

failure and success, though it took years for the United States to embrace such a relationship. Success at wooing the tribes took a long time, largely because the benefits took a while to be recognized. Initially, some in the U.S. military wanted to support tribes but were told that tribal authority was a relic of Iraq's past and not part of its democratic future.<sup>36</sup> In late 2005, the U.S. military made a more successful attempt to gain the cooperation of tribes in the far-western part of al Anbar province, which helped pacify the area more than a year before the rest of al Anbar was pacified.<sup>37</sup>

The U.S. part of the al Anbar bargain was to provide protection for the sheikhs and their entourages, most visibly by parking a tank outside each sheikh's compound.<sup>38</sup> The sheikhs, in turn, promised to persuade tribe members to join the police forces of Ramadi and other al Anbar towns. Some reports credited U.S. Army Colonel Sean MacFarland for having convinced the al Anbar sheikhs to cooperate. He certainly pushed the project forward, but the U.S. role was more as a catalyst.<sup>39</sup> The sheikhs had reasons of their own to oppose AQI, which had killed many family members and cut into their operations (such as

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<sup>36</sup> This was reported by Joe Klein, "Saddam's Revenge," *Time*, September 26, 2005, pp. 44–51). Military-intelligence officers presented the CPA with a plan to make a deal with 19 subtribes of the enormous Dulaimi clan, located in al Anbar province, the heart of the Sunni triangle. The tribes "had agreed to disarm and keep us informed of traffic going through their territories," says a former Army intelligence officer. "All it would have required from the CPA was formal recognition that the tribes existed—and \$3 million." The money would go toward establishing tribal security forces. "It was a foot in the door, but we couldn't get the CPA to move." Bremer's spokesperson, Dan Senor, said that a significant effort was made to reach out to the tribes. But several military officials dispute that. "The standard answer we got from Bremer's people was that tribes are a vestige of the past, that they have no place in the new democratic Iraq," says the former intelligence officer.

<sup>37</sup> West and West (2007). As reported in late 2005, acceptably trained Iraqi battalions began to join the persistent U.S. forces in al Anbar. AQI resorted to suicide attacks and roadside bombs and avoided direct fights. Subtribes began to kill AQI members in retaliation for individual crimes and discovered that AQI was ruthless but not tough. Near the Syrian border, an entire tribe joined forces with the Marines and drove AQI from the city of al Qaim.

<sup>38</sup> Perry (2006). Unfortunately, such help did not prevent the assassination of Sheikh Abdul Saltar in the summer of 2007.

<sup>39</sup> See, for instance, Jim Michaels, "Behind Success in Ramadi: An Army Colonel's Gamble," *USA Today*, May 1, 2007a, p. A1.