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UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER
7115 SOUTH BOUNDARY BOULEVARD
MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 33621-5101

24 September 2008 9

TO: LIEUTENANT GENERAL RICHARD F. NATONSKI, U.S. MARINE CORPS

Subj: Re-investigation into the combat action at Wanat Village, Wygal District, Nuristan Province, Afghanistan on 13 July 2008

Ref: (a) JAGINST 5800.7E (JAGMAN)

(b) AR 15-6 Investigation, IO Col (b)(3), (b)(6) Hotel approved 19 August 2008

(c) Combat Studies Institute, draft dated 3 June 2009

(d) Department of the Army Inspector General DOD Hotline Completion Report, dated 13 April 2009 and associated IG material

1. This appoints you, per Chapter II of reference (a), to inquire into the facts and circumstances of the subject combat action. Before conducting your investigation, review references (b-d). Individuals listed below are also appointed to this investigation in their listed capacities.

a. Major General Michael L. Oats, U.S. Army, is appointed as your deputy investigating officer.

b. Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) U.S. Marine Corps, is appointed as your legal advisor. You will consult with LtCol (b)(3), prior to collecting any additional evidence or information with respect to this investigation. (b)(3)

2. Investigate the circumstances surrounding the combat action in Wanat Village on 13 July 2008 and report any fault, negligence, or responsibility therefore. You will make findings of fact and opinions regarding the accountability of commanders and staff at the Battalion, Brigade and Combined Joint Task Force 101 levels for the planning and operations associated with the emplacement and support of the platoon at Wanat. You will determine whether any deficiencies found may be characterized as dereliction of duty. You will also fully address matters relating to the sufficiency of actions relating to intelligence, operations, logistics, and command and control. You will also make recommendations for corrective action, including administrative or disciplinary action, if appropriate. In addition to the forgoing broad mandate, you will also expressly and separately address, but are not limited to, the following specific matters:

a. The facts and circumstances regarding the site selection for the combat outpost at Wanat and the timing of the emplacement of the platoon at Wanat given the Brigade Relief in Place/Transfer of Authority operation that was underway during July 2008.

b. Whether Soldiers emplaced at Wanat were properly resourced with adequate levels of water, fuel, construction equipment, supplies, and provided adequate engineer support.

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- c. Whether adequate resupply actions (including aviation assets) were taken upon identification any of shortages of water, fuel, construction equipment, and supplies.
- d. Whether multisource intelligence reports regarding repeated threat indicators of a major impending attack on the combat outpost being constructed at Wanat were properly acknowledged, analyzed and disseminated.
- e. Whether continuous and adequate ISR assets were prioritized and utilized to provide command and control oversight, and early warning capability, for the platoon at Wanat.
- f. Whether adequate risk management was conducted during the planning and execution of the Wanat mission, including the initial risk assessment, modification of the risk assessment once the commencement of the mission was delayed, and in light of significant intervening combat actions in the immediate area of operations and intelligence regarding the enemy threat.
- g. Whether adequate risk mitigation was conducted when indicators, threats, and ISR capabilities changed after the emplacement of the platoon at Wanat.
- h. Identify the facts and circumstances regarding the decision to withdraw from the combat outpost at Wanat on 15 July 2008.
- i. Identify the facts and circumstances after the battle regarding the characterization of the emplacement of the platoon at Wanat as a "vehicle patrol base" vice a "combat outpost" made: by the Brigade AR 15-6 investigation of the battle at Wanat; during a briefing concerning the AR 15-6 investigation given by the Brigade leadership to the family of 1LT Jonathon Brostrom; and, by the Brigade commander during a telephone interview as reported in the Stars and Stripes newspaper on July 20, 2008.
- j. Reconcile these characterizations of the emplacement of the platoon as a "vehicle patrol base" with the planning documentation which describes the emplacement as a "combat outpost."

The intent of this reinvestigation is not to revisit the tactical combat action except as required to address the assigned investigation parameters outlined in this letter and reference (b).

3. All witness statements will be recorded and, whenever possible, be reduced to writing and sworn. If it is not possible to obtain a written and/or sworn statement from a particular witness, you will swear to the accuracy of any transcription or summary of such witness testimony in whatever form it appears within your investigative report. When a person is requested to supply personal information in a statement, the individual shall complete a Privacy Act statement in accordance with section 0207.e. of reference (a).

4. If you suspect a U.S. service member of committing an offense, you must advise them of their rights under Article 31(b), UCMJ, using a Rights Warning/Waiver Certificate. If you suspect an officer senior to you of having committed a crime, immediately notify your legal

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counsel. Ensure that all personal information is obtained from official DoD records when possible.

5. The completed investigation will include classified and unclassified summaries. Ensure proper classification marking for each paragraph page, and exhibit included in your report of investigation. You must exercise discretion when enclosing graphic photographs (e.g., autopsy photos) to the investigative report and you shall familiarize yourself with section 0232 of reference (a).

6. This investigation is your priority and you will have the complete support of USCENTCOM directorates and subordinate commands for administrative support, security, movement, coordination, and any other assistance you require to include any subsequent classification review and/or declassification effort as may be required. You may seek legal advice from your appointed legal adviser and the USCENTCOM SJA or DSJA during the course of the investigation.

7. You will forward your final, completed report of investigation, through the USCENTCOM Staff Judge Advocate for Commander, USCENTCOM no later than 1 November 2009. I or the Deputy Commander or Chief of Staff, USCENTCOM, may grant extensions of time. All requests for an extension will be in writing and specifically detail the reason(s) why additional time is needed to complete this investigation.


DAVID H. PETRAEUS
General, U.S. Army

Copy to:
DoD IG
CJCS
CSA
CMC
CDR, USFOR-A

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7 October 2008⁹

TO: MAJOR GENERAL DAVE PERKINS, U.S. ARMY

Subj: Re-investigation into the combat action at Wanat Village, Wygal District, Nuristan Province, Afghanistan on 13 July 2008

Refs: (a) CDR, USCENTCOM memo, Subj: *Re-investigation into the combat action at Wanat Village, Wygal District, Nuristan Province, Afghanistan on 13 July 2008*, dated 24 Sept 2009

(b) CDR, USCENTCOM memo, Subj: *Re-investigation into the combat action at Wanat Village, Wygal District, Nuristan Province, Afghanistan on 13 July 2008*, dated 7 Oct 2009

1. You are hereby appointed, per the enclosed references, to serve as LtGen Richard Natonski's deputy investigating officer with respect to the combat action that occurred at Wanat Village on 13 July 2008.

2. LtGen Natonski and his investigative team are already traveling to interview witnesses at various locations. He can be contacted via e-mail at < richard.natonski@usmc.mil > or through his aide, Major (b)(3), (b)(6) Zeta at (b)(2)High or <(b)(2)High >.

3. The USCENTCOM Office of the Staff Judge Advocate (CCJA) is available to provide you with whatever background material or other support you need to prepare for your duty as deputy investigating officer. Principle point of contact is LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) at DSN (b)(2)High or (b)(2)High or at <(b)(2)High > or <(b)(2)High >. My Staff Judge Advocate, Col (b)(3), (b)(6) is also available at the same telephone numbers and via e-mail at <(b)(2)High Sapphire > or <(b)(2)High >. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) Sigma has been directly appointed as the Army legal advisor supporting you and the investigative team. He can currently be contacted at <(b)(2)High >.

DAVID H. PETRAEUS
General, U.S. Army

Copy to:
LtGen Natonski
DoD IG
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