

Backgrounder # 19

Operation Raider Harvest: Establishing Lasting Security in Northern Diyala

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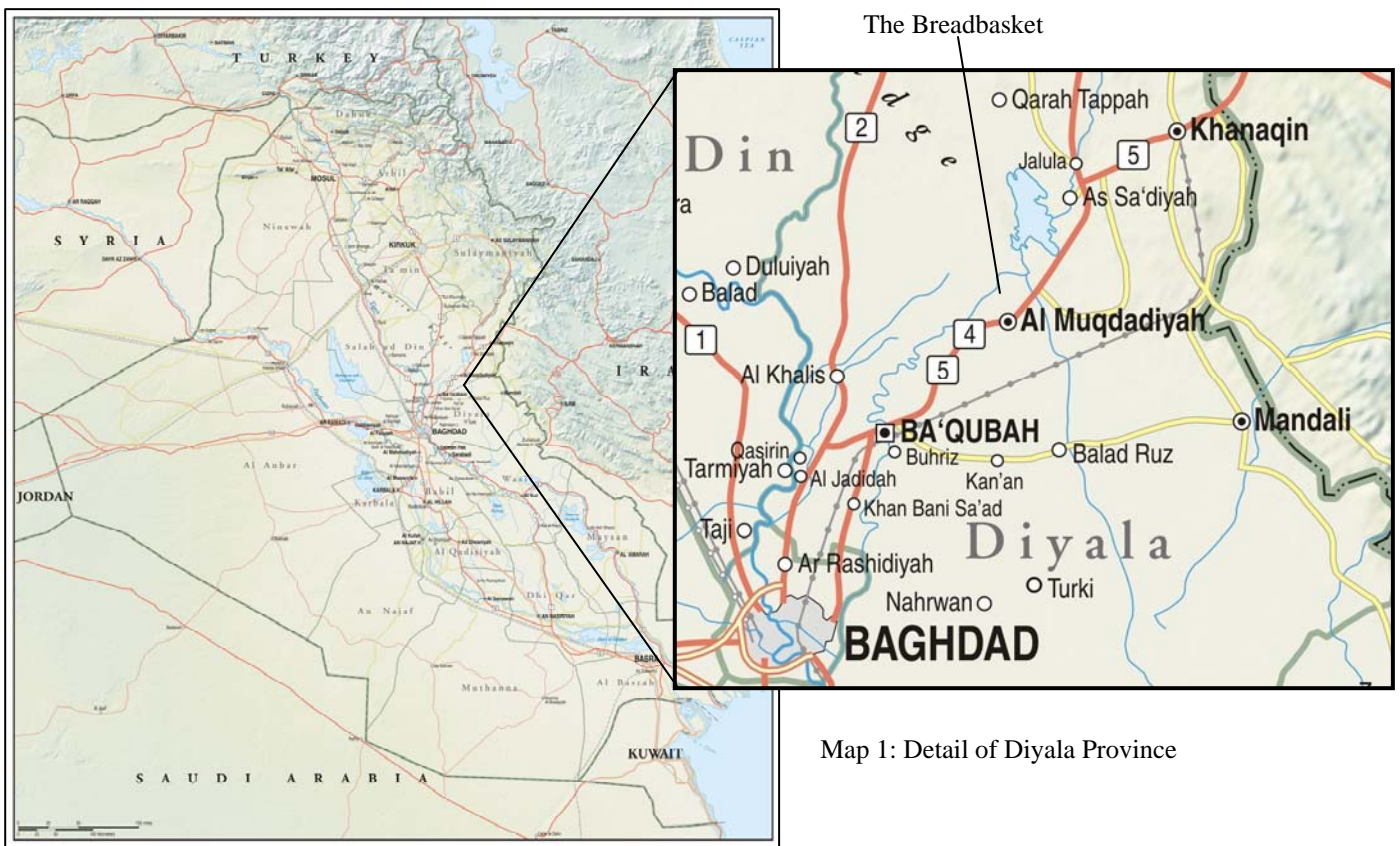
Backgrounder # 18, December Operations in Muqdadiyah, discussed the reconnaissance in force operations by Coalition Forces north of Muqdadiyah in December 2007 and predicted that the area would see an increased tempo of operations in the coming weeks. On January 9, 2008, Major General Mark Hertling, commander, Multi-National Division – North (MND-North), and 1st Armored Division, announced a new division-level, MND-North wide effort – Operation Iron Harvest. The centerpiece of Iron Harvest was Operation Raider Harvest, which indeed focused on the area north and west of Muqdadiyah. This backgrounder details the conduct of Raider Harvest and its potential impact on security in northern Diyala province.

As al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) was pushed up the Diyala River Valley by Coalition operations in 2007, the organization established a sanctuary in the area northwest of Muqdadiyah called the “Breadbasket.” AQI controlled the Breadbasket by terrorizing and intimidating the local population and used the area as a major logistics and command and control site to funnel fighters, weapons, and money down the Diyala River Valley into Muqdadiyah and Baqubah. Raider Harvest cleared the Breadbasket and then moved to a holding phase. The operation aimed to create lasting security by flooding the area with Iraqi Security Forces, investing in rebuilding Muqdadiyah and the Breadbasket’s essential services, infrastructure and economy, and connecting the area with the provincial and federal level governments.

Pushing Al Qaeda in Iraq North

After being cleared from Anbar, Baghdad and the belts, AQI has been steadily pushed up the Diyala River Valley since Coalition Forces began a series of operations against AQI’s network in the province in mid 2007. In June and July Operation Arrowhead Ripper cleared AQI out of Baqubah and blocked the organization from reestablishing safe havens west of the city in the Khalis Corridor and to the south in Khan Bani Saad. As Baqubah was cleared, Coalition Forces reconnoitered northeast of the city to pursue AQI and destroy enemy positions above Baqubah. During Operation Lightning Hammer I

in mid August, Coalition Forces spread out from the urban centers in Diyala, cleared approximately 50 villages, and established security up to Muqdadiah. Operation Lightning Hammer II prevented the reestablishment of AQI and cleared the city of Muqdadiah. In November and December, Operation Iron Hammer and Operation Iron Reaper continued to dismantle the AQI network in Diyala, but also focused heavily on the Za'ab triangle between Bayji, Sharqat and Hawija in northern Iraq. Military planners believed that many of the AQI elements pushed out of Diyala and elsewhere would attempt to regroup in these towns. Throughout Operation Iron Reaper in December, however, it became clear that AQI was still operating out of a sanctuary north and west of the city of Muqdadiah in the Breadbasket.ⁱ



Map 1: Detail of Diyala Province

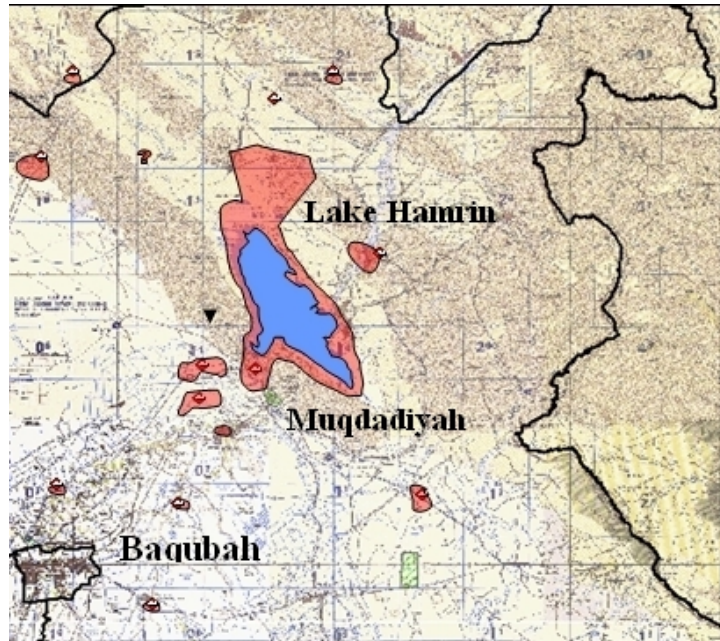
Maps by Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping

AQI's Sanctuary in the Breadbasket

After Coalition Forces cleared AQI and other insurgents from Diyala's major urban centers – Baqubah, Khalis, Muqdadiah – and the villages of the lower Diyala River Valley, part of the AQI network regrouped in the Breadbasket northwest of Muqdadiah. The Breadbasket is a fertile, largely agricultural area bounded by the Diyala River and Hamrin Ridge to the northwest and northeast, and by Muqdadiah to the south. It is an area of isolated villages dotted among dense citrus orchards and date palm groves, which are crisscrossed by a maze of canals and footpaths.ⁱⁱ This terrain has made the

Breadbasket an ideal location for AQI to operate and a difficult place for the few Coalition Forces that were previously in the area to clear and hold.

For more than a year AQI ruled the Breadbasket through both force and psychological intimidation. One of the primary mechanisms for maintaining their rule was a series of complexes that served as operating bases and detention, torture and execution facilities. In December Coalition Forces discovered one of these complexes in an operation targeting AQI in the area. The complex consisted of three detention buildings, one of which doubled as both a headquarters and torture facility. Inside the torture facility soldiers discovered “chains on the walls and ceilings, a bed still hooked up to an electrical system and several blood-stained items.”ⁱⁱⁱ Graffiti written on a wall of one of the buildings said “Long Live the Islamic State” – a clear reference to the caliphate sought by AQI and associated extremist groups.^{iv} And in the area around the complex Coalition Forces found an execution site and a mass grave with 26 human remains.^v A similar AQI prison and torture facility was discovered elsewhere during the course of operations in January.^{vi}



Map 2: Areas of AQI influence in Northern Diyala Province, November 2007 (Source: MNC-I)

AQI also had a number of safe houses scattered throughout the villages, which were used to maintain a presence in villages and transit through the area. There were numerous weapons and explosives caches distributed around the breadbasket to supply enemy fighters. There was also at least one car bomb making factory that was discovered during operations in December.^{vii}

These discoveries show that the AQI network in Diyala had several fairly sophisticated complexes, in addition to safe houses, weapons caches and a car bomb making factory, that were used to plan, prepare and conduct operations. According to Coalition Forces, AQI also had a sophisticated force structure in Diyala that was “organized into companies, squadrons and possibly a brigade.”^{viii} Based on

an organized command and control structure and a string of operating bases with large weapons caches, AQI was able to use the breadbasket to project force back down the Diyala River Valley to target Coalition Forces, Iraqi Security Forces, and newly established Concerned Local Citizens (CLC) groups in Baqubah and Muqdadiyah.

AQI maintained its sanctuary in the Breadbasket by terrorizing and intimidating the local population. When Coalition Forces arrived in January “residents confirmed that carloads of armed and masked men operated freely until recently.”^{xix} Residents in Sinsil village, for example, said, “There is no security. We are afraid to go out, and we expect to be killed at any moment.”^x In Sinsil residents lived for more than a year under an Islamic State in Iraq Sharia court, which handed out death sentences for even minor offenses. Smoking and drinking were prohibited and women were required to wear abayas and niqabs at all times. Individuals were kidnapped from the village by masked gunmen at random and many of them never returned.^{xi} In many of the villages AQI also imposed curfews. In one village, for example, the curfew was between 5 p.m. and 7 a.m. every day and villagers were told that they had to work for AQI.^{xii}

Residents were warned in extreme ways not to oppose AQI’s rule. The local Imam in Sinsil said that before Coalition Forces arrived “masked gunmen had paraded through the village with a severed head and warned the people that they could meet the same fate if they tried to organize their own security force.”^{xiii} Elsewhere, a leaflet found in one of the villages showed a picture of an attack on an Iraqi government checkpoint and threatened to “kill anyone working with the Iraqi Army, the police and the American forces.” The leaflet also threatened residents not to become CLC members.^{xiv} Residents acknowledged that these tactics worked. When Coalition Forces discovered the detention and torture complex in December local villagers said that they knew about the torture site but were previously too intimidated by the extremists to go to the authorities.^{xv}

A close look at the AQI organization and activities in the Breadbasket helps shed light on how the organization operates in the whole of Iraq. AQI established a sanctuary by terrorizing and intimidating the local population with strict laws and brutal punishments for even minor infractions. AQI’s string of detention, torture and execution facilities were important for imposing this rule. Operating bases and safe houses were established to plan, prepare and conduct attacks. And weapons caches and IED and car bomb making locations were used to supply enemy fighters, which then carried out attacks further down the Diyala River Valley.

Operation Iron Harvest

In the first week of January 2008 Lieutenant General Raymond T. Odierno, commander, Multi-National Corps – Iraq, announced a new corps-level offensive Operation Phantom Phoenix to follow on the successes of the 2007 corps-level offensives Operation Phantom Thunder and Operation Phantom Strike. Phantom Phoenix aims to protect the nine major cities in Iraq, with a particular emphasis on Baghdad, while at the same time pursuing AQI and other extremists that fled previous sanctuaries and

are attempting to regroup in smaller areas throughout Iraq. Phantom Phoenix includes several joint Iraqi and Coalition division and brigade-level operations throughout northern Iraq as well as in the southern belts of Baghdad. The first MND-North component of Phantom Phoenix is the division-level offensive Operation Iron Harvest. Iron Harvest aims to pursue AQI and other extremist elements that have migrated north after Coalition operations elsewhere. The central thrust of Iron Harvest was the brigade-level offensive Operation Iron Raider, which targeted the Breadbasket northwest of Muqdadiyah.^{xvi}

In December 2007 Coalition Forces conducted a reconnaissance in force of the Breadbasket in order to collect intelligence, determine how AQI functioned in the area, and set forces for Operation Iron Raider.^{xvii} Iron Raider targeted about 50-60 senior AQI leaders and about 200 lower-level fighters.^{xviii} The purpose of Iron Raider was to clear AQI out of the Breadbasket and deny enemy safe havens in the area. It also aimed to disrupt AQI funding sources, the Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) network in Diyala, and most importantly establish lasting security in the area.^{xix} Raider Harvest differed from previous operations in the Breadbasket because more troops flooded into the area during the operations, intending to hold the territory once it was cleared. General Petraeus explained “We’d actually been in and out of there a number of times in recent months, conducting very substantial raids and other operations. But this is one...to really clear it from one end to the other, and then to hold it.”^{xx}



A Soldier talks with an Iraqi Army soldier during a route clearance mission in support of Operation Raider Harvest in the northern Diyala River Valley, Diyala province, Iraq, Jan. 10. Photographer: Spc. John Crosby, 4th Stryker BCT, 2nd ID

About 5,000 U.S. forces took part in Operation Raider Harvest, in addition to Iraqi Security Forces. The U.S. effort was spearheaded by the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division (4th SBCT, 2nd ID), which is headquartered at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Warhorse north of Baqubah. The 4th SBCT, 2nd ID was reinforced by the 3-2 Stryker Cavalry Regiment (3-2 SCR), the 2-3

Armored Cavalry Regiment (2-3 ACR), and the 1-32 Cavalry Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition (1-32 RSTA) Regiment.^{xxi} U.S. Special Forces also took part in the operation, in addition to aviation personnel and assets like the MQ-1 Armed Reconnaissance Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV).^{xxii} Iraqi forces included the 5th Iraqi Army Division, which is headquartered at the Kirkush Military Base east of Baqubah.^{xxiii} The 5th Iraqi Army Division was also reinforced by the 3rd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division from Anbar province.^{xxiv}

The operation was centered out of FOB Normandy outside of Muqdadiyah. Coalition Forces moved thousands of U.S. forces, Iraqi units, scores of armored vehicles, equipment and ammunition, interpreters and other support workers into place in the days preceding the operation. Movement of these troops were staggered and done mostly at nighttime. Helicopters were used to transport troops to FOB Normandy, while the rest moved into place along the main highways and roads running through Diyala.^{xxv}

The operation began on January 8th with Coalition Forces simultaneously rolling into villages across the Breadbasket in the middle of the night. A number of Coalition vehicles were hit by IED's and Coalition Forces were attacked with some small arms fire and RPG's.^{xxvi} On the whole, however, Coalition Forces faced very little resistance. According to Brigadier General James Boozer, intelligence reports indicated that the 50-60 AQI leaders fled the area in the days preceding the operation, but that the 200 lower-level fighters remained.^{xxvii}

The AQI leaders that fled probably left for a combination of three reasons. First, Coalition operations in December were hard fought and continued over the period of a month. The insurgents took many casualties and many were detained. The presence of Coalition Forces in the area and the increased tempo of operations likely caused some insurgents to leave.^{xxviii} Second, the increased helicopter traffic in and out of FOB Normandy in the week preceding Raider Harvest indicated that Coalition Forces were being built up in the area and that a large operation was being prepared.^{xxix} Third, General Hertling speculated that there may have been an operational security breach by Iraqi officers who knew about the operation in advance and warned the insurgents.^{xxx} As a result, Coalition Forces fanned out into the Breadbasket and were able to clear the area without having to engage in heavy fighting.

Coalition Forces did, however, focus on tracking where both the leaders and fighters that escaped the Breadbasket went.^{xxxi} These tracking operations will prove important in the coming weeks in understanding where AQI fighters are moving to and regrouping, and how they plan to reconstitute their significantly degraded organization. Many of the fighters likely headed over the Hamrin Ridge and will move further north along the Lake Hamrin-Hawija-Mosul-Syria line that runs northwest across northern Iraq.

Some of the lower-level insurgents who stayed attempted to attack Coalition Forces, while others melted into the surrounding population. Coalition Forces faced some small arms fire and sniper fire on the first evening of the operation.^{xxxii} Coalition Forces also found many freshly planted IED's during the

course of operations and on one occasion engaged a group of individuals fleeing from an IED site to a nearby house.^{xxxiii} Many of the insurgents, however, attempted to melt into the population. Residents of villages, including the mayor of Sinsil, warned that insurgents still lurked among the population.^{xxxiv} Many of these individuals are likely local Iraqis who were recruited and intimidated by AQI. Rooting them out will be difficult and it is likely that many of them will simply melt back into the population permanently now that AQI is gone.

During the clearing phase of Raider Harvest Coalition Forces killed four enemy fighters, wounded four more, and detained 24 individuals. 13 IED's, 10 VBIED's, 4 HBIED's and 15 weapons caches were also discovered and cleared. On January 13th Raider Harvest moved into the holding phase in which Coalition Forces hoped to establish lasting security in the area.

Establishing Lasting Security in Northern Diyala

At the beginning of Raider Harvest, General Hertling said "While we will continue to pursue extremists, we know we won't measure the success of this operation by the kinetic effects over the next few weeks. Instead success will be found in the weeks and months after this operation is complete, as citizens see improved security and economic advancements."^{xxxv} Immediately after the clearing phase of Raider Harvest ended Coalition Forces began working on establishing the conditions necessary to create lasting security. The plan is to flood the area with Iraqi Security Forces, establish Joint Security Stations and a Joint Combat Outpost, invest in rebuilding Muqdadiyah and the Breadbasket's essential services, infrastructure and economy, and connect the area with the provincial and federal level governments.

The main part of establishing security in the weeks after Raider Harvest is to establish a sustained security presence throughout the area. The 5th Iraqi Army Division, reinforced by the 3rd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division will continue to be responsible for Diyala province. The army units will operate jointly with Coalition Forces over the coming weeks and will slowly take over greater responsibility for security in the Breadbasket, Muqdadiyah, and throughout Diyala so that Coalition Forces can continue to pursue AQI as it flees. In addition to the army presence, the Breadbasket will also be secured through a series of police stations. Police stations will be established in the middle of villages that were previously subject to AQI's rule of terror and intimidation.^{xxxvi}

There is also an effort to recruit Concerned Local Citizens (CLC) to integrate militias in the area into the Iraqi Security Forces and to help protect static locations, like security checkpoints. After the operation that cleared Muqdadiyah in October more than 1,000 Sunni and Shi'a CLC's were recruited to help man checkpoints and military safe houses across the city.^{xxxvii} These groups will be expanded out into the Breadbasket where during operations Coalition Forces encountered local militias that expressed interest in becoming CLC's, but had previously been too scared.^{xxxviii} In many places Coalition Forces handed out pamphlets as they entered villages in an effort to urge residents to form volunteer groups and

help defend their villages against AQI.^{xxxix} Over the coming weeks these groups will be formed to help provide security and to make stakeholders out of local residents.

To coordinate these various levels of security a number of Joint Security Stations “in the middle of key areas where there has been violence in the past” and at least one Joint Combat Outpost will be established in the Breadbasket.^{xl} These joint stations house Coalition Forces, Iraqi Security Forces, Iraqi police and Concerned Local Citizens in order to coordinate security operations and establish working relationships between the local and federal Iraqi Security Forces that will take over once the large Coalition presence is gone.

In addition to the security effort in the Breadbasket, Raider Harvest will also work to help rebuild the area. Some areas in Muqdadiyah and the Breadbasket have been completely destroyed. Essential services have been cut off, roads have been ripped up by IEDs, and buildings are crumbling or demolished from the constant fighting in the last year. As part of Raider Harvest, Coalition Forces will help funnel money into rebuilding houses and mosques and getting essential services back up and running.^{xli}

Coalition Forces began the holding on phase with humanitarian assistance as well. In the days after this phase began, Grim Troop, 2-3 ACR handed out flour and rice to residents in Mansuriyah and began a humanitarian assistance program. “As a part of the brigade operation to remove AQI and support local governance, Grim Troop is distributing humanitarian assistance, and will conduct a cooperative medical engagement in the area in the next few days. We will treat acute problems like cuts and burns, colds and sinus problems,” said Grim Troop Medic Cpl. Bill Allen. “After the clearing operation we are just trying to reach out to these people here and let them know we’re here for them.”^{xlii}



A Warrant Officer from the 5th Iraqi Army Division pours flour into an Iraqi man's burlap sack during a humanitarian aid mission in Mansuriyah, Jan. 13, conducted by the Iraqi Army and Soldiers of Troop G, 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. Photographer: Spc. John Crosby

Another component of rebuilding the Breadbasket is to help reconstitute an economy that was destroyed by AQI. The Breadbasket is a largely agricultural area. According to some residents many of the villagers fled when AQI arrived and others were killed or intimidated during their tenure. Many of their fields have been fallow and become overgrown in the last year. Coalition Forces will help provide micro grants to stand farmers back up on their feet. Others micro grants will be given to individuals to start small businesses in the villages. In the coming weeks these efforts will be stepped up as the Diyala Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) moves into the area and continues to build on these efforts.^{xliii}

The most important part of establishing lasting security in northern Diyala will come from tying different levels of governance together. The aim will be to tie the Breadbasket into Muqdadiyah and then Muqdadiyah into the Diyala provincial government, which will then incorporate the area into the Iraqi federal Government. This bottom-up approach will make stakeholders out of local residents by linking the Breadbasket into the larger body of governance in Iraq and allow funding from the central government to flow down to the local level.

On January 14th, Diyala Provincial Governor Ra'ad Rasheed Hameed Al Mullah went with the heads of essential services in Diyala province for water, electricity, health, education, municipalities and oil to Muqdadiyah to meet with their counterparts at the qa'da (county) level and begin this important process. The purpose of the meeting was to begin a working relationship between the provincial and qa'da governments in order to restore essential services in the area as quickly as possible and tie the qa'da level services into the provincial government. The provincial heads of essential services explained to their local counterparts what needs to be done in order to most effectively integrate the qa'da into the province and allow investment and services to begin flowing. Major Nicholas Difiore, the 4th SBCT, 2nd ID Reconciliations Engagement Officer, said of the meeting "This is one of those places where there is a break in the basic government, the linkage between qa'da and province, due to the security situation. Now after we have done many of these decisive operations like Raider Harvest, the security situation is improving. The technocrats feel much more comfortable traveling these roads and now we can see that linkage between province and qa'da strengthening."^{xliv} As this process unfolds in the coming months it will determine whether security and reconstruction will move forward in Muqdadiyah and the Breadbasket.

Conclusion

AQI's sanctuary in the Breadbasket shows that even though a large portion of AQI has been pushed out of central areas like Baghdad, the belts and Baqubah, the AQI network is resilient and will attempt to regroup on the fringes of provinces – like the Breadbasket in Diyala – in order to push back into more populated areas. The fact that the AQI leadership structure operating in the Breadbasket was mobile enough to fall back on lines of support further north shows this enduring resiliency and means that the core of AQI's structure remains intact and will regroup again. As a result, Coalition Forces will

need to continue major, people-intensive military operations including both kinetic and non-kinetic aspects in order to prevent AQI from establishing more sanctuaries elsewhere.

Operation Raider Harvest sheds light on the new counterinsurgency strategy that has been developed in the last year in order to prevent AQI from reestablishing sanctuaries. Coalition Forces cleared an area that had become an AQI sanctuary where local residents had been terrorized and cutoff from the rest of the country. The immediate focus of Coalition Forces was to build an enduring security structure that is based on the Iraqi Army and local security forces like Iraqi Police and CLCs and spread out among the population. These levels of security will be coordinated through joint stations where they will work with Coalition Forces to establish a permanent security *modus operandi*. Investment will be poured into the local economy in order to reestablish essential services, and rebuild infrastructure. Local residents will also be put back to work with a more stable level of security and micro grants to help get them restarted. Over the coming months efforts will be made to tie local government into the provincial and federal levels of government and make Muqdadiyah and the Breadbasket an integral part of the Iraqi state. Hopefully, this model will provide lasting security to northern Diyala.

ⁱ For 2007 operations in Diyala province see the Institute for the Study of War webpage www.understandingwar.org and in particular Iraq Reports I, IV, and VII, which detail Coalition operations in Diyala.

ⁱⁱ Major General Mark Hertling, Operational Briefing, Baghdad, January 9, 2008; Lennox Samuels, “Battling in the Breadbasket,” *Newsweek*, January 9, 2008; Alexandra Zavis, “A Renewed Push in Diyala,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 9, 2008; Kimi Yoshino and Julian E. Barnes, “U.S. Bombers Target al Qaeda in Iraq,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 2008; Amit R. Paley and Joshua Partlow, “Blast Kills 6 as Troops Hunt Iraqi Insurgents,” *Washington Post*, January 10, 2008.

ⁱⁱⁱ Multi-National Corps – Iraq Press Release 20071220-03. “MND-N Soldiers Find Atrocity Site, Torture Complex and Weapons Cache’s During Operation Iron Reaper,” December 20, 2007.

^{iv} Bradley Brooks, “Torture Chamber Found in Iraq,” Associated Press, December 20, 2007.

^v Multi-National Corps – Iraq Press Release 20071220-03. “MND-N Soldiers Find Atrocity Site, Torture Complex and Weapons Cache’s During Operation Iron Reaper,” December 20, 2007.

^{vi} Multi-National Force – Iraq Press Release A080112b. “Coalition Forces Find Prison Facility, Weapons Caches in Diyala,” January 12, 2008.

^{vii} On the discoveries and operations in December 2007 see Eric Hamilton, “December Operations in Muqdadiyah,” Backgrounder #18, The Institute for the Study of War, January 2008.

^{viii} Amit R. Paley, “Major Offensive Targets Insurgents,” *Washington Post*, January 9, 2008.

^{ix} Richard A. Opiel Jr. and Stephen Farrell, “9 U.S. Soldiers Killed in Sunni Strongholds,” *New York Times*, January 10, 2008.

^x Kimi Yoshino and Julian E. Barnes, “U.S. Bombers Target al Qaeda in Iraq,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 2008.

^{xi} Alexandra Zavis, “A Renewed Push in Diyala,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 9, 2008.

^{xii} Amit R. Paley, “Major Offensive Targets Insurgents,” *Washington Post*, January 9, 2008.

^{xiii} Alexandra Zavis, “Iraqi Troops Move Into Area,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 12, 2008.

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- ^{xiv} Richard A. Opiel Jr. and Stephen Farrell, “9 U.S. Soldiers Killed in Sunni Strongholds,” *New York Times*, January 10, 2008.
- ^{xv} Bradley Brooks, “Torture Chamber Found in Iraq,” Associated Press, December 20, 2007.
- ^{xvi} See the Operations section of Institute for the Study of War webpage www.understandingwar.org.
- ^{xvii} Major General Mark Hertling, Operational Briefing, Baghdad, January 9, 2008; For a detailed description of the December operations in the breadbasket see Eric Hamilton, “December Operations in Muqdadiyah,” Backgrounder #18, The Institute for the Study of War, January 2008.
- ^{xviii} Alexandra Zavis, “A Renewed Push in Diyala,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 9, 2008.
- ^{xix} Multi-National Corps – Iraq Press Release 20080109-05. “Operation Iron Harvest Clears al-Qaeda from Northern Iraq,” January 9, 2008; Major General Mark Hertling, Operational Briefing, Baghdad, January 9, 2008.
- ^{xx} General David Petraeus, Press Briefing by General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, January 12, 2008.
- ^{xxi} Wesley Morgan, *Multi-National Force – Iraq, Order of Battle*, Institute for the Study of War, January 2008.
- ^{xxii} Major General Mark Hertling, Operational Briefing, Baghdad, January 9, 2008.
- ^{xxiii} Major General Mark Hertling, Operational Briefing, Baghdad, January 9, 2008; DJ Elliot and CJ Radin, *Iraqi Security Forces, Order of Battle*, The Long War Journal, January 2008.
- ^{xxiv} Brigadier General Joseph Anderson, Civilian Defense Experts Conference Call, January 11, 2008.
- ^{xxv} Stephen Farrell, “U.S. Attack in Iraq is No Surprise to Many Insurgents,” *New York Times*, January 9, 2008.
- ^{xxvi} Stephen Farrell, “U.S. Attack in Iraq is No Surprise to Many Insurgents,” *New York Times*, January 9, 2008; Lennox Samuels, “Battling in the Breadbasket,” *Newsweek*, January 9, 2008; Major General Mark Hertling, Operational Briefing, Baghdad, January 9, 2008.
- ^{xxvii} Alexandra Zavis, “A Renewed Push in Diyala,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 9, 2008.
- ^{xxviii} Alexandra Zavis, “Iraqi Troops Move Into Area,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 12, 2008.
- ^{xxix} Stephen Farrell, “U.S. Attack in Iraq is No Surprise to Many Insurgents,” *New York Times*, January 9, 2008.
- ^{xxx} Major General Mark Hertling, Operational Briefing, Baghdad, January 9, 2008.
- ^{xxxi} Major General Mark Hertling, Operational Briefing, Baghdad, January 9, 2008.
- ^{xxxii} Lennox Samuels, “Battling in the Breadbasket,” *Newsweek*, January 9, 2008; Major General Mark Hertling, Operational Briefing, Baghdad, January 9, 2008.
- ^{xxxiii} Alexandra Zavis, “Iraqi Troops Move Into Area,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 12, 2008; Multi-National Corps – Iraq Press Release 20080110-06; “Air Strike Engages Suspected IED Emplacers During Operation Phantom Phoenix,” January 10, 2008.
- ^{xxxiv} Kimi Yoshino and Julian E. Barnes, “U.S. Bombers Target al Qaeda in Iraq,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 2008.
- ^{xxxv} Major General Mark Hertling, Operational Briefing, Baghdad, January 9, 2008.

^{xxxvi} Major General Mark Hertling, Operational Briefing, Baghdad, January 9, 2008.

^{xxxvii} Alexandra Zavis, “A Renewed Push in Diyala,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 9, 2008.

^{xxxviii} Lennox Samuels, “Battling in the Breadbasket,” *Newsweek*, January 9, 2008.

^{xxxix} Kimi Yoshino and Julian E. Barnes, “U.S. Bombers Target al Qaeda in Iraq,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 2008.

^{xl} Major General Mark Hertling, Operational Briefing, Baghdad, January 9, 2008; Multi-National Corps – Iraq Press Release 20080113-01. “Operation Raider Harvest Holding Phase Begins,” January 13, 2008.

^{xli} Major General Mark Hertling, Operational Briefing, Baghdad, January 9, 2008.

^{xlii} Spc. John Crosby, “Operation Raider Harvest Provides Humanitarian Aid to Iraqis in Need,” Multi-National Forces – Iraq Feature Stories, January 16, 2008.

^{xliii} Major General Mark Hertling, Operational Briefing, Baghdad, January 9, 2008.

^{xliv} Spc. John Crosby, 4/2 SBCT PAO, “Diyala Provincial Governor Visits Muqadiyah Officials,” Stryker Brigade News, January 15, 2008.