

HOUSE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE

WAR AGAINST
RADICAL MILITANT ISLAMISTS
RECESS RESOURCE KIT SUPPLEMENT



Dear Republican Colleague:

September 15 is a date that has been circled on all of our calendars for some time now. General David Petraeus' report to the Congress and the American people on the status of our mission in Iraq is expected by many to be a critical moment for the future of our strategy to defeat radical militant Islamists.

In recent weeks, we have seen signs of real progress in Iraq – for instance, this week it was reported that U.S. troop fatalities in Iraq plummeted in the month of July. On Monday, an opinion piece by two scholars from the left-leaning Brookings Institution appeared in – of all places – the op-ed pages of The New York Times. The authors, Michael O'Hanlon and Kenneth Pollack, who had previously been considerably critical of our efforts in Iraq, wrote:

"Here is the most important thing Americans need to understand: We are finally getting somewhere in Iraq, at least in military terms. As two analysts who have harshly criticized the Bush administration's miserable handling of Iraq, we were surprised by the gains we saw and the potential to produce not necessarily 'victory' but a sustainable stability that both we and the Iraqis could live with. "

What makes these reports so striking is the fact that it was only in mid-June that General Petraeus received the full compliment of troops called for in the surge. It was at that point that U.S. forces began a new offensive against the terrorists. Now some reports suggest al-Qaeda is on the run in previously violence-ridden portions of the country.

We got some unexpected insight into what the Democrats think of all this news Monday evening when The Washington Post put out a dispatch reporting that Democrat Whip James Clyburn said that a positive report from Gen. Petraeus would be "a real big problem" for his party in their efforts to end the war.

Here you have the leader whose job it is to win his party votes on the House floor inadvertently revealing that Democrat leaders are politically invested in failure in Iraq. This is a time to keep faith with our troops in harm's way, not to abandon them in favor of political considerations.

No matter where you go or what themes you are driving during this recess, Iraq is sure to be a dominant issue in your district. To that end, we have put together this special recess packet to help you better educate your constituents on how the surge works, what it has accomplished, and what we can expect in the way of progress going forward. You should also make it a point to put all of this in context by talking about what's at stake in Iraq and what the consequences of our failure there would be.

This document would not have come together if not for our Vice-Chair, Kay Granger, who was integral in developing themes to hit on and gathering materials from helpful sources. I also want to thank our Conference Secretary, John Carter, who has provided valuable insight in light of his recent visit to Iraq.

Finally, when having these important discussions with constituents over the course of this recess, it is important that we remain cognizant of the fact that just as much as we understand the significance of Sept. 15, so too do our enemies. We can certainly expect the terrorists in Iraq to increase their attacks on U.S. troops – especially in the form of spectacular acts of violence – in the weeks leading up to Labor Day and in the days thereafter. This is an enemy that has proven it understands how to control the media and influence outcomes in Washington.

As always, please don't hesitate to let me know if you have any questions or require any further information.
Sincerely,



Table of Contents

Preface

Letter from Chairman Putnam	1
-----------------------------------	---

I. A New Strategy: U.S. Troops on the Offense in Iraq

Talking Points: The Surge: What It Is, What Is at Stake & What Republicans Expect from Gen.

Petraeus in September	4
Al Qaeda in Iraq (Courtesy the White House).....	8
Iraq Fact Check: Responding to Key Myths (Courtesy the White House)	12

II. Mapping Our Troops' Progress

Map: Iraqi Cities and Baghdad Neighborhoods Liberated from al Qaeda Control Jul. 2007	18
Map: 26 al Qaeda Leaders Captured or Killed, May – Jun. 2007	19
Chart: Sectarian Murders Declining, Jan. – Jul. 2007.....	20
Chart: Weapons Caches Discovered, Jul. 2006 – Jul. 2007.....	21
Map: “Tribal Awakening” – Iraqi Tribal Leaders Turn on al Qaeda	22
Map: Iraqi Army Taking the Lead: Jun. 2006 vs. Jun. 2007	23
Chart: Ramadi: Daily Attacks, Oct. 2006 – Jun. 2007	24
Map: The Greater Middle East, Present Day	25

III. Appendix

“A War We Just Might Win,” By Michael E. O’Hanlon and Kenneth M. Pollack, *The New York*

<i>Times</i> , Jul. 30, 2007	26
------------------------------------	----

“U.S. troop fatalities in Iraq drop sharply; The toll is falling in the most dangerous provinces, not just

in the Baghdad ‘surge’ zone,” By Gordon Lubold, <i>The Christian Science Monitor</i> , Aug. 1, 2007.....	29
--	----

“Back from Iraq, Democrats Document Troops’ Progress,” House Republican Conference, Jul. 31,

2007	31
------------	----

TALKING POINTS: A New Strategy: U.S. Troops on the Offense in Iraq

The Surge: What It Is, What Is At Stake and What Republicans Expect from General Petraeus in September

Summary

Where we were:	The previous strategy in Iraq focused on training Iraqi military units and conducting tactical strikes against terrorists and insurgents – not a strategic, sustained effort to eliminate al Qaeda, prevent its re-supply from outside of Baghdad or keep cleared areas secure.
Where we are:	The newest phase of the U.S. strategy focuses on securing cities and regions through a strategic, coordinated offensive to (1) eliminate al Qaeda and insurgent groups, (2) disrupt and destroy their supply lines, and (3) secure and build upon cleared areas through sustained coalition and Iraqi patrols – thus giving the Iraqi people and government the opportunity to achieve political and economic normalcy. Operation Phantom Thunder has given coalition forces tactical momentum throughout Iraq; the evidence shows early signs of success as a result of General Petraeus’ leadership and implementation of the military surge.
Where we must go:	Republicans expect continued military and security progress, which Iraqi officials must use to pass good laws, pursue political reconciliation, reduce sectarian tensions, leverage positive local and regional developments, and rid the government of corruption and groups which seek to undermine progress.

The Threat of Radical Jihadists to the Safety & Security of America.

- **Our country faces a persistent and evolving threat from radical jihadists with global reach.** While stating that “the greatly increased worldwide counterterrorism efforts over the past five years have constrained the ability of al Qaeda to attack the US Homeland again”, the most recent National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) also notes that radical jihadists remain committed to improving their capabilities and attacking the United States. Toward that end, our adversaries continue to leverage their regional allies, of which the most capable and visible is al Qaeda in Iraq.
- **The NIE also warns that the international commitment to defeating the radical jihadist threat “may wane as 9/11 becomes a more distant memory.”** In the last seven months, we have already seen this happen within our own Congress:
 - Despite the fact that al Qaeda has publicly and unequivocally stated that Iraq is the central front in their war on Americans and our values, Democrats have focused on political stunts to weaken our influence in Iraq in an effort to appease their base.
 - And rather than learning the lessons of 9/11 – including that we need to break-down bureaucratic hurdles to intelligence collection and analysis – Democrats have stonewalled Republican attempts to update the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) and close the current loophole that prevents us from learning about terrorist plots.
- **Republicans learned the lessons of 9/11.** We must prevent critical regions from destabilizing and becoming safe havens for radical jihadists, as Afghanistan was left open to the extremist influence of the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

- o House Republicans continue to fight Democrats' numerous "slow-bleed" schemes, which undermine our troops who are fighting so courageously in Iraq, and other proposals for precipitous withdrawal. Republicans believe strongly in giving General Petraeus' strategy to secure Iraq through Operation Phantom Thunder – a massive military offensive or "surge" against al Qaeda and insurgents – the time it needs to succeed.

A New Phase: The Surge/Operation Phantom Thunder.

- The full complement of U.S. combat reinforcements arrived in Iraq in June. On June 15, **American and Iraqi military forces launched "Operation Phantom Thunder", a major military offensive in Baghdad and throughout Iraq to disrupt and destroy al Qaeda terrorists and insurgent groups.** American forces are now truly taking the fight to al Qaeda in Iraq, and we are turning the tables on the enemy.
- **The focus of General Petraeus' counterinsurgency strategy** – including an additional five U.S. brigades, which translates into nearly 30,000 additional U.S. troops – **is to secure the people of Baghdad and Anbar province**, two areas which saw considerable violence and instability in the previous year. Problems arose in the past when there were insufficient American and Iraqi forces to hold an area after it had been cleared of terrorists and insurgents.
- **Unlike previous strategies, the Petraeus plan seeks to eliminate terrorist and insurgent strongholds** in Baghdad and Anbar through Operation Phantom Thunder, a major, coordinated military offensive. This plan includes the necessary reinforcements that allow American and Iraqi forces to operate offensively while keeping a sufficient presence in 'secured' areas – thus preventing our enemies from re-introducing violence and instability to those areas.

The Surge is Working: Operation Phantom Thunder Has Given Coalition Forces Tactical Momentum in Iraq.

- **Major Operations.** Since the commencement of Operation Phantom Thunder, [American and Iraqi forces have conducted more than 85 battalion-level operations](#), which is double the number of operations conducted this time last year.
- **26 Qaeda Leaders Eliminated.** From May-June 2007, coalition forces killed or captured 26 al Qaeda leaders, including senior operatives. This is important because the NIE states that al Qaeda in Iraq remains al Qaeda's "most visible and capable affiliate and the only one known to have expressed a desire to attack" the U.S. homeland.
- **1,300 Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) Seized.** American and Iraqi forces have discovered and cleared more than 600 weapons caches, more than 1,300 IEDs, and more than 25 vehicle-borne IEDs (VBIEDs). They have dismantled eight VBIED factories.
- **Progress in Anbar Province.** Working with Iraqi security forces, U.S. forces have made dramatic progress in Anbar Province, an area once considered "lost" to al Qaeda. This progress is, in part, the result of a massive, well-planned operation to root out al Qaeda fighters from Ramadi and parts of western Anbar. Recognizing that al Qaeda has lost significant ground to coalition forces, a number of tribal sheiks in the province have broken their ties with the terrorists. This is the kind of success story that coalition forces are attempting to replicate in other parts of Iraq.
- **Progress in Baghdad.** U.S. forces have made concrete progress, working together with Iraqi security forces to secure Baghdad, block-by-block, neighborhood-by-neighborhood. Since the surge of forces began in January, sectarian violence associated with Shiite death squads has fallen; since May and June, the number of car bombings and suicide attacks has declined; and the number of Iraqis coming forward to assist in providing intelligence has risen. In recent weeks, General Petraeus has described "astonishing signs of normalcy" in over half of Baghdad.

- **Progress Outside of Baghdad.** In Diyala Province to the north and west of the capital, U.S. forces are working with their Iraqi counterparts to deny al Qaeda the ability to establish sanctuary in Baqubah. The significant coalition presence to the south of Baghdad has also prevented the emergence of safe havens there.

House Republicans are Expecting More Progress in Baghdad & Iraq, Particularly on the Diplomatic and Political Fronts.

- **“Operation Phantom Thunder”** is making progress in rooting out al Qaeda and insurgents in key areas of Iraq. While we expect that our adversaries will likely increase attacks against coalition forces in an effort to influence discussions and decisions in September, House Republicans also expect to see continued progress:
 - Sectarian violence has declined since the commencement of Operation Phantom Thunder. House Republicans want to see that downward trend continue.
 - House Republicans expect to see additional gains in securing and stabilizing Baghdad’s neighborhoods and suburbs, as well as Anbar province. Coalition forces must continue to deny safe havens for terrorists and insurgents in these and other areas.
 - Iraqi political leaders must put aside their sectarian and tribal differences to promote legislation and policies that are good for all Iraqis.
 - Gains have been made to eliminate government corruption and minimize the influence of sectarian extremists and militias on the Iraqi government. House Republicans expect greater progress in expelling these destabilizing influences from the government, especially within the Ministry of Interior and the military.

One Thing Is Certain: Retreat and Withdrawal Is Not a New Way Forward.

- Congressional Democrats would force American military commanders to abandon this new offensive just as positive results are materializing. Examples of progress from independent, respected news sources:
 - **Control Half of Baghdad.** “U.S. and Iraqi security forces now control about half of Baghdad, the American commander overseeing operations said Friday ... [General] Fil said American and Iraqi security forces now control 48 percent to 49 percent of the 474 neighborhoods in Baghdad. That is up from 19 percent in April, he said. Two weeks ago his boss, Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno, said about 40 percent of the city was under control.” ([AP, 6/29/07](#))
 - **“Sea Change’ in Improved Security.”** “The top U.S. general said Tuesday that parts of Iraq are undergoing a ‘sea change’ in improved security ... Security has improved in parts of Iraq in the past few months - since the increase in U.S. troops in Baghdad and as some Sunni tribes and armed insurgents have turned against al-Qaida.” ([AP, 7/17/07](#))
 - **U.S. Brokers Sunni-Shi’ite Pact.** “U.S. forces have brokered an agreement between Sunni and Shi’ite tribal leaders to join forces against al Qaeda and other extremists, extending a policy that has transformed the security situation in western Anbar province to this area north of the capital.” ([Washington Times, 7/23/07](#))
 - **Al Qaeda Informants Side with U.S.** “[D]ozens of low-level members of al-Qaeda in Iraq are daring to become informants for the US military in a hostile Baghdad neighbourhood. The ground-breaking move in Doura is part of a wider trend that has started in other al-Qaeda hotspots across the country and in which Sunni insurgent groups and tribal sheikhs have stood together with the coalition against the extremist movement.” ([The Times of London, 7/23/07](#))

- If Democrats had their way, American forces would be moved back onto large operating bases with severely limited missions, such as training Iraqi security forces – **a major part of our previous strategy that did not work.**
- A precipitous withdrawal before Baghdad is secure will endanger our troops already there, leave Iraq in chaos by providing a safe haven to al Qaeda, and broadcast to our enemies a key piece of tactical and strategic intelligence: the date and time of our stampede to the border.
- Our troops will be in even greater danger as they fight al Qaeda while protecting their own lives as lengthy withdrawal convoys move toward the border.
- Our retreat would send 160,000 American troops down the one available route out of Iraq where they would face a shooting gallery of al Qaeda fighters and insurgents, rocket-propelled grenades and IEDs. It is the same route where allied forces destroyed the Iraqi military on its way out of Kuwait in 1991: the "highway of death" between Basra, Iraq and Kuwait. Initial military estimates show that it would take "at least 3,000 large convoys" to remove U.S. equipment and personnel from Iraq – not to mention the armored vehicles, tanks, and additional security personnel that would be required to escort them out.
- **Washington Post:** "One official estimated that with only one major route from the country – through southern Iraq to Kuwait – it would take at least 3,000 large convoys some 10 months to remove U.S. military gear and personnel alone, not including the several thousand combat vehicles that would be needed to protect such an operation. 'We're not going to go from where we're at now to zero overnight,' said Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the U.S. commander for day-to-day operations in Iraq." ([The Washington Post, 6/10/07](#))

Surrender and Failure in Iraq Hold Catastrophic Consequences for the United States, for the Iraqi people and the World.

- An outbreak of regional conflict and humanitarian disaster – including possible genocide and massive refugee flows – would require the U.S. military to return to Iraq to protect vital national interests.
 - **Catastrophe in Iraq: A Region Consumed by War.** The ensuing chaos could spur a regional war between Shi'a and Sunni factions involving Iran and Saudi Arabia. Turkey could launch attacks against Kurdish separatists, possibly leading to a lengthy guerrilla war.
 - **Catastrophe in Iraq: Killing Fields and Genocide.** An American retreat could lead to genocide and ethnic cleansing on a Cambodian scale, with Shi'a and Sunni death squads the new Khmer Rouge, creating 21st century "killing fields" on the ground we once patrolled.
 - **Catastrophe in Iraq: A New Terrorist Safe Haven.** Amid the chaos caused by a U.S. retreat, al Qaeda would use Iraq as a base to launch terrorist attacks against the United States and our allies – as the National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq confirmed.

Al Qaeda In Iraq

- **The Al Qaeda Terrorists We Face In Iraq Are Part Of The Same Enemy That Attacked The United States On 9/11, And They Still Intend To Attack Us At Home.** While there is a debate in Washington about al Qaeda's role in Iraq, the facts are that al Qaeda in Iraq is an organization founded by foreign terrorists, led largely by foreign terrorists, and loyal to Osama bin Laden.

Al Qaeda In Iraq's Founder And His Successor Were Foreign Terrorists, Not Iraqis

Al Qaeda In Iraq Was Founded By Foreign Terrorists Linked To Senior Al Qaeda Leadership. Al Qaeda in Iraq founder Abu Musab al Zarqawi was not an Iraqi and neither is his successor Abu Ayyub al-Masri.

- **Jordanian Terrorist Abu Musab Al Zarqawi Founded Al Qaeda In Iraq And Pledged Allegiance To Osama Bin Laden.**
 - Before 9/11, Zarqawi ran a terrorist camp in Afghanistan.
 - According to our intelligence community, Zarqawi had longstanding relations with senior al Qaeda leaders and had met with Osama bin Laden and Ayman Zawahiri.
 - In 2001, Zarqawi left Afghanistan and eventually went to Iraq to set up operations with terrorist associates after Coalition forces destroyed his Afghan training camp.
 - In 2004, Zarqawi and his terrorist group formally joined al Qaeda, pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden, and promised to "follow his orders in jihad."
 - Bin Laden publicly declared Zarqawi the "Prince of Al Qaeda in Iraq" and instructed terrorists in Iraq to "listen to him and obey him."
- **Zarqawi's Successor Abu Ayyub Al-Masri Is An Egyptian Who Also Has Deep And Longstanding Ties To Al Qaeda Senior Leadership.**
 - Abu Ayyub has collaborated with Ayman Zawahiri for more than two decades.
 - Before 9/11, Abu Ayyub spent time with al Qaeda in Afghanistan and taught classes indoctrinating others in al Qaeda's radical ideology.
 - Last year Osama bin Laden tried to send a terrorist leader named Abd al-Hadi al Iraqi to help Abu Ayyub.
 - According to our intelligence community, Abd al-Hadi was a senior advisor to bin Laden who served as his top commander in Afghanistan.
 - Abd al-Hadi never made it to Iraq. He was captured last year and now is held at Guantanamo Bay.
- **Our Intelligence Community Reports That Many Of Al Qaeda In Iraq's Other Senior-Most Leaders Are Also Foreign Terrorists.** These foreign terrorists include:
 - A Syrian who is al Qaeda in Iraq's emir in Baghdad
 - A Saudi who is al Qaeda in Iraq's top spiritual and legal advisor
 - An Egyptian who fought in Afghanistan in the 1990s and has met with Osama bin Laden
 - A Tunisian we believe plays a key role in managing foreign fighters
 - Last month, Coalition forces killed senior al Qaeda facilitator Mehmet Yilmaz, a Turkish national who fought with al Qaeda in Afghanistan and met with Khalid Shaykh Muhammad and other senior al Qaeda leaders.

Al Qaeda In Iraq Tries To Deceive Others Into Thinking It Is An Iraqi-Led Operation

The Recent Capture Of Al Qaeda In Iraq's Most Senior Iraqi Official Reveals That The Group Is Led By Foreigners Who Are Trying To Deceive Others Into Thinking They Are Iraqis. On July 4, Coalition forces captured a senior al Qaeda in Iraq leader named Khalid Abdul Fattah Da'ud Mahmoud al-Mashadani, the highest ranking Iraqi in the organization.

- Mashadani said the foreign leaders of al Qaeda in Iraq went to extraordinary lengths to promote the fiction that al Qaeda in Iraq is led by Iraqis.
- Mashadani said al Qaeda in Iraq went so far as to create a figurehead whom they named "Omar al-Baghdadi" so that Iraqi fighters would think they are following the orders of an Iraqi instead of a foreigner.
- Mashadani said Abu Ayyub and his team of foreign leaders, not Iraqis, make most of the operational decisions for al Qaeda in Iraq.

According To Our Intelligence Community, Al Qaeda Senior Leaders And Al Qaeda's Leaders In Iraq "See Al Qaeda In Iraq As Part Of Al Qaeda's Decentralized Chain Of Command, Not As A Separate Group." Al Qaeda in Iraq is not just collaborating with al Qaeda leaders or maintaining contacts with them, they have formally merged with them and pledged *baya'at*, or loyalty, to Osama bin Laden.

- Our intelligence community concludes that "Al Qaeda and its regional node in Iraq are united in their overarching strategy."

Al Qaeda Is The Greatest Threat To Security In Iraq Due To Their Constant Attempts At Inflaming Sectarian War Through Large-Scale Bombings

Our Intelligence Community Believes Al Qaeda Is The Most Dangerous Of The Sunni Extremist Groups In Iraq.

- **Al Qaeda In Iraq, More Than Any Other Group, Is Behind Most Of The Spectacular, High-Casualty Attacks Seen On TV.** Our military estimates that between 80 and 90 percent of suicide attacks in Iraq are carried out by foreign-born al Qaeda terrorists brought into the country for the sole purpose of blowing themselves up and killing innocent Iraq civilians.
- **Al Qaeda Designs Their Attacks To Accelerate Sectarian Violence In Iraq.** Al Qaeda attacks Shia in hopes of sparking reprisal attacks that inspire Sunnis to join al Qaeda's cause.
- **Al Qaeda Is The Only Terrorist Group In Iraq With Stated Ambitions To Make The Country A Base For Attacks *Outside* Iraq.** Al Qaeda in Iraq dispatched terrorists who bombed a wedding reception in Jordan and sent operatives to Jordan where they attempted a rocket attack on U.S Navy ships in the Red Sea.
- **Al Qaeda In Iraq Shares Bin Laden's Goal Of Making Iraq A Base For Its Radical Islamic Empire And Using It As A Safe Haven For Attacks On America.**
- **This Is Why Our Intelligence Community Reports That Al Qaeda In Iraq, Compared With Other Groups, "Stands Out For Its Extremism, Unmatched Operational Strength, Foreign Leadership, And Determination To Take The Jihad Beyond Iraq's Borders."**

Iraq Is Central To The War On Terror, And America Can Accept Nothing Less Than Complete Victory

- **These Killers' Own Words Show That They Would Not Stop Trying To Kill Americans And Others Were We To Leave Iraq.**

- We know their intentions. Just last November, al Qaeda's top commander in Iraq issued an audio statement saying he will not rest until he attacked our Nation's capital.
- **For The Security Of Our Citizens, And The Peace Of The World, We Must Give General Petraeus And His Troops The Time And Resources They Need To Defeat Al Qaeda In Iraq.** We have already seen how al Qaeda used a failed state in Afghanistan to bring death and destruction to the street of our cities. The costs of withdrawal could be catastrophic:
 - Sectarian violence in Iraq could increase dramatically, raising the prospect of mass casualties.
 - Fighting could engulf the entire region in chaos.
 - We could soon face a Middle East dominated by violent Islamic extremists.
- **Recent Successes In Anbar Province Show That This Is A Fight We Can Win.** Less than a year ago, Anbar Province was al Qaeda's base in Iraq, but U.S. and Iraqi forces have since teamed with Sunni sheiks who have turned against al Qaeda and driven the terrorists from most of the population centers. Our troops are now working to replicate the success in Anbar in other parts of the country.

The Facts Are That Al Qaeda Terrorists Killed Americans On 9/11, Are Fighting Us In Iraq And Across The World, And Are Plotting To Kill Americans Here At Home Again. Those who justify withdrawing our troops from Iraq by denying the threat of al Qaeda in Iraq and its ties to Osama bin Laden ignore the clear consequences of such a retreat. Following their advice would be dangerous for the world and disastrous for America. So we must defeat al Qaeda in Iraq—and we will.

Iraq Fact Check: Responding To Key Myths

1. MYTH: The war "is lost."

- **FACT**: Our commanders and ambassador do not believe that. Asked whether the U.S. could win in Iraq and leave behind a stable government, General David Petraeus said "If I didn't believe that I wouldn't be here... I think that there is good prospect for progress in the months ahead." Ambassador Ryan Crocker says "the level of violence is down in the two areas where the 'surge' is focused, Anbar and Baghdad."
- **FACT**: The surge of operations is just beginning. The additional brigades Gen. Petraeus requested have only been in place since mid-June, and the military only began major offensive operations such as Operation Phantom Thunder once that happened.
- **FACT**: We have seen promising indicators since the President announced the new strategy in January. While al Qaeda and other extremists have conducted a counter-surge resulting in numerous horrific mass-casualty terrorist attacks, and while it is too early to declare the surge a success or failure, we have seen:
 - A substantial drop in sectarian murders in Baghdad since January
 - Arms caches found at more than three times the rate of a year ago
 - Tribal sheiks in Anbar and other provinces cooperating with Iraqi and American forces against al Qaeda
 - Attacks in Anbar at a two-year low
 - Total car bombings and suicide attacks down in May and June
 - The building of "joint security stations," where many Iraqis are coming with information on where terrorists are hiding
 - Signs of normalcy in Baghdad like professional soccer leagues, amusement parks, and vibrant markets.
 - Recruiting for Iraqi police forces drawing thousands of candidates
 - Young Sunnis signing up for the army and police
 - More Shia rejecting militias

2. MYTH: U.S. troops in Iraq are not fighting al Qaeda terrorists, just policing a Shiite vs. Sunni "civil war."

- **FACT**: Gen. Petraeus says "al Qaeda's terror war is focused on Iraq," where "they are carrying out the bulk of the sensational attacks, the suicide car bomb attacks, suicide vest attacks." Iraqi President Jalal Talabani says "the main enemy of Iraqi people is al Qaeda and terrorists cooperating with them."
- **FACT**: While there is certainly dangerous sectarian violence in Iraq, al Qaeda causes a vast majority of the spectacular suicide bombings that show up on U.S. TV screens and, importantly, *is trying to stoke sectarian violence* and chaos by using human beings, even young children, as bombers.
- **FACT**: Al Qaeda terrorists are targeting Iraqi Sunnis as well as Shiites and Kurds. For example, the 41 tortured Iraqis found May 27 in an al Qaeda hideout north of Baghdad were all Sunni.

- **FACT:** Al Qaeda leaders like bin Laden and Zawahiri (who last week said "victory" is near) want to "expel the Americans from Iraq" and establish a radical Islamic empire to launch a "jihad wave to the secular countries neighboring Iraq." These killers are clearly not going to participate in the political process or work with those who do not share their murderous ideology if America gives them what they want by leaving.

3. MYTH: The U.S. is playing "whack-a-mole" in Iraq.

- **FACT:** U.S. and Iraqi forces are conducting offensive operations against terrorists while simultaneously providing security in neighborhoods with joint security stations and patrols.
- **FACT:** General Petraeus's counterinsurgency strategy is a population-centric one that is different from what has been done before. The concept is for U.S. troops to work with Iraqi forces and secure safe havens, then maintain that security by staying in neighborhoods and building trust with the locals.
- **FACT:** The primary reason for the "surge" in troops was to give U.S. and Iraqi forces the ability and flexibility to conduct such offensive operations in and outside of Baghdad without having to shift troops out of so many areas where they were needed for security. This is why commanders held off on many of them until the brigades were in place – to avoid the problems of past offensives.

4. MYTH: The U.S. has an indefinite commitment in Iraq and should shift to training Iraqi troops.

- **FACT:** The current strategy in Iraq is a temporary surge in military, civilian, and diplomatic resources driven by the views of our commanders on the ground. The objective is to establish the conditions for a reduction in U.S. forces without risking catastrophe and wider regional conflict. As the President said July 4: "We all long for the day when there are far fewer American servicemen and women in Iraq...Yet, withdrawing our troops prematurely based on politics, not on the advice and recommendation of our military commanders, would not be in our national interest."
- **FACT:** The U.S. military is heavily invested in training Iraq's security forces and fighting al Qaeda right now — "shifting" to such pursuits would not be a change in course. Since the President announced the new strategy in January, the U.S. has increased the embedding of American advisers in Iraqi Army units, partnered coalition brigades with every Iraqi Army division, and accelerated the training of Iraqi forces.

5. MYTH: Setting a timeline and pulling troops out of Iraq regardless of conditions on the ground would be a responsible end to the conflict and/or would put needed pressure on Iraq's government.

- **FACT:** The collective judgment of our intelligence community is that this would increase, not decrease, the violence and hinder national reconciliation. In fact, the National Intelligence Estimate [NIE] some cite as evidence of dire conditions in Iraq said that "Coalition capabilities, including force levels, resources, and operations, remain an *essential stabilizing element in Iraq*," and rapid withdrawal "*almost certainly would lead to a significant increase in the scale and scope of sectarian conflict in Iraq, intensify Sunni resistance to the Iraqi Government, and have adverse consequences for national reconciliation.*" [emphasis added]

- **FACT:** Leaving Iraq to al Qaeda terrorists would endanger both Iraqis and Americans, embolden Iran, and solve no problems at all. The NIE concluded that "massive civilian casualties and forced population displacement would be probable" were we to rapidly leave, and "AQI [al Qaeda in Iraq] would attempt to use parts of the country—particularly al-Anbar province—to plan increased attacks in and outside of Iraq."
- **FACT:** The argument that the U.S. could leave behind a "residual force" in Iraq's Kurdish region or Kuwait before Iraqi Security Forces are ready to take over and still fight al Qaeda makes no sense, since the very crux of al Qaeda's strategy is to cause a civil war by bombing markets, mosques, and bridges. The very reason Gen. Petraeus asked for the troops he now has was so U.S. forces could raid al Qaeda strongholds without having to leave areas where they were providing security.

6. MYTH: Gen. Petraeus does not believe the U.S. military can make a difference in Iraq.

- **FACT:** Democrats sometimes quote Gen. Petraeus when arguing that the U.S. should give up in Iraq, but they completely misrepresent the General's views. While Gen. Petraeus has indeed said the ultimate solution to Iraq's problems is a political one, he has consistently argued that such a solution can only come with the improvements in security he is trying to achieve.
- **FACT:** Gen. Petraeus told the Senate that securing Iraq is "necessary" since the government will find it difficult to "come to grips with the toughest issues it must resolve while survival is the primary concern." He also said he needed all the additional troops he requested to get the job done.

7. MYTH: U.S. troops are "arming" Sunni insurgents in Iraq.

- **FACT:** Commanders are taking advantage of an important opportunity to reach out to locals who want to fight against al Qaeda and are recruiting them into the government of Iraq. Some tribal elements are being recruited as police support units with the blessing of the Maliki government. US forces are not arming Sunni insurgents and have only provided non-lethal assistance with the agreement of the government of Iraq.
- **FACT:** As we come to agreement with these individuals who are fed up with al Qaeda terrorists and willing to fight against them and/or show U.S. forces where they hide, we gather biometric data on them, identify and vet them, have them pledge allegiance to the government of Iraq and go through a training program, and then quickly bring them along as part of the Iraqi military or Interior police forces.
- **FACT:** This is in no way about working with al Qaeda members or foreign fighters. It is about taking advantage of an opportunity to join with Iraqis against irreconcilable enemies.

8. MYTH: Timelines and dates for withdrawal are consistent with the views of outsiders like the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group.

- **FACT:** The Iraq Study Group's report specifically said on page 46 that the group opposed "timetables or deadlines for withdrawal."

- **FACT:** On page 50, the group said they could support a "surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad, or to speed up the training and equipping mission, if the U.S. commander in Iraq determines that such steps would be effective."
- **FACT:** Iraq Study Group Co-Chairman James Baker says Gen. Petraeus and the new plan for securing Iraq "ought to be given a chance" and that "setting a deadline for withdrawal regardless of conditions in Iraq makes even less sense today because there is evidence that the temporary surge is reducing the level of violence in Baghdad."

9. MYTH: Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki is an agent of Iran and/or Muqtada al Sadr.

- **FACT:** Nouri al Maliki is the democratically elected Prime Minister of all Iraqis.
- **FACT:** There is no evidence that Maliki or his wing of the Da'wa Party is an agent or puppet of Iran. Maliki is an Iraqi nationalist who has few ties to Iranians. He has been critical of Iranian meddling both publicly and behind the scenes.
- **FACT:** In January, Maliki pledged to hunt down all militia groups and pointed out that he had only met with Muqtada al Sadr twice in the past four years. Moreover, Sadr withdrew his Cabinet ministers in part because he was protesting Maliki's alliance with the Coalition.

10. MYTH: U.S. troops are sent to Iraq without proper training, equipment, or rest.

- **FACT:** U.S. troops are the best trained and equipped military forces in the world. While the War on Terror is no doubt stretching the military and its resources, no troops are ever sent to Iraq without adequate training. As the Army's director of force management Maj. Gen. Richard Formica said when the surge brigades were being deployed, "Our deploying units will be manned, trained and equipped, and they will be ready for their specified missions."
- **FACT:** The Department of Defense does not allow any units to deploy to Iraq unless they are certified as trained and equipped for the mission by their chain-of-command. Some of the units now in Iraq were recently extended to 15 months to allow a minimum of 12 months before deployments.

11. MYTH: Iraqis are going on vacation and/or are not defending their own country.

- **FACT:** Iraqis are enduring two to three times the casualties U.S. forces are.
- **FACT:** Our commanders report that Iraqi Security Forces are growing in number, becoming more capable, and assuming more responsibility. Iraqis are often leading raids and stopping suicide bombers at checkpoints. As Gen. Petraeus puts it: "The Iraqi army has, in general, done quite well in the face of some really serious challenges. In certain areas it really is very heartening to see what it has done."
- **FACT:** Iraq's Parliament shortened its recess to one month and the Council of Representatives completed 53 pieces of legislation in its most recent session.

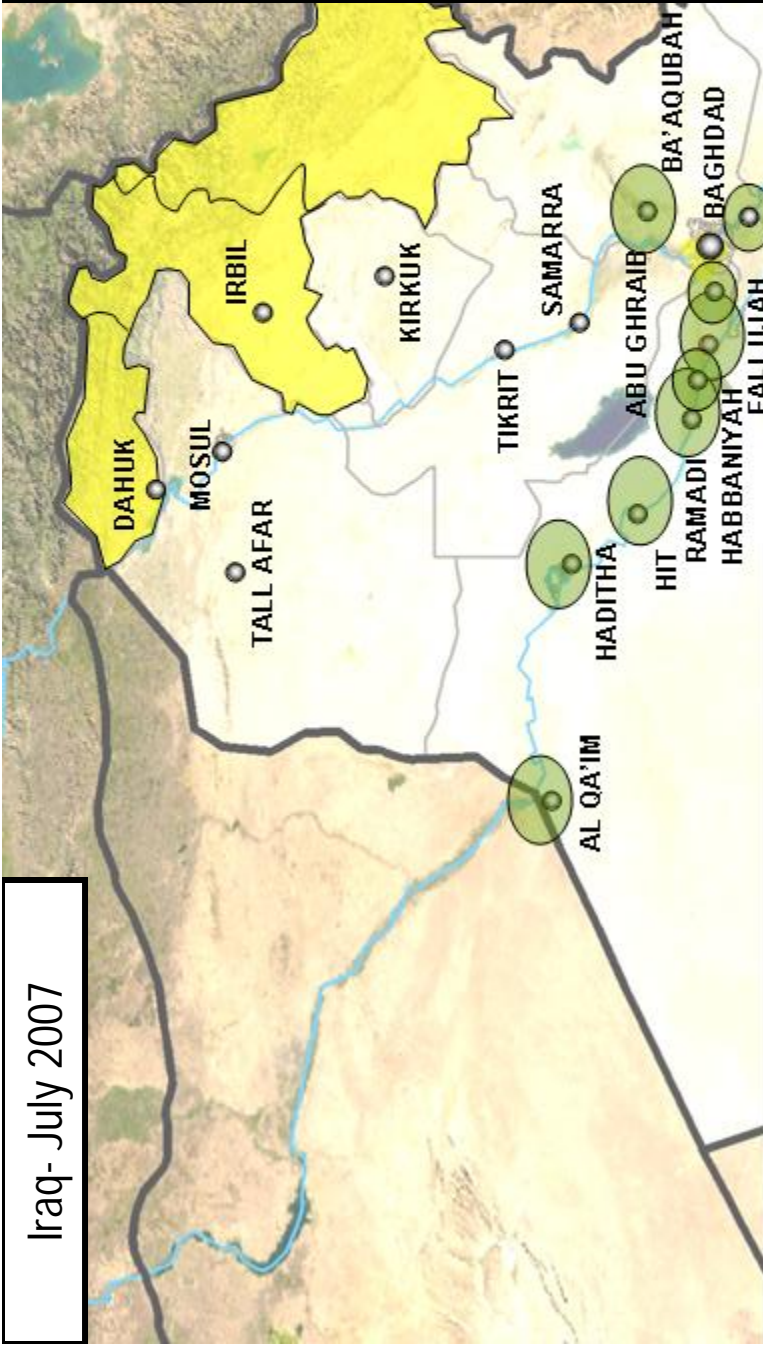
12. MYTH: Iraq's Parliament passed a resolution calling for U.S. forces to leave.

- **FACT:** The opposite is true. The U.S. is in Iraq at the invitation of the Iraqi government, and Council of Representatives (COR) recently voted for Americans to continue their work in Iraq.
- **FACT:** There was never a vote on the widely reported Sadrist "petition" calling for withdrawal. That petition was clearly not a reflection of the views of Parliament, as some who supposedly signed it later said they were deceived about what it meant and actually want the U.S. to stay in Iraq until Iraq's security forces are better trained.

13. MYTH: The U.S. is in Iraq only because of Congress's 2002 resolution authorizing the invasion to topple Saddam Hussein's regime.

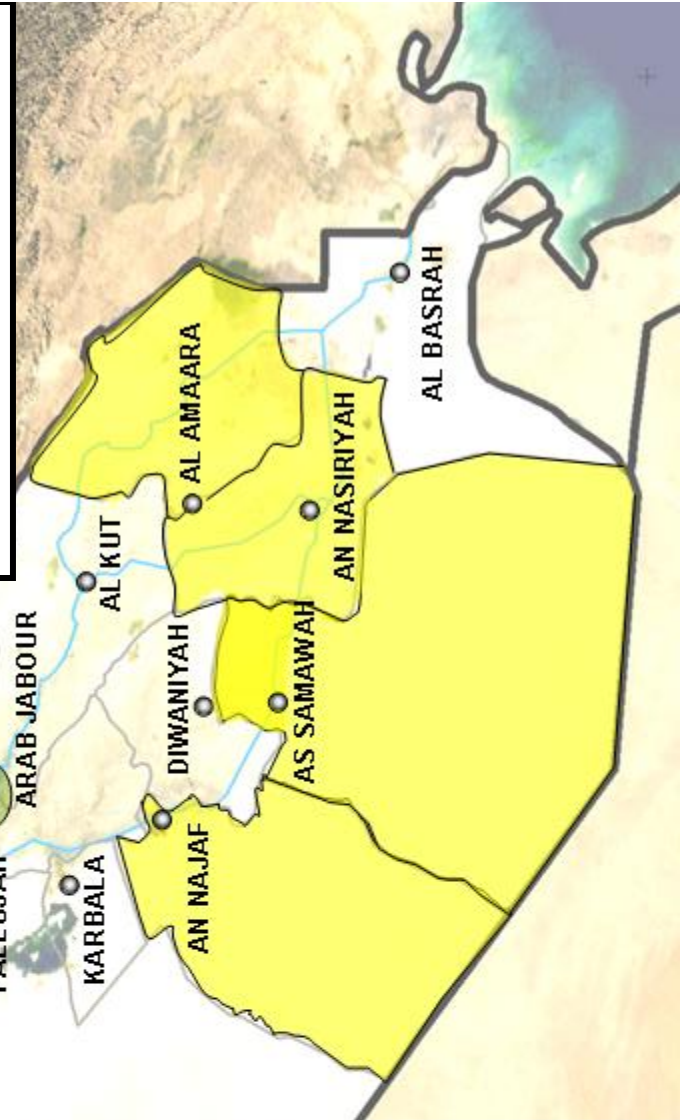
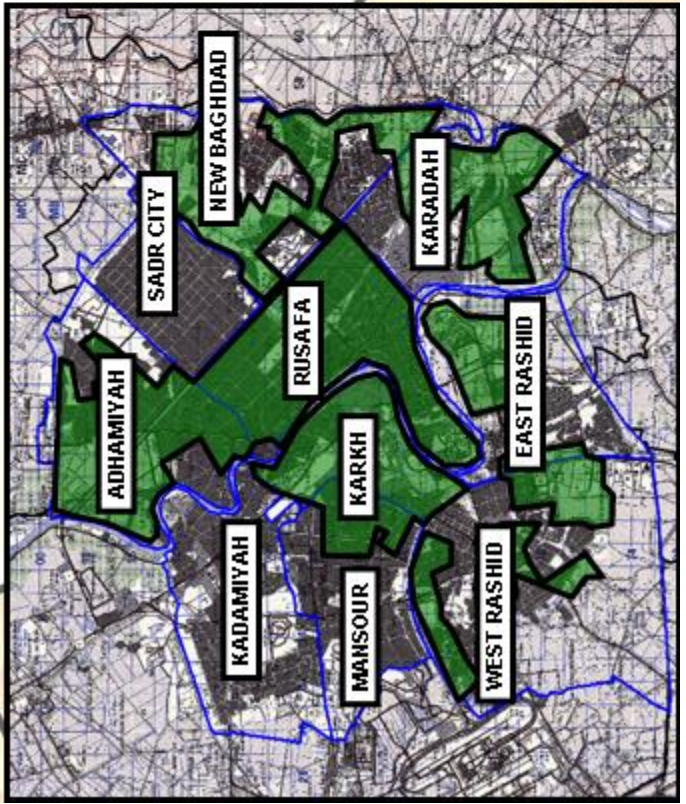
- **FACT:** The U.S. is currently in Iraq at the invitation of a sovereign government and the unanimous approval of the United Nations Security Council.
- **FACT:** UN Security Council Resolution 1723 extended the mandate of multi-national forces until December 2007. That resolution came at the request of Prime Minister Maliki.
- **FACT:** The 2002 Congressional war authorization referred to the use of force in enforcing U.N. Security Council resolutions. It clearly envisioned subsequent U.N. Security Council resolutions, and Senators understood that a President has the authority to enforce such resolutions.

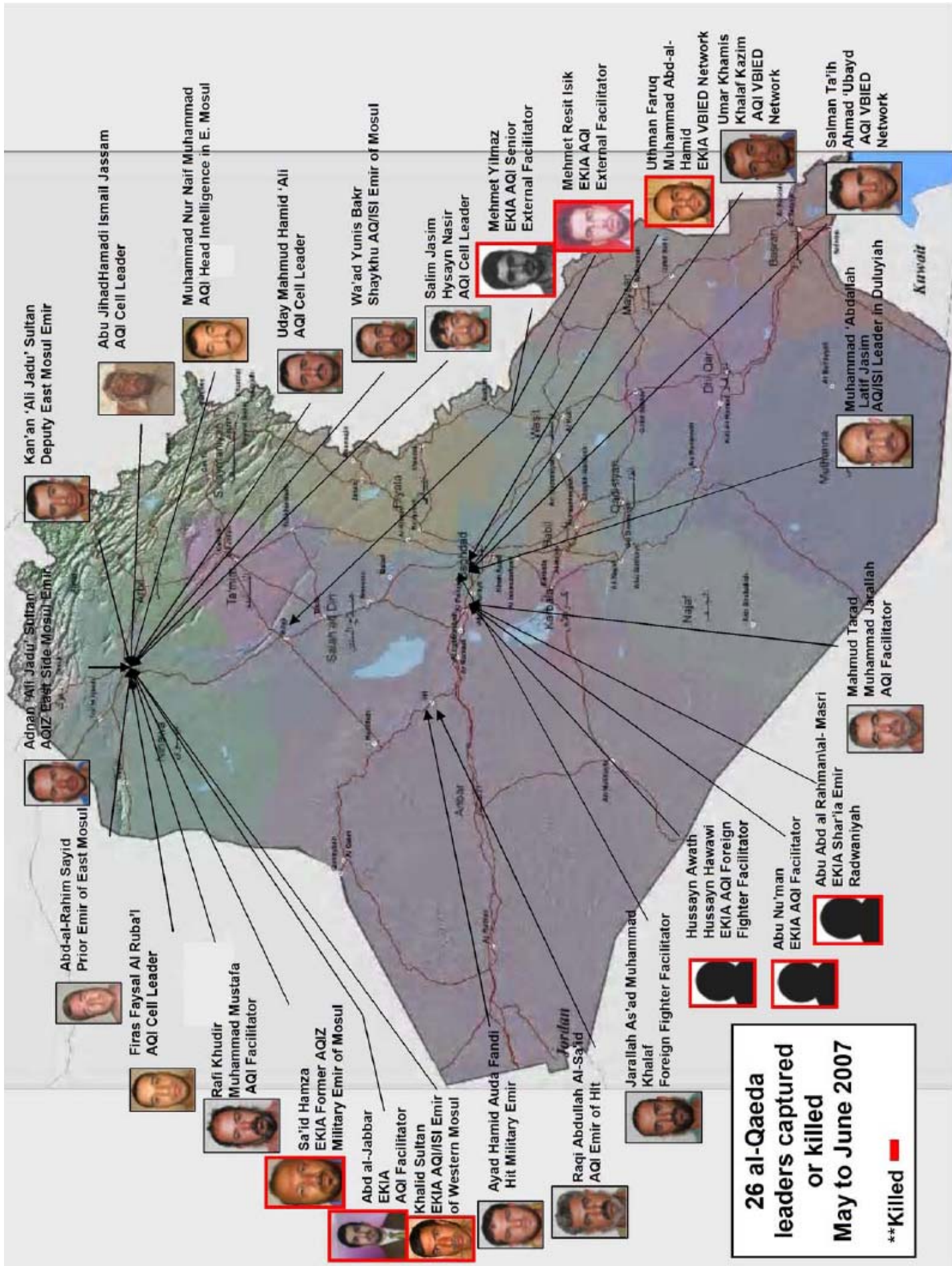
Iraq- July 2007



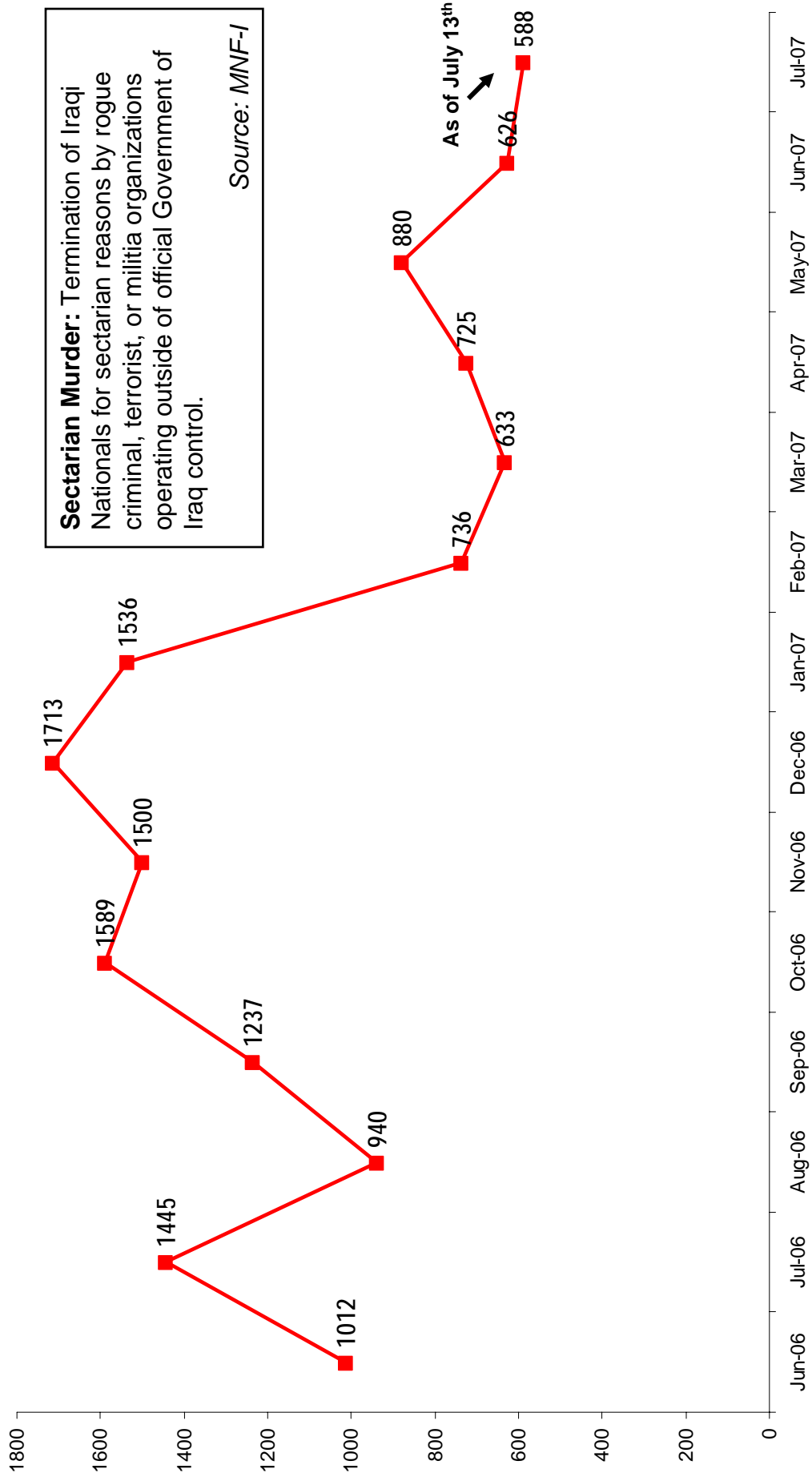
"Baqubah joins a growing list of cities like al Qaim, Haditha, Hit, Ramadi, Habbaniya, Fallujah, Abu Ghraib, and Arab Jabour area that have been liberated from al Qaeda control over the past seven months. Additionally, as you see in the bottom left corner, greater than 50 percent of Baghdad is currently in control of coalition or Iraqi security forces. With Baqubah's liberation, I can think of no major population center in Iraq that is in an al Qaeda safe haven today. The Iraqi people are clearly rejecting the Taliban-like mentality that offers no hope to Iraqis or their families. In Mosul, Tall Afar and Kirkuk the Iraqi security forces are in charge of their security executing independent operation with coalition force oversight."

- LTG Odierno, Multi-National Force Iraq, 7/19/07





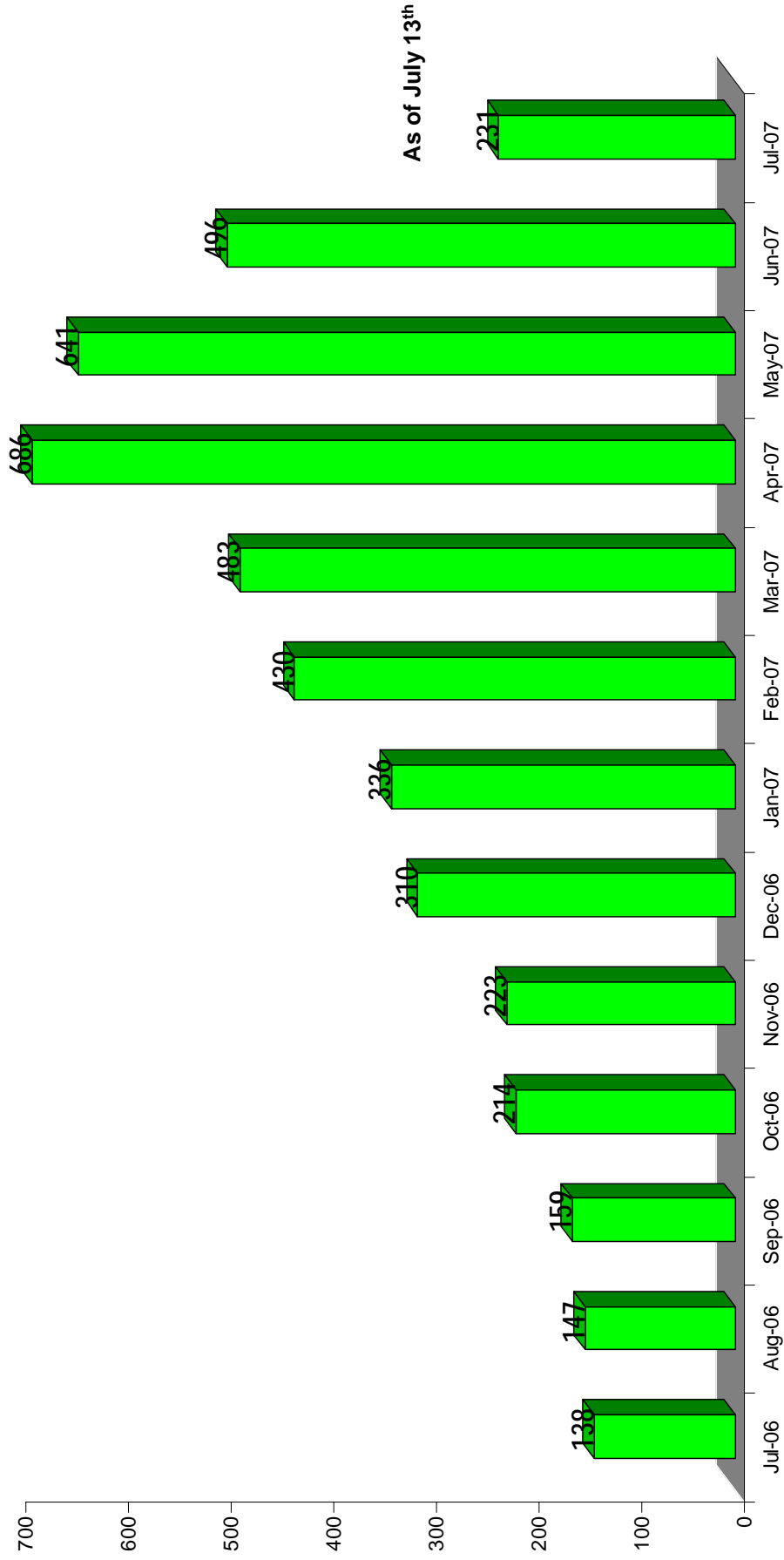
Sectarian Murders: June 2006 - July 13, 2007



Weapons Caches Discovered By Coalition and Iraqi Forces

July 2006- July 13, 2007

Source: Multi-National Force Iraq



"Tribal Awakening": Examples of Iraqi tribal leaders turning on al Qaeda

The Ramadi Covenant: 100 Sheikhs and 400 religious and political leaders met in Ramadi for a conference called "Promise of the People" to sign The Ramadi Covenant. The Covenant is a solemn agreement between tribes as well as between the tribes and the Government of Iraq.

- Source: MNF-I

Diyala Province: in Khalis, 16 local shieks and tribal leaders pledged on behalf of some 75 shieks to work to end the violence.

- Source: MNF-I

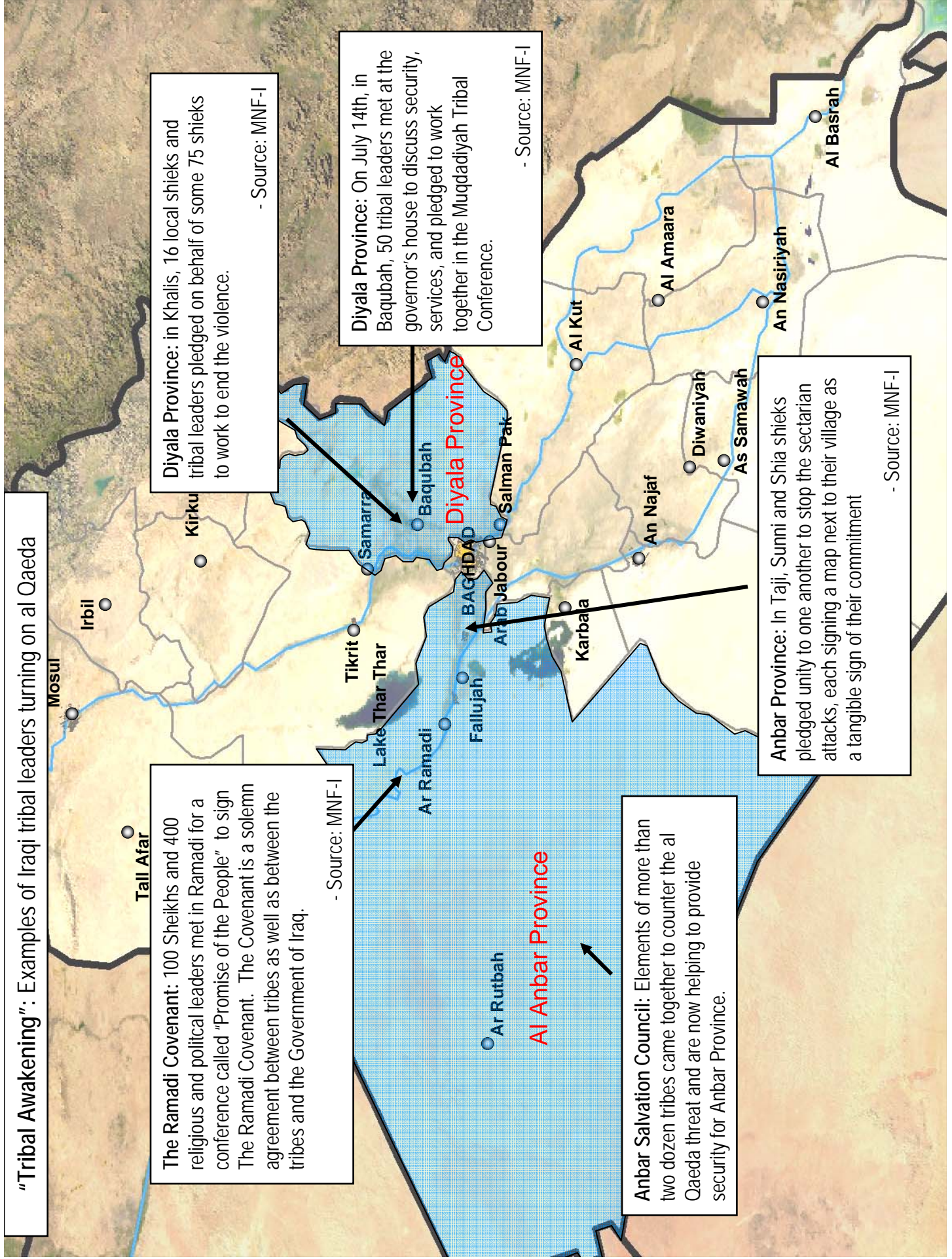
Diyala Province: On July 14th, in Baqubah, 50 tribal leaders met at the governor's house to discuss security, services, and pledged to work together in the Muqadiyah Tribal Conference.

- Source: MNF-I

Anbar Salvation Council: Elements of more than two dozen tribes came together to counter the al Qaeda threat and are now helping to provide security for Anbar Province.

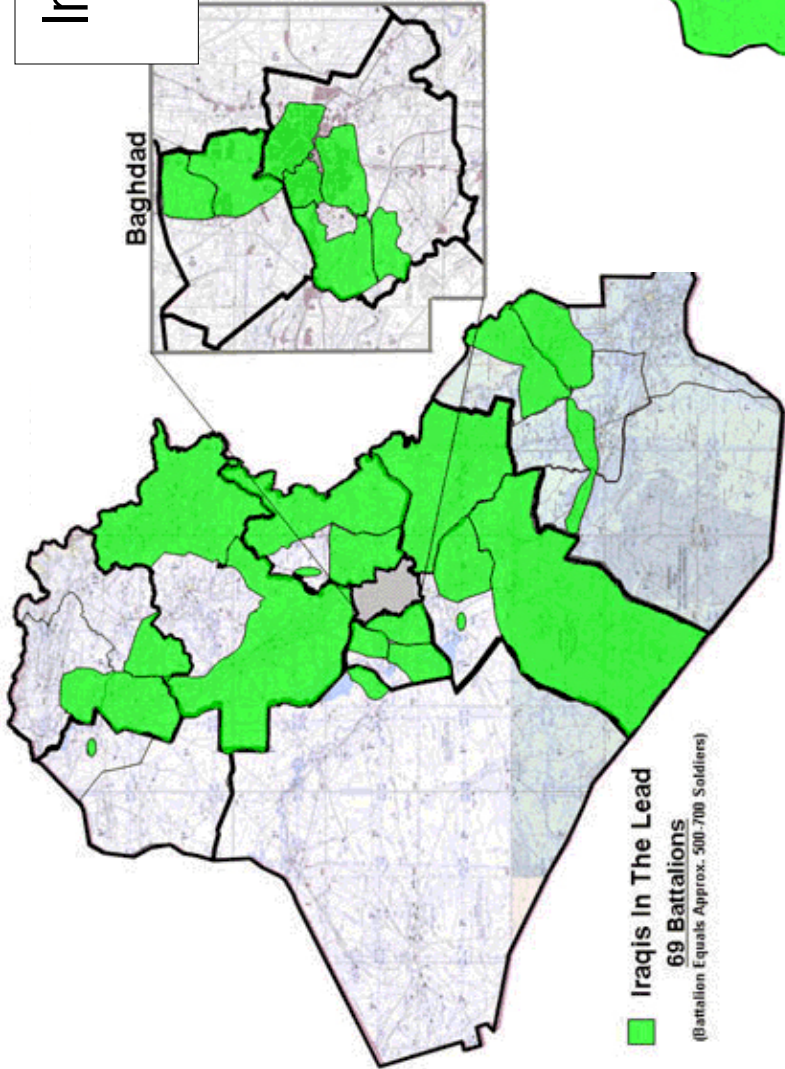
Anbar Province: In Taji, Sunni and Shia shieks pledged unity to one another to stop the sectarian attacks, each signing a map next to their village as a tangible sign of their commitment

- Source: MNF-I



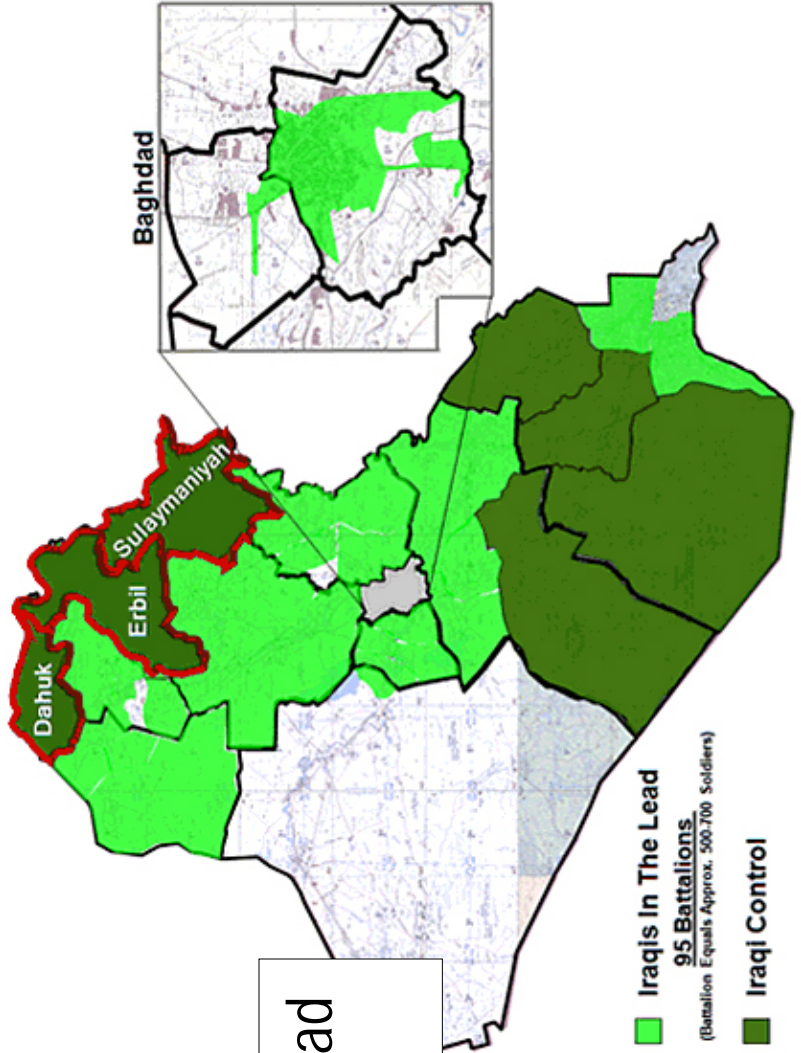
Iraqi Army In the Lead

June, 2006

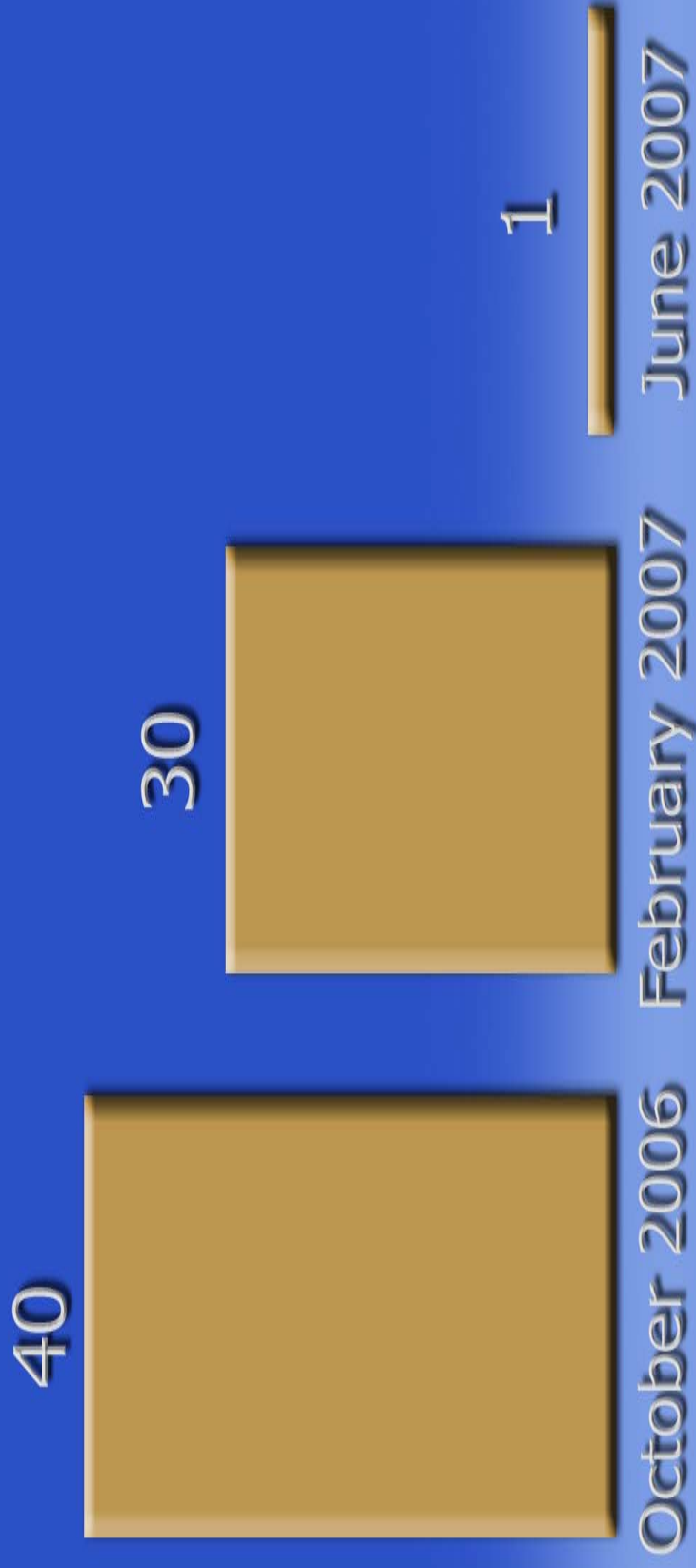


Iraqi Army In the Lead

June, 2007



RAMADI: DAILY ATTACKS



SOURCE: MINF-I

Middle East



The New York Times

July 30, 2007

OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

A War We Just Might Win

By MICHAEL E. O'HANLON and KENNETH M. POLLACK

Washington

VIEWED from Iraq, where we just spent eight days meeting with American and Iraqi military and civilian personnel, the political debate in Washington is surreal. The Bush administration has over four years lost essentially all credibility. Yet now the administration's critics, in part as a result, seem unaware of the significant changes taking place.

Here is the most important thing Americans need to understand: We are finally getting somewhere in Iraq, at least in military terms. As two analysts who have harshly criticized the Bush administration's miserable handling of Iraq, we were surprised by the gains we saw and the potential to produce not necessarily "victory" but a sustainable stability that both we and the Iraqis could live with.

After the furnace-like heat, the first thing you notice when you land in Baghdad is the morale of our troops. In previous trips to Iraq we often found American troops angry and frustrated — many sensed they had the wrong strategy, were using the wrong tactics and were risking their lives in pursuit of an approach that could not work.

Today, morale is high. The soldiers and marines told us they feel that they now have a superb commander in Gen. David Petraeus; they are confident in his strategy, they see real results, and they feel now they have the numbers needed to make a real difference.

Everywhere, Army and Marine units were focused on securing the Iraqi population, working with Iraqi security units, creating new political and economic arrangements at the local level and providing basic services — electricity, fuel, clean water and sanitation — to the people. Yet in each place, operations had been appropriately tailored to the specific needs of the community. As a result, civilian fatality rates are down roughly a third since the surge began — though they remain very high, underscoring how much more still needs to be done.

In Ramadi, for example, we talked with an outstanding Marine captain whose company was living in harmony in a complex with a (largely Sunni) Iraqi police company and a (largely Shiite) Iraqi Army unit. He and his men had built an Arab-style living room, where he met with the local Sunni sheiks — all formerly allies of Al Qaeda and other jihadist groups — who were now competing to secure his friendship.

In Baghdad's Ghazaliya neighborhood, which has seen some of the worst sectarian combat, we walked a street slowly coming back to life with stores and shoppers. The Sunni residents were unhappy with the nearby police checkpoint, where Shiite officers reportedly abused them, but they seemed genuinely happy with the American soldiers and a mostly Kurdish Iraqi Army company patrolling the street. The local Sunni militia even had agreed to confine itself to its compound once the Americans and Iraqi units arrived.

We traveled to the northern cities of Tal Afar and Mosul. This is an ethnically rich area, with large numbers of Sunni Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens. American troop levels in both cities now number only in the hundreds because the Iraqis have stepped up to the plate. Reliable police officers man the checkpoints in the cities, while Iraqi Army troops cover the countryside. A local mayor told us his greatest

fear was an overly rapid American departure from Iraq. All across the country, the dependability of Iraqi security forces over the long term remains a major question mark.

But for now, things look much better than before. American advisers told us that many of the corrupt and sectarian Iraqi commanders who once infested the force have been removed. The American high command assesses that more than three-quarters of the Iraqi Army battalion commanders in Baghdad are now reliable partners (at least for as long as American forces remain in Iraq).

In addition, far more Iraqi units are well integrated in terms of ethnicity and religion. The Iraqi Army's highly effective Third Infantry Division started out as overwhelmingly Kurdish in 2005. Today, it is 45 percent Shiite, 28 percent Kurdish, and 27 percent Sunni Arab.

In the past, few Iraqi units could do more than provide a few "jundis" (soldiers) to put a thin Iraqi face on largely American operations. Today, in only a few sectors did we find American commanders complaining that their Iraqi formations were useless — something that was the rule, not the exception, on a previous trip to Iraq in late 2005.

The additional American military formations brought in as part of the surge, General Petraeus's determination to hold areas until they are truly secure before redeploying units, and the increasing competence of the Iraqis has had another critical effect: no more whack-a-mole, with insurgents popping back up after the Americans leave.

In war, sometimes it's important to pick the right adversary, and in Iraq we seem to have done so. A major factor in the sudden change in American fortunes has been the outpouring of popular animus against Al Qaeda and other Salafist groups, as well as (to a lesser extent) against Moktada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army.

These groups have tried to impose Shariah law, brutalized average Iraqis to keep them in line, killed important local leaders and seized young women to marry off to their loyalists. The result has been that in the last six months Iraqis have begun to turn on the extremists and turn to the Americans for security and help. The most important and best-known example of this is in Anbar Province, which in less than six months has gone from the worst part of Iraq to the best (outside the Kurdish areas). Today the Sunni sheiks there are close to crippling Al Qaeda and its Salafist allies. Just a few months ago, American marines were fighting for every yard of Ramadi; last week we strolled down its streets without body armor.

Another surprise was how well the coalition's new Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams are working. Wherever we found a fully staffed team, we also found local Iraqi leaders and businessmen cooperating with it to revive the local economy and build new political structures. Although much more needs to be done to create jobs, a new emphasis on microloans and small-scale projects was having some success where the previous aid programs often built white elephants.

In some places where we have failed to provide the civilian manpower to fill out the reconstruction teams, the surge has still allowed the military to fashion its own advisory groups from battalion, brigade and division staffs. We talked to dozens of military officers who before the war had known little about governance or business but were now ably immersing themselves in projects to provide the average Iraqi with a decent life.

Outside Baghdad, one of the biggest factors in the progress so far has been the efforts to decentralize power to the provinces and local governments. But more must be done. For example, the Iraqi National Police, which are controlled by the Interior Ministry, remain mostly a disaster. In response, many towns and neighborhoods are standing up local police forces, which generally prove more effective, less corrupt and less sectarian. The coalition has to force the warlords in Baghdad to allow the creation of neutral security forces beyond their control.

In the end, the situation in Iraq remains grave. In particular, we still face huge hurdles on the political front. Iraqi politicians of all stripes continue to dawdle and maneuver for position against one another

when major steps towards reconciliation — or at least accommodation — are needed. This cannot continue indefinitely. Otherwise, once we begin to downsize, important communities may not feel committed to the status quo, and Iraqi security forces may splinter along ethnic and religious lines.

How much longer should American troops keep fighting and dying to build a new Iraq while Iraqi leaders fail to do their part? And how much longer can we wear down our forces in this mission? These haunting questions underscore the reality that the surge cannot go on forever. But there is enough good happening on the battlefields of Iraq today that Congress should plan on sustaining the effort at least into 2008.

Michael E. O'Hanlon is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. Kenneth M. Pollack is the director of research at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings.

U.S. troop fatalities in Iraq drop sharply

The toll is falling in the most dangerous provinces, not just in the Baghdad 'surge' zone.

August 1, 2007

By Gordon Lubold

U.S. troop fatalities in Iraq have plummeted from near-historic highs just two months ago. The number of deaths attributed to improvised explosive devices is down by more than half. Violence is down in the four most dangerous provinces.

The decrease is an apparent sign that, by at least one indicator, the surge of American forces is doing something it set out to do: tamp down the violence.

But even if this positive trend were to continue for the next several months, the larger question remains unanswered: Will the reduced levels of violence push Kurdish, Shiite, and Sunni groups to reach political reconciliation so that US troops can withdraw? US military officials are wary.

"Success does not hinge on the effectiveness or success solely of the security situation," says one senior official in uniform, who requested anonymity, echoing what many military officials have said. "It really depends on political governance."

As a single measure of success or failure in Iraq, the rate of American fatalities has its own limitations. But it does reflect the ability of the US to reduce insurgent-led violence. Two months ago, US fatalities climbed to 128, making May the third deadliest month for US troops in Iraq since the war began in 2003. But since then, as the surge of 30,000 new US forces has arrived, fatalities have fallen sharply. At press time, the toll for the month of July stood at 74, a decrease of 42 percent compared with May. That's the lowest fatality rate since last November.

When the surge was announced earlier this year, critics said adding more troops in one area would simply force insurgents to provoke violence in other areas. But according to an analysis by Pentagon officials, fatalities are down in July in all four of the most violent provinces of Iraq: Baghdad, Anbar, Salahaddin, and Diyala.

In Baghdad Province, for example, 27 Americans were killed as of July 24, down from 44 in May. In Diyala Province, six Americans were killed as of July 24, a decrease from 19 in May. Sunni-dominated Anbar Province to the west of Baghdad, where violence has been tamped down in part because Sunni sheiks have organized against Sunni extremism there, five American service members were killed as of July 24, down from 14 for the month of May. Salahaddin saw the same trend, where 12 were killed in May, six in July. The four provinces represent about 37 percent of the Iraqi population but nearly 80 percent of the violence that occurs in Iraq.

The toll from improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, has also decreased considerably in the last two months. As of July 24, 40 Americans had been killed in July, down from 95 in May.

Iraqis are also seeing a decrease in violence. The number of Iraqi security forces and civilian fatalities has declined since May as well, according to icasualties.org, a website that tracks such information. The site reports that there were 1,664 civilians and Iraqi security forces killed in July, down from 1,980 in May, but it notes that no such tallies are completely accurate and are probably much higher.

The reduction in violence doesn't appear to be the result of summer weather, when the intense heat might discourage insurgent attacks. According to an analysis by the Marine command in Anbar, violence trends upward from a low point in January, when it's coldest, through summer to October for each of the last three years. This year, according to Marine Maj. Gen. Walter Gaskin, commander of Multi-national Force West, the violence in Anbar has trended downward instead.

All this may be illustrating what to some is a new reality in Iraq even if much of Washington has yet to acknowledge it, says Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based think tank.

Mr. O'Hanlon has been critical of the war and has remained skeptical of the current strategy. But on Monday, he coauthored an Op-Ed in The New York Times titled "A War We Might Just Win." In it, O'Hanlon says he is impressed with the improved security situation, the reasonably high morale of US troops, and the increasing competency of Iraqi forces. "We are finally getting somewhere in Iraq, at least in military terms," O'Hanlon wrote, along with Brookings colleague Kenneth Pollack. "As two analysts who have harshly criticized the Bush administration's miserable handling of Iraq, we were surprised by the gains we saw and the potential to produce not necessarily 'victory' but a sustainable stability that both we and the Iraqis could live with."

Military officials are heartened by decreases in American fatalities but are reluctant to characterize it as a turning point.

"My initial thought is this is what we thought would happen once we got control of the real key areas that are controlled by these terrorists," Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, the No. 2 American commander in Iraq, said on Thursday. "It's an initial positive sign, but I would argue I need a bit more time to make an assessment of whether it's a true trend or not."

In May, noting the high number of casualties among American forces, General Odierno said it was the result of taking the fight to the enemy, going into places like Diyala and Baquba to fight insurgents, and that he expected over time that the number of casualties would decrease, as it appears to have done now.

Odierno says he may need more time, but Congress is waiting for an assessment as early as next month. That's when Odierno's boss, Army Gen. David Petraeus, the top commander in Iraq, is expected to provide a comprehensive report of the security situation in Iraq. Military officials caution that General Petraeus's assessment may not make specific recommendations regarding a possible drawdown of the more than 155,000 US troops currently serving in Iraq.

"Petraeus is very, very cautious about how much success he is going to advertise," the senior uniformed official says. "The culminating point is when the hearts and minds finally tip" in Iraq.



Back from Iraq, Democrats Document Troops' Progress

Rep. Jerry McNerney (D-CA): "Quite a bit of progress here"



"Democratic Rep. Jerry McNerney made his first trip to Iraq over the weekend. **Signs of progress** led him to consider whether troop withdrawal deadlines the House may consider again this week should be extended, he said...

"**I'm more willing to work with finding a way forward** to accommodate what the generals are saying,' McNerney told reporters Monday during a conference call from Germany on his way back to the U.S.

"He said **he was impressed by Gen. David Petraeus**, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, and by **evidence of progress** from President Bush's troop surge strategy in Ramadi in Anbar province...

"**It's given me a lot to think about.** I see that they are **making some progress** in the parts of Iraq that we saw ...,' said McNerney." ([AP/San Diego Union Tribune, 7/30/07](#))

CONTRACOSTA TIMES

"In Ramadi, McNerney and the others walked with military escorts in an open-air market. **The troops have 'made quite a bit of progress here (in Ramadi),'** McNerney said." ([Contra Costa \(CA\) Times, 7/30/07](#))

Rep. Tim Mahoney (D-FL): "Really made a difference ... al Qaeda on their heels"



"The United States' military surge has **succeeded in putting al Qaeda fighters 'on their heels'** in the battle-torn Anbar province ... according to U.S. Rep. Tim Mahoney ...

"Mahoney said his group also met with U.S. Maj. Gen. Walter Gaskin and a colonel in his command. Gaskin told the lawmakers the troop surge had allowed the U.S. to force al Qaeda from Ramadi. **'That has really made a difference and really has gotten al Qaeda on their heels,'** [sic] Mahoney said.

"Mahoney said he also learned that Sunnis, who allied with al Qaeda in opposing a strong central government in Iraq, are now changing their minds...

"Now, the U.S. has to refocus its military on the following tasks: protect Iraqis from al Qaeda and capture Osama bin Laden, secure the sovereignty of Iraq, and support the Iraqis in the reunification of their country, according to Mahoney. ([Charlotte Sun-Herald, 7/31/07](#))

Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN): “Success in Ramadi ... violence has been reduced”



Democrat Rep. Keith “Ellison [MN] said that local leaders in Ramadi told him of how they partnered with U.S. and Iraqi military officials to virtually rid al-Qaeda from the city. Although the lawmakers had to travel in flak vests and helmets, **‘we did see people walking around the streets of Ramadi, going back and forth to the market.’**

“There have been **fewer anti-U.S. sermons as the violence has been reduced**, Ellison said, and religious leaders meet regularly with U.S. military officials.

“The **success in Ramadi** is not just because of bombs and bullets, but because the U.S. and Iraqi military and the Iraqi police are partnering with the tribal leadership and the religious leadership,’ he said. ‘So they’re not trying to just bomb people into submission. **What they’re doing is respecting the people**, giving the people some control over their own lives.’

“Ellison said he was particularly impressed watching Maj. Gen. Walter Gaskin, U.S. commander in the Anbar province, greeting people with ‘as-salama aleikum,’ meaning peace be upon you.

“And they would respond back with smiles and waves,’ Ellison said. ‘I don’t want to overplay it. There were no flowers. There was no clapping. There was no parade. But there was a **general level of respect and calm** that I thought was good.” ([AP/USA Today, 7/30/07](#))

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