

MORE INAUSPICIOUSNESS: YOUR RENT-A-SHEIKH GETS KILLED

As many of you have pointed out, the guy I called Bush's Rent-a-Thuggish-Sheikh last week died in a bomb blast today.

The leader of local Sunni tribes in Iraq who have joined American and Iraqi forces in fighting extremist Sunnimitants was killed by a bomb today, Iraqi police officials said, potentially undermining what has become a new thrust of United States policy in the country.

[snip]

It could be a significant setback for American efforts to work more closely with local tribes against Al Qaeda. Recently the council had begun to reach out to other tribes to bring them into closer cooperation with the American and Iraqi government, and had met recently with southern Shia leaders. Authorities imposed a state of emergency in Anbar Province following his assassination, police officials said. At least one other person escorting him was also killed in the explosion.

So Bush's big debut for Magical September just got further clouded. First the oil compromise collapses on the eve of his presentation. And now the guy Bush was parading around last week as the symbol of great promise in Anbar just got blown to bits. But don't worry. I'm sure Bush won't ... um ... dwell on these depressing details.

Mark Lynch has more on the meaning of Risha's death, including the speculation that Risha was

not killed by Al Qaeda.