



HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES FORCES - AFGHANISTAN
KABUL, AFGHANISTAN
APO AE 09356

USFOR-A DCDR-S

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, United States Forces-Afghanistan/International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan

SUBJECT: Executive Summary for AR 15-6 Investigation, 21 February 2010 CIVCAS incident in Uruzgan Province

1. On 21 February 2010, up to twenty three (23) local nationals were killed and twelve others injured when the convoy they were travelling in was mistaken for an insurgent force and engaged with air-to-ground fire. The tragic loss of life was compounded by a failure of the commands involved to timely report the incident. The strike occurred because the ground force commander lacked a clear understanding of who was in the vehicles, the location, direction of travel and the likely course of action of the vehicles. This lack of understanding resulted from poorly functioning command posts at [REDACTED] and CJSOTF-A which failed to provide the ground force commander with the evidence and analysis that the vehicles were not a hostile threat and the inaccurate and unprofessional reporting of the Predator crew operating out of Creech, AFB Nevada which deprived the ground force commander of vital information.
2. Three vehicles carrying over thirty civilians were mistaken for an insurgent convoy and engaged with Hellfire missiles and 2.75" aerial rockets. The ground force commander was executing a combined combat operation in the village of Khod. He believed the vehicles, approximately 12 kilometers away, contained a group of insurgents attempting to execute a flanking maneuver to reinforce insurgents operating near the village.
3. Movements of the vehicles appeared to match calls heard over intercepted communication [REDACTED] for insurgents to mass for an attack on the combined US and Afghan forces near Khod. The vehicles were first spotted at approximately 0500D (local time). None of the women were spotted in or near the vehicles during the three and a half hours the vehicles movements were tracked. Two children were spotted near the vehicles, but inaccurate reporting from the crew of the unmanned Predator aircraft to the forces on the ground led the Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) to believe that the vehicles contained only armed military aged males. Information that the convoy was anything other than an attacking force was ignored or downplayed by the Predator crew. In addition, the operations centers at [REDACTED] and CJSOTF-A failed to analyze the readily available information and communicate effectively with the ODA Commander.
4. The ODA Commander conducting Battle Damage Assessment (BDA) counted fifteen (15) to sixteen (16) men killed at the site. During follow-up operations, local elders identified twenty three men killed and solatia payments were made to their families. Additionally, eight (8) men, one (1) woman and three (3) children were injured in the engagement and are receiving care from US or Coalition medical personnel. The ODA commander immediately released the remains of the deceased to local Afghan

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Police and community leaders at the strike site and the ODA team evacuated the wounded for medical care.

5. Initial observations of the vehicles appeared to indicate a threat force. Adult men were observed gathering in and around the vehicle, moving tactically and appearing to provide security during stops. The movement of the vehicles matched pre-mission intelligence and the [REDACTED]. The ODA Commander displayed tactical patience in letting the situation develop for several hours before the engagement. The time bought by that patience was wasted because of the Predator crew's inaccurate reporting and the failure of both command posts to properly analyze the situation and provide control, insights, analysis, or options to the ODA commander. Once the more experienced [REDACTED] Day Battle Captain came on shift, the situation was analyzed and he took appropriate steps to assist in developing alternative engagement scenarios with the [REDACTED] Commander. Unfortunately, these alternatives had not yet been implemented before the engagement occurred.

6. Immediately after the engagement [REDACTED] and CJSOTF-A had ample evidence of a possible CIVCAS incident but failed to report it. Both commands sought to confirm the existence of CIVCAS rather than reporting suspected CIVCAS as required. The OH-58Ds which fired the missiles and rockets, ceased their engagement when they spotted bright clothing and suspected women were present. Despite the reports sent by the OH-58Ds, the Full Motion Video (FMV) from the Predator showing women and children on the objective site and reports from the Predator over [REDACTED] neither [REDACTED] or CJSOTF-A reported suspected CIVCAS. Even after receiving a First Impression Report from the aviation unit which conducted the strike and performed the MEDEVAC, CJSOTF-A refused to report CIVCAS as the information contradicted initial reports from the Sensitive Site Exploitation (SSE) and did not come from a CJSOTF-A unit. [REDACTED] and CJSOTF-A finally reported the CIVCAS nearly twelve (12) hours after the strike when the [REDACTED] surgeon reported the casualties in the hospital.

7. Using the questions contained in your appointment memorandum dated 22 February 2010, I have enclosed findings at TAB A. My administrative recommendations for avoiding incidents of a similar nature in the future are at TAB B. In addition, these findings include suggestions regarding command accountability at TAB C.

TIMOTHY P. MCHALE
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Deputy Commander, Support
U.S. Forces - Afghanistan



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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: AR 15-6 Investigation, 21 February 2010 U.S. Air-to-Ground Engagement in the Vicinity of Shahidi Hassas, Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan

1. I have reviewed the AR 15-6 Investigation into the 21 February 2010 U.S. air-to-ground engagement in the vicinity of Shahidi Hassas, Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan. I approve the Investigating Officer's (IO's) findings and I approve recommendations as follows:

a. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM):

(1) This investigation is to be referred to JFCOM for review and full implementation of all of the recommendations regarding changes in home station training. However, at a minimum, consideration should be given to the development of predeployment training at home station and combat training centers to ensure that Command Posts are put through a rigorous series of COIN training and challenging scenarios.

(2) Additionally request JFCOM develop a seminar taught by former Battalion/Brigade/Division level Commanders/Command Sergeants Majors, using case studies and vignettes that educate and train leaders on "Leading COIN Formations." Develop a required professional reading list of books, periodicals, articles and investigations that bring to light the complexities and leadership responsibilities of leaders at all levels of COIN operations.

(3) Review war-fighting terminology for use in a COIN environment. Request JFCOM review and publish standard definitions for doctrinal terms and frequently used non-doctrinal terms throughout the CJOA. Incorporate these terms in predeployment training CTC and MTT training plans.

(4) Incorporate CIVCAS reporting requirements in predeployment training plans.

b. IJC and USFOR-A J7: This report will be referred to the ISAF Joint Command (IJC) and the USFOR-A J7 for implementation of in country training recommendations. Specifically, the J-7 will work with the IJC to:

(1) Develop a mobile training team to travel throughout the CJOA to evaluate and train units' Command Posts on COIN Operations as well as to develop a seminar to educate and train leaders on leading COIN formations. Further, this training should ensure full development and training on the targeting process, responsibilities and engagement criteria at all levels in accordance with the Rules of Engagement and Tactical Directives.

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(2) Ensure that deployed US and coalition units update and develop new vignettes to meet the requirements of the AOR and continue COIN training as outlined above on a sustainment basis while deployed.

(3) Incorporate CIVCAS reporting requirements in sustainment training.

c. United States Air Force:

(1) This investigation, findings and recommendations be forwarded Headquarters Air Force to consider appointing Air Combat Command as the lead MAJCOM to quickly codify command level guidance on Distributed Common Ground System/Remote Piloted Vehicle tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) and conflict resolution in an Air Force Tactics Techniques and Procedures manual.

(2) It is requested that the Wing Commander for the 432nd Air Expeditionary Wing Commander convene a Commander's Directed Investigation (CDI) to determine the actions and assessments of the [REDACTED] Predator crew in this incident.

d. IJC and USFOR-A, J3:

[REDACTED]

e. [REDACTED] and CJSOTF-A: Retrain on the Tactical Directive and develop standard operating procedures to address CIVCAS reporting.

2. Recommendations regarding disciplinary actions will be reviewed and considered for implementation as per my discretion.

STANLEY A. MCCHRYSTAL
General, U.S. Army
Commander
United States Forces-Afghanistan/
International Security Assistance
Force, Afghanistan