TAB A - Findings

a. ~~(FOUO)~~ What are the facts and circumstances surrounding the complex attack on COP Keating?

(U) Operational graphics of battle at Appendix I.]

1. (U) Junior leaders (lieutenants and NCOs) of B Troop, 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry fought heroically in repelling the 3 Oct 09 AAF attack on Combat Outpost (COP) Keating by a force five times their size. Small unit leadership, tenacity, and battlefield skill defeated the enemy attack and resulted in up to 150 AAF fighters killed or wounded and the recovery of all fallen heroes. Soldiers lived up to the Warrior Ethos, the Army Values, the Soldier's Creed, and the NCO Creed and validated Army training.

2. (U) On 3 Oct 09, at 0558L hours, an enemy force of approximately 300 Anti-Afghan Forces (AAF) fighters launched an indirect and direct fire attack on COP Keating and OP Fritsche in the Kamdesh District of Nuristan Province, Afghanistan. Mortars, rocket propelled grenades (RPGs), and precision small arms fire impacted the COP at an unusually high rate of fire.

3. (U) The enemy fire came from all sides, and notably, from positions used previously by enemy forces in probing attacks in the months leading up to 3 Oct 09.

4. ~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ Simultaneously, coordinated enemy fire against OP Fritsche initially prevented US forces there from providing supporting fires for COP Keating.

5. ~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ The enemy fire immediately suppressed the central component of the base defense, the unit mortars (1 X 60mm and 1 X 120mm mortar) located near the southwest perimeter of the compound, killing one Soldier at the outset and rendering the mortars combat ineffective.

6. ~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ The five other battle positions manned at stand-to that morning lacked adequate overhead cover and were occupied by individual Soldiers who were attacked by precision small arms fire.

7. ~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ Approximately ten AAF fighters breached the perimeter at three locations - the main Entry Control Point (ECP) to the northwest, at the southwest side near the mortar position, and through a gap in the wire at the ANA area of the compound to the east which ANA soldiers used to go to a latrine and had over time become an unauthorized access point to the COP.

8. ~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO~~) Ammunition resupply within the COP was hindered by the open terrain in the middle of the compound which was effectively controlled by the enemy's precision small arms fire and a continuing RPG barrage.

9. ~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ Close combat aviation (CCA) and close air support (CAS) were critical to the defense of COP Keating and enabled the Soldiers to regain the initiative to secure the COP while inflicting heavy enemy casualties.

10. ~~(S)~~ As a result of enemy indirect fire and precision small arms fire, B Troop suffered eight Soldiers KIA and 22 soldiers wounded in action (WIA). ANA forces suffered three KIA and five WIA.

11. (U) Members of B Troops upheld the highest standards of their profession in locating and recovering each of their fallen comrades.

b. ~~(FOUO)~~ How many US servicemembers and Afghan National Security Forces were occupying COP Keating? What units were present at the time of the attack?

12. ~~(S)~~ At the time of the attack on 3 Oct 09 there were 53 US Soldiers and 20 Afghan National Army (ANA) personnel on COP Keating, supported by a two-man Latvian Army Observe and Mentor Liaison Team (OMLT). In addition, there were approximately a dozen Afghan Security Guards (ASGs).

13. ~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ Units present on COP Keating included 1st, 3rd and HQs Platoons, B Troop, 3-61 Cavalry, and elements of 6th Kandak/2-201st ANA Corps.

14. (~~C~~) Situated at OP Fritsche were 19 US Soldiers from 2nd Platoon, B Troop, 3-61 Cavalry and 10 ANA personnel.

c. ~~(FOUO)~~ Who attacked COP Keating? How many Anti-Afghan Forces (AAF) were involved in the attack? How many AAF were killed or injured during the attack?

15. (~~C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO~~) The enemy force consisted of approximately 300 AAF, and included fighters from the surrounding villages of Kamdesh, Agassi, Mandaghal, and Agro, reinforced by seasoned fighters from outside of the province, and likely included Arabs and other foreign fighters. The determination of force size is based on intelligence reporting, volume of fire, and other operational reporting from US ground and air elements during the fight. The composition of the force is based on reporting of various languages and dialects heard in radio traffic during the action and the type of clothing and equipment worn by the enemy force.

16. (~~C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO~~) As a result of the US ground and air engagements in the vicinity of COP Keating and OP Fritsche, approximately 150 AAF fighters were killed or wounded. Post-battle intelligence reflections indicated that AAF commanders were surprised, and even stunned, by the number of casualties taken by their forces in this action.

d. ~~(FOUO)~~ When did the attack begin? Develop a timeline of the key events leading up to, during, and after the attack.

17. (U) A detailed timeline is at Appendix II (position locations noted on attached graphic). The following timeline shows the sequence and time approximate of major events in the battle:

(U)	**0558**	Enemy attack Initiated (IDF, SAF) at COP Keating and OP Fritsche
~~(FOUO)~~	**0600**	**PFC THOMSON** killed at mortar position

(U) **0602** COP Keating TOC notifies 3-61 CAV TOC of the troops in contact (TIC)

(U) **0602** 2 x F15E, call signs (b)(1)1.5a , tasked to support TIC at COP Keating

~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **0604** OP Fritsche cannot fire targets due to enemy suppressive fire; COP Keating mortars suppressed

~~(FOUO)~~ **0610** SGT Martin joins LRAS II with SPC Mace, SGT Gallegos, (b)(6) SPC (b)(6) ; SGT Martin, SPC Mace and SGT (b)(6) hit by RPG shrapnel through open turret

~~(FOUO)~~ **0610** SGT Kirk is moved from Shura building to aid station with severe head wound

~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **0615** ANA defense collapses (east side of COP Keating)

~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **0625** 2 X F-15E call sign (b)(1)1.5a check-in with JTAC at FOB Bostick

(U) **0630** AAF inside perimeter at three locations

~~(FOUO)~~ **0630** **SPC SCUSA** Killed vicinity Blue (3rd Plt) barracks (POS 5)

~~(FOUO)~~ **0630** SGT Gallegos, SPC Mace and SGT Martin exit LRAS II; RPG impacts, severely wounding SPC Mace and wounding SGT Martin; **SGT GALLEGOS** hit by machine gun fire

~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **0639** 1 x F15E, (b)(1)1.5a , on-station at COP Keating

~~(FOUO)~~ **0645** **SGT KIRK** pronounced dead at aid station

(C) **0648** F-15E (b)(1)1.5a engages enemy w/GBU-31 (first bombs on target)

~~(FOUO)~~ **0700** SGT Hardt reports AAF on COP pointing RPG at his position; last comms from SGT Hardt

(U) **0702** US elements collapse perimeter around TOC as final fighting position

~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **0710** 2 X AH-64, call sign (b)(1)1.5a on station

~~(FOUO)~~ **0715** SPC Mace recovered with severe wounds to LRAS II; remains with SGT (b)(6) and SPC (b)(6) approximately 5 hours

~~(FOUO)~~ **0730** MEDEVAC departs FOB Bostick; unable to land COP Keating LZ due to heavy ground fire

~~(FOUO)~~ **0830** MEDEVAC second attempt to reach COP Keating; unable to land due to enemy fire; QRF Cdr (CPT Sax, HHC, 1-32 IN) arrives at FOB Bostick

~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **0849** AH-64s, (b)(1)1.5a , continue to engage enemy vic COP Keating perimeter

~~(FOUO)~~ **1104** COP Keating personnel attempting to reset concertina wire and gain accountability of missing personnel

~~(C)~~ **1147** QRF 1 arrives via air on OP Fritsche

(U) **1236** B Troop regains initiative and begins offensive action to clear and secure COP Keating

~~(FOUO)~~ **1240** SPC (b)(6) and SGT (b)(6) recover **SPC GRIFFIN;** KIA from apparent sniper fire

~~(C)~~ **1400** QRF 1 (one platoon) departs on foot from OP Fritsche for COP Keating

~~(FOUO)~~ **1415** **SGT GALLEGOS** and **SGT Martin** remains recovered to aid station

~~(FOUO)~~ **1603** COP Keating cannot account for one soldier (SGT Hardt)

(U) **1900** QRF 2 passes thru QRF 1 to clear into COP Keating

(U) **1902** QRF 2 conducts link-up with B TRP on COP Keating

(U) **1945** HLZ at COP Keating secured by QRF (HHC/1-32 IN)

~~(FOUO)~~ **2002** QRF recovers **SGT HARDT** vic maintenance bay; KIA due to apparent RPG

~~(FOUO)~~ **2007** LTC Brown, Commander, 3-61 CAV, inserted into COP Keating via MEDEVAC escort; MEDEVAC collects three WIAs from COP Keating

(U) **2100** Remaining casualties MEDEVAC'd and remains of KIAs extracted from COP Keating

~~(FOUO~~) **2235** **SPC MACE** DOW at FOB Bostick

e. ~~(FOUO)~~ Where did the attack occur? Provide relevant graphics and photographs depicting the location of the attack.

18. (U) Imagery of COP Keating at Appendix III.

19. (U) In addition to the imagery at Appendix III, based on my personal reconnaissance overflight of COP Keating on 24 Oct 09, I note the following:

    a. ~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ COP Keating was located deep in a mountain valley along an unimproved road (MSR CALIFORNIA) that runs along the Landay Sin River; COP was located on the south side of the river and situated at the base of a steeply inclined hill mass.

    b. ~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ The switchback road was visible on the side of the hill mass leading up to OP Fritsche.

    c. ~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ The bridge across the river was intact and led to an even steeper incline facing the COP from the north approximately 200 meters from the COP.

    d. ~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ Both the hill mass leading to OP Fritsche and the northern mountainside across the river were heavily vegetated with trees and scrub and covered with numerous rock outcroppings ideal for an overwatching force to cover and conceal itself.

    e. ~~(C)~~ The small village of Urmol was clearly visible about 200 meters to the west.

    f. ~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO~~) The village was likewise ideally located to cover an overwatching force and well within small arms range.

    g. ~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ There was a higher piece of terrain about 100 meter south of OP Fritsche upon which were some revetments which were reported to have been used by the ANP during the engagement.

f. ~~(FOUO)~~ What were the specific injuries to each member of the coalition forces killed or injured in this attack?

20. (U) Appendix IV contains a spreadsheet of injuries. No incidents of fratricide or friendly fire occurred during this action.

21. (U) In addition to the medical treatment reflected at Appendix IV administered by the physician's assistant and medics at COP Keating, all Soldiers in B Troop were trained as Combat Life Savers
(CLS) and in several instances rendered buddy aid, thereby reducing the impact of wounds during the action.

g. ~~(FOUO)~~ What was the AT/FP plan for the COP? Was it current? Was it available at the FOB or was it at a higher HQ? Was the plan appropriate based on the terrain and AAF activity in the area? What force protection technology was in place and how was it employed? Did the COP commander conduct any base defense rehearsals prior to the start of the attack? Was the plan followed? How many US servicemembers were engaged in force protection duties at the time of the attack?

22. ~~(S)~~ The anti-terrorism/force protection (AT/FP) plan for COP Keating was current and consisted of two HMMWV-mounted Long Range Advanced Scout Surveillance Systems (LRAS) and one dismounted battle position at the ECP. There was also an M240B machinegun in the mortar pit with 1x60mm and 1x120mm mortars. During stand-to the unit would man two additional HMMWVs with .50 caliber machine gun and Mk 19 grenade launcher to support the LRAS for additional firepower. Each of these positions was manned by a single Soldier.

23. (U) The plan was initiated at COP level and available in the TOC. The Troop conducted base defense drills for the first few months of the deployment, but approximately two months prior to the attack reduced the frequency of the drills based on the number of real world responses to enemy fire. From these limited engagements personnel knew the plan and their roles during troops in contact situations.

24. ~~(S)~~ The AT/FP plan included use of the Rapid Deployment Integrated Surveillance System (RDISS) cameras located around the COP for surveillance, though they relied entirely on the TOC for power. In addition, there was a Low Level Voice Intercept (LLVI) system at OP Fritsche, later replaced by a commercial-off-the-shelf Wolfhound system, which provided constant scanning of AAF commercial radio frequencies and provided limited direction finding. Finally, the unit used radio frequency scanners while on patrol to monitor local or enemy reaction and comment.

25. ~~(S)~~ On 3 Oct 09 the Soldiers followed the plan, with six Soldiers in their stand-to positions providing security at the time of the attack – five manning positions plus the sergeant of the guard.

26. ~~(S)~~ This AT/FP plan was not, however, adequate for the terrain and AAF activity in the area. Shortcomings and vulnerabilities include:

    a. (U) Insufficient overhead cover for battle positions.
    b. (U) Lack of tower positions for observation of enemy movement approaching the COP.
    c. (U) Static battle positions and failure to dramatically modify response TTPs.
    d. (U) Routes for ammunition resupply lacked cover or concealment.
    e. (U) Lack of bunkers or other Soldier protection.
    f. (U) Unsecured perimeter, especially on ANA portion of the compound, which constituted a virtual open gate.
    g. (U) Inadequate patrols beyond the perimeter.
    h. (U) Oversized compound relative to troop strength.
    i. (U) Failure to relocate the mortars away from COP perimeter in more defensible position.

j. (U) ANA force sharing compound not integrated into base defense plan and was a known vulnerability with limited mitigation measures.
k. (U) Base defense plan relied on brigade-level QRF which was well trained, but not rehearsed for employment at COP Keating or OP Fritsche.
l. (U) Predictable patterns that enemy forces were able to observe.
m. (U) Over-reliance on static HMMWVs that were not adequately protected.
n. (U) Inadequate use of Claymore mines for perimeter security.
o. (U) Single Soldiers vice buddy teams manning key fighting positions.

~~(C)~~ None of these deficiencies in and of themselves caused the loss of the eight Soldiers, but all contributed to making COP Keating an attractive target to the enemy forces.

h. ~~(FOUO)~~ Were there contract security guards in place at COP Keating? If so, how were they employed prior to the attack, how did they respond to the attack, and who had command and control of the contract security force?

27. ~~(C)~~ The Troop employed contract Afghan Security Guards (ASGs) whose primary function was entry control at the main ECP on the northwest side of the COP. This included conducting vehicle searches outside the COP along MSR CALIFORNIA. Daily command and control was conducted through a site leader who reported to the Troop leadership. The regular commander of the contract security force was wounded a few days prior to 3 Oct 09, and was not present on the day of the attack.

28. ~~(C~~) When the attack began, most of the ASG guards fled the area and provided no security or control. Only one ASG member was observed fighting alongside US forces.

i. ~~(FOUO)~~ Were the ISAF and/or US ROE followed during the engagement? If so were the ROE too restrictive? Did the on-scene commander understand his authority to employ force and did he apply the appropriate amount of force?

29. (U) Soldiers and leaders understood and complied with the ISAF and US Rules of Engagement (ROE). Notably, B Troop applied the ROE in engaging the mosque in the village of Urmol in self defense, when they came under heavy fire from the mosque and had no means to withdraw or otherwise neutralize the threat. In addition, there were no civilian casualties observed or reported in this action in part due to the villagers having been warned to leave the area by AAF prior to the attack.

30. (U) The ROE posed no restrictions to the US forces on the ground, nor to the supporting air elements, that inhibited their actions in responding to the attack. The on-scene commander employed all the force he had available, and that force plus the air attacks constituted an appropriate use and amount of force.

31. ~~(C)~~ There is some evidence in an AH-64 Apache helicopter gun tape that might suggest a violation of the ROE when the on-scene commander asserted that all personnel outside the perimeter of the compound were hostile and proper targets. In context, however, those remarks served to inform the attack pilots who had just arrived on the scene that there were enemy forces right outside the perimeter, that no US or friendly forces were located

there, and thus those persons identified could be engaged. The on-scene commander had sufficient experience and knowledge of the situation to make proper target identification and under the circumstances there was no intent to declare someone hostile based on status or location alone.

j. ~~(FOUO)~~ When was COP Keating first occupied? Was COP Keating under construction at the time of the attack? Was the occupation and construction of COP Keating a planned operation? If so, who did the planning and what planning was done? Was there a current vulnerability assessment? If so, what was the result of the vulnerability assessment? How were identified vulnerabilities mitigated?

32. ~~(C)~~ The location of COP Keating was first occupied by a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in July 2006. Four successive company-size units occupied the site after it became a combat outpost. There was no on-going construction at the time of the 3 Oct 09 attack, though there were some minor defensive improvements made with sandbags and plywood at certain locations.

33. (U) The original occupation and construction of COP Keating was planned and performed prior to the arrival of 3-61 Cavalry. B Troop essentially occupied existing positions.

34. ~~(C)~~ There was no formal vulnerability assessment done during the deployment of 3-61 Cavalry, but leaders routinely assessed their vulnerabilities as part of their daily duties. While some vulnerabilities identified by leaders were mitigated with defensive improvements, no modifications of the site could overcome the tactical advantage afforded the enemy by the constricted and dominating terrain outside the COP.

k. ~~(FOUO)~~ Had COP Keating been attacked in the 30 days prior to this attack? If so, what was the extent of the attacks?

35. (U) In the 30 days prior to 3 Oct 09, enemy forces conducted small scale attacks, but demonstrated some level of coordination and experience. The attacks immediately preceding 3 Oct occurred as follows:

    a. (U) 9/7/2009 Small Arms Fire
    b. (U) 9/9/2009 Complex attack RPG/SAF
    c. (U) 9/9/2009 Small Arms Fire
    d. (U) 9/9/2009 Small Arms Fire
    e. (U) 9/11/2009 Small Arms Fire
    f. (U) 9/12/2009 Complex attack RPG/ Small Arms Fire
    g. (U) 9/16/2009 Complex attack RPG/ Small Arms Fire
    h. (U) 9/20/2009 Complex attack RPG/ Small Arms Fire
    i. (U) 9/22/2009 Small Arms Fire
    j. (U) 9/27/2009 Small Arms Fire

36. ~~(C)~~ These seemingly routine attacks continued had taken place since the arrival of B Troop in late May 09. Attacks averaged one every 5-6 days. Notably, 3-61 Cavalry received 47

enemy attacks in the first 130 days of their deployment compared to the 45 attacks their predecessors received in 12 months.

37. ~~(C)~~ Attacks from June through September 2009 consisted generally of an initial rocket-propelled grenade followed by sprays from small arms from approximately 5-6 enemy fighters, usually lasting 5-10 minutes. Based on intelligence reporting before and after the attack - and the conclusion of the Soldiers involved - the most recent attacks leading up to 3 Oct 09 were most likely probing attacks to identify COP Keating's force protection measures, weapons systems locations, and response patterns – information which the enemy used in coordinating the attack.

38. (U) It should be noted that the frequency of these small scale attacks peaked in July and had declined somewhat during August and September.

I. ~~(FOUO)~~ Was there a current threat assessment? Had any intelligence reports been received indicating a possible attack in the 30 days prior to this attack? If so, what was that intelligence? What office was responsible for those reports? What actions were taken as a result of that intelligence? Were those actions appropriate? Were higher HQ made aware of any current intelligence?

39. ~~(C)~~ Threat assessments were done twice a week as part of the intelligence assessment, and the most recent one was current and completed on 30 Sep 09. For the B Troop area of operations the assessment was oriented to how the enemy would attack. The squadron S2 is responsible for collecting the reports at the squadron level where they were processed into a daily rollup that is forwarded to brigade and disseminated to the squadron.

40. (U) This threat reporting was consistent with enemy trends over an extended period, as described above, and did not heighten the attention of intelligence analysts. Routinely, the unit received local national and other HUMINT reports that 50-100 fighters were massing to attack the COP, and ultimately only 4-5 fighters would appear. Thus, reports of large numbers of enemy fighters in the area were not out of the ordinary. It appeared that headquarters staff had been conditioned to view such reporting as a reflection of steady state AAF operations in the Kamdesh area.

41. (U) However, in the weeks preceding the attack, specificity of reporting appeared to grow. There were reports of large enemy forces massing in the vicinity and potential for impending attacks, and included reports that the AAF were meeting with local villagers and offering money to convince them to join the Taliban in an attack on COP Keating. Reporting also indicated arrival of new or previously unknown "Taliban commanders" in the vicinity. Some reports noted B-10 recoilless rifles seen in the area. Specific threat reporting in the vicinity of COP Keating for 26 Sep 09 indicates an approximate 200-man Taliban force in the area, threatening to overrun Barg-e Matal and then attack COP Keating.

42. ~~(FOUO)~~ The B Troop commander, CPT (b)(6) , who assumed command of B Troop on 20 Sep 09 at COP Keating, also noted increased local national discomfort with the expectation of attacks. As a result of this recent threat reporting, B Troop moved its stand-to time on 30 Sep 09 to an earlier start at 0430. But since a general "desensitization" of the intelligence

system had set in, aggressive efforts to confirm or deny the extent of the reports did not occur. Commanders at the Troop, Squadron, and Brigade levels were prepared to respond to the enemy's most likely course of action, but not for the enemy's most dangerous course of action, e.g., a large scale attack directed against a COP.

43. ~~(FOUO)~~ Intelligence reports were sent up the chain of command, but there was inadequate response, and ultimately, a failure of intelligence to prepare the unit for the enemy's action. This failure to react to intelligence resulted in a missed opportunity to increase security patrols, expand stand-to requirements, reinforce battle positions, seek additional ISR, or establish imminent TIC CAS requirements.

m. ~~(FOUO)~~ (1) What Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) platforms were covering COP Keating at the time of the attack? Was the ISR support appropriate? What organic ISR support was available at the COP? Was that organic support adequate? Were any deficiencies made aware to higher HQ? Was anything done to correct deficiencies?

44. ~~(C)~~ During the first two months of the unit's deployment, ISR (principally FMV) was allocated to the brigade for further tasking against brigade collection priorities. During July CJTF priorities shifted, largely driven by the intensity of operations in support of ANSF in the Barg-e Matal area and the personnel recovery efforts to find missing PFC Bergdahl in RC East. ISR availability became more challenging at the brigade and squadron level as allocations only supported approved CONOPs. This severely limited the brigade, squadron or troop's ability to do target development or to confirm or deny other intelligence reporting, such has bottom-up HUMINT reporting received in the days prior to the 3 Oct 09 attack.

45. ~~(C)~~ There was no ISR platform coverage of COP Keating at the time of the attack. However, during the action 4 lines of Predator were pushed to support the fight.

46. ~~(S)~~ The organic ISR available to B Troop at COP Keating consisted of two HMMWV-mounted LRAS systems, 14 perimeter Rapid Deployment Integrated Surveillance System (RDISS) cameras, of which two were night capable, one Raven UAV system, and one Low-Level Voice Intercept (LLVI) system (later replaced by a commercial Wolfhound system). The LRAS could not be used to the fullest extent of the capability due to the constricted terrain surrounding the COP. The Raven was rarely used due to the effects of high winds in the mountain valleys. And the video cameras provided marginal perimeter observation. LLVI was very effective and provided much of the SIGINT available to both the troop and the squadron.

47. ~~(C)~~ Throughout the summer intelligence reporting became routine and repetitive. For example, report after report would indicate large numbers of AAF massing for an attack in the battlespace and the result would be a few minutes of harassing gunfire from 3-5 insurgents. This pattern did not generate the urgency or the priority necessary to request additional ISR assets. In short, the troop, squadron, and brigade intelligence systems became "desensitized" to the operating environment.

~~(FOUO)~~ (2) What was the relationship with the local community prior to the attack? Was there any indication from the local community that there would be an upcoming attack?

48. ~~(C//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ There was a good, though limited, relationship with the local community, primarily the village of Urmol where most of the population worked on the COP. Due to the limited number of US and ANA Soldiers at COP Keating, the ability to conduct extensive engagement into the local community, while maintaining adequate force protection and security on the COP, was constrained. Therefore, most interaction with local civic leaders took place at the so-called shura building at the COP or through the local workers on the COP. Likewise, patrols to extend the security perimeter of the COP were limited in size, duration and range.

49. (U) The only indication of an impending attack from the local community came from the Urmol ANP commander. A few days prior to the attack he asked for barrier material to reinforce the Urmol police station. On 3 Oct 09 this same ANP commander came to the COP literally minutes before the attack to report that the local villagers had been ordered by AAF fighters to leave the village and that they had fled. He was later reported to have been killed or captured.

n. ~~(FOUO)~~ What was the indirect fire plan? If so, was it integrated with other military installations in the area? What organic indirect fire support was available at COP Keating? Was that level of support appropriate? Was close air support requested and delivered in a timely manner?

50. ~~(C)~~ The indirect fire plan for COP Keating targeted known or frequently used locations surrounding COP Keating and OP Fritsche used by AAF forces to fire on the COP. Assets used to execute the plan included the Troop's organic 60mm and 120mm mortars, which were split between OP Fritsche and COP Keating. There was a plan for reinforcing fires from the 155mm howitzer section at FOB Bostick. This 155mm support was limited to targets on the far eastern or western sides of COP Keating due to the possibility of range error when firing at maximum ranges with rocket assisted projectiles (RAP). For base defense, B Troop's organic fire support assets were intended to fix attacking AAF, allowing CCA or CAS to destroy attacking forces.

51. ~~(C)~~ The fire support was not adequate to respond to the large scale attack that occurred on 3 Oct 09. The enemy succeeded in quickly suppressing COP Keating's mortars at the start of the battle. The simultaneous enemy attack on OP Fritsche initially limited supporting fires, although OP Fritsche later provided approximately 200 rounds of 120mm mortar fire in support of COP Keating.

52. ~~(S)~~ B Troop requested close air support at 0602L, minutes after the battle initiated. Fixed-wing air assets, a flight of 2 X F-15Es, were tasked at 0602L to provide close air support (CAS) in response to B Troop's TIC situation, and they arrived vicinity FOB Bostick at 0625L, with one aircraft, (b)(1)1.5a , on-station at COP Keating by 0639L. The first bomb on target was delivered at 0648L. Communications challenges between the aircraft and ground elements required relay communications, from the JFO at COP Keating to the JTAC at FOB Bostick, who talked with one aircraft, (b)(1)1.5a who remained over FOB Bostick while the lead aircraft, (b)(1)1.5a , moved onto the target. The communications setup slightly delayed the air crews gaining full situational awareness of the ground situation, although the FOB Bostick-based JTAC was receiving calls from the JFO-qualified fire support officer (FSO) on

the ground at COP Keating, and clearing fires based on friendly personnel locations on the ground. CAS was instrumental in the ground forces regaining the initiative.

53. ~~(S)~~ COP Keating also received outstanding air support from AH-64 Apache close combat aviation (CCA). Request for CCA was made at 0612L, and an AH-64 AWT from Jalalabad Airfield (FOB Fenty) was on station at 0716L. The air weapons teams were extremely effective in suppressing multiple enemy fighting positions and killing enemy fighters. Overall, AH-64s expended 98 X 2.75 in. rockets, five Hellfire missiles, and 1800 X 30mm rounds during the battle.

o. ~~(FOUO)~~ What were the personal protective equipment requirements for individuals on the COP? Were those requirements followed? Were the requirements appropriate?

54. ~~(C)~~ B Troop instituted U3 uniform standard on the COP upon their arrival in May 09. The personal protective equipment (PPE) requirement for all Soldiers was full battle gear including body armor, Kevlar helmet, eye protection, and personal weapon, whenever outside of buildings. This standard was higher than that of previous unit and was imposed by 1SG Burton who was wounded by a B-10 round on 30 May 09, his first day on the COP.

55. ~~(FOUO)~~ The first sergeant enforced the standard without fail. There is no indication any soldier was killed or injured because he failed to wear the appropriate PPE, or in fact that any Soldier was without PPE during the battle on 3 Oct 09.

p. ~~(FOUO)~~ What, if any, medical treatment was provided to the servicemembers? Were the MEDEVAC procedures timely and appropriate under the circumstances?

56. ~~(FOUO)~~ Appendix IV contains a record of medical treatment provided.

57. ~~(FOUO~~) In addition to the medical treatment provided by the unit physician's assistant at COP Keating shown in Appendix IV, one Soldier, SPC Mace, was evacuated to the squadron Forward Surgical) at FOB Bostick where he received follow-on care before he died of wounds. SPCs (b)(6) and (b)(6) received care at the FST before they were evacuated to Landstuhl and home station. Most of the wounded were treated and returned to duty within hours or days.

58. ~~(C)~~ Though MEDEVAC aircraft were pushed to the area, early evacuation of wounded personnel from COP Keating was significantly delayed due to heavy enemy ground fire that posed a direct threat to all rotary wing aircraft during the battle and which had already struck 3 X AH-64 Apache aircraft.

59. ~~(C)~~ The on-scene commander would have rejected in-bound MEDEVAC during the fight because of the risk to the aircraft and his inability to secure the landing zone (LZ).

60. ~~(C)~~ COP Keating's lone LZ was located outside the perimeter, approximately 100 meters across a bridge, and in direct fire range of several enemy occupied buildings in Urmol. There was insufficient manpower to secure the LZ while simultaneously defending the COP.

61. ~~(FOUO)~~ The chain of command should have acted to address other considerations relating to MEDEVAC, including:

a. ~~(FOUO)~~ Relocation of LZ inside the COP, thereby reducing the need for additional manpower to secure both the COP and external LZ.
b. ~~(FOUO~~) Stationing MEDEVAC aircraft closer to the outlying COPs so as to make it available more quickly during a fight. Planning time for MEDEVAC from FOB Fenty to COP Keating to the FST at FOB Bostick was approximately 83 minutes. Positioning aircraft at FOB Bostick would have reduced the evacuation time to 49 minutes. However, no MEDEVAC plan for COP Keating would have achieved earlier evacuation of SPC Mace or other casualties on 3 Oct 09.

q. ~~(FOUO)~~ What is the nature and extent of loss of military equipment? Initial reports indicate that a UAV crashed during the attack. If so, what are the facts and circumstances surrounding the crash?

62. ~~(C~~) The majority of equipment located at COP Keating was lost due to fire and battle damage during the action and later from USAF bombing to destroy the vacated COP. Approximate value of lost property to date is $6.2M dollars including the cost of lost theater equipment, organizational equipment, and organizational clothing individual equipment (OCIE) property. Specific items include computers, Soldier intercom system packages, binoculars, radios, machine guns, night vision goggles, 9mm automatic pistols, rifle sights, generators, telescopes, shipping and storage containers, HMMWVs (2), and armored carrier utility trucks (3).

63. ~~(S)~~ An MQ-1 Predator (b)(1)1.5a crashed in vicinity of COP Keating during operations in support of the 3 Oct 09 battle. There has not yet been an official report on the cause, but indications are that adverse weather and altitude contributed to icing on the wings and resulted in the Predator crashing into a mountain as the aircraft moved from west to east into the airspace over COP Keating. The POC for the on-going safety investigation is at the 432d WOC, Creech Air Force Base, NV and can be reached (b)(2)Low

r. ~~(FOUO)~~ Were any Law of Armed Conflict violations alleged or observed during this engagement? If so, by whom and what were the specific violations? Did the AAF attack the COP from inside Mosques or other protected buildings (e.g., schools, hospitals)?

64. ~~(C~~) The enemy's use of a mosque in the village of Urmol was the only Law of Armed Conflict violation noted. Several Soldiers witnessed fire coming from the mosque, and an Apache helicopter engaged in self defense with two Hellfire missiles and destroyed the weapon system. Of note, Soldiers and leaders were mindful of the potential information operations (IO) impact of destroying the local mosque, but had no option to withdraw or reposition and were receiving heavy enemy fire.

s. ~~(FOUO~~) What impact did the commander's plan to abandon this camp in the future have on the ability to defend this camp at the time of attack? Was the drawdown in progress or were defenses at their normal rate?

65. ~~(FOUO~~) Based on interaction between leaders of 4/4 BCT and their predecessors prior to deployment, as well as commander assessment during the brigade's Dec 09 Pre-deployment Site Survey (PDSS), planning to close remote COPs like COP Keating actually began at homestation. The brigade and squadron arrived in theater with the full intention of closing COPs.

66. ~~(FOUO~~) On 17 Jul 09 LTC (b)(6) briefed COMISAF and COMCJTF-82 at FOB Bostick on plans to begin closing COP Keating, COP Lowell, OP Fritsche and others on or about 1 Aug 09.

67. ~~(FOUO)~~ The commander's plan to abandon COP Keating inadvertently undermined the focus on current base defense and preparedness. Specifically:

    a. ~~(FOUO~~) Mission – B Troop Soldiers and leaders based at COP Keating were unclear, even confused, about their mission for anything beyond "defending the COP."
    b. ~~(FOUO)~~ Construction – The unit did not adequately pursue efforts to get construction or barrier materials in to improve the COP since improvements would be of limited duration; the unit in fact gave away some sandbags and plywood to the ANP rather than using it to improve their own positions.
    c. ~~(FOUO)~~ Resourcing – Absent a clear mission other than preparing to close, the command maintained insufficient manpower at the COP.

    (U) It is not clear that a change in any one of these factors would have prevented the attack of 3 Oct 09, but each played a role in creating a less than optimal readiness posture. In my estimation, failure to take these and other force protection measures made the COP an easier target for enemy attack.

68. ~~(FOUO)~~ In addition to the above, on 12 Jul 09 an extensive brigade-level operation commenced at Barg-e Matal to support ANSF forces. Because of the remote location of Barg-e Matal and the nature of the fight there, significant resources from CJTF and brigade levels, including ISR, rotary wing airlift support, and ground forces, were diverted.

69. ~~(FOUO~~) With resources needed to either close bases or reinforce bases being sent to the new CJTF and brigade main effort at Barg-e Matal, economy of force applied elsewhere. It became challenging for the squadron to conduct routine resupply to remote COPs. When coupled with the continued desire close remote COPs, the squadron commander assessed that it was not possible or cost effective to apply more resources to reinforce sites already identified for closure.

70. ~~(C)~~ Also causing a reallocation resources, PFC (b)(6) had been missing in the RC East sector since 30 Jun 09. The personnel recovery effort required significant ISR assets that further reduced availability for other missions such as confirming or denying reports of AAF attack preparations. This recovery effort continues today as a high priority for ISAF and CJTF-82.

71. ~~(FOUO~~) Finally, with national elections scheduled for 20 Aug 09, security of polling places was prioritized above closing COPs

72. ~~(FOUO)~~ As a result of all of the above, plans for closure of COP Keating were delayed in the short term. By mid-September the brigade issued its plan of closure of the COPs (Operation MOUNTAIN DESCENT) which was to commence on 4 Oct 09.

t. ~~(FOUO)~~ Recommendations concerning improvements, if any, to coalition force techniques, tactics and procedures to prevent future incidents from occurring?

73. ~~(FOUO)~~ Location and enemy historical actions - Commanders must continue to evaluate mission, effectiveness, and tactical and strategic value of each FOB/COP/OP, and ensure location and terrain do not unnecessarily give the enemy a tactical advantage. Recognize that patterns of enemy attack in locale or against specific sites may change dramatically. Review intelligence reports and indicators against the enemy's most dangerous course of action, and exercise caution tempering indicators against attack history or experiences.

74. ~~(FOUO)~~ Resupply - Where air is only means of resupply of COP/OP, ensure necessary force protection or other barrier materials do not get lost in priority. Airlift will cancel for weather, re-tasking, or maintenance and enabling force protection must remain a unit priority. Pursue augmenting normal supply schedule.

75. ~~(FOUO)~~ MEDEVAC - At COP/OP, ensure location of LZ for resupply or MEDEVAC will not impose undue additional manpower burdens on already undermanned forces.

76. ~~(FOUO)~~ Improve Foxhole – Basic, but as the force realigns in theater, continue to stress importance of improving defensive positions and AT/FP posture. Do not economize on base defense, even if we expect a site to close soon. Assume the enemy learns our plans as we engage locals or government officials. As the unit approaches planned closure, maintain heightened awareness to intelligence reporting and indicators.

77. ~~(FOUO)~~ Joint Terminal Air Controller (JTAC) Support - When possible, push JTACs to outlying COPs/OPs in order to expedite target execution from CAS.

78. ~~(FOUO)~~ OPSEC - Maintain operational security on specific movement dates. Security is a special challenge in a COIN environment where we seek to work closely with ANSF and the local populace, but expect that information is shared with the enemy and plan accordingly.

79. ~~(S)~~ Communications – Ensure a redundant communications structure at remote or isolated COPs/OPs for use during a fight. This enemy demonstrates good understanding of our reliance on generators and other critical infrastructure to power our communication systems. It is incumbent on commanders to protect critical power infrastructure while maintaining other alternate communications systems, such as TACSAT , to continue the fight in case of loss of power.

80. ~~(FOUO)~~ PPE – Reinforce standards and constantly reevaluate PPE posture.

81. ~~(FOUO~~) Force Protection - Never let up on force protection. Reinforce battle positions; maintain adequate security force; check perimeter regularly; secure unauthorized and unmanned entry points; evaluate perimeter of site against force size available to defend and pull in perimeter as required; locate key weapons systems where they can be defended by maximum force; secure routes across compound, especially to ASP; protect entry/exit points to buildings to deny enemy sniper targets; alter responses patterns so as not to inform enemy of unit TTPs/SOPs.

82. ~~(FOUO)~~ Fresh Eyes - Maintain vigilance in intelligence analysis and indicators so that we are not lulled into false sense of activity based on enemy historical patterns.

u. (U) Any other matters you deem relevant.

83. ~~(FOUO~~) Force Structure - Manning remains a challenge, but an aspect of the manning issue is unit replacement schedule, force structure and number of soldiers available. Commanders at all levels, from DA to theater to company or troop at an outpost, must consider how available forces affect assumption of mission. In some circumstances, as at COP Keating, the incoming unit structure will be identical to the outgoing unit. When this situation occurs, commanders must evaluate mission, force protection, and related issues and adjust rather than simply assuming what was in already in place.

84. ~~(FOUO~~) Frequent Leader Visits – When Soldiers are in difficult situations it is vital for higher level commanders and other leaders to visit frequently to demonstrate understanding of the situation. This is especially true in remote locations - clearly a challenge in this operating environment, but crucial nonetheless.

85. ~~(FOUO)~~ Soldier Ethic - Our Soldiers continue to perform magnificent work. We must continue to reinforce their efforts by keeping them informed, keeping faith, ensuring that the mission and commander's intent are disseminated and understood. When risk must be taken, all available effort to mitigate risk must be taken. Risk is inherent in the profession and in this mission, but appropriate steps are always available to provide some risk mitigation.

86. (F~~OUO~~) COMISAF Tactical Directive, dated 1 Jul 09 - Validated in this action when leaders demonstrated that the guidance contained in the Tactical Directive can be applied without compromising Soldier safety. In two instances – calling for CAS and engaging a mosque – small unit leaders considered the guidance and acted squarely within the Tactical Directive (and the ROE).

87. ~~(FOUO)~~ Command responsibility/accountability –

a. ~~(FOUO)~~ Several levels of command had an opportunity to affect the base defense plan for COP Keating leading up to the 3 Oct 09 AAF attack. Failure to take appropriate actions arose for two main reasons: command focus on plans to close COP Keating and nearby OP Fritsche, and desensitization of commanders and staff to intelligence reporting of enemy activity.

b. ~~(FOUO)~~ Because base closure plans had been prepared, briefed, and approved up the chain of command, commanders at the brigade, squadron, and troop levels did not place enough emphasis, rigor, or resources toward the continuing need to improve battle positions and defenses.

c. ~~(FOUO)~~ As for intelligence, a common, even routine, pattern of reporting and associated enemy action in the Kamdesh district had developed over several months. Brigade and squadron commanders and intelligence staffs assumed this pattern would continue, but not significantly threaten local COPs or base closure plans. Consequently, these reports did not receive the necessary scrutiny to confirm or deny their credibility in a manner that would have enabled commanders at the squadron and troop levels to take appropriate offensive or defensive actions in the vicinity of COP Keating in the days leading up to the attack.

d. ~~(FOUO)~~ As an aside, comments from brigade, squadron, and troop leaders indicated that there had been no formal discussion or dissemination of lessons learned regarding the similarly executed AAF attack on the isolated vehicle patrol base and OP at Wanat, Afghanistan in July 2008.

e. ~~(FOUO)~~ Primary responsibility for failure to improve COP Keating's base defense and AT/FP plans lies at the troop and squadron levels.

f. ~~(FOUO)~~ MAJ (then-CPT) (b)(6) , former Commander, B Troop, 3rd Squadron 61st Cavalry, bears the greatest responsibility as the B Troop commander and senior officer at COP Keating from the unit's arrival in May 2009 until the 20 Sep 09 B Troop change of command. Specifically,

i. ~~(FOUO)~~ Then-CPT (b)(6) rejected recommendations from senior non-commissioned officers to execute additional protective measures, including the proposed emplacement of sniper teams and other small kill teams outside the perimeter to deny the enemy key terrain.

ii. ~~(FOUO)~~ He failed to adequately construct or reinforce defensive positions, though excess lumber and sandbags left by the previous unit were available.

iii. ~~(FOUO)~~ He denied junior leader requests to check, reposition, or change out Claymore mine arrays that had been emplaced by the previous unit around the COP perimeter (no Claymore mine detonated during the attack).

iv. ~~(FOUO)~~ He did not take strong enough action to force the closure of a well-known gap in the perimeter at the ANA portion of COP – an avenue of approach that was used by AAF forces to penetrate the COP on 3 Oct 09.

v. ~~(FOUO)~~ While he did increase on-base PPE uniform posture to a higher standard, he did not establish and enforce adequate stand-to procedures. During stand-to periods at COP Keating security forces were only increased from 3 to 6 Soldiers, all of whom occupied single-Soldier defensive positions instead of using, at a minimum, buddy teams.

~~(FOUO)~~ These and other deficiencies in the COP security plan left B Troop vulnerable to the enemy's most dangerous course of action.

g. ~~(FOUO)~~ LTC (b)(6) Commander, 3rd Squadron 61st Cavalry, also bears significant responsibility for the state of COP Keating's base defenses as the next higher commander.

i. ~~(FOUO)~~ LTC (b)(6) made several visits to COP Keating and was aware of the precarious location of the COP as well as the defensive positions and procedures that were in place. During the unit's pre-deployment site survey he attended a memorial service for the previous unit's company commander who was killed by an IED 50 meters outside the perimeter.

ii. ~~(FOUO)~~ LTC (b)(6) was also aware that then-CPT (b)(6) was not a strong leader and may not have relied on his non-commissioned officers enough for their experience and expertise. He should have been aware of internal friction between then-CPT (b)(6) and 1SG (b)(6)

iii. ~~(FOUO)~~ Knowledge of then-CPT (b)(6) shortcomings and potential command climate issues should have heightened LTC (b)(6) sensitivity, attention, and supervision to security plans and operations at the remote COP Keating.

h. ~~(FOUO)~~ The evidence shows that there were challenges for both B Troop and 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry in providing Class IV and other barrier material when resupplying remote COPs and OPs like Keating and Fritsche. With an air-centric resupply system there were inevitable cancellations and constant reprioritization which often drove Class IV to lower priority. Still, there were improvements that could have been made without resupply, and as noted above, there were excess supplies on the COP, such as those that were given to the ANP district police chief shortly prior to 3 Oct 09. In my assessment, a mindset that closure of the COP was imminent predominated over improvements in force protection.

i. ~~(FOUO)~~ CPT (b)(6) Commander, B Troop, 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry since 20 Sep 09, bears some responsibility and accountability with regard to the inadequate base defense plan on 3 Oct 09. Although CPT (b)(6) had only been in command for

approximately two weeks prior to the attack, and apparently brought new energy to the troop, he made no significant improvements in force protection at COP Keating. Like everyone who visited COP Keating, he was immediately concerned about the vulnerability of the base. While he did shift the morning stand-to hours one half hour earlier, he did not do a comprehensive vulnerability assessment of COP Keating's defenses upon assuming command. There were no additional patrols sent out, no checking of Claymore mines, no variation in response patterns or battle drills, and no additional person ed to stand-to battle positions. With planned COP closure just weeks away, CPT (b)(6) focus appeared again to be on COP closure at the expense of force protection.

j. ~~(FOUO)~~ COL (b)(6) Commander, 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, bears overall responsibility for forces in the TF Mountain Warrior battlespace. He had an opportunity to see the level of readiness and force protection during his two visits, once during the brigade pre-deployment site survey in Dec 08 and again for the B Troop change of command as recently as 20 Sep 09.

k. ~~(FOUO)~~ COL (b)(6) who had oversight of at least 39 FOBs, COPs, and OPs in his battlespace, should not be held accountable for specific shortcomings in base defense or AT/FP plans on an individual COP like COP Keating. Clearly, COL (b)(6) recognized the need to vacate unneeded, non-contributing, or indefensible COPs like Keating in order generate additional forces, reduce resource burdens, and begin the shift of forces to population centers. Indeed, planning to do this started long before the brigade deployed. This well-intentioned, even admirable, recognition of the precarious nature of locations like COP Keating contributed to a command focus that placed more emphasis on force realignment and base closure than on the day to day need to be prepared for significant enemy contact.

l. ~~(FOUO)~~ Levels of command above brigade impact base defense in setting and enforcing standards, but rely on subordinate commands to execute operations. Therefore, while I find no specific responsibility or accountability for inadequate base defense at COP Keating above the brigade level, I find the concerns from the situation at COP Keating to be excellent opportunity for continued emphasis throughout all levels of the chain of command.