

Iraqi tribes, coalition forces, team up

by UPI

BAGHDAD - More than 10 Iraqi tribes in and around Baghdad are teaming with coalition forces to oppose al-Qaida, USA Today reported.

U.S. soldiers said they hope the realignment marks a trend that will spread throughout Iraq, the newspaper said Wednesday.

Some of the tribes have members who previously fought alongside al-Qaida. Now, those tribes and their members are giving coalition forces information about their former allies, said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Rick Welch. "They know where they live and who they are. They know how they operate."

About 100 tribes live in greater Baghdad, many of whom have thousands of members. Attacks in Sunni-dominated Anbar province in western Iraq dropped by 60 percent last year after tribes there joined coalition forces, USA Today said.

U.S. military commanders urged the Iraqi government to bring the tribes into the legitimate security forces in order to avoid creating militias outside government control.

"The goal is to tap into the movement but not create a threat," Welch said.

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