Systems Thinking in Irregular Conflicts
Case Study -
Al Qaeda and Islamic State Tribal Management

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Originally Published 17 May 2016

Executive Summary

- The following paper was developed early-to-mid 2015 in support of pre-deployment training al-Taji.
- It has subsequently been updated following feedback from those who served in Iraq.
- The paper is derived entirely from open sources.

Introduction

Iraq is engulfed in a series of overlapping conflicts, each with its internal divisions, suspicions, and allegiances. The 2003 Iraq War unleashed deep-seated sectarian differences that drew in regional powers, each vying and supporting their respective power groups. The United States was just one actor surrounded by multiple conflicts. A series of miscalculations had the United States at a disadvantage for most of the Iraq conflict, no more so than the dissolution of the Iraqi state institutions and military, as frequently commented by other writers. Combined with a high degree of suspicion of the newly formed Baghdad government, the social conditions were set for a brutal insurgency; further confounded by foreign interference. Al Qaeda seized upon this local discontent to co-opt the local population and incited a vicious Shia-Sunni division through a series of car bombings and assassinations. Al Qaeda, however, started to make critical strategic errors, most notably in its management of the tribal system. Herein lay the opportunity for the United States to utilise growing internal dissent against Al Qaeda's presence and subsequently initiate a concerted outreach to Iraq's tribal structure. This paper will examine Al Qaeda's tribal management during the Iraq War, most notably after the US-led surge in 2007, the strategic mistakes that were committed and how the United States shaped the conflict ecosystem to secure tribal support gradually.

Secondly, this paper will assess the Islamic State and its tribal management and determine potential strategic options to extract tribal support to degrade ISIS's local support. The final section will utilise the 'situational allies' irregular methodology to review tribal support for the Islamic State within the New Zealand area of operations, Al Taji.

Al Qaeda's Tribal Management

Al Qaeda exploited and leveraged local discontent among the Sunni population to incite a vicious insurgency. Al Qaeda fed off the discontent regarding a supposedly anti-Sunni government in Baghdad and the loss of prestige following the disbandment of the Iraqi military and political institutions. Coupled with the growing Iranian influence and long seated suspicion of Shi'a motives, Al Qaeda had the perfect backdrop and information operations material to exploit local resentment and undermine US efforts in Al Anbar. At one stage, Al Anbar province was "lost" to the US-led Coalition and Baghdad, with multiple efforts to infiltrate the social network failing. Abu Jafar Al-Ansari, one of Al-Zarqawi's senior lieutenants, stated: "How can we imagine that the tribal chiefs would expel their sons or those who support them?" Such was their confidence in their dominance over the tribes.[1] Clearly, Al-Qaida had failed to calculate their actions and the tribal long-term strategy for survival.[2] Al Qaeda started to make dramatic strategic mistakes just as the United States started to gain a more evident appreciation of the situation.

The high proportion of foreigners among Al-Qaeda's leadership, combined with excessive violence and poor management of clerics, hastened its demise among the tribal elements traditionally suspicious of out-sider influences. [3] The violation of such tribal concepts was considered humiliating and served to distance Al-Qaeda from tribal support. Co-option of important financial routes and forced marriage of daughters were added insult to injury. Rather than maintain political support and coordination, Al-Qaeda started to demand tribal conformance. It was a strategy of "with us or against us". The Iraqi tribal structures never worked on strict principles but shifted their power depending on the greatest return on investment for their survival. The tribes employed a situational ally construct whereby they adjusted their support based on the highest probability of survival and power vis-à-vis other actors. The relationship with Al Qaeda was one of convenience in the conflict with Baghdad and never one of full-scale support. However, as Al Qaeda started to gain additional control and indiscriminate acts of violence, the social landscape slowly started to revolt. Rather than work in partnership and subsequently create a strong and near impregnable social foundation, Al Qaeda started to dominate tribal agreements. [4]

Al Qaeda, in effect, started to turn on its host to gain additional control, resources and political leverage, subsequently alienating the very social foundation that provided support. The Sunni tribes having to contend with their power being eroded from their situational ally, finally turned against Al Qaeda. After several failed starts due to the systematic removal of tribal power brokers and limited central government support, the Sunni Awakening finally gained a solid foundation and support from the US military. Al Qaeda, desperate to regain control of the ecosystem, identified key tribal leaders for removal to regain their influence. The scene was subsequently set for a new power broker, the US military, to shape the political landscape to their advantage.

Counter-Strategy

The United States also adjusted its position with the tribal structure and opened opportunities for engagement. In a classic example of power politics at the local level, the improved US-tribal relationships and the resulting employment opportunities provided sheikhs greater influence over their subordinates as well as the political leverage to position themselves as the defenders against Al Qaeda. [5] The improved relationships between US forces and Sunni tribes was not so much based on any concept of hearts and minds, but traditional power politics and the tribal desire for survival and power distribution.

US forces in the west and the security umbrella against Al-Qaeda elements allowed the tribes to contend with their internal issues. While there were undoubtedly direct clashes with Al Qaeda elements, the US security buffer allowed the tribes to purge themselves of Al Qaeda infiltration. The fight against Al-Qaeda followed tribal rules and conventions with the removal of tribal protection for any member associated with the terrorist organisation. As such, any members disowned (bara'a) from the tribe could be eliminated with impunity (hadr dam) according to tribal tradition.

Disavowed and with no tribal system to protect them, any identified Al-Qaeda tribesmen were free-game. Al-Qaeda was misguided and assumed that the adoption of the tribal members into their terrorist organisation implied tribal support. In contrast, it was merely a tactic to survive for a future opportunity to reassert their power. While Al Qaeda's application of indiscriminate violence may have partially contributed to the tribal rejection of the Sunni tribe – Al Qaeda alliance; the main driver was the growing concern that Al Qaeda was co-opting or gaining greater influence and power over their Sunni allies.[6]

The Islamic State Tribal Management

The Iraq war against the Islamic State (IS) originated in the broader post-2003 Iraq conflict, but the strategic landscape is significantly different. There are additional layers of influence and political management, including; tribal engagement, inter and intra sectarian divisions, and the broader strategic rivalry that will need to be taken into consideration if any external power is to intervene against the Islamic State. [7]This section will assess how the Islamic State has managed the tribal landscape and conclude with potential strategies to extract tribal support.[8] The Islamic State is not a homogenous entity but a loose confederation of irregular groups, including tribal elements, who have sought to leverage the territorial success of IS. The success and failure of the Islamic State are based upon its ability to secure the support of various tribes and/or other irregular groups branded under the Islamic State construct.

The Islamic State is positioning itself as the protector of Sunni Muslims. Information operations campaigns have been structured to capitalise upon the perceived injustice towards Sunni tribes and sectarian policies from Baghdad. The Islamic State grows upon the extreme polarisation of Sunni and Shia Muslim camps. Al Baghdadi instructed IS members "to attend to the Muslims and the tribes of Ahlus-Sunnah (the Sunnis) with goodness. Stay awake, guarding them so they can be safe and at rest. Know that today you are the defenders of the religion and the guards of the land of Islam".[9] The Islamic State controls vast stretches of territory across Iraq and Syria; such an area of control would be impossible without the at least tacit support of select Sunni tribes who may feel marginalised from Baghdad or failed to respond to the power emergence of IS. The Islamic State has also started to offer essential government services to consolidate local support and further polarise the population of Baghdad.

Herein lays its greatest strength and weakness. While such diversification may allow greater access to resources, the various supporting groups can be slowly coerced to abandon support. Islamic State has expanded to approximately 30,000. [10] This was achieved via a variety of mechanisms, including payment of forces via oil revenues, assimilation of smaller groups, and also an influx of recruits in light of the Islamic States' military successes in Iraq and Syria, supporting this is a sophisticated social media and political propaganda regime that exploits the growing sectarian rift and marketing of military successes.

The Islamic State established a command relationship of convenience across various tribes and smaller terrorist organisations. This relationship is not so much based on a singular ideology but on the conformance of tribal support for immediate survival or long-term strategic gain. Sunni Arab tribal support for the Islamic State was not motivated by religious elements or the desire to create a new state, but by the fundamental desire to survive Baghdad-based sectarian policies and military dominance by other tribal and Sunni insurgent groups who have joined the IS cause. This clash of motivations has already manifested in direct clashes between some Sunni tribal elements and the Islamic State. Captured documents portray the difficulty the Islamic State is encountering in managing the Sunni tribal system. For example, one document states:

> *Most of the brothers have severe difficulty reciting the Qur'an and understanding its meaning… often deferring to the head of the tribe in matters of war and peace. They seem to have joined the ranks of jihadists so that they can secure their daily bread…without having their sincere intention to take up arms and fight against the infidels and apostates*.[11]

Support should not be mistaken for obedience, and already the Islamic State is starting to commit similar strategic errors to that of Al Qaeda. There have been reports of executions against tribal elements; while unconfirmed, on 23 JAN 2015, 56 people from the Albu Mityut tribe, located towards the northwest, were executed. IS executions in Ninewa may also indicate its control is starting to slip and has subsequently resorted to intimidation to maintain control. In June 2014, ISIS destroyed the home of Anwar al-Asi, leader of the Ubayd tribe near Kirkuk, after he refused to swear allegiance to the IS caliph. In addition, over 700 Sheitat men were killed after tribal members killed Islamic State fighters. The examples of tribal attacks against the Islamic State are numerous.

The political foundation is emerging to revolt against the Islamic State; however, the environment that proved so fertile for the original Sunni Awakening may not be present. Instead, the Sunni tribes, as per their usual modus operandi, are orchestrating a delicate balancing act between survival and exploiting the Islamic State in their protestations against Baghdad's current policies. Add to this the heavy Iranian presence and powerful Shia militia squads, and the Sunni tribes are in a strategic dilemma. Either detach entirely from the Islamic State and assist in its downfall and potentially fall victim to Shia militia activities or develop a strong relationship with IS and have their tribal power effectively co-opted. While the removal of political support from the Sunni tribes will eventually fracture the Islamic State; their ability to establish a credible and robust "Sunni Awakening" to defeat IS will be more complicated to develop as other power brokers, most notably Shia militia squads, also need to be defended against.

The barbarity of the Islamic State may be both its most significant advantage and a disadvantage. The slaughter of civilians will go some way to coercing sectarian groups to adhere to Islamic State principles. However, much as al-Zaqawai found the indiscriminate killing of civilians will eventually harden the population against them if

they are given the security breathing space to push back. The purely Sunni-Arab composition of the Islamic State also makes them highly unattractive to other groups across Iraq and Syria. Regardless of the eventual defeat of the Islamic State, the probability of Baghdad ever truly removing the sectarian-based divisions is highly unlikely. As such, while Sunni tribes may certainly not want to "do a deal with the devil", the more grotesque the actions of the Islamic State, the more reluctant Baghdad will be to any sort of accommodation to Sunni tribes who may be implicated in such crimes. Breaking the political stranglehold of IS over the Sunni tribes will be a pure calculation of power politics that must also consider Baghdad and Shia political developments.

Potential Counter Strategies

The tribal political situation is markedly different from that which assisted the Sunni Awakening and the revolt against Al Qaeda between 2007-and 2008. The Islamic State has exploited local discontent, and combined with a sophisticated information operations campaign, has positioned itself as the defender of the Sunni tribes and intentionally polarised Iraqi politics.

While the Islamic State has been skilful in managing the Sunni tribal groups, there is growing evidence of tribal opposition who refuse to adhere to their principles. Much like during the Sunni Awakening, it may be possible to divide the Islamic State from the tribes by establishing a national guard program proposed by the United States and Baghdad. However, IS has gained valuable lessons from Al Qaeda's defeat at the hands of the tribes and infiltrating sub-tribal politics to potentially turn the tribes on themselves if a local revolt ever gained momentum. Economic incentives are also provided to young tribesmen, disenfranchised from Baghdad, to join the IS rank-and-file and subsequently internally weaken the tribal system. With the rise of Shia militias and reported atrocities being committed in liberated areas, there is little incentive for IS-affiliated tribesmen to switch sides to Baghdad unless significant efforts are introduced to control Shia militia reprisals and concrete military gains are secured. The tribes are effectively in a political dilemma.

Al-Baghdadi has been warned of the brutality and harsh treatment of Sunnis by Al Qaeda chief al-Zawahiri. The violence is being used for intimidation and coercion; its application, however, is haphazard and losing the political intelligence and targeting the Islamic State once showed. There are already multiple local reprisals against the ISIS forces, including tribes strongly alignment with the former Iraqi Army. The tribes are skilled political survivalists and will adhere to Islamic State rule until a new power broker emerges on the political scene, which can be leveraged in their political campaign vis-à-vis with Baghdad. [12]

Case Study: Al Taji and Irregular Tribal Management

The previous section has provided a macro-level analysis of the Al-Qaeda and Islamic State tribal management. The paper will now focus on the immediate New Zealand area of operations around Al Taji and the appetite of local tribes toward the Islamic State. The tribal alliance structure cannot be detached from the Sunni irregular groups in the area of operations, as it is invariably the tribes that provide the majority of the resources and local support. This section will outline the tribal and Sunni irregular relationships with the Islamic State.

The operational landscape around Al Taji is dramatically different from that in the war against Al Qaeda post-2007. In Al Taji, al Masri, the Al Qaeda leader following the death of al-Zarqawi, supposedly took place at the hands of Sheikh Abdul Sattar al-Risha's Anbar Salvation Council. The specific area of al Taji was a critical front in the counterpunch against Al Qaeda in Iraq. It was in the beltway of northern Baghdad that pivotal engagements took place against Al Qaeda elements with the support of US forces. The willingness to turn against extreme irregular groups is clearly present; however, as testified by the mid-2014 attack on Al Taji airfield, the local landscape is now dramatically different and will require exceptional management, not just with the tribal elements but potentially with Sunni irregular groups which may run directly counter with Baghdad and the ISF units under training.

The fertile local conditions that gave rise to the Sunni Awakening are not as prominent now as during the American presence, especially after the 2007 surge. The tribes are lending support to local Sunni groups and, in some instances, splitting their support between ISF and other irregular movements. This division of support is taking place between urban and rural-based tribal structures. Split loyalties are not necessarily a new development; however, it may mean that coalescing a combined tribal front against the Islamic State will be even more complicated.

Securing the support of the local tribes will need to be approached at multiple levels, both directly with the tribe and engaging with Sunni irregular groups. Herein emerges the complication. The Iraqi-based irregular groups are well embedded into the Sunni population areas, and there is significant animosity towards Baghdad, even more so since the rise of Shia militia death squads and supposedly hesitancy by Iraqi Security Forces to control militia elements. While there is an uneasy and confrontational alliance with the Islamic State, the tribal-based irregular groups are satisfied with exploiting IS military success to strike back at Baghdad. The near-polar strategic end-states between the Islamic State and Sunni insurgent groups will eventually see this relationship fracture.[13]

The Islamic State is one-armed opposition within a broader anti-Shia government insurgency with other groups co-operating for short and medium-term goals. Such groups include Jaysh Rijal al-Tariqah al-Naqshabandi (JRTN), the General Council of Iraq Revolutionaries, the Fallujah Military Council, and the Council of the Revolutionaries Tribes of Anbar, the 1920 Brigades, the Islamic Army of Iraq, Jaysh

al-Mujahidin and Ansar al-Islam. While these groups share a combined animosity towards Baghdad's sectarian-based policies, they have a troubled and unstable relationship with the Islamic State. From a strategic sense, the alliance will ultimately fail as the objectives of Sunni-based tribal groups are at direct odds with the Islamic State, especially after Bakr al-Baghdadi declares a "Caliphate".

As an example, the expulsion of Iraqi Christians from Mosul, beheading of civilians and destruction of shrines runs counter to the strategy of GMCIR and JRTN to position itself as a unifying force across Iraq. However, public displays of hostility need to be carefully managed, and JRTN has gone to great efforts to condemn the attacks without stating the Islamic State as the culprit. This careful balancing act has avoided outright war between the GMCIR and IS. However, the JRTN and other groups have certainly engaged in armed clashes with the Islamic State. Aware of the growing Sunni tribal discontent towards their presence, the Islamic State has systemically eliminated leaders of supposedly dubious loyalty. The Fallujah Military Council (FMC) is detached from the GMCIR and JRTN and recruits from local tribal elements. The degree of synergy and cooperation appears to be limited. Upon the Islamic State's takeover of Fallujah in mid-2014, the FMC had to in-effect cede control in the face of the superior military force of the Islamic State. Despite participating with the Islamic State in counter-attacking an ISF-tribal push into Fallujah, the efforts by IS to marginalise the FMC within the city are creating significant tensions. The Islamic State has been politically out positioned by the FMC by securing its tribal support, primarily from the Halabsa tribe. While technically, the relationship is one of an alliance, the FMC has no real option other than to appease and cede control.

Conclusion

The Islamic State is a reaction to the shock effect caused by the 2003 invasion and sectarian-based policies under the Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki. Even if physically defeated, the Islamic State is merely the latest terrorist group the international community will need to confront; more will follow its demise unless the causes of the disease are addressed. The layers of sectarian division make developing any form of regional counter-narrative and strategy highly problematic. The Islamic State is intentionally striking at the sectarian divisions to fuel this confusion and subsequently assist in its survival.

IS is not a rigid and fixed entity but a loose confederation of irregular groups and tribal elements, each exploiting recent military successes to consolidate respective power bases. These situational alliances are not resolute but can fracture if the right amount of pressure is applied at the correct fissure across various nodes, time, and intensity. The Islamic State has learnt one valuable lesson during the Sunni Awakening and sought to infiltrate tribal politics at various levels. The tribes can subsequently be turned in upon themselves in any internal revolt. However, this is again not a new development to tribal politics and can be defeated if sufficient security is provided throughout critical points of the system. However, the significant

complication is the powerful Shia militia and overt Iranian presence, which means gaining political Sunni tribes or other irregular groups is extremely difficult. The tribes must either contend with the Islamic State or Baghdad, neither of which they particularly trust.

The tribes are far from an inert actor in the Islamic State, and previous al-Qaeda attempts to control them. The tribes understand the fundamentals of power dynamics, competing interests, and long-term survival, especially as suspicion over Baghdad government policies and Iranian interference continues. Rather than being perceived as an agent that needs to be managed, the tribes need to be viewed as a powerful political actor that will adjust their political position based on the highest probability of survival and self-interest. [14],[15]

The Iraqi tribal system is as complicated for any intervening power for Al Qaeda or the Islamic State to manage. Much like the Islamic State is not a monolithic entity; nor are all Sunni tribes or Shia militia units internally cohesive. Such loose situational alliances mean any intervening force will have to be highly politically astute. However, it also presents numerous opportunities to gradually peel back the layers of local support that underpin IS control.

How the Islamic State manages its tribal engagement can differentiate between success and failure. The Islamic State is starting to commit significant strategic errors akin to that of Al Qaeda. While executions may succeed in intimidating local support, the Sunni tribal–IS alliance is purely situational, and there are indications of armed revolts against elements of the Islamic State. Reports continue to emerge of Sunni massacres at the hands of resolute IS elements and the burning alive of Sunni civilians implicated in supporting government security forces. Whether Iraqi-IS elements or foreigners are committing these acts cannot be ascertained. Regardless, such depravity will turn the local population against the Islamic State if a neutral powerful armed force can provide the political breathing space for the local elements to identify and eliminate the extremist forces. A new and more powerful tribe needs to emerge to which the Sunni tribes can lend their political support. However, there does not appear to be a powerful new power broker that can provide this leverage.

This analysis concludes that the military intimidation and subsequently information operations aura IS has created needs to be broken. To be perceived as the new power broker will require a very significant and deadly clash to break the political hold IS has over the local population and tribal elements. The situational allies will subsequently peel away from IS, leaving the more resolute and non-negotiable elements to be eliminated. There will be a short-term spike in civilian casualties. The type and nature of crimes will only become more grotesque as the Islamic State desperately tries to enforce local consent via brutal intimidation. Any anti-IS coalition needs to include a robust military roll-back, concerted outreach to Iraq's Sunni tribes, and strict control over Shia militia to add credibility to political concessions. While the Islamic State needs to be militarily broken, so too must the

Shia militias to make any political accommodation realistic in the eyes of the Sunni populace.

Epilogue

Since the March 2015 briefing to pre-deployment training Al-Taji, these points continue to stand true. While Baghdad has been victorious in securing tribal support for counter-IS operations, these are fleeting situational alliances. The Shia militia's growing political clout and prestige will continue to complicate Prime Minister al-Abadi's ability to fundamentally secure Sunni tribal support. Further to this, the re-emergence of al-Sadr and growing Shia political unrest in the South has added another power dimension the Prime Minister needs to consider. Al-Sadr has leveraged the unrest to demand a re-shuffle of the Cabinet. Meanwhile, the former Prime Minister al-Maliki continues to undermine reform efforts, all of which are closely monitored by the tribes. As forewarned in early 2015, while attention may be focused on the Islamic State, the political battles in Baghdad will be just as crucial as the kinetic action.

Added to this is the Iranian cocktail of intervention, including Quds force members, intelligence specialists and other political support. Tehran has been actively engaged, particularly in Southern Iraq, to secure the clerical political landscape following al-Sistani's eventual death. Tehran is abundantly aware of the opportunity now available in Iraq. Shia Iraq must also not be viewed as a singular entity whose religious centre is al-Najaf, not Iran; however, power politics being what the Iranian intervention is beneficial for the Shia militias in their political campaign within Baghdad. As David Kilcullen inferred in his latest publication *Blood Year,* everything is connected within a system upon systems with no event going unnoticed or not having some impact upon other elements.[16] Couple the Iranian influence with other developments, such as the Iranian nuclear deal, and the Sunni based tribes and other nationalist insurgent groups are extremely wary of Baghdad. Prime Minister al-Abadi is in a dilemma. While a political coup cannot be discounted, a soft coup is already in place. The Prime Minister cannot introduce effective reform while the Shia militia and deputy Prime Ministers counterbalance him. How the Prime Minister manages the Shia equation, including the heavy Iranian presence, whilst attempting to alleviate Sunni anxiety will be a crucial political development in 2016. This system contest where the war against IS will be won or lost.

Suppose the prime minister cannot manage the powerful Shia political blocks and subsequently introduce truly genuine reform. In that case, any efforts to secure the tribal elements will be purely situational and lack strategic substance. [17] The subsequent publication in this series will focus on this broader political landscape and its impact on the effort against IS, including the identification of key Sunni/Shia actors and networks. If the political landscape of Baghdad fractures or implodes, then any efforts to win the tribes will fail. IS, as a result, will be able to run unchecked. This is the crucial contest for 2016.

Endnotes:

[1] Norman Cigar, 'Al-Qaida, the Tribes, and the Government: Lessons and Prospects for Iraq's Unstable Triangle', No. 2, (September 2011), *Middle East Occasional Papers,* Marine Corps University Press.

[2] Norman Cigar, 'Al-Qaida, the Tribes, and the Government: Lessons and Prospects for Iraq's Unstable Triangle', No. 2, (September 2011), *Middle East Occasional Papers,* Marine Corps University Press.

[3] Dr Norman Cigar, *Tribal Militias: An Effective Tool to Counter Al-Qaida and its Affiliates?* (US Army War College: Carlisle, November 2014).

[4] Harmony Project, *Dysfunction and Decline: Lessons Learned from Inside Al-Qa'ida in Iraq,* (Combating Terrorism Centre: West Point, 2009).

[5] Recommend Bing West, *The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics, and the Endgame in Iraq,* (Random House: New York, 2008). This is an excellent account of the shifting relationship between the US military and Sunni tribes. As the United States effectively become the governing body in Ramadi and Fallujah the tribes identified the US military as the key power broker to assist them in reclaiming their political prestige.

[6] John A. McCary, 'The Anbar Awakening: An Alliance of Incentives', *Parameters,* Vol. 32, No. 1, (2009), pp. 43-59.

[7] For a deeper understanding of broader sectarian issues and the role of Iran: Geneive Abdo, *The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi'A-Sunni Divide,* (Washington DC: The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, April 2013).

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[9] Haroro J Ingram, 'Three Traits of the Islamic State's Information Warfare', *RUSI,* (23 DEC 2014), pp. 4-11.

[10] W. Andrew Terrill, 'Confronting the Islamic State: Understanding the Strengths and Vulnerabilities of ISIS', in *Parameters,* Vol. 44, No. 3, (Autumn 2014), pp. 13-24.

[11] Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, Nelly Lahoud, Daniel Milton, Bryan Price, *The group that calls itself a state: Understanding the Evolution and Challenges of the Islamic State*, (Combating Terrorism Centre: West Point, December 2014), pp. 20.

[12] Dr Norman Cigar, *Tribal Militias: An Effective Tool to Counter Al-Qaida and its Affiliates?* (Carlisle: US Army War College, November 2014).

[13] For additional information on Islamic State and Sunni insurgency rivalry and strategic differences; refer to Sinan Adnan, Aaron Reese, *Beyond the Islamic State: Iraq's Sunni Insurgency,* (Institute for the Study of War: Washington DC, 2014).
[14] Norman Cigar, 'Al-Qaida, the Tribes, and the Government: Lessons and Prospects for Iraq's Unstable Triangle', No. 2, (September 2011), *Middle East Occasional Papers,* Marine Corps University Press.

[15] For information of Iraq tribal structure refer to: Patricio Asfura-Heim, "No Security Without Us": Tribes and Tribalism in Al Anbar Province, Iraq", (Centre for Stability and Development: Washington DC, June 2014).

[16] David Kilcullen, *Blood Year: Islamic State and the Failures of the War on Terror,* (Black Inc: Melbourne, 2015).

[17] David Kilcullen, *Blood Year: Islamic State and the Failures of the War on Terror,* (Black Inc: Melbourne, 2015).

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