

~~SECRET//REL TO USA, GBR~~

Major General Votel: ~~TF (a), (b)(2) High~~ the room with me, I think you know who I am. I am currently the Chief of Staff down at SOCOM and obviously in the capacity that we are talking tonight, I'm the investigating officer looking at Objective ~~TF (a), (b)(2) High~~, the facts and circumstances surrounding that. In the room with me this evening I've got Brigadier Rob Nitsch from the United Kingdom. I've got a UK SME, also from the United Kingdom. I've got a US SOF SME and I've got Lieutenant Colonel ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ who is the legal advisor to the investigative team.

What we would like to do tonight, ~~TF (a), (b)(2) High~~, is just take a few minutes here, really this won't take very long because we are pretty focused on what we want to talk with you about and talk with you about a few aspects related to the operation that we think you may help us fill in some gaps. That's really what we are kind of doing now. I know we were out in Jalalabad over the weekend. We didn't necessarily see a need at that time to talk to you but as we kind of identified where the information gaps are in our collection here there are just a couple of things we want to kind of just run down with you.

Listen, this is an official investigation and as such I've got to cover some administrative, legalistic kind of sounding stuff up front here. So, I just want to go through that. It will take me a minute or two here and then we'll get on to the main part and do a little discussion. Okay?

WITNESS: Okay. Sounds good, sir.

Major General Votel: Hey, listen, during the course of the interview this evening I will ask you to furnish some information about yourself. The Privacy Act of 1974 requires that I inform you of my authority to do that in support of this investigation. We are going to send out a statement to you here in a little bit, a Privacy Act Statement, not unlike those which you probably signed in the past that basically lays that out and gives you an opportunity to review and sign off that you understand that the Privacy Act does apply here. Your testimony this evening is being recorded and it will be transcribed into a written record that will be a part of the whole packet that we ultimately present to General Mattis. Obviously answer every question verbally here and everything we

talk about tonight is on the record. I do want to remind you, ~~TF 4a, (b)(2) High~~, that it is very important to give truthful testimony. This interchange that we are having this evening basically constitutes a sworn statement and so to that end I will administer you an oath. So, after I recite these words if you would just respond in the appropriate manner.

[The witness was sworn.]

Major General Votel: Thank you. For the record here let me just note that the current time is 1437 Zulu on the 22nd of October and we are conducting this interview by phone. I am located at Bagram Airfield and we know you are located out at ~~TF 4a, (b)(2) High~~ Airfield.

Major General Votel: Thank you, Hey, I do want to remind you that right now you are not suspected. That is NOT suspected of any offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Federal, or local law. Therefore, you are not authorized to have a legal counsel present and I'm not advising you of any of your Article 31 rights. As part of this process you are required to answer all my questions or our questions unless you make a determination that one of those questions may incriminate you. I don't think that will be the case. Do you understand all that?

WITNESS: Yes, sir, understand fully.

Major General Votel: Okay. Good. Let's kind of have a little conversation, what I'm specifically interested in here and I know you have a lot of knowledge on this mission being the J2 now, I think we've got a pretty good handle on everything that led up to this and how we got to this point from an Intelligence operation standpoint and so we are not necessarily going focus in that particular area. Where we do have a little bit of a gap is with the ISR plan and, my "gap" I don't imply anything other than we are trying to make sure we have an absolutely full understanding of everything that took place with the multitude of ISR sensors. We do understand that for this operation we roughly ~~TF 4a, (b)(2) High~~ have the ISR sensors that we would normally have for one of our normal operations. Is that about right?

WITNESS: Yes, sir. I would say, yes, about ~~TF 4a, (b)(2) High~~ of what we would normally have.

Major General Votel: Here's my first question to you. As the forces and with all these assets here I think we've got about (b)(2)High sensors or thereabouts that are up and operational about the time the force is going in. What is their principle focus? Can you kind of talk a little bit about that? What are they looking at with respect to Objective 1.4(a), (b)(2)High? What gaps are we trying to answer? What are they trying to help mitigate for the force?

WITNESS: Absolutely, sir. Some sensors were focused specifically on the compound itself to determine a (b)(2)High and also leading up to the operation. So, conducting specific 1.4(a), (b)(2)High we were having the assets tell us what slant they had for each compound for the 10 series and the 20 series. So, specifically what those sensors are doing is providing us 1.4(a), (b)(2)High

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

doing.

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

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

overhead. So, I don't know if you need any more information than that, sir, but does that answer your question fully?

Major General Votel:

It does. Thanks. Just one quick follow-up to that and then I'll move on. You kind of described there, you are focused

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

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

Major General Votel:

No, sir, they don't. For this specific operation,

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

Major General Votel:

Okay. Thank you, I appreciate it. If I could just ask you to characterize here, beyond the fact that you've roughly got the amount of sensor resources for this one, is the approach ISR wise in terms of what you are doing any, I mean, is it any different then what you would normally, I know

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

WITNESS:

No, sir, to be honest. I mean the game plan is exactly the same as how we treat every target. You

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

Major General Votel:

Okay, thanks, I appreciate it. So, let me just explore a little bit different area here, so on this objective, I know it's an intel hit here that brings us to this location. How does the fact that Ms. Norgrove may possibly be on the objective? How does that figure into the ISR planning that takes place, before we launch the assault force in there and as they get on the ground?

WITNESS:

At that time, we didn't know, in fact I don't think - we never completely knew for sure if she was going to be located there. It was going to be a, this is the best lead. In my mind it was about a 50/50 chance that she was there. It was possible that she was just based on the intel report. So, that's what led us to believe that she could possibly be there but there was actually no specific indication that she was there. We believed that he probably was going to go back to her but we couldn't be absolutely positive intel on the 7th of October if that was, in fact, where she was.

Major General Votel:

Thank you very much.

WITNESS:

So, that doesn't necessarily change how we look at the target. From the Intel standpoint at that point we were going after that specific target so we were treating it as any other normal target in terms of the ISR development. The [redacted] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High that I spoke about earlier, you know, [redacted] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High [redacted] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High [redacted] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High. Obviously we could see that it was some sort of a farming area just based on all the

livestock present. So, from that standpoint, sir, we weren't absolutely positive she was there. But even if we were positive that she was there, I don't believe that would have changed [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

could be there and that could lead us, you know, to knowing that she was there. There was no specific piece of Intelligence that absolutely told us that she was going to be there.

Major General Votel:

Hey, how does that information there that you just mentioned to the ITCs and the platform, how is that conveyed to them? [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] piece right there that in addition to everything else you are doing here I need you to look for this type of activity?

WITNESS:

[REDACTED]

Major General Votel:

My final, final last question here, you were the J2 when the Task Force was participating in the [REDACTED] operations earlier in the deployment?

WITNESS: Yes, sir.

Major General Votel: How different was the ISR stuff you were doing with that as compared to what you did on the evening of the 8th here for Objective ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ where you actually are looking for people?

WITNESS: I was slightly removed from that situation, sir, only because that was taking place down in Logar Province. So, my J2, down in Logar he was really running the tactical stuff. I was slightly removed from it. I knew what was being collected on, yeah, all the collection was basically done on any sort of intel leads. A lot of those that we did all those ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ were really a lot of what we call, strike to develop. Based on intel reporting of captures

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

Major General Votel: Good. Thank you, it does. Have you experienced or been a J2 in; whether it is in training or whatever, for something that is a pure hostage recovery situation?

WITNESS: No, sir, I would say that the ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ of this year that was my first experience as the actual J2. Last year we were out here I think when ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ was abducted, that happened right after - during our RIP with the previous task force or right after. I cannot remember specifically, but we were not, the Task Force was not really involved in that one. So, this ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ was my first experience with that.

Major General Votel: Thanks, and I'm going to let the Brigadier ask a couple of questions here.

Brigadier Nitsch: What's the maximum number of ISR assets you have seen a ground commander control?

WITNESS: One operation, sir, I would think this is the most I have seen in my very short experience, sir, limited experience with the Task Force, but I know it ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~

[REDACTED] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High That's the most I have personally seen.

Brigadier Nitsch: Thank you. What do you think, and obviously the ground commander has got a take on this as well, but what do you think the maximum number that he might sensibly be able to control?

WITNESS: Uh, that's a difficult question to answer, sir, and I'll caveat it with saying no matter how many assets

[REDACTED] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High

Brigadier Nitsch: So, it's really the relationship between the warden and the ground commander, that's the key one?

WITNESS: Correct. Yes, sir.

Brigadier Nitsch: Okay. That's great. Thanks.

Major General Votel: US SOF SME?

US SOF SME: Again if we have any of the [REDACTED] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High where we provided the guidance to the assets especially in regard to, you know, being on the

[REDACTED] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High

include in our investigation.

WITNESS: Sir, we could probably dig up some old [REDACTED] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High I'm not sure if there is anything specifically in there because like I said, over the

[REDACTED] 1.4(a), (b)(2)High

if on that specific day there was anything passed to them, but I can certainly look that up for you.

US SOF SME: Thanks.

Major General Votel: Thanks. I think we need to have that for the record here, probably the [redacted] 1.4(a), (b)(2) High [redacted] were using that day. So, I'll have the US SOF SME work with you to get that. (b)(3), (b)(6) anything?

LTC [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) No, sir.

Major General Votel: Hey, thanks a lot. This has been very, very helpful. We certainly appreciate you taking out of your busy day to talk with us. Just as I kind of conclude here I just want to remind you that this is an official investigation. It is protected in a sense that this report or my report will be made to the appointing authority, General Mattis, and he will be making official decisions based on it. I am ordering you not to divulge the nature of this investigation or the questions, answers, or discussions included in this interview with anyone except the Chaplain or your counsel unless it is approved by me, the Inspector General, or the appointing authority himself. If anyone should approach you regarding your testimony, the matters discussed this evening you are required to report it immediately to me or the appointing authority.

As the investigating officer I can't give you a copy of the testimony directly that we are transcribing tonight, however, you may submit a request in writing for the report or any part thereof to the appointing authority or the Freedom of Information Act Office. The release authority will evaluate your request under both the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act and provide you the releasable information.

If something else comes up to you, obviously we would like to follow-up on the chats to make sure we've got those as part of our record, if anything else comes up to you that you think might be relevant, obviously the area that we are really interested in here is the ISR aspect with you that comes up later, please let us know and we'll immediately reconvene.

Are there any other matters that we should have covered with you or that you think might be important to our investigation?

WITNESS: Not that I can think of, sir, no.

Major General Votel: Okay. We've talked to both the ITC operators, we've obviously talked to you, we talked to the chain of command here, is there anybody else that we ought to talk to - and we talked to the warden from one of the ISR assets and we've seen all the video stuff that went along with that. Can you think of anybody else that we ought to talk to that we haven't?

WITNESS: I don't think so, sir, I think specifically, sir, I think you have really covered everything between myself and the ITC and then the assets themselves.

Major General Votel: Thank you. Do you have any questions for us?

WITNESS: No, sir, I sure don't.

Major General Votel: Thanks very much. Really, seriously, we really appreciate you taking the time here to talk with us. It has been very, very helpful in making sure we have a complete understanding of the whole ISR aspect. I believe that we do now and you and your controllers have been vitally helpful in helping us obtain that. So, thanks very much. Let me also thank you for your service to your country there. I really appreciate it. Obviously the impact being made by the organization out there is huge and I know the key role that an Intel officer in that organization and most any organization makes and we really appreciate your dedication here to the mission. So, thanks very much.

WITNESS: Thank you, sir.

Major General Votel: And I am noting that right now the time is 1503 Zulu and this interview is concluded.

[The telephone connection was terminated.]