



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
3RD SUSTAINMENT COMMAND (EXPEDITIONARY)
CAMP ARIFJAN, KUWAIT
APO, AE 09366

ACTS-SCK-DO

15 October 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Interview with [redacted] 1st
BDE, 82nd Airborne Division Brigade [redacted] 15
October 2021

1. On 15 October 2021, BG Lance Curtis, US Army and [redacted] USMC, conducted an interview of the above personnel at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 3ESC Headquarters to discuss the facts and circumstances surrounding the attack on Abbey Gate on 26 August 2021.

2. Methodology: BG Curtis asked a series of questions throughout the interview, which [redacted] answered often collaboratively. [redacted] US Army recorded the interview for transcription below. For the purpose of recording who was speaking, the following shortened terms will be used to identify the speaker:

BG Curtis – BG

[redacted]

3. Discussion.

a. The interview began with BG Curtis providing an overview of scope of the investigation, which included the fact-finding concerning actions before, during, and after the attack, chronology, leadership, task organization, force protection, gate operations, and medical operations. He stated the intent was to make notes of the conversation and prepare a memorandum of the statement. The subject would have the opportunity to review and make additions, add context, or remove anything not correctly captured and rendered to writing.

b. Question and Answer 1.

(1) Question. BG - When did you get assigned to the Brigade?

[redacted]

[redacted] – 12 August 2021 I was assigned as the BDE [redacted]

c. Question and Answer 2.

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(1) Question. BG - Can you talk about any important events in your pre-deployment and train up to your movement to HKIA?

(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) - IRF Prep started in March which was our Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) Rotation 21-05. We did not rehearse non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO) but we did rehearse civic engagement. Mock interagency visits and role players. Did not rehearse crowd control. Geronimo is the size of an airhead line and we ran Entry Control Point (ECP) ops at the scale available at the location. Unlike the one at National Training Center (NTC) where there's always a NEO inject we did not get that. Following that we did marksmanship training in preparation for IRF 1 July. We did one LPD involving tactical decision games. One was a NEO. We practiced a NEO leaving Hamad Karzai International Airport (HKIA) with a penetration. I would not have considered us to have achieved the status and training the Marines do in their prep for a float.

d. Question and Answer 3.

(1) Question. BG - When did you officially get alerted?

(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) - We started studying the problem knowing it was highly likely and developed a pointed playbook. We talked to MG Donahue and we were told to focus on Bagram. We worked up Joint Forcible Entry (JFE) concepts and thought things through for how to split forces between multiple airheads if necessary. We started getting serious about NEO discussion and then got the official notification on 12 August. The CG (MG Donahue) gave me the first indicator the day before that it was definitely going to happen.

e. Question and Answer 4.

(1) Question. BG - What did the departure look like? Prioritization of outload?

(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) - We were 100% focused on outload. IRF PVL and echeloned equipment sets. We began to work on Soldier load issues because it was clear that the division would be manipulating the force flow. We deployed and made decisions based on probably going to an Intermediate Staging Base (ISB) like [redacted] (b)(1)1.4a and then when called forward we planned to be security for whatever location it might have been.

f. Question and Answer 5.

(1) Question. BG - Talk about force flow and build-up.

(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) - My first unit on the ground is 2/504. We had one aircraft land on the 15th. It was a Sunday and we landed 2100 local. We linked up with Diplomatic security.

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g. Question and Answer 6.

(1) Question. BG - Talk me through your first impression of the tactical scenario.

(2) Answer. [REDACTED] (b)(6) - We were immediately put on the Camp Alvarado perimeter and then when the sun came up we were told to put our Soldiers down against that crowd who was out all over the airport facility and fields. I was in the Cab CP. [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) and his staff were watching the crowds with the raid camera and the crowd initially looked like the Taliban attacking. We had security of Alvarado and we sent a unit out to establish a screen line. We had 300 personnel on the ground (one battalion minus). We had 2/504 with their artillery battery on the ground. Red Devils landed on the 16th at 0440 local. We got a lot of artillery personnel on early in anticipation of opposition. They were basically with the IRV 1. By the time the zombie apocalypse happens we were at about 750-800 personnel. But the end of that night we had 1k on the ground. We established the screen lines south of the air strip once we had the personnel.

h. Question and Answer 7.

(1) Question. BG - Talk about COMREL. Who did you work for?

(2) Answer. [REDACTED] (b)(6) - I worked for BGen Sullivan (USMC, JTF-CR Commander). I asked this question right away and that was one of the things we established very early on. Although it later changed, I worked for BGen Sullivan.

i. Question and Answer 8.

(1) Question. BG - How did you get tied in with Marines on the ground to create a security perimeter?

(2) Answer. [REDACTED] (b)(6) - We tied in visually. We never established radio comms in the darkness. I recall that the Marines at the time only had 200-250 personnel themselves so we were both pretty thin. It would have been 1/8 or 2/1 but they were under [REDACTED] (b)(6) [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) there was an understanding that the Marines had the East side of the airfield and we had the West.

j. Question and Answer 9.

(1) Question. BG - Talk about how the day of the 15th ends for you.

(2) Answer. [REDACTED] (b)(6) - Our third aircraft came in and the night ends with the crowd never being disbursed. That's off of apron 8A-C. There were two distinct waves according to outside reports, but we just saw it as a mass mob because we were too close to it all. It looked to us like a constant wave of influx. We could differentiate between the Taliban based on their dress and while some of them were armed, there

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was never a direct threat to our Soldiers demonstrated in any intent. We had to be very careful about crowd control because the crowd was in the thousands and even small movements or disturbances could have a much larger effect. Those who were directly associated with the Taliban had clothing that was distinctive. Later that night as we pushed the crowd and the Taliban out. You could tell the difference and they even lamented to the National Security Unit (NSU). I witnessed awkward, but civil interactions between the Taliban and NSU. The night of the 16th was the first time we had any interactions with the Taliban. We were clued in then that the partnership and balance of relationships would be okay.

(b)(6) - When I got there and we established a more secure perimeter the interactions were civil between the NSU and Taliban. This is a different time and space because I came in a little after the CDR.

k. Question and Answer 10.

(1) Question. BG - What Rules of Engagement (ROE) were you aware of and practicing?

(2) Answer. (b)(6) - The ROE was the right to self-defense - I was going off the self-defense ROE and it was the hostile act and hostile intent standard expectation. They never maneuvered or demonstrated intent and our paratroopers exercised amazing restraint even in a lot of difficult scenarios.

l. Question and Answer 11.

(1) Question. BG - Can you talk at all about messaging to the crowds?

(2) Answer. (b)(6) - We used a vehicle with some guys who showed up and spoke a few of the local languages and they would speak and tell the crowd that nothing would happen until they get off the airfield. They understood that they needed to move back. There were a lot of injuries that night between locals claiming getting hurt and the shoving of the masses. I've heard a lot of figures. We haven't really established the numbers but we think there were 2000-3000 civilians on the airfield that night.

m. Question and Answer 12.

(1) Question. BG - What was your posture when dealing with the crowd?

(2) Answer. (b)(6) - We were inoculated from day one because of our close proximity to the Afghan Civilians (AFGCIVs). We were immersed in the crowd and the people at the forward line of troops (FLOT) since the moment we touched down. We got used to their presence and proximity and so as we continued from our arrival we became normalized in accepting the risk and proximity of their crowds. We were in no way dismissive of the danger and potential issues, but at the same time we did not

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have a choice in how we engaged them and our timetable was known to be compressed to a point of stressing making things work.

n. Question and Answer 13.

(1) Question. BG - So we're at the 17th now. Talk about your posture, force flow, and tasking understanding as of the 17th.

(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) - 17th was the first day of normalcy in terms of operations without surprises. Our CP was at Alvarado and we had 5 companies, one delta company, and two batteries. We had a strong point at the [redacted] (b)(1)1.4c [redacted] (b)(1)1.4c We had an agreement with the Marines that they had the East and we had the West prior to the 17th. The narrative was that we were securing the airhead line. That started on the 17th. On the 18th that changed to us being responsible for perimeter security with the Marines on local security for their gates in which they were operating. It looked like the following by date in a very general sense:

15th, arrive and secure locally

16th, clear AFGCIVs and secure locally

17th, secure the western line and establish perimeter understanding

18th, build combat power and secure the perimeter

19th, we have the entire perimeter line minus the localized Marine gate security

20th, secure the entire airhead line

21st, same as above

22nd, start supporting the NEO through south gate, and this was a big change because this was the first day we started receiving AMCITs at west gate. This is the day that we got wishy washy because we were doing the boutique exfils along with the planning of the Joint Tactical Exfil (JTE). This grew and grew and grew over time. Gate 1 and 3 were our gates we ran. This was also in coordination with [redacted] (b)(6) in the International coordination cell. [redacted] (b)(6) didn't start producing clarity and unity of effort until then. There was a moment in time where it was clear that he wasn't doing much chief of staffing and he was really running the international coordination cell. The MCC was really working to create clarity to be able to provide clarity.

o. Question and Answer 14.

(1) Question. BG - Mission Orders are distributed how?

(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) - Joint Task Force 82 is formed on the 18th and All American 6 (MG Donahue) and the Division tactical command post (DTAC) arrived mid-day. He had his first huddle that night around 1900. The task org changed the next day. I was working for Gen Sullivan before and then got TACON to 82nd on the 19th. We were still coordinating directly with the Marines but at this point what was established between myself and [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) was that we agreed to assume the entire airhead line and that he [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) was on the gates. The security of the gates had a bubble around them

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which they efficiently established on the ground and they owned the security in those spaces. It was largely [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) who established those connections.

p. Question and Answer 15.

(1) Question. BG - So now we're on the 22nd. Talk me through the issues and observations you had around this time.

(2) Answer. [REDACTED] (b)(6) - These are the days where the Marines are extracting personnel from the gates and the reporting in the news is picking up. The NSU is firing a huge amount of warning shots. The Threat stream is picking up. We had multiple threat streams with levels of specificity that varied. We started hearing about the 'gold corolla' I think on the 2nd day but it's not populated on the Intel row until the 20th. I have physical evidence of the threat on the 20th and we knew they were cooking something up early. We knew they were imminent on the 22nd. This is important because the issue became apparent when we would try to do anything at the gates. The issue of standoff and crowds complicated any transitions. The Taliban were very difficult to deal with at the North Gate.

q. Question and Answer 16.

(1) Question. BG - What was your interaction with the Taliban and their leadership?

(2) Answer. [REDACTED] (b)(6) - We established a sense of the Taliban control structure after Abbey Gate opened. We established individuals who controlled specific areas and then overall commanders who reported various levels of effectiveness. [REDACTED] (b)(6) he controlled a specific area. [REDACTED] (b)(6) was the senior guy at south gate. [REDACTED] (b)(6) was the city commander and he'd enter through the South gate and he'd have meetings. [REDACTED] (b)(6) may have been a bigger deal than some of the others because he got the pomp and circumstance that the others didn't get when they came around. They had a fairly clear command structure based on control and presence. 1/504 [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) interfaced with [REDACTED] (b)(6) was at Abbey Gate. [REDACTED] (b)(6) was the overall area leader, but we never established contact with him.

r. Question and Answer 17.

(1) Question. BG - Talk about gate and transition planning.

(2) Answer. [REDACTED] (b)(6) - I had been to Abbey Gate on the 23rd to get a sense of the gate ops and structure. There was always a discussion about this and we would agree to things but then our guys on the ground would start actioning stuff, and agreeing to the relief in place (RIP) schedule. Timelines started slipping almost immediately. We established the 27th early on that we would have leadership interface and start to

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transition. This was the 23rd when we initially agreed to this. BGen Sullivan and MG Donahue were very much of the mindset to say you guys figure this out down to my level with [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6). We established on the 24th that we would start pushing out info ops that the gates would close. We understood we would never operate the gates to process the evacuees. The economy of force was never capable of having us operate gates and secure the airhead line. We established that as the known factor. The earliest date they asked for was the 24th. This was the compelling factor because this was based on their exfil timeline understanding. They (the Marines) thought that was the amount of time it would take to draw back and then get off the lines and exfil. The Brits had asked for the gate to remain until the period of darkness (PoD) 25/26. [redacted] (b)(1)1.4d

[redacted] (b)(1)1.4d

(b)(6) – You could just see that the Marines were tapped out. They were almost culminating with their ability to operate the gates and we felt like their ability to operate was approaching end. They were exhausted, but they kept doing it.

(b)(6) – We agreed to the timeline: RIP on the 28th/29th, but the moment we walked out of the room with [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) and then MG Donahue and I walk the ground to assess the gate ops and I'm wondering if we can keep the Baron hotel rat line open. We called those rat lines because they were known ingress points used by lots of folks for different reasons. The Baron complex is large. We planned to close the larger gate and only operate the very niche boutique extracts. I convinced MG Donahue we could operate the rat line to Barron. MG Donahue was convinced there was no way we would keep the gate open based on the operations we already had planned. He said that based on the fact that this was an accident waiting to happen. We talked about the timeline for the 28th and 29th and it almost went from the agreement to an understanding that it likely wouldn't work the same way as the initial discussion with [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6). We established that we planned to close those gates and have zero operations, to a degree that we discussed the specific control. We established the expectation that the Marines would close the gates with an obstacle plan and their engineer effort would make sure the gate traffic could not continue.

I kept hearing the Marines at the lower level kept pushing the expectation of establishing the timeline that did not match our agreements and they kept pushing for earlier. On the 26th [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) was already walking around because of this expectation to start taking the gates earlier despite the understanding of the 28th/29th timeline. He was down there doing an assessment.

s. Question and Answer 18.

(1) Question. BG - So the day of the 26th?

(2) Answer. (b)(6) – The day started at 0400 in the morning with some craziness.

[redacted] (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(3)130b; (b)(6)
 [redacted] (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(3)130b; (b)(6) He was not

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in charge of anything. His purpose in the group was to use his clout. Anyway, I get info from [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) that there was an issue at the Black Gate. On the heels of the "small extraction" (6 busses) at Black gate. There was no coordination done prior and it created big problems and it was really sketchy. [redacted] (b)(6) owned that part of the perimeter. We show up and the info was mixed. The person who was more apparently in charge than anyone. He never said anything about Americans on the busses, and in fact pointed out that they didn't know who half the people were. He said half of these people jumped on these busses out of nowhere. We were surrounded by [redacted] (b)(1)1.4c and a bunch of paramilitary. There was a logical connection but nothing official. I called the consular affairs people because this all felt bad. It just reeked of unofficial and off the books. I explained who was at the gate and was moving them around. I end up taking the JSOC guy to the JOC in order to coordinate entry. The longer I work with the [redacted] (b)(6), the more I learned. He was working with the [redacted] (b)(1)1.4a and using their air force. They were bringing the evacuees to the gate 9 ramp. But the longer we worked with them, the SoA people led by [redacted] (b)(6) who was the front-man for SoA, the more I realized the divide between the SoA people and the actual JSOC crews. It was an understanding but nothing real. This was at 0504 I sent a text to [redacted] (b)(6) was DoS's [redacted] (b)(6). The threat stream was growing in this timeline, so this was a real potential problem connected to me wanting to get the convoy of random Afghans off the base. It was surreal.

[redacted] (b)(6) - I went out there. I told the boss "this needs your attention".

[redacted] (b)(6) - This went on and continued to get more and more sketchy in some ways. Insane and absolutely uncoordinated.

t. Question and Answer 19.

(1) Question. BG - Timeline for the blast.

(2) Answer. I took a note and wrote down 1734 as the SIGACT. They were (the Marines) miraculously poised to react and provide medical care. The other gates were shut down. North and East gates were shut down.

u. Question and Answer 20.

(1) Question. BG - Do we know why the Abbey gate was operating still?

(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) - When you go down there you'll see the international forces. It was almost sectioned off. The crowd would go nuts when that happened. But it offered a lot of options to see and grab select personnel. It was the whole reason the North gate shut down at one point after the NSU/Taliban/Marine incident.

v. Question and Answer 21.

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(1) Question. BG - You referenced the incident between Marines and NSU at the North gate. Can you talk about that?

(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) - Kind of. The Marines killed 2 NSU guys at the North gate. There was some sort of confusion. The Marines thought they were getting shot at. The Marines returned fire and killed an NSU guy. There were a lot of contributing factors to that incident, but more specifically to the feeling of keeping the gates operating. I feel like the problem was that they had no control of who was coming in. We were actually talking to one of the Marine LtCols. It was an [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6). He called it out as being very frustrating with the amount of people were being let in specifically for people whom we did not have control of or valid information on. The DoS operated in a way that made this difficult. I believe there wasn't a company commander out there that didn't feel that pressure and know that it was tied directly to the bigger picture at the White House level. BGen Sullivan and MG Donahue had meetings all the time with the White House and they knew it. Not that it was permeating down necessarily, but we were all aware of where a lot of this was driven from. We believed that it was something epic and awesome and we were just out there assuming risk in order to keep the lines open and do good things for people.

w. Question and Answer 23.

(1) Question. BG - The 26th threat stream reporting?

(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) - I recall clearly the threat streams of a motorcycle or bag IED and ISIS media reportedly in position. It was awful at Abbey gate on the 26th. We were actually there at 1430 on that day. The Marines didn't seem to be taking a lower profile than any other day. The other countries were there doing the same. Still operating like normal.

[redacted] (b)(6) - That's what I observed. I was down there several times in that time period and we had a lot of visualization over time and I didn't observe any change.

x. Question and Answer 24.

(1) Question. BG - What about uptic in threat stream reporting?

(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) - I did not observe any special threat reporting that day or any threat stream that specifically told me to change posture. Whether it was an incident or group of incidents, there were constant reports of 'bomb in 10 minutes'.

y. Question and Answer 25.

(1) Question. BG - Did you observe any specific gate being used for targeted extraction?

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(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) - So we controlled and ran West Gate with 2-504, and South gate with 2-501, then later 1-501. The ANA gate was controlled using TACON National Guard, but NSU mostly decided who entered. The Black gate was never even supposed to be a portal. Each gate had its own hustle. There was a [redacted] (b)(1)1.4d compound just outside of it. I got a message from [redacted] (b)(6) and remember telling him "KAK needs to work within the discipline of the gate security requirements". We called West gate "West Gate". Most people called it liberty gate but WSJ called it "Glory gate" other people called it NSU gate. Santa Cruz gate also known as the ANA gate was pretty much small extractions through [redacted] (b)(1)1.4d. We used [redacted] (b)(6) to control that gate, but we normally never would have done that. The crowd would be right up against the berm and the fence. The 28th was the day they controlled the outer gate.

z. Question and Answer 26.

(1) Question. BG - Back to Abbey gate – on the 26th – The Marines say there were snipers or designated marksmen in a tower there. Do you know if they fired?

(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) - [redacted] (b)(6) had a bunch of guys out there. I've asked [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) this question and I don't understand his answer. He was always kind of tied in with multiple international folks and different security posture. But the area isn't as open as it appears on the map. We were trying to determine whether or not anyone fired from us. It ended up that the small arms fire following the blast was US and Taliban forces firing warning shots. All the small arms fire would have been warning shots and trying to get AFGCIVs back. The medical personnel kept describing the penetrating wounds and it would have been ball bearings and fishing weights they were pulling out of guys. They would have known if it was bullets they were pulling out of wounded. [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) would know who to speak to about that specifically. The initial reports indicated that hundreds of shots were fired but eventually someone said that it was everyone shooting into the air. It would have been US personnel and the Taliban most likely. [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) will know who was in the tower that day and whether or not anyone fired from that position. [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) may know what it even sounded like because he was down there.

[redacted] (b)(6) - As it pertains to the Role II minus. As far as the timeline from the blast. I was on site as of 10 minutes from the blast. I was initially there because of traffic control and we needed to make sure the entrance was clear. I made it down to the first gate. We did not hear anything in our time there so it would have had to happen in the initial 2-3 minutes [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) may also have been directly in the gate area when the blast happened.

aa. Question and Answer 27.

(1) Question. BG - On the scene, how long are you there and what do you see?

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(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) – I initially got control of the inner gate. We brought in evacuation vehicle after evacuation vehicle. We were treating US servicemen and AFGCIVs. It was mostly Army FLAs that moved everyone out of the Abbey Gate area. I don't think the Marines recognized that. We maintained the route and kept moving Marines out of there. Aircraft was still flowing, meaning I don't think the airfield ever shut down so we had to be real careful of not effecting the runway operation even while evacuating. Rules didn't change for crossing the taxiway. 90% of our crossings were done on the West side of the taxiway. We could gain access to the North side of the runway through West side. The CH47 came in hot at about blast plus 45. The PJs came off the bird where it landed at the gate area and they just screamed past me and past the control measures and entered the gate. All the casualties were already gone out of the gate. I didn't have much visibility after I went in about what was happening inside the gate. The Western corridor was used and I know that from the drivers. [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) can speak to the casualties that would've gone in to Alvarado Role 1. They would've been US Service members and local nationals.

[redacted] (b)(6) – at 1901 on the 26th I took a note that said 5 Marines and 4 Afghans. MG Donahue was trying to gain visibility of the location. I later wrote down 4 more urgent cases. Those may have been pushed to us later.

bb. Question and Answer 28.

(1) Question. BG - What were your medical capabilities at Alvarado?

(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) - We considered it Role II Minus. Only thing we didn't have there was CT or Xray.

[redacted] (b)(6) – We had everything else there though. So the senior ranking provider/surgeon would have been [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) but the senior medic from 82nd would have been [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) The building was 40 yards from my command post.

cc. Question and Answer 29.

(1) Question. BG - What did I not ask that you think is important?

(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6) – Only thing I would add would be that it was [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) who had walked from the inner gate through to the outer area on the 26th moments before the blast and was doing a recon and he would have been down by the chevron when the blast occurred – he would have a very specific and clear perspective on the fire he would've heard and seen.

dd. Question and Answer 72.

(1) Question. BG - Exfil, What does that look like for you? Brits?

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(2) Answer. [REDACTED] – I know we agreed to speed up the timeline and we saw zero activity at the gate after the bombing. The gate would have been operating through the Barron evacuation. The next time I was at Abbey I saw zero crowd. On the 27th JTF-CR transitioned control of the gate to Task Force 82nd. From the 26th on, the North, East, and Abbey gates were actually the quietest. We had a lot of jumpers, but never at the gates themselves. We were active at South and West gate. On the morning of the exfil we saw rockets and we were down to the last few sticks, but it was eerily quiet and stable on the last day. We had 100% manning and we began to collapse slowly. From the time we collapsed to the time we were out was 2 hours. The reason the ISIS threat stream dropped to indirect fire was because they knew we were not taking gate traffic. On the fence our manning looked the same. As we started to collapse in, we knew we wouldn't have time to eject people, so we started making sure people couldn't get at the aircraft by isolating or controlling them off the airfield in non-lethal controls like locking them in busses off the flightline.

Contacts provided to add statements or interview are found below:

[REDACTED] – POC for statement with 1/82 IBCT

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 244th FWD surgical detachment. [REDACTED]

5. The point of contact for this memorandum is the undersigned at [REDACTED] and

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

LANCE CURTIS
 BG, US Army
 Investigating Officer



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
3RD SUSTAINMENT COMMAND (EXPEDITIONARY)
CAMP ARIFJAN, KUWAIT
APO, AE 09366

ACTS-SCK-DO

13 October 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Interview with [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)
[redacted] (b)(6) 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, 13 October 2021

1. On 13 October 2021, [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) USMC, conducted an interview of the above personnel at II Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters, Camp Lejeune, NC, to discuss the facts and circumstances surrounding the attack on Abbey Gate on 26 August 2021.

2. Methodology: [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) asked a series of questions throughout the interview, which [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) answered. [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) recorded the interview for transcription below.

3. Discussion.

a. The interview began with [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) providing an overview of the scope of the investigation, which included the fact-finding concerning actions before, during, and after the attack, chronology, leadership, task organization, force protection, gate operations, and medical operations. He stated the intent was to make notes of the conversation and prepare a memorandum of the statement. The subject would have the opportunity to review and make additions, add context, or remove anything not correctly captured and rendered to writing.

b. Question and Answer 1.

(1) Question. What's your Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)?

(2) Answer. 5803, a Military Police Officer.

c. Question and Answer 2.

(1) Question. What is your official billet?

[redacted] (b)(6)

d. Question and Answer 3.

(1) Question. When did you get assigned to that billet?

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(2) Answer. A year and a half ago, during the summer of 2020.

e. Question and Answer 4.

(1) Question. Leading up to the deployment Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA), what were you doing in terms of training?

(2) Answer. [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)

[REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)

f. Question and Answer 5.

(1) Question. Were you conducting vulnerabilities assessments in these countries?

(2) Answer. I went to all three locations in [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a and the embassy. Assessments had already been conducted at the embassy and [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a. In [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a we were going to be doing a vulnerability assessment, but we ended up not doing it because the training was canceled. I did do vulnerability assessments for [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a

g. Question and Answer 6.

(1) Question. When did you first make it to HKIA?

(2) Answer. I was part of the Pre-Deployment Site Survey (PDSS), originally in [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a I requested to go to Afghanistan, so I talked to the MEU Operations Officer to put me on the team. 11 July was when we inserted, and I stayed through the duration. The original plan was to stay a few days, but we were able to get extended and the MEU [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) advocated for me staying there. I worked with [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) who were the [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4c Marines operating out of HKIA.

h. Question and Answer 7.

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[REDACTED] (b)(6) 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, 13 October 2021

(1) Question. Talk me through what you are seeing as an [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) from July 11th through the collapse of Kabul on 15 August.

(2) Answer. I took the first week or so during the PDSS to really establish the layout and security aspects of the perimeter at HKIA. I linked up with [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) joined the team around the end of July, which formed our security team. This is also about the same time when the Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) Major flew in with eight other Marines to execute Evacuation Control Center (ECC) operations. The main goal was to figure out security. I worked for [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) in my security role and [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) in my operations role, both of them were with Joint Task Force-Crisis Response (JTF-CR). Situation Reports would be sent to the MEU Commander. I worked hand in hand with the Turks. We went with their Commander to look at every single gate and tower. We developed a security plan between us. I looked at the gates and security posts for the Battalion Landing Team (BLT) for fighting positions and overall security posture. I sent my findings back to the MEU Commander. We did this all around HKIA, between 13 different compounds. We did the security assessments at Camp Sullivan as well. The other thing I was doing was working with [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) We would bring in all the Afghan leadership once a week on Saturdays, to go over the all-around security posture. We mainly talked about what we would do if HKIA was attacked. We focused on the attack aspect rather than a horde of people.

i. Question and Answer 8.

(1) Question. What is your assessment of the overall survivability and viability as the one location that we would conduct the noncombatant evacuation (NEO) from?

(2) Answer. I provided all the assessments in detail and documented them on the high side. Specifically, we were talking about North HKIA where we identified four main security vulnerabilities. One was the North Gate and the others were the eastern perimeter towers, the southern area that was leading up onto the airfield, and the West Gate. We provided our recommendations to the commanders.

j. Question and Answer 9.

(1) Question. Did you conduct any assessments at Abbey Gate?

(2) Answer. Yes, however I can't give you the results because it was on a different domain. I sent the report to the MEU and JTF-CR, mostly every staff member should have had it.

k. Question and Answer 10.

(1) Question. Does anything stand out in your mind that could be problematic?

(2) Answer. Firstly, we had to get the General's permission to go outside HKIA to originally look at the enemy perspective. Everything we did on Abbey Gate was from

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inside the compound looking out or from about 200 meters outside looking back in. This was coordinated with the Turks who would provide security for us while we were conducting our analysis. From the original plan, to what actually happened, was completely the opposite of what we expected. Inside the internal gate was a shack that we needed to harden, but besides that I don't recall anything else.

I. Question and Answer 11.

(1) Question. During the time you were on the deck between the PDSS and when the NEO was starting off, how much time did you have with the RSO?

(2) Answer. Not much, I had anticipated working with the Embassy quite a bit, but everything was focused on the set up and security analysis at HKIA.

m. Question and Answer 12.

(1) Question. How was HKIA as the primary location to conduct NEO?

(2) Answer. From a security perspective, not very good. If we had more Marines it may have been feasible, but not with the Turks providing security. I was comfortable with the actual physical security. All the fence lines, tower structures, and the perimeter notification system was good enough to prevent people from entering the perimeter. I pointed out that the towers were outside the perimeter wall. If someone got into the tower they would be able to shoot or throw an IED on to the compound.

n. Question and Answer 13.

(1) Question. Were you mostly concerned with protecting the force and less concerned with keeping people off the runway?

(2) Answer. We were planning on keeping people off the airfield as well. We specifically talked about the holes in the fence line that would keep people from entering the airfield. I didn't anticipate that all the Afghan security forces would leave their weapons and let people flow through.

o. Question and Answer 14.

(1) Question. Prior to the NEO starting, was anything done to mitigate the threats you identified or any other security short falls?

(2) Answer. No, everything we determined as a risk was pushed up. [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a

[REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a

p. Question and Answer 15.

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(1) Question. If we declared a NEO sooner, could we have fixed the security short falls?

(2) Answer. Yes, most likely. This goes along with making sure the ECCs are set up correctly. This could have been done if we pre-coordinated with the Turks.

q. Question and Answer 16.

(1) Question. As you do you assessments to determine the viability of whether or not HKIA is valid from a security perspective, how do you envision the NEO occurring?

(2) Answer. We thought it would be an orderly process just like the way we were practicing it in [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a. It just didn't play out that way. The in-depth planning was conducted to set everything up with a secure perimeter, but on the 15th it just didn't go that way.

r. Question and Answer 17.

(1) Question. Did you ever readdress the major vulnerabilities?

(2) Answer. Yes, we briefed the JTF-CR staff about the vulnerabilities when they got on ground. We did that for about the first week. Once things started it didn't really matter because the situation had changed.

s. Question and Answer 18.

(1) Question. What did you assess as the risk to mission and risk to force?

(2) Answer. Risk to force would probably be the quick advance of the Taliban and their ability to attack HKIA prior to the NEO kicking off and before the Marines would get on ground. This was also dependent on the Turks' ability to provide security. This would affect our overall ability to properly secure the airfield.

t. Question and Answer 19.

(1) Question. What was your biggest concern to risk to mission and force?

(2) Answer. An insider attack and suicide vests were the main concern because of the ability for them to get close to the gates. There was a possibility a threat could be pulled in from the drainage ditch or through one of the other gates. A vehicle borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) wasn't a main concern due to the amount of people, as the crowds provided some standoff from the gates.

u. Question and Answer 20.

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(1) Question. Are you talking to the other units about that concern and ways to prevent that threat from manifesting?

(2) Answer. When 2/1 arrived I talked to their security officer and the BLT Marines about what I saw on the ground. My role as the protection cell changed because I was at the gates all day. The three of us would go to every gate. [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) was the intelligence analyst, I was filling my role as the [REDACTED] (b)(6) and [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) was the [REDACTED] (b)(6) Marine whose main job was to help with the biometrics. We linked up with the female search teams (FST) in order to help them whenever possible. I also spent much of my time going to find people at the gates and bring them in.

v. Question and Answer 21.

(1) Question. Was it primarily North and East Gate?

(2) Answer. Abbey Gate, North, and East. We also helped at West gate as people started coming in. There were families at the airport that were Americans. Some of the family members were stuck outside the gate. Our job was to go get them. There were important people from the embassy that we were tasked to go get as well.

w. Question and Answer 22.

(1) Question. Did you have success finding those people?

(2) Answer. Yes, I was provided a phone number and name to contact them. I was familiar with the area since I had been on ground so long. I spent about 90 percent of my time identifying people at the gates and getting them out. The other 10 percent was spent briefing and working with engineers to fix security issues around HKIA. We worked to get riot control gear around the compound. While going out to the gates to find people, I was able to identify security concerns and make recommendations to the commanders on the ground and the engineers to mitigate those concerns.

x. Question and Answer 23.

(1) Question. Were there other engineers making improvements at the gates besides the BLT Engineer Platoon?

(2) Answer. No, it was mainly just the BLT.

y. Question and Answer 24.

(1) Question. What concerns did you have from the time when we get Marines out to Abbey Gate to the end of the 26th?

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(2) Answer. My original concern, before the Marines were at the gates and while I was picking up locals at the gates, was the massive amounts of people. The Turks had shut the inner gate due to the amount of people. We had to work with them to open the gate when we needed to get people through. When we get the gate open the people tried to break in. This made me realize the security concern with how many people were located at the gates.

z. Question and Answer 25.

(1) Question. Once Marines establish security at the gate, pushed the people all the way out passed the Barron Hotel, and emplaced chevron on the 20th, what was your main concern?

(2) Answer. We were working with intelligence to find the people who would jump over the wall in order to get on the compound. We were trying to apprehend them to get them off the airfield. As I would go from location to location, I would consistently find people jumping over the wall who needed to be escorted off the compound. I think there was about 60 in total. There was a tree located near Abbey Gate that people were climbing and jumping over the wall in order to get past the perimeter. It was later cut down.

aa. Question and Answer 26.

(1) Question. What at Abbey Gate was a concern to you?

(2) Answer. It was just the massive amounts of people at the gates. All of the foreign countries were using that gate to get their people out as well. They would grab them from the ditch and process them through.

bb. Question and Answer 27.

(1) Question. Did you talk to the [REDACTED] (b)(6)

[REDACTED] (b)(6) about ways to mitigate risk?

(2) Answer. I don't remember talking with them about that specifically. You also had the British out there controlling the gate as well.

cc. Question and Answer 28.

(1) Question. Were you out there on the 25th at all? What did it look like versus 26th?

(2) Answer. Yes, the night of the 25th we were pulling people in. The British had pushed everyone down to the bridge. They had the riot shields down there controlling the crowds. The next morning the crowd had made it back up to the gate.

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dd. Question and Answer 29.

(1) Question. What are your thoughts on the crowd being up near the gate during the 26th? Did it make more sense for the company to collapse security or keep them further out?

(2) Answer. Based on the amount of people, and from my perspective, it's my opinion that it would provide more standoff, for the people to be by the bridge, in the case of an attack.

ee. Question and Answer 30.

(1) Question. If the Marines had kept security pushed out passed the bridge, how do you think it would have gone if there was an attack?

(2) Answer. Triage would have taken a lot longer, because casualties would have had to been carried a further distance. Depending on the situation there may have been more loss of life.

ff. Question and Answer 31.

(1) Question. Do you think there could have been anything done that would help with the standoff?

(2) Answer. I think that the Marines on the ground made the decision to the best of their ability per the threat that was identified and the numbers of people on the ground. You may have been able to put obstacles on the ground, but was there enough time? Potentially. From what I saw on the morning of the 26th, you would have needed a lot more Marines to push the crowd back. This would expose more Marines to the threat just to get more standoff.

gg. Question and Answer 32.

(1) Question. On the 26th where are you when the blast occurs?

(2) Answer. The morning of the 26th we woke up and went over to the PAX terminal, where there was one person that was identified as a blue passport holder who was meeting us at Abbey Gate. There were two individuals at the gate that I stood next to. We couldn't actually locate the person. I saw the Marines fight the crowds and watched the crowd trample each other. As for threat awareness, I was tracking a potential S-Vest during that day. I didn't know at which location. Inside the crowd was a one to two year old girl with her mother that was getting trampled and killed. The mother was asking us to get them out. At the same time a Marine blew up his hand with a flashbang and was getting evacuated. I gave the Marines my mace to help control the crowd. We eventually got the mother and her child out and took them to the PAX terminal to send them off.

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hh. Question and Answer 33.(1) Question. Were they passport holders?(2) Answer. I'm not sure, we would talk to the Department of State workers about certain people and explain the situation to try to get them out.ii. Question and Answer 34.(1) Question. Did you go back out to the gate?

(2) Answer. Yes, I went upstairs to ask to take [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) with me. He wanted to get outside and help. JTF-CR tasked us to get a lady and her family out that we were trying to get for multiple days. I located her on the southern area of the airfield. I told her to meet us at the gas station outside the West Gate and wait for us. She had a purple umbrella, which we used to identify her. [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) took a white truck and we took a different vehicle. We drove out North Gate toward the West Gate. We were greeted by an American guy that told us about the S-vest threat. I told them we were still going to get these people out. I looked out from one of the towers for the signal. I went outside the HKIA gate with National Directorate of Security (NDS) personnel. They went across the street to get the family and pull them through the gate. I checked their documents and brought them into HKIA. We searched the personnel and brought them back to the two trucks. We put the females in the up-armored vehicle, and we put the males in the white truck. We took both vehicles back to Abbey Gate to look for another person we were trying to find.

At this point there were several people that jumped the wall. The British personnel got them and were holding these people. They had it under control. There seemed to be another hole in the wall that needed to be closed. We drove over to the JOC and told them about the situation because our radios weren't working. At this point we get to the inner gate where we saw people running. Our vehicle was in the way so we moved it. We ran with the 2/1 Marines out past the barriers through the outer gate to find my Marine. I was looking for [REDACTED] (b)(6), but couldn't find her. I found out she was hit and made my way to the hole in the fence. I put a little girl on my shoulder and evacuated her to the casualty collection point (CCP). From there I ran into [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) and [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) who were helping to triage people. We saw someone looking out of the tower, so we had Marines look that way. We loaded [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) a host nation female, and a little girl into the truck. [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) was in the back helping [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) was driving, and in the back as well. We drove to the Role 2. We dropped them off and went back out to the gate. Once we got back out again there wasn't really anyone to get so we went back toward the inner gate. [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) loaded up a few more Marines and civilians to transport them back to Role 2. We meet up with [REDACTED] (b)(6) [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) to load up a mother, her child, and a male in our black vehicle and drove them to the Role 2. We then reported to the JOC.

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[redacted] (b)(6), 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, 13 October 2021

jj. Question and Answer 35.

(1) Question. What is your focus after the attack?

(2) Answer. I reported in what happened and what I saw. They brought in [redacted] (b)(6) to give a statement about what happened. After that we stayed in the JOC for a while. They told us to stay off the gates. At this point we went into the [redacted] (b)(1)1.4d

[redacted] (b)(1)1.4d

kk. Question and Answer 36.

(1) Question. When did you leave HKIA?

(2) Answer. The 28th of August.

ll. Question and Answer 37.

(1) Question. What else do you think we should know or should have asked about?

(2) Answer. I think you hit all the major points.

mm. Question and Answer 38.

(1) Question. Was it formalized that you would work for JTF-CR or have two bosses?

(2) Answer. I was the only [redacted] (b)(6) on the deck so it just happened over time.

nn. Question and Answer 39.

(1) Question. What's your phone number?

(2) Answer. [redacted] (b)(6)

4. The point of contact for this memorandum is the undersigned at [redacted] (b)(6) and

[redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)

[redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)

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SUBJECT: Interview with [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)

[redacted] (b)(6) 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, 13 October 2021

Approved for Release



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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ACTS-SCK-DO

15 October 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Interview with [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] 2nd Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 15 October 2021

1. On 15 October 2021, [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] USMC, conducted an interview of the above personnel at 3RD Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Headquarters, Fort Bragg, NC to discuss the facts and circumstances surrounding the attack on Abbey Gate on 26 August 2021.

2. Methodology: [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] asked a series of questions throughout the interview which [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] answered individually.

3. Discussion.

a. The interview began with [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] describing the purpose of the interview, the scope of the investigation, and the manner in which the conversation would be captured and rendered to writing. [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] was present to record and transcribe the statement.

b. Question and Answer 1.

[redacted (b)(6)]

c. Question and Answer 2.

(1) Question: Can you provide a brief overview of the training completed in preparation for your Immediate Response Force (IRF) mission?

(2) Answer: Collectively, our main training was completed at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) in Fort Polk, LA in March of 2021. We followed a full training glide path up to this point. This was a brigade-level training event. When we came back in April, we conducted recovery and then began preparations for assuming IRF I. This included Deployment Readiness Exercises (DREs) and inspections to verify our readiness. We conducted two DREs to practice deploying out of Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina (JBC).

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d. Question and Answer 3.

(1) Question: Did any of your training include securing an airfield?

(2) Answer: Yes, during a brigade exercise called Devil Storm, we seized and defended Sicily DZ at Fort Bragg, NC. We also secured an airfield while at JRTC. It's kind of our bread and butter to seize an airfield, but Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA) was bigger than any airfield we had previously trained on.

e. Question and Answer 4.

(1) Question: As part of your preparation, did you do any training to prepare for Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO)?

(2) Answer: Not really, but we made ourselves familiar with the NEO doctrine through Leader Professional Development (LPD) sessions at the brigade and battalion levels. We never trained specifically for a NEO. Our portion of the HKIA NEO was primarily security, rather than evacuation.

f. Question and Answer 5.

(1) Question: When did you receive notice of your deployment to HKIA?

(2) Answer: Our brigade received the alert message on 12 August. We received a WARNO earlier that day to expect an alert. At first, it was unclear on which battalion would be going where. I was IRB III so I expected to be in [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a instead of HKIA, but MG Donahue told me on 14 August around 2200 that my whole battalion would be going straight to HKIA.

g. Question and Answer 6.

(1) Question: When did you arrive to HKIA?

(2) Answer: We departed JBC during a period of darkness between the 15th and 16th. Our pilots thought we were going to [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a but I told them we needed to go to HKIA. We refueled in [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a before arriving in Kabul during the period of darkness between the 16th and 17th.

We arrived to HKIA shortly after the chaos of the crowd running onto the airfield. The airfield was mostly secure when we arrived. We filled the security gap on the south side.

h. Question and Answer 7.

(1) Question: What was your initial mission upon arrival to HKIA?

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(2) Answer: Our initial mission was to tie in with 1-504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division to help secure the south side of HKIA. We initially secured from the Abbey Gate to the domestic terminal. 1-504th was on the international terminal and to the west.

After the Marines left, we pulled security from the domestic terminal to the northeast corner of the airfield.

i. Question and Answer 8.

[redacted (b)(6)]

j. Question and Answer 9.

(1) Question: What was your Command Relationship (COMREL)?

(2) Answer: I reported directly to [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)]. Once MG Donahue arrived, he visited my sector and provided guidance often. Adjacent to me were the Marines and Brits. There were a lot of other nations and other services present throughout the NEO.

k. Question and Answer 10.

(1) Question: Did your mission change or evolve from airfield security while you were at HKIA?

(2) Answer: Initially, we were tasked with making sure that no one came on to the airfield. The mission eventually evolved to providing security on the south side of HKIA. This became difficult because many convoys came through the south side to the domestic terminal. We would process the convoys and support their movement to planes. We did this for four or five days and then I handed this over to 1-504th when we replaced the Marines at Abbey Gate and East Gate on the 27th. The gates were closed at this time, so we were not processing anyone at the Abbey gate or East Gate. We secured the southeast portion of HKIA until the exfil on POD 30/31.

l. Question and Answer 11.

(1) Question: What was the COMREL above you? Did you understand the adjusted Task Organization (TASKORG) pushed by Gen Mackenzie?

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(2) Answer: When I first arrived, a day or so before MG Donahue arrived, I understood that RADM Vasely was the CENTCOM representative in AFG. I thought [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) was working for BGen Sullivan, who was working for RADM Vasely. At first, it seemed like BGen Sullivan ran the NEO and MG Donahue ran security. But eventually, it just seemed like MG Donahue ran everything at HKIA.

m. Question and Answer 12.

(1) Question: What were your immediate priorities when you arrived to HKIA? How did they change over time and what drove your decisions?

(2) Answer: At first, my urgent priority was to understand where our perimeter was and to make sure we held it to ensure airflow in and out of HKIA. I was also concerned with trying to find a place for my battalion to conduct sustainment and command post operations. We were the third battalion from 1/82 to arrive and we didn't have any logical place to live. We ended up establishing a CP in a hangar on the south side of HKIA. We didn't have any running water or latrines, but we had shade and set up our command post and living area in the hangar. My first priority was security. My second priority was to take care of the troops and establish a battle rhythm. Eventually, I had to focus on the security of the convoys, because I had to do a lot of negotiating with the Taliban to get the convoys through. I placed a lot of trust in [redacted] (b)(6) and staff to keep security operations running along the perimeter, while I focused on the convoy missions at South Gate.

n. Question and Answer 13.

(1) Question: Did this take a lot of your time?

(2) Answer: Yes, I didn't sleep much during this time at South Gate. There was a high demand for the convoys to be coming in. I was the middle-man for many other countries and the Taliban.

It was important to work with the Taliban to ensure convoys could pass through the South Gate (which the Taliban controlled). The Taliban wanted information about each convoy, which we originally were uncomfortable with. We agreed to provide the number of buses, the drivers' names, and the number of passengers on each bus, so that the Taliban could be sure they were letting the right convoys in. The Taliban eventually wanted a full manifest before letting the buses in, but we were hesitant to provide names of evacuees.

I finally got a break from this mission at the South Gate as the Brits and Marines prepared to leave around the 26th. 1-504 PIR replaced us at the South Gate, and I began planning with the Marines for our transition. The Brits were leaving first, and then the Marines, and then we would be responsible for securing the East and Abbey Gates. There was a lot of discussion on if we would still be processing evacuees or not after we

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took over. I conducted a leader's recon on the 26th to discuss all of his with the Marines.

o. Question and Answer 14.

(1) Question: How often did you have the Department of State (DoS) working with you? Was it episodic or static? Did you understand which documents were required for processing?

(2) Answer: I never really understood what the standard was for evacuation and I was rarely the decision-maker on who would be allowed to come in to be evacuated. I knew that passport holders and green card holders should be able to come through. It seemed like there were not many American Citizens (AMCITs) waiting in line at the gates to come in. The Special Operations guys were plucking AMCITs out of the crowd and many AMCITs had contacts guiding them through easier ways to get in. I didn't have anyone from the DoS with me to help with any of this. A lot of Afghans that were trying to get in had random paperwork, but not passports or VISAs so we couldn't really help them. We weren't really running a processing center so we only helped obviously qualified evacuees.

p. Question and Answer 15.

(1) Question: What were the Rules of Engagement (ROE) when you arrived? Did it evolve over time?

(2) Answer: We were still trying to figure specific ROE when we arrived. We didn't receive a lot of information about ROE before deploying. Clarification to the ROE was my largest information requirement when we landed. I told my battalion that they should defend themselves when faced with hostile acts or hostile intent. Our Brigade Judge Advocate gave us a very good briefing when we arrived at HKIA explaining ROE, escalation of force, [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a

[REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(3)130b; (b)(6) I felt like it was pretty clear. The most confusing thing was how to interact with the Taliban.

We had one incident when a small group of either the Taliban or ISIS maneuvered toward one of our battle positions and pointed weapons at our guys. My guys fired at them. I immediately talked to my Taliban contacts and explained what happened. They didn't seem to know of care about it, so the group of armed males may not have been Taliban.

q. Question and Answer 16.

(1) Question: Was there any confirmation that you hit anyone during this?

(2) Answer: No.

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r. Question and Answer 17.

(1) Question: Were you receiving threat streams during your time at HKIA?

(2) Answer: We received intelligence reports all day, every day. I mostly received them through our brigade command channels, but MG Donahue would also tell me directly what to be watching out for. He would call, text, or tell me in person. There were constantly threats and reports being passed. We received the threat reports a potential attack at Abbey Gate, but it didn't seem more urgent than the many other threat reports we received.

s. Question and Answer 18.

(1) Question: You conducted your leader's recon and initially coordinated replacing the Marines at the gates. What did this look like?

(2) Answer: We knew all along that we would eventually take over security at the gates. We didn't know if we would be taking over the work of pulling people in the gate to process them, or if we would be solely pulling security. As the date for the handoff approached, we didn't think we would have anything to do with the evacuations. We were focused on security.

I focused Bravo Co on Abbey Gate and Charlie Co on East Gate. Starting on the 25th, these companies were in the vicinity of their gates to begin the transition. Each company was replacing a Marine battalion. I went down to the gates a handful of times on the 25th and 26th to check on my guys and the transition.

We had one joint meeting with Brits and Marines and Taliban. We were supposed to meet at 1500 on the 26th at the Barron Hotel. I was down at Abbey Gate the morning of the 26th, around 1000, and saw and talked with BGen Sullivan about the situation. I saw the huge crowds of desperate Afghans. It seemed like the Marines had created a more orderly process compared to when I had been down there before.

Around 1500 I walked with [redacted] to the Barron Hotel, leaving [redacted] and the [redacted] at Abbey Gate. We met with the [redacted] who was tied up in a VTC with his command. We waited for almost an hour and ended up starting the meeting around 1600. I think I missed some of the incoming intelligence reports about the Abbey Gate because of the meeting. I didn't feel any security concern on my walk through the Abbey gate, to and from the Barron Hotel. It didn't seem like there was going to be an imminent attack. The Marines were conducting business as usual. I think the meeting lasted from 1600-1700. I left the Barron Hotel with [redacted] and the [redacted] stayed at the Barron Hotel. [redacted] stayed at Abbey Gate with [redacted] to continue their transition.

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The attack happened after I returned to my TOC. My battalion responded immediately by assisting with CASEVAC and crowd control.

t. Question and Answer 19.

(1) Question: Can you discuss the Taliban leaders and who was in charge at which gates?

(2) Answer: (b)(6) seemed to be MG Donahue's Taliban counterpart. It seemed like he was the overall Kabul Taliban Commander. (b)(6) was located mostly near the South Gate at the domestic terminal. This seemed to be their headquarters. This made it tough for me during convoy coordination because we had to stop convoys for KLEs between US and Taliban leaders.

I know (b)(6) and MG Donahue talked a lot. I also coordinated with (b)(6) a few times. When I moved over to Abbey Gate and East Gate, I was trying to figure out who the Taliban leaders were in these areas but it was initially unclear.

I eventually figured out that (b)(6) was the Taliban leader at Abbey Gate on the day that I went to do my leader's recon at the gates with the Marines. The Brits gave me a burner cell phone that they used to contact (b)(6). I talked to (b)(6) a lot when there were surges of people near the gates, after we took over, when we needed help to control the crowds.

The Taliban commander near the East gate was (b)(6). He was very helpful assisting us with ground control. He would send guys with swords and hoses to quickly disperse crowds. They were unbelievably helpful. I don't know how we would have been able to clear crowds from the gates without their assistance.

At first, we had the National Strike Unit (NSU) as a partner force, and they were helpful with crowd control. After they left, we relied on the Taliban for crowd control, because the Afghans did not respond to our escalation of force methods.

I never met face-to-face with (b)(6); we only spoke through phone conversations. I met face-to-face with (b)(6) often. I had very good rapport with (b)(6). I trusted based on our mutual interests. I never thought that they enabled the blast at Abbey Gate.

u. Question and Answer 20.

(1) Question: What was discussed in the meeting? Did you discuss the timeline for the Brits and Marines to retrograde?

(2) Answer: We discussed that the Brits would pull out from the Barron Hotel that night. After they exfil'ed, the Marines would close the gate. Over the course of the 27th,

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the Marines would begin their exfil, as we replaced them for security. We discussed all of this with the Taliban and worked out the logistics of communication with them. The only thing that seemed a little sticky was when our transition with the Marines would be. I think this was worked out between [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] on the 26th before the attack. [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] made it clear to me that we wouldn't take over the gates until the 28th. We ended up taking over the Abbey Gate sooner, due to the attack. We took over the Abbey Gate on the morning of the 27th.

v. Question and Answer 21.

(1) Question: Do you recall the Brits discussing any delays with their exfiltration timeline?

(2) Answer: No, I was pretty oblivious to anything they were doing. I didn't get the sense that anything was off.

w. Question and Answer 22.

(1) Question: What happened after the attack?

(2) Answer: After the attack, I brought all of [redacted (b)(6)] to the Abbey Gate. We showed up about five minutes after the blast. We had one Afghan Field Litter Ambulance (FLA) that we had found on HKIA, and also called our brigade to send any FLAs that were available. We provided Role I medical assistance, and moved casualties to Role II. Four FLAs came down and we evacuated all of the remaining US casualties. I think it's safe to say that we evacuated all of the US casualties.

I'm not sure who evacuated the majority of the Afghan casualties. We pulled some of them through to Role II after we evacuated the US casualties.

We didn't really have to assist the Marines too much with security after the attack. I had [redacted (b)(6)] on standby to augment with them as needed.

Once we had all US casualties evacuated, a chinook landed with SOF medics. We had already evacuated all of the casualties, so they were not needed so I waved them off. I acted sort of like a "beach master" throughout the CASEVAC process, directing the ground traffic for first responders.

x. Question and Answer 23.

(1) Question: What time did you take over Abbey Gate and East Gate?

(2) Answer: We took over Abbey Gate around 1200 on the 27th. We took over East Gate a little later because a different Marine unit was at this gate. The gate at

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Abbey Gate was sealed at this point. We could open the gate to talk to the Taliban, but it was closed to potential evacuees. Some Afghans civilians continued to mass at the gate in hopes of being evacuated.

z. Question and Answer 24.

(1) Question: When did you start collapsing security at the gates and begin the force flow out of HKIA?

(2) Answer: (b)(6) held security at Abbey Gate until the last night (POD 30/31). I had been phasing my battalion out until the exfil. (b)(6) completed a three-phased withdrawal in less than two hours. They stayed up in towers around the gate until they had to move to the exfil plane.

The Taliban kept asking us for our exfil timeline but we didn't share any specific information with them. They knew we would be out by the 31st, but wanted to know exactly when so that they could rapidly move to control HKIA.

aa. Question and Answer 25.

(1) Question: Is there anything else that you think we should know? Is there anyone that you think we should talk to?

(2) Answer: The main thing we failed at, is that I didn't feel like we ever found a good way to communicate with our adjacent units. (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g We relied on face to face communication, and sent runners to their locations to pass information. (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g

I was also confused about when we would stop operating the gates and the timeline for our troops to pull back.

The Taliban were getting very frustrated that people were getting into HKIA that shouldn't have. (b)(6) wanted us to tell the Afghans exactly where they need to go and what to do. He said we needed to clearly message which gates were open and what the required documents were to get through. Many Afghans would go to Taliban checkpoints and tell them that Americans had told them to come to the gate. So the Taliban were frustrated because a lot of people that shouldn't be at the gates unnecessarily which became a security concern for the Taliban.

For every legitimate evacuee, there were thousands of illegitimate people trying to get into HKIA. We had such pressure to get as many people in as we possible. There was a lot of outside messaging to the Afghans that almost anyone would be able to be evacuated. This made perimeter security tough.

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bb. Question and Answer 26.

(1) Question: Back to the blast at Abbey Gate. Where were you located at the time of the blast and did you hear it? Did you hear any gunfire in the area?

(2) Answer: I was in the vicinity of Abbey Gate. I was in my TOC in a hangar a couple hundred of meters away. I could hear it but it wasn't extremely loud at my location. It was around 1730 when the blast occurred. I put my gear on and drove to the site to coordinate our response which I assumed would entail security and CASEVAC.

I got to the site around five minutes after the blast. There was sporadic gunfire, but it seemed to be coming from Taliban positions which as not unusual. I heard a few explosions south of the gate shortly after the attack, but assumed they were Brits or Taliban to control the crowd. I don't believe there was a complex attack after the initial explosion.

I had [redacted (b)(6)] attached to my unit. They were in the tower west of the Abbey Gate at this time and they could provide more information about possible small arms fire. No one has told me that there was any incoming small arms fire during or after the blast.

I had communication with the 82nd units at the time of the blast, but not with the Marines or Brits.

cc. Question and Answer 27.

(1) Question: Can you please provide your contact information?

(2) Answer: [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)]

4. The point of contact for this memorandum is the undersigned at [redacted (b)(6)] and

[redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)]

[redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)]



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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Interview with [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)
[redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 15 October 2021

1. On 15 October 2021, [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) USMC, conducted an interview of the above personnel at 3RD Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Headquarters, Fort Bragg, NC to discuss the facts and circumstances surrounding the attack on Abbey Gate on 26 August 2021.

2. Methodology: [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) asked a series of questions throughout the interview which [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) often answered together. It is annotated accordingly when they answered questions individually.

3. Discussion.

a. The interview began with [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) describing the purpose of the interview, the scope of the investigation, and the manner in which the conversation would be captured and rendered to writing. [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) was present to record and transcribe the statement.

b. Question and Answer 1.

(1) Question: What's your background and how long have you been in Bravo Co, 2-501st?

(2) Answer: [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)
[redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)

c. Question and Answer 2.

(1) Question: Did you conduct any training before assuming the Immediate Response Force (IRF) mission that helped prepare your unit for Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO)?

(2) Answer: We didn't conduct any specific NEO training but we did train on securing airfields.

d. Question and Answer 3.

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(1) Question: When did you find out you would be going to Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA)?

(2) Answer: We were alerted on 13 August.

e. Question and Answer 4.

(1) Question: When did you depart for HKIA?

(2) Answer: We departed Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina (JBC) on the night of 16 August.

f. Question and Answer 5.

(1) Question: What was your task and purpose when you arrived to HKIA?

(2) Answer: Our mission was to provide airfield security.

g. Question and Answer 6.

(1) Question: Were you aware of the crowds that were storming the airfield before you departed?

(2) Answer: Yes, we saw the CNN coverage while we were at JBC.

h. Question and Answer 7.

(1) Question: When did you arrive to HKIA?

(2) Answer: Our initial out load was sent six hours ahead of the main body, at 2200 on 16 August. Despite leaving earlier, they arrived after the main body. The two groups arrived within three hours of each other around 0200 on 19 August with 120 personnel.

i. Question and Answer 8.

(1) Question: What was the organization of your company?

(2) Answer: We were organized organically with 20 additional fire support specialists.

j. Question and Answer 9.

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SUBJECT: Interview with [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)
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(1) Question: What was the atmosphere like when you arrived at HKIA?

(2) Answer: It seemed rather tame when we arrived. We had to first establish an inner cordon around the airstrip. We were trying to secure some dig assets to set up an operations network on our line. We set up from the southern portion of East Gate. We had local communication with the Marines at East Gate, but everything else was just internal communication within our battalion. Our battalion was located by the domestic terminal in an abandoned hangar.

k. Question and Answer 10.

(1) Question: Did you feel comfortable with the mission at this point?

(2) Answer: Yes, everything was pretty tame. We occupied this area for five to seven days and only 25-30 people managed to breach our security. We would detain, hold, and clear these people and [redacted] (b)(6) escorted them out.

l. Question and Answer 11.

(1) Question: Was anyone else out by East Gate?

(2) Answer: There was a Marine unit and our inner cordon.

m. Question and Answer 12.

(1) Question: Did you receive any notification from personnel monitoring cameras in the JOC about people getting over the walls?

(2) Answer: No.

n. Question and Answer 13.

(1) Question: Did your entire battalion deploy? Where were they located?

(2) Answer: Yes, all organic elements did. [redacted] (b)(6) was northwest of Abbey Gate and were staged as a QRF element. [redacted] (b)(6) were near the terminals.

o. Question and Answer 14.

(1) Question: How did you understand the COMREL?

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(2) Answer: R: I worked for the [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) who worked for
[redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)

p. Question and Answer 15.

(1) Question: What can you tell me about TF Wild Boar and TF Polar Bear?

(2) Answer: Absolutely nothing. I've never heard of them.

q. Question and Answer 16.

(1) Question: Did you do any work with the 10th MTN?

(2) Answer: A: I did a lot. They had MRAPs and helped flex assets when people would get over the wall.

R: I understand that 10th MTN were mounted and acted as the base QRF.

r. Question and Answer 17.

(1) Question: Did you guys acquire any vehicles?

(2) Answer: Yes, a bus and some National Directorate of Security (NDS) trucks.

s. Question and Answer 18.

(1) Question: How did your priorities change from the 19th to the 26th?

(2) Answer: Our techniques to maintain security changed over time, but our mission didn't change.

t. Question and Answer 19.

(1) Question: Over the initial five or six days, did you have any interaction with the Taliban or the Department of State?

(2) Answer: R: During the period of darkness from the 20th to 21st, there was a pretty significant security concern near the domestic terminal. We were asked to provide any additional manpower to help secure area defense. We interacted with the Taliban there, at South Gate. There was a group of civilians that were causing issues. We were told to close South Gate. The Taliban were guarding it and told us that we couldn't close the gate. The Taliban had broken the gate. We had to establish a secure perimeter here to keep 500-600 civilians from storming in. There were about 30-50 Taliban in the area.

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u. Question and Answer 20.

(1) Question: Did you have to use crowd-control measures here?

(2) Answer: Yes, we created wire obstacles around 2000 the night of the 20th. We were helping at this location until around 0200 on the 21st before the screening process could begin again.

v. Question and Answer 21.

(1) Question: How many of the 500-600 people were processed?

(2) Answer: Maybe 120-200 people were able to get in to the terminal for processing.

w. Question and Answer 22.

(1) Question: What happened with the rest of the people?

(2) Answer: MG Donahue was in the area during this time and conducted a KLE with the Taliban commander near the gate. After the KLE, we were able to start processing people.

x. Question and Answer 23.

(1) Question: Were you ever briefed on the ROE? Non-lethal measures?

(2) Answer: We were aware of the theater ROE. We knew we had the right to self-defense when shown hostile acts or intent.

[REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a

R: I received this brief from the BJA the day I arrived around 0500-0600.

z. Question and Answer 24.

(1) Question: Leading up to the 26th, were you tracking the departure timeline? Were you a part of the planning?

(2) Answer: We weren't a part of the planning but were tracking the exfil date was the 31st.

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aa. Question and Answer 25.

(1) Question: Did you visit the gates before the 26th?

(2) Answer: R: I went to South Gate the night of the 20th. I went to Abbey Gate periodically because we had an adjacent unit there and were told we would be taking over that area. I went there to conduct reconnaissance. I went to East Gate to try to establish radio communication with the Marines there.

A: I was with [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) most of the time and went with him. We did a lot of reconnaissance.

bb. Question and Answer 26.

(1) Question: How many times did you go to Abbey Gate before the 26th?

(2) Answer: R: The first time we went out there was the 23rd. Between the 23rd and 26th, we went to Abbey Gate all the time to survey the area in preparation for when we would take over security. I went all over the area.

cc. Question and Answer 27.

(1) Question: What did the atmosphere at Abbey Gate seem like on the 23rd?

(2) Answer: It was very chaotic. The entire area was full. The area between the inner and outer gates was full. The canal was full. From the chevron to Barron Gate, it was either completely full or empty. Always one or the other.

There were Taliban on top of the chevron and they also had a small tower nearby.

I went to the Barron Hotel to meet with the Brits and saw the resting area that the Taliban used.

dd. Question and Answer 28.

(1) Question: Did you interact with any Marines at the gates?

(2) Answer: [redacted] (b)(3)130b talked with [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) often about our change out.

[redacted] (b)(3)130b talked with [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) and also a gunny out there.

ee. Question and Answer 29.

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(1) Question: What did you talk to [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) about? What was your impression?

(2) Answer: We talked to them about their operations and our changeover process. For the situation they had out there, they were doing well. [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) did a great job.

ff. Question and Answer 30.

(1) Question: How was the population at Abbey Gate at this time?

(2) Answer: Military-aged males were very aggressive. Most other people in the crowd were rather tame.

gg. Question and Answer 31.

(1) Question: From the 19th to the 25th, what threat reporting did you receive?

(2) Answer: We had a daily BUB every day at 0600. The intelligence we received was not specific. It was generic and vague.

We received reporting that ISIS-K was moving in to the area. This caused more credible threats over time as they moved in.

There was threat reporting every day. Some seemed more credible than others but it was very normal.

hh. Question and Answer 32.

(1) Question: Did the high number of threats cause any sort of change in operations?

(2) Answer: F: I don't think so. We reported all of the threats that we could.

ii. Question and Answer 33.

(1) Question: Was there any change in threat reporting as the 26th came?

(2) Answer: [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) would say threats seemed more credible now because they were getting called over the net.

jj. Question and Answer 34.

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(1) Question: Did you ever receive any threat reporting over the net that caused any changes in posture?

(2) Answer: Not really. There were multiple reports of an imminent threat but nothing occurred and the mission continued.

kk. Question and Answer 35.

(1) Question: Where were you during the blast on the 26th?

(2) Answer: [redacted] I was in the hangar.

[redacted] I was at the end of the fence near the latrine. I had been back and forth all day talking with [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) We were supposed to take over the gate security the night before but the timeline shifted. I got to the gate around 1720. I had linked up with the Brits to get a burner phone in order to maintain communication with the Taliban when we took over. I was walking back to my truck to drive back to the BUB at 1800.

The blast went off as I was walking back. [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) was with me. I saw the explosion and knew it wasn't a flash-bang. I told everyone to get down. I could feel the blast. I called it over the net to say there was an explosion, most likely a suicide vest (SVEST). I said there was a minimum of 30 KIA.

There was a lot of smoke in the area. I was counting my guys and started bounding back toward Barron Gate. I saw that the Brits had opened their small personnel gate and I pushed my guys through there.

The Brits were pulling security in the area. I made sure I had accountability of my guys. I kept pushing the information that I knew over the radio. I recommended that our QRF not go to the gate because the Afghans in the area did not disperse.

I talked to [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) and he told us his plan to retrograde. It was a quick conversation and I understood what they were trying to do. I heard a call for medics and my guys and I went over to assist. There were some Brits that went with us. We moved toward Outer Gate. There were still hundreds of people in the area. We went to go get the truck that we had to use as a casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) vehicle. Once we had used our full capability, I told the QRF to stand down. There wasn't enough space. I ran back to help marshal the vehicle traffic in the area. I was doing this for five to ten minutes. I had one of my platoon sergeants take over and went to meet with the [redacted] to give him a SITREP.

A: [redacted] (b)(6) away from the gate. We were assisting with the CASEVAC.

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ll. Question and Answer 36.

(1) Question: Do you remember seeing any specific casualties?

(2) Answer: (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) I remember seeing a large, white male being treated in front of where my vehicle was parked. We were trying to assist with getting him in the vehicle.

mm. Question and Answer 37.

(1) Question: Did you or your Soldiers treat anyone?

(2) Answer: We didn't treat anyone, just assisted with moving people. Everyone was already being treated or had already expired.

nn. Question and Answer 38.

(1) Question: What did you see at the casualty collection point (CCP) at inner gate when you arrived?

(2) Answer: (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) Everyone was being treated but it didn't seem like a typical CCP. I remember seeing a Marine with injuries to his face. I remember seeing a dead baby on the ground.

oo. Question and Answer 39.

(1) Question: Was there anyone in charge of the CCP?

(2) Answer: (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) I couldn't tell you who was in charge, but there were a lot of people coordinating the CCP. It was controlled chaos. We were trying to get everyone out of the area as fast as possible.

pp. Question and Answer 40.

(1) Question: Were a lot of vehicles being used?

(2) Answer: We had a line of 20-30 vehicles ready to CASEVAC.

qq. Question and Answer 41.

(1) Question: Have either of you been a part of CASEVAC before?

(2) Answer: (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) Yes.

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SUBJECT: Interview with [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)

Abrahamson, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 15 October 2021

A: I have, but had air and surgical assets available.

rr. Question and Answer 42.

(1) Question: Is there anything that could've gone better for the CCP?

(2) Answer: The STP was pretty far away. The corpsmen at the gate did a really good job.

ss. Question and Answer 43.

(1) Question: Do you or any of your Soldiers hear small arms fire at the time of the blast? Where?

(2) Answer: [REDACTED] At the close side of the canal, I saw British firing about 45 degrees up in the air, spraying the area to the northeast. They were about 10 meters away from me. I called up for Charlie Co when I saw this to tell them to take some cover, as the Brits were firing in their general direction. I didn't see any Taliban in the area.

tt. Question and Answer 44.

(1) Question: Did the Soldiers in the tower observe anything?

(2) Answer: [REDACTED] They could hear fire, I don't know if they saw it, but they did not return fire.

uu. Question and Answer 45.

(1) Question: How many Brits did you see fire?

(2) Answer: [REDACTED] At least two.

vv. Question and Answer 46.

(1) Question: Was your whole company at the inner gate?

(2) Answer: [REDACTED] No, They were either out on their positions or at the hangar.

ww. Question and Answer 47.

(1) Question: What happened after the casualties had been evacuated?

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SUBJECT: Interview with (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)

Abrahamson, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 15 October 2021

(2) Answer: (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) We left our guys pulling security out on their positions and the rest of the company went to the hangar.

xx. Question and Answer 48.

(1) Question: When did (b)(6) take over the security of Abbey Gate?

(2) Answer: (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) Around 0200-0300 on the 27th, I took my leaders out to Abbey Gate to conduct a final recon. I met up with some Platoon Commander from (b)(6) near the inner gate and went over the timeline with them quickly. It was a different unit on the gate than (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) The Brits had not completed their retrograde yet. I brought (b)(6) (b)(6) out around 0530 and took over the security of Abbey Gate.

By this point, the Brits still had people retrograding between the inner and outer gate and the corridor near East Gate. We had security elements placed from the outer gate to the inner gate and the outer gate was closed. By 0700, the Brits were north of the inner gate.

yy. Question and Answer 49.

(1) Question: How long were you pulling security at the gate?

(2) Answer: We pulled security up until our flight to leave HKIA.

zz. Question and Answer 50.

(1) Question: When did you leave HKIA?

(2) Answer: We left at 2358 on 30 August.

aaa. Question and Answer 51.

(1) Question: Do you know why the Brits' timeline kept changing?

(2) Answer: (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) I think there was just confusion.

(b)(3)130b, (b)(6) From my initial coordination with (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) I made my timeline based off of his. I briefed this plan to BN and was told to wait to action. A while later, both (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) and I were told that we had to shift our timeline to the right.

bbb. Question and Answer 52.

(1) Question: Did your entire battalion leave at the same time?

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(2) Answer: No, about half of the battalion, to include Alpha Co, Delta Co, and HHC left the day before us on the 29th. At this point, we had two companies pulling security of a large area.

ccc. Question and Answer 53.

(1) Question: Were the crowds dispersed now?

(2) Answer: No. There were 50-100 people during the day waiting near the gates. At night, 300-400 people would come. We had an interpreter come out to tell them that we weren't processing people anymore and that they needed to go to a different gate.

ddd. Question and Answer 54.

[redacted]
(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g

eee. Question and Answer 55.

[redacted]
(b)(1)1.4a

fff. Question and Answer 56.

(1) Question: From your position, did this seem like a coordinated attack?

(2) Answer: No.

ggg. Question and Answer 57.

(1) Question: Did you see any impacts from small arms fire or hear rounds snapping overhead during/immediately after the attack?

(2) Answer: No.

hhh. Question and Answer 58.

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(1) Question: Is there anything else that you think we need to know?

(2) Answer: No

iii. Question and Answer 59.

(1) Question: We had a report that the sniper tower manned by the 82nd received a few rounds during the time of the blast. Did they report any of this to you?

(2) Answer: No. They never said anything.

jjj. Question and Answer 60.

(1) Question: Did you notice a difference in the crowd from the 23rd to the 26th?

(2) Answer: The crowd in the canal was extremely packed by the 26th.

kkk. Question and Answer 61.

(1) Question: Can you please provide your contact information?

(2) Answer: [redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)

[redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)

4. The point of contact for this memorandum is the undersigned at [redacted] (b)(6) and

[redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)

[redacted] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)



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15 October 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Interview with MG Donahue, USA, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) USA,
(b)(3)130b, (b)(6) 82nd Airborne Division, 15 October 2021

1. On 15 October 2021, BG Lance Curtis, USA, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) USMC, conducted an interview of the above personnel at the 82nd Airborne Division Headquarters, Fort Bragg, NC to discuss the facts and circumstances surrounding the attack on Abbey Gate on 26 August 2021.

2. Methodology: BG Curtis (C1), (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) asked a series of questions throughout the interview which MG Donahue (D2), (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) and (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) answered either collaboratively or individually.

3. Discussion.

a. The interview began with BG Curtis and (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) describing the purpose of the interview, the scope of the investigation, and the manner in which the conversation would be captured and rendered to writing. (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) were present to record and transcribe the statement.

b. Question and Answer 1.

(1) Question, C1: Is this COMREL accurate?

(2) Answer, D2: RADM Vasely chose to retain Joint Task Force – Crisis Response (JTF-CR) specifically. He wanted BGen Sullivan to keep working for him, we all coordinatedth well. As the mission changed, it was the right call. We all worked very collaboratively and it worked out.

(3) Answer (b)(3)130b That's all codified in the U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) order, both the 82nd and JTF-CR would be tactical control (TACON) to USFOR-A.

c. Question and Answer 2.

(1) Question, C1: Please describe the readiness, preparation, and medical operations prior to the deployment.

(2) Answer, D2: To speak to the medical aspect, Sergeant Major would have to be present. He was unbelievable and highly involved with the process.

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SUBJECT: Interview with MG Donahue, USA, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) USA,
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d. Question and Answer 3.

(1) Question, C1: Was it a complex attack?

(2) Answer, D2: Ask James Martin, the Brit who was in command. He watched it happen. That's why I know it's not a complex attack. The bomb went off, and so everyone shoots in the air. The reason that we started to think it was a complex attack was because fish weights were used in the suicide vest which look more like a bullet wound on impact. We ran the hospital, so immediately after the blast, Gen McKenzie called me to get updates, since he was on the line with the President. I told him in our first report that there was a suicide vest and maybe some gun fire. Gen McKenzie was a phenomenal leader with clear guidance. I fully understood his intent.

To follow up from that initial report, the next day I sent him an email. I told him that we were 99% sure, based off videos from ISIS-K and speaking with our medical providers, that it was not a complex attack. The medical providers initially told us it was a lot of lower extremity gun shots, but we came back and we corrected that. James Martin confirmed, BG James Martin the 16th Assault Commander at Abbey Gate, he told us that there was 1 bomber and no shooters. He was standing by the chevron, and he witnessed the attack from his perspective.

I saw the video that ISIS-K released. The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) should be able to get that for you. From the angle of that video you can see that the ISIS-K member is in a building near the explosion. Anyways, James Martin reports that he saw the explosion from his location. (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) was over by the Psychological Operations (PSYOP) vehicle. He described it to me the same way.

I will be transparent, and have said this to everyone, I am shocked we only got hit with one suicide vest. The Marines did a movement to contact at North, East, and Abbey Gates. That is phenomenal, and the Marines did phenomenally. I am shocked that we had so few people hurt, we need to realize that people get hurt.

You know why we didn't get hit with more suicide vests? The Taliban did a great job screening people. The Taliban screened people and pushed them back twice that day. We watched it on our raid cameras. They were clearing stuff all the time. They were trying everything in their power to get us out. They wanted us to leave on the 31st of August.

e. Question and Answer 4.

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SUBJECT: Interview with MG Donahue, USA [redacted] USA,
[redacted] 82nd Airborne Division, 15 October 2021

(1) Question, C1: How and when did you find out you were going to Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA)? When you were on the ground on the 18th, what did you do?

(2) Answer, D2: I found out on the day that LTG Kurilla told us, the 16th of August. I showed up with a small team the [redacted] and [redacted]. The flow in was haphazard, as you know. I immediately came in and I met with RADM Vasely. He and I are friends. I told him he was in charge and that I was in direct support of him. He just needed to let me know what he needed me to do. He told me we were good, so I went out to assess the perimeter. We went to North Gate, then East Gate, then we drove the entire perimeter.

In fact, here is my map. This map had no markings and is unclassified so that I could use it with the Taliban. We used this map to drive around and also to speak with the Taliban. The perimeter stopped right here, and jugged down by the [redacted]. [redacted] There are Taliban over here driving Toyota ZPUs back and forth. Our guys, 1st Brigade, are right here. [redacted] is down by the [redacted] initially. I bumped in to him while I was with one of my rifle companies. Some of the guys had been there maybe 24 hours by then.

I asked [redacted] what was going on, because it all was very unacceptable to me. I went cruising around the perimeter and I was jacking people up as we go around. We continued down to the terminal because there was a command post there. Inside the terminal there were about 9 Taliban pulling guard. I was pretty agitated by this point, so I told my guys to give me some rifle squads. I told my guys to take the two ZPUs that were pointed towards Abbey and East Gates. I ordered my guys to get them out. I came back into the terminal, and the Taliban were sweeping the floor. There were two Taliban snipers on the roof of the international terminal, and the Taliban were also watching us on closed circuit television (CCTV). I had my guys push them out. When we got back I saw RADM Vasely, and I told him that we didn't have a perimeter and we needed to meet with the Taliban.

Later that night, around 0200, we met with the Taliban. We told them which areas we would be in charge of and which areas they would need to control. We told them that we would control the gates and they would push people out. We expressed that they will comply, because if they fight us on this we would be able to kill more of them than they could ever hope to kill of us.

After that their tone changed, and they generally did what we needed them to do. After that they moved out, and RADM Vasely had me establish the perimeter. I told him, and RADM Vasely and BGen Sullivan agreed, that North and East Gates weren't sustainable. I told them that we will open other gates, South and West Gates. We also

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worked with (b)(1)1.4c up by at the Northwestern Gate, also referred to as the National Strike Unit (NSU) Gate. Then I saw that we needed to get organized. I told RADM Vasely that (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) because he is phenomenal. He crushed it out there by the way.

After that I outlined what we would do. Our priorities were to defend the area, keep the runway open since I was concerned about indirect fires, plan the exfiltration of the force, and conduct the initial Joint Tactical Exfiltration (JTE). Then we added in all the gates, and after that we added in go on the offensive. We had all of this going on while still executing day in and day out operations. We didn't have enough people to do the processing that Sullivan's guys were doing. I don't think we ever could have got to that point. RADM Vasely understood that.

It took 26 hours to get the rest of the division TAC in there. So that night I focused on meeting with everybody. We put markers down. The plan was for all international forces to be out on the 28th. By the way, all of this is still being done on the 18th, within the first 6 hours of being on ground. JTF-CR was consumed with running those three gates, and the international parties were only adding to that burden. That is why we took over the perimeter and the Arrival/Departure Airfield Control Group (A/DACG) stuff. We would move equipment out. (b)(6) are pushing equipment, while BGen Sullivan and his guys are processing people.

So we met with everybody that night and told them that we are focusing on the withdrawal and then the JTE. The withdrawal is to get everyone out, then the JTE is to get the last people and equipment out. Those are two distinct plans. The battle rhythm that emerged from that was doing a standup in the morning with everyone that was there. After that, my guys would go into working groups and I would go into battlefield circulation for the afternoon. Then we had evening meetings. RADM Vasely and I had a meeting with the Secretary of Defense. Then I would do circulation at night and sleep when I could. The first 3 days we did not really sleep. As soon as I went out and came back, I told our surgeon that he needed to prepare for a mass casualty event. We were responsible for the hospital since we had the highest ranking surgeon on the ground. (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) was very good and he was formerly 160th, a Special Operations Forces (SOF) guy.

After that, we started doing mass casualty stuff. We got all of the vehicles out of the road which was essential since the roads were clogged. (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) started preparing for the mass casualty. Our headquarter reinforced the NATO Role II and 1st Brigade set up a second one. I also want to point out how great the international surgeons did, specifically the Norwegians who extended to the 30th for us. We did rehearsal of concept (ROC) drills, table top exercises, etc while we did other stuff.

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About 40-50 people jumped the fence every night. We also had to have quick reaction forces (QRFs) out every night to push to breaks in the fence. (b)(6) had to manage that, and as we got more forces, we arrayed those better to properly defend the airfield. We were figuring this out in the first 8 hours while we were there, so we were doing this as well as the mass casualty planning.

(b)(6) hop in if you want. Things were happening so fast, the insanity was off the chart.

(3) Answer (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) In addition to our international partners, we would coordinate with them to open gates to allow foreign Afghans in. This would cause a flood to that newly opened gate from one that was already open. That would cause a crowd and burn that gate's usability for a while.

(4) Answer, D2: To jump ahead, I knew Ambassador Bass really well. I told RADM Vasely that we needed to coordinate with State. We met with Ambassador Bass and Ambassador Wilson, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) (b)(6) and BGen Sullivan. We made (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) the coordinating cell lead. We gave the Taliban lists of groups from the Department of State like Afghan Women or New York Times Afghan reporters. (b)(6) would coordinate to get them in. At the West Gate you have (b)(6) and eventually (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) took over East Gate to South Gate as we started to thin the ranks.

f. Question and Answer 5.

(1) Question, C1: Was it difficult to do perimeter security and gate operations at the same time?

(2) Answer, D2: Absolutely, it became a maneuver defense. Everyday North Gate would have to close. East Gate was too high risk, and we all knew it, so BGen Sullivan shut it down. It was overwhelming over there. BGen Sullivan and everyone else was stuck at Abbey Gate. The chevron was in place there, the Taliban were screening constantly, and it was also the "International Gate". We were getting people through that gate.

The Marines were bringing people through Abbey Gate, as was the United Kingdom. The International SOF was also pulling in people through the canal. The Marines pulled security for all of those forces as well. The U.S. provided the platform to get everyone out, and the Brits helped defend the perimeter as well. We had large numbers of Afghans that, once through, would just sit inside the gate and RADM Vasely had to work on overseeing their processing. It wasn't until we started to thin the ranks, on the 25th, that we went to the gate since we were going to take over the next day.

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James Martin commanded 2 Para Battalions over there. He told me that they were going to try to keep pulling people out, and he wanted to know if I thought that we could keep the gate open. I told him that we would conduct a site survey since we were going to take over that gate. And we were interested to know if we could keep Abbey open, since North Gate was obviously dangerous at that time.

(3) Answer, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) We estimated 13,000 People at North Gate in our first 48 hours there.

(4) Answer, D2: We wanted to close it. I told (b)(6) that we will get our people out, and they needed to cooperate with us. (b)(6) was a team player. Once we got some more gates open, West and South and NSU, we could close those other gates.

So we did that for North and East Gates, but Abbey was our main producer. On top of that, we were still getting pressure to pull people out. I told James that we had 2 rifle companies replacing 2 Marine Battalions, 2 Para Battalions, and the SOF community. I told James that we were going to plan on closing the gate, because we weren't going to be able to keep it open with our manning.

Those Para Battalions were at least battalion minuses. They needed our forces there to help them. The Paras were not two full battalions, but at a minimum they were two battalion minuses. Do I know that for certain? No, but James Martin would.

The (b)(1)1.4 State, and other International Nations were all provided for, including air lift, by the United States. BGen Sullivan could talk better on that, but that's why I called it the international gate.

g. Question and Answer 6.

(1) Question, C1: When were you going to close to the gate on the 26th?

(2) Answer, D2: Initially at 0900, on the 27th of August. That time moved left after the explosion.

h. Question and Answer 7.

(1) Question, C1: So as the timeline for the JTE closed, Abbey Gate was the only gate open?

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(2) Answer, D2: That's not true. West gate was open. One time the Taliban were complaining about the two guys who got shot. RADM Vasely told them that we lost 13 people. It was interesting, one of the Taliban guys responded to that by saying "12 of my Taliban fighters were killed in that blast as well." I don't know if that's true, but that's what he said. I don't believe what they say, but that's what they told us. All that we actually know is that there were hundreds of Afghans killed and wounded. Some came into our aid stations, our corpsmen and U.S./Coalition medics worked on Afghans. That was something our providers had a hard time dealing with. They treated high numbers of women and children that were hurt, and then they had to turn them over to the local hospitals.

i. Question and Answer 8.

(1) Question, C1: When was that meeting with the Taliban?

(2) Answer, D2: About 3-4 days after the blast.

j. Question and Answer 9.

(1) Question, C1: Did you hear the blast? I believe the most accurate time I have heard is 1734.

(2) Answer: I did not, I was not there for that. But that sounds right because that is when I am normally in the Joint Operations Center (JOC) preparing for our evening meetings. That's why I didn't hear the blast, but it sounds right. The person that I think would know best is BGen Sullivan.

(3) Answer, [REDACTED] Sir, the USAFOR-A J2 chatlog I have shows 1738. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] from the Marine Expeditionary Unit, put that out in the chatlog. However, that is probably a few minutes after the blast.

k. Question and Answer 10.

(1) Question, C1: What do you do after you hear about the blast?

(2) Answer, D2: We got the report, and we sent a runner to the hospital to tell them to prepare for a possible mass casualty event. BGen Sullivan called me, and he told me that an attack may be occurring at Abbey Gate. We were getting threat reporting throughout the day. We were mentally preparing for an event like that.

l. Question and Answer 11.

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(1) Question, C1: I'm tracking 50-60 threat streams, suicide vests, vehicle borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs), and countdowns to the blast from the Brits that happened around 1400 and caused the Marines to lower profile until about 1430 before they realized it was a false alarm.

(2) Answer, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) That was from a twitter handle at 1433, according to the chatlogs that I have.

(3) Answer, D2: I was not aware of that. But to put this in perspective, I got into the JOC about 5 minutes before the blast happened. At the time we were very worried about the gates. The road up here to the north, if a large truck VBIED happened a breach would occur.

(4) Answer, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) But not just at the perimeter sir. This was right near the headquarters. This would have taken out JTF-CR headquarters at the least.

(5) Answer, D2: If an 18 wheeler went off over here, I don't think it would take out our headquarters but it would have knocked out our comms and destroyed other headquarters. Once the blast occurred the Taliban shut off that road and stopped anything from moving.

m. Question and Answer 12.

(1) Question, C1: How far is this road from your headquarters?

(2) Answer, D2: It's got to be about 200 meters. By the way, we moved cranes and t-walls all around so that we were ready to fill in any gaps caused by VBIEDs. We were very prepared mentally for a VBIED. We went around looking for people who could drive a crane so that we would be prepared to move t-walls and trying to find out how long it would take. The Brigade Engineer Battalion Command Sergeant Major was working with us. We dug a 13 foot deep trench, and we lined up filled connexes along the fences. We stacked cars up. We were conducting a defense in depth.

(3) Answer, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) From the South to the airhead line (AHL) was where civilians massed on the airhead before/while Immediate Response Force (IRF) 1 arrived. 1BCT placed obstacles on that route to disrupt civilians ability to mass on the AHL again. Due to the sheer volume of civilians, we wouldn't be able to block or fix them but we could disrupt and slow their movement should they breach the perimeter again.

(4) Answer, D2: Then we put (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g in to disrupt them as they got closer.

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(5) Answer, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) That was good the LRADS were strong enough to make the Afghans sick if they got too close.

(6) Answer, D2: Secretary of Defense Austin was asking about our obstacles and disrupting. Also, don't forget about our demilitarization (demil) plan. That took up a lot of time. We were told to demil any helicopters out there, but also anything that State left. It was thousands of rounds, and thousands of M4s laying around. Whenever guys came in through NSU gate, they would drop all their stuff. (b)(1)1.4a

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

(7) Answer, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) Meanwhile, you have (b)(1)1.4a

n. Question and Answer 13.

(1) Question, C1: I need more information on threat streams you have directed towards Abbey Gate. I was told that you only really have general threat information at this point, but to the point, I have been told there were 1-4 individuals that did their media interview, and there may have been a briefcase with arrows on it. Was there anything specific on Abbey Gate?

(2) Answer, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) I think on the 26th we knew it would be North or Abbey Gate. We were not surprised. I do not think it was a generic threat, we knew that it would be a suicide vest and it would be at North or Abbey Gate.

o. Question and Answer 14.

(1) Question: Have you received any information on a man with a ball cap near the bomber?

(2) Answer, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) (b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a

p. Question and Answer 15.

(1) Question, C1: Any images on the actual bomber?

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(2) Answer, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) We received about 3 images of possible suspects, but nothing that I think would indicate the bomber specifically at Abbey Gate.

q. Question and Answer 16.

(1) Question, C1: I hadn't heard about the lead fish weights in the suicide vest before this.

(2) Answer, D2: I got that from the surgeons. That is confirmed. Before I spoke to Gen McKenzie, I spoke to (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) and James Martin. When I spoke to Doc, he was emotional because he just performed surgery to save an Afghan child and initially reported that it was a gunshot wound to the head. I asked him about that being a gunshot wound, because all of the threat reporting focused on a suicide attack. There were several casualties who had lower extremity wounds and our medical teams initially thought those were gunshot wounds too.

Later on the medical team came back to me, and they told me it wasn't gunshot wounds, they were fish weights and they showed them to me.

r. Question and Answer 17.

(1) Question, C1: There is still a bit of a gray area for us. There is a t-wall by the canal, and maybe the Marines are standing on it, but normally there are the low walls in front of them. You can see the pattern of the blast on the wall below them, so we wondered why they have lower body wounds. Do you have any other insights on that? It is a leading theory of the complex attack.

(2) Answer, D2: James Martin is the guy who will tell you about that, and you need to speak with the doctors. My guy, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) you need to speak with him. He is an emergency room doctor and (b)(6) He was running the main Role II, not the other aid station that received only 9 guys.

s. Question and Answer 18.

(1) Question, C1: After RADM Vasely left were you the main conduit for discussions with Taliban?

(2) Answer, D2: Yes, but our general breakdown was that if it was tactical, I would deal with the Taliban. If it was above that, RADM Vasely would deal with it. If we met with them together, same thing. I would also try to set conditions for getting American citizens and others out after we left. I made it clear that we would leave the terminal

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ready to go, with the (b)(1)1.4a to run it, so that we would leave them an international terminal to get citizens out of the country after we departed.

t. Question and Answer 19.

(1) Question, C1: What role did state play?

(2) Answer: Ambassador Bass and his two deputies' task organized the screening. One Deputy worked with us, and one worked with the Marines. We talked to foreign nations at my level, but big go/ no-go decisions were for RADM Vasely. He was the up and out guy. Once he made a decision it would fall down to me or BGen Sullivan. If it was withdrawal it was me, if it was at the gate it was BGen Sullivan.

We started planning the JTE right away. We took 82nd, Joint Special Operations Command capabilities, and flew in the Air Force mission commander and their planner. We did a ROC drill with them. The JTE went very well. All of that planning went very well. We have a book with all of that planning in it that we gave to Army Central Command (ARCENT), my (b)(6) can provide it.

u. Question and Answer 20.

(1) Question, C1: Were you in anyway associated with decisions to move from using the North and East Gates, to focusing on Abbey Gate?

(2) Answer, D2: BGen Sullivan made those decisions. We talked about all of these decisions together, RADM Vasely and I weighed in, but BGen Sullivan was making all of the right calls. At one point, on the 25th, Gen McKenzie told me to make an assessment of the gates. Gen McKenzie asked me if the North, East, NSU, or Abbey Gate was the highest risk. I explained that was Abbey Gate and why. The reasoning made sense. When we showed up North and East were the only gates open, but the British pressured the Abbey Gate to open. And it was a great decision to open, it got thousands of people through.

v. Question and Answer 21.

(1) Question, C1: What was the force flow out of HKIA?

(2) Answer, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) It was very easy. We thinned US and international capability. We gave everyone slot times to fill to get them out for the exfiltration.

(3) Answer, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) It wasn't clean. There were so many impacts on the planning to get people and equipment out. It was an hourly, daily change. At one point we had to

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transition to a more aggressive number of people, but we still had tons of equipment to retrograde. We had pause where we didn't bring any equipment or people out because we were planning on bringing people in to hold the air field.

(4) Answer, D2: We took over the A/DACG and set the priorities through (b)(3)130b; (b)(6) prioritizing evacuees as necessary. To James' point, (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(3)130b; (b)(6)
(b)(1)1.4a

w. Question and Answer 22.

(1) Question, C1: Who was in charge when RADM Vasely leaves?

(2) Answer, D2: I was. There is a formal FRAGO saying that I was in charge when RADM Vasely left and that I was to report to Gen McKenzie directly. I want to say again, that he always had crystal clear guidance for RADM Vasely, BGen Sullivan, and myself. He would always end a conversation by asking if we had any questions, and emphasizing that he was available 24/7 to answer questions. My respect and admiration for him are immense, and they only grew during the operation. He did awesome.

x. Question and Answer 23.

(1) Question, C1: When are you out of HKIA? How did that go, what did you tell the Taliban? We heard that there may have been some deception involved with what you told the Taliban the plan was.

(2) Answer, D2: Early morning on the 31st. I told the SECDEF and everyone else that this was our plan during the back brief. (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g

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

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g We had 8 or 9 chinks planned, 5 programmed to land, 2 flying spares, 1 that had surgical capabilities, and 1 that had a heavy maintenance team. That all went in to timing. It's an evolution, it's like a sync matrix or a machine once it starts. We needed to leave enough time to land and fix an aircraft if necessary. We had to plan on how to take off with a damaged plane. All while people were tracking us. That photo of me was the 5th aircraft. We got a report saying that I lied, I wasn't the last one out because additional aircraft took off after mine did. We had to beat that back to make it clear that those were spares falling in to formation.

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At our last meeting on the 30th, we told the Taliban that we were leaving on the 31st. At 2000 we told them we would give them all the details the next morning. They were asking if we would take photos of the handover, etc. I almost felt bad, but the other side of me knew they were Taliban. [redacted]

[redacted]

y. Question and Answer 24.

(1) Question, [redacted] You mentioned the pressure from the British. What was the driving factor to keep Abbey Gate open, was it that pressure?

(2) Answer: We had pressure from everyone, not just the British. The U.S., other countries, and foreign interest groups were all exerting pressure. I had a company commander getting called directly by his congressman for not letting groups through. The pressure was real.

When I did the Pre-Deployment Site Survey (PDSS), I came back and told people that when I took over that gate I was going to close it. I think the pressure to keep it open, kept it open. That and the pressure to get people through. The threat was up, down, and sideways, so I think there was just immense pressure to keep that gate open. If you look at the steps that BGen Sullivan took to balance that risk, they were more than prudent to mitigate the threats the received with the resources they had. RADM Vasely and BGen Sullivan are both great leaders. Gen McKenzie is a great leader. When you get placed into a position where you don't control all the conditions, and you can't change those conditions sometimes there is a hard outcome.

z. Question and Answer 25.

(1) Question, C1: Anything else to bring up?

(2) Answer: Ghost Company is the reason that Abbey Gate was as successful as it was. Of the three companies that were there, that company is the reason for their success.

When we put out the demil plan everyone was responsible for an area, there was a MEU element and one of the rifle battalion elements that were wantonly destroying things. We had to stop that twice, state department reported it as well. Ghost company had the most reason to be pissed off, but they executed their demil plan exactly as it was briefed. Their sector was excellent. I cannot say enough about that company. You could tell just walking around, the difference there was between the companies.

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Have you interviewed RADM Vasely's Command Sergeant Major? You need to interview him if you want to hear more about Ghost Company. When I got back from looking at the gates, his Command Sergeant Major asked me which company was the best, and I told him Ghost Company was the standard. He absolutely he agreed, he was out correcting other companies.

You need to remember which area Ghost Company occupied. Until the day prior at that gate, international guys controlled that gate. (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

My point is, down at Abbey Gate, Ghost had to deal with that. The international SOF forces were out of control. Ask (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) how they acted.

(3) Answer, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) They were out of control. They had no regard for anyone else. They did not coordinate. They would hang off the side of the vehicles as they were driving around, they were reckless.

(4) Answer, D2: I told RADM Vasely that I was frustrated, these guys lost their mind and didn't know how to act. They were always asking if they had to leave on the 28th as well.

(5) Answer, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) (b)(1)1.4d (b)(1)1.4d

(3) Answer, D2: Many countries tried to do that, but the Brits were able to talk it back to the 29th.

aa. Question and Answer 26.

(1) Question, C1: Was State difficult to work with as well?

(2) Answer, D2: The State Department element forward had to reach back to Main to synchronize messaging efforts. My Paratroopers had to deal with the confusion that their messaging caused. They would send the wrong messaging, the wrong threat streams. Then you would have to go and renegotiate with the Taliban for an hour to smooth over whatever state put out. At one point they accused us of brain draining them, we were taking all of their educated women, etc. We had to negotiate through that, and another time we had to negotiate them letting the National Strike Unit (NSU) through. We were able to get all of the NSU out, because we told them if the Taliban

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didn't let them through we would just tell them the NSU to go fight out of Panjshir. After that the Taliban would cooperate there. This stuff about the Taliban not letting people through isn't true, they'd let people through it just took some time.

bb. Question and Answer 27.

(1) Question, C1: What were the rules of engagement (ROE)?

(2) Answer, D2: We had tons of discussions, a whole conversation on ROE just for the exfil and JTE. I remember discussing that with (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) But we didn't need an ROE. This is the purpose of the 82nd, to go into a situation like this. If we had asked for an ROE, it would not have been dynamic enough to keep up with this event. We told our guys that if someone jumped the fence, assume that they have a suicide vest. And still none of my guys shot. They knew their ethical left and right limits.

(3) Answer, (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) Absolutely. It was incredible restraint by the Paratroopers and Marines.

(3) Answer, D2: There were occasions where paratroopers shot warning shots, the situations could have escalated from there, but they didn't. It is on Commanders to plan and use the information available to make the decisions on the ground. If we had sought guidance we would have got late and wrong answers about what to do on the ground. We had a whole meeting with the Commanders about ROE, once in the ROC drill and once about just using the (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1) We talked about when to use lethal force. From an exfiltration perspective, when the MPs got in we went over what was expected to for them. I would talk to the Paratroopers during battle field circulation and ask them about ROE, and I would spot check them and their Commanders. It was something we were able to develop on the ground. (b)(6) was with me for all of this.

cc. Question and Answer 28.

(1) Question, C1: (b)(6) was with you for all of this?

(2) Answer, D2: (b)(6) He would pull all kinds of people through on his own. He would go on his own and save people left and right. He did remarkably. He had previously been held captive by the Taliban in Kabul for two months. (b)(6)

(b)(6) He hates the Taliban.

He was angry that the Afghan Security Forces didn't fight the way they said they would. He was mad they didn't go to Panjshir. He had a lot of raw emotion.

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5. The point of contact for this memorandum is the undersigned at (b)(6) and
(b)(3)130b, (b)(6) assistant investigating officer, at

(b)(3)130b, (b)(6)

(b)(3)130b, (b)(6)

LANCE G. CURTIS
BG, USA
Investigating Officer

Approved for Release



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
3RD SUSTAINMENT COMMAND (EXPEDITIONARY)
CAMP ARIFJAN, KUWAIT
APO, AE 09366

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18 October 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Interview with [REDACTED] 3/10th Mountain Division, HKIA,
18 October 2021

1. On 18 October 2021, [REDACTED] USMC, conducted an interview of the above personnel via Secret Video Teleconference (SVTC) from Ft. Bragg, NC 3ESC Headquarters to [REDACTED] to discuss the facts and circumstances surrounding the attack on Abbey Gate on 26 August 2021.

2. Methodology: [REDACTED] asked a series of questions throughout the interview, which [REDACTED] answered. [REDACTED] (US Army) recorded the interview for transcription below.

3. Discussion.

a. The interview began with [REDACTED] providing an overview of scope of the investigation, which included the fact-finding concerning actions before, during, and after the attack, chronology, leadership, task organization, force protection, gate operations, and medical operations. He stated the intent was to make notes of the conversation and prepare a memorandum of the statement. The subject would have the opportunity to review and make additions, add context, or remove anything not correctly captured and rendered to writing.

b. Question and Answer 1.

[REDACTED]

(b)(3) 130b; (b)(6)

c. Question and Answer 2.

(1) Question. What was your mission in CENTCOM?

(2) Answer. We deployed forward and established the security assistance force (SAF) for USFOR-A for continuity. That consisted of a rifle company and part of a Forward Support Company (FSC) and we reinforced US Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) with part of the staff. [REDACTED] This was the

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Counter Rocket Artillery and Mortar (CRAM) team. SAF was filled out with a bunch of enablers and an Infantry Battalion (-) in [redacted (b)(1)1.4a]. We were planning for security of the Embassy and as required at HKIA. We also had a second Battalion at JTF-CR to reinforce the non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO) if required when the Turkish forces pulled out.

d. Question and Answer 3.

(1) Question. So Polar Bear and Wild Boar are already in Afghanistan as of July or August timeframe?

(2) Answer. It wasn't until mid-June that things started getting clarified, but it still was not captured in orders. We were fleshing out that structure into pushing into USFOR-A Forward. The lead element left Fort Polk around 4 July to push into [redacted (b)(1)1.4a]. We did the over the horizon (OTH) CT platform in order to get an intelligence read. We had the brigade role 1 and some of our security force. The rest of the element was set to come forward a little bit later in order to spread transitions and build continuity into the force flow. [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] had been there for 6 months. They are out of 4-31 in Drum so not organic to 3rd brigade. 4-31 and 2-30 Relief in place and transfer of authority (RIPTOA) was meant to happen 2 August. Since we had both units on the ground I went to RADM Vasely and requested to freeze the RIP. I asked [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] to stay in place and I pulled some staff forward. But as of mid-August the boots on ground (BOG) ceiling was still the same and in order to stay under it we kept having to adjust our planning.

It was apparent that we would need more combat power. When I came in, it became really obvious early on that the bulk of my effort needed to be in the [redacted (b)(6)] role. When I looked at the employment of forces, at authorities, and for the aviation specifically, it was all at RADM Vasely level. Our priority was with planning for the employment of forces and preparation. I came in with the aviation unit and dug into the maintenance. I came away from [redacted (b)(1)1.4a] with an understanding that 31 August was a real date and BOG was a real thing. The policy was that we would be out by 31 August and that would not move. For context I had been in the [redacted (b)(1)1.4a] in 2019/20, so I understood the NEO and evacuation framework in mind. I understood the evacuation was coming based on my experience. That drove me to really focus on the aviation maintenance problem in order to think ahead of the problem. Those aircraft had been ridden really hard and they were going to be challenged if needed. If we were going to have to swap out aircraft we needed to get ahead of the problem in order to make sure we could keep pace.

For the infantry company on the ground, I had personal relationships with them going into it. Having been a quick reaction force (QRF) company commander before, I understood their planning and capabilities and likewise quickly dug into the equipment to identify if we were showing green on slides or showing reality? [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] quickly responded to that energy and started getting after it. Both the aviation unit and Polar Bear were able to rehearse and set priorities of planning early and that set them up for success. For my [redacted (b)(6)] with energy from BG Day (Brit), we had this realization that

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we had a lot more to retrograde than we originally planned. I had [redacted (b)(6)] [redacted (b)(6)] with me so I set them on that problem. They dug into the retrograde and made it their responsibility to plan and dispose of properly. They continued to work the retrograde as much as possible and we got a ton of equipment and material out all the way into late July. I also helped build their staff. The staff was comprised of Resolute Support (RS) holdovers and we had a lot of pieces to bring together. Dropping that down from a 4 star headquarters into a 2 Star headquarters was always going to be a challenge.

e. Question and Answer 4.

(1) Question. Safe to say your staff was rounding that out?

(2) Answer. Yes

f. Question and Answer 5.

(1) Question. What was TF Polar Bear?

(2) Answer. It was approximately 130 people. The way [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] had aligned it, it went to 4 platoons. They weren't doctrinal Modified Table of Organizational Equipment (MTOE). He had a platoon leader with a reinforced squad as the Platoon Security Detachment (PSD) and then had some Battalion staff officers to make a very small Battalion tactical TAC. The next problem I gave [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] was to really get a handle on the security at Hamad Karzai International Airport (HKIA). It didn't take a lot of walking around to realize that they had a different attitude on that than we did. We had a lot of struggle to keep them in the game and trying to be a force for good in improving the Force Pro standards at HKIA.

g. Question and Answer 6.

(1) Question. You got into HKIA when?

(2) Answer. I arrived 18 July and immediately went to the US Embassy Complex (USEC).

h. Question and Answer 7.

(1) Question. What role did your subordinates play in the embassy evacuation?

(2) Answer. It would have been 14th through the 16th. Period of Darkness 15th-16th. We made the decision on the 12th to swap units. We were in the middle of RIPTOA and made the decision to go organic with Polar Bear. That gave us unity of command and put a Battalion commander at each location. [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] had TF Polar Bear because he had more time on the ground at HKIA and understood that problem better. The USEC, I thought the Infantry Battalion commander would be the

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right fit there so that's where [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] went. I really felt that with me there the existing Department of State could handle the requirement. The rifle company with a sniper section and a Battalion commander was TF Wild Boar under [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)]

i. Question and Answer 8.

(1) Question. When did you get your mission change?

(2) Answer. During the RIPTOA, we saw the way this was going. Pretty obvious that we would have things change. We knew we needed at least 2 companies available. We needed two distinct teams and set the personnel up at the different locations. RADM Vasely had given a discussion to the ambassadors on the night of the 13th. The Regional Security Officer (RSO) had changed out 4 days prior. The previous RSO got it and understood, but he was frustrated with the rest of the embassy team for keeping their heads in the sand. It became problematic to a degree that RADM Vasely is meeting with the ambassador and his messaging was something to the effect of "this is going to be bad and it'll be bad faster than you think". There was a general disbelief and lack of agreeance on behalf of the embassy team towards that point. We kept putting together talking points and eventually the Ambassador agrees that we need to evacuate, but the timeline kept becoming the issue. As late as 13 August the embassy staff was still planning to be evacuated around 31 August. I sat in the EAC and had to be very clear about the fact that we were looking at hours, not weeks. I think what eventually got traction was the decent possibility that there would be a gunfight at the embassy. Part of what resonated with the ambassador was the larger picture of what that fight would look like and how the Taliban would get the choice of how that went down. I literally had to talk to him about planning for firing [redacted (b)(6)] into the streets of Kabul.

So early morning on the 14th we quickly moved 1400 people off the embassy compound and frankly not much leadership came from within the DoS personnel at all, especially the senior ones. A lot of very junior RSO's would push, but they couldn't provide a head count or names for us to work movement tables. From RADM Vasely, it was the plan to be off the embassy footprint by the morning of the 15th. We didn't want to fly in daylight, but it became obvious that we would have to. It took direct push and leadership on our part to almost force our will on them to move. We went in and had that conversation with the ambassador mid-morning on the 15th. That led him to do the flag ceremony later that afternoon and planned for the collapse back into the embassy as well as the HLZ location. The plan all along was that the last element out would be a security element. There were [redacted (b)(1)1.4a] and that was the last element out. We ended up going room to room and pulling out individuals to make the deadlines. DoS people were intoxicated and cowering in rooms. People were still operating like it was day to day operations with absolutely no sense of urgency or recognition of the situation. The junior leadership were dialed in, but the more senior leadership did not understand the gravity of the situation or didn't think it was real.

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Likewise the equipment destruction plans were not realistic. We just had to explain to them the challenges associated with the timeline and all the stuff that still needed to happen. The RSO was planning for some compactor operation for vehicles. We had to be frank about the fact that the green zone was gone. But they just had trouble conceptualizing the idea of what the attack from a regular force would look like. We

[REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g

We ended up having direct fire engagements with the Taliban during this time where they were shooting sporadically at anything they thought they could hit. As the evening went on it started sinking in that the gravity of the situation was very different than their previous expectations. We didn't know how much control the Taliban had over their fighters and we saw their capability. We had reservations about their ability to hold their individuals back from full on coming at the embassy.

Towards the end we were running out of time and aircraft availability and we're tossing bags off the ramps and manifesting people. Equipment kept coming out of the woodworks. They brought out hundreds of weapons. There were diplomatic pouches with sensitive equipment and communications. The embassy team was not postured for an evacuation whatsoever, not planned, not resourced, not rehearsed - it was beyond them. The maintenance for the chinooks actually kept us up and running. We collapsed the perimeter and got the Gurkha guards down and started the transition as soon as possible in order to get set up for the actual final pull. We didn't want to leave it late with contracted security. The ERT element gave us some more guns, but then it was the late evacuation and planning for destruction of equipment that really pushed us to problems.

First thing that went sideways was the chinook generator fire and emergency landing at HKIA. We had conditions checks, and we blew through some of that right away. The penetration of the perimeter at HKIA put that all that other stuff on pause. That was the zombie apocalypse and that event changed timelines. We had to push security back out and reset the security to protect the LZ. That's where we had some direct fire engagements. We didn't know if we would be able to continue to evacuate by air, or would we have to go by ground? We ended up getting [REDACTED] up and the aircraft/HLZ wasn't over run. Lead elements of 82nd were on ground. Polar Bear is working to control the south side perimeter. At that point they were answering to [REDACTED]. Every aircraft was maxed out at that point. 55-60 people in every CH47. I was one of the last guys off other than the operator team leader. We cleared the compound as much as possible. We had guys going as slim as possible in order to be able to bring off JTAC-TS equipment.

[REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g

[REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g Sometime between 0230 and 0330 we reorganized and got back on the line.

j. Question and Answer 9.

(1) Question. Were you dealing with airfield perimeter security at all?

(2) Answer. We saw and understood the implications of having people on the airstrip. The evacuation was literally impossible with the airfield controlled.

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18 October 2021k. Question and Answer 10.

(1) Question. What was your initial role upon arrival and reconstitution at HKIA?

(2) Answer. So, in daylight I went out and had to get a handle on our forces on the ground including [REDACTED] who isn't even organic to me. I was bouncing between checking on them and trying to help get USFOR-A sorted and perform the command post transition. Then it was complicated by 82nd getting on the ground and getting their HQ integrated. That first morning was really just going out to see what it looked like. We did a link up with the guys from 82nd just to get a sense of things. We drove out to Alvarado where they were set up. [REDACTED] Getting HKIA secure was obviously our 1st priority. At this point you have Marine elements and Army elements on the ground but nobody is complete. The posture and command and C2 and visualization was still in the grey a little. We were grappling to gain and maintain understanding of what we were dealing with. After talking with RADM Vasely, he didn't understand the JTF-CR plan was to secure HKIA. I spent some time with the [REDACTED] and two of the problems I saw were the Graphic control measures and the array of forces.

The graphic used to develop that was off. The terminal road was kind of split and that's where the line was drawn to divide the runway. I felt like that was a seam instead of a unified front. I knew how [REDACTED] conceptualized it. We knew the airfield seizure concept. I thought that was a challenge out of the gate and the other issue was the JTF-CR staff, and their lack of scenario planning leading up to this point. They had a completely different lead up planning cycle. It was huge, it was incomplete force structure for almost every unit. It was taking a little bit for them to get that. The first part of this for me was to make sure that HKIA remained open and operating. If HKIA became untenable it was a problem. We ended up having that conversation with JTF-CR, and [REDACTED] and MG Donahue identified that the NSU was the 'clear' force and that 82nd would 'hold'.

The South side of the apron was a whole different problem. There was so much gunfire. Taliban and NSU shooting over peoples' heads. Pretty much continuous machine gun fire across the South side of the airfield. It was the most chaotic situation I've seen in my time in the Army. We almost planned for having an accident on the runway. The control of the airfield and the visualization of where everyone was on the airfield at all times was almost impossible at that point seemingly. At one point we established a meeting with pretty much everyone other than BGen Sullivan and RADM Vasely and laid down the real plan to establish the security perimeter. It was that night where the realignment happened. From that moment on 82nd owned the perimeter. The 82nd focused down. North HKIA west all the way around was tactical control of the gates was JTF-CR. Polar Bear was the mounted reserve. Their Soldiers, leaders, and everyone had done the rehearsals, and we knew that mission. Polar Bear and 3-21 had their footprint in the JTF-CR footprint. At that point, once things were in that place, I really leaned into the [REDACTED] I was able to do another command post

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transition to where 82nd had the JOC floor in order to give them down and in and us being up and out. The other thing that needed to be done was the interagency and international burden had to be taken off the senior leadership. We stood up the multinational coordination cell by direction of RADM Vasely. We ended up moving down into JTF-CR footprint and there was a cell we could occupy. The upstairs was us, downstairs was the internationals. Ambassador Bass came in about that time and he was the NEO. He needed from me the planning abilities from the mil side. He needed us to sync with coalition partners. He needed us to sync the team and triage requests and inputs. We helped him to plan and visualize the embassy staff evacuation while helping to maintain relationships. We had to separate the spaces in a way that we could maintain the NOFORN space but not off-put the partners, so we used the upstairs for that. RADM Vasely was communications up and out and we had to maintain synchro with JTF-CR. Some folks augmented the 82nd, and some folks stayed on with me but the effort was divided pretty hard.

l. Question and Answer 11.

(1) Question. What did the Turks have a role in, and how did that transition over time?

(2) Answer. The COMREL with the Turks was interesting. When the JTF-CR thing ends it was interesting. They didn't work for RADM Vasely. They were business as usual, and their operations were very normalized at low operating concept. They identified early on that they would not fight the Taliban, and that while they would 'secure HKIA' but they specifically would not fight the Taliban. The identification of North HKIA as their area of control. I saw the problem set as a two Battalion problem set at minimum to secure HKIA. In fairness to [REDACTED] (b)(6) he probably didn't know what their countries policy was. Their Force Pro officer went on leave like 10 days before everything kicked off. [REDACTED] (b)(3)130b, (b)(6) were working hard to establish the perimeter and the control measures and gate and radio traffic. We got that and some measure of command and control (C2) established, and then there was supposed to be some element of LNO with the Turkish. Wild Boar had really provided them the support, but then when 3/10 got the notification of the requirement right before the embassy evacuation to feed that problem, [REDACTED] (b)(6) [REDACTED] (b)(6) and he would be able to go in there and get it done. The second part was frankly to understand what the hell they were doing. The third part was the contracts. The machine ran on contracts. We had to keep that on life support as much as possible. The Turks and NATO were the ones keeping a lot of the lights on and the chow moving. It got a lot of attention from JTF-CR and USFOR-A. Keeping that going was key to the operation and that stayed on even after we knew they [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4d [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4d They went in their shell, and it was interesting because they ended up going to ground until the last few days. They started wanting things in those last few days.

m. Question and Answer 12.

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(1) Question. Looking at the 17th, Gen McKenzie established the COMREL product. Talk about your understanding of that update?

(2) Answer. I was in the room with RADM Vasely with Sullivan and MG Donahue. Maybe even before Gen McKenzie said it. The most difficult dynamic would be USFOR-A forward and 82nd. There was tons of respect and ego would not be part of this. That was abundantly clear by personal example and clear within their staffs. They talked out what Gen McKenzie ended up framing as the COMREL. USFOR-A up and out. 82nd focus down and in. I really was impressed with the way they did it and their whole organizations bought into it. The 82nd came into it with that downward focus in order to bring order to chaos. Everything fell under JTF-CR, but in terms of authorities, I knew this was not at my level. Clear communication with BGen Sullivan and RADM Vasely and to me. I would oversee the evacuation. JTF-CR would operate at HKIA and we would go work for them upon arrival back at HKIA. It became obvious that we were really operating under 82nd. For physical terrain we were operating out of North HKIA and 82nd owned the airhead line and 1st BDE 82nd had South, North, and West.

n. Question and Answer 13.

(1) Question. So how does that evolve?

(2) Answer. JTF worked for RADM Vasely as far as the NEO. As far as the security component, it wouldn't surprise me if it was complex and changed a lot, but it was 82nd. It really became clear with 82nd.

o. Question and Answer 14.

(1) Question. So from your perspective [redacted (b)(6)] [redacted (b)(6)] can you talk a bit about your interactions with outside organizations?

(2) Answer. Two times daily we held an international reps meeting. I was usually the senior military guy there and usually Ambassador Bass would be there. This was the formal sync with the coalition partners non-military folks. This was continuous engagements with DoS, and each of the two main DoS guys got one of my Infantry Captains. I gave them the CPT in order to keep the products and information synced to be usable for us. The sync with MG Donahue and reps from RAMD Vasely and [redacted (b)(1)1.4] was multiple times per day. We were working continuous, around the clock and we maintained touch points. We were constantly triaging the needs of their partner nations and managing relationships with them and their needs and making it equitable. The focus was on not marginalizing the smaller nations and making sure the JTF-CR folks were really operating with options for everyone. The bulk of the international personnel coming in was from South perspective. The riskiest gate was at South gate. The most likely gate for VBIED was South. 82nd was having to manage that gate closely. We did a lot of direct engagement with [redacted (b)(3)130b, (b)(6)] We had to keep plugged in to that gate

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because it freed us up to do things in other places. We met the requirement there with our international partners.

p. Question and Answer 15.

(1) Question. You reference those pick ups at the gates. Can you discuss that a little?

(2) Answer. I was primarily coordinating bulk entry. This was primarily passport holders or folks who had passport and visa. This was not partner, worked with, or unclear folks. This was coordinated for large groups and clear documentation. We built movement tables and figured out the movement windows in order to allocate them for our partners. We knew what was coming and what the need was. This was key for the search teams. They had their own responsibility for their searches and this required coordination but it was their own responsibility to keep people from going rogue and stepping on each other and to keep 82nd out of the business of doing it for them. The manifest issues were worked through the International Coordination cell. The Taliban would validate the manifests at their gates. Much has been made about those lists, but I want to be clear that the busses weren't being screened out using people on the lists. It was people who weren't on lists and shouldn't have been on the busses who were screened out.

q. Question and Answer 16.

(1) Question. Marines were running North, East, and Abbey Gate. Did you visit those locations at all and can you discuss what you saw?

(2) Answer. I ended up going to all gates at some point and just based on what I was doing, I went to South gate most. You could tell North gate was a bad deal. We would watch them on the feeds as well. North gate was not awesome. One of the hard parts for the dismounted gates was really the Marines had to establish those gates in contact. They were mobbed from the moment they arrived. It was not feasible to gain standoff. Noticeable difference between North Gate, East gate, and Abbey gate. I talked to a lot of folks about it but I really felt like North gate got dialed up a little too much. NSU added a dynamic to it. They were shooting over people's heads. I think it was NSU on NSU and then Marines ended up getting tied into it. It was chaotic enough. It was not an 'if', but a when. Frankly the NSU was very aggressive towards Afghans. It was untenable. East Gate was a bit different. I went there with RADM Vasely to get an American family at East gate. It was chill. It wasn't chaotic and Marines were looking after the area. It was chill. This was around the 19th. Big group of female searchers there. Felt very in control. A lot of depth to that gate area. We met up with the NSU commander on the ground and more of the same machine gun fire. The gas station across the street felt like a drug deal gone bad. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] There was some kind of altercation and the little bubble we were in was chill, but we saw them kill some dude like 100 meters away. We roll up and while that's happening, we are dealing with the Taliban

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and they took the photo and go and get the guy and we all walk back into the chill. I was trying to get my head wrapped around what all this looked like. It was very clear that the control and the division of the labor was happening. The Taliban and the NSU would be shooting over people, but when we walked up, the Taliban guns and the NSU guns would go down. The SPMAGTF folks was just a real challenge, not on their shoulders. I was so very impressed at how empathetic the 18-19 year old Marine was in dealing with these people. It was clear that they had really trained to deal with this problem. I did not see, particularly with the SPMAGTF, that it was a problem. I specifically talked to those guys about how their moms and dads would be proud of what they were doing. Obviously at Abbey gate was the issue of the multinational. It was the Barron hotel and the other nations using the canal to get people in. The initial idea of Camp Sullivan, and how the Brits ended up using the Barron hotel, it didn't obviously work out that was and the Abbey gate operations weren't ideal. South Gate was order and I really felt like North and Abbey were chaos. We really tried to preserve the order and usefulness of South gate so we measured entry there and tried to keep it to these bulk deliveries.

Another item I think is relevant was that I don't think we had enough non-lethal capability. I think the folks at the DoS went through theirs in the first night. For future NEO, we need lots of capability pushed forward. I made my folks bring masks.

r. Question and Answer 17.

(1) Question. Talk about threat streams.

(2) Answer. The high profile attack 1.2 km away from Ministry of Defense house a few days before the embassy evacuation. That was a 4-5 hour gunfight. We were absolutely aware of the present nature and concept threat. The support throughout July and Aug meant that we were supporting ANDSF meant we were supporting them instead of ourselves. The limited number of [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4c went to ANDSF. The efficacy waned obviously, and then it started to make us have to identify pressure points and prioritize the future look and how this would roll out. We knew ISIS-K was trying to play the spoiler in this thing. Everyone saw there would be rockets and we expected an SVEST or VBIED attempt. Because there was an expectation and it became clear that the Taliban were interested in seeing us out of there, we were not oblivious to the ISIS-K threat. The risk to people due to concentration and lack of stand-off. We closed every gate at some point. We were trying to get security and react appropriately to the threats as the streams came in. We were in a lot of ways sharing our information with the Taliban. Taliban were not interested in an ISIS-K effecting us. The ISIS-K folks were likely more effective than the Afghan National Defense Security Force (ANDSF). My recollection of it was that Abbey gate, the transition was from Marines to Brits and the gate was supposed to be closed. There was a known presence of passport holders and it was supposed to have transitioned or closed earlier that day but that timeline slipped. If it had been ordered closed, it would have closed. There was a lot of external pressure to get people out. I got phone calls from the white house. I got calls from congress. I got calls from 4 stars retired and current. Chiefs of staff of all those entities. There was a real pressure to want to get people out, but there was a real sense of mission and

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responsibility to get people out. We all felt a tremendous responsibility to get every single American citizen, every Afghan who had served with the US, and everyone we could who we'd worked with out. I believe that was felt all the way to the lowest level.

s. Question and Answer 18.

(1) Question. Force Flow out?

(2) Answer. 82nd has the JTE. We wanted to make it as easy for them as possible. We started pushing out non-mission essential on the 25th. We start pushing out and collapsing down. We flowed 4-31 out on 26th-27th. They were first in order of movement out from us. We were closing a lot of gates and starting the process of getting out. We flowed 2-30th out and collapsed down to skeleton crew of the multinational coordination cell. It was basically me, a skeleton of staff, and my surgeon and bare bones crew with them. I think it was the 30th, I went to MG Donahue and the last of South gate and some weird mass of NYT reporters came in. I completed my requirements and went to MG Donahue and manifested on the 30th between 1000-1100.

t. Question and Answer 19.

(1) Question. Did you visit the gate on the 26th? Present for the blast?

(2) Answer. I did visit the gate but I was not present. I was in a meeting and I didn't hear a blast or anything. I checked in with the JOC and we knew something was going on. Wild Boar was QRF. Initial report was 3 wounded US. I got started looking at it all and kind of saw things come back and realized it was massive. Wild Boar never got called. People were clearing the roads to make sure evacuation was clear. They had done a MASCAL rehearsal like 48 hours from when it actually happened. Our role II had relationships with a lot of the other medical folks who had already been out there. These guys were great. (b)(3)130b; (b)(6) ran the triage. The amount of medical capability was insane. Unfortunate, but the reality was that it is likely that those who could've been saved were saved. I didn't spend enough time at Abbey to be able to speak to the tactical array of the gate. There was no way to run any of those gates in order to be done with zero risk. Given all the requirements of operating the gates, it was a requirement to take risks in order to make things happen. Bags were offloaded. We made it a principle to not allow bags just because that was one factor we could control.

u. Question and Answer 20.

(1) Question. Anything we haven't discussed?

(2) Answer. In the spirit of learning and taking away lessons. I think it was hard for the entire enterprise, and for people not on the ground, to be able to rectify the picture of what Afghanistan was in July and August of 2021. It felt like people just didn't understand that the de-evolution of the situation was known. It felt like the Taliban built

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in the airstrike losses into their calculus. They knew they could keep charging and be effective. The overconfidence in the ANDSF was due to the investment over 20 years, but I'm not sure we were as honest with ourselves as we needed to be. As a guy who would've been in charge of about 650 people at the embassy even if things went well. I think we really overestimated our requirement to support our operations with outside agencies. I really just felt the overestimation at my end. Not your problem, but DoS has to do a real wargame of the math and science of this stuff. The rigor wargame on DoD end is also incumbent upon us. We were able to do napkin math for so long, but the tyranny of distance with Afghanistan caught us short. I think the fixation on BOG absolutely hurt us. I didn't feel comfortable getting on a plane with a BOG between 650-1k. No organic fires. I didn't want to get caught out, and nobody did, so the bottom line to us was planning on getting put in a position of having to fight. Organic units are a thing and you cannot outsource your security to other people. The force flow and the triggers for force flow were probably a bit calculated off. You can go without food and a lot of other things, but the unity of effort has to push security as the primacy. Lot of O5/O6 on the ground commanding 1-2 companies. Things that were positive: we sent the most ready units in the Army to do this. We just came off CTC rotations. We had Soldier discipline and movement down. That was painful and was very much a preparation for what we saw and dealt with out there. I think that saved lives. I think as I look at the SPMAGTF, they had clearly trained and prepped for that mission very well. Finally, I was really proud of the young people and their empathy, discipline and courage. Last one I would add is that I watched a lot of people stepping up. The PR Recovery team. Across the entire team, people played ego-free ball. Especially the senior leaders, and it was reflected in their actions and attitudes. They set the tone and they operated in a way to make sure everyone was clear as possible given the shifting sands and moment to moment picture changes.

5. The point of contact for this memorandum is the undersigned at [redacted] or at email: [redacted]

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