

RELEASE IN
PART B6

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2010 3:55 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: NY Times Story on SOI

Fyi

----- Original Message -----

From: Jeffrey, James F (Baghdad)

To: Jeffrey, James F (Baghdad);

[Redacted]

Corbin, Michael H;

Desrocher, John P; Davis, Jason L; Sasahara, Karen H; Baghdad-FO-DL

Cc: Feltman, Jeffrey D; 'Blinken, Antony J. [Redacted]; Sullivan, Jacob J

Sent: Sun Oct 17 15:13:38 2010

Subject: NY Times Story on SOI

See below. As we have reported repeatedly to Secretary and rest of Washington, we do not see a crisis or even unusual problem with SOI. I was in Anbar with Abu Risha yesterday, along with GEN Austin. Didn't hear any complaints.

-----Original Message-----

From: [Redacted]

Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2010 8:59 PM

To: Austin, Lloyd J GEN USA [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Subject: Leaders deny Iraqi Awakening Council members defecting to al Qaeda

To all:

This is a current story on CNN that quotes two SOI leaders and rebuts today's NYT article. MG Askari (MOD Spokesman) also said that he'd provide reinforcing fires.

V/R,

[Redacted]

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/meast/10/17/iraq.awakening.councils/>

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Baghdad, Iraq (CNN) -- The leaders of Awakening Councils in two Iraqi provinces Sunday denied a report that hundreds of council members have defected to al Qaeda.

"There is no way that my fighters would join al Qaeda, no matter what, because their principles and their goals are to hunt down al Qaeda members in Iraq," said Sheikh Hussam al-Majmaei, leader of the Awakening Council in Diyala province, who has more than 13,000 fighters under his command.

The New York Times reported Sunday that hundreds of fighters appear to have rejoined al Qaeda in recent months, many of them after gaining extensive knowledge of the U.S. military. The report cited unnamed Iraqi government officials, current and former Awakening Council members and insurgents.

Al-Majmaei said that in the past two months, 150 fighters from the Diyala Awakening Councils have left -- not because they wanted to join al Qaeda, but because they became targets for al Qaeda and other insurgent groups. "Those who left their jobs with the Awakening Council started working in different jobs and most of them became farmers," he said.

"All the fighters in Diyala province who are under my command are from well-known tribes and they are our sons and our people," al-Majmaei told CNN.

Awakening Councils, also known as the Sons of Iraq, are mainly comprised of Sunni Arab fighters who turned on al Qaeda in late 2006. The U.S.-backed movement is credited as being one of the main factors that contributed to a drop in violence across Iraq, but council members have become targets for remaining jihadists.

Sheikh Hamad al-Jabouri, leader of the Awakening Council in Salaheddin province, said all of his 11,333 fighters support and help the Iraqi government.

"Some politicians within the government want to give a bad reputation to our fighters because they want to get rid of us and to pass their political agenda," he said. "I am a tribal leader and I have a very good relationship with the government, like any other tribal leader in Salaheddin, and if some parties want to give us a bad reputation then this means they have an agenda, even though those politicians are within the government."