

The Rise of ISIS



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What went wrong?

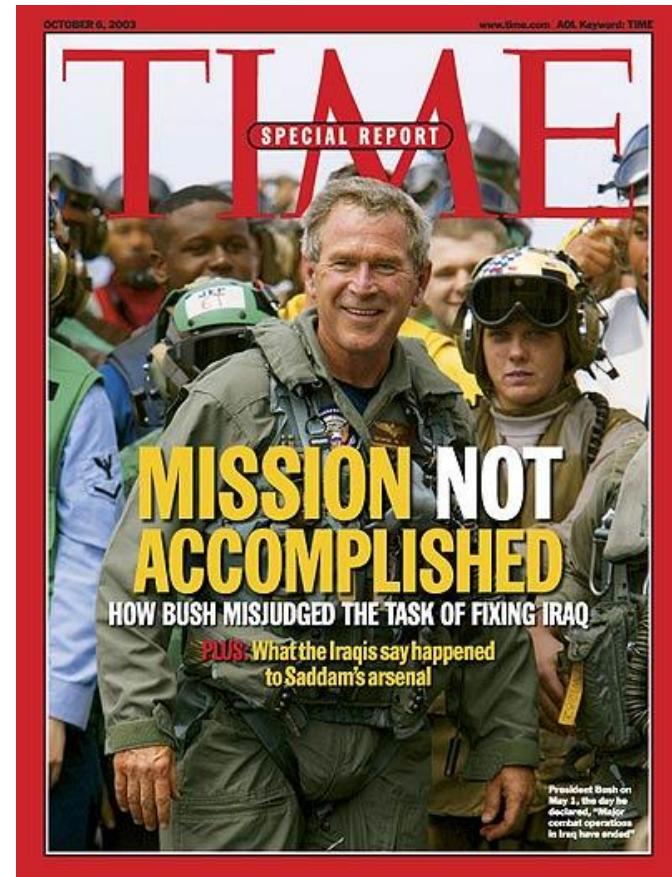
- Key assumptions going into the war:

- War of liberation
- Government/infrastructure will remain intact
- Iraqis would freely support the transition to a liberal democracy

- Critical errors in the first months:

- Extensive de-Ba'athification
- Disbanding the Iraqi army
- Empowering sectarian politics

- Lack of strategy and coherent operational approach to the occupation



"The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish the kind of war on which they are embarking, neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive."

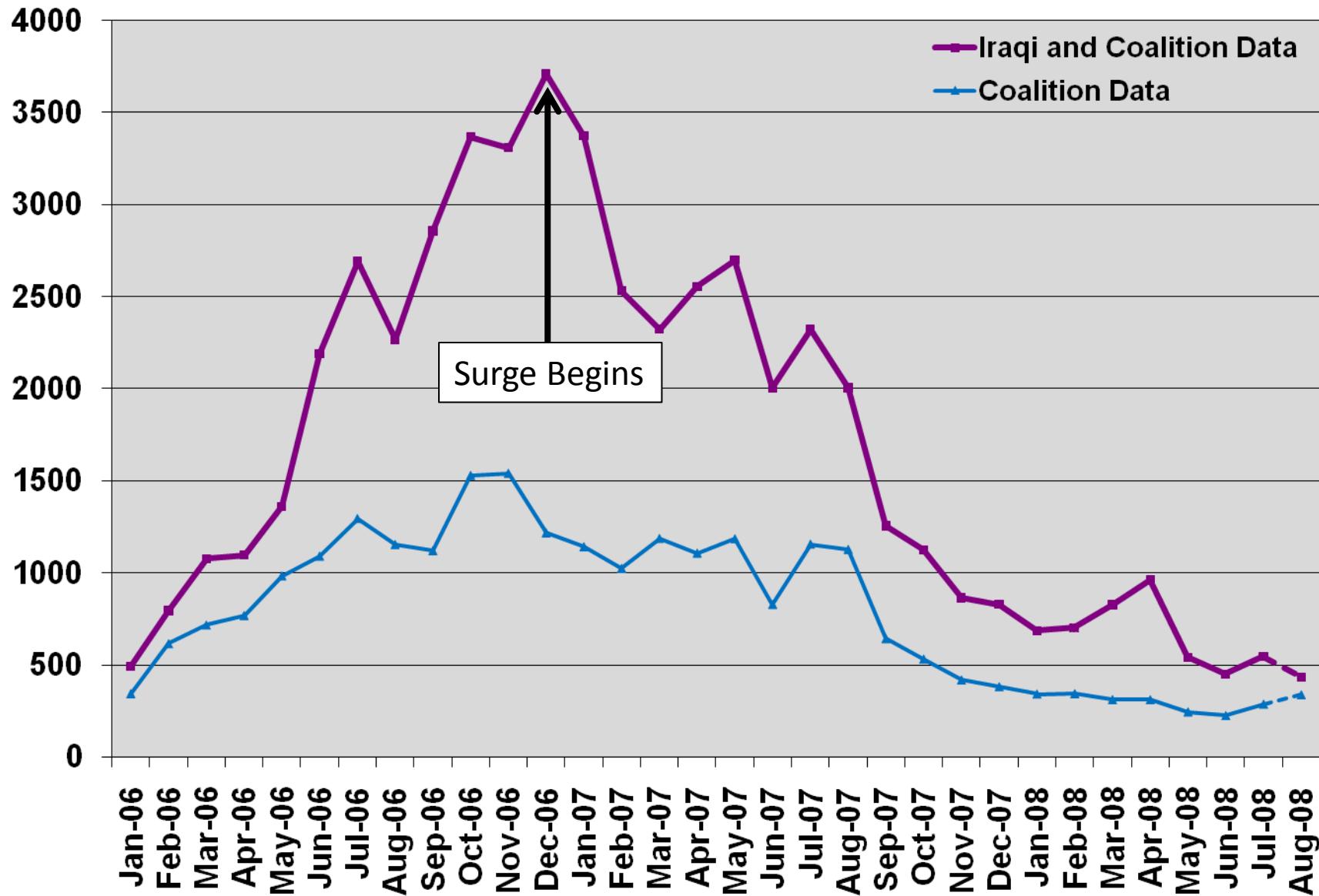
Carl von Clausewitz, Military Theorist

- Bombing of the Al-Askari Shrine in Samarra
- Sectarian cleansing/terrorism in Baghdad
- By Dec 2006, more than 3,500 Iraqis killed each month to ethno-sectarian violence
- Multi-National Force-Iraq failed to adjust strategic approach
 - Focused on killing and capturing insurgent and terrorist operatives
 - Rapid transition of security responsibilities to Iraqi security forces



Al-Askari Shrine after the bombing

Violent Civilian Deaths in Iraq



Does not include civilian deaths due to accidents unrelated to friendly or enemy actions.

Sources: SIGACTS III Coalition and Iraqi reports as 09AUG08.

A New Strategy – The Surge

- By late-summer 2006, clear that United States is headed for defeat
- Parallel strategic reviews by the National Security Council, Joint Chiefs of Staff, State Department
- President Bush made final decision to surge additional forces into Iraq
- U.S. forces deployed differently, in accordance with new counterinsurgency doctrine



“The cornerstone of any COIN effort is establishing security for the civilian populace. Without a secure environment, no permanent reforms can be implemented and disorder spreads.”

U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Doctrine

Squeezing Al Qaeda



Security Incidents

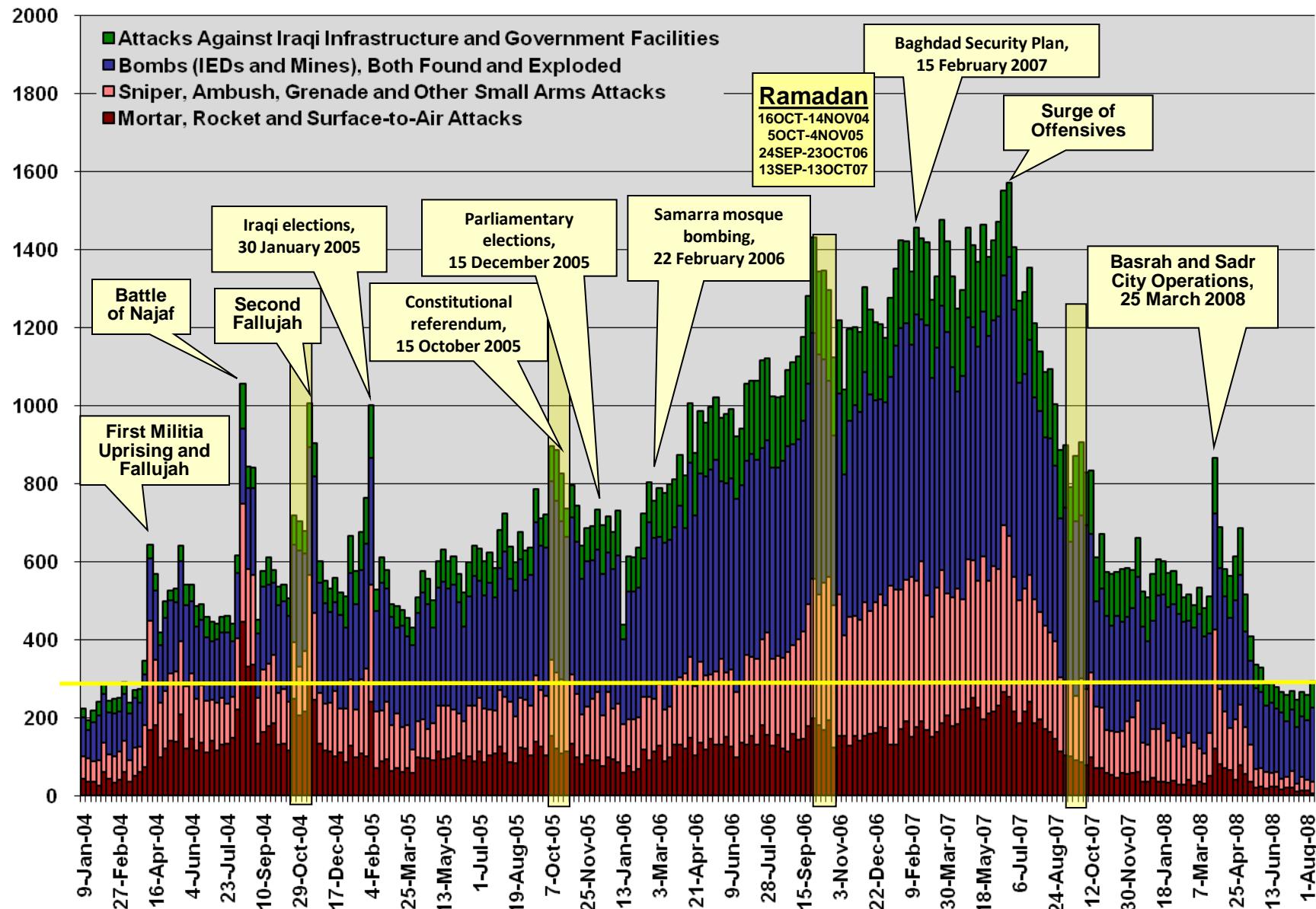
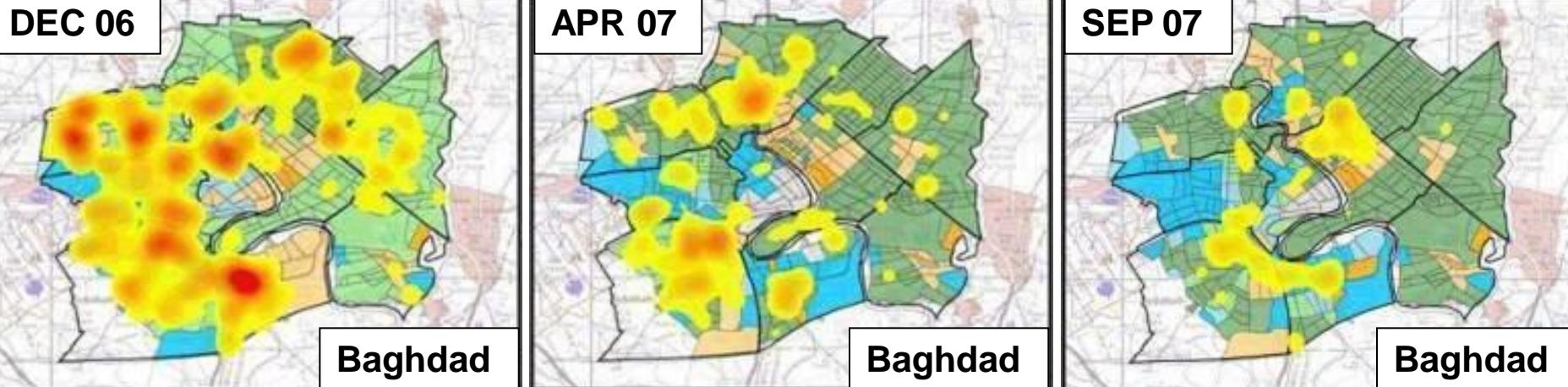


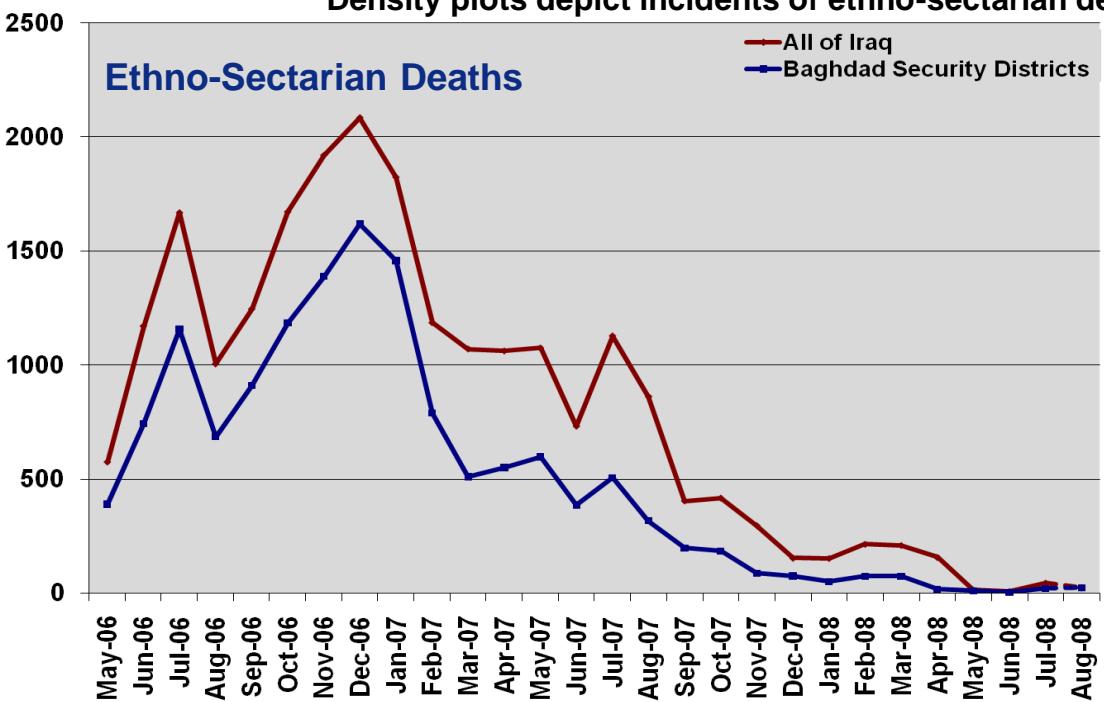
Chart includes potential attacks (IEDs/mines found and cleared) and executed attacks.

Sources: SIGACTS (CF reports) as of 9AUG08; weekly beginning 3JAN04.

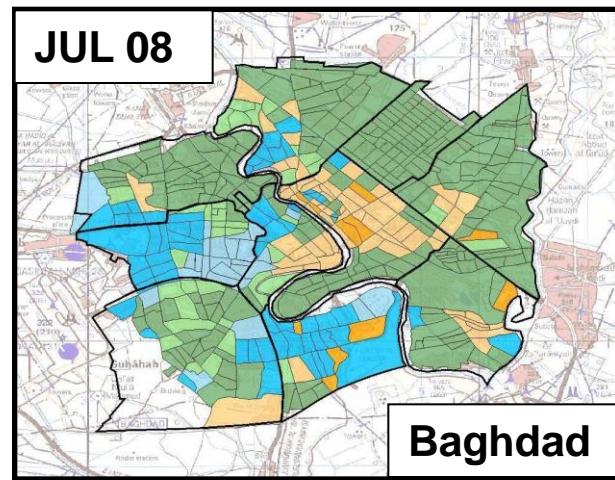
Ethno-Sectarian Violence in Baghdad



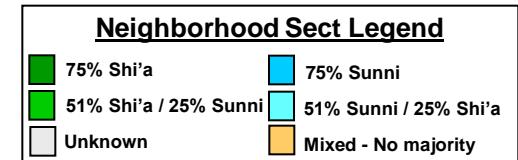
Density plots depict incidents of ethno-sectarian deaths.



Source: CIOC Trends (CF and Iraqi reports) as of 09AUG08; weekly beginning 1 May 06.



Density ← → Least Most



Differing Perspectives



President George W. Bush: Iraq as South Korea



President Barack Obama: Iraq as Vietnam



Winning the War, Losing the Peace

- **Election of 2010 – Ayad Allawi wins, but U.S. and Iran both back Nouri al-Maliki as prime minister**
- **U.S. forces depart from Iraq in 2011; U.S. loses leverage**
- **Maliki governs in a highly sectarian and divisive manner: jails opponents, tortures Sunni political prisoners, attacks protest camps**
- **Sunnis once again alienated from the political system**



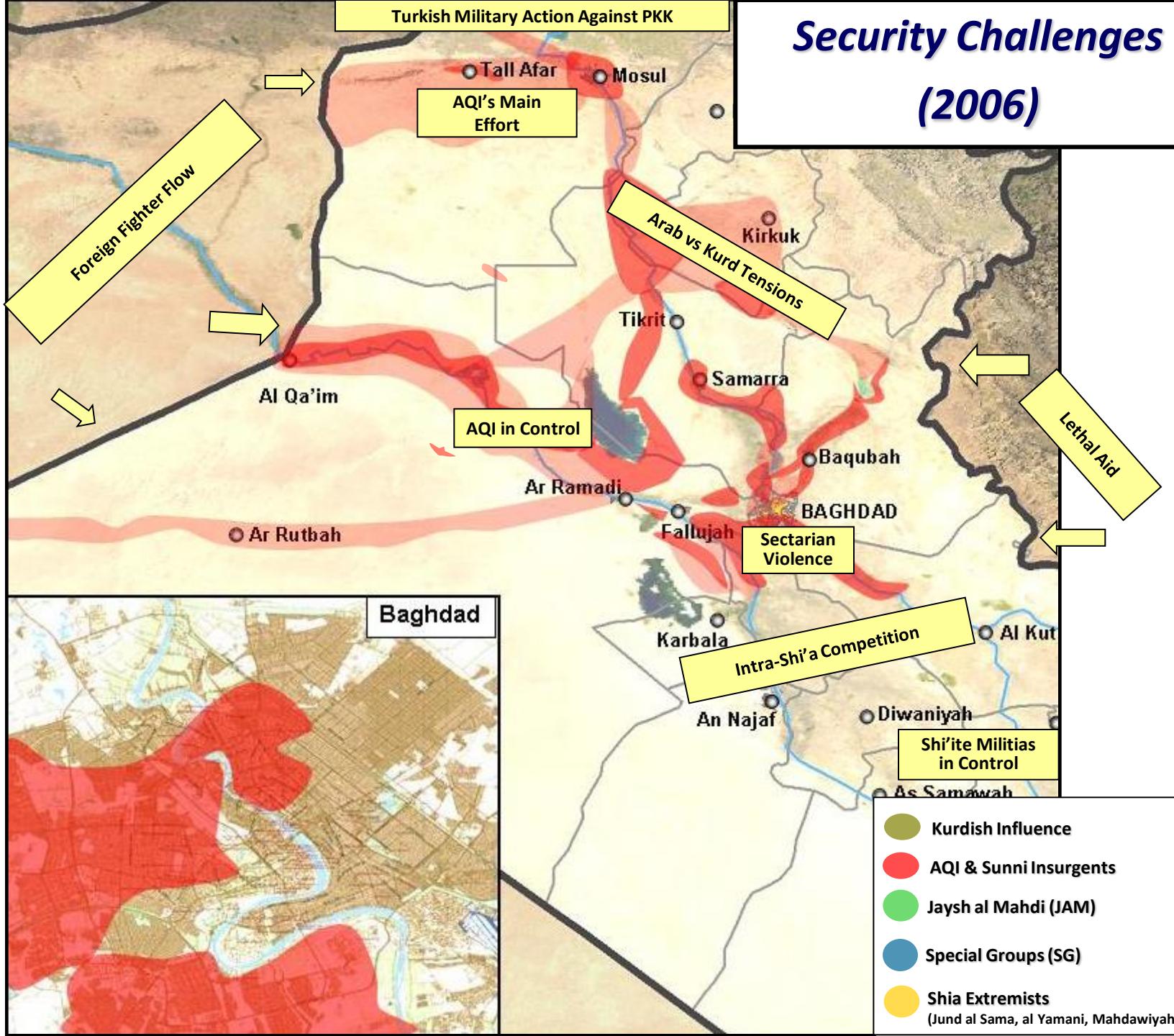
Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki

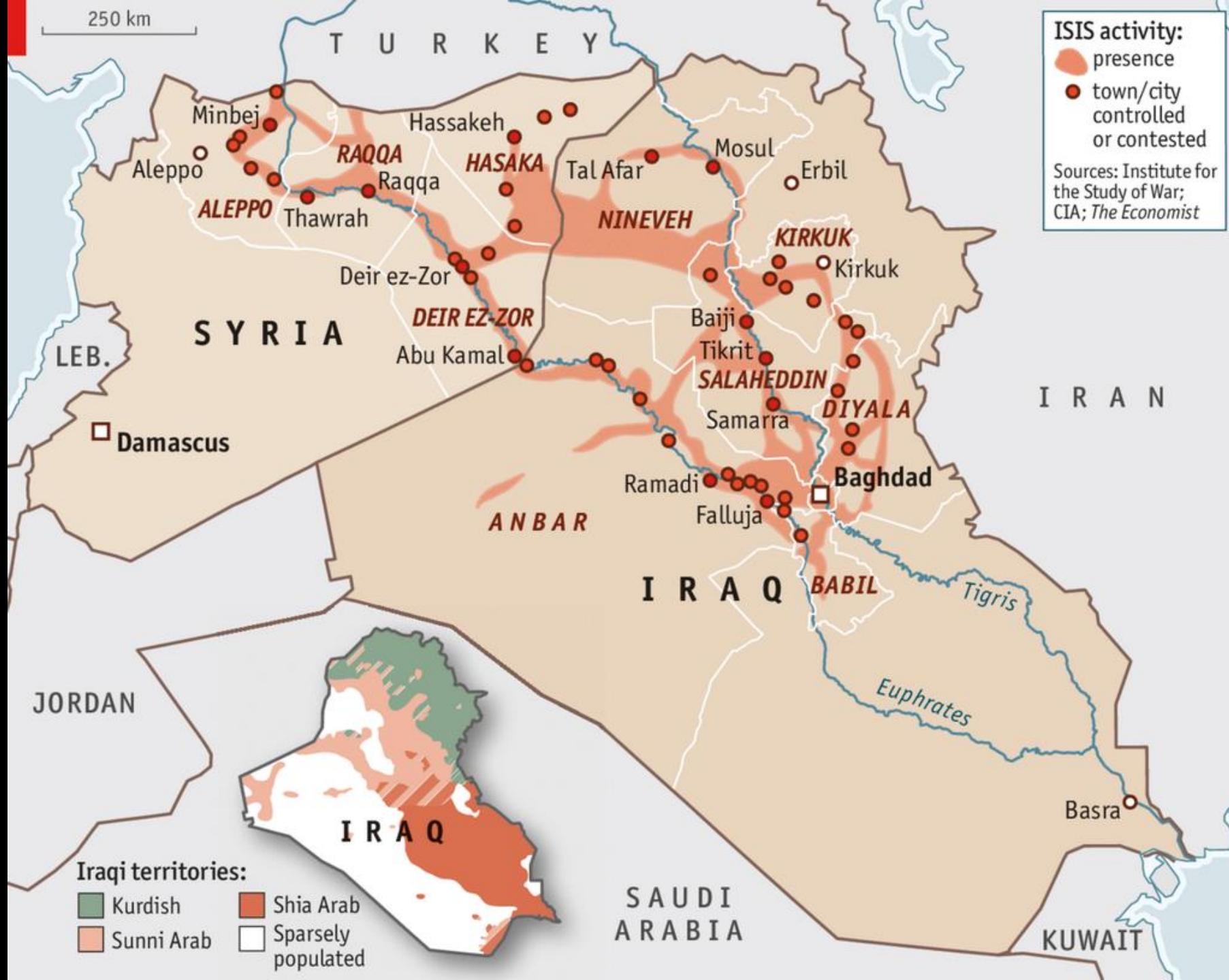
- ISIS is the successor to al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)
- Group metastasized in Syria
- ISIS allied with Ba'athists of Saddam Hussein's defeated army
- Tacit alliance with many Iraqi Sunni Arabs
- Collapse of Iraqi Army in Mosul due to Maliki's political interference with its leadership



Turkish Military Action Against PKK

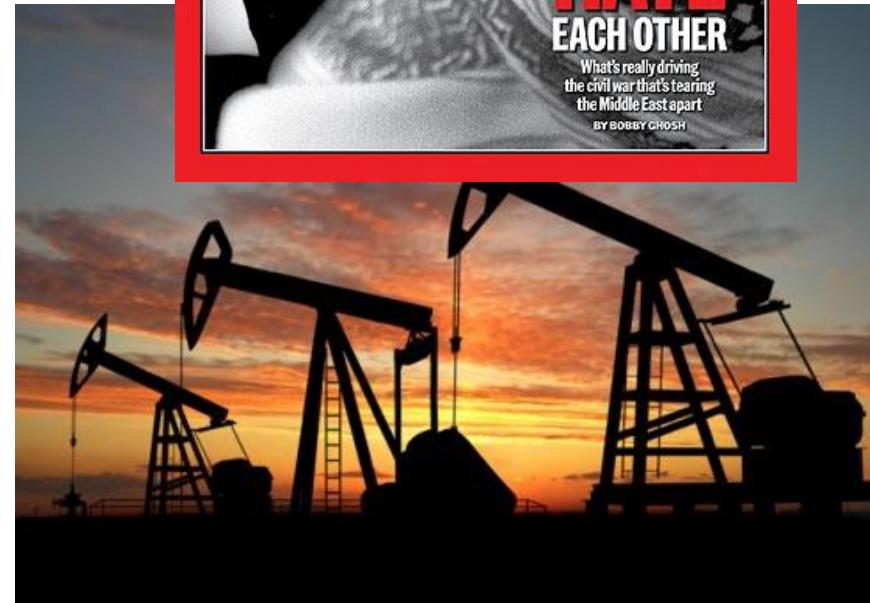
Security Challenges (2006)





The Danger

- ISIS the largest, most heavily armed, most combat experienced, and best financed terrorist group in the world today
- Regional instability – impact on oil markets
- Global terrorism – Western security
- Religious Conflict in the Middle East



Strategy to Degrade and Ultimately Destroy ISIS

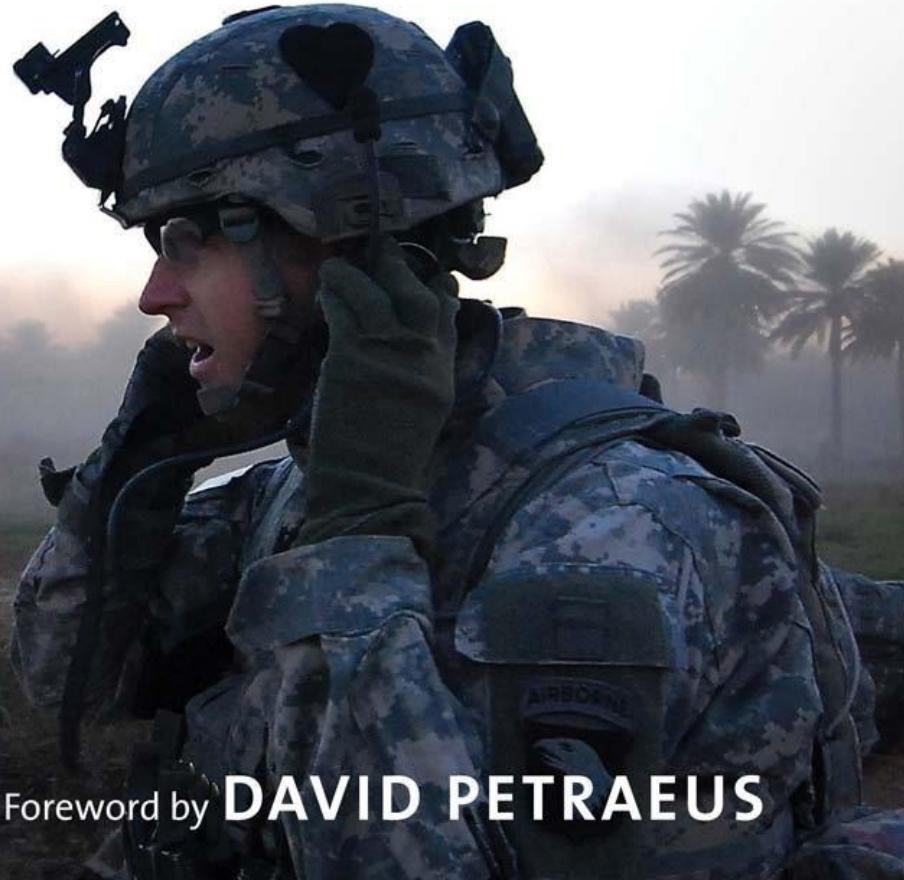
- **Sunni Arab tribes are key, as they were during the surge**
- **Political accommodation (regional autonomy) necessary to bring the tribes into a coalition against ISIS**
- **Wage a hybrid war against a hybrid force:**
 - **Iraqi Army and Kurdish Peshmerga**
 - **Sunni tribal irregulars**
 - **Syrian “moderates” (problematic)**
 - **U.S. advisors**
- **Ramp up the air campaign**
- **Fight the information war – Islamic world must denounce ISIS**
- **Pressure (or accommodate) Turkey: stop oil smuggling, inhibit transit of jihadists, allow use of Incirlik air base**



PETER R. MANSOOR

Surge

My Journey with General
David Petraeus and the
Remaking of the Iraq War



Foreword by DAVID PETRAEUS