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 (b)(3), (b)(6) Regarding Operations in the Ganjgal Valley on 8 September 2009

1. (b)(3), (b)(6) serves as the (b)(2)High (b)(2)High , Sarkani District, and served in this position during the planning and execution of the subject mission. He was present in the Ganjgal Valley during the ambush on 8 September 2009.

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

a. (b)(3), (b)(6) is the (b)(2)High (b)(2)High He had been in this assignment for approximately 10 months on 8 September 2009.

b. (b)(3), (b)(6) was present and involved in the pre-mission planning and coordination conducted for the subject operation.

c. (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that TF Chosin was represented during this operation's planning by the Battalion (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(2)High and the Assistant (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(2)High There were also representatives from the TF Chosin S3 planning cell. (b)(3), (b)(6) commented TF Chosin has an excess of CPTs in the Battalion Headquarters and cannot account for what each one does.

d. (b)(3), (b)(6) said that the Battalion Fire Support Officer (FSO) received notification that the operation would likely request fires on (b)(2)High and the concept of fires was sufficient for an Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) led operation. (b)(3), (b)(6) believes the fire plan failed in execution, not planning, during the subject operation.

e. (b)(3), (b)(6) acknowledged the planners knew (b)(2)High would not be dedicated to the mission and this fact was not a "no-go" criteria. He stated any mission based on (b)(2)High was a bad mission because (b)(2)High

f. (b)(3), (b)(6) said the first 20 to 30 minutes of the subject operation and engagement with the enemy went as expected and was sustainable. However, fire support was not immediate and the absence of (b)(2)High made it impossible to break contact with the enemy.

EXHIBIT III – 3 B.1

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g. (b)(3), (b)(6) said that initially the fires were effective but later failed when subsequent requested fire missions were denied by the (b)(2)High TOC. He was told (b)(2)High the (b)(2)High was the reason these requests were denied. (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) also noted the failure could be attributed to the "fog of war".

h. (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) who had effectively become the ground FSO, had to call (b)(2)High and that those received were ineffective. For the mission, CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) was assigned to accompany the ABP fire by support position in order to prevent the enemy from taking the high ground.

i. (b)(3), (b)(6) acknowledged that the communications plan between the ground element and the TF Chosin TOC was coordinated via a relay through the Scout element. The Scout element was in an over-watch position on top of the hill between FOB Joyce and Ganjgal Valley. (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that everyone involved in the planning knew of the communications challenges due to the terrain and decided this was an adequate communications plan because the ground commander could relay communications to the TF Chosin TOC via the Scout element. (b)(3), (b)(6) believes what the ground commander communicates to the TOC should be supported, and when a ground force commander gives his initials to a fire support request, the TOC should fire the mission without question.

j. (b)(3), (b)(6) believed the tone and the urgency of the situation was relayed from the ground forces to the (b)(2)High providing relay back to the TF Chosin. He heard the (b)(2)High (b)(2)High the sense of urgency but heard replies from the TOC only sporadically due to the terrain. He believed that the sense of urgency was not understood in the TF Chosin TOC.

k. (b)(3), (b)(6) stated he has had problems with the TF Chosin TOC servicing timely fires support requests in the past. He believes the fires approval authority rests "at an echelon above reality". In the past he has waited hours for TF Chosin fire support and has directly requested ANSF fires and received them in a more timely manner.

l. With regard to mission planning, (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that the (b)(2)High and actua (b)(2)High were present at the planning brief. He said that the (b)(2)High Acting (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(2)High was not present at the final brief on 7 September. (b)(3), (b)(6) said TF Chosin field grade officers usually do not attend briefs for ANSF led missions, and that while the ANSF are ready and willing to fight, TF Chosin does not know how to properly interface with them. (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) and LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) although not present at the briefings, were familiar with the operation and were informally involved in the planning. He stated the (b)(2)High met with representatives from the TF Chosin (b)(2)High planning cell on several occasions in the days prior to 8 September.

m. (b)(3), (b)(6) believed that a (b)(2)High was present with the Scout over-watch position. He is unsure whether the (b)(2)High team contained a Fire Support

Officer and did not believe it was his responsibility to ensure that it did. He stated his role was to mentor and advise the ABP, not to do personnel checks on Coalition Forces, to ensure they are capable of providing support that their representatives state they can or will provide.

n. (b)(3), (b)(6) firmly believes the ISAF Tactical Directive had an impact on the support received by the ground element in Ganjgal. He believes you can see and hear the effect of the Directive based on the reluctance of leaders to make and approve tough fire missions. He stated that subsequent to the subject mission, TF Chosin "has started using fires more liberally" which has directly resulted in fewer rocket attacks on FOB Joyce.

o. (b)(3), (b)(6) stated he last heard from the lead Marine element (all four members of which were later found killed in action) after the (b)(2)High (b)(2)High to (b)(2)High before aviation assets arrived. Communication with this element was sporadic throughout the entire engagement.

p. (b)(3), (b)(6) did not have any idea of what was going on in the TF Chosin TOC or how his communications were being relayed. He stated that things "can get hazy in a TOC".

q. At one point during the morning, exact time unknown, (b)(3), (b)(6) made it back to the vehicle Objective Rally Point (ORP) and spoke directly to the (b)(2)High TOC Battle Captain. This communication was enabled by the greater proximity to the TOC and (b)(2)High in the vehicle.

r. (b)(3), (b)(6) does not feel the sole source of blame for these events should be placed on CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) in the (b)(2)High TOC.

s. With regard to the Quick Reaction Force (QRF), (b)(3), (b)(6) noted that the Marine ETT (b)(2)High man remain behind element at the ORP was able to move forward in a vehicle in support of the dismounted element. When their (b)(2)High , they moved back to the ORP for resupply, then went forward again in an effort to locate and recover the missing Marines in the forward element. A Delta Company platoon maneuvered to the ORP. (b)(3), (b)(6) asked the Platoon Commander, 1LT(b)(3), (b)(6) to move forward to support elements being engaged by the enemy. (b)(3), (b)(6) felt the platoon's main focus was recovering one of its vehicles which had rolled over. The platoon did not focus on supporting the on-going engagement according to (b)(3), (b)(6) although it had heavy weapons available. (b)(3), (b)(6) felt that the (b)(2)High could have pushed forward despite others' concerns about (b)(2)High perceived inability to navigate through the terrain in the valley. (b)(3), (b)(6) also believed that the platoon could have dismounted and moved forward if the (b)(2)High could not have gone forward. The platoon leader told (b)(3), (b)(6) that the platoon was directed to stand down and keep its position(b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) then communicated with the TF Chosin Battle Captain who assured him that the platoon would go forward. (b)(3), (b)(6) then moved forward in an attempt to recover the Marines but was not followed by the platoon. (b)(3), (b)(6) can think of only two things that

would have caused the platoon to hold its position and not move forward: battlefield cowardice, or an order from the TF Chosin TOC to hold its position.

t. (b)(3), (b)(6) noted that an (b)(2)High from Asmar, over (b)(2)High drive from Ganjgal, arrived and engaged the enemy.

u. (b)(3), (b)(6) believes that normally a Scout Weapons Team (b)(2)High (b)(2)High (b)(2)High was capable of suppressing an enemy, however, he recalls on this day the pilots were surprised to learn their support was having little to no effect. (b)(3), (b)(6) believes that an Attack Weapons Team (b)(2)High (AH-64 Apache helicopters) would have been more effective.

v. (b)(3), (b)(6) said that FOB Joyce has no dedicated QRF but there is the Headquarters Tactical Command Post (TAC-A), but it is not normally in a ready, standby status.

w. (b)(3), (b)(6) stated no one from FOB Joyce came to the mouth of the valley in an attempt to get better situational awareness, establish better communications, or assert better command and control.

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

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

COL, USA

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

(b)(3), (b)(6)
COL, USMC