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

1. Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) serves as Assistant Battalion S2, 1-32 Infantry Regiment, (Task Force Chosin), and held that position during the planning and execution of the subject operation.

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

a. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) was the assistant TF Chosin S2 on 8 September 2009. He is also considered a TF Chosin planner. He participated in most of the mission planning for the subject operation and was assigned to participate on the mission as the TF Chosin Fire Support Coordinator (FSC). On the night before the operation, he approached the TF Chosin Fires Support and Coordination Cell (FECC) and Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) to coordinate support for 8 September. He described their involvement in the mission planning as minimal and that they were not directly involved in the deliberate planning process. The end result of CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) meeting was his discovery of a shortage of personnel in both the FECC and JTAC cells. They told CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) they could maintain a presence in the TOC to support the operation, but could not attach (b)(2)High (b)(2)High or JTAC to the operation.

b. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) insists that (b)(2)High were pre-set and does not know why the (b)(2)High were not pre-positioned. For the fire support layout they used a (b)(2)High printout.

c. There were two order processes associated with the mission into the Gangjal village during the evening of 7 September. One was conducted by the Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF), with CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) and (b)(2)High representatives present, followed by a U.S. only meeting with key personnel of each unit conducting the operation.

d. The meeting between U.S. forces on the night before the operation was attended by the Marines ETT members, CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) and the scout/sniper teams that would over-watch the village. The primary briefer during the planning session was (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) A platoon leader from Delta Company was also present at the meeting, but he believes a different platoon leader was eventually tasked to support the operation.

e. Intelligence suggested the (b)(2)High included harassing fires as they exited the village similar to the mission on 3 September 2009 into Dam Darya. The (b)(2)High anticipated was that 30-40 enemy fighters would engage in the valley. There was no intelligence to suggest a prepared ambush prior to the subject operation.

f. When questioned about a Finding from MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) the initial AR 15-6 investigating officer, about new intelligence available on 7 September, CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) stated he believes Maj (b)(3), (b)(6) confused the various intelligence reports. (Interviews with other S2 officers determined the date of the intelligence information referenced as a Finding by Maj (b)(3), (b)(6) was 8 September.)

g. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) knew Close Combat Aviation (CCA) would be operating in the Pesh Valley directly north of their operation, and that it could be available to respond to any reports of troops in contact (TIC). This is what he briefed during mission planning on 7 September.

h. After communicating with the TF Chosin TOC on the day of the operation, CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) believed the Battle Captain would declare (b)(2)High and aircraft would be diverted to support them. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) did not understand that TF Chosin could not dynamically re-task a committed aviation asset without the Brigade's approval. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) relied on previous experiences of being able to quickly divert aviation assets, but did not understand the process involved in doing so.

i. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) said he was involved in the fires planning because the battalion was stretched exceptionally thin as the primary planners were in Barge Matal. He also believed since this was an ANSF led mission, there was less involvement in the planning on the part of TF Chosin. He believes a TF Chosin unit conducting the same mission would have received more detailed planning and coordination. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) cannot explain the differences he would expect in the planning based on who was conducting the mission. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) stated field grade officers from TF Chosin were absent during planning for the Ganjgal operation.

j. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) volunteered to go on the operation and worked closely with (b)(3), (b)(6) and (b)(3), (b)(6) to coordinate fires and effects. His training on fires planning consisted of unit training before deployment and a 48 hour orientation prior to the mission by the TF Chosin Fires FECC non-commissioned officer. His training on the (b)(2)High consisted of a brief "once over" that enabled him to take range and bearing. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) had never performed this type of duty before.

k. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) reached his Observation Post (OP) on a hill southwest of Ganjgal village before first light (0530). He was accompanied by one ETT (Cpl (b)(3), (b)(6) with a (b)(2)High gun, and eight ANA soldiers with (b)(2)High He monitored the ETT (b)(2)High and could hear the TF Chosin (b)(2)High but could not transmit to the TOC due to the terrain. He also monitored the common air-to-ground net (CAG).

l. Between 0530-0550 the fight escalated rapidly. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) remembers (b)(3), (b)(6) saying over the radio "let's get some CCA in here and calm the situation down" during this time period."

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m. Within the first 15 minutes of the fight CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) had to (b)(2)High (b)(2)High and was unable to return to his original OP location on the hill for (b)(2)High He remained in the valley until his element was able to exfiltrate with the remainder of the forces.

n. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) understanding of the TF Chosin/ETT relationship is that the ETTs are advisors and have a separate chain of command. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) admitted he had a poor understanding of this relationship and was hesitant to offer more of an opinion.

3. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) offered the following comments/recommendations/lessons learned:

a. Ganjgal was a surprise and overwhelmingly violent. He believes it exposes a flaw in strategic and tactical level thinking and it should be closely studied from a variety of angles. We cannot simply assign blame and fault. Ganjgal is still an insurgent safe haven and (b)(2)High (b)(2)High stage from this area. (b)(2)High

(b)(2)High

b. The people in the Ganjgal area are exceptionally well prepared, experienced fighters and fought the Russians in the same manner for years.

c. There was a composite failure to understand the Ganjgal valley and the people's complete disregard for any outside influence, including the government.

d. We wanted to capitalize on 3 September 2009 Dam Darya mission – we overlooked how hasty we were.

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

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

COL, USA

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

COL, USMC