

some tribal sheikhs allied themselves with al Qa'ida, others had decamped to Jordan and Syria.²⁰ The few who remained saw repeated attacks decimate their familial ranks. One such sheikh, Abdul Sattar Buzaigh al-Rishawi of the influential Rishawi tribe in Ramadi, lost his father and several brothers to AQI. In the summer of 2006, AQI killed a prominent sheikh and refused to relinquish his body for burial until days had passed, contravening Islamic tradition. Indeed, AQI posed a major threat to tribal power.

Aided by the recoil of sheikhs, Sheikh Sattar organized 25 of the 31 tribes in al Anbar to join the Anbar Salvation Council in September 2006.²¹ Through the awakening movement, the sheikhs set themselves up as public enemies of AQI. Their primary strategy was to persuade young tribesmen to join the police forces of Ramadi and other al Anbar towns to help take back the province in return for protection by U.S. military forces.²² It took several months for the alliance to build its critical strength. As promised, the sheikhs persuaded tribal members to join the local police in large numbers. By December 2006, the Ramadi police force had doubled in size from 4,000 to a plateau of 8,000.²³ In western al Anbar, the number of police went from nearly zero to 3,000.²⁴ The police force in the province grew to 24,000 in mid-2007, with a goal of leveling off at 30,000.²⁵ U.S. forces, whose policy was to

²⁰ See Greg Jaffe, "How Courting Sheikhs Slowed Violence in Iraq," *Wall Street Journal*, August 8, 2007, p. A1.

²¹ Khalid Al-Ansary and Ali Adeeb, "Most Tribes in Anbar Agree to Unite Against Insurgents," *New York Times*, September 18, 2006, p. A12; Edward Wong and Khalid al-Ansary, "Iraqi Sheikhs Assail Cleric for Backing Qaeda," *New York Times*, November 19, 2006, p. 22; Tony Perry, "The Conflict in Iraq: Violence in the Capital," *Los Angeles Times*, January 23, 2007, p. A5.

²² Also termed *Anbar Intifada* (Sam Dagher, "Sunni Muslim Sheikhs Join US in Fighting al Qaeda," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 3, 2007, p. 1).

²³ Tony Perry, "The Conflict in Iraq: Struggles in Al Anbar," *Los Angeles Times*, December 15, 2006, p. A17.

²⁴ Rick Jervis, "Police in Iraq See Jump in Recruits," *USA Today*, January 15, 2007, p. 1.

²⁵ al-Ansary and Adeeb (2006). Rishawi said that the 25 tribes counted 30,000 young men armed with assault rifles who were willing to confront and kill the insurgents and criminal gangs that he blamed for damaging tribal life in al Anbar.