



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES COMMAND
4700 KNOX STREET
FORT BRAGG, NC 28310-5000

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

AFDC

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: AR 15-6 Interview with (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c
(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c 2nd Battalion, 10th Marines and Task Force Belleau Wood
Security Forces

1. The investigation team conducted a recorded interview with (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c
(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c 2nd Battalion, 10th
Marines and Task Force Belleau Wood Security Forces on 12 July 2013 via Secret
Video Tele Conference (SVTC) as part of the AR 15-6 investigation into the 14-15
September 2012 attack on the Camps Bastion-Leatherneck-Shorabak Complex in
Helmand Province, Afghanistan. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c is currently unavailable to sign and
return a sworn statement. The purpose of this memorandum is to certify that the
dialogue transcribed below is an accurate account of the interview with (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c The recorded interview is on file with the investigative team. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Q: Where are you currently assigned and what is your background in the Marine Corps?

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Q: What was your duty position at the time of the 14-15 September 2012 attack on the Camps Bastion-Leatherneck-Shorabak (BLS) Complex?

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

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(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Q: When did you arrive as CO of the TF Belleau Wood (TFBW) SECFOR? When did you depart?

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

Q: What was your SECFOR's mission?

A: We had two separate missions, actually three separate missions. We manned the two Entry Control Points (ECPs) on the American side of the base that allowed access to the base. The Main Entry Point (MEP) was on the north side of the base, and there was one on the south side of the base too. We also controlled what was called the Friendship Gate, which controlled access between the US camp at Leatherneck and the Afghan camp at Shorabak. We also ran the QRF for the TFBW AO, and we provided all of the US manning in the CJOC. Then we manned Patrol Base Boldak, which was in the TFBW AO about 10 kilometers south of the BLS Complex.

Q: Is it fair to say that you were pretty stretched?

A: We had a lot of different missions, Sir.

Q: Did you answer directly to the TFBW CO? How was your relationship with him?

A: Yes, Sir I did. That was originally (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c and then it transitioned to (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c. I had a very positive relationship with (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c. He did everything that you would expect of a commander. He provided me very good guidance, and he supported everything that I wanted to do. When (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c left, the relationship was not as positive between me and (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c and it was the same for our staffs. Communication and coordination between the two staffs started to break down once (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c left.

Q: What was the cause of the tension after (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c took over?

A: To be quite honest with you, Sir, I don't think (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c was the right guy for the job. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c and his staff focused on the right things, and he was a great commander. Once (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c took over, we could not get even the simplest of things out of what you would expect your higher headquarters to handle for you. It was very frustrating. Sir, I know you don't know me well, but I think most people who know me would say that I'm pretty easy to get along with. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c and I did not get along. He just didn't support the things that I wanted to do, even things that had been agreed upon prior to him taking over. It just went downhill.

Q: Did you have an adequate transition with your SECFOR predecessors?

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A: Yes, Sir I believe it was a good transition with 2nd Battalion, 11th Marines. I had been in that battalion as the XO, and I knew the commander so we had a thorough turnover with them.

Q: The JRB Initial Inquiry report mentions that your SECFOR, with support from the 215th ANA Corps, patrolled daily outside the perimeter fence. What was the task and purpose of these external patrols? How often did you patrol? Did you vary the time and route? Did you conduct patrols at night? Did the patrols cover the entire exterior of the BLS perimeter?

A: To clarify, we also had a Jordanian Task Force working for us, so almost every patrol was a combined patrol with the Jordanians. They were mainly in a supporting role to us, so the Marines would maintain command of those patrols, but many of the soldiers in those patrols were Jordanian. The ANA support was done in very loose coordination with them. We would meet with them weekly, share intelligence, and loosely coordinate, but at that time, we did not have tight coordination with the ANA for patrolling. We ran a weekly patrol routine that was in coordination with the British Force Protection Wing, which was the second half of the CJOC there. We ran a very detailed and coordinated patrol plan with the British. We would sector up the AO after me and my British counterpart developed our purpose and end state for that week depending on where the intelligence was pushing us. We would patrol out of Camp Leatherneck and out of our patrol base at Boldak. It would vary week to week based on what we were trying to achieve and where the intelligence was pointing us. But we had some pretty consistent objectives. We covered the entire area outside of BLS Complex. By "we," I mean us and the British. There were areas where they would tend to go more often than us because it was more related to their mission set, and we would cover down on the other areas.

Q: We've been told that these external patrols had reduced their visibility to the local populace in the days preceding the attack due to the anti-Islam YouTube video that had sparked violence in the Middle East in the days leading up to the attack. Is this correct? Were you ordered to do this, or was it your decision based on the sensitivities involved? Do you recall whether OP MINIMIZE was in force at the time of the attack? If so, what is OP MINIMIZE and what is the impact?

A: Yes Sir, there was what we called Patrol Minimize at the time. The impact of that on us was pretty minimal, because the areas that we patrolled were not very populated; most of it was pretty barren and desolate. We viewed it as having no impact on that area.

Q: Was there any increase in FPCON or other posture on the BLS Complex due to the video? If so, had this been directed from higher or was it your decision?

A: I don't recall, Sir. I don't believe so.

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Q: What were the specific responsibilities of each unit in the SECFOR? 2nd BN, 10th Marines? 51 Sqdn RAF Regiment? Bahrain Special Security Forces? Jordanian Armed Forces? Partnered ANA? Triple Canopy?

A: It was very complex with the number of people involved, so I will start with the simple ones. Triple Canopy manned the perimeter on the Leatherneck side. They did not report to me. They reported to TFBW, but they had a liaison in the CJOC where we would get the reporting of whatever they were seeing on the fence line. The Bahrainis exclusively manned the main entry point during the day shift, so they did vehicle searches. Pretty straight forward. The Jordanians worked for me, and they manned some guard towers at the main entry point, and they also participated in the QRF and patrolling out of Leatherneck. They also lived with us and did patrolling out of PB Boldak. Those relationships were pretty straight forward. Where it got more complicated was when we were dealing with the British Force Protection Wing. They technically worked for TFBW when they were patrolling outside the wire, but they reported to the Bastion base commander when they were conducting military police-type activities inside the wire. I tactically controlled them when they went outside the wire.

Q: Which units patrolled outside the wire?

A: That would be the Marines with the Jordanian reinforcements, and also the British 51st Regiment.

Q: Did you feel that the SECFOR was trained and proficient?

A: Yes, Sir, I do. I never had a question on the training and 51st Regiment was very professional.

Q: (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c told us 2nd BN 10th Marines had been cut from approximately 310 to 210 during his tenure as CO TFBW, and that you were working 18 hour days at that number. When informed that he would be cut another 100, he recalled informing MajGen Gurganus that he would only be able to patrol 2-3 times a day at that number. Were you aware of this conversation? Did you agree with the impact of the cut in SECFOR?

A: No, Sir, I was not aware of that conversation. It would have occurred prior to my arrival there. We took the first cut, which was actually down to 220, just before we deployed. I trained over 300 Marines to deploy, but we cut down to 220 just prior to deploying. The second cut down to 110 happened before the attack in the June or July timeframe.

Q: How many patrols were you able to generate at the time of the attack after being cut down to 100 Marines while you were trying to do a host of over things?

A: If you count the British patrols, I think we were doing 3-4 patrols on average in a 24 hour period. It varied from day to day, but 3-4 was probably the average.

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Q: How many patrols were you able to do prior to the reduction to 110 personnel?

A: About double that number, Sir. Our focus though was further down south, not really perimeter patrolling.

Q: Were you aware of a request from MajGen Gurganus to higher HQs for an additional Rifle Company for the SECFOR? When did he make this request? Did you ever receive the additional Rifle Company?

A: I was not aware of the request, Sir, but we did receive the Rifle Company after the attack.

Q: Do you recall the patrols that you conducted on 14 September 2012?

A: I don't recall. We were in our standard patrol package at the time. I do recall that we had one patrol out at the time of the attack. It was a squad, three-vehicle mounted patrol. If I recall, we had a patrol out to set up an observation post at what we called the "rocket box," the historical rocket launch area. They were out doing that on the night of the 14th of September. I'm not 100% certain, but I believe that is a fact.

Q: How did you receive intelligence about threats to the BLS Complex?

A: Sir, we would receive intelligence from multiple sources. Of course, we had our own intelligence collection in the battle space that we received, and then we would get information from RC(SW) on the threat reporting that comes down in the normal intelligence process.

Q: Did you have your own intelligence section? Who was your primary intelligence officer? Do you feel that the TFBW intelligence section provided you with the information that you needed to accomplish your mission?

A: I had two intelligence officers and a small intelligence staff. And then the British, who reported independently of us, had their own intelligence officer. They would get threat reporting from time to time from their own sources that we would not get from RC(SW). To be clear, Sir, TFBW did not have an intelligence section. Their intelligence section was my intelligence section. Obviously in hindsight there was something that we missed, but I felt that up to the attack and again afterwards that we were appropriately resourced to conduct intelligence collection in our battle space.

Q: What threats to the BLS Complex were you primarily focused on prior to the 14 September 2012 attack on Camp Bastion?

A: We went through our normal planning for force protection, and our number one threat that we had identified was the "Salerno type attack" that occurred at FOB Salerno. This was a VBIED attack at the fence line, and then an attack came through. That was our number one threat profile, so most of our force protection enhancements were geared towards that threat. (b)() c

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(b)() c Like a dump truck or other type
of truck full of explosives in the AO. (b)() c

(b)() c

Q: So the primary threat considered was a VBIED at an ECP?

A: Either an ECP or the fence line. We had over 14 miles of fence line, so we tried to improve standoff at the fence line with tank ditches and that sort of thing. This was for both Leatherneck and Bastion.

Q: What was your secondary threat?

A: Sir, the second threat was indirect fire. The third threat was small arms fire against a strategic aircraft that was taking off or landing. The fourth threat was an infiltration attack, a foot-based attack, like we saw on 14 September. (b)() c

(b)() c

Q: Did you have concerns about the insider threat posed by LN and TCN contractors? If so, please describe any conversations you had with RC(SW) regarding your concerns.

A: Sir, I did have concerns about it, but I was not in charge of internal security, so my role in that was ECPs. My mitigation of that was solely the ECPs. (b)() c

(b)() c

but I did not focus on it because it was not within my purview.

Q: Were you aware of an intelligence collection gap on Camp Bastion or outside the perimeter on the eastern side?

A: Sir, I did not feel that we had an intelligence gap over there. The British had a counter intelligence mission over there, and I felt that their CI program was better than ours quite frankly. More active.

Q: Why did you feel that their CI program was better?

A: There were things that they did better, and there were things that we did better. Our badging and vetting program was better than theirs, but their searching program in contractor areas – because you know there were thousands of civilian contractors on that FOB – was much better than ours. (b)() c

(b)() c

Q: Were you aware that they deployed a pretty significant CI capability after the attack to fill a gap?

A: I was not aware of that, Sir.

Q: Were you aware of the different authorities that they had regarding CI and the ability to run HUMINT sources?

A: I was not aware of that, Sir.

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Q: Did you have any concern about UK intelligence collection outside the perimeter, particularly in Nawabad and Sheikabad?

A: Sir, that area of Nawabad and Sheikabad was not their responsibility. It was our responsibility. Their intelligence capabilities were focused internally and with their patrols, and their patrols did not go into that area very often. Those were each very small, less than 30 compounds each, we knew all of the people that lived there. It didn't seem like a large threat area. (b)() c

(b)() c

Q: Although there was no unity of command over AT/FP for the entire BLS Complex, what mechanisms were in place to ensure unity of effort with your UK and Afghan counterparts?

A: We worked in the same building as the UK Force Protection Wing commander, and his office was literally right next to mine. I was in charge of the CJOC, but we had British watch officers side-by-side with us in every position that we had. We had a weekly battle rhythm that started with our intelligence assessment, and then rolled into our commander's guidance, which the UK Force Protection Wing Commander worked on with me. We also coordinated a weekly operations brief that we gave to TFBW and to the Bastion commander. So, the working relationship between us and the Brits was as tight as you could get without having unity of command. The relationship with the Afghans was much looser. I worked on that the entire time, but it was hard for them to match our capabilities. We never reached a level of coordination that we should have had.

Q: If you identified an area of concern, did you have adequate means of expressing those concerns and rectifying the situation with your counterparts on Camp Bastion?

A: The working relationship was very positive and engaged, but there were issues that we had with Bastion that would never get resolved to what we considered an acceptable solution. Some of the problems were caused by budgetary constraints, and others were just that they did business different than us. So we did not always get out of them what we would have liked when we identified a problem.

Q: What was your assessment of the UK forces' ability to protect Camp Bastion? Please explain.

A: Manpower-wise, I think they were sufficient. The biggest problem was ordinary force protection measures that we would take, and their inability to finance those. A simple example is that every airfield that I've ever been around has a fence around to help protect it. That project had been presented prior to me getting there, but it had been rejected due to funding. When you look back at this attack, and the ease of the attackers getting on the flight line, that is directly

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correlated to their inability to finance something that would be routine to us, and that is putting a fence around the flight line. The other example would be redundant ISR. Even though we had every area of the Leatherneck perimeter covered by guard towers, we also had redundant ISR watching in the CJOC. Camp Bastion did not have that redundancy, because they simply couldn't afford it.

Q: One of the fundamentals of a successful force protection plan is to have a layered, defense in depth. Was that in place at Camp Bastion?

A: No, Sir.

Q: Did you have any specific concerns about the Tongan soldiers manning guard towers on Camp Bastion? If so, what were your concerns and who did you address them to?

A: Their guard towers were manned by two different forces. The first was the Tongans, and the second was from "camp tax" of UK units on the Camp Bastion. I would watch them post guard every day, because they would do it in front of the CJOC. They looked and appeared like they knew what they were doing. I never went into one of their guard towers to inspect it. That was not within my purview, so I can't speak to that. You assume that people are doing their jobs, but just watching their guard mount, it looked very professional to me. We would get complaints from Marines on the Bastion side from time to time, and I always forwarded those to the Force Protection Wing commander to investigate. They did business differently than we did; they would stand 12-hour guard shifts, and they had two watch shifts on the tower. Two people would be on guard up in the tower, and two people would be off duty in the bottom of the tower. The off-duty people would lounge around, watch movies, that sort of thing. So the Marines running along the road by the towers would think that the guards were not doing their jobs, that they were asleep. There was a misperception on that part. I never questioned their ability or professionalism.

Q: Did you ever inspect the towers or perimeter defense on Camp Bastion? Would this have been tenable under the relationships established on Camp BLS?

A: I did a good orientation of the perimeter with the FP Wing commander when I first got there, and we did go up into one tower. That was my only orientation of that. I was not in charge of the perimeter of either Leatherneck or Bastion, so it really wasn't my area.

Q: Considering that there were Marine personnel and aircraft on the flight line, did you have any responsibilities for AT/FP on the flight line, or was that a 3rd MAW responsibility?

A: That was a 3rd MAW responsibility, Sir. I was not in charge of any force protection measures on the airfield.

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Q: The JRB Report mentions that OP MOLEHILL is a “daily security patrol that surveys the inside of the perimeter fence every day in order to find and repair any breaches.” UK forces conducted these patrols. Were you aware of them? We were informed that this patrol had identified 3-4 breaches in the wire in the 3-4 months prior to the attack. Were these breaches reported to you? If so, were they investigated?

A: OP MOLEHILL was briefed weekly, so I was aware of it. I do recall the reported breaches, and they were investigated by the UK. I believe our engineers helped repair some of them. What they concluded, based on ground indicators, was that it was stuff going out of the camp, meaning theft type activity. But there was definitely activity on that side of the fence line.

Q: Where were you during the attack on 14-15 September 2012?

A: Sir, I had just returned to my billeting at the time of the attack, and then I returned to the CJOC for the remainder of the night.

Q: Based on your experience of living on the BLS Complex and providing security for it, what were your initial thoughts as the attack unfolded?

A: It was very confusing at first, and we could not tell whether the attack was coming from the outside-in or the inside-out, so I launched two QRFs. The American QRF went outside the wire, and the British QFR went inside the wire, mainly because that was there part of the base and they were familiar with it. So the British worked the inside of the fence line, and we worked the outside. As the situation became more developed and we realized that the threat was inside, we re-organized the forces to conduct the final sweep inside the base.

Q: The people we have interviewed expressed total and absolute surprise that the enemy would be bold enough to conduct a breach and essentially a frontal assault on Camp Bastion. Was that your impression as well?

A: Yes, Sir. Absolutely. We had not received any threat reporting up to that point of even the capability to conduct that type of attack. And your “gold standard” for force protection is a manned tower, and even if we had anticipated an attack of that sort, we would not have expected it in that area. It was complete surprise. That area had been very quiet. We had very minimal enemy activity around the BLS Complex.

Q: What Intelligence, Reconnaissance, and Surveillance (ISR) assets or early warning devices specifically focused on AT/FP of the BLS Complex were operational at the time of the attack?

A: We had the PGSS balloon up, which covered the entire AO. Other than that, I’m not sure what independent assets the UK had. There were some airborne ISR assets that we were able to vector in pretty quickly once the attack happened.

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Q: The JRB Initial Inquiry Report that (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c conducted mentions that OP CONGO, the combined US/UK crisis management plan, did not clearly address seams between TFBW's area of responsibility and CO Bastion's area of responsibility. How were the Camps delineated? Was it clear? Were they walled off from one another?

A: I don't necessarily agree with that assessment. I think the plan did adequately account for the seams. The CJOC knew where all of the boundaries were, and who was responsible for what. That's what we did every single day. The one gap in the plan that came into light that night was calling for fires on the Bastion side. I as the TFBW SECFOR CO had the authority to approve fires in the TFBW AO, but Camp Bastion was not technically part of that AO. We called for fire on Camp Bastion that night, and that was one of the gaps in the plan. At the end of the day, we just did it, but that could have been a problem. The problem came during the execution of the plan. We conducted two rock drills during my tenure as SECFOR CO and the TFBW CO did not come to either. There was a gap in the TFBW and Camp Bastion oversight and support of the CJOC execution at the tactical level. The lack of support for the rehearsals came from the UK side to, so when they called OP CONGO on the night of the attack, TFBW and Camp Bastion personnel did not have a clear understanding of what they were doing or what the plan was. The ability to call OP CONGO alternated between the TFBW CO and the Camp Bastion CO to decide when it was necessary. That particular week, it was the Camp Bastion CO's turn. He was on watch that week. The difference was that the tactical units in the two SECFORs had good, integrated communications between each other, but the integration of the various base functions between Camp Bastion and TFBW was never done. The communication at that level broke down the evening of the attack.

Q: The JRB report indicates that the split C2 arrangement was required by the 2011 MOU between CENTCOM and the UK. Was this your understanding as well? When did you first learn of the MOU?

A: The MOU was the topic of the discussion in the CJOC, because we worked with those issues. For the "sovereignty" issues between the two camps, for lack of a better term, the MOU was the source document for us to resolve those issues.

Q: Joint Publication 3-10 (Joint Security Operations in Theater, 3 February 2010) states that, "Unity of Command is fundamental to effective security within the [Joint Security Area]." Gen Mattis' 5-3-5 card also stresses the importance of Unity of Command. Did you raise the concern about the lack of unity of command for AT/FP on the BLS Complex?

A: Yes, Sir. In fact, one of my biggest issues was that we didn't even have unity of command on the US side. For the ECP, there were Triple Canopy contractors

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in the towers adjacent, and I did not have command over them. I had to work that coordination through TFBW. Same with the military police. As you stated earlier, defense in depth is key, coordinating the exterior and interior security, and I did not have command of the MPs on the interior, so I was very concerned. I brought it up several times. This was aside from the British unity of command, because the MOU was just the way it was. It was well above our pay grade, so to speak. But we didn't even have unity of command on the US side, unless you counted TFBW as the unity of command. But again, they were an administrative headquarters, not an operational headquarters. They had no OP center or any type of 24-hour capability.

Q: Two of the immediate changes to Force Protection identified in the JRB Supplemental Review were 100% manning of all Camp Bastion guard towers and additional Marines assigned to TFBW SECFOR. What do you attribute this to? Did the collective group underestimate the threat of a breach attack prior to 14 September 2012?

A: Sir, I want to make clear that the two guard towers to the north and south of the breach were manned at the time of the attack. That is different than what has been reported in the various inquiries. The fact that the breach occurred between two manned towers shows that simply manning every tower is not necessarily the answer. It's easy to say that every tower should be manned, but that does not take everything into account. These camps grow, and sometimes they put up new tower. If the observation from one tower is redundant with another, then manning every tower is not required. So I do not necessarily agree that manning every tower was the answer. Manning every tower was just an immediate reaction, and a reaction to show that we did something immediately after the attack. I don't necessarily think that was a required action.

Q: Our understanding is that Towers 15 and 17 were manned, but Tower 16, the one closest to the breach point, was unmanned. Are you saying that you have a different understanding?

A: I know with 100% certainty to the towers directly to the north and directly to the south of the breach point were manned at the time of the attack. I have seen that misreported in many written documents, so that's why I think it's a key point. I thought we straightened this out before General Bradshaw's final report, because we saw a draft of the report and noted the inaccuracy. It may not have been corrected, but I went out to the breach site the morning after the attack, and the guards were still there in both of those towers.

Q: Then what do you attribute the breach to?

A: Sir, I think it goes back to the lack of redundant ISR on the British side. I think that if they would have had redundant ISR piped into the CJOC, that would have been the game changer. There were other things on the Bastion side that were

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not being done, such as having clear fields of fire and observation. I think it goes back to something you mentioned, which was underestimating that particular technique of attack. We did not orient our defense on that type of attack. We were oriented on a VBIED attack against an ECP.

Q: Did you identify any complacency or lack of discipline regarding Force Protection by US personnel prior to the attack? How about from the UK? If so, what do you attribute this to?

A: No, Sir, I did not identify complacency or lack of discipline by either the US or the UK side.

Q: One interview informed us that the attitude of personnel on the BLS Complex might have been that it was "too big to fail." Do you agree? Do you believe that TFBW personnel displayed this attitude? Did your UK or Afghan counterparts?

A: Sir, all I can speak to is what was going on in my command, and we focused every day on force protection. That was our business. I will say that if you look across the base, there were people there that felt like they were living in America. Plus that base had never been attacked by a ground force in its history of being there. Because of that, we were the lowest priority to get ISR. I requested ISR every week, and it had to be a pretty slow week in the AO for me to get what I requested. If you looked outside of the SECFORs, I agree that people did not see this as a threat area. But if you looked inside the SECFORs, both us and the British, this was our bread and butter, and we worked on it every day. We worked hard to improve a lot of the force protection measures, but in hindsight, we improved the wrong things.

Q: Do you have anything to add that would be relevant to this investigation?

A: No, Sir, I think I've covered everything.

2. Point of contact for this memorandum is my legal advisor, (b)(6), (b)(7)c at (b)(6) or (b)(6), (b)(7)c



WILLIAM B. GARRETT III
LTG, USA
Investigating Officer