REPORT 3

BEST PRACTICES IN COUNTERINSURGENCY

Lieutenant Colonel David M. Hodne, U.S. Army

AFTER THE SURGE:
TASK FORCE RAIDER'S EXPERIENCE IN IRAQ

INSTITUTE FOR THE
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Cover photo: Sergeant First Class Brandon instructs Iraqi soldiers in air assault operations. Photo courtesy LTC David M. Hodne.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lieutenant Colonel Dave Hodne is from New City, New York and received his commission in the Infantry upon graduation from the U.S. Military Academy in 1991. He served in leadership positions from the platoon to the battalion level in mechanized, light, and Ranger units and most recently commanded 3rd Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division prior to assuming command of 2nd Ranger Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment in June 2010.

Throughout his career, Lieutenant Colonel Hodne participated in numerous contingency operations including two deployments with the First Cavalry Division in support of Operation Intrinsic Action and Operation Iris Gold in Kuwait (1992-93); and while assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment (2002-2007) conducted multiple deployments to both Afghanistan and Iraq in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. LTC Hodne returned to Iraq with 3rd Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry during Operation Iraqi Freedom Rotation 9-11 (2008-2009), in the year that marked the implementation of the historic Security Agreement and Strategic Framework Agreement.

Lieutenant Colonel Hodne earned a Bachelor of Science degree majoring in Aerospace Engineering from the U.S. Military Academy and a Master of Arts in Military Studies in Unconventional Warfare from American Military University.

Lieutenant Colonel Hodne's awards and decorations include three Bronze Star Medals, four Meritorious Service Medals the Joint Commendation Medal, Commendation Medals from each Service (Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps), the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Senior Parachutist Badge (w/ Combat Jump Star); and Israeli, Canadian, and Brazilian Parachutist Badges. His units earned the Joint Meritorious Unit Award and the Meritorious Unit Commendation for actions in combat.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

➤ This report will describe the fundamental aspects of the 3rd Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry Regiment Squadron Campaign Plan that focused on operating within the tenets of the Security Agreement (SA) and the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) in order to build Iraqi capacity in a manner that was acceptable to Iraqi citizens.

➤ Following the implementation of the SA, U.S. military formations operated in an unfamiliar construct given perceived constraints on tactical operations.

  • The agreement requires all military operations to be conducted with the agreement of the Government of Iraq and fully coordinated with Iraqi authorities.

  • It also mandates that no detention or arrest be carried out by the United States Forces except through an Iraqi decision issued in accordance with Iraqi law.

➤ Among the first coalition units to implement the historic Security Agreement, 3rd Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry developed a phased network-centric strategy focused on building effective Iraqi capacity within local government institutions and Iraqi security forces.

  • This was a departure from previous security-centric strategies that sought solely to reduce enemy influence or protect the local population.

  • This strategy recognized the interrelationships of both enemy and friendly networks and addressed both simultaneously.

➤ The steps in the strategy were:

  • Understand the tribal and societal fabric.

  • Define all of the networks operating within this fabric.

  • Develop a strategy to enable friendly networks while simultaneously disabling enemy networks.

  • Restore the natural hierarchy of Iraqi society, which would survive long after U.S. forces departed Iraq.

➤ The Squadron operated in the Balad and Dujayl districts north of Baghdad.

  • These districts maintained a diverse population of Shia and Sunni Muslims and played a significant role in Iraqi history during both the Saddam era and during the years of sectarian violence following his defeat.

  • This region also hosted the largest U.S. Air Base in the region making this area decisive towards the U.S. plan for strategic transition and responsible drawdown in accordance with the Security Agreement.

    o Given this area's depiction as a microcosm of Iraq, local Iraqi leaders believed that successful initiatives in this area were easily exportable throughout Iraq.

➤ The Squadron conducted operations following a disciplined systems approach along multiple lines of effort (Security & Iraqi Security Force Partnership, Governance, Economics).

- The Security and Iraqi Security Force Partnership line of effort emphasized the understanding the interrelationships of both friendly and enemy networks in order to target indirectly and minimize negative effects on the population.

  o The Squadron built the first true Iraqi led Joint Coordination Center that publicly demonstrated U.S. commitment to the Security Agreement. This facility increased effectiveness of both the U.S. and Iraqi security forces and enabled both elements to implement prosecution based targeting.

- The governance line of effort went far beyond singular implementation of U.S. Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds and emphasized Iraqi transparency in government in order to close the gap created by a disenfranchised population's perceptions of good government and the newly-formed government's priorities.

  o Enemy influence, corruption, lack of access, and tribal differences contributed to this gap.

  o Partnered with Iraqi government officials, the Squadron sought to coach leaders to build processes that would professionalize these institutions and encourage active participation from the populace.

- In the economic line of effort, the Squadron partnered with the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to balance economic opportunity and development within a system familiar to Iraqis, given the lack of familiarity with capitalism and the lack of subsidies found in the previous regime.

  o This followed a network strategy that defined entrepreneurs, existing infrastructure, new markets, and international investment.

➤ In addition to these traditional lines of effort, the Squadron introduced a societal line of effort never addressed previously.

- This effort required not only a detailed understanding of Iraqi culture and society, but also required hypothesizing about the impacts of changes to traditional Iraqi society resulting from U.S. intervention and defining the desired societal endstate.

- The Squadron deliberately championed the causes of disenfranchised populations knowing that reforms that address their concerns might collapse the leadership structures of terrorist or insurgent organizations, enabling friendly networks while simultaneously disabling enemy networks.

➤ The campaign to restore and clean the canals of the Balad and Dujayl districts represented the unifying effort that influenced all Iraqi citizens in the region and required teamwork on behalf of all Iraqi leaders along government, security, or tribal lines.

- The resulting Iraqi partnership demonstrated governmental capacity, introduced new skills and employment opportunities, leveraged newly integrated sheiks councils, provided a forum for the government to educate people on a universally understood issue, and foster hope among disenfranchised populations.

AFTER THE SURGE:
TASK FORCE RAIDER'S EXPERIENCE IN IRAQ

BEST PRACTICES IN COUNTERINSURGENCY: REPORT 3

By Lieutenant Colonel David M. Hodne, U.S. Army

U.S. Army units rotating into Iraq in the fall of 2008 faced new challenges that would test their collective agility, professionalism, competence, and in many respects, their creativity. This was the case regardless of their requisite level of experience gained through previous deployments. 1 January 2009 marked the implementation of two historic accords between the Governments of Iraq and the United States – the Security Agreement (SA) and the Strategic Framework Agreement. These accords represented significant strides in partnership at the strategic level as they demonstrated a clear U.S. commitment to the citizens of Iraq as well as to regional stability.

Where the latter agreement (SFA) broadly addressed relations on economy, culture, science, technology, health and trade, the Security Agreement established a date for U.S. withdrawal from Iraq by 31 December 2011, governed the legal status and protections of U.S. forces and military property in Iraq, and defined their legal authority to conduct operations independent of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). Where U.S. units previously operated with relative impunity, future rules for detention operations outlined, "No detention or arrest may be carried out by the United States Forces (except with respect to detention or arrest of members of the United States Forces and of the civilian component) except through an Iraqi decision issued in accordance with Iraqi law and pursuant to Article 4." At the ground level, many U.S. units demonstrated reluctance and caution with respect to this new framework for tactical operations. Many expressed concern that we would no longer maintain authorities to detain or that we would not be afforded the right to defend ourselves. Others recognized this as an opportunity representing enhanced freedom of maneuver with respect to counterinsurgency operations.

The 3rd Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry Regiment (3-4 CAV) arrived to the Balad and Dujayl districts of Salah Ad Din Province, Iraq, with the clear understanding that we would be the first coalition unit to implement the historic Security Agreement. At the strategic level, this was a critical step towards reestablishing Iraqi sovereignty. At the tactical and operational level, some viewed this as a constraint.

In context, by the fall of 2008, the Surge was over, the U.S. elections were nearing, political will was waning, but most importantly, the Sons of Iraq (SOI) initiative largely succeeded in turning Iraq's failed state into a fragile state. Arguably more important than any other event, the implementation of this initiative provided coalition forces the critical freedom of maneuver to focus the preponderance of their efforts on governance initiatives. The newly published timeline for strategic withdrawal also provided an opportunity where we could better leverage "Iraqi accountability" by embracing the tenets of this historic Agreement. Ultimately, the Troopers of this Squadron understood that accomplishing our mission required relationships with a citizenry that depended on us to be professionals. This was counterinsurgency as I had never personally witnessed before. This was the result of a combination of operational, organizational, and conceptual frameworks that allowed both this Squadron and our Iraqi Security Force counterparts to succeed, as well as lay the foundation for hope among Iraqi citizens in our area of operations (AO).

This report will describe the fundamental aspects of the Squadron Campaign Plan that focused on operating within the tenets of these strategic agreements in order to build Iraqi capacity in

a manner that was acceptable to Iraqi citizens. This campaign required acknowledgment of revolutionary changes in progress while maintaining some measure of natural hierarchy familiar to Iraqi society. This was a phased "network-centric" strategy that required careful definition and understanding of both friendly and enemy networks as well as how these networks interacted with each other. In some cases, enemy networks, while hostile to U.S. Forces, demonstrated some interest in economic or governmental progress locally. Leveraging these network interests created a common goal that indirectly improved security and built governmental capacity. Unwitting participation by enemy networks actually improved security (particularly when they wanted to take part in economic ventures), and created inroads to further define, or even dialogue with an enemy that now demonstrated less conviction for its initial cause.

It is critical to understand that our strategy maintained a balanced focus on both friendly and enemy networks. Defeating enemy networks alone would never accomplish our mission locally, nor would it enable a stable, prosperous society for all Iraqis. In some cases, it merely created a "sideline citizenry" that watched us struggle in combating these enemy networks. This was a cycle that eroded confidence and emboldened the enemy. By focusing on building friendly networks in a sincere manner, the Squadron enjoyed a position where we could leverage these growing friendly networks (security, economic, government, population, etc) as they began to sustain themselves and compete directly with the enemy networks operating in our AO. This was clearly our preferred position as it provided even more freedom of maneuver to reinforce success and identify new friendly network ventures. Ultimately, effective Iraqi capacity was paramount, not only in terms of our effort and investment in Iraq, but in terms of Iraqi survival following our eventual withdrawal. The Squadron defined effective capacity by the following conditions:

- Transparent and effective government with the capability to address comprehensive problems (not simply "patch fixes")

- Friendly networks competing directly with enemy networks

- A government that understood processes and respected persons of influence are involved

- Reduced corruption through awareness

- Reduced insurgent base of support

- An Iraqi Security Force that addressed essential services (better prepares for strategic transition)

- Citizens and leaders united in support of solving root problems

Figure 1 depicts the phased strategy that allowed us to move towards effective Iraqi capacity. This strategy matured over time and remained a cyclical process as success opened more inroads to the population and allowed us to further define both friendly and enemy networks to enable and disable, respectively. Arguably a very simple process, this strategy required us to weight Iraqi societal constructs and desires over the traditional U.S. military desires that addressed security. I
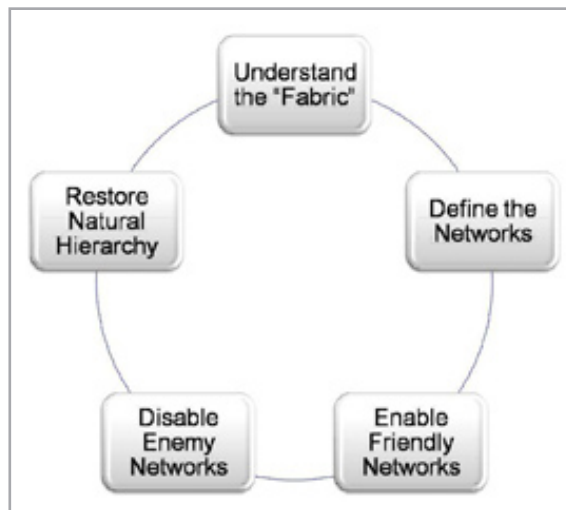

FIGURE 1

will discuss each of these phases in further detail, but must first emphasize that in each portion of the cycle below, I sought to communicate a system that would simplify very complex concepts in order to define roles and communicate a plan. In understanding the fabric, leaders spoke in terms of tribe and recognized the importance of tribal relationships and structures in all aspects of Iraqi society. We sought to define all of the networks operating within this tribal fabric and developed a strategy to enable friendly networks while simultaneously disabling enemy networks. Lastly, we sought to restore the natural hierarchy of Iraqi society, which would survive long after U.S. forces departed Iraq. Working towards any other end state simply would not accomplish our mission,

put U.S. soldiers at risk, and jeopardize Iraqi sovereignty.

Of course, the challenge in making the complex simple resided with communicating a clear and consistent message understood throughout the entire formation. Where soldiers are generally more comfortable in executing the security operations following months of training on individual tasks and collective battle drills, it was well understood that under the Security Agreement our security efforts and battle drill execution would no longer be the decisive operation. Our mission required us to dedicate our collective energy towards facilitating Iraqi governance and economics. We found that our role would be one of connecting people with their

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TASK FORCE RAIDER: CAMPAIGN INTENT

PURPOSE

The purpose of this operation is to support Iraqi sovereignty as the Government of Iraq (GoI) and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) re-establish a safe and secure environment, provide essential government services, rebuild critical infrastructure for all Iraqis, and to reach out to the disenfranchised.

KEY TASKS

- Support to Governance (Decisive Operation)
- Maintain established trust. Acts that jeopardize key leader relationships put us at greater risk.
- Connect the levels of government together and to their people– especially rural population.
- Talk to people. RESPECT them, KNOW them, and INVOLVE them in their government. Keep them informed.
- Convince people of the need to resolve issues through political or diplomatic means– facilitate reconciliation.
- Assist Balad and Ad Dujayl in developing essential services. This translates into Iraqi self-reliance.
- Support to Economics (Shaping Operation)
- Employment – leverage every possible opportunity for eligible work force. This translates into security.
- Identify and support business ventures, both small and large (Balad Canning Factory, Iraqi Trucking network, Quarries, Cattle Farms, etc).
- Generate momentum by involving business-savvy leaders and investors in their economic future– includes well intentioned Former Regime Elements (FRE). Engage local entrepreneurs to "jump start" self-sustaining economics. This translates into hope.
- Security and Iraqi Security Force (ISF) Partnership (Sustaining Operation)
- Build genuine, field-based partnership with local Iraqi Security Force units to secure the population.
- Co-locate Command and Control (C2) nodes and support Iraqi Security Force operations with enablers.
- In conjunction with Iraqi Security Forces, neutralize Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)/Anti-Iraqi government cells in zone through deliberate and detailed combined targeting.
- Seek every opportunity to mentor, train, and set the example for Iraqi Security Force counterparts.

ENDSTATE

Our support to the GOI and ISF create the conditions that permit U.S. military forces to disengage.

Population: Confident in their security, with markets open daily for personal and business transactions. They are optimistic and focus on sustainable economy and government…not self-preservation.

Enemy: Improvised Explosive Device (IED) /Indirect Fire (IDF) cells are disrupted. AQI/Anti-Iraqi government elements are dead, detained, dislocated from the population, or otherwise unable to negatively affect -GOI/ISF operations in AO RAIDER. Jays Al Mahdi (JAM)/Jays Al Islamic (JAI) Special Groups are political parties, not criminal groups.

FIGURE 2

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government, reaching out to disenfranchised populations, facilitating reconciliation among both tribes and among those who enjoyed power in the former regime, identifying business ventures, and building genuine, field-based partnerships with Iraqi police and army units. The end state required us to understand the "Iraqi Solution" as we sought to restore the natural hierarchy of Iraqi society that could survive in a post-Saddam era. I communicated the intent outlined in Figure 2 as central to the Task Force Raider campaign plan.

Words clearly mattered when it came to reiterating this intent throughout the formation during the entire year in Iraq. For example, words such as "Trust, respect, self-reliance, hope, and confidence" were arguably more important than "kill, capture, or detain." The Troopers internalized this yet they clearly demonstrated that they understood when lethal force was required as well. In extending trust, sincerity requires no translation, and our Troopers found they were able to engage in more meaningful discussions with the local populations and spend more time seeking to determine the root causes of issues that interfered with progress rather than applying patch fixes to problems that only made us feel better (and not the Iraqis).

Ultimately, from my perspective, I cautioned leaders in the Squadron that the biggest pitfall in operations rested with reliance on "playbook solutions" that did not require imagination to solve or prevent problems. This was especially true when it came to our efforts to restore the natural hierarchy. I will describe this in much greater detail, but want to be clear that this was unfamiliar territory for all of us. At the same time, it was also absolutely necessary to achieve success in our campaign and overall.

The 3rd Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry Campaign Strategy represented a team effort in reorganization, education, and application of new concepts at every level of the unit. This campaign solidified over time and was the direct result of routine interaction and dialogue with leaders and Troopers. In addition to the routine battlefield

circulation that occurred daily throughout both districts, the Command Sergeant Major and I maintained as part of our battle rhythm counseling sessions with platoon leadership that occurred every other month. These were one-on-one sessions (often lasting three hours or more) where the platoon leader and I simply talked over a map or network diagrams (friendly and enemy networks) to better synchronize the campaign, understand the environment, and simply get to know how they and their formations were doing during the year in Iraq. This was not a session focused on solely communicating intent to a subordinate nor was it a session to prepare me for key leader engagements (my responsibility). To the contrary, this session involved mutual learning where I often left with a detailed understanding of the environment to narrow the focus of our campaign in order to achieve the desired effects. Each of the system and visual constructs that contributed to the campaign (Figure 3 below) emerged as a result of engaging dialogue with my young platoon leaders. Similarly, these platoon leaders left the sessions with a more comfortable understanding of my intent and the status of their area of operations in relation to the overarching campaign.

As one of my mentors, LTG(R) James M. Dubik advised prior to my deployment, "This is hard, intellectual work. Iraq is dynamic. You must recognize that what you prepared for will most likely change very soon, and in ways we cannot predict. Your key asset is your mind and the corporate mind of your subordinate leaders and soldiers and you must be as sharp at the end of the deployment as you were at the start."

A MICROCOSM OF IRAQ

One cannot study the Squadron's campaign in Iraq without first understanding the nature of the terrain managed by this unit. The Squadron provided oversight for Balad and Dujayl, the two southernmost districts of Iraq's Salah Ad Din province. The Balad district mayor, Mayor Ammer, described the landscape of Balad and Dujayl as a microcosm of Iraq.
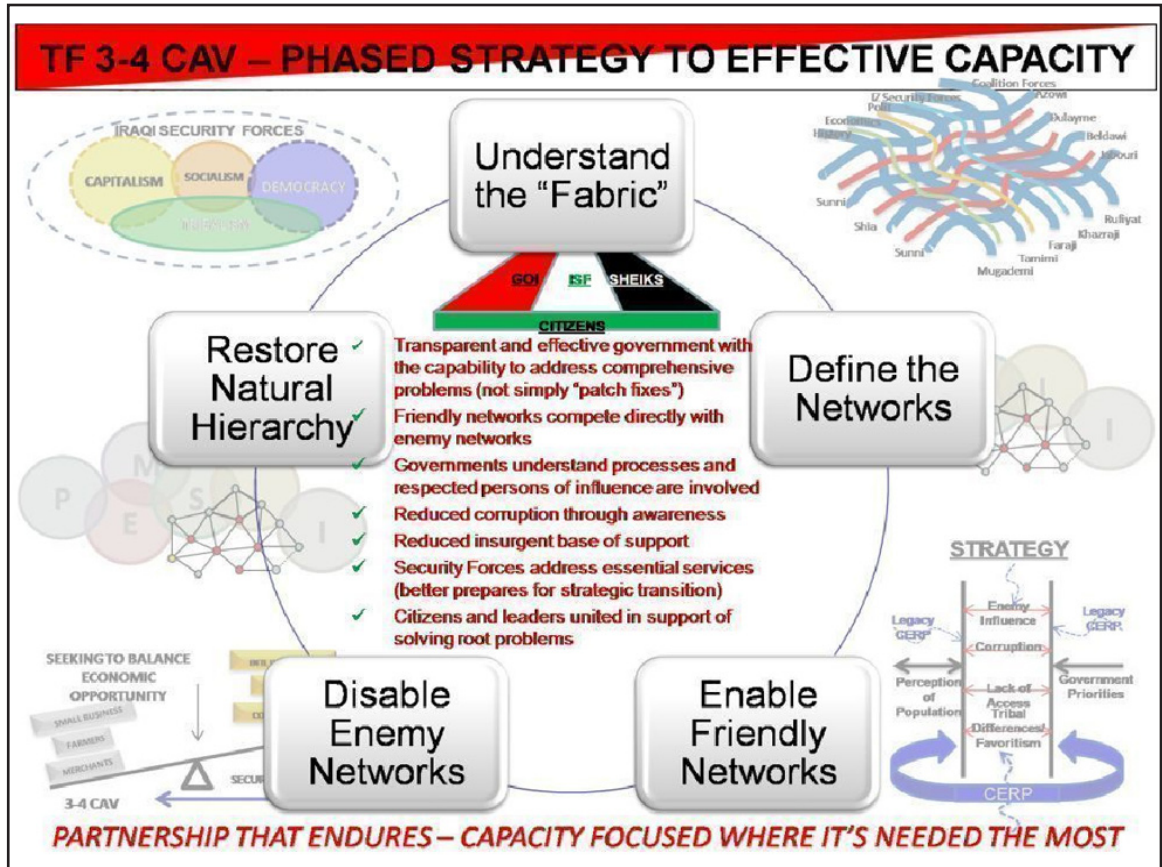
FIGURE 3

He also felt strongly that if governance and economic initiatives could take root here, they could migrate anywhere in Iraq. This unique area in close proximity to Baghdad not only represented the "bread basket" for the entire nation, but also hosted a unique confluence of Shia and Sunni populations, a mixture of over thirty major tribes and sub-tribes, and a population distributed evenly throughout the 1,500 square kilometers comprising the two districts (as opposed to within population centers surrounded by desert in the other districts of Salah Ad Din province). These districts are also strategically located at the southern boundary of the Salah Ad Din province at the strategic crossroads of the Diyala, Salah Ad Din, and Baghdad provinces.

Highway One (known as Main Supply Route, or MSR, Tampa) charts a course to Tikrit from Baghdad, passing the population centers of Balad and Dujayl, and the western Nubai deserts. This

offered great potential for Iraq's reconstruction efforts with the most promising gravel quarries in all of Iraq (most veterans of any phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom typically associate the Nubai quarries with mass graves and Al Qaeda sanctuary…most Iraqis remember it as a the site for construction and growth). Barring the lack of Kurds, this area holistically represented the merging interests and concerns that faced the broader population of Iraq.

Balad was also notorious for having witnessed some of the most significant sectarian violence of 2006 when, following the growing trend of sectarian murders, the Sunni population outside the city of Balad laid siege to the Shia population center, denying access to food and fuel trucks. In response, the Shia tribal leaders called for assistance from militias affiliated with Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr in Kadhimiyah, a Shiite neighborhood of Baghdad. The farms and orchards then became the predominant battle

ground between Sunni militia forces and Sadr's Mahdi Army. The reconciliation from these tragic events only recently occurred in December 2008.

Balad's neighbor to the south, Dujayl had the infamous reputation as the city responsible for a failed assassination attempt on Saddam Hussein in 1982. In response to the ill-fated ambush attempt, Saddam sent his forces to exact revenge on the area, ultimately resulting in over 150 executions (including an eleven year old boy—all victims never afforded due legal process).

Saddam further punished the citizens of Dujayl by burning their farms and withholding essential services from the district (for example, the Isaki Canal embankments transition from concrete to mud once it enters the Dujayl district boundary). One of Dujayl's preeminent sheiks commented that the incident gave rise to a common expression among other Iraqi districts, "Don't let happen to us what happened to Dujayl."

It's worth noting that Saddam was ultimately convicted of the "Dujayl murders" and executed for this crime, not for the gassing of the Kurds as is commonly thought. While difficult to confirm, locals in Balad and Dujayl claim that when Saddam was hung, it was residents of Dujayl who conducted the execution and were later made famous for the infamous cell phone video recordings of his execution.

Understanding of the history of this area was essential to our campaign. After all, this history was central to the population that endured the cycles of violence and oppression. This history was also a source of pride to those portions of the population who built reputations of solid character and as well-meaning citizens who earned the right to see a free Iraq. Much of this history is passed through generations of families through word of mouth, and our soldiers earned enormous respect when they displayed sensitivity and even a minimal understanding of events that transpired in their area. This helped soldiers better understand how these conditions affected families; particularly those that still maintained grudges or demonstrated outright resentment towards those responsible. A failure to

understand the local tribal feuds almost certainly would have prevented us from holding a legitimate seat at the table when attempting to facilitate reconciliation.

While Balad and Dujayl were decisive within Iraq's political and social context, these districts were also decisive towards the Multi-National Corps-Iraq's (MNC-I) plan for strategic transition and responsible drawdown. Joint Base Balad sits along the Balad and Dujayl district boundaries and is within one kilometer of the city of Dojema across the Tigris River in Diyala province. During our deployment, the base hosted over 20,000 U.S. servicemen and civilians and will likely grow as other units consolidate on Joint Base Balad in accordance with the tenets of the Security Agreement. This strategic U.S. base presented a lucrative target to a host of enemy networks that seek to not only attack coalition forces, but to support a propaganda campaign that attempts to communicate a forced U.S. withdrawal from Iraq as the result of a steady bombardment of this critical facility.

All of these factors contributed to the architecture of the Task Force Raider campaign, however, knowledge of Iraqi culture and society arguably played a more important role in its design. In some respects, these latter considerations provided for our success in developing an effective counterinsurgency campaign.

Prior to conducting operations in Iraq, the Squadron leadership continued to convey that this endeavor ultimately was about understanding people, not solely with respect to either insurgent motives or Iraqi Security Force capability, but specifically in terms of the human terrain that constituted this entire environment. The Command Sergeant Major (CSM) and I further emphasized that this was also about understanding our own formation and how our soldiers interact with the various social classes, tribes, and religious factions embedded in Iraqi society. Leaders needed to understand the variables to avoid actions that contributed to insurgency and revolutionary conditions in the execution of our operations. In addition to communicating my
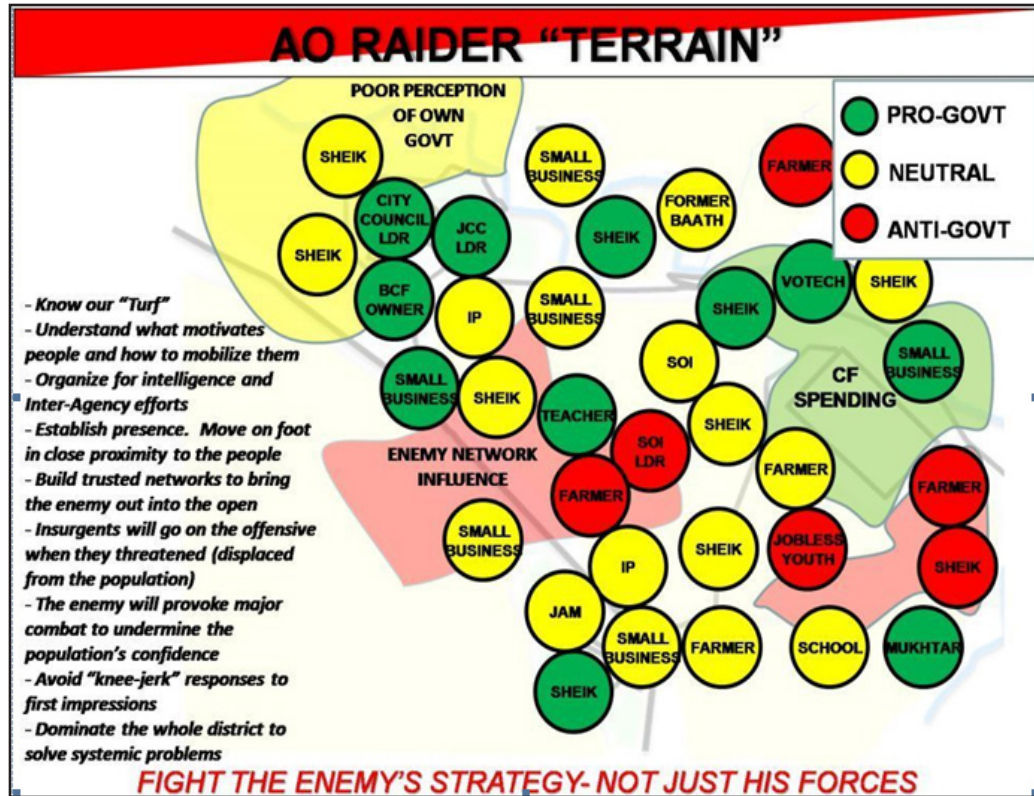
FIGURE 4

intent (listed previously in this report) we framed the human terrain using the diagram above (Figure 4) and reiterated the salient points listed on the left from David Kilcullen's "28 Articles" as fundamental to effective counterinsurgency.

This sketch represents the conceptual human terrain where each circle represents an individual as well as his sentiment toward his government and his opinion of the future. These sentiments included those who believe in Iraq's future and support the local government as well as those who lost faith in Iraq's future, demonstrate hostility over status they lost following the fall of Saddam, lack trust in their government, or simply are active insurgents. There were also individuals who have sided with neither the government nor the insurgents and are instead both cautious and uncertain. These were often individuals who had learned that vicious cycles of violence were far too common to choose a side. What was even more interesting about the human terrain in AO, termed AO Raider, was

that it represented Iraq's poor and working class. I will expand on this topic later with a description of the revolutionary changes witnessed in Iraq; however, this confluence of competing opinions and perceptions combined with sectarian and tribal differences contributed to very dynamic conditions in this region critical to success in Iraq.

Ultimately, we had to acknowledge that these perceptions shared among common citizens owe their influence to factors beyond the failures in government or insurgent action. The actions of coalition forces clearly influenced perception and unfortunately, as hindsight painfully reveals, often had adverse negative influences on citizens who might otherwise have supported their government. Such actions were not solely limited to issues pertaining to rules of engagement. For example, the indiscriminate spending and awarding of contracts in areas of close proximity to major U.S. Forward Operating Bases concentrated money in the hands of a few, and enhanced the gap between those few "haves" and the majority of "have nots."

Some of the poorest population centers in AO Raider included villages immediately outside Joint Base Balad. Combined with a low-payoff counterfire campaign (discussed later in the paper) that further destroyed infrastructure (farms, aqueducts, livestock, etc), the coalition presence risks alienating the population it seeks to protect.

To study our environment we needed to know the people who lived in it. To accomplish this required a persistent presence in order to establish and maintain relationships with people. Soldiers were required to extend trust and compassion and a willingness to engage in casual dialogue with people on subjects that did not appear immediately related to our security efforts. Failure to extend trust simply put us at greater risk. Leaders were encouraged to apply an indirect approach wherever possible to seek information rather than fatigue our Iraqi friends with conversations about things that mattered only to us or our desire to fight an enemy that is not easily identified.

As soldiers developed relationships and even genuine friendships with the citizens they interacted with almost daily, they even engaged in conversations on popular culture that almost inevitably led to conversations that answered our information requirements. We learned where people really stood when it came to "pro-government", "anti-government", or "neutral/ undecided/indifferent," though it was less important who was "pro-U.S." or "anti-U.S." when it came to helping the government of Iraq succeed. In many cases of open discussion, we agreed to disagree about the U.S. role, but resolved to work together on rebuilding Iraq for the benefits of the population.

The individuals depicted in Figure 4 are also all members of multiple overlapping networks including families, neighborhoods, social circles, business partners, security services, government officials, and of course, tribes (the importance of the tribal network will be covered in the next section). Defining these networks was essential in waging a very simple network centric strategy

where soldiers understood that each and every patrol must accomplish one of two purposes: enable the friendly networks or disable the enemy networks. This was not done randomly. This included a deliberate targeting and effects assessment process where we sought to concentrate efforts in support of the friendly networks that were in closest proximity to the enemy networks. In doing so, we ultimately created an environment where these emboldened friendly networks competed directly with the enemy networks (often influencing the neutral members to side with the more favorable or profitable friendly network). The cycle that followed provided freedom of maneuver to effectively address both our campaign end state and Iraqi desires.

THE TRIBAL FABRIC

Understanding the insights of this campaign plan required a fundamental understanding of what came to be termed in AO Raider as "the Fabric" (this even became the word synonymous with the campaign itself given its importance).

"The Fabric" (Figure 5) attempts to capture the fundamental underpinnings of the Iraqi society in our AO in order to better communicate how our actions within "the Fabric" both served to reinforce or to defeat our own efforts. Given the combination and interwoven relationships of tribes described previously, it did not take long for Troopers to understand that the proud tribal affiliation among these groups provided for the base threads that truly held Iraqi society together. Where most in America who are unfamiliar with Iraq would speak in terms of Shia or Sunni, the Troopers who truly understood the citizens of Balad and Dujayl spoke in terms of tribe.

In knowing our turf, it was critical to understand the importance of tribe, particularly in this area consisting of so many tribes, some of which harbored historic tensions and hatred of each other.

Troopers learned to understand the following aspects of tribe as an integral portion of our campaign:

- Tribal affiliation as the fundamental fabric that binds Iraqi society (Saddam Hussein understood this. Respected sheiks would tell us that this is how he maintained control over a diverse population – he pulled at the "fabric" to manipulate, distort, and keep tribes from becoming too powerful)

- This society has a "pervading consciousness of being one nation, irrespective of the number of tribes or political units"

- The tribe commands belonging, cohesion, and loyalty. Kin-based and kin-oriented social units. This develops interlocking social measures and values

- Group cohesion and group survival takes primacy

There was also a relative lack of understanding of the relationship of Shia and Sunni Muslims with respect to their beliefs and relationships. Even Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) overestimated the role of religion in society. Al Qaeda believed they could tear the fabric of this society apart by pulling at divisions between Shia and Sunni Islam, depicted in Figure 5 as the red threads. Those familiar with

the success of the tribally affiliated Sons of Iraq would vouch that events show that the tribal fabric was stronger, ultimately mending the fabric to a point where security was restored.

This is not to say that Shia and Sunni identities were not important. Given that our area of operations included both Shia and Sunni Muslims, Troopers required an understanding of the following sensitivities associated with religious identity as we navigated the tribal fabric.

- Competing theologies and conceptions of sacred history – a "very old, modern conflict"

- The convergence of faith and identity

- Concerns of power, subjugation, freedom, equality, and regional conflicts

- Tribal loyalty, when combined with the concerns mentioned above, can lead to a vicious cycle of provocation and revenge

- People who read into religion and interpret to their own needs

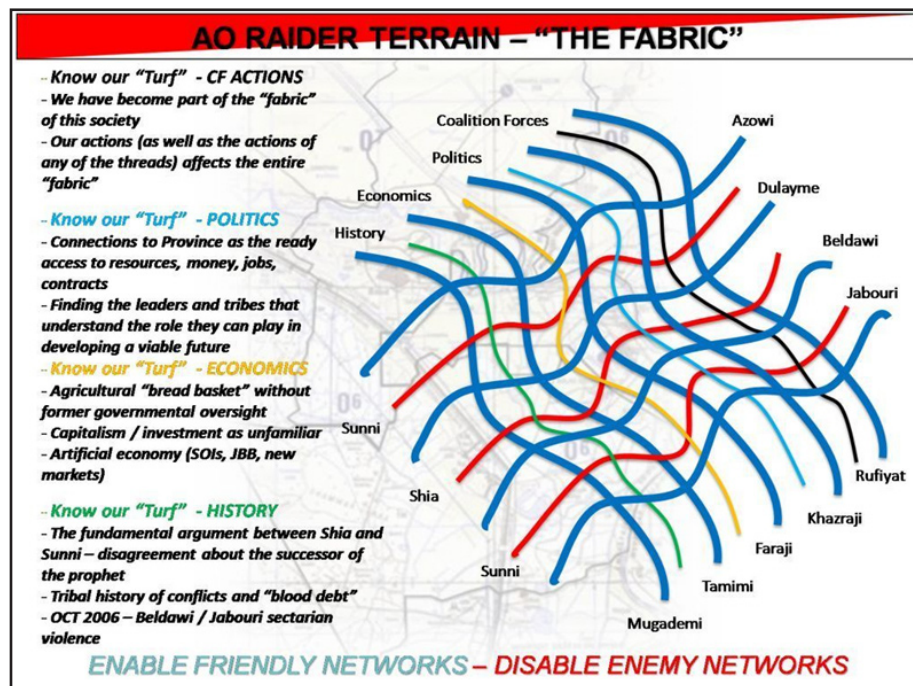- "Shias find it less threatening to come to terms with relative decline of Muslim power in

FIGURE 5

modern times – decline does not suggest a crisis in belief"

· Sunni anxiety over Shia gains in electoral process and feeling they have more to lose

This societal fabric was further connected by many other factors including history, economics, former colonization, political landscape, and U.S. military action. It was imperative that in "knowing our turf," we recognized that we had in fact become part of the fabric, and our actions (as well as the actions of any of the threads) affect the entire fabric. In this respect, it was our responsibility to execute a campaign plan that worked within the fabric and strengthened the society to withstand pressure and resist revolutionary or insurgent tendencies. In no way could our campaign plan weaken or manipulate the societal fabric.

The Squadron's campaign focused on each line of effort (Governance, Economics, Security, and Iraqi Security Force Partnership) in a manner that reinforced the fabric naturally while simultaneously setting the conditions to achieve strategic transition. In essence, our governance efforts sought to enable district directors to better see their constituents and sought to coach them in a manner that facilitated Iraqi solutions to improve opinions of government. With respect to the economics line of effort, we sought to direct attention to the natural landscape of an agrarian economy that could take advantage of Highway One.

Prior to the Squadron's arrival in Balad, much of the economic opportunity existed largely as a result of coalition spending and the bazaar on Joint Base Balad ,which ultimately served to distract small markets from the economic hubs of Balad and Dujayl proper. We focused on reconstruction efforts in recognized industries that functioned prior to our intervention in 2003 (Balad Canning Factory, agriculture, quarries, and the Isake Cattle Farm). We also sought to develop local business unions given the introduction of capitalism and the need to find ways to procure goods no longer available in a broken socialist state.

With respect to security and Iraqi Security Force partnership, we simply sought to replace our "thread" in the fabric with the Iraqi Security Forces. This required significant coaching, routine participation in Joint Security Working Groups, persistent patrolling with an eye on the habits of disciplined Troopers migrating to the Iraqis, and ultimately an Iraqi security presence in areas of enemy network presence. In some cases, these areas had never previously enjoyed Iraqi Security Force presence.

These concepts contributed to the development of the 3-4 CAV campaign plan and also required an understanding of the competing influences. We knew we would execute a campaign plan that was competing with tribal disputes, preconceived opinions (about security forces, government, and U.S. interests), radio/TV dialogue, damaged infrastructure, external markets, enemy network influence, coalition spending, former social status, and tribal reconciliation efforts (Figure 6). Ultimately our goal was to identify the threads in the fabric that we needed to pull in order to bring it back to its original shape.

It is also worth noting that we recognized this tribal fabric was a very valuable information conduit. In fact, we discovered that information passed through the tribal fabric at a remarkable pace and we often learned of events within minutes using tribal linkages that employ cellular communications to their fullest extent. In communicating the successes of local government or reinforcing friendly networks, we often sought to use the tribal communication systems in passing information during informal venues (tea sessions, meals, etc). Where anxiety travels quickly, so does the news of success.

One of the most critical aspects of counterinsurgency operations was how best to capture or categorize the effects of our actions. As we examined the forces that pushed or pulled on the fabric (including our own), we started to gain a better appreciation for both the positive and negative influences on the human terrain. Consistent with a network-centric strategy, we organized and executed a weekly "Effects

Assessment" meeting focused on defining the current state of the networks (both friendly and enemy) rather than simply serving as a venue to report the actions of the Cavalry troops. This was not a targeting meeting in the traditional sense. In fact, this meeting focused less on the mechanics of target matrices and instead was a free-flowing discussion about network effects and the actions that might allow us to enable and disable them. Where staff officers were initially comfortable in only discussing the enemy networks and their proposed linkages (tasks they were trained to do), they later demonstrated remarkable proficiency in defining the more nebulous friendly networks of governance and economics. This allowed the collective Task Force to focus their unique skills towards reinforcing these friendly networks in a deliberate manner. Ultimately, we could better synchronize our actions as well as integrate our enablers (Psychological Operations (PSYOP), Police Transition Teams (PTT), Military Transition Teams (MiTT), Human Intelligence Control Teams (HCT), Joint Signals Intelligence Personnel (JESTR), etc) on a larger scale as every attendee had a voice. Over the course of a few weeks the changes in network activity were clearly visible, and in the case of overlapping networks, we were better able to influence positive change in a proactive manner. This process succeeded in synchronizing not only maneuver, but also synchronized source operations, transition team operations, Provincial Reconstruction Team efforts, and our governance and economics efforts. When determining effects, I routinely cautioned that there was no singular relationship between cause and effect in this complicated environment. The challenge of identifying and targeting networks in the COIN environment was the coexistence of friendly and enemy networks. Some enemy networks utilized elements of legitimate (friendly) networks and we were cautious about disabling or weakening the networks used by the enemy when it would only weaken the ones we sought to enable.

SECURITY LINE OF EFFORT: INITIAL FOCUS

While we focused on governance as the decisive

effort, our initial efforts in the Balad and Dujayl districts focused on setting the conditions to secure the provincial elections which were slated to be held early in our deployment. These elections represented a crucial test of Iraq's stability particularly at a time when the new U.S. administration considered the pace of troop withdrawals (a constant source of anxiety for the Iraqis). In hindsight, our initial security operations looked far different in the latter half of our campaign given the positive results we saw from our societal line of effort described later.

Given the importance of the geographical location of the Balad and Dujayl districts, it's understandable why the area hosted multiple enemy networks with competing desires. The enemy considered this area of particular strategic importance because of its close proximity to three other provinces: Diyala, Al-Anbar and Baghdad. Furthermore, the AO contained one of the primary access corridors—Highway One (MSR Tampa)—linking the Salah Ad Din province with the Ninewa province in the north. These factors established AO Raider as a gateway to Iraq. While 3-4 CAV fell in on a comparatively subdued security environment, this was not the case in Diyala, and as intelligence showed, the enemy was using several facilitation routes throughout the AO to transverse between other provinces. The enemy networks known to be operating in the AO included Sunni insurgent groups such as Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), Jaysh Al-Islami (JAI), 1920's Revolutionary Brigade, Salah Ad Din Brigade, Hamas Al-Iraq, and Ansar Al-Sunna, as well as Shia militia groups such as Jaysh Al-Mahdi (JAM). There were also unconfirmed rumors of additional groups. These networks maintained varied sectarian, political, and anti-coalition ideologies contributing to an increasingly complex environment.

Our security strategy emphasized the role of enabling friendly networks as the primary method to disable enemy networks (Figure 6). Simply put, our Iraqi Security Force partnership efforts were decisive as the competence and discipline of combined security force operations led to successful counterinsurgency. Our demonstrated

discipline, compassion, adherence to standards, and lethality when required were evidenced every time our forces left the forward operating bases (FOBs), and the Squadron CSM and I shared a common vision as to the level of discipline we expected in this proud Cavalry formation. This operational, tactical, and individual level of discipline could not be overstated in counterinsurgency operations. Support from the population was conditional, and the people would always consider the perceived strength of the security apparatus in determining their ability to coexist with or to support enemy networks. This too, required a balance, as sometimes aggressiveness could prevent us from achieving operational successes. Even in the initial phases of our campaign, we sought to obtain freedom of maneuver through the indirect approach of our governance and economics line of efforts. Many of our partnered security operations initially focused on assisting Iraqis with the events most important to them including their provincial elections, religious pilgrimages, tribal reconciliation events, and openings of new schools and government buildings. This later translated

into increased assistance and teamwork in disabling enemy networks.

Where many expressed significant concern about the historic milestone associated with the 1 July 2009 deadline for all U.S. forces to relocate out of Iraqi cities, and the resulting limitations imposed on U.S. patrols to operate in the Iraqi cities without permission of the city government, this had absolutely no impact on our operational capability. We continued to conduct security operations throughout the Balad and Dujayl districts, and responded to changes associated with the Security Agreement milestone with relative ease as a result of our previously developed partnerships and genuine friendship with all neighboring Iraqi Security Forces (District Police, Federal Police, and Iraqi Army).

This partnership ultimately provided the opportunity to rebuild the existing Joint Coordination Center into a more effective joint command and control facility. This further communicated our intentions to honor the Security Agreement to the fullest extent. The
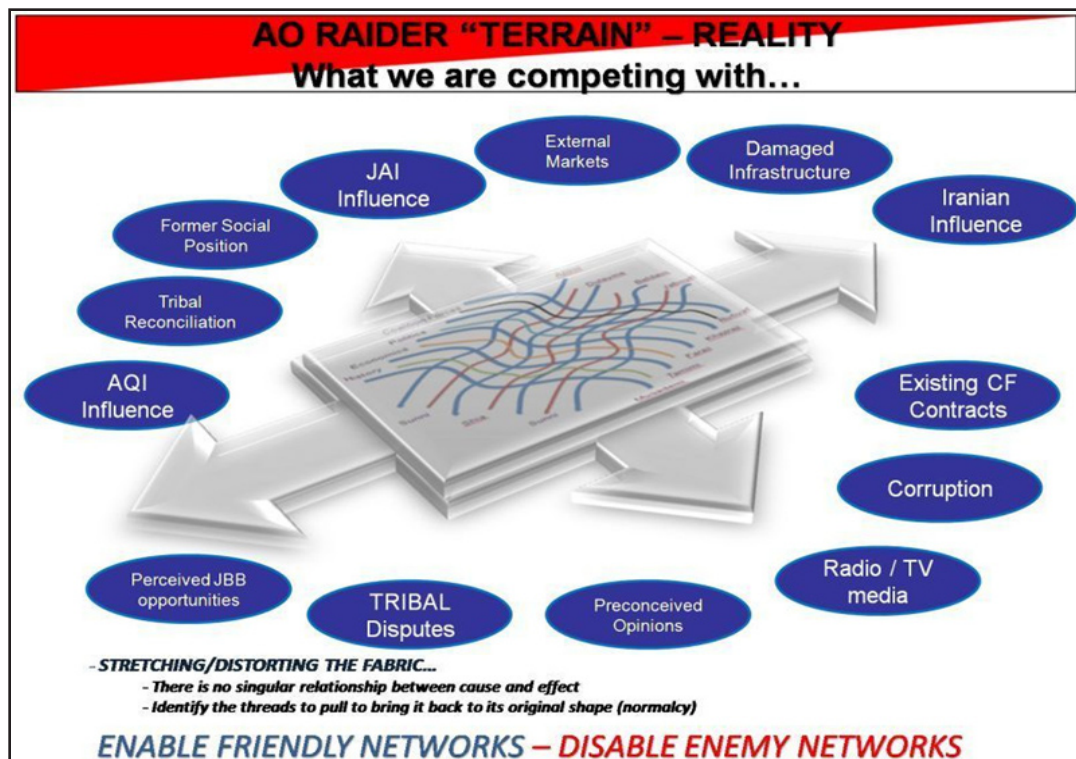

FIGURE 6

previous Joint Coordination Center consisted of a small building located between the Iraqi Army headquarters and the Squadron's main FOB. This facility was minimally manned by a few Iraqi Police officers and served primarily as a conference room for the weekly Joint Security Working Group (JSWG) meeting in Balad.

Coordination with adjacent units occurred in isolation over cell phone networks or through face to face communication. There was no common operating picture among the various security forces, nor was there a shared understanding of both the enemy and friendly networks in the district. One infamous JSWG meeting involved drawing police and military unit locations on the map to show the physical gaps in security force coverage that provided for enemy freedom of maneuver routinely acknowledged by security forces.

At the time, the new Balad Joint Coordination Center was the only one of its kind in all of Iraq, as the Squadron provided our own headquarters to serve as the hub of all ISF activity throughout this region. Task Force Troopers operated twenty-four hours a day alongside Iraqi Police, Iraqi Army, and National Police security forces. It's worth stating that this Joint Coordination Center is now formally the property of the Government of Iraq and we essentially became tenants on an Iraqi facility. My Tactical Operations Center (TOC) was officially the property of Balad, the Balad JCC Director was the OIC, and my title was the JCC Deputy Director. We conducted partnered shift change briefings twice daily (briefed in both English and Arabic), shared reports, maintained a better understanding of the environment, and even ate meals together. Each shift change briefing offered an opportunity for mentorship and team building, which was eagerly received by both U.S. and Iraqi forces. We also recognized increased response times from all security forces given immediate access to their officers who maintained situational awareness and could pass to their units. In fact, these efforts served to thwart indirect fire attacks on Joint Base Balad and U.S. forces were able to respond to Iraqi needs as well.

In opening this facility, we conducted a formal transition ceremony. The ceremony publicly demonstrated that the United States was committed to upholding the Security Agreement. It also demonstrated a level of trust previously not seen between U.S. and Iraqi forces and it clearly posed a threat to enemy networks.

The successful partnership between U.S. and Iraqi forces was further demonstrated in the spring of 2009. Iraqi citizens experienced an increase in suicide attacks throughout the country, the first of which occurred in our own area of operations resulting in civilian casualties. When threatened, the enemy will seek to regain the offensive, and the terrorist networks in the area sensed that the Iraqi government was gaining momentum. The enemy also sensed the building confidence of Iraqi security forces in their ability to secure their own civilian population and thus sought to regain momentum through a series of attacks

In response to these suicide attacks, we planned a series of combined operations to destroy this network. The first contact with the enemy resulted when an insurgent detonated a homemade explosive device as six of our partnered Iraqi Army soldiers entered the house to search it for insurgents. The bomb destroyed the house, killing the insurgent, and wounding the Iraqi Army soldiers. Fortunately, all were rapidly evacuated and treated in a remarkable display of combined medical efforts at our FOB. As some Iraqi medics treated some of their casualties, our medics treated the others and all six returned to full duty within a week of the incident. The operation resulted in the detention of several enemy network personnel, including one of their leaders.

Based on intelligence gained from the previous operation as well as combined information gathered during our Joint Security Working Groups (JSWGs), the Squadron conducted a follow-up combined operation. We identified an area between AO Raider and our neighboring province that most likely constituted an enemy sanctuary based on a variety of factors including a lack of road networks leading to it, river valleys that further limited vehicular traffic and dense orchards that separated rural agricultural communities and limited visibility to no more

than twenty-five meters. Our plan was simple and focused on building a road. We partnered with the nearby Army Engineer unit and elected to build a road into the heart of this previously inaccessible territory. The intent was to provide an enduring signature of the local government's influence, better connect the rural farmers to growing markets, and allow our ISF partners to routinely patrol these areas and disrupt future enemy activity. The first phase of this effort began with Army engineers and in the months that followed a local contractor paved the road, providing much needed jobs. This creation of jobs for local residents and the resulting connection of farmers to agricultural markets served as indirect approaches to disabling enemy networks through enabling friendly networks.

As was intended, this operation forced the enemy to respond with additional suicide attacks. While this was certainly tragic, the immediate response from Iraqi forces, and the subsequent movement of the enemy enabled joint U.S. efforts to target them in a lethal manner that ultimately resulted in the elimination of a sizable Al Qaeda cell operating in the orchards. The news of their defeat made international news. It also resulted in the discovery of multiple suicide explosive vests that could have easily caused dozen of civilian casualties and the discovery and exploitation of multiple underground hiding sites and staging areas that our Troopers subsequently destroyed. The Squadron staff coordinated these operations with both our local partners as well as with U.S. Special Operations Forces and Iraqi Emergency response forces from outside local districts.

The response from the local population that had previously lived in fear of this local Al Qaeda cell residing in their farms and orchards was overwhelmingly positive. The celebrations lasted for days as locals shot celebratory fire and gathered en masse to wave at each of our patrols that passed to and from the objective area. Within the first week of the operation some families brought lambs to the Joint Coordination Center to show their appreciation. As the heavy Engineer vehicles arrived on scene the population sensed the level of combined commitment, which encouraged some

of the previously intimidated population to come forward and agree to provide information between our Squadron and Iraqi Security Forces as to any future enemy activity in the area.

By the end of the first six months, the Squadron firmly established its presence throughout AO Raider. Through a combination of planned operations, time sensitive targets, and Task Force raids, the Squadron continually applied pressure to the enemy. Steady state operations contributed to visible degradation in enemy attacks and improved the morale of local citizens. In total, the Squadron conducted over 4,800 routine patrols through September 2009. The enemy attempted to respond on numerous occasions with IEDs, IDF, and small arms fire. As of 1 September 2009, there were 625 significant activities (SIGACTs) in the AO, and while approximately sixty percent of these SIGACTs were from enemy engagements, a significant but growing number came from ISF arrests, IED discoveries, and from cache turn-ins by local nationals. Our Human Intelligence (HUMINT) Control Teams (HCTs) saw a growth in the number of sources and contacts which further contributed to intelligence reporting and influenced the general public to turn against the enemy networks operating throughout the AO. In addition, cooperation from the U.S. Air Force Security Detachment (under the tactical control of Task Force Raider when operating outside the base), and increasingly the Iraqi Army, helped reduce the number of IDF attacks carried out against Joint Base Balad, which became known as Al-Bakir Airfield. The Squadron used this momentum to shift its focus to governance and economic efforts, further eroding enemy control throughout the AO, and leaving behind several lasting legacies.

GOVERNANCE LINE OF EFFORT

Iraqis in positions of influence (mayors, city council leaders, security force leaders, etc) quickly found that maintaining and exercising state power in conjunction with the Security Agreement was much different than simply claiming to have such authorities. To this end, we transitioned our

VIGNETTE 1: PROSECUTION BASED TARGETING

Another aspect emergent of the 30 June Security Agreement deadline included the primacy of prosecution-based targeting as a means for ensuring that criminals, particularly those engaged in terrorist activities, were effectively removed from the population. After several months of trial and error, the Squadron realized that focusing solely on attaining warrants for enemy targets, without witnesses or evidence of terrorism, did not necessarily lead to convictions in the Iraqi court system.

In early July 2009, the Squadron undertook an ambitious campaign to initiate a prosecution-based targeting process focused on achieving a conviction by linking known terrorists to their crimes through evidence and local witnesses. This campaign combined an understanding of the Iraqi penal code, a strengthened partnership with the ISF, and a close relationship with investigative judges to enhance success.

This strategy proved extremely effective and enabled alignment of targeting priorities between the ISF and U.S. forces, and a synergy between intelligence and evidence gathering operations. It took less than two months to secure 111 warrants for arrest and twelve convictions for local insurgents in the Iraqi court system, with each conviction carrying a death sentence. Although the advent of this form of targeting occurred at the end of the Squadron's tenure in Iraq, its success would be largely replicated throughout Multi-National Division–North and serve as an Iraqi solution and an alternate coalition force strategy for effectively eroding the terrorist cells known to be operating throughout the country.

Figure 7 below illustrates the process that became an integral part of the coordination that occurred within the Balad Joint Coordination Center. The table reflects the detailed criteria required to execute a warrant that would result in prosecution. Green signaled that the arrest could proceed and a single red or yellow box indicated that U.S. or Iraqi Security Forces would not execute the arrest until we set the conditions that ensured prosecution.
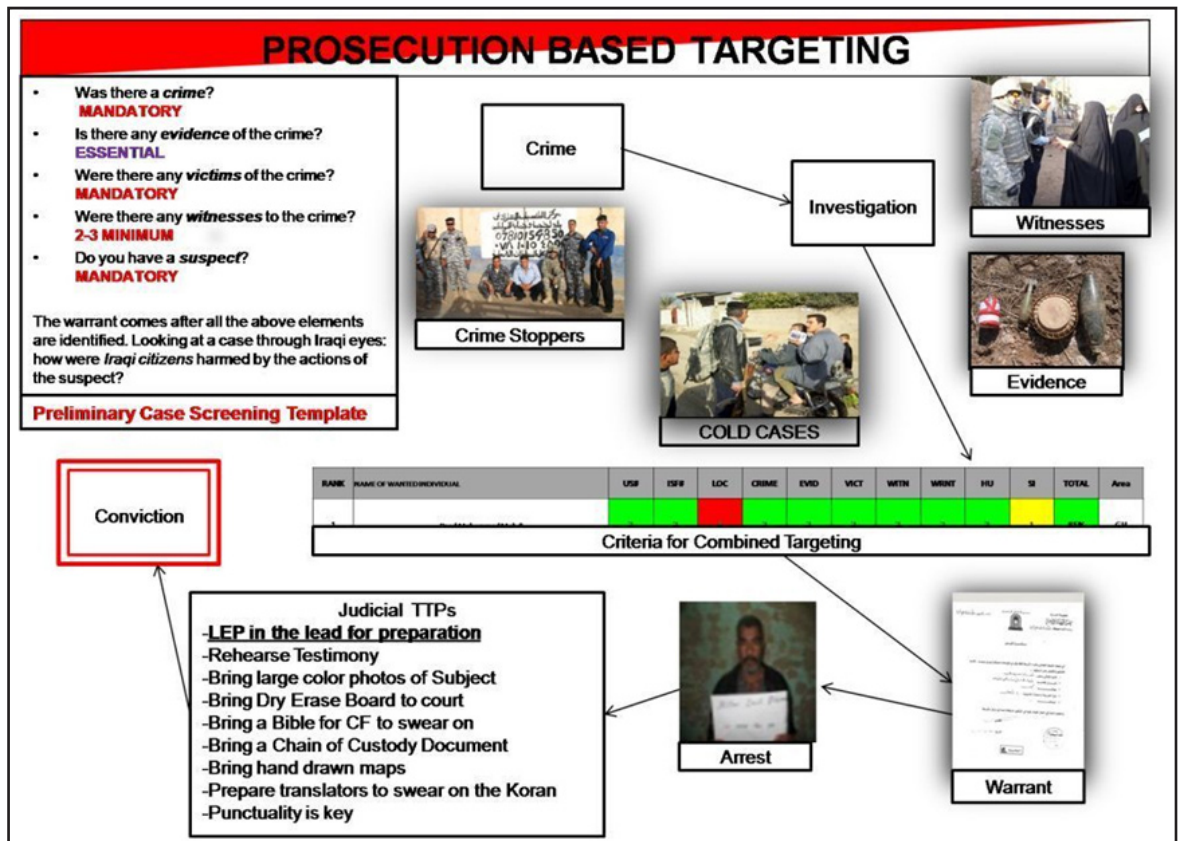

FIGURE 7

focus to governance as the Squadron's decisive effort immediately upon the completion of the provincial elections. Our primary role was one of reinforcing the district and county councils in both an advisory role as well as in terms of providing resources through Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) efforts. In many respects we would assume the role of scouts for the city councils in order to recommend areas that would be best served by new building projects or renovations of existing facilities. I spent time with each of the platoon leaders discussing the importance of defining networks, both enemy and friendly, and emphasized that each patrol must either enable a friendly network or disable an enemy network. The Squadron's governance and economics efforts were focused on enabling the friendly networks to the point where they would compete directly with known concentrations of enemy networks for the support of the population. City council members often focused their attention on the areas where they enjoyed access; however, we sought to redirect their focus to the areas that received little to no government resources and hosted a significant enemy presence.

Our predecessor's (1-32 CAV, 101st Airborne Division) success in employing the abundance of Iraqi donated Commander's Emergency Response Program (I-CERP) funds during their rotation meant that the Balad district had a better-than-average infrastructure in place. This enhanced the legitimacy of the local government. The situation in the Dujayl district, however, was the reverse, with few projects, rampant corruption, death squads, and a weak city council. The strategy that Task Force Raider adopted with respect to governance focused on applying CERP funds in a manner that 1) reinforced the priorities of the local government 2) reflected the competency of the local government, 3) countered the enemy's influence on the local populace by expanding the influence of local directors and officials in the government, and 4) increased the transparency of these efforts through local media outlets and town hall meetings. In short, our governance effort sought to close the gap between the priorities of the local government and the perceptions of the population concerning these priorities.

Our governance strategy was not solely limited to CERP. CERP, however, was the one pressure point where we maintained appropriate control measures to ensure mission success. Our strategy focused on enabling our local government networks through coaching city leaders, observing city council meetings, assisting with dissemination of information, and providing recommendations as to areas that require government assistance. In every respect, CERP reinforced the intent of the local Iraqi government. We would not execute a CERP project without their approval.

Within the first weeks of our arrival we learned that there were many previous CERP projects throughout the Balad and Dujayl districts that were in complete disrepair. I commented to General Odierno, who commanded Multi-National Force-Iraq, that the areas surrounding Joint Base Balad were littered with failed water projects. Dujayl represented the greatest challenge from this perspective; however, both districts suffered from mismanagement and lack of funding for the operations and maintenance of five years worth of reconstruction projects, leaving many of these projects in shambles. This created a measure of distrust among locals who were no longer interested in humoring failed promises. While sitting city council members thought they were doing a decent job, the farmers in close proximity to the failed water pumps throughout the agricultural communities thought differently.

This gap between the government and the population existed for many reasons. The most obvious was the influence of enemy networks that sought to intimidate city officials performing their duties or who simply destroyed the projects and other symbols of progress. This often resulted in an even greater lack of access for government officials who refused to visit these threatened areas for fear of their own safety. Perhaps the two greatest factors that contributed to the gap however, included the extent of corruption among many officials and contractors who sought to sublet contracts repeatedly to the point where the project lacked the funding to complete it. There was also a period where it was common for contractors to run off with the money for

such projects, further casting doubt on any good intentions. With respect to corruption among officials who sought to steer contracts based on tribal favoritism or other factors, I stated publicly in many city council meetings that "the single greatest challenge to a bright future for the common Iraqi citizen does not rest with security, it manifests itself in selfish personal agendas among some who have come to power in various political or security force positions."

The failed legacy CERP projects that remained in AO Raider typically served to address only one or two of the four factors that created the gap between the government and their constituents. Where roads were built to provide better access to enemy networks (one of the best roads in the Dujayl district was in the vicinity of Joint Base Balad and provided access to enemy mortar firing positions), these roads failed to connect natural economic or social networks. Where contracts were routinely awarded to the same contractor who was a close relative of the city council president, word spread quickly through to the other neighboring tribes who, in some cases, resorted to violence to obtain visibility. There were specific instances where locals placed IEDs simply to attract coalition attention and make their case for projects.

It was our intention to close the perception gap in a manner that addressed the many competing pressures that widened it. CERP projects required buy-in from both the population receiving the service as well as from the city council approving it. In communicating that resources were limited, this trained city council leaders to prioritize and vote on matters, as well as convinced the local citizens to participate in the process. Ultimately we sought to apply CERP in a manner that:

- Reinforces priorities of local district and county priorities

- Reflects competency of local government

- Reaches the rural and routinely neglected areas

- Counters enemy influence on population by expanding the influence of local directors into the contested areas (compete directly with them)

- Combats reputation of the legacy CERP that, while well-intentioned, in some cases had unintended negative consequences

- Broadcast results via local news and town hall meetings

Over time, city council leaders became more comfortable with the process for providing remedies to issues facing their constituents. As we reinforced the friendly networks resident in local governments this resulted in a growing cycle of participation from the citizenry and motivated local officials to continue to develop solutions. It was not uncommon for city council leaders to acknowledge that they saw some areas in their district for the first time, and they were proud to engage in conversation with these villages. This also allowed the Squadron leaders to play a reduced role in city council meetings and allow the process to work with minimal input from U.S. forces. Other measures at reinforcing local government included:

Transparency in Governance

- Project boards posted at each city council building

- Shows before/after pictures and contractor information

- List CERP/GOI projects with no delineation between funding source

- Project boards at each CERP project location which shows before/after pictures and GOI approval

- Publishing city council notes after each meeting

- Publish newsletter of GOI efforts and concerns as needed

Information Operations

- Publish fliers explaining agriculture loans currently available for farmers

- Local and Iraq wide media coverage for all GOI events: Project Openings, Tribal Reconciliation, Prov. Government visits

Professionalization of GOI Officials

- Conducting bimonthly district reconstruction meetings: All mayors and city council chairmen in attendance

- Forum used to synchronize county and district leadership efforts

- Mayors and city council leaders develop project priorities and leverage GOI programs

- Continue development of a Five Year Plan for reconstruction

Canal Clearing and Operations

- Extensive canal systems in vicinity of Al-Bakir Airfield had fallen into disrepair and lack qualified personnel to oversee

Significant and long lasting positive effects achieved by:

- Repairing damage

- Training operators to manage and sustain

Ultimately, through the course of our governance efforts we observed that the citizens of the Balad and Dujayl districts began to recognize the power inherent in their emerging democratic systems. Both these citizens and the Troopers of this Squadron understood that Al Qaeda and the other associated insurgent movements were not decisive, rather a government that was unable to provide for its people was.

ECONOMICS LINE OF EFFORT: ECONOMIC SECURITY IS REAL SECURITY

In close partnership with the PRT and the U.S. State Department, we sought to define a campaign that would adequately address the economic challenges of the population of AO Raider. Many citizens, government officials, sheiks, and even

insurgents fought out of economic necessity.

Where news of economic woes is certain to catch headlines, we strongly believed that economic security would contribute to real security. Our systemic network approach initially sought to identify the networks of private investors and businessmen that previously might have been too fearful to emerge in an unstable security environment. Indeed, one of the greatest ironies that became apparent was that there are some in Iraq who were more willing to pay for their future in blood (their own, or their family's) while there are others who are reluctant to pay for this future with their personal wealth. A U.S. embassy paper hinted at the existence of "mattress millionaires;" Iraqis who hide their wealth under their beds or buried in their yards. We actively sought to connect individuals with the markets naturally existing in this area to rapidly generate momentum. While this economic effort is arguably the most complex "fight" in the campaign, we viewed it as the surest way to build hope and Iraqi self-reliance.

The Squadron directed collection of specific information requirements to contribute to the overall economic assessment of the area of operations. In seeking to balance economic opportunity, the Squadron initially focused on developing relationships with the small business owners, farmers, and merchants throughout the area. This was done in conjunction with the other lines of effort in the campaign as this dialogue often corroborated information from discussions about essential services, and in some cases, also contributed to discussions about enemy networks (particularly where business was poor). As the Squadron simultaneously worked to improve security we viewed our efforts as a form of leverage for the PRT to focus on attracting international investment, industry, or large local companies to bring in higher revenue and jobs. This defined responsibilities and created a unity of effort that paid off.

Aside from a large canning factory just south of Balad proper and a functioning microloan office within Balad itself, the makeup of the economic network in the rest of the Squadron's area of

operations was largely unknown at the start of our deployment. The task fell to Task Force Raider, in conjunction with Civil Affairs Teams and the PRT, to map out this network completely.

During the initial phase of the campaign, the Squadron conducted reconnaissance and individual assessments on local businesses, factories, farms, and marketplaces throughout the AO, gathering information and data that became the basis for the 2009 AO Raider Economic Assessment which predicted:

"2009 will bring unprecedented economic growth to the Balad and Ad Dujayl Qada'as. Thanks to a marked increase in the security situation during 2008, the condition was set for markets to reemerge. In addition, a highly successful microcredit institution provided capital for many small businesses to open and expand operations, and will serve as the catalyst for continued growth. Furthermore, the expansion of the Balad Canning Factory, and its link to the local agriculture value chain, will create a permanent market for solid growth in the year ahead. Our efforts during 2009 will focus on restoring the missing linkages in the economic value chain by helping to establish businesses and networks that are mutually connected and feed into one another. The critical task is to establish an investment model that can produce the large-scale capital needed to expand the economy at its full potential. The bottom line of all our efforts is long-term, sustainable job creation. Overall, the AO can expect to see double-digit economic growth of 25 to 40 percent, translating into 20,000 jobs or more."(See Appendix M; Annex 1 - 2009 AO Raider Economic Assessment).

Connecting entrepreneurs and local markets required significant educational initiatives that ultimately introduced local millionaires to the concept of capitalism. Through a series of investment conferences and educational workshops, the Squadron's Economics Officer, CPT Peter Hagstrom introduced investors to modern trade theory, investment strategy, and the benefits and efficiencies of a free-market economy.

As word of investment and opportunity spread throughout the network resident in the tribal fabric, we found ourselves engaged in meaningful discussion about legitimate business ventures. More importantly, this open dialogue encouraged Iraqis with business degrees and global experience to come forward and offer their expertise, further strengthening this friendly network. It did not take long for international investors, including U.S. management companies, to take notice of the economic discussion occurring in the Balad and Dujayl districts.

Ultimately, the free-market economy concepts marked a distinct departure from the more familiar style of Arab socialism practiced by the former regime in Iraq. While many of the concepts would take time to be ingrained and practiced, the growth of markets throughout the AO over the course of the year demonstrated the success that these educational sessions had in transforming a pervasive mindset.

REVOLUTIONARY OUTCOME IN IRAQ?

In years of combating the forces and factors behind the insurgency in Iraq, it is entirely possible that we overlooked the revolution occurring right in front of us. While the situation in Iraq may not constitute a revolution in the traditional sense one must certainly acknowledge the change within the collective consciousness of the Iraqi citizens. They will never return to the Iraq they once knew. Of course, these revolutionary changes that we now understand in Iraq did not occur from within. The revolution did not occur in the traditional sense as a response to government oppression (arguably the conditions were ripe for it given the horribly oppressive nature of the former Saddam regime). This revolution occurred as a result of U.S. intervention and the toppling of the Saddam regime. This is important because the citizenry always understood that they would inherit this post-Saddam Iraq, even if they were not entirely clear what it would look like.

Given the timeline established in the Security

Agreement, we dedicated significant operational effort to defining and achieving a societal endstate that would provide the government of Iraq the opportunity to succeed. Governments throughout history learned that military means alone will not solve societal crises, and reliance on military solutions often lead to ineffective counterterrorism campaigns rather than effective counterinsurgency campaigns. Achieving a military endstate alone would likely only continue to create disenfranchised populations that formed the base of support for insurgent groups. Defining the societal endstate required us to evaluate our own previous missteps at varying stages in the war. It also demanded careful navigation to avoid similar mistakes. It was clear in both the Balad and Dujayl districts that many of the elites currently in power had their status through coalition backing; however, their power in some cases resulted in negative and unintended consequences and contributed to corruption, criminal activities, and ineffective government. Operational guidance emphasized key leader engagements to empower and reassure well-intended government officials as well as marginalize those who were most likely to interfere with the process. Key leader engagement was a main effort along all lines of operation.

In dedicating effort to understand Iraqi culture and society in Balad and Dujayl, Squadron comprehension of this revolutionary dynamic was absolutely essential. The rural and diverse citizenry in these two districts was susceptible to and easily swayed by disinformation and rumor; thus, we simply had no choice but to offer solutions. The Squadron had to engage in interesting and intellectual dialogue with the Iraqis about the future Iraqi state and how we were going to get there. COIN efforts will always require a degree of social engineering to offset conditions that might contribute to insurgency, especially since revolutionary movements rarely begin with revolutionary intention. Rather, they typically develop in the course of the struggle itself.

During the Saddam years, the Iraqi citizens recognized their government in terms of socialism and tribalism. The government subsidized all major industries, such as oil, electricity, and water, as well as national farming efforts through provisions of seed, fertilizers, and feed for livestock. The various ministries at the national level maintained full authority for anything and everything pertaining to their area of responsibility. The sheiks maintained their authority to resolve local disputes and lead their tribes. Saddam recognized the value in the tribal fabric and used the sheiks to not only achieve his own desires, but also to keep other tribes from becoming too powerful.   The shaded circle surrounding the socialist/tribal state represented the efforts of the Saddam regime in controlling this society and maintaining a firm group through empowering and resourcing very loyal security forces, the most proficient of whom were primarily focused on maintaining order within the regime rather than providing for security of their citizens.

With the fall of the Saddam Regime following the U.S. invasion, the order forcibly maintained by dictatorship no longer existed. Citizens comfortable with an authoritarian regime did not immediately embrace their new found freedom, as evidenced by the lack of Sunni participation in the first series of elections in Iraq. Furthermore, where the United States set about introducing unfamiliar concepts of democracy and capitalism to a society that was not immediately open to them, Al Qaeda sowed distrust of these concepts throughout the Iraqi population. Other policies (most notably de-Baathification) further alienated large portions of the population among multiple classes.

As the Troopers went about their day-to-day patrols, it was our responsibility to arm them with the desired endstate in Iraq in order to combat the effective Al Qaeda information campaign. Yet, the complex tribal fabric extant in the Balad and Dujayl districts made it difficult to overcome the tribal and sectarian divisions previously exploited by Al Qaeda in Iraq. This situation, combined with years of U.S. efforts in Iraq that failed to address root causes, and also created or enabled enemy networks, required an Iraqi solution. This required our Troopers to communicate an end

state in Iraq that all Iraqis could believe in, with the caveat that things would never return to the way they were during Saddam's rule. From our perspective the future Iraq would be a hybrid society of tribalism, socialism, capitalism, and democracy that governs in conjunction with the natural hierarchy and works by, with, and through the entire population, including disenfranchised former elites. In describing this to respected sheiks, they recognized that there was much to gain in balancing the familiar aspects of tribal and socialist society with the proven democratic and capitalist principles espoused by many powerful nations. Herein lay our greatest challenge.

As described in the governance and economics lines of effort, the Iraqis embraced the benefits associated with democracy and capitalism. However, the existence of disenfranchised populations required the attention of both U.S. forces and the local Iraqi governments as these populations served to create the centers of discontent and relative deprivation ripe for recruitment by enemy and insurgent networks. These disenfranchised populations included but

certainly were not limited to former well-intended Baathists, respected real sheiks, former property owners, job-seeking youth, independently wealthy citizens, and even sitting members of government. Figure 9 depicts the concerns maintained by each of these disenfranchised populations and describes a few of the unintended consequences of the many changes that occurred in a post-Saddam Iraq, many of which were the result of U.S. efforts and good intentions.

Though we initially thought that many members of the Baath Party were completely loyal to Saddam and his policies, we later learned that they merely served as party members to achieve better pay or promotion potential. There were many former Baath members in hiding in the Balad and Dujayl districts who once held positions of prominence in the former regime. We recognized reconciliation could not happen nationally due to the challenge it likely posed to the Shia-dominated government. Yet, we maintained that reconciliation must happen locally in order to allow the well-intended persons of influence to provide their skills and expertise in rebuilding
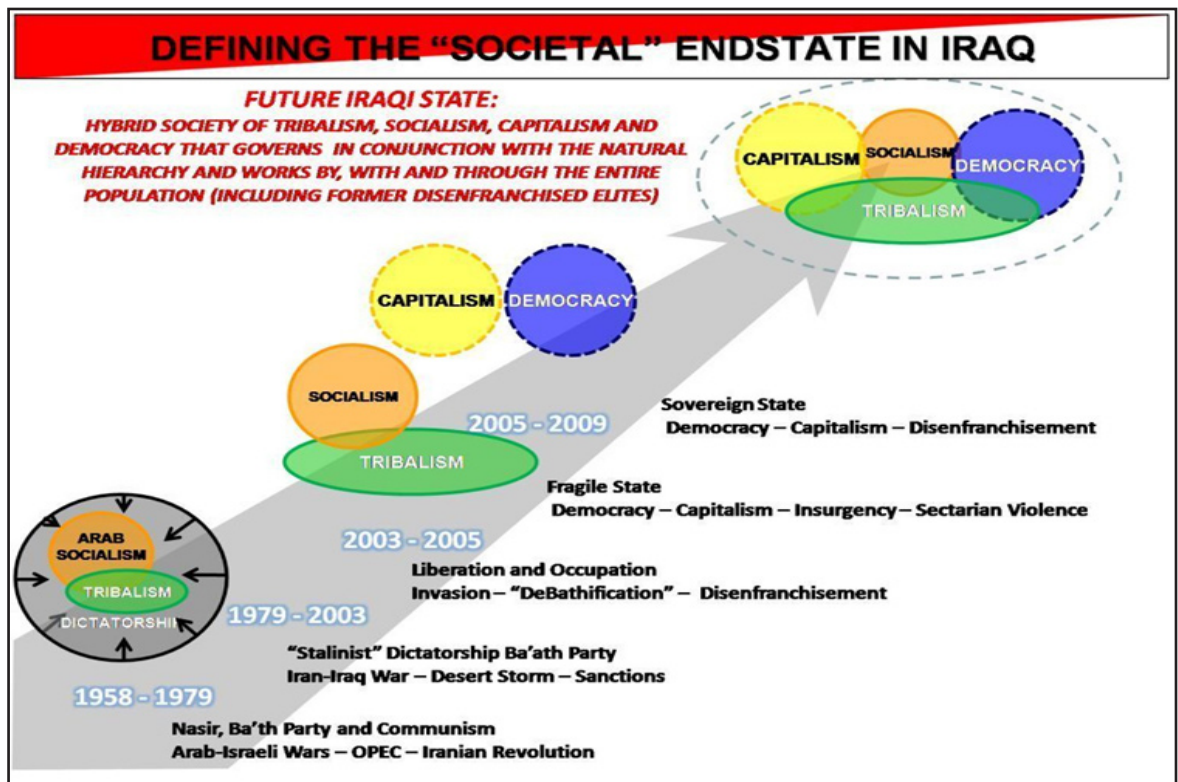

FIGURE 8

Iraq. Far too many of Iraq's technocrats and educated elite, and well-intended former regime persons of influence remained in the shadows because of the current status of their former party. We sought these people out daily and needed them to enable our governance and economic efforts. We also made it clear that this was not yet reconciliation, but rather reintegration since they were no longer Baathists. For example Saddam's preeminent hydro-engineer maintained peasant status in a farm community outside of Dujayl. As we defined and vetted the "network of well-intended Baathists," all local Iraqis recognized this particular individual (a Sunni Mugademi) as one of the most respected and reliable engineers in all of Iraq. As we initiated a comprehensive canal repair campaign, the media coverage of the groundbreaking ceremony depicted this individual standing next to the mayor of Dujayl, a Shia Zubaydi and preeminent sheik. The message to anyone watching this display communicated that Iraq would overcome previous tribal, religious, and regime divisions. Ultimately, our process

sought to combine the power of respected sheiks with the expertise of disenfranchised well-intended citizens. As we engaged in more detailed and exciting dialogue with Iraqis, many admitted that they maintained renewed optimism and recognized that major changes were occurring in traditional mindsets.

Another unintended consequence of U.S. policy included the loss of authority of some of Iraq's most respected sheiks and the rise in power of Iraq's "fake" sheiks associated with the Sons of Iraq (SOI) initiative. While the SOI strategy was entirely consistent with the tribal fabric, and many would argue is what saved Iraq from failure, it also created a network of "fake" sheiks akin to security contractor heads. During the chaotic years in Iraq from 2005 to 2007 there were opportunities for individuals who only considered their own needs rather than the needs of their people to come to positions of power. When the Squadron arrived in October 2008, the sitting Dujayl Sheiks Council consisted of "fake" sheiks that were in power because of their wealth and not

REACHING OUT TO THE DISENFRANCHISED
"not just Sunni..."

FUTURE IRAQI STATE:
UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF THE "NEW ORDER"

• Most easily understood (particularly among rural populations reliant on subsidies)
• A "trusted" system - reassures people of equal distribution of services based on national assets (oil revenue)

• Difficult to understand (new concepts)
• Incurs financial risk (security)
• Offers large reward if investors are on the "ground floor"
• Offers largest potential for Iraq to become a global actor

CAPITALISM   SOCIALISM   DEMOCRACY
TRIBALISM

• Most abused in support of corruption and power
• Accepted by the West as affording the representation of the people
• Gaining momentum through better understanding (trial & error from previous elections)

• Stands to lose the most (Real sheiks lose influence)
• Accepted path to reconciliation and property resolution
• Offers a trusted liaison between government and population

DISENFRANCHISED POPULATIONS:
➢ FORMER "WELL-INTENDED" BAATHISTS – includes those who simply were members to seek employment. This population includes well-educated citizens who offer skills and technical experience to facilitate governance efforts
➢ RESPECTED "REAL" SHEIKS – the rise of "fake" sheiks (often empowered through CF efforts) resulted in a decrease in authority for real sheiks. Over time this will disrupt the well-understood hierarchy of an influential population. Real sheiks often offer the recognized path towards reconciliation (this includes both Shia and Sunni sheiks) and look after their tribe. Fake sheiks seek only to satisfy their own needs
➢ FORMER PROPERTY OWNERS – Saddam Hussein's property confiscation combined with current deed mismanagement prevents rightful property owners from resuming productive efforts in this society
➢ JOB-SEEKING YOUTH – Immature government programs at the Provincial level and below prevent real job opportunities for youths who observed 6 years of conflict
➢ FORMER PRISONERS – Recent Bucca releases reintegrated into society are unfamiliar with the current landscape of the society. They often formed contact networks while in detention that affect their view on Iraqi progress.
➢ INDEPENDENTLY WEALTHY – Sitting on the fence to decide whether they want to participate or escape
➢ SITTING COUNCILS AND DIRECTORS – Unable to truly demonstrate their capacity to govern because of limited resources due to rampant corruption combined with interference in reconciliation processes and rule of law enabled by current empowerment of "frauds"
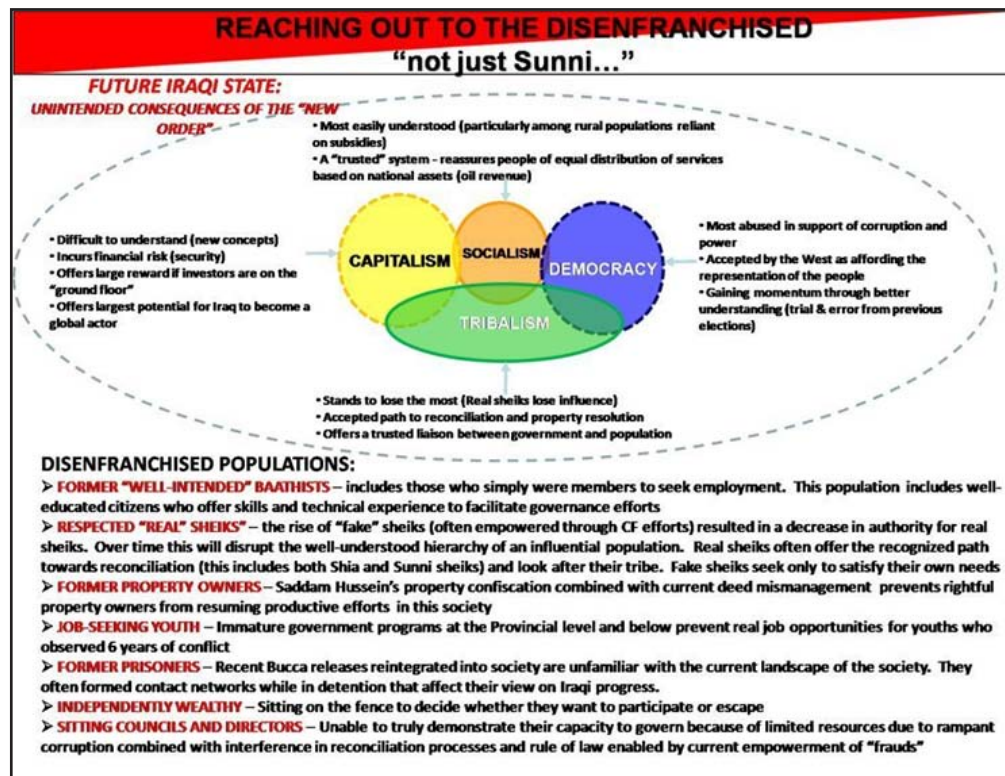
FIGURE 9

their legitimate tribal influence. They remained in power due to intimidation (some hired thugs and death squads) or through continued unwitting support of coalition forces who believed them to be sheiks. It's interesting to note that even the sub-tribal sheiks were a relatively recent creation of Saddam Hussein to manipulate and weaken the power of the true tribal sheiks. These "fake" sheiks were unable to offer or negotiate true reconciliation between tribes or within tribes, which caused social turmoil. The real sheiks remained silent. To challenge the fake sheiks meant unnecessary bloodshed, which would only further hurt the tribe.

As the Squadron went about defining, enabling, and disabling networks through multiple lines of effort, we eventually learned of these fake sheiks and deferred resolution of these matters to the respected, real sheiks. These real sheiks are critical to the resolution of land and family disputes that plague the Iraqi government in a post-Saddam era. In doing so, we gained even more freedom of maneuver.

Figure 10 outlines the differences between a solely military endstate as compared to the societal endstate. Those differences are critical to a discussion on counterinsurgency and revolution to consider that perceptions are very important. In the case of the military endstate, the common perception about the efforts in Iraq revealed that most Iraqis perceived the system would fail without coalition forces providing a measure of control. This is not only unrealistic for the long term, but it also resembles the pressure required by the former regime to maintain a degree of control over the Iraqi citizenry. This is counter to the principles of democracy that are beginning to take root. The societal endstate of Figure 10 depicts the preferred endstate where the coalition forces are replaced by the Iraqi security forces that participate in an Iraqi system that is sustainable and legitimate. The former disenfranchised populations, particularly the respected sheiks and the well-intended Baathists, play a critical role in this new Iraq by providing both expertise, and also legitimate, well-recognized, checks and balances that will offset many of the other issues

that plague Iraq's development. The system on the right is also sustainable as it includes natural and recognizable societal infrastructure such as rule of law, political parties, commerce, banks, and tribal councils that serves to reassure the citizenry.

Ultimately, we recognized that achieving our military endstate alone would not constitute success. It would only continue to create disenfranchised populations and in some cases reinforce the stated goals and causes of insurgent networks (some of which were solely motivated by social movements). We also recognized that continued alienation of disenfranchised populations would only feed collective grievances and encourage radicalization. This was especially true in those areas where citizens perceived that some in power were only in power due to presence of Coalition Forces. Lastly, we communicated to our Troopers that the failure to exploit the existing societal relationships might result in lost opportunities to erode popular support for insurgent networks. We often championed the cause of disenfranchised populations in our governance efforts knowing that reforms that address the concerns of disenfranchised elites might collapse the leadership structures of terrorist organizations, enabling friendly networks while simultaneously disabling enemy networks.

In unveiling our intention to venture towards an Iraqi societal endstate I was very concerned that if not carefully managed, our efforts might harm some of the gains we already made in the areas of governance and economics. I limited key leader engagements on this topic to Troop Commanders and wherever possible, I personally intervened to assume responsibility and ensure we vetted people to determine their true intentions. Platoon leaders assumed a reconnaissance role and sought to make contact with the disenfranchised populations for subsequent meetings with Commanders. It did not take long before individuals belonging to these various populations began seeking us out to engage in dialogue and offer their unique perspectives and experience. Prior to initiating our societal line of effort, I issued intent that carefully outlined what must change, what could not change, and what results
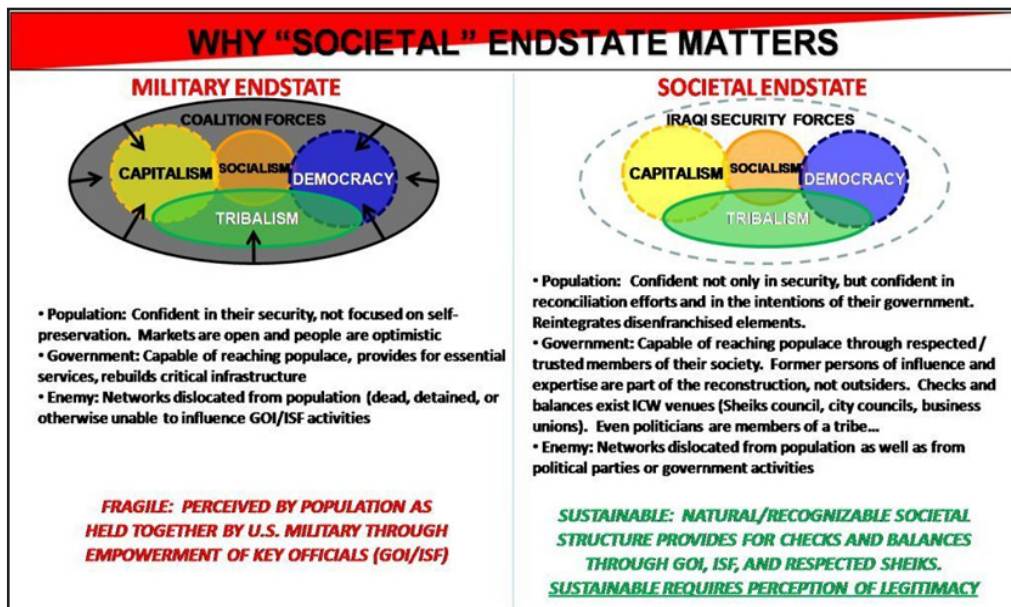
FIGURE 10

we must avoid in executing this line of effort. I was most concerned about marginalization of individuals currently in power, who gained their power through illegitimate means, to the point where we created enemy networks along tribal lines.

Within weeks of initiating this effort we began to see progress. While the Dujayl Sheiks Council formerly represented only the corrupt opportunists who gained power through illegitimate means, implementation of the societal line of effort resulted in the reinstatement of the Dujayl tribal union. What was more remarkable occurred under the leadership of real sheiks with the consent of local government and is described in the following vignette. We reached out to a former detainee at Camp Bucca in southern Iraq, who was influential in the Hishmawi Tribe that extends into the district of Dujayl to the south, and sought his advice on how to restore order through the use of the sheiks throughout that rural district. On his advice combined with the advice of other key leaders, including a prominent village Mukhtar from a neighboring tribe, the Dujayl government took the necessary steps to reinstate the Dujayl Tribal Union. One of the respected mukhtars previously secured the southern portion of the province with his Sons of Iraq when the ISF were incapable of doing so. The Squadron also

sought and gained the early release of his brother from prison and witnessed tears of joy at their reunion. His tribe remained one of our most valuable allies and he also felt it was time to take a stand to restore a natural order recently lost within the local society. Today, the citizens of Dujayl sleep better knowing the real sheiks returned to their rightful positions of authority, influence, and honor. My local Company Commander partnered in the area, CPT Paul Cutts, and I observed this historic event where Sheik Jassim Al Qais of the Khazraji Tribe, the senior Khazraji throughout the whole of Iraq, sat in the position of honor in the Dujayl city council Building next to the Dujayl District Mayor Mohammad Mahmud. The mayor shook my hand after the meeting of this new Sheiks Council and said, "Now I can really get my job done."

FREEDOM OF MANEUVER GAINED THROUGH THE SOCIETAL LINE OF EFFORT

Whether you lived in a Saddam-era or Security Agreement Iraq, what remained constant was the tribal fabric. Politicians, security force leaders, businessmen, engineers, professors, farmers, merchants, students, and laborers were all members of a tribe. They also wanted

to provide for themselves and their families and they wanted some measure of assurance that Iraq would survive as a nation. Our Squadron was simply far more effective when we demonstrated our concern for their future while also revealing our understanding of how Iraqis interact within their complex and remarkable society. In many respects, this more thorough understanding of the revolutionary changes in Iraq enabled our own friendly network through improved partnerships with security force leaders, government officials, and sheiks; all of whom possessed renewed enthusiasm in "helping us to help them." Our unifying achievement included the implementation of a comprehensive canal campaign that went far beyond the simple mechanics of repairing canals. Other achievements gained through our renewed efforts included the construction of a truly partnered Joint Coordination Center, improved detainee release measures that employed the newly empowered real sheiks as parole officers, and more effective prosecution based targeting and cold case processing. Leaders throughout the formation would comment on the increased officials effectiveness and accountability in all

of the City and district council meetings, which contributed to further erosion and inevitable defeat of enemy networks in both Balad and Dujayl.

One of Task Force Raider's major responsibilities included perimeter defense of one of the major U.S. Forward Operating bases that houses U.S. soldiers and airmen, as well as one of the major theater hospitals, and the largest forward deployed U.S. Air Force Air Wing worldwide. This fight was what one would expect. This fight is classic counterinsurgency, where we operated among a population of rural farmers who were clearly playing the role of sideline citizenry when it came to helping us in the effort to defeat this threat. It was not uncommon to hear how these farmers and their families were forced into silence through threats and intimidation. Quite frankly, this effort will remain one of our lasting legacies to the success of U.S. Forces in Iraq. In nine months, the Troopers of 3rd Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry reduced the number of attacks against this base by over seventy-five percent. We did so without firing a single round in support of counter fire.

It is worth noting in the previous six years,

VIGNETTE 2: SHEIKS AS PAROLE OFFICERS

The Security Agreement directed the phased release of large numbers of former coalition detainees back to their neighborhoods after months or years of custody at the detention facility in Bucca. Responsibility for reintegration and repatriation of these individuals fell on the responsibility of U.S. units in their respective areas of operations.

The Squadron developed a plan that focused on returning these individuals back to their tribes, and in doing so, developed standard operating procedures that were easily understood by the Iraqi Security Forces, tribal sheiks, and government officials. In brief, we shared the names with our partnered security forces to screen for existing arrest warrants resulting from crimes against fellow Iraqi citizens.

It was not surprising to learn that many of the hardened terrorists sought by U.S. forces over the years, routinely committed crimes against others, and were gladly received directly into the custody of Iraqi officials to stand trial. There were others, however, who admittedly may have been guilty by association and arrested under the auspices of security risks when the circumstances were not completely clear. Where one might think their incarceration created conditions for them to become criminals, we extended trust, and instituted a system where we turned these former detainees over to their sheiks.

These sheiks were not only the respected elders and leaders of their tribes, but they performed the functions of parole officers and offered the means necessary to integrate these individuals into an Iraq that changed greatly in the last year. Sheiks understood and welcomed their responsibility to reintegrate these individuals back into their tribe, and in some cases they provided for jobs immediately upon release.

VIGNETTE 3: IRAQI COLD CASES

In the realm of law enforcement and Iraqi Security Force partnership, our contracted Law Enforcement Professional worked with Iraqi police officers and local judges to obtain warrants and testimony that would enable prosecution of over forty individuals previously left alone in Iraqi cold cases.

Seeing the immediate benefit of this effort, Iraqi Police investigators from neighboring areas revived their cases and put the word on the street that former criminals and terrorists are not safe from crimes that might otherwise have been forgotten. His efforts in the district of Dujayl, given the new freedom of maneuver and confidence in the citizenry provided by the sheik's council, resulted in five death penalty warrants and eyewitness testimony supporting the prosecution of one of Dujayl's most wanted criminals.

This simply would not have been possible without the inclusion of disenfranchised populations and respect for Iraqi rule of law.

coalition units were largely unsuccessful in physically detaining the individuals responsible for shooting rockets and mortars at this large base. The course of our campaign resulted in over thirty detentions, most of whom were associated with Iraqi arrest warrants for crimes committed previously against Iraqi victims. Our counterfire efforts carefully navigated the tribal fabric, leveraged the newly reinstated tribal unions, and employed economic opportunity as the principle methods to offer alternatives to what in some cases seemed to be simply a hobby. Indeed, many admitted they fired rockets at the airfield even when Saddam's Air Force used it. In one instance, Troopers detained an individual who fired a rocket in close proximity to one of our observation posts hiding in the orchards. This individual had no warrant, but clearly committed a crime against coalition forces. The significance of this was not lost on the district court judge who had to consult higher officials to determine the legal precedent that was set and how U.S. soldiers would testify as eyewitnesses to a crime against coalition soldiers and citizens. The judge accepted the case and this resulted in prosecution.

This ultimately revealed the paradigm shift that occurred in this particular fight. Most of these attacks were launched with primitive systems with extremely unpredictable trajectories, and most simply missed the base. However, the damage caused to infrastructure, farmland, orchards, livestock, aqueducts, and even fellow citizens was completely counter to the direction in which Iraq was moving. Where this was once tolerated,

Iraqis were no longer willing to do so. Given our expanded cooperation and freedom of maneuver gained from the societal line of effort, it was relatively easy to communicate how the actions of their fellow citizens in shooting at the Joint Base only hurt Iraqi citizens. We now found ourselves in an Iraq where the Iraqi Security Forces and the Balad Joint Coordination Center assumed ownership of this fight. We drew pride in stating that for the first time, Iraqi Army leaders were motivated to emplace ambush positions in defense of a U.S. base. Most U.S. servicemen on the base did not know that Iraqi Army units provided for their security for extended periods of time.

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER: IRAQI PARTNERSHIP THAT MATTERS

The canal systems for the Balad and Dujayl districts in Iraq are among the most complex canal systems in the world. They cover hundreds of miles with some of the major arteries spanning more than seventy kilometers to deliver water from the Tigris River to remote orchards at risk of turning into parched desert. As we went about our business of governance, economics, and security in the Balad and Dujayl districts, the Task Force Raider Troopers on patrol often viewed the canals as obstacles. Patrolling required delicate maneuver on treacherous canal roads adjacent to these artificial rivers in thirty ton vehicles. In fact, this required extra precautions in modifying our vehicles with air canisters and rescue harnesses to rescue Troopers who might have inadvertently

rolled into a canal.

Ultimately, over the course of informal dialogue with sheiks, city council leaders, and citizens we started to recognize began to see the canals of the Balad and Dujayl districts differently. The Isaki Canal that feeds the Dujayl district originates south of Samarra and transits through Balad. As we listened to varying perspectives of consumers along different portions of these complex canals we started to piece together what should have been obvious from the start. During previous years, U.S. military formations developed internal boundaries based on the natural terrain and not along Iraqi district or county boundaries. As mentioned previously, this Squadron replaced two battalions in the fall of 2008. One of these battalions provided oversight to the Dujayl district and the eastern half of Yethrib adjacent to Joint Base Balad. The other battalion maintained oversight of the remainder of Yethrib, Balad city, and Duluiyah. This battalion was not responsible for Isake, the western county within the Balad district.

This created artificialities in terms of government

oversight that actually limited COIN efforts with respect to infrastructure repair and refurbishment. In the case of the southern Salah Ad Din canal system, arguably the most important canal system in the country with respect to agricultural production, this exacerbated the effects through much of Iraq. Many Iraqi shop keepers in the Muhatta Market south of Balad purchased fruits imported from neighboring countries formerly grown with pride in Balad and Dujayl. In gaining oversight for both the Balad and Dujayl districts, the Squadron soon identified the broader issues. Ironically, the respective city councils in Yethrib, Balad, Duluiyah, and Dujayl learned over time to view their canal issues in isolation and were unable to communicate their specific canal issues in a manner easily understood by the greater district or provincial leaders. Where Isake residents enjoyed the water in abundance from the headwaters of the canal, they often diverted water in large quantities to residences. Residents in Yethrib emplaced barriers and sandbags in the canal to collect water to irrigate crops, and at the end of the line, residents in Dujayl learned to integrate drip irrigation systems
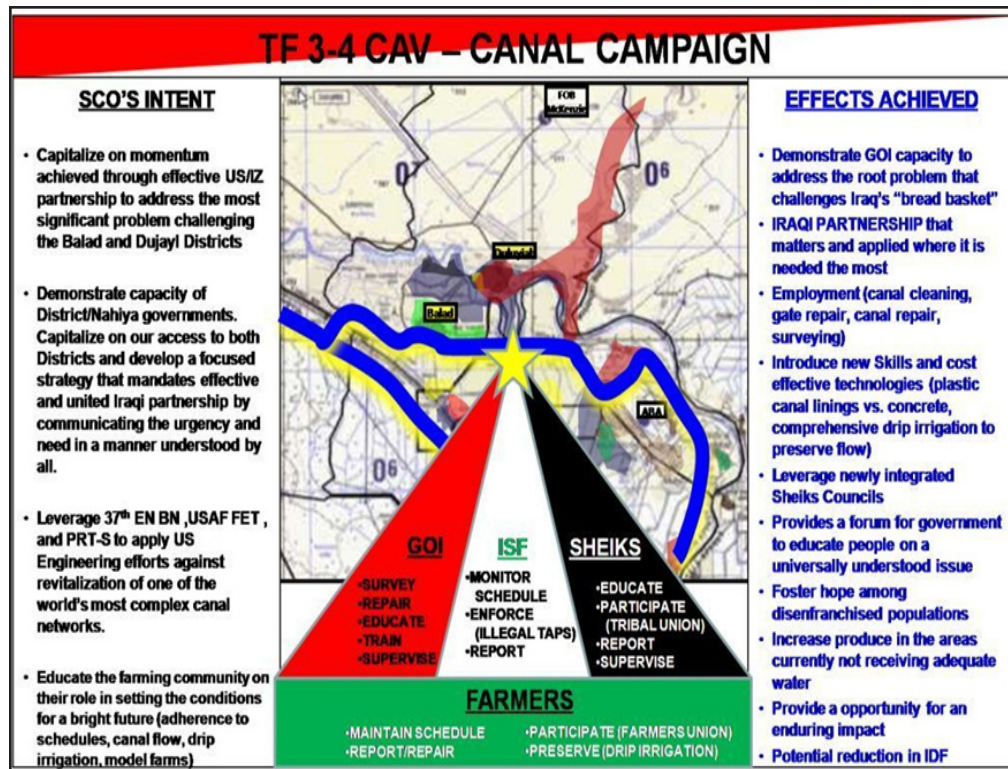

FIGURE 11

to preserve water, or they attempted to redirect water from the Tigris. This latter solution only created additional problems with all the provinces south of Dujayl that relied on a steady flow of water from the river.

Ultimately, the security situation in Balad and Dujayl in the spring of 2009 allowed for local government to begin addressing the canal infrastructure problems that plagued this agricultural region. For the first time, we coached the district leadership to assemble a provincial level team of engineers meet at the Balad Joint Coordination Center to discuss this problem holistically as it affected the entire community. This meeting even included engineers who were part of the original canal construction committees and who understood how the canals operated years ago. This single meeting generated energy and enthusiasm never seen in any previous COIN related governance efforts. It was clear that this effort would unite Iraqis. Word of this effort spread rapidly through the tribal fabric, further enabling friendly networks of citizens who used to take ownership for the canal schedules in their area.

This effort would also contribute to a meaningful and lasting solution for a situation that suffered significant collateral damage from over six years of conflict. As Figure 11 illustrates, this was an enormous problem, requiring many months of deliberate effort to accomplish the necessary canal refurbishment. The situation, however, was only going to deteriorate further if not addressed. Existing canal damage, caused by collateral effects, illegal taps into the canals, or simply due to weed growth and fissures in the concrete, reduced the water flow, illegal blockages stopped or redirected it, and a failure to adhere to canal schedules caused both flow problems and reduced water at the end of the line in Dujayl. Farmers often took matters into their own hands out of the need for survival, which further exacerbated the problem.

In a broader sense, the 3-4 CAV Canal Campaign was not just about canals or canal repair. It was about training our local governments and partnered security forces to solidify their capacity. Most importantly, this was a matter that was important to them. It was the single largest unifying effort this area saw in some time. This endeavor required teamwork that was not possible without inclusion of the disenfranchised elites. It
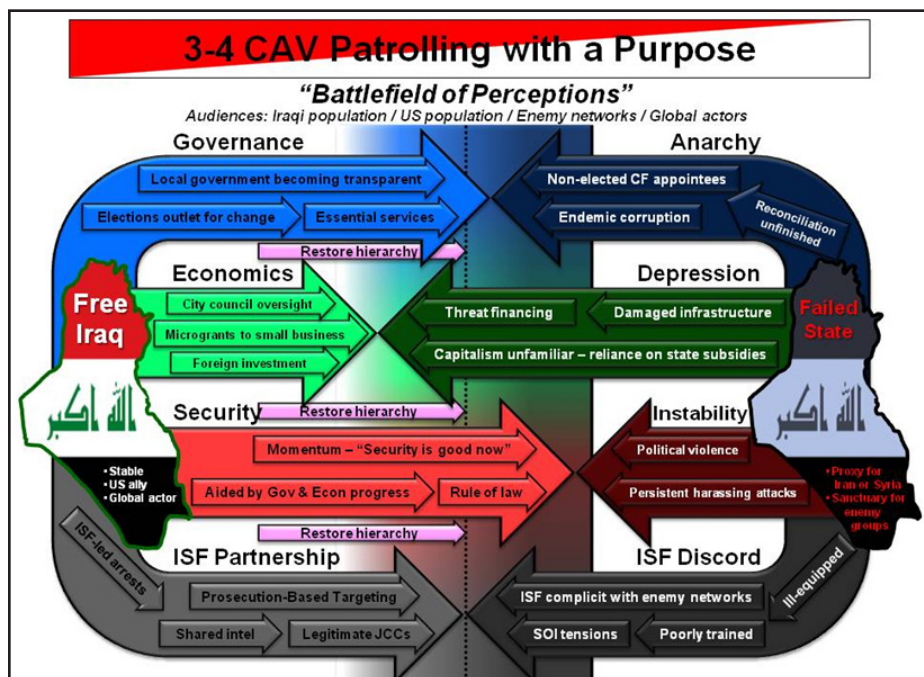

FIGURE 12

only succeeded as a result of synchronized efforts of city councils, service directors, Iraqi Security Forces, tribal sheiks, and farmers. We also teamed up with a local Army Corps Engineer Battalion of the 37th Engineers, and our U.S. State and Agriculture Department partners, to reinforce, enable, coach, and participate in this effort. Ultimately, this combined team participated in a meaningful capacity-building operation that addressed a real need of the population and helped the Iraqis better understand how to effectively address other issues and communicate their concerns to the provincial and national government. Figure 11 reflects the polarizing effort and responsibilities that the entire citizenry understood. All agreed on the positive effects that would result from this campaign, including capacity, partnership, employment, integration of sheiks, education on new technologies, increased production, and increased hope among all Iraqis.

The Squadron staff developed a deliberate, phased campaign that included mission analysis, reconnaissance, education, employment (weed removal and cleaning of dirt canals), training on new skills (installing plastic canal linings), drip irrigation initiatives to preserve water, and U.S. Army engineering efforts. When our Cavalry Scouts completed their reconnaissance, we handed the repair effort over to the 37th Engineer Battalion partnered with the 4th Iraqi Field Engineer Regiment. In conversation with their commander, LTC Paul Huszar, I told him that I felt it appropriate that, as we approach strategic transition in Iraq, the U.S. Army Engineering effort get the credit for leaving a lasting impact in this critical area.

CONCLUSION: DEFINING A SOCIETAL ENDSTATE

The Squadron in the Balad and Dujayl districts ultimately recognized that in our COIN efforts, we engaged competing networks in a battle of perceptions maintained among the Iraqi citizenry. We recognized that in waging counterinsurgency, knowledge of enemy network members, their tactics, techniques, and procedures, and pressure

applied to their sanctuaries was not sufficient to succeed. We were clearly in competition (see Figure 12) for the attention of the Iraqi citizens struggling to survive and eager for information regardless of the source. Where our challenge resided in demonstrating good governance and effective capacity necessary for a sovereign Iraq, the insurgent need not present a viable alternative to discredit our efforts and create a failed state. In many respects, discontent was sufficient in destabilizing Iraqi governance efforts and stalling efforts to achieve sovereignty. This understanding is critical as their lines of effort typically required only spreading misinformation to counter our lines of effort that require considerable energy and tangible results. In that respect our efforts to introduce a societal line of effort that restored natural hierarchy, included disenfranchised populations, and engendered trust proved to be very powerful in countering misinformation.

Where we saw our most success, however, occurred only after we sought to define the societal endstate. It was clearly not sufficient to expect Iraqis to 'take our word for it' in communicating Iraqi governmental capacity. However, when they witnessed well intended persons of influence in positions of natural authority, it provided legitimacy not before seen in our campaign. This effort demonstrated not only a detailed understanding of Iraqi culture and society, but also confirmed some of our thoughts as to the impacts of changes to traditional Iraqi society resulting from U.S. intervention.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank our Troopers publicly for their heroic efforts over the course of their recent 12 months in Iraq. While they defeated our enemies ranging from Al Qaeda affiliated networks in Duluiyah and Yethrib, Islamic Army networks in Aziz Balad, Mahdi Army leadership in Dujayl, and Sunni rejectionist networks in vicinity of Joint Base Balad, our Troopers also built effective governmental capacity, assisted in reconstruction, enabled delivery of essential services, and spurred unprecedented economic growth. These Troopers also completed their Cavalry Scout reconnaissance in support of a Canal Campaign that migrated to other provinces. This is how we defeat insurgency. This is our lasting contribution to the citizens of our partnered districts. Our Troopers enabled the friendly networks of good governance and economic opportunity and reinforced this in restoring the natural societal hierarchy required to compete directly with the enemy networks. Mayor Ammer proudly referred to this year in the Balad and Dujayl districts as a golden time that allowed for real progress for his fellow citizens. Our Troopers returned home with the pride in knowing we prepared our successors for the challenges that lie ahead.

In describing our Squadron's year in Iraq, I can honestly attest to the fact that I simply made far more friends than enemies. So did our Troopers at every level. These friendships are strategic. These friendships are built on trust, and it's important to reemphasize that in this effort, not trusting people simply puts us at greater risk. For most Iraqis, hope and self-reliance is not about oil. It is about life's basic truths of providing for your family, sending your children to school, and knowing that they have a future to raise their own families. Our Troopers, during this critical year of transition in Iraq, changed local Iraqi opinions and perceptions not only about U.S. commitment to this region, but about their own future. Our partnership with the sovereign nation of Iraq as a strategic ally is clearly in the best interests of the United States. During this year of transitions, the Troopers of 3rd Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry set conditions that allowed for the implementation of the historic Security Agreement and Strategic Framework Agreement. They coached and enabled our Iraqi Security Force Partners to sponsor safe, fair and free provincial elections, and further enabled peaceful transition of power to the newly elected candidates. For the first time in decades, our Troopers convinced Iraqis of the need to talk about economic opportunity and financial security. They did so in a manner that attracted international investment firms and banking institutions. In our final observations of a Balad city council meeting one local banking official could barely contain his joy when he announced that Balad will be the first city north of Baghdad to implement a new Visa card system at the specific direction of the Iraq Ministry of Finance.

In spite of these achievements, I reminded our Troopers that most U.S. citizens back home pay little attention to the strategic importance of our efforts in Iraq. They don't understand that Iraqi civic and security force leaders weep openly at the loss of U.S. lives here. They also do not know that less than one half of one percent of their fellow citizens volunteers to serve abroad in support of our nation. Where our values are at risk at home, we risk our lives to represent them proudly to the rest of the world. It is this personal risk that not only establishes a valuable ally and friend in a region where we desperately need it, but will also ensure Iraqi freedom today.

NOTES

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[3] LTG Dubik, email, Sep 2008.

[4] Mayor Ammer, conversation with LTC Hodne following a Balad District Council Meeting

[5] Ellen Knickmeyer, "In Balad, Age-Old Ties Were 'Destroyed in a Second':Sectarian Battles Drive Out Sunnis, Create State of Siege", *The Washington Post,* October 23, 2006.

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[13] Vali Nasr, The Shia Revival, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006, 17-18.

[14] Hagstrom, Appendix M, Annex 1

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