DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HEADQUARTERS, COMBINED/JOINT TASK FORCE (CJTF)-82
BAGRAM AIRFIELD, AFGHANISTAN
APO AE 09354

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

CJTF-82 19 November 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Interview with LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) USA, Regarding Operations in the Ganjgal Valley on 8 September 2009

1. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) serves as the Executive Officer of (b)(2)High (b)(2)High During the planning and execution of the subject operation, LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) served as the acting commander of (b)(2)High

2. The substance of LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) 17 November 2009 statement is summarized below:

a. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) was the acting (b)(2)High commander on 8 September 2009. The Battalion S3 was forward supporting (b)(2)High operations at (b)(2)High MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) was the acting (b)(2)High The TF Mountain Warrior commander had detailed him to (b)(2)High while the (b)(2)High commander was on R&R leave.

b. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) acknowledged that his Scout Platoon Leader and Mortar Platoon Leader had been relieved earlier in the deployment and that no officers were assigned to these positions on 8 September 2009. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) was aware the (b)(2)High Battle Captain on the morning of 8 September. CPT (b)(3), (b)(5), (b)(6)
(b)(5)

c. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that village elders from Ganjgal had visited FOB Joyce for a Key Leader Engagement (KLE) and broadcast a radio message indicating support of coalition forces in the days preceding the subject operation.

d. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that (b)(2)High mission planning for the subject operation was conducted primarily by CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) the assistant (b)(2)High S2, who had duties as a Battalion planner. The Battalion's primary planner and several non-commissioned officers who normally participated in planning were forward deployed to (b)(2)High

e. Based on the success of a similar mission in a neighboring village (Dam Darya), on 3 September 2009, and after discussion with Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan Border Police (ABP) personnel, (b)(2)High agreed to support a similar, more significant operation with a larger force. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) did not attend planning sessions between 3-8 September 2009 regarding this operation, although he did participate in the planning for the previous mission into Dam Darya.

f. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) saw a hard copy of the Ganjgal valley mission brief prior to 7 September. On Monday, 7 September 2009, (b)(2)High staff held an operations working group meeting

EXHIBIT III – 1 A.1

during which it was acknowledged that dedicated air assets would not be available during this operation, and most of TF Mountain Warrior's assets would be devoted to (b)(2)High (b)(2)High The operations meeting was led by MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) The battle staff was present, but the focus of the briefing was not the Ganjgal village operation, which was presented in one slide.

g. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) believed the subject operation to be a (b)(2)High requiring a brief to the Brigade Commander. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) based this belief on TF Chosin elements' role in the operation. (b)(2)High intended to provide a blocking position along with a scout support element to provide over-watch. (b)(2)High elements were not planned to be in the village itself. Based on these considerations, LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) did not consider the operation to be a (b)(2)High or that it needed to be briefed formally to the Brigade Commander. Based on the circumstances, LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) determined the mission to be a (b)(2)High

h. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) believes the CONOP slide was briefed to TF Mountain Warrior during the 6 September 2009 Brigade Battle Update Brief.

i. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) stated he was involved in the day to day planning for the Battalion and said CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) planned fire support on behalf of TF Chosin. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) did not directly supervise CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) The fire support plan was briefed in the 7 September 2009 operations meeting. He believed that (b)(3), (b)(6) and (b)(3), (b)(6) were present for that meeting.

j. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) talked to (b)(3), (b)(6) prior to the operation, but not about the specific details of the operation.

k. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) understood the command relationship with the Embedded Training Team (ETT) was NATO TACON to TF Mountain Warrior. Informally, the relationship was to cooperate and coordinate. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) could have vetoed this operation but believed it was low risk and a good plan. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) did not feel he had operational control over the ETT.

l. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) said the communications plan was not identified as a possible point of failure during mission planning. He said dismounted patrols often had to relay their communications to the TF Chosin TOC and he did not think a radio re-transmission communications plan was necessary.

m. On the morning of the operation LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) was awoken in his room and immediately approved several initial fire missions. He believes he entered the TOC at 0550 and immediately talked to the Battle Captain, CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) to gain situational awareness. He was told there was sporadic contact with the enemy. He exited the TOC and went to his office. He stated he was in his office from approximately 0600 to 0645 when he returned to the TOC. He was then told by SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) the Fires and Effects Coordination Cell NCOIC, about a problem obtaining support from a Scout Weapons Team (b)(2)High OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopters) that SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) had requested. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) later found out that the Scout Weapons Team had been requested

directly from (b)(2)High and not through the Brigade. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) received updates from his TOC, but generally allowed TOC personnel to monitor the fight.

n. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) learned of the request for CCA and CAS at approximately 0630. He could not explain why 40 minutes passed between the time CCA and CAS were requested and the time he learned about it. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) thinks the time could be attributed to his lack of presence in the TOC and he believes he should have inserted himself earlier.

o. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) contacted the TF Mountain Warrior Commander, COL (b)(3), (b)(6) at 0800.

p. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) did not remember when the Acting (b)(2)High S3, MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) came into the TOC, but he remembered talking to him at some point.

q. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) agreed that indirect fire support was essentially denied after the first four missions he approved between 0530 and 0550, and that this was his decision. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) attributed his decision to his lack of understanding of where friendly forces were located on the battlefield and the potential for civilian casualties. He stated he understood the ISAF Tactical Directive of 1 July 2009. He stated that the Tactical Directive was not the reason for denying fire support.

r. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) was asked what the reasonable expectation of the ground forces could have been from (b)(2)High He responded that he would have expected fires and would have expected for the TOC to allow him to assume the risk on the ground, and not take that discretion away from the on-scene ground commander. However, he maintained that he did not think it was a clear shot from his position at the time, and could not have cleared the fire missions with a clear conscience based on his lack of awareness regarding where U.S. and ANA forces were located.

s. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) plotted the requested grids on a map personally. He believed the locations of the requests were adequate and permissible, however, he was concerned about the effects of the fires. Knowing what he knows now, he thinks the fire missions could have been supported, but that the fire missions potentially would have put U.S., ANA, and civilian personnel at risk. At the time, LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) did not believe the ground commander could assume the risk of these casualties. At the time of this interview, he stated he now believes (b)(3), (b)(6) who was on the scene, was correct and should have been supported.

t. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) acknowledged (b)(3), (b)(6) performed brilliantly on the battlefield.

u. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) specifically told 3rd Platoon, Delta Company, to move into the valley to establish a blocking position and was aware the Battle Captain directed the platoon to push forward into the valley. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) was also aware that the platoon was told to self-recover a rolled vehicle. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) felt that self-recovery would have been quicker and was a better

option than sending out a wrecker with an additional platoon for security. LTC(b)(3), (b)(6) also believed that sending (b)(2)High to the platoon would have taken a long time, as they were not ready or equipped, and that it was a better option to push the platoon to the objective rally point and wait there.

v. LTC(b)(3), (b)(6) acknowledged that the battalion headquarters tactical command post (TAC) could have been pressed into action but the unit was not in a quick reaction force (QRF) posture. LTC(b)(3), (b)(6) did not consider using the TAC one to two hours into the engagement.

w. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) says he was continuously in the TOC from 0645.

x. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) said he did not consider going into the valley personally or sending his S3 into the valley. LTC(b)(3), (b)(6) only considered staying in the TOC as a means to manage the battle.

y. LTC(b)(3), (b)(6) stated that (b)(3), (b)(6) had the right to expect more situational awareness from him and quicker response times.

z. LTC(b)(3), (b)(6) was asked the if there would have been any difference had it been (b)(2)High forces in the valley instead of ETT and Afghan personnel. He replied that there would have been more involvement in the planning from the beginning and he would have caught some of the shortcomings to include the fires plan and communications issues, however, he stated that with the same level of planning there would have been the same result.

aa. LTC(b)(3), (b)(6) said a casualty producing event would trigger him personally engaging the next higher commander.

ab. LTC(b)(3), (b)(6) was given no specific instructions from the Battalion Commander prior to the Battalion Commander going on R&R leave.

3. The points of contact for this memorandum are the undersigned.

(b)(3), (b)(6)

COL, USA

(b)(3), (b)(6)

COL, USMC