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UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
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by U.S. Central Command. See
Norgrove Investigation.

9 November 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, United States Central Command, 7115 South Boundary Boulevard, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida 33621

SUBJECT: Investigation Findings and Recommendations (8 October 2010 Hostage Rescue Operation in Konar Province, Afghanistan) (U)

1. (U/~~FOUO~~) Summary. On 11 October 2010, I was appointed to conduct an investigation into the 8 October 2010 hostage rescue operation in Konar Province, Afghanistan, during which Ms. Linda Norgrove died. A combined and joint investigation team was assembled consisting of subject matter experts from the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK). Our UK investigation team members provided crucial access to information required for me to determine Ms. Norgrove's cause of death. All of the data relating to the hostage rescue operation was examined, witness interviews were conducted, and numerous deliberations were held over the course of two weeks at various locations throughout Afghanistan. After conducting my investigation, I have determined that Linda Norgrove died as a result of injuries sustained after the use of a fragmentation grenade on the objective. I also determined that the debriefing process utilized by the US forces involved in the rescue operation did not extract the details necessary to provide an accurate initial assessment of Ms. Norgrove's cause of death and resulted in the release of incorrect information to the public. Next, I determined that the Team Leader withheld information regarding actions on the objective in that he did not come forward until confronted approximately 42 hours after the mission. The coordination between the US, the UK, and all of the ISAF and Afghan forces who participated in the efforts to locate and rescue Ms. Norgrove were exemplary. Lastly, there was a tiny margin between success and failure on this operation and the valiant efforts to rescue Ms. Norgrove are commendable.

2. (U) Facts.

a. (~~S//REL USA, GBR~~) *Background.* On 26 September 2010, Ms. Linda Norgrove was traveling up the Konar River valley to an opening ceremony for the Salar Canal in the Tsowkey District, Konar Province. (Exhibit 3). Ms. Norgrove was working for a US Agency for International Development (USAID) subcontractor called Development Alternative Incorporated (DAI), as the regional director of the Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives-North, East, and West (IDEA-NEW) program that was a community based alternative development program that focused on agricultural initiatives. (Exhibits 1, 3). Ms. Norgrove was a fluent Farsi and Dari speaker who was well known throughout the Dewagal and Tsowkey District villages and communities. (Exhibit 1). She was traveling with a security detail and three Afghan colleagues from DAI named Hezarak Gul, Naqibullah, and Bakhtyaar. (Exhibit 3). Between 0930 and 1030 local time, Taliban insurgents under the direction of Maulawi Basir, a local Taliban facilitator, captured Ms. Norgrove and her Afghan traveling companions south of the Chowkay village near the Spin Jumat Checkpoint in the Tsowkey District of the Konar Province. (Exhibit 3). Intelligence reports indicated that the captors immediately moved all of the hostages west into

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the Dewagal valley. (Exhibits 3, 4). Upon notification of her disappearance, Coalition Forces initiated coordinated intelligence and operational activities to locate and potentially rescue Ms. Norgrove. (Exhibits 3, 4, 35, 73, 79).

b. (~~S//REL USA, GBR~~) *Initial Coalition Response*. On 27 September 2010, COMISAF declared Ms. Norgrove a person of national interest and the top priority for Coalition Forces throughout Afghanistan. (Exhibit 73, 79). In response, Coalition Forces including elements of Task Force Bastogne and Combined Joint Task Force-101, Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan, and Afghan National Security Forces began emplacing a cordon around the region where intelligence reports indicated that the hostages were being held in an attempt to prevent Ms. Norgrove from being moved into even more remote regions of Afghanistan and/or transferred to other Taliban leaders for use as strategic leverage with the Afghan national government. (Exhibits 3-11). The cordon encompassed the Dewagal valley and included hundreds of kilometers bordered generally by the Konar river valley to the south, the Korengal valley to the north, the Badar valley to the east, and the Chowkay valley to the west. (Exhibits 3-11). This region is geographically dominated by steep mountain valleys; 10,000 to 14,000 feet mountain peaks, and is accessible only by foot or pack animal in most areas. (Exhibits 3, 4, 16, 23). UK government authorities and liaison officers worked closely with US units involved in the operation to synchronize the multi-layered surveillance, intelligence gathering, and subsequent hostage rescue operation. (Exhibits 60, 77).

c. (~~S//REL USA, GBR~~) *Unit Selection*. Task Force (b)(1)High, (b)(1)1.4a was tasked with the hostage rescue operation based on the experience, capabilities, and relationships the unit had already established in the region where the objective was located. (Exhibits 16, 35, 80). Task Force (b)(1)High, (b)(1)1.4a further tasked the hostage rescue mission to Task Force (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a. (Exhibit 16, 73, 79). US authorities with the agreement of UK authorities determined that at the time of the kidnapping, Task Force (b)(1)High, (b)(1)1.4a was the best unit available in Afghanistan in the CENTCOM Area of Operations to attempt the hostage rescue operation. (Exhibits 73, 77, 79, 80). Task Force (b)(1)High, (b)(1)1.4a and in particular, Team (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a (the assault force selected for the operation), had conducted (b)(1)1.4a operations in the region during the previous three months (during eight of which there was enemy contact) and were (b)(1)1.4a. (Exhibits 37, 39, 40, 56, 73, 80). Additionally, the majority of the team members had multiple previous deployments to Afghanistan. (Exhibits 39-53).

d. ~~U//FOUO~~ *Pre-Mission Search Activities*. Within two hours following reports of her disappearance, United States and Afghan units began emplacing a cordon around the area where Ms. Norgrove was thought to have been taken. Locating and rescuing Ms. Norgrove became the sole mission of approximately 1000 US and Afghan forces. These forces were inserted into the rugged Dewagal valley in eight blocking positions with five separate maneuver forces that coordinated and reacted to large scale surveillance and intelligence gathering efforts in the region. During the eleven days leading up to the hostage rescue operation, intelligence reports indicated that Ms. Norgrove's captors wanted to move her and/or transfer custody to higher ranking regional Taliban leaders. (Exhibits 4-15, 35, 73). As the days progressed, so did indications that Ms. Norgrove's captors wanted to kill and/or move her into more inaccessible

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regions of Afghanistan. (Exhibits 4-15, 35, 41, 60). US and UK authorities assessed that these reports were credible, that there was a significant likelihood that Ms. Norgrove would be moved and/or killed if no immediate action was taken. (Exhibits 2-15, 35, 40, 60, 73). On 7 October 2010, intelligence assets located the position of what was thought to be one of her captors. (Exhibits 4-15, 35, 73). A hostage rescue operation was planned for the evening of 7 October 2010. (Exhibit 20). This operation was then delayed for 24 hours to allow more time for pre-mission planning and intelligence collection on enemy activity and Ms. Norgrove's location, all of which were assessed would improve the chances of success for the operation. (Exhibits 20, 21, 35, 73).

e. ~~U//FOUO~~ *Mission Coordination and Approval.* On 8 October 2010, intelligence reports provided additional confirmation of the captor's location in a rugged and remote area northwest of the Dewagal valley. (Exhibits 2, 35). US forces assessed that there was a fifty to seventy-five percent probability that Ms. Norgrove was located at the target compound and if there, intelligence indicated that she would most likely be located in building 11 or 12. (Exhibits 35, 36, 39-53). The Concept of the Operation (CONOP) was forwarded to the CJTF-101 Deputy Commanding General for Operations, Brigadier General Townsend, who approved the deconfliction measures and execution of the operation in CJTF-101 battlespace. (Exhibits 16, 17, 18, 22, 35, 77, 79, 80). Previously, COMISAF had agreed that the UK would have CONOP approval authority. (Exhibits 35, 37, 73). The UK government delegated this authority to the acting UK Ambassador (the Ambassador was on leave). Therefore, the CONOP was briefed to the acting UK Ambassador who gave her approval for the operation. (Exhibit 77).

f. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Description of the Target and Risks.* The targeted compound was located 48 kilometers northeast of Jalalabad in a remote mountainous region in the Nurgal District of the Konar Province. (Exhibit 16). The exact location of the compound where Ms. Norgrove's captor had been located was on the side of a steep mountain at approximately 8000 feet. (Exhibits 16, 23, 28). Intelligence indicated that the majority of the daily activities at the compound were occurring in and around buildings 11 and 12. (Exhibits 35, 36, 39-53). It was assessed that if Ms. Norgrove was still at the compound, then she was likely being held in one of those buildings. (Exhibits 16, 35, 39-53). The area surrounding the compound was filled with rocky outcrops and tall coniferous trees that severely restricted the number of safe helicopter landing zones available for insertion. (Exhibits 16, 23, 35). As a result of the severely restricted terrain and lack of accessible helicopter landing zones, the assault force determined that the best method for infiltration onto the target compound, although high risk, would be by (b)(2)High as close to the compound as possible to maximize speed and surprise during the infiltration. (Exhibits 16, 35, 39-53). The weather on the evening of 8 October 2010 was clear skies with temperatures in the mid 80s in the day and low 60s at night. (Exhibit 26). The moon illumination that night was near zero percent. (Exhibits 26, 35). This factor (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a (Exhibits 35, 41, 42). Nevertheless, the low illumination on the objective made observation more difficult. (Exhibits 26, 41). Processes and evaluation of risks varied by level of command and while there was no formal aggregation, the chances of success for the rescue mission across the organization

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were generally better than fifty percent. The Commander, Task Force ~~(b)(1)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ in particular, acknowledged himself as the overall risk manager for the operation and placed the chances of success around sixty-five percent. Other estimates varied.

g. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Task Organization and Scheme of Maneuver.* (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High

h. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *ISR Coverage.* Numerous intelligence gathering platforms and close air support assets were scheduled to be on station throughout the operation. (Exhibits 16, 55). Some of these assets were focused on the objective and others were focused external to the objective. (Exhibits 36, 55). A number of these assets provided real-time video feeds to command and control elements, albeit at a lower resolution (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High

(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a (Exhibits 35, 36, 53). (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a
(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a

(Exhibit 36). As intelligence and Ms. Norgrove's location became more definitive, Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ surged almost (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High in an attempt obtain verification of her exact location. (Exhibits 73, 74).

i. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Infiltration.* The assault force departed (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a Airfield at 1940Z enroute to Objective (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a. (Exhibit 19). At (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a the time on target was moved back to (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a to ensure all assets could be synchronized over the target area. (Exhibits 19, 35). Objective (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a was executed at 2005Z on 8 October 2010. (Exhibit 19). The assault force began (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a (Exhibits 19, 24). The northern assault force inserted approximately (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High north of the compound and the southern assault force inserted approximately (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High to the south of the compound. (Exhibits 42, 43, 50). The insertion of the assault force was reported as completed at (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit 19). During insertion,

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the northern assault force came under enemy fire from an unknown location. (Exhibits 36, 43-52). In addition, several Afghan males were observed exiting buildings 21 and 28. (Exhibits 27, 28). These Afghans then moved towards buildings 11 and 12 and another two insurgents departed the compound to the southeast. (Exhibit 36). As the first members of the northern assault force reached the northern edge of the compound, the [redacted (b)(1)1.4a] continued to move on top of buildings 21, 22, and 23 in an effort to find the quickest route up to buildings 11 and 12. (Exhibits 41, 43). His team [redacted (b)(1)1.4a] moved along the rooftops of buildings 21-23 and [redacted (b)(1)1.4a] along a narrow eight to ten foot wide terrace at floor level, along the western edge of buildings 21-23 [redacted (b)(1)1.4a] (Exhibits 27, 28, 41-47). The assault force on [redacted (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a] to the south of the compound encountered severely restricted terrain upon infiltration that significantly slowed their movement to the compound. (Exhibits 41-52). They did not arrive in the vicinity of the Objective until [redacted (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a] after the initial clearance of the objective was almost complete. (Exhibits 24, 42).

j. (~~S//REL USA, GBR~~) *The Critical Minute*¹. The events described in the following paragraph take place over the course of 59 seconds, [redacted (b)(1)1.4a]. [redacted (b)(1)1.4a]. As the lead elements of the northern assault force were making their way up onto the narrow terrace to the west of buildings 21-23, an insurgent exited building 23 and was engaged by TM3 and TM5 and fell dead (EKIA1) on the terrace in front of building 23. The two elements of the northern assault force continued to advance: one along the rooftops of buildings 21-23 led by TM1; the others along the narrow terrace, [redacted (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High]. Seconds later, an insurgent dragging Ms. Norgrove exited building 25 and was immediately followed by another insurgent from building 25 who ran past them and began climbing up to the terrace in front of building 23. TM3 located midway down the terrace in front of building 22, immediately engaged the insurgent as he came into his line of sight. That insurgent (EKIA2) fell seriously wounded at the front corner of building 23. A few seconds later, the insurgent with Ms. Norgrove behind him began climbing up to the terrace where TM3 and TM5 were located. As the insurgent in front of Ms. Norgrove emerged partially into view, TM3 and TM5 simultaneously engaged him from the terrace and TM1 engaged him from the edge of the roof of building 23. Neither TM1, TM3, nor TM5 ever saw Ms. Norgrove. The insurgent (EKIA3) fell seriously wounded on his side next to a large boulder with his head pointed towards building 25. Ms. Norgrove, still unseen to the assault force, fell on her side with her head pointed up the trail between buildings 23 and 25. TM1 then maneuvered to continue clearing the draw between buildings 23 and 25. Meanwhile, TM5 assessed that he and the team were extremely vulnerable on the narrow and exposed terrace to the enemy advances from the area between buildings 23 and 25.² TM5 dropped to one knee, warned TM3 of his decision to throw a grenade, and immediately deployed a grenade into the unseen area from where the enemy to his front had emerged. Near simultaneously, TM1 clearing the draw between buildings 23 and 25, engaged EKIA2 who he assessed was still a possible threat. He then engaged EKIA3 based on the same assessment. As he did so, the grenade TM5 threw detonated, resulting in an explosion which

¹ Exhibits for entire paragraph are provided only after the last sentence to improve readability.

² The terrace was described by TM5 as an eight to ten feet wide "fatal funnel" that was dominated by uncleared rooms on the left and an eight to twelve feet drop off on the right. Additionally, he was concerned that three insurgents had come up from the draw to his front in quick succession. (Exhibit 47).

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TM1 assessed as being a sympathetic detonation of an enemy suicide-vest or grenade since that exact situation happened to him on a previous operation. The blast almost completely sheared the side and left arm completely off of the insurgent. At no point during the entire engagement described above did any of the assault force members see or hear Ms. Norgrove. (Exhibits 24, 25, 27, 28, 32, 33, 34, 43, 45, 47, 57, 58, 78, 81).

k. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Subsequent Clearance Operations.* The clearance operations continued for [redacted (b)(1)1.4a] when buildings 11 and 12 were cleared and another insurgent was killed and then buildings 25 through 28 were also cleared and secured. (Exhibits 19, 24, 42, 43, 50, 51, 57, 58). The southern assault force arrived at the compound [redacted (b)(1)1.4a] and assisted with the subsequent sensitive site exploitation. (Exhibits 24, 43, 50, 57, 58).

l. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Discovery and Evacuation of Ms. Norgrove.* After buildings 11 and 12 were secured, assault force personnel began moving back towards the bodies of EKIA 1-3 and Ms. Norgrove. (Exhibits 24, 27, 28, 43, 48, 49). TM6 noticed what he believed to be a female body in front of building 25 as he was providing security during the final clearance of buildings 25 and 26. (Exhibits 48, 49). He and TM1 then cleared building 25. (Exhibits 43, 48). TM7 checked the bodies of the EKIA for explosives and also checked Ms. Norgrove. (Exhibits 43, 49). TM7 then went to building 25 to assist in the clearance and notified TM1 once building 25 was clear, that he might have located Ms. Norgrove. (Exhibits 43, 48, 49). TM1, TM6, and TM7 then immediately went to her body and assessed her vital signs. (Exhibits 43, 48, 49). Ms. Norgrove was wearing dark clothes, covered in debris, and laying next to building 25 when located.³ (Exhibits 25, 29, 48, 49, 52). TM7 cleared the area in the vicinity of the bodies. (Exhibit 49). [redacted (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High] (a medic) arrived shortly thereafter and assessed Ms. Norgrove's vital signs. (Exhibit 52). [redacted (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High] found no vital signs, assessed her wounds, declared her expectant⁴ and prepared her for extraction. (Exhibits 43, 48, 49, 52). Initial reports to higher headquarters indicated that a suspected enemy grenade detonated in the vicinity of Ms. Norgrove. (Exhibits 19, 35, 39). [redacted (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High] began medical assessment at [redacted (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High] (Exhibits 29, 52). Ms. Norgrove was prepared and [redacted (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High] was moved to the extraction site. (Exhibits 29, 52). Ms. Norgrove was hoisted onto a helicopter, [redacted (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a] (Exhibits 29, 52). At [redacted (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High] Ms. Norgrove was examined by a medical doctor and declared deceased after she arrived at Jalalabad Airfield. (Exhibits 29, 76). Ms. Norgrove was then transferred onto an aircraft for further evacuation to Bagram Airfield at [redacted (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High] (Exhibit 29). Ms. Norgrove arrived at Bagram Airfield at approximately [redacted (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High] and was identified by a British Embassy representative. (Exhibits 30, 77).

m. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Sensitive Site Exploitation and Extraction.* The assault force discovered the following items on the objective: six AK-47s, one pistol, two chest racks with multiple grenades with pins straightened, five other chest racks with ammunition and batteries, two loose grenades, one pipe bomb, two ICOM radios, and four cell phones. (Exhibits 32, 35, 43,

³ TM6 indicated that only Ms. Norgrove's leg was partially exposed and that her head was covered. When he first encountered Ms. Norgrove, he determined that the body was female but did not think that it was Ms. Norgrove. (Exhibit 48).

⁴ Expectant: Patients in this category have wounds that are so extensive that even if they were the sole casualty and had the benefit of optimal medical resource application, their survival would be unlikely.

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45, 47). The chest rack on EKIA3 had to be cut off during the clearance of the body. EKIA3's chest rack was intact and contained only ammunition and batteries. (Exhibit 50). Prior to extraction, all enemy munitions and ordnance were destroyed on the objective. (Exhibit 49). Once sensitive site exploitation had been completed, the entire assault force was extracted on (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a and returned to (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a Airfield. (Exhibits 19, 43, 45, 47).

n. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Post Operation Actions-Hotwash*⁵. The assault force returned to (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a Airfield at (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High on Friday, 8 October 2010. (Exhibit 19). Upon arrival, they conducted an informal hotwash covering actions on the objective. (Exhibits 41, 42, 43, 45, 47).

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High
(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High gathered around a large fire pit on the compound and talked through aspects of the operation. (Exhibits 41, 42, 43, 45, 47). The (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a Senior Enlisted (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High had the discussion with very limited input from the rest of the members of the assault force. (Exhibits 41, 42, 43, 45, 47). The hotwash lasted approximately 15 minutes and then the assault force was released to perform other recovery activities. (Exhibits 41, 42, 43, 45, 47).

o. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Post Operation Actions-Storyboard*. In the hours following the operation, the Task Force (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a leadership requested confirmation that no explosive munitions of any form had been utilized on the objective. (Exhibits 35, 41, 53). The Task Force (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a leadership confirmed that no explosive munitions were utilized on the objective and Task Force (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a prepared the post operation storyboard for submission to higher headquarters. (Exhibits 35, 41, 53, 73). Due to the nature of the injuries sustained by both EKIA3 and Ms. Norgrove, that chest racks with grenades with the pins straightened had been found on the objective, and the fact that the assault force confirmed that no explosive devices had been utilized, the command assessed that the injuries and Ms. Norgrove's death were probably caused by an enemy explosive device (suicide-vest or grenade). (Exhibits 32, 35, 41, 53, 58, 73). TM1 and several other members of the assault force team had experienced a suicide-vest sympathetic detonation during their previous deployment to Afghanistan in Operation (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a. (Exhibits 43, 45, 47, 56, 73).

p. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Post Operation Actions-SSE De-brief*. Immediately following the hotwash, the members of the assault force who took pictures and recovered items from the objective, met with the Task Force (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a Intelligence Section for the sensitive site exploitation debriefing to document and explain what they had found and the pictures taken on the objective. (Exhibits 43, 45, 47). Following these activities, TM3 approached TM1 in his room and told him that TM5 threw a grenade. (Exhibits 43, 45, 47). TM5 walked in immediately following this conversation and confirmed with TM1 that he had thrown a grenade on the objective. (Exhibits 43, 45, 47). TM1 told both TM3 and TM5 that he would handle the issue. (Exhibits 43, 45, 47). However, TM1 took no further action during the next 36 hours until he was asked directly about the grenade. (Exhibits 35, 37, 43, 45, 47). Additionally, TM3 and TM5 also did not raise the issue again until they were directly asked. (Exhibits 45, 47).

q. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Post Operation Actions-Saturday, 9 October 2010, Afternoon*. After the Commander's update briefing on Saturday, 9 October 2010, the (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High asks to see the (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a

⁵ Hotwash is an informal after action review.

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video to gain a better understanding of the actions on the objective. (Exhibit 42). ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4b~~ convened a meeting with TM1, TM3, and TM5 to review the ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ video and discuss what happened on the objective. (Exhibits 42, 43, 45, 47). At no time during the discussion was the throwing of a grenade discussed. (Exhibits 42, 43, 45, 47). On the same day, the Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ commander requested a copy of the high fidelity video from one of the ISR platforms' hard drives to obtain better clarity as to what happened during the operation. (Exhibit 35). The video files had to be downloaded, decompressed, and transported to ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ Afghanistan. (Exhibit 35). Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ also received an email at 1830Z informing them that the acting UK Ambassador would be traveling to visit Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ the following morning, 10 October 2010. (Exhibits 35, 41).

r. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Post Operation Actions-Sunday, 10 October 2010.* On 10 October 2010, the Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ leadership briefed the acting UK Ambassador on the operation. (Exhibits 35, 41). At 1100Z, 10 October 2010, the hard-drive ISR feed was delivered to the Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ Commander on a DVD. (Exhibit 35). The feed showed what appeared to be a grenade thrown by a member of the assault force because of the underhand throwing motion followed four seconds later by an explosion. (Exhibits 27, 35). The Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ Commander immediately notified his higher level Commander, and the ISAF Commander, General Petraeus. (Exhibit 35). The Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ Commander then traveled to Logar Province, Afghanistan later that day, and met with the Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ Commander. (Exhibit 35). The Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ Commander showed the Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ Commander the higher quality, and different angled video, and requested that he conduct another inquiry as to whether a grenade had been utilized. (Exhibits 35, 41). At 1800Z, the Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ Commander and senior enlisted returned to ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ Airfield, brought in the ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ Chief and TM1, and confronted them about the grenade. (Exhibits 35, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47). When confronted, TM1 admitted knowing about the grenade. (Exhibits 35, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47). TM5 admitted to throwing the grenade. (Exhibits 35, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47). He also indicated that he and TM3 informed TM1 that a grenade had been utilized only after the post operation debrief had been conducted and all post-operation products had been submitted to higher headquarters. (Exhibit 35, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47).

s. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Post Operation Action-Monday, 11 October 2010.* On 11 October 2010, the Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ Commander traveled to Kabul, Afghanistan and briefed GEN Petraeus, the Acting UK Ambassador, the Deputy Commander ISAF (UK), Ambassador Sedwell, COMISAF XO, COMISAF SIG, COMISAF JAG, and the Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ ISAF LNO. (Exhibits 35, 37). The NATO SECGEN and the UK Prime Minister were also notified that same day. (Exhibits 35, 37). Upon return to Bagram Airfield, the Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ Commander directed that no additional questioning of Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ members occur except by the official investigation team and that all ISR feeds and mission products be collected and preserved. (Exhibit 35).

t. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Other Grenade Considerations.* TM5 had also been instructed during a previous operation about utilization of grenades. (Exhibits 63-70). Two weeks prior to the hostage rescue operation, TM5 had been on a combat clearance operation (Objective

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(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a where he employed a (b)(1)1.4a grenade over a wall on to a roof of a building. (Exhibits 63-70). His team leader acknowledged that the use of the grenade was warranted, but warned him about the risks of utilizing (b)(1)1.4a grenades on rooftops when the grenade could have rolled off the roof and harmed non-combatants. (Exhibits 66, 67). Next, a barricaded insurgent was in another building that was being cleared. (Exhibits 63-70). TM5 utilized his remaining grenade, a (b)(1)1.4a grenade, with the approval of his team leader to clear the building. (Exhibits 66, 67). The grenade collapsed the building and the assault force was required to sort through the rubble to find the insurgent and conduct exploitation. (Exhibits 66, 67). The team leader viewed this as an appropriate situation to use a grenade; however, the team leader indicated that a (b)(1)1.4a grenade would have been more appropriate for the situation presented (b)(1)1.4a. (Exhibits 66, 67). TM5 was verbally mentored about the utilization of the grenades during the hotwash debrief and no further discussions or actions were taken by the unit leadership. (Exhibits 63-70).

u. (U//~~FOUO~~) *Autopsy Findings/Cause of Death.* Ms. Norgrove was repatriated to the UK on 14 October 2010 to Royal Air Force Station Lyneham, UK. A post-mortem examination was conducted in the UK in October 2010. (Exhibit 82). The results were provided to the investigating officer on 9 November 2010. The pathologist found that Ms. Norgrove died as a result of fragmentation injuries to her head and chest. (Exhibit 82). A Coroner's Court in the UK is presently scheduled for 2011.

3. (~~S//REL USA, GBR~~) Findings. Based on an extensive investigation that included multiple direct interviews, review of numerous documentary evidence to include ISR products, and extensive collaborative discussion, I am highly confident that the facts and circumstances captured in paragraph two of this report and the detailed chronology at Exhibit H represent a clear and accurate depiction of events that occurred on Objective (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a (the objective name for the operation to rescue Ms. Norgrove) on the evening of 8 October 2010 as well as the post mission activities that took place until my appointment as the Investigating Officer. With respect to the direction in my Appointment memorandum – I make the following findings:

a. (~~S//REL USA, GBR~~) *Finding #1. The decision to launch this operation was a proper one made by appropriate leadership based on the assessed threat to Ms. Norgrove and the opportunity to either rescue her or gather additional intelligence information that would potentially support a follow-on operation to do the same.*

(1) (~~S//REL USA, GBR~~) The lead-up to execution of Objective (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a included nearly two weeks of extensive information sharing, significant ISR coverage, supporting ground operations and US, UK, and Afghan collaboration that included special intelligence that led the leadership to conclude with confidence that there was a reasonable chance that on the evening of the operation Ms. Norgrove was located in the compound at Objective (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a or that persons located there may have information that could possibly lead to her recovery. Furthermore, intelligence identified a clear and present threat to Ms. Norgrove and the possibility that she may be moved in the near future. Task Force (b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a and its subordinate organizations, in coordination with Task Force Bastogne and Regional Command-East were directed to develop

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intelligence and conduct operations that would lead to the recovery of Ms. Norgrove. Ms. Norgrove was designated a Person of National interest and therefore her recovery became a top priority for ISAF. Task Force ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ was assigned primary responsibility to execute hostage rescue if the conditions and intelligence allowed. Because Ms. Norgrove was a UK citizen, UK military and intelligence resources commenced immediate collaboration and information sharing with their US partners.

(2) ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ There were three key areas of risk associated with the operation: the risk to the force on infiltration; the risk that Ms. Norgrove would not be on the target; and the risk to Ms Norgrove as a result of action on the target. Although thought was given to risk at all levels in the chain of command and was briefed to the UK Acting Ambassador, more emphasis was placed on assessing the risks during the infiltration than the risks on the objective itself. This effect was accentuated by the lack of a coherent risk picture through the command; there was plenty of discussion, but not a vehicle for focusing these considerations, or for synthesizing the individual perceptions of risk into a coherent judgment on the likelihood of mission success. Moreover, the varying assessments of risks were not resolved and the risks felt by lower operators in particular were not incorporated in the chain of command's risk analysis. Nevertheless, the top level judgments were correct in their decision to launch this operation. There was a credible, immediate, and significant risk to Ms. Norgrove's life as well as a sensible chance of success. An assessment of risk was also successfully shared with the highest levels of command and the UK Acting Ambassador.

b. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Finding #2. Team ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ (a subordinate element of Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~) located at ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ was the best and most appropriate force to recover Ms. Norgrove at Objective ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~. During ~~(b)(1)1.4a~~ that Team ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ was deployed in Afghanistan prior to Objective ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ they conducted ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~' combat operations in Nangahar or Konar Provinces. ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ these operations resulted in direct fire contact with enemy forces. Objective ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ was the third operation ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ had executed in Konar Province – an area dominated by 8,000 – 14,000 feet mountain peaks, extensively rugged terrain, deep canalizing valleys, poor road and trail infrastructure and an extremely capable and motivated enemy with near perfect knowledge of the terrain and area. ~~(b)(1)1.4a~~ Team ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ and its personnel have extensive training and experience in ~~(b)(1)1.4a~~. The ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ leadership is very experienced with the ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ Commander on his third deployment in this duty position. ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ is the element that became the principal focus of the action. ~~(b)(1)1.4a~~ members are also very experienced with most having between seven and eleven combat deployments, mostly in Afghanistan. Although experienced, one member of the team, TM5, was on his first combat deployment with 1 ~~(b)(2)High~~. Prior to its deployment to Afghanistan, ~~(b)(2)High~~

~~(b)(1)1.4a~~

Given the nationality of the hostage, consideration was given to using UK Forces. It was jointly agreed by US and UK leadership that despite national sensitivities, Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ was the most appropriate force to execute this operation.

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c. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Finding #3. The CONOP was developed by the US Task Force and ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ that executed the operation, with UK Force Elements and Afghan authorities having full visibility of the plan and opportunity to advise as they saw appropriate. Two days prior to execution of Objective ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ the ~~(b)(1)1.4a~~ executed Objective ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ a development target that resulted in the capture of an individual who provided information that further developed the overall situation regarding Ms. Norgrove. The force was alerted to the possibility of executing an operation at Objective ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ late on 7 October 2010 but chose to delay execution 24 hours to allow further study and development of a plan that mitigated risk to the insertion of the assault force and increased the chances of a successful rescue of Ms.

Norgrove. ~~(b)(1)1.4a~~

~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~

~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~. While there

was no specific confirmation of Ms. Norgrove's presence or location on Objective

~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~ the assault force assessed from the pattern of life that the most probable location

for Ms. Norgrove would be in the building 11 and 12 areas. This is an important aspect to the

planning and execution as this factor provides focus for aerial surveillance assets as well as

partially accounts for the delay in identifying Ms. Norgrove on Objective ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a~~

during the rescue operation. This area remained the distinct focus for ISR and the assault team

throughout the operation. I assess the planning processes were adequate to the mission

requirement, ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(5)~~

~~(b)(2)High, (b)(5)~~

~~(b)(2)High, (b)(5)~~ Given the

strategic significance of this operation, additional rigor in the articulation of plans and orders

between levels of command would have reinforced the common understanding of the mission,

key tasks, and Commander's intent across all elements participating in the operation.

d. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Finding #4. The CONOP was briefed and approved through

appropriate US and ISAF command channels and, at the direction of COMISAF, was briefed for

approval to the Acting UK Ambassador to Afghanistan. Upon completing the CONOP

preparation – Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~ provided a CONOP brief to Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~ their higher

headquarters located at Bagram Airfield. Upon approval, Task Force ~~(b)(2)High, (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~ coordinated an

approval brief with the Deputy Commanding General for Operations at Regional Command-East

Headquarters, the battle space owning organization responsible for deconfliction and

coordination. Extensive lateral coordination was executed at all tactical levels. COMISAF was

informed of the operation, gave his approval, and based on his previous direction; the CONOP

was briefed to the Acting UK Ambassador located in Kabul for final approval. The CONOP was

also briefed to the Acting UK Ambassador and she indicated her approval to mount a rescue

operation to recover Ms. Norgrove based on the intelligence derived threat to her life and

moderate to high chance for success.

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e. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Finding #5. Actions on the objective were notably intense and rapid - three insurgents were engaged and killed in the vicinity of buildings 23 and 25 within one minute and forty-three seconds of ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~ helicopter infiltration approximately 30-40 meters northwest of building 21.

(1) ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Following infiltration of the Assault Force by ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~ insertion, ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~ immediately began moving along terraces leading to the front of buildings 21, 22, and 23. Upon approaching building 21, the two lead assaulters (TM3 and TM5) identified an insurgent with a weapon in front of the doorway between buildings 22 and 23 and engaged and killed him. Proceeding and leading along a narrow terrace in front of building 21, TM3 identified and engaged a second insurgent moving up from a draw (the area between buildings 23 and 25) onto the path leading to the terrace in front of building 23. Following this engagement, TM5, having now cleared a jammed weapon, moved up and took a standing position to the right of TM3. TM3 engaged a third insurgent with a weapon rounding the corner of building 25 and moving laterally (exposing his left flank) into the draw between buildings 23 and 25. I assess, based on careful review of the surveillance video that TM5 probably engaged this insurgent as well. TM5, the least experienced in ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~ after observing and participating in the rapid engagement of three insurgents, assessed the requirement to clear the space from which all three insurgents had emerged in order to protect himself and his team in their precarious position on a narrow terrace with uncleared buildings and rooms to one side and an approximate eight to twelve foot drop-off to the other side. Subsequently TM5 verbalized either "frag out" or "I'm going to frag it," or words to that effect, and prepared and employed ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~ Fragmentation Grenade throwing it underhand into the draw between buildings 23 and 25. Upon hearing TM5's verbalization - TM3 verbalized an expletive and sought cover in the doorway of building 22. ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~ following some meters behind TM5 recalls hearing some verbalization of "get back" and with another team member (assessed as TM2) sought cover behind the corner of building 21.

(2) ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Simultaneous with these actions, TM1 traversed the roofs of buildings 21, 22, and 23 to arrive at the southeast corner of building 23. From there, he scanned and engaged an insurgent with a weapon and chest rack coming from the area around building 25; the same insurgent TM3 was engaging (EKIA3). Following this engagement TM1 continued to scan to his west and engaged an insurgent (EKIA2) with a weapon lying on his back at the southwest corner of building 23 when he observed him moving. He assessed this insurgent, previously engaged by TM3, to be a threat. Scanning back toward the northwest corner of building 25 he again detected an insurgent (EKIA3) with a weapon, assessed him a threat, and engaged again.

(3) ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ As TM1 engaged, he observed an explosion that knocked him backwards and inflicted a very minor wound. Seeing the resulting dust and debris caused by the explosion, and after regaining his bearings, TM1 continued his advance uphill toward buildings 11 and 12 where he still assessed Ms. Norgrove to be. Subsequently, he conducted a radio call that directed other members of his team, including TM3 and TM5, to continue their operations toward buildings 11 and 12.

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f. U//~~FOUO~~ *Finding #6. TM 5 inadvisably utilized a fragmentation grenade on the objective that caused Ms. Norgrove's death.* I am certain that TM5 feared for his safety and that of the rest of his Team when he chose to throw a grenade, having seen three armed enemy appear from the draw in quick succession. However, he could have used his weapon or sought cover in the buildings to his left. Within the terms of extant theatre tactical direction, the employment of a grenade in the circumstances is permitted, but it is exceptional in hostage rescue tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) and conventions. While there is no evidence to indicate that there was specific reference to the non-use of grenades, I am satisfied that emphasis was placed on general hostage rescue conventions by the chain of command in the pre-operational briefings. I therefore conclude that TM5 should not have thrown the grenade. Though understandable given his perception of the threat, he had other options and it was in direct contravention of hostage rescue TTPs. Since this grenade was the only such munition employed on the objective, I believe that it caused Ms. Norgrove's death. There is some testimony by the Troop Commander speculating that TM5 threw the grenade to conceal the fact that he had inadvertently shot Ms. Norgrove. On the basis of all the other facts in this investigation, I find there is absolutely no merit to this speculation.

g. (~~S//REL USA, GBR~~) *Finding #7. In error, it was concluded that Ms. Norgrove was the victim of the detonation of a suicide-vest or a munition positioned in a chest rig carried by EKIA3.* During a number of operations on this tour of duty, (b)(1).4a, (b)(2)High had recovered insurgent chest rigs containing grenades prepared for immediate throwing. Given that TM1 and 10 members of his Troop had also experienced an insurgent detonate a suicide-vest in the face of an attacking force previously (Objective (b)(1).4a, (b)(2)High, 27 May 2009 in Paktika Province), the initial assessment that EKIA3 had either detonated a suicide-vest or suffered a sympathetic detonation of either a suicide-vest or a grenade carried in his chest rigging is understandable. There is also significant testimony that supports the contention that the injuries of EKIA3 are more extensive than those normally found on a grenade victim. However, the SSE debrief missed the recovery of an almost intact chest rig from EKIA3 that contained only magazines and batteries. Despite the plausible interpretation of a suicide-vest or sympathetic detonation given the threat, their experience and the wounds sustained by EKIA3, I therefore conclude that a closer examination during the SSE debrief might have led to a deeper discussion that could have brought about the questioning of this explanation.

h. U//~~FOUO~~ *Finding #8. The assault force was not aware of the true presence and location of Ms. Norgrove until they started clearing the objective.*

(1) (~~S//REL USA, GBR~~) None of the assault team members who employed weapons in the vicinity of buildings 21, 22, 23, or 25 actually observed Ms. Norgrove being forcibly moved by the third insurgent. Given the depth of the terrain between building 23 and 25, the absolute darkness, the presence of other obscuring items such as trees, bushes, and rocks, Ms. Norgrove's smaller stature in relation to the insurgent and the likely presumption that Ms. Norgrove's body was masked by the third insurgent, I conclude that none of the assault team members actually saw her during the engagements; they were focused on the threat and were not looking for her at this time or location. In the experience and minds of this assault force, it was beyond

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comprehension that an insurgent would actually take a hostage and move directly into the area where engagements were presently occurring. While I assess that this may indicate a lack of imagination of possible outcomes, it is reasonable that a hostage taker would more likely move away from fire than directly into it. Finally, when combined with the factors above, the speed and intensity with which all these engagements took place [redacted] (b)(1)1.4a

[redacted] (b)(1)1.4a gave little opportunity to identify Ms. Norgrove.

(2) (~~S//REL USA, GBR~~) A considerable ISR effort was rightly dedicated to this operation,

[redacted] (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High

(3) (~~U//FOUO~~) The identification of Ms. Norgrove's body occurred approximately ten minutes after the detonation of the grenade. Following the detonation, TM1 and other assault force members continued the mission toward buildings 11 and 12, while TM6 moved down the steep incline at the southwest corner of building 23, across the draw and took a position at the northwest corner of building 25 to provide surveillance and security toward the south and west of the compound. Once in position, TM6 noticed what he assessed to be an exposed female leg of one of the bodies within his view but did not assess the body to be Ms. Norgrove. Meanwhile, as TM1 completed clearing building 11, he was informed of the other assault team's continued delay arriving at the objective. Leaving his assistant team leader in charge at buildings 11 and 12, he decided that he must begin the clearance of buildings 25 and 28. TM1 and TM8 then moved west down into the draw between buildings 23 and 25 and, picking up TM6, went directly to the south entrance of building 25. Enroute, TM8 stopped and conducted an expedited explosive hazard search of four bodies in the vicinity of buildings 23 and 25. He identifies one of the bodies as a Caucasian female and immediately moves to TM1's position inside building 25 and reports the same. TM1 then moves to the reported location, uncovers a veiled face and concludes that it is Ms. Norgrove.

i. (~~S//REL USA, GBR~~) Finding #9. *Nothing could have been done on the objective to save Ms. Norgrove once the fragmentation grenade exploded.* Upon identifying Ms. Norgrove, TM1 contacted the assault team [redacted] (b)(1)1.4a (TM10) by radio and directed him to conduct a medical assessment. TM10 moved to the directed location and conducted a medical assessment. He observed no wounds on Ms. Norgrove's front but noticed 15-20 coin size fragment wounds on her back and 5-6 coin-size fragments on her neck. He also observed fluid draining from her left ear. He did not examine Ms. Norgrove below the waist. The Troop Commander immediately moved to the site and upon observing the location of Ms. Norgrove's body in close

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proximity to a dead insurgent directed the ~~(b)(1).4a, (b)(2)High~~ Chief to confirm with the team leaders that no one shot Ms. Norgrove in error. He received an affirmative response that this had not occurred. Based on his on-site medical assessment, TM10 declared Ms. Norgrove expectant.⁶ The assault force then prepared Ms. Norgrove for evacuation from the objective.

j. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Finding #10. Two members of the assault force knew with certainty that a grenade had been employed on Objective ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~ before exfiltration and informed the Assault Force Team Leader of this fact approximately 60 minutes after the force returned from the mission to ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~ Airfield. Following the engagements along the terrace in front of buildings 21, 22, and 23, TM3 and TM5 began to clear buildings 22 and 23 until they received radio direction to continue their movement up to buildings 11 and 12. They exited onto the terrace moving south and then turning east and moving up the draw to complete their tasks at buildings 11 and 12. During exfiltration, both of these assaulters returned down to the terrace in front of buildings 21, 22, and 23, and while awaiting orders to begin exfiltration, TM3 asked TM5 to confirm he had employed a grenade. TM5 acknowledged that he had and TM3, a more experienced operator, told him that he had to tell the assault force team leader this information. TM5 acknowledged. The assault force then extracted back to ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~ Airfield and the team returned to its compound, stowed gear, and prepared for the assault force hotwash and debriefings (discussed in detail in the next paragraph). At no time during these events did either assault force team member mention the employment of a grenade. Following all debriefs, TM3 and TM5 arrived nearly simultaneously at the assault team leader's sleeping area and informed him that a grenade had been employed on the objective. Given the urgency and threat associated with exfiltration as well as the nature of the post-operation debrief process, described in the next paragraph, I assess this was the first opportunity for TM3 and TM5 to provide this information to their immediate supervisor. The post-operation events were not a conducive environment for relaying this information, and I do believe that both members felt an obligation to inform their immediate leader prior to releasing this information to a wider forum. By his own admission, TM1 was stunned when presented with this information, especially in light of the fact that Ms. Norgrove had perished on the objective and that the team had failed to accomplish its assigned mission. After a short conversation, the assault team leader verbally conveyed that he would deal with the issue; the exact form of words cannot be accurately recalled but both TM3 and TM5 got the impression that this issue would be handled by the assault force team leader. TM1 confirmed this impression.

k. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Finding #11. The post-operation hotwash and Sensitive Site Exploitation (SSE) debrief process was insufficient to facilitate a critical and detailed discussion of the events that actually took place on Objective ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~.

(1) ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ After returning to ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High~~ Airfield and storing their gear, the assault force gathered around a fire pit in the assaulter's compound. This is the habitual location that the ~~(b)(1).4a, (b)(2)High~~ gathers following return from a mission to conduct a hotwash which can best be described as an abbreviated review of key events that occurred on the objective. In addition to

⁶ Patients in this category have wounds that are so extensive that even if they were the sole casualty and had the benefit of optimal medical resource application, their survival would be unlikely.

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(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a There was no specific agenda, reference materials or other items and the Troop Chief, an extremely experienced and highly qualified operator and leader, led the review. The Task Force Commander attended a portion of the hotwash to gather key facts to begin preparation of the storyboard that would be submitted to Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High to explain what had occurred on the objective. Given the strategic significance of this target there was a definite sense of urgency to prepare the known details and get the information to higher headquarters. In addition to the Team Chief, the principal speakers during this event were the (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High. There is no indication that any other assault force team member brought up any discussion points or attempted to clarify any facts as they were currently understood. Indeed, the hotwash process did not encourage or oblige such interjections to be made. There was no mention of a grenade being employed on Objective (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High. The hotwash was literally a review by several key leaders of what they saw occur on Objective (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High and there does not appear to have been any detailed or specific discussion of any of the multiple engagements that took place. Most importantly, the hotwash setting around a fire pit and the presence of many non-assault force personnel contributed to an environment that did not encourage open and direct discussion of actions on the objective. The feeling of mission failure pervaded the hotwash. The overall mood of the force was dour, principally because of Ms. Norgrove's death on the objective and the fact that many members of (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a The consensus following the hotwash was that Ms. Norgrove had not been seen and was killed when either an insurgent detonated a suicide-vest or munitions on his chest rack sympathetically detonated when he was engaged, killing them both. The experience of the assault force team leader and (b)(1)1.4a other members of the assault force on Objective (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High and previous experience with insurgents who rigged grenades for fast detonation reinforced this conclusion. The entire hotwash lasted approximately 15 minutes. Based on my experience with post operation hotwashes, the setting, method, and time spent on this first review of such an important mission was inadequate.

(2) (~~S//REL USA, GBR~~) Following the hotwash, select members of the assault force who had responsibilities for taking photographs, making sketches, conducting tactical questioning of persons on the objective or gathering exploitable items moved to the (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High Planning Area and participated in a J2-led debrief of the materials they had gathered from the objective; no member of the chain of command is permanently present during this process. This session appears to have lasted approximately 30 minutes and principally focused on a discussion and documentation of the items recovered from the objective and not a detailed discussion of actually what occurred. TM3 and TM5, individuals primarily responsible for collecting SSE pictures and diagrams from the objective, participated in the debrief and the assault team leader acknowledges being present for a portion of this event. This event also failed to produce any critical information that could have assisted in clarifying what actually occurred on the objective. The potential to uncover details was present. As an example, a photo was taken that showed TM7 removing the chest rack from the insurgent alleged to have blown-up. In questioning TM7 during the investigation he described removing the chest rack from the insurgent. Despite being

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partially covered in blood and bodily material he described the chest rack as being in good condition. He further indicated its contents included AK47 magazines in the middle pockets and "AA" type batteries in the outer packets. There were no explosive munitions or grenades and the chest rack had no particular indication that it had been damaged by a self or sympathetically detonated grenade. Critical review of this photo and its linkage to the insurgent located next to Ms. Norgrove should have caused someone to question exactly what happened, especially since the photo did not seem to support the conclusions that had been reached on the objective or during the hotwash. Short of a discussion on Objective (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High these two post-operation events represented the next best opportunities to clarify the facts and circumstances of what really occurred on the objective. They did not achieve this end.

1. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Finding #12. While the initial post-operation report rendered by Team (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High leadership through Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High and subsequently to ISAF HQs was believed to be true – it was not accurate. Following the hotwash and simultaneous with the J2 debriefs, key leaders, including the (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High Commander, the Task Force Operations Officer, and the Task Force Commander came together and prepared the event storyboard based on the information they believed to be accurate. The Squadron Operations Officer and the Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High Operations Officer conducted phone conversations to compare notes and information based on radio calls and (b)(1)1.4a to ensure that the most accurate, known information was passed to the higher headquarters. Satisfied that the storyboard was as accurate as possible, the Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High Operations Officer assumed the responsibility for completing the report, getting it approved through the (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High Commander and (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High Commanding General and forwarded it to ISAF and other appropriate HQs in a timely manner. Given the strategic aspects of this operation, there was a clear sense of urgency at all levels to get the facts documented in a storyboard and get the information passed up the chain of command. While timely reporting and being "first with the truth" is a characteristic the Task Force strives to attain all the time, more careful attention should have been paid to the post-operation debrief process to ensure that all details of the operation were fully and accurately exposed. Given that a lower level leader knew the true facts and chose not to come forward immediately, I assess that the leaders involved in this part of the process believed that the information they were providing was accurate. The description of a suicide-vest or sympathetic detonation was perfectly plausible to them because a number of them had actually experienced this in combat. Unfortunately, it did not represent the true facts and circumstances as they ultimately unfolded. Of particular note, it is commendable that the Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High Commander took it upon himself on the following day to request the full motion video directly from the hard-drive of one of the aerial platforms over the objective that evening. This data was in a compressed format and the only available decompression software available at the time (b)(1)1.4a (b)(1)1.4a It took some time to achieve this decompression and when the Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High Commander ultimately received the higher resolution FMV from the hard-drive he instantly identified, investigated, and reported that a grenade had been thrown on the objective and that this might have contributed to the death of Ms. Norgrove. (Note: The issue involving decompression software at limited locations across Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High was immediately corrected by the chain of command).

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m. U//~~FOUO~~ *Finding #13. The lack of an After Action Review (AAR) did not provide an opportunity to correct the facts and circumstances in a timely manner.* In much the same manner that the hotwash and debriefs did not uncover the true facts, there was no subsequent informal or formal AAR process to critically look at this operation in detail. Recognizing that this assault force and its members are highly experienced (some with over 44 months of combat) with (b)(2)High to their credit and a very high operational tempo of operations back to back, the idea of formal or informal AARs following each operation may not seem immediately necessary. However, given the strategic significance of this operation characterized by the high risk to force being accepted by the command, and the fact that it had been a hostage rescue attempt involving a citizen of our principal Coalition partner, stronger consideration should have been given at all levels to a more formalized and swifter attempt to review the action in detail, particularly in instances of mission failure or strategic significance. Time and opportunity for this existed and should have resulted in uncovering the true facts earlier.

n. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Finding #14. A failure by the Assault Force Team Leader to bring forth a pertinent fact regarding the employment of a grenade on Objective (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High as soon as he knew it perpetuated inaccurate reporting and delayed discovery of the true facts and circumstances of Ms. Norgrove's death.*

(1) ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Ultimately, a key fact was known within approximately 60 minutes after the force returned to (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High that while not changing the outcome of the operation would have at least ensured a more accurate rendering of the initial report. The tactical actions of the assault team leader on Objective (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High were absolutely courageous; he led his team with distinction on a high risk operation to which he and his team members were exposed to constant danger and hostile conditions in perhaps the most challenging terrain US forces currently operate. He failed to meet expectations when TM3 and TM5 informed him that a grenade had been thrown and he chose not to report this information immediately. The possible conclusions drawn from employment of a grenade in the vicinity of Ms. Norgrove should have caused him to immediately report this information to his higher chain of command so a more accurate assessment could have been immediately accomplished. This initial failure was perpetuated as time progressed and he continued to hold this information.

(2) U//~~FOUO~~ Other opportunities existed on the afternoon of Saturday, 9 October 2010. At approximately 1230Z, the (b)(2)High Chief viewed a lower quality full motion video that showed the explosion. Interested in learning more about what had actually occurred on Objective (b)(2)High, he contacted the assault team leader and arranged to have a viewing of the full motion video so they could review the details. As they discussed the full motion video, with no suspicion of anything other than what was being described to him, the (b)(2)High never asked if a grenade had been employed and the assault team leader never offered this information. Instead, the conclusion drawn from this discussion continued to perpetuate the inaccurate conclusion that Ms. Norgrove had most likely perished as a result of a suicide-vest or sympathetic detonation.

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(3) U//~~FOUO~~ As time went on into Saturday evening and Sunday morning it became even more difficult for the assault team leader to come forth, especially as it was announced that the Acting UK Ambassador was coming to visit and thank the unit for its courage in attempting this operation and the story of Ms. Norgrove's death was repeated in the press with the belief that she had been killed by a suicide-vest worn by one of the insurgents. Extreme disappointment overwhelmed this experienced and competent tactical leader and he was unable to verbalize the facts to his higher chain of command. When confronted the next day with the high resolution full motion video and directly asked if a grenade had been thrown, TM1 acknowledged this fact with a sense of relief.

(4) U//~~FOUO~~ TM1 was extremely disappointed in the outcome of this mission;

(b)(2)High
(b)(2)High His disappointment was compounded by the extremely high risk conditions that he and his team had endured to attempt this rescue as well as the somewhat public hotwash that took place around the fire pit in front of his superiors, peers, and teammates. When he was informed about the grenade a short while later by two of his team members, I assess he was overwhelmed and given his already extreme level of disappointment was unable to muster himself to immediately report it. The fact that a team member had made a poor tactical decision and actually thrown a fragmentation grenade on an objective at which a hostage might be located was anathema to the established (b)(2)High
(b)(2)High

(5) (U//~~FOUO~~) Despite his commendable efforts on the objective, TM1 was derelict in the performance of his duties in violation of Article 92, Uniform Code of Military Justice. A person is derelict in the performance of duties when that person fails to perform that person's duties or when that person performs them in a culpably inefficient manner. The elements of dereliction in the performance of duties are: (1) That a person had certain duties; (2) That the person knew or reasonably should have known of the duties; and (3) That the person was willfully or through neglect or culpable inefficiency derelict in the performance of those duties. In this case, approximately 60 minutes after returning to (b)(2)High Airfield, TM3 and TM5 informed TM1 that TM5 had thrown a grenade on the objective. As the Team Leader, TM1 had an obligation to inform the chain of command of this new development. Though the enormity of the revelation overwhelmed TM1, it does not excuse his failure to inform the chain of command. Rather, his reaction to the events highlights the import of the information which should have reinforced the need to inform the chain of command. Instead, when an opportunity arose, he rendered a false official statement.

(6) (U//~~FOUO~~) TM1 made a false official statement in violation of Article 107, Uniform Code of Military Justice, when on 9 October 2010 he told the (b)(2)High that the explosion on the objective resulted from him firing at EKIA3 which caused a detonation, or words to that effect. A person makes a false official statement when: (1) the person makes a certain official statement; (2) the statement was false in certain particulars; (3) the person knew the statement was false at the time of making it; and (4) the statement was made with the intent to deceive. In this case, the statement that enemy ordnance caused the explosion was false. TM1 knew it was

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false at the time because TM3 and TM5 had told him the previous day that the explosion resulted from TM5 throwing a grenade. Though TM1 was having a difficult time with the failure to bring Ms. Norgrove home alive, one can only conclude that his false explanation as to the explosion on the objective was meant to deceive the (b)(2)High

o. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Finding #15. Ms. Norgrove died as a result of fragmentation wounds incurred during a failed hostage rescue attempt.* The risk to which Ms. Norgrove was exposed during Objective (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High was increased by the insurgent who physically moved her toward the assault force and into an area where engagements were occurring. Ms. Norgrove was in close proximity to an insurgent who was simultaneously engaged by three assault team members. As a result, Ms. Norgrove sustained a gunshot wound to her right lower leg which was probably due to a ricochet or a bullet that passed through EKIA3. Ms. Norgrove's fatal injuries were caused by fragments from the explosive detonation of an (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High fragmentation grenade. The fragmentation injuries were catastrophic and not survivable. Ms. Norgrove was not discovered on Objective (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High until approximately ten minutes after the detonation. Nothing could have been done on the objective to save Ms. Norgrove once the fragmentation grenade exploded. The assault team (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High, upon arriving at Ms. Norgrove's location, assessed that her injuries were inconsistent with sustained life and were not treatable on the objective.

4. (U) Recommendations.

a. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Recommendation #1.* (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

b. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Recommendation #2.* (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

c. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ *Recommendation #3.* (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

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(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

d. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Recommendation #4.

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

e. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Recommendation #5.

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

f. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Recommendation #6.

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

g. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Recommendation #7.

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

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h. ~~(S//REL USA, GBR)~~ Recommendation #8.

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(5)

5. (U) Other matters.

a. U//~~FOUO~~ Beyond the aforementioned failure by the assault force team leader I found no indications that any members of this unit engaged in any attempt or conspiracy to cover up the facts or circumstances as we now know them. All members of the chain of command (beyond TM1) acted quickly and prudently to investigate, determine and report the accurate facts once discrepancies were identified.

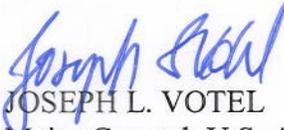
b. U//~~FOUO~~ Throughout all interviews, members of the unit (especially TM1 and TM5) were forthright, transparent, and demonstrated personal and professional pride in themselves, the mission, and their organization.

c. U//~~FOUO~~ The joint process and team composition developed and implemented for this matter should be considered a model for future investigations of incidents that have overlap between the US and other nations. The provisioning of a senior leader with current Afghan experience and without a SOF background (a UK Flag Officer), an extremely experienced subject matter expert and a well connected and serving legal officer complemented the US membership and significantly enhanced integration, information-sharing, critical discourse and consensus throughout the process. Additionally, the provisioning of a two-person court-reporter team was invaluable to accurate testimony transcription and overall speed of the investigation.

d. U//~~FOUO~~ Despite the fact that this operation failed to achieve its objective (the successful rescue of Ms. Norgrove), the tenacity of the command's leadership to aggressively develop the situation and accurately identify Ms. Norgrove's location, the clarity of the intelligence picture coordinated with multiple partners, the daring of the assault force in an extremely high risk situation directly onto the objective, the courage of the helicopter crews during an exceptionally vulnerable infiltration and exfiltration, and the expert combat support provided by multiple other units and assets is creditworthy.

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6. (U//~~FOUO~~) The point of contact for this action is the undersigned.


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