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## ***Night and Day*** ***Anbar between the past and the present***

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No one imagined that Al Anbar province, once the most heated area in Iraq, would turn between night and day to become a quiet area. So calm in fact that many politicians cite the status quo in Al Anbar when they talk about the future of security in Iraq.

In the recent past, the word Anbar stood for Al Qaeda stronghold, terrorism, killings, discrimination, destruction and suffering. But when the people there decided to show their strength in unison to overcome the obstacles that faced them, they managed to uproot and eliminate the terrorist bases.

This honorable and heroic action has freed the people of Al Anbar from oppression of the terrorists who enslaved and humiliated them.

In the past, after noon you would seldom see anybody moving in the street except for the armed insurgents and terrorists who wandered about looking for more innocent victims. Public life and commerce ceased. There were no operating medical facilities; the chronically ill suffered for lack of treatment, shortening their lives; the absence of the emergency health services meant many innocents injured by the haphazard shooting and maleficent bombings died of treatable wounds. Tons of rubbish accumulated in the open lots and curbside, sewage flowed in the streets. Darkness shadowed the province as a whole and specter of death oppressed the minds of people.

Now the situation is totally different, the dark clouds over Al Anbar have been dispersed. A new dawn has emerged in this province by the virtue of the steadfastness of its people in the face of the barbaric attacks aimed at humiliating and dominating them.

The Gulf Region Division, for its part, is returning smiles and hope to the people as it reconstructs what the wicked destroyed.

In the area of healthcare, it has built 10 primary healthcare centers at the cost of \$5.2 million, designed to provide medical services to approximately 150 patients per day. Notable among these centers are the An Nazal PHC which has been constructed in Fallujah on behalf of the Ministry of Health, and Nasr Wa Salam's new PHC located between Baghdad and Fallujah. The medical staff there is seeing 250 to 450 patients daily and residents say they are very pleased with the expanded capabilities that new facility and equipment provides their community. Other medical work includes the completed renovation and new

modular construction on two hospitals in Ramadi and Rutba, benefiting 360,000 residents at a total cost of \$2.4 million. In addition, the renovation of the 260 bed Ramadi Women and Children's Hospital has been completed. Ar Rutbah Hospital in west Al Anbar province was completely rebuilt with a cost of \$1.23 million. The project benefits a population of 60,000.

Education, like healthcare, is a very important area in Iraqi society that suffered from years of neglect. The current efforts will benefit thousands of students and families for generations to come. In Al Anbar, \$17.7 million is being spent on renovation and construction of 39 schools. These schools provide a better learning environment for about 20,000 students.

In the area of security, 23 border forts costing \$6.2 million have been built along Al Anbar's extensive borders with Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria to help stop infiltrators from getting into Iraq to destabilize the situation inside. Police stations have been built in Ramadi, Fallujah, Karma and Saqlawiyah costing a total of \$3.6 million that serve a population of approximately 500,000 residents along with renovation on an Iraqi police school.

After clearing Fallujah from the terrorists, more projects have been executed in the most heated neighborhoods such as Al Tahadi where the residents there last year celebrated the opening of a new water treatment facility with the capacity of producing enough water for about 50,000 area residents. An identical facility, the Al Askari water treatment has been constructed to pump fresh water to Fallujah's northeast section.

Many of the 27 sewage projects planned have been completed. These projects with the cost of \$76.1 million are primarily in Fallujah. A wastewater treatment plant for the city is under construction to serve the population of 200,000, improve living conditions for the people of Fallujah and providing jobs for local tradesmen and contractors.

In the area of electricity, one generator project is complete and one is on going for the cities of Ramadi and Haditha (benefiting more than 400,000) with the cost of \$19 million.

Work on the electrical grid includes not only generation but also transmission. There are seven projects which will deliver electrical power to the residents of Haditha, Al Qa'im, Fallujah, Ramadi, and outlying areas of Anbar, benefiting more than 600,000 residents. The total cost is \$84 million. In distribution, 31 projects more than half of which are complete will supply power to more than 500,000 people in the communities of Ramadi, Saqlawiyah, Fallujah and the outlying areas of Al Anbar. Electricity projects also included installing new substations with different capacities and renovating others in different areas throughout Al Anbar.

Moreover, the Gulf Region Division has taken an active role in repairing and resurfacing key roads and building new ones, as well. Examples of work in the \$30 million program include road work in Saqlawiyah and the road between Ramadi and Haditha.

All people in Anbar are working hand in hand to rebuild their province. Contractors are providing employment for hundreds of Iraqi workers and the improvements they make will help spur the economy.

The inhabitants of those remaining areas of Iraq where strife is still chosen over cooperation could do well to look at the lesson of Al Anbar if they are seeking a better and safe life.