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The interview of T[REDACTED] (S[REDACTED] (b)(1), (b)(1.4), (b)(1.4a), (b)(1.4c)) (ASPS, J2CHOPS, & DEPUTY J2 CHOPS) opened at 2230 Zulu, 16 August 2011.

PERSONS PRESENT

INTELLIGENCE ADVISOR

SME-INTEL

COURT REPORTER

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Derived from:

[REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6)

Declassified on: 7 September 2036

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SME-INTEL: I'm [REDACTED (b)(3), (b)(6)]. I'm the member of the team assembled to investigate the circumstances related to the crash of the CH47. My role is as the intelligence SME. The [team is here to investigate the] circumstances surrounding the crash of the CH47 Helicopter in Wardak Province, Afghanistan on 6 August 2001.

Brigadier General Jeffrey Colt is the investigating officer in this case, and was appointed by General Mattis, Commander U.S. CENTCOM, McDill Air Force Base, Florida. His findings and recommendations as to appropriate action will be included in the report to General Mattis in accordance with AR 15-6.

Before we began the interview, the individuals to be interviewed have signed a privacy act statement. The bottom line is this is a fact finding investigation and any information you provide [the investigation team] plus your names will be included in this report.

Now, I need all of you to stand, and I'm going to confirm an oath. Please raise your right hand.

The witnesses did as directed and was duly sworn.

SME-INTEL: Let's go around and introduce yourself, state your duty position and [the scope of] your duties and responsibilities within the Task Force.

ASPS: I'll start. My name is [REDACTED (b)(6)]. I'm a civilian assigned here within 3-10 J2, in the All Source Production Section, ASPS. The role of the ASPS analyst is to serve as a conduit between the strike forces and the headquarters here [at Bagram, Afghanistan]. And then additionally, to serve as the intelligence support to the [TE (b)(1), 4a, (b)(1)]^{4c} headquarters itself.

My role in your average objective that comes in is just contacting the strike force, acquiring information on the target site, things like that, provide those to the [TE (b)(1), 4a, (b)(1)]^{4c} J2 Chops for inclusion in the target brief to research background on the target himself, and

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provide that information in a brief to the [TF(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)]^{4c} command and staff in the CONOP [concept of operations] brief.

J2 CHOPS: I'm [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6) [TF(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)]^{4c} J2 CHOPS, Chief of Operations. I essentially run the operations during the night for the J2 including CONOPs. And specifically for roles what we do is, we provide -- build about two to three slides doing a really quick and aggregate level, macro level view of threats to both surface-to-air [SAFIRES] and ground to ground [threats] for the CONOP to try to give an assessment to the commander.

We include all the different facets of intel support from an analytical piece, the ASPS [all source production section] piece that Devon just mentioned to the in-brief support and [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)]^{4c} support, and try to provide a picture to the boss [TF(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)]^{4c} Commander / J3 / J2], and give the extents of where the mission is going, what we expect the threat will be and a bigger picture. And then we present that during the CONOP brief. And then once those are done, we actually monitor the execution of the operations and working time sensitive missions to understand the target.

DEP J2 CH My name is [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6) I'm the [TF(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)]^{4c} deputy J2 CHOPS [chief of operations] or DCHOPS. So I'm [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6) deputy. I'm also an intel analyst and provide intel analysis for the CONOPs [concept of operations] every evening as well as just workload overflow for the chief operations.

SME-INTEL: Okay. What I want to start off with for the overview for scope is first look at the targeted individual Objective LEFTY GROVE. And also, too, if you can kind of give us some background and data related to the network that works within the Tangi Valley.

ASPS: The background to start with on LEFTY GROVE begins with Mullah Din Mohammad [referenced as Objective DUNLAP by TF(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)]^{4c} who, until approximately two months ago, [objective Dunlap was killed during TF(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)]^{4c} execution

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of objective [REDACTED] on 5 June 2011] was the overall Taliban commander in Tangi Valley. The network within the Tangi Valley is kind of a sub-district structure that, largely, is self-contained [geographically oriented network]. Whereas, most locations in Afghanistan there's a district or larger structure, Tangi Valley primarily for geographic reasons is largely itself contained. So there's not as much interaction inside and outside the valley.

So Mullah Din Mohammad, Objective DUNLAP, was the Taliban commander until -- I don't have the exact date in front of me. But I believe it was, you know, July 15 plus or minus [the actual date was 05 June 2011]. He was killed on Objective [REDACTED] if I remember correctly.

At that time, there came a little bit of a struggle among other senior Taliban commanders in the Tangi Valley to become that preeminent leader.

It is the Task Force's [TF [REDACTED] assessment that Objective LEFTY GROVE is the most likely person to fill that role. Reporting does show some disagreement. Different sources do indicate different individuals, Alahwee Mohammed is another name that comes up in a couple reports. But our assessment is LEFTY GROVE is the most likely person.

So he's not just another Taliban commander. There are, you know, 15 or 20 Taliban commanders that, you know, genuinely deserve the title "commander" versus sub-commander, facilitator et cetera. Within that geographical area [reference Tangi Valley network], he is likely to be among those.

Under him, some of the more prominent objectives, [REDACTED], is very well-known. He's RC East's [REDACTED] number two priority right now in terms of targeting just to give an idea of his stature. He's involved in a very prominent threat against Kabul and multi-end reporting

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within the last month. He's just an example of some of the high profile commanders that we see as subordinate to [Objective] LEFTY GROVE, just to once again, you know, kind of frame his stature.

In terms of derog against [Objective] LEFTY GROVE himself, with the exception of the organizational attributes in terms of who he answers to, which we believe that he answers directly to (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(7)d (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(7)d Taliban Shadow Governor for Sayed Abad District, Wardak Province, Afghanistan] , Objective (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c based on what we're [T] (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c seeing. But he was the overall shadow governor for Sayyidabad District.

But other than the organizational aspects, he [Objective LEFTY GROVE] looks very similar to any other Taliban commander in terms of the actual attacks that he's involved in, things like that in terms of, his subordinates are conducting IED attacks, rocket attacks, etc. And so I guess that's my overall take.

SME-INTEL: [Question regarding the Taliban's use of the Tangi Valley to facilitate] Attacks against Kabul, so the Tangi Valley Taliban, how have they been involved or what's the connection to attacks in Kabul?

ASPS: So as a general rule, I would say that Tangi Valley is largely itself contained in terms of its threat. By which, I mean, Tangi Valley is not seen as a staging area for attacks on Kabul, generally speaking. It's much more focused on US Forces, coalition forces when they go into [or conduct operations in] Tangi Valley, they are attacked. And so it's very inhospitable terrain. The Taliban try to generally keep us [coalition forces] out of that area.

There are a few notable exceptions to that, and (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(7)d being the preeminent one. (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(7)d

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(7)d

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So the challenge there is, you know, we have to go into this, you know, inhospitable terrain to get after him. So -- and there's one or two other examples, you know. Every couple months, you will see a report where some kind of threat originates in Tangi, and has an effect in Kabul. The (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(7)d threat that I have been mentioning, by the way, has not yet come to fruition. There was lot of reports of him staging suicide bombers, staging, you know, VBIEDs etc. But the attack has not yet occurred.

SME-INTEL: Has there ever been an attack associated -- on Kabul or outside of Tangi Valley associated with the threat network --

ASPS: There has. I would have to go back and do some reading to come up with the specific examples. But I can remember reading one threat that came out of Maiden Shahr [village located in Wardak Province, Maiden Shahr District] on to Kabul proper [the city of Kabul] that was predominantly conducted by Tangi Valley insurgents. But I would have to go back and find the name and time of that.

SME-INTEL: Okay. But no preeminent --

ASPS: In my opinion, it's a very rare thing. I mean, from what I've seen, most of the threat emulating from Tangi is threat in the Tangi immediate vicinity.

SME-INTEL: But not associated with the attacks on the airport a couple years ago? Not associated with the attacks on the hotel?

ASPS: No. All of the main attacks in Kabul that we are all familiar with, the preeminent Kabul threats are coming from elsewhere.

SME-INTEL: Okay.

ASPS: And I think this (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(7)d threat stream was abnormal, although not unique. It's not a normal thing.

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SME-INTEL: Can you scope it for me regarding the tough [analytical] question: So why Tangi Valley?

ASPS: So in my opinion, the reason is a lack of willingness to seed the battle space. Obviously, this is way above my pay grade. But this is an area that connects Wardak and Logar, the two provinces that are in the opinion of RC East - strategic terrain. So Wardak and Logar are preeminent staging areas for attacks, you know, at the provincial level, specifically, like Maiden Shahr and Logar and Sayyidabad and Wardak.

But the Tangi Valley is the connection between these two areas, and the piece that allows the insurgents to move freely. And so my guess is that it's recognizing how bad of a safe haven it could easily become because of the area surrounding it in terms of the threat and things like that, it could very easily become a staging area, training camps could form et cetera. We haven't seen that yet, but coalition forces only moved out of COP ~~(b)(1)14a, (b)(1)14c~~ what, two or four months ago. I believe it was April 18 [2011] was the date -- April 9th [2011].

So it has only been a couple months that there hasn't been a significant coalition presence in the middle of the Tangi valley. So the fact that we haven't seen it [indications the Taliban are using the Tangi Valley to facilitate operations/attacks in Kabul] yet doesn't -- I mean, it has all the markings of a promising safe haven in the future.

So I think going into Tangi Valley on a regular basis -- the Task Force going into Tangi Valley on a regular basis is the only thing that could prevent that from happening [pressuring the network within the Tangi Valley]. Otherwise, we won't recognize that it has happened until we are already seeing it.

J2 CHOPS: Some of it could be just trying to trip the network, cut out different echelons of the network. If Objective LEFTY GROVE took over for Objective DUNLAP,

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then he would actually be a (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c level target to say, Hey, cut off the head of the snake, and let them run around and figure out who the next guy is, and we keep pounding the [Tangi Valley] network.

The reward is pretty high in the sense of, hey, we can try to keep this network guessing. And [are then] less effective than a stronger command and control network with an experienced guy like Objective DUNLAP. And then Objective LEFTY GROVE would take out some of these bigger dudes [higher level Taliban commanders]. They [Taliban senior leadership] then sit there and try to move guys who aren't experienced up, or it's [the network is not as effective] not as effective --

ASPS: And from the perspective of network targeting, you want to hit when the iron is hot. The Task Force [TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c] has had significant effect on the Tangi Valley network and the surrounding area. So removing Objective DUNLAP on Objective (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(7)d, and then removing Objective LENGEN on Objective (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(7)d (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(7)d, both of those within the last, two or three months the, I would say that's two of the top ten insurgents in the Tangi Valley area have been removed. [Objective DUNLAP being the first and] Objective LENGEN being the second [Taliban senior commander killed in the Tangi Valley].

SME-INTEL: Objective (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(7)d that's when Objective DUNLAP (Din Muhammad) was killed?

ASPS: Yeah, and that's --

SME-INTEL: What was the date of that; do you remember?

ASPS: I would have to check. It was roughly late June or July. [the date of Objective DUNLAP death was 05 June 2011]

SME-INTEL: Was the operation executed the same day the CONOP was briefed?

DEP J2 CHOPS: (b)(1)1.4(a), (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(7)d was 6 June 2011?

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ASPS: Do you have the date for [redacted]?

SME-INTEL: 5 August 2011.

ASPS: Okay. So on 5 August 2011, Objective LENGEN who was Sheen Abdul Rahman was killed on that objective.

SME-INTEL: He was killed?

ASPS: On Objective [redacted], Objective LENGEN was EKIA.

SME-INTEL: What about Objective [redacted] - [need to listen to recording for reference]

ASPS: No. Objective [redacted] --

SME-INTEL: -- was still out so there from the network --

ASPS: -- there is --

SME-INTEL: -- Objective LEFTY GROVE is still --

ASPS: So there is a [redacted] report that [collaborates] Objective [redacted] is dead.

SME-INTEL: So he [Objective [redacted]] and Objective LEFTY GROVE are stil

ASPS: Right. And then Objective LEFTY GROVE has been a priority for Task Force in recent days. But weather has really impeded [redacted] ability to action Objective LEFTY GROVE] on recent days. When he was targetable, the weather did not present us with the opportunity. But he is being closely watched as a priority [target by TE [redacted]]

But so as I was saying, the turn in the network resulting from Objective DUNLAP and Objective LENGEN deaths both really presents an opportunity to continue to hit at this [Tangi Valley] network. Because being as self-contained [as the Taliban Tangi Valley network is] as I mentioned earlier, you know, there's probably 10

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senior leaders total. And so removing two of them, you know, if you had the opportunity to remove another, you can do significant damage [to the enemy network] with a minimal number of actual strikes.

SME-INTEL: Okay. Let's, kind of, off the network now, great roll-up by the way. Thank you. It really, kind of, clears up [the relative importance of the Tangi Valley network] which helps me understand why ~~TF (b)(1), (b)(1.4)~~ was targeting Din Muhammad [Objective LEFTY GROVE]. And then I think it was 30 June 2011 or so when Objective LEFTY GROVE was put on the target deck [~~TF (b)(1), (b)(1.4)~~ Joint Targeting List - Afghanistan] [The actual date was 19 June 2011 which was confirmed by the ~~TF (b)(1), (b)(1.4)~~ J2].

So the next piece to get into is the reported SIGACT (significance activities) [within the Tangi Valley]. What have we seen [in the Tangi Valley] what is the threat capability within the Tangi Valley with respect to size and key targets? What weapons systems do they [Taliban] employ in the region? What are their TTPs (tactics, techniques and procedures)? And what are their objectives?

J2 CHOPS: Well, one thing to caveat from this echelon -- a lot of those specific stuff [analytical analysis] [sic] is conducted analyzed down lower [reference to Task Force J2 who has regional responsibility for the network analysis].

SME-INTEL: Okay.

J2 CHOPS: We don't have the luxury, unfortunately, of getting to that level of detail here. For us, what we are trying to do is when the warning order is given, to say we're going to go after this objective and this area. We usually have about an hour to try to do some quick macro level 10,000-foot level analysis of the objective as best we can from what we have.

The guys who are at the lower echelon supporting the teams going in, dive deeper into the threat of [specifically] tactics, like, How are they shooting these RPGs? Are they shooting them against where they

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think the aircraft to be [landing to insert the ground assault force]? Are they using any sort of visual aide -- I mean, night aide? You know, that kind of stuff we don't see here. We don't necessarily go into the TTP (tactics techniques and procedures) side [of the threat] here [at the TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c Headquarters].

What we do is we do aggregate pulls [of reporting] and the Deputy CJ2 Chops was working the mission that night. But we do big picture pulls from [reporting] databases, and we pull what was the [reported] activities level in this area at this time for [a specified] period of time. [approx. 6-12 months based on the availability of reporting]

So for like a typical CONOP brief, we will look at the surface-to-air fire threat for any kind of rotary-wing or fixed-wing aircraft in that area of interest. We look back typically by (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c days to show the type of enemy activities-- and it's really a pattern analysis kind of deal as well as threat. We have seen in this valley, we have seen significant activity or moderate [level of threat---low, moderate or high] and so on, this is where we saw it reported in this specific area.

Because at the end of the day, what we are doing is trying to give to the commander a quick and dirty assessment of what we think the overall threat is in

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

But again, he - (b)(3), (b)(6) [Reference to (b)(3), (b)(6)], (b)(3), (b)(6) Intelligence Analyst], he is up here at the higher echelon. Most of the lower level stuff like a squadron level guy who is sitting with his aircrew going, okay, you are flying into this valley, this is where we've seen them, this are their tactics, this how they do it, and this is where you need to be careful. That level is done down at the squadron level [by the squadron level intelligence analyst]. Up here [at TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c Headquarters], we won't get that.

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Okay. So we do (b)(1), (b)(4) pull SAFIRE (Surface to Air Fires), means the databases that track all the MISREPS (Mission Reports) which is mission reports that the aircraft gives out to brief their teams. And then we do a quick and dirty look at the ground threat picture and the ground situation.

We analyze what kind of SIGACTs (Significant Activities) they have had on the ground, and we do one year for that (b)(1), (b)(4) days for SAFIRE; one area for SIGACTs. It's, again, it's more patterns, like, we look at a SIGACTs report, and what we really look at is when is the date of it to show, you know, time, spacial, we look at what the activity was, whether it was small arms fire, machine gun, or RPGs (Rocket Propelled Grenades). And then we look at whether there were any casualties reported, or any significance from that specific incident.

And it was mounted patrol that took some small arms fires sporadic, okay. So we note all the reports, and then we present it to the commander and say -- sir, in this area, it's a fairly active area [for the enemy that operates in the region].

We provide give that kind of analysis. We don't really dive deeper into it because we don't have the time unfortunately. Our site picture is way far back. So a lot of the times if there are questions on what are the TTPs [tactics, techniques and procedures], and so on, we can go and research that, or get the lower echelon task force to give us that answer. We don't typically have that up here unfortunately.

SME-INTEL: When you get that data, can you kind of talk through what decisions are made with that data --

J2 CHOPS: Yeah.

SME-INTEL: -- or is it just informative?

J2 CHOPS: Essentially, when the warning order is given to us

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it's completely ops driven. So is the CONOP brief. The warning order itself says "We want to go after this guy

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

They submit it, and then we go to work and just provide three slides. Essentially, we are telling the boss a quad, which is his lane in a sense of 'this is what we know about the guy, this is why we want to target him, this is the network he is connected to.' And again, that's essentially it. It just sets on the network if we can capture or kill this guy.

And then there's usually three slides after that. Two to three slides depending on the fidelity. That surface-to-air fire (SAFIRE) threat for however they are getting in there -- and the package there will walk you through it. It's in the CONOP as well. You will see it when you guys get the CONOP. You will see what we put in there.

So surface-to-air fire threat is where the location is, and what we know for threats to the aircraft.

The problem is up to the point of EXTORTION, we didn't have the routes ever delivered to us. We would have to, pretty much, look at a direct line shot from the base to the location. Look in the terrain, and say, Okay, they are typically are going to fly up here and do this.

Tangi Valley is a little bit different because it is so restricted. There's one way in and one way -- actually, there's two ways in, two ways out, north or south.

SME-INTEL: But you don't necessarily do the threat along the ground, you --

J2 CHOPS: We look at (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(4)1.4c day pull of what has been observed in the last (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c days along that route.

SME-INTEL: Okay. So you --

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J2 CHOPS: We look at what the route is probable -- we are never given the route. So we kind of anticipate what the route is going to be. So in the case of this one, what we would do is we would say, Okay, they are going to launch Team ~~(b)(1), (1.4a), (b)(1), (1.4c)~~ and they're going to go up to the objective, how would they get there? Well, they can come through the valley up; that's basically what we do.

SME-INTEL: Okay. But you don't receive the Falconview overlay from the aviation or ground planners?

J2 CHOPS: Negative. We just started getting that the last two weeks. One of the outcomes of this was, hey, we have been asking for it, but we never received it. Now, we are getting them.

SME-INTEL: Okay.

ASPS: Just to clarify a question on that because I don't know myself. But, so, are the routes briefed by the Aviation or Ground Assault Force LNO -- the anticipated route, or is that also a guess-timate by the CJ2 Chops? --

J2 CHOPS: Up to this point, with the LNO -- there was a slide that had a rudimentary route that says we will be flying from here to here, and these are the times we are getting there. So I'll clear them. There's no intel analysis on that route down by the ~~TF~~ ~~(b)(1), (1.4a), (b)(1), (1.4c)~~ J2 CHOPS. That's done at lower echelon.

So, again, it's that intel guy in the flying squadron who will look at the entire picture, and present that to their crews and their J2 and J3 at the task force level to say this is the overall threat. For us, we are just informing the boss out of what we think they are doing and where they're going.

So it's [the analysis] very macro level. And it's -- most of the time it's us putting the two points together and figuring out how they're going to fly in there. And since this time, we have worked with the

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J3 to get a new process where we are now going to try and get the routes. But again, it's going to be a big picture analysis. It's not going to be micro. So that's the second slide.

The third slide is the disposition of the [enemy] ground forces in a sense of -- not where blue [friendly] force are, but [so can determine] where the enemy [activities] on the ground that we have observed [or were reported]. The only -- unfortunately, there's nowhere to track enemy order of battle with the insurgency. So I can't look at, you know, where we're looking at battalion, company, whatever sized forces [in order to template locations].

For these guys [enemy forces], what we look at -- all we have is to look at what activities happened in the past [reported significant activities], which would show us, hey, there's a lot of direct fire in one of the pocket lines that -- and we will dial into that, and realize that there was no DA (Direct Action) team or a BSO (Battlespace Owner) that was doing sweeps in that village for two weeks straight. Oh, they are going to get shot because people are going to shoot at them -- targets of opportunity (TOO). So that kind of stuff we do.

SME-INTEL: So when you do the assessment you are looking at things there threats to the force at the macro level?

J2 CHOPS: Big picture.

SME-INTEL: You kind of understand, too, that the lack of reporting doesn't indicate a lack of threat?

J2 CHOPS: Check. When we brief it, we usually say "observed." So like for SAFIRE analysis, we say, 'We've only observed these SAFIRE in the last 30 days.' It doesn't mean there's not people; there's not threats. The guy with the rifle can be anywhere in this valley. The guy with the RPG (rocket propelled grenade) can be anywhere in this valley. But what we've observed in the last 30 days is the same analysis conducted with respect to

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the ground picture. [We assess] This is the activity we've seen in this valley in the last year.

What we are showing is basically - it's small arms, RPG (rocket propelled grenades) attacks against BSOs (battlespace owners), activities in the area. That's like a basic one [event]. Like, 'Hey, we saw an RPG attack against a mounted patrol on this date, at this time.'

SME-INTEL: So understanding the presence of threat and what it is?

J2 CHOPS: Yes. And how I explain it to people is we are trying to depict big picture [macro level view] if we can see any specific patterns [trends] or, provide intelligence that in that specific compound, there was two SAFIRE events in the last year in that village. I think they might need to know that.

The commander might need to know that, so when he's weighing the risk in his head versus rewards on what the objective is, he can make the right decision. But the real granularity is down lower echelon where they have to sit there -- that two or three at the Task Force has to say, based on what I'm seeing, I'm not comfortable with the objective area or concept of operation, but I'm comfortable with this objective or concept of operation in an area.

In a case with this one, and LT (Deputy J2 Chops) will walk you through his analysis here, but we don't have any visibility regarding the employment of the Initial Response Force (IRF) or Quick Response Force (QRF). In a sense of, when we look at that CONOP and say, essentially, this is where we are going to fly from, this is where we are going to go. And we try to figure out how they are going to do it, and they say by the way a QRF will be stationed to support extra forces. That's all we know.

So in this operation, you know, they came up the valley; the IRF came down the valley. So we wouldn't have known

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that. So we don't -- and again, it's not our lane to do the analysis of where QRF (quick reaction force) is going because we just don't know. We don't have that visibility here.

SME-INTEL: Lets transition into the objective. Can you just give us a little bit of an overview of what was going on, and what you saw on the ground itself in the objective area regarding Objective LEFTY GROVE?

DEP J2 CHOPS: Okay. What I just handed you, sir, was the brief that I built, the intel portion of the CONOP (concept of operation) that I built for this one. And, again, the first slide is just the one day roll up of the air threat in the area. So we just go back ~~(b)(1), (b)(4), (b)(7)(D)~~ ~~(b)(1), (b)(4), (b)(7)(D)~~ days and see what we have observed just directly. So again, as the J2 CHOPS (J2 Current Operations) mentioned, it's almost all inductive reasoning, and we expect more of the same.

It's not very predictive. Our best tool for predictive analysis is from IIRs (Intelligence Information Reports) from the ~~(b)(1), (b)(4), (b)(7)(D)~~ ~~(b)(1), (b)(4), (b)(7)(D)~~ reports. And [inaudible] as reliable as IIR (Intelligence Information Reports) are these reports have the least credibility we tend to give them a lower level of value. Like, we will look into them if it's something significant like a MANPAD (Man Portable Air Defense System) report or something like that, working with JSOAC (Joint Special Operations Aviation Command). But a lot of times, that information isn't very credible.

So we will just show the commander the snapshot of what we've seen, and the implication is that we expect more of the same in the area of the objective. So, again, the J2 CHOPS provides that level of pattern analysis.

The primary intelligence picture on the ground was reported prior to the closure of Combat Outpost (COP) [in April 2011]. So all this shows you is that there's a lot of shooting going on over the last year. You don't know the current situation because of how spread out the span of time, over the last four months due to

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the lack of forces reporting in the area. The analysis depicts a year worth of shooting [reported activity]. You don't know how many guns this is, how many gunmen are in and around this area. We just know there's lots of shooting going on.

So when we step back afterwards and took a look at it, we saw mostly insurgent groups of two or three reported. There are a couple estimates of higher numbers like five to eight or ten to twelve, but mostly smaller groups of insurgents operating in the area. So, again, this analysis is pretty limited in regard to [space and time]. It just shows you that how the Tangi Valley has taken lot of fire from ridgelines and stuff like that based on the reporting.

SME-INTEL: What's your assessment of the threat capability? What does the threat possess [in reference to the Taliban operating in the Tangi Valley]?

DEP J2 CHOPS: The majority of the threat -- at least threat to operations is that your question? --

SME-INTEL: Yes. Well, just in general -- just in general picture of the threat activity from coalition forces going into the objective area night. What would they most likely have available based on your assessment?

DEP J2 CHOPS: We understood this was a high-risk area, sir. (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c [ASPS Analyst] made it clearly earlier this was a Taliban stronghold. We had been here before successfully in the recent past, but the task force is very capable in being able to mitigate the risks related to past engagements. --

ASPS: If I can jump in briefly on that. In line with this being a high risk area, Tangi Valley is somewhere that we go predominately at the low illumination cycle, and that ended up playing a role in the operational decisions that followed. But going in there intentionally at lowest illumination so as to provide us the best operational advantage.

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So just so you know, one example of the things that had been done to kind of account for that threat relative to a lot of other places that are operated in by the task force [TF (b)(1)(4a), (b)(1)(4)c] --

SME-INTEL: So that is a process -- is to use illumination cycles to assess operational risk to mitigate risk to force in high threat areas during operational planning?

DEP J2 CHOPS: I visited Team (b)(1)(4a), (b)(1)(4)c like, 10 days before this objective, and they specifically mentioned to me, 'Next low illum we're going into Tangi Valley.' This is, you know, part of their planning process to kind of rack and stack the least hospitable terrain, and prioritize that against the illumination cycle, that's the way to mitigate the threat's capabilities. --

SME-INTEL: It's part of the risk mitigation process?

ASPS: Right.

SME-INTEL: Okay. Anything else?

J2 CHOPS: That's about it, sir. Just to emphasize it, the team's [Task Force level] intelligence analysis is much more thorough than when we [J2 Chops] provide through our macro analysis. Their area of responsibility (AOR) is just that one region. So they know that area much better than we do. They have looked over it. They've assessed the risk and accepted them. And they just pass up the area to us, and we do a very -- like the J2 CHOP said, a 10,000 foot picture of what we are looking at, so the commander can get eyes on it so he has visibility of the operational picture.

ASPS: As is appropriate at this level of the chain of command. You wouldn't want an O-6 making decisions, you know, should the strike force move left or right. That, you know -- that's, of course, made at lower echelons.

SME-INTEL: But bottom line though, it's a process that's in place in order to provide oversight to make sure targets are vetted up through the chain of command; and, the

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second one is analysis that the threat estimate is correct. And there's a process to allow you to about some of the risk mitigation that occurs -at the T F (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c level.

J2 CHOPS: When you have to guess on it. Like, the best way to put it is the customer for us is the commander. We are working to give him information, not the strike force assessments, but the one the team (J2 Chops) provides to the T F (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c commander.

SME-INTEL: What's your balance of (????---what was the question?) --

J2 CHOPS: What we do is we pull up where they're going -- like we pull up (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c), that the [Task Force] has targeted. He calls down there for us and says, 'Hey, guys how did you get here today?' And then we try to build story, and story to the boss [T F (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c Cdr]. The (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

geo-locate it to a specific compound. We believe he is there, and this is why. We, kind of, tell that story to the commander. And then we provide a quick and dirty [macro level] snapshot of, 'Hey, this is what we think the overall threat is.'

So we can give him [T F (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c Cdr] knowledge to look at the entire picture and say this is approved or not approved.

SME-INTEL: Okay.

J2 CHOPS: Unfortunately, you have where there is a gap in information, we don't know what the strike force is thinking; that's why we call them direct everyday and say, 'Hey, is there anything we need to know?' And they tell us, and we share a little bit of information between us.

ASPS: I think it's also worth noting, the decision making is very decentralized, and it's the nature of operations.

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And, you know, once again, getting way out of my lane. But, you know, the Colonel just has to trust that the subordinate Task Forces have taken into account, you know, all of these other factors.

And, you know, he is looking at the macro level, so he gets, you know, two minutes on intel, and he gets, you know, ten seconds on information operations (IO), [etc. from the ~~TF (14a, 67) 1, 2~~ staff]. You know, and all these other factors, and goes through and puts it together knowing that the strike force and subordinate Task Force have already looked at both of these things in greater [detail] issue.

J2 CHOPS: That's the way it has to be. The goal is to make sure that the commander has enough data to decide whether a CH47 is going to be safe on infil, you know, the subordinate Task Force is in their teams. They are going to be doing that analysis. He's doing a much broader picture of the mission as a whole, and how it affects a broader range of issues [strategic level] not just at tactical level.

ASPS: I guess, another piece or two which you may have already covered elsewhere, and I'll leave it up to you whether we go into detail on it. So the target in most cases is already vetted before we get to the stage that we've just discussed, and that's through the joint targeting board process. So as you mentioned, this was an established target that had previously been approved.

So through briefing the target quad slide, and standing up there and saying, here's who the target is, here's the derogatory information on them [the target], you know, here's what we access to be the effective removing them [the target]; that's having the target already have been briefed to the 2 and many cases, the 3 at the joint target inboard. And they've looked at it, and they said, 'This target is appropriate.'

And so a lot of those, kind of, checks that you would expect to see don't occur during the briefing in the CONOP (concept of operations) because they have already

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approved previously. And the reason is briefing CONOPs is a high-op tempo situation in many cases. You know, you have multiple CONOPs briefed back to back each night.

And so whenever possible, you would like have established well in advance that, you know, we have already reviewed this target quad slide, and we believe that Objective LEFTY GROVE is, you know, that the juice is worth the squeeze. You know, that kind of decision-making has already occurred.

J2 CHOPS: The current commander who was there, and then all the previous commanders, they care about, like, three different things: One, is it a valid target. (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c
(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c) proves it's a valid target. So when we brief the quad slide, it's essentially saying this is approved and vetted target.

The second thing he wants to know is - what was the trigger? In other words, why are we going after him tonight? And it's our job --

ASPS: To determine, Why do we believe [or assess] he [the target individual] was there?

J2 CHOPS:

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

So those -- it's a valid target, what's the trigger for

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going in there on the objective. And then the third is the big picture of, 'Hey, is this is hot area, a normal area, and what do I need to be concerned about?'. And then real quickly, 'Tell me what I need to be concerned about most' [within the objective area].

So those three things are what we try to do in four slides or three slides depending on the threat. And, again, it's a pulled back [macro level analysis], and the rest is trusting your commanders. They are going to put their lives of their men on the line for something that is worth [based on their assessment of] the risk versus the reward.

We did do that pull you asked. I did a pull of SIGACTS (Significant Activities) for 360 days -- 365, 180, and then the 90-day pulls. As you can tell [for the last 90 days], there's nothing [reported], and that's because battle space owner withdrew, we think, around 8 April [2011].

That's for you. You said you wanted them. [J2 Chops provide the Investigation Team Intel SME a copy of their assessment plus a summary of the area over the last 30-60-90-180-365...included as exhibits]

SME-INTEL: Yes, please. And if you could send them to me by email as well.

We can get that put into the folders. We will identify it's from you, and that it was received and what it was. And this will build a picture for us for the summary.

Thanks guys. I appreciate you taking the time to do this and describe what's going on.

Plus, also, for the overview, too, it will help us build the threat picture in those areas [the Tangi Valley region] for the investigation.

[post interview discussion]

The investigation closed at 2307 Zulu, 16 August 2011.

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