DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES COMMAND
4700 KNOX STREET
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Reply to
Attention of

AFDC 19 August 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, US Central Command, 7115 South Boundary Boulevard, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida 33621

SUBJECT: Army Regulation (AR) 15-6 Investigation of the 14-15 September 2012 Attack on the Camp Bastion, Leatherneck, and Shorabak (BLS) Complex, Helmand Province, Afghanistan

1. ~~(U//FOUO)~~ **Task, Purpose, and Method of Investigation.** Pursuant to AR 15-6, General Lloyd J. Austin III, Commander, US Central Command (USCENTCOM), appointed us (Encl 1) to investigate the circumstances surrounding the attack on Camps Bastion, Leatherneck, and Shorabak, collectively referred to as the BLS Complex, in Afghanistan, that occurred on 14-15 September 2012, and report any fault, negligence, or failure of responsibility. During the investigation, we reviewed the prior US and UK inquiries and documentary evidence regarding the incident; gathered additional documentary evidence; and interviewed nearly 40 leaders at various levels of US command, including USCENTCOM, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), ISAF Joint Command (IJC), Headquarters, Regional Command-South West (RC[SW]), and subordinate units within RC(SW). We also conducted written interviews with four key leaders in the UK chain of command, interviewed two key leaders in the 215th Afghan National Army (ANA) Corps, and travelled to the BLS Complex in Afghanistan to assess the area in person.

2. ~~(U//FOUO)~~ **Scope of Investigation.** The scope of the investigation was to determine the accountability of US commanders and staff at all levels for the planning and execution of force protection in relation to the attack. The scope of the investigation did not include a directive to confirm or deny the previously reported details of the attack itself, or the actions of the US and coalition forces who responded to the attack. Five primary investigations, inquiries, or reviews document the events and timeline of the actual attack (Ex 1, 12, 38-40). Similarly, other reviews have focused on evaluating the adequacy of force protection measures implemented subsequent to the 14-15 September 2012 attack, so this investigation did not address that topic. Finally, the scope of the investigation did not include a directive to assess any potential responsibility of other coalition forces. As directed, this investigation only focused on US accountability. For that reason, the statements of the UK personnel were requested for context only, and are not included as part of the investigation. However, coalition forces were responsible for protection of the Camp Bastion side of the BLS Complex, so we were required to assess the acts or omissions of US commanders and staff in light of coalition security measures in existence at the time. The previous reviews of the attack, in chronological order, are as follows:

Classified By: (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)
Derived From: Multiple Sources
Declassify On: 19 August 2023

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a. (U) **UK Review:** UK Operational Learning Account and After Action Review, signed by (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) th Royal Air Force (RAF), Force Protection Wing (5 FP Wing), and (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) 5 FP Wing, dated 16 September 2012 (Ex 39).

b. (U) **Joint Combat Assessment Team (JCAT) Review:** JCAT AV-8B II+, Probable F-1 Grenade, 18 September 2012 (Ex 40).

c. (U) **RC(SW) Initial Review:** The Joint Review Board Initial Report of Administrative Inquiry of the 14-15 September 2012 Insurgent Attack on Camp Bastion, signed by MajGen Charles M. "Mark" Gurganus on 24 September 2012 (Ex 1-9).

d. (U) **ISAF Review:** Administrative Enquiry into 14/15 SEP 2012 Insurgent Attack on Camp Bastion, signed by Lt Gen Adrian Bradshaw, Deputy Commander (DCOM) ISAF, on 27 September 2012 (Ex 38).

e. (U) **RC(SW) Supplemental Review:** Supplemental Review of the 14-15 September 2012 Insurgent Attack at Camp Bastion Focusing on the Response to the Joint Staff Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (JSIVA), approved by MajGen Gurganus on 21 November 2012 (Ex 10-37).

3. (U) **Layout of Findings and Report of Investigation:** Background information and our findings and recommendations follow. An Executive Summary is available at Enclosure 3, followed by an Exhibit List at Enclosure 4, a Timeline at Enclosure 5, and a chart depicting relevant organizations and personnel at Enclosure 6.

4. ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Background Facts and Context.** At approximately 2200L on 14 September 2012, 15 heavily-armed Taliban insurgents dressed in US Army uniforms breached the eastern perimeter of the BLS Complex undetected, split into three teams of five men each, and commenced a coordinated attack on the Camp Bastion airfield. US and coalition personnel present on the airfield responded immediately, and the US and UK Quick Reaction Forces (QRF) made contact with the enemy within 16 minutes, beginning an engagement lasting into the early hours of 15 September 2012 (Ex 1, 3, 12). The resulting friendly casualties and damage included two US personnel killed in action (KIA), eight US personnel wounded in action (WIA), eight UK personnel WIA, one civilian contractor WIA, six AV-8B Harriers destroyed, two AV-8B Harriers severely damaged, one C-12 damaged, three MV-22B minor damaged, one C-130E severely damaged, one UK SKASaC (Sea King) minor damaged, two UK Jackal vehicles significantly damaged, three fuel bladders destroyed, five sun shades destroyed, one sun shade with structural and fire damage, three sun shades with fabric damage, extensive concrete damage, and damage to the VMA-211 hangar/maintenance facility (Ex 6). The QRFs, supported by US and UK personnel and helicopters, killed 14 of the Taliban attackers and wounded the remaining attacker, who was detained. Only heroic action by US and UK forces on the scene prevented greater loss of life and equipment (Ex 1, 3, 12).

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a. (U) **Enemy Situation Before and During the Attack.**

(1) (U) **US Intelligence.**

(a) ~~(S//REL TO USA, FVEY)~~ **Lack of Indications and Warnings for Attack on BLS Complex.** The US intelligence community did not issue explicit indications and warnings of an imminent attack on the BLS Complex (Ex 1, 12, 45, 51). Post-attack intelligence reporting and interrogation of the detainee provided clearer information regarding the enemy situation. The information provided by the detainee about the attack is largely corroborated by post-attack intelligence reporting and facts that the detainee could not have otherwise known. (b))(1)1.4c, (b))(1)1.4d

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

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

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

(b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4d The Taliban made a conscious effort to synchronize media efforts with the attack, further emphasizing the deliberate planning and strategic objective of the attack on the BLS Complex. Indeed, the success of the attack emboldened the Taliban and encouraged Taliban leaders to announce more high profile operations of this kind should be emulated (Ex 80-82).

(2) (U) **RC(SW) Intelligence.**

(a) ~~(S//REL TO USA, FVEY)~~ **Taliban Inside Surveillance on BLS.** Prior to the attack of 14-15 September 2012, RC(SW) assessed the Taliban had significant intelligence available from inside sources on the BLS Complex. The surviving detainee corroborated during his interrogation that the Taliban attack planners had information from inside the BLS Complex (Ex 80-82).

(b) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Dismounted Attack on BLS Unexpected.** The TFBW Anti-Terrorism Plan in existence at the time of the attack stated, "The possibility exists that a determined terrorist force may be successful in breaching the security perimeter of the Base and executing an attack" (Ex 21). However, RC(SW) and TFBW assessed the

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primary threats against the BLS Complex to be a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) attack against an ECP, an insider threat attack, and indirect fire (IDF). Due to the BLS Complex's geographic isolation, the lack of explicit intelligence indications and warnings, and the absence of past direct attacks against the BLS Complex, the vast majority of leaders interviewed as part of this investigation did not expect a dismounted attack of the nature encountered on 14-15 September 2012 (Ex 41, 43, 46-54, 57-63, 65-66).

(3) (U) **Intelligence Gathered from Surviving Attacker.**

(a) ~~(S//REL TO USA, FVEY)~~ **Recruitment.** The detainee's Taliban commander recruited him for a "big, important mission" approximately four months before the 14-15 September 2012 attack. He stated that planning for the attack began in 2011, and was scheduled to occur in July 2012. However, the premature detonation of one of their improvised explosive devices (IED) killed several of the fighters during the final staging for their attack. The Taliban then postponed the attack until September so they could recruit and train a new assault force. The detainee stated the propaganda video released after the 14-15 September 2012 attack, which depicted planning and training for an attack on Camp Bastion, had been a recording of the first group of attackers before the foiled July 2012 attempt. The propaganda video had, therefore, been made well in advance of the attack, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4d (Ex 80, 81).

(b) ~~(S//REL TO USA, FVEY)~~ **Training**. Approximately 17 days before the Camp Bastion attack, the detainee attended training at a compound (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4d The training consisted of weapons training, physical training, communications, individual movement techniques, and chain link fence breaching, among other things. The detainee stated that he did not know the other attackers until he arrived at the training compound. He knew that the other fighters came from Afghanistan or Pakistan, but only a few of the attackers knew each other. A few days before their departure, an unknown individual responsible for briefing the attackers went to Helmand and returned the next day with a sketch map of Camp Bastion, which he used to brief the group on their approach route and perimeter breach point. He inaccurately advised that the tower to the north of the perimeter breach point would be unmanned. This was the first time that the detainee learned of the specific target of the attack. On 13 September 2012, the attackers moved in civilian clothing across the border into Afghanistan in groups of two and met in Kandahar City. They were then transported by a truck to a safe house approximately an hour away from the BLS Complex in the Shah Pushta region of Washer District, Helmand Province (Ex 80, 81).

(c) ~~(S//REL TO USA, FVEY)~~ **Pre-assault Preparation**. The attackers arrived at the safe house in Shah Pushta at approximately 1630 on 13 September 2012, and the weapons, ammunition, clothing, and radios arrived shortly thereafter. The same truck then transported the attackers to the drop off point east of the BLS Complex. The detainee explained it was pitch black outside when they were dropped off. RC(SW) assessed the attackers staged from one of the small villages, which had sprung up close to the eastern perimeter of the BLS

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Complex, most likely Naw-abad, but the detainee did not offer or corroborate this information (Ex 51, 54, 80-82).

(d) (~~S//REL TO USA, FVEY~~) **Breach**. The detainee estimated it took the group 90 minutes to two hours to approach the base, breach the perimeter, and commence the attack. He explained they initially followed a small wadi from the east and then low crawled the last distance to a position behind a pile of sand short of the fence line. After cutting the fence with wire cutters, the attackers moved through the fence, and crossed the boundary road one at a time until forming a defensive perimeter on the west side of the road (Ex 81). Tower 16, which is approximately 150m southwest of the breach point, was unmanned based upon the tower manning rotation set by the UK commander responsible for force protection on Camp Bastion (Ex 1, 2, 12, 46, 47, 48). Tower 17 is approximately 250m northwest of the breach point, and it was manned by personnel from the Tonga Defense Services. Tower 15, also manned by personnel from the Tonga Defense Services, is approximately 400m southwest of the breach point, but Tower 15 did not have direct line of sight to the breach point due to undulating terrain masking the vantage point. It is 650m between Towers 15 and 17, with small wadis and undulating terrain in between (Ex 1, 2, 46, 47, 93). The attackers had been informed Tower 17 would be unmanned, but the detainee reported Tower 17 trained a light towards the attackers once they were inside the perimeter. However, the attackers were able to move into a small wadi, and Tower 17 did not react further (Ex 81). An aerial view of the tower arrangement and photos of the breach point are depicted below.

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(e) ~~(S)~~ **Assault.** Once inside the perimeter, the attackers then split into three groups. The detainee informed interrogators that the first group's objective was to destroy the jets and hangars; the second group's objective was to destroy the helicopters and what they thought were tents near the helicopters; and the third group, led by the detainee, planned to kill inhabitants in tents located across the airfield (Ex 1, 4, 40, 81). The Joint Review Board's "Initial Report of Administrative Inquiry of the 14-15 September 2012 Insurgent Attack on Camp Bastion" provides the details of the attack (Ex 1, 3). The detainee provided one detail, which is inconsistent with the prior reports. Some of the attackers were found with spray paint cans and cigarette lighters, which the detainee indicated were to be used as mini blow torches to set tents on fire. Lighters were recovered during the Sensitive Site Exploitation (SSE) after the attack, corroborating the detainee's version of events (Ex 1, 81, 83). A more important discrepancy noted in the Joint Combat Assessment Team (JCAT) report regarding the destroyed AV-8B Harriers was their assessment that F-1 anti-personnel grenades destroyed the six aircraft as opposed to rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) as was widely reported after the attack. The JCAT based their assessment on the concrete cratering underneath the aircraft, fragmentation patterns on the aircraft coupled with computer modeling of the F-1 fragmentation pattern, and multiple F-1 grenades found on the enemy bodies closest to the aircraft. The JCAT assessment indicates the attackers were able to get very close to the aircraft undetected in order to accurately place or roll the grenades underneath the aircraft (Ex 1, 40).

b. (U) **Friendly Situation Before and During the Attack.**

(1) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **RC(SW).** On 14 September 2012, RC(SW) was one of six regional commands operating in Combined Joint Operations Area-Afghanistan (CJOA-A) as part of ISAF. The RC(SW) staff was primarily composed of the staff from I Marine Expeditionary Force (FWD) [I MEF (FWD)] deployed out of Camp Pendleton, California. Coalition partners rounded out the staff, primarily from the UK. The Commanding Officer (CO) of RC(SW) was MajGen Mark Gurganus, and the Deputy Commanding Officer (DCO) was Brigadier Stuart Skeates from the British Army. MajGen Gurganus began forming his staff at Camp Pendleton in August 2011 for the upcoming deployment, including UK officers who would serve as staff primaries and deputies. MajGen Gurganus's staff worked closely with the RC(SW) staff in theater, and MajGen Gurganus's staff had access to in-theater operations and intelligence reporting. MajGen Gurganus assumed command of RC(SW) on 12 March 2012 from MajGen John Toolan (Ex 21, 41).

(2) (U//~~FOUO~~) **RC(SW) Mission, Area of Operations (AO), and Composition.** The RC(SW) mission was to conduct counterinsurgency operations focused on protecting the Afghan people, developing the Afghan National Security Forces capabilities, and supporting the improved governance and economic development in conjunction with the Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Inherent in this mission was the requirement to protect the force. The RC(SW) AO covered the Helmand and Nimruz provinces of Afghanistan. The major units assigned to RC(SW) included Task Force Leatherneck, commanded by MajGen Dave Berger (made up primarily

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of 1st Marine Division (FWD) and a Georgian Battalion); Task Force Helmand, commanded by Brigadier Doug Chalmers (made up primarily of the UK 12th Mechanized Brigade along with Danish and Estonian Armed Forces); the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (FWD), commanded by MajGen Gregg Sturdevant; and the 1st Marine Logistics Group (FWD), commanded by BrigGen John Broadmeadow. RC(SW) was partnered with the 215th ANA Corps, commanded by Maj Gen Sayed Malouk. The RC(SW) Headquarters was located on Camp Leatherneck, part of the BLS Complex. The complex was originally only Camp Bastion supporting UK forces in RC South, but it had seen rapid and expansive growth of Camps Leatherneck and Camp Shorabak before and after the creation of RC(SW) in June 2010 (Ex 21, 41, 104).

(3) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **BLS Complex.** By 2012, the BLS Complex was the largest and most important coalition base in SW Afghanistan, hosting the RC(SW)

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

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g The "base" was actually a "complex" of camps accommodating personnel from US, UK, Afghan, and other coalition military units, as well as thousands of contractors (Ex 9, 93).

(4) ~~(S//REL TO USA, GBR)~~ **Drawdown and Mission Change.** At the time of the attack on Camp Bastion, RC(SW) was nearing the end of a reduction in its Force Management Level (FML) personnel manning authorization as part of ISAF's Phase II Surge Recovery. From March-September 2012, RC(SW) reduced its strength from 17,800 to 7,400 Marines (Ex 41, 46, 76, 109). The RC(SW) mission was also changing from counterinsurgency to security force assistance (SFA) with the ANA in the lead (Ex 76, 41). These changes occurred during the middle of the fighting season, during a period of increased insider attacks, and during a period of ANA growth which produced numerous adjustments in force posture across the regional commands (Ex 41, 76, 77). In that regard, there was constant dialogue between LTG James Terry, Commander, IJC, and the Regional Commanders, including MajGen Gurganus, regarding the execution of the plan and adjustment of force posture to reduce risk and protect the force. As LTG Terry put it, "there was a constant balance between projecting forces and protecting the force during this period with priority to protecting the force that each RC commander determined" (Ex 77). As commanders across Afghanistan adapted to achieve the mission with fewer forces, MajGen Gurganus requested an FML increase to augment his SECFOR. Although LTG Terry supported the request for an FML increase, it was disapproved by Gen John Allen, the commander of ISAF/USFOR-A (Ex 77, 109). This decision did not exempt MajGen Gurganus from his inherent responsibility to protect the force. At no point prior to the attack of 14-15 September 2012, did MajGen Gurganus alert LTG Terry that RC(SW) was at "mission failure" or could not accomplish its mission due to inadequate manning levels or lack of force protection resources (Ex 41, 77).

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(5) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **BLS Anti-Terrorism and Force Protection (AT/FP) Command and Control (C2).** MajGen Gurganus and RC(SW) inherited the BLS Complex AT/FP C2 arrangement, established by a January 2011 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between USCENTCOM and the UK Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), titled "The Command and Support Arrangements for UK/US Forces Based at Bastion/Leatherneck Combined Operating Base Afghanistan" (Ex 86). It is common during coalition operations to have agreements between multinational forces that address various facets of conducting combined operations. Joint Publication 3-10, *Joint Security Operations in Theater*, acknowledges that US Commanders in a multinational operating environment are required to coordinate with multinational and host nation forces in accordance with existing agreements (Ex 110). Similarly, UK Joint Doctrine Publication 3-64, *Joint Force Protection*, recognizes that Memorandums of Understanding need to be considered as part of the force protection planning process (Ex 111). The existing 2011 MOU was a subsequent version of an original 2009 MOU that first established the command relationships between US and UK forces at Camps Leatherneck and Bastion (Ex 104, 86). The BLS Complex originally consisted only of Camp Bastion. As US personnel arrived in increasing numbers and established Camp Leatherneck adjacent to Camp Bastion, the 2009 MOU was drafted to delineate the two camps. The 2011 MOU established that the separate camps would "run on national lines," and several personnel described the two camps as separate "sovereign" territory. Although the boundaries between Camps Leatherneck and Bastion were not clearly demarcated, there was definitely a sense that the US was completely in charge of Leatherneck, and the UK was completely in charge of Bastion (Ex 41, 44, 46, 47, 53). The 2011 MOU clearly established the separate camps in addition to the Bastion airfield, which was a UK-US shared airfield located on Camp Bastion and operated by the UK 903d Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW) as the Airfield Operating Authority (AOA). The 2011 MOU further specified that the US would protect Camp Leatherneck and conduct security operations in Area of Operation Belleau Wood (AOBW), which included the area surrounding the BLS Complex, as depicted in Exhibit 2. The MOU specified that the UK was responsible for protection of Camp Bastion, including the airfield, and for security patrols in AOBW. The MOU stated that US and UK force protection standards would be in accordance with national command element requirements, but it did not specify those standards. This arrangement effectively created two different camps with two different protection standards. The MOU also established that the different camps would conduct intelligence collection, analysis, and sharing according to national policies, but would establish a unified process to share intelligence. Lastly, the MOU did not discuss integration of Camp Shorabak, the ANA installation, into a comprehensive force protection plan for the entire BLS Complex. The end result of the CENTCOM-PJHQ MOU was what Lt Gen Bradshaw, the Deputy Commander ISAF, characterized as a "sub-optimal C2 solution" (Ex 38).

(6) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Camp Leatherneck and Camp Bastion Base Commanders.** The 2011 USCENTCOM-PJHQ MOU did not establish a single commander responsible for the BLS Complex, including overall force protection (Ex. 86, 41, 47). As the commander of RC(SW), MajGen Gurganus was ultimately responsible for force protection,

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but he delegated the day-to-day execution of security and force protection at the various bases in RC(SW) to the respective base commanders (Ex 41, 47). This is common practice across Afghanistan, and consistent with doctrine (Ex. 110). Therefore, even though the RC(SW) Headquarters was located on the BLS Complex at Camp Leatherneck, MajGen Gurganus was not the Camp Leatherneck base commander. Force protection responsibilities for the BLS Complex were shared between CO Task Force Belleau Wood (TFBW) [also the CO of I MEF Headquarters Group or MHG (FWD)] for Camp Leatherneck, CO Bastion Joint Operating Base (CO BSN) [also the CO of the UK 903d Expeditionary Air Wing] for Camp Bastion, and CO 215th ANA Corps for Camp Shorabak (Ex 86, 41, 46, 47). The TFBW CO was (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) until 15 June 2012, and then (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) at the time of the attack. The BSN CO was (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and the Commander of 215th ANA Corps was Maj Gen Sayed Malouk. The 3rd MAW(FWD) Headquarters was located on Camp Leatherneck, with subordinate squadrons located on the Camp Bastion airfield. Despite this geographic separation, MajGen Sturdevant retained his inherent responsibility as a commander to ensure the security and protection of his forces (Ex 118, 119).

(7) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Security Force (SECFOR) Structure.** CO TFBW on Camp Leatherneck and CO BSN on Camp Bastion each had a security force (SECFOR) to help protect the BLS Complex. At the time of the 14-15 September 2012 attack, the TFBW SECFOR consisted of 110 Marines from the 2/10 Marines, a 134-person element from the UK (relationship described below), a 105-person element from the Bahrain Special Security Force (BSSF), a 288-person element from the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF), approximately 50 ANA Soldiers for combined patrolling, and a 255-person contracted security force provided by the Personal Security Contractor (PSC) company called Triple Canopy (Ex 8, 47, 48, 62). Triple Canopy was a MARCENT contracted, USAFOR-A funded contract security force (Ex 46, 47, 76). The TFBW SECFOR Commander (CO TFBW SECFOR) was (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) also CO of 2/10 Marines, a Field Artillery battalion (Ex 48, 62). Specific responsibilities within the SECFOR elements, other than 2/10 Marines, are as follows (the 2/10 Marines will be discussed separately in paragraph 4.b.(8)):

(a) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **UK Element.** Patrols from the UK element, 51st Squadron, RAF Regiment were NATO TACOM to the CO TFBW SECFOR only when they patrolled outside of the perimeter. Otherwise, the UK 5 FP Wing had full operational control over 51st Squadron, RAF Regiment (Ex 8, 48, 62). CO TFBW SECFOR and CO 5 FP Wing (discussed below in paragraph 4.b.(9)) coordinated to create a weekly patrolling plan, which varied depending on the security goals and intelligence collection priorities that they individually established for that particular week. They individually created patrolling sectors within AOBW, although no established boundaries or separate areas of operation existed within AOBW for US and UK forces (Ex 2, 48, 62).

(b) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Bahraini Element.** The BSSF provided on-base security on Camp Leatherneck and at entry control points (ECPs) (Ex 48, 62).

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(c) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Jordanian Element.** The JAF provided on-base security on Camp Leatherneck and at ECPs, and the SECFOR employed combined US-JAF patrols in AOBW (Ex 48, 62) .

(d) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Afghan Element.** Although officially on the organization chart, the ANA Soldiers worked on Camp Shorabak, and the coordination with them for combined patrols was inconsistent. Combined US-ANA patrols in AOBW were still a work in progress at the time of the attack (Ex 48, 62).

(e) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Triple Canopy Element.** Triple Canopy arrived in May 2012 to supplement security at Camp Leatherneck and enable the drawdown of Marine forces. They provided security in the Camp Leatherneck guard towers and at ECPs (Ex 23, 47, 48, 62).

(8) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **2/10 Marines** (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(c) and 2/10 Marines provided the bulk of the patrolling force for the TFBW SECFOR. However, 2/10 Marines also had several other responsibilities, to include a field artillery mission for TF Leatherneck, manning the Combined Joint Operations Center (CJOC) (discussed below), manning ECPs on Camp Leatherneck, manning a QRF, manning Patrol Base Boldak, and manning the Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP) mission. As part of the planned drawdown, 2/10 Marines was reduced to 110 Marines by September 2012. Due to the list of required tasks and reduced personnel, 2/10 Marines could generate one squad per 24-hour period to conduct patrolling for TFBW, and this squad combined with their UK counterpart could, in turn, generate an average of 3-4 squad-sized mounted patrols in that same 24-hour period. At the time of the attack on 14-15 September 2012, there was only one patrol operating in AOBW – a squad from 2/10 Marines conducting surveillance on an assessed point of origin for rocket attacks, several kilometers south of the BLS Complex (Ex 48, 62).

(9) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **UK 5 FP Wing and Tonga Defence Services.** The primary counterpart to the TFBW SECFOR on the Camp Bastion side of the BLS Complex was the UK 5 FP Wing, who reported directly to CO BSN and who was comprised of members of: the Wing Headquarters, 51st Squadron, RAF Regiment (see above); 2622 (Highland) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force Regiment; the No 2 (Tactical) Police Squadron; the Tonga Defence Services; and elements of the 16th Regiment Royal Artillery. The 5 FP Wing provided counter-threat activity, airfield security, and air transport security for Camp Bastion (Ex 119).

(10) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **AT/FP Reporting Chain of Command.** Although CO TFBW and CO BSN shared responsibility for delivering FP measures and effects across AOBW, they reported to different commanders. TFBW reported to RC(SW). CO BSN reported to UK Joint Forces Support-Afghanistan (JFSpA). JFSpA did not have operational responsibilities, so it did not report to RC(SW). Rather, the chain of command from CO BSN to CO JFSpA to PJHQ was a purely national chain of command for support-

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related matters. JSFSpa was responsible for all UK forces in Afghanistan, and its headquarters was located at Camp Bastion (Ex 28 ,49).

(11) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **CJOC and OP CONGO.** Although unity of command did not exist for the overall FP effort on the BLS Complex, the US and UK had a CJOC, designed for CO TFBW and CO BSN, and particularly their SECFORs to enable unity of effort on force protection. Additionally, the CJOC was designed to coordinate the US/UK crisis action and consequence management plan for major incidents that occurred within the BLS Complex or AOBW. Pursuant to OP CONGO, the Supported and Supporting Commander for a crisis response would be determined based on where the crisis event occurred. CO TFBW would be the Supported Commander if the event occurred in AOBW or Camp Leatherneck, and CO BSN would be the Supported Commander if the event occurred on Camp Bastion (Ex 1, 7, 41, 44, 46-49, 53, 62).

(12) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Terrain Analysis.** The eastern edge of the Camp Bastion airfield contains a significant amount of undulating terrain, both within and outside of the perimeter fence. Whereas the terrain outside of the Camp Leatherneck perimeter and most of the BLS Complex consisted of flat desert that provided unhindered observation, the area outside of the breach point consisted of undulating terrain with hills and shallow wadis. The villages of Sheik-abad and Naw-abad are located to the east and southeast of the Camp Bastion eastern perimeter, respectively. Farmers in those towns increasingly grew poppy right up to the fence line, taking advantage of wastewater runoff from the BLS Complex. The main North-South ground Line of Communication (LOC), Highway 1, runs along a wadi approximately 1 km from the eastern perimeter. The perimeter line was composed of a single row of concertina wire, a ditch and berm obstacle designed to mitigate the threat from vehicle-borne attacks, and a 30-ft high boundary chain link fence (Ex 1, 46-48, 60, 62, 93).

(13) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Camp Bastion Guard Towers.** Twenty-four concrete guard towers protect Camp Bastion, and they are set at varying intervals along the Camp Bastion eastern perimeter at varying setback distances from the chain link fence, most within 50 meters but some ranging as far back as 250 meters from the fence. Eleven of the twenty-four guard towers (called "sangers" by UK personnel) on Camp Bastion were manned at the time of the attack. The UK 5 FP Wing did not employ a dedicated security force on the Camp Bastion perimeter. Instead, they relied upon a "camp tax" (tasking to provide guards) from various UK tenant units at the BLS Complex to augment the Tonga Defence Services in the perimeter guard towers (Ex 38). Of the eleven guard towers manned on 14-15 September 2012, five were manned by UK "camp tax," and six were manned by Tongan forces. Tower manning rotated in an attempt to avoid a pattern, and tower manning selection was also based on the external terrain and interlocking fields of fire and observation. Personnel in the Camp Bastion guard towers were equipped with rifles, semi-automatic weapons, hand-held spotlights, night vision devices, and communication equipment. It was also typical on Camp Leatherneck to man approximately 50% of the existing towers. At the time of the attack, there was no artificial lighting to illuminate the perimeter fence or the terrain outside of the

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perimeter. It was common practice on both Camps Leatherneck and Bastion to put (b)(1)1.4g (b)(1)1.4g (b)(1)1.4g (Ex 1, 2, 4, 46-48, 53, 59, 60, 62, 93).

(14) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Towers 15 and 17.** (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) the primary investigating officer in the Joint Review Board Initial Report of Administrative Inquiry, was able to interview one of the two tower guards on duty in Tower 17 at the time of the breach. The guard indicated he did not see the attackers come through the fence or move towards the airfield. As mentioned previously, it was 250 meters between the breach site and Tower 17, and there was just 2% illumination on the night of 14-15 September 2012. The AT/FP Officer for 3d MAW (FWD), (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) informed us that with the amount of ground and the type of terrain Tower 17 had to cover, it would have been difficult to observe an approaching attacker who was attempting to conceal his movement, even on a night with better illumination, and even if the guard was constantly scanning back and forth with a night vision device. The attackers' movement was partially obscured by the route through a shallow wadi, and if the guards would have oriented their observation primarily east (forward from the tower), the breach point, although definitely visible, would have been to the right side of their vantage point in an area of low ground. Tower 15, on the other hand, does not have direct line of sight to the ingress route or the breach point due to high ground in between (Ex 4, 39, 46, 60, 93).

(15) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Tongan Defence Services.** There is no evidence to suggest that the personnel from the Tonga Defence Services in Towers 15 or 17 were asleep at the time of the attack. The majority of individuals described the Tongan personnel as professional and hard working (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) CO TFBW SECFOR, watched the Tongan personnel conduct guard mount every morning, and he had no concerns about the Tongans' professionalism or capability to conduct guard duty. Findings on this subject are below in paragraph 5c(3)(b) (Ex 41, 46, 47, 48, 50, 53, 55, 59, 62).

(16) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **HRH Prince Henry of Wales (Captain Harry Wales).** This investigation found no evidence that Camp Bastion personnel reduced their security posture on the perimeter to provide enhanced internal security for Captain Wales, who was serving as a helicopter co-pilot on Camp Bastion at the time of the 14-15 September 2012 attack. It is highly unlikely the Taliban attacked Camp Bastion to target Captain Wales, as planning for this attack began as far back as 2011, and primarily focused on destroying or damaging aircraft and BLS Complex infrastructure (Ex 42, 46, 48, 60, 80, 81, 82).

(17) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Observation and Patrolling of Camp Bastion.** Other than the guard towers' surveillance of the fence line, surveillance for Camp Bastion on the night of the attack was limited to a Persistent Ground Surveillance System (PGSS or aerostat), monitored in the CJOC. Although the PGSS has scanning and zooming capability and could monitor the area between the breach and the airfield using infrared (IR), (b)(1)1.4g The

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CJOC used the PGSS to scan for threats over the entire 40 square miles of the BLS Complex and its exterior. The guard towers offered a field of view outwards toward the Camp Bastion perimeter, and to either side of the tower, so personnel in the towers could not effectively monitor the area behind them towards the airfield. Very few barriers and obstacles existed between the perimeter and the airfield, and the area behind the towers was not under persistent surveillance. In late July 2012, the 3d MAW (FWD) completed a project to secure vulnerable areas of the airfield and to channelize pedestrian traffic to ECPs by emplacing concertina wire, which the Taliban attackers breached with wire cutters on their way to the airfield. An airfield ditch and berm project had begun in early September 2012 to address the vehicle-borne threat against the airfield, but it did not present an obstacle to the dismounted attackers. Two UK mounted patrols checked the perimeter each 24-hour period to detect any breaches in the fence, and the UK randomly patrolled the roads in the area between the towers and airfield. The 3d MAW (FWD) utilized Marine MPs from the Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS) to patrol internally at the airfield, later augmented by MPs from Camp Leatherneck as the drawdown reduced MWSS capacity. Prior to the attack on 14-15 September 2012, violence against US interests across the Middle East forced ISAF to implement a "patrol minimize" posture, which limited US patrolling in populated areas. However, this had minimal impact on the TFBW SECFOR due to the lack of populated areas in the vicinity of the BLS Complex (Ex 1, 12, 41, 43, 46, 48, 51, 52, 53, 59, 60, 62).

(18) (~~S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO~~) **3d MAW (FWD) Security Posture.** While the 3d MAW (FWD) headquarters was located on Camp Leatherneck, the Squadrons of the 3d MAW (FWD), MALS-16, HMH-361, HMH-362, VMM-161, HMLA-469, and VMA-211, were located on the Camp Bastion airfield. 3d MAW (FWD) was a tenant unit on Camp Bastion, which Joint Publication 3-10 (JP 3-10), *Joint Security Operations in Theater*, describes as a unit that resides and operates on a base, but does not fall under the direct command of the base commander. On the night of the attack, the closest straight-line distance from the Camp Bastion perimeter fence breach point to the airfield was approximately 550m. VMA-211, the Harrier Squadron hit hardest by the attack, was on the northernmost portion of the airfield on the Lima Ramp. It was 750m from the breach point to the Lima Ramp. The other attackers were neutralized near the Juliet Ramp, which was 650m from the breach point. 3d MAW (FWD) did not have a defense plan or crisis management plan at the time of the attack, and they were similarly not integrated into the UK defensive plan for Camp Bastion or into the previously discussed OP CONGO crisis response plan. Yet, JP 3-10, which "provides the doctrinal basis for…US military involvement in multinational operations," instructs that, "Tenant unit commanders must actively participate in the preparation of base security and defense plans. They will normally be required to provide security of their own forces and high value assets, provide individuals to perform perimeter/gate security, and will often be assigned battle positions IAW base security plans." Two of the squadrons, HMLA-469 (Huey and Cobra helicopters) and VMM-161 (MV-22 Ospreys) had their own internal security plan. However, this local security was the exception. Instead, MajGen Sturdevant focused 3d MAW(FWD) on generating aircraft sorties in support of ground operations and assumed risk in the security and protection of his forces at the Camp Bastion airfield (Ex. 43, 57-60, 65, 93).

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c. (U) **Significant Events Shaping the Environment on the BLS Complex Before the Attack.**

(1) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **The 14 March 2012 Airfield Incursion ("Burning Man Incident.").** On 14 March 2012, two days after MajGen Gurganus took command of RC(SW), he, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and other members of the RC(SW) staff were waiting on the airfield for the arrival of Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta. At the same time, a disgruntled local national interpreter working for coalition forces commandeered a vehicle and drove onto the airfield. He narrowly missed MajGen Gurganus and his party before being pursued into a ditch. The individual set himself on fire and exited the vehicle, dying of his wounds that evening. RC(SW) assessed that the individual did not have intelligence regarding the Secretary of Defense's visit, the individual's acts were not part of an organized plot to target anyone in particular, and the timing of MajGen Gurganus' presence and the incoming Secretary of Defense was a coincidence (Ex. 12, 13, 14, 41, 43, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 54, 55).

(a) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Identification of the CENTCOM-PJHQ MOU.** MajGen Gurganus and his staff became acutely aware that no single commander was responsible for force protection on the BLS Complex after the 14 March 2012 airfield incursion, commonly referred to as the "burning man incident" (Ex 41, 47, 49). The CJOC directed a response to the incident, but it took longer than expected because both US and UK personnel in the CJOC were directing actions at the same time (Ex 49). MajGen Gurganus subsequently learned of the 2011 MOU between USCENTCOM and the UK PJHQ, which established command arrangements between US and UK personnel on Camps Leatherneck and Bastion as discussed in paragraph 4.b.(5). MajGen Gurganus identified that the MOU established a C2 structure which violated Marine Corps unity of command doctrine. MajGen Gurganus directed his (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) to correct the C2 problem after the 14 March 2012 airfield incursion. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) drafted a new MOU, which unified command by providing one commander for the base and for the security forces, but the BLS Executive Steering Group (ESG) did not agree to it (Ex 41, 49). The ESG was a combined US-UK board designed to integrate actions affecting both Camp Bastion and Camp Leatherneck. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) co-chaired the ESG along with the JFSpA Deputy Commander. Other US board members included representatives from the C3, C4, Engineers, C6, C8, and TFBW. The UK board members included their AT/FP Officer, an Airfield Operations officer, their logistics officer, and CO BSN. Following the ESG's decision, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) spoke to MajGen Gurganus and subsequently elevated the C2 issue to IJC and ISAF. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) stated his effort to clarify the C2 met with "friction" from the IJC and ISAF staffs, and stated neither were supportive of combining the two camps. According to (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) IJC and ISAF directed RC(SW) to work on a supported/supporting command relationship instead. RC(SW) complied and began to focus on strengthening unity of effort instead of creating unity of command, resulting in TFBW and CO BSN establishing OP CONGO and better integrating the CJOC into AT/FP. Personnel from both SECFORs staffed the CJOC,

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shared information, monitored the ISR feeds, synchronized the patrol plan, and rehearsed OP CONGO (Ex 7, 41, 46, 49, 62).

(b) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Identification of Airfield Vulnerability.** The 14 March airfield incursion also raised concerns about the security of the airfield and its assets, and access to critical areas within the airfield. The incident also demonstrated the need to improve airfield and perimeter security and to institute improved access control to the airfield operating areas (Ex 12). The airfield incursion involved vehicular access to the airfield, but a UK post-incident force protection survey identified the threat of both vehicular and pedestrian access (Ex 13, 14). The 3d MAW (FWD) and RC(SW) chains of command were aware of the threat of both vehicle and pedestrian access identified by the airfield incursion (Ex 1, 41, 43). Based on the assessed threat, the UK, in coordination with the 3d MAW (FWD) AT/FP Officer, submitted a project request for vehicular and pedestrian restrictions to the airfield, the highest amount of protection of the four courses of action (COAs) considered by the UK Works Group Royal Engineers. (b)(1)1.4g (b)(1)1.4g (b)(1)1.4g (Ex 14, 59). This recommended project went to the ESG, which was responsible for validating requirements for construction projects affecting both US and UK interests. The ESG denied the request based on cost and time to construct compared to the assessed threat (Ex 16, 49). The UK PJHQ also denied the request in a parallel approval process, relying on the same reasoning as the ESG (Ex 15). As an alternative, the ESG approved the anti-vehicular COA containing the ditch and berm project alone, which started on 1 September 2012 (Ex. 19). MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant were aware of the ESG and PJHQ decisions to deny the airfield fence project, but neither felt that the enemy threat warranted additional command action on their part (Ex 41, 43). The 3d MAW (FWD) AT/FP Officer, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) also submitted a request to the Prioritized Engineer Project List (PEPL) Working Group on 11 May 2012, to construct an integrated barrier plan for the 3d MAW (FWD) section of the airfield, which would have emplaced over 10,000 linear feet of HESCO barriers and 650 linear feet of T-Walls to protect the airfield. The request stated, "Without these improvements, the airfield equipment and personnel will remain vulnerable to enemy attack at multiple access points, including numerous high speed avenues of approach." (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) learned the PEPL denied his proposed project based on cost, resources, and the assessed enemy threat. However, the PEPL WG approved a smaller 3d MAW (FWD) project to emplace concertina wire near the road adjacent to the airfield to secure vulnerable areas and channelize pedestrian traffic to ECPs (Ex 17, 18, 59).

(2) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **The Joint Staff Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (JSIVA).** The JSIVA Program is managed by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) as the executive agent for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. The JSIVA is a vulnerability-based assessment of military installations to determine susceptibility to a terrorist attack. The program consists of six assessment teams composed of eight people in each team. JSIVA Team Four, led by (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) USMC, conducted an assessment

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of the TFBW AT/FP Plan and Camp Leatherneck 10-14 June 2012. In addition to Camp Leatherneck, the JSIVA team assessed the Camp Bastion East Gate and airfield (Ex 9, 44).

(a) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Vulnerability Assessment Requirements.** An installation or base is required to conduct its own vulnerability assessment each year, and DoDI 2000.16 requires an external, higher headquarters AT assessment once every three years for installations of 300 personnel or more (installations in high threat areas or with a high turnover of personnel can be assessed more often). The owning service, the applicable geographic combatant command (GCC), or a JSIVA team may conduct this higher headquarters assessment. USCENTCOM has a Joint Security Office (JSO), which conducts vulnerability assessments in its area of responsibility (AOR). An installation commander may request a certain type of assessment; however, the GCC or owning service generally determines the need and type of assessment (Ex 9).

(b) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **TFBW Response to Scheduled JSIVA.** In February 2012, RC(SW) learned of the upcoming June 2012 JSIVA , and (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) leveraged it as an opportunity to make improvements in the AT/FP program for Camp Leatherneck. He used the JSIVA "AT Benchmarks" as his guide. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) of 3d MAW (FWD) utilized the pending JSIVA in the same manner (Ex 47, 59).

(c) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **JSIVA Vulnerabilities.** A JSIVA "vulnerability" is "a situation or circumstance that if left unchanged may result in the loss of life or damage to mission-essential resources." (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) provided an outbrief to the TFBW leaders and some of their UK counterparts at the conclusion of the JSIVA on 14 June 2012, and his team produced an official report, dated 7 August 2012 (Ex 9, 44, 88). During our interview, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) characterized the six vulnerabilities identified at the BLS Complex as: ((b)(1)1.4g (3)

(b)(1)1.4g

(d) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Interview of JSIVA Team Chief.** (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) informed us it is common to identify these types of vulnerabilities during a JSIVA. He informed us it was his team's assessment that Forward Operating Base (FOB) Bagram's airfield security was better than the BLS Complex and FOB Shindand's was about the same, although Shindand had much less air traffic. During their assessment of the BLS Complex, the JSIVA team also identified 36 "concerns," defined as "a situation that is exploitable and that can indirectly lead to the death of DOD-affiliated personnel or lead to the destruction of mission essential resources." (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) nformed us that 36 concerns at an installation is also not uncommon, especially since concerns are often associated with the absence of a process; e.g., risk management, formalized working groups, and planning documents (Ex 44).

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(e) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Airfield Vulnerability.** Most relevant to this investigation is the assessment of the Camp Bastion airfield as a vulnerability, "[b]asically, [because of] the possibility of mission failure by not being able to control access (vehicle and pedestrian) to the airfield." TFBW walked the JSIVA team through the events of the 14 March airfield incursion and the resulting mitigation strategies, and (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) team's opinion was that the mitigation strategies would not stop a determined individual from entering the airfield. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) stated that although completely eliminating a threat in a war zone is impossible, the airfield was a Mission-Essential Vulnerable Area (MEVA), which requires multiple layers of security in addition to the perimeter. During JSIVAs, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) team routinely looked for a layered defense and posture, and he noted that the Camp Bastion airfield did not have any real, mutually supporting obstacles to support the perimeter fence. Additionally, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and his JSIVA team assessed the two routine patrols assigned to the airfield as "largely ineffective from a preventative/detection perspective" primarily because of the size of the airfield and ramps, the aircraft dispersion, the lighting, the lack of detection and warning systems in place, and ease of access to the area. The JSIVA team provided mitigation strategies and recommendations for the airfield, as well as the other five identified vulnerabilities (Ex 9, 44, 88).

(f) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Post-JSIVA**. Commanders are not required to mitigate the force protection vulnerabilities and concerns identified by a JSIVA. Likewise, a JSIVA team does not have the responsibility or authority to re-inspect an installation for compliance. However, commanders have primary responsibility for risk management decisions in support of their assigned missions. The JSIVA is an objective vulnerability assessment, specifically designed to enable commanders to make informed decisions about where to accept prudent risk and prioritize actions to protect the force. MajGen Gurganus's staff briefed him regarding the results of the JSIVA assessment, the identified vulnerabilities, and the mitigation strategies and recommendations (Ex 41, 47, 48, 49). The staff recommended that the overhead cover, protective shelters, and sidewall protection vulnerabilities were low priority for mitigation due to the low probability of an IDF threat, and because overhead cover and sidewall protection would have required additional funding. MajGen Gurganus's staff briefed him that steps to correct the MWNS deficiency were already in progress, and that the the previously approved airfield ditch and berm project would mitigate any vehicle-borne threat. MajGen Gurganus accepted his staff's recommendations as "prudent" and did not direct any new force protection measures at the Camp Bastion airfield as a result of the JSIVA. Instead, the primary effort went into correcting ECP deficiencies (Ex 41, 47, 48). MajGen Sturdevant recalled being briefed on the results of the JSIVA, but he could not remember what they were or whether his staff requested new projects to mitigate the risk to the airfield. He recalled feeling comfortable that the ditch and berm project sufficiently addressed their assessed vehicular threat (Ex 43).

(3) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Insider Threat and Contractor Control**. All RC(SW) members interviewed expressed a concern for the insider threat posed by the local national (LN) and third country national (TCN) contractors on the BLS Complex. Over 6,000 US, local national, and third country national contractors performed duties on the BLS

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Complex (Ex 9). The 14 March airfield incursion made this concern even more acute (Ex 12, 41, 43, 47, 49, 51, 54). RC(SW) significantly increased efforts to improve vetting, badging control measures, and contractor accountability. The different Camps on the BLS Complex initially had different vetting and badging procedures, and contractors had easy access throughout the base and between Camps as a result. Poor accountability existed for contractors with expired contracts. TFBW and the RC(SW) C2X Counterintelligence (CI) Officer, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) led a large effort to combine the US and UK vetting and badging procedures out of a common location near the CJOC, to identify and account for all contractors on Camp Leatherneck, and to ramp up random inspections of contractor living areas to search for illegal activity and restricted items like cell phones, cameras, and other electronics. RC(SW) routinely disbarred contractors for violations. RC(SW) also instituted a common, colored badging system, and increased awareness among Camp personnel of the access level allowed by each type of badge. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) expressed the situation had improved drastically by the end of May or early June 2012, but the insider threat concern remained for all personnel throughout the deployment (Ex 41, 47, 51, 54).

(4) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **External Fence Breaches**. The RC(SW) command knew of external fence breaches before the September 2012 attack. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) who became the TFBW CO after (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) redeployed in June 2012, informed us of a breach of the perimeter fence in the Camp Leatherneck sector near Tower 40 or 41 that occurred in late June 2012. The guards observed the intruder breach the fence and climb onto an interior berm. The guards executed escalation of force procedures, and the intruder fled back out of the breach. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) informed us this incident completely changed the TFBW AT/FP posture. They increased tower manning or re-arranged coverage based on a new tower observation review, they doubled exterior patrolling along the fence line, and also increased interior patrolling (Ex 48). All interviewees informed us of the problem with "scrappers" – individuals who would try to come near the base to take or steal metal to sell on the economy – at the BLS Complex. The theft (scrapper) problem was the worst along the western perimeter near the BLS Complex firing ranges. Afghans often sent children near the perimeter fence to recover expended brass and whatever else they could find (Ex 41, 43, 47, 49, 51, 62). (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) learned during Operations and Intelligence (O&I) briefings at the CJOC of three unobserved breaches that occurred in the Camp Bastion perimeter in the July-August 2012 timeframe, identified by UK patrols after the breaches occurred. He recalled two of the breaches were near Tower 8. The cause or purpose of the breaches is unknown, but the 5 FP Wing assessed them as scrapping activity (Ex 41, 43, 51, 60, 62). (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C), the TFBW CO at the time of our investigation team's site survey to Camp Leatherneck on 26 June 2013, informed us he identified 24 areas in the perimeter chain link fence, which had apparently been repaired before his tenure (Ex 74). There were also two nighttime surveillance videos capturing Camp Bastion breaches. On one occasion, two individuals entered the perimeter fence through a breach, moved near the cryogenics lab by the airfield, and then departed out of the same breach (Ex 65, 98). (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) discussed a different nighttime surveillance video capturing an individual who entered Camp Bastion through a breach in the fence, looked around inside an empty guard tower, and departed again (Ex 41, 48, 54). Many people throughout the RC(SW) chain of command, including MajGen

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Gurganus, expressed concern about the fence breaches, but accepted them as related to scrapping or theft activity (Ex 41, 43). Yet, CO TFBW and the RC(SW) C3 both assessed that the BLS Complex was increasingly being probed (Ex 47, 50). Personnel from 3d MAW (FWD), including MajGen Sturdevant, felt they were being observed externally, and VMA-211 submitted reports to 3d MAW(FWD) regarding their concerns of external observation (Ex 43, 59, 60, 65, 66). Finally, the individuals that we interviewed consistently expressed concern about the vulnerability and security threat posed by the villages and poppy fields increasingly encroaching on the eastern and southeastern perimeter of Camp Bastion (Ex 41, 43, 47, 49, 51, 54).

(5) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Managing the Force Protection Risk.** In common with other aspects of military operations, force protection is ultimately a balance between risk and finite resources. The successful weighing and judgment of this balance is the responsibility of the commander. Achieving his mission with fewer resources required MajGen Gurganus to prioritize risk and then adjust his troop-to-task ratio to mitigate that risk to an acceptable level. Operating in a dynamic security environment, he did not have the option to focus on a single problem or area to the exclusion of others. To do so would increase both the probability and magnitude of negative outcomes in the ignored areas. Nor could he treat all potential problems as equally immediate or important. The potential threats exceeded the resources required to eliminate risk across the entire area of operations. Therefore, he had to decide what risks could be accepted, and what risks were too great to be accepted. MajGen Gurganus assessed the threat and made a conscious decision to accept risk in force protection at the BLS Complex (Ex 41, 42, 76, 77).

5. (U) **Findings.**

a. (U) **Findings of US Accountability.** MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant were experienced commanders operating in a dynamic security environment. Their challenge was to strike a balance between other operational tasks, force protection, and the finite resources available to them. Nonetheless, given the known and potential threats to the BLS Complex on 14-15 September 2012, MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant failed to take adequate force protection measures within the range of responses proportionate to that threat. It is important to note that virtually all significant vulnerabilities were rapidly mitigated in the aftermath of the attack (Ex 1, 12, 28-33). The relative ease by which such vulnerabilities were mitigated indicates that RC(SW) and 3d MAW(FWD) had adequate capacity to accomplish the mission while simultaneously protecting the force.

b. (U) **Command Responsibility.** Commanders are responsible for force protection. While MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant appropriately delegated authority to their staffs for the development and execution of plans and operations designed to protect the force, such delegation does not relieve the commander of continued responsibility for the success or failure of the mission. Moreover, as in all aspects of military operations, it should be a commander's skill and judgment that remains of primary importance when making decisions about force protection. The staff can provide recommendations but it has no

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responsibility for resulting actions; the commander alone is responsible; therefore, the commander alone is accountable (Ex 118).

(1) (U) **MajGen Gurganus.** MajGen Gurganus maintained overall command responsibility for RC(SW) and knew, or should have known, of the force protection risks at the BLS Complex. He underestimated the threat posed by the enemy's capabilities, overestimated US and coalition capabilities to counter that threat, and failed to take prudent steps to counter or mitigate an enemy attack. Further, he failed to achieve the coalition unity of effort necessary to ensure comprehensive protection of the BLS Complex or, alternatively, to take unilateral action to mitigate the risk to an acceptable level. Lastly, MajGen Gurganus failed to adequately provide command direction and oversight to ensure his subordinates took appropriate actions to effectively mitigate the identified vulnerabilities at the Camp Bastion airfield.

(2) (U) **MajGen Sturdevant.** MajGen Sturdevant failed to effectively integrate 3rd MAW(FWD) into the force protection posture for Camp Bastion. He assumed that other units responsible for the protection of the BLS Complex would also protect 3d MAW(FWD) personnel and equipment on the Camp Bastion airfield, without fully understanding the capabilities and limitations of those units. This misjudgment unnecessarily exposed his personnel and equipment to enemy attack on 14-15 September 2012. He also failed to provide adequate command direction and oversight to ensure his subordinates took appropriate actions to mitigate the identified vulnerabilities on the Camp Bastion airfield. Finally, although MajGen Sturdevant appropriately focused his forces on generating aircraft sorties to support ground operations, he failed to simultaneously address the inherent responsibility of commanders at every echelon to provide security and protection for their forces.

c. (U) **Causal Factor**. The underlying causal factor of the successful Taliban attack on 14-15 September 2012 was the failure of MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant to adequately ensure that an integrated, layered, defense-in-depth was in place to protect US personnel and equipment on the Camp Bastion airfield, which led to loss of life and damage to mission-essential resources. A further discussion of this causal factor follows.

(1) (~~U//FOUO~~) **Defense-In-Depth Doctrine.** At the time of the attack, RC(SW) was focused on countering three assessed threats against the BLS Complex: a VBIED attack against an ECP, an insider threat attack, and indirect fire. However, the JFOB Protection Handbook 6, consistent with Marine Corps doctrine and cited by AT/FP staff from RC(SW) and 3rd MAW(FWD) as a source of doctrinal guidance, emphasizes the importance of an "integrated, layered, defense-in-depth plan" utilizing the protection concepts of deterrence, prevention, active security, passive defense, and mitigation to support base protection (Ex 44, 59, 60, 120). While a commander is free to use any approach to manage operational risk, the base defense plan for the BLS Complex did not display these essential characteristics and was, therefore, inadequate to protect the force. Several elements of a successful defense-in-depth were lacking.

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(2) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Patrolling.** The SECFOR's patrolling effort in AOBW was inadequate to detect, deter, or counter enemy forces seeking to attack the BLS Complex. As previously noted, there was only one SECFOR unit operating outside the perimeter of the BLS Complex on the night of the attack - a single squad from 2/10 Marines providing area surveillance of a potential enemy rocket launch site several kilometers south of the BLS Complex. Aggressive patrolling is an important part of the protection concepts of active security and deterrence, and is a critical component of a layered defense (Ex 120). MCDP 1-0, *Operations*, emphasizes that "patrolling and security operations are usually prerequisites for a successful perimeter defense." When CO TFBW, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was informed that 2/10 Marines, his primary patrolling unit in the SECFOR, would be reduced from 220 to 110 in June 2012, he alerted MajGen Gurganus the SECFOR would only be able to generate a maximum of 2-3 patrols per 24-hour period and still perform their other security tasks (Ex 41, 47). While MajGen Gurganus requested additional SECFOR personnel, when those forces were not approved, he should have reassessed his troop-to-task ratios and adjusted his available forces and resources to meet operational requirements, including protection of the force. Although commanders determine acceptable risks inherent in any operation, MajGen Gurganus made his troop-to-task decisions without fully appreciating their cost and consequences. Specifically, he did not adequately consider that his force allocation decisions would leave the SECFOR without the minimum essential combat power required to conduct effective patrolling or defense-in-depth to protect the BLS Complex. This misjudgment made it easier for the enemy to reconnoiter, approach, and attack the BLS Complex without early detection.

(3) (U) **Perimeter Security**

(a) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Camp Bastion Perimeter Fence.** On 14-15 September 2012, the Camp Bastion perimeter consisted of single strand concertina wire, a 30-foot chain link fence, and guard towers of varying distance from each other and from the fence line (Ex 1). Manning only Towers 15 and 17 in vicinity of the breach point was inadequate, given the distance between the towers and the expansive area the personnel in these towers had to observe. The undulating terrain in the vicinity of these towers provided a dismounted enemy with covered and concealed avenues of approach that led directly to the fence line. Although manning of the towers was rotated to avoid predictability while still maintaining interlocking fields of fire and observation, the terrain made accurate and timely observation difficult on the eastern perimeter. In fact, Tower 15 did not have observation of the breach point in the fence due to the undulating terrain, so only Tower 16 (unmanned) or Tower 17 (manned) could have detected the breach on the night of 14 September 2012 (Ex 93). Additionally, Camp Bastion lacked ISR capability to provide redundant observation of the eastern perimeter from the CJOC. This was rectified after the attack (Ex 62, 33).

(b) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Tower Observation.** During the investigation team's Camp Bastion site survey, we observed the perimeter from Tower 17 at night. The AT/FP Officer for 3d MAW (FWD), (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) had previously informed us that with the amount of ground and the type of terrain Tower 17 had to cover, it would have been

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difficult to observe an approaching attacker who was attempting to conceal his movement, even on a night with better illumination, and even if the guard was constantly scanning back and forth with a night vision device (Ex 60). Having observed the vantage point from Tower 17 at night during our site survey, we concur with (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) assessment. Although we are unable to determine with certainty why the guards in Tower 17 did not observe the attackers breach the fence and maneuver towards the airfield, it is not difficult to surmise how this could happen on a night with 2% illumination given the vantage point, expansive observation area, and the terrain surrounding Tower 17. Even with significant engineering work to reduce some of the terrain outside of the perimeter, and with new lighting to illuminate the terrain, it would still be a questionable decision today to only man Tower 15 and Tower 17 on the eastern perimeter. Regarding the Tongan guards in Towers 15 and 17, the preponderance of the evidence does not support various reports that the Tongans were asleep at the time of the attack. The Tongan guards had different guard procedures than the Marines, and they stayed in the towers for longer periods of time. Typically, two Tongans were on duty in the top of the tower, and two Tongans were off duty in the bottom of the tower, which also served as their living and sleeping area. The Tongans on the bottom level could rest, watch television, or conduct other off-duty activities. Marines typically ran on the gravel road near the Camp Bastion towers, so Marines without knowledge of the living and working arrangement in the guard towers may have misinterpreted and misreported what they observed the Tongans doing in and around the lower level of the towers. Leaders within TFBW knew of the reports from Marines about the Tongans, but they were aware of the working arrangements in the Camp Bastion guard towers, and they had no concerns about the ability of the Tongans to conduct their duties (Ex 47, 48, 59, 62).

(c) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Tower Manning.** MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant did not make themselves aware of the capabilities and limitations of the coalition forces responsible for protection of the Camp Bastion perimeter, nor did they direct TFBW or their staffs to make the assessment. MajGen Gurganus was aware that roughly every other tower was manned on the Camp Bastion eastern perimeter, just as they were on Camp Leatherneck. MajGen Gurganus accepted this force protection posture as reasonable given the assumed observation provided by the guard towers and the perceived low attack threat against the perimeter (Ex 41). By contrast, MajGen Sturdevant knew "the fence was the only thing between the outside of the base and the inside of the base," but he did not know that the perimeter guard towers were only manned every other tower (Ex 43). RC(SW) and 3d MAW (FWD) both held the general assumption that security along the Camp Bastion perimeter was adequate, but they did not base this assumption on an assessment of the capabilities and limitations of coalition forces there, nor did they communicate on the subject with one another (Ex 41, 43, 49, 50, 53, 55, 57, 58, 61, 63, 65, 66).

(4) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Unobserved Terrain**. Camp Bastion lacked persistent observation of the roughly 550m of terrain between the perimeter fence and the airfield (Ex 44, 46, 47, 57-60). Due to this vulnerability, the 3d MAW (FWD) AT/FP Officer at the time of the attack, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) described the perimeter fence as the "single point of failure" (Ex 60). The tower guards could not observe the dead space behind the towers. If an

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enemy force could breach the Camp Bastion perimeter fence and move past the guard towers, there was unimpeded access all the way to the hard surface road abutting the eastern side of the airfield. In fact, the attackers on 14-15 September 2012 maneuvered through this area undetected on the way to their airfield targets. Even at the hard surface road next to the airfield, the only barrier consisted of short four-foot Hesco barriers with single strand concertina on top at approximately chest height. The attackers breached this obstacle. Although the CJOC monitored the PGSS, which had the ability to observe this area, a PGSS cannot be relied upon to observe all activity on a base the size of the BLS Complex. MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant did not appropriately recognize and mitigate the risk of inadequate observation outside and inside of Camp Bastion, or the unobstructed freedom of movement once past the perimeter fence guard towers.

(5) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Exploitable Airfield Access.** MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant failed to implement adequate measures to control pedestrian access to the airfield, which the enemy exploited on 14-15 September 2012. The 14 March 2012 airfield incursion, the 10-14 June 2012 JSIVA, and the July 2012 VMA-211 vulnerability assessment all highlighted this vulnerability (Ex 9, 12, 97). Although 3d MAW (FWD) had manned ECPs at the north and south end of the hard surface road on the eastern side of the airfield to control vehicular access (Ex 43, 57-60), this force protection measure was inadequate to prevent dismounted infiltration of the airfield. MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant primarily focused on mitigating the vehicular threat, even after recognizing pedestrian access to the airfield was practically unimpeded (Ex 41, 43). The JSIVA photos at Exhibits 9, 89-92 clearly illustrate the high-speed avenues of approach to the airfield. The high-speed avenues of approach highlight another gap in the layered, defense-in-depth of the Camp Bastion Airfield, which neither MajGen Gurganus nor MajGen Sturdevant corrected until after the 14-15 September 2012 attack. The failure to fully mitigate previously identified vulnerabilities will be discussed in greater detail below (see para. 5c(3)(a)).

(6) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Limited Local Security on the Airfield.** 3d MAW (FWD) failed to ensure its squadrons located on the Camp Bastion airfield had an integrated force protection plan, which essentially would have served as the last line of defense in addition to the QRF and other crisis response assets in a defense-in-depth. Despite the fact that Marine units located on Camp Leatherneck, including the 3d MAW (FWD) Headquarters, required local security of their compounds, MajGen Sturdevant stated local security on the airfield was a "Squadron Commander's call." Two of the squadrons on the airfield, HMLA-469 and VMM-161, maintained their own local security, which included at least some form of barrier plan and guards. This was the exception, as the majority of the leadership of 3d MAW (FWD) and VMA-211 that we interviewed did not believe they had the manpower to accomplish their mission while also providing their own security. However, shortly after the attack, MajGen Sturdevant was able to rapidly implement an integrated force protection plan that enabled 3d MAW (FWD) to perform its own local security and prevent unimpeded access to the flight line while accomplishing its mission (Ex 43, 57-61).

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(7) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Lack of Integration.** RC(SW) and 3d MAW (FWD) failed to ensure that the 3d MAW (FWD) Squadrons were integrated into any plan by the UK forces responsible for protection of Camp Bastion. 3d MAW (FWD) had not discussed, coordinated, or rehearsed with UK forces regarding how they would respond in a crisis on Camp Bastion. Moreover, all members of the 3d MAW (FWD) leadership indicated they relied on UK forces and TFBW to provide for their force protection, yet the 3d MAW (FWD) leaders were unaware of UK plans, capabilities, or limitations. At no point did MajGen Gurganus or MajGen Sturdevant recognize or attempt to correct this force protection deficiency (Ex 41, 43, 57, 58).

d. (U) **Contributing Factors.** Three contributing factors influenced the existence of the underlying causal factor discussed in Paragraph 5c above.

(1) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **First Contributing Factor: MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant Underestimated the Enemy.** RC(SW) had adequate manpower, access to all forms of intelligence, and all the tools necessary to receive, produce, and analyze intelligence properly (Ex 51). While there was a lack of explicit reporting on any direct threats to the BLS Complex prior to the attack, MajGen Gurganus should have increased force protection measures based on the known threat to large coalition bases throughout Afghanistan (Ex 51, 99-103, 112). The RC(SW) Intelligence Officer (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) indicated that the threat to all major installations was "high" at the time of the 14-15 September 2012 attack, and there were consistent indicators that the Taliban wanted to gain access to and attack the BLS Complex. As previously discussed, the BLS Complex was the largest and most important coalition base in SW Afghanistan, and it hosted significant capabilities critical to the success of RC(SW). As the center of gravity for coalition operations in SW Afghanistan, the BLS Complex was a longstanding high payoff target for the Taliban. Within the BLS Complex, the Camp Bastion Airfield was an identified MEVA that produced significant combat power for RC(SW). Therefore, it was important to counter or mitigate risks to the BLS Complex, including the airfield, in order to enable the mission success of RC(SW), to maintain the perception of worth held by individual US and coalition members, and to sustain confidence in US and coalition leadership. Yet, RC(SW) and 3d MAW (FWD) leaders at every level expressed complete surprise by the mode of attack on 14-15 September 2012, specifically the boldness of the enemy breach of the perimeter and dismounted assault on the airfield (Ex 41, 43, 52, 55, 57, 58, 61). Underestimating the enemy, MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant did not implement an integrated, layered, defense-in-depth to protect the BLS Complex. Several causes led to misjudgment of the enemy threat.

(a) (U) **Faulty Threat Assessment.** MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant failed to adequately assess the enemy situation and plan accordingly. The attack on the BLS Complex should not have come as a complete surprise to MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant. Multiple attacks occurred against coalition bases across Afghanistan in 2011-2012. As discussed earlier, there were consistent indicators, although not necessarily explicit, about the enemy's desire to attack the BLS Complex. They made a faulty threat assessment

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based primarily on recent enemy activity as opposed to analyzing the full range of enemy options based on Taliban capabilities and intentions. Their misread of enemy capabilities left RC(SW) unprepared to prevent the threat faced on 14-15 September 2012. Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 2, *Intelligence*, instructs that past enemy actions are certainly part of the analysis in determining enemy "capabilities," which describe what the enemy can do, and also enemy "intentions," which describe what the enemy might do and likely do. However, most of the RC(SW) and 3d MAW (FWD) personnel interviewed seemed to overly rely on past history and did not consider other possibilities outside of their top three assessed threats. MCDP 2 warns that enemy intentions are normally the product of thought processes different than our own, which can lead to surprise. To counter enemy surprise, Joint Publication 2-0, *Joint Intelligence*, states that despite the apparent weight of evidence and decision-making predisposition, we must consider all possible enemy capabilities and intentions. MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant did not adequately do so, which caused them to overlook and fail to guard against potential enemy COAs (Ex 121, 122).

(b) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Failure to Address All Enemy COAs.** MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant were aware of the general threat to BLS, but they failed to adequately consider all modes in which that attack might be carried out. Both commanders were aware of a July 2012 intelligence report indicating that a Taliban attack on a base in Helmand Province had been avoided due to the premature explosion of an IED, which killed several of the attackers. However, the report indicated the attackers were suicide bombers, and it did not specify that the target was the BLS Complex (Ex 41, 43). For MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant, this report likely reinforced their belief and increased their confidence in their assessment of the enemy's most likely course of action, which was a VBIED attack on an ECP. However, threat assessments must constantly be updated in a dynamic security environment. By failing to revisit their initial assumptions, MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant overlooked the mode of attack on 14-15 September. While challenging their dominant assumption, or creating a new assumption, was difficult due to lack of information and the seemingly low probability of a dismounted attack on the BLS Complex, they did not assess the dismounted threat as the enemy's first, second, or even third course of action. Lacking an accurate assessment of the enemy's capabilities, MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant foreclosed options, and did not adequately adjust their force protection posture to account for all aspects of the threat or to mitigate the range of vulnerabilities the enemy might exploit. Moreover, RC(SW)'s minimal reconnaissance and security operations did not provide adequate information on enemy capabilities and intentions, or effectively prevent the enemy from collecting information on coalition forces at the BLS Complex. Illustrative of a pervasive miscalculation by many leaders in RC(SW) and 3d MAW (FWD), MajGen Sturdevant stated that "not in his wildest imagination could he envision" the sort of attack which occurred. In sum, underestimation and overconfidence led MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant to a failure of imagination, which prevented them from anticipating and countering a dismounted attack on the BLS Complex.

(2) (U) **Second Contributing Factor: RC(SW) Lacked Overall Unity of Command and Effort for AT/FP on the BLS Complex.** The 2011 USCENTCOM-UK

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PJHQ MOU established the bifurcated C2 arrangement between Camp Leatherneck and Camp Bastion, which Lt Gen Bradshaw, DCOM ISAF, characterized as "sub-optimal" (Ex 38, 86). The arrangement did not allow for a single commander responsible for force protection and security of the BLS Complex. Specifically, no decision authority existed to ensure a comprehensive, integrated, and timely approach to assess, identify, and mitigate longstanding force protection vulnerabilities at the BLS Complex. The C2 arrangement inhibited an exchange of information and prevented MajGen Gurganus from gaining an accurate understanding of the capabilities and limitations of the coalition units responsible for the protection of the BLS Complex. Nonetheless, this situation did not relieve MajGen Gurganus or MajGen Sturdevant of their inherent responsibility to ensure the security and protection of their forces. While MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant inherited the C2 arrangement imposed by the CENTCOM-PJHQ MOU, they failed to take adequate measures to mitigate the MOU's negative effects on the force protection of their forces by ensuring unity of effort.

(a) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Effects of the Absence of Unity of Command.** The C2 arrangement allowed the separate camps to have different force protection capabilities and limitations, to include doctrine, standards, weapons, equipment, and rules of engagement (ROE), and the differences were not fully understood by their coalition partners on the other camps. The BLS Complex also lacked a single commander with unity of command over all forces to determine the capabilities and limitations of each of the forces, and then develop a force protection plan based on the various skill sets and the assessed threat. Finally, unity of command would have provided the single commander with common oversight and enforcement of standards for all units responsible for protection of the BLS Complex. For example, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) CO TFBW, informed us that the C2 arrangement did not allow for him to inspect the towers on Camp Bastion. While almost all personnel interviewed expressed that they were confident in the coalition personnel's ability to protect Camp Bastion prior to the attack, none of them had based this assessment on inspection or thorough examination. Another specific example of the effect of the C2 structure on force protection was that it created a disparity between the counter intelligence (CI) capabilities and authorities for Camp Leatherneck and Camp Bastion. The RC(SW) C2X, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was responsible for CI on Camp Leatherneck (Ex 54). (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

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

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c Given the significant insider threat posed by HN and TCN contractors on the BLS Complex, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) briefed MajGen Gurganus and Brigadier Skeates in April 2012 on what (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) characterized as a CI gap on Camp Bastion. RC(SW) had actually identified the issue during their Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRX) before deploying, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) eventually proposed a COA where he would have CI coverage over the entire BLS Complex, but RC(SW) did not institute this COA due to the C2 arrangement. While (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) CI teams were successful in identifying and neutralizing insider threats on Camp Leatherneck through arrest or disbarment from the base, he was unable to employ his CI teams on Camp Bastion. Also of significance, the Camp

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Bastion CI teams had jurisdiction of the encroaching villages to the east of the BLS Complex; namely Sheik-abad and Naw-abad, ~~(S)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c This may have proved costly given the RC(SW) assessment that the attackers staged out of Naw-abad. Due to these negative effects on AT/FP created by the MOU, MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant should have taken more measures to ensure unity of effort with coalition partners, especially on Camp Bastion, due to the presence of the 3d MAW (FWD) squadrons on the airfield.

(b) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Failure to Ensure Unity of Effort in the Absence of Unity of Command.** MCDP 1-0, *Operations*, recognizes that unity of command is difficult to achieve in multinational operations, and directs commanders to concentrate on obtaining unity of effort when this is true. MajGen Gurganus did not have the authority to create unity of command on the BLS Complex without obtaining CENTCOM and PJHQ agreement to rescind the MOU, but he and MajGen Sturdevant failed to ensure adequate unity of effort in the alternative. RC(SW) did not ensure unity of effort to account for and mitigate the differences in the force protection capabilities and limitations noted above. Further, 3d MAW (FWD) did little to coordinate with coalition forces on Camp Bastion regarding security of the perimeter, an internal defense plan, or an integrated crisis response plan. Leaders throughout RC(SW) and 3d MAW (FWD) expressed a belief that they achieved unity of effort with coalition partners through the CJOC and the ESG, but these mechanisms were not adequate to effectuate complete unity of effort. Besides the coordination of patrolling in AOBW, the CJOC was reactionary. As previously discussed, the response by the US and UK SECFORs on the night of the attack indicated unity of effort at the tactical level in the CJOC and between the two SECFORs, but the CJOC did not integrate perimeter security, the defense plans between the different camps, or the defense plan of Camp Bastion between the 3d MAW (FWD) and other coalition forces present there. The ESG was likewise not designed to address complete unity of effort. The ESG did provide a combined mechanism to discuss force protection projects which affected both US and UK interests, but it proved to be a cumbersome approach, based on compromise at every level, that did not keep pace with the threat and often produced watered down solutions insufficient to mitigate force protection vulnerabilities. The ultimate result was unity of effort for some areas of force protection, but not on the areas the Taliban exploited on 14-15 September 2012.

(c) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Post-Attack Unity of Command and Effort.** RC(SW) published a FRAGO in December 2012 unifying command, and establishing MajGen Sturdevant as the CO for the entire BLS Complex. All force protection and security then fell under his purview (Ex 95). Although MajGen Gurganus still did not technically have the authority to override the CENTCOM-PJHQ MOU with a FRAGO, he did so with the acknowledgement and acceptance of the US and UK chains of command. The force protection measures employed immediately after the attack and before the December FRAGO, which included enhanced internal security on the airfield, an integrated base defense plan that encompassed all of the BLS complex, 100% manning of guard towers,

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better coordination with coalition forces for perimeter security on Camp Bastion, improved communications, and increased ISR capability for the perimeter, demonstrate that alternatives for better unity of effort existed for MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant even without unity of command (Ex 28-33, 96). Unfortunately, it took a catastrophic event to prioritize the application of available forces and resources to protect the BLS Complex.

(3) (U) **Third Contributing Factor: MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant Failed to Provide Adequate Command Direction and Oversight.** Both MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant failed to provide adequate command direction and oversight for the protection of their forces. Specifically, they both failed to adequately mitigate previously identified force protection vulnerabilities of the airfield, and to provide sufficient guidance on force protection measures to US forces that considered the capabilities and limitations of coalition partners.

(a) ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Failure to Adequately Address Airfield Vulnerability.** MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant failed to adequately address the airfield vulnerabilities identified by the 14 March 2012 airfield incursion and the JSIVA.

1 ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Failure to Adequately Address the 14 March 2012 Airfield Incursion.** After the 14 March 2012 airfield incursion, both MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant, based on the advice of their staffs, believed the ditch and berm project was a fair compromise to the proposed airfield perimeter fence given the assessed enemy threat (Ex 41, 43). However, the project did not address the entire identified airfield threat, which included a pedestrian access threat. Both MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant noted the 14 March 2012 airfield incursion caused them to focus inwards on the internal threat, and not outwards on the external threat of attackers breaching the fence and attacking the airfield. However, the dismounted access to the airfield and its personnel and mission-essential equipment existed regardless of whether the threat came from external or internal. As such, MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant failed to mitigate the potential enemy threat.

2 ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Failure to Adequately Address the JSIVA.** Three months to the day after the 14 March 2012 airfield incursion, JSIVA Team 4 outbriefed TFBW on the results of their five-day vulnerability assessment of Camp Leatherneck and parts of Camp Bastion (Ex 88). Of the six vulnerabilities identified, the most relevant to this investigation is the airfield vulnerability, discussed above. The JSIVA should have served as a second strong warning to MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant of the unimpeded pedestrian access to the airfield, especially in light of the airfield's identification as a MEVA. Nobody we interviewed was aware of any renewed effort to mitigate the airfield access using the JSIVA as justification. MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant should have done more to address the identified force protection deficiencies by better utilizing the JSIVA report, including use of the Core Vulnerability Assessment Management Program (CVAMP) discussed below.

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3 (~~S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO~~) **Failure to Utilize the Core Vulnerability Assessment Management Program (CVAMP).** Unit AT/FP Officers may access CVAMP, a Joint Staff portal, to submit requests for force protection funding via the Combating Terrorism Readiness Initiatives Fund (CbT RIF). The purpose of the CbT RIF is to fund emergency and emergent high-priority AT/FP requirements in the year of execution. CVAMP also ensures that long-term program funding for the requirement will be tracked in case it does not gain funding under CbT RIF. CVAMP directly ties funding requests to JSIVA observations and vulnerabilities within the database (Ex 123). (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) informed us that inputting JSIVA-identified vulnerabilities into CVAMP is the best way to get visibility of those vulnerabilities up the chain of command, all the way to the Joint Staff. The base commander should also prioritize the identified vulnerabilities, and approve mitigation strategies in CVAMP (Ex 44). The JSIVA Report indicated CVAMP had not been updated for the BLS Complex since a USCENTCOM JSO Vulnerability Assessment conducted in January 2011, and that neither CO TFBW nor the TFBW AT/FP Officer had access to CVAMP (Ex 9). The RC(SW) AT/FP Officer (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) tasked a subordinate to get the major subordinate commands access to CVAMP, but he believed it was TFBW's responsibility to identify and work through the mitigation (Ex 53). There is no evidence that (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) ever informed MajGen Gurganus of any CVAMP deficiencies. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was aware of CVAMP, but he departed Afghanistan the day after the JSIVA outbrief, and (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) replacement, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) told us that he had never heard of CVAMP (Ex 47, 48). As a result, RC(SW) did not follow-up on the CVAMP. Therefore, the vulnerabilities and mitigation strategies were never inputted into CVAMP, and RC(SW) and 3d MAW (FWD) did not take advantage of a potential opportunity to address the airfield vulnerabilities.

4 (~~S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO~~) **Failure to Adequately Address the VMA-211 FP Assessment.** VMA-211, the Harrier squadron hit hardest by the attack, moved to Camp Bastion from Kandahar in early July 2012. Upon their arrival, their AT/FP personnel conducted a vulnerability assessment, dated 7 July 2012, and provided it to the 3d MAW (FWD) staff. The VMA-211 assessment found the airfield to be "high risk" and "the first and most vulnerable target." The assessment went on to say, "In the event of a successful attack on the airfield, operations would not only be reduced but depending on the scale of the attack the squadron could potentially cease flight operations for an unforeseen amount of time. The only advantages the airfield holds are the blast shields between the aircraft and its distance from the main road. The aircraft are also easily seen from multiple points in Camp Bastion. Again, depending on the scale of the attack the damage could vary between minimum maintenance damage and full scale destruction of the aircraft." The assessment included several photos showing the "straight shot from the [road along the eastern side of the airfield] to virtually all VMA-211 assets, including the jets themselves" (Ex. 65, 97). VMA-211 requested barrier material and other improvements for their portion of the airfield, but (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was informed by (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) of 3d MAW (FWD), that the project was disapproved due to lack of barrier materials and engineer support (Ex 65). It is true that the Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS) had been reduced in numbers by 80% during the drawdown, and its engineers were stretched extremely

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thin doing base improvement or retrograde across the entire AO, not just on the BLS complex (Ex 43, 59). We were unable to determine, however, whether the VMA-211 barrier request went before the ESG, PEPL Working Group, or any other requirements validation authority. MajGen Sturdevant prioritized his resources to meet other operational requirements, but he nonetheless failed to adequately respond to the vulnerabilities identified by VMA-211.

(b) (U) **Failure to Effectively Manage Risk.** MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant were in a very challenging risk management environment considering the significant drawdown of forces and correlating shift in mission from counterinsurgency to security force assistance. Nonetheless, some of the decisions they made and the lack of proper oversight exposed the BLS Complex and its personnel and mission-essential equipment to considerable risk, which the enemy exploited on 14-15 September 2012.

1 ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **MajGen Gurganus Resource Allocation.** Command includes the authority and responsibility for effectively using available resources to accomplish assigned missions. Commanders constantly use their judgment for allocating resources, including determination of appropriate troop-to-task ratios. Commanders have an obligation to inform their superiors when insufficient resources have been allocated to accomplish the mission. LtGen Waldhauser, Commander, US Marine Forces Central Command (MARCENT), reinforced this point in guidance to MajGen Gurganus as he assumed command of RC(SW). LtGen Waldhauser told MajGen Gurganus that if there were missions or tasks MajGen Gurganus could no longer do as his personnel reductions continued, then he simply could not do them and he needed to speak up about it. Specifically, LtGen Waldhauser advised MajGen Gurganus that he may have to scale back on what he was being asked to do with the COIN mission. Finally, LtGen Waldhauser recognized MajGen Gurganus would have to make some hard choices, and he would have to mitigate risk created by the force drawdown (Ex 76). Yet MajGen Gurganus did not effectively adapt to achieve the mission with fewer resources. In July 2012, MajGen Gurganus submitted a request through LTG Terry to Gen John Allen, Commander, ISAF/USFOR-A, for an FML increase of 205 Marines for the SECFOR (Ex 115, 116). While awaiting Gen Allen's decision on the FML request, MajGen Gurganus did not adjust his troop-to-task ratio and reallocate adequate forces to protect an already vulnerable BLS Complex. When the FML request was disapproved, MajGen Gurganus did not take prudent steps to reallocate his own forces to reduce unnecessary exposure to risk. Instead, he made the conscious decision to continue accepting risk at the BLS Complex (Ex 41, 42). Regardless of the wisdom of MajGen Gurganus's troop-to-task decision, the responsibility for this decision falls upon MajGen Gurganus as the commander who consciously assumed that risk.

2 ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **MajGen Sturdevant Failure to Adequately Address AT/FP.** MajGen Sturdevant appropriately focused his forces on generating aircraft sorties to support ground operations, but he failed to simultaneously address the inherent responsibility of commanders at every echelon to provide security and protection for their forces. Every individual interviewed from 3d MAW (FWD) and subordinate units expressed

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that they were focused offensively and not defensively (Ex 43, 57-61, 65, 66). As a result, the personnel in 3d MAW (FWD) completely underestimated the threat, and overly relied on others to provide for their protection despite the fact their position had been identified as exposed and vulnerable. Many of the 3d MAW (FWD) interviewees, including MajGen Sturdevant, expressed that they were a tenant unit, and they relied upon TFBW and the UK FP Wing to protect them. By solely relying upon other units for the protection of his forces, MajGen Sturdevant ignored his responsibility to be an active participant in the preparation of base security and defense plans, and to protect his own forces and high-value assets. When AT/FP officers attempted to make improvements and encourage the squadrons to provide their own internal security, the answer was they could not get airplanes and qualified crews in the air while also providing their own security. MajGen Sturdevant's approach to local security was inconsistent with USMC doctrine of "no rear area Marines" and ignored the practical aspects of the Credo "every Marine a rifleman." Further, the decision to cut 80% of the MWSS was a troop-to-task assignment which eliminated AT/FP assets like engineers and MPs that could have helped provide or improve the force protection posture. Although the 3d MAW (FWD) undoubtedly provided outstanding air support to the ground combat elements in RC(SW), they did so at the expense of their own security.

(c) (U) **Inadequate Guidance and Support.** Finally, MajGen Gurganus failed to provide adequate AT/FP guidance and support to MajGen Sturdevant, and MajGen Sturdevant, in turn, failed to provide adequate AT/FP guidance and support to his squadrons.

1 ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Inadequate Guidance (MajGen Gurganus).** RC(SW) had a major subordinate unit and a major source of its combat power located on a camp not protected by Marines. MajGen Gurganus failed to adequately direct his staff to assist 3d MAW (FWD) with force protection measures to ensure that they were secure on Camp Bastion. That staff assistance could have included a coalition force capabilities and limitations assessment, and implementation of necessary mitigation measures. In the alternative, he could have directed MajGen Sturdevant to conduct his own assessment and identify what support he needed. MajGen Gurganus failed to ensure that 3d MAW (FWD) was adequately integrated into the UK defensive plan of Camp Bastion or the previously discussed OP CONGO crisis response plan. Although 3d MAW (FWD) was not relieved of responsibility for its own force protection, MajGen Gurganus did not provide an adequate level of direction and oversight.

2 ~~(S//REL TO USA, ISAF, NATO)~~ **Inadequate Guidance (MajGen Sturdevant).** Likewise, MajGen Sturdevant did not provide adequate direction and oversight for the protection of his squadrons located on the Camp Bastion airfield. The 3d MAW (FWD) Headquarters was integrated into a sectored force protection plan with other Marine units located on Camp Leatherneck. Yet, MajGen Sturdevant did not demand the same of his squadrons to integrate into the Camp Bastion defensive plan or the OP CONGO response plan.

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e. (U) **Finding Regarding the UK**. The scope of this investigation is limited to US accountability pertaining to the Camp Bastion attack, so it will not draw findings regarding the effectiveness or efficiency of UK forces. However, an initial UK review of the attack (Ex 39) warrants the recommendation in paragraph 6.b. below.

6. (U//~~FOUO~~) **Recommendations to Commander, US Central Command.**

a. (U//~~FOUO~~) Refer this report to Commandant, USMC, for review and action as appropriate.

b. (U//~~FOUO~~) Refer this report to UK Ministry of Defence for review and action as appropriate.

c. (U//~~FOUO~~) Refer this report to Commander, ISAF, for review and action as appropriate.

7. (U//~~FOUO~~) **Point of contact.** (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, US Central Command (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

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6 Encls
1. Appointment Memorandums
2. Legal Review
3. Executive Summary
4. Exhibit List
5. Timeline
6. Relevant Organizations/Personnel

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