

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

Major General Votel: I've been appointed by the CENTCOM Commander, General Mattis, to investigate the relevant facts and circumstances surrounding the hostage rescue operation in Konar Province, Afghanistan. During the course of the interview this morning, I'm going to ask you to furnish some information about yourself. The Privacy Act of 1974 requires that I inform you of the authority of this requirement. The statement which I'm not handing to you serves that purpose. I'd just ask you to review, print, and sign.

[The witness did as directed.]

Major General Votel: Okay. Thank you. The statement will become part of the official case file. Your testimony is being recorded and will be transcribed so that a written report can be made available to the appointing authority. Please answer each question verbally as the tape recorder cannot pick up any nods or gestures. Everything is on the record here this morning.

Before we continue, I want to remind you how important it is to give truthful testimony. It is violation of Federal law to knowingly make a false statement or oath. I'd like to now administer an oath to you if you'd please stand and raise your right hand.

[The witness was sworn.]

Major General Votel: Okay. The time is now 0941 Zulu on 24 October 2010. The persons present are Brigadier General Steve Townsend and myself and we are located at RC East headquarters of Bagram, Afghanistan.

Steve, if I could ask you to state your full name, spell your last name, rank, and duty position please.

WIT: Brigadier Stephen J. Townsend, Stephen with a "ph," Townsend, T-O-W-N-S-E-N-D, Brigadier General, United States Army, Deputy Commanding General for operations for Combined and Joint Task Force 101 and Regional Command East.

Major General Votel: Okay. Good. And if I could ask you to recite your social security number and your home station.

WIT: (b)(6), Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Major General Votel: Steve, at this time, you are not suspected of any offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Federal, or local law. Therefore, you not authorized to have legal counsel, and I'm not advising you of your Article 31 rights. You must answer all questions except those which incriminate you.

Thanks for taking the time here. As I mentioned, what I'm interested in is just kind of getting some top-level overview, if you will, with just kind of from your perspective on kind of the overall mission here.

WIT: Sure.

Major General Votel: And I'm wondering you can just kind of start off and just give a little strategic context in terms of the communication that's going on between RC East Headquarters and Commander ISAF and then the various other forces that kind of are involved in this.

WIT: Okay. Well I don't remember the exact start date of what we called Operation (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High. It was also known as Operation (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High. One of our subordinate battalion that was executing it called it Operation (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High very early on about the same time we started calling it (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High. (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High being the (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High for the US Sailors back in July. I'm just kind of flipping through my notebook here to make sure I have the right start date.

Major General Votel: I think it's the 26th of September when she goes mission or she's kidnapped I should say.

WIT: Yep. In fact, I got here on the 26th report of US AID worker kidnapped Ms. Linda Norgrove, United Kingdom, taken on (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High, Konar Valley, North of COB (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High southwest of COB (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High. That was my first report and I wrote in my notebook on the 26th of September. Initially being a US AID worker, quite honestly there are other NGO and those kind of folks, contract workers that come up missing in Afghanistan from time to time.

So we started doing a local drill. A little surprised we got direction on high to treat this as if it was a US Navy (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High. So as soon as we heard that, we went into a drill that was fairly well

rehearsed because this is (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High of these during our rotation here. The US Navy Soldiers in July, there was an ANA lead operation that resulted (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High in missing ANA Soldiers in August. And we mounted a month long (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High recovery PR event for that and eventually got all of those Soldiers back, not all of them alive but all of them back. So we were fairly well rehearsed in this and (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High the brigade, was well practiced in this. So when we called and said treat this like the US Navy (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High they knew what to do. We started locking down things pretty quick and communicated very quickly to higher, here's what we're doing. Because this was (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High in the last (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High months, they trusted us to do what was necessary and didn't really get a lot of tactical direction from IJC and ISAF. They just wanted us to, of course, keep them informed as to what we were doing and at no time was it ever unsatisfactory, our inputs as to what we were doing.

Initially, our goal was to contain the incident to Afghanistan because this was only a few kilometers from Pakistan. We thought that they might try to take Ms. Norgrove to Pakistan. So that was our first concern is to block to the south and east to Pakistan.

Secondarily, our concern was to contain the event into as small an area as possible. We had a lot of success in doing that in (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High previous operations;

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

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

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

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

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

we thought she was. And we started doing what we would to block that very quickly.

Major General Votel: Okay. Good. Thanks. That's really great context, and you actually answered one of my other questions as to kind of the guidance that you were getting from ISAF which I just kind of perceive was, hey, treat this just like the

WIT: Missing US -

Major General Votel: Yeah. I mean a UK citizen working for the US. Okay. Good. Talk to me a little bit about the interaction with Task Force between RC East and I know, obviously, is pulling a lot of the weight here. Who are the other players?

WIT: Right. The major player, of course, number one player for the overall operation was Task Force and that was delegated largely to Task Force 2/327th infantry commanded by Lieutenant Colonel . His task force had the mission to contain this thing and do the conventional search op - the large scale search operations which really are the bull work of this thing. Then, they were assisted by Special Operations Task Force which is our slice of CJSOTF Afghanistan. That's commanded by Lieutenant Colonel . The AOB Commander's name out there is . The AOB Commander's name escapes me. I want to say but I'm not sure about that. I don't remember his name. Anyway, there is an AOB Commander out there and he's got access to several ODAs and Commando Companies which routinely operate with us. This is right up their alley because they can do large scale cordon and search operations of villages and they can do it with Afghans in the lead. They can speak the language. They can sense the people much better than we can.

This is one of the times where we would employ unilateral US/Coalition Operations if necessary. If we needed somebody to block or someone to search and we didn't have Afghans available, we went anyway. We did not delay. So they did the lion's share of the work day to day. Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High course, part of our (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High the most capable hostage rescue force we have in Afghanistan. So that was (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High They assisted us with intelligence collection. They provided that daily. They participated and they just (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High We have a superb working relationship with them. You're aware of that and how strong that relationship is. It's built on a lot - there's a lot of personal relationships, histories there over time. So they were a part of (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High the whole time. We had (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High We have (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High

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

practice, suggested by Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High when we were doing the US Navy (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High. They suggested this practice. In fact, that thing started (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High in (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High that event did. I'm remembering it. They

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

Major General Votel:

That's good. Just a couple things to pick up on here from - is there any coordination - obviously, I know you've Commandos involved here, Afghan Commandos - is there any other coordination or communication with any other Afghan ministries; MOD, MOI, NDS?

WIT: Yes, certainly. At a local level (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High out there. I went to a morning planning session. In fact, I took along the first civilian representative from the UK was here and I'd have to look up his name; it's escaping me right now. I took him out to (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High battle space, picked up Colonel (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High the Brigade Commander, and we went out and visited (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High. And they had a morning planning session where they met the Governor of Konar, Governor Wahidi; they had the NDS chief; they had the local ANA commander, they had the AUP commander there. So all the security leaders; they had the local government and civilian leadership and the intelligence service, NDS, was there.

Major General Votel: Fully aware that we got a PR confirmation?

WIT: Fully aware. They knew everything that was going on. Additionally, we communicated to IJC to help us with Ministry level attention. In fact, that communication picked up more and more as we went along because it just felt like the locals were involved. It didn't feel like there was any pressure initially from the Government of Afghanistan on the situation. And we realized this after a number of days went by and there was increasing communication with IJC, hey, help us out with the ministries. Let's get some top down Afghan pressure. All the Afghan pressure seems to be kind of bottoms up right down; we need some top down pressure. The Governor met with local elders and (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High met with local elders and go those involved but we needed some higher level NDS, MOI pressure and we kind of encourage that after a couple of days.

Major General Votel: But ultimately you got that?

WIT: Ultimately, I think everyone was involved in this thing trying to get this thing solved before we even got to a final culminating point.

Major General Votel: You mentioned the selection of Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High provide the force to do this. Were there any other consideration of any other forces, any other national forces or anybody else to potentially go in and do that?

WIT: Well I wasn't privy to the internal discussions (b)(1), (b)(2) High
(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2) High had a resident capability here at RC East
so that was a natural discussion. There was a
discussion with the UK folks when they showed up. It

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

We didn't really consider any other forces. I mean, we quickly scanned through forces available when you do your METTC analysis and we have conventional forces, we have ISAF SOF, we have Afghan Commandos, we have US SOF, and we've got (b)(1), (b)(2) High here so it's kind of just the natural decision point is Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2) High

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

Major General Votel: Good. Thanks. That's really useful. And then you all don't give any particular orders or ISAF doesn't give you any particular written specific orders (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2) High
(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2) High they're just part of the team here and that's kind of how they're doing this.

WIT: Right.

Major General Votel: Everyone kind of agrees that (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2) High is the right force to do this.

WIT: Right.

Major General Votel: They're using their assets and they're focused on it.

WIT: It was almost by default. There was low-level discussions about it - actually than other than bringing in a UK force, I don't recall any deliberate decision making about who the force should be. It was obvious to everyone that they're the most capable force that's here now.

Major General Votel: Okay. Thanks. (b)(3), (b)(6) are you aware of any on-going negotiation efforts or any other approaches to gaining the release of Ms. Norgrove that's going on simultaneously with the military efforts?

WIT: Yes. Her company that's contracted to US AID. I think the company is DAI. And I don't recall - it's an acronym for something. I don't remember what it stands for but it's a company that - and I believe it's a US company that is contracted to US AID to

oversee projects in RC East and in that region. We were aware that her company was trying to negotiate her release. And that was known to us. It didn't really bother us that that was going on. We just say, look, let's make sure we don't trip on one another. There were a couple of points where we asked the British team that was here, the UK representative, we asked them to kind of get DAI out of the way. And a couple of times we were concerned that we might interfere with one another's efforts. They weren't appearing to make much progress on the - we would have been thrilled to see a negotiated settlement. We would have been thrilled to see even some outside - outside her company or some other organization paid ransom, clear the UK government wasn't going to do that, and we weren't going to do that. Our job was to find her and affect a rescue as we saw it or affect her release by rescue if necessary.

So we let that other kind of thing just proceed and when we felt like we needed to have some influence on it, we did that through the British team that was here.

Major General Votel: Okay. Just to summarize, your assessment was that although there was something going on with DAI from a negotiation standpoint, it wasn't substantial and wasn't making any noticeable progress to you?

WIT: Did not appear to be to us.

Major General Votel: Okay. Good.

WIT: We did wonder if the British Government was having negotiations of their own. I asked our British team here a couple times if we knew everything they were doing and they assured me on multiple times, both the civilian representative and the military representative, they assured me that they were laying it all for us and we knew everything that they were doing and they were not conducting separate negotiations or that kind of thing. We were aware of some negotiations that were going on but they said they weren't doing any behind the scenes stuff that we were not aware of. So I was satisfied with that answer.

Major General Votel: Hey, (b)(3), (b)(6) I really only have one more information area I just want to talk with you about. Before I get off this area we've been talking about, are there any other kind of umbrella contextual things that I haven't asked you about that might have some bearing on what we're talking about?

WIT: Possibly. There were discussions all along, very early on, the Brits wanted to know if they had - if they would be in the approval process for any potential military operation. They were aware all day long that we were all over this area of operation, the conventional forces, not necessarily well trained hostage rescue forces but conventional forces to include Afghan forces. So they knew that we could bump into her and who would know what the outcome might be. They were aware of that and supportive of all those efforts because we kept telling them, look, we've got to contain this thing first and then we've got to try to pinpoint where she's at and these operations will generate intelligence as we do these operations. If we do nothing but sit around the cordon, we won't find out where she's at. We've got to do these operations. So they were very supportive of that. When the discussions turned to what if we locate her and can commit a force trained and equipped to rescue her, they wanted to know if they were a part of that approval process. And we thought about it for, I don't know, about two seconds and said, yes, of course, sure. You should be a part of that approval process. Whether or not we do a rescue operation, I think you're part of that process. I did not feel necessarily all that comfortable that they should be part of how exactly the military operation would be conducted but we even agreed - in the end, we agreed to share that with them, the concept of operation would be provided to UK representatives before we executed. (S) (b)(1), (b)(4a), (b)(2) High day to day was not great in the actual maneuver part of the operation, certainly important in the intelligence part of the operation. They watched, they planned a couple of operations, they executed (b)(1), (b)(4a), (b)(2) High raid -

Major General Votel: Referring to Object (b)(1), (b)(4a), (b)(2) High

WIT: Object (b)(1), (b)(4a), (b)(2) High They did Object (b)(1), (b)(4a), (b)(2) High We got some intelligence from that. It helped us refine our

picture of the battlefield. And in the end, it was (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High intelligence that let us know that they had managed to just escape outside the western edge of our cordon. We thought we had the problem cordoned. All the feeds were telling us - there was a very spurious feeds that were telling us Korengal. In fact, the Brits for a couple days insisted she'd already been in the Korengal. We didn't think that was the case. Until that last 48 hours, we thought she was still inside the cordon. It turns out that we got intelligence from (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High that told us with a relatively high degree of confidence that she was located just a few kilometers west of our cordon in an adjacent valley and probably continuing to move north. That's what it looked like to us. So we started refocusing our cordon and preparing to expand the cordon area while (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High postured for strike. The intelligence remained the same over about (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High period. And we gave the Brits what we said. We let them in on the whole concept of operation and here's how we're going to do it and they were very supportive of that. It was going to be (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High Special Operations hostage rescue raid supported by Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High with QRF and a larger scale force. Several company sized forces were postured in case she wasn't at the target but we were still confident she was in that area. We were going to mass conventional forces into that valley to try to put another cordon because we figured that they would try to EXFIL with her. If they weren't at the target and they had managed to get off the target but they were in the area, they'd start moving so we wanted to cordon that area as quickly as we could, so we had several conventional companies postured and ready to go, reinforce the raid or if it went bad.

Major General Votel: That's good. Thanks. That's really useful. And actually generated two small questions here, did RC East Headquarters here have an assessment on the chance of her being present on Objective (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High the raid that they actually did on the eighth?

WIT: Yes. I think - I'm not sure we had an independent assessment of the chance that she was there. We took (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High assessment which was initially reported about 50 percent, later reported before the raid (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High Commander, Colonel (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High told me he thought about

75 percent chance confidence level that she was there. We just adopted that as our - the bottom line is, General Votel, we were swinging at every pitch because it was not swinging at every pitch just because of their capabilities and the risks involved. They were being very deliberate about what they did. But with conventional forces, we were going after just about every reasonable report, we were sending someone to check it out.

Major General Votel: Good. Thanks. And we've had pretty exhaustive discussions of the risk assessment associated with just the operation in getting these guys into Objective [redacted] I know most of that [redacted] managed, mitigated. Any - did you get involved in any of that or - do you mind talking a little bit about that?

WIT: Yes. Absolutely. I'm not so sure that I had much to say about [redacted] risk acceptance but Colonel [redacted] briefed us on his concept of operation, I was fully apprised, I had reviewed the entire CONOP just as I had reviewed every operation we did in this operation. It was no different. I went over the CONOP. I discussed it with him. We had a VTC about it. We knew it was a high risk. We thought some of the greatest risk was involved simply in the [redacted] It was at 8000, 8200 feet at elevation. There was no suitable landing zones. They were going to have to [redacted] onto this objective in the face of we knew to be four to six, maybe, defending enemy that were guarding her. We decided it was a high risk operation. Then, there's always the risk - I have as you do, I have some background in special operations - there is a risk to the hostages when you do a hostage rescue. We talked about that and we knew that they would potentially either leave her, they would try to kill her themselves in EXFIL, they'd try to move her off the objective, they may have moved her off the objective before we even arrived. And we knew all of those were potential outcomes. We knew it was a high risk operation from insertion through the entire execution of it.

Major General Votel: That's great. Thanks, [redacted]

WIT:

And we didn't hold any of those risks back from the UK team that was here. We told them, and I specifically told - and, again, her name escapes me. I'd have to look it up. The last civilian senior representative was here. She's a real trooper, very supportive. And we had a guy here and he's of the same group of guys that [redacted] He knows this business. We looked them in the eye and said, okay, here's the risk involved; risk to our forces, risk to her, here's the potential for this, they all knew that risk and were on board with this.

Major General Votel:

Okay. Great. That's really good. Last question here, given this is kind of [redacted] assistance in RC East's experience since you guys have been here with kind of big PR operations, are there any other observations or lessons learned or things that ought to be considered from a PR rescue force or are you satisfied with the support you're getting from the Task Force? Is there anything else that we ought to be considering here, presuming that not only has this happened three times but it's likely that it'll happen again in the future?

WIT:

Yeah. Well this operation brought some unique challenges. We applied all of the lessons learned. We did an after-action review after the US Navy [redacted] and we applied all those lessons learned and we talked about some of them nightly in our VTC. One of them was to be careful about how much you pressure the kidnapping force. If you pressure the enemy too much, they may just execute their hostage in order to extract themselves from the situation. This was a concern of ours with the US Navy [redacted] It was a lesson learned, in fact, our AAR said that if we had to do it over again, we would

[redacted]

kidnap force. Relatively speaking, that was easy terrain to do this on. It was in Logar Province around [redacted] that mountainous, not that rugged and so if we had to do it over again, we could do that in those circumstances. Try to perceive their

[redacted]

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

Major General Votel: And the operation you're referring to is the one up in -

WIT: (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High Province.

Major General Votel: (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High Province.

WIT: It was called Operation (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High And that (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High. We retained that name throughout. Operation (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High we couldn't really

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

was kind of the same. The (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High, Linda Norgrove, was far tougher than the (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High They were successively tougher, (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High The locals were not happy that they had brought - this group of insurgents had brought her into their area so they were supportive to a point but, hey, you get her through here and out of here as quick as you can. We don't want the Coalition coming here because they're going to come here. The terrain though was much tougher here. At least (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High had mountains but they were bald mountains. We could land or hover

or hop out on almost any ridge line that we had to. This we had mountains with big, tall evergreen trees.

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

I'll give you an example, it took a Commando Company one night, all night long to move about two and half kilometers in this terrain. So this was very challenging and I think that lesson learned there was again, we could not apply leave an open way because there were plenty of open ways. We could only try to shape it by closing the ways. As far as (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)Highs, they were very active on the US Navy (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High They

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

just - we'll cordon - with infantry we'll cordon and search the village just because it's there and we have a whiff of a report that somebody is there. They prefer to have more firm intelligence than that. On the Afghan, they did not participate in the Afghan - they were available, said they were available to help us if we needed them, if we had a hard target or where we knew some ANA were, they'd go do that. We did not require their assistance on that operation.

On this one, they were available but the opportunities for them to go do something were pretty limited. And I thought they acted where they had a reasonable intelligence to do so. I know that they made risk decisions about risk to their force versus commitment to that force. In my view, we were taking - other than that last night where they went in on Linda Norgrove's location, other than that night I felt on the day to day basis, we were taking far greater risk with our force to try to find this woman, the conventional forces were.

Major General Votel:

Good. Thanks. That's really helpful. That's really the last significant question I've got here for you. I think you've answered all mine or filled in all my information gaps so let me start to wind this thing down and just kind of give you a couple comments here at the end just to remind this is an official investigation. It is protected in the sense my report will be made to the appointing authority for such use as deemed appropriate. 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 a Chaplain or your counsel, if you have one, until case closure unless approved by me, an Inspector General, or the approving authority or higher authority. If anyone should approach you regarding your testimony and the matters discussed here, you are required to report it immediately to me or General Mattis.

As investigating officer, I am prohibited from providing you a copy of the testimony that will be transcribed here this morning. 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 will provide releasable information to you.

If something comes up in the wake of our discussion here that we haven't talked about that you think might be relevant, please let me know. I'm going to be around for several more days here so I will make myself immediately available.

Finally, are there any other matters that we haven't covered that you believe may be important in the context of what we've been here discussing here this morning?

WIT:

Only off the top of my head, I'd like to say this, I thought that the entire Task Force came together extremely well with - I mean the larger Task Force here at RC East came together extremely well with the sole goal of trying to find this woman and trying to rescue her alive or get her released in some way. The Afghans that we dealt with were behind that, the Afghan military forces that we used were behind that. We used Afghan Army. We used Afghan Special Forces, Commandos. And everyone, whether special operation or general purpose forces or US or UK or others, were all involved in this. In fact, I had ISAF SOF in here preparing concepts of operations because there were reports that she had gotten completely out of this area, Konar all together and into another province, into Kapisa Province. And I had international cast and characters standing here ready to go - go into harms way to find her and pull her

out. I think the whole formation, that was their goal. I think we put a lot of people at risk to accomplish that and I think fortunately, we didn't lose anybody, any of the rescue forces during this operation. This operation went on for three weeks or so I think. We didn't take any losses from those forces, some wounded and some injured. And I think everyone was doing everything they could to make this work. It's my only view that the outcome of this thing is one of those things that a fact of war. That's the way I feel about it. I feel for those guys who went into that target to try and get her off, to get her out alive, and had to fight their way in there and have this outcome. It's disappointing for everybody and we're sad for her and her family and all the citizens of England.

Major General Votel: Thanks. Let me just say for the record that throughout a very exhaustive investigative process the performance of RC East, the forces directly under your control, ~~(b)(1), (b)(2), (b)(7)(C), (b)(7)(D)~~ and the others that are part of the big team, the whole performance is very credit worthy. The synchronization role that's kind of pulled together by RC East Headquarters is notable and acknowledged by all the participants we've talked to so really, really good job.

Any questions you might have for me at this point?

WIT: No. None that I can think of other than I guess maybe I would say that - no. I guess not, no.

Major General Votel: ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ thanks a lot. I really appreciate you making the time here this morning. I think you really filled in almost what my final informational gaps are here so I really appreciate it. I will note here the time is 1017 Zulu and this interview is concluded.

Hey we're back on the record here at 1019 with Brigadier General Townsend and, ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ just want to ask you one more question here before we conclude this, any impressions on the initial reporting or any efforts within the Task Force ~~(b)(1), (b)(2), (b)(7)(C), (b)(7)(D)~~ Headquarters about the reporting of this event?

WIT: Yeah. I had a fairly unique set to observe the actual execution of the raid. Some of the feeds don't come into RC East Headquarters here so General

Campbell operated out of our situational awareness room here and I went down and joined Colonel (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High and his staff and his JOC. I took our 2 down there. So I was down there sitting beside (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High during the execution of this operation and his staff. His 2 was to my left and then (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High was sitting right there as well. So I watched the raid on

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

there. Pretty good view of what happened. The

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

were doing but you could definitely sense how the operation was unfolding, the insertion went, and what was happening with the maneuver and the enemy movement. A level below that, I could (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High As we sat there and we listened to the feeds and we were getting chat (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High

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

unfold, there was a moment where an instant of jubilation just an instant, we've got here and then almost instantly, this disappointing flinch almost, winch of, ugh, she's been hit. In an instant it was that fast, jubilation to disappointment in an instant. And then trying to find out what had happened. The first report was enemy grenade. And that's what it seemed like to us. We were unaware that she had moved at that time, moved outside of a building. We thought she might be inside of a room. We thought that the enemy might have dropped a grenade against her, with her. Then the second report and the report as I left the JOC and didn't find out differently 'till the next morning, the next report was that we believed it was possibly a suicide vest that one of the enemy insurgents had a vest slung around his shoulder that he detonated himself and she was standing next to him and they were trying to exfiltrate her. And that was kind of how it morphed over. Now literally this is minutes of battle field reporting, while they're still in contact on the objective. They're trying to give higher headquarters the best picture that they can. I know that Colonel (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High is very cautious to report to higher what it was and what we knew just because he wanted to make sure it was right and he knew that these first reports coming off the battlefield are frequently almost not quite right. And that's just the nature of battlefield reporting,

WIT: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Major General Votel: So it's a little bit -

WIT: Yeah, you're right. I thought it was the next morning. You're right. I think it's Sunday morning. Let me look at my notes here. I may have written this down or maybe I didn't. But, you're right, there was more time in it than that because the force came back, did a back brief, stood down to get some rest and I think you're right. Do you remember what day that was?

Major General Votel: Sunday the 10th.

WIT: Here's my notes on Friday night (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High friendly killed in action, Linda Norgrove by suicide vest, suicide belt or grenade. That's what I wrote down as the raid was concluding. There's Saturday, nothing. You know what, I think it definitely was Sunday. I didn't write it down but I wrote her that the deputy UK Ambassador Catherine Royce came by on Sunday afternoon. She came here and she traveled to (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(2)High to speak to the Task Force. She came here to RC East and spoke to us. And I think at that time we were not aware of the - we knew she was killed but at that time, we thought we was killed by enemy suicide belt or vest or grenade at that time. I remember she came and spoke to all of use and gave us her thanks.

Major General Votel: Thanks, (b)(3), (b)(6) That's really helpful there and is very consistent with what I've heard so I appreciate that. And then pending anything else you have, I think we're complete here.

WIT: No. Sorry to cause a little confusion there with my recall of the timing of the thing.

Major General Votel: Thanks. I appreciate it and I note the time here is 1028 Zulu and we are concluded once again. Thank you.

[The witness exited the room.]