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Chapter Seven

Rise of the Anbar Salvation Front

(2007)

(S/NF) By 2007, the rise and continued growth of Sheikh Abdul Sattar, the Anbar Salvation Front, and the Anbar Revolutionaries had forced AQI to adapt to a more hostile environment. While AQI was far from crippled, its previous dominance in Anbar was actively challenged at the local level by indigenous groups opposed to AQI's agenda and ideology. This trend would continue throughout 2007, with tribal dynamics playing an increasing role on the nature of the insurgency during the first quarter of 2007.

(S/NF) While it would thus be a serious mistake to characterize AQI as having been defeated in Anbar, this shift in local atmospherics combined with the movement of AQI personnel away from Anbar to Salahaddin and Diyala provinces represented the Coalition with a unique opportunity in the course of counter-insurgency in Anbar.

Anti-AQI Efforts Strengthen

Overview of Anbari Tribes after the Formation of the Anbar Salvation Front

(S) The formation of the Anbar Salvation Front (SAA) led to a noticeable improvement in security in the greater Ramadi area, as pro-Coalition tribes demonstrated their ability and willingness to band together against AQI. Through the efforts of experienced leaders like Sheikh Abdul Sattar of the Albu Risha, his brother Sheikh Ahmed, Sheikh Hamid Farhan Heis al-Dhiab of the Albu Dhiab, (b)(6) Sheikh Jassim Muhammad Salih al-Suwaydawi of the Albu Soda, and Sheikh Ra'ad Sabah al-Alwan of the Albu Alwan had learned the lessons of MML's Anbar People's Committee (see Chapter 6a) and protected their leaders from AQI reprisal.¹

(S) Because the greater Ramadi area was populated by more than a dozen tribes, the leading sheikhs recognized that no one tribe could hope to defeat AQI on their own. While the communal nature of the SAA was not a fail-safe against assassination, it did ensure that each tribe either succeeded or failed as a group. The founding tribes of the Anbar Emergency Council (see Chapter 6c) wielded a significant amount of authority, but they did not dominate the organization and all tribal leaders who agreed to join the group were rewarded with equal positions of influence and authority.²

(S/NF) The situation in Fallujah, where SAA had difficulty organizing, was far more complex. Amariyah, Ferris Town and the Jezira were dominated by the Albu Issa, Saqlawiyah by the Mohamdi, Zaidon by the Zobai, and Karmah by the Jumayli. The Albu Issa was split between pro- and anti-AQI factions, but the Mohamdi, Zobai and Jumayli were heavily pro-AQI. While the Anbar Revolutionaries were active in Saqlawiyah and the residents of Amariyah and Ferris Town had cooperated with the SAA, IIP, and the Anbar Revolutionaries to establish security, similar efforts did not occur in other parts of Fallujah. In contrast Khalidiyah and Habbaniyah were equally

¹ [| Military | 15 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070115 | (S/NF) |]

² Ibid.

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tribally heterogeneous but had experienced improvements in security because the Anbar Revolutionaries conducted joint patrols with local elements of the Iraqi army and police.³

(S/NE) The problems in Fallujah were primarily the result of a lack of effective senior tribal leadership, which left lower-ranking sheikhs open to petty rivalries or AQI intimidation. Despite the return of Sheikh Khamis Hasnawi Aifan al-Issawi to Iraq to rally the Albu Issa against AQI (see Chapter 6c), Sheikh Muhammad Samir Hikmat al-Mohamdi, Sheikh Meshan Abbas Muhammad al-Jumayli, and Sheikh Hadi Yousef al-Zobai all remained abroad for fear of their lives, adopting an attitude towards the SAA similar to Sheikh Khamis' prior to his return ("When Sattar falls, I don't want my tribe falling with him").⁴

(S/NE) The Albu Mahal tribe in al-Qaim and the Albu Nimr south of Hit were both pro-Coalition tribes with a substantial number of their tribesmen enlisted in the Iraqi police. The Haditha tribes, however, particularly the dominant Jughayfi, were seriously weakened by the influence of AQI's murder and intimidation campaign and their leaders were unable to oppose the group even had they the desire to do so. As in the Fallujah area, many of Anbar's northwestern tribes were unable to adequately oppose AQI. Even in al-Qaim, rivalry between the Albu Mahal, Salmani, and Karbuli tribes dating back to 2005 (see Chapter 5a-b) prevented Albu Mahal leader Sheikh Sabah Sattam Aftan from forming an SAA equivalent even had he the desire to do so.⁵

The Anbar Salvation Front Expands Further

(S) The continued growth of the SAA away from its shadow government origins into a legitimate political organization meant that the group's president Sheikh Hamid Farhan Heis al-Dhiabi began to play a more political role in the group. A long-time Anbari tribal leader, Sheikh Hamid had attempted to become involved in Iraqi national politics under the banner of the United Iraqi Alliance. In addition to his role in the creation of the SAA, Sheikh Hamid had also been instrumental in the Albu Dhiab tribe's anti-AQI activities and in December 2006 helped to create the Jazira Council (with (b)(6)) (see Chapter 6c), and Anbar University professor (b)(6).
b 6 This was the first step in the SAA's efforts to establish local governance in the Jazira area, which would demonstrate to Anbaris that it was capable of addressing the local situation. The Jazira Council consisted of representatives of the Albu Dhiab, b 6
(b)(6) with Sheikh Hamid guiding its first meeting and nominating his brother Sheikh Muhammad as president of the new organization.⁶

(S/NE) The Jazira Council was led by Sheikh Hamid's brother Sheikh Muhammad, with Sheikh Tahir Sabar Bedawi of the Albu Ali Jassim as vice president and Sheikh Mizher Hamid Ajaj al-Assafi (a leader of the ruling tribe in the Dulaymi confederation) as assistant vice president. The council's first meeting on December 20, 2006 focused on vetting Coalition-funded projects and prospective contractors and providing security for fuel deliveries. It also encouraged Anbaris to take part in civil society, worked for national government recognition of the Jazira area as a subdistrict of Ramadi,

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ [| Military | 07 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070107 | (S/NE) |]

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held an adult literacy program, and was a mechanism to provide reconstruction support to those tribes that agreed to support the Coalition. A number of technocrats were included on the council to oversee electricity, water, municipality, health, and education and to act as liaisons with the provincial and national government ministries.⁷

(S) While a majority of the council's participants were members of the SAA, the Jazira Council was not just an extension of Sheikh Abdul Sattar's movement, and was more concerned with establishing local government. The Albu Risha and Albu Julib tribes, leading members of the SAA, were not involved in the Council because they did not have a presence in the Jazira area. By working with the Coalition to provide electricity, water, employment, and security to the Jazira area, Sheikh Hamid and other SAA leaders hoped to win the hearts and minds of the local population, deprive AQI of an important staging area into Ramadi, and provide an example for neighboring tribes.⁸

(S) The creation of the Council was possible because SAA's relationship with Governor Mamoun and the IIP was markedly better than it had been throughout much of late 2006 (see Chapter 6c for details). Sheikh Abdul Sattar came to regard Governor Mamoun as a legitimate partner rather than an enemy despite Mamoun's attempts to prevent the SAA from receiving support from the Iraqi interior ministry until after the next round of provincial elections. Some of this new understanding was due to the fact that, given the security situation in Baghdad, Governor Mamoun's ability to persuade the Iraqi government to agree to anything was extremely limited. As a result of the new partnership, Governor Mamoun met with the SAA leaders on December 23 to hand out reconstruction contracts.⁹

(S/NE) To discuss the distribution of the new contracts, Sheikh Abdul Sattar organized a conference on January 10 that was attended by several hundred leading sheiks, contractors, politicians, and Coalition officials from across Anbar; the largest meeting of the SAA since its founding as the Anbar Emergency Council in September 2006. The fact that so many leading Anbaris were willing to attend despite the presence of Coalition personnel indicates that the Anbari elite was now if not fully supportive of the Coalition, at least willing to be seen with Coalition officials in the hopes of garnering reconstruction contracts. As with other SAA events, the conference was very much Sheikh Abdul Sattar's show. The fact that so many leading Anbaris agreed to answer his summons constituted a tacit acknowledgement that he was now the most powerful leader in the entire province and would remain so as long as he continued to deliver on his promises.¹⁰

(S/NE) For Sheikh Abdul Sattar, the primary purpose of the conference was to create a foundation for economic infrastructure improvement in Anbar, increasing employment through mass public works projects (road construction, utilities, repair, etc.). This would counteract AQI's recruitment of disaffected or unemployed Anbaris and build public confidence in the SAA's capacity to bring basic necessities to the province. The secondary purpose was use the possibility of winning contracts to increase the influence of the SAA leadership over other sheikhs by having them publicly display

⁷ [| Military | 08 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070108 | (S/NE) |]

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ [| Military | 04 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070104 | (S/NE) |]

¹⁰ [| Military | 12 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070112 | (S/NE) |]

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their support for "a new order in Anbar" and the SAA while rejecting AQI. By encouraging local governance and economic initiatives like the Jazira Council, Sheikh Abdul Sattar was also acknowledging that success in Anbar largely depended on the efforts of Anbaris and support from the Coalition, not on uncertain assistance from the Iraqi central government.¹¹

(S) While Sheikh Abdul Sattar remained the most public and dominant leader of the SAA, lesser leaders such as his brother Ahmed, [REDACTED] b 6 and the group's president Sheikh Hamid Farhan al-Heis occupied prominent positions within the organization. Sheikh Abdul Sattar had a significant level of influence over the Albu Risha tribe, but by early 2007 the Albu Risha were only one of many tribes belonging to the SAA. As part of the power-sharing arrangement envisioned by the SAA, all tribal leaders associated with the organization retained some level of influence over the Emergency Response Battalion (now known as Emergency Response Units (ERU)) members from their tribes, providing a balance of power between traditional tribal authority on one hand and the institutional and personal appeal of Sheikh Abdul Sattar on the other. In Ramadi, these tribal loyalties also prevailed among the Iraqi police, particularly in the newer stations, substations, and patrol bases that were manned and led by members of a particular tribe, such as the Albu Alwan tribe that manned the al-Warar police station.¹²

(S) Indicative of Sheikh Abdul Sattar's continued appreciation for the Coalition was his declaration that the new Iraqi police station to be built near the White Apartments in the Tamim district was to be named Travis Patriquin Station, after a Coalition officer killed in an IED attack on December 6, 2006 who had been RFCT's liaison to the Ramadi tribe. Because of Captain Patriquin's efforts on behalf of the SAA, Sheikh Abdul Sattar considered the officer to be a member of his own Rishawi tribe.¹³

The Replacement of General Hamid

(S/NF) Maneuverings over the replacement of General Hamid show the complex interaction between the SAA and the provincial government. Under the pretext of responding to complaints from the provincial police that Brigadier General Hamid circumvented procedures and was regarded by many police as inept, the SAA agreed to request that he be replaced as provincial police chief by Ramadi police chief Colonel Khalil Ibrahim Hamadi. The subtext of this replacement, however, was that Brigadier General Hamid had attempted to transfer Colonel Khalil to Hit to take over the duties of Hit police chief Brigadier General Hamid Ibrahim Jazza, prompting Colonel Khalil to convince the Ramadi police force to demonstrate in his favor on November 26. On November 27, Sheikh Abdul Sattar and his brother Sheikh Ahmed met with Colonel Khalil to calm the situation, resulting in the compromise under which Colonel Khalil would eventually replace Brigadier General Hamid as Anbar provincial police chief.¹⁴

(S/NF) While Brigadier General Hamid was not the leader of Albu Dhiab tribe, he held some influence within it and had been involved in the SAA since its inception. However, he was also a

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² [| Military | 23 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070223 | (S/NF) |]

¹³ [| Military | 02 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070102 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁴ [| Military | 29 Nov 06 MNF-W INTSUM | 20061129 | (S/NF) |]

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lieutenant to Sheikh Abdul Sattar, to whom the real credit lay for the SAA's rapid growth and as such agreed to the demotion on the condition that he would remain the Albu Dhiab representative for the SAA and thus would save face within his tribe.¹⁵

(S/NF) Hamid managed to retain his position until January 18, 2007 when he was replaced with Staff Brigadier General Abdul Salam Ali Khalil Abdul Qadir al-'Ubaydi. A possible reason for the SAA's initial acceptance of Brigadier General Abdul Salam was a growing perception on the part of the group's leadership that Brigadier General Hamid was somewhat intellectually slow when it came to understanding the duties associated with his new position.¹⁶

(S/NF) The more the SAA learned about General Abdul Salam, however, the less the group came to like about him. As far as the SAA was concerned, General Abdul Salam's affiliation with IIP, his good relationship with Governor Mamoun, and his origins in Haditha were all strikes against him. This led to a February 2, 2007 conversation between Sheikh Ahmed to Prime Minister Maliki in which he stated that the SAA opposed General Abdul Salam's appointment and wanted Brigadier General Hamid reinstated as provincial police chief. Sheikh Ahmed's opinion was moderated however by the tentative support of General Abdul Salam b SAA leaders Sheikh Moyad Ibrahim, Sheikh Hamid Farhan Heis, and [redacted] b 6 [redacted] all of whom agreed to see how General Abdul Salam faired even though they all regarded him as little more than an IIP crony.¹⁷

(S) Sheikh Abdul Sattar's influence, while muted in this interaction, was soon shown to be expanding. In early January 2007, Governor Mamoun appointed Sheikh Abdul Sattar's cousin Latif Ubayd Ayadah al-Julibawi as the new mayor of Ramadi. While Latif had previously been associated with 1920 Revolution Brigade leader MML, he had supported MML's efforts at political engagement with the Coalition and was now dependent on his cousin's generosity for his own survival. Both SAA and the IIP-dominated provincial council regarded this as a demonstration of their influence, but the true winner was Sheikh Abdul Sattar, who had successfully installed an SAA supporter into a key political position. As a result of Sheikh Abdul Sattar's "share the wealth" attitude, providing the Albu Julib with this influential position served to further cement the tribe's loyalty to the SAA.¹⁸

The Anbar Salvation Front in Khalidiyah and Rutbah

(S) The growing strength of the SAA can be seen in the extension of its influence throughout Anbar. As noted in Chapter 6c, Khalidiyah was one of the cities where the SAA were most active against AQI. By January 2007, the group was conducting joint operations alongside Iraqi security forces and expanding the scope of its operations to include areas of Habbaniyah.¹⁹

(S) The SAA was opposed in Khalidiyah by [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] an AQI cell leader and facilitator loyal to [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] who was involved in trafficking weapons, murder and intimidation, sniper attacks, and planting IEDs in the city. [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] was heavily involved in

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ [| Military | 25 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070125 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁷ [| Military | 4 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070204 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁸ [| Military | 14 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070114 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁹ [| Military | 25 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070125 | (S/NF) |]

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recruiting adolescents to plant IEDs for AQI and his followers distributed propaganda for the Islamic Emirate of Iraq at the Habbaniyah market.²⁰

(S) The SAA also continued its expansion into Rutbah. Sheikh Abdul Sattar sent letters of appointment from both himself and Albu Alwan leader Sheikh Ra'ad Mukhlif al-Alwani on January 7, 2007 designating Sheikh Hamid Shanduk as the head of the SAA in the town. A pro-Coalition sheikh who had also worked as a Coalition contractor, Sheikh Hamid was a lieutenant colonel in the Iraqi police who had worked at the al-Warar police station in Ramadi during the height of the fighting in late 2006 (see Chapter 6c).²¹

(S) While the SAA had been active in Rutbah prior to Sheikh Hamid's appointment (a chapter of the Anbar Revolutionaries had operated in Rutbah since at least October 2006), most of its efforts had focused on patrolling the highways to prevent AQI from stealing cars and from robbing Anbaris traveling between Ramadi and the Anbar border crossings. As a result of these efforts, security was now much improved along highways while Task Force [1.4a] provided an increased level of security inside Rutbah.²²

(S) Since November 28, 2006, Task Force [1.4a] had been tasked with targeting insurgent and criminal activity in western Anbar. Its actions led to 176 detentions and the discovery of thirteen major arms caches that significantly degraded AQI influence and foreign fighter facilitation in Rutbah. Efforts by the Badran Turki network to reconstitute were disrupted by a January 10 raid on Samhat village that forced network associates [(b)(6)] to flee abroad. Task Force [1.4a] also targeted [b 6] associate [(b)(6)] in Nukayb, which AQI had previously regarded as a safe haven due to the historic absence of Coalition forces in the area.²³

(S) These actions, combined with those of the SAA, led to improvements in Rutbah despite AQI's ongoing murder and intimidation campaign. While Rutbah had yet to establish its own police force, the transfer of sixty Iraqi police to Rutbah from Ramadi met with considerable success in enhancing local security and disrupting the activities of the Abu Sarah Group. Task Force [1.4a] also succeeded in capturing [(b)(6)], an Islamic Army of Iraq financier loyal to AQI. The capture led to the discovery of pro-AQI Islamic Army of Iraq financing operations running from Rutbah to Nukayb to the Ar Ar border crossing.²⁴

The Capture of [(b)(6)]

(S) Elsewhere the Coalition also had considerable success in targeting AQI leaders. On December 8, for instance, Coalition forces captured AQI leader [b 6] at Bakhit village north of Saqlawiyah. [(b)(6)] was an AQI leader who had overseen the manufacturing of VBIEDs with the assistance of the largely criminal population of Bakhit village,

²⁰ [| Military | 2 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070202 | (S//NF) |]

²¹ [| Military | 12 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070112 | (S//NF) |]

²² Ibid.

²³ [| Military | 13 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070113 | (S//NF) |]

²⁴ Ibid.

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and then sending them to Baghdad for use in AQI attacks. (b)(6) was aided in these efforts by (b)(6) a former Jaysh Muhammad leader who oversaw weapons smuggling and IED activity in the Zagharid area. Like much of the insurgent leadership in the Saqlawiyah area, (b)(6) (b 6) was a subordinate to (b 6) who was the head of a large AQI network based in Saqlawiyah that spanned the Zagharid area as well as the Albu Shijil tribal area.²⁵

The Death of Hamud Kanush

(S) On December 24, 2006 Coalition forces raided the village of Samsiyah in response to intelligence suggesting that high-level AQI figures Hamud Kanush, Muhammad Talib Ibrahim, and (b 6) (b 6) were in the area. This raid led to the death of Muhammad, who was killed by the Coalition, as well as Hamud, who detonated a suicide bomber vest he was wearing rather than be taken prisoner.²⁶

(S) Born in Brudiyah, Iraq in 1953, Hamud had worked as a chemistry teacher and local Ba'ath Party leader prior to OIF. Since at least 2004, he had acted as a leader for AQI's weapons smuggling, foreign fighter facilitation, training, VBIED, and IED cells in western Anbar. He had also become exceptionally adept at evading Coalition capture, altering his appearance and never staying in the same place for more than two nights at a time.²⁷

AQI Responds to the Growing Pressure

AQI's Campaign Against the Anbar Salvation Front

(S) Despite this pressure, AQI continued its efforts to undermine support for the SAA at every turn. On December 8, 2006, senior AQI leader (b)(6) met with the leadership of the Albu Fleiss tribe in al-Sajarah, ordering them not to allow their tribesmen to join the Iraqi army, police, or SAA or they would be killed. Through police rosters in his possession, (b)(6) knew the names the tribesmen who had already joined the Iraqi police and offered them an amnesty that depended on turning in their weapons and requesting forgiveness. The same offer was extended to Albu Fleiss tribesmen who had participated in the December 2005 elections. (b)(6) meeting, however, was not simply an airing of typical AQI demands. He also insisted that the Albu Fleiss sheikhs begin levying recruits for AQI and assist the group in eliminating "collaborators" (particularly (b 6) a Habbaniyah police officer who supported the Anbar Revolutionaries) and in preparing for an upcoming attack on Camp Habbaniyah.²⁸

(S/NF) As the spiritual leader for AQI and all its allies operating between Ramadi and Habbaniyah, Ali Siyagha exercised considerable authority as a cell leader and facilitator. He had previously been subordinate to AQI leader (b 6) and thus had been part of (b 6) (b 6) network that stretched all the way from Husaybah-Sharqiyah to Ramadi.²⁹ The (b)(6)

²⁵ [| Military | 01 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070101 | (S/NF) |]

²⁶ [| Military | 17 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070117 | (S/NF) |]

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ [| Military | 02 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070102 | (S/NF) |]

²⁹ Ibid.

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family lived in the tribal area of the Albu Ajur subtribe of the Albu Fahd, which was reportedly a member of AQI's Central Tribal Council (see Chapter 6c).³⁰ After Durayd was killed in the Battle of Sufia (see Chapter 6c), (b)(6) continued to use his network to conduct attacks along the Ramadi-Khalidiyah corridor, though his primary focus remained coercing and intimidating civic, religious, and tribal leaders into supporting AQI. Examples of this included his use of the al-Rahman Mosque in the Albu Hazim tribal area to denounce the IIP and his recruiting of AQI fighters from al-Nassayf village. Through his intimidation campaign, (b)(6) was able to coerce Albu Fleiss tribesmen into attacking the Coalition, Iraqi police, and perceived "collaborators."³¹

(S) On January 12-13, Coalition forces killed eight AQI fighters including Umar Daham Hanush, another son of Daham Hanush, who was the amir of his father's Juro cell. The Juro cell was a particularly loathsome group that was involved in the kidnapping, torture, and beheading of suspected Coalition collaborators. His group also assassinated Sheikh Nasser Abd al-Karim Mukhlif al-Fahdawi (see Chapter 6a). Prior to his demise, Umar had been allied with and financially supported by Sheikh Fawaz Daham Hilayil, the former head of the Albu Taha subtribe of the Albu Fahd tribe, who had been a close associate of Saddam Hussein and a member of the defunct Ramadi Shura Council. By February 2007, Sheikh Fawaz had fled to Syria for fear of being detained by Coalition forces.³²

(S) (b)(6) also issued fatwas for AQI and its allies as far afield as Ramadi and Habbaniyah. Operating a *shari'ah* court out of Mudiq, (b)(6) preached against the IIP in the Albu Ajur tribal area and al-Nasaf, calling on residents to join AQI.³³ (b)(6) (yet another relative of (b)(6) see Chapter 3) was one of (b)(6) top lieutenants in the Khalidiyah area.³⁴

(S) To suppress the growing influence of AQI in this region, establish a permanent presence in Julaybah, and gain the support of local tribal leaders, the Coalition conducted Operation CHURUBUSCO in West al-Nasaf and the Albu Musa tribal area from January 16-25. The operation caused many AQI fighters to go underground or flee across the Euphrates River into the Jazira area. Among those AQI members who fled the area was (b)(6) who fled to the Albu Bali tribal area with the assistance of former al-Nu'man Brigade leader (b)(6).

AQI Reorganization in Ramadi

(S) With the loss meanwhile of so many senior AQI leaders in Ramadi to the Coalition and Anbar Revolutionaries in the fall of 2006³⁶, the group's (b)(6) began an internal

³⁰ [| Military | 24 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070124 | (S/NF) |]

³¹ [| Military | 08 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070108 | (S/NF) |]

³² [| Military | 2 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070202 | (S/NF) |]

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ [| Military | 08 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070108 | (S/NF) |]

³⁵ [| Military | 31 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070131 | (S/NF) |]

³⁶ Among the most recent Ramadi AQI losses included Malaab amir (b)(6) detained November 10, and his successor (b)(6) detained December 8.

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reorganization designed to distribute experienced commanders to as many cells as possible.³⁷ Among the AQI leaders he appointed was [redacted (b)(6)] of the Abu Anis Ishaqi cell, who had returned from Syria on December 20, 2006 and had previously been a member of the Abu Harun Group under [redacted b 6]. An experienced IED planner with a residence in the Malaab district, [redacted (b)(6)] sought to reinvigorate AQI's IED efforts in that district. Using barriers established by the Coalition to restrict vehicular traffic in December 2006 during Operation SQUEEZE PLAY to provide his cell members with cover, [redacted b 6] was able to carry out a more robust AQI IED campaign in southeastern Ramadi. AQI also set up checkpoints and conducted vehicular patrols in the northern part of the Tamim district centered on the Mustafa School.³⁸

(S) As a result of this reorganization, AQI was able to continue its murder and intimidation campaign against the Iraqi police in Ramadi. Unlike in 2006, however, the failure of major attacks, such as the joint AQI-Ansar al-Sunna assault on the Sufia district, was beginning to affect the group's ability to intimidate residents. As the Iraqi police continued to grow in numbers and capability in Ramadi, more residents were willing to support them and AQI's ability to move within the city diminished.³⁹

(S) [redacted b 6] who had been one of the most notorious AQI leaders in Ramadi since early 2005 and was the overseer for SVBIED attacks throughout Anbar, had since October 2006 relocated to the small town of Ambria near Fallujah for fear of the Anbar Revolutionaries. Although he remained active in AQI operations in Ramadi through his [redacted (b)(6)] [redacted (b)(6)] who was entrusted with the care of his family, [redacted (b)(6)]'s new focus was Fallujah, now that the Coalition had turned over control of that city to the Iraqi security forces. With [redacted (b)(6)] [redacted (b)(6)] relocation, the AQI hierarchy in Ramadi was divided into three co-equal branches (executive, legislative, and military) that remained under his supervision as the de ut re ional amir. [redacted b 6] was the amir of the executive branch with [redacted (b)(6)] [redacted b 6] acting as the respective amirs of the legislative and military branches.⁴⁰

(S) Much of the AQI leadership was now based in the Albu Aetha tribal area of Ramadi, which was considered far safer than other parts of the city. A number of the group's new leaders were recruited from this area including [redacted b 6] a former car thief who rose to be the Tamim district amir. Under pressure from SAA, [redacted (b)(6)] pulled his fighters out of the Tamim district and had them relocate first to the village of al-Angur near Lake Thar Thar then to the old barracks of the Saddam-era 26th Special Forces Brigade near Saddamiyah.⁴¹

(S) [redacted (b)(6)] rapid advancement within AQI was thanks to his superior during his time as a car thief, [redacted b 6]. Because of this connection [redacted (b)(6)] had met with a number of hi h-rankin A I leaders includin [redacted b 6] [redacted (b)(6)].

³⁷ [| Military | 02 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070102 | (S/NF) |]
³⁸ [| Military | 21 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070121 | (S/NF) |]
³⁹ [| Military | 24 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070124 | (S/NF) |]
⁴⁰ [| Military | 18 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070118 | (S/NF) |]
⁴¹ [| Military | 08 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070108 | (S/NF) |]

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This gave him the necessary social connections needed to ascend so rapidly through AQI from a foot soldier to a mid-level leadership role.⁴²

(S) AQI also continued its close collaboration with Ansar al-Sunna in Ramadi. Cooperation between AQI and Ansar al-Sunna was overseen by AQI military branch amir for Ramadi Salah (b)6 (b)6 who coordinated with Ansar al-Sunna amir (b)6 to integrate their two organizations in Ramadi on a leadership, financial, and operational basis.⁴³ (b)6 (b)6 who had previously was the AQI amir for the Hay al-Dhubat district, was now the Ansar al-Sunna amir for Ramadi, coordinating joint AQI-Ansar al-Sunna attacks against al-Warar police station. While Dhakir was captured by Coalition forces in a January 15 raid, the collaboration between the two groups continued under his successor (b)6. However, the rise of (b)6 was something of a fluke as it had occurred after both o (b)6 op (b)6 (b)6 were detained by Coalition or Iraqi police forces in December.⁴⁴

1.4b, (b)(6)

(S) AQI continued to use Anbar University, though to a lesser degree than the group had prior to Coalition, Iraqi police, and Anbar Revolutionaries activity in November 2006 (see Chapter 6c). Deprived of the campus as a recruiting center, AQI intimidated various deans and faculty members into spying on the student body for them in order to identify Coalition informants. As a result, AQI remained able to exercise a degree of influence over the faculty and student body while on campus, though most of its efforts at recruiting or intimidating students occurred off-campus.⁴⁶ To reassert their influence, elements of the Islamic Army of Iraq loyal to AQI issued flyers to female students at Anbar University instructing them to stop wearing Western dress and using cosmetics and to adhere to the *shari'ah* or they would face consequences.⁴⁷

S. Hamdi ah and the Albu Bali tribal area continued to be centers of AQI activit see Cha ter 6c .

(b)6 (b)6 was responsible for most of the IDF and SAF attacks against the Coalition in the area using weapons taken from caches along the Euphrates River. Running an extensive intelligence network throughout the area (where he was known as "AQI's security chief"), (b)6 regularly had residents followed to determine whether or not they were collaborating with the Coalition. If collaboration was verified, the residents were kidnapped, interrogated, and then murdered. AQI was able to operate in the Albu Bali tribal area because residents had come to believe that the Coalition

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ [| Military | 18 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070118 | (S/NF) |]

⁴⁴ [| Military | 17 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070117 | (S/NF) |]

⁴⁵ [| Military | 24 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070124 | (S/NF) |]

⁴⁶ [| Military | 18 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070118 | (S/NF) |]

⁴⁷ [| Military | 31 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070131 | (S/NF) |]

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was incapable of providing security for their tribesmen. They also saw the absence of a sustained Coalition presence in their area as a sign that the Coalition was afraid of the insurgency. As a result of these perceptions, Albu Bali women provided information to (b)(6) intelligence network on the movement of Coalition forces in their area.⁴⁸

(S) The most disturbing part of AQI's reorganization in Ramadi was the group's increasing reliance on child soldiers. Prior to his detention on December 26, 2006 (b)(6) (b)(6) recruited teenagers from Adnan Khirallah High School in the Hay al-Dhubat Thanya district of Ramadi to plant and detonate IEDs and conduct beheadings. As noted in Chapter 6c, in those parts of Ramadi where the SAA was the strongest, AQI was increasingly reliant on the use of younger fighters.⁴⁹ AQI also appears to have made an active effort to indoctrinate teenagers in the Anah and Rumallah school systems as well as at the Attaliyah School in Haqlaniyah, the Khaldun School in Fallujah, al-Tayar High School in Habbaniyah among others.⁵⁰

(S) The re-organization helped AQI to retain its operational tempo in Ramadi and even increase the scale of some operations. On January 28, the group mounted a chlorine-laden SVBIED attack against one of the SAA's Emergency Response Units (ERUs) in Ramadi that was the single most catastrophic attack against Iraqi security forces in Anbar since the beginning of OIF. In order to maximize the effectiveness of the VBIED, AQI combined an enormous chlorine tank with 300-350 lbs of bulk explosives.⁵¹

(S) In areas of Ramadi inhabited by pro-Iraqi police members of the Albu Faraj, Albu Alwan, and Albu Soda tribes, AQI fighters were able to invade homes and fire mortars at civilians in the streets in the hopes of breaking their will while attempting to demonstrate the inability of Iraqi security forces to defend them.⁵²

(S/NF) Parallel to this effort was an assassination plot overseen by (b)(6) (b)(6) to eliminate Sheikh Abdul Sattar and Sheikh Jassim Muhammad Salih al-Suwaydawi using suicide bombers. Infiltrating agents into Sheikh Abdul Sattar's personal security detail, AQI hoped to get close enough to eliminate him.⁵³

AQI's Effort to Win Popular Support in Ramadi

(S) Along with their murder and intimidation campaigns, AQI did attempt to win support in Ramadi. (b)(6) provided residents with fuel at 30-40,000 dinars per barrel, which was considered a bargain price. Most of this fuel was obtained from the gas stations that Thamir controlled throughout Ramadi, though some of it may have been obtained during his November 2006 visit to the Bayji oil refinery to intercept shipments ordered by Sheikh Abdul Sattar that were intended to aid in the SAA's reconstruction efforts. While Thamir hated the population of

⁴⁸ [| Military | 23 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070123 | (S/NF) |]

⁴⁹ [| Military | 07 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070107 | (S/NF) |]

⁵⁰ [| Military | 18 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070118 | (S/NF) |]

⁵¹ [| Military | 28 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070128 | (S/NF) |]

⁵² [| Military | 01 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070101 | (S/NF) |]

⁵³ [| Military | 05 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070105 | (S/NF) |]

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the Iskan district and considered them traitors to the jihad, he recognized the need to mollify at least some residents so that they would continue to tolerate his presence. (b)(6) outreach in the Iskan district paralleled other efforts by AQI's Ramadi leadership since the summer of 2006 to sell gas at reduced prices in the city in the hopes of winning the support of residents. By early 2007, one of the centers of this endeavor was the White Apartments in the Tamim district, where AQI distributed both fuel and propaganda. As a new component to this effort, AQI distributors would claim that they were selling fuel at reduced prices to help their Muslim brothers who had been deprived of basic necessities by the Coalition.⁵⁴

AQI vs. Albu Ghanim

(S) Even as AQI sought to build popular support in Ramadi, the group was once again undercut by the brutality of its murder and intimidation campaign. On January 13, 2007, 14 year-old Sahir Jamal Aysan was kidnapped at an AQI checkpoint and beheaded the following day. His head was then sent to his parents with a fatwa justifying the action and warning the Albu Ghanim tribal leaders to cease cooperation with the Coalition. Sahir's family had a close relationship with the Albu Ghanim tribal leader Sheikh Majid Albu Ghanim, who intended to protect the tribe against AQI attack and seek *tha'r* against the group. As a result of this brutal act, the number of armed Albu Ghanim tribesmen taking part in the tribe's neighborhood watches rose from sixty to 150 and all male tribesmen were ordered to carry weapons. The Albu Ghanim also sought support from the SAA, receiving a pledge of weapons and assistance from Sheikh Abdul Sattar.⁵⁵

(S) The Albu Ghanim neighborhood watches and checkpoints were one of many that were established by local tribes in the Sufia district with the assistance of Task Force 1.4a following the all-out attack on the Albu Soda tribe in November 2006. As a result, the Sufia district tribes were able to rally an unprecedented degree of resistance to AQI's murder and intimidation campaign in their area, further restricting the group's ability to move fighters and equipment.⁵⁶

(S) AQI responded to this show of defiance in early February 2007, killing three more Albu Ghanim youths and sending their heads to the Ramadi General Hospital with a warning. As before, the group's murder and intimidation campaign led to an unprecedented level of resistance from the Albu Ghanim tribe and the establishment of two Iraqi police stations in the Sufia district and Julaybah along with a permanent Coalition presence to deter AQI from mounting an attack against the tribe.⁵⁷

(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI) This cooperation by the Albu Ghanim represented a complete transformation for the tribe. Since 2003, Albu Ghanim tribesmen had been one of the main suppliers, for both residents and insurgents, of forged documents, including Iraqi identification cards, drivers' licenses, Anbar and Baghdad University student identification cards, and passports from Syria, Jordan, and Switzerland. The tribe's shift towards the SAA and the Coalition made the

⁵⁴ [| Military | 01 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070101 | (S/NF) |]

⁵⁵ [| Military | 19 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070119 | (S/NF) |]

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ [| Military | 05 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070205 | (S/NF) |]

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tribe less willing to work with AQI and forced the group to intimidate tribesmen in an effort to prevent them from growing closer to the SAA.⁵⁸

~~(S/REL USA AUS CAN GBR)~~ In mid-February 2007, AQI members of the Albu Ghanim traveled to a camp near Lake Habbaniyah to plan the assassination of Sheikh Majid, the head of their tribe. Their plan involved getting AQI members of the Albu Ghanim to secure employment with Sheikh Majid in order to engineer his assassination.⁵⁹

The Fallujah Area Becomes Contested Ground Once Again

Police and the Insurgency in Fallujah

~~(S/NF)~~ The new focus by [redacted (b)(6)] on the Fallujah area would soon begin to bear fruit. In January 2007, AQI Fallujah a [redacted b 6] see Chapter 6a) had only three cells in the city made up of 5-7 operatives each. Relying on corruption among the Iraqi police and army soldiers in Fallujah, [redacted (b)(6)] was able to bring weapons into the city to support his cells' operations.⁶⁰ The small size of AQI in the city did not affect the ability of the group to target the Iraqi police in the greater Fallujah area, however, with the group launching three major attacks against the Saqlawiyah police station, two major attacks against the southwest Fallujah police station, and one major attack against the Nasser wa Salaam police station over the course of January alone.⁶¹

⁵⁸ [| Military | 23 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070223 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

⁵⁹ [| Military | 25 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070225 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

⁶⁰ [| Military | 11 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070111 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

⁶¹ [| Military | 28 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070128 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

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The Albu Issa of Fallujah

(S/NF) There were several factors that gave AQI hope that it would be able to expand its influence in Fallujah. In contrast to the Ramadi-based SAA, the greater Fallujah area had yet to benefit from anti-AQI tribal sentiments (outside of Amariyah and Ferris Town). There were a number of reasons for this, including the fact that most of the assertive tribal leaders who would otherwise have led such a movement had either fled abroad or gone underground for fear of AQI assassination. For instance, Sheikh Khamis Hasnawi Aifan advocated engagement with the Coalition, and had therefore been targeted for AQI in June 2005 and March 2006, after which he fled to Jordan to join other expatriate sheikhs. Only in early 2007 would he feel secure enough to return to Iraq.⁶²

(S/NF) Unfortunately for AQI's hopes, Sheikh Khamis would return more determined than ever to fight the extremists. As noted in Chapter 6c, Sheikh Khamis was instrumental in the reconciliation within the Albu Issa. In early January, however, the settlement agreement between the pro-AQI Fuhaylat subtribe and the rest of the Albu Issa subtribes in Amariyah and Ferris Town collapsed and the fighting resumed.⁶³

(S) The catalyst for the renewed fighting was the January 4, 2007 kidnapping of three AQI fighters in the Albu Hatim tribal area by relatives of Sheikh Khamis. AQI immediately retaliated and fighting soon broke out in the Albu Hatim tribal area between followers of Sheikh Khamis and no less than thirty AQI fighters armed with AK-47s, RPGs, and mortars and aided by the group's local ally Sheikh Hamid al-Jassim. [redacted] b 6 responded by creating a defensive network around the [redacted] (b)(6) village with the support of a Coalition sniper team.⁶⁴

(S/NF) The kidnappings occurred because, despite the efforts of the SAA and Sheikh Khamis to establish security in Amariyah and Ferris Town, AQI retained considerable influence in the area. One sign of this influence were the creation of *shari'ah* courts under the leadership of [redacted] b 6 [redacted] (b)(6) a Sudanese national from Darfur), [redacted] b 6 [redacted] (b)(6) The courts met at the Dejanna, Ayshah, and Medina Minawar mosques, and were used by AQI to coerce or intimidate residents into swearing bayat to Abu Omar al-Baghdadi as the head of the Islamic Emirate of Iraq.⁶⁵

(S) The establishment of *shari'ah* courts was even further along in the Fuhaylat tribal area (a hotbed of AQI support, see Chapter 6c), where AQI leader Sheikh Ahmad Husayn Ali had long operated a *shari'ah* court out of the Abu Khalid Mosque. As with those set up in the vicinity of Amariyah, these courts issued strict bans on smoking and other behaviors that were enforced with cable lashings. The Fuhaylat tribal area was also the home of [redacted] (b)(6)

⁶² [| Military | 01 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070107 | (S/NF) |]

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ [| Military | 10 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070110 | (S/NF) |]

⁶⁵ [| Military | 12 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070112 | (S/NF) |]

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al-Sattar), who was the AQI regional amir for both Fuhaylat and Amariyah, conducting attacks against Coalition and Iraqi forces from Amariyah to Fallujah.⁶⁶

(S) The continued efforts of Sheikh Khamis to rally opposition against AQI were complicated by the fact that in addition to the Fuhaylats and their allies, the leaders of the Albu Yusuf, Albu Salih, Albu Khamis, and elements of the Albu Hatim and Albu Aifan subtribes of the Albu Issa in the Fallujah Peninsula were also intimidated by or loyal to AQI as a result of its creation of the Central Tribal Council (see Chapter 6c). Sheikh Khamis was able to oppose them with the Albu Tuhman, Albu Traymish, and his own loyalists within the Albu Aifan and Albu Hatim subtribes, but AQI had already raised a levy of no less than sixty-five fighters from each of its subtribes to fight him.⁶⁷

(S) At a meeting with the Albu Issa tribal leadership and the Coalition, Sheikh Khamis and his allies admitted that since 2003 the Albu Issa had turned a blind eye to the insurgency and recognized that the Coalition had been more than patient with them. Now, however, Sheikh Khamis was willing to fight even if it meant Albu Issa against Albu Issa. Despite the efforts of the pro-AQI subtribes to pressure Sheikh Khamis's allies to join the jihad against the Coalition, Sheikh Khamis refused to negotiate with AQI and decided instead to fight.⁶⁸ In an effort to avert another round of inter-tribal warfare, a tribal leader Sheikh Ahmad Husayn Ali al-Dashi dispatched (b)(6) (b)(6) to negotiate with the Albu Issa leadership, offering them an opportunity to win Coalition contracts for roads, clinics, and infrastructure improvements without fear of attack. Sheikh Khamis again turned them down and the fighting continued.⁶⁹

(b)(6) and Zaidon

(S/NF) Despite this setback, AQI increased its activities in Fallujah by dominating the small villages surrounding the city. Zaidon in particular remained a center of AQI influence. Although dismissed from operational leadership, senior AQI leader (b)(6) (see Chapter 6c) continued to operate throughout the Abu Ghraib-Zaidon corridor, including the villages of Ta'alia and al-Anaz. Since his focus was now on recruiting, (b)(6) and his followers distributed AQI propaganda to Zobai farmers and called upon them to join the organization, claiming that the United States was responsible for their current situation. (b)(6) was able to gain AQI recruits by distributing money to poor farmers and offering further financial incentives if they joined the organization. However, he also enforced *shari'ah* and carry out the *hadd* punishments, kidnapping residents that he believed violated *shari'ah* and ordering sentences carried out.⁷⁰

(S) Recognizing the continued role of al-Anaz village to AQI, the Coalition carried out Operation THREE SWORDS from January 21-23 with the support of the Fallujah police force. This resulted in the discovery of an AQI safe house that had been used as a torture facility for Shi'a captives.⁷¹

Al-Khattab

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ [| Military | 19 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070119 | (S/NF) |]

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ [| Military | 30 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070130 | (S/NF) |]

⁷⁰ [| Military | 03 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070103 | (S/NF) |]

⁷¹ [| Military | 25 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070125 | (S/NF) |]

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(S) AQI influence over Zaidon allowed the group to dominate the mainly Shi'a town of Nasser wa Salaam. (b)(6) was the primary AQI associate group in the village, made up primarily of fighters from Zaidon under the leadership of (b)(6). The group consisted of four IED cells and a kidnapping cell, but was ill-supplied and often in need of ammunition, rockets, AK-47 ammunition, and auto repairs from their superiors in Zaidon. Possibly a splinter group of the 1920 Revolution Brigade's Umar bin al-Khattab Group, (b)(6) conducted a variety of activities at AQI's behest ranging from IED attacks to intelligence collection to murder and intimidation, kidnapping, and torture.⁷²

AQI Efforts in Saqlawiyah

(S) As part of its attempt to increase its influence in the Fallujah area, AQI stepped up efforts in and around Saqlawiyah. The group began a pervasive murder and intimidation campaign against residents and Iraqi police operating in the Albu Shijil tribal area to convince them to "repent" and either join AQI or acquiesce to AQI influence in their territory. The death of Diya Shakir Farhan (see Chapter 6b) did not slow this effort, since Diya's older brother (b)(6) simply assumed Diya's position as AQI amir while (b)(6) became the AQI amir for the Albu Shijil tribal area.⁷³ When, on January 21, Iraqi police from Tal Aswad station detained (b)(6) who had been a (b)(6) prior to his death, the brothers (b)(6) became the leaders of (b)(6) remaining followers in the Albu Shijil and Saqlawiyah areas.⁷⁴

(S) From December 27, 2006 onwards, AQI began attacking their last serious insurgent opposition in the Saqlawiyah and the Albu Shijil tribal area: the remnants of Jaysh al-Fatihin. The attacks began because there were a few Jaysh al-Fatihin members in the area who remained loyal to the group's Anbar security chief (b)(6) had tried to work with the Coalition against AQI and was one of the key architects of the failed Abu Ghraib cease-fire initiative.⁷⁵

The Results of Operation MAJID

Haditha Transforms in the Wake of the Operation

(S) The further entrenching of AQI in the Fallujah area must be balanced with gains against the group in Haditha proper. As noted in Chapter 6c, AQI and its allies dispersed from the Haditha area in the face of overwhelming force during Operation MAJID. However, those fighters that remained behind were anxious to conduct attacks against Coalition and Iraqi security forces to demonstrate the continuing viability of the insurgency in the area. To counter this effort, Coalition officials and Haditha police chief Colonel Faruq began tribal engagement with leaders from the Jughayfi and Simari tribes. When combined with vehicle restrictions and the loss of thousands of pounds of

⁷² [| Military | 28 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070128 | (S/NF) |]

⁷³ [| Military | 22 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070122 | (S/NF) |]

⁷⁴ [| Military | 31 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070131 | (S/NF) |]

⁷⁵ [| Military | 19 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070119 | (S/NF) |]

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ordnance and weapon to Coalition sweeps during Operation MAJID, AQI was unable to mount an immediate counter-offensive to the Coalition presence in Haditha.⁷⁶

(S) Instead AQI fighters sought refuge in Khaffajiyah, using the local power plant as their base of operations. That Khaffajiyah was regarded as a haven by AQI was not surprising, as the group's documents recovered by the Coalition as far back as November 2005 referred to "brother [b 6] [b 6] the assistant manager at the Department of Electrical Energy" as well as an earlier manager of the Khaffajiyah power plant, [b 6] flight and [b 6] ascension as the senior manager of the power plant, AQI was able to follow the same pattern of behavior that it had used at other key facilities to gain influence over critical infrastructure, in this case, the nearby Haditha Railroad Bridge, which was used by AQI fighters to travel back and forth across the Euphrates River.⁷⁷

(S) The K-3 pumping facility in Haditha was also something of an AQI bastion, leading some residents to refer to it as "Little Afghanistan," an epithet aided by the fact that the AQI fighters there wore Afghan-style clothing. Many of the K-3 housing facility's occupants were indifferent or hostile to the Coalition and the building had been a refugee for AQI and its allies in the Haditha area during Operation RIVER BLITZ and RIVER BRIDGE in 2005 (see Chapter 5a). Among the residents was [b 6] the AQI amir for Haqlaniyah, who used the facility as a base for carrying out IDF and SAF attacks against Coalition forces in Haqlaniyah.⁷⁸

(S) The AQI presence at the K-3 housing facility may have been facilitated by [b 6] [b 6], the head of the pumping station security forces, who was the cousin of Haditha police chief Colonel Faruq Tayih Hardan Muhaydi al-Jughayfi. While Khalaf had in the past cooperated with Coalition forces at the Haditha Dam and al-Asad Air Base, this had caused him to be labeled as a traitor to the insurgency. In the end, he began distributing money to AQI and was in fact working with both AQI and the Coalition for personal gain.⁷⁹

(S) Another mid-level AQI leader operating out of the K-3 housing facility was [b 6] [b 6] the amir of an AQI IDF and IED cell in Barwanah. While [b 6] had joined AQI as a rank-and-file member several years earlier, his status within the group increased dramatically as word spread of the Coalition's efforts to target him. During Operation MAJID, [b 6] and his cell fled to Bayji to escape capture but returned in January 2007 in the hopes of resuming their murder and intimidation campaign against the general population. Despite rumors of his death at the hands of the Iraqi police or the Anbar Revolutionaries, [b 6] continued to operate in the Haditha area by using AQI's established transit routes between Barwanah and Bayji.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ [| Military | 05 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070105 | (S//NF) |]

⁷⁷ [| Military | 09 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070109 | (S//NF) |]

⁷⁸ [| Military | 21 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070121 | (S//NF) |]

⁷⁹ [| Military | 16 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070207 | (S//NF) |]

⁸⁰ [| Military | 21 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070121 | (S//NF) |]

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AQI Shifts Focus to the al-Qaim-Haditha Corridor

(S) The results of MAJID were felt elsewhere in Anbar. In Rawah, the Coalition captured many low-level AQI fighters, while AQI considered Anah unsafe because of the permanent Coalition presence in the city. To reinvigorate the insurgency in western Anbar, AQI appointed twelve new amirs. All twelve of the amirs had fought the Coalition in Mosul and the provincial AQI leadership believed that they could provide much-needed experience for AQI cells in the area.⁸¹ Among these new AQI amirs were Abu Yunis in Brudiyah village, Ahad Sabah in the al-Qaim-Haditha corridor, Nur Karim Mutni in Rawah, and Sinan Anwar Muhammad in Samsiyah.⁸²

(S) The decision to appoint new amirs was made at a meeting of senior AQI leaders in al-Qaim in which the group also discussed pooling all its resources in Ramadi, Haditha, and Baiji to reestablish a more secure smuggling network along the western Euphrates River valley. Following this meeting, AQI fighters began smuggling sizeable amounts of weapons from Ramadi and Baiji to the group's safe houses and supply caches west of Rawah. AQI fighters were also shifted from northern Iraq and other parts of Anbar to bolster the group's ability to surge in western Anbar.⁸³

The Return of al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal

(S) AQI made an effort to strengthen itself in Hit as well, focusing on its local ally al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal. [REDACTED] b 6 [REDACTED] was the leader of al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal in Hit in addition to serving as the amir of AQI in the city. [REDACTED] (b)(6) [REDACTED] (detained by Iraqi police in late January 2007) was [REDACTED] b 6 [REDACTED] second-in-command. Formerly led by [REDACTED] (b)(6) [REDACTED] brother Mahmud Cent (also known as Muhammad Cent, killed in Operation SAYYAD I), al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal worked with AQI and Ansar al-Sunna to conduct IED, sniper, and SAF attacks in Hit as well as weapons smuggling and money laundering. Al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal also maintained a relationship with the Abu Sarah Group (see Chapter 6c) under which funds raised by the Abu Sarah Group's vehicle theft and kidnapping activities were sent primarily to al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal and only secondarily to AQI or former Islamic Army of Iraq cells in other areas.⁸⁴

(S) AQI retained a sizeable presence in Hit after Operation MAJID, allowing it to carry out a complex attack against the police station and multiple positions throughout the city on January 12. This attack, similar to the near-simultaneous attacks against the police station and operating positions throughout Hit on December 12, was part of a concentrated AQI effort to prevent the local establishment of Iraqi police.⁸⁵ In keeping with AQI efforts to build popular support, area business figures were warned of AQI's VBIED attacks against Iraqi police before they occurred so that the businessmen themselves would be able to escape harm. From the relative safety of the al-Mashtal district, senior al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal leader [REDACTED] (b)(6) [REDACTED] was able to

⁸¹ [| Military | 11 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070111 | (S//NF) |]

⁸² [| Military | 25 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070125 | (S//NF) |]

⁸³ [| Military | 11 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070111 | (S//NF) |]

⁸⁴ [| Military | 02 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070102 | (S//NF) |]

⁸⁵ [| Military | 14 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070114 | (S//NF) |]

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oversee a variety of activities ranging from facilitating attacks to propaganda to the intimidation of the Hit city council.⁸⁶

(S) AQI was opposed in the Hit-Kubaysah corridor by the Anbar Revolutionaries, which established a chapter in the area targeting AQI members throughout the Rutbah and Haditha area.⁸⁷ Among the group's targets were al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal leaders [redacted] b 6 and local AQI leader [redacted] (b)(6) (see Chapter 6a).⁸⁸ By early 2007, the SAA was publicly claiming that it had killed seventeen insurgents and detained twenty-five in Hit.⁸⁹

AQI in Anah and Rawah

(S) AQI was also not willing to cede their strongholds of Anah and Rawah without a fight. On January 13, an AQI cell in Rawah led by [redacted] (b)(6) destroyed the government center, which had been a meeting point for the city council. This attack was an extension of earlier AQI efforts in Rawah to destroy key buildings to disrupt the local government and Iraqi police. In February 2005, for instance, AQI fighters had surrounded Rawah in the middle of the night and attacked the police station, capturing most of the police and forcing them to temporarily disband. Despite the January 13 attack, however, the city council continued to meet with the Coalition in an alternate location.⁹⁰

(S) AQI fighters in the town were unable to exploit this attack because the Coalition seized a large number of AQI arms caches and captured many of the group's rank-and-file fighters. As a result, AQI cells in the city had to urgently request IEDs, RPGs, and missiles from their regional leadership. A major point of contention among AQI in Rawah was possession of [redacted] (b)(6) massive weapons cache, which led to fighting between local AQI amirs. Moreover, despite the appointment of the new AQI amirs, many Rawah AQI fighters remained demoralized by the fact that their previous amir [redacted] b 6 had fled to Syria in December 2006.⁹¹

(S) In Anah, AQI fighters who had fled the Haditha area entered the town in force at the beginning of January 2007, extorting "rent" from forty-two government homes, banning internet access, and enforcing *shari'ah* law. In the ensuing weeks, a Coalition and Iraqi police counter-offensive led to the arrest of more than forty AQI fighters and limited the group's ability to enforce its edicts, leading to a late January decision by AQI to "relax" its ban on internet access so long as there was no home useage, chat rooms, or pornography.⁹²

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⁸⁶ [| Military | 22 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070122 | (S//NF) |]

⁸⁷ [| Military | 16 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070116 | (S//NF) |]

⁸⁸ Ibid.; Interestingly, Yassir was considered superior in the AQI hierarchy to the group's Hit amir Abu S'ud, though this may have been because much of the AQI activity in Hit occurred under the auspices of al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal rather than Abu S'ud. [Military | 17 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070117 | (S//NF) |]

⁸⁹ [| Military | 16 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070107 | (S//NF) |]

⁹⁰ [| Military | 18 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070118 | (S//NF) |]

⁹¹ [| Military | 19 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070119 | (S//NF) |]

⁹² [| Military | 30 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070130 | (S//NF) |]

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Attempts to Win Over Other Insurgents

(S) As the Islamic Emirate of Iraq continued to mature, its leaders began negotiations with other Sunni insurgent groups to persuade them to join the new state. This attempt was bolstered by (b)(6) willingness to enlist former Ba'athists as administrators in the Emirate. In addition, the Islamic Emirate of Iraq was able to appeal to the romanticized image that many Iraqi Sunnis held of themselves as heirs of the golden age of Islamic civilization (c. 750-1250).⁹³

(S) It was not easy for AQI to convince other Sunni insurgent groups to subordinate themselves to the leadership of the Islamic Emirate of Iraq. The leadership of SAR groups correctly regarded the organization to be AQI in another form, and the Emirate thus inherited SAR criticism of AQI, in particular its disregard for Sunni civilians and the numerous foreigners among its senior leadership. (b)(6) and other AQI leaders apparently recognized the validity of the latter criticism, leading to plans within AQI to set up a separate Iraqi leadership for the Emirate.⁹⁴

(S) As part of the effort to garner support for the Emirate, AQI leadership pledged to eliminate those amirs who had committed particularly heinous acts that might have alienated other insurgent groups from joining their new organization. While Ansar al-Sunna leadership continued to express strong reservations despite this action, other AQI allies such as Muhammadi Cell Alpha were less discriminating and swore bayat to (b)(6) as their amir.⁹⁵

AQI Command and Control

(S) AQI infrastructure in the Haditha area provides further insight into the Emirate's development and growing sophistication. The insurgents operated in a decentralized manner, with local leaders granted a high level of operational independence. However, this decentralization was overseen by a hierarchical centralization of the mid- and senior AQI leadership.⁹⁶ Intercepted letters from AQI couriers to their subordinates revealed an extremely robust command and control infrastructure not only in the Haditha area but throughout Anbar.⁹⁷

(S) For operational security, all classes of AQI leaders changed their kunyas on a regular basis to maintain anonymity and to thwart Coalition targeting. As soon as local residents became familiar with a kunya, it was to be changed. This principle was reinforced by the fact that seized AQI courier letters in the Haditha area referred to both the sender and the recipient by alias to prevent a reader unfamiliar with the individuals involved from learning their identities.⁹⁸

(S) One of the key players that emerged in these documents was (b)(6) a senior AQI leader who was knowledgeable about the insurgency in Bayji, Mosul, and Anbar. (b)(6) received regular reports from and sent orders to (b)(6) a senior AQI leader for Anbar in general and the

⁹³ [| Military | 24 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070124 | (S/NF) |]

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ [| Military | 29 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070129 | (S/NF) |]

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ [| Military | 6 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070206 | (S/NF) |]

⁹⁸ Ibid.

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Haditha area in particular. As a result, (b)(6) was a regular intermediary through which (b)(6) (b)(6) could communicate with local AQI leaders in Ramadi, Haditha, and western Anbar to receive their reports and issue his own instructions. Among the local leaders that (b)(6) corresponded with was (b)(6) an AQI leader from Ramadi who was the military amir for the group in the Haditha area. Although the roles of the local leaders that (b)(6) corresponded with varied greatly from military to financial, logistical, and media support, all were actively engaged in maintaining a robust and dynamic AQI command and control structure.⁹⁹

(S) Indicative of the degree of professionalism that (b)(6) had imposed upon the AQI leadership since assuming command was the remarkable frankness in the correspondence that enabled information to flow freely from rank-and-file members to the senior leadership while remaining largely uncorrupted in the process. This should be contrasted with the wild claims made by other insurgent groups and AQI's own propaganda campaign that exaggerated the group's accomplishments and resources. According to AQI, inaccurate assessments would not be accepted internally because they affected the group's command and control. Consequently, internal AQI reporting contained no excessively optimistic or excessively pessimistic reporting. Abu Ahmad, for instance, filed weekly reports on the activities of his cells (i.e. grenade, IED, and IDF attacks against Coalition forces). However, he also reported on his "military emergencies" such as the detention of (b)(6). Nearly all his claims were corroborated by the Coalition's own reporting.¹⁰⁰

(S) As soon as (b)(6) report, an executive summary was forwarded to (b)(6) (b)(6) along with his own assessment. It is particularly interesting that (b)(6) perception of the situation in the Haditha area mirrored that of the Coalition, with references to the vehicle curfew that prevented AQI from establishing a major presence and regular attack tempo in the Haditha area as well as the group's shift towards grenade attacks. He too thought the situation in western Anbar was "bad" because much of the AQI leadership was in hiding and many rank-and-file members were confused and in disarray.¹⁰¹

(S) One of the ways AQI maintained accuracy in its internal reporting was to reward local leaders for their diligence and truthfulness by correcting legitimate deficiencies that were brought to their attention. This can be seen in the effort made by (b)(6) a local AQI leader in Ramadi, to compile a detailed inventory of 239 separate items lost to the Coalition. (b)(6) submitted the list to AQI's Ramadi military amir Hisham, who gave it to (b)(6) (the head of AQI logistics for Anbar), who in turn brought it to (b)(6) instructed (b)(6) to contact (b)(6) the AQI logistics amir for Ramadi, to make certain that (b)(6) cell received the supplies it needed to compensate for the losses.¹⁰²

(S) AQI leaders relayed information to one another through the use of trusted human couriers. AQI was aware of Coalition intelligence collection capabilities, and thus saw couriers as a relatively secure

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. Those few inconsistencies that did occur were largely due to translation errors or an improper conversion of dates between the Islamic and Gregorian calendars.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

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and inexpensive way to maintain contact between the group's senior leadership. In addition to thumb drives, AQI used handwritten notes to relay messages. These were unassuming and less likely to attract notice at security checkpoints where Arabic speakers were in short supply. The courier system was relatively efficient, though there were some disadvantages, such as the time between when a note was written and when it was delivered (usually 2-3 days), though there were some cases in which messages were written, delivered, and responded to in less than 24 hours. However, because this level of professionalism appears to have been implemented within AQI with the ascension of (b)(6) the group's command and control system was still an evolving one and there was no reliable mechanism to manage or track the flow of information. In one case, AQI administrator (b)(6) requested missing records from (b)(6) in order to compile his "bi-annual military report" that was likely intended for the AQI *shura majlis* and possibly AQSL as well. However, because copies of the handwritten documents he sought from (b)(6) were unavailable, his "bi-annual military report" was likely to be incomplete.¹⁰³

AQI Intelligence Collection

(S) The Emirate also showed signs of increasing sophistication in intelligence collection and analysis. According to studies of internal AQI documents, the focus of the group's intelligence collection was almost entirely the local population, with intelligence on Coalition operations and intentions representing a low priority. As a result, AQI maintained a degree of awareness concerning local atmospheric, personalities, and community dynamics that far exceeded that of the Coalition, contributing to the group's ability to interact with local personalities with a great deal of precision and speed.¹⁰⁴

(S) On November 9, 2006, Coalition forces near Barwanah captured an AQI thumb drive containing detailed maps of Khalidiyah and Suraydiyah complete with census-type information on residents. The data on the inhabitants of Khalidiyah and Suraydiyah was incredibly detailed, with residents listed by name, tribal affiliation, and occupation along with a short assessment provided by the AQI collector with categories ranging from "good," "very good," "thief," "apostate," and "house wife." In some cases, the AQI census data could be corroborated by Coalition reporting. AQI used this information to support a wide range of activities: from arranging provisions for the moral and financial well-being of "martyred" insurgents to conducting well-planned and targeted campaigns of murder and intimidation.¹⁰⁵

~~(S/REL TO USA, IRQ AND MCFI)~~ For operational intelligence, AQI relied on several techniques to assist the group in planning attacks. First, the group employed children between the ages of 13-15 years old to conduct surveillance on Iraqi and Coalition units, giving them vehicles to drive to checkpoints and telling them to count the number of soldiers, the distance between the soldiers, and the distance to the checkpoint from where they started driving. Once the information was reported back to AQI, the group began using it to plan attacks against checkpoints.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ [| Military | 28 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070128 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ [| Military | 13 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070313 | (S/NF) |]

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~~(S/NF)~~ Second, AQI attempted to infiltrate the Iraqi security forces to gain intelligence on Iraqi and Coalition units throughout Anbar. This allowed the group to gain information on Coalition and Iraqi army activities, relationships between units, informants, and home addresses. Moreover, it gave the group access to the names and addresses of Coalition informants so that they could conduct a murder and intimidation campaign against them while limiting Coalition access to information on their activities.¹⁰⁷

AQI Training

~~(S/NF)~~ According to AQI documents recovered by Coalition forces, AQI leadership thought the proper training of new recruits was very important, and devoted a substantial amount of manpower and resources to managing and maintaining the group's training program. Correspondence between regional and senior AQI leaders revealed regular updates on the status of the group's training programs, the number of recent graduates, and the suitability of those graduates for additional training or combat operations. In at least some cases, AQI maintained "training directorates" under the supervision of "training amirs" that kept extensive records on each recruit and the amount of training that they had received.¹⁰⁸

~~(S/NF)~~ AQI training programs and training camps in the Fallujah area were structured for a variety of purposes. Their most obvious one was to provide new recruits with a basic proficiency in paramilitary TTPs. According to the Coalition's demographic analysis of captured detainees, the number of insurgents in Anbar with military or security services experience was on the decline as many of those who possessed such experience were captured or killed. This situation increasingly dictated that the AQI leadership provide recruits with some rudimentary training to ensure that they could execute basic tasks. At the same time, the specific needs of each local amir varied considerably. The training courses thus ranged from a basic set covering weapons familiarization, marksmanship, IED construction and employment to more specialized courses on counter-interrogation procedures, surveillance, intelligence collection, and sniper training. The basic training also covered small unit action training such as casualty evacuation, fire and maneuver, and indirect fire. For foreign fighters, training also included culture familiarization courses to help foreigners blend in with their surroundings and camouflage regional accents.¹⁰⁹

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ AQI also sought to instill loyalty, enthusiasm and esprit de corps in recruits. Its training programs were intense and involved periods of sleep deprivation, vigorous physical conditioning, and extensive religious and ideological indoctrination. One video of an AQI camp showed a training instructor equipped with tactical gear and military attire as part of a deliberate effort to emphasize that AQI recruits are training not for a militia but for a country, in this case the Islamic Emirate of Iraq. The name of one of these camps, Masada al-Aqsa (active as of November 2006) showed as well that these installations were training troops not only for action in Iraq, but beyond ("al-Aqsa" refers to the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ [| Military | 25 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070225 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

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~~(S/REL TO USA AUS GBR/X1)~~ Despite ample reporting by Coalition human intelligence on the existence of AQI training facilities in Anbar, such camps were rarely discovered by the Coalition due to their remote locations far removed from the province's major population centers. Other training camps were located in [1.4b] or along the Iraqi border with [1.4b]. The absence of significant infrastructure at AQI training sites complicated Coalition efforts to locate them - a training camp located by Coalition forces at Wadi Sakran in December 2006 consisted of a series of sandbagged firing positions, concertina wire, and obstacles built from automotive tires and wooden poles set up to allow for a variety of small arms fire exercises and individual movement drills.¹¹¹

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI/FOR DISPLAY ONLY TO IRAQ)~~ An AQI training camp, operated by AQI fighters from Umm Tinah and Manak, was located east of the village of Uklah (also known as Udayntayn). The camp exploited the uninhabited desert south of al-Qaim as a refuge and operational staging area. AQI's al-Qaim amir [b 6] used the Uklah and related training camps to train between 25-50 fighters, some of whom were recent graduates from AQI training facilities in [1.4b]. In addition, the Uklah training facility was a base for AQI fighters operating between al-Qaim and Akashat.¹¹²

Islamic Emirate of Iraq Reconstruction Efforts in the Hit-Haditha Corridor

(S) By February 2007, all the insurgent groups operating in the Hit-Haditha corridor were loyal to the Islamic Emirate of Iraq. Taha Abu Abd al-Rahman was the primary conduit of Emirate funding, receiving money from unidentified backers in Baghdad and then giving it to [b(6)] for distribution in the Hit-Haditha corridor. Among the recipients of [b 6] generosity were al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal leader Muhammad Cent as well as AQI amirs [b 6] (Abu S'ud, killed by the SAA in January 2007) and [b 6]. This support was not given to [b 6] or 1920 Revolution Brigade, however, which created animosity between the two groups and AQI, leading to a declaration by [b(6)] that it would not support AQI financially in Hit. As part of AQI's effort to create a parallel government, [b(6)] money went towards the constructions of schools, farms, hospitals, and other civic projects in the vicinity of Hit.¹¹³ AQI leadership also oversaw the financial care of the families of AQI members who had been killed or detained by the Coalition.¹¹⁴

Al-Zawraa: Easy Communication Capacity for the New Emirate

(S) In late December 2006, AQI found a golden opportunity to increase publicity, indoctrination, and propaganda efforts, through negotiations with former Iraqi MP Mishan al-Jaburi. To show his good faith, Mishan sent \$300,000 to an AQI leader in Anbar along with a letter stating that he was prepared to support the group financially, morally, and through the use of his al-Zawraa satellite channel. The AQI leadership's reception of Mishan's offer was mixed. Some refused to cooperate with the former Ba'athist or accept his assistance on ideological grounds, while others saw it as an opportunity to attract donors through better publicity. Those AQI leaders who agreed to work with

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² [| Military | 13 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070313 | (S/NF) |]

¹¹³ [| Military | 8 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070208 | (S/NF) |]

¹¹⁴ [| Military | 6 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070206 | (S/NF) |]

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Mishan were provided with funding as well as access to Mishan's network of former and current Iraqi soldiers, oil protection officers, and defense ministry officials that he had cultivated as the leader of the Reconciliation and Liberation Bloc, opening new relationships between AQI and Mishan's Ba'athist allies. AQI leadership intended their cooperation to be short-term and planned to eliminate Mishan once he was no longer of any use to them.¹¹⁵

(S) While the Iraqi government had suspended al-Zawraa's license after its inflammatory programming following the announcement of the Saddam verdict, this actually freed the station to express even more vehement anti-government and anti-Shi'a views. Its Baghdad offices were abandoned and its six primary correspondents on the run, but al-Zawraa's broadcasts into Iraq and throughout the Middle East continued 24 hours a day, aided by the Egyptian satellite distributor NileSat. The station used its comprehensive video library of insurgent attacks, collected through Mishan's collaboration with multiple insurgent groups, to play insurgent propaganda videos and classes on IED construction.¹¹⁶

AQI Use of Google Earth

(S) Because Google Earth was the easiest way to view free, high-resolution satellite imagery through the internet, by January 2007 it was often used to support insurgent activities in Iraq. Google Earth provided maps of Iraq with a fifteen-meter or higher resolution using the World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84) datum to provide latitude and longitude information with a GPS receiver. In Anbar, insurgents combined GPS and laptops with Google Earth installed to ascertain their location and then determine the azimuth, range, and elevation necessary to conduct accurate IDF attacks on targets of their choosing. While Google Earth images were usually eighteen months old, this did not hinder their effective use by insurgents to target stationary facilities such as Coalition bases, Iraqi police station, and government buildings.¹¹⁷

(S) The shift towards Google Earth was first hinted at in March 2005 when AQAM established an "electronic jihad" organization called the Media Jihad Brigade to use technologies like Google Earth to advance the global jihad agenda. By early August 2005, Islamic Renewal Organization posted a message containing the option to download a copy of Google Earth. While AQI had been using Google Earth in Anbar at least as far back as December 2005, by January 2007 the group had considerably refined their reliance on the system to integrate it with GPS data when conducting IDF or planning attacks against static targets. Most AQI cells now designated their most computer literate member as their Google Earth expert.¹¹⁸

AQI and Inter-Insurgent Politics

(S) The new state did face serious problems from within the ranks of AQI, especially among those leaders of the group who were held at Coalition detention facilities or had recently been released. The detained AQI leaders believed that the declaration of the Emirate had been premature, that

¹¹⁵ [| Military | 01 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070101 | (S//NF) |]

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ [| Military | 04 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070101 | (S//NF) |]

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

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those now in detention would be excluded from positions of influence and power within it, and that the declaration had forced the Coalition to conduct operations in certain important districts of Ramadi. There were also rumors among various AQI amirs that (b)(6) intended the Emirate to begin killing those members of the group who had taken part in the unauthorized murder of Iraqi civilians. This would win popular support for the *shari'ah* courts that the group was seeking to set up throughout Iraq. Fears about possible criminal prosecution became a major concern for those followers of Zarqawi who continued his brutal ways even after his demise.¹¹⁹

(S) While the level of AQI dissension should not be exaggerated, (b)(6) was under pressure from AQSL, including UBL and (b)(6) to unite Iraqi Sunnis, a move that AQSL believed had been jeopardized by (b)(6) tactics. In particular, AQSL had disapproved of (b)(6) brutal attacks on civilians, his efforts to incite sectarian warfare, and above all his disregard for what they saw as innocent Muslims. (b)(6) tried to change these tactics, but some low and mid-level AQI members refused to follow his lead, which widened the gap between them and the national leadership. As a result of these divides, the interactions between AQI and other insurgent groups differed, sometimes dramatically, from town to town, village to village, and even cell to cell. This led to further rifts between AQI and high-ranking leaders of Ansar al-Sunna that created increased tension between the two in some areas of Iraq.¹²⁰

(S) For these Ansar al-Sunna leaders, the presence of foreigners in AQI's highest leadership was interpreted as a fundamental mistrust of Iraqi jihadis. Yet the dislike of AQI by some high-ranking Ansar al-Sunna commanders did not prevent the two groups from cooperating closely in places like Ramadi, where Sheikh Najji issued fatwas for both groups authorizing the murder of collaborators, or Haditha where the two groups continued to cooperate closely, sharing resources, facilities, and fuel. The Ansar al-Sunna criticism was echoed by AQI senior leader Sheikh Abdullah Janabi, who continued to believe that he rather than (b)(6) should have been chosen to replace Zarqawi. This led some of Janabi's followers from the 2004 Fallujah Mujahideen Shura sinking deep into denial, claiming that Janabi was the true leader of AQI and (b)(6) was a media creation.¹²¹

(S) To bring Ansar al-Sunna and other insurgent groups closer to AQI, (b)(6) was tasked with working on cross-insurgency cooperation. A former member of the Republican Guard Special Forces, (b)(6) was an ideal figure to coordinate between AQI and dubious allies. He had ties to numerous insurgent groups and had been the leader of (b)(6) himself, before turning to AQI and being given operational command of many of Sheikh Abdullah Janabi's followers. Based in the Amariyah area, (b)(6) was aided by a number of high-ranking allies across Iraq, including Sheikh Abdullah Janabi's second-in-command Sheikh Muhannad Subhi Huwaysh al-Kubaysi, who acted as (b)(6) direct liaison to (b)(6).¹²²

Developments within Other Insurgent Groups

Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna

¹¹⁹ [| Military | 03 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070103 | (S/NF) |]

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² [| Military | 22 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070122 | (S/NF) |]

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(S) It is significant that precisely at this point, certain leaders within Ansar al-Sunna decided that it might be possible to come to an understanding with the Coalition. In mid-January 2007, Ansar al-Sunna leaders (b)(6) organized a meeting of leaders from elements of Ansar al-Sunna, Jaysh al-Fatihin, 1920 Revolution Brigade, (b) 6 GSPC, and other smaller Sunni insurgent groups opposed to AQI. The purpose of the meeting was to form a new organization called Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna, which would consolidate efforts against AQI and agree to a cease-fire with the Coalition. Because the insurgent leaders feared AQI attack if they moved against them, Abu Wa'il assured them that Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna could oppose AQI through non-violent means, such as providing intelligence to the Coalition, and that the group would only use violence if attacked first. He stressed, however, that the elimination of AQI and the Islamic Emirate of Iraq was now essential for the survival and future of Iraq.¹²³

(S) To further his plan, (b)(6) agreed to provide the other Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna leaders with access to Ansar al-Sunna's extensive database of photographs, documents, and CDs on AQI activity in order to end the group's foreign and domestic financing. (b)(6) intended to make a case to the (b)(6) 1.4b that there was no religious justification for what A I was doin . The (b)(6) 1.4b could then promote Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna to AQI's extensive network of (b)(6) 1.4b donors. Concerning a cease-fire with the Coalition, Abu Wa'il informed the other members of his conspiracy that they had to reevaluate their priorities and that the "real threat" to the Sunni community was (b)(6) 1.4b rather than the Coalition. To demonstrate Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna's bonafides to the Coalition, (b)(6) planned to select an area in which all members of his conspiracy would inform their followers to cease all attacks against Coalition forces with the understanding that once the Coalition responded that the cease-fire could be duplicated in other areas. Abu Ghraib and Khan Dhari were considered particularly favorable because AQI presence was assessed to be minimal.¹²⁴

S. In late January 2007, (b)(6) met with Ansar al-Sunna's supreme leader (b) 6 (b)(6) outside Baghdad to discuss (b) 6 earlier proposal for opening negotiations with the Coalition (see Chapter 6c). While (b) 6 permission to proceed, he warned him not to get too close to the other insurgent groups, reminding him that they were not to be trusted. (b)(6) was more concerned about (b) 6 second-in-command (b)(6), who strongly opposed any discussion of a cease-fire or dialogue with the Coalition. While (b)(6) was not worried that (b) 6 would agree to swear bayat to (b) 6 he did fear that the other man might convince (b) 6 and his followers from Ansar al-Sunna and to continue attacks against the Coalition and the Iraqi government.¹²⁵

(S) (b)(6) was not concerned about (b)(6) joining forces with AQI because Ansar al-Sunna was embroiled in a dispute with the other organization over the murder of three Ansar al-Sunna members by AQI fighters in northern Iraq. The Ansar al-Sunna leadership had sent a letter to (b) 6 requesting an explanation for this killing and threatening to go public with the dispute. It was

¹²³ [| Military | 24 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070124 | (S/NF) |]

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ [| Military | 9 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070209 | (S/NF) |]

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[b 6] belief that (b)(6) would not respond, thus further alienating the Ansar al-Sunna national leadership from AQI.¹²⁶

(S) (b)(6) did respond, saying that his group had the right to kill members of any insurgent group that it suspected of collaborating with the Coalition. He cited the precedent (also a sore point with the Ansar al-Sunna leadership) of an incident in which AQI had kidnapped and tortured an Ansar al-Sunna member in reaction to allegations that he was a "collaborator." Indeed, the death of the three Ansar al-Sunna members in northern Iraq had been a local AQI leader's response to reports that Ansar al-Sunna leaders were contemplating a cease-fire with the Coalition. The intent of that leader, echoed by (b)(6) was that any perceived effort by Ansar al-Sunna to move against AQI would be met with lethal force by its larger and more capable counterpart.¹²⁷

(S) (b)(6) however, had long harbored concerns about AQI's strategic and tactical direction in Iraq with or without Zarqawi, leading to his continued effort to enlist other Ansar al-Sunna leaders who felt the same way. It should be noted that (b)(6) desire for a cease-fire with the Coalition had less to do with him moderating his extremist views than it did with his recognition that Ansar al-Sunna could not defeat AQI, the Coalition, and Shi'a militias without reaching an arrangement with one of them.¹²⁸

(S) Despite [b 6] efforts, the likelihood of the Ansar al-Sunna leadership actually negotiating with the Coalition was low. Some Ansar al-Sunna leaders saw negotiations as a way to convince the Coalition to recognize the group as a legitimate militia so that it could continue attacks against the Iraqi government and Shi'a militias. Yet others, like [b 6] were vehemently opposed to any negotiations or ceasefire. Whatever (b)(6) beliefs, (b)(6) was quite willing to defect to AQI if the Ansar al-Sunna leadership agreed to a cease-fire against the Coalition - a significant threat since he was one of the group's longest-serving members. Indeed, the most likely outcome should (b)(6) conspiracy succeed would be a mass exodus of Ansar al-Sunna fighters to AQI or similar organizations.¹²⁹

[b)(6)]

(S) In late January 2007, (b)(6) had a series of meetings in [1.4b] to assess the group's position within the Iraqi insurgency. Among those who attended were the group's operational leader

[b 6] military chief [b 6]

[b)(6)]

[b 6] During the meeting, (b)(6) learned about the Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna conspiracy and informed (b)(6) that a cease-fire with the Coalition and the unification of the SAR insurgents was a good idea.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ [| Military | 15 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070215 | (S/NF) |]

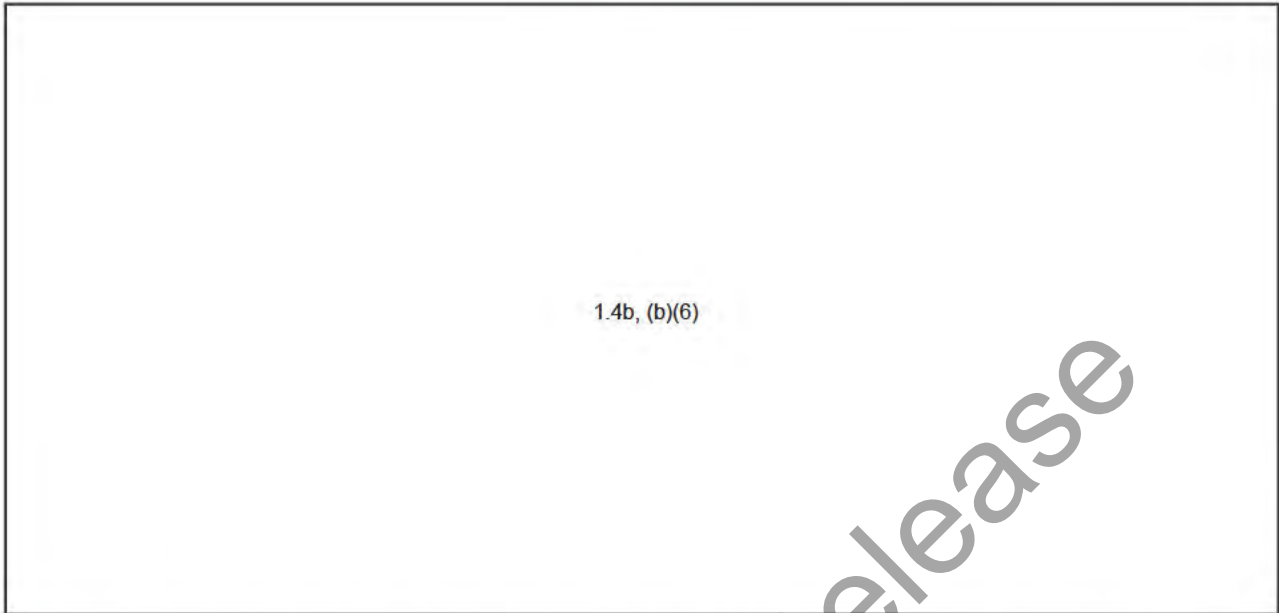
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1.4b, (b)(6)

(S/NF) The AQI senior leadership recognized that if al-Jaburi succeeded in obtaining a fatwa from the [1.4b] clergy against the Islamic Emirate of Iraq, he would create a major threat to the religious legitimacy of the strategy pursued by [b)(6)] AQI, and AQSL. As a result, both [b)(6)] and AQSL [b 6] mounted a successful effort to prevent the issuing of an anti-Islamic Emirate of Iraq fatwa, while encouraging other clerics to issue their own fatwas declaring support for the Emirate as a counter-measure.¹³³

The Crisis of Jaysh al-Mujahideen

(S) Jaysh al-Mujahideen was yet another insurgent group that would become interested in some sort of agreement with the Coalition. The group remained based in Fallujah, carrying out the majority of its operations throughout the Fallujah-Baghdad corridor with smaller cells in Ramadi, Hit, Haditha, Mosul, Samarra, and Rutbah. Because the group was the result of a merger of SRE groups (see Chapter 4), Jaysh al-Mujahideen was a highly decentralized organization best described as local commanders working under a common banner for their own agendas. The group therefore operated under a wide variety of names and took part in a diverse array of insurgent activities.¹³⁴

(S) Over time the group's most radicalized elements (as well as its founder) came under the operational control of AQI, leaving the group's national and local leaders far less extreme than it had previously been. This enabled some local leaders to contemplate at least short-term cooperation with Iraqi police and government officials to fight perceived threats to Iraq, such as [1.4b]. This shift in agenda can be seen as far back as the December 2005 Iraqi elections, when some of the group's cell leaders supported Sunni political participation and even worked with the Iraqi

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ [| Military | 07 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070107 | (S/NF) |]

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police to protect residents from AQI attacks and Shi'a death squads. Despite these local shifts, Jaysh al-Mujahideen cells remained very nationalistic and believed that all foreign influence—whether AQI or Coalition—must be expelled from Iraq. They also supported the restoration of Sunni rule in Iraq, with some adopting the view that this might take decades to affect.¹³⁵

(S) While Sheikh Abdullah Janabi had been instrumental to the formation of Jaysh al-Mujahideen, his flight to [1.4b] meant that he had lost much of his ability to influence its leaders even as he himself was radicalized by AQI. Despite this, Janabi continued to support Jaysh al-Mujahideen cells financially in return for their attacks on Coalition forces and their help with his smuggling operations. With Janabi no longer a major operational influence on the group, [b 6] assumed command of the group, only to be captured by the Coalition. He was succeeded by [b 6] (b)(6), who met with a similar fate. In Anbar, the group's senior leaders were [b 6] (b)(6) in Saqlawiyah and former Ba'athist [b 6] (b)(6) who oversaw the Hit-Baghdadi corridor.¹³⁶

(S) Under al-Azawi and al-Kharaji, Jaysh al-Mujahideen contemplated merging with Ansar al-Sunna and Jaysh al-Fatihin (then Islamic Army of Iraq) in May 2005. Following their capture and internal differences within Jaysh al-Mujahideen over MML's support for the political process, this triple alliance disintegrated. By late 2005 local Jaysh al-Mujahideen elements in Anbar were forming tactical relationships with AQI, Ansar al-Sunna, or Jaysh al-Fatihin for their own survival on the basis of personal relationships between local commanders. Although discussions between the national leadership of Jaysh al-Mujahideen and other insurgent groups never moved beyond the planning stages, by late 2006 the group's more stridently Salafist members embraced the Islamic Emirate of Iraq and pledged bayat to [b 6] (b)(6) as their amir.¹³⁷

(S) In retrospect, it seems likely that this was a reaction by members of Jaysh al-Mujahideen who vehemently disagreed with their comrades over support for the Iraqi political process or alliances with SAR groups like 1920 Revolution Brigade against AQI. Because of the diverse and decentralized nature of Jaysh al-Mujahideen, a wholesale merger between the group and AQI was impossible. As a result, at the same time that many Jaysh al-Mujahideen leaders were pledging bayat to [b 6] (b)(6) a number of their counterparts in Anbar were patrolling alongside the Iraqi police in Fallujah; attempting to negotiate a cease-fire with the Coalition in Ferris Town; competing with AQI, Ansar al-Sunna, Jaysh al-Fatihin, and 1920 Revolution Brigade in the Jazira area for resources and funding; working to eliminate AQI in Ramadi; or attempting to establish themselves as the armed wing of AMS.¹³⁸

(S) Yet the willingness of local Jaysh al-Mujahideen leaders to support political engagement also weakened the group, widening the gulf between those leaders that supported political engagement to better oppose AQI and Shi'a militias, and their counterparts that continued to push for a closer alliance with AQI in order to better fight the Coalition and Iraqi security forces. Other events, such

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

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as the loss of al-Azawi and his successor al-Kharaji, weakened the group as well, and by 2006 it had dwindled so much that many of its members deserted to join stronger insurgent groups such as AQI.¹³⁹

(S) Despite this disparate and highly chaotic organization, Jaysh al-Mujahideen and its core of roughly 700 fighters were quite capable at IED, SAF, and IDF attacks as well as propaganda, kidnapping, and intimidation campaigns. Kidnappings in particular were important to the group in order to obtain funding, with its first appearance in the press involving its role in the kidnapping of Indonesian journalists. In addition to the continued patronage of Sheikh Abdullah Janabi, the group was able to solicit funding from Saddam Hussein's daughter Raghda. As a result, the group remained an active part of the Iraqi insurgency even in the absence of its coherent structure.¹⁴⁰

(S) One faction of Jaysh al-Mujahideen attempted to reconstitute itself by establishing a training camp in a forest near Bayji. This camp ran two one-week courses for new recruits, one focused on the proper operation and maintenance of AK-47s, PKCs, RPGs, pistols, and the Dragunov sniper rifle and the second focused on religious and ideological indoctrination. The camp had two commanders, former Saddam Hussein bodyguard Rawad Abu Ahmad al-Tikriti who ran the first course and Sheikh Muhammad Sa'id al-Jumayli (Abu Sayf) who ran the second. The location of the camp indicated a possible understanding by the camp's patrons of the Coalition's operational boundaries and battle spaces.¹⁴¹

SAR Cease-Fire Initiatives

(S) Despite these attempts at cease-fire initiatives, there were no negotiated agreements between the Coalition and SAR national leaders for over a year. This may have been because the prospective cease-fires revolved around a belief that the Coalition was struggling militarily against the Sunni insurgent and that Coalition leaders should regard the SAR leadership as their equals. All the cease-fire offers involved the elevation of SAR groups to militia status or full inclusion in the Iraqi security forces with Coalition approval to continue targeting 1.4b (i.e. Shi'a political leaders or any Shi'a group believed to pose a threat to the Sunni population). Essentially, the cease-fire initiative was a bid by the SAR leadership to have any action carried out by their groups—except those against the Coalition—redefined as legitimate so that their groups could continue their operations without the need to expend resources by attacking the Coalition simultaneously.¹⁴²

(S) Put another way, the SAR leaders who were most interested in pursuing cease-fire initiatives did not support the Coalition but rather were terrified of AQI and hated the Shi'a. They believed that they could capitalize on anti-AQI sentiment to reestablish their groups' dominance in the Sunni areas of Iraq and to better target the Shi'a militias.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ [| Military | 5 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070205 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁴² [| Military | 12 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070212 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁴³ Ibid.

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(S) Despite this bad faith on the part of SAR national leaders, there were a number of successful local cease-fire initiatives between SAR leaders and local Iraqi security forces or tribal leaders. While all these initiatives contained agreements to cease attacks on the Coalition, in every case there was no statistically significant decline in the number of attacks following these agreements. In October 2006 for instance, Jaysh Muhammad leaders in Fallujah struck a deal with the Iraqi police to form an alliance against AQI. As noted earlier, by late January 2007 the Anbar Revolutionaries had successfully coopted 1920 Revolution Brigade and Jaysh al-Fatihin in Fallujah.¹⁴⁴

(S) The cease-fire initiatives were more viable at the local level than nationally because national SAR leaders had only limited control over individual cells. Many cells were made up of men who had joined the organization for criminal or financial reasons and as a result any cease-fire initiative with a SAR group had to include an employment provision for rank and file members. With unemployment ranging between 50-80% across Anbar, ordinary insurgents were often willing to shift their allegiances to a group that paid them per attack rather than to cease fighting the Coalition. In Fallujah, a number of 1920 Revolution Brigade fighters are known to have joined AQI following the cease-fire decision. Jaysh al-Fatihin (b)(6)'s cease-fire initiative (see Chapter 6c also failed for exactly this reason. In contrast, Ansar al-Sunna's second-in-command (b)(6) justified his opposition to (b)(6) cease-fire initiative to other members of the organization by arguing that he was opposed to any truce with "unbelievers."¹⁴⁵

(S) The AQI leadership understood that it was vulnerable to a united and coordinated opposition by SAR insurgents, so they adopted a two-track response. The first was an extreme version of the group's existing murder and intimidation that had helped to create much of the anti-AQI sentiment to begin with. The second was the installation of Iraqis as the primary leaders of the Islamic Emirate of Iraq, which provided a more indigenous framework for AQI. The group could now distance itself from the perception that it was a foreign organization and thus facilitate cooperation between insurgent groups.¹⁴⁶

(S) None of this generated more goodwill toward AQI amongst SAR leadership, and yet even their anti-AQI stance created problems, since so many of their subordinates depended on AQI logistical support for their attacks. All this meant that the rise of anti-AQI groups such as the SAA represented a far more workable means of lowering attacks than did national (as opposed to local) cease-fire negotiations with the SAR insurgency.¹⁴⁷

Expatriate Organizations

The ACC, INDF and Harakat al-Qiwa' al-Wataniyah wa al-Qawmiyah

(S/NF) These SAR groups were not alone in their desire to form some sort of effective anti-AQI force. Several expatriate organizations in 1.4b were also eager to contest AQI for influence in Anbar. As discussed in Chapters 6b and 6c, throughout the latter half of 2006 there was

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

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a great deal of Anbari political activity in Amman that resulted in the formation of three major expatriate organizations: the Anbar Central Council (ACC), the Independent National Dialogue Front (INDF), and the Harakat al-Qiwa' al-Wataniyah wa al-Qawmiyah (HQWQ). Of the three, by January 2007 the INDF had become defunct as a result of the inability of its leader [b 6] to win Western or Arab support for his planned coup plot against the Iraqi government (see Chapter 6b).¹⁴⁸

(S) The HQWQ, meanwhile, made efforts in October 2006 to establish a council of tribal leaders to fight AQI including Dulaymi confederation leaders Sheikh Majid Ali Sulayman al-Assafi and Sheikh Amer Abdul Jabbar Ali Sulayman al-Assafi as well as Albu Mahal leader Sheikh Sabah Sattam al-Aftan al-Mahalawi, but they were upstaged by the creation of the Anbar Emergency Council (see Chapter 6c) and decided to hold off their efforts to observe the progress of Sheikh Abdul Sattar.¹⁴⁹

(S/NF) In mid-January 2007, HQWQ planned to organize a provincial-level military force for Anbar made up of 2,500 officers drawn from former Iraqi military personnel that could be based in the al-Asad or H3 airfields under the commander of General Ra'ad Hamdani. HQWQ leaders believed that this force could help to professionalize the two Iraqi divisions already active in Anbar. As the former commander of the Allahu Akbar Division of the Republican Guard, General Ra'ad was regarded as a credible figure among former Iraqi military personnel. He was also the head of HQWQ's external relations department and used his contacts in the former Iraqi military to work on uniting all the SAR groups under HQWQ's banner for the purposes of political representation. As one of Anbar's wealthiest families, the [b(6)] family planned to bankroll General Ra'ad's efforts, reportedly attempting to purchase 500 armored cars from Russia.¹⁵⁰

(S/NF) Because of HQWQ's opposition to Prime Minister Maliki and embrace of former Ba'athists, there was little chance the group would receive permission from the Iraqi government or the SAA to establish itself as a military force in Anbar and in fact, HQWQ initiatives to establish security in Anbar were entirely opportunistic. For several years, the leading members of the [b(6)] family remained unconcerned observers in [1.4b] while unprecedented violence took place in Anbar. The [b(6)] family's interest in stabilizing Anbar now that the SAA had done much of the heavy lifting was little more than seizing an opportunity to get credit for security in the province without doing the hard work.¹⁵¹

(S/NF) The Anbar Central Council, a loose association of business and tribal leaders, was more economic than political. Led by wealthy businessman Sheikh Tariq Khalaf Abdullah al-Halbusi, the group refused to support the SAA because of Harith al-Dhari's influence (see Chapter 6c), and as a result had little impact on politics in Anbar.¹⁵²

(S/NF) The [1.4b] expatriate organizations were essentially opposition factions despite the fact that many of their individual members were in regular communication with the Iraqi

¹⁴⁸ [| Military | 09 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070109 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ [| Military | 26 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070126 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² [| Military | 09 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070109 | (S/NF) |]

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government. Their preferred policies were anti-federalist, anti-militia, and pro-SAR, which was standard for Sunni parties outside the Iraqi governing coalition. Sheikh Tariq and the al-Gaoud family were both sympathetic to the Ba'athists (they had gained their wealth under Saddam Hussein), while Salih Mutlaq still considered himself a Ba'athist and was in communication with (b)(6) (b)(6) (see Chapter 6a). As a result of these similarities, these organizations were not so much political organizations as they were vehicles intended to serve as power bases for particular individuals. Only HQWQ was able to develop an infrastructure inside Iraq and only then because (b)(6) spent vast amounts of his own money with little or nothing to show for it in terms of popular support.¹⁵³

(S/NF) A few Anbari personalities, such as Sheikh Majid, transcended the boundaries between the different organizations. Sheikh Majid was a Dulaymi member of the Anbar Central Council, who had a good working relationship with the al-Gaoud family even though he detested the (b)(6) and Sheikh Tariq. Most of the individuals involved in these groups were, however, more likely to engage in intrigue against one another than to try to build up their own organizations. For instance, (b)(6) founded HQWQ after Sheikh Tariq and his allies prevented the (b)(6) family from obtaining leadership positions in the ACC. Moreover, the expatriate organizations were essentially competing for the same pool of supporters and potential supporters among former generals, sheikhs, intellectuals, and technocrats.¹⁵⁴

(S/NF) Of the three expatriate organizations it was ironically Salih Mutlaq's moribund expatriate INDF that had the most potential for growth; since it had the support of eleven Iraqi MPs that theoretically represented 1,100,000 Iraqi citizens (each MP theoretically represented 100,000 Iraqis). Yet none of these groups had much influence on the situation on the ground in Anbar. In the absence of a successful expatriate movement, the SAA was able to capitalize on its success in the province, attracting an impressive popular following despite its support for the Iraqi government and the Coalition. As long as the expatriate leaders continued to adopt an outmoded opposition to the Iraqi government and refused to participate in the political process, the SAA was free to continue to grow.¹⁵⁵

Sheikh Abdullah Janabi and the Mujahideen Shura Council

(S) The other potential contender for public support in Anbar was Mujahideen Shura Council of Fallujah (see Chapter 6a), which continued to be supported from 1.4b by Sheikh Abdullah Janabi. Unlike the other expatriates, however, Sheikh Abdullah Janabi continued to support AQI and had AQI members amongst his closest contacts. One of his couriers, for instance, was (b)(6) (b)(6) a member of AQI's national Mujahideen Shura Council who had been a Ba'athist recruiter in Fallujah pre-OIF before being arrested for counterfeiting currency. (b)(6) brother (b)(6) was a veteran AQI IED and mortar operative who was (b)(6) primary contact in Fallujah.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ [| Military | 05 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070105 | (S/NF) |]

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The Ba'athists Continue to Plot

(S) The remnants of the Iraqi Ba'ath Party, and [redacted (b)(6)] in particular, now believed that it was possible to dismiss negotiations with the United States in favor of escalating attacks inside Iraq using both remaining Ba'athist loyalists and existing insurgent groups. From [redacted b 6] perspective, the Coalition was rapidly reaching a conviction that it had arrived at a dead end in Iraq and was about to withdraw. To further this plan, Iraqi Ba'athists based in [redacted 1.4b] compiled lists of tribal sheikhs in central and southern Iraq. They hoped to convince those sheikhs still loyal to the Ba'ath Party to rejoin the Party and help it to rebuild its shattered infrastructure.¹⁵⁷

(S) [redacted (b)(6)] also restructured the Ba'athist leadership inside Iraq, replacing Ba'athist commanders in Diyala and Salahaddin with new leaders like Staff Brigadier Abdallah Jassim Hamadi al-Duri in the hopes of galvanizing their operations. Ba'athist operations in the Tikrit-Baghdad corridor were seen as crucial for the Party's return to power and as a result great effort was made in northern and central Iraq to coordinate with Ansar al-Sunna, AQI, and 1920 Revolution Brigade. By January 2007, Ba'athists were collaborating with AQI on financing, intelligence collection, and targeting in Diyala, Fallujah, and Hawijah.¹⁵⁸

(S) Because [redacted (b)(6)] plan involved a major increase in anti-Coalition operations, Ba'athist cells inside Iraq were ordered to carry out IED, VBIED, and IDF attacks that would inflict 30-40 Coalition fatalities per day. This scheme was wildly at odds with the Party's actual capacities, yet [redacted (b)(6)] [redacted b 6] was not deterred by this state of affairs, and continued to call for attacks despite his inability to see them carried out.¹⁵⁹

The Role of [redacted (b)(6)]

(S/NF) Through her control of her father's money, [redacted b 6] was involved in all the intrigues amongst Anbar's expatriates. Following Saddam Hussein's execution, a group of sheikhs from the Dulaymi tribal confederation offered Raghad their condolences on her loss, proposing to hold a full state funeral for Saddam and to bury him in Ramadi if Tikrit was unavailable. The Anbari sheikhs who approached Raghad were members of the Anbar Central Council living in [redacted 1.4b] who had profited handsomely under Saddam Hussein.¹⁶⁰

(S/NF) Even those expatriates who were not members of the ACC owed their status to Saddam Hussein. The immensely wealthy [redacted (b)(6)] family profited heavily from the UN Oil-for-Food Program, while the meglomaniacal [redacted (b)(6)] made hundreds of millions of dollars smuggling for Saddam Hussein while Iraq was under UN sanctions. As a result, [redacted (b)(6)] had protected Saddam Hussein's family after the overthrow of his regime and frequently met with [redacted b 6] to support Ba'athist reconstitution in Iraq. [redacted (b)(6)] however, was something of the exception to the rule regarding expatriate tribal leaders, who tended to be

¹⁵⁷ [| Military | 09 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070109 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ [| Military | 18 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070118 | (S/NF) |]

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businessmen rather than ideologues. Much of the expatriate interaction with (b)(6) and other Ba'athist leaders was motivated by either money or the prospect of making money.¹⁶¹

(S/NF) Yet, although (b)(6) was now the de facto head of the Hussein family, she had support only from a small minority among those Iraqi Ba'athists that continued to revere Saddam Hussein after his death. (b)(6) and his lieutenants were now well-entrenched in their leadership of the Iraqi Ba'ath Party and they continued to use Saddam's name in their pronouncements. Only her access to former regime cash (perhaps still numbering in the billions) allowed (b)(6) to cultivate support among expatriate tribal leadership in order to maintain her relevance to both her small clique of supporters and the high society of Iraqi expatriates in

1.4b⁶²

Approved for Release

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

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More Moves by the Anbar Salvation Front

Anbar Salvation Front Efforts to Reconcile with Expatriate Sheikhs

(S/NF) In an effort to seek rapprochement with the Anbari expatriate leaders, two senior SAA delegations traveled to [1.4b] on January 3 and January 8, 2007, hoping to persuade academics, doctors, engineers, and tribal leaders to work with the group against AQI. Among the biggest surprises of the two meetings was a concession from [b 6] to reduce AMS's anti-SAA campaign by 40%. [(b)(6)] retained his staunch opposition to the group, however, viewing it as illegitimate because of its close collaboration with the Coalition and the Iraqi government. While there were no other concrete agreements with the expatriates, the SAA leadership believed that as the organization continued to expand its influence it could bring at least some of the expatriate opposition around and therefore wanted to keep communications open.¹⁶³

(S/NF) Yet the SAA was not without allies among the Anbari expatriates. Leading Dulaymi confederation member Sheikh Amer Abdul Jabbar Ali Sulayman, Sheikh Khamis Hasnawi Aifan of the Albu Issa (whom the group persuaded to return to Iraq), Sheikh Awrans Meteb Mahrous al-Hathal of Rutbah, and Sheikh Sabah Sattam Aftan al-Mahalawi of the Albu Mahal all supported the SAA. Even so, Sheikh Hikmat Muhammad Samir of the Mohamdi, Sheikh Khamis Abdul Karim of the Albu Fahd, Sheikh Sa'ad al-Naif of the Albu Issa, Sheikh Anwar al-Kharbit of the Albu Khalifa opposed the efforts of Sheikh Abdul Sattar, as did his own uncle Sheikh Fawzi Ftaykhan al-Rishawi.¹⁶⁴

Anbar Salvation Front Religious Support

(S) Despite its continued expansion and efforts to support security in Anbar by coordinating between Anbari tribes, police, the Iraqi army, and the Anbar Revolutionaries, the SAA lacked religious support from any major Sunni cleric or religious organization to counter the religious rhetoric used by AQI. This was due in part to AQI's pervasive murder and intimidation campaign throughout 2006, which intimidated, murdered or forced abroad those religious leaders that opposed the organization.¹⁶⁵

(S/NF) However, the group did enjoy the covert support of a number of Anbari religious figures. Among these was [(b)(6)] a senior Ramadi imam who had been a commando in the Iran-Iraq War before becoming an Islamic scholar. As the leader of AMS in Anbar, [(b)(6)] supported the Ramadi Shura Council's insurgency until July 2005, when he had begun to support MML's negotiations with the Coalition, attending a number of reconstruction and security meetings in December 2005. After AQI began assassinating anyone connected with the Anbar People's Committee, [(b)(6)] went into hiding until November 2006, after which he began supporting the efforts of the SAA against AQI.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ [| Military | 22 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070122 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ [| Military | 29 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070129 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

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(S/NF) While still recovering from his assassination attempt at the hands of AQI, MML also supported the SAA as a leader of JUI, which he intended to serve as a counter-weight to (b)(6) (b)(6). It was Sheikh Abdul Sattar's ultimate intention that the SAA would receive support from both JUI and the expatriate Anbari sheikhs in 1.4b⁶⁷

(S/NF) Sunni Endowment head (b)(6) would also become a supporter of the SAA. As noted in Chapter 6c, al-Samarra'i had long planned to establish a new Sunni religious organization (an expansion of the Iraqi Fatwa Council mentioned in Chapter 6c) that could serve as a moderate alternative to AMS. In February 2007, he resumed his efforts and enlisted the support of more than 200 Islamic scholars in 1.4b as well as many current members of AMS (including the group's spokesman (b)(6) (b)(6)). A strong supporter of Sheikh Abdul Sattar, al-Samarra'i saw an alliance with the SAA as the key to bringing down (b)(6) but had been forced to postpone his plans due to the Sunni outrage that followed the Iraqi government's arrest warrant against (b)(6)⁶⁸

(S) While (b)(6) reinvigorated efforts to form an alternative to AMS were a positive sign, it should be noted that (b)(6) had worked on this since 2005 without success. However, by early 2007 (b)(6) had gained the support not only of Sheikh Abdul Sattar but also of its IIP rival. On February 4, 2007, IPP leader (b)(6) publicly attacked AMS, calling for religious scholars and imams to form a new association and accusing AMS of becoming a political rather than a religious organization. As a result, (b)(6) was now in a position to lend the prestige of the Sunni Endowment to the SAA, providing the group with the national religious support that it had so far lacked.¹⁶⁹

Jamaat Ulema al-Iraq

(S/NF) (b)(6) task was made more difficult by the fact that another alternative to the AMS, the Jama'at Ulema al-Iraq (JUI, Iraqi Islamic Scholars' Group), had already been formed in mid-January by a group of Sunni clerics.¹⁷⁰ The JUI leadership signed a communique stating that Iraq was at a historic moment in which the country's identity, belief, and holy sites were subject to local, regional, and international danger by the ongoing sectarian and insurgent violence. Because of these dangers, the group's leadership believed that strong religious direction was needed to help the Sunni population critically reassess traditional views such as the Shi'a-Sunni divide. JUI was to be headquartered in Baghdad with branch offices in Ramadi, Fallujah, and Basra and there were plans to set up branches in Mosul and other cities in Salahaddin province.¹⁷¹

(S/NF) The JUI leadership believed that there was currently no independent religious-based organization or council that exercised moderation. In addition, the group believed that only 10% of

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ [| Military | 18 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070218 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ The group's executive council was made up of Sheikh Abdul Latif Humayyim Muhammad al-Lafi al-Fahdawi, Dr. Abdul Qadir al-Ani, Sheikh Dhafir al-Ubaydi, MML, Muthafir al-Hayani, Hussein Mustafa al-Jaburi, Khalid al-Mulla, Yusuf al-Hamdani, and former Fallujah city council member Abdul Sattar Abbas Huthafah al-Jumayli.

¹⁷¹ [| Military | 22 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070122 | (S/NF) |]

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Iraqi Sunni clerics were adequately represented by the current AMS leadership. JUI was thus intended to speak for what its leadership believed to be the Sunni "silent majority." The groups would assist in the Iraqi transition away from violence and sectarianism and toward national unity and peaceful coexistence between Sunni and Shi'a by establishing cultural, informational, media, and educational institutions. This "Islamic humanism" resonated with many SAR insurgents and their supporters, making it a far more credible challenge to AMS's core constituency than the Iraqi Fatwa Council.¹⁷²

(S/NE) As with the Iraqi Fatwa Council, JUI was largely drawn from current or former AMS members who were fed up with AMS's hardline leadership and sought to present a more moderate Sunni position. While the Iraqi Fatwa Council had an optimistic beginning, its influence dissipated dramatically after the Iraqi government's arrest warrant for Harith al-Dhari led Sunni community leaders to rally to his side. JUI leaders had likely worked with AQI to some degree or other in the course of the insurgency, but they were more oriented toward SAR insurgents than toward AQI.¹⁷³

(S) Of the group's leadership, [redacted] b 6 [redacted] not to be confused with insurgent financier [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted], who was known as "the Incorruptible" because he refused a bribe from Saddam Hussein, was respected as an Islamic scholar by residents of Ramadi. Since June 2003, [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] had resided in [redacted] 1.4b [redacted] holding both the Coalition occupation of Iraq and the insurgency in disdain. However, he was also an associate of [redacted] b 6 [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] who had provided \$300,000 to Ramadi Ba'athist leader [redacted] b 6 [redacted] and had generally supported the efforts of Ramadi FRE and SAR organizations to restore Sunni dominance to Iraq.¹⁷⁴

(S/NE) [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] was the former head of the Sunni Endowment under Saddam Hussein and the founder of the February 2004 attempt to create the Council of Sunni Communities of Iraq (CSCI) to develop a unified political voice for the Iraqi Sunnis. In April 2004, [redacted] b 6 [redacted] had come to the opinion that [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] was responsible for the kidnapping of foreign nationals and issued a fatwa against the taking of hostages. However, he had also allied himself with Sheikh Abdullah Janabi after Operation VIGILANTE RESOLVE and had helped him to recruit foreign fighters in [redacted] 1.4b [redacted]

(S/NE) Sheikh Dhafir Sobhe Bukori al-Ubaydi was the second-in-command to Sheikh Abdullah Janabi in Fallujah (see Chapter 4) and involved in anti-Coalition activities in the town since at least June 2003. During the rule of the Fallujah Mujahideen Shura, Sheikh Dhafir had been the public face for the organization while Janabi had held the real power behind the scenes. In comparison to Janabi, Dhafir was a more pragmatic individual who distrusted the influence of foreign jihadis like Zarqawi and opposed Janabi's alliances with both [redacted] b 6 [redacted] and Muqtada al-Sadr while in Fallujah. In an effort to save Fallujah from Coalition attack, Sheikh Dhafir challenged Sheikh Abdullah Janabi for leadership of the city in late October 2004, only to lose out and be exiled from the city with his followers. Since Operation AL FAJR, Sheikh Dhafir had resided in [redacted] 1.4b [redacted] but had

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

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been willing to join other Sunni expatriates in negotiations with the Iraqi government over the constitution.¹⁷⁶

(S/NE) Of the other JUI leaders, MML was still recovering in [1.4b] from injuries he had suffered during an AQI assassination attempt, while Hussein Mustafa al-Jaburi was a SAR insurgent leader who had been active in Baghdad as late as July 2005. [b 6] were both moderate Sunni leaders in Basra who had condemned both Shi'a excesses and Sunni terrorism. Sheikh Abdul Sattar Abbas Huthafah al-Jumayli was a former member of the Fallujah city council who had resided in [1.4b] since the February 2006 assassination of the Fallujah city council chairman.¹⁷⁷

Further Developments in Foreign Connections with the Insurgency

Cross-Border Insurgent Activity

(S) Meanwhile AQI and other national insurgent groups operating in Anbar were increasing their cross-border and cross-provincial connections. In some ways, these groups maintained a symbiotic relationship of mutual support with their counterparts active in Baghdad. Weapons and money from Baghdad supported the insurgency in Anbar, while vehicles, weapons, and foreign fighters from Anbar supported the insurgency in Baghdad. While Coalition operations in Anbar had lessened the flow of logistical support to Baghdad from the Iraqi border with [1.4b] Iraq still possessed insufficient border resources, rampant official border corruption, and a difficulty regarding Anbar's sheer size that allowed insurgent facilitation activity to continue between Iraq and [1.4b]⁷⁸

(S) This cross-border smuggling took many forms, with a majority occurring at the border crossings. Large quantities of people, weapons, and money could be easily transitted at these spots due to the absence of border enforcement technology and the corruption of many Iraqi customs officials. Furthermore, since the Iraqi government was the primary oversight authority at the border crossings, the Coalition's ability to reduce corruption was limited. All of this served to facilitate insurgent cross-border smuggling. For instance, [1.4b] network used the Husaybah border crossing to move weapons through Husaybah with the aid of corrupt customs officials. AQI leader Sheikh Abdullah Janabi's followers relied extensively on [1.4b] network to smuggle foreign fighters across the [1.4b] border and into al-Qaim or Rabiyyah, at which point they were moved along the Euphrates River valley into Yusufiyah before they were sent to Baghdad.¹⁷⁹

(S) Some rural smuggling that occurred in Anbar took place under the cover of nomadic activities such as sheep smuggling, a well-established practice among many of the border tribes that occupied territory extending across international borders. AQI border cells often emulated this practice, supplementing their income by stealing and then smuggling sheep. By disguising themselves as shepherds, AQI operatives were able to move across international borders without detection, facilitating the transfer of foreign fighters and money as well as their own movement. While this was

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ [| Military | 09 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070109 | (S/NE) |]

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

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much slower than moving through official Iraqi border crossings, it was extremely difficult to differentiate between legitimate shepherds and AQI operatives posing as such.¹⁸⁰

(S) Nor was AQI the only group that relied upon sheep smuggling as a cover for its activities. Both Ansar al-Sunna and its predecessor Ansar al-Islam had used sheep smuggling as a cover for financing, weapons trafficking, and the facilitation of foreign fighters into Haditha. Historical AQAM connections to cross-provincial Kurdish sheep smugglers based in Nineveh province allowed both Ansar al-Sunna and AQI to smuggle goods into the Haditha area and transport them as far south as Karmah.¹⁸¹

(S) As a result of Coalition operations in 2005 and 2006, Anbar was no longer the primary source of foreign fighters in Baghdad. While the Euphrates River valley had been the preferred route for foreign fighter transport, Coalition operations in al-Qaim, Rutbah, Haditha, and Ramadi had forced the group to shift its focus to the Tigris River valley. Many insurgent smugglers also shifted their activity from the closed Husaybah border crossing and the Walid border crossing to the Rabiya border crossing due to the rampant corruption at the latter post. While foreign fighters continued to use every possible route to infiltrate into Iraq, the number that were smuggled through Anbar was on the decline and the [1.4b] network was under heavy pressure from the AQI senior leadership, because of its inability to meet their demand for foreign fighters.¹⁸²

Foreign Fighters Continue to Infiltrate

(S) Even with its reach shortened by Coalition operations, the [1.4b] network remained the largest established AQI foreign fighter facilitation network. After [1.4b] Sheikh Abdullah Janabi was the next largest facilitator, working with AQI, Ansar al-Sunna, 1920 Revolution Brigade, and Jaysh al-Fatihin operations in Fallujah, Karmah, Ramadi, Baghdad, Yusufiyah, Abu Ghraib, and Mosul. Collaborating with the [1.4b] network, Janabi aided the movement of foreign fighters along the Euphrates River valley to Yusufiyah so that they could be integrated into AQI operations to impact both eastern Anbar and other nearby provinces.¹⁸³

(S) By February 2007, elements of the [1.4b] network appear to have broadened their focus from foreign fighter facilitation to include VBIED manufacturing. From [1.4b] a number of [1.4b] network members including [(b)(6)] had begun to assemble VBIEDs and smuggle them into Iraq for use in attacks. On February 1, 2007, one of the group's VBIEDs was used by AQI to carry out an attack in al-Qaim. This shift in the [1.4b] network's efforts was spearheaded by AQI amir [(b)(6)], who had formerly been based in Rutbah but had fled to [1.4b].¹⁸⁴

(S) At [b 6] direction, the [1.4b] network began facilitating the movement of bulk explosives such as TNT and VBIEDs from [1.4b] to Baiji through the Jazira desert. While AQI

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ [| Military | 7 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070207 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁸² [| Military | 09 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070109 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁸³ [| Military | 14 Jan 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070114 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁸⁴ [| Military | 8 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070208 | (S/NF) |]

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traditionally manufactured VBIEDs much closer to their intended area of use to prevent interdiction, by February 2007 elements of the [1.4b] network had concluded that importing VBIEDs from [1.4b] was a more effective means of preventing Coalition or Iraqi police interdiction operations during the assembly phase.¹⁸⁵

Syrian Support for the Iraqi Insurgency

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ As part of his foreign fighter facilitation, [1.4b] set up a terrorist training camp between [1.4b] to train classes of 35-40 fighters at a time. The camp was overseen by [b 6] who would then assist recruits in traveling to Iraq once they had completed their training.¹⁸⁶ Upon completing their training, the AQI fighters would split up into three groups and begin infiltrating into the al-Qaim area.¹⁸⁷

(S) This camp was indicative of a larger trend in the relationship between [1.4b] and AQI. While several larger insurgent training camps had been located in [1.4b] since at least 2005 if not earlier, many of these were overseen by former regime figures and directed by Iraqi army officers. Over the course of 2006, however, AQI actively set up its own training facilities (of which [b 6] was one) to teach 3-6 month courses for as many as 500 recruits. Graduates of the courses were sent to western Anbar in order to reinvigorate AQI's influence in the area. However, the strong Coalition presence in the al-Qaim area restricted the freedom of movement for many of these AQI fighters, preventing them from infiltrating back into Iraq in the numbers that the group's leadership required.¹⁸⁸

~~(S/NF)~~ The [1.4b] helped out as well, maintaining a facility outside Damascus International Airport that was run by security and intelligence personnel. The facility offered courses in Strella rockets and M-16s to Iraqi nationals and was run by [1.4b] [b(6)] the former of whom had previously managed a Ba'athist training camp at Abu Kamal in December 2006. Given the proximity of the facility to Damascus Airport, which was now under the supervision of [1.4b], it is highly unlikely that the ongoing training of Iraqi nationals would have escaped the attention of the [1.4b] government.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ [| Military | 6 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070206 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁸⁷ [| Military | 26 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070226 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁸⁸ [| Military | 6 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070206 | (S/NF) |]

¹⁸⁹ [| Military | 22 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070222 | (S/NF) |]

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Pages 43 through 44 redacted for the following reasons:

(b)(6), 1.4b
1.4b, (b)(6)

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1.4b, (b)(6)

AQI Weakness in the Ramadi Area (February-March)

Coalition Action and AQI Reaction in Ramadi

(S) While these cross-border ties helped AQI to continue its attacks even as the Coalition and SAA cut into its operations in Anbar, there was one area AQI suffered steady setbacks: the Ramadi area. The Coalition's new strategy of clearing and holding the city continued to take neighborhoods away from AQI and created zones free of insurgent influence. The establishment of static Coalition positions along 17th Street, for instance, forced AQI to relocate its primary base of operations in Ramadi from the Qatana district to the al-Qudar Mosque in the northern Shrikah district of the city.¹⁹⁹ A number of AQI's allies like Ansar al-Sunna leader (b)(6) appear to have followed the group's exodus into the Shrikah district.²⁰⁰ Soon afterwards, the al-Qudar Mosque became a major center of activity for AQI and its allies under the command of former Qatana district amir

(b)(6)⁰¹

(S) The Ansar al-Sunna leadership in Ramadi remained under the command of the group's military leader (b)(6) and his superior (b)(6). (b)(6) was primarily based out of the Dental College in the Shrikah district, relying on Ansar al-Sunna operatives as local security guards to protect himself and his lieutenants (b)(6). (b)(6). The area around the Ramadi Fire Station also was a center for the housing of Ansar al-Sunna fighters and weapons. Meeting with his AQI allies at the al-Qudar Mosque to coordinate strategy, (b)(6) led a force of up to forty fighters in Ramadi and was involved in the killing of Iraqi police, murder and intimidation, and the construction of IEDs and VBIEDs.²⁰²

(S) (b)(6) was one of AQI's mid-level leaders in Ramadi, having been a lieutenant to both (b)(6) prior to their deaths. Reportedly commanding as many as 75-100 fighters, (b)(6) coordinated his operations with Ansar al-Sunna and those Islamic Army of Iraq fighters loyal to AQI. Operating in the Hay al-

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ [| Military | 4 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070204 | (S/NF) |]

²⁰⁰ [| Military | 6 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070206 | (S/NF) |]

²⁰¹ [| Military | 4 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070204 | (S/NF) |]

²⁰² [| Military | 7 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070207 | (S/NF) |]

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Dhubat and Shrikah districts, (b)(6) based his operations out of Muayim High School and the al-Qadir Mosque.²⁰³

(S) AQI also tried to expand its efforts to influence Ramadi schools (see Chapter 6c), as armed fighters going from school to school and intimidating students. AQI's primary target in addition to its ongoing murder and intimidation campaign was to prevent the next generation of Ramadi youth from being taught what it regarded as un-Islamic concepts such as representative democracy as well as to enforce *shari'ah* and recruit students into the insurgency. It also represented recognition on the part of the Ramadi AQI leadership that if they could not close the schools down that they would at least exercise influence over what was taught there. School curricula, particularly the College for Psychology's curricula, was removed by AQI and replaced with its own.²⁰⁴

(S) Paralleling AQI efforts in western Anbar in the latter half of 2006, in February 2007 the group's fighters in Ramadi began posting signs and moving house to house, ordering residents to terminate internet access in the belief that they are using it to view pornography and stating that those wishing to access the internet should do so at various internet cafes located throughout the city. This was not without precedence, as AQI had attempted to control communication and information sharing in Ramadi at least as far back as August 2005, leading to the destruction of cell phone towers on September 2005 (see Chapter 5b) and the destruction of the telephone switchboard in February 2006 (see Chapter 6a).²⁰⁵

(S) Yet the internet remained extremely important to AQI senior leadership as an effective means of issuing guidance to large numbers of their followers without placing themselves in personal jeopardy. (b)(6) for instance, relied heavily on the internet to disseminate his orders to large numbers of his followers. On February 13-14, 2007 the Coalition carried out raids in Ramadi, Karmah and Ba Hadad to capture members of (b)(6) personal network resulting in the detention of (b)(6).

(S/NE) Of the detainees, (b)(6) was the general manager and system administrator of the Barq Center communications center and internet cafe in the Qatana district of Ramadi who acted as a courier for (b)(6) was the owner of the Barq Center, while (b)(6) were the primary AQI computer experts that (b)(6) relied upon to relay his orders to low and mid-level AQI leaders operating in Ramadi.²⁰⁷

(S/NE) Denied access to traditional medical facilities in Ramadi as a result of Coalition raids on the Ramadi General Hospital, the Women and Children's Hospital, and the detention of (b)(6) (b)(6) AQI was forced to rely on a number of ad-hoc facilities to see to the injuries of wounded fighters. The Risala Mosque in Shajariyah, the al-Tumadun School for Girls, the al-Nur Mosque, and

²⁰³ [| Military | 9 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070209 | (S/NE) |]

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ [| Military | 14 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070214 | (S/NE) |]

²⁰⁶ [| Military | 14 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070214 | (S/NE) |]

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

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the al-Rahma Clinic in the Sufia district were all used by AQI fighters for medical treatment. For more extensive injuries, AQI relied on hospitals in Hit and the Albu Ubayd tribal area.²⁰⁸

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ The relative weakening of AQI in Ramadi proper allowed elements of Jaysh al-Mujahideen, under the leadership of [b 6] to fill some of the void in the Qatana district. This was the first time that Jaysh al-Mujahideen fighters had been active in Ramadi since August 2006 and was apparently part of an effort by [b(6)] to exploit local anti-AQI sentiments in favor of a "nationalist" insurgent organization.²⁰⁹

AQI Continues to Lose Ground in Ramadi

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ Despite these efforts, Coalition and SAA operations began to squeeze AQI out of the city. On February 17, the Coalition launched Operation MURFREESBORO, pushing AQI fighters from the Malaab to the al-Iskan district.²¹⁰ The Tamim district came under assault next. To break the AQI use of fuel to influence residents, Coalition forces and Iraqi police began conducting fuel drops in Tamim, where residents were far more open to their presence than they had been in the past due to the level of AQI's murder and intimidation campaign. As a result of successful Iraqi police raids against the AQI node in the White Apartments in December 2006 (see Chapter 6c), many residents now sided with the Iraqi police and the Coalition in the belief that they would drive AQI out of their district. Sheikh Abdul Sattar had also been organizing security measures for the Tamim district since December 2006, outlining near, mid, and long-term goals aimed at providing security to the area.²¹¹

~~(S/NF)~~ The Coalition and SAA effort was aided by targeting of AQI leadership. For instance, on February 10, 2007, AQI Ramadi amir Thamir Hamad Nahar was killed by Iraqi police. However, Thamir had foreseen prior to his demise that his enemies were closing in on him and had ceased directly coordinating attacks against the Coalition, shifting his role to planning and coordinating activities among the roughly sixty members of the AQI administrative shura in Ramadi.²¹²

~~S/NF~~ With Thamir dead, he was succeeded as amir of Ramadi by his subordinate [b(6)] [b 6] who had previously overseen the AQI command and control node located at the al-Qudar Mosque, carrying out attacks against Coalition and Iraqi security forces and selling black market fuel to fund AQI operations.²¹³ Originally an AQI IED cell leader in the Albu Bali and Shajariyah areas, [b(6)] had been a major AQI leader in the Shrikah district prior to the relocation of many AQI fighters to the Shrikah district due to the Coalition sealing off the Qatana district (Operation HUE CITY) and the AQI flight from the Malaab district (Operation MURFREESBORO).²¹⁴ Based in the Shrikah district [b(6)] ought to facilitate a rise in IED and

²⁰⁸ [| Military | 26 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070226 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

²⁰⁹ [| Military | 28 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070228 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

²¹⁰ [| Military | 1 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070301 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

²¹¹ [| Military | 2 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070302 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ [| Military | 5 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070305 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

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VBIED attacks inside Ramadi as part of an effort to reestablish AQI rather than SAA as the dominant organization in the provincial capital.²¹⁵

(S/NF) (b)(6) rise to the head of AQI in Ramadi also elevated a number of his subordinates to positions of authority in the city. To protect his command and control node around the al-Qudar mosque, (b)(6) began organizing security patrols and laying IEDs along the major routes to the mosque.²¹⁶

(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI) AQI recruiting under (b)(6) was focused around the Qatana district of Ramadi, with AQI recruiters focusing on young, unmarried and unemployed men between the ages of 14-30. Potential recruits were also judged on how often they attended mosque. Despite AQI's desire to recruit fighters motivated by religion, the group was more than willing to exploit Anbar's high unemployment in order to recruit financially motivated individuals. In general, AQI paid Qatana district residents \$27 per attack or a lump sum of \$400 for multiple attacks.²¹⁷

(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI) There were now only two districts under AQI influence. To deal with the Shrikah district, the Coalition began planning Operation OKINAWA to restrict AQI movement in and out of the district and to capture or kill its leaders in the hopes of forcing them out of Shrikah and into the Hay al-Dhubat Thanya district. Once both Shrikah and Hay al-Dhubat Thanya had been secured, AQI would be completely displaced from Ramadi and forced into the rural areas of the city where they would be subject to attack by the SAA's ERUs and allied tribesmen.²¹⁸

(S/NF) The threat posed to AQI by this type of exposure was highlighted on March 17, 2007 with the Iraqi police's capture of (b)(6), the leader of the AQI network in the Jazira area that had murdered Albu Ali Jassim tribal leader Sheikh Khalid Araq, his son, and his cousin. Forced to flee from Jazira to Julaybah to escape the tribal backlash, Tariq assumed command of AQI's anti-aircraft network made up of former pilots and air defense officers from the former regime.²¹⁹

(S/NF) Between March 8th and 20th, Operation OKINAWA drove AQI out of the Shrikah district and led to a raid on the al-Qudar Mosque. As the Iraqis established a permanent presence in Shrikah, the district began to improve despite a brief rise in attacks by those AQI fighters who opted not to flee with their leaders to the Hay al-Dhubat Thanya district, which was now the last major center of AQI influence in Ramadi.²²⁰

²¹⁵ Militar 2 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM 20070302 (S/NF)

(b)(6)

[Military | 5 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070305 | (S/NF) |]

²¹⁷ [| Military | 16 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070316 | (S/NF) |]

²¹⁸ [| Military | 5 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070305 | (S/NF) |]

²¹⁹ [| Military | 18 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070318 | (S/NF) |]

²²⁰ [| Military | 21 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070321 | (S/NF) |]

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(S) The systematic, deliberate clearing of neighborhoods, establishment population control measures, and the backfilling of neighborhoods with combat outposts and Iraqi police stations embodied by Operation OKINAWA and its counterparts had a significant impact on AQI's ability to operate in Ramadi. The massive shift in attack statistics in the city between July 2006 and January 2007 were telling: daily attacks were down 38%, IEDs were down 57%, and the maximum number of fighters per attack had dropped from twenty to twelve. Ninety percent of the IEDs used by AQI were now surface rather than subsurface laid, indicating the group did not have the freedom of movement necessary to plant and conceal the devices.²²¹

(S/NE) AQI was also beginning to struggle financially in Ramadi. While kidnapping, vehicle theft, and extortion continued to provide individual cells with large amounts of money, a more regular amount of AQI income had come from "ghost" payrolls and sympathetic business owners. On December 21, 2006, Coalition forces detained [b 6], the most significant AQI financier in Ramadi. Operating a currency exchange and cigarette store that was a cover for his activities, [b(6)] facilitated upwards of \$600,000 a month to AQI through currency smuggling. With the detention of [b 6] took over the operation of his currency exchange, though he was only able to provide AQI with \$128,000 from January to March 2007, a small fraction of what [b(6)] was able to supply.²²²

(S/NE) AQI's allies in Ramadi were faring little better. Fearful of capture, Ansar al-Sunna Sufia district amir [1.4b, (b)(6)] with his personal bodyguards. As one of the primary leaders of the combined AQI-Ansar al-Sunna attack on Sufia in November 2006, [b(6)] [b(6)] had good reason to fear for his life in Ramadi. In his absence, [b(6)] assumed the leadership of Ansar al-Sunna in Sufia, but he was not as experienced as [b(6)] and had been appointed due to his family ties to Ansar al-Sunna's Ramadi amir Abu Ubayda.²²³

(S/NE) Interestingly, in March 2007 AQI [b(6)] were both meeting regularly to discuss strategy and coordinate their operations in Ramadi. In sharp contrast to the view adopted by the national leaderships of the various SAR groups, in Ramadi members of Ansar al-Sunna, Islamic Army of Iraq, al-Nu'man Brigade (see Chapter 5b for a discussion of AQI's absorption of the al-Nu'man Brigade), and Jaysh al-Mujahideen had all been radicalized to the point where they readily cooperated with AQI under the umbrella of the Islamic Emirate of Iraq.²²⁴

(S/NE) AQI's Hit-based ally al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal tried to expand its reach into the Ramadi area. [b 6] was Muhammad Cent's top lieutenant in Ramadi, coordinating the movement of up to fifty foreign fighters from Hit into the rural area between Saddamiyah, Muthana, and Habbaniyah southeast of Lake Thar Thar. This route was particularly favored by AQI and al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal because of the high concentration of AQI fighters in proportion to the relatively low population of the area. AQI maintained a significant freedom of movement in the area, favoring its close proximity to Samarra, Ramadi, and Baghdad to

²²¹ [| Military | 22 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070322 | (S/NE) |]

²²² [| Military | 12 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070312 | (S/NE) |]

²²³ [| Military | 9 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070309 | (S/NE) |]

²²⁴ [| Military | 21 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070321 | (S/NE) |]

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use it as an operational and logistics node for their operations in the three cities. In the end, this attempt would fail and by April 2007, Ramadi would be nearly free of insurgent influence for the first time since 2003.²²⁵

Tribal Justice

(S/NF) Despite these improvements, a major area of concern in Ramadi remained the lack of a functioning judicial system. In an effort to impose some law and order in the city, the tribal leaders of the Albu Dhiab, (b)(6) met in the Albu Ali Jassim tribal area under the banner of the SAA to set up a system of local and tribal laws that would govern their respective tribal areas, including punishments for specific crimes. Residents found in violation of these laws would be arrested by the Iraqi police and brought before the council of their tribe to determine justice. The tribal leaders agreed that some penalties would need to be harsh in order to deter a crime wave from occurring now that AQI's influence was waning in Ramadi.²²⁶

(S/NF) The goal of the tribal justice system was to discourage both criminal and insurgent activity while demonstrating to the Coalition and the Iraqi government that the tribal leadership was willing to take steps to establish law and order. The tribal laws proposed by the SAA helped to reestablish law and order and strengthened tribal leaders while removing the negatives associated with extra-judicial proceedings. The only question was whether or not tribal leaders would be willing to relinquish their new-found authority once a functioning justice system returned to Anbar.²²⁷

Prime Minister Maliki Goes to Ramadi

(S) In recognition of the improvements in the city, on March 13, 2007 Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and other members of the Iraqi central government visited Ramadi to meet with Governor Mamoun and representatives of all the major tribal figures within the SAA. This was the first visit by Prime Minister al-Maliki to Anbar, though former Prime Minister Ibrahim Jafari had visited both Fallujah and Ramadi in January 2006. The meeting between al-Maliki and the various Anbari notables went well, with Governor Mamoun retaining his composure despite being the target of several verbal attacks by tribal representatives.²²⁸

Fallujah Becomes the Center of the Fight Again

AQI's Insurgent Unification Efforts in Fallujah

(S) As its influence decreased in Ramadi, AQI placed even more emphasis on increasing its presence in Fallujah. To further this goal, on January 19, a number of Fallujah AQI leaders including financier

(b)(6) Sheikh Abdallah Mahdi's lieutenant (b)(6) and Sheikh Abdallah al-Fahdli met with 1920 Revolution Brigade leader and sniper chief (b)(6) (b)(6) at the Hajji Muhammad Abdallah al-Fahdli Mosque to discuss the

²²⁵ [| Military | 4 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070304 | (S/NF) |]

²²⁶ [| Military | 11 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070311 | (S/NF) |]

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ [| Military | 14 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070314 | (S/NF) |]

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potential for cooperation and combined attacks against the Coalition. Because a large number of AQI and 1920 Revolution Brigade members were now being apprehended in Fallujah as a result of Coalition and Iraqi police actions, members of both groups in Fallujah believed that they had no choice but to cooperate or they would be overwhelmed. Given that this occurred at about the same time as Abu Wa'il's Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna conspiracy, this illustrates once again that the national insurgent leaders who were the most eager to negotiate with the Coalition often had the least control over their followers.²²⁹

(S) While the outcome of this meeting is unknown, soon afterward AQI scaled up its operations in Fallujah with the February 2, 2007 assassination of city council secretary Abbas Ali Hussein at his home. A key political figure in Fallujah, Abbas had been the secretary of the Fallujah city council since its reestablishment, though he had also been acting city council chairman after the September 24, 2006 assassination of Najim Abdullah Saud al-Issawi.²³⁰

(S) In an effort to replicate a tactic that had proven successful in Ramadi, AQI began intimidating Fallujah gasoline vendors into selling their gasoline at a higher price than that set by the government and then cornering the black market in gasoline. Because of supply and demand, the black market for gasoline in Fallujah was even higher than those for propane and cigarettes that AQI already controlled. As a result of this initiative, AQI intimidated local Fallujah gas vendors (known to residents as "Jolly Boys" because of their jerry cans) into complying with their demands, particularly in the Jubayl district.²³¹

(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI) Within Fallujah proper, AQI was now led by [redacted (b)(6)] a former member of the Black Flags Battalion in Karmah who received his instructions directly from senior AQI leaders including Sheikh Abdullah Janabi, [redacted (b)(6)] and Sheikh Nazar Sa'di Zahir. An experienced AQI leader, [redacted (b)(6)] attempted to reestablish AQI influence inside the city by setting up a *shari'ah* court in the Nazal district.²³²

Anbar Revolutionaries' Expansion into Fallujah

(S/NF) AQI's increased activity in Fallujah did not pass unchallenged. At the end of January 2007, the Anbar Revolutionaries co-opted elements of 1920 Revolution Brigade and Jaysh al-Fatihin in Fallujah to help aid its fight against AQI by highlighting the group's murder of innocent Sunnis and the personal enrichment of many of its leaders at the expense of the Anbari people. After killing eight AQI leaders and dumping their bodies at the IIP office in the Hay al-Jamhuriya district, the group posted a list of 134 known AQI members operating in Fallujah stating that they would suffer the same fate. In literature distributed to Fallujah residents, the Anbar Revolutionaries referred to AQI as "the [redacted 1.4b]" accusing them of "disfiguring the reputation of real mujahideen" through their actions and stating that they had one week to leave the city or they would be killed.²³³

²²⁹ [| Military | 1 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070201 | (S/NF) |]

²³⁰ [| Military | 2 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070202 | (S/NF) |]

²³¹ [| Military | 5 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070205 | (S/NF) |]

²³² [| Military | 9 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070309 | (S/NF) |]

²³³ [| Military | 9 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070309 | (S/NF) |]

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(S) The Anbar Revolutionaries' campaign in Fallujah was modeled after its efforts in Khalidiyah and Habbaniyah, where the group had posted the names of ninety-five known AQI members operating in Khalidiyah. Many of the individuals listed fled to Fallujah and by early February 2007 Khalidiyah and Habbaniyah were secure enough that the Anbar Revolutionaries could directly engage imams, sheikhs, and other civic leaders to acquire their cooperation without fear of attack. To achieve similar success in Fallujah, the group strengthened its intelligence collection and direct action efforts in the city.²³⁴ In addition, the group distributed a letter in the Zawiyah district of Fallujah that was purportedly written by a former AQI member (it was in fact written by a relative of Sheikh Khamis) stating that while the group claimed to be representing Islam its actions showed just the opposite, as AQI desecrated everything that Muslims believed in. In addition, the letter questioned AQI's use of foreign fighters from [REDACTED] 1.4b [REDACTED] noting that the regimes in all three nations were far worse than those of Iraq.²³⁵

(S) Cooperation between the Fallujah police and the Anbar Revolutionaries was facilitated by (b)(6) [REDACTED] the latter group's representative who reached an agreement with Fallujah police chief Colonel Faisal that the Fallujah police would employ the Anbar Revolutionaries, allowing them to distribute propaganda as well as to take part in joint patrols and raids alongside the regular Fallujah police.²³⁶

Improvements in the Fallujah Security Forces

(S/NF) The successes of the Anbar Revolutionaries were greatly aided by improvements in the Iraqi police and army. Fallujah police chief Colonel Faisal Ismail Hussein improved the ability of local police to target the insurgency, leading to the detention of 282 AQI fighters in February. Colonel Faisal worked closely with the Anbar Revolutionaries to support the Fallujah police and conducted joint raids into Zaidon. As a member of the Zobai tribe, Colonel Faisal had played a role in the Anbar Revolutionaries' successful coopting of 1920 Revolution Brigade and Jaysh al-Fatihin in Fallujah.²³⁷

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ The creation of the Special Missions Group (SMG), a police unit aimed at capturing HVTs, enabled the Iraqi police to more effectively target AQI leaders operating in the Fallujah area. The SMG, created in November 2006, was the brainchild of Iraqi police Captain Amar, who was the unit's executive officer until he was kidnapped in Baghdad. Among the group's most notable achievements was the detention of former Karmah mayor Majid Hamid Mudin al-Halbusi.²³⁸

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ The biggest success by far of the Fallujah police was the March 8, 2007 capture of Brigadier General Ali Dawud Sulayman Nayil al-Khalifawi. A high-ranking Ba'athist under Saddam Hussein, Brigadier General Ali had become a high-ranking AQI financier and facilitator, traveling often to [REDACTED] 1.4b [REDACTED] to acquire funding from Sheikh Abdullah Janabi for insurgent groups in the city. Along with many of his family members, Brigadier General Ali had played a role

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ [| Military | 11 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070211 | (S/NF) |]

²³⁶ [| Military | 18 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070218 | (S/NF) |]

²³⁷ [| Military | 02 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070302 | (S/NF) |]

²³⁸ [| Military | 15 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070315 | (S/NF) |]

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in coordinating the Fallujah insurgency since at least the beginning of 2004 and was referred to by residents as "the Usama bin Laden of Iraq." As one of Zarqawi's top lieutenants in Fallujah, Brigadier General Ali had played a prominent role in the defense of the city during Operation AL FAJR, facilitating IED and small arms attacks between Fallujah and Ramadi.²³⁹

(S/NE) While Brigadier General Ali had gone underground after Operation AL FAJR, he and his family had apparently remained loyal to AQI following Zarqawi's demise and continued to operate in the Ramadi-Fallujah corridor. Brigadier General Ali and his family regarded AQI as the only vehicle capable of helping them to restore the status that the Sulayman family had in the Iraqi army under Saddam Hussein, and saw the Coalition as occupiers and enemies of Islam.²⁴⁰

(S/NE) These advances in the Fallujah police were paralleled by similar progress in the Iraqi army. On January 20, 2007, Brigadier General Khalid Ju'ad Khadum of the Iraqi army was relieved of command for engaging in a variety of illegal activities ranging from pilfering his soldiers' salaries to stealing government property. Following his replacement by (b)(6) the Iraqi army in Fallujah made dramatic improvements in accountability and eliminated the problem "ghost soldiers" that had plagued it throughout Brigadier General Khalid's tenure.²⁴¹

(S/NE) While AQI and its allies remained a long-term threat to Fallujah stability, the transition of the Fallujah city limits from Coalition to Iraqi operational control led to a significantly lower degree of AQI activity inside the city. The physical presence of the Iraqi army and the Coalition prevented AQI from establishing a foothold inside Fallujah proper. However, local government remained a problem as the Fallujah city council only functioned intermittently at best due to multiple AQI assassinations and their after-effects.²⁴²

The Zaidon Area Remains Problematic

(S/NE) The situation in Fallujah remained strongly influenced by AQI strength in the nearby Zaidon area. Operation THREE SWORDS did not dislodge AQI leader (b)(6) from the Zaidon area. Operating under the command of Yemeni AQI leader (b)(6) based his operations out of a compound in the Zobai tribal area with his followers. As before, (b)(6) enforced an extreme interpretation of *shari'ah*, decapitating suspected "traitors" and "apostates" in front of their families. In addition, (b)(6) stole tractor trailers passing through the vicinity of Zaidon, taking their drivers back to the Zobai tribal area and beheading them.²⁴³

(S) In addition to (b)(6) Zaidon also was a command and control node for (b)(6) a senior AQI leader who was a member of the Zobai tribe and closely associated with a number of Zobai subtribal sheikhs. According to (b)(6) former lieutenant (b)(6) the villages of al-Anaz, Mu'amir, and Nu'aymiyah had been major AQI nodes

²³⁹ [| Military | 11 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070311 | (S/NE) |]

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ [| Military | 2 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070302 | (S/NE) |]

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ [| Military | 5 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070205 | (S/NE) |]

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since at least 2005. The entire Zaidon area was also notorious for involvement in AQI weapons smuggling to Fallujah, particularly of 14.5mm and 23mm heavy machine guns.²⁴⁴

(S) Despite Abu Sabah's brutality (or perhaps because of it), many residents of al-Anaz hated Coalition involvement with the Iraqi government even more. They believed that the Iraqi government was little more than a Coalition puppet that aided the American theft of Iraqi oil. Al-Anaz was thus useful as an AQI node not only due to its strategic location in the Zaidon area and close proximity to the Euphrates River, but also because these sentiments helped the organization to operate freely in the village.²⁴⁵

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ In addition, AQI used the village of As Sa'dun in southern Zaidon as a center from which to conduct regular checkpoints aimed at identifying members of the Iraqi police, army, or 1920 Revolution Brigade. Within As Sa'dun itself, AQI had imposed a curfew and forbidden smoking throughout the village. At the end of February 2007, 100-150 [1.4b]

[1.4b] AQI fighters from As Sa'dun entered the markets and houses of a number of Zaidon villages, threatening residents with death if they cooperated with the Coalition and attempting to coerce them into helping AQI. The discovery of three dead bodies (one of them headless with its hands bound behind its back) in the Zaidon area by Coalition forces confirmed how serious AQI was at implementing its murder and intimidation campaign.²⁴⁶

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ AQI's murder and intimidation campaign in eastern Zaidon was soon overshadowed by fighting between AQI and 1920 Revolution Brigade due to the support of al-Hamam tribe for the latter group. This conflict forced AQI to abandon the al-Zaidon Mosque for its strongholds in southern Zaidon such as the villages of Dwalibah and Qaryat al-Hathut. The fighting occurred as a result of the violent murder and intimidation campaign pursued by [b)(6)] [b 6] particularly an incident in which [b 6] reportedly tied a man behind his car and dragged him through the streets of Zaidon as a warning to those who opposed AQI.²⁴⁷

AQI's Foothold in Karmah

(S) AQI also maintained a strong and persistent presence in Karmah, using the town as a center from which to conduct attacks into Fallujah. Karmah was an AQI logistical and foreign fighter node as well, facilitating the group's smuggling between Baghdad and areas west and north of Anbar. Networks stretching from [1.4b] to Baghdad were connected to the greater Karmah area and by February 2007 the number of attacks in the area had risen dramatically. Because IED attacks were deemed to be most effective, IEDs made up 64% of the attacks in the Karmah area.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ [| Military | 15 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070215 | (S/NF) |]

²⁴⁵ [| Military | 14 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070214 | (S/NF) |]

²⁴⁶ [| Military | 25 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070225 | (S/NF) |]

²⁴⁷ [| Military | 26 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070226 | (S/NF) |]

²⁴⁸ [| Military | 14 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070214 | (S/NF) |]

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(S) AQI in Karmah was under the leadership of [redacted b 6] and Sheikh Nazar Sa'di Zahir, who shot down a CH-46 helicopter northwest of the town on February 7 using a MANPAD and carried out opportunistic IED attacks in their aftermath.²⁴⁹

(S) AQI's presence in Karmah was sustained in part by the dissatisfaction of many residents with the Coalition despite their tiring of indiscriminate attacks against innocent civilians. There was also an active murder and intimidation campaign in the town, made easier by the lack of constant Coalition or Iraqi government presence. AQI and Islamic Emirate of Iraq propaganda displayed on Karmah homes and mosques threatened death for "collaborators" or those who opposed AQI. Moreover, there were no residents in the town who would oppose the organization. Sheikh Mehzen Abbas Muhammad of the large and influential uma li tribe had fled to Amman, the town's former mayor Majid had been a collaborator with [redacted (b)(6)] of the local police had supported the Fallujah insurgents throughout 2004. When Sheikh Abdul Sattar contacted Sheikh Mushir Jasim of the Albu Jassim tribe to convince him to raise 500 tribal fighters to oppose AQI in addition to the 200 that the SAA was prepared to send into the area, Sheikh Mushir declined to do so out of fear of AQI.²⁵⁰

The Fight Intensifies in Western Anbar

Anbar Salvation Front Expansion into Hit

(S) The situation in Western Anbar mirrored the positive example of Ramadi far more than the setbacks in the Fallujah area, yet it shared one problem with the latter area: driving AQI from the cities simply sent them into nearby small villages, where they regained strength and then used their safe havens to carry out attacks and intimidation in the larger towns.

(S) The positive developments were thus most obvious in Hit and Haditha. Although the insurgency in Hit was one of the most robust throughout Anbar, the rise of the SAA and the Hit police meant that AQI and its allies found themselves facing a serious threat that began to reverse long-established trends in Hit and created significant improvements in the town.²⁵¹

(S) One of the first results of the presence of a permanent Iraqi police force and the SAA was the killing of AQI's Hit amir Fadil Rashid Hilal al-Zambouri and the capture, interrogation, and summary execution of al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal leader Hikmat Majid Jasim. These killings led to the flight of AQI and al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal leaders from Hit to [redacted 1.4b] Rutbah, Muhammadi, and the Albu Tiban tribal area. The insurgent fighters who remained in the city were members of al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal and Muhammadi Cell Alpha, both of which were loyal to the Islamic Emirate of Iraq.²⁵²

Muhammadi Cell Alpha

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ [| Military | 14 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070214 | (S/NF) |]

²⁵² Ibid.

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(S) In response to the growing pressure from the police and SAA, AQI associate group Muhammadi Cell Alpha targeted the Hit police, carrying out multiple suicide attacks on February 3-4. Muhammadi Cell Alpha was an AQI associate group based around Muhammadi that used the town as a logistical and operational staging point for its attacks in Hit and Ramadi. Members of Muhammadi Cell Alpha were well-trained and equipped, employing careful planning considerations when conducting attacks. Well-versed in intelligence collection, the group used this capability to maximize the effectiveness of its attacks.²⁵³

(S) Among the leaders of Muhammadi Cell Alpha were (b)(6) who was involved in planning the January 28, 2007 chlorine attacks against the SAA's ERU headquarters in the Jazira area north of Ramadi. Muhammadi Cell Alpha itself was subordinate to al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal leader Muhammad Cent despite the fact that Cent had sworn bayat directly to (b)(6). With the death of AQI Hit amir al-Zambouri and the capture of (b)(6) at the hands of the SAA and their allies in the Iraqi police however, Abu Anas decided to carry out more independent operations.²⁵⁴

Iraqi Police Efforts in Haditha

(S) Successes against the insurgency were also experienced in Haditha, which now had a permanent police presence for the first time in years. The Iraqi police expanded their intelligence collection ability in the city, specifically targeting women due to their unique place in society and access to information. AQI fighters often spoke freely around women and in at least one case, the Iraqi police used prostitutes as informants because of the number of AQI fighters who frequented their brothels and bragged about their actions or attacks they intended to carry out in the future. As a result of this increased intelligence capability, the Haditha police were able to detain nineteen suspected AQI fighters between February 8th and 13th.²⁵⁵

AQI's Efforts to Reconstitute in Barwanah

(S) On January 26, 2007, AQI leadership for the Haditha area held a meeting in Barwanah at the home of AQI member (b)(6) with local amir Abu Ahmad to discuss the group's recent setbacks in the Haditha area. With AQI leader (b)(6) recently fled to Bayji and his lieutenants (b)(6) both captured by the Coalition, (b)(6) declared a "military emergency" for AQI in Barwanah. Realizing that a viable police force was a major threat to their long-term viability, the AQI leaders decided to infiltrate the police with their own men, dissuade tribesmen from participating in the police through intimidation, and threaten the local Albu Nimr tribal leader Sheikh Abdullah Aafeen. While these efforts were only partially successful, they reflected all the major pillars of AQI strategy on how to undermine the Iraqi police force.²⁵⁶

²⁵³ [| Military | 4 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070204 | (S/NF) |]

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ [| Military | 13 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070213 | (S/NF) |]

²⁵⁶ [| Military | 5 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070205 | (S/NF) |]

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(S) Usin the K-3 housin area and Khaffajiyah as his primary bases, Khoulan's lieutenant (b)(6) (b)(6) was able to carry out suicide bombings against Coalition forces and Iraqi police in Barwanah. (b)(6) ability to revive AQI's activity in Barwanah was due to his access to foreign fighters (as noted previously, the K-3 housing facility was known to residents as "Little Afghanistan") and his good relations with (b)(6)²⁵⁷ Bani Dahir was another redoubt for (b)(6) followers due to their continuing alliance with Ansar al-Sunna fighters led by (b)(6) who assumed command the group in Bani Dahir after his predecessor (b)(6) (b)(6) was captured by the Coalition on January 23, 2007. Another of (b)(6) (b)(6) allies was (b)(6) an experienced AQI fighter from Rawah who had been detained twice by the Coalition.²⁵⁸

AQI's Failure to Reconstitute in western Anbar

(S) Despite this counteroffensive, these attempts at reconstitution would run into serious problems because of the activity by the SAA in Hit; resistance by the Albu Mahal (in the form of the revived Hamza Battalion); and decisive action by the Coalition and Iraqi security forces. By February 2007, the renewed fighting between AQI and the Hamza Battalion that had started in December 2006 (see Chapter 6c) had swung decisively in favor of the Albu Mahal. AQI leader (b)(6) (b)(6) network of villages (e.g. Samsiyah, Gharbya, Buidiyah, and Bubiyyah) that had been his redoubts throughout much of 2006 had all fallen to the Hamza Battalion or become far less willing to accomodate AQI. As a result, Anwar was reduced to seeking refuge with his Karbuli tribal allies in the villages of al-Riaq, Suwaysah, and Umm al-Udham. AQI leader (b)(6) recognized the changed circumstances, describing the situation in Gharbya as "bad" in a courier message to the AQI senior leadership captured by the Coalition.²⁵⁹

(S) (b)(6) reliance on small villages in the open desert north of the Euphrates River had been a major part of AQI strategy since Operation SAYYID II. Because these small villages did not often appear on Coalition maps and had historically been associated with smuggling activity, they had been perfect safe areas from which AQI fighters in western Anbar could regroup, rearm, and plan attacks. Their locations along historic smuggling routes also provided an excellent opportunity to use AQI's existing cross-border supply lines. Unfortunately, the traits that had made the villages such assets also made them vulnerable to attack by the Albu Mahal tribe, which had their own history in the smuggling trade.²⁶⁰

(S) In addition to the renewed fighting between AQI and the Albu Mahal, successful Coalition and Iraqi security force operations significantly degraded AQI in a part of Anbar that had historically been one of the group's most important logistical nodes. These included Operation RIVER SQUEEZE in October 2006 that resulted in the discovery of numerous arms caches and the capture of multiple AQI facilitators. Additional operations in the area during November and December 2006 resulted in the deaths of AQI leaders Abu Ammar al-Masri, Hamud Kanush, and Badran Turki's lieutenant Muhammad Talib Ibrahim. When combined with Coalition operations in Rawah,

²⁵⁷ [| Military | 7 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070207 | (S//NF) |]

²⁵⁸ [| Military | 13 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070213 | (S//NF) |]

²⁵⁹ [| Military | 9 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070209 | (S//NF) |]

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

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Anah, and the surrounding areas as well as the establishment of a permanent Coalition presence, the AQI influence in the area significantly decreased. This was a major defeat for AQI, which had relied on the rural villages of western Anbar (such as Tuzliyah) as its redoubts following SAYYID II.²⁶¹

(S) As a result of this previously favorable environment, AQI fighters active in the area had a high degree of experience and tactical proficiency. Throughout the fall of 2006, these AQI fighters were able to initiate a number of complex attacks against Coalition patrols. Despite the group's notable setbacks in western Anbar, the AQI provincial leadership was determined to reconstitute itself in the area. This involved local initiatives by AQI leaders to reinforce the group's standards of discipline and religious virtue to rank-and-file members in the belief that the group would prevail in western Anbar if it held to an idealized vision of moral purity.²⁶²

~~(S/REL USA AUS CAN GBR)~~ In late February 2007, AQI's Rawah amir [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] (b)(6) hosted an AQI leadership summit in al-Zilah village to discuss increasing the number of IED attacks against Coalition and Iraqi security forces between Rawah and al-Qaim. With the death or flight of so many other AQI leaders in western Anbar, [redacted] (b)(6) was now a regional leader and began coordinating the increase in IED attacks along the Rawah-Karabilah corridor and north of the Euphrates River.²⁶³

(S/NF) Coalition and Iraqi actions in Anah now shifted AQI members to the village of Reyannah, yet AQI was still able to maintain a murder and intimidation campaign in Anah proper, killing residents Adnan Jum'ah Shihab and Dargham Ali Jum'ah on the belief that they were undercover Iraqi police officers. AQI leaders in Anah made a deliberate effort to ensure that one AQI agent was infiltrated into each class of Iraqi police recruits to help the group obtain as much information as possible about their prospective targets.²⁶⁴ AQI also began actively murdering the relatives of Haditha police chief Colonel Faruq living in the Anah area, killing four between February 21-22.²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ [| Military | 11 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070211 | (S/NF) |]

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ [| Military | 26 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070226 | (S/NF) |]

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ [| Military | 28 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070228 | (S/NF) |]

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Tribal Infighting Continues to Create Problems

Kateebat al-Bira'

(S) The successes of the SAA in organizing tribal resistance to AQI did not mean that tribesmen automatically followed the example of their sheikhs. Within several tribes, serious divisions remained, and would lead to intratribal warfare in early 2007. The situation with the Albu Ali Jassim is typical of this problem. Outside Ramadi, former members of [b 6] AQI network (which itself had formerly been the Abu Harun Group) reconstituted in the Albu Ali Jassim tribal area as the Kateebat al-Bira', declaring their official separation from the rest of the Albu Ali Jassim and pledging to kill Coalition soldiers and Iraqi police. It soon began carrying out IED, VBIED, and IDF attacks similar to those formerly employed by the Abu Harun Group. Led by [b 6] [b 6] the group's disassociated from its tribal leaders because the Albu Ali Jassim tribe had publicly sided with the SAA.²⁶⁶

Albu Bali and Abu Hazim

(S/NF) Despite tentative efforts by the Albu Bali and Albu Hazim tribes to establish neighborhood watch programs modeled after those of SAA to combat AQI, both tribes continued to suffer from a heavy intimidation campaign. This was due to a variety of reasons, foremost among them being the willingness of local leaders in both tribes to collude with AQI in order strengthen their positions in tribal disputes. Since all the strong leaders in both tribes had fled abroad for fear of AQI, there was no one in either tribe willing to lead a campaign against the group. Since meeting with a delegation of Albu Hazim tribal leaders in January 2007, Sheikh Abdul Sattar had attempted to organize resistance against AQI in their area and the Jazira Council had agreed to allow the Albu Hazim to participate in their efforts at local government once their tribal area was free of AQI influence.²⁶⁷

Albu Issa Infighting Resumes

(S) Attempts by the pro- and anti-AQI subtribes of the Albu Issa to reconcile ended on February, 5 2007 when fighting resumed by the two factions.²⁶⁸ The Albu Issa were now in a state of inter-tribal conflict, with Albu Khamis, Albu Aifan, and Albu Abdallah Khamat subtribes actively opposing AQI and the Fuhaylat, Albu Salah, and Albu Hawa supporting AQI. Fearful of being drawn into the conflict, the comparatively weak leadership of the Albu Yusuf, Albu Khalid, and Albu Jahara declared their neutrality in the fighting and sought to resolve the matter peacefully.²⁶⁹

(S/NF) The de facto leader of the pro-AQI Albu Issa was Sheikh Ahmad Husayn Ali, who now was the head of the *shari'ah* court for the Jazira area, using mosques centered around Fuhaylat tribal territory to implement a murder and intimidation campaign against Jazira residents who cooperated

²⁶⁶ [| Military | 21 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070221 | (S/NF) |]

²⁶⁷ [| Military | 1 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070301 | (S/NF) |]

²⁶⁸ [| Military | 8 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070208 | (S/NF) |]

²⁶⁹ [| Military | 16 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070216 | (S/NF) |]

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with the Coalition. Those Iraqi police who refused to "repent" of their loyalty to the Iraqi government were kidnapped and murdered on Sheikh Ahmad's orders.²⁷⁰

~~(S/REL TO USA AUS CAN GBR)~~ On February 27, 2007 the Iraqi army with Coalition assistance detained senior AQI leader Abu Athil with three associates including Sheikh Ahmad. While the capture of Abu Athil was a major win on its own right, the capture of Sheikh Ahmad deprived AQI of its most charismatic political and religious leader among its allies of the Albu Issa tribe.²⁷¹

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ This did not stop the tribal infighting, however. The Albu Issa had already armed their tribesmen, and they now set up roadblocks, checkpoints, and neighborhood watches to prevent AQI from entering their tribal lands. Fearful of being detained by the Coalition or having their weapons confiscated, the Albu Issa leadership concealed these measures from the Coalition, and instead met with members of the Anbar Revolutionaries, hoping to form the Fallujah Revolutionaries as their own offshoot organization. Yet in March 2007, the Albu Issa tribal feuding had so escalated that the Albu Issa tribal leaders of the Amariyah area requested Coalition assistance to drive the pro-AQI subtribes and their foreign fighters from the region.²⁷²

~~(S)~~ The Anbar Revolutionaries had difficulty answering the call of the Albu Issa tribal leaders lay in its origins as a vigilante force made up largely of off-duty or former police and military personnel and their families. Hiding among the general population much the same way that AQI did to avoid being targeted, the Anbar Revolutionaries were hard-pressed to enter a town as small as Amariyah without attracting notice and being hunted down by those they had come to fight.²⁷³

~~(S)~~ Sheikh Khamis Hasnawi and other Albu Issa tribal leaders now requested Coalition help not because they supported the Iraqi government or the Coalition, but because they recognized that they could not prevail against AQI without outside aid. The new cooperation was put to the test in a battle between AQI and the Albu Issa from February 28 through March 1 in which Iraqi police supported by armed tribesmen and reinforced by Coalition counter-battery fire defeated an estimated force of forty AQI fighters.²⁷⁴

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ In mid-March, elements of the Fuhaylat, Albu Hatim, and Albu Hawa subtribes allied with AQI launched a powerful counteroffensive, attacking the Albu Alwan tribe with mortars, kidnapping Albu Alwan tribesmen from the Halabsa area in retaliation for their support of the Iraqi army and the Anbar Revolutionaries.²⁷⁵ Later that month AQI and their allied Albu Issa subtribes mounted a series of chlorine-laden SVBIED attacks against the Amariyah police, anti-AQI Albu Issa civilians, and the residence of Sheikh Khamis.²⁷⁶ These attacks injured hundreds of civilians but killed relatively few.²⁷⁷ The attacks against the civilian population of

²⁷⁰ [| Military | 20 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070220 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

²⁷¹ [| Military | 28 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070228 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

²⁷² [| Military | 4 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070304 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ [| Military | 16 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070316 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

²⁷⁶ [| Military | 25 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070325 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

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Amariyah showed that the AQI supporters among the Albu Issa were now willing to use any means necessary against their opposition.

AQI Financing Becomes More Creative

AQI Extortion of the Anbar Economy

(S) Changing patterns in AQI financing reflected the shift of the group from Ramadi to the Fallujah area. One of the group's major targets for extortion now became oil tankers owners, who were forced to pay the group \$400 for each truck that they wanted to safely reach their destination. If the owner refused to pay, AQI fighters ambushed his trucks and drained the oil to be resold on the black market. This method of extortion began in 2006, when AQI fighters loyal to (b)(6) (b)(6) orchestrated the theft of fuel trucks to resell their contents at AQI-controlled gas stations. Karmah-based AQI operatives (b)(6) adopted a similar strategy for providing fuel to the gas stations they controlled in Deir Digla, four kilometers north of Karmah.²⁷⁸



Cracking Down on Oil Corruption

(S/NF) For a variety of reasons ranging from a desire to hinder AQI financing to a need to break the group's monopoly on the Anbari black market for the cross-border smuggling operations of its tribal leaders, the SAA began to move against corrupt oil managers. Among these was (b)(6) (b)(6) the director-general for oil distribution in Anbar who had fled to Fallujah from Ramadi in 2005 for fear of Abu Khattab. Detained by the Coalition in Fallujah in late July 2006, he had been released without charge, but in February 2007 he was re-captured by the SAA and taken to Fallujah for detention²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ [| Military | 11 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070211 | (S/NF) |]

²⁷⁹ [| Military | 21 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070221 | (S/NF) |]

²⁸⁰ [| Military | 7 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070207 | (S/NF) |]

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(S) Yet (b)(6) who remained indispensable to both Anbar and the insurgency (see Chapter 6c), was not targeted. On December 6, 2006 (b)(6) was contacted by the Albu Alwan tribe to request that he resume his duties as director for oil distribution in Ramadi with a promise that he would not be targeted by the SAA.. In January 2007, (b)(6) met with Sheikh Abdul Sattar who confronted him with his past involvement in the insurgency but stated that he had no choice but to allow him to resume his duties. His extensive network of contacts within Iraq's oil departments and his knowledge of the oil industry made him untouchable.²⁸¹

Anbar and the Bayji Oil Refinery

(S/NF) The Bayji refinery was something of a case study for all that was wrong with the Iraqi oil industry: political corruption, pay-offs to sheikhs and security officials, AQI financing, and criminal activity, to say nothing of the endless seemingly technical problems that made all this possible. Because of all these problems, the Iraqi oil ministry's ability to control the Bayji refinery through official channels was sporadic and often limited.²⁸²

(S) In February 2007, a series of steps were taken to deal definitively with the problems at Bayji. First, February 6, 2007 Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki ordered the 4th Iraqi Army Division to provide security to the Iraqi oil industry, including the Bayji refinery. The 4th Iraqi Army Division was ordered to provide for the need of oil-related products to the Iraqi citizenry, provide fuel to power stations, conduct a review of the command and control of the Infrastructure Security Forces, and to conduct operations against illegal gas stations.²⁸³ Not long afterward, long-standing Bayji refinery director (b)(6) was replaced by (b)(6) a director-general from the Iraqi oil ministry in Baghdad (b)(6) had allowed AQI to steal up to \$40,000 a day through AQI operatives who were members of his personal security detail.²⁸⁴

(S) Lieutenant General Abdul Aziz Abdel Rahman al-Mufti of the 4th Division planned to increase the pace of activity and improve process controls in order to lessen the opportunity for Bayji facility employees and drivers to engage in illicit activities and to provide security for fuel convoys into Anbar to avoid their mass theft or extortion by AQI.²⁸⁵

City Stories

Khalidiyah-Habbaniyah

(S) On February 24, 2007 AQI carried out in Habbaniyah the deadliest single SVBIED attack against Anbari civilians since the beginning of OIF. Despite this attack, the SAA was able to persevere because of the collective safety net that the organization provided for tribes that would be unable to withstand AQI on their own.²⁸⁶

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² [| Military | 13 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070213 | (S/NF) |]

²⁸³ [| Military | 14 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070214 | (S/NF) |]

²⁸⁴ [| Military | 13 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070213 | (S/NF) |]

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ [| Military | 25 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070225 | (S/NF) |]

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~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ There were several factors that made the SAA so dominant in this part of Anbar. Like the greater Ramadi area, the Khalidiyah-Habbaniyah corridor was inhabited by small tribes without any one dominant over the others. The SAA's reliance on mutual cooperation between various tribes was therefore easily applied to the region. In addition, because of its relative experience, structured organization, and success to date at resisting AQI, the SAA was well-situated to influence the Khalidiyah-Habbaniyah area. It used its frequent media exposure via al-Iraqiyah Television to highlight civilian deaths, lessen support for AQI, and cast itself in a favorable light by emphasizing its role in fighting the group.²⁸⁷ Finally, while some problems had arisen between residents of the two cities and the SAA due to the latter's tactics of targeting elements of the Albu Fahd and Albu Hazim tribes loyal to AQI, the February 2007 SVBIED attack galvanized residents' resolve in favor of the SAA and led them to encourage aggressive action against AQI fighters.²⁸⁸

~~(S)~~ According to the Khalidiyah police, the SAA in the city were made up of 150 fighters with the support of 50-75 intelligence agents and sources. Even so, the organization would not have been able survive in the city without the support of the local community. Using family and tribal connections, the older Anbar Revolutionaries had brought a unique understanding of local factors in Khalidiyah to the SAA, which gave them a level of collective security that AQI found extremely difficult to counter. Persistent Coalition presence and tribal engagement efforts had now paid off in the form of an indigenous security force that the general population now viewed as legitimate.²⁸⁹

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ SAA members now began openly conducting joint patrols alongside Iraqi police and army officers, subordinating themselves to the existing Iraqi security forces while helping to directly engage sheikhs, imams, and other civic figures to help develop credible intelligence to assist in future operations against AQI. The ultimate effect of this effort, beyond the detention of significant AQI leaders, was a mythology that grew around the SAA that had now spread throughout the province. In other parts of eastern Anbar, local Iraqi police and tribal leaders were actively forming their own chapters of the SAA to great effect on the security environment in their areas.²⁹⁰

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ By contrast, the Malahimah and Ghazwan farmlands north of Habbaniyah were heavily populated by AQI supporters. At least one AQI training facility was located on one of the Malahimah farms, teaching both Iraqi and foreign recruits how to manufacture IEDs and VBIEDs.²⁹¹

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ [| Military | 4 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070304 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

²⁸⁹ [| Military | 22 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070322 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

²⁹⁰ [| Military | 15 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070315 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

²⁹¹ [| Military | 19 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070319 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

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Julaybah

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ In contrast to Khalidiyah-Habbaniyah, AQI retained a strong influence in the Julaybah area, with the group's primary nodes located at the Hadi al-Bashir (Abu Musa), Risala, Abdallah ibn Abbas, and Fatima al-Zahara mosques. The Risala Clinic was referred to by residents as "the Mujahideen Hospital" because of the number of AQI fighters that traveled there to receive treatment, while the Risala Mosque was a redoubt for AQI and Ansar al-Sunna fighters following the failed attack on the Sufia district.²⁹²

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ AQI regarded the Julaybah area as a favorable location to store weapons and plan attacks because it was isolated and offered multiple avenues of escape for individual operatives. AQI-operated checkpoints and IED defensive belts helped to reinforce the perception among AQI fighters that the area was relatively safe for them to operate in, with a number of mid- and senior AQI leaders including Umar Daham Hanush active in the area. While the Coalition had established COP Julaybah during Operation CHURUBUSCO in February 2007 to provide greater security to the area, it stood alone as the only permanent Coalition or Iraqi presence in Julaybah.²⁹³

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ As in other parts of Iraq, AQI's murder and intimidation campaign planted the seeds for its own downfall in Julaybah. On March 11, 2007, AQI amir Ala Daham Hanush kidnapped [redacted] (b)(6) for his support of the Iraqi police in the area. This kidnapping, combined with other AQI murder and intimidation activities such as the beheading of local residents, infuriated the Julaybah tribesmen. Residents formed a neighborhood watch called "the Julaybah Scouts" by Coalition forces and killed both Ala Daham and Hamid Hanush.²⁹⁴

Karmah

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ [redacted] (b)(6) (al-Ghafur) was one of the major leaders of AQI in Karmah, carrying out IED attacks inside the town and focusing his attacks on the Shahabi village that was populated largely by Iraqi police and their families. Establishing a *shari'ah* court in Karmah, [redacted] (b)(6) attempted to enforce religious edicts against those who cooperated with the Coalition or the Iraqi police.²⁹⁵

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ Karmah water purification director [redacted] (b)(6) was the public face of AQI in the city, possibly serving as the local group's second-in-command. Water treatment facilities such as those controlled by [redacted] (b)(6) in Karmah were known storage sites for large amounts of chlorine. In addition, [redacted] (b)(6) allowed AQI to use the water treatment facility for storing IEDs and IED components. At city council meetings, [redacted] (b)(6) exerted considerable influence over which contractors would receive Coalition civil affairs contracts. [redacted] (b)(6) took detailed notes at these meetings that were forwarded to his superiors in the AQI leadership. In addition, [redacted] (b)(6) used water

²⁹² [| Military | 13 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070313 | (S/NF) |]

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ [| Military | 14 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070314 | (S/NF) |]

²⁹⁵ [| Military | 19 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070319 | (S/NF) |]

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tankers to transport fuel and weapons to AQI fighters active in the vicinity of Lake Thar Thar and Saddamiyah.²⁹⁶

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ (b)(6) was AQI's security amir for the Karmah area, charged with implementing *shari'ah* as part of the Islamic Emirate of Iraq. One of (b)(6) earliest challenges was the case of former Green Battalion member (b)(6) who now was the leader of an AQI IED and sniper cell in the greater Karmah area. For the last several months (b)(6) had been caught up in a feud over the alleged kidnapping of (b)(6) cell member (b)(6) by (b)(6) men that had left several members of (b)(6) family dead. Ultimately, the feud was resolved by the local *shari'ah* court, which agreed to mediate the case between the two men so that their anti-Coalition operations could resume.²⁹⁷

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ In early March 2007, the Coalition carried out raids against a set of chicken farms southeast of Karmah that severely hindered AQI's IED manufacturing efforts. Soon afterwards, the group was forced to raise the price for IED manufacturing from \$225 to \$300 due to the short supply of IEDs and difficulty in acquiring new artillery rounds for use as IEDs. As a result, AQI fighters who had previously traveled to Karmah to obtain weapons were now forced to shift their efforts to Karmah or Saqlawiyah.²⁹⁸

Amariyah

(S) AQI's access to foreign and domestic money enabled it to easily recruit from among the Albu Issa subtribes. As a result, the rural Amariyah area became a major center of AQI activity along with Karmah and Zaidon, acting as a holding and staging area for the group's operations into Ramadi, Fallujah, and Baghdad as well as serving as a link to AQI supporters further south in the vicinity of Yusufiyah.²⁹⁹

Zaidon

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ As a result of fighting between AQI and the 1920 Revolution Brigade, AQI fighters were pushed out of Zaidon village and south across the Abu Ghraib canal. Aided by members of the Albu Soda tribe loyal to the SAA, northwestern Zaidon was now free of AQI influence and residents of the area began smoking and become more welcoming of Coalition forces. The fighting between AQI and 1920 Revolution Brigade was now centered around southern Zaidon in the AQI-occupied villages of Dwalibah, Rufush, As Sa'dun, and Albu Soda.³⁰⁰

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ Despite their dispersal from northwestern Zaidon, AQI retained a strong presence throughout the remainder of the area through a continuous murder and intimidation campaign. Aware that anti-AQI groups were unlikely to lessen their campaign, AQI

²⁹⁶ [| Military | 1 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070301 | (S/NF) |]

²⁹⁷ [| Military | 6 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070306 | (S/NF) |]

²⁹⁸ [| Military | 23 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070323 | (S/NF) |]

²⁹⁹ [| Military | 4 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070304 | (S/NF) |]

³⁰⁰ [| Military | 6 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070306 | (S/NF) |]

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leaders began planning to relocate south of Abu Ghraib, north of Nasser wa Salaam, or east towards Baghdad in the event that their current situation became untenable.³⁰¹

(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI) As AQI became more desperate in southern Zaidon, its actions became more and more draconian. The form of *shari'ah* promulgated and enforced by AQI's religious courts in the region (supervised by [REDACTED] b 6 [REDACTED]) prohibited residents from smoking, drinking carbonated sodas, or any other activities that the AQI fighters believed had not occurred during the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the Caliph Uthman. To stop any support for 1920 Revolution Brigade or other rival factions, AQI members led by Shalah Muhammad Batah and [REDACTED] b 6 [REDACTED] began targeting members of al-Hamam tribe, kidnapping and beheading twelve tribesmen and running cars over their children.³⁰²

Hit

(S/NF) [REDACTED] (b)(6) [REDACTED] was "minister of the Islamic Emirate of Iraq in Hit," coordinating IED attacks and executing residents accused of violating *shari'ah*. A former member of Ansar al-Sunna's assassination cell, Dawud joined AQI in September 2006 and became a lieutenant of al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal leader [REDACTED] (b)(6) [REDACTED]. While Dawud had been arrested by the Hit police on no less than four occasions, each time he had been released by order of Hit police chief Colonel Hamid, allegedly on the grounds that Dawud was his best source inside the insurgency. In fact, Colonel Hamud was a corrupt individual who released AQI fighters for payments of \$14-60,000.³⁰³

(S/REL TO USA AUS GBR/MR) Fearful of a pledge by Sheikh Hatim to provide 1,000 Albu Nimr tribesmen to serve in the Iraqi army and police, AQI amir [REDACTED] (b)(6) [REDACTED] and Muhammadi Cell Alpha began a major effort to collect intelligence on the Hit police. While AQI still maintained checkpoints and conducted an extensive propaganda campaign against the Hit police, the group's leadership in the city perceived their situation to be increasingly grim, and al-Asa'ab al-Ahwal leader Muhammad Cent attempted to flee to Syria before seeking refuge in Saddamiyah.³⁰⁴

(S/NF) The town of Khasraj north of Hit was a favored destination for many AQI fighters fleeing the city, though other rural villages were also used as redoubts. Khasraj imam [REDACTED] (b)(6) [REDACTED] of the Abada bin al-Samid Mosque supported AQI in the city, using his religious authority to support the organization.³⁰⁵

Muhammadi

(S/NF) By March 2007, the Hit police had begun conducting raids into Muhammadi, capturing [REDACTED] (b)(6) [REDACTED] on March 2. This was significant both because of AQI's historically high level of influence in Muhammadi and the Albu Tiban tribal area and because

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² [| Military | 14 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070314 | (S/NF) |]

³⁰³ [| Military | 23 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070323 | (S/NF) |]

³⁰⁴ [| Military | 07 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070307 | (S/NF) |]

³⁰⁵ [| Military | 09 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070309 | (S/NF) |]

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of the status of (b)(6) within AQI. A member of the Albu Mahal tribe, (b)(6) had sided with AQI against his own tribesmen during the group's battles with the Hamza Battalion over the course of 2005, becoming the AQI amir for al-Qaim and supervising the group's horrific murder and intimidation campaign in the city. Forced to flee al-Qaim for Rutbah during Operation STEEL CURTAIN, (b)(6) and had been displaced again during Operation WESTERN SHIELD and had been forced to seek refuge in Muhammadi with (b)(6) the AQI amir for the Hit-Ramadi corridor, another member of the Albu Mahal tribe who had joined AQI.³⁰⁶

(S/NE) The capture of (b)(6) was possible because Muhammadi residents and Albu Tiban tribesmen were becoming more willing to support the Iraqi police and stand up to AQI. This effort was buttressed by members of the Albu Mahal and the Albu Assaf, both of which were members of the SAA, and complemented by the anti-AQI efforts of the Albu Nimr in the Zuwayyah and al-Furat areas on the other side of the Euphrates River. As a result, the Hit police were able to establish a police station in Muhammadi to help bolster the confidence of local residents and disrupt AQI's ability to organize attacks along the Hit-Ramadi corridor.³⁰⁷

(S/REL TO USA AUS GBR/MR) In mid-March 2007, the Hit police captured (b)(6) the AQI amir for the Hit-Ramadi corridor and the leader of al-Asa'ab al-Iraq al-Jihad, while he was attempting to cross the Euphrates River from Muhammadi to Zuwayyah. With the capture of (b)(6) and a number of his associates such as (b)(6) the atmosphere in Muhammadi began to improve as AQI was less able to intimidate the general population into submission without fear of local reprisal.³⁰⁸

Baghdadi

(S/NE) Sheikh Aziz al-Hayyani, the dominant tribal leader in Albu Hyatt, had long been a supporter of AQI who helped to facilitate their efforts in the Baghdadi area and made Albu Hyatt into a safe haven for members of the organization. A staunch opponent of the Baghdadi police, Sheikh Aziz had opposed their presence in Albu Hyatt and refused to cooperate with the Baghdadi city council. On March 4, 2007 however, he upped the ante by facilitating an AQI SVBIED attack on the Baghdadi police.³⁰⁹

(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI/RELIDO/MR) AQI fighters operated primarily out of Dulab, Baghdadi, and Albu Hyatt, staging a murder and intimidation campaign against the Baghdadi police and their families who lived in the Military Housing Complex. In response to this campaign, which included two suicide bombings against the complex, Baghdadi police officer (b)(6) (b)(6) organized a special police task force that performed well in response to the increase in attacks.³¹⁰

Haditha

³⁰⁶ [| Military | 5 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070305 | (S/NE) |]

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ [| Military | 16 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070316 | (S/NE) |]

³⁰⁹ [| Military | 5 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070305 | (S/NE) |]

³¹⁰ [| Military | 14 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070314 | (S/NE) |]

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~~(S)~~ As in Hit and Rutbah, Coalition efforts in the Haditha area (including entry control points, badging programs, and census operations) helped to keep known AQI fighters from the larger population centers. The establishment of a persistent Coalition presence in the form of combat outposts alongside Iraqi security stations denied AQI the freedom of movement that they had once enjoyed in the area. As a result, there were only eight enemy incidents in the entire Haditha area between March 1-7 of 2007 in contrast to the sixty-seven between September 6th and 13th of 2006. During the same period in Hit, there only three incidents where there had been fifty-eight between September 21st and 27th of 2006.³¹¹

~~(S)~~ Fearful that Sheikh Barem Abd al-Qadr Ayfan al-Mahalawi, the senior sheikh of the Albu Mahal in Haditha, would support the expansion of Iraqi police in Haditha, AQI assassinated him on March 6, 2007 at his home on Hawijah Island in Haditha. This was somewhat ironic because while Sheikh Barem had worked with the Coalition since December 2004, supporting especially the return of the Haditha police in 2005 and 2006, as a result of AQI's murder and intimidation campaign throughout most of 2006 he had become neutral towards the Coalition.³¹²

Anah

~~(S/NF)~~ As a result of the earlier disruption of AQI operations in Anah, local leaders called security in the town the best it had been in years. Even so, by March 2007 AQI was making an active effort to reassert its influence in Anah, carrying out IED attacks, threatening to destroy the homes of any residents that cooperated with the Coalition, and burning down a local internet cafe in an effort to prevent residents from providing intelligence to the Coalition.³¹³

Al-Qaim

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ In March 2007, al-Qaim was by far the most secure major city in Anbar. As we have seen, this trend began in November 2005 and, while AQI attempted to thwart this development by attacking the local police, this strategy was unsuccessful throughout 2006. Both the al-Qaim police and the Desert Protectors continued to become more effective as their experience and intelligence-gathering capabilities improved. This trend continued into 2007 despite the reduced Coalition presence in the area and captured AQI documents illustrated the group's internal acknowledgement that it was unable to regain influence in the region. As a result, AQI's efforts were centered on the rural areas east and south of al-Qaim's major population centers as part of a plan to exploit the reopening of the Husaybah border crossing over the summer of 2007.³¹⁴

³¹¹ [| Military | 22 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070322 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

³¹² [| Military | 07 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070307 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

³¹³ [| Military | 01 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070301 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

³¹⁴ [| Military | 18 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070318 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

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Rutbah

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ After a period of relative dormancy, the insurgency reemerged in Rutbah in the form of AQI, 1920 Revolution Brigade, Jaysh al-Fatihin, and Jaysh al-Mujahideen. As in other parts of Anbar, however, differences between the four groups prevented them from coordinating against the Coalition. In addition to the broader ideological and strategic divides, tactical cooperation between the four groups proved to be impossible as a result of an inability to resolve the issue of whether or not to conduct attacks on the Iraqi police, which AQI and Jaysh al-Fatihin supported and 1920 Revolution Brigade and Jaysh al-Mujahideen decried. Many Rutbah residents, moreover, continued to be discontent with AQI's view of Islam and the group's brutal imposition of *shari'ah*.³¹⁵

~~(S/REL TO USA AUS CAN GBR)~~ Following the assumption of responsibility for Rutbah by TF 1.4a there was a noticeable reduction of AQI and criminal activity in Rutbah and surrounding areas. Residents felt a far greater level of security than they had previously and were now willing to cooperate with the Coalition. The SAA and Anbar Revolutionaries paralleled the efforts of TF 1.4a leading to a dramatic improvement in security. An Iraqi police recruiting drive yielded 200 recruits, the city council conducted regular meetings in cooperation with the Coalition, and many residents expressed optimism concerning the city's future.³¹⁶

Further Development of the Islamic Emirate of Iraq as a State

AQI Financial Structure

~~(S/NF)~~ In the meantime, the Islamic Emirate continued its evolution into a state within a state. According to AQI documents discovered by Coalition forces in the village of Tuzliyah, each AQI "district" maintained its own financial department which meticulously recorded financial transactions. The documents indicated that at the time they were written (fall 2006), AQI was a self-sustaining network that was a dominant economic force in western Anbar. The Tuzliyah documents noted that AQI raised a majority of its money in Anbar through kidnapping, extortion, exploitation of government infrastructure, theft, and black market activity, all of which were called "mechanisms for collecting financial expenses."³¹⁷

~~(S/NF)~~ External sources in the form of large payments labeled either "Budget" or "Revenue to the District," accounted for 54% of AQI's financial support, indicating that this financial support was provided by more senior elements of the AQI leadership in Anbar. For instance, one document listed a transaction in which the "district" received a \$23,000 deposit from "Imad," identified in AQI courier letters as a senior financier for AQI in Anbar. In addition, a representative was sent to Ramadi every month to receive a \$10,000 stipend from the AQI leadership in the city.³¹⁸

³¹⁵ [| Military | 02 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070302 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

³¹⁶ [| Military | 04 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070304 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

³¹⁷ [| Military | 11 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070311 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

³¹⁸ Ibid.

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~~(S/NF)~~ The Tuzliyah documents listed \$330,000 in material expenditures to purchase vehicles, munitions, and supplies. Weapons and explosives were a large part of these expenditures, but AQI also purchased computers and peripherals, thumb drives, and video cameras. It was the vehicle-associated costs that were the most substantial however, accounting for 36% of all material expenditures. This was due to AQI's decision to recruit impoverished young Iraqis by offering them free cars, thus explaining why the group went to such time and effort to maintain a large fleet of vehicles with meticulous records as to appearance and mechanical condition.³¹⁹

~~(S/NF)~~ The other large portion of AQI's financial resources between al-Qaim and Anah were "salaries" and other personnel-related expenditures. AQI fighters were given a periodic salary based on a "pay scale:" individual members received 60,000 dinars per month if they were single with no dependents, with additional payments of 30,000 dinars per month for every dependent. In addition to regular pay, AQI members were often reimbursed for rent, medical, and legal expenses as well as for special occasions such as weddings. If an AQI member got married, he was paid between \$500-1,000 as a bonus. If an AQI member was killed, his family received an immediate "martyrdom payment" of \$500 in addition to his regular salary. In an area as economically depressed as western Anbar, these financial incentives helped to entice residents into AQI.³²⁰

AQI Organization and Operational Security

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ The Islamic Emirate of Iraq also placed great emphasis on awareness of its members' operational security, hard targeting measures, and both precautionary and regulatory security procedures. Documents captured at Albu Qarta indicate that members of the Emirate were familiar with Coalition observation methods as well as detention procedures and knew the amount of evidence required to retain a detainee. This information was likely obtained either as a result of the detailed observations of AQI operatives who had been on multiple occasions by the Coalition and later released or as a result of infiltration of the Iraqi army and other Coalition organizations by the Islamic Emirate of Iraq's internal intelligence apparatus.³²¹

~~(S/REL TO USA AND MCFI)~~ Highlighting the level of sophistication now present within AQI were the Albu Qarta documents' repeated references to amirs, weekly reports, supervisors, military branches, and security branches, all of which illustrated the elaborate level of organization, tasking, and responsibility that existed within AQI both in Anbar and in other parts of Iraq.³²²

AQI Military Sophistication Grows

AQI Snipers

~~(S)~~ Along with the evolution of the Emirate as a state, AQI military techniques and organization also grew more complex. The development of separate cadres of snipers and of troops to specifically target one of the Coalition's main advantages—helicopters—shows this growing sophistication.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ [| Military | 12 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070312 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

³²² Ibid.

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While neither the existence of insurgent snipers nor the highlighting of their activities were new phenomena (see Chapter 6a), by March 2007 AQI was training special sniper cadres at facilities in both Iraq and 1.4b. This training included comprehensive marksmanship instruction and sniper instruction, but had only the most rudimentary field instruction. This led to a failure by most AQI training facilities to produce individuals capable of understanding the fundamentals of successful sniper operations. That said, a few of the AQI training facilities possessed a sophisticated curriculum that was capable of producing small numbers of highly trained snipers capable of executing effective attacks against the Coalition. Propaganda videos of these snipers' exploits were widely circulated on pro-insurgent websites and by al-Zawraa.³²³

(S/NF) Among the most notorious AQI sniper cells in Anbar was that of AQI amir (b)(6) based in Sadi iyah. Made u of (b)(6) (b)(6) cell operated between Ramadi and Habbaniyah. Discovering the Coalition's operational boundaries through trial and error, (b)(6) cell was able to exploit this information and carry out both pre-planned and target of opportunity sniper attacks against Coalition forces, in some cases planting IEDs in an effort to draw the Coalition into a designated "kill zone."³²⁴

AQI's Anti-Helicopter Squads

(S/NF) Between January 20 and February 7, Coalition helicopters were shot down or forced to execute hard landings due to enemy fire. This loss of seven helicopters in less than three weeks was unprecedented. With the exception of the helicopters lost during Operations VIGILANTE RESOLVE and AL FAJR, the number of successful insurgent SAFIRE attacks in Anbar had dropped significantly since May 2003, though the general vicinity of Ramadi remained a high threat area. Comparatively, the number of helicopters lost in the Baghdad-Taji-Balad corridor had steadily increased from 2004-2005. The spike in successful SAFIRE attacks against Coalition helicopters in early 2007 was particularly surprising, however, since there had been no increase in the overall amount of SAFIRE activity during the same period.³²⁵

(S/NF) Preplanned and well-coordinated attacks against Coalition aircraft were rare, with the vast majority of the successful attacks on Coalition helicopters being actions directed against targets of opportunity consistent with insurgent modus operandi.³²⁶ A Soviet doctrine for fighting aircraft, which used mobile anti-aircraft artillery (AAA), a large long-range Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) platform, and a group of Man-Portable Air Defense (MANPAD) gunners used in concert to provide the maximum amount of protection and lethality to the primary SAM platform, would become the basis for AQI the more successful anti-aircraft tactics in areas such as Karmah.³²⁷

(S/REL TO USA CAN AUS GBR) During the Coalition air campaign at the beginning of OIF, a majority of Iraq's large air defense batteries were destroyed, leaving the country's MANPAD

³²³ [| Military | 1 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070301 | (S/NF) |]

³²⁴ [| Military | 5 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070305 | (S/NF) |]

³²⁵ [| Military | 16 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070216 | (S/NF) |]

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ [| Military | 22 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070222 | (S/NF) |]

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gunners unemployed. Without training on other weapons systems, many of these Iraqi servicemen deserted, returning their weapons and munitions to existing depots or keeping them for some future use. With the rise of FRE and SRE insurgents from 2003-2005, the price of MANPAD systems rose dramatically due to the shortage of functioning grip stocks and power sources. Whereas SA-7s had cost \$700 apiece during 2003, but by the end of 2004 the price for a functioning SA-7 had risen to \$2,000. This inflation was due in no small part to the lack of maintenance on available systems and the prices levied on insurgent customers by [redacted] 1.4b [redacted] suppliers.³²⁸

~~(S/REL TO USA CAN AUS GBR)~~ Throughout 2005, [redacted] 1.4b [redacted] suppliers ensured a relative trickle of functional MANPAD systems into the Sunni insurgency, many of which ended up in the hands of Ansar al-Sunna. [redacted] 1.4b [redacted] also provided SA-7, SA-16, and MISHGAH-1 variant MANPADs to the Mahdi Army that were later unsuccessfully employed against Coalition aircraft near Baghdad International Airport. Due to the shortage of viable launchers, insurgent groups were known to "lease" grip stocks to one another regardless of any skills the recipient group had at actually employing the system.³²⁹

~~(S/NE)~~ The center of AQI's anti-aircraft efforts were network of operational and logistical air defense personnel that operated between Taji and Karmah under the command of [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted]. At least three members of [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] lieutenants were former fixed wing aircraft pilots or air defense officers including [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] the former commanding officer of the 50th Army Aviation Squadron of the 1st Army Aviation Division under Saddam Hussein. A former division command-level member of the Ba'ath Party, like many of his colleagues [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] had been recruited into AQI following Saddam Hussein's overthrow.³³⁰

AQI Chlorine Weapons Come of Age

~~(S/NE)~~ The final area of military sophistication was chemical weaponry. As noted in Chapter 6c, AQI, Ansar al-Sunna, and Jaysh al-Fatihin all had ongoing chemical weapons programs intended to help develop viable weapons for use against the Coalition. Although their efforts to employ such weapons had not been unsuccessful, by February 2007 AQI had successfully incorporated chlorine into their SVBIEDs as a rudimentary chemical weapon through a mixture of trial and error. Despite this progress, AQI still experienced difficulties in perfecting the dispersal of chlorine gas from SVBIEDs because the high temperature and oxidation accompanied by exploding munitions often consumed the released chlorine prior to its dispersal. As a result, AQI sought a chlorine-laden VBIED configuration that would create the best possible radius of harmful gas concentration, leading to a variety of different techniques and effectiveness being employed that the group was able to observe, record, and improve on as time went on.³³¹

~~(S/REL TO USA AUS CAN AND GBR)~~ According to the interrogation of [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] had sought to recruit chemical weapons specialists who had formerly worked for Saddam Hussein as well as from his contacts in the [redacted] 1.4b [redacted] As sectarian

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ [| Military | 21 Feb 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070221 | ~~(S/NE)~~ |]

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violence continued to rise in Iraq however, (b)(6) was increasingly dubious that his 1.4b would agree to supply him with chemical weapons for fear that they would be used against the Iraqi Shi'a. As a result, AQI operatives were instructed to prioritize their efforts on acquiring chemical weapons, toxins, biological agents, and other nuclear or radiological material so that they could be used in unconventional weaponry.³³²

(S/REL TO USA AUS CAN GBR) A major focus of AQI recruitment were former Iraqi military weapons designers and chemical engineers, many of whom now lived in exile in 1.4b. Offering large financial incentives and other luxuries, AQI sought to recruit these individuals into setting up facilities where they could resume work on chemical weapons. While these scientific expatriates had been fairly wealthy at the beginning of their exile, by 2007 many of them had fallen on hard times and were now susceptible to AQI recruitment.³³³

(S/REL TO USA AUS CAN AND GBR) According to Wathiq, once AQI obtained viable unconventional weaponry the group intended to target the Green Zone in Baghdad. The reason that b 6 selected the Green Zone rather than Coalition military bases was because the higher concentration of journalists in the area ensured maximum media coverage of the attack. In the event of a successful unconventional attack on the Green Zone, (b)(6) believed that the Coalition would withdraw from Iraq.³³⁴

The Anbar Salvation Front Surges

Jaysh Muhammad and Ba'athist Support for the Anbar Salvation Front

(S/NF) Despite these signs of strength by AQI, anti-AQI forces continued to gain momentum. By the end of February 2007, 1.4b Jaysh Muhammad leader (b)(6) b 6 and his backers among the surviving members of the Iraqi Ba'ath Party had come to support and admire the efforts of Sheikh Abdul Sattar and the SAA, regarding Abdul Sattar as a hero for his willingness to stand up to AQI. This was significant, as (b)(6) had been a senior Jaysh Muhammad leader since the group's inception in 2003, serving as one of the group's most prominent leaders in the Fallujah area in 2004. Forced to flee to 1.4b to escape both the Coalition and AQI in 2006, b 6 remained a major player within Jaysh Muhammad, overseeing the assassination of AQI leader (b)(6) and persuading the group's political advisor to refuse multiple AQI offers for a merger in late January 2007.³³⁵

(S/NF) Given the relationship between Jaysh Muhammad and their Ba'athist supporters, it is not surprising that (b)(6) maintained ties to the Iraqi Ba'ath Party. While the institutional Iraqi Ba'ath Party led by b 6 remained opposed to both Sheikh Abdul Sattar and the SAA, following the execution of Saddam Hussein the Party had become embroiled in yet another cycle of intrigue and succession disputes between (b)(6). By the first half of 2007 however, the dispute between the two men had taken on an ideological dimension. Al-

³³² [| 1.4c b 3 50 USC 3507 | 20060930 | (S/NF) |]

³³³ [| Military | 16 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070316 | (S/NF) |]

³³⁴ [| 1.4c, b 3 50 USC 3507 | 20060930 | (S/NF) |]

³³⁵ [| Military | 6 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070306 | (S/NF) |]

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(b)(6) condemned (b)(6) for supporting AQI's terrorist attacks and atrocities in the name of national liberation and instead supported negotiations with the Coalition to reintegrate Iraqi Ba'athists back into the military in order to protect Iraq from (1.4b) and AQI. In late February 2007, (b)(6) followers in Salahaddin province contacted the US Embassy in Baghdad to discuss a cease-fire with the Coalition and to rejoin the Iraqi political process as an opposition party.³³⁶

(S/NF) The issue of whether or not to seek detente with the Coalition had already fractured nearly every major SAR insurgent group, and Jaysh Muhammad was no exception. Unlike (b)(6) in Ansar al-Sunna however, (b)(6) represented a sizeable constituency within Jaysh Muhammad and had the tacit support of (b)(6) thus placing him in a far better position to negotiate with either the Coalition or the SAA than many of his contemporaries in other SAR organizations. However, Jaysh Muhammad was extremely weak in Anbar even within its traditional center of gravity in the Fallujah area, making whether or not Nuri would be able to support the SAA within his organization something of an irrelevant issue to the broader question of whether or not such support would affect security in the province.³³⁷

(S/NF) In many ways, the SAA was seen as a golden opportunity by many Ba'athists and Jaysh Muhammad members. While not a sectarian, Sheikh Abdul Sattar and the rest of the SAA leaders shared many of the concerns of Iraqi Ba'athists and Jaysh Muhammad members about (1.4b) (1.4b) on the Iraqi national government, opposed an attempt to implement (1.4b) in Iraq, and feared that the Iraqi Sunnis would be left with a resource poor rump state. As a result, they saw the SAA as a legitimate vehicle through which to regain their former status.³³⁸

SAA Goes National

(S) At the beginning of March 2007, the SAA launched the formation of its own political party, the Iraqi Awakening Movement (IAM). Led by Sheikh Abdul Sattar and the other SAA leaders, the IAM was the culmination of efforts by the SAA to organize a political party that stretched back to December 2006, when SAA leader Sheikh Raad Sabah al-Alwani of the Albu Alwan tribe had informed the Coalition that the group was planning a political party but lacked the necessary platform and ideology.³³⁹

(S) Based on Sheikh Abdul Sattar's public statements, the intent of the IAM was to ensure that the SAA continued to play a major role in a united Iraq. As early as November 2006 he had talked about a "unification assembly" that would encompass all Iraqi tribal leaders regardless of ethno-sectarian background. He believed this assembly could resolve violence through peaceful dialogue between Sunni and Shi'a tribal leaders. While Sheikh Abdul Sattar and his lieutenants publicly praised the Iraqi government for supporting the SAA, in private they resented the fact that this support had not taken a more tangible form. Even so, Sheikh Abdul Sattar detested Harith al-Dhari and other

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ [| Military | 13 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070313 | (S/NF) |]

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prominent Iraqi Sunni leaders, viewing their sectarian prejudices as a hinderance to improving the Sunni situation in Iraq.³⁴⁰

~~(S)~~ On March 13, ranking Dulaymi confederation tribal leader Sheikh Ali Hatim Abdul Razzaq al-Assafi and Sheikh Sabah Sattam al-Sharji of the Albu Mahal (both leaders of the SAA), met with Prime Minister Maliki, indicating the group's continued reach well beyond its origins in the greater Ramadi area. Now commanding the loyalty of twelve members of the provincial council and a dominating presence in Ramadi's security apparatus, the SAA had far more political clout than it had in September 2006. Even so, the group faced a tough road ahead due to the influence of the politically entrenched but unpopular IIP, which possessed a strong national organization and party machine. Even so, as long as AQI's influence continued to wane in Ramadi, Sheikh Abdul Sattar and his followers could claim credit for the city's recovery, which translated into enormous political capital. The SAA was overwhelmingly popular in all the major Anbari population centers, but it still faced competition from other Sunni organizations as Sunni sheikhs in other provinces feared the rise of Sheikh Abdul Sattar's popularity at the expense of their own.³⁴¹

~~(S/NF)~~ By March 2007, the SAA leadership boasted that forty major tribes were members of its organization, though it should be noted that, in the perception-centered world of Iraqi sheikhs, one man's clan or subtribe was often another man's tribe. While forty tribal organizations participated within the framework of the SAA, much of the organization's bulwark continued to be a group of twelve to fifteen tribes centered around the greater Ramadi area.³⁴²

Attack Data (January – March 2007)

(U) The following charts illustrate the numbers and types of insurgent attacks against Coalition forces in Anbar Province that occurred in the first trimester (January to March 2007). The first two (large – ½ page) charts provide an overview of attacks from 2003 to 2007 in the three AOs of Anbar (in two different graphic presentations). The three months are highlighted and allow comparison to the entire period. The following eight charts (small format) break down the overall data into the specific types of attacks (Direct Fire, Indirect Fire, IED, and Complex Attacks) arrayed over the 2003-2007 timeframe and also expanded to a week-by-week graphic.

~~(S)~~ The average number of enemy attacks during this period was lower than the highs achieved in the previous period, and was mostly stable with a slight decreasing trend across the period. While the number of IED incident counts remained mostly stable (if not increasing slightly), the number of incidents for the three other categories decreased slightly during the period, particularly after early February. Note that data was not yet available for the last full week of March.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² [| Military | 18 Mar 07 MNF-W INTSUM | 20070318 | ~~(S/NF)~~ |]

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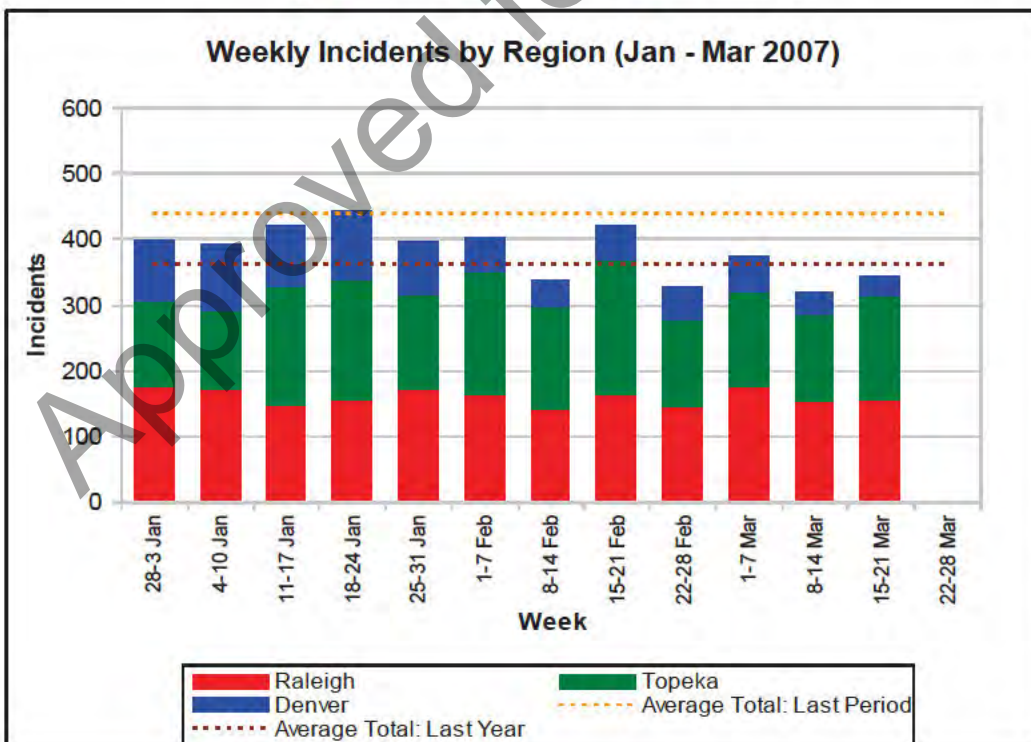
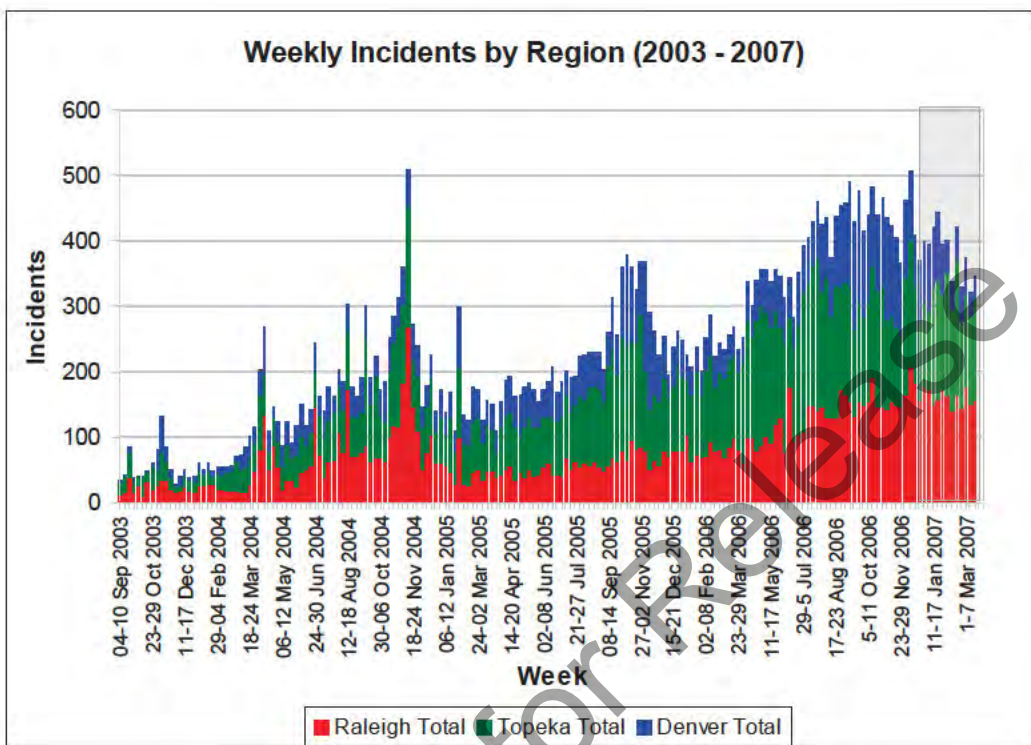
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All Incidents



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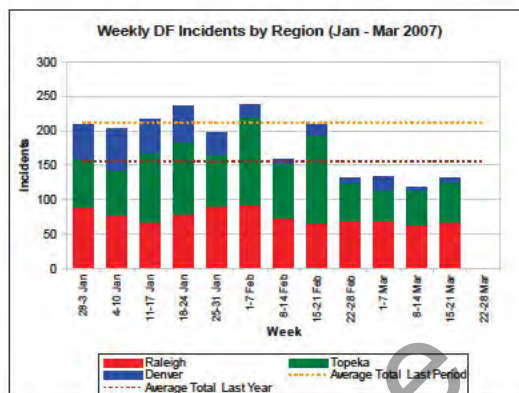
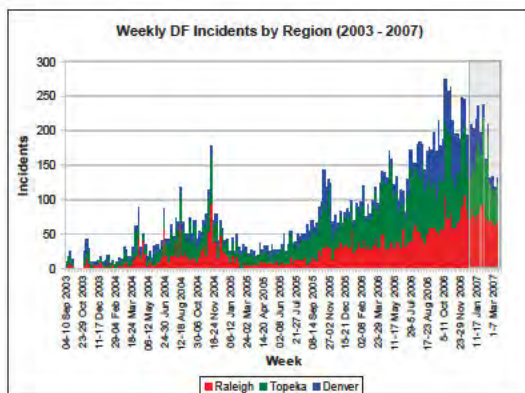
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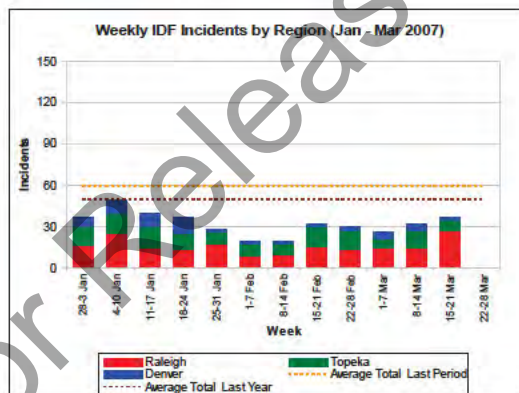
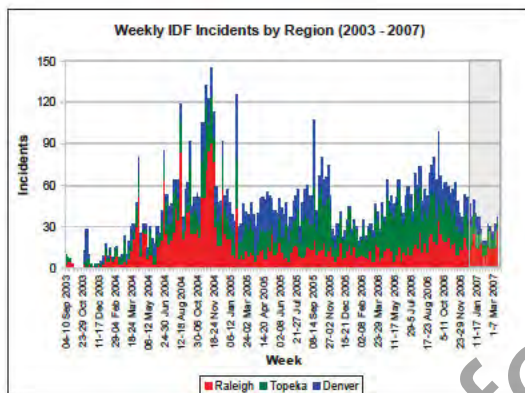
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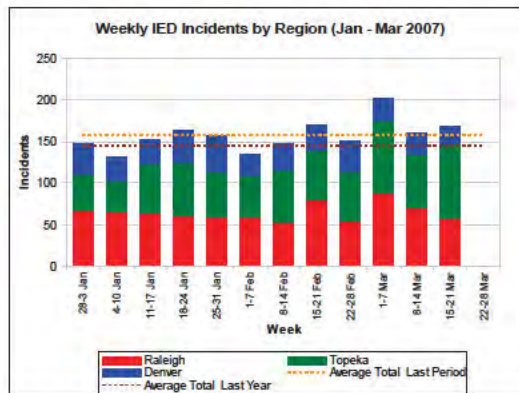
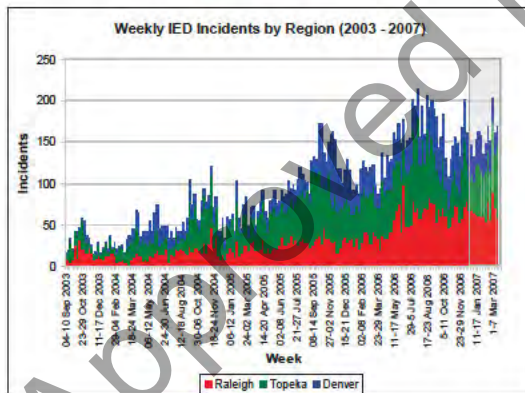
Direct Fire Incidents



Indirect Fire Incidents



IED Incidents



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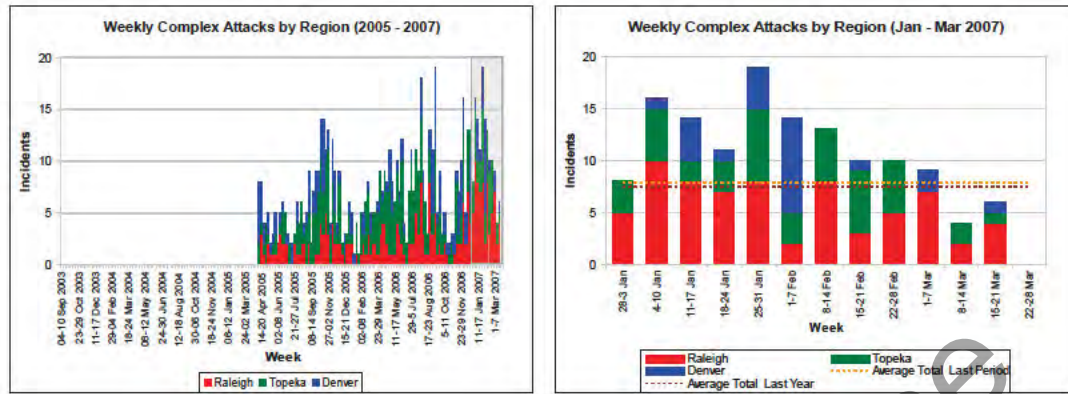
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Complex Attacks



Insurgent Profile: 2007

(S/NE) In 2007, the typical street-level insurgent captured in Anbar was an Iraqi male about 27 years old, was slightly more likely to be married than to be unmarried, and was educated at a high-school level or less. Most captured detainees were associated with tribes and about half had some military experience. These conclusions are based on an analysis of more than 1,680 tactical interrogation reports gathered from intelligence sources.

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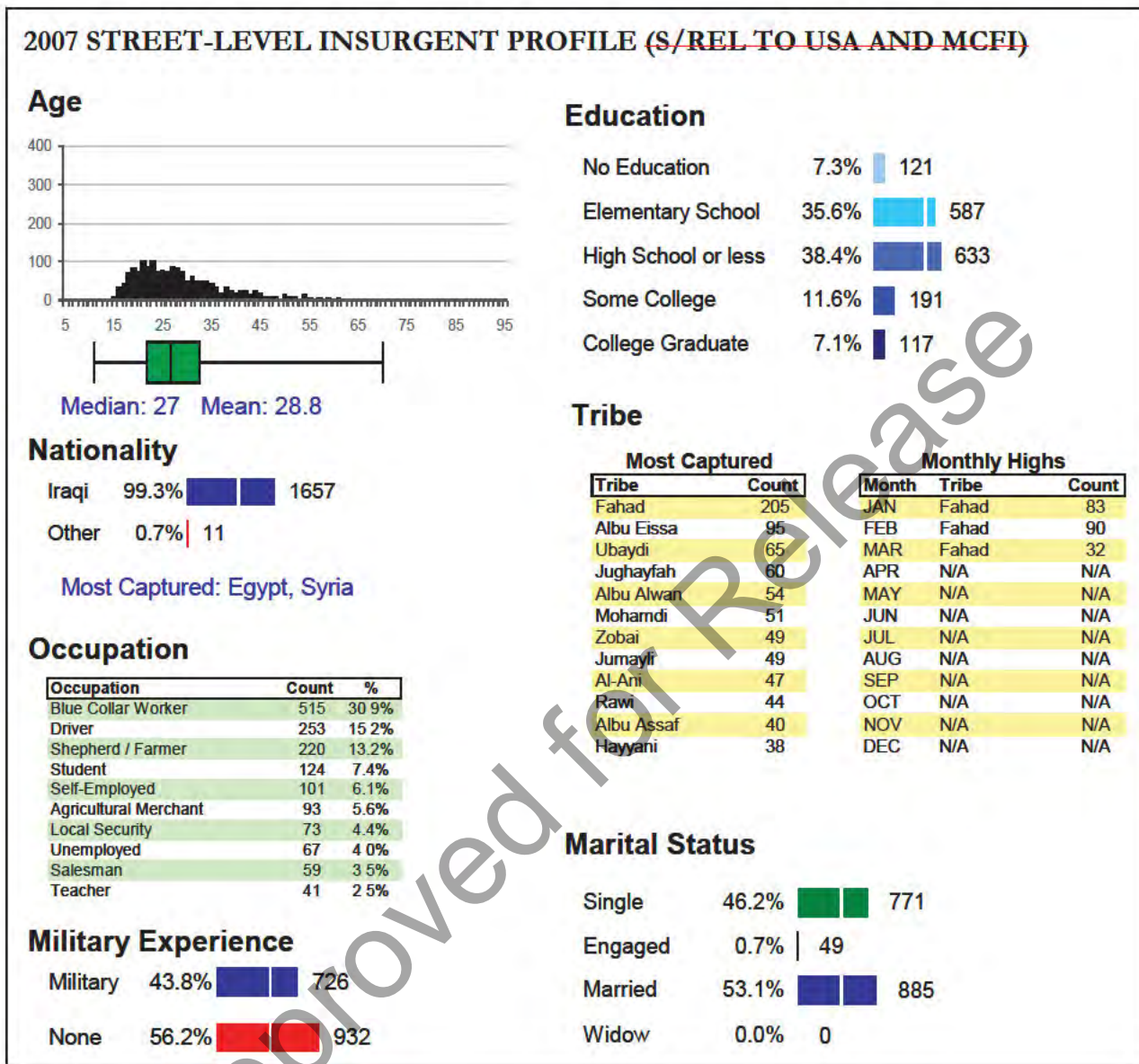


Figure 1: 2007 Street-Level Insurgent Profile (S/REL TO USA, MCFI)

(S/NE) Most insurgents captured in 2007 were 30 years old or younger (65.6%), with a significant group (13.7%) under 20 years old, the largest percentage of any year to date. 2006 is the first year in which the mean age (28.8) is less than 29 years old. The middle 50% of the population distribution was between 22 and 33 years old. The fact that the median of 27 years is lower than the mean of 28.8 years confirms that the data is skewed younger and also indicates that the age range among older detainees has a large spread. The most common age among detainees in 2006 was 21 years old.

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(S//NF) Almost all the insurgents captured in 2006 claimed to be Iraqi (99.3%), with only 0.7% claiming to be of foreign origin. Of those foreigners, the most frequent origins named were Egypt and Syria, though this represents just a very few individuals.

(S//NF) The majority of detainees were associated with blue collar or other labor occupations. The most common occupations claimed were *driver* (15.3%) and *shepherd* or *farmer* (13.3%), though the largest grouping of occupations was *blue collar workers* (31.0%), which included jobs like *electrician*, *carpenter*, and *laborer*. Though only 4.0% of detainees claimed to be actively unemployed, it is likely that many more detainees were actually unemployed but provided their previous job or training when asked their occupation. In addition, a noteworthy fraction of detainees (5.8%) were employed in positions of trust such as the Iraqi police or local security forces.

(S//NF) Less than half of those captured in 2006 claimed to have some military experience (42.5%), while a portion of those that had not served were still students and were too young to participate. This finding indicates that a large segment of the insurgent population had some form of prior military training, had combat experience, and may even have had personal access to weapons.

(S//NF) More than three-quarters of those detained had no education beyond high-school, with nearly half (42.9%) having no more than an elementary education (6th grade or less). More than 18% had some post-secondary education or had completed a degree program.

(S//NF) By more than double, the tribe with the most captured members in 2007 was the Fahad tribe, followed by the Albu Eissa, Ubaydi, and Jughayfi tribes. The Fahad tribe was the most captured in all three months within the study period. There were many tribes well-represented, as 76.5% of the detainees associated themselves with one of the top 20 tribes.

(S//NF) More than 53% of all detainees claimed to be married, engaged, or widowed, though most detainees under 30 (64.3%) were still single. Of those married, 56.0% claimed to have children, which is much lower than the overall rate of children in the population. However, this data is very unreliable and a significant difference from the results from previous years. If valid, it seems that those who had families were reluctant to participate in the insurgency and less willing to risk their lives, for fear of leaving behind unsupported children.

(S//NF) The most common places of residence among detainees were Ramadi (30.9%) and Hadithah (19.3%). 2007 is the first year in which Fallujah was not one of the two most active cities, and reflects that almost twice as many detainees came from Hadithah, proportionally, than in the previous year. Fallujah (18.3%), Al Qaim / Husaybah (5.9%), Hit (3.8%), and Rawah (3.6%) also were major claimed sources of detainees.

Conclusion: Snapshot of the Insurgency

(U) As in the previous six months, the new year opened with the insurgency presenting clear challenges for the Coalition and Iraqi government and yet offering the promise of better things ahead. Fallujah, which had been cleared of most insurgents after Operation AL FAJR, was falling under the influence of AQI and affiliated groups. By using the small villages that surrounded the

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city as safe havens, AQI had managed to escape Coalition attention while rebuilding its strength, manpower and structure in the area. The results were increasing signs of AQI infiltration and influence, which showed the group had not given up on the city that had once been the center of its Anbar strategy.

(U) There was also a growing sophistication in AQI attacks throughout Iraq, including the successful use of chlorine weapons, intricate intelligence gathering methods, and targeting of helicopters, which suggested that the group was learning from its experiences and developing some higher forms of warfare. Coordination between AQI and other regional actors, such as Lebanese Hezbollah and Syrian and Iranian players were also ominous.

(U) Yet the clearing of insurgents from Ramadi, Hit and Haditha, as well as other towns in Anbar; the expanding power and influence of Abdul Sattar and the SAA; and a growth in the confidence and abilities of the Iraqi police and army were harbingers of real positive change in the province. The result was a continuing decline in attacks, greater cooperation and collaboration by residents, and improved atmospherics throughout Anbar even before the Coalition "surge" began. All the conditions were in place for the defeat of the insurgency, but only if there would be enough time to finish the work that Iraqis and the Coalition had begun together.

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