IRAQ REPORT

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Brian J. Cummins (upper left) discusses current and future cooperation with a concerned local Iraqi, Sheik Ahmad Huassne and Iraqi army Brig. Gen. Gaillan. Iraqi army, Iraqi police and concerned nationals combined efforts to conduct a raid against a suspected al-Qaida in Iraq stronghold, Sept. 2. (Photo by 1st Lt. Richard Ybarra, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.)

June 2007-November 2007

Securing Diyala

by KIMBERLY KAGAN

U.S. forces drove al Qaeda in Iraq from its sanctuaries in Diyala in 2007 and dramatically reduced violence in that province. Defeating al Qaeda in Diyala was especially important because the province had political, as well as military significance for al Qaeda. The organization attempted to establish the capital of its Islamic state there. The task of defeating violent enemies in Diyala and establishing a political process there was also exceptionally more difficult. The enemy controlled Baqubah, the capital of Diyala, so thoroughly that it had fortified defensive positions within the city. The enemy also controlled the rural terrain along the province's roads and rivers. The ethnic and sectarian diversity of Diyala's population amplified the opportunities for al Qaeda's violence and its effects, including reprisal violence by Shia militias, security forces, and neighboring villages. Re-establishing security in Diyala required a series of offensive operations over four months, all aimed at controlling urban areas, rural terrain, and lines of communication (roads and rivers). After U.S. and Iraqi forces cleared Baqubah, the continued presence of U.S. troops, partnered with Iraqis and "concerned local citizens," prevented the organization from re-establishing itself there. As U.S. and Iraqi forces eliminated enemy safe havens, they encouraged some tribes and villages to turn against enemy groups. They also increased their operations against extremist militia groups which tried to establish control as al Qaeda's presence receded in the province. Commanders attempted to eliminate the insurgency more permanently in Diyala by linking tribal movements to national, provincial, and local government institutions. As commanders implemented counterinsurgency doctrine, positive synergies developed between combat operations, governance, and the policy of tribal engagement that, together, made Diyala more secure.

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INTRODUCTION

Violence in Iraq decreased dramatically in the second half of 2007. The number of enemy attacks in Iraq, the number of attacks against Iraqi civilians, and the number of murders in Baghdad, dropped to levels that last existed in early 2006.1 "Violence throughout the country has dropped to a level not even seen before the first bombing of the Golden Mosque in 2006," reported General Ray Odierno, commander of Multi-National Corps Iraq, the highest echelon of Coalition combat forces.2 The population of Iraq generally rejected al Qaeda, Shia extremists, and other terrorist groups over the course of 2007, which is one reason why Iraq became safer. Much credit for improving security justifiably goes to the Iraqis who publicly opposed terrorist groups and mobilized their population behind them. But the tribal movement did not simply "grow" and "spread" organically from one area to the next, nor did security spread exclusively because of tribes' rejection of al Qaeda.

Security in Iraq improved from June through November 2007 because of three successive, large scale military operations made possible by the new strategy and the increase in troops. The first was Fardh al Qanoon, or the Baghdad Security Plan, which dispersed U.S. and Iraqi troops throughout the capital in order to secure its inhabitants. The second was Phantom Thunder, the Corps offensive to clear al Qaeda sanctuaries in the belts around Baghdad from which the organization launched its most devastating vehicle bomb attacks. The third was Phantom Strike, the Corps offensive to pursue al Qaeda operatives and other enemies as they fled their former sanctuaries and attempted to

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regroup in smaller areas throughout Iraq.

These sweeping military operations drove al Qaeda in Iraq out of its sanctuaries around Baghdad: the Tigris and Euphrates River Valleys south of the capital; the Tharthar-Karmah-Taji corridor to its northwest; and Diyala province to its northeast. These areas had supported al Qaeda operations throughout 2006.

Defeating al Qaeda in Diyala was especially important because the province had political, as well as military significance for al Qaeda. The organization attempted to establish the capital of its Islamic state there. The task of defeating violent enemies in Diyala and establishing a political process there was also exceptionally more difficult. The enemy controlled Baqubah, the capital of Diyala, so thoroughly that it had fortified defensive positions within the city. The enemy also controlled the rural terrain along the province's roads and rivers. The ethnic and sectarian diversity of Diyala's population amplified the opportunities for al Qaeda's violence and its effects, including reprisal violence by Shia militias, security forces, and neighboring villages.

Re-establishing security in Diyala required a series of offensive operations over four months, all aimed at controlling urban areas, rural terrain, and lines of communication (roads and rivers). After U.S. and Iraqi forces cleared Baqubah, the continued presence of U.S. troops, partnered with Iraqis and "concerned local citizens," prevented the organization from re-establishing itself there. As U.S. and Iraqi forces eliminated enemy safe havens, they encouraged some tribes and villages to turn against enemy groups. They also increased their operations against extremist militia groups which tried to establish control as al Qaeda's presence receded in the province. Commanders attempted to eliminate the insurgency more permanently in Diyala by linking tribal movements to national, provincial, and local government institutions. As commanders implemented counterinsurgency doctrine, positive synergies developed between combat operations, governance, and the policy of tribal engagement that, together, made Diyala more secure.

MISSION AND OPERATIONAL CONCEPT OF THE SUMMER OFFENSIVES

Military operations in Iraq in the summer of 2007 aimed to disrupt al Qaeda's operations throughout the country by controlling urban centers, eliminating rural safehavens, and disrupting the enemy's freedom to move from one stronghold to another. By mid-July U.S. forces had pushed al Qaeda out of its urban sanctuaries and broken up al Qaeda's operations in the belts, driving the enemy successively further from the capital. By August, the enemy occupied small, dispersed pockets, many of which were not mutually reinforcing. This Iraq Report explains how Phantom Thunder drove al Qaeda from Baqubah. It also explains how Phantom Strike—alongside the citizens' movements and the counterinsurgency campaign—prevented the enemy from re-infiltrating into cities and re-establishing safehavens in Diyala province, where al Qaeda had attempted to establish the capital of the Islamic State of Iraq in 2006.

THE ENEMY IN DIYALA

"Our problem set is extremely different and extremely complex for a province in Iraq. Basically all the issues and conflicts that exist through all of Iraq...exist here," according to Colonel David Sutherland, the commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division (known as Greywolf), which operated in Diyala from October 2006 through the end of November 2007. Al Qaeda was the main security threat in Diyala in 2007, and its objective was to create lawlessness and sectarian conflict in order to establish a Wahaabist state. Sunni rejectionists aided al Qaeda in order to reassert their power and influence. Shia militias, including the Jaysh al Mahdi and Badr Corps, also operated in the province to cleanse areas of Sunni and establish the Shia domination of Diyala. The Iranians established secret cells in Diyala in order to support those in Baghdad, undermine the Maliki government, and fix U.S. forces in Iraq. The Iranians also had special concern about the Mujahedeen E-Khalq (MEK), a terrorist group that opposed Iran during the Iran-Iraq War. The MEK was confined by Coalition forces to a contained area in Diyala in 2007, but the organization attempted to obstruct Iranian influence through intelligence networks and proxies.[3]

AL QAEDA IN BAQUBAH AND THE DIYALA RIVER VALLEY

Al Qaeda was the most destabilizing threat to Diyala in 2006. The province had special significance for al Qaeda. Abu Musab Zarqawi designated Diyala the capital of the caliphate that he aimed to establish in Iraq when he was head of al Qaeda in the country.[4] In April 2006, Zarqawi located his headquarters at Hebheb, a village northwest of Baqubah along the Baghdad-Kirkuk road. In the same month, "specifically on Saddam Hussein's birthday, al-Qaeda conducted seven coordinated attacks inside the province. They attacked Udaim, on the northwestern side of the province; they attacked into Muqdadiyah; they attacked Balad Ruz, Kana'an, Khalis, Khan Bani Sa'ad, and Baqubah...," explained Colonel Sutherland. These attacks constituted al Qaeda's first major offensive into Diyala. Even after U.S. Special Forces killed Zarqawi on June 8, 2006, al Qaeda continued to use Diyala as a staging ground and potential capital.

Al Qaeda terrorists lived in rural areas, but concentrated in safe houses inside Baqubah. They discredited the Iraqi security forces through numerous attacks, and they discredited the Iraqi government by threatening employees with death if they showed up for work. The organization used the canalized terrain east and southeast of that city, the former hunting grounds of Saddam Hussein stretching from Balad Ruz to Turki Village, as a major supply base for its Diyala and Baghdad operations. A violent, Wahhabist organization called the Council imposed its version of Shari'a law on those villages. The Council killed Shia males and displaced Shia families.

Al Qaeda also based itself in villages in the Diyala River Valley, northeast of Baqubah. They fought to control Muqdadiyah, which established a line of communication to Lake Hamrin. From there, al Qaeda maintained communications along

roads into Iran via Khanaqin and into the Kurdish provinces via Kirkuk. Finally, al Qaeda established itself in the Khan Bani Sa'ad tribal area south of Baqubah, all the way down to Salman Pak, south and east of Baghdad. These areas were under al Qaeda control—whether through physical presence or psychological intimidation—by November 2006.[5]

THE IRAQI SECURITY FORCES RESPOND TO AL QAEDA

The Iraqi Security Forces attempted to halt al Qaeda's campaign to control Diyala. Colonel Sutherland explained, "...[I]n August/September... of 2006 Iraqi Security Forces, specifically the Iraqi Army, conducted an operation in Baqubah and detained about 500 individuals. They did wide-cast wide-sweep operations inside the city of Baqubah detaining every military-age male... creating a perception of the Iraqi Security Forces as being sectarian. It was further compounded in Baqubah when during Holy Ramadan of 2006 the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police conducted another operation and detained about 400 other military aged men. There was no intelligence driving these operations. There was no evidence. They did wide-sweep, wide-cast operations and detained close to, in total, 900 individuals. Of those 900 individuals, all but two were Sunni, so it gave the perception of the Iraqi Security Forces as a sectarian organization. In reality the Iraqi Security Forces were conducting operations based on the training that they had received under Saddam. Saddam's method was to go in, conduct these wide-sweep, wide-cast operations, detain as many people as possible, and then investigate them."[6]

"Additionally, the Iraqi Police at that time during our arrival were recruited, not from the neighborhoods, but from outside the neighborhoods. In fact the police chief at the time, Gassan al-Bawi, the provincial director of police, was recruiting from Baghdad. He had recruited about 300 individuals from the Wolf Brigade, which was a national police organization, very Shia organization, and he recruited them to assume rolls as policemen inside Baqubah, again further fueling that perception of sectarianism," said Sutherland.[7]

By recruiting from the Wolf Brigade, Gassan al-Bawi ensured that the Iraqi Police in Diyala had little connection with residents, and substantial connections with the National Police (which were mainly stationed in Baghdad). The Iraqi Police in Diyala supported an agenda consistent with extreme members of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), one of the parties in the parliamentary bloc supporting Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Former Minister of the Interior Bayan Jabar incorporated the Wolf Brigade, a Badr Corps organization, into the National Police in 2005, before he became Minister of Finance. The Wolf Brigade had a reputation for sectarian cleansing.

These ISF operations in Diyala did not ensure Shia dominance in Diyala. The Iraqi Security Forces not only failed in their attempts to stop al Qaeda, but they damaged their own reputation with the population. The actions of the Iraqi Security Forces fueled Sunni support for al Qaeda. "...[I]t created a perception of sectarian bias. So you had Sunnis turning to other organizations for security against the Iraqi Security Forces," Sutherland explained.[8]

AL QAEDA ASCENDANT IN DIYALA

Al Qaeda's efforts to undermine the credibility of the Iraqi government and security forces succeeded. The government of Iraq could not function in Diyala. The distribution of food to Diyala's population stopped in September 2006, and the distribution of fuel in October. The Diyala provincial government ceased meeting in October 2006. By March 2007, the provincial government had spent only two percent of its 2006 budget. The Iraqi Security Forces were the only sign of Iraqi government in the province, but they could not control it. The Iraqi Police withdrew from Buhriz, the area just south of Baqubah, in November and December 2006; Terrorists bombed their former police station. By the end of 2006, al Qaeda—not the government of Iraq—controlled the city of Baqubah and much of Diyala Province. Al Qaeda and other organizations began to impose their religious and political agenda.

PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS AND TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT IN DIYALA BEFORE THE CORPS OFFENSIVE

In order to establish security, U.S. and Iraqi forces had to fight to establish a footprint beyond Forward Operating Base Warhorse. Iraq Report I described how the Greywolf Brigade and the 5th Iraqi Army Division cleared al Qaeda's supply base south of Balad Ruz in January 2007 and established its first patrol base there. Iraq Report IV described how the Greywolf Brigade, reinforced by elements of a Stryker brigade, established outposts throughout the Diyala River Valley in March and April, and how they cleared Buhriz, Baqubah's southern suburb. As these operations continued, forces in Diyala set the conditions for clearing Baqubah by reconnoitering enemy positions, establishing relationships with locals, and holding key terrain.

As the Coalition presence spread in Diyala, U.S. commanders helped tribal leaders negotiate disputes in order to reduce violence. There were 25 major tribes and almost 100 sub-tribes in Diyala in 2007, some of them crossing sectarian lines. The terms of inter-tribal agreements established in 2007 reveal the nature of violence that occurred between tribes and villages before then: "freeing previous kidnapped victims and stopping all kidnapping and killing operations; stopping indirect-fire attacks; providing the Iraqi police any members of their tribes which may be linked to insurgent groups; supporting the Iraqi army and police against terrorists; and resolving farming issues among the tribes."[9]

Colonel Sutherland began working with the tribes in December 2006, and more fruitfully in February 2007 after clearing Turki Village.[10] "In February, I met with a group of individuals that are now leading the concerned local citizens in Baqubah, but this was facilitated… in Diyala… by Sheik Ahmed al-Tamimi, who was the head of the Shia Endowment Foundation inside Diyala…. [H]e facilitated this get-together with… Sunni and Sunni leaders. We also started reconciliation efforts in earnest, specifically with…four of the paramount sheiks."[11] The two paramount sheiks nearest Balad Ruz and Turki Village were the first to sign and swear a peace agreement. (One represented al Kharki, a Sunni tribe, and the other al Shammeri, a mixed Sunni/Shi'a tribe.) Their negotiations began after the Turki Village operations and concluded formally three months later, on April 30, 2007.[12] This inter-tribal agreement paved the way for others.

U.S. forces fostered connections between tribal leaders and government officials in order to integrate these two competing lines of authority. Diyala's provincial governor, its director of police, and the commanding general of the 5th Iraqi Army Division addressed a meeting of forty-five sheiks from Diyala on May 23, 2007, laying out their plans for the province. During the meeting, the government reported on its activities to the sheiks. The sheiks raised issues important to them: "the failure of the central government to focus on the problems of Diyala, the failure of the Provincial Council to effectively represent the people and the common goal of ridding the tribal lands of terrorists and foreign fighters."[13] Influential Iraqis encouraged the sheiks to support the Iraqi government. "Sheik Ahmed Azziz, [Grand Ayatollah] Sistani's representative in Diyala, continued to challenge the leaders to settle their differences and work with the legitimate government; while [Governor] Ra'ad committed to continue meeting with different *nahias* [municipalities] throughout Diyala in an effort to create reconciliation at the lowest levels where it can be most easily enforced."[14] Colonel Sutherland and Brigadier General Mick Bednarek, the deputy commanding general (operations) for MND-North, also attended the meeting.

Members of parliament concerned about the province formed the Diyala Support Committee and met on June 6. U.S. and Iraqi commanders and provincial leaders addressed the group. By receiving regular briefings about security and essential services, the members of the committee aimed to increase the funding and attention given to Diyala by central government ministries.[15]

These initial operations and negotiations did not solve Diyala's problems. Rather, they prepared the way for clearing Baqubah during the Phantom Thunder offensive, and for holding the city after combat operations. They also

established the framework for restoring government to Diyala.

CLEARING AND HOLDING BAQUBAH DURING OPERATION ARROWHEAD RIPPER

Operation Arrowhead Ripper, one component of Phantom Thunder, cleared Baqubah. In May and June, U.S. forces conducted preliminary, or "shaping," operations in order to set the conditions for Arrowhead Ripper.[16] Principally, U.S. Forces established a presence in the eastern portion of the city, known as Old Baqubah, and in Buhriz, a district to the south of Baqubah.

Nevertheless, 300-500 insurgents remained in the western neighborhoods of Baqubah (Khatoon, Mufrek and Mujema).[17] Insurgents occupied residents' homes by force in order to establish strong military positions from which to attack U.S. and Iraqi troops. Insurgents also horded food and fuel in the city which the Government of Iraq intended for distribution to residents.[18] The religious extremists terrorized Baqubah's residents by operating their own justice system to enforce their interpretation of Islamic law. U.S. troops in Baqubah ultimately discovered a courthouse (with documents), a torture house (with saws and blood-stained walls), a prison (with cell numbers), and a mass grave (with five bodies).[19] One embedded reporter interviewed Baqubah's residents about al Qaeda's campaign of intimidation in the would-be capital of the Islamic state of Iraq in 2006 and 2007:

> Residents said the militants gradually began taking over last year, parading through the streets in trucks, brandishing Kalashnikov assault rifles and using bullhorns to inform residents that they were now part of the Islamic State of Iraq.
>
> They banned smoking, closed down barbershops and coffeehouses, and required women to cover themselves in black robes with only a slit for their eyes. Iraqis working for the Baghdad government or for U.S. forces were hunted down and killed, residents said. Even a trip to Baghdad was grounds

Phantom Thunder / Diyala

Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping

for suspicion....Scores of Shiite Muslim families were forced from their homes, which the insurgents used as temporary hide-outs or converted to house the institutions of their rule.

> U.S. soldiers discovered a courthouse containing marriage certificates, records of civil disputes and a log of suicide bombers, including details about volunteers and where they could be found.
>
> Residents said the gunmen stole food and collected government ration packs from the Shiites they displaced. Three storehouses were found containing bags of rice, corn flour, cooking oil and stacks of blankets.[20]

This religious extremism, in part, fractured the Sunni insurgent movement in Baqubah. Former Ba'athists in the 1920s Revolution Brigades, largely based in the eastern part of Baqubah, chose to assist U.S. forces in the fight against al Qaeda by providing them with intelligence about the latter group's precise positions in the city.[21] Special Forces targeted al Qaeda in Mufrek and Khatoon in the first weeks of June, preparing for the conventional operations ahead.[22]

U.S. forces planned operations in and around Baqubah that aimed to prevent insurgents from escaping during the fight. "'Rather than let the problem export to some other place and then have to fight them again, my goal is to isolate this thing and cordon it off,' said Col. Steve Townsend, the commander of the Third Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Second Infantry Division,'[23] which had the mission of clearing the city. The Greywolf Brigade (3-1 Cavalry) supported the effort in Baqubah by conducting operations in the Diyala River Valley, to which al Qaeda might attempt to escape or from which they might derive support.

Soldiers from the 5th Iraqi Army Division, run through a smoke screen in Baqubah, Iraq, June 22, as Soldiers from the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, from Fort Lewis, Wash., follow. The action was part of Operation Arrowhead Ripper, a joint effort between U.S. and Iraqi security forces to defeat al-Qaida terrorists and secure the city. (Photo by Sgt. Armando Monroig , 5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

The Corps concentrated nearly 10,000 U.S. and Iraqi troops in Diyala to liberate the city and interdict any insurgents who tried to escape. Accordingly, the plan involved cutting the major lines of communication out of the city. Arrowhead Ripper began on June 19, 2007. "In the first hours of the American military assault, after midnight early Monday, helicopters flew two teams of American troops and a platoon of Iraqi scouts so they could block the southern escape routes from the city. Stryker armored vehicles moved along the western outskirts of Baqubah and then down a main north-south route that cuts through the center of the city. By the time dawn broke on Tuesday, the insurgent sanctuary in western Baqubah had been cordoned off. Then, the American forces established footholds on the periphery of the section and slowly pressed in."[24] Rather than projecting force *from* established positions in eastern Baqubah and Buhriz, U.S. forces attempted to surprise the enemy by moving *toward* them.

Insurgents defended western Baqubah by pre-positioning explosives along major routes. "About 30 improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, were planted on Route Coyote, the U.S. code name for a main Baqubah thoroughfare...."[25] Insurgents attempted "...to use deep-buried bombs under the road and small-arms fire to force the soldiers to take refuge in the houses adjoining the route."[26] They rigged houses for detonation to destroy any troops taking refuge inside. "Col. Steve Townsend... said the network of house bombs here was the most extensive he had seen in Iraq. He said that in the first seven days of the attack, the brigade destroyed 21 house bombs."[27]

The careful reconnaissance of Baqubah, including the scouting and intelligence provided by the 1920s Brigades, enabled U.S. forces to destroy many of the deep buried IEDs and houses rigged with explosives before they patrolled each city block on foot.[28] As clearing operations continued, soldiers erected concrete barriers around Baqubah's western neighborhoods to

prevent insurgents from attacking or re-infiltrating their former safe havens.[29] Soldiers brought humanitarian aid, such as rice and water, to the residents of western Baqubah within 96 hours of commencing combat operations.[30]

Securing Baqubah required multiple kinds of activities: combat operations in the city; combat operations in Diyala province; aid for the population; and tribal reconciliation.

Emergency supplies and aid followed clearing operations promptly. By mid-July, convoys of trucks delivering medical supplies, fuel, and food had reached even the outer corners of Diyala Province.[31] By July 29, Diyala residents had received 284,000 kg rice and 285,000 kg flour, distributed with the assistance of the Iraqi Army and U.S. forces.[32] The Iraqi Army also participated in reconstruction efforts. The 5th Iraqi Army Division's civil affairs officer visited west Baqubah's neighborhoods on July 31 to assess ongoing engineering projects and humanitarian aid.[33] Two days later, Baqubah's mayor and neighborhood leaders met to discuss the city's problems.[34]

Reconciliation efforts proceeded as soon as Arrowhead Ripper had cleared western Baqubah. The city's mayor met with nine tribal sheiks and the head of the Diyala Operations Center (the overarching Iraqi military command in the province). Colonel Sutherland explained the need for locally recruited Iraqi police, and for a Concerned Citizens' Movement that might produce police candidates.[35] The meeting apparently produced an agreement that applied to the inhabitants of several Baqubah neighborhoods, including Buhriz, Tahrir, Mufrek and Khatoon.[36]

U.S. forces conducted reactive operations in

Iraqi Maj. Gen. Abdul Karim, commander of the Diyala Operations Center, greets Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki upon his arrival at the Diyala Operations Center, July 26. Maliki was visiting to tour the center, which is the strategic hub for Iraqi security forces in Diyala province. (Photo by Curt Cashour, Joint Combat Camera Center)

Baqubah against insurgents who took arms again in early July, as the first phase of combat operations subsided.[37] U.S. forces began a second phase of Arrowhead Ripper on July 17. The 3-2 Stryker Brigade, supported by elements of the 3-1 Cavalry, surrounded Old Baqubah, one of Baqubah's eastern neighborhoods. They cleared the area in a multi-day operation through house to house searches.[38]

The clearing of Old Baqubah made it possible and necessary for U.S. commanders and former insurgent groups to negotiate a longer term relationship. Accordingly, in late July, Colonel Townsend "met with local citizens interested in contributing to the future security plan" in the city. After that meeting, locals formed the Baqubah Guardians.[39] The organization's members wear uniforms, are tracked in a U.S. Army database, and swear to cooperate with U.S/Iraqi forces in the effort to oust al Qaeda. The Baqubah Guardians were not an alternative to the Iraqi Security Forces, but rather a group that provided an extra layer of security for the provincial capital. Initially, they provided intelligence about al Qaeda weapons

caches and reinfiltration into Baqubah.[40] They also served as first responders in emergencies and assisted the Iraqi Security Forces. For example, al Qaeda attempted to reestablish itself in the Buhriz section of southern Baqubah, in mid-August. The Baqubah Guardians caught the first wave of insurgents, gunning down seven; they notified and fought alongside Iraqi Security Forces to hold that portion of the city. [41]

Security operations in early August continued to destroy zones that al Qaeda used to support its violent activities in the Baqubah area. U.S. forces conducted an air assault operation in an area south of Baqubah from which al Qaeda had launched mortar attacks, and they discovered weapons caches and vehicles the enemy intended to use as VBIEDs.[42] They cleared the village of Abu Tinah, northeast of Baqubah, from which al Qaeda threatened nearby villages[43].

Khalis Corridor and the Diyala River Valley

Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping

THE BATTLE FOR KHALIS

Arrowhead Ripper liberated Baqubah from terrorist control. U.S. forces killed or captured roughly 150 insurgents, including about 80 percent of the ordinary al Qaeda fighters. But approximately 80 percent of the al Qaeda leaders in Baqubah escaped from the city before the combat operations began.[44]

The enemy that fled Baqubah in June dispersed into traditional safe havens outside the provincial capital. By June 26, Colonel Townsend had intelligence reports identifying al Qaeda's concentration points as Samarra, Khalis, and Khan Bani Sa'ad, reflecting recent activity in these areas.[45]

The city of Khalis, about 10 miles northwest of Baqubah, sits between the Tigris and the Diyala Rivers on the highway that runs north from Baqubah to Kirkuk. The highways and back roads connect Khalis with important al Qaeda

sanctuaries along the Tigris River Valley. The Khalis corridor was already a significant battleground for al Qaeda and Shia extremist militias before the former were chased from Baqubah. Al Qaeda and Shia militias fought to control that road, as well as the east-west routes through Khalis and the city itself.

Local, militia-affiliated officials in Khalis, a primarily Shia city, aided some sectarian actors in charge of Diyala's security forces in 2006. Khalis contained a headquarters of a battalion of the Fifth Iraqi Army Division; a detention center; a city Emergency Response Force; and a major hospital.[46] The commander of the Fifth Iraqi Army Division in 2006 was General Shakir Hussain, who was placed in command before August 4, 2006 and relieved of command in mid-May 2007 by the Iraqi government because of his sectarian behavior.[47] The Provincial Director of Police in 2006 was Gassan al-Bawi, who had recruited Wolf Brigade members to police Baqubah on a sectarian basis, and who was also arrested.[48] Other sectarian actors arose, however, as new branches of the security service emerged. At the Khalis sheiks meeting in July, Sunni sheiks accused their

Shia colleagues of supporting militants, and they accused the Iraqi Security Forces of acting on behalf of the Jaysh al Mahdi. The Sunni sheiks voiced particular concerns about the Emergency Response Force commander, whom, they said, acted in a sectarian manner.[49] Indeed, Coalition forces arrested "an extremist company commander" in Khalis on October 6, 2007.[50]

The Khalis corridor also served as a main supply route and safe haven for Iranian-backed Special Groups. U.S. forces found a huge cache in al Jadidah on February 25, 2007 which contained 130 copper disks for the fabrication of EFPs, a hallmark of Iranian-backed groups.[51] In late July, U.S. and Iraqi forces pursued Special Groups members through the Khalis and Qasarin areas.[52] Coalition forces engaged in a firefight with 25 men while attempting to apprehend a Special Groups leader west of Baqubah on October 5. That leader facilitated the transportation of weapons from Iran into Iraq. That particular group was sufficiently well organized and trained that it remained in its defensive positions as U.S. forces arrived, then began to maneuver from them into an attack, supported by anti-aircraft weapons which were used to engage Coalition air support.[53] Special Groups interacted with criminal networks in Khalis and Qasarin.[54] East of the Diyala River, individuals with close ties to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps—Qods Force facilitated the movement of weapons in Kharnabat, just north of Baqubah, in July.[55] U.S. forces also found several large EFP caches south of Baqubah in October and November.[56] Between February and October, Special Groups might regularly transported weapons from Iran and stored them in depots along the banks of the Tigris and Diyala Rivers. Alternatively, Special Groups emplaced weapons there in February, and reactivated the supply lines and headquarters through southern Diyala as Arrowhead Ripper and its successors dislodged al Qaeda from the area.

The Special Groups and al Qaeda fought with one another for the control of Diyala's lines of communication. Al Qaeda attempted to cut the supply routes used by extremist militias and Iranian-backed secret cells in Diyala. They had based themselves at Hebheb, 5 miles south of Khalis, since 2006. Al Qaeda regularly launched spectacular attacks targeting government institutions in Khalis at one-month intervals (beginning in December 2006; attacks followed in January, February, the end of March, and the end of April 2007).[57] Al Qaeda in Iraq also attempted to cut access to the roads to and from Khalis by laying IEDs. For example, in early May, two IEDs targeted concrete carriers in Abu Shuwka, 5km south of Khalis. Al Qaeda frequently attacked these vehicles because they carried concrete for building police stations and facilities for the Iraqi Army and U.S. forces.[58]

Extremists—whose sectarian affiliation is not identified—accelerated violence among villages in the vicinity of Khalis through mortar attacks.[59] Inter-village conflict erupted in mixed areas west of Hebheb in early May.[60] An assassination campaign targeted key figures in Khalis: a judge and prosecutor on the appeal court (January); a Daini tribal leader (April); a Sunni local council member from the Jumaili tribe (May); civil servants (May). And extremists began a series of mass kidnappings in early June.[61]

KHALIS DURING ARROWHEAD RIPPER

Greywolf and Iraqi Security Forces, therefore, conducted supporting operations during the clearing of Baqubah in order to drive al Qaeda from Khalis, block escape through the Khalis corridor, and prevent the organization from reorganizing there or dispersing from there across the Tigris.

They undertook preparatory operations in Khalis before Arrowhead Ripper. On June 5, attack aircraft and ground troops killed 19 terrorists and wounded one in Koubat village, just north of Khalis, evidently an enemy stronghold. This set the conditions for securing Khalis during Arrowhead Ripper and blocking the enemy from using Khalis as an escape or reinforcement route during the battle of Baqubah.

As Arrowhead Ripper proceeded in Baqubah, so did the operations in and around the city of Khalis. The 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army held checkpoints near Khalis, while Greywolf and the Iraqi Police conducted security operations

Operation Phantom Thunder: June 15–August 12

	Khalis Corridor	Baqubah	Diyala River Valley	Kana'an and east
May		U.S. Forces began shaping operations and established presence in eastern Baqubah, known as Old Baqubah.		
June	**Operation Arrowhead Ripper launced on June 19.**			
June	Supporting operations conducted in Khalis during Arrowhead Ripper; AQI attempts to disrupt Coalition progress.	Western Baqubah cleared during Operation Arrowhead Ripper.		Supporting operations conducted during Arrowhead Ripper in Khan Bani Sa'ad to dislodge enemy groups.
July	Khalis tribal reconciliation meeting on June 23, despite sectarian violence in Khalis.	Second phase of Arrowhead Ripper began on July 17 with clearing of Old Baqubah.	Operation Ithaca and Olympus drive AQI from Haimer, Abu Nasim, Jamil and Anbakia	
August		Reconciliation agreement signed by 18 paramount sheiks on August 2 in Baqubah.		

Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping

compound in the village, and the pursued gunmen dismounted and ran into a house. The aviation assets killed the gunmen and destroyed the house, causing a series of secondary explosions—indicating that the enemy had placed a large weapons cache there. Meanwhile, al Qaeda attempted to ambush the reinforcements sent to the attacked Khalis checkpoint by emplacing false IEDs along the route. When the reinforcements stopped to secure the IED site, al Qaeda gunmen attacked them. The Iraqi soldiers and their American advisors killed two gunmen. They were reinforced also by an attack helicopter, which killed a third.

Al Qaeda organized another counterattack a few days later. On June 22, Iraqi Police attempted to secure a village southwest of Khalis. Seventeen al Qaeda gunmen tried "to circumvent the IPs and infiltrate the village."[64] Coalition attack helicopters from the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade and ground forces from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, spotted the enemy movement. The attack helicopters engaged, killing the gunmen and protecting the village.[65]

In addition to the battle between Coalition forces, Iraqi forces, and al Qaeda groups, inter-village fighting erupted in the Khalis area a few days after the clearing operations. Villagers from Tohoyla, about 10 kilometers north of Khalis, attacked residents of nearby al Koubat village. (Coalition forces had begun the preparatory operations in Khalis by attacking terrorist positions in Koubat, three weeks earlier.) Citizens called the Provincial Joint Coordination Center and requested help. Iraqi Security Forces intervened to stop the gun fight, but four villagers were killed and 19 wounded before they arrived.[66]

ARROWHEAD RIPPER IN KHAN BANI SA'AD

Coalition forces conducted operations in Khalis simultaneously with others in Khan Bani Saad,

around it.[62] Iraqi soldiers secured the main road into and out of Khalis, while others conducted patrols on nearby villages such as Salam.[63]

Organized al Qaeda units of 15 to 20 fighters staged complex attacks to disrupt the progress of Coalition forces in Khalis. On June 20, just one day into Arrowhead Ripper, al Qaeda conducted a complex attack on an Iraqi Army checkpoint near Khalis. Fifteen al Qaeda gunmen dismounted from four vans and fired on the checkpoint. The Iraqis fended off the attack, killing eleven of the 15 enemy gunmen. The remaining gunmen returned to their vehicles and fled toward a nearby village. The vehicles dispersed; a Coalition attack helicopter team followed one that seemed more important to Jamil nearby. The vehicle entered a

south of Baqubah on the road to Baghdad (via the southeastern district, 9 Nissan). Khan Bani Saad city, the highway through it, and the tribal areas located nearby, all provided access also to the Salman Pak area southeast of the capital. During a series of raids in Khan Bani Saad from June 20–22, "Coalition Forces discovered a terrorist safe house, containing weapons, handcuffs, ammunition, stretchers, black masks and homemade explosives, ...several weapons caches containing mortars, rockets, chemicals used for making explosives, ...a stolen fire department vehicle, ...[and] a vehicle in a palm grove rigged as a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device. All the weapons and explosives were safely destroyed on site."[67]

The simultaneous operations in Baqubah, Khalis, and Khan Bani Saad dislodged enemy groups from Diyala's capital and neighboring cities, and prevented them from moving from one city to another.

PURSUING THE ENEMY IN THE DIYALA RIVER VALLEY AND THE KHALIS CORRIDOR

U.S. and Iraqi forces did not stop their combat operations when they had cleared the urban areas. A series of follow-on operations pursued al Qaeda and prevented the organization from regrouping near the cities. Commanders had prepared for the chase before the Baqubah fight. "...[T]he brigade commander put our unit up in this region to deny them [the enemy] the ability to exfil[trate] into this area," from Baqubah, Khalis, or Khan Bani Sa'ad, Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Poppas, a squadron commander in the Diyala River Valley, explained.[68] Poppas's squadron (5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 82nd Airborne, attached to Greywolf) had conducted shaping operations on the east bank of the Diyala River Valley in April. Before Arrowhead Ripper, the unit operated from patrol bases in Zaganiyah and As Sadah. After the first phase of Arrowhead Ripper, 5-73 and its Iraqi partners reconnoitered positions along the Diyala River Valley where al Qaeda terrorists might establish themselves in the wake of Baqubah's clearing.[69]

Arrowhead Ripper thus extended from Baqubah through the Diyala River Valley. First, U.S. and Iraqi forces conducted a reconnaissance in force to detect al Qaeda positions. As U.S. forces cleared Baqubah, Khalis, and Khan Bani Sa'ad, 5-73 did not attempt to block movement through all of the battlespace assigned to it. Rather, the squadron "put sensors out there, because it is a large expanse," in order to determine the enemy's positions. "[I]ndividual soldiers, through patrols and engagements," are the primary sensors in the counterinsurgency fight, Poppas noted, supplemented with other systems.

Routine patrols in the reconnaissance phase revealed a number of enemy positions. The squadron first found al Qaeda operatives during its patrols along the east bank of the Diyala. An organized group of approximately 25 terrorists had established itself with a weapons cache in a palm grove near Mukhisa. Three al Qaeda gunmen attacked U.S. troops on patrol in the vicinity, from across the river (the west bank). U.S. forces returned fire, maneuvered against the position, and called in air support from a fixed-wing aircraft. They destroyed the enemy and his weapons. "Throughout the firefight, a nearby mosque was broadcasting chants for local residents to 'rise up against' the Coalition Forces; the chants were later replaced by a voice that seemed to be giving orders."[70] Another combined U.S. and Iraqi patrol operating in the area discovered and destroyed a factory in the village of Mukhisa that produced home made explosives, complete with chemical suits to protect insurgents while they manufactured the products.[71] They did not clear Mukhisa at this time, but rather destroyed the enemy positions that they found. Photo: Diyala 24: 59055

To the west of the Diyala River, the intertwined fight between the villages, the extremists in the Security Forces, and al Qaeda accelerated in Khalis in early July. Arrowhead Ripper displaced al Qaeda from its positions near the city, allowing Shia extremists to pursue their sectarian agenda vigorously. On July 5, an Iraqi called the local Iraqi Army battalion commander and informed him "that a mob, backed by a local paramilitary group, had descended on the homes of the Albu-Abali Sunni family. The group was about to loot and set the properties on fire, the caller said."[72] When the

battalion arrived, it found the allegedly-sectarian Khalis Emergency Response Force guarding the deserted streets, having searched the home of a Sunni leader there whom they suspected of working for al Qaeda. The following day, the same "six homes were looted and set on fire."[73] This was one incident in a series of retributive attacks on villages in the vicinity of Khalis, to the east of which Shia homes were burnt several days before.[74] And on July 7 and 8, an extremist company commander from Khalis allegedly forced Sunnis out of their homes in Arab Danan, and then burned the homes and farms. This same commander, along with companions, allegedly ambushed and murdered a Sunni man on July 2.[75] U.S. and Iraqi Special Forces detained the extremist commander in early October, 2007, as noted above.[76]

Supplemental intelligence suggested that some al Qaeda was moving into the area west of the Diyala, north and east of Baqubah and east of Khalis. The 5-73 consequently reconnoitered the area, and observed a "large mass movement" into Anbakia, a village between the Diyala and the Khalis-Kirkuk highway.[77] "When we went in there, it was a predominantly Shi'a village....We engaged with the mukhtar and the sheikh and then the locals, and we fanned out. [A]nd just through... questioning, we found out that most of them had been forced out of...villages to the south," namely, Haimer, Abu Nasim, and Jamil. (These villages are about 20km north of Baqubah.)

By engaging with the residents, the 5-73 gained specific intelligence on al Qaeda's positions in the villages. The displaced residents "...drew handwritten maps of where their houses were. Others ...told us" where the enemy "had started to sandbag" in order to create defensive positions, where "they were putting in strongpoints," and "where they'd put caches in the local palm groves...." Unmanned aerial vehicles confirmed the locals' information.[78]

Operation Ithaca, a component of Arrowhead Ripper, drove al Qaeda from positions in Haimer, Abu Nasim, and Jamil.[79] Al Qaeda used these areas as support zones for the organization's activities in the Diyala River Valley. A troop of 5-73 conducted an air assault into the villages (in an air assault, helicopters insert U.S. forces at multiple landing zones, often to get ground troops within or to the rear of an enemy position). Fixed wing aircraft and attack helicopters fired on designated targets.[80] They killed 29 al Qaeda gunmen and detained 23 others. They also discovered and released eight hostages whom the terrorists were set to execute. They discovered two weapons caches, destroyed a safe house, and eliminated the extortion ring that al Qaeda used to force the local population to comply with its wishes.[81]

The squadron sent its Civil-Military Operations (CMO) Team toward Anbakia. Enemy groups had blocked the highway that ran north of Baqubah. The CMO team "conducted route clearance, removing improvised explosive devices, barriers, and illegal check points in order to allow Iraqis to use the main road to travel between Baqubah and Khalis."[82]

The squadron conducted combat operations together with civil-military operations, as part of Operation Olympus, ten days after the Ithaca fight. The American paratroopers conducted another air assault into two villages held by the enemy, while Iraqi forces supported them from ground positions. They destroyed the enemy positions in the villages. In nearby Anbakia village, the CMO team provided food and medical support, protecting the refugees and the native villagers.[83]

The 5-73 deliberately assisted Anbakia because "'the town had been friendly to Coalition forces,'" according to an officer working with the CMO team. "'They help us, so we help them,' he said. 'We will continue to work with them and not just abandon them.'" Poppas added, "'Our deliberate destruction of anti-Iraqi forces throughout the entire region has set conditions for the repatriation of these dislodged individuals.'"[84]

SECURITY AND TRIBAL RECONCILIATION IN DIYALA

Indeed, negotiations with tribal leaders facilitated clearing operations in the Diyala River Valley. On July 10 (before Operation Ithaca) two feuding tribes in the Khalis region north of Baqubah, the Anbakia and the Obeidi tribes, signed a peace agreement.[85] This was the second small scale reconciliation agreement in Diyala. According

to Colonel Sutherland, this agreement was significant because it catalyzed the concerned local citizens movement in Diyala.[86] The sheiks in Dojima, some of whom were from the Obeidi tribe, formed a Concerned Local Citizens group at this time—almost concurrently with the clearing of Mukhisa, and just before the operations west of the Diyala.[87] The Anbakia-Obeidi agreement thereby helped deny al Qaeda its safe haven west of the Diyala.

The Anbakia-Obeidi agreement also paved the way for the Obeidis to work with the government, an essential part of the reconciliation effort. There was an "individual on provincial council who did not want the Obeidis to participate" in provincial government, said Sutherland, but the agreement helped the Obeidis become involved in the process.[88] The participation of the Obeidis quickly advanced tribal and civic negotiations in the Khalis district.

Provincial, municipal, and tribal leaders attended the first reconciliation meeting in Khalis on July 23, 2007 (after the formation of the Dojima CLCs and between Operation Ithaca and Operation Olympus). Because Khalis was a focal point of Shia militia and al Qaeda violence in 2007, the meeting was highly contentious. Some Sunni sheiks charged that many government actors were malign, and wished to hold these people accountable for illegal activity by bringing charges against them. Some Shia sheiks accused Sunnis of facilitating the emplacement of IEDs by al Qaeda in order to cut the city of Khalis off. They named, in particular, Sheik Majeed al Bayati. Some of the Obeidi from Dojima confirmed the accusation to the Coalition.[89] The sheiks' comments illustrate sectarian and local antipathies, but also

Tribal leaders from the northern Diyala River Valley swear on a reconciliation agreement following a meeting at Forward Operating Base Fallock, an Iraqi Army base, Oct. 8. Approximately 70 leaders from Muqdadiya and the surrounding areas gathered to discuss uniting in the fight against terrorism and the way ahead. (Photo by Sgt. Serena Hayden, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)

demonstrate their attempts to make the local and provincial government responsive to the needs and complaints of the population, such as the need for drinking water and irrigation.[90]

The tribal movements and local reconciliation initiatives in Baqubah city and Khalis county paved the way, in turn, for a broader reconciliation meeting in Diyala. Eighteen paramount sheiks swore and signed a reconciliation agreement in Baqubah on August 2.[91] On August 19, more than 100 tribal leaders from the Diyala River Valley met and swore to "cooperate and support each other in fighting terrorism in our tribes." They also agreed to achieve the following objectives:

1. End kidnapping and murdering; release all hostages; and cease rocket and mortar attacks on other tribes.
2. Pass all information to ISF, regarding expelled members who try to cause riot and sedition between tribes.
3. Fight Al-Qaeda, JAM, Al-Shura council, foreign fighters and all other illegal armed groups; try to limit the use of weapons to government forces only.

4. Work on and cooperate with ISF to eradicate the corrupted members that work in these forces.
5. Remove all IEDs that we find placed in our lands.
6. Abide by law and support ISF in their fight against terrorism.
7. Solve all problems existing between the tribes through dialogue.
8. Bring all displaced families back to their homes.[92]

Nineteen of 25 paramount sheiks in Diyala swore to and signed the agreement. The remaining six paramount sheiks, from remote tribal areas in the north and east corners of the province, did not participate in the discussions. Colonel Sutherland attributed their absence to their relative distance from Diyala's most violent areas.[93]

The governor of Diyala province pursued this large meeting with a smaller gathering that aimed to assist with reconciliation among competing local villages in the Diyala River Valley.[94] Colonel Sutherland explained a situation that required special attention: "When we had a suicide VBIED go into a market, in a town called Abu Saydah, which is predominantly a Shia town, the people instantly believed that VBIED came from...villages known as Mukeisha abu Garmah and Qubbah, which are predominantly Sunni. And so that fueled more sectarian violence, and...Abu Saydah cut itself off from Mukeisha abu Garmah. And so there, they turned to al-Qaeda as well, but that was because we could not get the word out through the lack of local media, what the real situation was."[95] The governor's engagement in these villages established relations between them, and also established the provincial government as an arbitrator between local groups.

The tribal reconciliation movements made it easier for U.S. forces to hold terrain against insurgents. Al Qaeda had chased the Iraqi Police out of the Diyala River Valley, so U.S. forces worked with the Iraqis to reestablish the police force.[96]

The concerned local citizens groups thickened the Iraqi Security Forces where they were present, and protected villages where they were absent. Leaders had positive incentives to ensure that their people acted against insurgents, including personal honor, influence with Iraqi and American leaders, and patronage for their community. U.S. and Iraqi leaders did not provide such benefits to sheiks who failed to comply with their obligations.

ENEMY GROUPS AND RECONCILIATION EFFORTS COMPETE IN KHALIS

The wave of reconciliation movements in Diyala improved security and governance in the province, but it did not eliminate the hard-core insurgents who escaped from Baqubah into rural safehavens. Militias, Iranian groups, and al Qaeda—all of which had safe havens in Diyala north and east of Baqubah—fought actively to thwart the reconciliation efforts.

Khalis, once again, was a focal point for conflicting groups. On August 18, terrorists launched sixteen mortar rounds on the Shia Sharqiya neighborhood in that city, killing three and wounded 22 in the market.[97] Five-hundred locals, concerned about the attack and frustrated with the city's government, conducted a large, multi-day demonstration that began on August 19 at the mayor's house and then expanded to block the main roads into and out of Khalis. Iraqi Security Forces secured the area, and Diyala government officials met with protesters on August 20 to hear their demands. When a convoy of Coalition forces arrived, unidentified gunmen in the crowd fired at the Strykers. U.S. forces fired warning shots, but did not engage. The incident prompted another meeting among protesters, government officials, Iraqi Security Forces, and American brigade commanders. The residents complained about "irrigation, water, medical supplies, security and specific checkpoints." The crowd agreed to let the convoy through if the existing leaders in Diyala and Khalis worked to solve the problems within a few days.[98]

Subsequent events suggest that insurgents had cut off water supply into the city. On August 27, Coalition forces and the Fifth Iraqi Army Division launched Operation Church. They conducted an air assault into Gobia village in order to re-open a spillway that insurgents had blocked in order to cut off the water supply into Khalis (10 miles to the

west). A large number of insurgents defended the village, demonstrating their intention to keep the spillway blocked. Coalition and Iraqi forces killed 13 insurgents during the air assault, and 20 more during firefights throughout the day. They also found large weapons caches containing home-made explosives, rocket-propelled grenades, and a ZSU-23 anti-aircraft machine gun with 2,000 rounds of ammunition.[99]

A group of protesters conducting a peaceful demonstration in Khalis, Iraq, block a main supply route into the city, Aug. 21. The demonstration began after several mortar attacks from an unknown enemy, causing more than 500 concerned citizens to protest until they received security and services from the security officials and the local and central governments. (Photo by Sgt. Serena Hayden, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)

Colonel Sutherland reported a consistent problem with rogue militias (which have often drawn support from Special Groups). "Jaysh al-Mahdi is a title. It's the rogue militia—those elements that will go in and clear [an area] or fill the vacuum after we've cleared an area—that we're concerned about. So we continue to attack them as well. But, again, they've lost support because they take away those services and the capabilities that, that quite honestly,...the people want."[100]

This pattern emerged most severely in the Khalis-Hebheb corridor. Reports of extremist militia activity in the vicinity of Hebheb increased dramatically in September.[101] Subsequent military operations indicate that Special Groups were active in September and October, especially in the Khalis corridor.

Militia violence increased the number of retaliatory attacks by al Qaeda, including kidnappings, mortar attacks, and the bombing of a significant bridge connecting Khalis and its villages to Baqubah (aimed evidently at cutting extremists' movements).[102] Gunmen, whose affiliation is not specified, also increased attacks and established unauthorized checkpoints along the Khalis-Hebheb-Baghdad road.[103] Local government and

tribal leaders intervened to quell the violence in late September and mid-October.[104]

As U.S. and Iraqi forces pushed northeastward along the Diyala River in September, others targeted the Special Groups and other Shia extremists in the southern portion of the province. In late September, U.S. forces arrested the Special Groups leader linked to the large cache found in Khan Bani Sa'ad in February. The suspect was responsible for the smuggling network north of Baghdad, including facilitating foreign fighters and training militants in bomb making.[105] They arrested Special Groups members in Qasarin who smuggled weapons and aided rogue elements of the Jaysh al Mahdi, including a facilitator who made multiple trips to Iran.[106] A large firefight erupted between U.S. forces and a Special Groups cell west of Baqubah, terrain which lies in the Khalis corridor.[107] The arrest of extremist militia members and special groups members throughout October also mitigated the tensions.

These operations in Diyala resulted in a dramatic diminution of violence in the Khalis area by the middle of September.[108] Sutherland attributed most of the decline to the local

reconciliation efforts. "Reconciliation initiatives resulted in a forty-six (46) percent drop in violent acts in the Diyala River Valley and a seventy-one (71) percent drop in Khalis Qada. These agreements have also embedded or enabled the return of displaced families to a number of areas throughout the province. Approximately three thousand three hundred (3,300) displaced individuals have returned to their homes. An example is seventy-one (71) families from the Khalis area near Al-Khalis."[109]

PURSUING THE ENEMY: PHANTOM STRIKE

Prior U.S. operations, such as those in Fallujah in 2004 and Tal Afar in 2005, cleared some of Iraq's cities of insurgents. The Corps did not, however, conduct simultaneous or follow-on operations to prevent the enemy from regrouping elsewhere. Some critics of U.S. strategy in Iraq before 2007 therefore characterized it as "whack-a-mole." Though U.S. brigade commanders had hoped to strangle al Qaeda fighters in Baqubah, the Corps planners designed Phantom Thunder differently. Corps planners resolved the problem of "whack-a-mole" not by tactical means (cordoning off cities and their exit routes), but rather by operational means (simultaneous and successive operations throughout the division areas of operations).

The overarching objective of Phantom Thunder was to stop insurgents in the provinces from supporting violence in Baghdad. Controlling Baqubah, and indeed the cities in Baghdad's belts, advanced U.S. forces toward that objective. In order to prevent al Qaeda from regrouping, U.S. Forces conducted follow-up missions throughout Iraq as part of a second Corps offensive, called Phantom Strike. This campaign aimed to degrade other al Qaeda sanctuaries before Ramadan began in mid-September, a time during which al Qaeda in past years increased attacks.

General Odierno described the operational concept of Phantom Strike shortly after that Corps offensive began on August 13:

> "This week, we launched Operation Phantom Strike, a series of targeted operations designed to intensify

pursuit of extremist elements across Iraq. With the elimination of safe havens and support zones due to Phantom Thunder, al Qaeda and Shi'a extremists have been forced into ever-shrinking areas, and it is my intent to pursue and disrupt their operations....Over the coming weeks, we plan to conduct quick strike raids against remaining extremist sanctuaries and staging areas, carry out precision targeting operations against extremist leadership and focus missions to counter the extremists' lethal accelerants of choice, the IED and the vehicle-borne IED. We will continue to hunt down their leadership, deny them safe haven, disrupt their supply lines and significantly reduce their capability to operate in Iraq."[110]

He added, "[W]e are not going to give up any ground that we have attained so far. We have been able to liberate the major population centers, provide more security, and what we will do now is conduct quick operational strikes all around the country to go after these remaining small pockets that are still remaining out there of al Qaeda and also Shi'a extremists."[111]
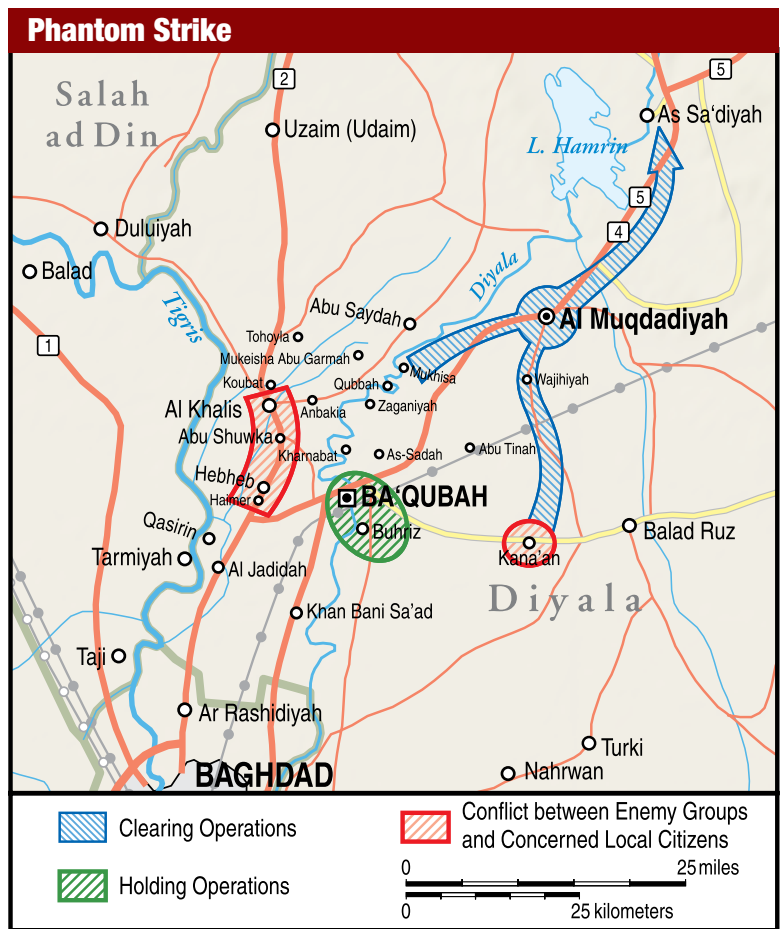
PHANTOM STRIKE IN DIYALA

U.S. forces planned a campaign called Operation Lightning Hammer to attack al Qaeda that had survived or escaped during Arrowhead Ripper. Al Qaeda leaders from Diyala reconstituted in several areas in northern Iraq after Arrowhead Ripper cleared Baqubah, Khalis, and the western Diyala River Valley. Some took refuge along the Hamrin Ridge, just north of the Diyala River Valley, on a secondary road toward Kirkuk. Others, perhaps supported by al Qaeda in the Hamrin Ridge, worked actively in Muqdadiyah and the Diyala River Valley northeast of Baqubah. Others still reconstituted in tribal areas just south of Baqubah. Still other al Qaeda elements remained in strongholds along the Tigris River Valley, such as Tarmiyah, Balad, and Samarra; and in safehavens south of Baghdad. Al Qaeda and Sunni insurgent command and control elements concentrated in the Za'ab Triangle, terrain that lies primarily in Ninewah province toward Kirkuk. The headquarters of the Islamic State of Iraq remained in Mosul.

Multi-National Division-North launched Operation Lightning Hammer 1 on August 13,

2007 in order to "target al-Qaeda elements that fled from Baqouba into the outlying regions north of Diyala's capital city" while there were still U.S. and Iraqi troops "concentrated…in Diyala province."[112] Lightning Hammer consisted of multiple, brigade and battalion-sized operations in Diyala, Salah ad Din, and Ninewah provinces. The subordinate operation, Greywolf Hammer 1, in Diyala Province, was the division's main effort.

Colonel Sutherland explained, "Lightning Hammer 1 was an…MND-N operation all across the four provinces of Multi-National Division-North. We [Greywolf] were the main effort and we conducted an operation, what was called operation Pericles, in the Diyala River Valley, where we cleared about thirteen different villages from the northern part of Baqubah up to and including little Abu Saydah. Sunni [and] Shia areas dotted them. I mean, literally, one area is Shia, [the] next area is Sunni, [the] next area Shia, [the] next area Sunni. And we cleared those. [The] final operation was focused on an area known as, three villages, Mukisha, Abu Karmah, and Qubbah."[113] Mukhisa is a small village on the east side of the Diyala, surrounded by dense palm groves. The village occupies an important position, roughly half way between Baqubah and Muqdadiyah (the next large population center in the Diyala River Valley).

"As one squadron was conducting those operations through air assaults, another squadron, 6-9 CAV, was clearing the Wajihiyah-Kana'an corridor, where they fought about a company-size element of al-Qaeda in that area, that had taken over the corridor between these two major cities. During that operation, we reduced…18 IEDs, killed or captured over 40 al-Qaeda members,… reduced three house-borne IEDs and six VBIEDs that were…targeted as suicide VBIEDS for the city of Baqubah, we believe. We destroyed one al-Qaeda company-size element …66 individuals, to include a command post, medical outpost for treatment, and [we] discovered and destroyed ten caches that were also being used to resupply insurgents in and around the area; and then detained another 39 al-

Phantom Strike

Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping

Qaeda suspects."[114]

These operations expanded the regions near Baqubah controlled by security forces. The development of patrol bases allowed forces to protect those areas, in a classic, inkspot-like fashion.

Al Qaeda's August and September counteroffensive in Diyala included a campaign of spectacular attacks and complex attacks against the Concerned Local Citizens, and an effort to retake terrain in the Baqubah area. As many as 200 al Qaeda fighters attacked multiple positions in Kan'an, east of Baqubah, on August 23, in response to the Greywolf Hammer operations in the Wahijah-Kana'an area. An initial enemy attack drew concerned citizens into a fight just east of the village, which they defended successfully. After fifteen minutes—as soon as the concerned citizens and security services responded to the emergency on the east side of the town—al Qaeda fighters attacked west of the village, focusing on the Iraqi Police checkpoint and harming the family

Operation Phantom Strike: August 13–Present			
Khalis Corridor	**Baqubah**	**Diyala River Valley**	**Kana'an and east**
August Operaton Lightning Hammer launched August 13			
Enemy groups compete for control in Khalis Hehheb corridor.	Security operations continued to destroy AQI support zones near Baqubah.	U.S. and Iraqi forces pushed northeast along the Diyala River during Operation Greywolf Hammer I.	
	U.S. and Iraqi forces work to reestablish essential services in Baqubah.	Reconciliation meeting with more than 100 tribal leaders on August 19 in the Diyala River Valley.	Clearing operations against AQI conducted in the Wajihiyah-Kana'an corridor.
September Operaton Lightning Hammer II launched September 5			
U.S. and Iraqi forces target Special Groups.	U.S. and Iraqi forces continue work to reestablish essential services in Baqubah.	Muqdadiyah and Lake Hamrin areas cleared during Operation Greywolf Hammer II.	U.S. and Iraqi forces targeted Special Groups and other Shia extremists; they also targeted AQI elements south of Balad Ruz in the Turki Area
October Reconciliation meeting with local, elected officials and tribal sheiks held in Khalis on October 24.		Reconciliation meeting with Diyala Government and tribal sheiks in Muqdadiyah area on October 24.	

Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping

and mosque of Sheik Younis, who had refused to support al Qaeda.[115] Al Qaeda's ability to concentrate forces in Diyala diminished. A handful of spectacular attacks in September signaled the decreasing capacity of al Qaeda's conventional elements in Diyala, and the problems posed by the Concerned Local Citizens. The most devastating such attack in Diyala occurred on September 24, when a suicide bomber attacked a reconciliation meeting of 250-300 Sunni and Shia leaders, including Diyala's governor, in the Shifta mosque in Baqubah, killing 20 and wounding 38.[116]

The operations along the Diyala "…took away all of their [al Qaeda's] logistics…," Sutherland explained. " [W]e didn't necessarily have to

defeat al-Qaeda in the Diyala River Valley; we took away any support and so their perceived safe havens went away….Those that we didn't kill or capture [headed] … further north, into the Muqdadiyah area; and we began conducting operations inside Muqdadiyah."[117]

GREYWOLF HAMMER II: SECURING MUQDADIYAH AND LAKE HAMRIN

U.S. and Iraqi forces continued to clear terrain along the Diyala River Valley in September and October. After establishing security in the villages near Mukhisa, they cleared the city of Muqdadiyah and pushed past Lake Hamrin. Colonel Sutherland described the purpose of this successive operation: "Greywolf Hammer II was focused on clearing Muqdadiyah, a large city, very important to the province, but important to al-Qaeda for its lines of communications. Also, [the operation's purpose was to] establish…security outposts in the Diyala River Valley, [as well as] conducting essential service synchronization inside…Baqubah. And then the final part of it was to clear al-Qaeda elements south of Balad Ruz that had attempted to reinfiltrate back into the Turki area."[118]

U.S. forces cleared Muqdadiyah's market of al Qaeda in late October, by which time there were 675 residents who were participating in the Concerned Local Citizens group in Muqdadiyah. During and after the clearing operations, they assisted U.S. forces in identifying weapons caches in the city and in neighboring villages.[119] U.S. forces then pressed beyond Muqdadiyah, north and east of Lake Hamrin, where insurgent groups had established logistics bases. They engaged the population in the area, and discovered major caches in As Saydiyah.[120] "During this operation, which… really lasted about a week and a half, ten days, we were able to defeat al-Qaeda cells in Muqdadiyah… We detained or killed…about a two-company al-Qaeda force that was in Diyala. And then we

were able to reduce over 109 IEDs, six house-borne IEDs, and three VBIEDs. And one suicide vest we found actually weighed 75 pounds and had quarter-inch ball-bearings in it, and we suspect that it was being targeted for a reconciliation meeting."[121]

The Diyala government and important sheiks sponsored a reconciliation meeting on October 24 at the Iraqi Army base in the Muqdadiyah area, attended by 70 leaders from that part of the province. The paramount sheik of the Jabouri, a Sunni tribe located primarily west of Lake Hamrin, swore a pledge of peace with the paramount sheik of the Tamimi, a Shia tribe located in the Diyala River Valley and south of Lake Hamrin. They agreed actively to fight terrorists in their communities, and not to tolerate corrupt individuals who harbor or help terrorists. The meeting also promoted the advantages of tribal reconciliation movements.[122]

Greywolf Hammer 2 also re-established government and essential services in Muqdadiyah. The operation permitted the government of Diyala to "…reestablish the public distribution system of food inside the Muqdadiyah qadaa, not just the city itself."[123] The hospital received supplies, water treatment plants operated, and the city received 12 hours of public electricity daily.

By early November, U.S. and Iraqi forces had cleared the entire Diyala River Valley, from Baqubah to Lake Hamrin. Al Qaeda groups concentrated along the northern and eastern shores of Lake Hamrin, far from population centers and major roads.[124]

Sheik Waleed of the village Baab Al Darb walks over to greet U.S. Army Soldiers while the village Concerned Loacal Citizens (CLC) look on, Baqubah, Iraq, Oct. 4. (Photo by Spc. Shawn Cassatt, 55th Combat Camera)

CONCERNED LOCAL CITIZENS AND IRAQI SECURITY FORCES IN DIYALA

U.S. and Iraqi Security forces have integrated the tribal and concerned citizen movements with local and provincial government since June. They involved government officials in negotiations with tribal leaders, who often presented the problems of the population to the government and held officials accountable. They attempted to use the Concerned Citizens Movements to create a new cadre of police recruits. Some local government officials have capitalized on tribal structures to improve their ability to govern. For example, on September 24, local, elected officials in Khalis summoned their own reconciliation meeting, independently of Coalition forces. They consulted with 50 sheiks and local citizens, both Sunni and Shia, in order to resolve emerging problems.[125] And finally, the Sheiks have stood as legal guarantors of locals who were released from prison by Coalition forces and Iraqi Police after their cases were dismissed.[126]

Tensions between the security forces and concerned local citizens rose in September as

central government officials moved slowly to incorporate concerned local citizens into Diyala's police force. The government of Iraq promised to add 6,000 new police to Diyala, bringing the force to 21,000. Colonel Sutherland explained, "The Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, other Iraqi leaders have stated publicly that the authorization...would be approved. We're still waiting for the Minister of Interior to sign that document and give it to the provincial director of police, General Ghanem."[127]

Concerned local citizens staged a large, peaceful protest in Baqubah's government center on September 17 to demonstrate their concerns about the hiring practices of the provincial police chief. They presented an eleven-point request to the Diyala provincial governor in order to express their concerns.[128] The pressure on the provincial governor, however, did not result in agreement from Ministry of Interior.[129] "It is not happening. There is some friction, or some...difficulty on getting hiring instructions for these CLCs," Sutherland explained.

The problem is at the ministerial level. "The provincial director of police wants to hire policemen from the concerned local citizens. He wants to hire policemen from the neighborhoods. The tribal leaders want their men to have jobs they want to participate in the security process. The concerned local citizens are not paid to guard their neighborhoods. They want to be policemen. The province has an authorization of 6,000 additional policemen. They have been waiting for several weeks for the Ministry of the Interior to provide hiring instructions so the director of police for the province can hire these men to be policemen, give them jobs, ...pay them to secure their neighborhood and enforce rule of law and domestic order."[130]

U.S. forces were still working on determining the source of the problem and conflict between the Iraqi Police and the concerned local citizens. To mitigate tensions at the provincial level, U.S.

Concerned Local Citizens Groups in Diyala Province	
Town/ City	Number of Concerned Local Citizens
Baqubah	2,032
Dali Abbas/Nowfal	300
Dojima	300
Kana'an	500
Muqdadiyah	675

Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping

forces involved provincial Iraqi Police leaders in the process of hiring concerned local citizens on security contracts and to plan defensive engagements with them.[131]

The participation of the former insurgents in securing Diyala fractured insurgent groups. A large battle between al Qaeda members and tribesmen erupted in Hebheb in mid-October. Rumor evidently conveyed that the tribesmen were members of the 1920s Brigades. Local leaders denied this rumor in the press, asserting that the defenders of Hebheb were members of the Diyala "awakening." Their statement does not preclude the possibility that these were former members of the 1920s brigades who had turned against al Qaeda.[132] American sources confirm this possibility generically, if not in this specific instance. According to General Odierno, "[T]here are groups that used to be part of the 1920s Revolutionary Brigade who have sworn allegiance to the government of Iraq who are working with Iraqi security forces and coalition forces both in Diyala. But there are still some elements [of the 1920s Brigade] that are not. …[W]e continue to conduct operations against them. In fact, in some of these groups there has been a split between the groups, where some have decided they want to reconcile with the government of Iraq and are working with us. There are some that are not. Those that are, we go through a vetting process with them. They pledge their allegiance to the government of Iraq. They have proven over time now that they want to work with us, and they've been very helpful. Those that do not... we continue to go after and treat as criminals."[133]

RESTORING GOVERNMENT AND SERVICES IN DIYALA

"Because of these operations, essential services, not security are now the main priority for the people of Diyala and the number one

discussion point during, engagement," Colonel Sutherland reported in September, as clearing operations reached the Muqdadiyah area. Diyala's provincial government, which ceased to function in November 2006, is now providing services. Sutherland's mid-September assessment is worth reproducing in full:

> Currently the public distribution system which is the Iraqi subsidized food program is functional in all five qadas [counties] and the province. Local mayors are coordinating delivery of PDS [the provincial distribution system of food] with the Iraqi Security Forces, making the delivery a routine event. The local government and the Security Forces are continuously providing humanitarian assistance to the most remote areas where PDS might not have the ability to reach the population on a regular basis.
>
> Local businesses are beginning to open and jobs are now becoming available. One of these businesses, a flourmill south of Baqubah is currently producing flour that is available throughout the province. A work program within the city of Baqubah is on the way and producing very significant results.
>
> Water facilities are now being assessed by the local government. Some are working, some are need of minor repairs and chemicals to purify the water and others are in need of major repairs that will take time. The District General of Water and Irrigation is working to address these issues. Diyala receives an average of twelve (12) hours of electricity throughout the day; however, the electricity problem is a nationwide issue, which will take some time to get fixed. At the provincial level, the government is assessing the local electric network and is working to fix that network through provincial means.
>
> Diyala hospitals and clinics are functioning and supplies are reaching outlining areas. The Baqubah hospital has received millions of dollars in equipment and supplies, and the provinces received thirty-five (35) new ambulances at a cost of over one million (1,00,000) dollars. The DG of Health has coordinated a multiple lifts of the medical supplies from Baghdad to clinics throughout the provinces.
>
> Fuel is now coming to the province, with multiple shipments of diesel, kerosene and benzene arriving every week. Its government is also focusing on canal systems throughout the province. This is an agricultural province and water is essential for their crops. Canals have been cleaned to allow the flow of water to land…farmland throughout Diyala.
>
> The government has allocated over one hundred and fourteen (114) million dollars from the two thousand six (2006) budget and over one million six, one hundred and six (106) million dollars from the two thousand seven (2007) budget for reconstruction projects throughout Diyala. Additionally, the provincial council is meeting every week to review new projects.
>
> Schools are being reassessed to identify their needs prior to the beginning of the school year. In the coming weeks eight (8) truckloads, full of test books are being delivered to Baqubah by the Ministry of Education. Additionally, the Education Department warehouse is full of school materials and equipment for the schools in the Diyala area.
>
> These are all signs of progress; however, these improvements could not be achieved without the support of the local Iraqi citizens. The tribal leaders are the pillars of these communities. The government has made significant progress in its efforts to reconcile the Diyala tribes in order to maintain improvements currently taking place. The governor has conducted over fifteen (15) tribal engagement and negotiated four (4) major reconciliation agreements to reduce tribal violence and unite the people. Last month governor Ra'ad Al-Tamimi hosted a meeting that included virtually every Paramount Sheik or their senior representative in the province. These individuals signed a provincial-wide tribal reconciliation agreement promising to work together for better future for all Iraqis, regardless of tribe or sect." These Sheiks are now offering their sons to join the Iraqi Security Forces to protect their people and fight Al-Qaida.
>
> …There are problems and issues that are still in need of special attention. Al-Qaida and other extremist groups remain a threat to Diyala, but they are quickly learning they have no safe haven here. Today, the situation in Diyala is better than it was four (4) to six (6) months ago and it will continue to improve.[134]

COUNTERINSURGENCY LESSONS FROM THE DIYALA CASE STUDY

The campaign to secure Diyala shows the distinctive features of the 2007 counterinsurgency campaign in Iraq.

Combat operations in Diyala in summer 2007 aimed primarily at controlling terrain so that the enemy could not operate, and secondarily on killing or capturing the enemy. Multi-National Division-North, therefore, first cleared the enemy from Baqubah, and then prevented the enemy from re-infiltrating the city or re-establishing itself elsewhere. Al Qaeda attempted to reconstitute multiple times in the province, and on occasions succeeded in conducting complex attacks. Yet as continuous operations fragmented the enemy into small groups, the enemy launched fewer complex attacks at longer intervals, with decreasing success.

General Petraeus's emphasis on securing the population and General Odierno's insistence

on denying the enemy safe-havens and rural support zones encouraged brigade commanders in Diyala to liberate terrain from enemy control and maintain those areas. This practice contrasts sharply with some practices of 2006, when Iraqis were supposed to control terrain through checkpoints (which often had the effect of freezing forces in static positions from which they could not respond to threats except in their immediate area). Commanders in 2007 sought to achieve their goals through a more expansive use of firepower and maneuver.

General Petraeus' counterinsurgency doctrine, as implemented in Iraq, encouraged commanders to seek enduring, systemic solutions to problems, while tailoring their solutions to local needs. The Corps' determination to conduct multiple simultaneous and successive operations also ensured that division and brigade commanders had the time to conceptualize and execute operations addressing the systematic problems in Diyala, rather than treating the symptoms of these problems. Successive operations allowed commanders to adjust their plans more readily to changing situations on the ground.

Combat operations (or "kinetic operations") were a necessary part of counterinsurgency in Diyala. They were not subordinate to non-combat ("non-kinetic") operations, nor were they a hindrance to them. Rather, combat operations enabled other lines of operation, such as economic and political development, to succeed in areas contested by enemy groups. The new counterinsurgency strategy accepted ongoing combat operations along with ongoing reconstruction as necessary tools for ending the insurgency and securing the population, instead of expecting combat operations to end and reconstruction to follow.

Many problems in Diyala—even in small villages—were not localized problems that could be solved without also addressing systematic problems of enemy forces and provincial government. Within Diyala, the counterinsurgency effort varied locally to suit the specific problems facing the population. Securing Baqubah and Khalis differed from securing small villages of the Diyala River Valley.

In the wider framework of General Petraeus'

campaign plan, Sutherland thus saw the combat operations as the necessary prerequisite for revitalizing civic and government institutions. "In the Diyala River Valley, we determined it was first [necessary to conduct] kinetic operations—go in, clear those areas. As you clear them, simultaneously, the hold factor became the reconciliation effort…[D]epending [on] where it was, …it may be village on village reconciliation, it may be tribe on tribe, it may be sect on sect, but [it was a] reconciliation [effort] specific to that area. The next [task] was the establishment of essential services, synchronization, food and water; and once we did that we needed to figure out who would guard those essential services. So we either established concerned local citizens networks, the individuals we had checked backgrounds on, or we established a police force."[135]

MND-North and its brigades carried the combat operations to their logical ends—all the way through the cities and the Diyala River Valley. In this way, the campaign avoided problems that had bedeviled previous Coalition efforts, which some people called "Whack-a-Mole." If MND-North had not followed up the clearing of Baqubah and of Khalis with additional operations throughout the Diyala River Valley and in the Hamrin Ridge, it would have left its gains in the cities vulnerable and allowed the enemy a chance to regroup. By aggressively pursuing the enemy, MND-North dealt as decisive a blow to al Qaeda as it is possible to deal to a networked insurgent group.

These operations were successful because they were designed from beginning to end with the goal of establishing stable security in the region, not of transitioning to Iraqi control (the aim of operations in 2006). As operations progressed, commanders were attuned to opportunities not only to advance current clearing operations, but also to lay the preconditions for long-term stability in the area. The kinetic operations themselves were designed and conducted with that ultimate goal in mind—separating the insurgents from the population, defending those members of the population willing to oppose the insurgents, and protecting the population against insurgent retaliation and efforts to re-infiltrate. Ongoing operations also worked to

solve important local social, political, and economic problems. Commanders fought and negotiated in order to bring the local people together around an agreement to abjure violence and those who perpetrate it. American forces served as a buffer and as a broker between local factions which did not trust one another, but whose members could more easily develop relationships of trust with U.S. soldiers. And Americans forces were able to protect and reward individuals and communities that actively rejected violence. Every command echelon emphasized establishing a durable and long-term stability in which American forces would continue to play an important part, rather than creating the short-term conditions that might seem superficially to justify the desired rapid transition to "Iraqi control." The new American objective of security, as well as the new counterinsurgency strategy and the surge of operations, made it possible to liberate

Baqubah and secure Diyala in 2007.

Sutherland expressed the changed relationship of Americans and Iraqis in Diyala as he stressed why American forces needed to stay in the province in order to let the Iraqis take control of their own security. "The level of violence, the increase in services, the efforts to get employment and jobs working will be determined by the people of Diyala. What I do is enable them. Right now...there are still al-Qaeda elements out there that want to re-infiltrate back in. I will destroy them, working with the Iraqi security forces. There are still rogue militia organizations that want to control areas, for advancement of either secular or economic interests. I will destroy them, working with Iraqi security forces. There is corruption...in elements of the government that has to be attacked, and we will attack that. The people will determine the outcome of this; I will be their enabler."[136]

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87   "Greywolf: Making a Difference," slides provided by 3-1 Cavalry PAO, October 25, 2007. The cooperation of Obeidis from Dojima also corresponds temporally with attempts to kidnap students: Amran Awad, "Gunmen Kidnap Seven University Students North of Baghdad," Aswat al-Iraq News Service, June 7, 2007, Translation from Arabic; Richard A. Oppel Jr. and Khalid Al-Ansary, The New York Times Media Group, and Iraqi employees contributed from Diyala and Mosul, "At

least 18 die in truck bomb blast near Falluja," *The International Herald Tribune*, June 6, 2007.

88   Colonel David Sutherland, Civilian Defense Experts Conference Call, November 9, 2007.

89   Sheik Majeed al Bayati was kidnapped by a major, criminal militia leader in Baghdad in late October, perhaps illustrating the militia's assessment of his activities, see "7 freed tribal chiefs arrive in Diyala," Aswat Aliraq, October 31, 2007. Rogue JAM leader, Arkhan Hasnawi, kidnapped Sheik Majeed and others in Sha'ab after they attended a reconciliation meeting in the (JAM-guarded) al Rashid hotel. Arkhan Hasnawi offered to release the others (Shia) for ransom, but not Sheik Majeed and the other Bayati (the Sunni). The Iraqi Security Forces later rescued all the hostages but one, who had been killed. According to Sutherland, none of the individuals captured participated in Diyala reconciliation talks with Greywolf. see Colonel David Sutherland, Civilian Defense Experts Conference Call, November 9, 2007.

90   "Greywolf: Making a Difference," slides provided by 3-1 Cavalry PAO, October 25, 2007. Fifteen Sunni and Shia tribal leaders in the Khalis district met with U.S. and Iraqi Army commanders, provincial director of police, the mayor of Khalis, the Khalis police chief, the Khalis Emergency Response Force commander, and Khalis city council members.

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