

The interview of [JSOAD-J2] (b)(3), (b)(6), JSOAD J2, was opened on 16 August 2011, at 2152 hours Zulu.

**PERSONS PRESENT**

INVESTIGATING OFFICER: Brigadier General J. Colt, USA

INVESTIGATING OFFICER: SME-INTEL, USA

WITNESS: JSOAD-J2, USAF

COURT REPORTER: CR2, USMC

**SME-INTEL:** I'm [SME-INTEL] (b)(3), (b)(6). I'm a member of a team assembled to investigate the surrounding of the crash of CH47 in the Wardak Province, Afghanistan, on 6 August 2011.

BG Jeffrey Colt here is the investigating officer in the case, and was appointed by General James M. Mattis, Commander to U.S. CENTCOM. His findings and recommendations as to the appropriate action will be included in the report to General James Mattis in accordance AR 15-6.

Before we begin the interview, can you please review the privacy statement. The bottom line is this is not a criminal investigation. But the information that you provide including your name will be included in the report. I just want to ensure that you understand those circumstances itself.

*The witness perused the document.*

**SME-INTEL:** Okay. To give you a background on this, this is not a criminal investigation. What we are tasked to do is gather the facts and information, understand the processes behind how things work within the task force itself, and also, to understanding the intelligence overall of the objective area and give any assessments of how we [inaudible] to the target to prosecute the objective to constitute what was the threat, actions in the AO prior to looking back at approximately six months back.

Before we begin, I need you to stand and raise your right hand.

*The witness did as directed and was duly sworn.*

**SME-INTEL:** For the record, state your name and rank and duty position.

**JSOAD-J2:** I'm [JSOAD-J2] [REDACTED (b)(3), (b)(6)]. I'm with Task Force (b)(1), (b)(4), (b)(1) SOAC J2. And I got here the first week of May 2011.

**SME-INTEL:** [ JSOAD-J2] [REDACTED (b)(3), (b)(6)], what about your experiences within JSOAD.

**JSOAD-J2:** I have been with JSOAD for the last five years. I got here back in 2004.

**SME-INTEL:** How many rotations have you had in Afghanistan?

**JSOAD-J2:** Afghanistan, two. Iraq, three.

**SME-INTEL:** Okay. Let's start with the discussions right now. Let's start with the target itself, and describing the air threat in and around the target approximately the day of the execution, plus about two weeks prior to give us a good window of up to 30 days [prior to the execution of Objective LEFTY GROVE]. And then we will go backwards to give the assessment of the Tangi Valley area.

**JSOAD-J2:** The Tangi Valley was initially assessed as a moderate to high threat based on the location of the target in the valley you were operating. We had reason to believe that the enemy within the valley itself -- the bottom line, sir, is there wasn't a lot of good intel coming out of the valley. In the last 90 days, there wasn't a lot of SIGACTs

because, I would say, due to lack of BSO [battlespace owner] presence within the valley.

That being said, we had not conducted a lot of operations in the area. The operations that we did conduct in the area, we did note enemy activity. And from what I recall from the other sapphire incidents within the valley, most of those were targets of opportunity, pot shots from the BSO aircraft transiting in the area, from what I read.

**SME-INTEL:** What do does targets for engagements, what did they consist of? Feel free to use your notes. Everybody else is using slides too.

**JSOAD-J2:** Basically, what we have seen within the last 90 days is three incidents within the valley itself. And then a fourth incident approximately four miles to the west of the valley within the last 90 days.

Of those incidents, two of them were combined attacks, both RPGs and small arms engagements. One of them was a hit with a small arms, that was a full-back sapphire; that happened back on 20 July.

**SME-INTEL:** What type of aircraft is that?

**JSOAD-J2:** That was an MH47.

**SME-INTEL:** When you say it was a complex attack, can you define that for me. What constitutes a complex attack?

**JSOAD-J2:** What we define, sir, as a complex attack is engagements from multiple points of origin usually using coordinated fire. Not just multiple points of origin all engaging at the same time, but complex in nature. Meaning, that they will engage with small arms or heavy machine guns, and then try to distract in some way, and then engage with a more lethal weapon.

**SME-INTEL:** These four incidents that you had overall, these were all specifically what types of incidents? Ground or air? They were all air related?

**JSOAD-J2:** Yes, sir. All those were all air related.

**SME-INTEL:** Okay. What was the mix of weapon systems used by the threat?

**JSOAD-J2:** It was RPG [Rocket Propelled Grenade], and what was believed to be 7.62mm.

**SME-INTEL:** So that was the last 30 days. What about going back further?

**JSOAD-J2:** That was actually the last 90 days, sir. Last 30 days would be the full-back sapphire on 20 July.

**SME-INTEL:** Okay.

**JSOAD-J2:** So a single incident while they were in transit in the last 30 days.

**SME-INTEL:** Do you recall -- when was the time that the coalition forces moved out?

**JSOAD-J2:** I want to say it was -- it would have been around April timeframe, sir -- I believe.

**SME-INTEL:** Prior to April, what was your assessment of the threat in the April timeframe, prior to the coalition forces moving out?

**JSOAD-J2:** Not a lot of air operations in there, sir. But, you know, based off of what we saw through SIGACTs, again, we derived capability out of ground SIGACTs. So anything from RPGs to heavy machine guns to IDFs [Indirect Fire]. It was about a 70/30, almost a 60/40 split between small arms engagements, direct fire incidents, and RPG direct fire incidents on the ground.

**SME-INTEL:** So when you say "60/40, 70/30," the higher number being small arms?

**JSOAD-J2:** Small arms, yes, sir.

**SME-INTEL:** Okay. Tracking ground SIGACTs, what about also too -- so you are talking about caches as well? Any significant finds?

**JSOAD-J2:** I don't believe so, sir. Not that I recall.

**SME-INTEL:** Okay. [JSOAD-J2] ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~, what I need you to go through is the process for reporting SAFIRE [Surface-to-Air Fire], and how you categorize them through the whole system up and distribute them back out. Can you walk us through that process. You can get into definitions that you use to describe the SAFIRE incidents.

**JSOAD-J2:** Yes, sir. The majority of the conventional sapphires we received through the CAOC [Combined Air Operations Center] ISR Division [Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Division]. They are the clearing house for the theater's sapphire distribution. So everybody, basically, reports to the CAOC. And then the CAOC puts together story boards, and distributes those out amongst the theater.

What we will do is we will take that information. We will input it into a consolidated database that we house here that builds reports for us, and just to maintain, basically, a consolidated database for all task force aviation assets.

**SME-INTEL:** So CAOC maintains a database --

**JSOAD-J2:** They maintain their own database. It's called the MAT, or the MISREP [Mission Report] Analysis Tool; that's how they keep all of the MISREP from all of the units. And then they will build a story board, and push that basically back out.

We will take that information, put it all together every single day. And then we'll distribute that out to all of our subordinate assets as well.

**SME-INTEL:** Is that your database then?

**JSOAD-J2:** Yes, sir.

**SME-INTEL:** And when that database is pushed out, who does it go to?

**JSOAD-J2:** It goes to everybody -- all task force units and

(b)(1)1.4a

units that we have supporting us.

**SME-INTEL:** Okay. How is it filtered down to the 10th CAB?

**JSOAD-J2:** We send it to their S-2. And from there, sir, I don't know.

**SME-INTEL:** So you send it out --

**JSOAD-J2:** Email.

**SME-INTEL:** -- to the rest of the task?

**BG Colt:** Is that a daily?

**JSOAD-J2:** Yes, sir.

**SME-INTEL:** On the SAFIARE reporting, one of the units within the task force reports to SAFIRE. Who has responsibility for putting it together?

**JSOAD-J2:** That would be me. So the units themselves -- if a sapphire then happens on a task force asset, the units will produce a MISREP, to

which I will take that. We actually request that the information be as much as possible. And then I will sanitize it, and then push it out, so there's no task force specific call signs or anything of that nature in the MISREP. And then I will push that to the KAOC, and they will distribute it out as well. And then I will input it into our database. And then it will get sent out in our daily email.

**SME-INTEL:** So they just provide the MISREP. No story board comes up from them?

**JSOAD-J2:** No. Sometimes they do story boards. It depends on how significant the sapphires are.

**SME-INTEL:** What about perspective or de-confliction conflict between the story boards themselves? Who resolves that?

**JSOAD-J2:** Generally, there's no real heart burn between story boards. Once the conventional unit presents their story board, it's taken at face value unless it's a - what I would consider a signature event, i.e., like a rocket attack or an engagement something of that nature. And then we will look into that a little bit deeper.

**SME-INTEL:** Okay. What about classification such as a significant or close event? What are the definitions?

**JSOAD-J2:** Those are all standardized by the CAOC, and it's close, it's distant and hit. Anything that's observed that's outside a half

nautical mile, depending on the weapons system, is considered a "sighting." And that's tracked on a different database.

**SME-INTEL:** Okay. What about levels of responsibilities for assessments of RC East -- or actually all of Afghanistan? How do you process that? And what's the frequency?

**JSOAD-J2:** As far as overall assessment, we provide as much data, and allow the lower echelon units to develop their assessments.

We'll put together, like, a 30-day roll-up, and just basically provide those facts out. Locally, I will talk with the JSOAC (Joint Special Operation Aviation Command) commander, and the other S2s (Intelligence) in the area. And we will talk about certain areas, Hey, what do you see that's high, you know, Are your guys tracking this. So on and so forth.

So there's some cross talk between all of the 2s, and make sure we are seeing the same thing, so our assessments are completely opposite once they go up.

**SME-INTEL:** Are you in on the process when it comes down to prosecuting an objective? Are you in on that process, too itself?

**JSOAD-J2:** No, sir. The only involvement that I have is I will usually monitor objectives. And I'll monitor the (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c that comes out via our collection assets. And then I will provide that out to anybody that's monitoring our aviation intel room, and that's both ground and air guys

both monitor those. And then I will define how it's going to effect -- if it is going to effect -- the target area or the route.

**SME-INTEL:** How is that distributed out to --

**JSOAD-J2:** That's all real time, sir, so it's via (b) (1), (b) (7) (C) and phone calls.

**SME-INTEL:** Okay. Sir, do you have any specific questions?

**SME-INTEL:** Any traffic since you've been here about night vision proliferation?

**JSOAD-J2:** Not proliferation, sir. We've picked up, I think, one or two sets off of some of the coalition. I believe the Brits picked one up here about a month ago.

Currently, we assess that, yes, insurgents do have it. They are not widely distributed. And they are usually kept with some of your higher level guys. It's more of a status symbol than actually sending it down to the lower echelon shooters.

The ones that we do feel that are out there will be used more as a spotting role than to aid in any type of weapons systems.

**SME-INTEL:** Any specific unusual variance, RPGs being fired around here?

**JSOAD-J2:** None that are noted, sir.

**SME-INTEL:** [JSOAD-J2] (b)(3), (b)(6) VISOPS, (Visibility Observation Post) kind of, describe VISOPS, aircraft reporting, just to get your thoughts on them.

**JSOAD-J2:** Generally, it's depending on location. You take an area such as RC Southwest, which has a lot of (b)(1), (1.4a), (b)(1), (c) chatter; that seems to be their main source of information.

We see pretty good networks in -- along the Helmand River Valley. We see good VISOPS up in Konar. And based off the traffic that we've received over the last couple of months, they don't talk in between the Tangi Valley to the, you know, through Sayed Abad west to the Chark Valley. So that encompasses everything from Baraki Barak, Logar Province, all the way to Chark Valley --

**BG Colt:** Can you point that out on the map.

*The witness did as directed.*

**JSOAD-J2:** There's a river bed just basically comes -- just west of FOB (b)(1), (1.4a), (b)(1), (1.4d) is Baraki Barak. And there's a river valley that comes all the way across this boundary -- actually, across Highway 1, and up into the eastern part of Wardak. The Eastern part of Wardak is where the Chark Valley is.

There is active insurgent comms and VISOPS reporting in - once we are operating in those areas. But nothing outside of that, you know, unlike RC Southwest where they are talking all the time.

But areas such as those, they are generally pretty good. They will have two or three VISOPS out there along the ridge lines reporting that they see aircraft, and that could go for a couple miles. So it just depends on where we are flying is really the basis of the assessment, sir.

**SME-INTEL:** Okay. One other question, probably the last one:

Thoughts on (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c We have had this discussion just kind of --

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

**SME-INTEL:**

**JSOAD-J2:**

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

**BG Colt:** (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

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

**JSOAD-J2:**

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

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

I agree with that. Okay.

**SME-INTEL:** Sir, that's all I have.

**BG Colt:** I appreciate your time. Thanks. If we have a follow up, we will come back.

*The inquiry closed at 2214 Zulu, 16 August 2011.*