



Joint
Advanced
Warfighting
Program

INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES

**Al Sahawa—The Awakening
Volume V: Al Anbar Province,
Area of Operations Raleigh, Fallujah**

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the Anbar Awakening project, and the five volumes that document its findings, is to tell the story of Al Anbar's *Sahawa*.¹ In doing so, it will show that there were a number of developments throughout Al Anbar between 2003 and 2008 that significantly contributed to the overall Awakening story. This document, Volume V, addresses events in the Fallujah area of the Coalition's Area of Operations (AO) Raleigh, primarily during 2007. To provide context, it will first review Fallujah's earlier relationship with the Coalition.

Most Americans may recall 2004 as a year of chaos in Iraq with Fallujah dominating the news. In March 2004, General John Abizaid's visit to Fallujah was cut short due to an insurgent attack on him and his entourage. In late March, four US contractors were killed in Fallujah, their burned remains hung from the city's old North Bridge. The Coalition's attempts "to make the insurgents pay" were aborted. This left the insurgents in charge of Fallujah and signaled the rest of Iraq and the region that the Americans could be beaten. According to Dr. Mowaffak Al Rubai'e, the Iraqi National Security Advisor, Fallujah became a sanctuary for and symbol of the insurgency.

In November 2004, the Coalition launched Operation AL FAJR to clear the city of insurgents and to eliminate it as their sanctuary. The fighting was intense and uprooting them required such extensive fire power that the city suffered widespread damage. Although the foreign fighters and supporting insurgents lost their sanctuary, some found refuge in the surrounding areas of Saqlawiyah, Al Karmah, and Zaidon (see Figure 1 below). Others moved west along the Euphrates towards the Iraq/Syrian border and north towards Mosul.

During the next two years, war-weary communities, towns, and districts along the Euphrates River would awaken to the fact that: 1) Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) was not their friend, and 2) They could not defeat AQI on their own. One by one, they turned to the Coalition for help—first in Al Qaim in 2005, in the Corridor in early-to-mid-2006, and in Ramadi in mid-to-late 2006—not out of love for the Coalition but to survive the insurgents (See Figure D-3 in Appendix D).² As the insurgents fled those areas, many were driven east and northeast, seeking sanctuary in the Lake Tharthar and Fallujah areas; the Fallujah area being well suited for resourcing and launching attacks into Baghdad.³

¹ *Sahawa* means Awakening in Arabic.

² The Corridor defines a 70-mile stretch of communities along the Euphrates from Hadithah to Hit.

³ Fallujah was operationally important to the insurgents as a launching pad for attacks into Baghdad, where Tharthar became one of the last hiding places for AQI and affiliated insurgents.

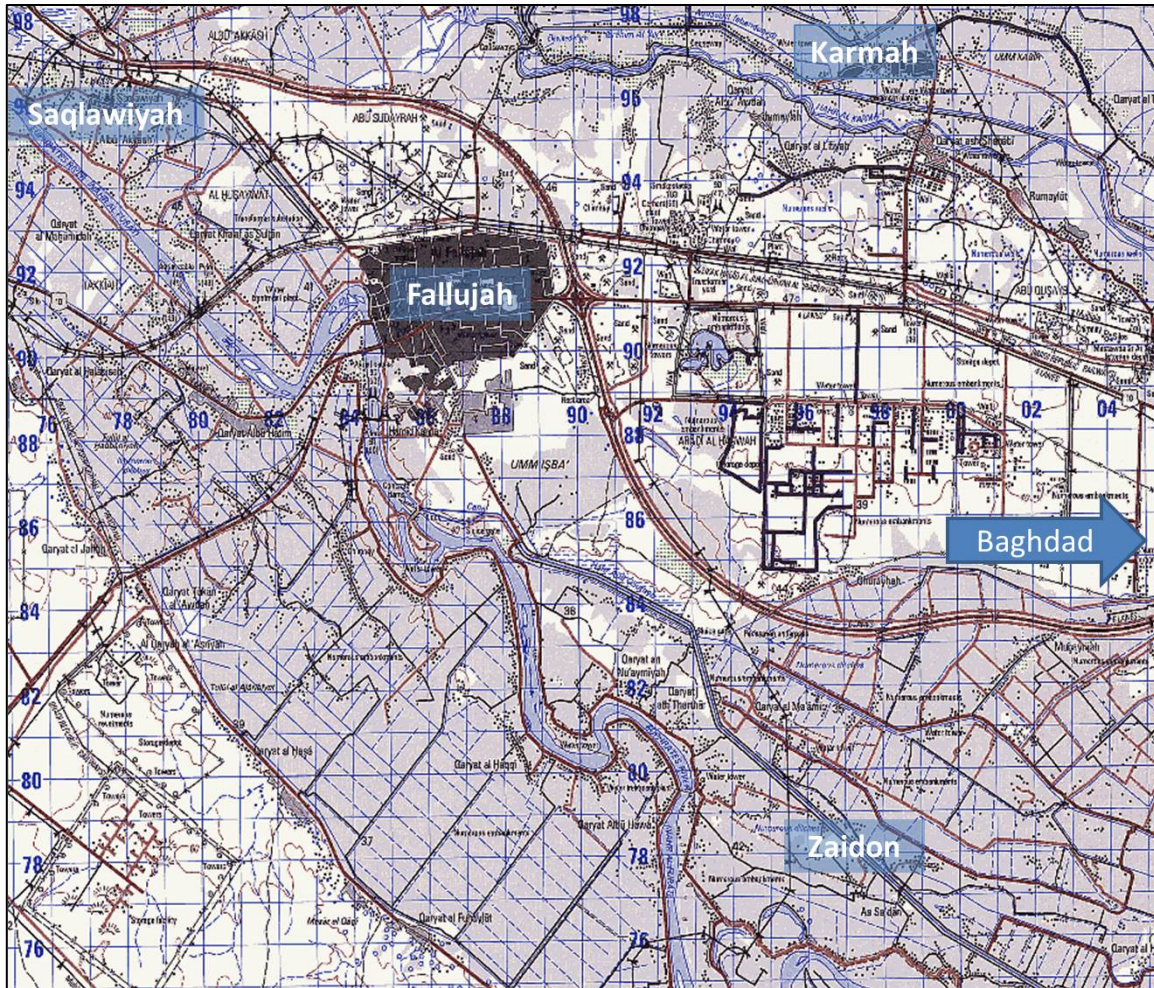


Figure 1. Map of Fallujah and surrounding communities of Saqlawiyah, Al Karmah and Zaidon

As 2007 began, Fallujah proper was not out of control, but it was not under control either. The tribal uprisings that had marked the Awakening movements in Al Qaim, portions of the Corridor, and the majority of the Ramadi area had little to no effect on Fallujah and its environs. To the contrary, successes in the west drove homeless insurgents northeast to the Tharthar region or further east to the Fallujah area, reinforcing insurgents already there. Although the city was not the insurgent sanctuary it had been in 2004, the assassination of Fallujah residents, police, council members, and leaders was widespread. It took a Ramadi-style “clear, hold, build strategy” by 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines (2/6 Marines) with Iraqi Security Forces and dedicated Iraqi city leadership to bring the city under control during 2007.

But the solution to the insurgency in the Fallujah area and its impact on attacks in Baghdad required much more than controlling entry into and movement within the city. It depend-

ed on controlling its environs—areas such as Saqlawiyah, Al Karmah and Zaidon.⁴ Those were insurgency resourcing and feeder communities; the urban areas of Fallujah and Baghdad couldn't be stabilized until the source of the violence was contained.

This paper provides the story and lessons of the awakening in those communities and the subsequent stabilizing of Fallujah. Their awakening may have followed a general theme of “realizing AQI was their enemy and that they had to partner with the Coalition to rid their community of AQI,” but the details of how that transpired and how power coalesced in those areas was unique, as indicated below in the Themes section. Eventually, by containing and subsequently eliminating the insurgency in those feeder communities, recruiting the right Iraqi leadership, and clearing the city in a Ramadi-like fashion, Fallujah was returned to its residents.

As this story of the resistance and AQI started in Fallujah in 2003 and 2004, it also closes there in 2007, as one of the last major remnants of AQI and insurgent control.

The last chapter will summarize the decline of the insurgency in Al Anbar province and the transfer of security responsibilities to the Iraqi Government.

Objective

The objective of the Anbar Awakening project is to create an unclassified, credible resource for trainers and educators. It is presented in multimedia to accommodate different teaching and learning styles.⁵ The project presents the Awakening movement's phases from the development of the insurgency in 2003 to the Coalition's transfer of responsibility for Al Anbar to the Iraqis in 2008. In addition, it offers analysis and lessons, many of which are transferrable to current and future conflicts.

Reconstruction

Reconstructing the events in Al Anbar into a multimedia product begins where most case studies, historical analyses, and comparable projects end. The case study has to be completed first; next (or simultaneously, if possible), multimedia materials need to be collected; and then those materials have to be woven together to bring the case study to life. Much of the information came through interviews. Chapter 2 of this document summarizes the transcripts of those interviews contained in the appendices. That summary and those of the other volumes provide the script—the storyboard—with quotes that identify potential “characters” and video or audio clips for the multimedia product.

⁴ There were others also, such as Ameriyah-Ferris to the south of Zaidon, but this paper will concentrate on the three listed.

⁵ Professional Military Education institutes have asked for unclassified, public releasable material to be used in their seminars.

The Awakening project comprises five volumes of supporting documents and an interactive DVD with a Teacher's Guide. The purpose of the Teacher's Guide is to suggest how an instructor might use the DVD and the various volumes to support and inform research, training and education. It provides storyline experiences that may be relevant to on-going conflicts and examples that allow students to see the strategic implications of tactical actions and visa-versa. Volume I is the final report and Volumes II–V, arranged by AO, from strategic to tactical levels, contain background on each AO, transcripts from interviewees who worked in those AOs, and summaries of those transcripts (see Figure 2).

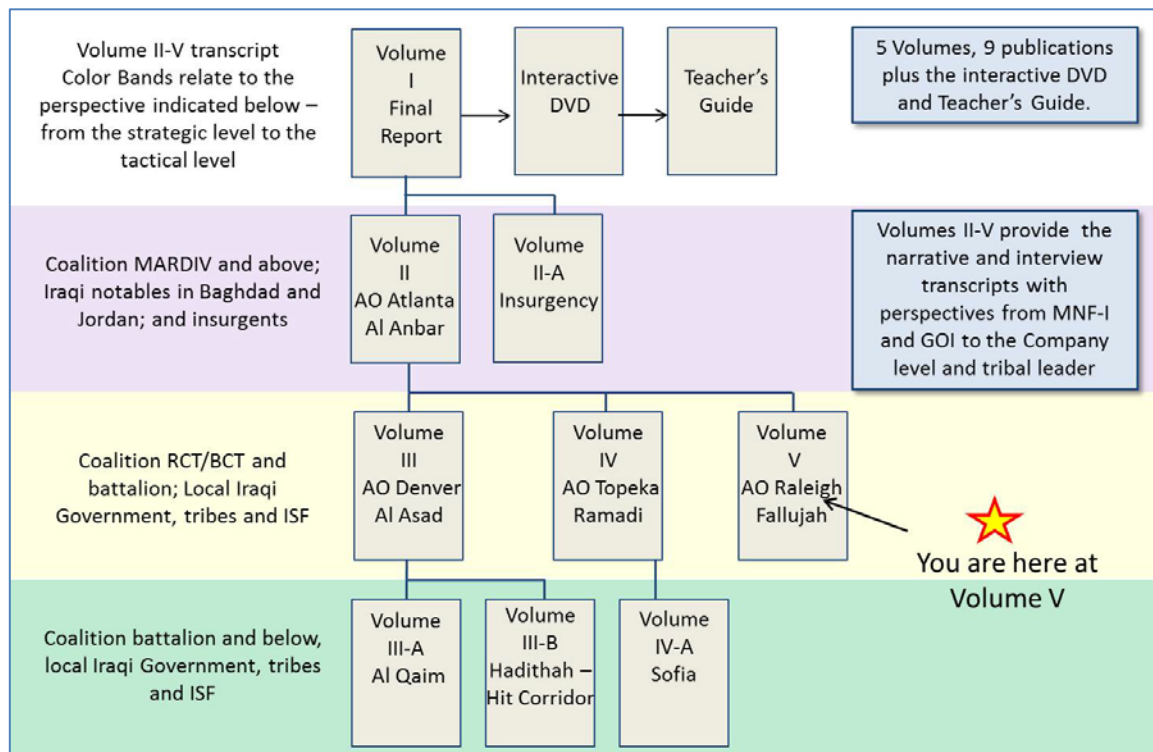


Figure 2. Areas of Operation in Al Anbar provide the structure for the Awakening volumes

This Volume

This volume addresses events in the Fallujah area in 2007. It provides both Coalition and Iraqi perspectives, in Appendices A and B respectively, on events in the area that impacted the evolution of the area from an insurgent stronghold to an area that worked with the Coalition and Government of Iraq (GOI) to rid itself of the insurgency. It concludes with a summary of the insurgency's decline in Al Anbar and the transfer of security responsibilities to the Iraqi Government in 2008.

Themes and Leads

Each volume in this study provides themes corresponding to significant events in each AO. Below are the themes and leads gleaned from the events that occurred in Fallujah; events that were significant and similar or dissimilar to other areas of Al Anbar are also noted.

Perceptions are important even if through American eyes they seem preposterous

As preposterous as it may seem, a number of high-level Iraqis thought that the Americans were working with Al Qaeda to destroy Iraq. According to Sheikh Tariq al-Abdullah al-Halbusi, Principle Sheik of the Halbusi Tribe located in Fallujah, “most of the people started to think that Al Qaeda worked for the Americans,” because Coalition forces were aware of the brutality but appeared to condone it.⁶ According to Dr. Hareth al-Dhari, Leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars:

At first we thought, “The Americans are using Al Qaeda as an umbrella for them to torture and make the Iraqis suffer.” I want to emphasize that Al Qaeda had no place in Iraq before the invasion. And the blame for Al Qaeda entering Iraq lies with the Americans and the American alliance, and the Coalition’s. They opened the gates from the east to the west, from the north to the south for Al Qaeda and other terrorists who came into Iraq.⁷

Sheikh Mishan of the Jumalyi tribe was kinder; he told BrigGen John Allen, Deputy Commander, Multi-National Forces-West in 2007 that the “U.S. assists insurgents by taking away all their [the tribes] weapons and then the U.S. does not protect the people.”⁸

The Coalition force’s experience was extraordinary!

The Marines in general and 2/7 Marines in particular had an extraordinary amount of experience in the Fallujah area. Lieutenant Colonel Joe L’Etoile worked in the area during 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007. As commander of 2/7 Marines, he led the battalion in the Fallujah area during two tours: from July 2005 to January 2006, and January 2007 to August 2007. As in other areas of Iraq, the Coalition’s combat experience was extraordinary. That of 2/7 Marines was even more so, because they had back-to-back deployments in the same area.

2/6 Marines operated in Fallujah from October 2005 to April 2006. Although a number of Marines rotated out of and into the battalion as it prepared for its 2007 Fallujah deployment

⁶ Sheikh Tariq al-Abdullah al-Halbusi, interview, Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 3 February 2011, Amman, Jordan.

⁷ Dr. Hareth al-Dhari, interview, Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 8 February 2011, his office Amman, Jordan.

⁸ Sheikh Mishan, interview, Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 3 February 2011, Amman, Jordan.

to include the Battalion commander, most were familiar with Al Anbar, if not specifically Fallujah.

Not all Awakenings are the same, but there are similarities

The evolution of events in the Fallujah area illustrate that not all awakenings are the same. Typically, people associate the awakening with the tribes, but in the Fallujah area, power coalesced in different ways. In Zaidon, the 20th Revolutionary Brigade turned on AQI with the Coalition's help, and essentially remained in charge of the area after ridding it of insurgents.

Al Karmah's redemption depended on the Coalition establishing a window of security in preparation for Sheikh Mishan's return from Jordan. This capitalized on Mishan's affiliation and influence as the paramount sheikh, although for many years the Jumayli tribe's loyalties were split between insurgent and anti-insurgent.

In Saqlawiyah, the police force, enabled by the Marines, developed as a force, gained credibility, and finally established control in the area; however, in all cases, AQI did something so extreme, it catalyzed the population to choose the Coalition.

AQI Overreach: A different perspective

AQI's propensity to overreach is confusing. Some have suggested (the Awakening project task leader and one of the authors, for example) that had AQI not been so brutal and had it been more considerate of the population, there would have been no Awakening and the Coalition would either still be fighting or would have departed in defeat. Some would suggest that the overreach might have been the initial catalyst for the Awakening. But some of the extreme barbarism may have served a purpose other than intimidation. LtCol L'Etoile, reflecting on the killing of a Sheikh's 12-year-old son "slaughtered like a lamb" offered a different explanation, for that incident at least. War-weary tribal members were ready to go home. But to do so they needed to reconcile with the tribal leadership. AQI, by slaughtering the young boy, the Sheikh's son, effectively stopped any reconciliation because "that was such an egregious act that everybody was tainted, so the line was drawn and it was final," there would be no further reconciliation.⁹

Addressing the source, not the symptom

Although Fallujah was cleared during Operation AL FAJR in late 2004, it would not be stabilized until the source of the instability was neutralized. That didn't happen until the first half of 2007, when 2/7 Marines enabled the stabilization of Al Karmah, Zaidon, and

⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Joe L'Etoile, USMC (Ret), interview, Dr. William Knarr, 28 September 2013, Tampa, Florida.

Saqlawiyah. After that occurred, 2/6 Marines launched Operation ALLJAH to clear, hold, and build Fallujah a precinct at a time.

The Surge made a difference

The Surge in Iraq was inaccurately credited with a number of successes. Most notably Senator John McCain credited Sattar's *Sahawa* proclamation in September of 2006 to the later surge of forces in 2007.¹⁰ That was inaccurate. However, the surge of forces in 2007 did make a difference in Fallujah as RCT-6 received two additional battalions to support operations in the Fallujah area.¹¹

¹⁰ Senator John McCain's, interview with Katie Couric, CBS, 22 July 2008.

¹¹ Major Craig R. Abele, *Tipping Point: What Caused Fallujah's Security Transformation*, Marine Corps Command and Staff College Research Paper, 1 April 2010.

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1. The Awakening¹²

At a 14 September 2006, meeting in Ramadi, three days after a classified report was leaked to the *Washington Post* announcing Al Anbar as “militarily unwinnable,” Sheikh Abdul Sattar Albu-Risha announced the Awakening—the *Sahawa*.¹³ At that meeting, Sattar, along with 40 other sheikhs from the Ramadi area, signed an Emergency Council proclamation to work with the Coalition to drive Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) from Al Anbar. By December 2006, 18 of the 21 Ramadi-area tribes had joined this Awakening movement.¹⁴ By February 2007, the movement began to accelerate throughout Al Anbar as the Coalition reinforced areas seeking help to defeat Al Qaeda. On 3 September 2007, one year after Sattar’s announcement, President George W. Bush met with the tribal leaders of Al Anbar and the leadership of Iraq to congratulate them on their successes.¹⁵ Sattar was assassinated ten days later, but the Awakening did not stop or stall. On 1 September 2008, conditions were stable enough for the Coalition to hand over control of the province to the Iraqis.

What happened? How could Al Anbar—the cradle of the Sunni insurgency and the birthplace of AQI—turn around so quickly?

This volume and the others in the study provide trainers/educators a set of multimedia tools for use in the classroom and the field that describe the conditions that existed in the theater, what the actors perceived and how they reacted to change those conditions, and analyses of the decisions and implementation processes that contributed to the Awakening.

A. Objective

The objective of the Anbar Awakening project is to create an unclassified, credible resource for trainers and educators. It is presented in multimedia to accommodate different teaching and learning styles.¹⁶ The project presents the Awakening movement’s phases from development of the insurgency in 2003 to the Coalition’s transfer of responsibility for Al Anbar to the Iraqis in

¹² The Awakening movement was the Al Anbar Awakening until 2007 when two things occurred: Sheikh Sattar changed the name *Al Anbar Al Sahawa* to the *Al Sahawa Al Iraqi*, and the movement was implemented in other areas of Iraq outside of Al Anbar.

¹³ Thomas E. Ricks, “Situation Called Dire in West Iraq,” *Washington Post*, 11 September 2006.

¹⁴ Ramadi is a city and district—in this case, those sheiks came from both the city and the district. Colonel Anthony Deane, USA, “Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle,” *Military Review* (Jan–Feb 2010).

¹⁵ Alissa J. Rubin, “Sunni Sheikh Who Backed US in Iraq Killed,” *New York Times*, 14 September 2007, <www.nytimes.com/2007/09/14/world/middleeast/14iraq.html>.

¹⁶ Professional Military Education institutes have asked for unclassified, public-releasable material to be used in their seminars.

2008. In addition, it offers analysis and lessons, many of which are transferrable to current and future conflicts. The ultimate product is a multimedia instructional package to accommodate different teaching and learning styles.

B. Collection

Interviews were conducted in the United States, Iraq, and Jordan, and were structured around a series of five primary research questions (PRQ) that were supplemented with secondary research questions (SRQ) that provided more granularity to the research. When answered, the SRQs addressed the breadth and depth of the project and kept it focused on the objective. None of the research questions were necessarily static; they changed as they were answered and new leads developed. Interview plans based on those questions were tailored to each interviewee. Although the final collection plan was more detailed and complex, initial PRQs and SRQs are in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1. Initial Primary and Secondary Research Questions for the Awakening Project

Primary Research Questions	Secondary Research Questions
1. How, when, and why did the insurgency start?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who participated and why did they join? • How were they supported within Iraq and/or by other countries?
2. What was the Al Anbar Awakening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a single definition? If so, what is it and if not, what are the other definitions? Do different groups define it differently? • What are the various perspectives—Coalition, Iraqi, Insurgent, others? • Was there more than one Awakening?
3. What caused the Al Anbar Awakening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What events set the conditions for the Awakening? • Who and what caused those events—Coalition, AQI, insurgents, Iraqis (residents, tribes), the Government of Iraq, Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), and others? • Was there a “tipping point?” If so, when, where, how did it start, and how did it evolve?
4. How did the Al Anbar Awakening reconcile the causes identified by PRQ 3? Who and what events contributed to the reconciliation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What processes were used to reconcile the causes? • What were the strategies used by the actors to achieve their goals? • How did those strategies interact? • What resources were necessary/made available to the actors to implement their strategies?
5. What were the major themes of and lessons from the Al Anbar Awakening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did these themes and lessons contribute to success in the larger context of Iraq? • Are they transferable to other areas such as Afghanistan or Africa? • Should they be incorporated into doctrine? • Should they be taught at the various Professional Military Education institutions? If so, how?

C. Publication Series and Structure

Creating an unclassified, credible, accurate resource for trainers and educators to examine the Awakening using multimedia is more difficult than it may sound. Constructing all of the material gathered during the interviews into a multimedia product begins where most case studies, historical analyses, and comparable projects, end: First, the case study must be completed; next

(or simultaneously, if possible), the multimedia materials must be collected; and then those materials must be woven together to bring that case study to life.

That being the case, this volume is part of a multi-volume set comprising interview transcripts and a final study report, and provides a basis for the multimedia product.

D. The Volumes

The Al Anbar Awakening product consists of five volumes of reference material, comprising nine publications, plus a Teacher's Guide with an interactive, multimedia DVD. Volume I is the final report containing a storyline that follows the organization of the DVD. Volumes II–V contains the interview transcripts organized according to Coalition areas of operation (AOs). (See Figure 1-1; also, a map of the various AOs is in Appendix D.)

The volumes are organized as follows:

- Volume I. Al Anbar Awakening—Final Report
- Volume II. Al Anbar Awakening: AO Atlanta, An Overview
- Volume III. Al Anbar Awakening: AO Denver, Western Euphrates
- Volume IV. Al Anbar Awakening: AO Topeka, Ramadi Area
- Volume V. Al Anbar Awakening: AO Raleigh, Fallujah Area

Taken together, these volumes tell the in-depth Awakening story and feature all of the interview transcripts from which the storyline was constructed. As an example, Volume II covers AO Atlanta, which is approximately all of Al Anbar province. Volumes III–V cover the AOs subordinate to AO Atlanta and districts subordinate to Al Anbar.

Additionally, Volumes II–V all begin with the same introduction, PRQs, and structure to orient readers within the project and storyline, regardless of which volume they read first.

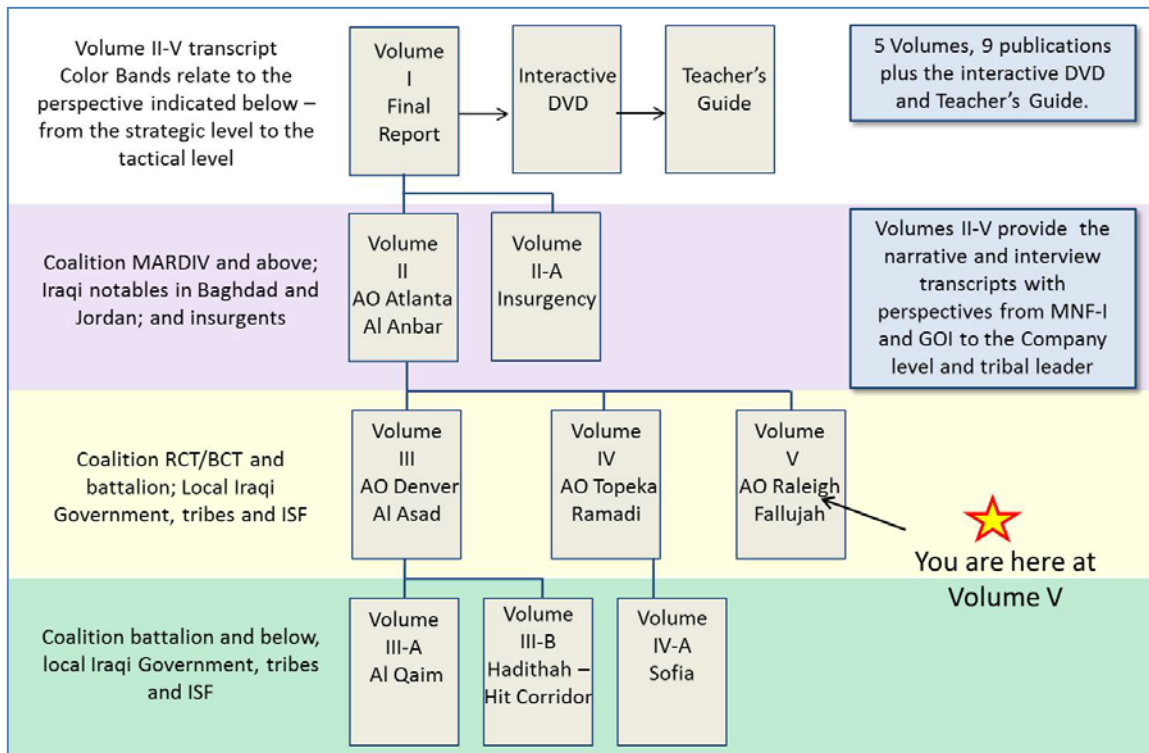


Figure 1-1. Areas of Operation in Al Anbar provide the structure for the Awakening volumes

E. This Volume

The volume you are reading (Volume V) presents Coalition and Iraqi perspectives on events in Fallujah. Table 1-2 provides the list of Coalition and Iraqi interviewees for this publication. Their interview transcripts are provided in Appendices A and B.

Chapter 2 of this paper provides the storyline of events, responds to the research questions posed in the collection plan, and provides themes and lessons from Fallujah relevant to the Anbar Awakening. At Chapter 3, it concludes with a summary of the insurgency's decline in Al Anbar and the transfer of security responsibilities to the Iraqi Government in 2008.

Appendices include:

- A—Transcripts: Coalition Perspectives
- B—Transcripts: Iraqi Perspectives
- C—Who's Who. Name spellings and descriptions of Iraqis who appear in the document. The description includes the person's position, tribal affiliation, and some background information.
- D—Maps. Map showing areas discussed during the interviews.
- E—Illustrations
- F—References
- G—Abbreviations

Table 1-2. Transcripts appearing in Volume IV¹⁷

#	Interviewee	Position in Iraq	Interview Date
Appendix A: Coalition Transcripts			
1	LtCol Joe L'Etoile	Cdr, 2 nd Battalion, 7 th Marines (2/7 Marines), July 2005 to January 2006, and January 2007 to August 2007—both times in the Fallujah area	28 Sep 2013
2	Capt Donald Hasseltine	Cdr, Fox Company, 2/7 Marines, January to August 2007	10 Sep 2010; 14 Jan 2014
Appendix B: Iraqi Transcripts			
3	Sheikh Mishan Albu-Jumayli	Paramount sheikh of the Jumayli tribe from Al Karmah	7 Feb 2011
4	Dr. Hareth al-Dhari	Leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars	8 Feb 2011
5	Sheikh Tariq al-Abdullah al-Halbusi	Principle Sheik of the Halbusi Tribe located in Fallujah	3 Feb 2011
6	Sheikh Thary Abed Alhadi al-Yousef al-Zobai	Current Deputy Governor, Fallujah and former Mayor of Fallujah 2005-2007	10 Apr 2010

Note: The convention used throughout the study in the text is to refer to the ranks of officers, particularly American officers, during the time of deployment being discussed, corresponding to their positions indicated in the center column of Table 1-2. The references and footnotes will refer to their ranks at the time of their interview indicated in the left column of Table 1-2.

¹⁷ Coalition ranks are at the time of the interview; Coalition command positions and timeframes are in Iraq.

2. Fallujah

Fallujah dominated the news coming out of Iraq in 2004. In March, General Abizaid's visit to Fallujah was cut short due to an insurgent's attack on him and his entourage. In late March, four US contractors were killed in Fallujah, their burned remains hung from the city's old North Bridge. The Coalition assault on the city "to make the insurgents pay" was aborted and left the insurgents in charge of Fallujah. This sent a signal to the rest of Iraq and the region that the Americans could be beaten.¹⁸ According to Dr. Mowaffak Al Rubai'e, the Iraqi National Security Advisor, Fallujah became a symbol of the insurgency.¹⁹

Fallujah became unbearable for the residents, who soon understood the horrors of living under AQI's extreme interpretation of Sharia. Instead of partnering with the Iraqi people to fight the occupiers, AQI, led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, demanded to lead the jihad with the intent of first destroying and then transforming the social fabric of the province. Fallujah-area residents such as Farhan De Hal Farhan and Sheikh Mishan Albu-Jumayli fled and carried the word to other areas of Iraq as well as Syria and Jordan, that the *takfiris*—extremists—were really the enemy of the Iraqi people.²⁰

In November 2004, the Coalition launched Operation AL FAJR to clear the city of insurgents and eliminate it as their sanctuary. The fighting was intense; uprooting them required such extensive fire power that the city suffered widespread damage. Although the foreign fighters and supporting insurgents lost their sanctuary, some found refuge in nearby Habbaniyah, Ameriyah-Ferris, Zaidon, Karmah, and Saqlawiyah. Others moved west along the Euphrates towards the Iraq/Syria border and north towards Mosul.

During the next two years, war-weary communities, towns, and districts along the Euphrates would awaken to the facts that 1) AQI was not their friend, and 2) They could not defeat AQI on their own. One by one they turned to the Coalition for help—first in Al Qaim in 2005, in the Corridor in early-to-mid-2006, and Ramadi in mid-to -late 2006— not out of love for the

¹⁸ Capitalizing on the chaos, Muqtada al-Sadr and his militia contested GOI and Coalition power in the Karbala, Najaf, and Al Kut areas of Iraq. He was subdued by the Coalition's recall of forces that were deploying or had already deployed back to their home stations. He tried again in Najaf during August 2004 and was again subdued.

¹⁹ Dr. Mowaffak Al Rubai'e, Iraqi National Security Advisor, interview, Dr. William Knarr and Major Robert Castro, USMC, his home, 29 January 2006, Baghdad.

²⁰ Farhan De Hal Farhan fled to Al Qaim and became the district mayor. He carried with him the horrors of AQI in Fallujah to the Albu-Mahal in Al Qaim, one of the first tribes to turn against the insurgents. Sheikh Mishan Albu-Jumayli was one of the key figures in his tribe's reversal in the Al Karmah area of Fallujah.

Coalition, but to survive the insurgents (see Figure D-3, Appendix D).²¹ As the insurgents fled and were driven east and northeast, they sought sanctuary in the Lake Tharthar and Fallujah areas. The Fallujah area was well suited for resourcing and launching attacks into Baghdad.²²

At the start of 2007, Fallujah proper was not out of control like it had been in 2004, but it was not under control either. Since 2004, AQI had regained some of its influence there, taking advantage of the Marines' redistribution of forces—the Marines had turned over control of the city to two battalions of the Iraqi Army and the local police in October 2006. Without the Marines alongside them, the Iraqi Army units in the city became less effective in patrolling and controlling Fallujah's streets.²³ Additionally, the tribal uprisings that had marked the Awakening movements in Al Qaim, portions of the Corridor, and a majority of the Ramadi area had little to no influence in Fallujah or its environs, except to 1) drive homeless insurgents further east to the Fallujah area, thereby increasing the number of insurgents there, and 2) With the influx of insurgents, further intimidate the locals and drive tribal sheikhs to Syria and Jordan.

AQI scaled up its operations in Fallujah in early 2007 with the February assassination of city council secretary Abbas Ali Hussein at his home.²⁴ In March, AQI attacked the Government Center with mortar fire, small arms fire, and then two suicide truck bombs, the second of which was filled with chlorine gas. This was followed by a ground attack; 15 Iraqis and US Advisors were wounded in the assault.²⁵

Despite the setbacks, there were qualitative improvements in the Iraqi Police and Army. Fallujah police chief Colonel Faisal Ismail Hussein, himself a former insurgent, improved the local police's ability to target the insurgency. Col Faisal worked closely with the Anbar Revolutionaries to support the Fallujah police; as a member of the Albu-Zobai tribe, he would play a role in successfully co-opting the 1920 Revolution Brigade.²⁶

The creation of the Iraqi Special Missions Group, a police unit aimed at capturing High Value Targets, enabled the Iraqi Police to more effectively target AQI leaders operating in the Fallujah area. The Group, created in November 2006, was the brainchild of a US Marine Re-

²¹ The Corridor defines a 70-mile stretch of communities along the Euphrates from Hadithah to Hit.

²² Fallujah was operationally important to the insurgents as a launching pad for attacks into Baghdad, where Tharthar became one of the last hiding places for AQI and the coalition of insurgents.

²³ Bing West, *The Strongest Tribe* (Random House, 2008), 243.

²⁴ Fred W. Baker, "U.S. Officials in Iraq Condemn Assassination of Fallujah Councilman," American Forces Press Service, 22 April 2007.

²⁵ Bill Roggio, "Fallujah Government Center struck by chlorine suicide attack," *The Long War Journal*, 28 March 2007, www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/03/fallujah_government.php.

²⁶ Sudarsan Raghavan, "In Fallujah, Peace Through Brute Strength," *Washington Post*, 24 Mar 2008; Bill Ardo-lino, "Confidence is Key: The Evolution of the Fallujah Police Department Part One," *Long War Journal*, 3 Oct 2007.

serve sergeant in the Police Transition Team. An FBI agent when not in uniform, the sergeant had experience with such units.²⁷

The Iraqi Army showed similar progress with the installation of a new commander. In January 2007, Brigadier General Khalid Jawad Khadim 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. After he was replaced, the Iraqi Army in Fallujah dramatically improved its accountability and eliminated the problem "ghost soldiers" that had plagued it throughout BG Khalid's tenure.²⁸

But the solution to the insurgency in Fallujah was much larger than controlling entry into and movement within the city; it depended on controlling areas such as Zaidon, Al Karmah, and Saqlawiyah.²⁹ Those communities fed insurgents into Fallujah as well as Baghdad, and they areas couldn't be stabilized until the source of the violence was contained. In January 2007, Regimental Combat Team 6 assumed responsibility for the Fallujah area. Although more than nine combat battalions had rotated through its area during its tenure, this paper focuses on two of those battalions: 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines (2/7 Marines) assuming responsibility for Zaidon, Al Karmah, and Saqlawiyah in January 2007; and 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines (2/6) that assumed responsibility for the city of Fallujah in March 2007. The following sections outline a series of events that addresses the feeder communities and then focus on the city itself.

A. The Fallujah Environs: Zaidon, Al Karmah and Saqlawiyah

Fallujah was not new to 2/7 Marines, in particular to Lieutenant Colonel Joe L'Etoile, the battalion commander. L'Etoile was the 1st Marine Division (MARDIV) G3, in 2004 for both battles of Fallujah under Major General James Mattis and later under Major General Richard Natonski. LtCol L'Etoile deployed 2/7 Marines to the Fallujah area from July 2005 to January 2006 ('05 deployment) and again from January to August 2007 ('07 deployment). So he and the battalion were extremely familiar with Fallujah and its environs. Figure 2-1 reflects 2/7's area of responsibility for both deployments.

²⁷ Bill Roggio, "A Day in Fallujah," *Long War Journal*, 8 Dec 2006; Bill Ardolino, "The Fallujah Police Transition Team Mission," INDC Journal, 12 Feb 2007, based on his personal reporting while imbedded with the police transition team in Fallujah.

²⁸ West, *The Strongest Tribe*, 259; "General in 'Ghost Army' Inquiry is Still in Command," *Financial Times*, 24 Jan 2007; and Ned Parker, "How Ghost Soldiers Are Bleeding the Iraqi Army of Guns and Money," *The Times*, 19 Jan 2007, <http://rempost.blogspot.com/2007/01/how-ghost-soldiers-are-bleeding-iraqi.html>.

²⁹ Habbaniyah to the west of Fallujah and Ameriyah-Ferris to the south of Zaidon were also important, but this paper will concentrate on the three listed.

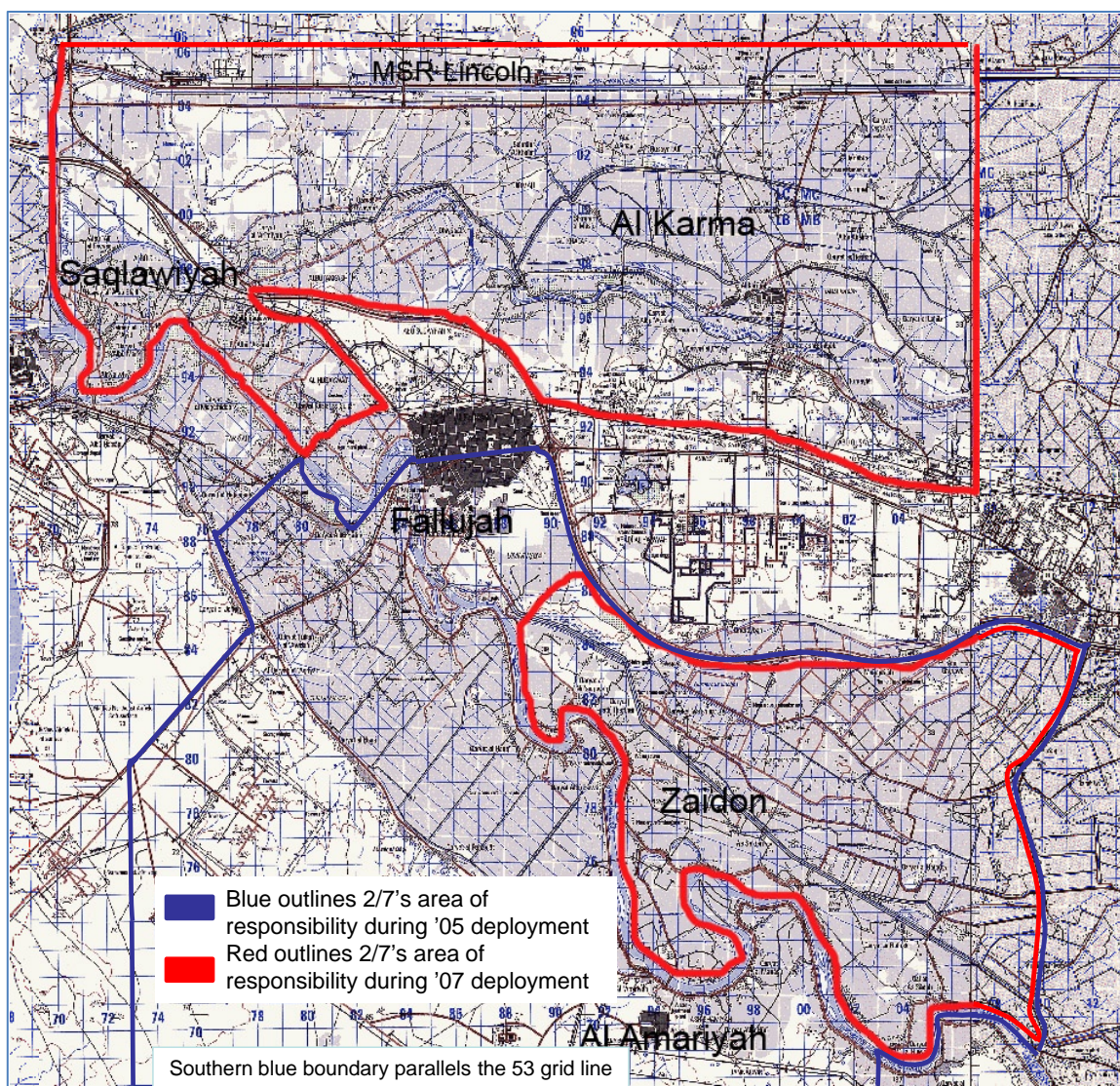


Figure 2-1. 2/7's Area of Operations³⁰

1. Zaidon

Zaidon is a town where Islamist extremists thrived while Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq. Religious leaders preached hatred and jihad, and provided the ideological underpinnings for the jihad against Coalition forces. Zaidon was also the home of the Zobai tribe, who were known to be insular, restive, and prone to hijacking along the main highway. When Coalition forces cleared Fallujah in November 2004, many insurgents escaped to Zaidon where AQI again sought to implement its fierce version of *Sharia*.³¹ Zaidon and the Zobai tribe were no-

³⁰ The '05 deployment was July 2005–January 2006, and the '07 deployment was January–August 2007. Two Iraqi battalions assumed primary responsibility for the city of Fallujah (center of map).

³¹ Bill Roggio, "Anbar Rising," *Long War Journal*, 11 May 2007; West, *The Strongest Tribe*, 259–60.

table for other reasons, such as being the home of Dr. Hareth al-Dhari and the 1920 Revolutionary Brigade.

Dr. Hareth al-Dhari was the leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars, the leading Sunni religious leader in Iraq, and has been called the spiritual energy behind the nationalist insurgency in Iraq.³² He remained in Iraq until he fled in 2006 when the Iraqi Minister of Interior, Jawad al-Bolani, issued a warrant for his arrest for inciting terrorism and violence among the Iraqi people.³³ His reputation is rooted in that of his grandfather, Sheikh Dhari who led the resistance against the British occupation of Iraq in 1920. Sheikh Dhari was also renowned for killing Colonel Gerald Leachman of the British army who was sent to Fallujah to quell resistance.³⁴

The 1920 Revolutionary Brigade was one of the largest Nationalist insurgency groups in Iraq and derived its name from the Iraqi revolution against British occupation in 1920. It is a Sunni nationalist group with Islamic ties and was established in 2003 as the armed wing of the Hamas in Iraq. Sheikh Dhari's nephew of the same name was the leader of the organization until his assassination in 2007. The 1920 Revolutionary Brigade eventually broke ties with AQI due to AQI's brutality towards Iraqis—both Sunni and Shia.³⁵

The 1920 Revolutionary Brigade claimed the area to the north of the canal and AQI claimed territory to the south (see the Zaidon area on Figure 2-1 and the canal diagonally bisecting the area). Not only did this split the Zaidon area, it also split the Zobai tribe. According to L'Etoile, the Coalition's presence made it a three-way fight. The 1920 Revolutionary Brigade would periodically go south of the canal to kill AQI and AQI would respond by going north and attacking the 1920 Revolutionary Brigade. LtCol L'Etoile explained the balancing of power in the area:

The dynamic was, if they had achieved some sort of parity they would fight for advantage for who was going to control what. But if one side would achieve an advantage through some sort of engagement where they would knock off a good dozen or two dozen of the other side, the reflections would indicate that they were talking about reconciliation. And we didn't want them to reconcile; we did not want them to coalesce into one entity, so we would do our targeting, do our operations based off of the feedback from the reflections as to who was talking to who about advantage, disadvantage, negotiations, etc....And so you have this three way donnybrook where

³² Dr. Hareth al-Dhari interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, on 8 February 2011 at his office in Amman, Jordan.

³³ Associated Press, *Arrest of Sunni Leader Sought in Iraq*, 16 November 2006, accessed 21 April 2011 www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/World/20061116/sunni_leader_061116/.

³⁴ Dahr Jamail, "Iraq: Support Grows for Sunni Leader," Inter Press Service News, 20 November 2006, accessed at <http://www.ipsnews.net/2006/11/iraq-support-gathers-for-sunni-leader/> on 11 November 2013.

³⁵ 1920s Revolution Brigades, www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/9#note10 on 17 December 2013, hosted on Stanford University's Mapping Militant Organizations web page. Also Bill Roggio, "The Sunni Civil War," *The Long War Journal*, 27 March 2007, www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/03/the_sunni_civil_war.php.

our strategy was very simple, almost like the English strategy of kill the Germans to the last Russian. We were trying to kill Al Qaeda to the last 20th Rev.³⁶

But just as the average Iraqi was war-weary, local AQI could be subject to the same affliction. L'Etoile indicated that the tribal reconciliation process was one of his greatest tools. If local AQI was not on some sort of list, i.e., "a really bad guy," then the tribe could take care of it as a tribal issue. He was not going to allow this to be a "one way door" and stand in the way. This reconciliation process would also help separate the locals from the extremists.

One day, AQI raided the north and kidnapped a 12-year-old boy affiliated with the Zobai leadership. According to L'Etoile:

[They] slaughtered him just like a lamb on the hook, gutted him and left him hanging there. I went home that night and I was thinking this is the dumbest enemy I have ever faced. This is not the way you fight wars amongst the people... You've crossed a cultural norm that doesn't allow you to go backwards. You've crossed the Rubicon at the tribal level. You've crossed the Rubicon of societal norms. And then it struck me that's exactly what they wanted to happen, because the response by the Zobai Tribe was, there is no more reconciliation. And so Al Qaeda through that act stopped the ability of their fighters to leave because the tribe wouldn't take them back. That was such an egregious act that everybody was tainted, so the line was drawn.

Shortly after, LtCol L'Etoile set up a meeting with the leadership of the Zobai/1920 Revolutionary Brigade and proposed they cooperate to defeat their common enemy. They started with a series of confidence-building measures to show that they could depend on each other. Next the Marines provided a train-up of indigenous forces to facilitate working together. On 5 July, they moved south to battle AQI; within 48 hours, it was over.

Before July 4, we had had over 100 real fights. I'm not talking about somebody throwing a round down range, or a random mortar, we had 100 direct contacts with enemy forces both 20th Rev and Al Qaeda. We did not have a single one after we had gone south of the canal and cleared it up. It was over! It was like hitting the switch. There was no tapering down. There was no 25 contacts this week, 15 the next, five the next, it was over. Not another shot was fired in the entire Zaidon.

To sustain the situation, MNF-W worked with the Iraqi government to legitimize and fund 300 Iraqi locals as an auxiliary police unit. 2/7 Marines then turned the Zaidon over to the Zobai leadership and 1920 Revolution Brigade. The success in Zaidon allowed them to focus on Al Karmah to include committing those forces from Zaidon to Al Karmah.

2. Al Karmah

AQI also maintained a strong and persistent presence in Al Karmah, using it as a center from which to attack Fallujah. One difficulty with securing the Karmah area was its proximity

³⁶ Lieutenant Colonel Joseph L'Etoile, interview, Dr. William Knarr, 28 September 2013, Tampa, FL.

to where three Coalition operating areas connected: Multi-National Division–North, Multi-National Division–Baghdad, and MNF-W. Cognizant of the “seam,” insurgents used the boundaries to facilitate their attack.

The area north of Al Karmah had also been a harbor for AQI since 2004, given its remoteness and location along a major route connecting the Samarra area to the Fallujah area. Coalition forces had rarely ventured into the area, mainly due to the more pressing challenges in the urban areas and the lack of forces to spare.³⁷

Additionally, the local Jumayli tribe had some strong AQI supporters. The tribal leader, Sheikh Mishan, lost a son to Coalition forces in 2003 and then ran afoul of the insurgents in 2004 over the radicalization and subsequent destruction of Fallujah. In return, he and his family were attacked and he lost a second son. The sheikh fled to Syria where he remained until AQI murdered his third son outside Fallujah in June 2007. The sheikh finally agreed to return and lead his people against AQI as part of the Awakening.³⁸

According to L'Etoile, this was a “chicken or egg” situation. They wanted Sheikh Mishan back to help stabilize the area. But he wouldn't return until the area was secured. So, with the help of surge forces from the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), they cleared the Karmah area in an operation called BLACK DIAMOND from June until October; during that period Sheikh Mishan returned. The Marines also helped obtain authorization for a new Provisional Security Force battalion to comprise Jumayli tribesmen to help secure the tribal areas.³⁹

The Marines also used elements of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit to secure the Tharthar area. When AQI was driven to points further north, dozens of large, well-emplaced IEDs were discovered. As was now the habit, after areas were cleared, Marine and Iraq Army combat outposts were established to remain and keep the area secure.⁴⁰ Although attention would turn to Saqlawiyah to the northwest of Fallujah, violence in Al Karmah would periodically spike. Some questioned Sheikh Mishan's leadership to stabilize the situation, and felt that others, such as General Sadun Talib al-Jumayli, commander of the Al Karmah area Provisional Security Force, was better suited to lead. After the 26 June 2008 incident where a suicide bomber accessed a high level Al Karmah meeting and killed the mayor of Al Karmah, a

³⁷ West, *The Strongest Tribe*, 280-281; Bill Roggio, “Anbar Rising.”

³⁸ LtGen John Allen, former Deputy Commanding General, Multi-National Force–West, Jan 2007–Feb 2008, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Central Command, 18 Mar 2010, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. General Allen describes his engagement actions with the sheikh and his efforts to convince him to return.

³⁹ Greg Jaffe, “Tribal Connections: How Courting Sheikhs Slowed Violence in Iraq,” *Wall Street Journal*, 8 August 2007; L'Etoile interview, 28 September 2013.

⁴⁰ Bill Roggio, “The Battle of the Belts,” *Long War Journal*, 18 June 2007; Bill Roggio, “Operation FARDH AL AMIN: The Anbar Offensive,” *Long War Journal*, 26 June 2007.

Marine battalion commander and others, the Coalition turned more to Sadun for his leadership in the Karmah area rather than Mishan.⁴¹

3. Saqlawiyah

Captain Donnie Hasseltine, Commander, F Company, 2/7 Marines in late 2005 and again from January to August 2007, described Saqlawiyah and the tribal dynamics of the area (see Figure 2-2):

Saqlawiyah was unique because there was only one tribe, the Mohamdi, located in a very defined area that you could geographically isolate very easily and, once you figured out the cultural landscape, you could gain momentum in the area.

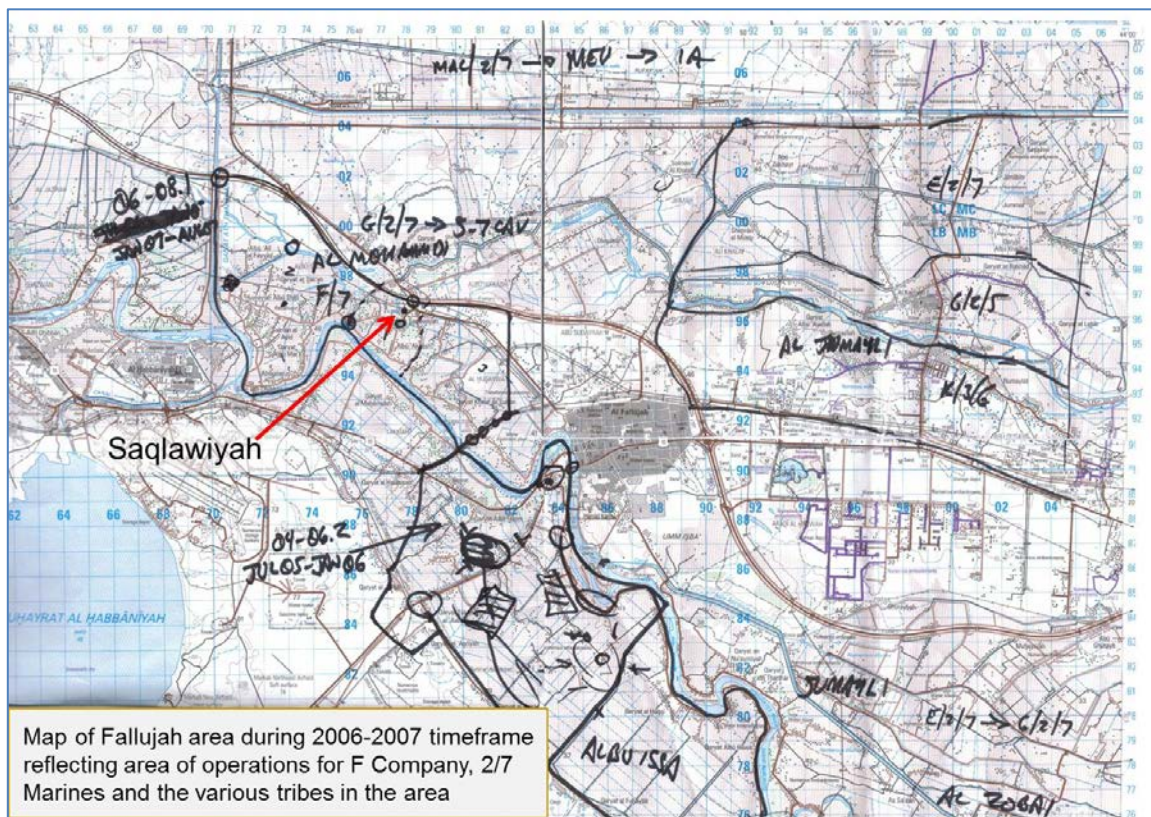


Figure 2-2. F Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, AO and interest 2006–07 timeframe

The Mohamdi tribe, according to Hasseltine, was laid back and content with remaining in their local area; however, other nearby tribes weren't as laid back:

⁴¹ Austin Long, "War Comes to Al Anbar: Political Conflict in an Iraqi Province," paper presented at the 2009 Intentional Studies Conference, *50th Annual Convention: Exploring the Past, Anticipating the Future*, New York Marriott Marquis, New York City, NY, 15 February 2009

If you go out on the peninsula with Albu-Issa and deal with Sheikh Khamis, they were an aggressive tribe, and once you go out to Al Karmah you've got the Al Ju-mayli who were extremely aggressive.

Captain Hasseltine also commented on mapping the human terrain, to include tribal relationships and insurgent activity. His area analysis also included the economic activities such as black marketing routes and fuel points that serviced that community.⁴²

With the Mohamdi sheikh in Jordan, there was no one to stand up for the population. At one time an Emergency Response Unit was brought in from Ramadi, but they were viewed as foreigners and, according to L'Etoile, became part of the problem. The strategy in Saqlawiyah was to invest in the local police and police station. After a while, things improved. L'Etoile described "three overlapping conditions that conjoined to create the environment conducive to the Awakening:"

One is, overreaching by Al Qaeda. Number two is, is a war weary population that must make a choice. And Number three, is really that in choosing to side with the Coalition, that, that is an honorable choice which requires the Coalition to behave in a way that is honorable, so that choosing them isn't dishonorable.

But then something happened that accelerated the process. AQI hit the Marine compound in Saqlawiyah with a truck filled with "probably over 1,000 pounds of HME [home-made explosives]." Although the machine gunner blew the truck before it hit the compound, the explosion was powerful enough to collapse the building and it crashed down on top of the squad. "By the grace of God no one was hurt, but they're all bleeding through the ears, concussion injuries, broken bones...a mass casualty event." But what happened next contributed to Saqlawiyah's turning point.

Across the street from the compound was an Iraqi family that the Marines had gotten to know, not friends exactly, but friendly, and in particular, the Marines had connected with the young daughter. When the truck detonated, the little girl was playing outside and was wounded. The Marines did not tend to their wounds, but took care of the little girl. According to LtCol L'Etoile:

The first medevac called in by the Marines was for the little girl and it was a lie, because they knew that the policy was not to medevac civilians ahead of the wounded Marines...Unfortunately, she subsequently passed on. But the family of the little girl that survived told the population what had happened: that the bloodied, bruised, broken Marines tried desperately to revive their daughter and the first person on a helicopter out of there was their daughter, not the wounded Marines. They said, "The fight's over. You're our Marines."

⁴² Captain Donnie Hasseltine, interview, Dr. William Knarr, Alexandria, Virginia, 10 September 2007.

Within three days, AQI was gone. On the way out, AQI hit the overpass on Route Michigan with an suicide vehicle borne IED and sent another one into the market place—turning on the population.

B. Fallujah

The 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines had been in Fallujah before from October 2005 to April 2006. Although Marines had rotated out of and in to the battalion since that deployment, almost all had Al Anbar experience, and many had Fallujah experience. That was both good and bad. Previous deployments emphasized force protection and kinetic operations. Some equated the two—in many cases, during those earlier years, that might have been true. But conditions were changing. This time it would be different. Not only because of the added Coalition experience, but because conditions outside the city as well as inside had changed. Outside the city, 2/7 Marines started to gain the support of the Iraqi residents, security forces, and government to secure those bedroom communities surrounding Fallujah. Although Sheikh Sattar met with tribal leaders in the Fallujah area and offered his assistance, he, and his Awakening movement had less influence with the Fallujah tribes than he did with those in the Ramadi area. They were more independent, not necessarily of the same confederation and were not influenced by the Ramadi movement. Hence, the return of the sheikhs from Jordan and Syria contributed significantly to the coalescing of the tribes. Their leaders were back; decisions could be made, honored, and carried out.⁴³

The return of Sheikh Khamis Hasnawi Aifan of the Albu-Issa tribe, one of the strongest and largest in the Fallujah area was another example of the impact of the tribal leader on a tribe with split loyalties between the Coalition and AQI. He had advocated engaging the Coalition in 2005 and AQI subsequently targeted him in June 2005 and March 2006. Forced to flee, he joined other expatriate sheikhs in Jordan and Syria. Only in early 2007 would he feel secure enough to return.⁴⁴ After some intense intra-tribal fighting, Sheikh Khamis reconciled the various sub-tribe grievances and they were able to focus their efforts against AQI.

Within the city, the return of the Marines in and of itself was significant. The city had been turned over to the Iraqis in 2006; some say prematurely. Although the Iraqi Army, Police, and Fallujan government had qualitatively improved, there were still too much murder and intimidation. LtCol Mullen and the return of 2/6 Marines would adapt to the changed conditions by changing their approach to the Iraqis and adopting the “clear, hold and build” strategy from Ramadi. Mullen recognized that success in Fallujah depended on the Iraqis accepting responsibility for their own security and that meant working with and through them.

⁴³ L'Etoile interview, 28 September 2013. Allen interview, 18 March 2010.

⁴⁴ Greg Jaffe, “Tribal Connections: How courting Sheikhs Slowed Violence in Iraq”; Montgomery and McWilliams, *Al Anbar Awakening, Volume II*, interview with Sheikh Aifan Sadun al-Issawi, 92–93.

This was an attitude he and his sergeant major, executive officer, and operations officer had to instill in the battalion before Transfer of Authority.

In late May 2007, the battalion executed a plan of “clear, hold, win, won.” Named Operation ALLJAH, it consisted of dividing the city into 11 precincts. As described by Mullen:

One by one, a precinct would be swarmed by Iraqi Army and Police units backed up by 2/6 Marines. Cement barriers were placed around the precinct to restrict traffic entering and exiting the precinct to two openings, each guarded by Iraqi Police. A precinct headquarters was established and manned by all three forces. Local men were recruited from the precinct to form a neighborhood watch under the supervision of the police. Lastly, food bags (each of which could feed a family of 4 for several days) were distributed by the police while civil affairs teams made an assessment of the precincts infrastructure needs. These needs were then prioritized and addressed as quickly as possible.⁴⁵

This was a methodical, systematic clearing and securing of the city, followed by recruiting and training a local force to assume security responsibilities, and a slow withdrawal of Marines into tactical over-watch; they were close enough to respond if needed, but far enough away to allow the Iraqis to develop confidence.

The combination of addressing security in the environs of Fallujah as well as within the city itself, forced AQI out. Most moved to the north in the Tharthar area and into other provinces, looking for gaps in Coalition/Iraqi security. It was not necessarily over, but clearly, with the Sheikhs returning from Jordan and Syria, and their recommitment to secure the city, things were looking up.

C. Themes and Lessons

Each volume in this study provides themes corresponding to significant events in each AO. Below are the themes and leads gleaned from the events that occurred in Fallujah; events that were significant and similar or dissimilar to other areas of Al Anbar are also noted.

1. Perceptions are important, even if they seem preposterous

A number of high-level Iraqis thought that the American forces were working with Al Qaeda to destroy Iraq. According to Sheikh Tariq al-Abdullah al-Halbusi, Principle Sheik of the Halbusi Tribe located in Fallujah, “most of the people started to think that Al Qaeda worked for the Americans” because of AQI’s brutality against Iraqis and the appearance, at

⁴⁵ William F. Mullen, III, “Turning Fallujah,” *Small Wars Journal*, 29 October 2009, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/turning-fallujah>.

least, that the Coalition was aware of and condoned that brutality.⁴⁶ According to Dr. Hareth al-Dhari, Leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars:

At first we thought, “The Americans are using Al Qaeda as an umbrella for them to torture and make the Iraqis suffer.” I want to emphasize that Al Qaeda had no place in Iraq before the invasion. And the blame for Al Qaeda entering Iraq lies with the Americans and the American alliance, and the Coalition’s. They opened the gates from the east to the west, from the north to the south for Al Qaeda and other terrorists who came into Iraq.⁴⁷

Sheikh Mishan of the Jumalyi tribe was kinder. He told BrigGen John Allen, Deputy Commander, MNF-W in 2007 that the “U.S. assists insurgents by taking away all their [the tribes] weapons and then the U.S. does not protect the people.”⁴⁸

2. Experience of the Coalition force was extraordinary

The Marines in general, and 2/7 Marines in particular, brought an extraordinary amount of experience to its deployment in the Fallujah area. LtCol Joe L’Etoile worked in the area during 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. As commander, 2/7 he led the battalion in the Fallujah area during two tours: from July 2005 to January 2006, and January 2007 to August 2007. As in other areas of Iraq, the Coalition’s combat experience was substantial. 2/7 Marines even more so, because they had back-to-back deployments in the same area.

2/6 Marines operated in Fallujah from October 2005 to April 2006. Although a number of Marines rotated out of and into the battalion as it prepared for its 2007 Fallujah deployment to include the battalion’s commander, most of the Marines were familiar with Al Anbar, if not specifically Fallujah.

3. Not all Awakenings are the same, but there are similarities

The evolution of events in the Fallujah area illustrate that not all awakenings are the same. Typically, people associate the awakening with the tribes, but in the Fallujah area power coalesced in various ways. In Zaidon, the 1920 Revolution Brigade as a Nationalist insurgent group turned on AQI with the help of the Coalition and essentially remained in charge of the area after ridding it of insurgents.

Al Karmah’s redemption depended on the Coalition establishing a window of security in preparation for Sheikh Mishan’s return from Jordan. This capitalized on tribal affiliation, alt-

⁴⁶ Sheikh Tariq al-Abdullah al-Halbusi, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 3 February 2011, Amman, Jordan.

⁴⁷ Dr. Hareth al-Dhari, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 8 February 2011, Amman, Jordan.

⁴⁸ Sheikh Mishan, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 3 February 2011, Amman, Jordan.

though for many years, the Jumayli tribe's loyalties were split between insurgent and anti-insurgent.

In Saqlawiyah, the police force, enabled by the Marines, developed as a force, gained credibility, and finally established control in the area; however, in all cases, AQI did something so extreme, it catalyzed the population to choose the Coalition.

4. AQI Overreach: A different perspective

AQI's propensity to overreach is confusing. Some have suggested (the Awakening project task leader for example) that, had AQI not been so brutal and had they been more considerate of the population, there would have been no Awakening and the Coalition would either still be fighting or would have departed in defeat. Most (to include the authors) believe that AQI's overreach in intimidating the population was the catalyst for the Awakening. But consider that some of the extreme barbarism may have served a purpose other than intimidation. LtCol L'Etoile, reflecting on the killing of a Sheikh's 12-year-old son "slaughtered like a lamb" offered a different explanation, for at least this incident. War weary tribal members who had supported/joined Al Qaeda cells were ready to go home. But in order to do so they needed to reconcile with the tribal leadership. AQI, in slaughtering the young boy, the Sheikh's son, effectively stopped any reconciliation because "that was such an egregious act that everybody was tainted, so the line was drawn and it was final," there would be no further reconciliation.⁴⁹

5. Addressing the source, not the symptom

Although Fallujah was cleared during Operation AL FAJR in late 2004, it would not be stabilized until the source of the instability was neutralized. That didn't happen until the first half of 2007 when 2/7 Marines came to the area. After that, 2/6 Marines launched Operation ALLJAH to clear, hold, and build Fallujah a precinct at a time.

6. The Surge made a difference

The Surge in Iraq was inaccurately credited with a number of successes. Most notably Senator John McCain credited Sattar's *Sahawa* proclamation in September of 2006 to the later surge of forces in 2007.⁵⁰ That was inaccurate. However, the surge of forces in 2007 did make a difference in Fallujah as RCT-6 received two additional battalions to support operations in the Fallujah area.⁵¹

⁴⁹ L'Etoile interview, 28 September 2013.

⁵⁰ McCain interview, CBS, 22 July 2008

⁵¹ Major Craig R. Abele, *Tipping Point: What Caused Fallujah's Security Transformation*, Marine Corps Command and Staff College Research Paper, 1 April 2010.

D. The Last Anbar Hold-out

As other parts of Al Anbar Province improved, so did the Fallujah area, but much more slowly. The last “red” area to be secured was in the Fallujah area, with MNF-W listing Al Karmah as the “most significant insurgent operating area” as of August 2007.⁵² Additionally, the incident of 26 June 2008 in Al Karmah would delay Al Anbar’s transition to Provincial Iraqi Control from June until September 2008.⁵³

⁵² Major General Walter Gaskin, Commanding General, Multi-National, *MNF-W 06-08 Stability in Anbar briefing*, October 2007 (estimated date).

⁵³ On 26 June 2008, a suicide bomber detonated at a meeting of Al Karmah town council killing Mishan’s cousins, uncle, and brother. The battalion commander and other Coalition forces were also killed in the explosion. Mary Vorsino, *Honolulu Advertiser*, 29 June 2008, “Suicide Bomber Kills Three Hawaii Marines.”

3. Decline of the Insurgency in Al Anbar and Transition to Provincial Iraqi Control

By August 2007, the violence in Anbar had declined to almost nothing. Days would go by without an IED incident. Ramadi was barely recognizable to anyone who had visited before. In July, Multi-National Corps–Iraq Commander Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno walked through the Central Street bazaar and was welcomed by the local populace. The rows of crumbled buildings had been bulldozed into heaps and hauled away, along with the mounds of garbage and burned-out cars. Power was available six hours a day, shops were open, and the police walked around openly without protective vests. The same was true in Fallujah, where Coalition advisors could walk down clean streets, even past the infamous Blackwater Bridge, without helmets and body armor. Police could wear their uniforms home and not fear being murdered in their sleep.⁵⁴

By August 2007, the tribes of Al Anbar were, to a large degree, united in their opposition to AQI and the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), although sub-elements and individuals from many tribes still supported those organizations. The Awakening efforts had spread beyond Anbar Province to other Sunni areas of Iraq, and many Iraqi insurgent groups had openly criticized AQI. The Sunni insurgency was increasingly fracturing—an opportunity for the Coalition and the Iraqi Government.

For their part, the Coalition and the Iraqi Government were prosecuting a sustained effort to bring security to Iraq and simultaneously destroy AQI. First, they would implement the Baghdad Security Plan (FARDH AL QANOON) to clear and hold districts in Baghdad and separate the population from AQI. Second, they would execute Operation PHANTOM THUNDER, the corps-level offensive to control the farmland belts around Baghdad, including the eastern portions of Anbar. Third, Operation PHANTOM STRIKE involved pursuing and destroying AQI fighters as they were forced from their traditional operating areas into smaller and smaller areas of Iraq.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ John F. Burns, “Showcase and Chimera in the Desert,” *New York Times*, 8 July 2007, www.nytimes.com/2007/07/08/weekinreview/08burns.html?pagewanted=print; West, *The Strongest Tribe*, 288, 290; Colonel John Charlton, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Ms. Mary Hawkins, 20 October 2010, Alexandria, VA.

⁵⁵ Institute for the Study of War, “Operation Fardh Al Qanoon,” www.understandingwar.org/operation/operation-fardh-al-qanoon; Bill Roggio, “Coalition, Iraqi Forces, Launch Operation Phantom Strike,” *The Long War Journal*, 13 August 2007, www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/08/coalition_iraqi_forc.php; West, *The Strongest Tribe*, 327.

In Anbar, the combination of the increased police forces, the Provincial Security Force Units, increased Iraqi Army units, and additional Marine elements enabled the Coalition to force AQI out of the populated areas along the Euphrates River Valley. As summer progressed into fall, MNF-W pushed out further and further into remote areas to the north and south of the river. Only one year after Anbar had been assessed as almost lost, the turnaround could not have been more dramatic.⁵⁶

On 3 September 2007, President George Bush met with Government of Iraq representatives and the Sunni Sheikhs at Al Asad Airbase in al Anbar to congratulate them on their successes. Although 10 days later, Sheikh Sattar would be assassinated, the movement could not be stopped or stalled; conditions continued to improve, not only in terms of security, but followed quickly by governance and economics.



Courtesy US Army

Figure 3-1. President Bush meets with Anbar Sheikhs at Al Asad

One year later, on 1 September 2008, President Bush released the following statement:

⁵⁶ Roggio, “Operation FARDH AL AMIN: The Anbar Offensive.”

Today, Anbar is no longer lost to al Qaeda—it is al Qaeda that lost Anbar. Iraqis—like countless other Muslims across the world—witnessed al Qaeda’s brutality first-hand and rejected it. As a result, Anbar has been transformed and reclaimed by the Iraqi people. This achievement is a credit to the courage of our troops, the Iraqi Security Forces, and the brave tribes and other civilians from Anbar who worked alongside them.⁵⁷

On that date, Major General John Kelly, USMC, Commanding General, MNF-W, and Mr. Mamoun Sami Rasheed, the Governor of Al Anbar Iraq signed the provincial Iraqi control documents officially turning the responsibility for security of Al Anbar over to the Iraqi Government (see Figure 3-2).⁵⁸



Courtesy of USMC

Figure 3-2. Major General Kelly and Governor Mamoun sign Provincial Iraqi Control documents on 1 September 2008 at a ceremony in Ramadi

Al Anbar was the 11th of 18 Provinces to transfer to Iraqi control. On 23 January 2010, the Marines officially departed Al Anbar and turned over military commitments to the US

⁵⁷ Statement released by the White House on 1 September 2008, accessed at www.socnet.com/archive/index.php/t-80307.html.

⁵⁸ Stephanie Gaskell, “US Returns Control of Anbar to Iraqis,” NYDailyNews.com, 1 September 2008, www.nydailynews.com/news/world/returns-control-anbar-iraqis-article-1.324226.

Army. On 7 December 2011, the United States transferred Al Asad Airbase—its last base in Al Anbar—to the Iraqi Government.

A week later, on 14 December 2011, hundreds of demonstrators in Fallujah celebrated the departure of Coalition troops by burning the American flag, hailing Fallujah as the “Flame of the Resistance,” and claiming credit for driving out the occupier. Its reputation as feral and untamable continued.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Agence France Presse, “Hundreds in Fallujah Burn U.S. Flag to Celebrate troops pulling out of Iraq,” *National Post*, 14 December 2011, <http://news.nationalpost.com/2011/12/14/hundreds-in-fallujah-burn-u-s-flag-to-celebrate-troops-pulling-out-of-iraq/>.

Appendix A. Coalition Perspectives

Notes on conventions used in the transcripts

- Ranks. The first time a service member is identified, their rank is spelled out; subsequently, their rank is abbreviated in accordance with their service affiliation. Ranks are spelled out in the footnotes.
- Time “hacks” on transcripts correspond to video so they can be used to identify areas to use as clips for the movie, the DVD and for further research into specific areas.
- For al- or Al- or Al in a proper name: When “al” is in the middle of the name, in a last name, for example, it should be lower case with a hyphen, such as Nuri al-Maliki. If the name is by itself then the “al” is capitalized, as in Al-Maliki.
- The majority of tribal names begin with the term *albu*, a formal characterization of *the*. When the tribal name is included in an individual’s name, the prefix “al-” is added and the tribal name changes slightly, usually with the addition of *awi* or *i* at the end. For example, Albu-Risha becomes al-Rishawi and al-Assafi denotes a member of the Assaf tribe or Albu-Assaf.

Table A-1 gives the reader an appreciation for the units responsible for AO Raleigh from 2003 to 2008. Readers can refer to it to see what brigade-sized unit was assigned responsibility for the area.

Table A-1. Brigade/Regimental Units Responsible for AO Raleigh, 2003–08

Deployment Dates	Unit Commander	Unit
Apr—Sep 2003		Various units of 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, 82 nd Airborne Division and 3 rd Infantry Division
Sep 2003—Mar 2004		3 rd Brigade, 82 nd Airborne Division
28 Mar 2004—27 Mar 2005	Colonels John Toolan/Lawrence Nicholson/ Michael Shupp	Regimental Combat Team (RCT) -1
27 Mar 2005—21 Feb 2006	Colonels Charles Gurganus/David Berger	RCT 8
21 Feb 2006—Jan 2007	Colonel Lawrence Nicholson	RCT 5
Jan 2007—Jan 2008	Colonel Simcock	RCT 6
Jan 2008—Jan 2009	Colonel Lewis Craparotta	RCT-1

Subject: Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Joseph L'Etoile, USMC, Retired, former commander 2nd Battalion 7th Marine Regiment

On 28 September 2013, Lt. Col. Joe L'Etoile, USMC, Retired, former commander of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines was interviewed in Tampa, Florida. LtCol L'Etoile deployed 2/7 Marines to Iraq from July 2005 to January 2006, and January 2007 to August 2007—both times in the Fallujah area.

In this interview, LtCol L'Etoile focuses on his second deployment with the battalion. The Iraqis had reached the turning point, partnering with the Coalition, in most of Al Anbar, first in Al Qaim, then the Corridor and in late 2006 Ramadi. Although Al Fajr, the 2nd Battle for Fallujah, was fought in late 2004 to take the city from the insurgents, the district itself was a contested area. L'Etoile discusses the environs of Fallujah, the differences in the areas of Zaidon, Al Karma and Saqlawiyah, and offers his thoughts on the awakening in the Fallujah area.

Knarr: Please talk in general about Fallujah and then specifically about your second tour with 2/7 in the Fallujah area. Please start by describing the conditions when you arrived for the second tour.

L'Etoile: [start at 00:03:20] From the early days of '04 so much of the leadership of the tribes in that area had departed. The threat was too high, too many sons were being killed, too many family leaders were being killed. So the bulk of the population was left without their anchors. Where there was leadership it was the number two, number three, number four son and he just didn't carry the gravitas necessary, the credibility to lead the tribes in a way that could withstand the pressures. Portions would be coopted and pulled in either by Al Qaeda or just criminal enterprises. It was a patchwork of personalities you had to deal with instead of the traditional top down approach. So you had to have a lot of entry points and then try to coalesce those things together into something that could bring the population along with them.

In Saqlawiyah [see Figure A-1, Map, north west corner] the population was simply terrified. The Al Qaeda presence had beaten the police force down to a minimal number of people. There was no organic leadership to coalesce around, to resist them, and any resistance would have been futile because they would have been individuals and individual families that would have been quickly picked off.

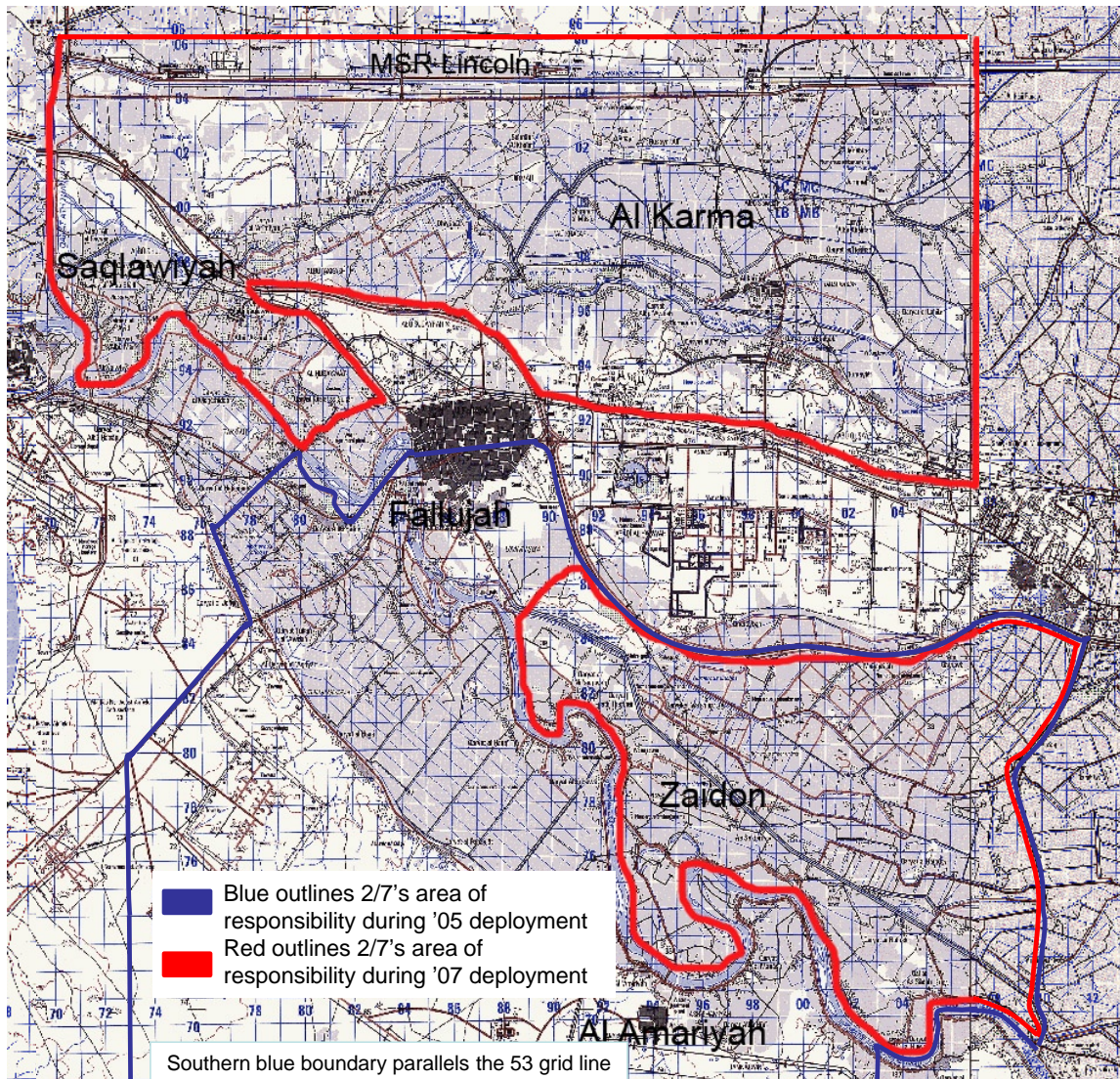


Figure A-1. 2/7's Area of Operations⁶⁰

Down in Zaidon it's a little bit different because you have the Zaidon Canal which essentially runs from northwest to southeast cutting the Zaidon in half. Over time Al Qaeda had chosen to occupy the southern half of that canal and there are very few canal crossings and those could easily be controlled.

And then you have Euphrates as a natural obstacle at your back. So essentially you have a moat if you will, that you can control, you can leave there because you control the crossings, but nobody else can get in. [06:00]

⁶⁰ The '05 deployment was July 2005 to January 2006, and the '07 Deployment was January 2007 to August 2007 Two Iraqi battalions assumed primary responsibility for the city of Fallujah (center of map).

And then north of that canal was the 20th Revolutionary Brigade, so the Zobai Tribe had been split. The Al Qaeda portion south of the canal and the 20th Rev, which is your Nationalists, former regime leadership, north of the canal and of course the 20th Rev would also go above the MSR into the Abu-Ghurayb area. And what you had down there was an internecine fight between those that had aligned themselves with Al Qaeda and those that had aligned themselves with the 20th Rev.

And so, enters the Coalition; you have a three way fight. You have Echo Company 2/7 under John Riggs enter Zaidon during the RIP/TOA process, and this is something I think is worth noting: We never gave Echo Company a FOB. Echo Company lived in the field for seven months and moved every two to three days at the platoon level. Those Marines entered there and came out seven months later, never sleeping behind HESCO, never sleeping behind sandbags, never plugging in any appliances or anything. It was a four platoon company and we tried to keep three platoons in the Zaidon at all times moving every two to three days. In so doing, we made that organization larger than it really was because we were understrength to be in an area that large and that complex. The geography down there was very difficult. It's canals and fields and palm groves, so it favors the defender. But, if you move every two to three days the ability to emplace IEDs based on their establishing our pattern of life is very limited because we're just not going to be there two days from now. Additionally, they can't dial in their indirect fire because they were not that good.

Knarr: RIP/TOA was January of 2007?

L'Etoile: January 2007, Echo Company comes in.

Knarr: Were they replacing somebody that had a FOB?

L'Etoile: Prior to Echo Company 2/7 being there permanently, the Zaidon was an economy of force area.

Knarr: So you had no FOB down there?

L'Etoile: There was no FOB to occupy. From the early days of 2004 Zaidon was an area that Marine reconnaissance operated in until, I believe it was John Minnick's 2/2 would do, I don't want to call them punitive expeditions, but people would go into the Zaidon for two weeks at a time, do what they could and then leave. There was no permanent presence. It was an economy of force area designed simply to prevent the contamination that was down in the Zaidon from getting up into Fallujah.

So, you go in there, you disrupt and that would be the tactical task: disrupt. When we got there the task from Colonel Simcock was to finally finish the Zaidon question, take control. And so, we put Echo Company in, and like I said, we would do large operations if we were south of the Zaidon. So you'll see things called Operation Zaidon One and Operation Zaidon Two which are company reinforced level operations. And when I say reinforced I

mean significantly reinforced. Four to five hundred Marines cross the canal, go south, do clearing operations for a week to two weeks at a time and then go north of the canal and operate north of the canal. And the reason for needing the strength in numbers to go south of the canal was because you had to hold the LOCs [lines of communications] behind you. If you didn't hold the LOCs behind you, the natural terrain of the Euphrates at your back, the canal at your front, you could easily end up in an isolated situation where the IEDs are just being emplaced behind you. And now all you're doing is just a series of hasty breaches every three-hundred meters, and that's all you would be doing, is blowing IEDs in place and not at all doing a clearing operation and not being able to get out when you were done.

So, when you went south of the Zaidon, you would have to hold all the key terrain behind you, and so obviously there's a culminating point where you can't hold anymore and then you retrace your steps and you move on, and you've uncovered some caches, you've grabbed some bad guys, you've disrupted.

North of Zaidon you're moving every two to three days at the platoon level, because the topography and geography is a little bit different and the threat isn't as condensed as it was south of the canal.... The folks in the 20th Rev would also, from time to time, go south of the canal to try to kill the Al Qaeda guys and the Al Qaeda guys would try to go north of the canal to kill the 20th Rev guys. And so you have this three way Donnybrook where our strategy was very simple, almost like the English strategy of kill the Germans to the last Russian. We were trying to kill Al Qaeda to the last 20th Rev. [12:26]

The dynamic was, if they had achieved some sort of parity they would fight for advantage for who was going to control what. But if one side would achieve an advantage through some sort of engagement where they would knock off a good dozen or two dozen of the other side, the reflections would indicate that they were talking about reconciliation. And we didn't want them to reconcile; we did not want them to coalesce into one entity, so we would do our targeting, do our operations based off of the feedback from the reflections as to who was talking to who about advantage, disadvantage, negotiations, etc.

There was a point though, and I find this really, really interesting. If you were an Al Qaeda guy some time sooner or later some of these folks [local AQI/insurgents] would raise their hand and say, "I would like to go home to the tribe." And I made it clear to the tribal leadership that unless somebody was on some sort of list, as a really bad guy, that reconciliation to the Zobai Tribe by an Al Qaeda member was a tribal issue. It was not going to stand in the way just because you had once said that you were affiliated with this organization. I didn't want that to be a one way door. So one of our greatest tools was the reconciliation process, inter/intra-tribal reconciliation, because that would peel away the extremists and put them into the tribal camp where maybe they would go to the 20th Rev, maybe they wouldn't. 20th Rev was a better adversary because they were rational. The guys south of the canal were not rational.

Knarr: Yeah, I heard that.

L'Etoile: But one day the Al Qaeda guys south of the canal had gone north of the canal, taken over a market, kidnapped a twelve year old boy who was affiliated with Zobai leadership and slaughtered him just like a lamb on the hook, gutted him and left him hanging there. I went home that night and I was thinking this is the dumbest enemy I have ever faced. This is not the way you fight wars amongst the people, because, you have just tainted yourself. You've crossed a cultural norm that doesn't allow you to go backwards. You've crossed the Rubicon at the tribal level. You've crossed the Rubicon of societal norms. And then it struck me that's exactly what they wanted to happen, because the response by the Zobai Tribe was, there is no more reconciliation. And so Al Qaeda through that act stopped the ability of their fighters to leave because the tribe wouldn't take them back. That was such an egregious act that everybody was tainted, so the line was drawn and it was final. [16:01]

It's around that time that working with Lieutenant Colonel Karahsul [phonetic] who I had met in '05, in Fallujah, he was one of the two battalions we were partnered with, had moved to take responsibility for the Abu-Ghuryb area. He was a Kurd, but had a reputation as being this straight shooter amongst tribal issues. So I went to Lieutenant Colonel Karahsul [phonetic] and said, "I think the time is right for a 20th Revolutionary Brigade outreach." He set up a meeting. We met down in the Zaidon with the leadership of the 20th Rev in that area and had a very frank conversation and said, "This doesn't have to go the way it's been going. We have a common enemy. I have no interest in putting you guys in jail. The only interest we have here is that the Zaidon does not become a bastion, for a tax on anybody, either Fallujah, Al Karmah, or whatever. So what we would like to institute is a series of confidence building measures that will allow you to demonstrate the ability to live within those rules."

So what I proposed was, "I'll let you guys have a checkpoint in the market and at the top of this thing called the Lightning Bolt", which is a road that looks like a lightning bolt which is a main entrance into the heart of the Zaidon with a terrible IED problem. "If we can travel the Lightning Bolt without being IED'd, and we can get into the market without being IED'd and sniped, then we can talk about other confidence building measures and progressively give you control of the local security." So we did that. But what we did was, we badged everybody, biometric'd everybody, recorded serial numbers of all weapons and the rules were, if anybody was caught in Zaidon that wasn't in that system it was a breach of the confidence building measures, because what we could not create was a R&R center for fighters from other areas to come to rest because there's some sort of agreement here where the Coalition won't mess with you.

So this is off limits to outsiders and we're going to let you do these confidence building measures, so over time we added checkpoints and added confidence measures to the point

where the Southern Zaidon was completely isolated. They could no longer get across because we had built the 20th Rev checkpoints all the way up to those crossing points. And of course we were backing them up with Coalition firepower, ISR and everything. At about that time General Gurganus asked what we needed to be successful in the Zaidon, finally successful. My answer to him was if we could have three hundred paid, legitimized, security forces that that could turn it finally and then we could actually leave the Zaidon in the control of the former 20th Rev, current Zobai leadership. It took a little bit of time working with central government in Iraq and getting the permissions and all that.

Knarr: So kind of an ERU [Emergency Response Unit] type of force?

L'Etoile: Kind of an ERU type, auxiliary police force if you will, and we secured the uniforms, the reflective vests, all that kind of stuff and then put them through, in batches of one hundred, a training program focused on a couple of very fundamental things: basic human rights issues, you're not going to be torturers, these are the things that will break the deal; command and control issues and identification of friend or foe TTPs so we don't shoot you and you don't shoot us. Once we had gotten those folks through the training program, the time was right to go south of the canal. And then when we went south of the canal they were the elements that knew where the bad guys where, knew where they hung out and we simply backed them up with medevac and, where appropriate, fires. But they did the detailed clearing and within 48 hours the problem that had been there for four years had been wrapped up.

Knarr: That's incredible!

L'Etoile: The really incredible part of this story in my mind, and what makes me really, really proud of the Marines is we had to mature that police force into something that was legitimate and controllable. So one of the things we did early on was sort of build in the off switches, so if this thing goes stupid we could turn it off. So the logistical dependence and things like that, that we were not going to let them be, you know, independent, pay procedures, and conflict resolution procedures...

Let me hold that for a few minutes [21:47].

The Marines that had been fighting in the Zaidon for five months straight were now sitting across the table from guys that had killed their buddies, but you wouldn't believe the way the conversations went. There was a mutual respect between the Marines and these 20th Rev guys that actually was extraordinarily surprising and the discussion included things like, this is 20th Rev guys, "Remember that day when you guys came down the Lightning Bolt and we hit you with an IED here? And then you guys really got us that day!" And then the Marines would tell a story to the 20th Rev guys, "Remember that day when we came up on your command and control facility and you had not had time to erase where your positions were and then we rolled up four or five positions immediate-

ly?” And they were laughing, sharing food, telling stories of how these fights went over the last five years. You wouldn’t have believed it! They absolutely switched off any personal animus that they had for what had gone on down there for five months. You wouldn’t have believed it!

Knarr: You said five months. Are we talking about June?

L’Etoile: I can give you the date. We suffered our last casualty in the Zaidon the night before we went south of the canal and on July 4th.

Knarr: July 4th is an important day because you...

L’Etoile: July 4th is when we arrived for the previous tour.

Knarr: Yes, that’s right!

L’Etoile: July 4th we suffered our last Marine KIA and it was in preparation to go south of the Canal. We hit an IED that night. Before July 4th, we had over one hundred real fights. I’m not talking about somebody throwing a round down range, or a random mortar, we had one hundred direct contacts with enemy forces both 20th Rev and Al Qaeda. We did not have a single one after we had gone south of the canal and cleared it up. It was over! It was like hitting the switch. There was no tapering down. There was no 25 contacts this week, 15 the next, five the next, it was over. Not another shot was fired in the entire Zaidon. [24:15]

What the success down there allowed General Gurganus to do was to begin that same process in Al Karmah, because Al Karmah was also an area where it had become an economy of force area; bad area, lots of violence, lots of Al Qaeda, lots of, you know, all the standard stuff that had gone on before. But, by giving control of the Zaidon over to the force that we had created down there, I was able to take Echo Company out of the Zaidon, put a smaller footprint, a Fox Company into the Zaidon, and then take Echo Company and move them to Al Karmah. The way that worked was the RCT and the division, Division (minus) reinforced 2/7 with a company from Jim McGrath, I think Jim had 3/6...

Knarr: Yeah, that’s right.

L’Etoile: We took a company from Ramadi which is an indicator of how little fighting, if any, there was left in Ramadi at this point. That company, commanded by Captain Reardon, came from Ted Kaczynski’s battalion, 2/5 I believe, 2/5 or 3/5 I forget. And we received a Recon company. So, three additional companies, the task force 2/7, as well as tanks, some SIGINT, some EOD, standard combat multipliers that you would see.

Knarr: And you had indicated that now about 1700...

L’Etoile: There were about 1750 Marines all in, Marines and Soldiers; we had a platoon of Bradley’s. So what happened in Al Karmah was an under strengthened battalion of the

82nd was holding it, but they weren't making any real progress. You know, it was a Parachute Infantry Battalion. I think they were 400 all in all, and Al Karmah is a difficult place. They were RIP'd out and then Echo Company, the Recon Company, the company from 3/5 and Jim McGrath's company, we did a large scale operation. The MEF, reinforced us with almost all of their engineering capacity. We did an analysis, I think there were 28 separate entrances and exits into Al Karmah and, as you know, to really clear a place you've got to close off the exits otherwise it's just a cat and mouse game. So in the period, I think it was two periods of darkness, two cycles, we completely isolated and barricaded all the entrances and exits to Al Karmah and then we did the Fallujah like clearing procedure. Although, the kinetics weren't there, the bad guys saw what was happening, saw the mass that was being applied and they all fled, most of them to the east in the area between Abu-Ghuryab and Al Karmah. This set the conditions for what General Allen talked about in his interview about bringing Sheikh Mishan home.

Because Mishan wasn't going to be parachuted into Al Karmah as it was. The security environment was one of the chicken or the egg, "Do I come home and help you establish security, or do you establish security so I can come home?" And of course it was the latter. So we established security in Al Karmah, Sheikh Mishan came home, from that the same sort of capacity and confidence building measures were applied with the progressive turning over of checkpoints, training and all that stuff.

And so Al Karmah then becomes an area of relative security; not violence free because there's constant sorties from the east, from the dead-enders if you will, but never enough to actually cause a tactical or even operational effect that was worth worrying about.

As you move around the corner and go to Saqlawiyah this is where Donny had Fox Company. Saqlawiyah had the isolated population. There was just nobody standing up for them. We didn't have the boots on the ground to provide security of our own accord. There were ERU type units coming out of Ramadi attempting to establish control of Saqlawiyah, but they were causing more problems.

Knarr: I'll bet; foreigners!

L'Etoile: That's exactly right; they were as foreign as we were. And so they were just another antibody that was being injected into the system. So the only way to get ahead in Saqlawiyah was for the people that lived there to coalesce around something that was theirs. And to that end there was one police station in Saqlawiyah that had been reduced to about seven officers. The rest had either fled or been killed. Those seven couldn't even leave the police department. The police department was under siege. I lost Marines standing on the ramparts getting shot by snipers and stuff. It was just terrible, you'd launch the QRF, the QRF would hit a bomb, we had suicide bombers, we had all of that stuff, all over Saqlawiyah.

So what we decided to do instead of just wrestling for ground in Saqlawiyah that we couldn't hold was to invest in the police department in order to attract others to join it. And so over time, by showing the commitment to those guys, we would get them out of the gate so the population could see them. We would put them in front, in control. And over time recruiting for the Saqlawiyah Police Department improved. And when the recruiting improved it also drew police from Fallujah who were actually supposed to be working in Saqlawiyah, but refused to do so because of the security problems. And so there's a tipping point there where the conditions became safe enough that those who were supposed to be working in there said, "Okay I'll go". And then when they came, others came.

Just like down in the Zaidon, Al Qaeda left Saqlawiyah not in dribbles and spurts but overnight almost. We were attacked by probably seven massive suicide VBIEDs over the course of about five days, inflicting a lot of casualties, but when you talk about wars amongst the people it's the little things that matter. You said words to the effect that there were three overlapping conditions that conjoined to create the environment conducive to the Awakening. One is, overreaching by Al Qaeda. Number two is, is a war weary population that must make a choice. And Number three, is really that in choosing to side with the Coalition, that, that is an honorable choice which requires the Coalition to behave in a way that is honorable, so that choosing them isn't dishonorable.

Knarr: That's right, respectful.

L'Etoile: Respectfulness.

There's a canal at the bottom of Saqlawiyah, it's a fascinating spot on the ground, there's a canal down there that if you do your map reconnaissance and then physical reconnaissance it is the definition of key terrain. Because it's a choke point and a crossing site all in one.

Knarr: You've pointed that out to me before.

L'Etoile: It's as plain as day. I mean any Second Lieutenant can go to the map and say, "I know this is important". So the Coalition had lost Marines over previous rotations, matter of fact the battalion we replaced in Saqlawiyah lost four Marines in one IED trying to cross that crossing site. So when we occupied Saqlawiyah we said, "This is not going to be a place where we intermittently traverse. We're going to occupy it full time so we don't have to continuously clear IEDs every time we travel the route. We're going to own this piece of ground even though it's expensive and it's going to cost us a squad to reinforce, to sit in one spot and own that piece of ground; but, it's that important."

So we went down there and looked for a facility, a building that we could occupy. And as we are beating the brush there's an old building that's about two stories tall. It looks like a castle. It's got the rampart scalloping on the top, walls are a foot and a half thick. We come

up to it and we take a wet rag, there's a plaque above the entrance of this thing, and we rub and it says, "Built by the queen's own sappers and miners 1920." The Brits 85 years earlier had recognized this very same piece of ground as something they had to hold and they built a fort there. So we simply said, "Well we're just going to augment this thing with T-barriers and things for the vehicles," and we cleaned it out and we parked our squad, reinforced inside this thing. Well when Al Qaeda came at it, and they came at it with a truck filled with probably over 1,000 pounds of HME [homemade explosives] and they managed to get through the first T-barrier, we put a Marine Gunner, machine gunned him, but then he blew his truck and when he did that building virtually collapsed, that's how powerful the explosion was. And so this building comes down on top of that squad and only through the grace of God nobody was killed, but they're all bleeding through the ears, concussion injuries, broken bones, you know it's a mass casualty event.

What happens next is just fascinating insight into the way human beings are the same all over the world. Across the street from that redoubt that we had occupied was an Iraqi family because there was a small hydro-electric plant that provided just local power and there was a family living there. Well when the bomb went off it hit that building. In the course of time of the Marines living there they had become, not friends, but friendly with the family across the street. Specifically, giving the little girl there candy and things like that. Occasionally they would come across the street with maybe a chicken or something like that. When the bomb went off that girl was mortally wounded. But what happened was, when the Marines recovered from the blast, they did not tend to their own wounds, they did not tend to their own; I mean tactically they did everything wrong. They didn't prepare for the next suicide bomber, because typically its tandem and you hit the first responders type thing. As a group they focused on the little girl. So, the first medevac that was called in by the Marines was for the little girl and it was a lie, because they knew that the policy was not to medevac civilians ahead of the wounded Marines. And so, the Marines medevac'd the little girl to the hospital where unfortunately, subsequently she passed on, but the family of the little girl that survived basically told and convinced the population what had happened: that the bloodied, bruised, broken Marines tried desperately to revive their daughter and the first person on a helicopter out of there was their daughter, not the wounded Marines. They said, "The fight's over. You're our Marines. You're good with us. This stops today."

And so between that incident being transmitted to the population, as well as the legitimizing of the police department, within three days Al Qaeda was gone and they left. They blew up the overpass on Mobile Michigan and wounded a bunch of Marines in that. They sent a suicide bomber into the market; they turned on the population and blew up the market. And then they were gone.

So when you look at those three different places, the Zaidon, Al Karmah, and Saqlawiyah, this is why I believe the Awakening is sometimes mischaracterized as a monolithic, political movement almost, or tribal movement instead of being recognized as a dynamic of those three things you mentioned: the overreach of Al Qaeda; the consistently, not always perfect, but making enough good decisions at the tactical level to be honorable, so that the Marines were characterized as honorable adversaries; and then a war weary population that when they got to the point of having to make a choice, they made the right one. But the way it manifests itself, the way that power coalesced itself in all three of those places was different. Down in the Zaidon it was the 20th Revolutionary Brigade, so you had an entire organization that turned, attacked the organization of Al Qaeda with the Coalition backing them. Former regime leadership was left in charge down in the Zaidon. In Al Karmah it was Sheikh Mishan being brought back from Jordan, enabled enough tribal credibility to coalesce power around him, and so the tribe was left in charge in Al Karmah. In Saqlawiyah the police department was left in charge, down in Saq. So you see the way that the power, and who was left in charge in each one of those places was completely different, yet it's all given the same brush stroke.

Ramadi initiated uprising finally washed over the shores of the eastern part of Al Anbar is not what happened.

Knarr: What did you know about the sheikhs in the Fallujah area? Were they connected?

L'Etoile: Of the lore down in the Zaidon was that, in the days of Saddam, that was a renegade area, the Zaidon in particular and Fallujah to a certain extent. And the regime would come into those areas on their own version of punitive expeditions... Remember Saddam always had issues with the tribes. The way he manipulated power was manipulating the Sheikhs and he hated having to do it. He wanted to be a king, but he had to exercise power through the tribes. And the most restive areas were these areas with the most recalcitrant Sheikhs. I think over time Saddam's manipulations of the tribes, pitting one against the other, was very pronounced in this area because he kept it from coalescing or else he would have bigger problems. So he was always finding ways to pit various tribes against each other and by virtue of the regime coming in there from time to time to try to clean house, establish order, and everything, he drove the Sheikhs underground. And so they became very effective of exercising their communications and power from the coconut telegraph if you will, because if they had surfaced and operated above ground they would have just been picked off and Saddam would have put somebody else in. Because, remember he was the king of the fake Sheikh.

Knarr: Yeah, that's right.

L'Etoile: He'd come in and say, "You're no longer the Sheikh. This guy's the Sheikh and if I have any more problems with you guys then I'm going to come in here and clean

house.” And I think that the way they operated was a hangover from those manipulations by Saddam.

Knarr: That makes sense. Yeah, I had an opportunity to talk to Hareth Al Dari in Jordan... He had just gotten out of Egypt on or around 2 February, because I just arrived on 2 February.

L'Etoile: Yeah, the spring?

Knarr: Yeah! That's right the Arab Spring! So I get in to see this guy and the Jordanians are providing security for him! So it was kind of an interesting set up. But, he took me back to the 1920's and his grandfather's involvement in the revolution.

L'Etoile: Well the, the legend is, it's the Sheikh that we met with that hosted the meeting between Lieutenant Colonel Karahsul [phonetic], the 20th Revolutionary Brigade and Marines and this Sheikh, and his name is escaping me right now, it was an old man. He was probably 85/90. Of course he looked 120 because he smoked his whole life, he looked like the Marlboro man. The legend was it was his grandfather that had assassinated the British colonel.

Knarr: Leachman, that's right!

L'Etoile: Shot him, just straight face to face during a KLE [key leader engagement]. So they were very, very proud of that, and would occasionally during these meets say, “You know we have a history of shooting people that come to meet us?”

Knarr: And that's kind of scary, because you figure it assumes a certain honor and neutrality so you can hold this meeting.

L'Etoile: Yeah!

Knarr: Yeah, I always found that strange.

L'Etoile: In which case you would just have to say, “Well, you might get me, but there's 1,000 behind me.” You know?

Knarr: That's right. And they'll wipe this place out.

L'Etoile: They will level this place!

Knarr: That is something. Now you talked about dates. You talked about the fourth of July, but when was that meeting that preceded your entry on 4 July?

L'Etoile: I would say that meeting took place in mid-March to early April.

Knarr: Okay. You kicked off things rather quickly then? I mean you go through the RIP/TOA and then you are into February, March, and now all of a sudden you're meeting with these guys.

L'Etoile: One of the advantages we enjoyed, because we were a repeat battalion going over to OIF was, I was in command, my Sergeant Major was the same Sergeant Major. Echo Company was still in command of Eco Company. Donny was still in charge of Fox Company. And we had been in the Zaidon before. We hadn't occupied it, but we had done numerous operations, sort of those one week and two week expeditions into Zaidon, so we knew some of the personalities. We knew the terrain. We knew some of the dynamics. So, that when we redeployed, you know, a year later we didn't have to spend 60 days building our IPB. We just had to refresh it. And we already had some of the operating methodologies of how you move from places to place, and the little TTP that you would think are inconsequential are actually almost determinant.

When you move into these areas you typically take a house or a compound, you displace the family, you pay the family for doing that, so at the time it's 40 dollars or so, and you leave it better than you found it. If you find a broken generator try to fix it. If you find broken glass try to repair it. Whatever! Leave it better than you found it, so you're not the hooligans that came in and trashed the place and left it looking like you had a party there for two days. Pick up all your trash—everything! Leave it better!

More importantly, from time to time, every second or third house, occupy one of those that a bad guy owns. Because, you have to have the narrative that the Marines occupying the house that the owner has no say in that whatsoever. That he is not collaborating. And the only way to really send that message is take some of the bad guys' houses too! Pay them the 40 dollars. Leave it better than you found it! Because, if you didn't do business that way, if you only went where you were invited or at least where they were passive, Al Qaeda and the 20th Rev would have sought retribution against the people whose houses you were trying to occupy.

Knarr: That's a good point. The experience you had, I never would have thought of that.

L'Etoile: You know after four years of coming back: 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, you accumulate a kit bag, a field craft if you will, on how to do COIN. It's like the conversation we had earlier about, there's no analogous intelligence field manual that tells you how to figure out an area. There are absolutely workable TTPs that have been developed and are not recorded anywhere. For instance, going into Fallujah in 2005, this is post Al Fajr, taking over the southern half of the city and trying to find out who's who, and nobody's talking. Nobody's cooperating. Everybody is still sort of in shock of what happened the previous year. And it's very difficult to get anybody to stick their hand in the air and say, "I'm aligned with this, I'm aligned with that." So, what do you do? You start with something as simple as a claim. You go to the table and you say, "Hey you're such and such," and say, "If we have run over your fence, or we have broken your door in a raid, or we have done any of this, come to this place and I'll pay you 10 dollars or whatever the damage was." Okay? "I'm

going to pay my respects to you by recognizing that I haven't been perfect." But that's not what you're doing. What you're really doing is you're bringing people together.

And then the next week you say, "That was a huge success, but there were too many people and we didn't get to everybody in line. So, what we'll do this time is" we'll say, "It's a security threat to have all you people out here together, so one person can bring 10 claims and you will represent the other 10 people. When those people come, you know one of two things: one, they're either in charge of something, because they're going to pick up some money.

Knarr: They're a leader?

L'Etoile: They're a leader. Or, they work for a leader and that leader is so powerful that he knows he can send that guy to go get the money and it's not going to get skimmed. So, you know that; you didn't know that before. The next thing you say is, "This is still too big. Let's do this neighborhood by neighborhood. And so, we're going to have 10 payment stations and we're going to do one in the Andalus, we're going to do one down in the industrial area, we're going to do one here." Now the people show up. You know the two things you knew before, but you also know what neighborhood they are from. That's when you start penetrating the human terrain. The next step is, "We need to transition this process to you guy's doling out the payments. We need a neighborhood council to take over this. We'll sit in the back with the bag of money, but you have to elect your leadership." And so you have regenerated the Mukhtar system that was there prior and you've uncovered it in four weeks, by four steps. You have just done an intelligence penetration through the restitution processes essentially. It's not written anywhere how to do that. It's not recorded in doctrine. It's not recorded anywhere. It's in the heads of the 10,000 or whatever people who, of their own accord, had to figure out how to do it themselves. That's one of the tragedies, if we leave these conflicts and we haven't deliberately harvested those lessons and converted them lessons into TTPs that are memorialized in writing, we'll relearn them 10 years from now.

Knarr: That's a great point

L'Etoile: We'll be right back in the game, you know? And there's 1,000 examples of how to do things like that. The television set that's on top of a house that house no power, or has no satellite dish; it's a bad guy's house. How do you know that? It's because the television set is not being used to watch television, it's being used to detect the CREW [*Counter RCIED Electronic Warfare*] systems on our vehicles, because if you put it on channel two, fire up your generator, as soon as CREW comes within about 1000 meters, the test pattern's going to come on the TV because you're jamming it. And that's why he has a TV, but no satellite dish!

Knarr: That's amazing!

L'Etoile: And there's a million unrecorded TTPs. It's all out there. It's not harvested. How do you develop a pattern of life? How do you record it? It's all out there, but five years from now when everybody's dusted off their gear...You know; how do you detect when you're in a KLE that the person you're meeting with is not actually in charge? It's the kinesics, the body language. Ask a difficult question and then immediately look to see whose eyes divert to who. He's the guy that's actually in charge.

I remember during the first tour as a battalion commander in Fallujah and they were breaking a fast. And so I got invited to go watch the battalion officers of this Iraqi Battalion that we were partnered with and celebrate their breaking of the fast. They put out a great meal for them, they were very gracious, I was invited, it was a good time in terms of days in Iraq.

After the meal they broke off into parlor games afterwards and they were playing just little games that people play when they don't own Monopoly or Checkers or whatever. And so, one of the games was, they would have ten guys sitting against the wall, ten, eight, six, it doesn't matter. Then on the other side of the room, on the side of the carpet would be another six to eight guys sitting across the room. And one guy would have a marble, and he would put a blanket over his head, and he would walk up to his team. So, he got blanketed and he's going to put that marble in the hand of one of the people on the other side of that line. And then they're all going to have their hands out, as if they've got their marble in their hand. And then somebody from the other side, the other team, would come across and they will look at those guys, and he will try to pick which one of them has the marble. Right? And I was, you know, okay, there's ten guys, there's a one in ten chance he's going to get it right. They were getting it right 70–80% of the time.

Knarr: Wow!

L'Etoile: And so I sat down, and again this is with Lieutenant Colonel Karahsul [phonetic], and I said, "This is something!" I mean, talk about being able to read people! And he proceeded to explain to me, "You don't understand. We live in a culture where we don't have tort laws and things like that. And a business man, the shrewdest business man is really revered. So, in your culture if you would, as an example, go buy a motorcycle from somebody... you answer an ad in the paper and you pay them 500 dollars and you get on the motorcycle and you go 10 feet, the wheels fall off, the engine sputters or whatever, in your culture the guy that sold you that motorcycle is a bad guy." He said, "In our culture the guy that sold you that motorcycle is a treasure." Because he pulled it off! Because, if you're going to trade, do business, even hold discussions, negotiate, you've got to learn to read people because there's no safety net. There's no recourse. So, we grow up from the earliest days trying to figure out what's behind everything. You're a trusting society. We're a suspicious society. We're suspicious because we have to be and it changes our value system just to accommodate.

Knarr: I never thought of that.

L'Etoile: Just by the looking into the eyes of the guy that was holding the marble they could figure it out.

Knarr: That's incredible! You look at all the money we lost over there and we scratch our heads, you know? And they are thinking they're smart and we're stupid!

L'Etoile: That's exactly it! You know, we're lesser and they are more because they managed to get more out of us then we got out of them.

And that's the way the transactional relationship worked. And it just manifests itself in some fascinating ways. As an example, one battalion that we were partnered with was stealing. So, the gas station lines would be extraordinarily long and the soldiers would monitor, keep control of who was going to get gas and whatnot. Over time, they were selling the ability to get to the front of the line. So, those who had money didn't wait in gas lines. Those that didn't have a whole lot might not even get any gas. It was a very, very lucrative thing. So, you see that, you understand it, and then you say, "In our culture, that's bad, we need to shut that down!"

Knarr: That's right. That's probably what we would do.

L'Etoile: "I've got to shut that down!" It's the opposite with them. What you should do is go to that commander and say, "Hey, this is what's going on at the gas station." And he says, "Oh, no, no, no that's not going on." "Ok. I think it's what's going on at the gas station. And I'll tell you what, I've been trying to get you to go into this neighborhood for two weeks and you've been dragging, and dragging, and dragging your feet, so I'm going to shut down the gas station unless you go into that neighborhood. If you go into that neighborhood you can run that little enterprise you've got going." Now I have leverage. I've got something he wants. I've got something he needs. It's how he keeps power with his own officers. We've identified it. Don't shut it down. Use it! And use it to the greater good. Take the lesser evil that the gas station is, but that's been going on there for as long as there's been lines for anything. You're not going to change it. You're just going to use it as leverage and try to do that IPB of your partners. You know, over; how do I keep control of this thing? Do personality IPB.

Knarr: It's going to be a lost art.

L'Etoile: Yeah, we'll go back to combined arms maneuver. The acumen of war will be time on a target.

10 September 2010

Subject: Interview with Capt Donald Hasseltine, USMC, former Commander F Company, 2nd Battalion 7th Marine Regiment

Captain Donald Hasseltine was in Iraq from July 05 to January 06; from July to October as the S-3A and then from October to January as Commander, Company F. He then returned to Iraq as Commander, Fox Company from January 07 to August 07. The mission was counterinsurgency.

On 10 September 2010, Captain Donnie Hasseltine was interviewed at IDA and described his area of interest, the Fallujah area, and then his area of operations, Saqlawiyah.



In January 2014 he was asked to discuss his area of operations specifically during the April 2007 timeframe. As such the first part describes his area of operations from his September 2010 interview and the second part is his submission describing the events in April 2007.

The following is a summary of Captain Hasseltine's description of his area of operations As he discussed the area he drew approximate boundaries and provided comments on a map, Figure A-2:

Captain Donald Hasseltine: Saqlawiyah was unique because there was only one tribe, the Mohamdi, located in a very defined area that you could geographically isolate very easily and, once you figured out the cultural landscape, you could gain momentum in the area.

The Mohamdi tribe was laid back and content with remaining in their local area. However, other nearby tribes weren't as laid back:

If you go out on the peninsula with Albu-Issa and deal with Sheikh Khamis, they were an aggressive tribe, and once you go out to Al Kharma you've got the Al Jamayli who were extremely aggressive.

Note. Captain Hasseltine also commented on mapping the human terrain, to include tribal relationships and insurgent activity. His area analysis also included the economic activities such as black marketing routes and fuel points that serviced that community.

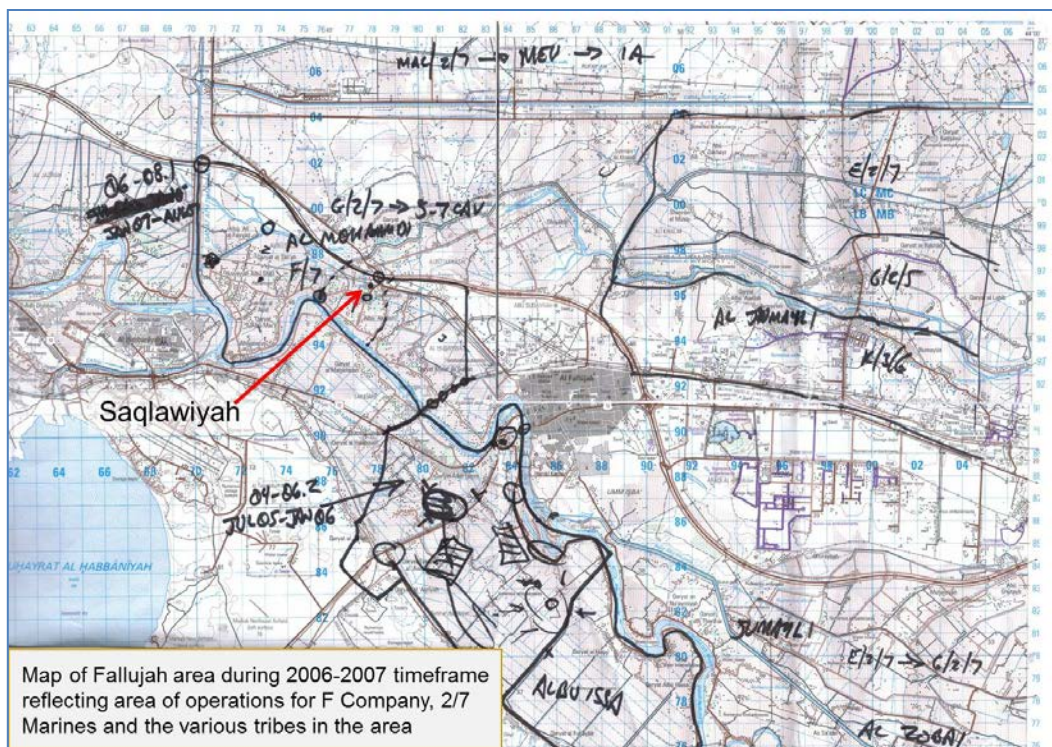


Figure A-2. F Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, AO and areas of interest 2006–07 timeframe

With the Mohamdi sheikh in Jordan, there was no one to stand up for the population.

Captain Hasseltine provided the following as a follow-up description of April 2007 events:

Saqlawiyah was a small town centered on a marketplace, police station, medical clinic, and small town government center [located at FB Riviera on Figure A-2]. The economy was agriculture focused, with some small goods importers and mechanical repair businesses. The town was highly educated with a literacy rate in the high 90% and the local technical college's dormitory was based in the town. A distinctive four-story building towered over the center of the town and was utilized as the Marine firm base. The building was a copy of another that stood in the government center of Fallujah. The town center was located approximately 5 miles northwest of Fallujah, and was bordered to the south by the Euphrates River, to the north by Highway 1 (MSR Mobile), and to the west by a canal that linked the Euphrates to the Thar Thar Lake to the northeast. Historically, it lay in the floodplain of the river and midway between the town and Fallujah was a large elevated area with the ruins of the original city of Anbar, dating to 350CE and the Sassanid Empire, and a later capital of the Abbasid Caliphate. The area was a strategic gateway to Fallujah and stood as a link for the insurgency's resupply and movement lines from Ramadi, and the Samarra/Baghdad corridor. Its geographical importance was highlighted by the presence of a British Fort built in 1910 that guarded a bridge providing access to the town center from the west. Despite its small size (two stories), it held

commanding views of most of the west and north approaches to the town, and therefore to Fallujah itself. [Figure A-2. See “Go Army Bridge Combined ECP” two kilometers west of the city center.]

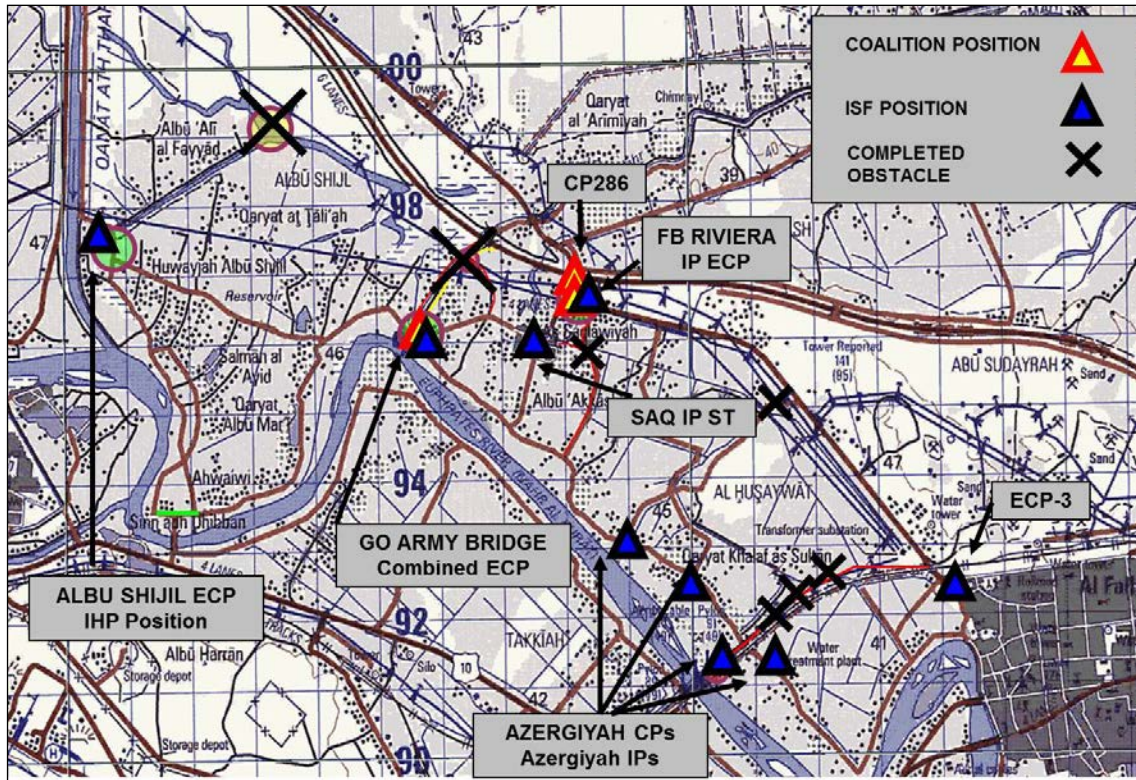


Figure A-3. F Company, 2/7 Marines, AO, Jan–Aug 2007

When the company arrived in January 2007, as had their predecessor, they continued to make progress in killing and capturing the major insurgent leaders. However, the insurgents still maintained a very aggressive murder and intimidation campaign against both the citizens and the Marines. While improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were the most common weapon, their effectiveness had waned considerably due to the increased armor, countermeasures and tactics of the Marines. The most dangerous weapon at the time was a very accurate team of snipers that was engaging Marines from well concealed vehicles and positions, and regularly killing and wounding them by placing well aimed shots around their body armor. The week of Fox Company’s arrival, a Marine Human Intelligence sergeant was killed within sight of the firm base. The pervasive presence and effectiveness of the sniper (or team) rendered it nearly impossible for the Marines to conduct dismounted daylight patrols in the town.

As the turnover was completed, Fox Company began conducting aggressive night patrols to engage the populace. While devising new tactics to pair all daylight patrols with

mounted units, they isolated the town section by section as the dismounted Marines moved through. Despite the aggressive presence and engagement with the populace, it was clear that the residents would not cooperate with the Marines. It was also clear that they were against the Al Qaeda sponsored insurgency and actively desired a movement similar to the *Sahawa*, the awakening then occurring in the Ramadi area to rid the area of insurgents. However, the Iraqis were exceptionally pragmatic. While many would agree and demonstrate support in private, very few would take any open movement against the insurgency. The police force had waned to less than 15, and fewer that regularly showed up for duty, and rarely stood post or departed the station on patrols. This environment continued with a very slight positive trend until the month of April.

On April 2, 2007 a Marine was completing his tour on the post atop the police station at GO Army Bridge, when he briefly exposed himself between the armored post and the camouflage/anti-sniper netting on the roof. The sniper was in position and fired a single shot that impacted his armpit above the armor vest he was wearing, killing him almost instantly. The Marines reacted as trained, treating and evacuating him while isolating the area in an attempt to capture the sniper team. Despite this happening in daylight with numerous people in the area, all refused to cooperate or assist in discussing what happened and identifying who was involved. After consultation with the battalion commander, the company completely shut down the town, instituting a 24/7 curfew and using the geography around the town to their advantage completely isolating it from anyone entering or leaving. The town went to a complete standstill for over a week.

The curfew made its impact on both the populace and the enemy. The western routes into Fallujah around the major entry control points was sealed, and the insurgents reacted with their nuclear option—the suicide vehicle borne IED (SVBIED). In the afternoon of April 8, a small truck packed with just over 1,000 pounds of explosives attempted to destroy the Marine post that covered the single bridge west of the town. The temporary post Marines had erected in and around an Iraqi home was severely damaged, but the quick and effective actions of the Marines engaged the driver, forcing him to prematurely detonate the truck, preventing serious injury to the Marines stationed there.

At the time of the SVBIED attack, a patrol had just passed the checkpoint and was heading NE along the road back toward the center of town when it heard the explosion and turned back. A little Iraqi girl that lived in the home across the road (south of the position), had been playing outside when the SVBIED detonated. As the patrol approached the fort, it observed a wounded family member, on the road, carrying her body. The Marines immediately stopped and picked them up with another 1-2 wounded civilians and began treating them as they continued to the fort to re-establish security and treat the casualties. This seemingly small act became a significant turning point based on timing, location, and luck. The Marines stopped to pick up the Iraqi civilians because they were

injured and they were the first people observed as they approached the detonation site, but the message that grew through the town rumor mill was that the Marines stopped to treat the Iraqis before they treated themselves. The populace continued to spread the message that the Marines were prioritizing the Iraqis' welfare above the Marines, and that was the spark that began turning the populace openly to the side of the Marines.

While such high profile attacks were spectacular in nature, they were also rare because of the difficulty in obtaining a willing driver, suitable vehicle, explosives in that quantity, and then assembling everything and moving it to the target location. Use of an SVBIED signaled that the target was directly impacting their operations, and all other available options had failed. In many cases, such an attack resulted in coalition forces pulling back or building new posts in less vulnerable locations. Recognizing this, the battalion staff worked to surge engineering assets from the entire AO to the checkpoint. Overnight, hundreds of cement barriers were moved into position fortifying the bridge and road. Within days, the entire position was re-engineered around the old British Fort forming a near impregnable position that was never successfully attacked for the remainder of the deployment.

The following weeks showed a rapid change in attitude and perspective of the populace. The police force became emboldened, and more importantly began patrolling and receiving information from the local citizens. Realizing they were on the cusp of losing a major town and more importantly an access point to Fallujah, the insurgents reacted with a larger and more spectacular attack, possibly aimed to both take revenge on the turning of the population as well as terrorizing them into rescinding their support to the Marines. On April 19, a large dump truck filled with over 3000 pounds of explosives drove into the center of town, detonating at the entry point to the police station. This explosion leveled the center of town, completely destroying the marketplace, severely damaging the police station, and killing or wounding nearly 20 civilians. Fortunately the attack took place on a Friday afternoon when most of the town was at home following Friday prayer, hence, most of the people were gone. A complex attack ensued as Marines and Iraqi Police reacted to the attack. As before, Marines treated and evacuated the wounded civilians alongside their own. Though this was against the medical policy in the AO, the Marines recognized 1. The area lacked capable local treatment facilities, 2. The evacuation of the civilians to a Marine facility would send a positive message, and 3. The fact that once they were evacuated, they would have to be treated regardless of the circumstances of their evacuation. This attack was followed a day later by another extremely large SVBIED against the Marine checkpoint on MSR Mobile north of the town. This critically wounded several Marines but had little impact on the town or the Iraqis themselves. These two events (two of the largest SVBIEDs seen in the AO) were the final major acts of the AQI fueled insurgency in Saqlawiyah.

The enhanced security measures emplaced due to the attacks brought one final opportunity that facilitated the Iraqis taking charge of their own security. The security measures negatively impacted the town center and marketplace which angered the populace (though they understood the reasoning). They reacted by staging several non-violent protest marches in the center of the town at the police station. The Police Chief initially panicked and demanded assistance in handling the protest. Marines instead observed, thereby forcing the Police Chief to deal with his fellow citizens. This forced the Chief to come up with alternative options that suited both the town and the security situation. This end solution was driven and executed by the Iraqis and supported by the Marines. When the town realized they were in charge of their own fate, they reacted in kind and began taking steps to further their own destiny.

Appendix B. Iraqi Perspectives

Notes on conventions used in the transcripts

- Ranks. The first time a service member is identified, their rank is spelled out; subsequently, their rank is abbreviated in accordance with their service affiliation. Ranks are spelled out in the footnotes.
- Time “hacks” on transcripts correspond to video so they can be used to identify areas to use as clips for the movie, the DVD and for further research into specific areas.
- For al- or Al- or Al in a proper name: When “al” is in the middle of the name, in a last name, for example, it should be lower case with a hyphen, such as Nuri al-Maliki. If the name is by itself then the “al” is capitalized, as in Al-Maliki.
- The majority of tribal names begin with the term *albu*, a formal characterization of *the*. When the tribal name is included in an individual’s name, the prefix “al-” is added and the tribal name changes slightly, usually with the addition of *awi* or *i* at the end. For example, Albu-Risha becomes al-Rishawi and al-Assafi denotes a member of the Assaf tribe or Albu-Assaf.

13 February 2011

Subject: Interview with Sheikh Mishan Albu-Jumayli,⁶¹ paramount sheikh of the Jumayli tribe from Al Karmah

Sheikh Mishan Albu-Jumayli, paramount sheikh of the Jumayli tribe from Al Karmah was interviewed on 7 February 2011 at the Hyatt Hotel in Amman. He currently lives in Syria, but travels periodically to Amman for medical reasons.

According to General Allen who was the Deputy Commander for MNF-W at the time, Al Karmah, located in the far east of the province, just south of the quarry area, was always a problem. He thought that if the Coalition could get Sheikh Mishan to come back, that he could assemble the Albu-Jumayli and its sub-tribes, into a coherent, cohesive whole ultimately to help the Coalition oppose Al Qaeda in that portion of the province. The strategy was to create a “The Tribal Wall around Fallujah”. After clearing out Fallujah the last time, the Coalition sought to create an alliance with all of the five principal tribes around Fallujah to prevent the tribal land from being either an R&R spot for Al Qaeda, or an infiltration route.



Sheikh Mishan Albu-Jumayli

According to Allen, Sheikh Mishan’s wife had died of a broken heart after two of their sons had been killed by IEDs, and he had two sons left, one still in the country and one with him in Syria. Allen met with Mishan in Amman, Jordan—a meeting arranged by Sheikh Tariq of the Halbusi tribe (Sheikh Tariq was interviewed on 3 February). Allen told Mishan that when he was ready to return to Iraq that Allen would provide the transportation, “fortify your home and train and organize your personal security detachment.”

Several weeks later Allen received a call his liaison officer in Amman, “Sheikh Mishan’s son in Al Karmah has been killed by an IED, he’s ready to come back.” The following is a summary of the Sheikh Mishan’s comments followed by the interview transcript.

When the Coalition entered Iraq, the Iraqis thought they would be liberated and wanted to negotiate with the U.S. to help show them the way. However, the Coalition brought an uneducated man, Bremer, who took the wrong path and both US and Iraq suffered. Insulting the heads of tribes and Islamic clerics, killing the innocents, were all mistakes.

Sheikh Mishan’s first contact with the Coalition was on 1 September 2003 when the Americans came to his neighborhood and asked him, “Has Saddam been here, and if so, when?” He thought, “This is ridiculous, Saddam had been my enemy for 35 years. Does the enemy

⁶¹ Sheikh Mishan Albu-Jumayli, interview with Dr. William (Bill) Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 3 February 2011, Amman, Jordan.

come to his enemy to hide?” The commander of the Coalition asked many questions and ate lunch at his house. Thirty minutes after Coalition forces left, the Islamic Party came, and asked why he was talking to the US? Sheikh Mishan told them what happened but by the next morning someone had written on his wall that he was a traitor because he talked to the US.

The Islamic Party was killing innocent people and tried to assassinate him. In 2004 they killed his cousin and his son and infiltrated Fallujah. There was a market in Fallujah where you could purchase weapons for very little money. Mishan was confused because the Americans saw this but didn’t do anything about it. In May 2005 conditions worsened so he left for Syria, life was much easier and cheaper there. Seven days after he departed Iraq, his son who was the head of the provincial council in Al Karmah was kidnapped. The kidnappers were asking for half a million dollars. He was prepared to sell everything in order to get his son back, but the insurgents beheaded his son and threw his body in Saddam Tharthar. The insurgents were being financed from other countries and were paying Iraqis to kill people in his tribe. These conditions remained until 2007.

In early 2007, Brigadier General Allen, Deputy Commander, Multi-National Forces-West requested he meet him in Jordan. Allen told him that he wanted him to go back to Fallujah and save his family and people from the insurgents. Mishan said, “I can’t return because there is too much corruption and torture.” He told Allen that the US assists insurgents by taking away all their weapons and then the US doesn’t protect them.

In June 2007 he sent his son Nehab to collect money from renters near Fallujah and he was killed by an IED. That was his third son who died. He then decided to go back to Iraq and fight Al Qaeda. He went to visit Sheikh Tariq al-Halbusi in Amman and asked Tariq to return with him to Iraq, but Tariq said, “No, I have my son Hameed there [in Fallujah to take care of things]. According to Mishan, Wahleed al-Halbusi, who was related to Tariq, was the terrorist ruler of Al Karmah.

On 3 July 2007 he and his cousins met with Allen to return to Iraq. When he arrived in Fallujah by helicopter, General Gaskin and others were there to welcome him. When people found out he came back to fight Al Qaeda, many residents joined him. By that time the Insurgency had moved from Ramadi to Al Karmah. He was glad to hear of the Awakening and how Sheikh Sattar took responsibility to save the people of Ramadi. But, Sheikh Sattar’s forces only controlled the area from Ramadi to Habbaniyah which was west of Al Karmah.

Mishan said the Awakening in Al Karmah was much different from Sattar’s awakening in Ramadi in terms of the violence, police recruitment and Coalition support.

1. Insurgents tried to blow up all houses on his street including his—it was a mess. 2. When they started their police recruitment there was no vetting of the police, anyone could join. 3. The US took up all their weapons and left Mishan’s people with small arms such as the AK-47. 4. The Coalition watched as the al-Halbusi’s consistently mortared his area. The

Coalition said, “Be patient, we have people there.” But Mishan’s people kept getting killed; he lost his 19 year old daughter, brother, and cousin. One day when the Coalition was visiting, his compound was mortared, the Coalition then started to understand the danger.

The same day he buried his daughter, cousin and brother he met with Sheikh Sattar and General Allen. They talked about cooperating, but the US was listening more to Sattar and the Islamic Party than they were to him. Mishan’s compound continued to be attacked by Al Qaeda and despite the Coalition’s talk of rebuilding; the area was not secure enough to begin rebuilding.

On 26 June 2008, a meeting of Al Karmah town council was convened, but the Coalition allowed attendees to enter the hall without being cleared. Mishan was not at the meeting because he was sick. There was an explosion at the meeting and his cousins, uncle, and brother died. Additionally, the battalion commander and other Coalition forces were killed in the explosion.⁶²

Sheikh Mishan’s final comment was that the Awakening was a tribal awakening but Sheikh Ahmed Albu-Risha turned it into a political party. Ahmed opened offices in Mishan’s area without asking him. To Mishan, this did not unite the tribes and he doesn’t think Iraq needs anymore political parties. There are already over 300.

Sheikh Mishan was interviewed by Dr. William (Bill) Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves and Ms. Mary Hawkins, on 3 February 2011. A translator was used for the interview.

Dr. William Knarr: Sir, it’s an honor for us to have an opportunity to talk to you. You’ve made so many sacrifices and it’s truly an honor for us to be here.

Sheikh Mishan Albu-Jumayli: Thank you. God bless you. And thank you for inviting me here. It’s an honor for me to be here, to show you the reality and the facts of what happened in Iraq. From our Arab tradition, we care, and we should care about our neighbors, because the prophet Muhammad as said, he said to us, “Look after your neighbor, and your neighbor twice, and then your brother.” This is, does not; is not accepted by God or by other God worshippers [like Saddam is]. And I don’t want to mention any names because everybody knows who started, who did all this to us, the suffering in Iraq. And we’re waiting for the day of liberation in Iraq. When the Coalition agreed to come and liberate us we thought that they would be coming to liberate us and change the regime in Iraq only. After the Americans invaded in 2003 we accepted them and wanted to negotiate with them to support the Iraqi people. They took the wrong path that suffered, and both we and the Americans suffered. They made some big mistakes and brought the

⁶² Mary Vorsino, Honolulu Advertiser, 29 June 2008, “Suicide Bomber Kills Three Hawaii Marines,” the Commander of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Company Commander of Fox Company and a Corporal.

wrong uneducated illiterate ruler called Bremer. He was advised by the wrong people. The biggest mistake that he made was dissolving the Iraq Army. Yes there were some bad people among them, but not all the Iraqis are bad.

As you know, in our Province in Anbar, and Fallujah especially we welcomed the Americans and they understood us and we negotiated with them and we gave them all the right and the honest advice that Iraqis, they cannot be suppressed. And one of the mistakes the Americans did as well was insult the head of tribes and the clerics, the religious clerics.

I'll give you an example on that: On the first of September, 2003, I had a meeting with the Americans in Ramadi and Fallujah too and I returned back home at 3:30 in the afternoon to my guest house, I just sat down, I heard the tanks rolling, and the children I can hear them saying, "The Americans, the Americans, the Americans!" and I went out and I saw they are inside my guest house. And at the time when they were arresting the Sheikhs they put a bag on his head, tie his arms and take him away. I was thinking, "How the hell are they going to put the bag on my head?" So the, the Commander asked me through the translator, "Are you Mr. Sheikh Mishan Al Jumayli" I said, "Yes, I am Sheikh Mishan al Jumayli" He then starts talking to the translator and after a minute the gentleman asked me, "Can we sit down?" I said, "Please come in, sit down in my house." They sat down and he got a book out of his pocket. The first question he asked me, he asked me, "Saddam Hussein has been visiting you in your house, I want to know from you when did Saddam Hussein come to your house and at what time?" So I answered him by saying, "Saddam Hussein and I, we are enemies since 35 years ago. As you know that my cousins, Abdul Rahaman Arif and Abdul Salaman Arif, the Presidents of Iraq prior to Saddam Hussein, before the Ba'ath Party of course, that was is [1968] and we've been pushed away by Saddam Hussein.

Can I ask you a question: Does the enemy come to his enemy?" I asked this question. He said to me, "Ok." The next question he asked me, "As you are the head of the tribe of this area, I want the names of the Ba'athists in your area." We are independent, so I answered, "We are independent people. We don't know who is the Ba'ath and who is not Ba'ath. He asked me, the Brigade Commander, "Who is controlling you? Who is ruling you?" [I said], "The Governor of us in Fallujah." He said, "Ok." The third question was, "There's somebody shooting at us. Who is shooting at us? Who is targeting us?" I said, "I don't know. All we hear is the bullet noise." And he pointed in one direction and he said, "That's where the bullet is coming from." And I said, "Oh, really? I don't know how. We have an open border, we don't know where they are coming from, it's chaos in the area." So I was waiting for the tea to come and be served, so I could serve them tea. He asked me the fourth question, "There are leaflets being distributed in the area telling your people to kill the Americans. Who is distributing these leaflets?" "I have no idea who." So they served tea then.

He said to me, "We haven't had lunch yet. We want something to eat." I said, "It's four o'clock, what should I do? I cannot slaughter a lamb. It's too late." So I sent for food from outside, [restaurant in Fallujah] because I cannot let them go without having something to eat. I wanted them to have the tea, to come to my house as well so we can cooperate, understand each other; and start to communication with each other. This is one of our traditions, whoever comes to our house must have lunch. I did not want to bring food from the restaurant, I wanted to slaughter a lamb for them, but it was a bit too late for me. They had their lunch and departed from the house, 18:30.

Half an hour later, after they departed from my house, another group came in, from the Islamic Party. They asked me, "What did the American come into your house for?" and I told them that we talked about the situation and how to keep the peace and harmony in our area. I also said, "There were some people are telling the Americans that Saddam Hussein come and visit me, and they came to ask me and I told them that I have had no contact with Saddam at all and the American understood what I said and they departed." And the Islamic Party brought a big clock and they put it on my wall, which I refused to accept it from them, but they insisted to put their clock on the wall.

The next morning I woke up and saw that they have written on my wall, "The Spy, Mishan Jumayli, he betrayed us by speaking to the Americans" it was all over my wall.

So I started wondering and thinking what the Islamic Party is trying to do as I don't trust them any longer. The Islamic people, some of them are nice guys, good guys. People like me who have not joined the Islamic Party, are not a member of the Islamic Party and spoke to the Americans, they would slaughter me the next day, they would slaughter them the next day. So we start the conflict with the Islamic Party and they start fighting me, and the Islamic Extremist started talking and starting harming people, killing innocent people, but I continued my good relation with the Americans. I was a member of the Government Council in Ramadi at the beginning and then I was a member of the Council in Fallujah. We encouraged people to work and secure the area in Fallujah, and to stop the violence and the killing and the [hatred] against the Americans. And at the time we ruled Fallujah it was peaceful. The Islamic Party started to realize who That I was accepted by the all the head of tribes, I was liked by the people of Fallujah, so they start a war against me. Many of them, and they tried to attempt to assassinate me, many times.

Knarr: Who did that?

Mishan: Mainly from the Islamic Party. They were corrupt, and "You're either with more against me." I said, "I don't want to join, I'm not a politician; I don't want to join any party. We are a league, we are independent, but nobody can control us and we obey only the law."

In 2004 they assassinated my cousin, he was the first one to be assassinated, and then they assassinated my son, Abdul Nassir, and then they injured my son Napan. One of my cousins was killed by the Americans by mistake. My cousin, he didn't know at the time, because at the beginning of the war many people didn't know the way of the Americans dealing with us, my cousin was in his truck and the Americans start flashing some lights. They didn't know the reason for flashing the lights, so the Americans shot at them and killed them. And one of my children was assassinated, my other son was injured, but the Americans took him for eight months and thank God that he recovered from it. I don't blame the Americans for the killing of my cousin, because my cousins were mistaken, they should have stopped when the lights were flashed. It is a mistake from both sides. And we continued with these situations until 2005, up to 2005. Because I was in control of Fallujah at the time and the people. I was really in charge of the security there.

Knarr: Then in 2004, what happened in Fallujah?

Mishan: I was telling you earlier about the Islamic Party. Suddenly in 2004, we would find checkpoints run by civilians. All we see is people with masks on their head and we can see only their eyes, but I have no idea who sent them. I think in 2004, when some of the civilians killed contractors, killed Americans...

Knarr: In late March 2004.

Mishan: I thought they were civilian contractors, I think, who were killed.

Knarr: Four contractors, Black Water, late March 2004.

Mishan: Yes, you are right, God bless you. I didn't know who assassinated them and who killed them. So, we lost control of Fallujah and Fallujah was infiltrated, and they're using Fallujah in the name of Islam. We lost Fallujah. I used to go to Fallujah see the man standing with mask controlling the area with PKCs [machine guns]. "What the hell is going on? I have no idea!" And they opened the market where you can buy and sell weapons at very cheap price, and the Americans were watching that!

The situation was getting worse until I think it was in June or July of 2005. In June or July of 2005, I heard on the radio by the Islamic Party's channel, that "Mishan Jumayli was assassinated." So I start receiving calls. I said, "Yes" as I answered the phone. Everybody said, "You are safe? We just heard on the radio you have been assassinated!" I said, "No, I'm here, no body assassinated me." There was a rumor going on, for about three/four hours that I was assassinated. I said, "It's better to move from my place into another area. There's something going on."

At nine o'clock in the evening I received a call from a gentleman, I don't know who, saying there is a problem between a group of people and the only guy who can solve this situation is you, Sheikh Mishan. If you come the problem will be solved, if you don't

come they will continue fighting among themselves. It's important for you to attend now to solve the situation." So I start to realize, "There's something going on." I asked the guy on the phone, "Do you know where I am?" He answered by saying, "You are in Al Karmah, in your family's house." I said, "No, I'm not in Al Karmah. I'm in Baghdad. How can I get from Baghdad to Al Karmah at this time of night, at this time of the evening? Baghdad is surrounded. I cannot come to attend to solve the problem." So he just started begging me and insisting that I must come back. I said, "Sorry, I cannot really make it" so I put the phone down.

And then I called somebody who has got a GMC Suburban. I asked him, "Can you take me now immediately to Syria?" I couldn't come to Jordan for special circumstances and expenses. It's much harder to live in Jordan, much cheaper to us to live in Syria, so I decided to go to Syria. So in the evening we left Baghdad on the way to Syria, by morning we're in Syria and I went to a Shia district in Damascus. When I got there, I saw everybody's [hitting] themselves and I said, "This is not my way to live. I cannot live among these people. Take me to another District, Hama District."

We've got nothing against the Shia, but the way I saw them living, we are no different between Shia and Sunnis at all. The extremist, religious people are using this excuse to differentiate between us as Shi and Sunni. As you know some of my tribal people live in Nazarai and Basrah and Armarah and they are Shia, so some of my tribe, they are Shias, we are all the same. We get married from each other, Shias and Sunnis, there is not a problem, it's a normal thing to us. So I lived in Syria. I went to Hama in Syria, seven days later...

Knarr: When did you move to Syria?

Mishan: Around the 27th of May, 2005.

We have cousins in Amman and I saw my cousin Napan was thinking that there's something going on, but they're not telling me what's going on. A week after I left, I was in Syria. So I asked them, "Come and talk to me. What's going on?" They said, "There's nothing going on." And then I found out they contacted them telling them my son Arkhan had been kidnapped. My son was the head of the Provincial Council in Al Karmah. The people have nominated him, they elected him. It was a political council in Al Karmah and after seven days he was kidnapped. And I was contacting many people who I used to talk to in Fallujah to find out what's happened and where is my son. So, after negotiation, many calls, somebody told me, "If you give us half a million dollars we will release him." I have never seen 500 thousand dollars, never mind 10 thousand dollars. A Defter is a book, it is 10 thousand dollars. So, when they asked for 50 Defters, or 50 books, it's 500 thousand. We've don't have the dollars, never mind to have half a million dollars.

So, I told them sell my estate, whatever estate I have sell it and take money, take my house, take my guest house, take whatever I have just to save me son; just save my son! And by then we found out my son was beheaded and killed and his body, we found it on the Tharthar. They just threw him in without burying him. They let the dogs and the animals eat his body. Many of my cousins were kidnapped, some of them were released, some of them were slaughtered, beheaded. I remained in Syria. In the beginning of 2006; during 2005 they were slaughtering and killing people in our area in 2005/2006. And they concentrated on the killing of members of my tribes, anybody who I spoke to, they slaughtered and killed.

Knarr: Who was doing the killing?

Mishan: They are Iraqis, and there are Arabs and other nationalities supported and financed by neighboring people. Some of the clerics and the religious people, they're all foreign Arabs, of Arab nationality, not Iraqis. They were paying the Iraqis to assassinate us.

Knarr: Was there an Iraqi organization? Was it the Islamic Party?

Mishan: As you know after the invasion there were at 300/400 parties, we don't know how many parties there were so many parties, we lost count of the parties that were open. The Islamic Party started killing us, the Ba'ath Party's killing us, al Dawah Party is working against us, we suffered really from the parties who were calling themselves the Islamic Parties, the extreme Islamic Parties, that's who killed and hurt us. They used Islam in the name of assassinating us. If you become a member with them you are saved. If you're against them or not joining them, you will be killed. We remained like this until 2007, and then in the District called Shihabi District, next to the Fallujah Cement Factory, my cousins woke up and decided to protect their area by themselves. Some people start to come to them, he said, "Stop protecting the area. If you don't stop protecting that area, we're going to hurt you, we'll kill you, we'll assassinate you; we'll slaughter you," and they start come on a daily basis threatening them to stop securing the area."

Munther: What was their job prior to that?

Mishan: One of them was a Police Officer, the other one was a former pilot. They decided to organize protection for their area and they started protecting themselves against the insurgents.

Knarr: In 2007?

Mishan: In beginning of 2007. After many negotiations, they refused to stop protecting the area. One day they attacked them at night. Many cars full with armor, armed people, well equipped, they attacked my cousins from the [Euphrates], the Tigris side. From the Tigris side they attacked them from the other side with many, plenty of cars and armed people full of it. They start having big battle, us, my cousins and the insurgents.

Knarr: Where was the battle?

Mishan: Al Karmah...Al Karmah is a wide area. We won that battle and the insurgents started running away. On their escape they saw a wedding, they got into the wedding and they kidnapped 30 people from the wedding, some of them children, some of them women, some of the young men as well. One of the guys they kidnapped was my grandson. His name was Jamal Abdul Nasar Mishan, Abdul Nasar's son. So, they kidnapped him, and he was only a child. When they asked him, "What's your name?" The boy said, "My name is Muhammed Abid Allabus" he did not give them the real name of his father; he gave them the mother's side name. So they released him in the desert. I was living in Syria but I hear the news. They took the rest of the people to the Tharthar and they punished them and tortured them. Some of them slaughtered were slaughtered like a lamb.

One of my people, Brahim Chisna, and one of my friends Hatim Brahim, they [the insurgents] said to him, "We're going to slaughter your sons one after another" and he had to witness two of his sons being slaughtered in front of him. The other, [Salman Humayaday] group, the insurgents put tires around their neck, put gas on top of the tires and they burned them alive. The rest of the people, they put them in a room and it was really hot and they suffocated inside.

At the beginning of 2006 when I was living in Syria, prior to Sattar Albu Risha, John Allen requested me to come and visit him here in Jordan, General John Allen, and a friend of ours called Lamir Jumayli, he was a linguist, and other Generals, officers. We had a meeting. And I can't remember the month but it was in 2006. General Allen said to me, I want you to go back to your family in Iraq and save your people and your groups from the insurgency. I wanted to go back. But with all the suffering I said, "I can never return back to Iraq. I would rather die outside than die in Iraq. The corruptions and the torturing, they're torturing us and punishing us in the name of all the religion. I'd rather not come back at all.

He said to me, "if Sheikh Mishan come back they can start fighting and isolate all this terrorism in the area." I said, "Mr. General, God bless you and thanks be the way your feelings towards me" I said, "You must have made these people, the insurgents from what we can see. You're assisting these insurgencies." So he said, "How do we assist them?" I said, "I will say it frankly to you. You come to the city, you come to the villages, you come to our districts, and you take all our arms away from us. You leave us without anything to defend our self. A day later we see these insurgents with PKC full of cars come and attack us and we're standing there watching them. We cannot defend ourselves. They take the son, the boy out of, the son in front of his father. They take the cousin in front of their cousins. They take the brother away from the brother, killing them. And we cannot fight them. We haven't got any arms to defend ourselves, or to fight them back. And you're watching them, you're watching what act they're doing and

you don't move. You don't protect us! So we are start wondering and mistrust you. So, you are assisting them and you're accepting what's happening in the area. So, you must be supporting them." Again he said, "Please come back and we will protect you." And I answered, the General by saying, "God can protect me, not you. And I apologized, and he accepted my apology, and I went back to Syria.

While I was in Syria I had no work, no income, but people contacted me to tell me that my people are being slaughtered and murdered. After a while we heard of something called the Awakening. The leader of that Awakening Abdul Sattar Albu Risha; they are a good family. He started and he took the responsibility to save the people of Ramadi from their suffering and worked with our friends, our brothers, the Americans. To me, I appreciate, the work to secure the safety and security of the Anbar Province as whole. I remained in Syria as Abdul Sattar started the Awakening. We are very glad and happy, me and my cousins and my uncles who had to migrate to Syria were glad to see the progress that Albu Risha was doing. So in June 2007 I send my son Napan back to Iraq to try to get us some money, so we can live. He was the third martyr of course. I brought all my family to Syria, because they were slaughtering all my members of my family, even the child they slaughtered the baby.

So I sent my son Napan to go back to Iraq to get us some money. And the insurgents knew at the time that my son Napan was returning to Fallujah. Four days later after he arrived in Fallujah, he went to the farmer to pick some money up. As he got into Fallujah there was an IED on the side of the road to assassinate him. He went to see the farmer, on his way back, he was riding a motorbike, and he got killed.

Knarr: I'm so sorry.

Mishan: That's my third son, and he's the third martyr. I then wondered what's going to happen to us? All my family is going to be abolished completely. Even the women, they're going to be assassinated. So far we had 60 martyrs from my family and my cousins, and they're also in Syria. I decided to go back to join my cousin, as I spoke to him earlier, Sadun Al Talib, in fighting Al Qaeda. So I contacted Mr. Amir Jumayli. I decided to go back to serve my country and my people. He invited me to [Balad] because he said they will slaughter you on the way back to Iraq. So Mr. Amir asked me to my name, full name, and the names of other people who want to return back to Iraq. And he contacted Mr. General Allen. I was invited to come back to Jordan. When I got into Jordan I saw General Allen. He welcomed me. And I went to visit Sheikh [Tariq Hala Abdulla]. Sheikh Tariq is from Al Karmah. And a gentleman with me at the time, Mr. Sattar Al Gafa Jumayli, he accompanied me to visit Sheikh Tariq Abdulla Halbusi. I asked Sheikh Tariq, "Look a lot of my members of my family being killed and suffering." And I asked Sheikh Tariq, "Are you staying in here while we see our tribes slaughtered back home?" Because the ruler of Al Karmah is the cousin of Sheikh Tariq and his name, Mr. Wahleed Halbusi, he's the ruler of

Al Karmah but not the elected the ruler, he's the ruler of the insurgency in Al Karmah, and he was giving the orders, who to be slaughtered and who to be killed.

Knarr: His name was Wahleed?

Mishan: Wahleed Halbusi. I went to Sheikh Tariq to talk to him about him. It's a long story.

Knarr: Please, I want to know this story.

Mishan: So I asked Sheikh Tariq, "You are rich, you've got money and you've got businesses, let's go and save our people. Let's cooperate together. So I asked him to come with us, but he said, "No. You go back to Iraq. I've got my brother Hassan" Hassan Halbusi who was in Iraq, Sheikh Tariq told me that, "I will speak to Hassan to help and cooperate with you, to work together."

Knarr: Was Wahleed related to Tariq?

Munther: Halbusi's cousin.

Mishan: Even from my tribe, Jumayli tribe, some joined Al Qaeda. And everybody was waiting for me to come back so I can save them. And even the one who was from the Al Qaeda, once I returned back they would change and they would come and join us to fight Al Qaeda. Some of my tribes were controlled by Wahleed, Halbusi and the rest, "If you don't join the insurgency and join Al Qaeda we'll assassinate you!" So Wahleed, Halbusi and the others were controlling the area. And somebody called Hammed Brahim Amar Naji, they were all member of Al Qaeda. His surname, nickname, Hammed Brahim was Muhammed Kurdi because his uncles were from Kurdistan, and his nickname was Muhammed Kurdi and everybody knew he was a member of Al Qaeda, and he was from my tribe. A lot of people like him... And there's another person from my tribe called Hamid Rabier, he was a member of the Al Qaeda. I don't want to accuse other tribes, but some of my people joined Al Qaeda too. So I asked Tariq to come with me, but Tariq refused so I said, "Goodbye" and left. So we went back to the hotel and we met General Allen on the 3rd of July, 2007. Me and my cousin went with General Allen back to Iraq.

We left from here and I think we went to Asad Base, we landed Asad Base and then we transferred from the C130 into helos, and I think we landed in Fallujah then. General Allen was with us all the way until we got into Fallujah and they welcomed us. General Gaskin was there to welcome us and gentleman Simcock.

Knarr: Colonel Simcock, the regimental commander.

Mishan: And other officials, officers, other American Officers were there. And there was Mr. Sadun Talab there to welcome me and my cousins; Talab was there to welcome me back. And then we went to the Shahabi District. So our people entered into the Karmah District, they came to welcome me, "The head of the tribes, the Sheikh has arrived!" The

uprising started as they all stood with me. The Al Qaeda centered in the Karmah area, because Sattar Albu Risha were fighting them in Ramadi, they moved from Ramadi to the Karmah area. Sattar Albu Risha never came to Al Karmah or Fallujah. He reached up to Habbaniyah area only, he did not continue all the way to Fallujah and Al Karmah. I remained in the Shahabi District by my people and to Al Karmah, that they kept me in Al Karmah to save my life. And when the Sheikh, the tribe, the rest of the tribes and the people knew that the fight has started against Al Qaeda everybody joined forces. An American General, he used to be in contact with me all the time following the progress that we are going through, his name is Reef.

Knarr: Reist?

Mishan: Reef. He told me, "Do not enter Al Karmah until we give you the green light. Remain in the Shahabi District but do not go into Al Karmah until we give you the green light. We will take you." Three, four days later, maybe up to five days; [Hamis] came to my house and somebody was in command, his name was Red. The Americans took me all the way to Al Karmah. Around ten days later we liberated 20 square kilometers from the area from Al Qaeda. At that time, another group entered with us. I think they might be from Almar Kurdia, Almar Naji and Hamid Kurdia group, so I wasn't trusting who they were. But I talked to them and I forgave them, I told them, "Change your ways, come back to our side, come and defend the area."

But prior to me going back to Iraq I gathered all my family here and I made them swear on the Koran, that when, "We go back to liberate our people from Al Qaeda, there will be no revenge against those who killed us, no revenge at all. And let us forget the past, and we will open a new page, and hope and pray to God that we will be victorious against Al Qaeda. And we respect and cooperate with the other side, which is the American side, the friendly side. I respect them and they respect us."

We achieved our aim. Ten days later I was sitting in my guest house, they brought a gentleman to me. I asked, "Who's this man? He said, "This is the guy who placed the IED that killed your son." I have the Koran and promised myself and my tribe that we will not revenge against anybody and we start to forgive people. So what do I do? Should I kill him? He killed my son! I said, "Give me my rifle." He start shaking, he thought I'm going to kill him. I said to him, "Here take this rifle." He didn't believe me, because I asked him, I said, "Did you assassinate my son Napan?" He said, "Yes, I did." I said, "Why did you kill him? What did he do? What made you kill my son?" "Because the infidels" he means Al Qaeda, "pushed me to do such a thing. I want your forgiveness. I killed him for no reason, so please forgive me what I did."

I gave him the rifle and I gave him the Awakening belt so the American they can see, the helos when we have this belt like a reflector belt, they know that we are from the Awak-

ening, and I sent him with one of my men. I said, "Now this guy has learned his lesson. Take him to the check point and let him protect us."

Three days after this happened and I forgave who assassinated my son, we had another attack from the Tigress side again, a big attack. They were fully armed, PKCs, suicidal belts, trucks full of TNT, they came, they entered from the al-Rofa area, it's north of Al Karmah. This path directly comes to my guest house. We had only small rifles, we were not ready to fight them back. We thank the Americans at the time, because they allowed us to carry weapons to defend ourselves, but they did not equip us with any weapons, we had to go and get the weapons ourselves. The Americans did not help arm us. And I have no contact with Albu Risha, my Awakening was separate from Sattar Albu Risha's Awakening. My contact [was] directly with our friendly people, the Americans, my link.

The Al Qaeda, they destroyed the first two houses on the way towards us. The two houses north from the Jumayli tribe, from my people. One of the houses belonged to Hamas Sahan, he's from my tribe and the other house belonged to Halaf Salman. They demolished the houses completely. And they were thinking of demolishing all the houses on their way to come to me, they demolished them with TNT and the last one would be my guest house with a car full of TNTs. They were surprised to see my people were there. Some of them had suicidal belt on them, and they start killing each other, they were in a big mess at the time. And the Americans were watching us fighting them. When the battle ended the American came and collected all the weapons. They collected it all. They had the TNT, PKC that they were carrying, the Americans took it all. We stayed with the simple rifles. Three, four days later I was at the Shahabi Police Station. Me and my people, with my cousins, my cousins were there, Sadun Talab, and there was a commander, an American Commander, L'Etoile.

Knarr: L'Etoile, Joe L'Etoile? Yeah, I know Joe.

Mishan: L'Etoile entered the police station, he was carrying a weapon called the Hadiyah, he brought it from what the Al Qaeda, insurgents left, he picked it up and brought one for me. He said, "This is a present to you Sheikh. Thank you and your people on your victory against Al Qaeda." I took the rifle from him. "Thank you for this present." I thanked him and appreciated the way he saw us fighting Al Qaeda. But I tell you something, I told my tribe people that I am responsible in my district only. Because we cannot interfere with others.

He's a brave man and a good Military guy [LtCol L'Etoile]. We did not interfere with the other side, with the other tribes in the east of Al Karmah. We didn't want to corrupt and interfere in anybody's businesses, so we defended our area only. I was talking to the American Commander at the time, Red his name, "How do you allow these guys attack-

ing me all the time?” After L’Etoile, who came after L’Etoile somebody called Nastasi. Do you know him?

Knarr: I don’t know Nastasi.

Mishan: “If you don’t stop them attacking me, just give me the green light so I and my tribe can go in and completely destroy them.” He kept telling me, “Be patient and wait.” “You keep telling me to be patient, take my time, and my people are being killed daily basis from the Halabsa side. How do you accept it? Why don’t you allow me to go and fight?” He said, “We have some friends among...” “I’m being frank with you. They are slaughtering us. And we are working with you and cooperating with you. Just let us go in! And we have the peace and security in our district now, and these guys keep attacking us. And they are hitting us every day, bombing us every day from the Halbusi side.” He said, “No, we have friends with them. We can’t allow you to go and fight.” More incoming, every three days we had incoming. In one incoming I lost my daughter. She was only 19. And my brother Jassam was injured, and my cousin Salaf, he died too in my second home. Red did not stop them from hitting us. One day it was announced, “Anybody who wants to volunteer to work in the Police, let him come and register.” And I can see, there are some gangsters. Some of them I knew they are either supporter of Al Qaeda or from Al Qaeda themselves. And nobody can guarantee them, who they are. But nobody was listening to me at that time, nobody was listening. They were taking instructions and orders from Ramadi.

Munther: Who is not helping you?

Mishan: The government, local government in Ramadi, they were not assisting me, not listening to me after all my sacrifices. As you know, they appointed 28,000 policemen and I had only 60 policemen in the whole of the Karmah District, and it’s the biggest district area in the whole of Anbar. The local government or the Provincial Government was controlled by the parties then; the Islamic party at the time. I was not a part of them, I did not join their party, so I was independent.

One day the Commander Nastasi and Red were in my guest house. We started to put the list together on who would like to volunteer and join the policemen and we had a long [cue] in my area. While the men were standing in the cue to register, we had an incoming, and luckily it hit the roof of the house. If it were centimeters away, it would hit in the middle and many of my people would have died, and even the Americans would have died too. So I said to Red, “Is this what you wanted? If it had hit us we would have been dead. And I was all along telling you, let’s get revenge, let’s fight them back and he said, “No I’ve got friends with them.”

So I went to see Sattar Albu Risha at the time. I said, “Look, you are the Awakening. Let’s cooperate and work together, because nobody’s supporting me.” So Sattar said to

me, “You are the head of the Awakening in Fallujah/Al Karmah only. We are separate from you.” But I asked, “Look we need some assistance, some help. The Awakening is started. Let’s work for all of the province.”

There was an important meeting in Ramadi. General Allen was there and other Generals I think from Baghdad, and that was the day I was burying my daughter and my cousin and my brother, and I left the burial. I ran to the meeting in Ramadi because I thought it was so important for the Awakening the whole of Anbar. And even Sattar at the time he apologized and said, “Thank you for coming. You left a burial, to bury your daughter to attend such an important meeting.”

The Americans were listening to Abdul Sattar and the Islamic Party more than they were listening to me. It was like a sign; they put me on the shelf. I continued like that until Abdul Sattar gave me the title, “The head of the Awakening in Al Karmah and Fallujah” so hopefully that we will work together. But, it was unfortunate that he was assassinated.

The danger was in Al Karmah; the whole of Al Qaeda ran from Ramadi and gathered in the Karmah area. Then when Red was there and we were attacked by the incoming, he start moving And he told me that the people who hit us that day were attacked by a helo and they were all killed. Red was transferred; and with Nastasi somebody else came called Jones, Captain Jones. He listened to us, because Nastasi understood the situation so Jones was more understanding. Nastasi was listening to me. I was very frank to him. General Allen and I went to the burial of Abdul Sattar.

Knarr: Ah yes, September 2007.

Mishan: After he returned from the States, a week later, God bless his soul. The important thing now; Ahmed Albu Risha took over, I stayed to control Al Karmah, the stabilization of Al Karmah. And General Petraeus came and visited me in Al Karmah and there was another gentleman with him. Jones and the group, the businessmen used to come and see me as well, and the American kept asking me, “What do you need, what do you want?” I said, “All that I ask is peace and harmony, that’s all I want, peace and security.” And the businessmen used to come and tell me, “Let’s start working with the reconstruction” and I keep telling them, “Hold on. Al Karmah is not completely cleared. We cannot build because it would be destroyed again.” The American kept asking me as well, “Are there any agricultural projects?” I keep saying, “Hold on now until we make sure there’s security in the area.” Because we had no agriculture for four, five years in the area, the future was getting worse, we couldn’t plant any agriculture. If you come and spend money now on agriculture, on other projects, it’s not worth it until we make sure everything is in the right time.

Somebody from the head of the reconstruction, the Provincial Reconstruction Team would come and visit me, and one of them was a Chinese looking guy. One day Jones

came to visit me and told me, "Sheikhs we're going to give you 4,000 to 5,000 head of lambs." So I asked him, "Where are we going to put them? I cannot feed my Awakening people, let alone to feed the lambs!" It's impossible to get 4,000-5,000, honestly! I said, "I'm sorry. Let's talk about something else. And I told him then the agriculture does not work. "Do not mess with the agriculture yet." I told him, "Let's get Army; let's get soldiers in here. That's what we need. One day they brought me tractors so we can get some agriculture going and we have some income. This is not worth it. What do I do with tractors? I said to their president, I said, "Thank you." So I gathered my people and celebrated the gift from the Coalition and gathered every five/six families, some of them were open, some who suffered just like us, every five/six family I gave them a tractor so they can start agriculture and get some income to live on. Nastasi was transferred and has another guy called Galaleigh, another Captain or Major Galaleigh.

Knarr: I don't know him.

Mishan: Replacing Jones' replacement was Captain or Major called Link. Link was there, what I mean Americans were attending this celebration when I gave the tractors away as a gift to the poor people. Some of the Generals and other Americans, Officers, used to ask me, "What will happen now to the Awakening? It's finished. Where will all the Awakening people go?" I don't know what others told them, but I told them, I said, "Let's start opening and organizing a humanitarian organization to work with the people, to work to rebuild, to work to teach them after all the suffering for so many years." This is what our aim is. And as you know the Awakening is a tribal Awakening. All our tribes got together, assisted by our friends the Americans, and if it wasn't for the tribes we wouldn't have ridded Anbar of the Al Qaeda and the insurgents. We stood with our friends the Americans. Thank God we succeeded!

And then, what I see, one day Ahmed Albu Risha start to change the Awakening into a party, offices parties in my area. My area start opening offices for the Awakening, which is not Awakening now, it's a party. So he was more or less trespassing into my area, without talking to me, without permission from me. And I know for sure whoever was in charge of certain offices in the Karmah area, in my area, was a member of Al Qaeda. They start opening offices. When I did my Awakening, but I didn't call it the Awakening of Fallujah or my name, I called it the Awakening of the District where we started. For the Jahabi District we called is the "Jahabi Awakening", other area, according to the area we called it, not in my name or the Karmah name. And he started opening offices calling one office the "Awakening of Halbusi", the other one office called, "Albu Halifa Office Awakening."

Knarr: So who was opening these offices?

Mishan: Ahmed Albu Risha.

Mishan: So I took Link with me and went and visited Albu Risha. Link was in charge of our area. So I spoke to Ahmed, I said, "What are you doing to us? We have opened the Council in the Karmah area called the Karmah Council Office. And when I opened the office I called it "Al Karmah Council Office" I did not call it in my tribe name. I wanted the tribe to be united, so there would be no [hatred] among others in the Karmah area. He insisted on opening offices. So I told Ahmed, "What are you doing? Why are you playing such a game? Abdul Sattar worked hard to get rid of the Al Qaeda. Now you're playing a different game. You're starting to make it into a political party. We're not in the political party, we're not involved in politics, it was a tribal uprising and we succeeded.

Knarr: Yeah; they did that up in Al Qaim too.

Mishan: So I held a meeting with my people. I said, "We have established an Awakening. It's a gathering with all of us. Now we have the peace and security in our area. We are independent people. We obey the law." So I gathered my people and I said, "Listen, we have started the Awakening, we work for the Awakening. Now it's becoming different. Ahmed started to open a political party. Whoever wants to join political party, and join Ahmed, you are most welcome to go. Anyone staying with me and remain an independent are most welcome." Most of the people remained with me except the devious ones who moved into, with Ahmed. So I went and opened the tribal council. I've got a tape, a small tape which you can see the day after I opened the council, the tribal council in Karmah.

[Short Break]

Every Thursday I had the meeting as the head the meeting at the Council, and I have two Deputies. One of my Deputies was Hasan Halaf Abdulla, Halbusi's, Sheikh Tariq's brother. Nobody elected him to be there, but I chose him to strengthen relations with the Halbusi. On the 26th of June, 2008, on that Thursday, the night of the Thursday I was so sick I couldn't move out, Wednesday/Thursday night, I had such a bad headache I had to stay in bed, so I stayed at home and I turned to my District Director, Mr., Dr. Anjir Kamal. He remembered Jassam, my brother, who was attacked a few years back. The Americans helped him to regain his health back after nine months treatment. I took him to the Jordan Hospital in Fallujah to treat my brother and they said, "We can't treat him. Whoever operated on him earlier, they are the only people who can treat him." And the Americans, thanks to them, they treated my brother and he's back into normal.

So I turned to Anjir Kamal and Anjir Kamal asked me, "Come, we have to attend the meeting today." I said, "I really can't, Kamal, I don't feel very well to attend the meeting. You have Hassan my Deputy and Lawrence was there, and my brother is there, everybody will be attending the meeting. There's a letter to give it to Captain Caroline, so he can take my brother after the meeting to the hospital." He took the letter to the American Commander or Officer. Hassan Abdulla my First Deputy attended and when he en-

tered they searched him, checking him, they found he was carrying a gun; they took the gun away from him. He start shouting, "How dare you take my gun?!" He called the American and he said, "Come here, Link. Why are they taking my gun away from me?" Link lost his temper, he stopped the Awakening people from searching anyone coming in, opened the doors, "Whoever wants to enter into the meeting, let them. Nobody search anyone." My brother Jassam was attending the meeting with the Americans, and there was an explosion at 11 o'clock at the Council. So everybody start questioning me, "Why weren't you at the meeting?" I said, "I had two Deputies and I didn't feel well to go. You want me to die—until then you'll be happy?"

15 Sheikhs lost their life in that meeting and my brother Jassam died in the meeting, my uncle Hamis Abdulla died, [Mayor Sunam Al Khan, we lost a lot of Americans, one of them was the "Lion"] he's American at the time. I felt really sorry for the Americans. I was really upset, more than I was upset about my brother I was upset about the Americans who lost their life thus after a while after I established or formed the Tribal Council.

What happened after, and thank God, whoever survived, survived. Milber, sometimes he called himself Andy, sometimes Milber, him and I were not in very good relations.

Ahmed Albu Risha took 11 from my Awakening, butchering them and torturing them, Ahmed Risha was torturing my people telling them, "Come and confess that Sheikh Mishan, he put the, he has relatives on the Tribal Council" because I didn't join their party or their Islamic Party, they start to be against me then. Nastasi was so upset.

Milber said, "At first Nastasi spoke nicely about you and how brave you were, how much you have sacrificed..." But when Milber came, or Andy, the first thing he said, "My job is how to eliminate you." Even so Nastasi spoke nicely about me and he told him how he should look after me. So I decided to leave the Tribal Council. Then they brought Lawrence Abdul Brahim to be the head of the Council. He's, as you know, from the Islamic Party and he left the meeting 10 minutes before the bomb exploded. He was heading the Council meeting that day and 10 minutes prior to the meeting; he left the office, before the bomb.

Milber start to look after Lawrence and he counted him as his right hand man. General, Iraqi General Ali Razi Ashami, who was in charge of the Iraqi Army area. We had a great relation with him.

We never asked for cash or money or whatever, we only wanted peace and security, and we wanted to punish those who killed our people.

After I lost 25 people in that explosion and they want me to re-open another Tribal Council, what will people say about me? It's not my responsibility. What will people think about me?

Knarr: What happened to Waleed Halbusi?

Mishan: He is in prison in Baghdad. From what I've heard Sheikh Tariq is paying money to the Central Government for his release.

Knarr: For Waleed's release?

Mishan: Yeah. He's paying a lot of money. And Waleed is thanking him for mediating his release. This is something I know for sure.

Graves: When you left for Syria, did you leave anybody in charge of your tribe?

Mishan: No. I was in charge. As you know, my tribe has got so many branches, and the head of each branch I was in contact with them on a daily basis. But, don't forget, as I said earlier, most of the tribal's head of the branches were eliminated or slaughtered by the Al Qaeda. So I was in touch with my tribe all the time.

One day at a meeting with, God bless John Allen, I said, "Sir, why do Iraqis have 300 political parties? Why do you allow so many parties in Iraq? Why don't you do this in the United, how big is the United States? It's one of the biggest countries in the world, it has two parties. And why, when you have only two and we have 300?" He said, "In time it will be reduced and one day it will become to 10 parties." Even 10 parties are too many. But I request from our friends the Americans, unite Iraq. There's no difference here. Prior to, during Saddam Hussein Era we had wars and suffering for 35 years, now is the time to stop, unite and let's live in peace

Knarr: Sir, thank you very much

Subject: Interview with Dr. Hareth al-Dhari, Leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars

Dr. Hareth al-Dhari is a senior Sunni cleric who was born in the Albu Ghraib district of Iraq. He received his Master of Science and PhD from the Al Azhar University in Egypt. Dr. Hareth taught at the university level for about 30 years. He left Iraq in 1997 only to return in 2003 when the US invaded Iraq. He remained in Iraq until he fled in 2006 when the Iraqi Minister of Interior, Jawad al-Bolani, issued a warrant for his arrest for inciting terrorism and violence among the Iraqi people.⁶³ Dr. Hareth started the Association of Muslim Scholars one week after the US invasion in 2003.



Dr. Hareth al-Dhari

Dr. Hareth al-Dhari was interviewed by Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, on 8 February 2011 at his office in Amman, Jordan. Mr. Munther Saiegh translated for the interview.

Dr. William Knarr: First, it's an honor for us to come here and talk to you.

Dr. Hareth al-Dhari: It is our duty to serve the Iraqi people and to welcome anybody to the facts of what has happened to Iraq, to the Iraqis, and to the humanitarian situation in Iraq.

Knarr: Many Americans have written about what happened in Iraq. We have been asked to ask the Iraqis what happened so that we can present that information to the students at the various military schools and colleges back in the United States.

Hareth: In the name of God the Most Merciful.

What has happened in Iraq and to the Iraqis after 2003 is a scandalous and regrettable humanitarian disaster.

Before the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the region held a lot of respect towards the United States' historic credibility because of their attention to personal freedom, freedom of speech and expression, and to the expansion of democracy. The region needed—and understood that it would gain—true democracy and total freedom for individuals. People who also wanted the right to express themselves, have dignity and the right to disclose any oppression if suffered, without fear.

⁶³ Associated Press, *Arrest of Sunni Leader Sought in Iraq*, 16 November 2006, www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/World/20061116/sunni_leader_061116/.

But after the United States and the Coalition invaded Iraq, what they did in Iraq was unexpected. They insulted our human rights took our freedom, and shed Iraqi blood—without accountability. They were killing, starving, and torturing Iraqis.

This is what happened in general, but you will be surprised to learn the details. We will begin with the invaders, the Coalition. I am sure you are aware that America's military are the largest and strongest forces in the world. In addition, they were joined by 27 or 28 other countries. They took Iraq in 19 days.

They [the Coalition] used all manner of weapons: the traditional and the prohibited. They killed tens of thousands during the invasion. They also lied to us. They did not find any [WMD, weapons of mass destruction] in all of Iraq! Iraq's former regime was accused of cooperating with terrorist organizations.

But Iraq is not the only nation to defend its rights and honors. Americans defended themselves and sacrificed a lot for its liberty from European countries like Britain and France that invaded it. They were a brave people [those early Americans]. Americans still celebrate these brave people who fought for their freedom today. Bush himself, the last President, the Commander who invaded Iraq, he said himself in one of his speeches that if America were invaded, Americans would have done just what the Iraqis are doing. [10:25]

In Iraq, US Forces employed all kinds of killing, torture, and imprisonment—of innocent people, displaced people—and followed them with their weapons. These acts were recorded and recognized by America and by European countries. They used Uranium as well as white powder—white phosphorus—to kill Iraqis. We can still see what it did to the Iraqis. A quarter of the Iraqis suffer today from the weapons used. And 50 percent of the newborn babies in Iraq are disfigured. Three-to-four million Iraqis are suffering from cancer caused by these weapons.

Going back to activities [US Forces] used against us—From 19 March 2003 to this minute, they [US forces] travel around Iraq, and if you think the war has ended in Iraq, it has not. American Forces are still doing their military jobs in Iraq. All of the American Forces are still active in Iraq doing whatever they want, when they want. And every day they control and patrol the Iraqis by themselves and with the Iraqi Forces, which the invaders have put in place. [14:28]

We go back to the Iraqi Government, formed during the invasion, which means they are following and killing Iraqis who were against the invasion. And the forces are chasing and torturing and imprisoning people, displacing Iraqis from their homes. There is no security. That's the result of the American Forces operations' in Iraq and the work of the Iraqi Government formed by the Americans and loyal to them. And so far, the invasion has lead to the martyrdom and deaths of nearly two million Iraqis.

At this very minute, there are more than 600,000 Iraqis in American and Iraqi prisons. They have put about 400 prisons all over Iraq; some are known to us and others are secret prisons we don't know of.

Even in the Green Zone, where the present Government of Iraq and the Coalition Forces reside, there are prisons where they torture innocent people, where they torture the prisoners. The *Washington Post* newspaper discovered a secret prison in the Green Zone. We knew about it before that. We even know who some of the judges and investigators are, those who work in the prison and give orders to torture the innocent people in the Green Zone.

Three years ago, 10,000–15,000 prisoners were declared free, to be released from prison, but remain there. The American Administration and its forces in Iraq are aware of what's happening. They know how many prisons and prisoners there are in Iraq and how many they did not help. And they know, as well, of Prime Minister Maliki's involvement. He is the last Prime Minister of Iraq the invaders imposed on the Iraqis and he is still the Prime Minister of Iraq despite the democratic election results.⁶⁴ [20:15]

In addition to that, there are more than three million displaced Iraqis inside Iraq. Displaced from their homes and their towns. Some live in tents in winter and in summer. And there are more than four million immigrants outside Iraq in the Arab region. Most have lost their properties inside Iraq and have spent all of their savings while living abroad. The United Nations never cared about them and what they needed. Not even the invader forces took responsibility for them, which is their moral and international responsibility. Not even the Iraqi Government, whose revenue is hundreds of billions of dollars so far, takes care of these immigrants.

The Prime Minister is trying to displace people from their homes in Iraq and moving people out of Baghdad for his own benefit.

On top of that, a third of the Iraqi population is out of work. More than 50 percent are living in poverty according to the human rights organizations. There are no education or health services whatsoever; they have collapsed. Not one school has been built since the invasion of Iraq. Yes, some of the schools have been repaired, but not one has been built. Do you know that in the Primary Schools, 100–150 students sit in one class and most of them are sitting on the floor? Most of the schools have no reasonable toilet facilities for the students.

Next to the subject of bribery. Everybody is accepting bribes, including the invaders. I can say that Petraeus himself has taken bribes from businessmen in Iraq, from the Iraqi

⁶⁴ Dr. Hareth al-Dhari is talking about the recent election where former Prime Minister Allawi's party won most of the seats but Maliki was still the prime minister. BBC News, 26 March 2010, "Iraq Election: Iyad Allawi's Bloc Wins Most Seats," <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8590017.stm>.

Government and Ministers, from businessmen here in Jordan, and I can tell you, even in Dubai. Most of the Iraqi Ministers are corrupt. They take bribes of millions to hundreds of millions of dollars—all the Ministers who work in Iraq.

And now to the topic of corruption. I think the Americans are aware of corruption in the administration. All the human rights organizations have stated that Iraq is the second most corrupt country in the world. What's unfortunate is that when the uprising started in Egypt [January 2011], Obama asked the President of Egypt to move or to leave his position and to hand over the power to others. He said the President of Egypt should obey the uprising and the demands of the Egyptian people for the sake of security, stability, and the freedom of speech—why hasn't Obama said anything about that for the Iraqis? He didn't say this to his generals in Iraq who authorized killing and torture. He didn't say that to Maliki who governed Iraq for more than five years—during Maliki's time in office, more than one million Iraqis have died. But, Obama supported Maliki and kept him as Prime Minister of Iraq despite the election and the demands of the Iraqi people—voiced through a democratic election—that they did not want him to be Prime Minister.

If we count the torture and the crimes committed by the President of Tunisia, Ali Zein Al Abdeen and those of Hosni Mubarak, and compare them to what has happened and is still happening in Iraq since 2003, they amount to only 5–10 percent of what was committed in Iraq.

Thank you. You can ask me any question you wish.

Knarr: Sir, could you provide your background, where you grew up and where you went to school?

Hareth: I was born in Iraq, in a District called Albu Ghraib. It's on the western side of Baghdad. I attended secondary school in Iraq and university at the Al Azhar University in Egypt where I received my Master of Science degree and my PhD. Then I returned to my homeland in the early seventies and was appointed as a lecturer at the Baghdad University where I remained for 27 years until I became a professor.

I left Iraq in 1997 and went to Jordan. I taught at the Yarmuk University here in Jordan for three years. In 2000, I traveled to the United Arab Emirates [UAE] [31:46] and taught at the Islamic University in Dubai, and for one year at Ajman University in the UAE.

When Iraq was invaded in 2003 I cancelled my teaching contract and returned to Iraq. I remained in Iraq until early 2006. Out of necessity I had to depart Iraq in order to work freely to liberate my country, to liberate it from the invaders.⁶⁵ And now I'm a resident

⁶⁵ Associated Press, *Arrest of Sunni Leader Sought in Iraq*, 16 November 2006, accessed 21 April 2011 < www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/World/20061116/sunni_leader_061116/>. Copy on file. The Minister of Interior in Iraq, Jawad al-Bolani, issued a warrant for Harith al-Dhari's arrest for inciting terrorism and violence among the Iraqi people.

here in Jordan. I don't remain in Jordan all the time; I travel between Jordan and Syria to defend and fight for my country. I speak and defend my country through the media in a peaceful way.

Knarr: Sir, after the invasion I understand that you started the Association of Muslim Scholars, is that true? Did you start it, and why?

Hareth: Yes it is true. A week after the invasion I did so. The Americans and Coalition invaded Iraq and then Baghdad. After the invasion ended on 9 April 2003, I started my scholarship on 13 April, five days after the invasion of Baghdad.

Knarr: And you call it the "Association..."

Hareth: Of Islamic.

Knarr: Your scholarship? [The Association of Islamic Scholarship] [35:01]

Hareth: Yes.

Knarr: Who was part of that?

Hareth: Young Iraqis. It was formed while I was abroad. And then when I returned on 1 July 2003, I joined this scholarship. On 15 December 2003, the people who established this organization elected me to be the General Secretary. I still work in this position as the head of the Scholarship.

Knarr: What are the objectives and goals of the Scholarship?

Hareth: [47:41—Hareth talks for ten minutes, Munther takes notes and then translates.] The organization formed based on Islamic humanitarian aims to teach and educate Iraqis to make them aware of the risks and threats to their values and to their homeland. To work toward spiritually uniting the people and forming a brotherhood amongst Iraqis—including all sectors and religions, as it is in Islam. Islam calls for unity, humanity, brotherhood, and mercy and to educate Iraqis about the Islamic way forward.

The Scholarship was formed during the invasion and under brutal aggression against Iraq. Most of the Scholarship's early efforts were spent resisting this invasion and its aggression using all possible and legitimate manners approved by all holy religions and in accordance with the United Nations charter. Every normal person, even if non-political or non-religious, will defend his country when invaded. This invasion was different from any other invasion because of its cruelty, violence, ferocity, and agenda. The Americans' dangerous inhumane objectives were to decimate Iraq, stone by stone, to destroy its humanity—educational and historic, thoughts and direction, identity and existence—and finally to divide. Now the American invasion withdraws to divide Iraq. All of this work is a shock to us.

Before Islam, Iraq was invaded several times by other countries; by the Persians, who, at the time of Quraysh, overthrew Naboth Nassur to dominate the area and extract resources—not for sedition or division. Post-Islam, the Tatar invaded our country, partly destroyed it, killing many of its people; however, they did not try to divide the country because they wished to dominate and extort as other invaders do.

The British too invaded Iraq in 1917 to dominate and extort Iraq's resources, and tried to spread European culture, but especially British culture, without dividing the country.

But America in the twenty-first century, during a time of global stability and non-interference with other national sovereignty, America's and particularly Vice President Biden's project is to divide Iraq.⁶⁶ Biden flirts with the Iranians and Israel and other forces like the Kurds in Iraq as part of his project to divide Iraq. America is no longer the America we used to hear about and talk of in the 1950s and 1960s during the Cold War.

We used to hear of the West's principles, even if it wasn't precise. We find that America says one thing and does another, promises one thing and gives another, pretending humanity whilst omitting human values. This behavior and these attitudes have been shown towards the Iraqis, Afghanis, Palestinians, and others. What we have seen towards Iraq is a full disclosure of true American political reality.

Now we start to speak about the distinction between *Americans* and *America*. We speak of the American Administration, not the American people who have demonstrated against the invasion of Iraq. The Americans, as with all other nations, express their kindness, because they are a humanitarian nation and feel what other nations feel. Iraqis began to review their understanding of the American Administration—whether Bush Senior, Clinton, Bush Junior, or Obama. Obama speaks softly and kindly making sure that you feel good and that he wants the best for you. Unfortunately he has not deviated from G.W. Bush's political agenda for the region, especially in Iraq.

We don't blame the American people because we appreciate their refusal to accept the invasion of Iraq and their request for withdrawing American forces from Iraq. As a result of this request, Obama was able to come into power (due to his election promises) because the people thought he would end this absurd, inhumane, crazy war. Unfortunately, he has not done this.

If Americans think this is over, it is not. They are constantly losing both men (military) and money.

Americans need to know that during this absurd and unjust war—started by Bush against Iraq—America and Iraq have suffered bloodshed, lost money, and shed tears. However,

⁶⁶ Associated Press, "Biden Proposes Partitioning Iraq into three Regions," 1 May 2006, www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12572371/ns/world_news-mideast/n_africa/.

other sides, such as Iran and Israel, have gained from this war. Israel and Iran have both gained and wish for America to remain in Iraq and not withdraw, perpetuating their losses, while both countries continue in their gains.

May I conclude with my respects to the American nation.

Knarr: Sir, when the resistance started, what was your relationship with the resistance and what was your relationship with Al Qaeda when they came? [53:14] [Hareth does not speak right away.] Is that not a good question?

Hareth: No, that is a good question. Me and my organization and the liberated people of Iraq, we rejected the invasion. And whoever rejects the invasion will fight the invaders. Some Iraqis have armed their people to fight the invaders and others resist them politically and through the media. Me and my organization will continue to resist the invaders politically and through the media.

We support the armed national resistance in Iraq that resists the invasion until the invaders leave. We object to forces from other countries that have other agendas in Iraq. We support those that resist the invaders, but we do not support those with a foreign agenda, who are not from the Iraqi people. We will never support them, if it is Al Qaeda or any other.

[We all discuss the meaning of *support*. Dr. Hareth has several advisors present. We assume they are there to ensure he doesn't stumble into something legally and the meaning of the word *support* to the armed resistance has gained their attention.]

What I mean, when you said, *You support the resistance*—I am saying the word *support* means “politically and through the media.” It does not mean “financial or logistical” support.

Knarr: Is there a relationship between the, between your scholarship... I'm sorry Sir.

Hareth: I said before [58:52] I do not support Al Qaeda.

[We again discuss the meaning of the word *support* and reach the conclusion that in Hareth's case, it does not include anything financial or logistical, but includes support spiritually, politically, and through the media only. 1:00:28]

Hareth: As I said we have worked, me and my organization, through the media and political areas only.

Additionally, nobody knew what Al Qaeda in Iraq was in the beginning. Initially, some of the foreigners, (who were Mujahedeen and fighters) came into Iraq to fight and to resist the invaders. Then in 2004, we started to hear of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), but a lot of Iraqis did not know what Al Qaeda was or what its aims were, and who was behind them. We didn't know until 2004. One day we heard of the [Dowhade] Brigade, the

United Brigade and their commanders.⁶⁷ We knew what Al Qaeda was, but nobody understood what Al Qaeda in Iraq was or of its activities.

What I can say to you is that Al Qaeda was known to us in Iraq through the Americans and also through the media. At first we thought, "The Americans are using Al Qaeda as an umbrella for them to torture and make the Iraqis suffer." I want to emphasize that Al Qaeda had no place in Iraq before the invasion. And the blame for Al Qaeda entering Iraq is lies with the Americans and the American alliance, and the Coalition's. They opened the gates from the east to the west, from the north to the south for Al Qaeda and other terrorists who came into Iraq. They are a burden, just like the invaders are a burden on the Iraqis.

Knarr: Sir, in 2007, in an interview with *Time Magazine*, you rejected Al Qaeda, in particular because of their tactics. Is that correct?⁶⁸ [1:05:12]

Hareth: We continuously reject any organization that harms and punishes Iraqis even if it's being done by Iraqi National resistance. We do not support any organization that hurts the Iraqi people.

Knarr: Sir, what is the relationship between your scholarship, the AMS, and the Muslim Brotherhood?

Hareth: My organization is an Iraqi nationalistic Islamic organization and it works within the Iraqi borders for the Iraqis. It is not a political party nor is it linked to any other organizations. I, myself, I have never been a member of any political party, Islamic or non-Islamic, not even a charity organization. And if it weren't for the invasion of Iraq, I would not have joined as a member of the Islamic Scholarship. I became a member of this organization when I knew it was independent and their speeches were nationalistic and the aim was to unite Iraq and clear out and reject the invaders.

Knarr: Sir, we talk about the Awakening when some of the tribes had rejected Al Qaeda and asked the Coalition for help. Can you comment on the Awakening and your thoughts about the Awakening?

⁶⁷ Al Qaeda in Iraq wasn't an official organization until October 2004, when Abu Musab Zarqawi pledged Allegiance to Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaeda organization.

⁶⁸ Bobby Gosh, Baghdad, "Al-Qaeda Loses an Iraqi Friend," *TIME Magazine* 14 May 2006, www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1620607,00.html#ixzz1D3LH1Cjs. The article indicates that "Al-Qaeda has lost its most powerful friend in Iraq: Harith al-Dari, the country's most influential Sunni cleric and a prominent anti-American figure, has rejected al-Qaeda's vision of an Islamic state, telling *TIME* that Iraqis 'will not accept such a system.' In a sharp departure from his long-standing view of the terror group, al-Dari now says al-Qaeda has 'gone too far.'" In addition to rejecting AQ's methods, Hareth has personal reasons for rebuking Al Qaeda: a nephew, a leader of one of the 1920 Revolutionary Brigades, was murdered by Al Qaeda in March 2006.

Hareth: When they first formed the Awakening I really did not know much about it; but after it was formed I knew the inside and outside of who was involved and that the American Intelligence services established, financed, and formed it. The project is a malignant colonization. The characters involved were infiltrators, as was the project a brutal betrayal. It did not serve Iraq as a whole and especially did not serve the Sunni's. It was for the benefit of Maliki, his allies in Iran, and the invaders. The Awakening helped to limit the movement and the activities of the nationalist resistance in Iraq. The Iraqi nationalistic resistance has suffered more from the Awakening than Al Qaeda. And the Americans have benefitted from the Awakening.

The national resistance was more active in 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006, so America has benefitted by forming this Awakening and limited the activities of the resistance.

One of your Generals said, in one of the Arab countries, "In 2006 we were defeated and we were merely pulling out of Iraq. By forming the Awakening, a new start was created by Petraeus." He is the brave one in Iraq. He is brave on the blood of the Iraqis who helped the Awakening. The Awakening helped Petraeus declare that he managed the stabilization and the security of Iraq.

Maliki benefitted from the Awakening too by declaring that he helped stabilize Iraq in 2006. That's why the Americans depended on him, chose him, and nominated him to rule Iraq again. When the Americans requested from Maliki that the members of the Awakening be integrated into the Police and the Army, as you may know, Maliki rejected their request because the Iranians ordered him to do so. He said to the Americans, "I have managed the stabilization, so now it is your turn to choose me or the Awakening." That is why they allowed him with other parties with the Iranian intelligence and Al Qaeda to eliminate the Awakening [members]. Only the Sheikhs or leaders of the Awakening who benefited financially are residing in Iraq.

[Discussion among the group.]

Munther: We, the Sheikh and Mister Salam and I, are discussing the leader of the Awakening, and what his job was before becoming the leader of the Awakening. I'm sure you know what he was doing before becoming the head of the Awakening.

Knarr: Smugglers?

Munther: Yes, so you know...

Hareth: Gangsters!

Knarr: Sir, what you do think the future of the tribes will be in Iraq?

Hareth: There are two types of Sheikhs in Iraq: real Sheikhs who are honest and honorable, nationalists, faithful to Iraq, and they love their country. These and other Iraqi Nationalists like them, they are at the front of the alliance for Iraq. They are few.

There are a lot of them who call themselves the heads of the tribes, or head Sheikhs, but in reality, they are not Sheikhs. But the Americans and the media have made them into Sheikhs. Other Iraqi politicians, businessmen, and merchants, who do not represent Iraq, but only a small percentage of Iraqis, and they are not in a position to be respected by the Iraqis. But if they try to cleanse themselves and come back and redeem themselves from corruption and what they did to the Iraqis, we as Iraqis will forgive them their mistakes. We are forgiving, our chest open and wide, an open heart; we forgive anybody who's made any mistake in the past. Those who do not change their minds can be punished under the law, although one day hopefully their consciences will tell them to stop their wrong-doing, and if they don't, there's a God who will one day judge them. [1:24:04]

Knarr: Do you have any questions?

Ms. Mary Hawkins: Did the Sahawa [Awakening] prevent Al Qaeda from killing and torturing Iraqis?

Hareth: No it didn't. The Awakening did help to limit Al Qaeda's activities for certain operations and the torture of Iraqis, but not for long. Because, as you may know, Al Qaeda cells are still there. The Awakening has ended and Al Qaeda has returned. Not to the same torture and killing as they used to do before. They have limited their operations and torture of Iraqis, but they remained in Iraq, and the Sahawa has diminished. From my understanding—and I think the Americans are not very concerned about Al Qaeda being there—this is an excuse for them to remain, to fight the terrorists and Al Qaeda in Iraq.

LtCol David Graves: What other resistance groups did AMS support?

Munther: We are using the word *agree*. I'm not going to say *support*. It was an agreement; I think this is better for the Sheikh.

Hareth: We "agree" with all types of resistance; nationalist resistance in Iraq, but we do not agree with foreign resistance from outside Iraq. We agree that the resistance fights the invaders and saves the Iraqis and their unity. And we agree with every resistance about not harming any Iraqis, without differentiation between religions, or sects of any other religion. We support the resistance that works in and for Iraq, within the borders of Iraq.

Knarr: Okay, I understand.

You have a heritage that resonates with what is happening in Iraq today. Your grandfather resisted in 1920 against the British. Could you talk about that?

Hareth: There's a lengthy history concerning this subject, but I can say one thing. He was one of the Iraqi men, like others in the north, center, and south of Iraq, who started the revolution against the British invasion in the year of 1920. They had had enough of the promises from the British who said that they did not come to Iraq as invaders, but as liberators who would depart after liberating Iraq from the Ottomans. But they continued their occupation from 1917 until 1920, and after the Iraqis tried their best through peaceful negotiations, after they tried to convince the British to leave Iraq [without success], the Iraqis started the armed revolution. [1:31:40]

So the Iraqis revolted in the north in Tal Afar. The people and tribes of Tal Afar and the surrounding areas revolted against the British Camp. They captured it and imprisoned a lot of the generals, commanders, and soldiers. So the general revolution started in the north of Iraq and finished in southern Iraq. On 30 June 1920, the revolution started in the south of Iraq, and then in the middle of Iraq the revolution started on the 12th of August, 1920.

It started in the central part of the country with the killing of Colonel Leachman in the district of Abu Ghraib west of Baghdad. My grandfather and my father and others from the Zobai tribes were there. The revolution expanded to the western border of Iraq in Der Alzur. It continued for months until my grandfather, father, and other tribal members to the north requested permission to travel to Syria where they remained until 1928. Then my grandfather was arrested on the peninsula at the Iraq/Syrian border.

He was handed to the British Forces in Iraq and they established a court to prosecute him. The accusation was the killing of Colonel Leachman and revolt against the British invasion of Iraq. The judgment was that he should die by hanging, but due to his health they reduced it from hanging to life in prison. He died three days after the judgment in the Al Majeedia Hospital in Baghdad. And he was buried by the Iraqis the day after he died in the Sheikh Maruf Al Karkhi cemetery in the Karkh District of Baghdad.

Knarr: Thank you sir. If you had an opportunity to talk to the students at the Military Colleges today, and you wanted to make three points, what would you tell them?

Hareth: First, America is the largest and most industrially developed country in the world—its technology, its civilization, and in particular, its military. What it needs now is to develop its attitude and manners to compare and develop the same standard as its technology, so it can be respected by other nations.

Secondly, if America really wants to be the most powerful country in the world it should not be an enemy to the people like other countries who do not observe international law.

Third, America needs to be honest in what it declares and to keep its promises not to be 100 percent selfish. America needs to stop using any and all means to meet their ends no

matter what—whether honest or not. It needs to be honest and transparent to all people and all nations.

America should depend on itself and make its own decisions. As we have seen lately, administrative decisions have been made with outside influences affecting them. Most of these decisions that have been made in the last century, under outside influences — unknown to the American people and not for their own benefit—have served those other nations.

That's what we Iraqis have seen and explained to them after the United States invaded Iraq. As I said earlier, what America did in Iraq wasn't for America's benefit, neither now or later, but, initially for the benefit of Israel, and secondly, for the Iranians.

Knarr: Sir, it has been an honor. Thank you for your time and comments. Your people have sacrificed a lot.

Hareth: Thank you, we appreciate free people in the world, and that includes Americans. And we remember a lot of American people who were kind to us, to the Iraqi people who made us respect them, and respect those Americans who stood with us. But, unfortunately, they are not listened to by their administration. Even in America they're not, the administration does not listen to the people's democratic voices.

And you are most welcome here. This is a record of the organization and its activities, politically and military. [Dr. Hareth gives us a set of books.]

Knarr: Thank you.

19 May 2010

Subject: Interview with Sheikh Tariq al-Abdullah al-Halbusi, Principle Sheik of the Halbusi Tribe located in Fallujah

Sheikh Tariq al-Abdullah al-Halbusi was interviewed at his office in Amman. He is the principal Sheikh of the Halbusi tribe located in Fallujah and attended the economic engagements with the coalition in Amman, Jordan. He was involved in engagements with BrigGen David Reist, Deputy Commander, Multi-National Force-West in 2006 and early 2007 and with General Reist's successor, BrigGen Allen during 2007 and early 2008. General Allen recommended we talk to Sheikh Tariq.



Sheikh Tariq al-Halbusi

In early 2004 his brothers were killed and he was targeted by AQ, so he left Fallujah. In order to help his tribe he needed to protect himself and went to Jordan. Although he is the paramount sheikh of the Halbusi's, his brother has been running the day-to-day business of the tribe in Fallujah.

The military on the ground ignored the policy of not engaging with the sheikhs, but by 2005 the Marines had an open dialogue with tribes. "Thank God for this," he said and he referred to the meeting of the sheikhs as "the surge." Tariq's "surge" was the ground work and cooperation before the Awakening and that ground work was already laid before Sattar took role in Awakening.

In 2006 Gen Reist helped organize business events. The meetings were held in Jordan because it was easy to facilitate. Zalmay Khalizad attended the initial meetings. The purpose of the economic meetings was to gather a coalition of locals to determine, in collaboration with the Marines, how to rebuild Al Anbar.

In 2006 the Anbar Central council in Amman was created to work with Anbar Provincial Council; he was elected to be the leader of the council. Once the Anbar High Council was formed in Iraq to work with Provincial Council, the ACC in Amman was dissolved.

Sheikh Tariq said, "We will know when AQ is gone, because those who fled will return." In 2007 General Allen brought Tariq back to Iraq.

Sheikh Tariq was interviewed by Dr. William (Bill) Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves and Ms. Mary Hawkins, on 3 February 2011. Mr. Munther Saiegh translated.

Dr. William Knarr: Sir, Please start with your background. Where were you born?

Sheikh Tariq al-Abdullah al-Halbusi: I was in Iraq when the Coalition came in 2003. The people in Iraq were expecting a change, they were looking to better their situation and to

see democracy and freedom from another perspective—like what you have in the US, America.

I lived in Fallujah and the people welcomed the Coalition. The change was very smooth especially in the middle of Iraq and the west of Iraq. The problems started when the Mr. Bremer released the Iraqi Army and the other security commands in Iraq. This was the beginning of the mess in Iraq. These people are not Saddam's; they are Iraqis. Especially the Iraqi Army. It was built before Saddam and before the regime itself. So, to build a new Army and new security is not easy. For example, today we don't have a real Army and a real security. This gives room for the insurgents and Al Qaeda to be active, especially in the west of Iraq.

Why? Because when the regime changed there were a number of Al Qaeda that came to Iraq to support the Iraqis fight against the Americans and when they saw that the local Iraqis were against fighting the Americans; they decided to leave Iraq. But, most of them, at that time, were very desperate and they didn't know what to do to leave Iraq. They didn't have passports or any documents, any money, anything. So the local people helped them leave Iraq.

When they found that the door was closed, and they couldn't leave easily they; this is my opinion, they were contacted by a third party and I think it was Iran at that time, and they diverted them; instead of leaving Iraq, they contracted them to stay in Iraq and attack the American and create problems in the most stable area in Iraq, which was in western Iraq. If they succeed they would gain two things. First, to isolate the Sunni from the Government and for them to be considered as an enemy of the Americans. The second thing, to force the Coalition to occupy western Iraq and leave the other parts of Iraq open for them, Al Qaeda to play their games. And we can see that they are now in Iraq and they are very powerful and are controlling the politics, that is, most of the things are now controlled by Iran.

The people, started to support Al Qaeda, by killing Americans and attacking the Coalition as Sunnis from Al Anbar. The Americans don't know the tribes, they don't know the people very well and they think that these attacks are coming from the local people. That's why they attacked the local people. Then, slowly, slowly they succeeded in creating conflict between the Coalition and the local people. There are some Sheikhs and some leaders in Al Anbar that don't know exactly what the problem is. That's why we decided to open a dialogue with the Coalition and especially with the Marines. And they decided to find another solution to the problem instead of fighting with the locals.

So in our first discussion with the Marines in Jordan we explained the reason for the conflict. So, we continued to meet with the Marine leaders in Jordan because it is safe for them and for us and the Jordanians were very helpful in facilitating the meetings.

We explained that the locals don't have a problem with the Coalition and they were welcome to our area. But there is, as I said, a third party who fights to push us into conflict with the Coalition and they succeeded. So, what should we do to stop this conflict? First thing, I told them they should support the Sheikhs and consider them as friends and they should trust them. Because, if they must allow them to carry weapons and protect themselves. The people should be able to carry weapons to fight, to defend themselves from the Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda is not only attacking the Coalition, they are attacking all the leaders in the area so that they can become the leaders. They are starting to control the leadership in the area in the name of the Islamic Government and so on as you know.

Knarr: When did you have your first meetings with the Coalition?

Tariq: They came in Al Anbar in 2004 maybe...

Knarr: Yeah, March.

Tariq: Yeah March, but it takes us time to have the first meeting. I think it took us several months. Maybe 2005 our first meeting was with them and with the Ambassador [Khalizaid] also I met him. We met him in Amman and we send the same messages. From that time we start to work together to convince the Sheikhs to go back to Iraq. They allowed them to carry weapons and to have armed cars. When the Sheikhs felt supported and were able to defend themselves, they persuaded the people to fight against Al Qaeda. We decide to call it Al Sahawa we found a person to lead Al Sahawa and to arrange the meeting between the troops and the civilians to fight against Al Qaeda. And that's why they give them the name of Al Sahawa. But actually this movement was started earlier under the name of the "Surge".

Knarr: The "Surge"?

Tariq: Yeah, between the Sheikhs and the Marines.

Knarr: What Sheikhs?

Tariq: Most of the Sheikhs. I think General Allen in 2006 became the leader of the Marines in Anbar, he was very active in this issue and he took many Sheikhs from Amman and from Syria through Amman to Iraq. He minimized the bureaucracy in this issue and facilitated the necessary things to move the people in a very short time.

Before General Allen we started with General Reist, in 2005 to arrange some events like business events and other events. We succeed to invite more than 500 people to create an Anbar Central Council in Amman and we invited them to the Royal Hotel in Amman. We invited many commercial groups, Army groups, security groups and political groups. We asked them to elect the leaders from inside the people where they will participate. At that time they elected me to be the leader of this Al Anbar Central Council. I convinced them that because the Provincial Council wasn't very acceptable at that time,

we convinced them that we should positively deal with the Al Anbar Provincial Council and the leadership of Mr. Allani at that time. And we worked together to support them, not to work against them.

Knarr: Mamoun?

Tariq: Mamoun was the Governor also at that time and he was invited to this event. When we succeeded in bringing the people to the event we started to convince them to work closer with the Coalition, that's why we created the business events. I think these things broke the ice between both sides and they started to work hand in hand and that's why the idea of the "Surge" acceptable to them.

Knarr: Why did you call it the "Surge" back then? You know when Americans think of the "Surge" they think of the "Surge" in Military forces that happened in 2007, but when you speak of the "Surge" you speak of it before the Awakening which was around 2006.

Tariq: Yeah, because this is the real date for the starting of this issue.

Knarr: Okay, but why did you name it the "Surge"? Was it a surge of effort?

Tariq: Yeah, because there was no Sahawa at that time. I don't have any other name to call it. This collaboration it was from my point of view it was the "Surge".

Knarr: When did you live in Fallujah?

Tariq: In 2003 till the beginning of 2004. Two of my brothers got killed by Al Qaeda at that time, that's why. I received some letters from them because they said I was supporting the American. But this is not the issue. They know that I am not because I am supporting the dialogue because I think you can't resolve anything without discussions. It's different to work with someone as compared to working for them. I wasn't working for the American. I was working with the Americans for my people at that time. But they don't want anyone to do the positive things, that's why I was attacked. They attacked my office in Baghdad and my house in Baghdad. In order to deny them the chance of attacking my house in Baghdad, I demolished my house. I told them, "I don't need it. I need Iraq, the whole Iraq." But I still have my house in Fallujah. When I moved to Fallujah they send me some other messages. That's why I decided to leave. If I get killed I cannot help my people.

Knarr: When did you leave Fallujah and come to Amman?

Tariq: In January, beginning of January 2004.

Knarr: When was it, you talked about the first meetings with General Allen and the Marines, when, did that then happen in 2006, with General Allen?

Tariq: I start with General Reist in 2005, many times here in Amman.

But he couldn't facilitate my visit to Al Anbar. But, General Allen he did that and he took me there and he put me together with my people when he felt that we were ready to succeed, to reach our goal. I think he said something when I was in Fallujah, when the people started to understand the situation and start to fight with the Americans against Al Qaeda, he took his vest and his helmet off and he said, "This is the first time as Marines we walk in Fallujah without wearing the helmet and the vest."

And I remember one very, very good thing. He arranged for me to have lunch with my tribe in Fallujah. He asked me to send some people, "To protect you... Can you give me the number of the people who will attend this lunch?" I told him maybe 100/120 people. So he arranged for certain number of Marines to join me for that lunch. But when we reached there we find that the presence was more than 600-700 people.

Knarr: That's a lot.

Tariq: So the Officer at that time was next to me, he said, "I think if something happened our blood will be mixed, so we will sit next to you because we see that your people, they are protecting the area and we will be protected with you." And they took off their helmets and their weapons and we had lunch together without any protection from inside, only what they arranged as a tribe from outside. It was something; I think it was; that was the starting point from the negative to the positive on the relation between the Marines and the locals.

Knarr: When did this luncheon was when you back?

Tariq: I think it was in August of 2006.

Munther Saiegh: Please provide some of your background.

Tariq: I was born 1959 in Fallujah. Our tribe, Halbusi tribe, it's mainly in Al Anbar and in Fallujah and Karma, but I have some other members in north of Iraq in Mosul and in the south in Wassat and in Najaf. But where they lived in the south of Iraq they became Shia because in Iraq there was no difference between the Shia and Sunni, especially at that time. I finished my high school in Fallujah, but took special courses in Baghdad till the 1979, when I finished the high school. So, I left Iraq first to London and I got a [chair] in the north college in Winchester. I lived there more than six months [and] then I moved to Romania. I got a [chair] in the [30:01] University in the Civil Engineering Faculty. I finished with a grade 10 because they have the grade from the, to succeed and to leave between six and 10, and I finished 10. We were three students, two Iraqis and one Romanian, we were on the top of the list.

I decided in 1986, to go back to Iraq. At that time was the war between Iraq and Iran, so to finish my [mandatory Military] they put me as an engineer in a very close to place to Fallujah. It's also called Fallujah Camp. At that time Saddam decided to give one staff to

any engineer or doctor during his period of Army, so after one and half years I became an officer with one staff member. But, they put us in different bases. So, I finished with the rest of my period in Basra for more than one year.

Then in 1988 I finished and came back to Fallujah and I started my own business. My father, before he became the leader of the tribe my father was working in commercial business trading spare parts for vehicles. But I wanted to do something else. I opened an engineering bureau. And because of the embargo at that time, in the beginning of the '90's, I decided to work in different lines in the oil business and some other trading business and now I have many other companies in different locations. I control my business now from Jordan. My headquarter was in Iraq until 2004.

Knarr: And that's when you moved permanently to Amman?

Tariq: Yes.

Knarr: Fallujah is a very independent city, a lot of different tribes with very independent people. How did you bring the tribes together in Fallujah?

Tariq: There [are] main tribes in Fallujah. The biggest tribe was Al Mohemdi and Halbusi and Albu Issa and Jumayli. These four tribes, we are as tribe leaders, the four Sheikhs, we are in a very, very good relation and we understand each other and we always communicate, we are chatting together and discussing the situation. From the beginning we decided that any one of us can represent the others. Until now we are in good relation.

Graves: On the economics, the conferences you had, what were some of the initiatives that came out of those, economic initiatives?

Tariq: In the economic events there were two goals. One goal was to bring the Coalition and local people together. This was the main goal. And for the people, to teach them how they can rebuild Iraq and how the Marines, at that time, can support them.

I remember that they spent a lot of money on projects to refurbish the schools, to build the roads and to build buildings and to provide water treatment equipment. They were provided generators when there was a shortage of electricity, to make the people feel that these troops, the American troops or the Marines, they are not here to fight with them, but to help them to rebuild their country. It was very positive. I helped market this idea but I didn't participate in any of these contracts. Till now, I didn't get any contracts from the Americans. Then the people they started to believe that we were doing that for them, because if I share the business with them, they think this is a businessman and he wants to market this situation for himself. But, until recently, none of my companies participated in any of the contracts developed under this.

Graves: So did they bring businessmen from within Anbar?

Tariq: Ye, we told the Sheikhs, “Have your friends or company come and participate in this.”

Graves: Was it called the “Anbar High Council”?

Tariq: Because at that time, the people, they don’t believe in Al Anbar Provincial Council, like there is till now some people they don’t believe in the Central Government. In Al Anbar the local government is the Provincial Council and the governor. The first thing we did was bring the governor to our side to show them that he is part of us and he’s not working for the Central Government, because they don’t trust the Central Government, at that time. The second goal was to make the link between the Provincial Council and a council which is very similar to the Provincial Council—the Central Council. The Central Council was developed to support the Provincial Council and work hand to hand. And when Al Sahawa started, we ask Al Sahawa to nominate a few people and to put them together with the Provincial Council and then the Central Council was dissolved, because you don’t want any conflict between the two.

Graves: Is there still a High Council now, or is it...?

Tariq: No, no, it’s finished. Now we have an elected people in the Provincial Council, all the parties participate in the election in 2010.

Graves: Going back to some of the economic conferences, and this might have been just in 2004, but some of the stuff we found is, there were some insurgent groups that came in these conferences and tried to negotiate the Coalition. Do you know of, do you remember that, or recall...?

Tariq: You see, as that time the people were very confused. There is someone trying to push them to become your enemy. That’s why there were many resistance groups at that time. They considered that they were fighting for the Iraqis. But, we found that these people were led by Al Qaeda. Because, the resistance should come from the people. And the American was ready to negotiate with the resistance. And when they started to sit with them they found out that there is not any conflict between them. The only conflict was created by the third party to show them that they are enemies, but they are not.

And as I told you the Al Qaeda was killing Iraqis indirectly to show them that they did this on behalf of the American. And most of the people started to think that Al Qaeda worked for the Americans. Another part of Al Qaeda killed the Americans and led them to believe they were local. They did that to push the Americans to kill the locals. The Soldier just reacted; his reaction was uncontrolled. But he didn’t know what was Al Qaeda and what was not Al Qaeda. He also didn’t know our mentality is that, if you kill my brother I should do the same unless the Sheikhs sit together and they resolve it to be paid. This is very complicated. I think you understand there is revenge.

Munther: An eye for an eye.

Tariq: Yeah, but this, the American soldiers when he killed he didn't think on that, he think that because he got attacked from this side he will respond.

Graves: He didn't understand the culture.

Knarr: You know you said something very interesting that we've heard before. It was that some thought that the Al Qaeda was working for the Americans.

Tariq: Yeah, but when I asked questions I couldn't follow it to the source. When I heard something like that I asked them, "Ok, how do you know that?" He said, "They told me that they saw the car who attacked so and so went and entered in the base." "You saw it by yourself?" He said, "No, no my relative told me."

Knarr: That's interesting. They are smart people and they came up with that conclusion because that's what they heard or thought they saw. That must have been a very hard time.

Hawkins: You have the engagements that took place here in Amman, and then you have the engagements between then Colonel MacFarland and Sheikh Sattar. Were the engagements that took place in Ramadi helpful?

Tariq: We don't have any engagements between us and Sattar. Sattar, he was invited by the Coalition just to be in the picture as a leader, but the work on the ground was done already and he just carried the name. Because the background of this person it does not match with our requirement. That's why there is also the deal between us and the Coalition that Al Sahawa should be finished immediately after the mission, when it's finished the Sahawa should be finished as well. Because we, in our mentality in Iraq, especially in the rest of Iraq, we don't believe in the militias and we don't want Al Sahawa to become a militia. We believe in the central power, we believe in our Army. We did that just because we want to escape from this bad situation at that time.

Munther: Do you still have ties with Fallujah now, and influence, or do you plan to go back ever or do you call this home?

Tariq: I started to go more often as things become more stable. All my business is with Iraq, I don't have any other business. We are looking forward to the day when the things become very stable, but now it is still not very safe. When you are a businessman or a Sheikh you are a target for the bad people. They kidnapped my nephew, they kidnapped my father before he died, and I am sure if I were there I would be killed or kidnapped. So, as soon as the situation improves I'll go back to my country. Meanwhile I am here very well. They treat me like a Jordanian. I am, my children they are very happy, but as you know your country is your country.

Knarr: Since you're in Jordan, how do you run the day to day type of business of the tribe back in Fallujah?

Tariq: Till two years ago my older brother, he was doing everything on my behalf. But when they attacked him with the Marines in the meeting of the Sheikhs in Karma and he got killed, now my two cousins follow up day to day with the people and I am with them every month I go there for a few days.

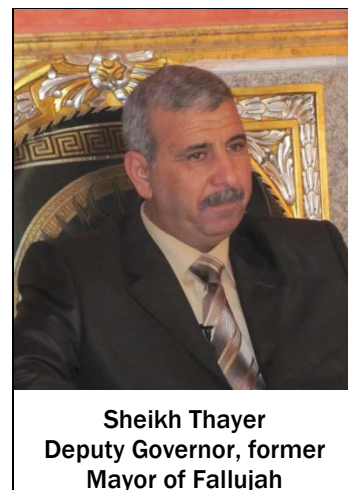
Knarr: Sir, it was an honor, I mean when we talk about heroes and sacrifices, the Iraqis have made a lot of sacrifices.

Tariq: Thank you very much.

13 September 2013

Subject: Interview with Sheikh Thary Abed Alhadi al-Yousef al-Zobai, Deputy Governor, Fallujah

Sheikh Thary Abed Alhadi al-Yousef al-Zobi, currently the Deputy Governor for Al Anbar and previously (2005-2007) Mayor of Fallujah, was interviewed on 10 April 2010 at the Albu Risha Compound. He is from Fallujah and represents Fallujah in the MSI political party headed by Sheikh Ahmed. Sheikh Thary, from the Zobai tribe, insisted that there was no terrorism in Iraq before 2003 and there were no foreign fighters or Al Qaida in Fallujah during the first battle of Fallujah, in April 2004, in which, “the Fallujans defeated the Americans.” He was elusive in responding to questions about the second battle of Fallujah only to say that Al Qaida was not in Fallujah and foreign fighter involvement might have occurred but was minimal. The value of the interview was not in its application to the awakening (because it was very hard to keep him on track and he insisted on trailing off on political statements about the Coalition and Iranians) but to hear, six years after the battle(s) of Fallujah, a Fallujan political leader’s perspective on the events of 2004 in Fallujah. An interpreter was used for the interview.



The following is his account of the Awakening.

Dr. William Knarr: Could you provide some of your background please?

Sheikh Thary Abed Alhadi al-Yousef al-Zobai: I was born and grew up in Fallujah. All my education until high school was in Fallujah. Then I enrolled in the military college in Baghdad. In 1983 I graduated from military school as a Lieutenant. I stayed until 2003. When the occupation started, I left the Army as a colonel in 2003.

Knarr: Please talk about the time when the Coalition came in and then how the insurgency started. [5:02]

Thary: In 2003 there were no fights between Coalition forces or any of us. We didn’t have any terrorism, at least during the first year of the invasion. People had expectations that a new country would be born with the new democratic system away from violence and fighting. People expected higher living standards and better living conditions. People had a very high expectation that there would be a joint leadership for Iraqi representation of every sector of Iraq that would be leading this country. Higher living standards were one of the expectations, because we had spent years under embargo, so we thought this was our opportunity. People expected that they would have a government that would be very respon-

sible and put the good of the people first. We expected the American presence in Iraq to be a positive presence to help create the new government and to build the new Iraq.

As I said, for the first year, we didn't have any clashes between the Iraqis and the Coalition forces. In 2004, people realized their expectations were not going to be met and this is where the resistance started against the Coalition forces. The people saw that the Coalition forces, the Americans, were not opening channels of communications with the regular Iraqis. When the Coalition forces started the [new] government with whomever they brought with them from the outside, the ousted leaders from before, the Iraqis felt that they were put on the sidelines. A very important factor is that the Iraqi people were very dissatisfied with the new faces that the Americans brought with them to put in Baghdad. The US Forces brought with them other Arabs that were not from Iraq. To be specific, Iranian people, who have Iranian citizenship, were put in leadership positions. We as an army, have a huge grudge with Iran because of the 8 years' war that we spent with them. We lost the trust with the American forces when we saw the Americans bringing in Iranians and putting them in a leadership positions. [10:25]

Knarr: Who had Iranian citizenship that the Americans put into leadership?

Thary: These guys were Iraqis that were in opposition to Saddam Hussein, so they were living in Iran. By living in Iran, they were loyal to Iran and got citizenship from Iran.

The basic principal structure of the society in Iraq is tribal. You might find from one tribe, a part of that tribe that is Sunni and a part of the tribe that is Shia. And for us, as leaders who served in the Army or as Iraqis, we can determine what person is either from west, middle, or south Iraq. So many of these leaders came in, and they can track people within the tribal system. A lot of people claim they're from specific tribes, and the leadership double-checks with that tribe. The leader asks the tribe "Is this guy that is claiming he's from your tribe, from your tribe?" They will say, "No. He's claiming that he's from our tribe, but he's not." He's trying to get a position in the government by claiming Iraqi roots that he doesn't have. [14:07]

When these people infiltrated the government Iraqis knew their country was falling and would be cut by sectarian violence. So they grouped together to start the resistance.

You know that the freest and the strongest resistance started in Fallujah when I was there as a mayor. In the beginning, the people of Fallujah gathered together, because any legitimate resistance will not allow anybody to come and occupy or take their land from them, take their personal properties, or look at their females. So the people of Fallujah started an innocent, unbiased resistance, which doesn't have any outside scenarios or influence. The reason for this was Americans. It was either the leadership here or their bosses that controlled them. The reason why the Americans are responsible for all these mistakes is because they didn't talk to the Iraqis on the ground. They just listened to the

people who called themselves “opposition,” which I refer to as guys outside the country that opposed Saddam. These guys had different plans and agendas that was completely opposite to the American agenda in Iraq, but they make it look like they’re on the same page of the Americans just to obtain power.

We tried to advise the Americans. We told them, “If you keep going in the same direction, you’re going to cause yourself casualties and destruction, and you’re going to cause us casualty and destruction.” The Americans kept listening to the so called opposition until they drug the Americans into a swamp. I called that swamp the “Iranian swamp.” We have to focus on this line right now, tell why this happened wrong, and tell why the Americans did not communicate with the original people on the ground. [20:17]

I just gave you the general idea. Now I am going to get to the details and tell you how the Awakening started. You have to distinguish between resistance and terrorism. I need to let you know that terrorism is completely opposite to the Islamic religion. That subject would take us two, three days talking about, because with policy and politicians there are red lines when it comes down to religion.

If you want to occupy a country for any reason, either for strategic reasons or you are opposed to the ruling government, you shouldn’t be messing with people’s religion or beliefs. If you come and try to occupy my country and then you try to mess with my religion, I will hate you. All the people around the world understand this thing. We don’t have invasions like an occupation, like during WWI and WWII. This kind of occupation is gone, and now there are different kinds of occupations. You have to distinguish between the freedom of that person, his freedom of speech and religion, so you do not gain his or her hate.

Every incident will have a reason, so I gave you some of the reasons briefly, but there were 17 people killed on the 28th of April. It was in the south part of Fallujah, it was a school. American forces were occupying the school at that time, and the school’s students organized a peaceful march through the school, asking the Americans to get out of the school, so they can go back to school and study. At that time US Coalition forces shot and killed 17 of them. That was one of the sparks.

The main reason how the resistance started is when the American forces did not communicate directly with the Iraqis, and they brought outsiders to rule in here. They kept doing that for a long period of time. The reason for the resistance was to end occupation and start the new government.

Thary: In the end of 2004, after the victory in Fallujah, when the Fallujans prevented the Coalition forces from entering Fallujah...

Knarr: In April of 2004.

Thary: Up till that point it's still considered as resistance. At the beginning of 2005, approximately in February, Al-Qaeda started coming in.

Knarr: In 2005? They didn't come in 2004?

Thary: Until the end of 2004 there was no Al-Qaeda.

Knarr: There was no Al-Qaeda in there in 2004 at all?

Thary: We didn't even hear about Al-Qaeda at that time.

Knarr: Zarqawi was not in Fallujah?

Thary: We didn't even reach the Zarqawi timeframe, Zarqawi era. There is a difference between the resistance, legitimate resistance in 2004, and the beginning of Al-Qaeda in 2005. During 2004, our agenda was to resist the occupier. During 2005, we had the international agenda, to do various things. Now I am going to tell you about terrorism. [42:16]

Knarr: Were you the Mayor of Fallujah back then?

Thary: In 2005.

In 2005, the borders of Iraq collapsed. Iraq was open to all the neighboring countries. This is when all the people start coming in including international intelligence. All the people had international agendas. All the terrorists came in from the borders at that time. They all came in the name of resistance to get the sympathy of the Iraqis. They targeted the areas that were desperately looking for resistance, and they started with them. They entered with the religion. They put the ideology of the religion so they could get their sympathy, infiltrate them, and help them resist. Gradually, they started leading the resistant, of course with international command, to do things that they're not supposed to do legitimately. We found out later that Al-Qaeda was trying to dismantle the resistance in the first place. That's one of the reasons that the international Al-Qaeda was trying to get rid of the legitimate resistance. Some of the reasons why Al-Qaeda did that [i.e., dismantle the initial resistance] was: to finalize some scores with the Coalition forces and the Iraqi ground; to distract US Forces from rebuilding, to let the American forces fail trying to establish their targets; to bring the whole Iraq under Iran's control. When the actual resistance started understanding the agenda that Al-Qaeda came in with, it reached a point when the actual resistance and the Al-Qaeda fought each other. When the actual resistance found out that Al-Qaeda's main goal was to destroy Iraq and the Coalition forces, they had to fight the guys who were right in front of them. It was an easy target for them.

The problem was, Al-Qaeda was supported internationally and had more resources, so it won the battle and overcame the actual resistance. This is when Al-Qaeda took over the whole battle field. By the end of 2005, Al-Qaeda was all over the place and in full force, openly executing its targets in front of everybody. This is when the chaos happened. Al-

Qaeda started killing everybody without distinguishing. They were killing leaders in the Army, in the IA, the IPs, all the religious people, and Americans. It was just chaos! The killing was so vast and so tremendous that I had several attempts where my assistant, most of my PSD got killed. My City Council, Local City Council Chief got killed, too. The killing was extremely bad. They were dismembering people. [48:46]

At that time there was no representation in the government whatsoever. There was not even a Provincial Council. We didn't have any province leadership. The government had no way of communicating with Fallujah, so I was the only one there as a mayor. I was fighting so much to establish some security, IPs, or IP stations. Sometimes I got a visit from the Minister of Defense, and the only way they could come into Fallujah was to be flown in by US Forces by way of helicopter to land in my area. The same thing was true with the Governor of Anbar, Mamoun. He had to go with the US Forces in a helicopter to get to a meeting. As Mayor of Fallujah, for a whole year I couldn't come to the Provincial Council here. Regardless of this, I was able to create the Fallujah IP of 600 personnel. At the end of 2005, I was able to open the Fallujah IP Police and send some of my guys to be trained outside Fallujah. I sent several classes to Amman, Jordan to be trained, 200 IPs at a time. We put down the first ground stone for the hospital, and we started fighting terrorism to regain the city back. We tried to explain to the people that Al-Qaeda was trying to destroy Iraq. Every time we would try to build a project and just before we did a key turn over, Al-Qaeda will go and blow up the whole project. People slowly started understanding it. Al-Qaeda stopped all the rebuilding of my AO. They killed a lot of the Iraqis, the best of the Iraqis, the educated ones, the good figures. [52:19]

We couldn't find any government entity to help us at that time. We didn't have any local government in the province.

Now we're 2006. Same thing: destruction, destruction, destruction! In 2006 everybody felt that there's no way we can stop Al-Qaeda. They got in so deep, there's nobody that will be able to stop. And Anbar, there was no Anbar. People couldn't live, couldn't go anywhere, and couldn't do anything. The highway was shut down. Most of the Sheikhs either stayed in their homes or left the country. All government facilities were taken down. No one could claim himself as an ISF or wear the uniform. Everybody gave up and ISF gave their weapons to Al-Qaeda. Everybody got depressed and they knew that, that's it, that's the end.

This is when the first building ground for new Iraq happened. That's the light at the end of the tunnel as we say. This is why we needed to put this into history, so nobody can come in and put fake votes in a voting box and claim the history for himself.

This is in the complete darkness and complete giving up of on hope; this is when the Awakening started. The Awakening started from this place, and Sheikh Sattar Albu-Risha

was the leader of the Awakening. Then I held the flag, and I determined to lead the forces to clean up Al-Qaeda and to bring back the old Iraq. I also wanted to bring back the tribes, because the main principals come from the tribes. Even the lawmakers come from tribes. This happened at a time that you couldn't even whisper in somebody's ear that we're going to fight Al-Qaeda, but I did it. I said it right in front of the media, "I will lead civilian attack on these criminals and take them out of our country." With the very little logistics I had, with only a number of people with me to help. A lot of people didn't believe me, because nobody was able to say these things. I made in the beginning, a couple of battles, and I won these battles with the minimum people, not even ten or more guys. [58:25]

Knarr: Let me ask you something. If the Sahawa started with the Albu-Risha in Ramadi, you keep talking about the tribes. What tribe took the lead then in Fallujah?

Thary: There were no tribes fighting Al-Qaeda in there. We were talking about central tribal government that started in here, because nobody could. The Awakening is not separated; it's all one hand. It started like a snowball effect. It started with the ten guys that fought with Sheikh Sattar Albu-Risha. They won some battles, and people started hearing about it. People started coming into here and joined the Sahawa. Then it spread out. One person or one tribe by itself couldn't rise up by itself and say, "Hey, we're starting an Awakening." They all had to come here and start it from ten to 100 to 500 to 1000.

Knarr: So did he come to Ramadi?

Thary: Yes, they had to come to Ramadi and join there when they are from Fallujah.

Nobody could do any movement in any district around the Anbar without coming back to the main Awakening leadership. If somebody wants to start a battle against Al-Qaeda in his district, he has to come and inform the Sheikh and open an IP station. He would get all the equipment and the support from here to start that IP station. This is how the Awakening and the victory started. We began having peace and security, and then it spread out all the way to Baghdad and to the rest of the provinces. This is how it led up to the democratic country. This is when all the big shots and the decision makers and the politician started coming here and taking, finally, a deep breath and start doing their job and going to their establishments. They began opening political parties in Anbar. We could drive late on the highway and nobody would mess with us. Driving on highways was forbidden for civilians and the government at one point in time. This was when it all started. This is how we defeated terrorism. After it changed from a tribal revolution, we started establishing IPs and IAs in the province. The IPs reached the number of 28,000 IPs in Anbar. People came over here to become an IP. They got their uniform; they got their equipment, and they went to their IP stations. After the Awakening is when the council established IP stations. They refrained from wearing civilian clothes with guns. They went from being tribal revolution to normal people. This way, people do not blame

them for being armed militia like what is happening in other parts of Iraq now. They proved to the politicians that they don't have any different agendas. They don't have any armed militia. They are not seeking any propositions. They're just ordinary people unlike what is happening now with different awakenings where the people still have their weapons and they have political agendas. [1:04:57]

Things started settling down and some people did not like what was going on and what was happening. People started collaborating to take Sheikh Sattar Albu-Risha out. This is when the outside agendas and the traitor hands came in to kill him with that heinous crime and took his life. But the Awakening did not give up. Colonel Sheikh Ahmed Abu Risha was appointed as his successor, and they transferred from being an Awakening Council. They introduced themselves to the political party. And now they have the Convention of Iraq Awakening Council as their political party. It was decision number one as given permission to that political party, and we fought a political war in the elections. We won in that battle, too! We took number one in the whole province. We created the governor, and we even beat other political parties that have been in the political process for 20 years. As you know, the bigger party has more seats and is the one who decides who will become the governor. We started the local government as an executive power starting from the governor and management for the province and restructured the ISF. We became the leaders of the province, 11 April 2009. Now we have celebrated the first hero for establishing the local government, and we succeeded in leading the province in excellence as an Awakening. The governor that we put in power got the first prize for investments, and he was issued that prize in Turkey by the Coalition forces. Now we lead the whole province for rebuilding for a better life for the whole people of the province.

Knarr: Okay. I'd like you to go back to 2004 for a second. Were there no foreign fighters in Fallujah in 2004? [1:09:27]

Thary: I cannot be specific on date and time, because there are incidents that might refer to these things. I tried to give you a timeframe to separate the legitimate resistance from AQI. There were two major battles in Fallujah. The first battle was 100% Iraqi. It was a pure resistance against the occupier. We asked for communication and negotiation with the Americans, so we could explain our targets in this revolution. The resistance started especially after the school incident. You can bet that winning the Fallujah battle against the Americans brought the attentions of AQI to come into Fallujah. If you're asking how did they come into Fallujah, the first battle of Fallujah publicized the resistance, which attracted all these foreign fighters.

Knarr: My question was AQI and foreign fighters, I understood, were in Fallujah during the second battle, during Al-Fajr.

Thary: Yes, after the first battle, Al-Qaeda started coming in because it was like a magnet for all these guys. To the end of 2004 they came in and fought with the resistance. The end of 2004, they fought the second battle. They start coming after the first war, and they didn't appear until the second battle. I have to clarify one point for the history: you cannot connect Islam and terrorism.

Knarr: Yes, I agree.

Thary: People have a tendency to blame Islam and terrorism together. The minute somebody blows up something, they label them as a Muslim and they connect these. Our Islam did not allow us this.

Knarr: I think, unfortunately, terrorism sometimes misuses Islam to do that.

Thary: This is why our responsibility as doctors to explain this and expose it.

I'm educated. We both know, but the little people don't know. Everybody is watching media and it is our responsibility, in front of God, to reach this point to them. We have to let the media know that terrorism doesn't have a face or a religion. Our meeting is just to explain that even in the days of ancient Islam and the prophet Mohammed, Islam was not built on these things, and our duty is to explain that to them. These subjects are long, very long. I hope you got to your point, there are so many different subjects, and we cannot finish it in one sitting. [1:16:06]

Thary: You have to understand the Iraqi people. We are very generous and brave.

And very clear people. We speak openly; we don't care. You have to understand, the Iraqi people are very open. When they call you an occupier, they will tell it to you in your face. The Iraqi people have a very good relationship and friendships with Iraqis and French. They love friendship. A lot of our doctors and educators studied in the US and England. There's so much foreign influence that everything confusing, and, after all, you guys are the reason. You take responsibility for that. Fix a good Army and IA and bring Iraq like it was before. Americans will be responsible in front of history of all. If it wasn't for America, the Iranians would not have put a footstep in the country, because we fought with them for years and they never made it.

Knarr: But I would trust that with men like you, and the passion against the Iranians, that that will never happen. [1:18:16]

Thary: You know how I fought the Iranians, but they took advantage of the chaos that was caused by the invasion. This is how they sneak up. Iraq is like a lion inside a cage, and now we have all the sheep and foxes roaming around, because the Americans put the lion in the cage. Again, I am putting responsibility on the Americans to stop the influence of the Iranians in front of history.

Knarr: I want to thank you for being so candid and honest. You're from a great city, Fallujah. Thank you for coming here from Fallujah to speak to us. [1:24: 38]

Thary: Thank you for this opportunity for meeting. I hope this information, as it reaches some politician, reaches the regular, normal people, so they will have an understanding of what happened here. Maybe we'll get things fixed. And what we just said will distinguish between terrorism and the Islamic religion, and let everybody know that whatever delays in the political situation here and the destruction and the delay of rebuilding is because of Iran. We will let them know that we are afraid of the Iranian occupation, but not of the American occupation. Even though it's the same word, occupation, but the Americans they are not here to wipe the face, the religion, or the culture of Iraq. Maybe it's to reconstruct, maybe it's to rebalance, maybe the American occupation for Iraq came to rebalance the regional area, or maybe it came for other reasons, but it was not to wipe the face of the Iraqis. And I don't think that the US occupation has any enemy or has any grudge against the Iraqis. The occupation of Iran has historic hatred to Iraq, and they want to erase our face. They're trying to bring the Persian Empire by occupying Iraq. The Iraqis, we're smart, but, we are not hiding. We know that we are not hiding and we have full knowledge that Iran has an invisible occupation of Iraq. Americans have to take responsibilities, because they were the reason. I thank you, and I wish that you got some use of this.

Knarr: We did. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Appendix C: Who's Who

Interviewees

Abd al-Hakim Muhammad Rashid Muhammad al-Jughayfi, Mayor of Hadithah

Abdul Qadir Mohammed Jassim Obeidi al-Mifarji, General, Minister of Defense from 2006 to present, preceded by Dr. Sadun al-Dulaymi, Sunni Arab, born in Ramadi

Abdullah Jallal Mukhlif al-Faraji, Head of Sunni Endowment for Anbar Province, Regent Sheikh of the Albu-Faraj tribe; Ramadi City Council Member

Adel, Brigadier General, Commander 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division

Ahmad Jelayan Khalaf, former Desert Protector

Ahmed Bezia Fteikhan al-Rishawi, Paramount Sheikh of the Albu-Risha tribe, President of Muttamar Sahawat al-Iraq (MSI)

Ahmed Hamid Sharqi, Colonel, Chief, North Ramadi Police Precinct

Aum Ahmed, resident of Al Qaim

Babakir Badr-khan Shawat al-Zubari, General, Chief of Staff for the Joint Forces Command, Studied at the Iraqi Military Academy in Baghdad in 1969, served in the Kurdish Peshmerga 1973–91; Escaped to Iran as a political refugee in 1975; Acting Commanding General of Iraqi Joint Headquarters, 2004–05; Chief of Staff, Iraqi Joint Headquarters, 2005 to present

Bakhit Arak Ali, Lieutenant Colonel, Commander, Qatana Police Station, Ramadi

Bezi Mujjil Nijris al-Gaoud al-Nimrawi, eldest Sheikh of the Albu-Nimr tribe; one of the first tribal leaders to offer to arm tribesmen and support Coalition (Summer 2003); turned down by CPA over concerns of creating tribal militias; lives in Amman, Jordan

Farouq Tareh Harden al-Jughayfi, Colonel, Police Chief Hadithah

Hareth al-Dhari, (Dr.) Leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS) and Zobai tribe

Ibrahim al-Jaafari, former Iraqi Prime Minister, April 2005 to May 2006

Ismael Sha Hamid Dulaymi, staff Brigadier General Former Commander 28th Iraqi Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division

Jalal al-Gaoud, Iraqi Businessman from Hit, residing in Jordan

Jassim Muhammad Salih al-Suwaydawi, sheikh of the Albu-Souda tribe

Kurdi Rafee Farhan Al-Mahalawi, lower tier sheikh of Albu-Mahal tribe

Mahmood al-Janabi, a leader with the Jaish al-Islami (Islamic Army) insurgent group

Majed Abd al-Razzaq Ali al-Sulayman, Sheikh of the Dulaymi Confederation

Mamoun Sami Rashid Latif al-Alwani, former Governor of Anbar; Anbar Provincial Council Member; Chairman of the Provincial Council's Economic Committee

Mishan Abbas Muhammad al-Jumayli, Paramount Sheikh of the Albu-Jumayli tribe

Mohammed Al-Saady, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister and Chairman of the Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation. Recently elected to the new Parliament.

Mukhlis Shadhan Ibrahim al-Mahalawi, Desert Protectors commander

Nathem al-Jabouri, former member of AQI

Numan al-Gaoud, businessman and member of the Albu-Nimr tribe in Hit

Raad Majid Rashid al-Hamdani, Lieutenant General, Retired Republican Guard Commander; Leader of the FRE Movement to Reintegrate with GOI

Raja Farhan, mayor of Al Qaim

Sa'fa Al-Sheikh, National Security Advisor

Sa'id al-Jughayfi, Sheikh of the Jughayfi tribe in Hadithah

Sabah al-Sattam Effan Fahren al-Shurji al-Aziz, principal Sheik of the Albu-Mahal tribe in Al Qaim

Sadun Juwayr Farhan al-Rishawi al-Dulaymi, Doctor, Former Minister of Defense 2005/2006, Doctorate in Social Psychology from United Kingdom's Keele University

Said Flayyah Othman al-Jughayfi, contesting Sheikh, Albu-Jughayfi, one of the top 17 influential tribes in Anbar, Hadithah

Sha'ban Barzan Himrin, Colonel, former Chief of Police in Baghdadi

Sheikh Ali Hatim Abd al-Razzaq Ali al-Sulayman al-Assafi al-Dulaymi, President of the Common Council of Iraqi and Arab Sheikhs, Lineal Sheikh-in-waiting of the Albu-Assaf tribe, Founder of the Iraqi National Front

Tariq al-Abdullah al-Halbusi, Principle Sheik of the Halbusi tribe located in Fallujah

Thamer Kadhem al Tamimi, closely associated with JAI; one of the first and premier Saha-wa leaders in Baghdad

Thamir Ibrahim Tahir al-Assafi, Doctor, Head of the Muslim Ulema Council (MUC) for Anbar and Senior Theologian to Sunni Waqf; Ramadi City Council member; Al-Anbar University (AAU) Professor of Religious Studies; Mutammar Sahawat al-Iraq (MSI) office of Religious Affairs

Thary Abed Alhadi al-Yousef al-Zobi, Deputy Governor, on the Awakening

Other Notable People

Abdul Sattar Albu-Risha, Leader of the Awakening movement in the Al Anbar Area, assassinated 13 September 2007

Abdullah al-Janabi, close supporter, organizer, and religious advisor to many of the insurgent groups growing in and around Fallujah during the summer of 2003; became one of the key influential insurgent leaders during both battles of Fallujah (2004)

Abu Ayyub al-Masri, replaced Zarqawi as leader of AQI following the former's death in June 2006; created Islamic State of Iraq in October 2006

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Jordanian-born founder of *Jama'at Al-Tawhid Wa'al Jihad* (JTJ—Group of Monotheism and Holy War) (2003) and later Al-Qaeda in Iraq (October 2004); killed in Coalition airstrike in June 2006

Amer Abd al-Jabbar Ali Sulayman al-Assafi al-Dulaymi, Co-Paramount Sheikh of the Albu-Assaf tribe and Co-Sheikh General of the Dulaymi Confederation

Faisal al-Gaoud, former Sheikh of Albu-Nimr; father of Sheikh Fasal

Fasal Rakan Nejris, Sheikh of Albu-Nimr tribe; appointed governor of Anbar by IIG November 2004; replaced as governor by Raja Nawaf Farhan al-Mahalawi (May 2005); Awakening Council leader; died 25 June 2007 in Mansour Hotel bombing

Hamid Farhan al-Heiss, from the Albu-Thiyab tribe; member of the Anbar Salvation Council; don't confuse him with his brother, Sheikh Muhammad Farhan al-Heiss and contesting lineal sheikh of the Albu-Thiyab tribe

Hatim Razzaq, current Sheikh of Albu-Nimr

Hikmat Jubayir, mayor of Hit; Sheikh of Albu-Nimr tribe

Karim Burjis al-Rawi, former governor of Anbar Province (April 2003–August 2004); forced to resign after his sons were kidnapped; replaced by Mohammad Awad

Khalid al Irak al-Jassim, leader of the Albu-Ali Jassim tribe, killed by AQI

Khalid Araq Ataymi al-Iliyawi, well respected Ali Jassim tribal leader brutally murdered by AQI (August 2006); his body was hidden preventing burial for three days, violating both tribal and Islamic custom; catalyst for tribal resistance to AQI in the Ramadi area

Lawrence Mutib Mahruth al-Hathal al-Aniza, Paramount Sheikh of the Abu-Aniza tribe, Mayor of Nukhayb, Anbar, Iraq

Mudhir Abdul Karim Thiab al-Kharbit, son of Sheikh Malik; assumed leadership of clan upon his father's death; Ba'athist supporter and strongly anti-Coalition following his father's death

Muhammad Mahmoud Latif, leader of the 1920 Revolutionary Brigades and Ramadi Shura council

Muqtada al-Sadr, Shia cleric and leader of the Mahdi Militia

Naim Abd al-Muhsin al-Gaoud, appointed by Coalition forces as first mayor of Hit (April 2004)

Nayil al-Jughayfi, seized control of Hadithah during initial invasion; subsequently recognized by Coalition as first mayor (April 2004)

Raja Nawaf Farhan al-Mahalawi, appointed governor of Anbar by newly-elected provincial council (May 2005); kidnapped by extremist elements to influence Abu-Mahal to stop fighting AQI; found dead in a home after Coalition-insurgent fighting in the area; replaced by Mamoun Sami Rasheed

Razak Salim Hamza, former commander 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division

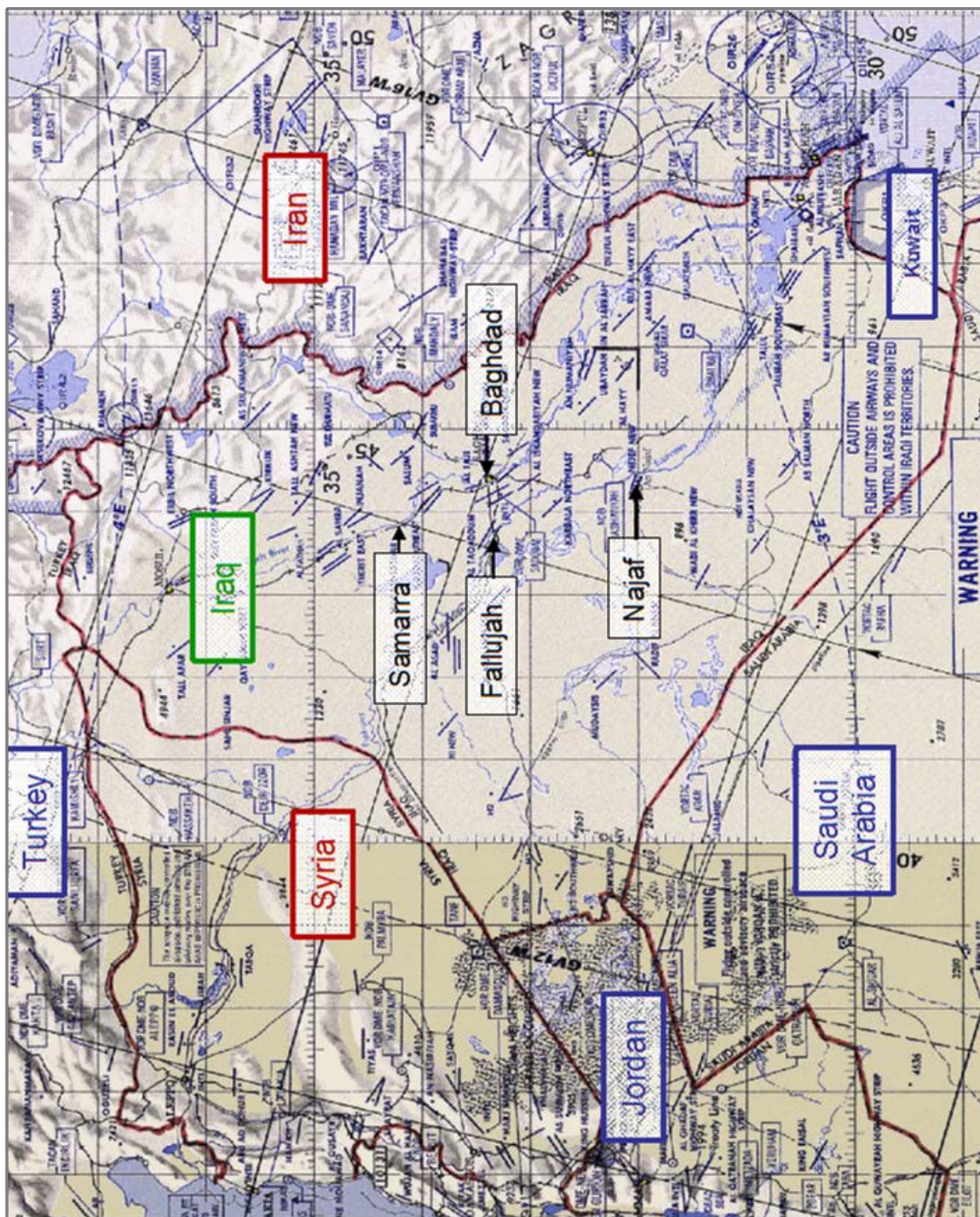
Sheikh Malik al-Kharbit, tribal leader of the Khalifawi (Ramadi area); head of one of the most important families in the powerful Dulaymi tribal federation; cooperated with Coalition forces before the invasion; tragically killed along with between 17 and 22 family members, including women and children during mistaken Coalition airstrike on his compound (11 April 2004); cited as motivating factor turning Ramadi-area tribes against Coalition

Talal al-Gaoud, son of Bezi al-Gaoud; worked with Marines engagements in Jordan in 2004; died suddenly in 2006

Tariq Abdul Wahab Jasim, former Commander Iraqi First Division

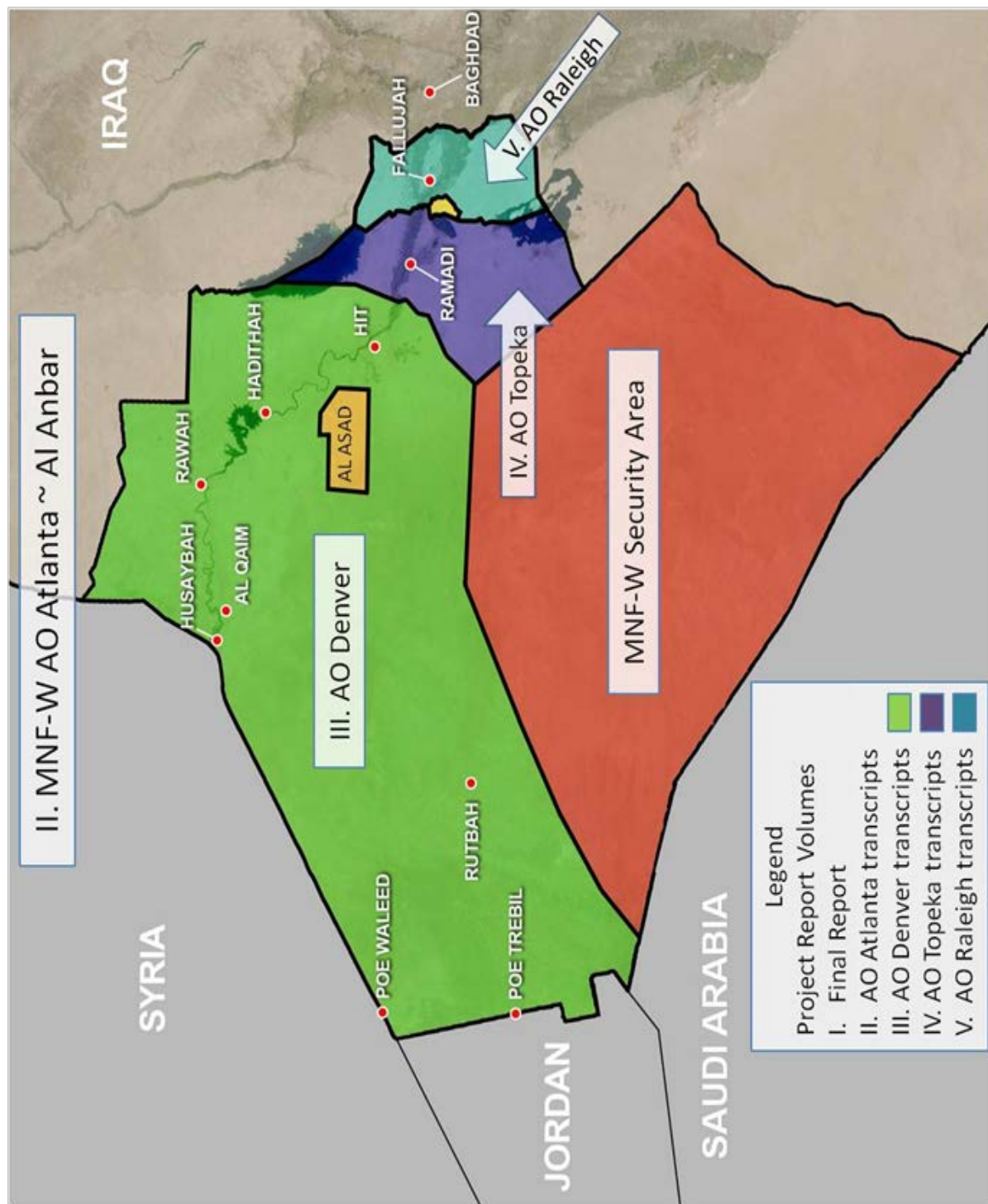
Appendix D. Maps

Note: North is towards the top of all maps as you read them.



Base map courtesy of National Geospatial Agency

Figure D-1. Map of Iraq and its neighbors



Area of Operation boundaries extracted from map courtesy of I-MEF and USMC History Division

Figure D-2. Map of military operational areas in Iraq during 2004

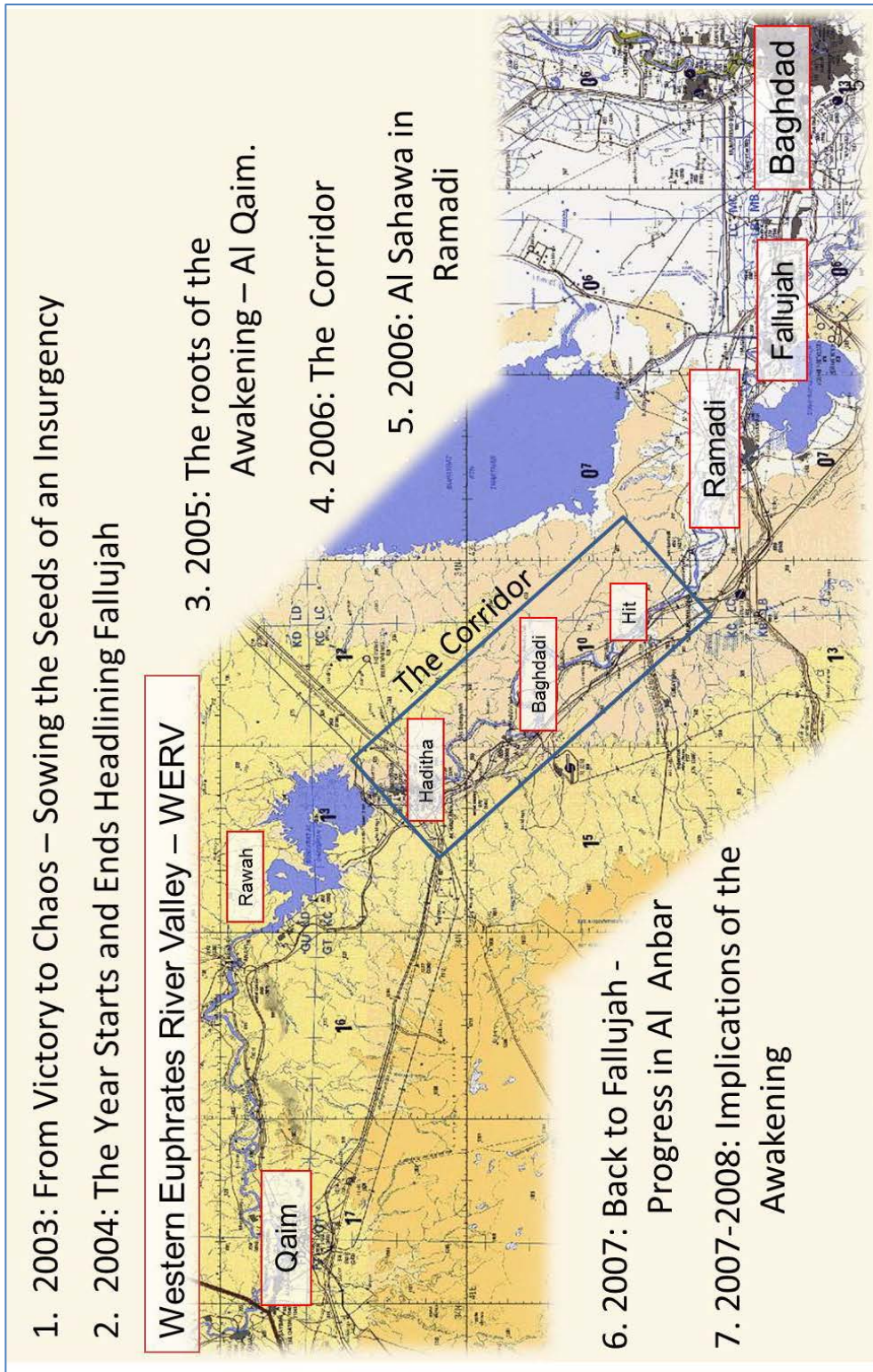


Figure D-3. Phases of the Al Anbar Awakening

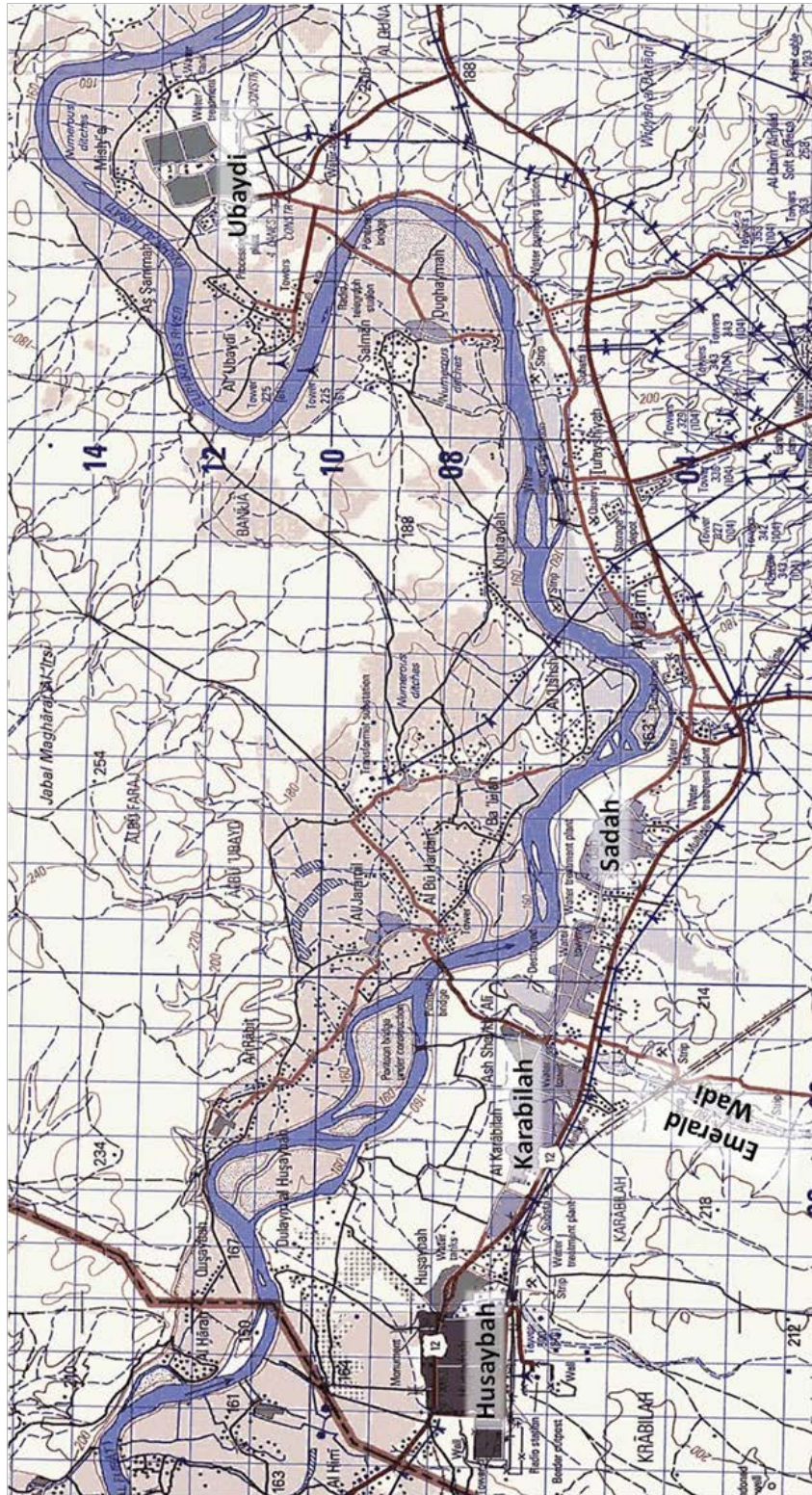


Figure D-4. Map of Al Qaim area

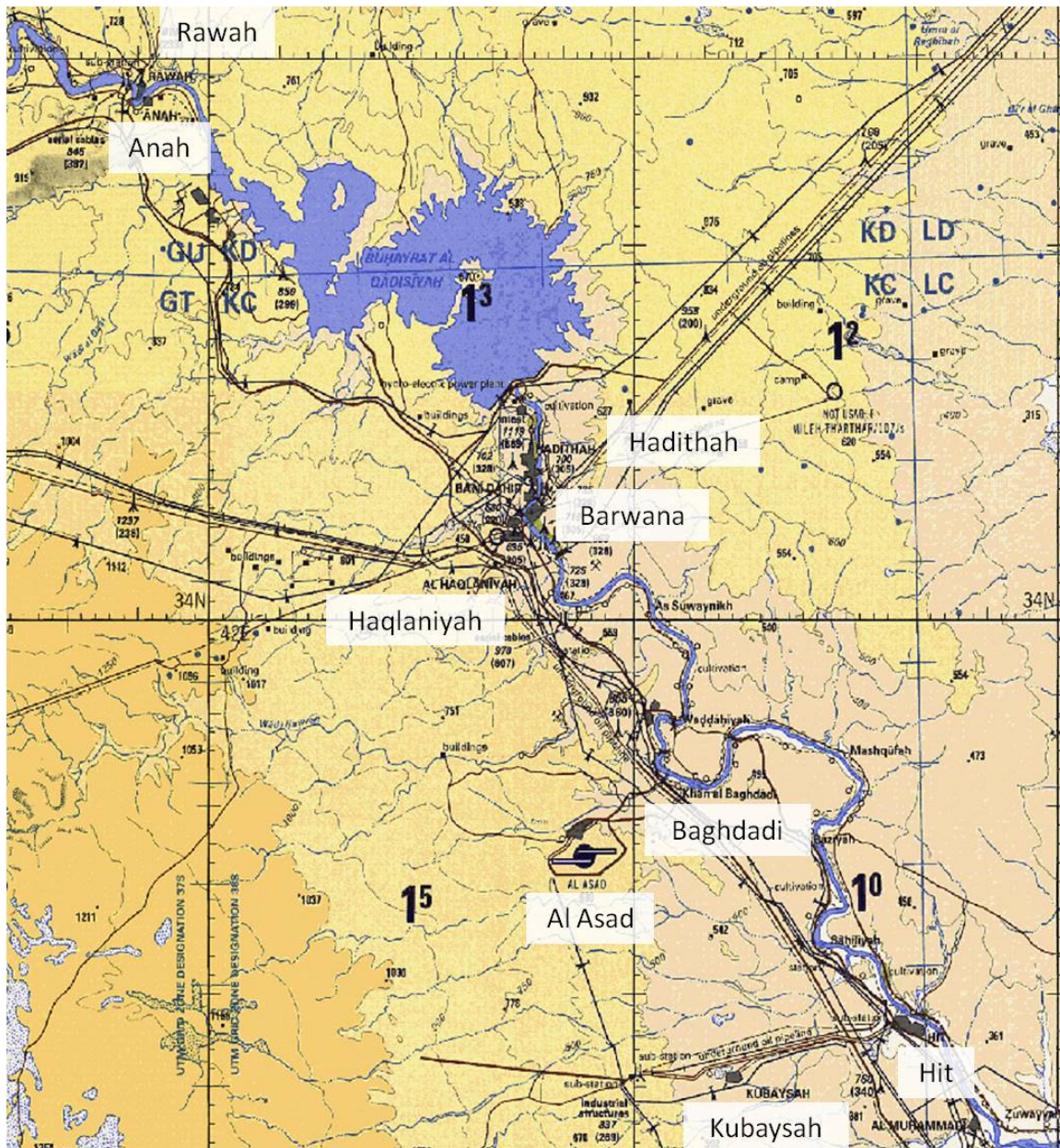
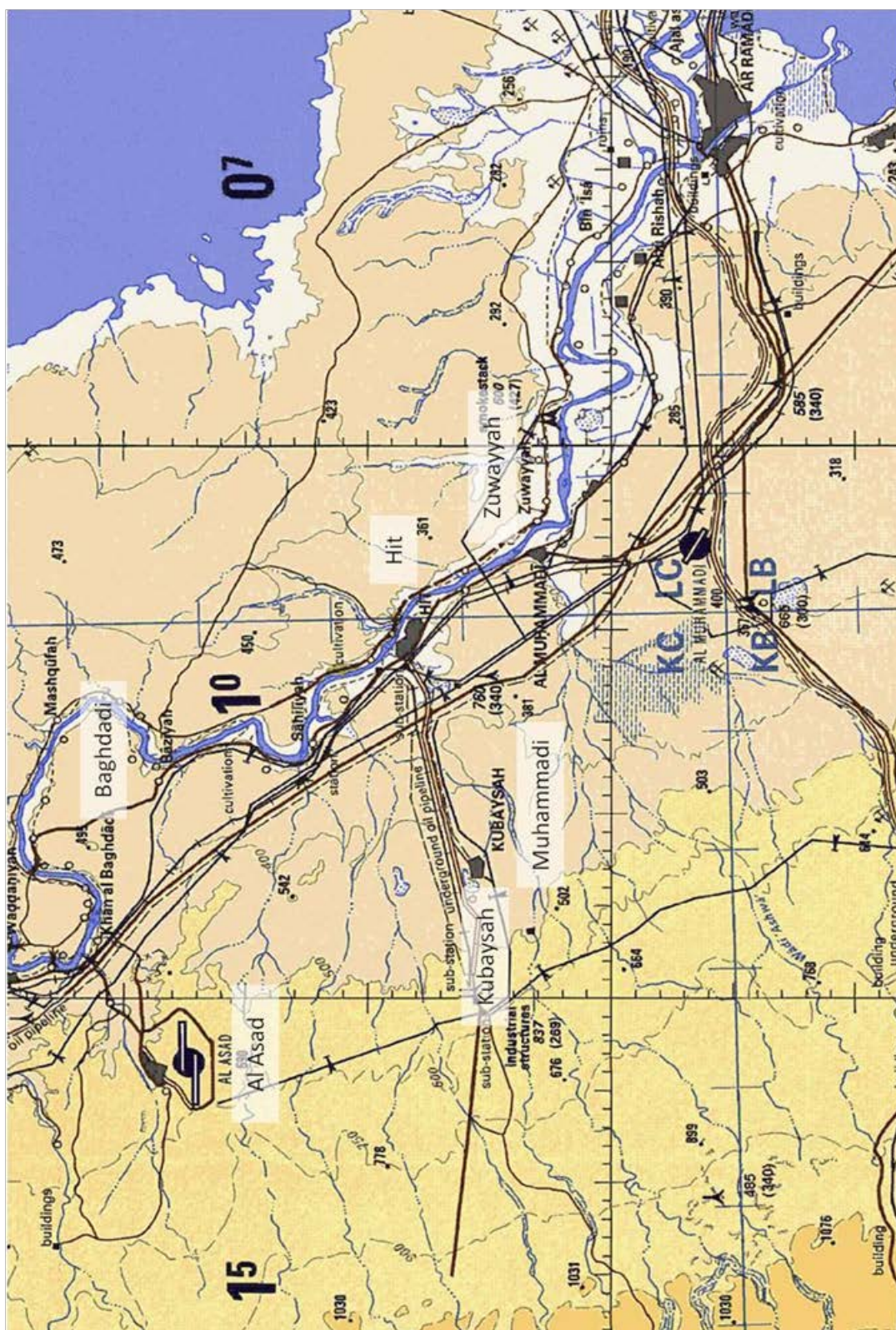


Figure D-5. Map of Hadithah area



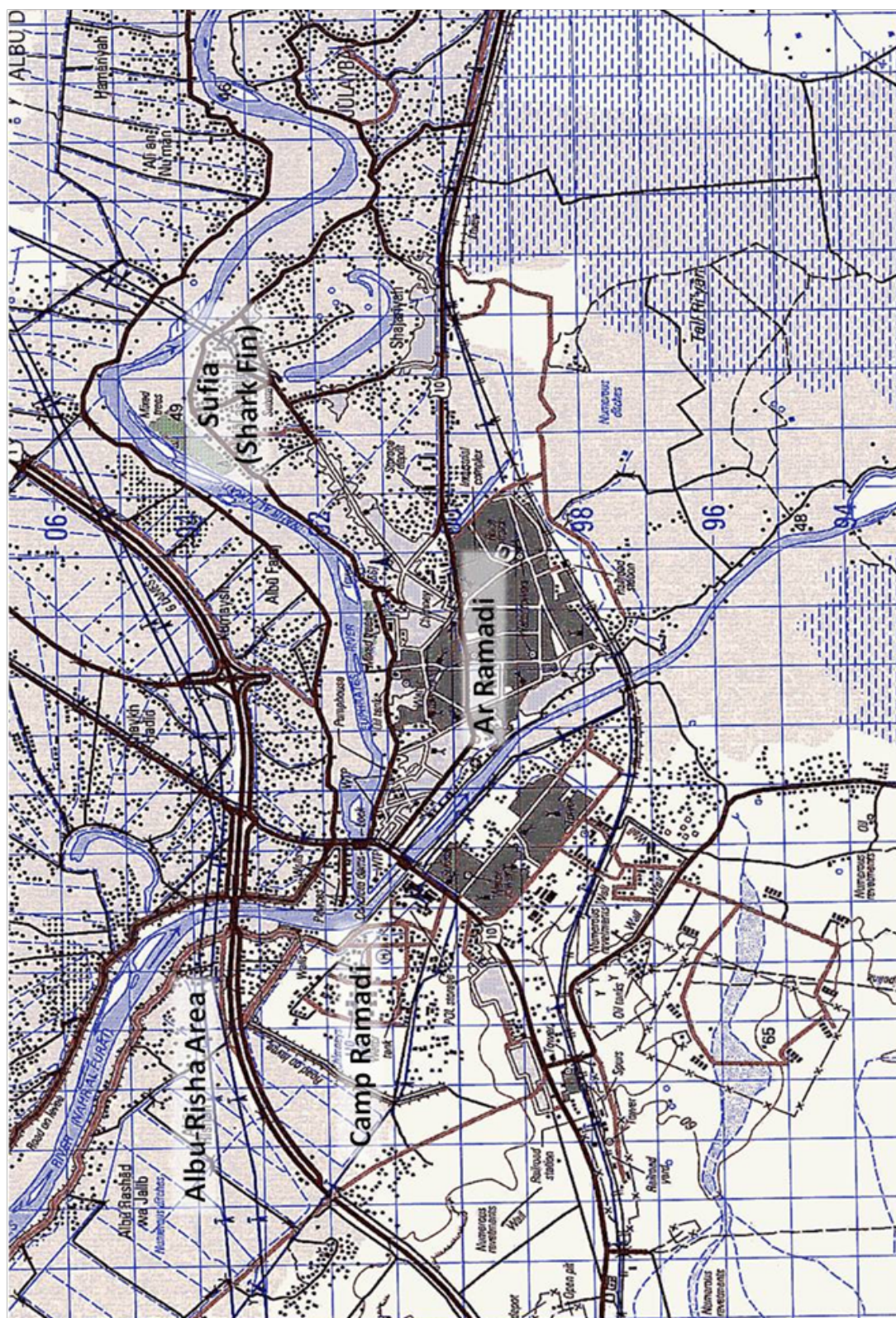


Figure D-7. Map of Ramadi area

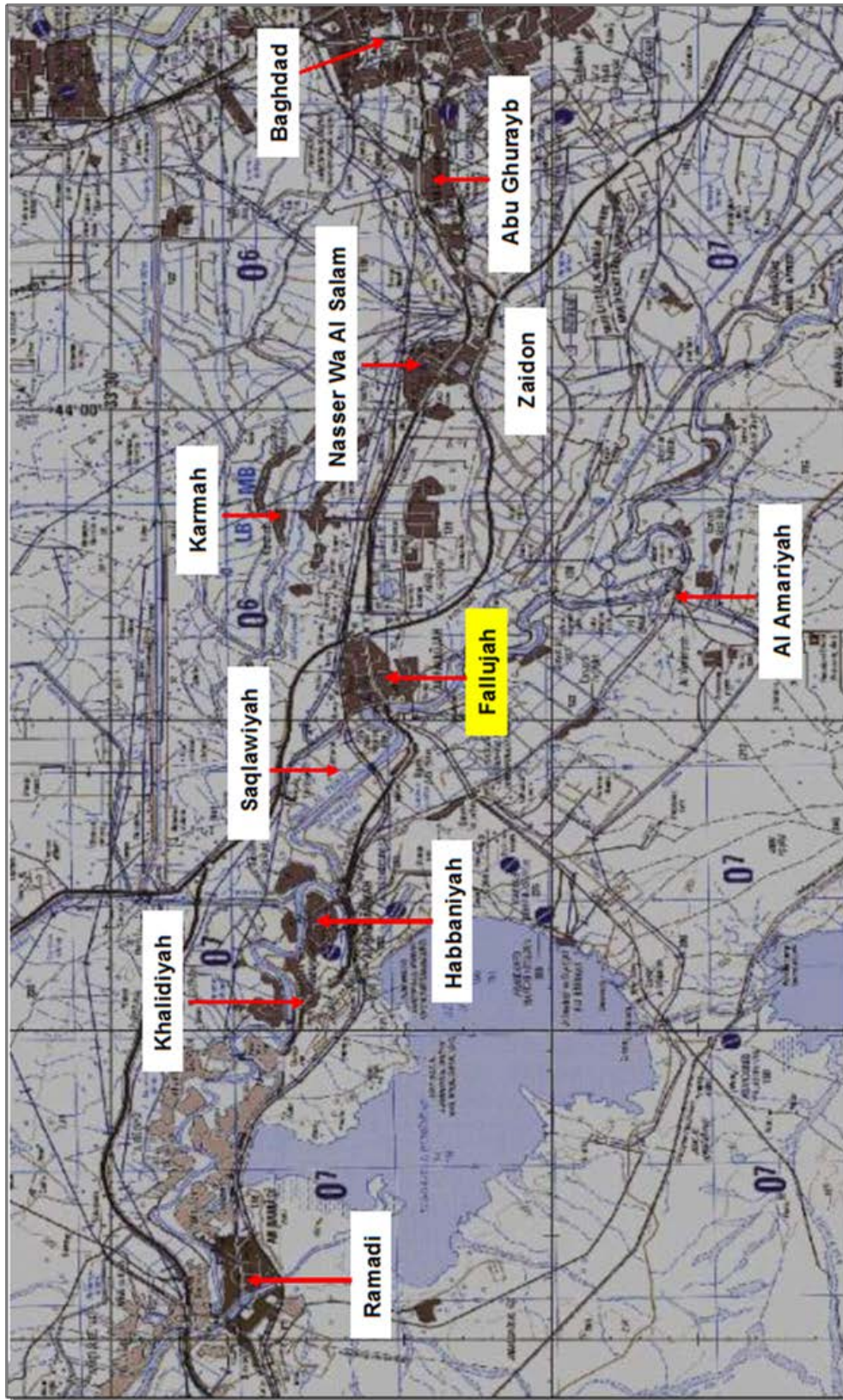


Image courtesy of 1st MARDIV

Figure D-8. Map of Fallujah and surrounding cities

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Appendix G. Abbreviations

ACR	Armored Cavalry Regiment
AO	Area of Operation
AQI	Al Qaeda in Iraq
BCT	Brigade Combat Team
BrigGen	Brigadier General–US Marine Corps
BG	Brigadier General–US Army
Capt	Captain, US Marine Corps or US Air Force
Cav	cavalry
CENTCOM	US Central Command
COIN	counterinsurgency
CG	Commanding General
COL	Colonel, US Army
Col	Colonel, US Marine Corps or US Air Force
COP	Combat Outpost
CP	command post
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
CREW	Counter RCIED (Radio Controlled IED) Electronic Warfare
CT	counterterrorism
ECP	entry control point
ERU	Emergency Response Unit
FM	field manual
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FRAGO	Fragmentary Order
G-3	Army or Marine Corps component operation staff officer (Army division or higher staff, Marine Corps brigade or higher staff)
GEN	General, US Army
Gen	General, US Marine Corps or US Air Force
GOI	Government of Iraq
HME	Homemade explosives
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
IA	Iraqi Army

IDA	Institute for Defense Analyses
IED	improvised explosive device
IG	Iraqi Government
IIP	Iraqi Islamic Party
IO	information operations
IR	Information Requirement
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISI	Islamic State of Iraq
JAI	Jaish al-Islami [Islamic Army]
JAWP	Joint Advance Warfighting Program
KIA	Killed in Action
KLE	Key Leader Engagement
LOO	Lines of Operation
LtGen	Lieutenant General, US Marine Corps
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel, US Army
LT Col	Lieutenant Colonel, US Air Force
LtCol	Lieutenant Colonel, US Marine Corps
LTG	Lieutenant General, US Army
MAJ	Major, US Army
Maj	Major, US Marine Corps or US Air Force
MajGen	Major General, US Marine Corps
MARDIV	Marine Division
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MG	Major General, US Army
MiTT	Military Transition Team
MNC-I	Multi-National Corps–Iraq
MND	Multi-National Division
MNF-I	Multi-National Forces–Iraq
MNF-W	Multi-National Forces-West
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MSR	main supply route
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSC	National Security Council
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha

OGA	Other Governmental Agencies
OIF	Operation IRAQI FREEDOM
OPORD	operations order
RCT	Regimental Combat Team
ROE	rules of engagement
RPG	rocket propelled grenade
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
PRQ	Primary Research Questions
PsyOps	Psychological Operations
QRF	quick reaction force
SRQ	Secondary Research Questions
TOA	Transfer of Authority
TTP	Tactics, techniques and procedures
UAV	unmanned aerial vehicles
VBIED	vehicle-borne improvised explosive device
WERV	Western Euphrates River Valley

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