings and operated seamlessly with special operations forces, aviation, close air support, and riverine units. We have now seen this model followed by other BCTs in other parts of Iraq, and it has proved effective. Indeed, the level of sophistication has only improved since the Ready First departed in February 2007. Although, perhaps groundbreaking at the time, most of our tactics, techniques, and procedures are now familiar to any unit operating in Iraq today.

The most enduring lessons of Ramadi are ones that are most easily lost in technical and tactical discussions, the least tangible ones. The most important lessons we learned were:

- Accept risk in order to achieve results. Once you gain the initiative, never give the enemy respite or refuge.
- Never stop looking for another way to attack the enemy.
- The tribes represent the people of Iraq, and the populace represents the “key terrain” of the conflict. The force that supports the population by taking the moral high ground has as sure an advantage in COIN as a maneuver commander who occupies dominant terrain in a conventional battle.
- No matter how imperfect the tribal system appeared to us, it was capable of providing social order and control through culturally appropriate means where governmental control was weak.

Conclusion

The men assigned and attached to the Ready First

paid a terrible price for securing Ramadi. In nine months, 85 of our soldiers, sailors, and Marines were killed, and over 500 wounded in some of the toughest fighting of the war. Only the remarkable results they achieved, and the liberated citizens of Ramadi who can now walk the streets without fear, temper the grief caused by their sacrifice. It is gratifying to see our model adapted and used elsewhere in the war on terror. It proves once again that America’s Army is truly a learning organization. In the end, probably the most important lesson we learned in Ramadi was that, as General Petraeus said, “Hard is not hopeless.”

Notes

Military Review, March-April 2008, 41-52. Reprinted by permission.

1. Frederick W. Kagan, “The Gettysburg of This War,” *National Review*, 3 September 2007.
2. Megan K. Stack and Louise Roug, “Fear of Big Battle Panics Iraqi City,” *Los Angeles Times*, 11 June 2006.
3. For the purposes of this essay, the multiple insurgent groups are broken into two main categories: former regime elements (FRE), consisting of former Ba’athists and other nationalists, and al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQIZ), consisting of Islamic fundamentalist insurgent groups.
4. The “How to Win in al-Anbar” presentation became famous quickly, even gaining mention on several news talk shows. It can be downloaded at <[http://abcnews.go.com/images/us/how_to_win_in_anbar_v4 .pdf](http://abcnews.go.com/images/us/how_to_win_in_anbar_v4.pdf)>.
5. Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2000).

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Colonel Sean B. MacFarland, USA, has been promoted to brigadier general since publication of this article and is now commander of Joint Task Force North. From 2005 to 2006, he was commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.



Ramadi: From the Caliphate to Capitalism

by Andrew Lubin

U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, April 2008

By the summer of 2006 the Bush administration and many of the generals fighting the war in Iraq considered the city of Ramadi a lost cause. The terrorist organization al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) had announced that Ramadi was now the capital of their new caliphate, an Islamic state in which a single ruler exercises both civil and religious power; the Marines stationed in the government center, in the middle of the city, were under fire day and night; the Army stayed in bases on the outskirts of the city. In August, the Marines' in-country intelligence chief, Colonel Pete Devlin, delivered a bleak and highly classified assessment of the city and surrounding al-Anbar Province that shocked the administration, Congress, and the American public when it was leaked to the *Washington Post's* Thomas E. Ricks.

Devlin, Ricks wrote, had recently filed "an unusual secret report concluding that the prospects for securing that country's western al-Anbar Province are dim and that there is almost nothing the U.S. military can do to improve the political and social situation there."

Americans had grown to know Ramadi from stories of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) ripping through unarmored humvees, or Marine patrols being attacked only a few dozen yards outside outposts with names like Snake Pit. In August 2006, the month that Colonel Devlin completed his report, 33 Marines and soldiers were killed in action in and around Ramadi. The successes and euphoria enjoyed by the politicians and the American people in the afterglow of the quick and successful March 2003 invasion had long since been replaced by the growing killed in-action reports from the daily fighting in Ramadi, Fallujah, and other cities in al-Anbar Province.

As the casualty count mounted, the situation grew worse, and in November the *Post* followed up with another article, by Ricks and Dafna Linzer, which said the Devlin report had been updated to say:

"The U.S. military is no longer able to defeat a

bloody insurgency in western Iraq or counter al-Qaeda's rising popularity there." The story went on to quote a senior U.S. intelligence official as saying that, as of mid-November, "the problems in troubled Anbar Province have not improved."

But unknown to few outside of al-Anbar, the situation on the ground was already changing. Although the improvements would not become apparent until April-May 2007, by early September 2007, only 10 months after the *Post's* despairing report, the Ramadi City Council sponsored a 5K race that attracted some 120 competitors and live television coverage from Baghdad. Currently, salaries have increased almost 40 percent due to the recent construction boom; Ramadi's mayor, Latif Obaid, with a full year in office, has sponsored three well-attended business development councils; and in January 2008 the Marines approved patrolling without wearing flak jackets and Kevlar helmets.

This is a turnaround of historic proportions.

Soldier, Marine, Sheikh

The peace and prosperity enjoyed in Ramadi today was earned primarily by the leadership and initiative shown in the 2006-2007 time period by three men: Colonel Sean MacFarland of the Army's 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 1st Armored Division, known as "The Ready First," Lieutenant Colonel William Journey of the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines (1/6), and Sheikh Sattar Abdul Abu Risha and his Sons of Anbar, the first organized group of Iraqis to turn on AQI.

In 2006, the Army was fighting to control the Shia areas in Iraq, and the Marine Corps was given responsibility for al-Anbar Province. Major General (now Lieutenant General) Richard Zilmer arrived in June to take command of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) (Fwd) and began to develop the strategy to secure Ramadi.

"Ramadi was the missing key to Anbar Province," Zilmer said in a January 2008 interview with

Proceedings, “but we needed to stabilize the security situation first.”

But Ramadi needed more than security if it were to again be thought of as viable city. There were no basic services. Two years of constant IED blasts, 70-ton M1 Abrams tanks barreling through the streets, and Marine counterattacks had left the city devastated. Raw sewage ran down the streets from shattered pipes. There was little to no city-supplied electrical power. Shops and other businesses had long ceased to open, and the school system had collapsed. Those citizens who had not fled the city huddled in their homes as Marines and insurgents fought through the streets day and night.

With General Zilmer responsible for all of al-Anbar Province, responsibility for gaining control of Ramadi fell to Colonel MacFarland of the “Ready First” as it assumed area responsibility in early June 2006.

The situation was grim; the Army had control of the outskirts of the city through its “bookend” camps to the west and east (Camp Ramadi and Camp Corregidor). A tank company operated in the southern part of Ramadi, and the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines (3/8) under Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Neary were based at Camp Hurricane Point, in the far western end of the city. Neary had established three tenuous outposts within the city limits; one at the Government Center, another in the Iraqi veterans affairs building known as OP VA, and the third, OP Hawk, close to the Government Center.

“2006 needed to be the Year of the Iraqi police (IP),” Zilmer said. “We needed to build up their army and police so that governance could follow.” But for this to occur, the local Iraqis had to be convinced that the Americans would stay and fight—just as the Americans needed to be convinced that the Iraqis would stand and fight with them.

Enter Sheikh Sattar Abdul Abu Risha.

Sattar Delivers

Shortly after the “Ready First” arrived in June 2006, Lieutenant Colonel Tony Deane, commander of Task Force 1-35 Armor, approached Sattar to recruit his tribesmen to the police force.

To accomplish this, Colonel MacFarland’s deputy, Lieutenant Colonel Jim Lechner, and his police imple-

mentation officer, Marine Major Teddy Gates, decided to change the location for IP recruiting. They wanted a more secure location close to Sattar’s house, as this would enable them to build a police station north of the Euphrates River in an area where many potential recruits lived.

Having already had his father and three brothers killed by AQI, Sattar liked the idea, and the Iraqi response was overwhelming at the next week’s recruiting drive. Sattar promised even more recruits for August, and with AQI’s help, he delivered.

In August, the new Jazeera police station north of the river, manned mostly by Abu Ali Jassim tribe members, was attacked and the sheikh of the tribe killed. AQI then hid the sheikh’s body so it was not found for several days, a gross violation of Islam’s strict burial rules that call for interment within 24 hours.

The attack on the station killed several Iraqi police and also caused a number of burn casualties. MacFarland offered the police evacuation to Camp Blue Diamond, an American Army camp outside of Ramadi, while they repaired the station, but the Iraqis refused to abandon their post. Instead, in a scene reminiscent of Iwo Jima, they put their flag back up, and began patrolling again that same day.

With the locals outraged by AQI’s disregard of Islamic funeral laws, the charismatic Sheikh Sattar stepped forward to continue the push toward working with the Americans. He began as the spokesman for what is now known as the Anbar Awakening movement, and soon became the leader. McFarland attended the meeting when the sheikhs officially began the Awakening, and the next week he and they agreed to a list of principles and requirements.

McFarland later said, “I told them that I now knew what it was like to be in Independence Hall on 4 July 1776 when the Declaration of Independence was signed.”

Keeping Pressure on AQI

Three weeks later, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines (1/6) relieved 3/8. Its mission: “Provide security and stability for Ramadi, working with and through the Iraqi Army (IA).”

The battalion moved into the camp on the western end of Ramadi known as Hurricane Point and immediately began to plan its advance into the city. “We

were told to expand our permanent presence with the Iraqi security forces" (ISF), said Lieutenant Colonel Journey, the CO, "and so we began conducting some pretty serious offensive ops within the first 30 days."

Initially Journey and 1/6 were on their own in West Ramadi, although they had theoretical support from an Iraqi Army battalion that in reality was not able to fight. Journey saw the need to fight aggressively, and he pushed his companies out into the city quickly.

"I tried to give my battalion commanders a clear intent for their role in the Brigade's fight, provide them with the resources they need to execute, and let them fight their fight as they see it," explained MacFarland.

Journey quickly dispatched his companies into the city. Alpha Company under Captain Stephen Sloan took over OP VA. Captain Jason Arthaud, Bravo Company, pushed out to the Government Center, and Charlie Company, Captain Jody White, ran OP Hawk. Captain Todd Mahar's Weapons Company escorted convoys around the city, conducted mobile patrols, and provided the heavy quick reaction force presence.

Additionally, MacFarland provided Navy SEALs and Seabees, Army scouts, civil affairs, and PSYOPS teams, UAVs, engineers, artillery, and attack helicopters as needed. He also stationed a tank platoon at Hurricane Point to support the Marines. Based on reports from his field commanders, the colonel adjusted his forces to maintain maximum pressure on the enemy at all times.

"We pushed our Marines into the most heavily contested areas," said Journey, the 1/6 battalion commander, "where AQI ruled primarily by murder and intimidation."

Journey ordered regular patrolling, enhancing security street by street. His Marines also supplied generators, other equipment, medical assistance, and a variety of services that elevated living conditions for Ramadi's citizens.

Night Calls

Knocking unbidden on the doors of residents after midnight, a practice known as "night calls," resulted in intelligence about the workings of the neighborhood that had the collateral benefit of helping the Marines distinguish between friend and foe. Captain Sloan's troops would depart OP VA through the twisted wires, trash, and IED craters to knock on doors at 0100 or

later. If not fighting, Second Lieutenant Micah Steinfeld would drink chai with the head of the household as he inquired about family, schooling, employment (or lack of), and other demographic questions so Marines could build a database of local knowledge for each street.

Simultaneously, the company corpsman, Chris "Doc" Anderson, would be treating children who needed basic medical aid. Returning to base at about 0400, the teams would often hear gunfire and IED blasts from other sections of the city where Marine patrols were engaged in nocturnal firefights.

Lieutenant Colonel Journey took the concept of "clear-hold-build" and refined it: he believed all three activities needed to be conducted concurrently. There were kinetic and non-kinetic operations done simultaneously, but in different parts of the city, and to different degrees.

Part of the non-kinetic operations was Voice of Ramadi, a radio broadcast to the citizens via huge loudspeakers from the top of the Government Center, and other newly established strong points. The brainchild of Major Tiley Nunnick, the Information Officer, the goal was to communicate news and events to the local population.

"Your brave Iraqi police stopped a suicide bomber this morning" the citizens were told, or "750 more of your loyal Sons of Anbar have signed up as Iraqi police in order to protect their homes and families."

Voice of Ramadi broadcast at set times each day, like the prayers chanted from the mosques. Led by Majors Nunnick and Daniel Zappa, Lieutenant Colonel Journey's executive officer, 1/6 formed a working group that developed these culturally effective messages. In an unusual move, Journey and Zappa installed their lead interpreter as a special adviser, his knowledge and familiarity with the local culture and religion playing a big part in the communications operation.

In addition, the district police chiefs, Mayor Latif, and Anbar's governor, Ma-moun Sami Rashid al Alwani, all took part in bringing public service messages and updates to the people. Their messages had to do with security and improving critical services as redevelopment projects got underway.

Working Together

As the Marines struggled to win the battle in the

streets, Journey and MacFarland fought to prevail on a governmental and tribal level. Governor Ma-moun shuttled between his office at the Government Center and the Ministry of the Interior in Baghdad pleading for funds to pay the police and other city workers. His knowledge of the local political scene proved invaluable to the Marines of 1/6; one day he brought Journey a list of 120 names of Sunnis volunteering to join the police force—all of whom withstood a security check.

Journey and MacFarland also worked with Sheikh Sattar in planning each new outpost. They would build one in a day, then assign both Marines and Iraqi troops to operate from it. After the surrounding area was secured, they would construct another one several hundred yards away.

While the Marines of 3/8 had labored mightily to train the Iraqi Army battalion prior to the arrival of 1/6, it finally achieved acceptable combat readiness when Journey and MacFarland started co-locating Marines and Iraqi units. Previously, the IA rotated companies in and out of the fight for leave, but this was changed to platoon rotations so that companies could permanently partner with the Marines and own the same battlespace.

Captain Patriquin

MacFarland and his civil affairs officer, Captain Travis Patriquin, met regularly with Sheikh Sattar, and the relationship developed into an essential ingredient in successfully engaging the locals.

Patriquin was a former Special Forces officer who spoke passable Arabic. Smart and highly personable, he accompanied MacFarland to his meetings with Sattar. He became personally close to the sheikh and his family, who soon “adopted” him, and gave him the honorary tribal name Hisham Abu Resha (Patrick of Abu Resha). When Patriquin learned of medical problems or other local needs, he told MacFarland’s staff, which quickly responded, further improving relations.

MacFarland, Patriquin, and Sheikh Sattar huddled regularly to discuss ways to persuade tribesmen to join the Iraqi security forces, to induce more tribes into the Awakening movement, to bring a functional government back to Ramadi, and to rebuild the city. “It was a partnership built on mutual respect” said MacFarland “and neither of us (he or Patriquin) ever made a commitment that we did not honor”

“Patriquin was one more very good reason for the sheikhs to trust us,” McFarland explained.

The captain’s death from an IED blast in December 2006 was a huge blow to the sheikhs, who turned out in force for his memorial service and often became teary eyed when speaking of him afterward. They named a police station in his honor.

But at this point Journey’s Marines were still going door-to-door, providing the muscle that gave Sattar the “face” he needed when talking with the other sheiks. The fighting inside the city remained ferocious; on this author’s first night at Hurricane Point, in October 2006, four Marines at OP Hawk were killed when their humvee was IED’d, and a month later Doc Anderson and Captain Patriquin were lost. The Marine KIA [Killed in Action] and WIA [Wounded in Action] toll continued to mount.

Seizing the Security Station

The first major Marine offensive was seizing the 17th Street Security Station, which they did in mid-October. Taking control of this three-story building signaled both the locals and AQI that the Marines were serious about reclaiming the city. Sloan’s Alpha Company Marines were moved from OP VA into the security station, and it became the first joint Marine-Iraqi outpost in the city.

Meanwhile, AQI’s campaign of terror had not abated. Beheadings of adults and teens continued. Smokers had their fingers cut off.

Now, though, Marines, Iraqi Army troops, and police were patrolling together three times a day. They went street by street, knocking on doors, meeting the residents, opening two schools, fighting if necessary. The continuous on-the-ground presence of the Marines gave the locals the courage to stand up to AQI.

The break came when the Abu Alwani tribe “flipped,” meaning they switched their loyalties and began working with the Marines. The tribe lived in West Ramadi, where Journey’s Marines first began patrolling, and were convinced by Governor Mamoun, a fellow Alwani tribesman, to build a police station in their section of the city.

The station was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Salaam al-Dalaimi, a dynamic Iraqi officer who aggressively began clearing AQI out of the area. But AQI

went after him equally aggressively, murdering him in his home using a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBID). His deputy, however, quickly stepped up and followed Salaam's lead. The West Ramadi police station became even more active in working with the Marines to rid their part of the city of AQI. Salaam became a police hero, a martyr, and his picture still adorns every police building in the city today.

The Marine-Army-Tribal alliance was successful: The Abu Alwanis flipped because the governor and Sattar convinced them to do so—and was himself convinced by MacFarland, Patriquin, and the courage of Jurney's Marines.

City Coming Back to Life

In January 2007, Governor Mamoun appointed a mayor, Latif Obaid. Protected by Jurney's Marines, Mayor Latif vigorously and visibly promoted stability, and began appointing fellow businessmen to an increasingly active city council. Working with civil affairs Marine Major Scott Kish and Gunnery Sergeant Matthew Knight, the mayor also pressed for the repair of sewage pipes, the resumption of trash collection, the removal of burned-out cars from the streets, and other basic services—and he did it by hiring the locals and paying them in cash. These were the first jobs available in Ramadi since 2004, and were much sought-after.

The improved security situation enabled Latif and the Americans to rebuild and improve other municipal services; electricity reached more parts of the city for more hours each day, houses and neighborhoods had clean water, and the oddly named Route Michigan, the main road through the city, had the concrete blast barriers removed as traffic volume increased to pre-war levels.

While Jurney's Marines were extended for three months, MacFarland and the "Ready First" returned to Germany. Colonel John Charlton and the Army's 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3d Infantry Division, replaced them in February 2007. Charlton continued MacFarland and Jurney's tactics. With Jurney's Marines continuing to clear street-by-street, Charlton's troops assisted by manning the newly opened joint security stations where Americans and Iraqis lived and worked side by side.

As the violence of winter 2007 eased, and spring and summer arrived, the combined concept of security = jobs = more security = more jobs took hold and the locals joined the Iraqi police by the thousands to continue to drive out AQI. Gunny Knight's initial clean-up program grew as the locals, with Marine and Army managerial assistance, rebuilt the streets, the buildings, and reopened the hundreds of small businesses and markets that are the hallmarks of a prosperous city.

Even the September 13 assassination of Sheikh Sattar did not break the momentum towards stability and peace. Shortly after Sattar was photographed at al Asad air base with President George W. Bush, AQI suicide bombers attacked him at his home during the opening days of Ramadan, killing him and his guards. But his brother, Sheikh Ahmed Abu Risha, promptly took charge of the Anbar Awakening Movement. Unusual in the Middle East, where loyalty normally goes to the man and not the institution, Sheikh Ahmed was successful in maintaining Ramadi's charge toward reconstruction and governance.

As of 15 February 2008, with police intelligence becoming more effective daily, Ramadi has not had a gun fired in anger in 262 days, and the few IED incidents that occur do so outside the city.

The city of Ramadi today is a work in progress in a country undergoing a transition from a government-managed petroleum dictatorship to a free-market democracy. Thanks to Jurney, MacFarland, and the late Sheikh Sattar, Ramadi's citizens, 99 percent of them Sunni, finally understand that their survival depends on banding together against AQI and their historic Shia enemies. These three men built the base that enabled Charlton and Latif to continue reconstruction efforts—all of which gave the citizens of Ramadi the courage, and the opportunity—to stand up for themselves.

Notes

U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, April 2008, 54-61. Reprinted by permission. Copyright © 2008 by U.S. Naval Institute (www.usni.org).

About the Author

Andrew Lubin is a journalist and a member of the USMC Combat Correspondents Association. Between 2006 and 2008, he has been imbedded with Marine and Army units in Iraq and Afghanistan.





Daily Diary of an al-Qaeda Sector Leader

by *Abu-Tariq*

Diary captured and transcribed by United States Forces-Iraq

Editor's Note

On 3 November 2007, soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team captured the diary of an Iraqi named Abu-Tariq. This is an unclassified, full translation of the diary with names redacted. Abu-Tariq was an al-Qaeda emir in control of five battalions within two sectors.

Soldiers found the diary during a patrol conducted about 15 kilometers south of Balad. It gives a strong indication of how the tide had turned against al-Qaeda in Iraq as the Awakening movement grew. As Abu-Tariq noted in his first entry, he at one time commanded more than 600 men before the impact of the Awakening movement took root, ultimately leaving him with a roster of 38 men he listed at the end of the diary, many of whom were unavailable for duty.

In the Name of Allah the Most Merciful and Most Compassionate.

Date: Third of Shawaal of 1428 Hijri (H)
[Gregorian: 15 October 2007]

This is My Will:

I am Abu-Tariq, emir [leader] of al-Layin and al-Mashahdah Sector. There were almost 600 fighters in our sector before the tribes changed course 360 degrees under the influence of the so-called Islamic Army (Deserter of Jihad) and other believer groups.

Many of our fighters quit and some of them joined the deserters, and later on I will mention the names of fighters who stood by us (faithful fighters), but things started getting worse ever since, and as a result of that the number of fighters dropped down to 20 or less which led us to move some of our vehicles to another location (al-Muthanna establishment area) for security reasons where our brother [NAME REDACTED] is stationed at (I will also mention the type vehicles at the end.)

There are many details known by brothers [NAMES REDACTED] and [NAME REDACTED] regarding the spoils, buying and selling vehicles such as:

1-Lorry (6-wheeled) in Mosul sold later and we received some of the money for it.

2-[NAME REDACTED] still owes us [\$10,000] which is the remainder of the money that is still with them after they sold two Lorries for us at the car dealerships in the al-Saqlawiyah area which we have not received yet. We gave him our business and received [\$10,000] from him as a down-payment but he still owes us another [\$10,000], and later we gave him [\$28,000] to get the Lorry back, but he did not return it yet. (The actual owner of the dealership is [NAME REDACTED].)

3-The value of another Lorry is [\$25,000] is still in the possession of a person in Tikrit known by brother [NAME REDACTED]

4-We bought a pickup model 2000 from a person called [NAME REDACTED] (his phone number is [NUMBER REDACTED]) of which he did not pay its value yet, and the deal was to trade in this vehicle with a truck or pay its value in al-Shirqat at al-Nahar dealership close to the house of brother [NAME REDACTED] (killed) and the price of the pickup is [\$7,500].

Date: 9-10 of Shawaal of 1428 H
[Gregorian: 21-22 October 2007]

A BKC [7.62mm machine gun], ammunition and other light weapons are still in the pos-

session of [NAME REDACTED] and his brother [NAME REDACTED] which belong to us and brother [NAME REDACTED] knows about that, and the weapons that are in the possession of [NAME REDACTED] are 2,000 C5 Rockets plus an RPG-9 but he refuses to give us any of it lately and we do not know what is his intention is in that regard, therefore, we have to keep trying with him to get our weapons and ammunition back due to the present condition and especially since the al-Sahwah [Awakening] groups started opposing us.

Weapons and ammunition such as 30 containers of bullets and four BKC's in the possession of brother [NAME REDACTED] also belong to us.

Brothers, I want you to know that I will only mention the names of fighters who were faithful to our cause and stood by us when we needed them, and later I will mention the names of the traitors so that they may be punished when time comes.

Date: 12 of Shawaal of 1428 H
[Gregorian: 24 October 2007]

There are very few tribe members who stood by us and supported us, such as members of [NAME REDACTED] tribe that were surrounded by al-Sahwah [Awakening] fighters and even though they did not quit plus members of [NAME REDACTED] and [NAME REDACTED] sub-tribe members. After the raid that we did against the houses and safe heavens of the deserters, which led to killing and injuring a lot of them, burning some of their vehicles, and spoiling some of their vehicles and weapons, which affected their morale and resources tremendously, knowing that the number of fighters who did the raid and not 150 fighters as they claimed after that.

Date: 16 of Shawaal of 1428 H
[Gregorian: 28 Oct 2007]

My request to you is not to be negligent with the deserters/traitors at all, because

those kinds of people look like the cancer that grew up in the body of al-Jihad movement, therefore, we should have no mercy on them even if they joined the Iraqi government security forces and do not let them have any sense of relief despite the fact that some of them ran away from our strong hand to unknown locations with their families. Even though our Jihadi movement goals at the early stages were to recruit as many as possible of the government employees in order to have access, sources and supporters among them in order to gain more information about the government security forces and the infidel's military and tactical movements in order to ease our movements and missions against them despite the fact that I was against such goals for security reasons. Dear brothers, I would like you to know that even though the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) achieved a lot of projects for the benefit of the people of Iraq such as bringing water, electricity and agricultural help to a lot of areas such as [NAME REDACTED] we were mistreated, cheated, and betrayed by some of our brothers who used to be part of the Jihadi Movement, therefore we must not have mercy on those traitors until they come back to the right side—The ISI side—or get eliminated completely in order to achieve victory at the end. And I would like to mention here the name of one of [the] families [sub-tribe] who betrayed us and lost our trust is the [NAME REDACTED] family who were very good, faithful Jihadi fighters, but later on we found out that these people were nothing but hypocrites, liars, and traitors and were waiting for the right moment to switch sides with whoever pays them most and at the end they fought against us and they tried to prevent us from attacking the *al-Sahwah* [Awakening] groups blocking our entrance to that area.

Information about the old battalion of fighters in my sector:

1-Battalion of Laylat al-Qadr Martyrs [Laylat al-Qadr is the 27th Night of Ramadan]: Its group emir called [NAME REDACTED] (detained), and the number of fighters in this

battalion were 200. All of them were very well equipped with weapons and 37 vehicles, and they did a lot of good activities against the invaders and its followers, but in the meantime, there are few fighters left who are actually fighting, and some were killed and some arrested, but the majority betrayed us and joined al-Sahwah [Awakening]. This battalion was one of the first battalions whose numbers of fighters was tarnished after Abu-Haydar al-Ansari Battalion, and the number of fighters is now only 10.

2-Battalion of Abu-Haydar al-Ansari: The emir of this battalion [NAME REDACTED] was the first renegade in this group. He ran away one month before the al-Sahwah [Awakening] movement started in our sector, and we still do not know where he is hiding. It is no wonder that most of the information we got from him was deception and lies. There were 300 fighters in the battalion equipped with good weapons and 17 vehicles, and since [the Emir] deserted us, the number of fighters dropped down to 16 and then to two; one of whom was arrested [NAME REDACTED], and the second one was injured [NAME REDACTED], and the rest joined the al-Sahwah [Awakening] groups.

3-Battalion of Hudhayfah Ibin al-Yaman: The Emir of this battalion is [NAME REDACTED], and the number of fighters are almost 60. They are very well equipped with weapons and other supplies. All of them are true and good believers, plus their activities against the invaders and their followers were very good, but for the present time, their activities are frozen due to their present conditions plus their families' conditions.

4-Battalion of al-Ahwal: Most of its members are scoundrels, sectarians, non-believers, and the worst one of them was [NAME REDACTED], and he was the first one to desert his battalion and ran away to Syria, then later on came back from Syria and joined the traitors, while the rest of the battalion was gone except for [NAME REDACTED] and his sons, and the military person who was in charge of the battalion, his name is [NAME

REDACTED] (bad not good), and he still has in his possession three BKC's and two sniper rifles, and he claims that one of those rifles was given back to its original owner [NAME REDACTED]. (I will try to take back the rest of the weapons from him soon, and I will mention that later.)

5-Battalion of Muhammed Bin Muslimah: The leader of this battalion was the martyr [NAME REDACTED] who was killed by the traitors of the Islamic Army with help of the invaders' helicopters, which also led to the destruction of some of our vehicles and weapons. Some of the fighters of this battalion deserted, and especially the ones who came from [NAME REDACTED] tribe like the traitor [NAME REDACTED], who became an officer with the al-Sahwah [Awakening] group, plus others who ran away with their weapons to Diyala and then disappeared, like [NAME REDACTED] who has in his possession a sniper rifle, and his brothers, except for one [NAME REDACTED] who was injured with [NAME REDACTED] who possesses a BKC.

Technical Department:

Members of this department are [NAME REDACTED] and his sons, who are still working with us, plus [NAME REDACTED], who was injured recently.

Air Defense:

One person left in this department who is still working with us [NAME REDACTED], who is willing to work with us to the end, and he has in his possession three operative batteries (one inoperative), plus eight C5 launchers and one 23mm gun.

Names of people who are still working with al-Qaeda:

- [NAME REDACTED]
- [NAME REDACTED] and his brothers
- [NAME REDACTED] and his brothers
- [NAME REDACTED]
- [NAME REDACTED]
- [NAME REDACTED]

[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED] the sniper/now he is injured

[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED]/detained
[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED]/left us a week ago
[NAME REDACTED] and his sons/[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED]

[NAME REDACTED]/there are so many negative remarks against him
[NAME REDACTED]/We have not seen him for more than 20 days so far.

[NAME REDACTED]/We have not seen him for more than 10 days so far.

[NAME REDACTED] showed up with their group emir [NAME REDACTED] and they are:

[NAME REDACTED]
[NAME REDACTED]/left three days ago
[NAME REDACTED]/came back to work with us recently after his wounds healed up.

And that is the number of fighters left in my sector.

Remarks: [NAME REDACTED] and their fighters are good and faithful, and they lost one of their fighters (his name martyr [NAME REDACTED]) fighting against al-Sahwah [Awakening] fighters, and in addition to that tribe area is surrounded with al-Sahwah fighters who are preventing them from leaving

their area. So far and we have no further information about the situation over there.

Notes

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About the Author

Abu-Tariq was an emir (leader) of al-Qaeda in Iraq fighters in the al-Layin and al-Mashahdah sector at the time his diary was captured in the fall of 2007.





Part V: Stability, Progress, and the Future

As U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker told journalist Thomas E. Ricks for a piece published in February 2009, “What the world ultimately thinks about us and what we think about ourselves is going to be determined much more by what happens from now on than what’s happened up to now.”¹ As of this writing, Iraq is a much more stable and secure country than it was in 2004. However, sectarian tensions remain, and there is doubt about whether or not Iraq can remain stable without the presence of substantial U.S. forces. The following selections present an overview of the questions and problems that Iraq will face in the future, as well as the concerns many observers feel about the consequences of the surge and al-Anbar Awakening. Timothy Williams’s piece from *The New York Times* considers the sense of optimism that pervaded much of western Iraq as Marines withdrew from Camp Fallujah in the fall of 2008. Steve Simon’s article presents a warning against too much optimism, however, noting that the Awakening strategy may have been successful for the short term, but that it has strengthened forces that could undermine the cohesion of the Iraqi state in the long term. In response, Colin H. Kahl and William E. Odom argue that Simon’s assessment is too pessimistic and that the Awakening presents a foundation from which more can be done to strengthen the Iraqi state.

1. Quoted by Ricks in “The war in Iraq isn’t over. The main events may not even have happened yet,” *Washington Post*, 15 February 2009.