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On 14 September 12, at an unknown time in the evening, fifteen (15) Insurgents (INS) infiltrated the BLS eastern perimeter by cutting the chain link fence. The INS commenced a three pronged attack on the Juliet and Lima Ramps of the flight line at 142209D\*SEP12. The beginning of the INS attack was reported to the Bastion/Leatherneck/Shorabak (BLS) Combined Joint Operations Center (CJOC) by the (b)(1)1.4g detachment and Marines from Marine Attack Squadron-211 (VMA-211, USMC AV-8B Harrier). The INS used SAF, RPGs, and hand grenades to target CFs, USMC AV-8Bs, and flight line infrastructure. The attack resulted in CF casualties, fires and significant damage to CF aircraft. There were no specific indicators from intelligence reporting indicating a threat of an attack to BLS.

A Joint Review Board (JRB) was convened on 17 September 12 to inquire into the facts and circumstances of the 14 September attack and was completed on 24 September. The Joint Review Board initial report conducted a comprehensive review and incorporated a report dated 12 August 2012 from the Joint Staff Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (JSIVA). The JSIVA report was the result of a 10-14 June 12 JSIVA team visit. The JSIVA conducted a vulnerability assessment of Camp Leatherneck/Bastion and made recommendations regarding identified vulnerabilities to six separate areas one of which was access to the flight line proper. Although the JRB made reference to the JSIVA report and included it as an annex to the JRB initial report, it did not fully analyze the identified area vulnerabilities and recommended measures, leaving that analysis to the more comprehensive Force Protection Review. In order to ensure a complete review of the JSIVA recommendations, the Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force (Fwd), directed a supplemental review specifically focused on the JSIVA recommendations. That review is ongoing. The following discussion is a preliminary assessment of just one of the six areas listed as a vulnerability (flight line access is exploitable) in the JSIVA that is relevant to the attack on BLS 14 September.

Prior to the JSIVA visit, flight line vulnerability was previously identified based on the 14 March 2012, internal airfield incursion. The incursion occurred within Bastion (BSN) Joint Operating Base (JOB) when a Local National (LN) interpreter made an unauthorized entry onto the BSN Flight Line. This incident and its timing, coinciding with a VVIP visit, and raised concerns regarding the security of the flight line, assets, and access to critical areas within the Bastion airfield. This incident also demonstrated the need to improve airfield and perimeter security, and to institute some level of increased access control to the airfield operating areas.

As documented in a 21 March 2012 report, United Kingdom representatives responsible for Bastion Airfield security undertook an independent investigation of airfield security and force protection measures and developed several courses of action to alleviate security concerns. A Statement of Requirements (SOR) was generated to request the preferred course of action: the installation of an airfield perimeter fence to prevent unauthorized airfield access and secure critical areas of the airfield. UK estimates for financing and installation of the airfield fence put the estimated time of completion (if funded by 22 June 2012) as 15 October 2012. This SOR was initially sent through UK chain of command for approval; however, it was denied on the basis of cost, verse security gains.

Concurrently, the airfield fence project was submitted as a Joint Force Utilization Board(JFUB) package to the RC(SW) Executive Steering Group. The ESG also denied the request based on

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cost and approved an alternate berm barrier/ditch complex to secure the airfield. The project was submitted to the RC(SW) C-8 to determine cost-sharing for the project between the US and UK according to the "70/30" cost share agreement.

In the interim, on 11 May 2012, 3d MAW requested and was approved funding to emplace concertina wire to secure vulnerable areas around the flight line and to channelize pedestrian traffic to ECPs. The project was reviewed by the Prioritized Engineer Project List (PEPL) Working Group on 26 Jun 12, and work began on the project on 1 July 12. This project was completed on 26 July 12. Design work and funding for the berm/ditch complex continued until work on the project began on 1 September 12. Work on the berm/ditch project was completed on 22 October 12.

A separate internal perimeter fence would likely have not presented any serious challenge, barrier, or impediment to the enemy on the day of the attack. Indeed, the enemy easily exploited and overcame similar obstacles during the attack. As discussed in the JRB initial report, the enemy was successful in their attack by negotiating and cutting through the perimeter fence undetected by the adjacent manned towers. On the night of the attack every other tower was manned along the BSN perimeter. Bastion security towers (referred to as sangers by the UK) were manned based on the current UK assessment of the security threat.

#### **JSIVA Report and Subsequent Actions**

The JSIVA of 10-14 Jun 12 was verbally briefed to the Commanding Officer, I MEF Headquarters Group, the Commanding Officer, 903 EAW, and representatives from other entities playing a role in AT/FP on 15 June 12. Focusing on just the flight line vulnerability, the JSIVA made five anti-terrorist/force protection recommendations with regard to the vulnerabilities at the Bastion Airfield. The discussion that follows identifies these vulnerabilities, recommendations and the corrective measures taken in response either prior to or after the JSIVA assessment.

**A. Work closely with U.S. and coalition partners to increase owner/user awareness and security reporting procedures.** Force Protection duties at the BLS complex are divided between three (3) entities, each with its own area of operations and defined responsibilities. The 903 Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW), and Task Force Belleau Wood comprise the coalition forces, and the 215<sup>th</sup> ANA Corps who handles the security on Shorabak. All force protection issues are reported to and handled by the Combined Joint Operations Center (CJOC). The CJOC is a joint unity of effort between LNK (U.S) security force personnel and BSN (UK) personnel. The efforts of these forces are coordinated through the commander and security force staffs of TFBW/I MHG(Fwd) and 903 EAW. Although there is not a unity of command over all AT/FP within BLS, these commands work closely together in mutual cooperation to establish unity of effort. The FRAGO to clarify this issue is being staffed and made ready for signature.

**B. Conduct exercises to validate processes and identify shortfalls.**

Although not mentioned in the JSIVA report, OPERATION CONGO, updated after the 14 March airfield incursion, is a Combined Joint UK/US CONPLAN. It is initiated to deliver crisis and

consequence management to any major incident with the BLS complex and/or the Belleau Wood Area of Operations when such incidents exceed the capabilities of in-place security and emergency response teams. Two OPERATION CONGO exercises were conducted after the creation of the plan but prior to the 14 September 12 attack. Lessons learned from the two exercises were incorporated into the internal processes of the CJOC. Despite the lack of formal incorporation into OPERATION CONGO until after the attack, the CJOC and joint security force command and control and quick response to the 14 September attack was very effective as highlighted in the JRB initial report, and were executed per the new C2 SOP that was drafted after the March 14 incident.

**C. Increase the number of dedicated/routine patrols to the flight line.**

Dedicated/routine patrols of the BSN airfield falls under the responsibility of the UK security regime, consisting of the Force Protection Wing and the 903 EAW located on JOB Bastion. After the 14 March 12 airfield incursion, the UK increased the number of security patrols on the flight line.

**D. Install fencing or barriers to control unauthorized vehicle/pedestrian access to the flight line.**

As mentioned above, the 21 March 12 UK requirement for an airfield fence was denied by both the UK chain of command and the RC(SW) ESG on 28 April 12 on the basis of cost, verse gain. However, the alternate plan, a berm/ditch obstacle/barrier, was approved and forwarded for design and requirements definition in May 2012 to the Flight Line Working Group before actual work was to begin on the project. The design and requirements definition phase was still in process by the time the JSIVA debrief was presented to commanders at Camp Leatherneck on 15 June 12.

In the interim, based on an 11 May 12 Prioritized Engineer Project List (PEPL) undertaking, 3d MAW began emplacing concertina wire (C-wire) between the flight line and the perimeter fence on 1 July 12, and was completed on 26 Jul 12.<sup>1</sup>

**E. Consider utilizing additional security surveillance systems to monitor flight line activities.**

Prior to the JSIVA report, RC(SW) ATFP requested and was approved for the deployment of a Persistent Ground Surveillance System (PGSS or Aerostat) to fulfill a need for ISR coverage over the BLS complex. This system achieved full operational capability on 10 July 12. It is monitored and operated 24 hours a day, weather permitting.

The UK does not have a dedicated airfield surveillance system and no plans were in place to procure or operate an airfield surveillance system based on the JSIVA report. However, during the event the PGSS for LNK provided excellent coverage of the airfield. Additional considerations would be a GBOSS tower dedicated to the airfield. However, it is assessed at

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<sup>1</sup> As discussed previously, this C-wire was breached/cut by the enemy in four different areas.

this time that the PGSS in conjunction with other FP measures are more than adequate to cover the airfield.

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