

flict was conducted through constant attrition. The police rounded up those who were AQI members even as AQI extended its intimidation campaign against police, their families, and the tribal sheikhs who had turned against them. The effects of Anbar Salvation Council's formation on AQI's strategy were immediate. Prior to mid-September, fewer than 2 to 3 percent of AQI's attacks were targeted against Iraqi police. In September, the ratio started rising to reach 15 percent (this includes a few attacks on Anbar Salvation Council itself) by early December 2006, when it jumped to the 25- to 30-percent level. By contrast, whereas roughly 10 percent of AQI's attacks had targeted members of the Iraqi Army, this ratio fell in March 2007 to 5 percent, where it remained through late 2007. In effect, AQI quickly understood who was its major threat in the province: the police.

The results of this shift were dramatic. By March, al Qa'ida had largely been expelled from Ramadi, a city that had been a wasteland for U.S. and Iraqi forces.<sup>31</sup> Except in Fallujah, the number of attacks in al Anbar fell dramatically. U.S. deaths, which were running roughly 30 a month in the entire province, fell to three in June 2007. Sheikh al-Dulami reported that al Anbar had "been purged completely of AQI and the Anbar Salvation Council's forces are encircling the organization's remnants in al-Ta'i area south of Ramadi which makes up 0.5 percent of Anbar's overall area. AQI used to control more than 90 percent before Anbar Awakening Council's establishment last year."<sup>32</sup>

It may seem hard to believe that the addition of a few thousand police officers could tip the balance of power in al Anbar province so swiftly. These police officers were essentially untrained, inexperienced, and poorly equipped, especially in comparison to the 35,000 U.S. soldiers already in the province. Nevertheless, there were two critical

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player there, it was not overwhelmingly dominant. The eastern section was not pacified until late 2007. It was the center-west section that underwent the largest swing in control.

<sup>31</sup> The assessment of Commander Steven Wisotzki, chief of staff for Naval Special Warfare Group One cited in Chris Johnson, "Military Officers Criticize Media Coverage of Battlefront in Iraq," *Inside the Navy*, February 5, 2007, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> "Iraq's Sunni Armed Groups Reportedly Planning Alliance Against Al-Qa'ida," *Al-Hayat* (London), April 11, 2007.