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OSD Policy  
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2:41 PM

**National Security Council Meeting**  
**October 27, 2006 8:35 AM - 9:20 AM**  
**Security Update: Situation in al-Anbar**

MNF-I will brief. *No brief provided.* From Embassy, military, and intelligence reporting, we note the following:

- (S) Anbar continues to be the most contested province. Reporting on the situation in Anbar is mixed.
  - USG reporting suggests that Anbar tribal leaders are leading resistance against al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).
  - Press reports indicate that AQI fighters paraded openly in the principal cities of Anbar last weekend.
- (S) The Government of Iraq (GoI), supported by MNF-I and Embassy Baghdad, is engaged in dialogue with Sunni tribal leaders in al-Anbar province, who say they are willing to play a more active role against AQI and in the Iraqi political process.
- (S) On October 17 Sheikh Rishawi, the leader of the Anbar Tribal Sheikh Council, and the Governor of Anbar stated that their future public announcements would describe Coalition Forces as "friendly forces."
  - Rishawi claimed that the Anbar Tribal Sheikh Council had formed three "regiments" of 300 men each. These "regiments" were waiting for the GoI to arm them and authorize them to conduct security operations.
    - Decisions on arming such tribal militias should take into account the potential impact of such actions on the overall approach to militias in Iraq.
      - o Fostering tribal militias in Anbar may make it more difficult to deal with the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM).

**Key Points:**

- (S) Is there anything that the USG can do to help publicize any helpful declarations by Anbar Sheikhs (e.g. Coalition Forces are "friendly forces")?
- (S) Is there anything that the USG or the GoI can do to make this current tribal engagement effort more successful than the tribal engagement efforts in 2005?

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