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Tribesmen fighting alongside Iraqi police forces hold a position on a street 30 January 2015 in Ramadi, Iraq, during a military operation against Islamic State fighters.

The Role of Iraqi Tribes after the Islamic State's Ascendance

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In the midst of a military campaign littered with the bodies of its victims, the jihadist group that dubbed itself the Islamic State (IS) nonetheless managed to shock observers with a series of atrocities it inflicted on the

Albu Nimr tribe in Iraq's Anbar Province during October and November 2014.¹ Following the Albu Nimr's resistance to IS military advances in Anbar, the first indications of the jihadist group's intentions came on 27 October,

when IS rounded up the remaining civilian population of 1,500 families in Zuwayrah following its capture of the village. A string of mass executions followed.

The executions began on 29 October when IS militants paraded more than forty captured Albu Nimr fighters through the streets of Hit—and then shot and killed them in the city's central square in front of residents.² The following day, IS publicly executed another seventy-five Albu Nimr tribesmen, forcing dozens of residents to watch as they shot the captives in their heads.³ On 1 November, the jihadist group executed approximately fifty civilians in Ras al-Maa, while thirty-five bodies were found in a mass grave in Hit.⁴ On 2 November, IS publicly executed fifty Albu Nimr tribesmen in Hit and killed sixty-seven more tribe members as they fled from the village of al-Tharthar.⁵ On 3 November, IS publicly executed thirty-six Albu Nimr civilians, including women and children, on the outskirts of Hit.⁶ On 4 November, IS executed twenty-five more tribesmen, shooting them at close range and dumping their bodies in a well.⁷ On 9 November, IS executed seventy Albu Nimr tribesmen in Hit District and then executed sixteen more tribe members on 13 November.⁸

The attempted extermination of the Albu Nimr marked, at the time, IS's most vicious attack on a Sunni population in Iraq. Overall, IS slaughtered more than seven hundred members of the tribe in less than twenty days. Why did IS commit these massacres? What role do the Sunni tribes play in the current battle for Iraq? What can the United States do to better engage with substate allies?

Answering these questions requires context about the Sunni tribes' historical relationship with jihadist organizations in Iraq, beginning with the U.S. invasion to topple dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003. Given the disempowerment of Iraq's Sunnis following Saddam's ouster, many Sunni tribes initially supported the insurgency against the new Iraqi government and the U.S. occupation. But the excesses of al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI), which came to play a leading role in the insurgency, pushed many Iraqi Sunni tribes to support the *Sahwa* (Awakening) movement that stood up against AQI's power.⁹ The *Sahwa* began in Anbar Province, and that uprising served as a model that was exported to other parts of Iraq. This method of Sunni tribal engagement played an important role in AQI's defeat in 2007–08.

This defeat did not mean the death of AQI. That organization was reborn as IS and became more powerful than AQI had ever been. The Islamic State could have learned a

variety of lessons from AQI's defeat. One lesson could have been the need to engage with tribes and try to win their loyalty by appearing to be an organic part of them, rather than alienating the tribes by trying to coerce them through the use of force. That is largely the lesson that the al-Qaida organization, from which IS was expelled in February 2014, took from its affiliate's defeat during the Iraq War. But IS instead internalized the opposite lesson: it came to believe that the best approach to tribes and other local actors was employing *greater* force and brutality. The result is that, though Iraq's disaffected Sunni tribes were initially optimistic about IS's spectacular June 2014 advance into Iraq—particularly because the jihadist group had worked in a coalition with other Sunni organizations—IS alienated them even faster than AQI had.

This situation presents opportunities for IS's enemies, including the United States. It is vital, however, that the United States learn the right lessons from the *Sahwa* and its aftermath, including how the United States and Iraq managed to squander the trust and confidence of the Sunni tribes that were so central to AQI's defeat. Indeed, as of this writing, IS forces have been involved in an intense fight as they attempt to capture Ramadi, the capital of Anbar. If IS succeeds in capturing the city and is unchecked in slaughtering the tribes that have been resisting its advance, there is a chance that this article could end up a sad epitaph to the idea of an anti-IS tribal rebellion.

Origins of the *Sahwa*

Sahwa al-Anbar is the name of the tribal uprising against AQI that a number of Anbari sheikhs announced on 14 September 2006 at Sheikh Abdul Sattar Abu Rishā's home in Ramadi.¹⁰ The uprising had roots in the evolution of the Sunni insurgency after 2003. As sectarianism grew following the U.S.-led invasion, Iraqis—especially in rural areas—relied more heavily on their tribal ties for security and subsistence than they did the new state. But rather than accepting and working within the tribal structure, AQI and its Jordanian leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi set out to oppose and disempower it. Part of the reason AQI and Zarqawi opposed tribal power was their hardline religious outlook. Many AQI leaders opposed all forms of political participation, even if it was a means to combat the U.S. occupation, because they believed that political affairs should be handled solely by an Islamic *shura* (consultative council), and that loyalty to any other political or social system was un-Islamic. As a corollary to this belief, Zarqawi



(Photo by Azhar Shallal, AFP, Getty Images)

Iraqi tribal fighters, backing government forces, fire from behind a berm at Islamic State group positions in Abu Risha District on the northern outskirts of the Iraqi Sunni Muslim city of Ramadi, 22 September 2014.

and his associates tried to delegitimize Iraqis' strong tribal loyalties, as they thought loyalty to one's tribe conflicted with submission to religious authority.¹¹

Zarqawi and AQI felt they had license to condemn and execute anyone they found disloyal to Islam, whether this disloyalty came from participation in the new political process, contact with U.S. forces, or allowing tribal bonds to outstrip one's dedication to jihad. This extremism conflicted with traditional Iraqi interpretations of Islam, including even the understanding of many Iraqi Islamists, who did not view political participation or tribal loyalties as contrary to religious principles.¹² These Iraqi Islamists were keenly aware of local sensitivities and did not attack the defining characteristic of many Sunni Arabs' identity—their tribe. Tribal loyalties had only grown stronger since the onset of the Iraq War as tribal affiliations became a key social safety net against the anarchic backdrop.

In addition to its position on tribal affiliations, AQI also alienated the local population through its brutality and totalitarian religious governance. In Anbar, where AQI was particularly strong, attacks on civilians increased by 57 percent between February and August 2006.¹³ A retrospective on the improvements that the Sahwa would later bring to Anbar published in *Military Review* described AQI as carrying out a “heavy-handed,

indiscriminate murder and intimidation campaign” in Ramadi during this period, which alienated the Sunni tribes.¹⁴ In the U.S. Marine Corps official history of the Anbari Sahwa, the head of an Iraqi women's nongovernmental organization recalled AQI committing “the ugliest torture” to intimidate the population. If that did not work, AQI would slaughter people, sometimes decapitating them.¹⁵

AQI further alienated local Sunnis through its costly approach to the 2005 elections. In the run-up to the January 2005 provisional elections, some Sunnis in the insurgency wanted to participate. But Zarqawi's intimidation campaign, as well as regional pressure from insurgency sponsors, caused Sunni participation in the January 2005 elections to be very low. As the new provisional government formed in May 2005, Sunni insurgent leaders realized that boycotting had been a mistake. The new government was formed by an overwhelming majority of pro-Iranian Shia and Kurdish parties, and it gained an internationally recognized mandate to draft a constitution and form the new Iraqi security forces (ISF).

Zarqawi, flush with money and recruits, moved to consolidate his leadership. He waged an assassination and intimidation campaign against Sunni politicians, tribal leaders, clerics who refused to espouse his extremism, and

anyone who joined the ISF or had ties to the new Iraqi government. Though Zarqawi had a strong hand at the time, he overplayed it. Vigilante groups that received no U.S. support began waging shadow wars against AQI, largely to extract revenge for the jihadist group's widespread assassinations but also to regain control of the insurgency. These anti-AQI Anbari vigilantes, prior to the creation of the Sahwa, were known as Tribal Revolutionaries.

Tribal rivalries were intertwined with these vigilante efforts. These rivalries were multidimensional, existing at the family, subtribal, and larger tribal levels. Different groups were connected to various tribal patrons, who held clashing positions on the insurgency, the Americans, and Zarqawi. Vigilantes fighting Zarqawi and AQI received assistance from Sunni Islamist politicians who denounced the U.S. occupation but were nonetheless targeted by AQI. Senior tribal leaders who began to fight AQI through these early vigilante efforts included the Abu Mahal in al-Qaim; Abu Nimr in Hit (whom IS would later viciously target); Abu Jugayfa in Haditha; Abu Risha, Abu Thyab, Abu Assaf, Abu Alwan, and Abu Fahad in Ramadi; and the Abu Essa and al-Janabis in Fallujah. Many of these tribal leaders constituted the backbone of the Sahwa al-Anbar that was announced in September 2006.

The Surge-Era Sahwa and Its Aftermath

The tribal revolt in Anbar against AQI that began in 2004, was named Sahwa in 2006, and then was adopted and adapted by U.S. troops in 2007–2008 during the troop surge, has been misunderstood by many Western observers. When the Sahwa was announced in September 2006, the U.S. brigade in charge of operations in Ramadi decided to recognize the legitimacy of the uprising. U.S. companies and battalions in Anbar had supported similar tribal uprisings but were limited in the kind of support they could provide.

Sunnis in the area lacked a functioning city council and local police officers, and they faced Iraqi army soldiers who were mainly Shias in a majority Sunni city. Thus, the Sahwa had relatively limited demands, only asking the U.S. brigade to recruit tribesmen into the security forces locally, to allow them to secure their own neighborhoods, and to help the tribal uprising have more political representation in the municipal and provincial councils. The U.S. brigade did not use U.S. funds to pay Anbari tribal fighters' salaries, but it did work within the rules of Iraq's ministry of the

interior to recruit tribal fighters into the police force. The new recruits' weapons, training, and salaries were all paid for by Iraq's Ministry of Interior. In return, the U.S. brigade used its authorized reconstruction funds to finance reconstruction projects in areas from which the local police dislodged AQI.

The Ramadi experiment, in which the United States supported a grassroots uprising against AQI, was an immediate success. Tribal and local government leaders from Sunni areas made their way to Ramadi, asking the Sahwa leadership to help them convince U.S. troops in their own areas to allow them to build police stations and be in charge of their own operations against AQI. It was not until the summer of 2007 that the United States began paying the salaries of tribal fighters claiming to be Sahwa in areas where the interior ministry did not want to hire Sunni tribal fighters (including in areas where Shias made up the majority of security officers, such as in Baghdad and Salahideen).

It is important to distinguish between the Sahwa centered in Ramadi and the Sahwat (also known as the Sons of Iraq program) largely outside of Anbar.¹⁶ The Sahwa based in Ramadi, Hit, al-Qaim, Haditha, and the Ramadi-Fallujah corridor were integrated into Iraq's security institutions from the beginning. There was not much pushback from Baghdad about allowing these local Sunnis to constitute the majority of the ISF in their areas because homogeneous Anbar did not have the same kind of sectarian problems as the mixed areas of Baghdad, Salahideen, Diyala, and Babel.

The Sahwa's turning of tribes to cooperation with coalition forces made a significant difference on the ground. At its height, more than one hundred thousand predominantly Sunni Iraqis took part in this program. Then Army Gen. David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker presented information about the changes on the ground to Congress in two separate sets of testimony, in September 2007 and April 2008. By the initial testimony in September 2007, the Awakening movement had already helped to significantly improve Anbar, transforming it from the days in which al-Qaida was the dominant actor. Gen. Petraeus said that Anbar had become "a model of what happens when local leaders and citizens decide to oppose al-Qaida and reject its Taliban-like ideology."¹⁷

Despite this success, as the United States drew down its forces in Iraq at the end of 2011 and U.S. leverage over Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government diminished,

the situation for Sons of Iraq members deteriorated quickly. Though the U.S. government and Sunni politicians tried to promote the Sahwa's integration into the ministries of interior and defense, starting in 2010 the Baghdad government began taking steps to weaken Sahwa forces. Baghdad stripped fighters of their military ranks, reduced pay, seized weapons, and arrested fighters on the suspicion of supporting terrorist groups. The government also dragged its feet on providing government jobs to Awakening forces. In turn, hundreds of Sons of Iraq members defected to the Sunni insurgents, who adopted a carrot-and-stick recruitment approach: they targeted Awakening members for death but, at the same time, promised larger salaries than the Iraqi government paid if these fighters instead switched sides.¹⁸

Those who refused to rejoin the insurgency found themselves increasingly vulnerable to attack by AQI operatives. For example, from July through September 2013, AQI militants killed fifty-four Sahwa members.¹⁹ The most notable attack during that stretch came in August when al-Qaida gunmen assassinated Sheikh Hazem Hajem al-Jawali, who had played a critical role in establishing Sahwa in the Kirkuk area in 2008. Shortly before al-Jawali's assassination, he received a phone call from a man claiming to be an AQI leader, who threatened him if he refused to resign from Sahwa. But al-Jawali refused to be intimidated. On 19 August, his car was cut off by gunmen while he was driving to a *souq* (open-air market) in al-Rashad. His final act was trying to use his body to shield his three-year-old niece from the hail of bullets, but both were killed.

When U.S. troops withdrew from Iraq in December 2011, the Shia-led government headed by Nouri al-Maliki almost immediately issued an arrest warrant for the highest-ranking Sunni politician, Vice President Tareq al-Hashimi, who was also the leader of the Iraqi Islamic Party. Baghdad's uneven treatment of Sunni populations and neighborhoods was accompanied by an escalation in the war in neighboring Syria. The combination of these factors gave new life to AQI.

Anbar's Protest Camps and Escalating Sectarian Tensions

In December 2012, Baghdad's Shia-led government issued arrest warrants for the bodyguards of then minister of finance Rafi al-Essawi. Like Hashimi, Essawi was a former leader in the Iraqi Islamic Party and a known supporter of the early vigilante groups that had fought AQI

in Anbar. With Hashimi in exile, and new efforts made to target al-Essawi, Sunnis in Anbar mounted peaceful protests. They demanded the release of prisoners from the many raids conducted in Anbar by counterterrorism forces controlled by Maliki, and demanded the repeal of the de-Baathification law that Sunnis believed was only enforced against them.

Many tribal leaders who were the symbols of the Sahwa supported these protests, which started in Fallujah and spread throughout Anbar. These leaders included Ahmed Abu Risha, Ali Hatem al-Suleiman, Mohammed Mahmood Latif al-Fahadawi, and others. Tribal leaders funded daily meals for protestors. Speakers would give sermons at the protest sites, encouraging protesters to denounce the use of violence while demanding that their rights be granted. Maliki's Shia-led government accused protest organizers of inciting sectarianism, violence, and sympathy for al-Qaida, and it pressured the Anbari government to end the protests.

As part of his party's campaign in Iraq's provincial elections in April 2013, Maliki continued to denounce the peaceful protests as a Baathist and AQI scheme to destabilize his government in Baghdad. Five Iraqi soldiers had been killed in Fallujah in January 2013, and Maliki blamed the protesters for targeting the ISF. He promised to take on the protestors. The central government then postponed provincial elections in Anbar and Nineveh, claiming the security situation did not permit them. This further enraged the Sunni protesters.

After the postponed Anbari provincial election was held in June 2013, a new provincial government was formed—led by supporters and organizers of the Anbar protests. The new provincial leaders, led by Governor Ahmed al-Thyabi (whose tribe was active in the vigilante efforts against al-Qaida in 2005) said it was time for the protesters to take their demands to Baghdad. Protest organizers became aware that AQI supporters had by now infiltrated protest sites. While the protests remained peaceful, the rhetoric at the protests had shifted in a more militant direction, and there were increasing calls for Sunnis to defend themselves from raids and arrests by forming the Free Iraqi Army and tribal protection forces.

Many Sunni organizers disliked AQI's presence in the protests but chose not to confront AQI. They knew they would not be protected in any confrontation with AQI.²⁰ Some organizers, mainly those associated with Ahmed Abu Risha, called on protesters to give the political process



(Photo by Azhar Shallal, AFP, Getty Images)

A member of Iraqi security forces, who are backed by Sunni tribesmen, gives assistance to comrades who were wounded 7 September 2014 during an attack on a military post in Anbar Province, west of the provincial capital Ramadi, during the visit of Ahmed al-Dulaimi, the governor of Iraq's Anbar Province.

a chance as well as to support the ISF's efforts to remove AQI from the protests. Other leaders, especially those who resented Sheikh Ahmed's ascent to power in 2006–07, distanced themselves from his proposal and called on the protesters to continue. Ali Hatem al-Suleiman, whose great-grandfather aligned with British forces during the British occupation of Iraq, was a vocal opponent of Sheikh Ahmed. Ali Hatem claimed to head the Tribal Military Council, which was composed of Tribal Revolutionaries.

Tensions between the two camps erupted in December 2013 after Anbari MP (Member of Parliament) Ahmad Alwani was arrested at his home in Ramadi, during which his bodyguards clashed with Maliki's counterterrorism forces. Clerics supporting the protest movement called on Sunnis to defend themselves, and the remaining protesters came to openly support armed confrontation with the Iraqi security forces. Now Anbar was immersed in an intertribal and intratribal fight, with multiple power centers involved.

The various conflicts brought to the fore by the Anbari protest camps would again manifest in January 2014, when AQI made a lightning advance to capture Fallujah

just as the ISF cleared out the protest camps.²¹ This timing was not coincidental: not only did AQI understand that the ISF would be preoccupied with emptying the protest camps, and thus would have greater difficulty stopping its advance, but this military move symbolically positioned AQI as the defender of Iraqi Sunnis. And the protest camp-related conflicts emerged again with IS's June 2014 advance from Syria into Iraq.

The Sunni Tribes in IS's June 2014 Offensive

Some of the tribes that had opposed the ISF during the conflict over the protest camps participated in IS's broad-based offensive into Iraq in June 2014, which culminated in IS's capture of Mosul. Those who aligned with IS included members of the Tribal Revolutionaries coalition, which publicly acknowledged in July 2014 that there had been "coordination" between these tribes and IS.²² Most tribes were internally divided, with some members aligned with IS while others remained neutral or allied with the Iraqi government.²³ The Islamic State sought to accentuate and capitalize on intratribal generational conflicts by promising

the tribes' "younger generations that they will replace the older generation" in territories under IS control, according to United Arab Emirates-based analyst Hassan Hassan.²⁴ The Iraqi government pointed to intratribal divisions as a reason that it withheld military aid to Sunni tribes fighting IS, claiming there was a risk that weapons delivered to them would end up in IS's hands.²⁵

Though the tribes that joined IS's offensive often disagreed with IS's extreme interpretation of Islam, many felt alienated by the Maliki regime and saw IS as a bulwark against the Baghdad government's sectarian agenda.²⁶ Zaydan al-Jibouri, an Anbari tribal leader, explained the decision by some of his tribesmen to join IS: "The Sunni community has two options. Fight against IS and allow Iran and its militias to rule us, or do the opposite. We chose IS for only one reason. IS only kills you. The Iraqi government kills you and rapes your women."²⁷

IS's relationship with the tribes was always delicate and susceptible to disruption. Even in the early days of IS's push into Iraq, some tribal leaders publicly stated that their alliance with IS was temporary and could be reversed if changes occurred in Baghdad. For instance, Ali Hatem al-Suleiman claimed, "When we get rid of the government, we will be in charge of the security file in the regions, and then our objective will be to expel terrorism—the terrorism of the government and that of IS."²⁸

Given this early tribal unease with IS, the jihadist group's brutal tactics and heavy-handed governance approach created further rifts with its erstwhile Sunni tribal allies. The Islamic State's decision to declare a caliphate and demand that all Sunnis swear allegiance to the caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was deeply divisive, and a number of tribal sheikhs refused to pledge allegiance to Baghdadi.

Despite this, IS gained a stronger foothold in Anbar after the fall of Mosul in June 2014 through a powerful offensive that resulted, among other things, in the group's slaughter of the Abu Nimr. Almost immediately upon gaining ground in Anbar, IS targeted the original Sawha families that had helped fill the ranks of the local Iraqi police during the surge era. This meant that in al-Qaim, the Abu Mahal were targeted; in Hit, the Abu Nimr; in Haditha, the Abu Jugayfa; and in Ramadi, the Abu Risha, Thyabi, and Fahadawi.

Conclusion

The Iraq War shaped the way both IS and al-Qaida understand the role of local populations, and the two organizations learned diametrically opposed lessons from the war. Al-Qaida came to believe that AQI's brutality had alienated local populations and fomented resistance, thus contributing to the organization's downfall. As a result, al-Qaida instructed its affiliates to be less intrusive



(Photo by Karim Kadim, Associated Press)

Iraqi Shia tribal fighters deploy with their weapons while chanting slogans against the Islamic State 3 June 2014 in Baghdad's Sadr City, Iraq. The tribal leaders declared their readiness, along with that of their tribesmen, to help the military and take up arms against the Islamic State, which had made advances into Iraq's Sunni heartland.

and more patient when dealing with local populations. For instance, al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb emir Abu Musab Abdel Wadoud reprimanded jihadists for their iron-fisted governance approach in Mali in 2012, telling them that “our previous experience proved that applying *sharia* [Islamic law] this way, without taking the environment into consideration, will lead to people rejecting the religion and engender hatred toward the mujahedin.”²⁹ In contrast, the conclusion IS drew from AQI’s defeat is seemingly that AQI had collapsed because it failed to sufficiently stamp out opposition. Rather than viewing the population as a potential ally, IS generally perceives tribes as a potential threat to its supremacy, as well as religiously suspect.

Despite IS’s excesses, Sunnis feel marginalized and targeted by the Iraqi government. They are not equally represented, and the Sunni establishment lacks any consensus that the current political process is a viable means of defending their rights. Further, the Iraqi government has taken pains to avoid arming the tribes. If Iraq armed those vested in the political process, and allowed them to take on IS with ISF support, they would surely win. Instead, the Iraqi government has decided to rely on Shia tribesmen and militias to support the ISF.

But it is becoming increasingly clear that the Iraqi government will have to work with local tribes in Sunni-majority provinces such as Anbar if the ISF is to have any hope of driving IS out. Sending Shia fighters into Anbar risks galvanizing the tribes to bandwagon with IS to prevent what many Sunnis would view as a Shia invasion. Thus, Baghdad’s strategy must include winning the trust of disillusioned Sunni tribes.

In the long term, the best solution to the threat posed by IS is to establish a national army that is perceived by

both Shias and Sunnis as nonsectarian. But such a force is unlikely to emerge in the near future, meaning that a short-term fix is necessary. The United States should pressure the Iraqi government to provide arms, ammunition, and other material support to individual tribes, like the Albu Nimr and al-Jabouri, who are fighting IS. The Iraqi government could do this by sending arms and supplies directly to the local Iraqi police.

And if the situation looks particularly dire for the Sunni tribes, and the Iraqi government proves unwilling to assist them—as may currently be the case in Ramadi—the United States should be willing directly to provide such support as arms, medical supplies, equipment, and money to the Sunni tribal leadership, bypassing the government of Iraq. In a world where the military landscape is increasingly dominated by non-state actors, the United States should be willing to ally directly with nonstate actors who have mutual interests. Doing so effectively involves—unlike what occurred in the aftermath of the surge-era *Sahwa*—maintaining relationships with these nonstate allies rather than garnering a reputation for helping allies when the situation requires—and then abandoning them once short-term U.S. interests are satisfied.

One Awakening leader noted that Sunni tribes tend to back the group whom they believe to be the “strong horse.”³⁰ The United States needs to demonstrate that the anti-IS coalition is the “strong horse” in this fight. And when IS has been weakened, the United States should make sure that its tribal allies do not view the United States as abandoning them for a second time. ■

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Notes

1. Abu is used to denote a large tribal configuration, but Abu also may be employed as an article for a tribal name. Thus, some sources refer to the Nimr tribe as the Abu Nimr, others as the Abu Nimr.
2. Matt Bradley, "Islamic State Executes at Least 40 Tribal and Iraqi Government Fighters," *Wall Street Journal*, 29 October 2014.
3. "IS Militants Execute 75 Tribesmen in Western Iraq," Xinhua, 30 October 2014.
4. "Islamic State: Militants Kill 50 from Iraqi Anbar Tribe," BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation], 1 November 2014 (reporting executions in Ras al-Maa); "ISIS Kills 85 More Members of Iraqi Tribe," Reuters, 1 November 2014 (describing bodies found in Hit).
5. See "Islamic State 'Kills 322' from Single Sunni Tribe," BBC, 2 November 2014 (describing IS's public execution of fifty tribesmen); "IS Militants Execute 67 Tribesmen in Western Iraq," Xinhua, 2 November 2014 (describing IS's killing of sixty-seven tribe members as they fled).
6. "IS Militants Execute 36 Tribesmen in Western Iraq," Xinhua, 4 November 2014.
7. "Iraq Security Forces on Alert as Shi'ites Gather for Ashura," Reuters, 4 November 2014.
8. "Asaabaat Daa'esh Tartakeb Majzarah Jadeeda Bihaaqq 'Asheerat al-Bu Nimr Bi'i'daamha Akthar min 70 Shakhsaan," Iraqi Media Net, 11 November 2014 (describing IS's execution of 70 Abu Nimr tribesmen); "Daa'esh Ya'adam 16 Shakhsaan min 'Asheerat al-Bu Nimr Shimaali Sharq al-Ramadi," Al-Mada Press, 13 November 2014 (reporting execution of sixteen Abu Nimr members).
9. AQI would go through several name changes before finally settling on the IS appellation after it announced that it had reestablished the caliphate. See Aaron Y. Zelin, *The War between ISIS and al-Qaida for Supremacy of the Global Jihadist Movement* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2014), table 1 (detailing IS's various name changes). This article refers to the group as AQI up until its expulsion from al-Qaida in February 2014, and calls it IS thereafter.
10. Gary W. Montgomery and Timothy S. McWilliams, *Al-Anbar Awakening vol. 2: Iraqi Perspectives* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2009), 46, 188.
11. Nadem al-Jabouri, *Tanthim al-Qaida fi-l-Iraq* (unpublished manuscript, 2009), 3; Waleed al-Rawi, *Dawlat al-Iraq al-Islamiya* (Amman: Amna House Press, 2012).
12. Camille Tawil, *Brothers in Arms: The Story of al-Qa'ida and the Arab Jihadists* (London: Saqi Books, 2010); Nadem al-Jabouri, "The Future of al-Qa'ida in Iraq in Light of the US Troop Withdrawal," presentation at NESAS [Near East South Asia] Center for Strategic Studies, 13 January 2011; Mahmud Janabi, 12 December 2010, Baghdad, interview with Sterling Jensen.
13. Peter Devlin, "State of the Insurgency in al-Anbar," intelligence assessment, 17 August 2006, 2. In an intelligence assessment, Col. Peter Devlin described AQI as the "dominant organization of influence" in Anbar Province.
14. Niel Smith and Sean MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review* (March–April 2008).
15. Montgomery and McWilliams, 20.
16. See Najim Abed al-Jabouri and Sterling Jensen, "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening," *PRISM* 2(1) (2011).
17. David H. Petraeus, "Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq," 10–11 September 2007, 5.
18. Timothy Williams and Duraid Adnan, "Sunnis in Iraq Allied with U.S. Rejoin Rebels," *New York Times*, 16 October 2010.
19. Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Bridget Moreng, "Al-Qaeda's Offensive Against Iraq's Sahwa," War on the Rocks website, 30 September 2013.
20. Muhammad Khamis Abu Risha, 14 August 2013, Washington, D.C., interview with Sterling Jensen.
21. Liz Sly, "Al-Qaeda Force Captures Fallujah Amid Rise in Violence in Iraq," *Washington Post*, 3 January 2014.
22. Dalshad Abdullah, "Iraqi Tribal Revolutionaries Say Prepared to Accept ISIS Caliphate," *Asharq Al-Awsat*, 9 July 2014.
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24. "Hassan Hassan on How to Uproot ISIS in Deir Ezzor," *Syria Deeply* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), 27 October 2014.
25. Alice Fordham, "Despite a Massacre by ISIS, an Iraqi Tribe Vows to Fight Back," NPR [National Public Radio], 20 March 2014.
26. Abdullah. As Sheikh Raad Abdul Sattar Suleiman, a senior member of the Dulaim tribe, said in an interview in which he endorsed IS, "Iraqis are prepared to accept help from any party in order to defeat the gang that is ruling Iraq. We are Iraqis. We can change Maliki and his rule, and we will change the whole political process in Iraq"; Frederic Wehrey and Ala' Alrababa'h, "An Elusive Courtship: The Struggle for Iraq's Sunni Arab Tribes," *Syria Deeply* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), 7 November 2014.
27. David Ignatius, "Iraq and the U.S. are Losing Ground to the Islamic State," *Washington Post*, 23 October 2014.
28. Abdullah.
29. Abu Musab Abdel Wadoud, letter from the emir of al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb to his fighters in Mali, n.d., 3, http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/_international/_pdfs/al-qaida-manifesto.pdf (accessed 22 April 2015).
30. Bill Powell, "Sunni Tribes Will Bet on the Strong Horse, and That's ISIS," *Newsweek*, 11 December 2014.