

# Exhibit 2.7



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**HEADQUARTERS**  
**UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND**  
 UNIT 29951  
 APO AE 09751-9951

AC-COS

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, U.S. AFRICA COMMAND, APO AE 09751

SUBJECT: (U) Army Regulation (AR) 15-6 Investigation Findings: 4 October 2017  
 Enemy Contact Event in Tongo Tongo, Niger

**1. (U) PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND.**

a. (U//FOUO) On 17 October 2017, Major General (Maj Gen) J. Mark Hicks, Commander, Special Operations Command Africa (CDRSOCAFRICA), appointed (b)(3) / (b)(6) to conduct an informal AR 15-6 investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding an enemy attack near the town of Tongo Tongo, Niger.<sup>1</sup> The attack resulted in the wounding of two and the death of four U.S. service members. On 20 October 2017, General Thomas D. Waldhauser, Commander, U.S. Africa Command (CDRUSAFRICOM), appointed Major General (MG) Roger J. Cloutier, Jr. to assume responsibility for the investigation.<sup>2</sup>

b. (U//FOUO) The investigating officer employed a team of experts to advise him during the investigation including attorneys, doctors, Special Forces officers, intelligence officers, Nigerien cultural and language experts, communications specialists, as well as an Air Battle Manager, air planner, and a historian (collectively "investigating team"). The investigating team also collaborated with U.S. government interagency partners including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the (b)(3) 3605 and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

c. (U//FOUO) During the course of the inquiry, the investigating team examined documentary, photographic, audio, video, and testimonial evidence to make findings of fact.<sup>3</sup> The investigating team returned to the site of the attack in an operation that dedicated more than 300 U.S., French, and Nigerien air and ground forces to securing Tongo Tongo and the surrounding area for nine hours in support of investigative activities. Nigerien and U.S. investigators spoke with Tongo Tongo villagers; examined the surrounding terrain; and walked, photographed, and documented evidence in a 5 square-mile area surrounding the initial attack site. Nigerien survivors of the attack

<sup>1</sup> (U) Enclosure (Encl.). 1. Army Regulation (AR) 15-6 provides for three different types of investigation: formal investigation, informal investigation, and preliminary inquiry. A formal investigation is characterized by the designation of a respondent and a board of investigators. An informal investigation is an investigation that does not identify a respondent. The designation of this investigation as an informal investigation has no correlation to the resources allocated and the priority given to this investigation.

<sup>2</sup> (U) Encl. 2.

<sup>3</sup> (U) Encl. 5.

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guided the investigating team to key points in the area. The investigating team collected physical evidence from the site of the attack and locations where each U.S. Soldier was killed in action.

d. (U//~~FOUO~~) The investigating team travelled to Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Stuttgart, Ramstein, and Baumholder, Germany; Niamey, Ouallam, and Tahoua, Niger; Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; and N'Djamena, Chad. The investigating team interviewed 143 witnesses that included American and Nigerien military survivors of the attack; French and Nigerien pilots and ground forces who responded to the attack; U.S. response forces; military and civilian personnel who observed the remains of the eight fallen U.S. and Nigerien service members; medical professionals who treated American and Nigerien wounded and examined the remains of the fallen; and commanders and staff personnel at every command from Team OUALLAM to U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM).

e. (U) All findings in this report are supported by a preponderance of all evidence available to the investigating team at the time this report was completed. Should additional evidence become available after this report is completed, we will take all necessary steps to assess the evidence and revise any portion of this report as necessary.

2. (U//~~FOUO~~) **REPORT ORGANIZATION.** This investigation covered a range of topics including: individual and unit training of relevant Special Operations units, pre-deployment site surveys and assessments, pre-mission training, authorities for operations, coordination and approval of operations, as well as a detailed analysis of the facts and circumstances surrounding the nature of the original and follow-on missions leading up to the enemy contact on 4 October 2017. The investigation provides a detailed description of the actual Troops in Contact (TIC) event, and actions taken by U.S. and partner forces in response, including combined efforts to locate all U.S. personnel. For ease of reading, these findings and recommendations are organized into the following discrete parts:

**PART I – (U) FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

**PART II – (U//~~FOUO~~) TEAM OUALLAM'S PRE-DEPLOYMENT UNIT AND INDIVIDUAL TRAINING**

**PART III – (U//~~FOUO~~) TEAM OUALLAM'S PRE-DEPLOYMENT SITE SURVEY (PDSS); RELIEF IN PLACE / TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY (RIP/TOA) FROM (b)(3) / (b)(6) and OPERATIONS / TRAINING PRIOR TO MISSION**

**PART IV – (U) MISSION: EVENTS OF 2-4 OCTOBER 2017**

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**PART V – (U) SUPPORT, SEARCH, AND RECOVERY EFFORTS**

**PART VI – (U) FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

(U) The report also includes a Table of Exhibits (and corresponding exhibits), a Table of Enclosures (and corresponding enclosures), and a Table of Annexes (and corresponding Annexes). In this report, “Exhibits” are primary sources of evidence (i.e., sworn statements, witness testimony, photographs) and “Enclosures” describe administrative matters or provide context (i.e., timeline of events, graphic overlays, coordination matrices). Finally, “Annexes” analyze technical or other matters. An acronym glossary is included for reference.

3. (U) The report includes the following Annexes:

**ANNEX 1 – (U//FOUO) Operational and Fiscal Authorities Applicable to Team OUALLAM**

**ANNEX 2 – (S) (b)(3) 360 Support to Personnel Recovery (PR) and Explanation of False Friendly Force Tracking (FFT) Signals**

**ANNEX 3 – (U) Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR)**

**ANNEX 4 – (U) Intelligence Overview**

**ANNEX 5 – (U) Personnel Recovery and Casualty Evacuation (CASEVAC)**

**ANNEX 6 – (U) Command and Control**

**ANNEX 7 – (U) Risk Assessment and Risk Mitigation**

**ANNEX 8 – (U) Medical Findings**

4. (U) The specific inquiries directed in the appointment order are answered throughout this report. To assist in directing the reader to the section of the report which answers these specific inquiries, a reference guide is included in Enclosure 1.

5. **(U) TIMING CONVENTIONS.** All times listed in this report are in local Niger time. At all relevant times from 2-6 October 2017, Niger was Zulu +1 hour; Germany was Zulu +2 hours; and Washington D.C. was Zulu -4 hours.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> (U) Zulu is the military terminology for “Coordinated Universal Time” (UTC). On account of Daylight Savings Time, Germany moved to Zulu + 1 on 29 October 2017. Washington D.C. moved to Zulu -5 hours on 5 Nov 17. Niger does not adjust for Daylight Savings Time and therefore remains the same.

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6. **(U) DISTANCES.** All distances noted in this report are approximations calculated using the center point of the original TIC site, the center point of Position Two, and grid coordinates of physical evidence collected from the battlefield.

7. **(U) NAMES OF PARTNER NIGERIENS.** For the security and safety of partner Nigerien personnel and their families, most Nigerien witnesses are identified throughout this report by a witness number: Partner Nigerien (PN) XX. A roster of Nigerien witnesses remains on file with the Investigating Team at Headquarters, U.S. AFRICOM.

8. **(U) VEHICLE NAMING CONVENTIONS.** U.S. vehicles are identified throughout the report by their original order of movement: USV1, USV2, and USV3. Similarly, Partner vehicles are identified throughout the report according to their original order of movement: PV1, PV2, PV3, PV4, and PV5.

9. **(U) SPECIAL FORCES UNIT NAMING CONVENTIONS.** Army Special Forces are generally organized into Groups, Battalions, Companies, and Operational Detachments "Alpha" (ODA). When deployed, Army Special Forces are modular and can form any number of staff and maneuver elements including Special Operations Commands Forward (SOCFWD), Special Operations Command and Control Elements (SOCCE), Advance Operating Bases (AOB), and Joint/Combined "Teams." In the context of this report:

a. (U) Members of the 3d Special Forces Group (Airborne) Headquarters formed the main body of SOCFWD-North and West Africa deployed to Baumholder, Germany;

b. (U) 2d Battalion of the 3d Special Forces Group (Airborne) formed the body of SOCCE-Lake Chad Basin deployed to N'Djamena, Chad;

c. (U//~~FOUO~~) (b)(3)/(b)(6) 2d Battalion, 3d Special Forces Group (Airborne) formed the body of AOB Niger;

d. (U//~~FOUO~~) (b)(3) / (b)(6) formed the body of Team OUALLAM.

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**PART I  
FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

1. ~~(S)~~ Strategic Background of U.S. Special Operations Force (SOF) Operations in Niger; [redacted] (b)(1)1.4a



(U) Figure 1 (See also Encl. 8.2)

a. ~~(S//NF)~~ [redacted] (b)(1) 1.4c  
[redacted] (b)(1) 1.4c  
[redacted] (b)(1) 1.4c

b. (U//~~FOUO~~) In 2016, a group of fighters split from Boko Haram and pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).<sup>7</sup> The Intelligence Community

<sup>5</sup> (U) Information Paper - Violent Extremist Organization in Mali, on file at USAFRICOM.  
<sup>6</sup> (U) Information Paper - Violent Extremist Organization in Mali, on file at USAFRICOM.  
<sup>7</sup> (U) Long War Journal; <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/08/jihadists-argue-over-leadership-of-islamic-states-west-africa-province.php>.

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refers to that group as ISIS – West Africa (ISIS-WA).<sup>8</sup> The Boko Haram and ISIS-WA threats are primarily concentrated in southeastern Niger.<sup>9</sup>

c. (S//NF) [redacted] (b)(1)1.4c

[redacted] (b)(1)1.4c

d. (S//NF) [redacted] (b)(1)1.4c

[redacted] (b)(1)1.4c

[redacted] (b)(1)1.4c

[redacted] (b)(1)1.4c

e. (S) [redacted] (b)(1)1.4a

[redacted] (b)(1)1.4a

[redacted] (b)(1)1.4a

Those teams advanced U.S. Africa Command's (USAFRICOM) strategic goal of countering violent extremist organizations by working by, with, and through partner Nigerien forces. That strategy used a variety of operational and fiscal authorities to allow the teams to (1) train and equip partner forces, (2) advise and assist partner forces, and (3) in some circumstances, advise, assist, and accompany partner forces on counterterrorism operations subject to operational constraints discussed below.<sup>14</sup>

f. (S//NF) Of the [redacted] Special Operations teams in Niger, Team [redacted] (b)(1)1.4a focused on the Boko Haram and ISIS-WA threats.<sup>15</sup> Team [redacted] (b)(1)1.4a concentrated on the threat from ISIS and AQIM emanating from Libya.<sup>16</sup> Prior to November 2016, Team ARLIT was [redacted] (b)(1)1.4a in Niger postured to address the growing ISIS-GS and AQIM threat in southwestern Niger.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>8</sup> (U) Long War Journal; <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/08/jihadists-argue-over-leadership-of-islamic-states-west-africa-province.php>.

<sup>9</sup> (U) Long War Journal; <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/08/jihadists-argue-over-leadership-of-islamic-states-west-africa-province.php>.

<sup>10</sup> (U) Information Paper - Violent Extremist Organization in Mali, on file at USAFRICOM.

<sup>11</sup> (U) Information Paper - Violent Extremist Organization in Mali, on file at USAFRICOM.

<sup>12</sup> (U) Annex 4; Encl. 7; TTN61, on file at USAFRICOM - "Violent Extremist Organization Threats to the Sahel."

<sup>13</sup> (U) Ex. A76, 3, 4, 12.

<sup>14</sup> (U) An explanation of SOCAFRICA's command and control structure down to each team is provided in the next section. A detailed description of the operational and fiscal authorities and constraints for these activities is provided in Annex 1.

<sup>15</sup> (U) Ex. B1, Ex. B30.

<sup>16</sup> (U) Ex. B31.

<sup>17</sup> (U) Ex. B27, Ex. B28.

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g. (S) Special Operations Command Forward-North & West Africa (SOCFWD-NWA), with the concurrence of the SOCAFRICA Commander, directed the move of

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(3) 130b

h. (S) It soon became apparent to SOCFWD-NWA that (b)(1)1.4a was not an ideal location for a variety of reasons, including (b)(1)1.4a remoteness, lack of infrastructure, relatively small partner force presence, and distance from the threat.<sup>20</sup> (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(3) / (b)(6)

<sup>21</sup> In April 2017, Team (b)(1)1.4a met with (b)(6) to discuss coordinating Team (b)(1)1.4a efforts and forces with those of his task force.<sup>22</sup> (b)(6) agreed and Team (b)(1)1.4a began preparations to move to Ouallam.

i. (S) Two years prior, SOCFWD-NWA requested funding to train and equip (b)(1)1.4a Nigerien (b)(1)1.4a companies pursuant to the build-partner-capacity authority codified in 10 U.S.C. § 2282.<sup>23</sup> Coincidental to Team (b)(1)1.4a move to Ouallam, some of the equipment began to arrive.<sup>24</sup> SOCFWD-NWA, in coordination with the Security Cooperation Office at the U.S. Embassy to Niger, arranged to have that equipment delivered to Ouallam so that the new team there could assess, train, equip, and employ the (b)(1)1.4a Company.<sup>25</sup> The Nigerien military designated the new unit the (b)(1)1.4a (b)(6) worked with Team (b)(1)1.4a to identify soldiers and officers to fill its ranks.<sup>26</sup>

j. (S) (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(3) / (b)(6), (b)(3) 130b

<sup>18</sup> (U) Ex. A76, 12; Ex. A55, 3.

<sup>19</sup> (U) Ex. B3, 2.

<sup>20</sup> (U) Ex. A55, 14-15; A76, 12-13.

<sup>21</sup> (U) Ex. A55, 7.

<sup>22</sup> (U) Ex. G44, 1.

<sup>23</sup> (U) Ex. J15, 2-3.

<sup>24</sup> (U) Ex. G44, 1.

<sup>25</sup> (U) A57, 131.

<sup>26</sup> (U) Ex. G44, 1.

<sup>27</sup> (U) Ex. A55, 17; A56, 1-2.

<sup>28</sup> (U) Ex. A55, 18.

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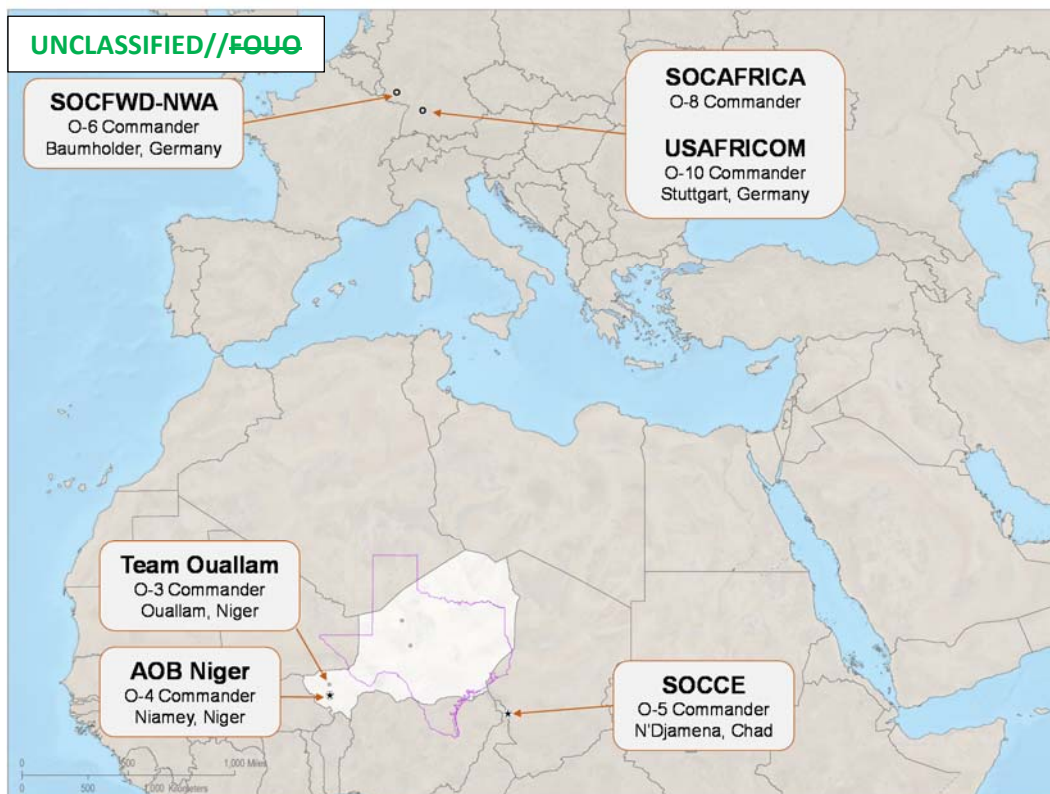
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(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(1)1.4a

k. (S) On 1 October 2017, the entire Team OUALLAM consisted of (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(1) 1.4a Special Forces team), (b)(1) 1.4a Special Operations Forces (SOF) enablers.<sup>29</sup> Team OUALLAM was partnered with elements of (b)(3) 130b and the (b)(1)1.4a both co-located at Ouallam. Team OUALLAM's mission was to advise, assist, and accompany (A/A/A) these forces during Counter ISIS-GS/AQIM operations from (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4d 2017 to (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4d 2018 in (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4d in order to disrupt ISIS-GS/AQIM operations, training, and logistical support.<sup>30</sup>

2. (U) Force laydown and Command and Control (C2) structure.



(U) Figure 2 (See also Encl. 8.1)

<sup>29</sup> This number accounts for the full composition of Team OUALLAM, and is not intended to describe the size of the force on the operation conducted from 3 – 4 October 2017.

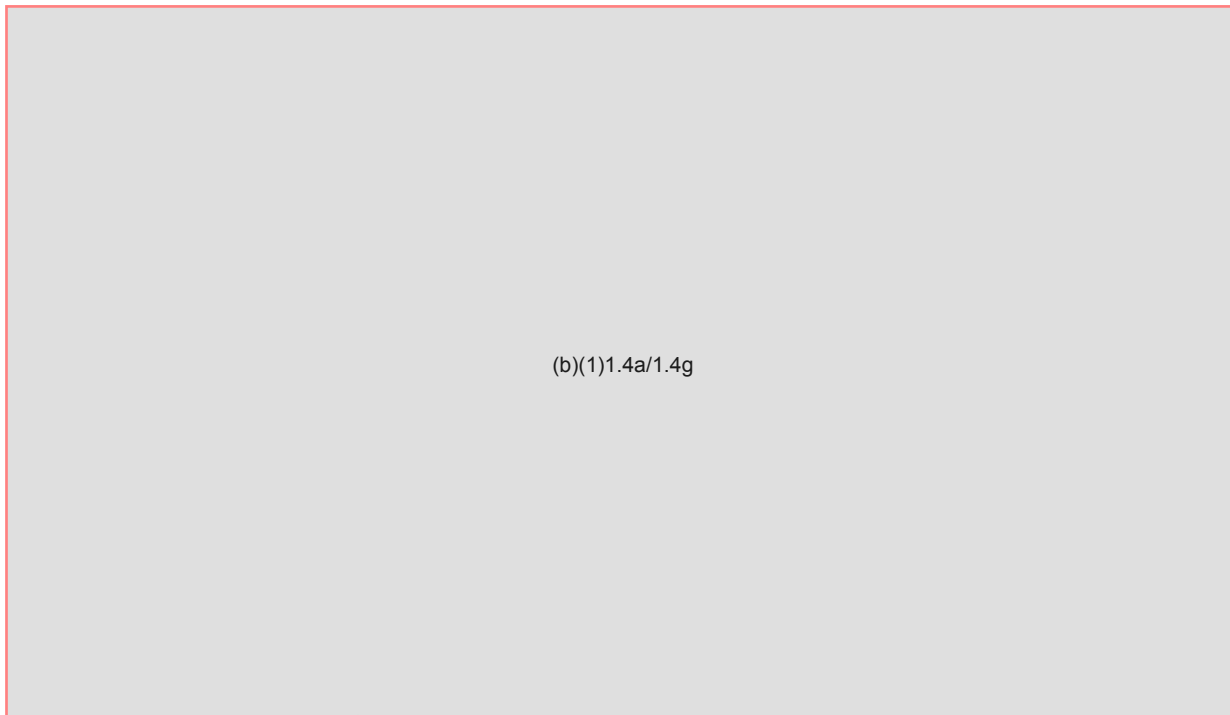
<sup>30</sup> (U) Ex. B26, 2.

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(U) Figure 3

a. (U//~~FOUO~~) United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM), located in Stuttgart, Germany, is a Geographic Combatant Command that establishes a theater-wide strategic approach to achieving national interests in the African area of responsibility. USAFRICOM Commander (CDRUSAFRICOM) provides theater-wide command and control (C2) via the USAFRICOM Joint Operations Center (JOC).

b. (U//~~FOUO~~) Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAFRICA), located in Stuttgart, Germany, is a Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) that the Secretary of Defense has assigned to United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) under the Commander, USSOCOM's Combatant Command (COCOM), and has assigned Operational Control (OPCON) to CDRUSAFRICOM.<sup>31</sup> CDRUSAFRICOM exercises OPCON of attached Special Operations Forces (SOF) through the Commander, SOCAFRICA (CDRSOCAFRICA), a two-star General Officer/Flag Officer (GO/FO). SOCAFRICA conducts broad, continuous missions uniquely suited to SOF capabilities in support of CDRUSAFRICOM objectives.<sup>32</sup> SOCAFRICA has established two Special Operations Commands—Forward (SOCFWD); SOCFWD - North and West Africa (SOCFWD-NWA), commanded by an Army O-6/Colonel (COL), and SOCFWD - East Africa (SOCFWD-EA), commanded by a Navy

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<sup>31</sup> (U) FY 2017 Global Force Management Implementation Guidance.

<sup>32</sup> (U) JP 3-05, ix.

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O-5/Commander (CDR).<sup>33</sup>

c. (S) SOCFWD North and West Africa (SOCFWD-NWA), located in Baumholder, Germany, is a tailored, operational-level, joint headquarters commanded by an O-6 (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a  
 (b)(1)1.4a SOCFWD-NWA was formed around the core of the 3d Special Forces Group (Airborne) (3d SFG(A)) with the Commander and the Deputy Commander, both Army Colonels, (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>35</sup> SOCFWD-NWA has (b)(1) 1.4a personnel on their Joint Manning Document (JMD) and has established two subordinate Special Operations Command and Control Elements (SOCCE); SOCCE – Lake Chad Basin (SOCCE-LCB) and SOCCE – Sahel and the Maghreb (SOCCE-SAM).<sup>36</sup>

d. (S) SOCCE-LCB, located in N'Djamena, Chad, is doctrinally a focal point for Special Operations Forces-Conventional Forces coordination and the synchronization of special operations activities with other joint operations.<sup>37</sup> (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a  
 (b)(1)1.4a  
 (b)(1)1.4a<sup>38</sup>

SOCCE-LCB is commanded by an Army O-5/Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) and the core of the headquarters is formed around a 3d SFG(A) battalion; on 3 October 2017, this was 2nd Battalion, 3d SFG(A). (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a  
 (b)(1) 1.4a During the events of 3-6 October 2017, the SOCCE-LCB acted as the battalion headquarters for the company level command located in Niamey.<sup>40</sup>

e. (S) AOB Niger, located in Niamey, Niger, was formed around a Special Forces Company, commanded by a Special Forces O-4/Major (MAJ). An AOB is usually small, light, and tailored to perform specific missions, such as forward launch and recovery, logistics, and communications.<sup>41</sup> AOBs are usually augmented with key enablers such as intelligence specialists, logisticians, cooks, and mechanics. (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

<sup>33</sup> (U) Ex. A76, 1-2.; Ex. A69, 2.

<sup>34</sup> (U) JP 3-05, III-5.

<sup>35</sup> (U) Ex. A77, 1.

<sup>36</sup> (U) Ex. A79, 5; Ex. A76, 1-2; Ex. A69, 2; See also Annex 6 for the SOCFWD-NWA Command Architecture.

<sup>37</sup> (U) JP 3-05, III-18.

<sup>38</sup> (U) JP 3-05, III-9.

<sup>39</sup> (U) Ex. A76, 2; See also Annex 6 for the SOCFWD-NWA Command Architecture.

<sup>40</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 10. Since the events of 4 October 2017, SOCFWD-NWA executed the preplanned dissolution of SOCCE-LCB as part of a deliberate consolidation of command organizations.

<sup>41</sup> (U) FM 3-05, 4-4.

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(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

f. (U//~~FOUO~~) Team OUALLAM, located in Ouallam, Niger, was formed around (b)(3) / (b)(6) a Special Forces team commanded by an Army O-3/Captain (CPT) that was regionally-oriented, language-qualified, and specifically trained to conduct unconventional warfare and/or foreign internal defense to achieve U.S. strategic goals. Doctrinally, a fully-manned SFODA is comprised of 12 personnel and is the primary Special Forces operational unit. A captain commands the SFODA, and a chief warrant officer serves as the assistant commander. The detachment also has two noncommissioned officers in each of the Special Forces functional areas: weapons, engineer, medical, and communications, and has an intelligence noncommissioned officer and operations noncommissioned officer. The redundant capabilities within an SFODA allow the commander to employ his teams as either full or split teams. SFODAs can operate independently or with indigenous forces in a denied area.<sup>45</sup>

3. (U//~~FOUO~~) Composition of Team OUALLAM. Team OUALLAM had nine Special Forces personnel; they were short an assistant commander (180A), a junior medical sergeant (18D), and a junior communications sergeant (18E). Team OUALLAM was augmented by additional “enabler” personnel including interpreters; a mechanic (91B); an intelligence analyst (35F); a human intelligence collector (35M); a radio technician (25C); a cook (92G); and a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Neurological (CBRN) technician (74D).<sup>46</sup> On 3 October 2017, Team OUALLAM was comprised of the following personnel who participated in the patrol that was attacked<sup>47</sup>:

a. (U//~~FOUO~~) (b)(3) / (b)(6) – Detachment Commander (18A). (b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(3) / (b)(6)

<sup>42</sup> (U) Ex. A57, 2.

<sup>43</sup> (U) See Annex 6 for the SOCFWD-NWA Command Architecture.

<sup>44</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 3; See also Annex 6 for the AOB Niger Task Organization.

<sup>45</sup> (U) FM 3-05, 4-5 – 4-6.

<sup>46</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A2, 18-20; See also Annex 6 for AOB Niger Task Organization and (b)(3) / (b)(6) Individual Roster and Skill Sets.

<sup>47</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) As noted below, U.S.C. § 1302(e)(5)(B) described in this section, was not on the actual patrol, but was running the Team OUALLAM operations center at the time of the attack. (Ex. A4, 25). Other members of Team OUALLAM were not directly involved in the attack, including support personnel located at Camp Ouallam are not described here.

<sup>48</sup> (U) Ex. H1; Ex. A1, 3.

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(b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) survived the attack on 4 October 2017,  
(b)(3) / (b)(6) <sup>55</sup>

b. (U//FOUO) (b)(3) / (b)(6) – Team Sergeant (18Z). (b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) survived the attack on 4 October 2017.

<sup>49</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 2.

<sup>50</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 1. SFQC includes four weeks of “High Risk” Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) training at the Rowe Training Facility, Camp Mackall, North Carolina.

<sup>51</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 1, 4-7.

<sup>52</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 1.

<sup>53</sup> (U) Ex. H1.

<sup>54</sup> (U) Ex. H1.

<sup>55</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 199-200, 222.

<sup>56</sup> (U) Ex. H2.

<sup>57</sup> (U) Ex. H2.

<sup>58</sup> (U) Ex. H2.

<sup>59</sup> (U) Ex. H2.

<sup>60</sup> (U) Ex. H2.

<sup>61</sup> (U) Ex. H2; Ex. A2, 2.

<sup>62</sup> (U) Ex. H2.

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c. (U//~~FOUO~~) (b)(3) / (b)(6) – Acting Intelligence Sergeant (18F). (b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) survived the attack on 4 October 2017.

d. (U//~~FOUO~~) (b)(3) / (b)(6) – Senior Weapons Sergeant (18B). (b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(6) He survived the attack on 4 October 17.

e. (U//~~FOUO~~) (b)(3) / (b)(6) – Junior Weapons Sergeant (18B). (b)(3) / (b)(6) is

(b)(3) / (b)(6)

<sup>63</sup> (U) Ex. H3.

<sup>64</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 3.

<sup>65</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 2.

<sup>66</sup> (U) Ex. H3.

<sup>67</sup> (U) Ex. H4.

<sup>68</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A9, 2; Ex. H4. Note: Special Forces Company headquarters elements are alternately referred to as “ODBs” or “B-Teams” and when deployed are referred to as Advanced Operations Bases or “AOBs.”

<sup>69</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 2.

<sup>70</sup> (U) Ex. H4.

<sup>71</sup> (U) Ex. H5.

<sup>72</sup> (U) Ex. H5.

<sup>73</sup> (U) Ex. H5.

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(b)(3) / (b)(6)<sup>74</sup>  
 (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) survived  
 the attack on 4 October 2017.

f. (U//FOUO) (b)(3) / (b)(6) – Senior Engineer Sergeant (18C). (b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(3) / (b)(6) did not participate in the patrol that was attacked in Tongo Tongo on 4 October 17.<sup>82</sup> He remained in Ouallam to man the SFODA operations center there.<sup>83</sup>

g. (U//FOUO) SSG Dustin Wright – Junior Engineer Sergeant (18C). SSG Wright was 29 years-old, entered service in 2012, and attended Infantry IET at Fort Benning, GA before attending SFAS and the SFQC at Fort Bragg, NC. He graduated in July 2014 as an 18C and reported to 3d SFG(A) in September 2014. SSG Wright spent his first year at 3d SFG(A) serving in administrative staff functions including a five month rotation to Germany, where he worked at SOCFWD-NWA as an Operations Sergeant. Upon return from that deployment in June 2016, he was assigned (b)(3) / (b)(6) 2/3 SFG(A). SSG Wright's additional skills included language training in Dari. He joined (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) following their deployment to Maradi, Niger. Ouallam was his first deployment on an SFODA.<sup>84</sup> SSG Wright was killed by enemy fire during the 4 October 2017 attack.

h. (U//FOUO) SSG Bryan Black – Senior Medical Sergeant (18D). SSG Black was 35 years-old, entered service in 2009, and conducted IET as an Emergency Care Specialist (68W) at Fort Sam Houston, TX. In 2012 he attended SFAS and SFQC and

<sup>74</sup> (U) Ex. H5.

<sup>75</sup> (U//FOUO) (b)(3) / (b)(6) described in this section, was not on the actual patrol, but was running the Team OUALLAM operations center at the time of the attack. (Ex. A4, 25).

<sup>76</sup> (U) Ex. H6.

<sup>77</sup> (U) Ex. H6.

<sup>78</sup> (U) Ex. H6.

<sup>79</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. A4, 8; (b)(3) / (b)(6) ERB (Ex. H6) has a FOUO indicating he deployed to Nigeria (NG) when it was actually Niger (NE).

<sup>80</sup> (U) Ex. H6.

<sup>81</sup> (U) Ex. H6.

<sup>82</sup> (U) Ex. B23, 4; Ex. A2, 9.

<sup>83</sup> (U) Ex. A4, 25-26; Ex. A2, 9.

<sup>84</sup> (U) Ex. H7.

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graduated as an 18D in June 2015 when he was assigned (b)(3) / (b)(6) 2/3 SFG(A). SSG Black joined his unit in Afghanistan in July 2015 and served there for two months before redeploying to Fort Bragg. SSG Black's additional skills included Arabic and French language and he was a graduate of Army Ranger School.<sup>85</sup> He was killed by enemy fire during the 4 October 2017 attack.

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) (b)(3) / (b)(6) – Senior Communications Sergeant (18E). (b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) survived the 4 October 2017 attack, (b)(6)  
(b)(6)

j. (U//~~FOUO~~) SSG Jeremiah Johnson<sup>88</sup> – Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Specialist (74D). SSG Johnson was 40 years-old, entered service in 2007, and attended IET at Fort Leonard Wood, MO before going to Fort Hood, TX for 74D training. He served in the Army for ten years as a CBRN Specialist in four separate assignments and joined the 3d SFG(A) Chemical Reconnaissance Detachment (CRD) in January 2015. Before deploying to Niger, SSG Johnson's only deployment had been to Jordan in 2012. In addition to his CBRN training, SSG Johnson's additional skills included training in SSE, hand-to-hand combat, tactical combat medical care, master driver training, and mobility force protection.<sup>89</sup> SSG Johnson was killed by enemy fire during the 4 October 2017 attack.

k. (U//~~FOUO~~) SGT LaDavid Johnson – Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic (91B). SGT Johnson was 25 years-old, entered service in 2014, and attended IET at Fort Jackson,

<sup>85</sup> (U) Ex. H8.

<sup>86</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. H9. (b)(3) (10 U.S.C. § 130b), (b)(6)

(b)(6)

<sup>87</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 112.

<sup>88</sup> (U) Jeremiah Johnson was promoted posthumously to the rank of Sergeant First Class. To avoid confusion, throughout this report SFC Johnson is referred to as Staff Sergeant (SSG) Johnson, as that was his rank at the time of the attack and all witnesses referred to him as SSG Johnson.

<sup>89</sup> (U) Ex. H11.

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SC and Fort Lee, VA as a 91B (b)(3) / (b)(6) SFG(A) was SGT Johnson's first and only assignment in the Army. He deployed to Maradi, Niger from May to October of 2016 with (b)(3) / (b)(6) as their mechanic and he also performed duties as a vehicle driver during that deployment.<sup>90</sup> His additional skills included formal training as a fuel handler, forklift operator, generator mechanic, and combat lifesaver qualification.<sup>91</sup> SGT Johnson was killed by enemy fire during the 4 October 2017 attack.

I. (U//~~FOUO~~) (b)(6) – Interpreter (Nigerien Civilian Contractor). (b)(6)

(b)(6)

survived the 4 October 2017 attack.

m. (U//~~FOUO~~) (b)(6) – Intelligence Analyst (U.S. Civilian Contractor).

(b)(6) is a civilian contract employee with the Wexford Group and works for the Joint Improvised-Threat Defeat Organization (JIDO). He has served in that capacity for (b)(6). Prior to that, (b)(6). At the time of the attack, he had been in Niger for one month and (b)(6). (b)(6) He was attached to AOB Niger by SOCFWD-NWA to conduct intelligence mentoring. (b)(6) joined Team OUALLAM on or about 1 October 2017 during the course of a battlefield circulation, for what was supposed to be a limited-duration visit to assist the team's 35M.<sup>94</sup> (b)(6) survived the 4 October 2017 attack.

4. (U//~~FOUO~~) Team OUALLAM's equipment.

a. (U) Individual.

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Each member of Team OUALLAM had PPE including Kevlar helmets and body armor issued to them. Members of the team brought PPE on missions but did not usually wear it for the entirety of missions. Personnel who were manning crew-served weapons on vehicles wore their PPE while

<sup>90</sup> (U) Ex. H10.

<sup>91</sup> (U) Ex. H10.

<sup>92</sup> (C) Ex. A103, 1.

<sup>93</sup> (U) Ex. A12, 23.

<sup>94</sup> (U) Ex. A15, 1-2, 9.

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they manned their weapons. Personnel inside vehicles took their PPE off during movement due to the heat and the perception that they were operating in a permissive environment.<sup>95</sup> When attacked near Tongo Tongo on 4 October 17, (b)(3) / (b)(6) and (b)(3) / (b)(6) had their PPE on while several other members of Team OUALLAM put PPE on while under fire. (b)(3) / (b)(6) did not put on his PPE.<sup>96</sup>

ii. ~~(S)~~ Individual Weapons. Each member of Team OUALLAM was armed with a primary and secondary firearm: (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a The team had a variety of other individual weapon options available to them (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

iii. ~~(S)~~ Individual Communications Systems. (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. (U//~~FOUO~~) Team/Collective. (b)(3) / (b)(6) deployed with all of their organic team equipment and brought it with them to their new operating base in the event they were tasked with doing something or going somewhere they had not anticipated.<sup>104</sup> They did the same when they deployed to Ouallam.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>95</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 76.

<sup>96</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 98.

<sup>97</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 16; Ex. B23, 4.

<sup>98</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) A9, 96-97. Jeremiah Johnson may have only had three magazines on his kit, but grabbed additional ammo from USV3 when the fight started.

<sup>99</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 57.

<sup>100</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 90; A5, 16.

<sup>101</sup> (U) A1; Ex. A5, 16; Ex. A7, 92.

<sup>102</sup> (U) Ex. A61, 27-28.

<sup>103</sup> (U) Ex. A61, 27-28.

<sup>104</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 11.

<sup>105</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 11.

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i. ~~(S)~~ Crew-Served Weapons and Heavy Weapons. (b)(3) / (b)(6) had a variety of crew-served weapon systems available to them in Ouallam (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g

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

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g Depending on the mission, Team OUALLAM would select from available weapons those systems deemed necessary for each operation. During the 3-4 October 2017 operation, Team OUALLAM also patrolled with two mounted M-240 machine guns (7.62 x 51mm (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g The team carried sufficient ammunition for all weapons systems.<sup>107</sup>

ii. ~~(S)~~ Vehicles. Team OUALLAM had a total of seven vehicles available to them: three sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and four pickup trucks. Some of those vehicles were used for administrative and logistical needs, while others were used for tactical patrols.<sup>108</sup> On 3 October 2017, Team OUALLAM departed in three vehicles: two white Toyota Land Cruiser four-door pickup trucks and a Toyota SUV. The team used the SUV as their medical vehicle.<sup>109</sup> (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g

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

iii. ~~(S)~~ Team Communications. Team OUALLAM employed a combination of (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g capabilities for communications with their higher headquarters, their (b)(3)130b partner force, and one another.<sup>115</sup> (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g

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

<sup>106</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. A2, 11; U.S.C. § 1300 describes Team OUALLAM's weapons inventory, but does not mention .50 caliber machine guns.; but see Ex. A5, 16. Ex. A2, 11; Ex. A4, 9; Ex. A9, 25 (SSG Ondrejch discusses a plan to train on their .50 caliber machine guns.) A preponderance of the evidence supports the finding that Team OUALLAM deployed with .50 caliber machine guns.

<sup>107</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 19.

<sup>108</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 28-30.

<sup>109</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 64.

<sup>110</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 17; Ex. A9, 25; Ex. A4, 10-13.

<sup>111</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 17; Ex. A9, 25; Ex. A4, 10-13.

<sup>112</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 17; Ex. A9, 25; Ex. A4, 10-13.

<sup>113</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 17; Ex. A9, 25; Ex. A4, 10-13.

<sup>114</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 25; Ex. A4, 11-13.

<sup>115</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 19-23.

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(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g, (b)(3) / (b)(6), (b)(3) 130b

iv. (U//FOUO) Friendly Force Tracking (FFT) Devices. Although Team OUALLAM was issued three SHOUT Nano Iridium satellite-based FFT devices, only one was functional.<sup>120</sup> On 4 October 2017 it was located on the dashboard of USV1 with the Team Leader and the communications sergeant.<sup>121</sup>

c. (U//FOUO) External assets available to Team OUALLAM upon request.

i. ~~(S)~~ (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g

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

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

ii. ~~(S)~~ PR/CASEVAC. For personnel recovery and casualty evacuation, Team OUALLAM depended on ground evacuation.<sup>124</sup> Team OUALLAM also on a combination of contracted CASEVAC aircraft and a mutually supportive relationship with armed forces in Niger and Mali air evacuation.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>116</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 19-23.

<sup>117</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 107.

<sup>118</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 21-22; Ex. A5, 47.

<sup>119</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 8, 23; Ex. A1, 70.

<sup>120</sup> (U) The SHOUT Nano device is a handheld, global, two-way satellite messaging and personal tracking device that includes an Emergency 911 option which sends an immediate distress signal when a switch on the side is depressed (Ex. A2, 31).

<sup>121</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 31; Ex. A3, 24-25; Ex. A1, 76-77. See Annex 5 and Annex 2 for additional information on the use of friendly force trackers for personnel recovery efforts.

<sup>122</sup> (U) Ex. I11, 1.

<sup>123</sup> (U) See Annex 3 for a detailed description of ISR availability and use from 3-6 October 2017.

<sup>124</sup> ~~(S)~~ Ex. B15, 9. Primary CASEVAC plan was ground evacuation from (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g

<sup>125</sup> (U) Ex. B15, 9.

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

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

iii. ~~(S)~~ Airlift. Team OUALLAM (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g could request (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g airlift for operations. (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g

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

iv. ~~(S)~~ Other SFODAs. Team OUALLAM could, and did, request assistance on more complex operations from other SFODAs/Teams in Niger. (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g

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

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

v. ~~(S)~~ Additional Nigerien Partner forces. Team OUALLAM (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a could request support from (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(6) infantry

units (b)(1)1.4a Those units responded as quick reaction forces (QRF) on 4 October 2017.

vi. ~~(S)~~ Other Partner Nation forces. Other nations had forces in the area that could be called upon for assistance. The French had Task Force BARKHANE, headquartered in N'Djamena, Chad (b)(1)1.4d

(b)(1)1.4d

(b)(1)1.4d responded to a request for assistance on 4 October 2017 and were instrumental in the recovery of Team OUALLAM.

<sup>126</sup> (U) See Annex 5 for a detailed description of Personnel Recovery and CASEVAC.

<sup>127</sup> ~~(S)~~ (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

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**PART II****(U//~~FOUO~~) TEAM OUALLAM'S PRE-DEPLOYMENT UNIT AND INDIVIDUAL TRAINING.**

1. (U//~~FOUO~~) Training Requirements. Pre-deployment training requirements for Army Special Forces deploying to the continent of Africa are defined by Group Commanders in their annual Command Training Guidance (CTG) memoranda.<sup>128</sup> Those memoranda are published in conformance with USSOCOM, USASOC, and 1st Special Forces Command (SFC) training guidance. 3d SFG(A) published relevant training guidance on 24 July 2016 for fiscal year (FY) 17.<sup>129</sup> The FY 17 CTG mandated the following:

a. (U//~~FOUO~~) Training Priorities. The Group Commander's training priorities included proficiency in the "SF Principal Tasks" of Unconventional Warfare (UW) and Foreign Internal Defense (FID). It also included "train and prepare operational detachments and Soldiers for combat (technical skills, common tasks, direct action)."<sup>130</sup>

b. (U//~~FOUO~~) Individual and Collective Certification (Company, Platoon, Detachment). The CTG mandated that all 3d SFG(A) Soldiers participate in and pass individual certification testing that includes a list of specific tasks and standards that must be included in the certification. Battalions were responsible for tracking the status of individual certification testing. Similarly, the Group Commander selected key collective tasks for Special Forces Operational Detachment Bravo (SFODB) and SFODA collective certification.<sup>131</sup> Members of the Group Support Battalion were required to develop their own collective training certification tasks and standards.<sup>132</sup>

c. (U//~~FOUO~~) Validation. The CTG required Commanders to validate subordinate unit certification and training annually and prior to all deployments.<sup>133</sup> It also required battalions to send a minimum of one AOB and two SFODAs to a Command Training Center annually.<sup>134</sup>

d. (U//~~FOUO~~) Training Management. The CTG places the responsibility for training management on battalion commanders. It further directs leaders to "focus time and resources on building individual and collective capabilities directly nested with small unit

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<sup>128</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 2.

<sup>129</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 1.

<sup>130</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 2-3.

<sup>131</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 3-9.

<sup>132</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 3-9.

<sup>133</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 3-9.

<sup>134</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 3-9.

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survivability and mission accomplishment.”<sup>135</sup> Battalion commanders briefed the Group command team on their training status and plan twice in 2017: March and July.<sup>136</sup>

e. (U//~~FOUO~~) Pre-Mission Training (PMT). Key provisions of the CTG on PMT included:

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) “Battalions are responsible for ensuring that all deploying units and attachments are incorporated into PMT to improve interoperability...”<sup>137</sup>

ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) “Battalions are responsible for planning, resourcing, and executing a PMT Culmination Exercise (CULEX).”<sup>138</sup>

iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) Commanders will include mobility, sustainability, and recoverability as focus areas in PMT plans.<sup>139</sup>

iv. (U//~~FOUO~~) Battalions will incorporate academics on SOF programs, operational/fiscal authorities, and other mission critical subjects prior to deployment.<sup>140</sup>

v. (U//~~FOUO~~) Due to the unique medical challenges presented by the African theater, SFODAs and SFODBs are directed to place added emphasis on prolonged field care, CASEVAC using non-standard platforms, and preventative medicine. Companies will conduct a prolonged field care exercise as part of PMT and that training will include live tissue training and validate the unit’s ability to manage and sustain critically injured patients over multiple days.<sup>141</sup>

2. (U//~~FOUO~~) Team OUALLAM’s Training Validation and Certification. PMT for the personnel who ultimately formed Team OUALLAM did not comply with the Group’s CTG.<sup>142</sup> Due to personnel turnover and last-minute augmentation of the SFODA, six of the eleven U.S. Special Operations Forces (USSOF) personnel involved in the events of 4 October 2017, including the Detachment Commander, did not conduct any collective training events with their Team prior to deployment.<sup>143</sup> There was no period during pre-deployment training cycles when SFODA manning was locked down and stabilized so

<sup>135</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 9-11.

<sup>136</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 9; Ex. J7; Ex. J8; Ex. A57, 51.

<sup>137</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 5.

<sup>138</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 5.

<sup>139</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 5.

<sup>140</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 5-6.

<sup>141</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 6.

<sup>142</sup> (U) Ex. J4, 3-9; Ex. A2, 9.

<sup>143</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A2, 5-8, (b)(3) / (b)(6) provided conflicting testimony that everyone, except (b)(3) / (b)(6) participated as a team during JADE HELM. Ex. A1, 1; A3, 5; A4, 5-6; A5, 3-5; A7, 2-4, A9, 4,7,9 state that (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) SSG Jeremiah Johnson, and SGT LaDavid Johnson did not participate in JADE HELM as a team.

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that the personnel who would deploy together could conduct collective training together.<sup>144</sup> During the capstone collective training event, the JADE HELM exercise, only six personnel who would ultimately comprise Team OUALLAM participated together on the same team.<sup>145</sup> The Battalion included attached personnel in PMT, but those personnel did not train with the SFODAs with whom they would deploy. The 2/3d SFG(A) Battalion Commander could not have validated and certified (b)(3) / (b)(6) to deploy in August 2017 because the personnel on that team had not conducted the requisite collective training events together.

### 3. (U) Individual Training Conducted.

a. (U//~~FOUO~~) All members of 2/3 SFG(A) attend ELOC, which is an indoctrination course to learn unit standard operating procedures (SOPs); establish a baseline knowledge in shooting and maneuvering; and to become familiar with the unit's capabilities.<sup>146</sup> Special Forces Soldiers attended ELOC and support personnel attended the Special Forces Basic Combat Course – Support (SFBCS-S).<sup>147</sup>

b. (U//~~FOUO~~) All members of Team OUALLAM completed SERE 100 training and Special Forces members of the team were all graduates of the Level C/High Risk category resident SERE Course at Camp Mackall, NC.<sup>148</sup>

c. (U//~~FOUO~~) Four members of (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) SSG Black) were graduates of the U.S. Army Ranger School. Three (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) attended the Special Forces Advanced Urban Combat course (SFAUC). Two (b)(3) / (b)(6) were graduates of the Special Forces Advanced Reconnaissance, Target Analysis, and Exploitation Techniques Course (SFARTAETC). Two (b)(3) / (b)(6) were trained snipers and one (b)(3) / (b)(6) had been an instructor at the Special Operations Target Interdiction Course (SOTIC).<sup>149</sup>

d. (U//~~FOUO~~) Prior to deployment, (b)(3) / (b)(6) attended a privately contracted course conducted by Gryphon Group Security Solutions, LLC that taught skills in fighting from unarmored civilian vehicles.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>144</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 3-5; Ex. A1, 57-58; Ex. A2, 5-6.

<sup>145</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 3-5.

<sup>146</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 4-5; Ex. J10

<sup>147</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 6; Ex. J10.

<sup>148</sup> (U) Ex. H1-H13; Ex. J4, 4.

<sup>149</sup> (U) Ex. H1, 1; Ex. H2, 1; Ex. H3, 1; Ex. H4, 1; Ex. H5, 1; Ex. H6, 1; Ex. H8, 1; Ex. H9, 1

<sup>150</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 8; Ex. A9, 9; Ex. A11, 1.

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4. (U) Collective Team Training.

a. (S) (b)(3) / (b)(6) returned from deployment in Maradi, Niger, at the end of October 2016 and began a post-deployment training cycle called "Red Cycle."<sup>151</sup> During Red Cycle, the team conducted maintenance, accountability, and refit of deployment equipment; they took leave; afforded opportunities for team members to attend individual schools; conducted team training; and supported Battalion details.<sup>152</sup> The team also conducted (b)(1) 1.4a demolition training, (b)(1) 1.4a medical training, and (b)(1) 1.4a vehicle training before taking two weeks of block leave for the Christmas holidays.<sup>153</sup> Of the members of the team involved in the 4 October 2017 attack, four participated in the (b)(1) 1.4a vehicle training in December 2016.<sup>154</sup>

b. (U//FOUO) Over the course of the next four months, team membership changed significantly.<sup>155</sup> The Team Leader, Team Warrant Officer, Senior and Junior Weapons Sergeant, Senior and Junior Engineers, the Medical Sergeant, and the Junior Communications Sergeant all rotated off of the SFODA before the deployment back to Niger the following year.<sup>156</sup> Shortly before deployment to Ouallam, the SFODA's Intelligence Sergeant was determined to be medically non-deployable and the Company replaced him with (b)(3) / (b)(6) two weeks after the team had deployed.<sup>157</sup>

c. (U//FOUO) In late March 2017, the SFODA entered a five-month "Amber Cycle" when the training focus transitioned to training and preparation for the upcoming deployment.<sup>158</sup> The beginning of Amber Cycle revolved around a collective training event called "JADE HELM." JADE HELM was a large annual unconventional warfare exercise that ran from 04 April – 12 May 2017.<sup>159</sup> Skills that (b)(3) / (b)(6) were able to exercise during JADE HELM included (b)(1) 1.4a/1.7e of EO 13526

(b)(1) 1.4a/1.7e of EO 13526 (b)(1) 1.4a/1.7e of EO 13526 Six members of what would become "Team OUALLAM" participated in the JADE HELM exercise together: (b)(3) / (b)(6) SSG Wright, SSG Black, and (b)(3) / (b)(6) SGT LaDavid Johnson, and SSG Jeremiah Johnson all participated in JADE HELM, but

<sup>151</sup> (U//FOUO) The "Red-Amber-Green" training management system is codified in the outdated Army Field Manual 25-101 (Battle Focused Training). Units continue to refer to their quarterly training goal in those terms.

<sup>152</sup> (U) Ex. J4, 5; Ex. A2, 3; Ex. A3, 6; Ex. J2, 9; Ex. J4, 3.

<sup>153</sup> (U) Ex. J4, 5; Ex. A3, 6; Ex. J2, 9, Ex. J4, 3.

<sup>154</sup> (U) Ex. A11, 1.

<sup>155</sup> (U) Ex. B2, 1-2; Ex. J5, 3.

<sup>156</sup> (U) Ex. B2, 1-2; Ex. J5, 3.

<sup>157</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 3; Ex. A2, 19.

<sup>158</sup> (U) Ex. J4, 3

<sup>159</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 3; Ex. A5, 3; Ex. A9, 3; Ex. A7, 2; Ex. A2, 4; Ex. J4, 8.

<sup>160</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 3-4; Ex. A9, 7; Ex. A2, 4.

<sup>161</sup> (U) Ex. J4, 3; Ex. A3, 3; Ex. A5, 1,3; Ex. A7, 2; Ex. A2, 4; Ex. A4, 2-3, A9, 7.

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not with (b)(3) / (b)(6)<sup>162</sup> While JADE HELM was designed to validate a Special Forces Group's ability to plan and execute Unconventional Warfare, SOT (b)(3)1302/3 SFG(A)), (b)(3) / (b)(6) 2/3 SFG(A)), and its respective SFODAs used JADE HELM as a certification and validation exercise at their respective echelons.<sup>163</sup> After JADE HELM ended, the SFODA continued to conduct team training (b)(1)1.4a/1.7e of EO 13526

(b)(1)1.4a/1.7e of EO 13526<sup>164</sup> Although SFODAs ideally attend SFAUC together as a collective training event, only three members of (b)(3) / (b)(6) were able to attend SFAUC and they attended at different times individually.<sup>165</sup> At the end of March, the SFODA conducted bilateral training with 160th Special Operations Air Regiment (SOAR) that included a full mission profile.<sup>166</sup>

d. (U//FOUO) Neither JADE HELM nor the 160th bilateral training included immediate action drills involving thin-skinned vehicles. Neither training event focused on the specific skills needed for (b)(3) / (b)(6) deployment to Niger. Although 1st SFC and 3d SFG(A) had comprehensive pre-deployment training guidance, as briefed in Semi-Annual Training Briefs (SATB) it was not executed as planned. Personnel moves, schools, and other training distractors prevented (b)(3) / (b)(6) from fully executing a comprehensive pre-deployment training plan. In August 2017, (b)(3) / (b)(6) Company commander validated (b)(3) / (b)(6) training to the Battalion commander.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 5; Ex. A7, 2.

<sup>163</sup> (U) Ex. A79.

<sup>164</sup> (U) Ex. J4, 7-9; Ex. A2, 3; Ex. A9, 7.

<sup>165</sup> (U) Ex. J4; Ex. A9, 4.

<sup>166</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 3; A9, 15-16.

<sup>167</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 22-23.

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**PART III****(U//FOUO) TEAM OUALLAM'S PRE-DEPLOYMENT SITE SURVEY (PDSS); RELIEF IN PLACE / TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY (RIP/TOA) FROM (b)(3) / (b)(6) PRIOR COLLECTIVE TRAINING; and PRIOR OPERATIONS.**1. (U) Pre-Deployment Site Survey (PDSS).

a. (U//FOUO) Three members of (b)(3) / (b)(6) conducted a PDSS with the outgoing (b)(3) / (b)(6) in Ouallam and their operational area from 10-17 July 2017: (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) (18A), (b)(3) / (b)(6) (18C), and (b)(3) / (b)(6) (18F).<sup>168</sup> During the seven-day PDSS, they spent three days in Ouallam. (b)(3) / (b)(6) focus areas during the PDSS were intelligence, logistics, force protection, and operations. The three members of (b)(3) / (b)(6) toured the camp, met with key members of the Nigerien military, studied intelligence that the outgoing team had compiled, and (b)(3) / (b)(6) participated in an overnight area familiarization operation.<sup>169</sup>

b. (U//FOUO) (b)(3) / (b)(6) noted that during the PDSS familiarization operation, (b)(3) / (b)(6) was focused and hypervigilant despite what they perceived to be a relatively permissive environment.<sup>170</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) assessed the Nigerien (b)(3) / (b)(6) to be competent in vehicle convoy operations and well-disciplined relative to African forces he had worked with during prior deployments.<sup>171</sup> During the operation, (b)(3) / (b)(6) did not always wear their PPE, but they kept it in the truck beside them.<sup>172</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) had mounted M240B machine guns on two of their trucks and carried an M249 squad automatic weapon in the third.<sup>173</sup>

c. (U//FOUO) Following the PDSS, the three members of (b)(3) / (b)(6) returned to Fort Bragg and briefed the team on what they had observed and learned.

<sup>168</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. A1, 9-10; Ex. A4, 7-8, 15; Ex. A5, 7-8. (b)(3) / (b)(6) ultimately did not deploy due to (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) deployed in his place.

<sup>169</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 9, 13-19.

<sup>170</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 18; A55, 42.

<sup>171</sup> (U) Ex. A4, 20-21.

<sup>172</sup> (U) Ex. A55, 42.

<sup>173</sup> (U) Ex. A55, 43.

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2. (U//FOUO) Advance [Party] Echelon (ADVON) / Relief in Place / Transfer of Authority (RIP/TOA) from (b)(3) / (b)(6)

a. (U//FOUO) (b)(3) / (b)(6) ADVON arrived in Niger on 19 August 2017 and consisted of (b)(3) / (b)(6) and SSG Wright.<sup>174</sup> The ADVON spent approximately one day in Niamey before moving to Ouallam.<sup>175</sup> The core of (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) 130 including the Team Leader, had already departed Ouallam and was in Niamey where they remained when (b)(3) / (b)(6) went forward to Ouallam.<sup>176</sup> The (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) 130 ADVON spent one day in Ouallam conducting equipment and camp turnover with four NCOs of (b)(3) / (b)(6). After one day, the four members of (b)(3) / (b)(6) returned to Niamey with (b)(3) / (b)(6).<sup>177</sup>

b. (U//FOUO) (b)(3) / (b)(6) did not conduct a Right-Seat/Left-Seat RIP/TOA in the traditional sense of a formal, conditions-based mission assumption. The AOB does not have an established RIP/TOA checklist to follow.<sup>178</sup> The main bodies of (b)(3) / (b)(6) were never in Niger at the same time. (b)(3) / (b)(6) did not conduct combined operations or partnered patrols with their partner Nigeriens to baseline established SOPs. (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) did not conduct collective rehearsals during the RIP/TOA period. The teams did not exercise CASEVAC, fires, or battle drills. (b)(3) / (b)(6) did not conduct area familiarization rides or Key Leader Engagements with local civilian or military leaders. (b)(3) / (b)(6) had packed up their equipment, including communications and crew-served weapons, before (b)(3) / (b)(6) arrived with their equipment.<sup>179</sup> By the time the main body of (b)(3) / (b)(6) got to Niger, the majority of (b)(3) / (b)(6) had departed.<sup>180</sup>

c. (S) When (b)(3) / (b)(6) returned to Niamey, (b)(3) / (b)(6) and SSG Wright remained at Camp Ouallam.<sup>181</sup> In Niamey, (b)(3) / (b)(6) presented a joint in/out-briefing to the Ambassador's Deputy.<sup>182</sup> The two team leaders also presented a RIP/TOA briefing to both the outgoing and incoming AOB commanders, (b)(3) / (b)(6) respectively.<sup>183</sup> Despite the limited time with both teams on the ground, the two AOB Commanders approved the Transfer of

<sup>174</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 7; Ex. A5, 10-11; Ex. A1, 60.

<sup>175</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 9; Ex. A1, 62; A5, 10.

<sup>176</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 62;

<sup>177</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. A55, 46, (b)(3) / (b)(6) states they were together at Ouallam for 12 hours and the (b)(3) / (b)(6) personnel left "the next day" after (b)(3) / (b)(6) ADVON arrived; See also Ex. A1, 63-65.

<sup>178</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 7-11; Ex. A5, 10-13; Ex. A1, 62-72; Ex. A57a, 71; Ex. A58, 4.

<sup>179</sup> (U) Ex. A4, 19.

<sup>180</sup> (U) Ex. A55, 46.

<sup>181</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 9; Ex. A1, 62-63.

<sup>182</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 9; Ex. A1, 67-69.

<sup>183</sup> (U) Ex. A57, 1; Ex. A1, 67-68.

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Authority.<sup>184</sup> At that point, (b)(3) / (b)(6) had (b)(1)1.4a personnel in Niger. Concurrently, AOB Niger conducted a two-week RIP/TOA and SOCCE-LCB conducted a one-week RIP/TOA with both TOAs being on 1 September 2017.<sup>185</sup>

d. (U//FOUO) The driving force behind the rushed RIP/TOA between SFODAs in Niger appears to have been a perception by leaders, whether accurate or not, that the timeline and airlift assets were inflexible.<sup>186</sup> AOB Commanders believed that a USSOCOM “deployment-to-dwell” policy that prohibited SOF deployments that exceeded 200 days “door to door” required approval of the Secretary of Defense to violate.<sup>187</sup> AOB Commanders also had a perception that airlift assets were so limited that requests to delay flights would be denied.<sup>188</sup> That perception was somewhat validated when the (b)(3) / (b)(6) Commander asked air planners to build in two extra days to account for contingencies and that request was denied.<sup>189</sup>

e. (S) Operating within those perceived constraints, 3d SFG(A) implemented a number of strategies in an attempt to mitigate the lack of overlap from one SFODA to the next.<sup>190</sup>

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

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3. (S) Team OUALLAM’s Prior Collective Training with Partnered Force. (b)(3) / (b)(6) deployed (b)(1)1.4a before they moved to Ouallam.<sup>195</sup> During that deployment, they conducted a Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) event with the platoon-sized element that was stationed in (b)(1)1.4a<sup>196</sup> Training included basic rifle marksmanship and small unit tactics. In addition, (b)(3) / (b)(6) accompanied

<sup>184</sup> (U) Ex. A57a, 71-72.

<sup>185</sup> (U) Ex. A57a, 1; Ex. A69, 43.

<sup>186</sup> (U) Encls. 26 & 28.

<sup>187</sup> (U) Ex. A106.

<sup>188</sup> (U) Encls. 26 & 28.

<sup>189</sup> (U) Encl. 28.

<sup>190</sup> (U) Encls. 26 & 28.

<sup>191</sup> (U) Encls. 26 & 28.

<sup>192</sup> (U) Encls. 26 & 28.

<sup>193</sup> (U) Encl. 28.

<sup>194</sup> (U) Encl. 28.

<sup>195</sup> (U) Ex. A55, 3-5.

<sup>196</sup> (U) Ex. A55, 3-5.

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(b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(3) 130b

immediate action drills with them including react to contact and break contact.<sup>197</sup> The primary purpose of immediate action drills was to improve interoperability and to ensure that the SFODA and (b)(3) 130b had a common understanding of how they would react if attacked.<sup>198</sup>

4. (U//FOUO) Team OUALLAM's Partnered Operations Prior to 3 October 2017.

a. (S//NF) (b)(3) / (b)(6) prior operations. (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(3) 130b

(b)(1)1.4a

b. (S//NF) (b)(3) / (b)(6) prior operations. (b)(3) / (b)(6) conducted (b)(1)1.4a operations with (b)(3) 130b prior to 3 October 2017.<sup>202</sup>

i. (S//NF) The first (b)(1)1.4g operation for (b)(3) / (b)(6) was a (b)(1)1.4g civil/military reconnaissance with key leader engagements at designated military outposts (b)(1)1.4a<sup>203</sup> "Civil reconnaissance" is a doctrinal term defined in Joint Publication 3-57 and promulgated in Civil Affairs manuals, plans, and operations.<sup>204</sup> Civil reconnaissance is "a targeted, planned, and coordinated observation and evaluation of specific civil aspects of the environment such as areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, or events."

(b)(3) / (b)(6) Team Leader, (b)(3) / (b)(6) was not present during that mission (b)(6)<sup>205</sup> The AOB XO, (b)(3) / (b)(6) stood in for (b)(3) / (b)(6) on the mission. Four members from Team OUALLAM's 3-4 October mission were not present on that first mission.<sup>206</sup>

ii. (S//NF) Although described as a "civil/military reconnaissance" in its CONOPS, (b)(3) / (b)(6) second operation was a (b)(1) 1.4g mission with the purpose of advising and assisting (b)(1)1.4a

<sup>197</sup> (U) Ex. A55, 32-33.

<sup>198</sup> (U) Ex. A55, 32.

<sup>199</sup> (U) Ex. B11 - Ex. B13; Ex. B15 - Ex. B20.

<sup>200</sup> (U) Ex. B11 - Ex. B13; Ex. B15 - Ex. B20.

<sup>201</sup> (U) Ex. B20.

<sup>202</sup> (U) Ex. B21- Ex. B22.

<sup>203</sup> (U) Ex. B21.

<sup>204</sup> (U) See, for example, Army Field Manual 3-57.

<sup>205</sup> (U) Ex. B21.

<sup>206</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. B21. (These members were (b)(3) / (b)(6) SSG Jeremiah Johnson, (b)(3) / (b)(6) .

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(b)(1)1.4a<sup>207</sup> The CONOPS for that mission did not accurately describe the intended purpose of the mission.<sup>208</sup> The CONOPS for that mission was crafted almost identically to the prior mission's civil/military reconnaissance.<sup>209</sup> The "Key Tasks" were identical and the concept of operations was largely the same, notwithstanding a discrete mission set intended to advise and assist FAN forces from an impending attack.<sup>210</sup> Three members from Team OUALLAM's 3-4 October 2017 mission were not present on the second mission.<sup>211</sup>

c. (U//~~FOUO~~) Prior to 3 October 2017, neither Team OUALLAM nor their partner force had ever been engaged by the enemy.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. B22; Ex. A5, 25-33; Ex. A2, 53; Ex. A77, 15-16, 18. The CONOPS also listed a key task as "Conduct KLEs in select villages areas with civil/military leaders IOT generate atmospherics and discuss FAN security efforts."

<sup>208</sup> (U) Ex. B22; Ex. A5, 25-33.

<sup>209</sup> (U) Ex. B21; Ex. B22.

<sup>210</sup> (U) Ex. B21; Ex. B22.

<sup>211</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) These members were (b)(3) / (b)(6) SSG Wright, and (b)(3) / (b)(6) (Ex. B22).

<sup>212</sup> (U) Ex. A55, 42; Ex. A56, 38-39.

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**PART IV****(U) Mission: Events of 2-4 October 2017**

1. ~~(S)~~ Original mission: Objective (b)(1)1.4a (FRAGO 003).

a. (U//~~FOUO~~) Background. On 25 September 2017, the Commander of AOB Niger, (b)(3) / (b)(6) returned to the Continental United States (CONUS) on (b)(6) leave previously approved by the SOCCE-LCB Commander. (b)(3) / (b)(6) left his Executive Officer (XO), (b)(3) / (b)(6) in Command of the AOB.<sup>213</sup> He did not publish the transfer of authority in writing, but briefed (b)(3) / (b)(6) verbally before his departure.<sup>214</sup>

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) (b)(3) / (b)(6) had been the Company XO (b)(3) / (b)(6) 2/3 SFG(A) for approximately three months when assuming command of the AOB.<sup>215</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6), (b)(3) (10 U.S.C. § 130b)

(b)(3) / (b)(6)

(b)(6)<sup>218</sup> In addition to (b)(3) / (b)(6) the AOB staff leadership consisted of a Company Operations and Intelligence Warrant Officer, (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) and a Company Sergeant Major, (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6). Each had more than ten years of experience in Special Forces (SF) and multiple combat deployments with SF.

ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) Typically, CONOPS submitted by (b)(3) / (b)(6) to the AOB were reviewed by the Company SGM, Warrant, and XO before going to the AOB Commander for final approval.<sup>219</sup> The Company SGM concentrated his review on Task Organization, ensuring that the plan called for the appropriate composition of force to achieve the task and purpose of the CONOPS.<sup>220</sup> He would also identify any non-organic resources that the plan would require so that the AOB could coordinate to provide those resources.<sup>221</sup> The Company Operations Warrant Officer conducted a more holistic review of the CONOPS.<sup>222</sup> He then coordinated for required ISR coverage.<sup>223</sup> The XO, along with the Warrant, examined the CONOPS prior to final review by the AOB Commander.<sup>224</sup>

<sup>213</sup> (U) Ex. A57, 39-40; Ex. A58, 13-14; Ex. A59, 24.

<sup>214</sup> (U) Ex. A57, 40-42.

<sup>215</sup> (U) Ex. A59, 1.

<sup>216</sup> (U) Ex. A59, 1.

<sup>217</sup> (U) Ex. A59, 1.

<sup>218</sup> (U) Ex. A59, 1.

<sup>219</sup> (U) Ex. A58, 16; Ex. A60, 1; Ex. A59, 9.

<sup>220</sup> (U) Ex. A58, 16-17.

<sup>221</sup> (U) Ex. A58, 20.

<sup>222</sup> (U) Ex. A60, 8-10.

<sup>223</sup> (U) Ex. A60, 8-10, 22, 24, 35-36.

<sup>224</sup> (U) Ex. A59, 9.

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b. (U//~~FOUO~~) CONOPS Approval Authority.<sup>225</sup> The authority level to approve CONOPS is determined by a SOCAFRICA CONOPS approval matrix which assesses the nature of the operation and the residual risk associated with the operation.<sup>226</sup> At the time of Team OUALLAM's operation, three conflicting CONOPS approval matrices existed to delineate what authorities had been delegated from the SOCAFRICA Commander: SOCAFRICA followed matrix 1<sup>227</sup>; SOCFWD-NWA and SOCCE-LCB followed matrix 2<sup>228</sup>; and AOB Niger and its subordinate teams followed matrix 3.<sup>229</sup>

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) This confusion arose when the SOCFWD-NWA J3 requested a revision to the SOCAFRICA CONOPS approval matrix, before redeploying to Fort Bragg.<sup>230</sup> The incoming SOCFWD-NWA J3 erroneously thought that the revised matrix had been approved and implemented it. Similarly, the AOB Niger commander received a third revised CONOPS Approval matrix from his predecessor that was different than both SOCFWD-NWA and SOCAFRICA.<sup>231</sup> The investigation was unable to determine where that version of the CONOPS approval matrix originated.

ii. (~~S~~) Members of AOB Niger and SOCCE-LCB also did not have a common understanding of which authorities had been delegated and which had not even within the context of their conflicting matrices.<sup>232</sup> The SOCCE-LCB commander asserted that although he was authorized to delegate authority to the AOB Niger commander to approve (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS, he had not done so.<sup>233</sup>

iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) To add to the confusion, each of the CONOPS approval matrices had provisions to delegate approval authority to command "levels."<sup>234</sup> Several key witnesses articulated different understandings of who could approve an operation that had been delegated, for example, to "O-4 level."<sup>235</sup> SOCAFRICA commander viewed the delegation as tied to rank, while the AOB Niger commander thought the authority

<sup>225</sup> (U) See Annex 1 for an explanation of the CONOPS approval process.

<sup>226</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. I1; "Residual Risk" is the assessed risk considering all available mitigation measures. See also Ex. B23, Slide 5 for an example.

<sup>227</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. I1; Ex. I5. See Annex 1 for a detailed description of the SOCAFRICA CONOPS approval matrix and the unapproved matrices that were being followed by subordinate commands.

<sup>228</sup> (U) Ex. I2; Ex. I5; Ex. A79; Ex. 69, 78.

<sup>229</sup> (U) Ex. I3; Ex. A57, 4.

<sup>230</sup> (U) Ex. I5

<sup>231</sup> (~~S~~) Ex. I2-I3; Ex. A57, 5-6; Specifically, the AOB matrix delegated to the AOB commander approval authority for

(b)(1)1.4a CONOPS, and created a new approval authority for (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a FRAGOs. The AOB matrix required SOCCE-LCB commander approval for

(b)(1)1.4a FRAGOs. The AOB matrix also created a (b)(1)1.4a notification requirement to SOCFWD-NWA that did not exist on either the SOCFWD-NWA matrix or the SOCAFRICA matrix.

<sup>232</sup> (~~S~~) Ex. A69, 78-79; but see Ex. B23, a (b)(1)1.4a FRAGO approved by the AOB commander.

<sup>233</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 78-80

<sup>234</sup> (U) Ex. I1; Ex. I2; Ex. I3.

<sup>235</sup> (U) Ex. A57, 43-45; Ex. A79, 9-10; Ex. A81, 43-46.

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was tied to position, and therefore could be delegated to an "acting commander" even if he was below the rank of O-4.<sup>236</sup>

iv. (S) At the time of the operation, the only matrix that was approved by the SOCAFRICA commander was matrix 1.<sup>237</sup> On 2 October 2017, the AOB was following a CONOPS approval matrix (matrix 3) that had not been approved by SOCAFRICA.<sup>238</sup> The AOB Commander incorrectly believed he had the authority to approve any CONOPS [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a [REDACTED] 239

c. (S) Receipt of the Mission. In the early evening of 2 October 2017, [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) received a call from [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) at AOB Niger.<sup>240</sup> [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) informed [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) that the AOB had received intelligence [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4b, (b)(1)1.4c [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4b, (b)(1)1.4c [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4b, (b)(1)1.4c one."<sup>242</sup> The AOB wanted Team OUALLAM to exploit the intelligence.<sup>243</sup> As described in paragraph (d.) below, the task and purpose of Team OUALLAM's primary mission was to find, fix, and capture [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c or, if he resisted, to kill him.<sup>244</sup>

i. (S) [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) initially expressed skepticism in the strength of the intelligence and his Team's ability to move to Tiloa before [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a expected departure from the area.<sup>246</sup> Due to road conditions, it could take upwards of four hours to drive from Ouallam to Tiloa.<sup>247</sup> [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6)

<sup>236</sup> (U) Ex. A57, 43-45; Ex. A79, 9-10; Ex. A81, 43-46.

<sup>237</sup> (U) Ex. I5.

<sup>238</sup> (U) Ex. I5.

<sup>239</sup> (U//FOUO) See Annex 1 for a description of the SOCAFRICA CONOPS approval process. The three matrices are also available at Ex. I1, Ex. I2, and Ex. I3 for comparison.

<sup>240</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. A1, 90; Ex. A3, 32; Ex. A7, 17-20; Ex. A60, 15-16. [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) from the embassy contacted [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6)

[REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) at the AOB, who then contacted [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) (10 U.S.C. § 130b)

<sup>241</sup> (S) Ex. A1, 90; Ex. A3, 32. The source of this intelligence is classified above the classification of this report. [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4c

[REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4c

<sup>242</sup> (S) Ex. A66, 1. [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4c

[REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4c

<sup>243</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 92.

<sup>244</sup> (S) There is conflicting testimony about the task and purpose of Team OUALLAM's Tiloa mission. After weighing the testimony and the evidence, I determined by a preponderance of the evidence that the task and purpose was to find, fix, and capture [REDACTED] (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c Ex. A1- Ex. A16; A2, 96; Ex. A29, 1; Ex. A35; Ex. A59, Ex. A60, 22, 38; A3, 34.

<sup>245</sup> (U) Ex. A60, 18-19; Ex. A67, 1; A5, 38; A9, 34, 38.

<sup>246</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 91; Ex. A7, 18; Ex. A59, 26; Ex. A60, 16; Ex. A13, 1; Ex. A3, 35-36.

<sup>247</sup> (U//FOUO) [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) noted that the drive could take upwards of 3 hours (Ex. A3, 39). [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) stated the drive could take upwards of 4 to 5 hours (Ex. A1, 120). As both statements are estimates, dependent upon weather and

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(b)(3) / (b)(6) discussed the issue with (b)(3) / (b)(6) expressing his concerns that he would not be able to get to Tiloa in time (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>248</sup> Despite those concerns, (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) believed the AOB was adamant that his team should act on the intelligence.<sup>249</sup>

ii. (S) (b)(3) / (b)(6) suggested to (b)(3) / (b)(6) that a better plan might be to wait and attempt to establish (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c<sup>250</sup> He hung up the phone with the AOB and discussed the intelligence he had received with the rest of his team.<sup>251</sup> Several team members expressed similar misgivings about the operation, as they felt (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c intelligence report was too unreliable to drive a mission given the travel distance.<sup>252</sup>

iii. (S) Several days earlier, Team OUALLAM had returned from a (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c mission to (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c<sup>253</sup> That operation was also based upon (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c intelligence (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c<sup>254</sup> (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c Several team members expressed concerns that the new operation seemed to again rely on (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c intelligence.<sup>255</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) concerns were underscored by what he believed to be a lack of appreciation for the amount of terrain required to traverse in order to exploit such intelligence reports.<sup>256</sup>

iv. (S) Over the course of the next few hours, (b)(3) / (b)(6) had several more conversations with members of the AOB including (b)(3) / (b)(6) The AOB suggested the addition of (b)(1)1.4g that might help to narrow down the location of (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c<sup>257</sup> (b)(1)1.4a (b)(1)1.4a outside the (b)(1)1.4a window in which (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c was expected to be in Tiloa. (b)(3) / (b)(6) agreed to

other factors, I also considered Team OUALLAM's actual driving time on 3 October 2017 to come to this conclusion. As detailed in paragraph (e.)(iv.), it took Team OUALLAM almost 4 hours to move from Ouallam to Tiloa despite perfect weather conditions on 3 October 2017.

<sup>248</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 91.

<sup>249</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 33; Ex. A1, 91.

<sup>250</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 103; Ex. A3, 33.

<sup>251</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 32-33; Ex. A5, 38.

<sup>252</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A3, 32-33; Ex. A13; Ex. A7, 21. Notwithstanding team member concerns, the general consensus among the team was that they were there to work. "We would all rather go out on missions than train" (Ex. A5, 38).

<sup>253</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 93-94; Ex. A59, 45; Ex. A60, 16-18; Ex. A2, 51; Ex. B22.

<sup>254</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 93-94; Ex. A59, 45; Ex. A60, 16-18; Ex. A2, 51; Ex. B22.

<sup>255</sup> (S) Ex. A2, 55-56; Ex. A13. (b)(3) / (b)(6) one of the more senior and experienced members of the team, suggested that a better course of action might be to conduct (b)(1)1.4c of the area (b)(1)1.4a (b)(1)1.4a (Ex. A3, 32-34) (b)(3) / (b)(6) concern was that a quick reaction to imprecise intelligence would cause (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c to flee the area and potentially compromise (b)(1)1.4c (Ex. A1, 103-104).

<sup>256</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 91; Ex. A2, 42-43; Ex. A7, 17-18.

<sup>257</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 95-96; Ex. A60, 18; Ex. A2, 42, 68; Ex. A7, 21; Ex. A66.

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conduct the operation outside the window, understanding there was little chance they would (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c<sup>258</sup>

d. (U) Mission Analysis and CONOPS Development.

i. (S) With the assistance of his team, (b)(3) / (b)(6) drafted the initial CONOPS for the mission.<sup>259</sup> He labeled the CONOPS (b)(1)1.4a and further described the operation as a “Civil / Military Reconnaissance.”<sup>260</sup> As previously defined, “Civil reconnaissance” is intended to be a “targeted, planned, and coordinated observation and evaluation of specific civil aspects of the environment such as areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, or events.”<sup>261</sup> The intended purpose of the mission was not consistent with this doctrinal definition. Every operation conducted by (b)(3) / (b)(6) however, was described as a “Civil / Military Reconnaissance” despite very different tasks and purposes for each mission, suggesting an inconsistent and imprecise use of this term.<sup>262</sup>

ii. (S) (b)(3) / (b)(6) developed and sent to the AOB what he considered to be a (b)(1)1.4a CONOPS that he believed only required AOB approval.<sup>263</sup> A review of the SOCAFRICA CONOPS Approval Authority matrix in effect at the time of this operation indicates that the actual approval authority for a (b)(1)1.4a CONOPS rests with the SOCFWD CDR (O-6), but may be delegated to the SOCCE-LCB CDR.<sup>264</sup> Consistent with that matrix, approval authority had been delegated by the SOCFWD-NWA CDR to the SOCCE-LCB CDR.<sup>265</sup> The approval authority for a fragmentary order (FRAGO) to an approved (b)(1)1.4a was also delegated to the SOCCE-LCB CDR.<sup>266</sup> Unlike (b)(1)1.4a CONOPS, (b)(1)1.4a require (b)(1)1.4a (b)(1)1.4a notification to SOCAFRICA before execution.<sup>267</sup>

<sup>258</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 95, 99; Ex. A2, 43.

<sup>259</sup> (U) Ex. B23.

<sup>260</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. B23. As previously defined, “Civil reconnaissance” is a doctrinal term defined in Joint Publication 3-57 and promulgated in Civil Affairs manuals, plans, and operations. Civil reconnaissance is “a targeted, planned, and coordinated observation and evaluation of specific civil aspects of the environment such as areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, or events.” Army Field Manual 3-57.

<sup>261</sup> (U) Army Field Manual 3-57.

<sup>262</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. B21, Ex. B22, Ex. B23. Although this term was used by other teams for some missions (Ex. B16; Ex. B17), more precise terms (e.g. interdiction or area reconnaissance) were used by other teams when appropriate. (Ex. B18; Ex. B19).

<sup>263</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 101-102.

<sup>264</sup> (U) Ex. I1.

<sup>265</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 43-44, 59. Ex. A69, 78; Ex. A77, 18, 21-22.

<sup>266</sup> (S) (b)(1)1.4a  
(b)(1)1.4a

Before teams could be approved to conduct these operations, an approved fragmentary order (FRAGO) off this base CONOPS was required (b)(1)1.4a

<sup>267</sup> (S) This notification requirement reflects CDRSOCAFRICA’s desire that (b)(1)1.4a FRAGOs receive additional scrutiny by his staff, although SOCAFRICA is not required to approve these FRAGOs prior to execution (Ex. 81, 57-58, 62).

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iii. (S) The stated mission on the CONOPS submitted for approval was to “improve situational understanding of the (b)(1)1.4a region and effectiveness of current military efforts to disrupt AQIM/ISIS-GS activity in the area.”<sup>268</sup> The phased concept of operations in this CONOPS provided for a series of key leader engagements (KLE) in various locations before Team OUALLAM would return to base.<sup>269</sup> Despite references in the CONOPS to the villages (b)(1)1.4a the team had no intent to visit either village on this mission. The CONOPS made no mention of

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

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

<sup>270</sup> The investigation did not establish by a preponderance of the evidence that the CONOPS was deliberately crafted as a “Civil / Military Reconnaissance” in an effort to lower the approval authority level to what the Team believed could be approved by the AOB. Rather, a preponderance of the evidence demonstrates an over-reliance on previous or templated CONOPS by Team OUALLAM in preparing for missions, and a lack of attention to detail and quality assurance by the AOB leadership in reviewing the CONOPS. Comparing the CONOPS for this mission with Team OUALLAM’s previous CONOPS, the investigation noted remarkable similarities.<sup>271</sup> For example, the following parts of each CONOPS are nearly identical for all three operations: (b)(1) 1.4a

(b)(1) 1.4a

<sup>272</sup> This over-reliance on templated CONOPS and lack of attention to detail further suggests these CONOPS were treated as pro-forma products that must be completed before executing a mission rather than the deliberate planning tools they are intended to be.

iv. (S) Despite the CONOPS being titled a “Civil / Military Reconnaissance,” nearly every member of Team OUALLAM considered the initial mission to be advising and assisting partner forces on a “capture/kill” mission for (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>273</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) offered a more nuanced explanation for the mission, explaining that it

However, the SOCFWD-NWA Commander believes the (b)(1)1.4a notification requirement is ambiguous and not a hard constraint (Ex. A76, 58; I1). See Annex 1 for the SOCFWD-NWA CONOPS approval process.

<sup>268</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. B23. The Mission statement for this CONOPS was identical to (b)(3) / (b)(6) two prior CONOPS. See Ex. B21 and Ex. B22 for comparison.

<sup>269</sup> (U) Ex. B23.

<sup>270</sup> (U) Ex. B23.

<sup>271</sup> (U) Ex. B21; Ex. B22; Ex. B23.

<sup>272</sup> (U) Ex. B21; Ex. B22; Ex. B23.

<sup>273</sup> (S) Ex. A2, 43, 56; Ex. A3, 34 (stating that “capture” was the expectation); Ex. A7, 16-17, 30 (“[task and purpose] was going to be to capture or kill (b)(1)1.4a”), 50; Ex. A5, 54-55; Ex. A1, 109 (stating their task was to confirm or deny if (b)(1)1.4a was still in the area), 137 (stating he understands it to be a capture-kill mission). Some team members described the primary purpose of the mission differently. For example, (b)(6) believed the primary purpose of the mission was to speak with FAN forces in Tiloa (KLE), but a secondary purpose of the mission would be to capture (b)(1)1.4a if they could find him (Ex. A15, 5). However, (b)(6) was not part of the planning process. (b)(3) / (b)(6) believed that although the intelligence (b)(1) 1.4a precipitated the mission, the unlikelihood of locating (b)(1)1.4a meant that Team OUALLAM’s primary purpose was to meet with FAN forces in Tiloa (Ex. A9, 37-39). Notwithstanding the likelihood of success in capturing (b)(1)1.4a (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) still believed it was this intelligence that generated the mission.

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was more of a “find/fix” operation intending to pinpoint the location of (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>274</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) explained that if Team OUALLAM was successful in fixing the location of (b)(1) 1.4a additional action to target the individual would require separate approval via a revised CONOPS.<sup>275</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) believed his task in this mission was to “confirm or deny if that (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) was still in the area.”<sup>276</sup> The partner force, (b)(3) 130b was not involved in any aspect of the mission analysis or CONOPS development for this mission.<sup>277</sup>

v. (S) Although this CONOPS properly identified the risks associated with this operation, the risk mitigation measures were inadequate, resulting in an inaccurate residual risk determination.<sup>278</sup> For example, the CONOPS identified an ISIS-GS attack on the team as a moderate risk to force, but the measures listed to mitigate that risk

(b)(1)1.4a  
(b)(1)1.4a<sup>279</sup> These mitigation measures are pro-forma, and do not reflect a deliberate assessment of how to actually mitigate risks. In fact, the operation posed greater risk to force than Team OUALLAM or the AOB fully appreciated.

vi. (S) Contrary to the CONOPS description, Team OUALLAM’s initial mission was driven by (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g that identified the possible location of a named objective in the vicinity of Tiloa.<sup>280</sup> Intelligence leading to the potential capture of a high value target drove an urgency from the AOB to exploit a time-constrained opportunity.<sup>281</sup> This urgency drove the hasty planning and shortened execution timeline for this mission, as well as the augmentation of Team OUALLAM with a (b)(1) 1.4c that would facilitate the intended purpose of the mission. The underlying intelligence driving this mission explains Team OUALLAM’s common understanding that this mission was intended to advise and assist partner forces in either locating (finding / fixing), or capturing/killing, a named objective.<sup>282</sup>

<sup>274</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 37-38; Ex. A15, 5. “Find/Fix” operation is intended to detect, positively identify, and provide a refined location for a potential target (Joint Pub 3-60, II, 21-26).

<sup>275</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 101, 109-110.

<sup>276</sup> (U) The source of this intelligence is classified above the classification of this report.

<sup>277</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. A2, 60-61; Ex. A3, 37 (stating the partner force was notified when to be ready to depart).

<sup>278</sup> (U) See Annex 7 for a detailed discussion on the risk assessment process.

<sup>279</sup> (U) Ex. B23, 5

<sup>280</sup> (S) Ex. A1, 90; Ex. A15, 5. While (b)(3) / (b)(6) had planned to conduct a KLE in Tiloa several days later, prior to receiving intelligence from the AOB on 2 October, Team OUALLAM was not scheduled to conduct a KLE the next day. The immediate planning, and addition of (b)(1)1.4c

<sup>281</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 32-34; Ex. A5, 35; Ex. A9, 28; Ex. A59, 26-27.

<sup>282</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 34-35; Ex. A2, 43-44, 56-57; Ex. A7, 30, 50; Ex. A5, 54-55; Ex. A9, 37; Ex. A59, 25.

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vii. (S) Describing this operation as a “civil/military reconnaissance” was inaccurate; the Team OUALLAM commander and the AOB commander failed to accurately describe the intended purpose of the operation in the CONOPS. Acting under what he believed to be his authority, the AOB commander approved the CONOPS and notified the SOCCE about the mission as described in the CONOPS. The AOB commander did not brief the SOCCE-LCB CDR that the mission was to advise and assist partner forces in finding/fixing the location of a high valued target.<sup>283</sup> The AOB did seek and receive country team concurrence for the operation.<sup>284</sup> The Special Operations Forces Liaison Element (SOFLE) Officer in Charge (OIC) received the CONOPS from the AOB at 2045 on 2 October 2017 and briefed the U.S. Ambassador to Niger on the operation at 2200.<sup>285</sup> Notwithstanding the CONOPS inaccuracies, the SOFLE OIC briefed the Ambassador that Team OUALLAM would be attempting to find and fix (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>286</sup>

viii. (S) At the time of Team OUALLAM’s departure on the initial mission, no command higher than the AOB was aware that the mission sought to find or fix, or potentially capture/kill, a named objective.<sup>287</sup> The SOCCE-LCB commander was not briefed the true nature of the operation. An accurate CONOPS for the original mission would have been a (b)(1)1.4a FRAGO and would have required approval by the SOCCE-LCB commander, and (b)(1)1.4a notification to SOCAFRICA before execution. Neither of these occurred.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 81-84.

<sup>284</sup> (U) Ex. A67, 2

<sup>285</sup> (U) Ex. A67, 2

<sup>286</sup> (U) Ex. A67, 2

<sup>287</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 84-85.

<sup>288</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 64-70; Ex. A76, 57-58; Ex. A77, 21-24.

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e. (U) Mission Execution.

i. (~~U//FOUO~~) Concurrent with CONOPS development, Team OUALLAM began preparations for their mission on the evening of 2 October 2017 by notifying their partner force that they would be conducting a mission in the morning, task organizing the force, and preparing vehicles with necessary food, water, ammunition, and special equipment.<sup>289</sup> The partner force was not involved in any aspect of the mission planning and was provided only limited details as to the high value target driving the operation.<sup>290</sup> Team OUALLAM and its partner force had developed a professional working relationship with common goals. Although (b)(3) 130b commander had the right to decline using his force on a partnered patrol, that never occurred.<sup>291</sup> Although the CONOPS described the operation as an “advise, assist, and accompany” partner-force operation, the mission was driven by U.S. intelligence, planned by Team OUALLAM and the AOB, and executed entirely at the direction of USSOF.<sup>292</sup>

ii. (~~U//FOUO~~) On 2 October 2017, several members of Team OUALLAM had not previously executed a mission with the team.<sup>293</sup> Additionally, the convoy was augmented by additional Nigerien partners who had not previously operated with Team OUALLAM.<sup>294</sup> On 2 October 2017 (b)(3) / (b)(6) conducted a mission brief with members of Team OUALLAM and discussed the basic concept of operations.<sup>295</sup> Team OUALLAM conducted no specific mission rehearsals or immediate action drills (i.e., actions on the objective, react to contact, react to ambush, break contact, CASEVAC) either internally (with new members of the Team) or with partner Nigeriens comprising the total force.<sup>296</sup> The team did not conduct pre-mission test fires with partner forces to ensure their weapons were functioning properly.<sup>297</sup> In the early morning of 3 October 2017, Team OUALLAM did conduct pre-mission communications and equipment checks before linking up with their partner Nigeriens and commencing movement.<sup>298</sup>

iii. (~~U//FOUO~~) Team OUALLAM and partner forces departed Camp Ouallam at 0559 on 3 October 2017, traveling in a military convoy in a northwestern direction out of

<sup>289</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 61; Ex. A3, 37; Ex. A15, 8; Ex. A5, 39-40, 62.

<sup>290</sup> (~~U//FOUO~~) Ex. A2, 60-61; Ex. A3, 37 (stating the partner force was notified when to be ready to depart).

<sup>291</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 61; Ex. A3, 37; Ex. A15, 8; Ex. A5, 39, 62.

<sup>292</sup> (U) Ex. B23, 2; A1, 140.

<sup>293</sup> (~~U//FOUO~~) (b)(3) / (b)(6) joined Team OUALLAM on 18 September 2017 and had not previously conducted a patrol of with Team OUALLAM (Ex. A7, 5, 28). (b)(6) a JIEDO contractor, had just joined Team OUALLAM at the AOB as part of a battlefield circulation. (b)(6) had not conducted a previous patrol with Team OUALLAM (Ex. A15, 2).

<sup>294</sup> (~~U//FOUO~~) Additional partner Nigeriens joined Team OUALLAM the morning of 3 October shortly before the convoy departed. (Ex. A66, 1; Ex. A1, 99; Ex. A66, 1.)

<sup>295</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 40-41.

<sup>296</sup> (U) Ex. A41, 3.

<sup>297</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 44-45; Ex. A9, 43; Ex. A4, 21-22; Ex. A1, 85.

<sup>298</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 36-37; Ex. A2, 62; Ex. A9, 40-42; Ex. A15, 8-9; Ex. A5, 40-41, 44.

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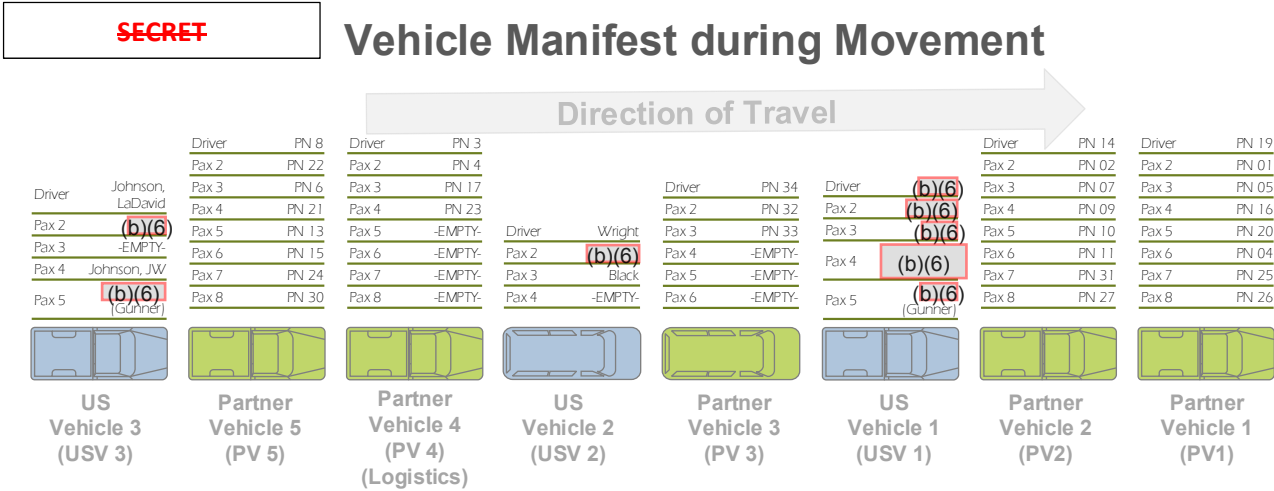


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Ouallam, along the route identified on their approved CONOPS.<sup>299</sup> Listed from lead vehicle to trail vehicle, the order of movement for the convoy was as follows: Partner Vehicle (PV)1; PV2; U.S. Vehicle (USV)1; PV3; USV2; PV4; PV5;USV3.<sup>300</sup> (See Figure 4, below).



(U) Figure 4 (See also Encl. 9.1)

iv. (S) The convoy traveled approximately 40 km reaching its first check point near the town of Mangaize at 0727.<sup>301</sup> Road conditions between Ouallam and Mangaize are generally good on dirt and gravel improved roads.<sup>302</sup> North of Mangaize, however, roads are less defined and sometimes non-existent. The convoy continued from Check Point 1 in a northeastern direction for another 43 km, arriving 5 km south of Tiloa by approximately 1000.<sup>303</sup> (See Figure 7.) At approximately 1038, Team OUALLAM dispatched one Nigerian vehicle (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4d (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4d<sup>304</sup> Those partner Nigeriens returned by 1130, unsuccessful in locating the high value target.<sup>305</sup>

<sup>299</sup> (U) Ex. G7, 1; Ex. A3, 37; Ex. A5, 46, 48.

<sup>300</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 39; Ex. A5, 41, 65, 86; Ex. 50, 1, 4; Ex. A15, 10. See also Encl. 9.1 for a detailed description of the order of movement and known occupants of each vehicle.

<sup>301</sup> (U) Encl. 6.1; Encl. 8, 3.

<sup>302</sup> (U) Ex. C1, Photograph 2.

<sup>303</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 73; Ex. A5, 50

<sup>304</sup> (S) (b)(1)1.4c are classified above the classification level of this report.

<sup>305</sup> (S) Ex. A9, 44; Ex. A2, 73. In addition to witness testimony, this timeline is deduced to a reasonable degree of confidence based upon (b)(3) / (b)(6) Photographs that show (b)(3) / (b)(6) in the halt position, with the (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4d vehicle missing, as late as 1055. The next known timestamp is a video showing the team on Tiloa base at 1315. Accounting for travel time, time to make their way to their rest point, and the time to conduct a rest period, (b)(3) / (b)(6) would have been approaching Tiloa base between 1200-1230. This timeline is consistent with witness testimony.

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f. (U) Key Leader Engagement.

i. ~~(S)~~ After efforts to find/fix (b)(1)1.4a in Tiloa were unsuccessful, Team OUALLAM waited until 1200 (b)(1) 1.4a moving the convoy north to the FAN base.<sup>306</sup> Arriving at the FAN base, Team OUALLAM met with the local commander.<sup>307</sup> The KLE lasted longer than usual, as the commander invited members of Team OUALLAM to eat lunch with him.<sup>308</sup> Team OUALLAM used the KLE as an opportunity to discuss the FAN's activities and patrols in the region, while also gaining atmospheric information about the local area.<sup>309</sup>

ii. ~~(S)~~ Team OUALLAM concluded the KLE and departed Tiloa base at approximately 1400, returning along the same general route as they used to travel north to Tiloa.<sup>310</sup> As Team OUALLAM departed Tiloa, the AOB diverted the ISR aircraft north to monitor likely avenues of egress (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>311</sup> That ISR aircraft was successful (b)(1)1.4a (b)(1)1.4a<sup>312</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) notified (b)(3) / (b)(6) about this new intelligence just as Team OUALLAM's convoy was moving south of Mangaize.<sup>313</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) directed (b)(3) / (b)(6) to halt movement, and provided (b)(3) / (b)(6) with the grid coordinate for the new (b)(1) 1.4a intelligence.<sup>314</sup>

<sup>306</sup> ~~(S)~~ Ex. A1, 114; Ex. A2, 73; Ex. A7, 35; Ex. A5, 51. The Team waited until (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1)1.4a before proceeding through Tiloa to their KLE. Ex. A3, 38; Ex. C1, Photograph 5; Ex. C1, Photograph 6; Ex. D81. See Annex 3 for further details of ISR related to this mission.

<sup>307</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 116-117; Ex. A5, 51.

<sup>308</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 117; Ex. A15, 10.

<sup>309</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 117-118.

<sup>310</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 119.

<sup>311</sup> (U) Ex. A60, 23-24.

<sup>312</sup> (U) The details of this equipment are classified above the classification of this report. See Annex 3 for further details of ISR related to this mission.

<sup>313</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 120-122.

<sup>314</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 122; Ex. A2, 74; Ex. A3, 39; Ex. A9, 47; A60, 24.

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2. (U//FOUO) Re-mission 1: Objective NORTH;<sup>315</sup> Team OUALLAM in Support of Team ARLITa. (U//FOUO) Halt / Hasty Planning.

i. (S) At approximately 1700 on 3 October 2017, Team OUALLAM's convoy halted approximately 5 km south of Mangaize in order to receive additional information from the AOB and to conduct initial planning for a possible re-mission.<sup>316</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) plotted the grid coordinate and assessed whether his team could maneuver to the location and effectively clear the objective.<sup>317</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) assessed that given the proximity of the grid coordinate to the Mali border, it would have been difficult for a dismounted element to approach from the south and still establish northern blocking positions, as he deemed necessary given the lack of border police or checkpoints and the ease with which fleeing targets could cross the border.<sup>318</sup> Knowing that Team ARLIT had (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(3) / (b)(6) called the Team ARLIT Commander, (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) to see if Team ARLIT was able to assist in the operation.<sup>319</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) agreed, and Team ARLIT began their planning process.

ii. (S) Following that telephone call, there were a series of coordinating calls between (b)(3) / (b)(6) trying to figure out the best way to exploit this (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c intelligence.<sup>320</sup> Equipped with (b)(1) 1.4a, Team ARLIT proposed being the lead (b)(1)1.4a element, (b)(1)1.4a (b)(1)1.4a<sup>321</sup> The initial plan proposed a force composition of (b)(1)1.4a USSOF, (b)(1) 1.4a partner forces, and (b)(1) 1.4a interpreters.<sup>322</sup> The plan called for Team ARLIT to (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>323</sup> The plan further called for Team OUALLAM to move to a position 25 km south of the objective (b)(1)1.4a (b)(1)1.4a (b)(1)1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>325</sup>

<sup>315</sup> (S) Objective NORTH is the name assigned by the investigating team for ease of reference. The name is used to refer to the grid coordinate location identified with (b)(1)1.4a during Team OUALLAM's re-missioning. The name does not appear in any Concept of Operations and was not used during the operation.

<sup>316</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 122-124; Ex. A2, 74; Ex. A15, 11; Ex. A5, 56; Ex. A9, 47-48; Ex. C1, Photograph 8; Ex. D85

<sup>317</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 122.

<sup>318</sup> (S) Ex. A1, 123. (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g

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

<sup>319</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 123; Ex. A2, 75; Ex. A3, 40-41; Ex. A52, 12.

<sup>320</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 124; Ex. A52, 13.

<sup>321</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 124; Ex. A52, 14; Ex. A5, 58-59.

<sup>322</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 14-15.

<sup>323</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 124; Ex. A5, 58-59.

<sup>324</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 124-125; Ex. A2, 77; Ex. A3, 42; Ex. A9, 58, 60.

<sup>325</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 125; Ex. A2, 77; Ex. A7, 49; Ex. A9, 60.

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iii. (U//FOUO) As the basic concept of the operations was being further refined,

(b)(3) / (b)(6) assessed that it would take Team OUALLAM significantly longer to move to their position (25 km offset) than it would for Team ARLIT to fly to Objective NORTH.<sup>326</sup> While he estimated the movement to be approximately 50 km, there were few navigable roads and various terrain features that hampered movement.<sup>327</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) assessed the team had a long night of driving ahead of them.<sup>328</sup> The AOB notified the SOFLE of the new mission involving Team ARLIT and the SOFLE briefed the Ambassador and received her concurrence.<sup>329</sup>

b. (S) Movement to (b)(1)1.4a Position. In order to be in their (b)(1)1.4a position on time, Team OUALLAM's convoy commenced movement at approximately 1800, prior to final approval of the proposed CONOPS.<sup>330</sup>

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) The convoy traveled back through Mangaize in a northwestern direction towards Objective NORTH.<sup>331</sup> (See Figure 7.) At that time, Team OUALLAM's plan was to move to its position 25 km south of Objective NORTH and hold.<sup>332</sup> The team would then reassess Team ARLIT's planning process and further refine their plan.<sup>333</sup> Arriving at 2254, Team OUALLAM's actual movement to their 25 km offset position took approximately five hours.<sup>334</sup> Team OUALLAM coordinated with the partner force commander, who implemented a rest plan.<sup>335</sup>

ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) The Team OUALLAM commander was not part of the subsequent planning efforts between Team ARLIT, the AOB, and the SOCCE-LCB. Team OUALLAM was moving their convoy north and was not involved in the actual CONOPS development or approval process.<sup>336</sup>

<sup>326</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 127.

<sup>327</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 129; Ex. A2, 80; Ex. A9, 50.

<sup>328</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A1, 128. However, (b)(3) / (b)(6) does not believe the duration of the planned operation exceeded the capability of an operational detachment.

<sup>329</sup> (U) Ex. A67, 2

<sup>330</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 62; Ex. C1, Photographs 8-10.

<sup>331</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A1, 129; Ex. A5, 65. Some witnesses believed they drove through Tongo Tongo that night on the way to Objective NORTH. Ex. A5, 82; Ex. A2, 82. However, a review of the grid coordinates called in during movement indicates Team OUALLAM's convoy moved west of Tongo Tongo by approximately 10 km as they approached their 25k halt position (Ex. G1, 1). See Encl. 8, 3.

<sup>332</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 131.

<sup>333</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 131.

<sup>334</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 131; Encl. 8, 3.

<sup>335</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A1, 132. The rest plan ultimately allowed for members of Team OUALLAM to each get only 30 minutes of sleep before the force would have to move forward from this position (Ex. A9, 61; Ex. A7, 54; Ex. A5, 69).

<sup>336</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 134.

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c. (U) CONOPS Development and Approval.

i. (S) As Team OUALLAM was moving to their (b)(1)1.4a position, the AOB and Team ARLIT further refined the concept of operations.<sup>337</sup> At 1830 on 3 October 2017, the AOB requested to re-task a (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c remotely piloted aircraft (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c to develop intelligence at Objective NORTH.<sup>338</sup> After receiving an initial CONOPS on this new operation, the SOCCE-LCB Commander, (b)(3) / (b)(6) directed the AOB and Team ARLIT to be more deliberate in their planning.<sup>339</sup> To ensure the plan was well synchronized, (b)(3) / (b)(6) directed a video teleconference (VTC) between Team ARLIT, the AOB, SOCCE-LCB, and SOCFWD-NWA.<sup>340</sup> Team OUALLAM was not part of the VTC.

ii. (S) Collectively, the SOCCE-LCB, AOB, and Team ARLIT refined the concept of operations over the course of this VTC. Team ARLIT and the AOB further refined the scheme of maneuver and the composition of their force to (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a troops, (b)(1) 1.4a U.S. forces, and (b)(1)1.4a interpreter.<sup>341</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) assessed that Team OUALLAM would not be able to be an effective (b)(1)1.4a force given the vast terrain to the south of the objective and the enemy's use of motorcycles.<sup>342</sup> Instead, (b)(3) / (b)(6) directed Team OUALLAM to act as a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) for Team ARLIT, but did not provide planning priorities for the QRF.<sup>343</sup>

iii. (S) Although leaders from Team ARLIT, the AOB, SOCCE-LCB, and SOCFWD-NWA were all involved in a collaborative planning effort, the final written CONOPS did not include a concept of operations for Team OUALLAM acting in either a QRF or a (b)(1) 1.4a capacity.<sup>344</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) and other team members believed their task in this operation was to establish a southern (b)(1)1.4a position.<sup>345</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) believed Team OUALLAM's task was to act as a QRF.<sup>346</sup>

iv. (S) Although leaders from Team ARLIT, the AOB, SOCCE-LCB, and SOCFWD-NWA all understood this operation would involve two separate SFODAs, there was no consolidated CONOPS detailing the combined communications plan, QRF planning priorities, refined CASEVAC plan, or maneuver plan for Team OUALLAM.<sup>347</sup>

<sup>337</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 15; Ex. A69, 87-88.

<sup>338</sup> (U) Ex. G27, 1.

<sup>339</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 89, 90.

<sup>340</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 89; Ex. A52, 16; Ex. A60, 28-29.

<sup>341</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 14-15.

<sup>342</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 92.

<sup>343</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 92.

<sup>344</sup> (U) Ex. B23, 2; Ex. B24, 1-2; Ex. B25, 2; Ex. B29, 5-7; EX. G7, 1

<sup>345</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 125; Ex. A7, 47; Ex. A2, 77-80.

<sup>346</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 92.

<sup>347</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 91-92; Ex. A60, 38-39; Ex. B29, 2, 6.

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(b)(3) / (b)(6) approved the CONOPS consistent with his delegated authority.<sup>348</sup> At approximately 2100, the SOCCE submitted the CONOPS to SOCFWD-NWA for notification.<sup>349</sup> The ISR platform requested by the AOB earlier that evening (b)(1) 1.4a arrived over Objective NORTH at 2125 and (b)(1) 1.4a but observed no significant activity.<sup>350</sup>

v. (S) As a FRAGO (b)(1) 1.4a the CONOPS required SOCAFRICA be notified (b)(1) 1.4a in advance of execution.<sup>351</sup> The SOCCE submitted the final approved CONOPS to the SOCFWD-NWA Joint Operations Center (JOC) minutes before Team ARLIT was set to launch, far short of the (b)(1) 1.4a notification requirement. The SOCFWD-NWA J3 was aware of the operation as he was present during the planning VTC.<sup>352</sup> The J3 notified the SOCFWD-NWA commander about the operation, then forwarded the CONOPS to the SOCAFRICA JOC.<sup>353</sup> The SOCFWD-NWA commander did not notify the SOCAFRICA commander that there was going to be a complex operation involving two SFODAs on a partner assisted interdiction operation involving nighttime movement and air insertion, within the (b)(1) 1.4a notification requirement.<sup>354</sup>

vi. (S) Although the SOCFWD-NWA notification of this CONOPS to SOCAFRICA was far short of SOCAFRICA's (b)(1) 1.4a notification requirement, it was consistent with a standard of practice tacitly approved by SOCAFRICA over the preceding 11 months. Although the SOCAFRICA commander, Maj Gen Mark Hicks, testified that the (b)(1) 1.4a notification requirement is intended to afford his staff sufficient time to look at the CONOPS and to conduct a full staffing process, SOCAFRICA had not implemented any processes to account for time-sensitive or real-time approvals.<sup>355</sup> In the absence of clear guidance as to the approval and notification process for time-sensitive missions (b)(1) 1.4a the SOCCE-LCB commander routinely approved time-sensitive missions, and SOCFWD-NWA routinely notified SOCAFRICA of these missions, over the preceding 11 months. Prior to 2 October 2017, SFODAs within the SOCFWD-NWA area of responsibility executed (b)(1) 1.4a time-sensitive missions (b)(1) 1.4a for which (b)(1) 1.4a prior notification was required by the SOCAFRICA approval matrix.<sup>356</sup> SOCAFRICA never denied or objected to any of these missions, and never raised concern over the fact they had not received (b)(1) 1.4a advanced notification. SOCAFRICA's lack of guidance or corrective action following any of the previous (b)(1) 1.4a missions, a period spanning the command tenures of both BG

<sup>348</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 91; Ex. B23, 6; Ex. I1 – I3.

<sup>349</sup> (U) B29, 1.

<sup>350</sup> (U) Ex. G27, 1.

<sup>351</sup> (U) Ex. I1, 1.

<sup>352</sup> (U) Ex. A79, 25.

<sup>353</sup> (U) Ex. A79, 14, 17, 20; Ex. G48.

<sup>354</sup> (U) Ex. A79, 14, 17, 20.

<sup>355</sup> (U) Ex. 81, 60-62.

<sup>356</sup> (U) Ex. G49.

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Donald Bolduc and Maj Gen Hicks, resulted in the implicit acceptance of short-notice operations. As a result, SOCFWD-NWA developed a practice of providing immediate notification of time-sensitive CONOPS, then executing the operations, even though such notification did not comply with the (b)(1) 1.4a prior notification requirement.<sup>357</sup>

### 3. (U//FOUO) Re-mission 2: Objective NORTH; Team OUALLAM Main Effort

a. (S) Team ARLIT Abort, Hasty Planning, Movement to the Objective. As Team OUALLAM was moving to their 25 km offset position, (b)(3) / (b)(6) heard (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g SATCOM traffic between Team ARLIT and the AOB about ARLIT's timeline being delayed.<sup>358</sup>

i. (S) Team ARLIT took off in two contracted Super Huey helicopters (b)(1) 1.4a at 2141 on 3 October 2017.<sup>359</sup> Approximately 20 minutes into flight, (b)(1) 1.4a encountered severe headwinds that significantly increased their fuel consumption rate.<sup>360</sup> The increased fuel consumption rate and extended sortie duration meant they would have insufficient fuel to reach the infiltration point.<sup>361</sup> (b)(1) 1.4a then planned to conduct a refueling stop at Niamey before continuing to Objective NORTH.<sup>362</sup> However, while in route to Niamey, the pilots assessed they would also be unable to reach even Niamey, so they aborted the mission and returned to Arlit.<sup>363</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) called the AOB notifying them Team ARLIT had to abort the mission.<sup>364</sup>

ii. (S) As Team OUALLAM arrived at their 25 km offset position, (b)(3) / (b)(6) received a call from (b)(3) / (b)(6) at the AOB telling him that Team OUALLAM was no longer the supporting effort, but the main effort that would conduct the raid on Objective NORTH.<sup>365</sup> In order to conduct this raid, Team OUALLAM and their partner force would have to move an additional 25 km north through difficult terrain under limited visibility. Given that distance to travel, and the fact that his partner force had been up for over 18 hours, (b)(3) / (b)(6) expressed to (b)(3) / (b)(6) his preference that the force return to base (RTB).<sup>366</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) relayed (b)(3) / (b)(6) preference to (b)(3) / (b)(6) but (b)(3) / (b)(6) directed that (b)(3) / (b)(6) move to Objective NORTH and conduct the

<sup>357</sup> (U) See Finding 4 for more detailed discussion.

<sup>358</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 134.

<sup>359</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 18, See also Encl. 6.

<sup>360</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 18-19.

<sup>361</sup> (S) Ex. A58, 30-31; Ex. A52, 18-19; Ex. A69, 94. Some witnesses believed the shortage of fuel may have been due to (b)(1) 1.4a running their engines during the VTC and subsequent CONOPS revisions (Ex. A7, 53). This was not true. Witnesses with personal knowledge of the event state the aircraft shut down during CONOPS refinement (Ex. A52, 18-19; Ex. A59, 42).

<sup>362</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 19.

<sup>363</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 19; Ex. G7, 1.

<sup>364</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 19; Ex. A9, 60-61.

<sup>365</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 136; Ex. A9, 61; Ex. A3, 46.

<sup>366</sup> (U) Ex. A59, 45-46.

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raid.<sup>367</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) provided specific direction to (b)(3) / (b)(6) on the requirement to remain at the last position (b)(1) 1.4a while conducting actions on the objective.<sup>368</sup> Upon receipt of that directive, Team OUALLAM's mission changed from providing a flexible (b)(1) 1.4a force to capturing and detaining (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a.<sup>369</sup> Notwithstanding the changes in Team OUALLAM's directed task and purpose, neither the AOB nor the SOCCE-LCB developed a CONOPS detailing Team OUALLAM's modified concept of operation. The SOCCE-LCB notified the SOCFWD-NWA, who in turn notified the SOCAFRICA J33 via email, of the revised plan through a short description of the five-W's (Who, What, When, Where, Why).<sup>370</sup> Missing from the five-W's description was a modified risk assessment for Team OUALLAM given the team's new task and purpose, including the nearly 24-hours with little rest, no quick reaction forces assigned, an execution timeline that would put the team near the Mali border approaching daylight hours, no CASEVAC plan, and an ISR platform without sufficient fuel to cover Team OUALLAM's return to base.<sup>371</sup> The SOCCE-LCB commander did not notify the SOCFWD-NWA commander of the change to mission. Although the SOCFWD-NWA J3 was aware of this change to mission, he did not notify the SOCFWD-NWA commander. The SOCAFRICA commander was not notified of the change to mission. The AOB did not notify the SOFLE of the change in mission until 0800 on 4 October 2017, after Team OUALLAM cleared the objective.<sup>372</sup>

b. (U//FOUO) Actions on Objective NORTH

i. (S) Upon receipt of his new task, (b)(3) / (b)(6) developed a plan for clearing the objective and briefed his partner force commander.<sup>373</sup> The partner force commander was not involved in the mission planning.<sup>374</sup> The teams designated to be the (b)(1) 1.4a force and the (b)(1) 1.4a force conducted hasty rehearsals, reviewing the plan and talking through actions on the objective.<sup>375</sup>

ii. (S) At approximately 0130, the convoy began moving to a designated vehicle drop-off (VDO) point approximately (b)(1) 1.4a from the objective.<sup>376</sup> (See Figure 7.) Movement to the VDO was extremely slow. Because the partner vehicles had limited (b)(1) 1.4a USV1 took the lead in navigating to the VDO.<sup>377</sup> Moving closer to

<sup>367</sup> (U) Ex. A59, 45-47; Ex. A69, 96.

<sup>368</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 137.

<sup>369</sup> (S) Ex. A1, 137. (b)(3) / (b)(6) saw no nuance in the nature of the new operation, stating "...this (capturing (b)(1) 1.4a is outside of what a civil-military recon is, right? I think we all agree on that...", (Ex. A1, 133-134).

<sup>370</sup> (U) Ex. B24.

<sup>371</sup> (U) See Annex 7 for a detailed discussion of risk analysis.

<sup>372</sup> (U) Ex. G33

<sup>373</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 143; Ex. A3, 46.

<sup>374</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 143

<sup>375</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 143; Ex. A5, 66.

<sup>376</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 143; Ex. A9, 62.

<sup>377</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 144.

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the objective than first planned, the convoy arrived at a VDO site approximately (b)(1) 1.4a from the objective at 0453. ISR was on station and in communication with Team OUALLAM by the time they arrived at the VDO.<sup>378</sup>

iii. (S) Team OUALLAM established security at the VDO before the pre-designated force began a dismounted patrol to the objective.<sup>379</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6), (b)(3) (10 U.S.C. § 133) original plan called for two separate elements, a (b)(1) 1.4a element that would move first continuing to its position (b)(1) 1.4a of the objective, and a main (b)(1) 1.4a element which would clear across the objective from (b)(1) 1.4a.<sup>380</sup> As planned, (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) and SSG Black were tasked to advise and assist (b)(1) 1.4a partner force personnel in the (b)(1) 1.4a element.<sup>381</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) and SSG Wright were to advise and assist (b)(1) 1.4a partner force personnel in the (b)(1) 1.4a element.<sup>382</sup>

iv. (S) As the dismounted elements moved towards the objective, ISR reported seeing a motorcycle moving from the objective.<sup>383</sup> At approximately 0600, the (b)(1) 1.4a element led by partner forces came upon equipment and recent fires suggesting they had stumbled upon the objective.<sup>384</sup> The team adjusted their plan, and the (b)(1) 1.4a element moved in to assist in clearing the objective. Team members advising and assisting partner forces on this operation were (b)(1) 1.4a behind their partner forces as they cleared the objective, outside the constraints of remaining at the last position (b)(1) 1.4a.<sup>385</sup> Although no enemy personnel were discovered

<sup>378</sup> (S) Ex. A1, 145; Ex. G1, 1. The ISR aircraft, (b)(1) 1.4a, arrived on station at 2125 on 3 October 2017 observing Objective NORTH. As Team OUALLAM and their partners approached the objective, Team OUALLAM (b)(1) 1.4a made contact with (b)(1) 1.4a requesting a steady stare on the objective. See Annex 3 for more detailed description of ISR activities.

<sup>379</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 145.

<sup>380</sup> (S) Ex. A1, 145; Ex. A9, 57; Ex. A3, 46-47; Ex. A7, 60. The original scheme of maneuver called for the (b)(1) 1.4a element to lead the patrol towards the objective. At approximately 1 km from the objective, the (b)(1) 1.4a element was supposed to hold until the (b)(1) 1.4a force continued (b)(1) 1.4a into their position (Ex. A9, 58 to Ex. A9, 63).

<sup>381</sup> (S) Ex. A9, 62-63. Some witnesses describe the precise composition of the elements slightly differently. For example, (b)(3) / (b)(6) formed the (b)(1) 1.4a force Advise/Assist team, while (b)(3) / (b)(6) SSG Wright, and SSG Black formed the (b)(1) 1.4a force Advise/Assist team (Ex. A3, 47). (b)(3) / (b)(6) describes the composition as stated here, but in a later description switches two personnel. (Ex. A2, 84-85). (b)(3) / (b)(6) remained at the VDO and was not on either team. The investigation finds (b)(3) / (b)(6) recollection of the composition to be most reliable.

<sup>382</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 145; Ex. A9, 62-63.

<sup>383</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 150; Ex. A2, 86; Ex. A15, 12.

<sup>384</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 147-149; Ex. A9, 66; Ex. A41, 10; Ex. D48.

<sup>385</sup> (U//FOUO) One partner Nigerien described the U.S. forces as leading the Nigeriens across the objective (Ex. A41, 12-13). Notwithstanding conflicting accounts, it is clear from ISR footage that the U.S. and partner forces were very close together while clearing this objective (Ex. D48; Ex. A9, 65).

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at Objective NORTH, the team did discover smoldering fires and a cache of supplies indicating this had been a recent enemy bed-down location.<sup>386</sup> (See Figure 5 and 6.)

v. (S) As Team OUALLAM was exploiting the site, ISR reported (b)(1)1.4g (b)(1)1.4g on a motorcycle driving away from the objective to the west.<sup>387</sup> ISR then observed the motorcycle link up with a group (b)(1)1.4g approximately 5 km to the southwest of the objective.<sup>388</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) directed the ISR to continue to watch (b)(1)1.4g and directed (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>389</sup> Minutes later, ISR observed the group (b)(1)1.4g (b)(1)1.4g separate, with personnel moving in different directions.<sup>390</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) directed the ISR to track the motorcycles in order to identify enemy crossing points into Mali.<sup>391</sup> Team OUALLAM completed exploiting Objective NORTH; partner Nigeriens seized supplies (military clothing, food items such as rice and tea, blankets, etc.) and destroyed the motorcycle.<sup>392</sup>



(U) Figure 5 (See also Ex. C1, photograph 14)

<sup>386</sup> (U//FOUO) The objective included a large cache of supplies, including sugar, tea, large bags of flour, a few pieces of camouflage clothing, ammunition, an ammunition rig and belt, and a motorcycle. Ex. A9, 66; Ex. A1, 147, 149; Ex. A2, 86-88; Ex. A5, 74.

<sup>387</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 150; Ex. A2, 86; Ex. A3, 51, 52; Ex. A15, 12; Ex. A5, 74; Ex. C1, Photographs 13-15.

<sup>388</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 150; Ex. A7, 64; Ex. A5, 74-75; Encl. 19; See also Annex 3.

<sup>389</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 150-151; Ex. G22, 8-9, 13; Ex. A5, 76; See also Annex 3.

<sup>390</sup> (U) Ex. G22, 13-14.

<sup>391</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 151; Ex. G22, 3; See also Annex 3.

<sup>392</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 152; Ex. A3, 53; Ex. A2, 87-88; Ex. A9, 66, 68; Ex. A15, 11-12; Ex. A7, 63; Ex. C1, Photograph 16.

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(U) Figure 6 (See also Ex. C1, photograph 16)

c. ~~(S)~~ Return to Base; Stop in Tongo Tongo. At 0815, the Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Tactical Controller (ITC) asked the ISR platform over Objective NORTH (b)(1) 1.4a to shift its focus back to Team OUALLAM to begin overwatch for Team OUALLAM's return to base (RTB). (b)(3) / (b)(6) however, requested (b)(1) 1.4a to continue following the motorcycles.<sup>393</sup> At approximately 0830, Team OUALLAM departed Objective NORTH in a southeastern direction, returning to base.<sup>394</sup>

i. ~~(U//FOUO)~~ The convoy stopped at a small farming village in order to allow partner forces an opportunity to cook and eat their breakfast.<sup>395</sup> The small village did not have any water, so a villager directed the convoy to the next village, Tongo Tongo, which the villager believed to have a well.<sup>396</sup> The convoy approached the village of Tongo Tongo

<sup>393</sup> (U) Ex. G22, 10-12.

<sup>394</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 154; Ex. A3, 54-55.

<sup>395</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A5, 81. Although said to be a small village, witnesses described this first stop as being a very small cluster of buildings significantly smaller than even Tongo Tongo. One witness described the village as being nothing more than a farm house with other out-buildings (Ex. A15, 12-13). There does not appear to be a name for this village, and it is not identifiable on any maps (Ex. A3, 56-57; Ex. A1, 155).

<sup>396</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Witnesses have different accounts as to who this villager was. Some witnesses described the villager as a woman with a child (Ex. A1, 156). Other witnesses describe the villager as a male farmer (Ex. A15, 13). There is no evidence linking this villager to any phone calls or warnings regarding the movement of Team OUALLAM towards Tongo Tongo which was a five to ten minute drive away. (Ex. A1, 156; Ex. A2, 89; Ex. A7, 64; Ex. A9, 74-75; Ex. A15, 13).

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from the northwest, stopping approximately 100 meters outside the village at approximately 1040.<sup>397</sup> The three U.S. vehicles formed a hasty security position under one large tree, while the remaining Nigerien vehicles gathered separately under a different tree.<sup>398</sup> Approximately 15 minutes into the halt, as Nigerien forces were cooking their breakfast, a village elder later identified as (b)(6) approached Team OUALLAM accompanied by 27 military-aged men.<sup>399</sup> (See Figure 8.)

ii. (S) Because the ITC was asked to track the motorcycles north towards Mali, the ISR platform assigned to this mission (b)(1) 1.4a did not provide overwatch for Team OUALLAM's movement to Tongo Tongo. Having been (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a completed its mission and returned to Niamey at 1041.<sup>400</sup> There is insufficient evidence to determine whether (b)(1) 1.4a would have observed the enemy forces in the vicinity of Tongo Tongo had it maintained overwatch of Team OUALLAM during their movement south.

<sup>397</sup> (S) At 1040, Team OUALLAM called in a stop over the radio at (b)(1)1.4a Ex. G1, 1; Encl. 6, 3; Encl. 8, 3, 1.

<sup>398</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 57, 69; Ex. A7, 68; Ex. A9, 75-76; Ex. A5, 82; Ex. A1, 159.

<sup>399</sup> (U//FOUO) Witnesses had varying estimates of the total number of military aged men (Ex. A5, 83; Ex. A1, 160. Ex. A3, 69-70; Ex. A2, 90-91). However, 27 men can be counted in Photographs of the crowd taken by the team (Ex. C1, Photographs 17, 18).

<sup>400</sup> (U) Ex. A93, 2.

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(b)(1) 1.4a

(b)(1) 1.4a

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d. (U//FOUO) Impromptu Engagement with Village Elder.

i. (U//FOUO) Team OUALLAM had not planned on conducting a KLE in Tongo Tongo and spent more time in the village than planned.<sup>401</sup> The stop was intended to be a 30-minute halt to allow the Nigeriens time to eat.<sup>402</sup> As the village elder and group of men approached, (b)(3) / (b)(6) and their interpreter engaged in an impromptu KLE.<sup>403</sup>

ii. (U//FOUO) The KLE was largely unremarkable, as (b)(3) / (b)(6) discussed with the elder the security situation around Tongo Tongo, his primary concerns, and the needs of the village.<sup>404</sup> (b)(6)<sup>405</sup> He did not provide any other details about his (b)(6)<sup>406</sup>

iii. (U//FOUO) In the course of the conversation, the elder noted that villagers sometimes see motorcycle traffic to the west of their village, but that the motorcycles do not bother them.<sup>407</sup> The elder discussed additional concerns, such as a lack of food and water. Eventually, the elder asked (b)(3) / (b)(6) to wait, as he left the larger group and returned to the village.<sup>408</sup> A different villager approached at that time, asking them to look at a young boy with apparent scoliosis.<sup>409</sup> SSG Black, the team's medic, looked at the child and recommended the child be seen by a medical professional in Niamey.<sup>410</sup>

iv. (U//FOUO) The elder reappeared minutes later with a goat, expressed gratitude for the team's visit, and asked the team if they would stay for lunch.<sup>411</sup> The team declined the offer, as they had already stayed longer than the planned 30-minute halt.<sup>412</sup> At that point, the elder gave the partner Nigeriens the goat.<sup>413</sup> The team thanked the elder for meeting with them, loaded the vehicles, and began their movement back to Ouallam.<sup>414</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 160.

<sup>402</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 161; A30, 4.

<sup>403</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 160-161; Ex. A7, 68-72; Ex. A2, 91.

<sup>404</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 83, 85; Ex. A3, 70; Ex. A1, 161-162; Ex. A2, 91; Ex. A9, 77-78; Ex. A7, 69.

<sup>405</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 161; Ex. A7, 70; Ex. A2, 92.

<sup>406</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 161.

<sup>407</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 162.

<sup>408</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 163-164; Ex. A3, 71.

<sup>409</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 165-166; Ex. A7, 71; Ex. A2, 91; Ex. A9, 77-78; Ex. A5, 84.

<sup>410</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 166; Ex. A7, 71; Ex. A2, 91-92; Ex. A5, 84; A9, 77-78.

<sup>411</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 166; Ex. A3, 70-71; Ex. A2, 92-93; Ex. A9, 79.

<sup>412</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 79, 82; Ex. A1, 166-167; Ex. A30, 4, A2, 93.

<sup>413</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 167; Ex. A2, 93; Ex. A5, 85.

<sup>414</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 169; Ex. A16, 1; Ex. A2, 93.

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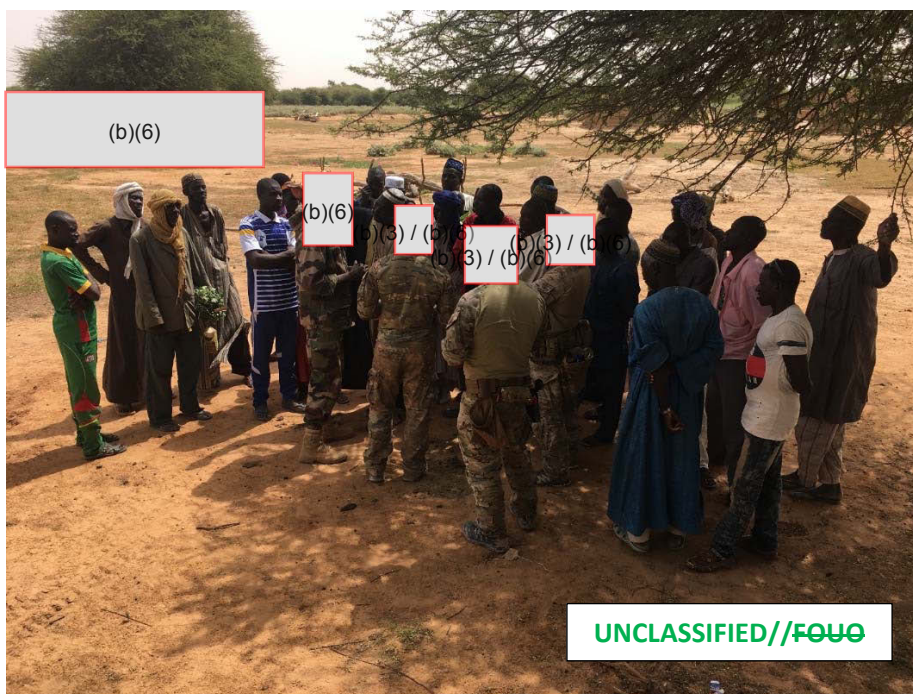
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v. (S) The KLE seemed largely unremarkable at the time of the engagement.<sup>415</sup> However, several witnesses described various observations that, in retrospect, they believe to be indicators that the elder and other villagers from Tongo Tongo were complicit in the attack that followed. Some witnesses described what they believed to be an absence of women and children as they approached the village.<sup>416</sup> In retrospect, witnesses believed the village elder deliberately delayed the convoy from departing in an effort to allow the enemy time to set up the ambush. Delay tactics, such as presenting a child with scoliosis, inviting the team for lunch, and offering a goat, all suggest to the team members, after the fact, a nefarious intent by the elder. Evidence does exist to suggest villagers from Tongo Tongo took part in the firefight that followed.

(b)(1) 1.4c

(b)(1) 1.4c

<sup>417</sup> However, evidence also demonstrates the village elder tried to help when he immediately called the region prefect once the attack began, requesting he call the FAN commander to send support, and subsequently helped in the recovery of our fallen Soldiers.<sup>418</sup> Thus, while the Team members' theory about the village elder is plausible, the investigation could not determine his complicity by a preponderance of the evidence.



(U) Figure 8 (See also Ex. C1, photograph 17)

<sup>415</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 83, 85; Ex. A3, 70; Ex. A1, 161-163; Ex. A2, 91; Ex. A9, 79; Ex. A7, 67.

<sup>416</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 78; Ex. A90, 4. Still other witnesses dispute this, having observed some women and children.

<sup>417</sup> (U) Ex. D40.

<sup>418</sup> (U) Ex. A23, 2, 20; Ex. D55; Ex. D64

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4. (U//~~FOUO~~) Movement from Tongo Tongo, Initial Contact.<sup>419</sup> Team OUALLAM's convoy formed into the original convoy order and departed the site of the engagement at approximately 1130.<sup>420</sup> The convoy traveled southeast along the eastern edge of the village.<sup>421</sup> Shortly thereafter, a villager approaching the village from the tree line to the east directed the convoy down a road which appeared to cut through the wood line due east from Tongo Tongo.<sup>422</sup> The first two or three vehicles in the convoy began to approach that road, but the lead vehicle determined it was not the correct road out of Tongo Tongo and rerouted the convoy to the southern direction.<sup>423</sup>

a. (U//~~FOUO~~) Vehicle Dispersion. The vehicles were 20 meters apart as the convoy was still forming into its ordinary formation.<sup>424</sup> The convoy continued in a southeastern direction down a narrow road with relatively dense forest/vegetation to the convoy's east (left side of convoy) and a slightly less dense area of vegetation to the convoy's south/southwest (right side of the convoy).<sup>425</sup> (See Encl. 8.6)

b. (U//~~FOUO~~) React to Initial Contact. As the convoy moved through the narrow road between the two wood lines, the vehicles to the rear of the convoy began to receive small arms fire from the convoy's left-rear / northeast.<sup>426</sup> Initial enemy fire was one to

<sup>419</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) For all actions at the initial ambush site, see Figure 9 (also Encl. 9.2)

<sup>420</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Team member Photographs show the KLE still underway at 1118. The TIC is called at 1140 and occurred likely no more than 7-10 minutes from initial movement on the north side of Tongo Tongo (Ex. A1, 167-168; Ex. A3, 70-71; Ex. A9, 82; Ex. C1, Photograph 17). See also Encl. 6, 2; Encl. 10.

<sup>421</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 167; Ex. A30, 4-5; Ex. A9, 82; See also Encl. 8.6. Additionally, the team took videos of parts of the event (Ex. D8, Ex. D9).

<sup>422</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Some witnesses testified that a villager approaching from the tree line to the east directed the convoy to drive down a road which appeared to cut through the wood line due east from Tongo Tongo. Other witnesses said that the convoy was redirected due to muddy, impassable roads (Ex. A30, 4, 6). Although PN7 described the convoy approaching this road, then turning away from it, there was insufficient evidence to establish who may have directed the convoy in this direction or their motive. A theory advanced by some witnesses is that this villager was deliberately sending the convoy into a primary ambush zone, and because the convoy diverted south, the enemy had to adjust its ambush by swinging south. Although this theory is plausible, there is insufficient evidence to prove this by a preponderance of the evidence. The individual with personal knowledge of this exchange, PN1, was the partner force leader (termed Adjutant Chef) and lead vehicle commander. PN1 was killed in action. See also Encl. 8.6 for a graphic depiction of the route of travel from the KLE.

<sup>423</sup> (U) Ex. A30, 4-6.

<sup>424</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A1, 168; Ex. A9, 84; Ex. A50, 5. This dispersion may have been even less, as (b)(3) / (b)(6) notes the vehicles were close together initially, but just getting dispersed as the convoy was hit (Ex. A3, 73).

<sup>425</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A50, 3-5; Ex. A27, 1; Ex. A1, Stmt. Encl. 3; Ex. A2, 93, 96; Ex. A7, 70; Ex. A9, 160. The precise movement of vehicles was detailed by Nigerien Partner 7 during the investigation's site survey conducted on 12 November 2017.

<sup>426</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A15, 17; Ex. A16, 1; Ex. A9, 82-83; Ex. A5, 87-88; Ex. A3, 73-74; Ex. A7, 71; Ex. A2, 95; Ex. A30, 6; Ex. A1, 172-173. (b)(3) / (b)(6) believed the first rounds came from the village behind them. (Ex. A9, 82-83). One villager testified seeing four motorcycles fire two shots from the vicinity of the school building (Ex. A17, 3-4.) The preponderance of the evidence establishes the enemy fired on Team OUALLAM from the convoy's rear-left.

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two shots at a time.<sup>427</sup> At 1140, Team OUALLAM radioed "Troops in Contact" (TIC) over the command net monitored by the AOB, SOCCE, and SOCFWD-NWA, and provided their grid coordinate.<sup>428</sup> Team OUALLAM and several partner Nigeriens immediately returned fire.<sup>429</sup>

i. (U) Return Fire / Vehicle Displacement.

1. (U//~~FOUO~~) Soon after the first shots, the enemy fire became increasingly intense and effective.<sup>430</sup> The convoy halted, and one of the two partner vehicles in the lead of the convoy reversed their truck, wedging against the driver side of USV1.<sup>431</sup> At one point, there was a distinct lull in enemy fire followed shortly by a marked increase.<sup>432</sup> As the rate of enemy fire increased, Team OUALLAM heard large-caliber automatic weapons, which they presumed to be DShK fire.<sup>433</sup>

2. (U//~~FOUO~~) During the initial moments of the firefight, USV3 maneuvered forward, in front of and to the right of USV2, in order to coordinate crew-served fire with USV1.<sup>434</sup> In an effort to provide support to USV2, SSG Jeremiah Johnson moved on foot back from USV3 to USV2 with an AT4.<sup>435</sup>

3. (~~S~~) The reaction to initial contact varied. Several members of Team OUALLAM dismounted and sought cover behind the hard points of their vehicles. Some

<sup>427</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A1, 173; Ex. A3, 76-77; Ex. A30, 6. (b)(3) / (b)(6) the gunner on USV3, described the shots as "more like a celebration shot, like they were shooting in the air" (Ex. A9, 83-84). Riding inside the SUV, the initial shots did not even sound like gunfire to (b)(3) / (b)(6) who believed the sound was a seatbelt hitting a window (Ex. A7, 71).

<sup>428</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A61, 12; Ex. G1, 1; Ex. G2, 2; See also Enclosure 6 for a consolidated timeline. This report will generally refer to this initial channel location as the TIC site.

<sup>429</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A5, 88-89; Ex. A9, 86; Ex. A2, 96; Ex. A15, 18; Ex. A16, 1. The precise reaction to enemy contact by each individual Team Member varied according to their assigned equipment. (b)(3) / (b)(6) for example, immediately racked his M240, and swung the weapon to left, orienting his fires on muzzle flashes observed in the wood line (Ex. A5, 88). Others engaged with their assigned weapons.

<sup>430</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 88; Ex. A2, 95; Ex. A37, 2.

<sup>431</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A3, 75; Ex. A5, 88; Ex. A15, 17; Ex. A16, 1; Ex. A2, 96-97; Ex. A9, 88-89. (b)(3) / (b)(6) and other witnesses were uncertain which partner vehicle (PV1 or PV2) backed up against them at the initial TIC site. Ex. A3, 75. Some evidence suggests PV2 may have moved slightly west off the TIC site, allowing PV1 room to back into USV1. The investigation was unable to establish this fact by a preponderance of the evidence.

<sup>432</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 88.

<sup>433</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 94; Ex. A2, 98; Ex. A9, 89. The DShK (Degtyarev Shpagin Krupnokalibernyi in Russian) is a Russian heavy machine gun firing 12.7 x 108mm caliber, linked ammunition. This weapon system is comparable to the U.S./NATO M2 .50 caliber heavy machine gun.

<sup>434</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 90; Ex. A9, 89-90; Ex. A50, 7.

<sup>435</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A5, 103; Ex. A2, 99; Ex. A3, 84-85; Ex. A9, 91. SSG Johnson did not fire the AT4 at this point. (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) stopped SSG Johnson from firing the weapon, as they did not have positive identification of the enemy at that moment and (b)(3) / (b)(6) assessed the back blast would have injured other team members (Ex. A7, 77).

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of them donned their body armor and equipment.<sup>436</sup> Others immediately returned fire from mounted M240B machine guns.<sup>437</sup> [REDACTED] (b)(1) 1.4d

[REDACTED] (b)(1) 1.4d Several reacted quickly and aggressively.<sup>438</sup> One Nigerien vehicle (PV5) broke contact immediately while the others dismounted, sought cover, and attempted to identify the enemy.<sup>439</sup> Some Nigeriens exercised fire discipline,

[REDACTED] (b)(1) 1.4d

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4. (U//~~FOUO~~) Shortly after initial contact, PV1 and PV2 moved into the wooded area to the west of the TIC site.<sup>441</sup> Partner Nigeriens from both vehicles dismounted, some immediately returned fire while others sought cover.<sup>442</sup> PN1 directed his driver (PN19) to collect wounded and displaced Nigerien soldiers.<sup>443</sup> Several minutes later, PV1 and PV2 moved southwest out of the ambush site.

<sup>436</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A1, 194; Ex. A5, 90; Ex. A7, 74; Ex. A9, 98; Ex. A12, 13, 27; Ex. A30, 6-8; Ex. A50, 6, (b)(3) / (b)(6) ptes he was not wearing his body armor when they first made contact and did not put it on immediately. Only when the fire intensified did he put his on. (b)(3) / (b)(6) also notes that (b)(3) / (b)(6) was not wearing kit as he dismounted and maneuvered on foot (Ex. A3, 77).

<sup>437</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 84-85; Ex. A5, 88-89.

<sup>438</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 89.

<sup>439</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 98, 100; Ex. A5, 88; Ex. A7, 76; Ex. A15, 18; Ex. A27, 2; Ex. A28, 1; Ex. A30, 6; Ex. A31, 1; Ex. A32, 1; Ex. A41, 22; Ex. A51, 4.

<sup>440</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 81-82; Ex. A5, 96-97; Ex. A2, 104, 105; Ex. A9, 94-95; Ex. A1, 180.

<sup>441</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 178; Ex. A2, 97; Ex. A3, 82; Ex. A5, 99; Ex. A7, 74, 79; Ex. A9, 86; Ex. A29, 2; Ex. A30, 9-10; Ex. A32, 1.

<sup>442</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 180-181; Ex. A2, 104; Ex. A3, 78, 82; Ex. A5, 97.

<sup>443</sup> (U) Ex. A27, 3.

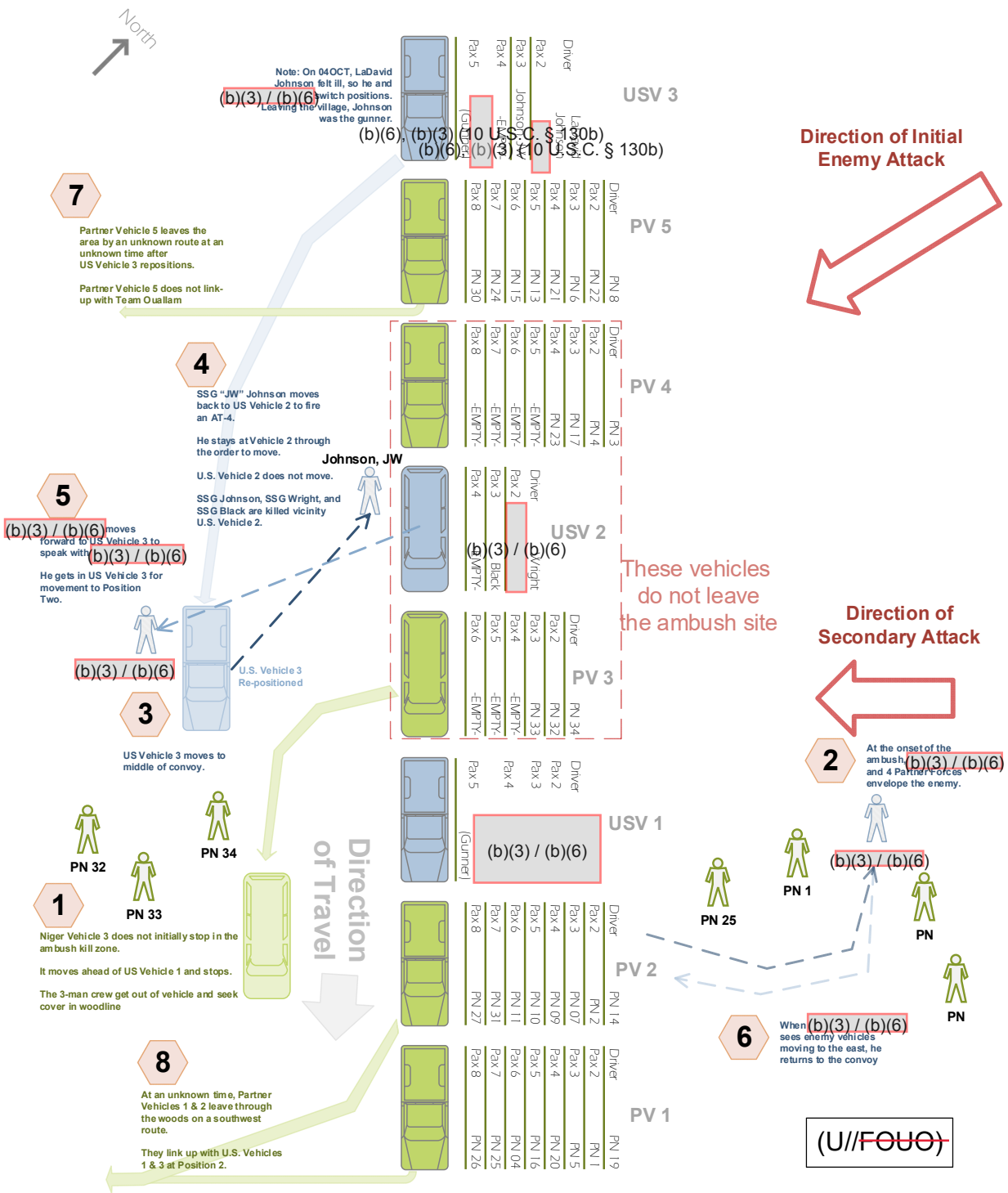
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## Actions Upon Troops In Contact



(U) Figure 9 (See also Encl. 9.2)§

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ii. (U//FOUO) Team OUALLAM Counterattacks.

1. (S) Believing the enemy to be small in number, (b)(3) / (b)(6) decided to counterattack. He dismounted USV1 and, along with the Nigerien commander and several partner Nigeriens, conducted a flanking maneuver around the south end of the forested area to the convoy's east.<sup>444</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) directed (b)(3) / (b)(6) to shift friendly fire to the left to allow the flanking force room to maneuver.<sup>445</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) directed Team OUALLAM and partner Nigeriens to shift fire.<sup>446</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) (gunner on USV1) and (b)(3) / (b)(6) (gunner on USV3) coordinated alternating machine gun fire to suppress the enemy (b)(1) 1.4g<sup>447</sup> The flanking force maneuvered through and around several cattle corrals before seeing enemy personnel firing their weapons towards the TIC site.<sup>448</sup> The counterattack initially surprised the enemy and killed approximately four enemy fighters.<sup>449</sup> During this fire fight, one Nigerien Soldier witnessed enemy personnel setting up what he described as a one to two meter tall mortar system with a bipod.<sup>450</sup>

2. (U//FOUO) (b)(3) / (b)(6) then saw 10 to 15 additional enemy personnel and several motorcycles begin moving to his right in an apparent attempt to envelop the convoy.<sup>451</sup> Realizing the enemy was more numerous than first assessed and appeared to be well trained, (b)(3) / (b)(6) immediately directed the Soldiers with him to return to the convoy.<sup>452</sup> As he approached the location of the U.S. vehicles, (b)(3) / (b)(6) radioed to (b)(3) / (b)(6) to warn the team the flanking element was returning.<sup>453</sup>

iii. (U) Suppressive Fire / Partner Force Dispersion.

1. (U//FOUO) Upon his return, (b)(3) / (b)(6) yelled to the formation that the enemy was massing to their right flank and began coordinating movement out of the ambush site.<sup>454</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) directed (b)(3) / (b)(6) to shift suppressive fire to their right to suppress the enemy's movement south and returned to engaging the enemy over the

<sup>444</sup> (U//FOUO) The precise number of partner forces who joined (b)(3) / (b)(6) on this flanking maneuver is uncertain. (b)(3) / (b)(6) testified he grabbed "a handful" of Nigeriens (though he later stated he had four). (Ex. A1, 173-174). Several other witnesses described four or five Nigeriens (Ex. A3, 76; Ex. A5, 89; Ex. A15, 17-18; Ex. A16, 1-2; Ex. A9, 94; Ex. A30, 7-8; Ex. A50, 10; Ex. A27, 2. PN25 accompanied (b)(3) / (b)(6) on his flanking maneuver (Ex. A37, 3). See also Encl. 8.6.

<sup>445</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 77-78; Ex. A5, 90.

<sup>446</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 90.

<sup>447</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 98.

<sup>448</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 174; Ex. A37, 3.

<sup>449</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 175; Ex. A15, 18; Ex. A16, 2.

<sup>450</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. A37, 3. Based upon the description of this mortar system, it is likely this system was an 82mm mortar.

<sup>451</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 175-177.

<sup>452</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 179.

<sup>453</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 179; Ex. A2, 99-100; Ex. A3, 79; Ex. A5, 91-92; Ex. A7, 80; Ex. A9, 93, 95.

<sup>454</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 179, 182; Ex. A5, 91; Ex. A2, 99-100; Ex. A9, 93, 95.

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hood of his vehicle.<sup>455</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) immediately shifted fire to the right in an effort to cut down the flanking enemy.<sup>456</sup> All U.S. forces were engaging the enemy at that time. From a position on the passenger side of USV2, SSG Black was firing an M320 40mm grenade launcher to suppress enemy movement.<sup>457</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) was also engaging the enemy with an M320. SSG Wright was firing his M4 over the hood of his truck.<sup>458</sup> SSG Jeremiah Johnson was firing from a position near the back quarter panel of USV2.<sup>459</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) and (b)(3) / (b)(6) coordinated alternating fire from the M240s at the flanking enemy.<sup>460</sup> SGT LaDavid Johnson ceased firing his M4 and took over an M240B while (b)(3) / (b)(6) took magazines to SSG Jeremiah Johnson, SSG Black, SSG Wright, and (b)(3) / (b)(6). When (b)(3) / (b)(6) resumed his position on the M240, SGT LaDavid Johnson continued engaging the enemy with his M4.<sup>461</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) was engaging the enemy with his M4 and directing fire for the team members at USV2.<sup>462</sup> Team OUALLAM killed several enemy personnel as the enemy attempted to maneuver south.<sup>463</sup>

2. (U//~~FOUO~~) Despite Team OUALLAM's effective fire, the visible number of enemy fighters increased.<sup>464</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) and (b)(3) / (b)(6) worked to gather up the Partner Nigeriens and direct them into vehicles.<sup>465</sup> At the same time, (b)(3) / (b)(6) moved forward on foot from USV2 to USV3 telling (b)(3) / (b)(6) that they needed to move.<sup>466</sup>

3. (U//~~FOUO~~) At some point, PV5 broke contact and maneuvered out of the TIC site.<sup>467</sup> The Nigeriens' logistics truck, PV4, came under heavy fire and was immediately disabled.<sup>468</sup> Despite initially moving in front of USV1, PV3 came under heavy fire and three partner Nigeriens dismounted their vehicle, first taking cover and

<sup>455</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 80-81; Ex. A5, 92.

<sup>456</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 92-94.

<sup>457</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A1, 181; Ex. A3, 84; Ex. A9, 89-90. Team members used references such as "dirty side" and "clean side" when referring to the sides of their vehicles that were receiving, or not receiving, direct fire. In this case, witnesses described SSG Black on the "clean side" of his vehicle. The "dirty side" at that time was the driver-side of the vehicles in the direct line of incoming enemy fire.

<sup>458</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 181; Ex. A9, 90.

<sup>459</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A1, 183; Ex. A2, 108; Ex. A9, 97-99; Ex. A7, 81, (b)(3) / (b)(6) states SSG Jeremiah Johnson was at the front right wheel well when he returned (b)(3) / (b)(6) order to load up with a thumbs-up. The preponderance of the evidence is that SSG Jeremiah Johnson was last seen on the right rear side of US Vehicle 2.

<sup>460</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 92.

<sup>461</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 91, 93.

<sup>462</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 92.

<sup>463</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 93; Ex. A3, 81.

<sup>464</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) (b)(3) / (b)(6) stated, "It almost looked like a bee hive. Literally, they were moving motos [motorcycles] and they were moving on foot, massing across," (Ex. A5, 93).

<sup>465</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 183-184; Ex. A5, 96, 97; Ex. A50, 11.

<sup>466</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 96; Ex. A7, 80, 83; Ex. A2, 98; Ex. A9, 93.

<sup>467</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A9, 86. The exact direction in which PV5 departed remains unclear. Some evidence suggests PV5 moved north/northwest out of the TIC site.

<sup>468</sup> (U) Ex. A31, 1.

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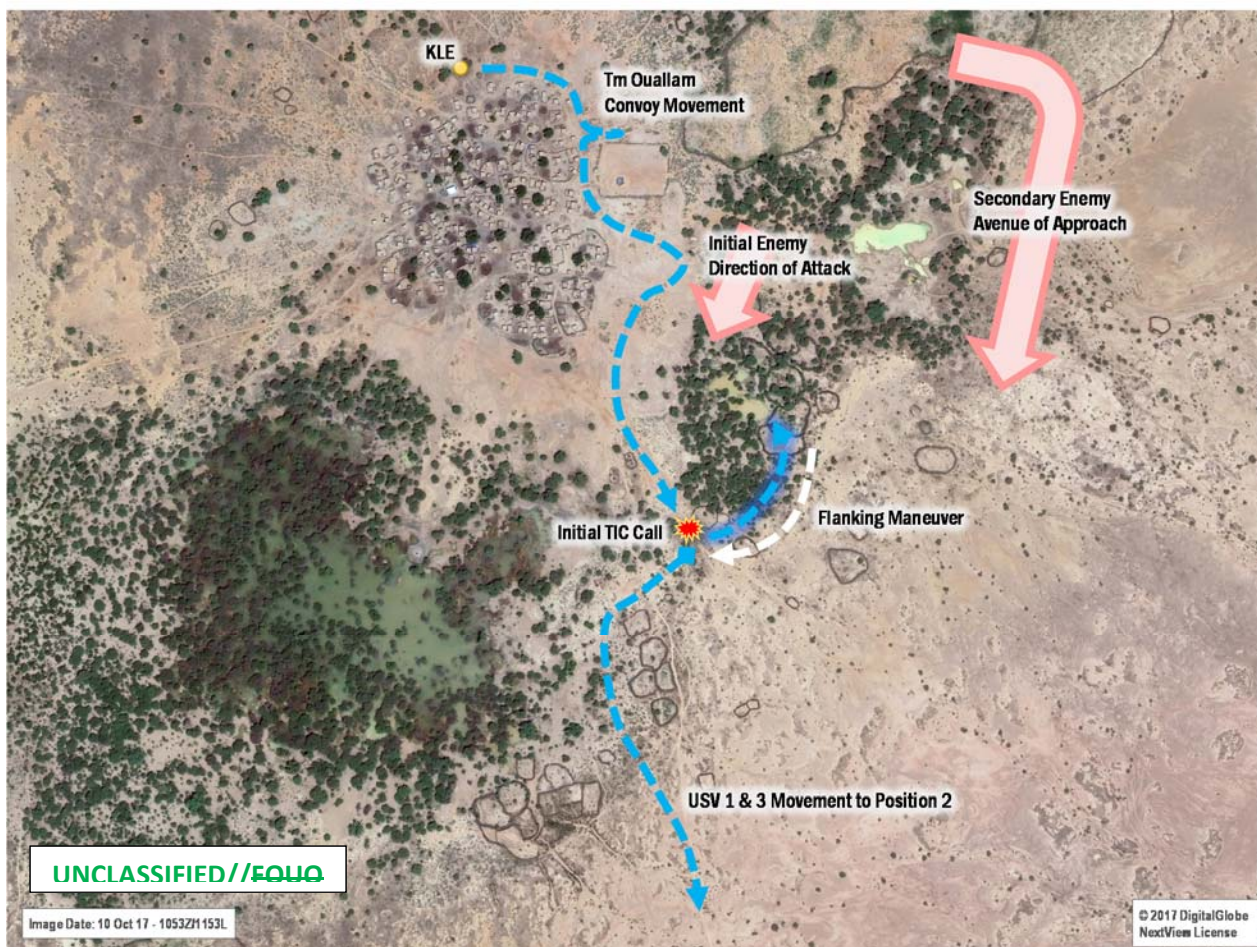
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returning fire from behind their vehicle before breaking contact and moving west into the wood line.<sup>469</sup> Due to heavy fire, these Nigeriens were unable to get back into their vehicle.<sup>470</sup>

4. (U//~~FOUO~~) Team OUALLAM remained in the primary ambush site engaging the enemy for approximately 17-20 minutes.<sup>471</sup>



(U) Figure 10 (See also Encl. 8.6)

<sup>469</sup> (U) Ex. A50, 6, 10.

<sup>470</sup> (U) Ex. A50, 10-11; Ex. A51, 9-10.

<sup>471</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) This estimate is based upon team members' best recollection of the estimated time of (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) flanking maneuver (Ex. A3, 94; Ex. A5, 101; Ex. A16, 2). The initial TIC call was logged at 1140 (Ex. G1, 1; G2, 1; G9, 1). At 1157, Team OUALLAM called in that they would send new grid coordinates once they move, suggesting this call was as they were preparing to move off the TIC site (Ex. G2, 1).

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c. (U) Movement to Position Two.<sup>472</sup>

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) As the team prepared to move out of the TIC site, (b)(3) / (b)(6) and (b)(3) / (b)(6) maneuvered on foot to provide cover for partner Nigeriens to move back to their vehicles.<sup>473</sup> At that time, (b)(3) / (b)(6) yelled to SSG Jeremiah Johnson at USV2 that they were going to break contact and that he would ride in USV3 as they moved out of the ambush site.<sup>474</sup> Having already moved forward to USV3, (b)(3) / (b)(6) decision to get into USV3 moving out of the TIC site was one of expedience and efficiency. (b)(3) / (b)(6) testified,

"(U//~~FOUO~~) Fire was starting to pick up even more. I could see vehicle two. I could still see JW, Dustin, Bryan shooting 320s, shooting their M4s at muzzle flashes and suspected likely [enemy] locations. It didn't make sense to run back through there if we were all going to drive out together. I yelled out to JW [SSG Johnson] who was at the front wheel well. We're going to load up, we're driving out of here. We're pushing south out of the kill zone. I gave him a thumbs up. He gave me a thumbs up back."<sup>475</sup>

(U//~~FOUO~~) From his position next to USV3, (b)(3) / (b)(6) threw a red smoke canister towards the south in order to provide concealment as the convoy broke contact.<sup>476</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) described this moment as,

"(U//~~FOUO~~) Smoke had been popped, eye to eye contact, thumbs up, and we are rolling out of the kill zone. Everybody is tracking, everybody is green light. There was no – like – we didn't just roll off without these guys. Everybody knew that we were moving."<sup>477</sup>

(U//~~FOUO~~) SGT LaDavid Johnson jumped into the driver's seat of USV3 and (b)(3) / (b)(6) jumped into the back left seat.<sup>478</sup> PV3, USV2, and PV4 never left the TIC site.<sup>479</sup>

<sup>472</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) "Position Two" is the name assigned by the investigating team for ease of reference. The name is used to refer to the vehicle rally spot approximately 700 meters south of the initial TIC site. The name does not appear in any Concept of Operations and was not used during the operation.

<sup>473</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 81; Ex. A3, 81-82; Ex. A30, 9.

<sup>474</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 81-82.

<sup>475</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A7, 81-82. (b)(3) / (b)(6) further explained "Nobody was monitoring radios, plus we were so close that I could just yell to him. I didn't feel I needed to get on the radio at that point and talk to him. We made eye contact and he gave me a thumbs up back." (Ex. A7, 82).

<sup>476</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 82-83; Ex. A9, 95-96.

<sup>477</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 99.

<sup>478</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A7, 83. (b)(3) / (b)(6) and (b)(3) / (b)(6) also jumped into their respective positions in USV3.

<sup>479</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 83, 87-88; Ex. A50, 11; Ex. A51, 9; Ex. A31, 1; Ex. A42, 2; Ex. A38, 2.

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ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) USV3 moved off the TIC site first, with USV1 following close behind.<sup>480</sup> As USV1 began its movement from the TIC site, (b)(3) / (b)(6) M240B malfunctioned on USV1.<sup>481</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) reverted to his M4 while (b)(3) / (b)(6) continued firing his M240B from USV3.<sup>482</sup> As USV1 and USV3 moved south, some team members heard an explosion to their rear, and one observed a cloud of smoke and dust.<sup>483</sup>

iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) As the convoy began to move out of the TIC site, SSG Wright began driving USV2 slowly south while SSG Black and SSG J. Johnson walked along next to the vehicle providing suppressive fire.<sup>484</sup> At first, SSG Black positioned himself near the front right side of USV2, using the engine block for cover as they crept forward toward the red smoke that (b)(3) / (b)(6) had thrown for concealment.<sup>485</sup> SSG J. Johnson similarly moved alongside the vehicle using the right rear axle as cover.<sup>486</sup> SSG Black then moved just in front of USV2 and was fatally wounded.<sup>487</sup> He died instantly.<sup>488</sup>

iv. (U//~~FOUO~~) SSG Wright stopped the vehicle, dismounted and dragged SSG Black's body behind the cover of the right front wheel well.<sup>489</sup> SSG J. Johnson attempted to assess SSG Black's injury while SSG Wright provided covering fire.<sup>490</sup> During his assessment, SSG J. Johnson discovered SSG Black's fatal (b)(6) wound.<sup>491</sup> As the enemy quickly closed on their position, SSG Wright and SSG J. Johnson attempted to bound backward toward the west.<sup>492</sup> While they were bounding, the enemy shot and critically wounded SSG J. Johnson approximately 85 meters west of USV2.<sup>493</sup> The wound rendered him immobile.<sup>494</sup> SSG Wright immediately stopped,

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<sup>480</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 88; Ex. A3, 82; Ex. A9, 103.

<sup>481</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A5, 97; Ex. A1, 187. As an 18B, (b)(3) / (b)(6) is proficient with the M240B and went through a succession of remedial efforts to repair the malfunction. Despite changing barrels, working through clearing protocols and attempting to fix the weapon with his Gerber tool he could not get the M240B to work (Ex. A5, 98; Ex. A16, 2).

<sup>482</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 98; Ex. A9, 98.

<sup>483</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A9, 98-99; Ex. A3, 83, 87; Ex. A1, 182-184. Notwithstanding these accounts, a preponderance of the evidence proves that indirect fire did not impact at the initial TIC site during this period of time. The investigating team examined the original TIC site and found no evidence of mortars or other indirect fire (i.e., craters, etc.). Furthermore, video evidence of the attack including the point at which the convoy began to move from the initial TIC site does not show an explosion or any indirect fires impacting (Ex. D89).

<sup>484</sup> (U) Ex. D89.

<sup>485</sup> (U) Ex. D89.

<sup>486</sup> (U) Ex. D89.

<sup>487</sup> (U) Ex. D89.

<sup>488</sup> (U) Ex. D89; Ex. E7; E8, 28; Encl. 13.

<sup>489</sup> (U) Ex. D89.

<sup>490</sup> (U) Ex. D89.

<sup>491</sup> (U) Ex. D89.

<sup>492</sup> (U) Ex. D89.

<sup>493</sup> (U) Ex. D89; Encl. 8.18; 8.20; 8.21.

<sup>494</sup> (U) Ex. D89.

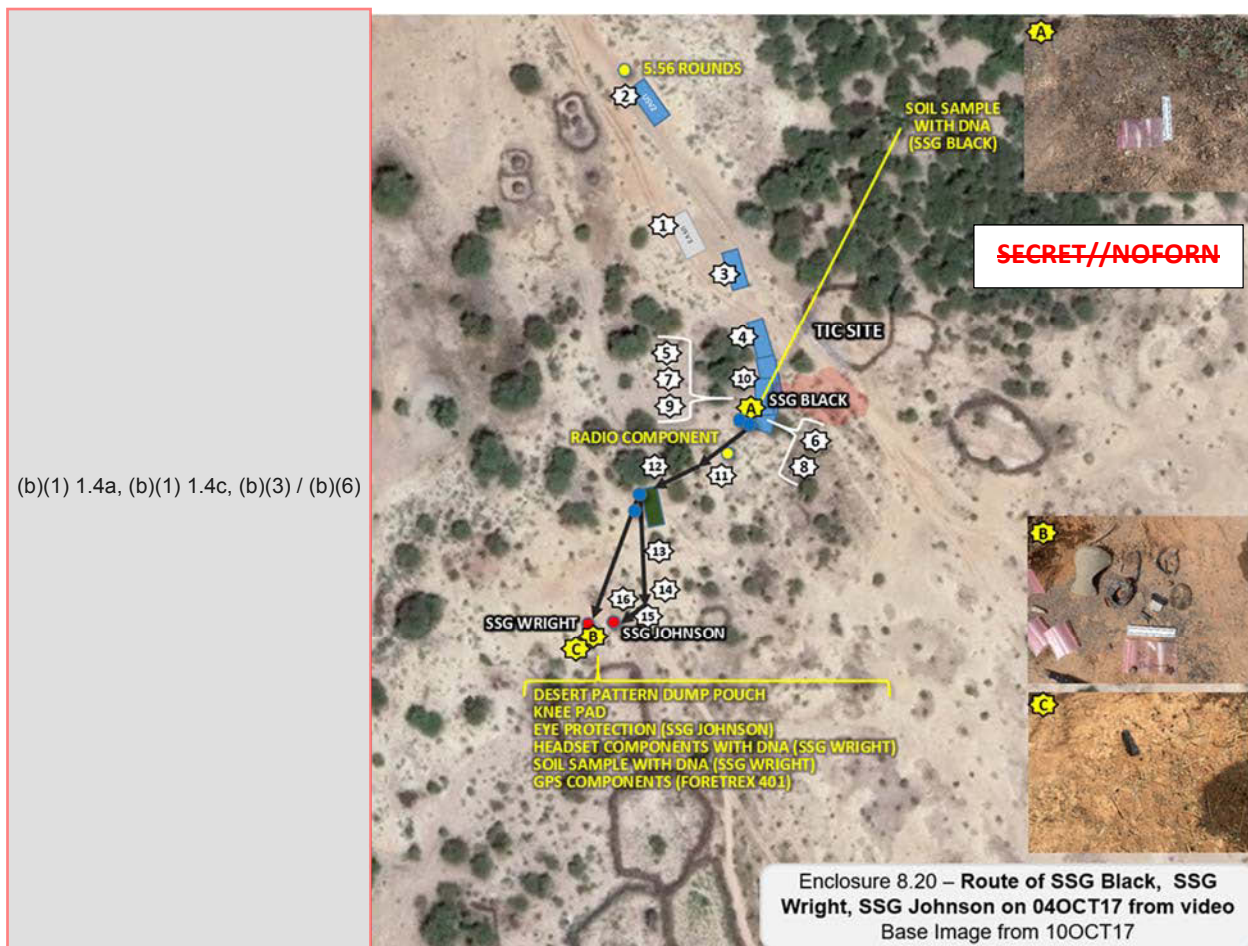
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returned to SSG J. Johnson's position, and re-engaged the enemy.<sup>495</sup> From a small cluster of bushes near SSG J. Johnson, SSG Wright made a final stand.<sup>496</sup> Attempting to protect SSG J. Johnson, SSG Wright fired his M4 at the enemy as they advanced on his position until he was fatally wounded.<sup>497</sup> The enemy killed both Soldiers with small arms fire.<sup>498</sup>



(U) Figure 11 (See also Encl. 8.20)

<sup>495</sup> (U) Ex. D89.<sup>496</sup> (U) Ex. D89.<sup>497</sup> (U) Ex. D89.

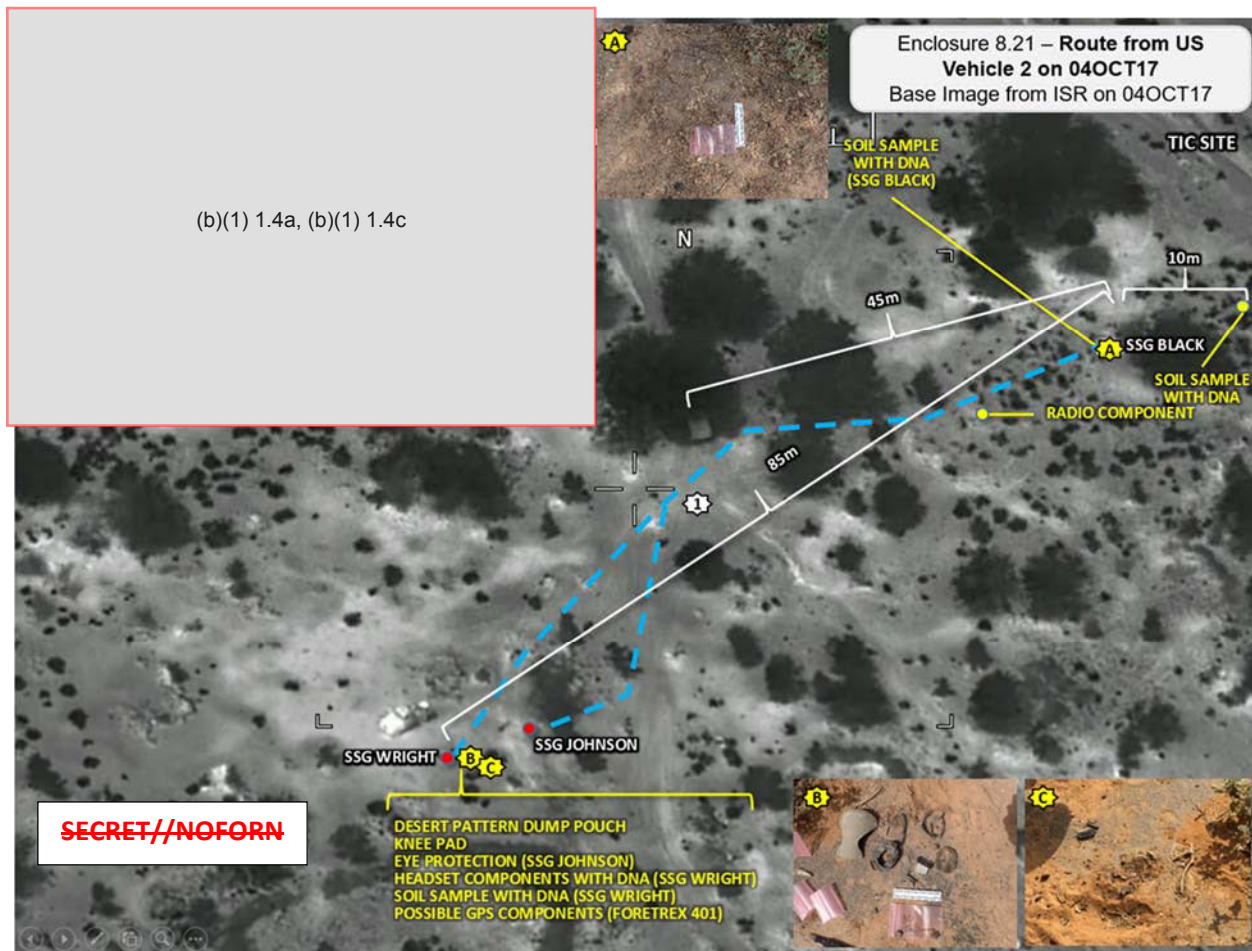
<sup>498</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. D89; Exs. F2, F8-F10; Ex. C5, 11-23, 25-28; Encls. 8, 13, 18, 19. Locations corroborated by forensic analysis of physical evidence collected from the battlefield by the investigating team on 12 November 2017. United States Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory analyzed blood/soil samples collected from the TIC site and provided a DNA match to SSG Black, SSG Wright, and SSG J. Johnson. See also Figure 10a and Encls. 8.18; 8.20; 8.21.

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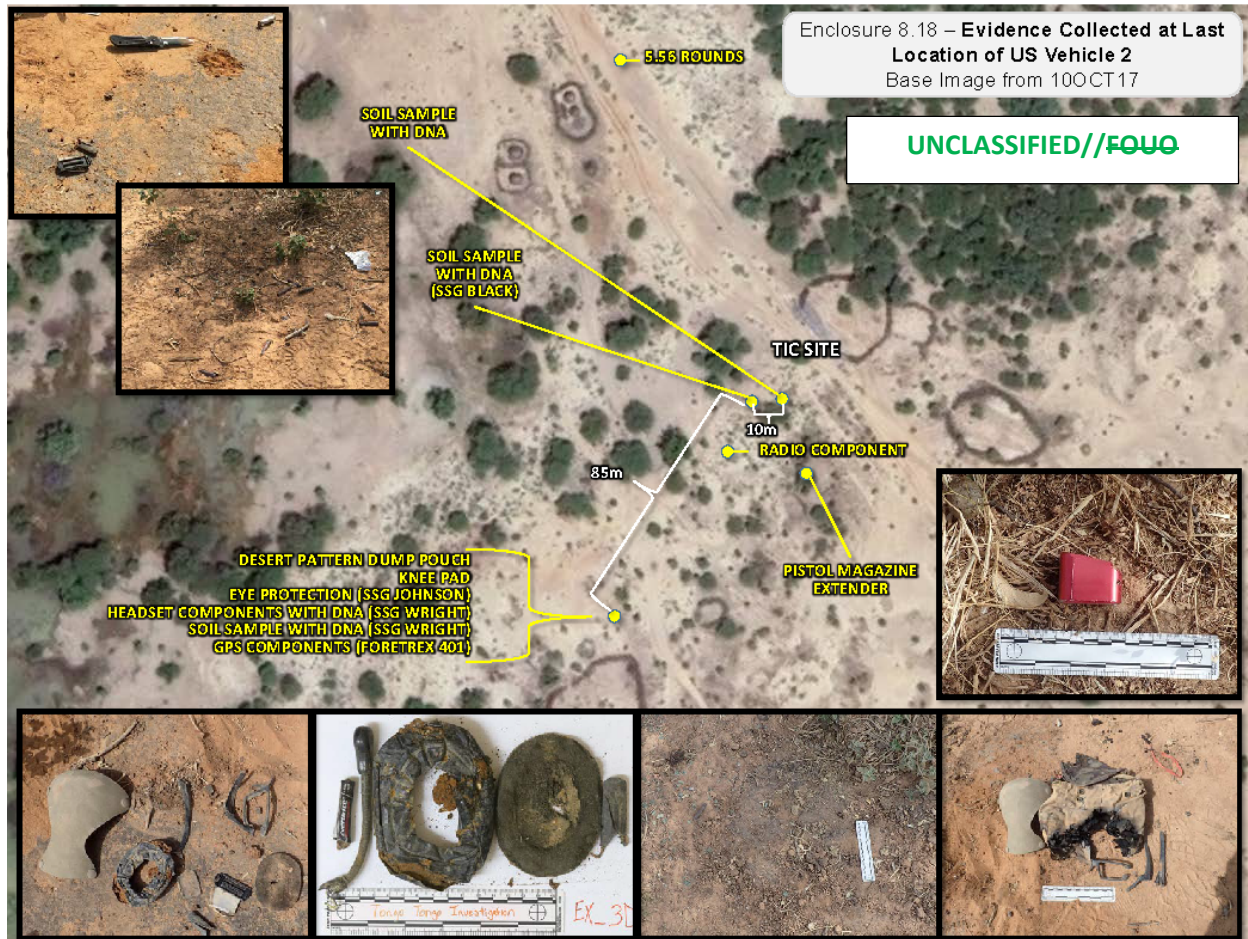
(U) Figure 12 (See also Encl. 8.21)

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(U) Figure 13 (See also Encl. 8.18)

v. (U//~~FOUO~~) As they assaulted across the TIC site, the enemy fired several additional bursts into the bodies of SSG Black, SSG J. Johnson, and SSG Wright.<sup>499</sup> They ultimately stripped the three bodies of any serviceable equipment and uniform items and later attempted to remove them from the battlefield in a pick-up truck.

vi. (S) Unaware that USV2 was pinned down, USV3 and USV1 maneuvered in (b)(1) 1.4a approximately 700 meters to the south where they established a secondary position (hereafter "Position Two").<sup>500</sup> (Distance is approximate and

<sup>499</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. D89; Exs. E1-E9; Encls. 13-15; Ex A40, 1-2 (PN29 testified that he saw SSG Black shot and killed by enemy small arms fire at the original TIC site and that (b)(3) / (b)(6) ordered him to leave SSG Black and to break contact. The witness testified that he then broke contact with (b)(3) / (b)(6) and a group of Americans and Nigeriens, immediately moving on foot to the Alamo position. PN29's testimony is not credible and directly contradicted by his own multiple inconsistent statements, other witness testimony and, most convincingly, by the video evidence in Ex. D89).

<sup>500</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 99; Ex. A50, 16.

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calculated from the center point of the original TIC site to the center point of Position Two. See Encl. 8.4 for battlefield geometry.) Arriving at Position Two, USV1 positioned facing east toward the flanking enemy.<sup>501</sup> USV3, Partner Nigerien vehicles and personnel arrayed in a security perimeter facing south and west.

vii. (U//FOUO) (b)(3) / (b)(6) attempted to communicate via radio with USV2, realizing that they had not made it to Position Two.<sup>502</sup> Team members in USV1 observed what appeared to be a well-trained enemy bounding from the east in an organized manner.<sup>503</sup> Team members at Position Two gained positive identification (PID) of dismounted enemy personnel and engaged.<sup>504</sup> SGT LaDavid Johnson relieved (b)(3) / (b)(6) from the M240B on USV3 and began firing.<sup>505</sup>

viii. (S) (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g

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

ix. (U) Dismounted Search for Vehicle 2 and Team Members.

1. (U//FOUO) From Position Two, (b)(3) / (b)(6) immediately volunteered to run back to the TIC site in search of his team members in USV2.<sup>509</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) directed (b)(3) / (b)(6) to take a partner force with him for security. Believing (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) needed another American to go, (b)(3) / (b)(6) volunteered to go with him instead.<sup>510</sup> Together, (b)(3) / (b)(6) and (b)(3) / (b)(6) moved north on foot back towards the initial TIC site in an effort to locate USV2.<sup>511</sup>

<sup>501</sup> (U//FOUO) USV1 and USV3 arrived at Position Two near in time. (b)(3) / (b)(6) the driver for USV1, remembers his vehicle arriving first at Position Two. Ex. A3, 82-83. (b)(3) / (b)(6) the gunner for USV3, believed USV3 arrived first at position two, followed 30 seconds later by USV1. Ex. A9, 103.

<sup>502</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 102; Ex. A3, 85; Ex. A2, 103, 104; Ex. A1, 186.

<sup>503</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 85-86; Ex. A5, 101, enclosure 2; Ex. A30, 16.

<sup>504</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 85-86; Ex. A5, 101.

<sup>505</sup> (U//FOUO) USV3 originally offset from USV1 to the west by approximately 100 to 200 meters. USV1 repositioned closer to USV3 in order to consolidate and to figure out what was wrong with USV2 (Ex. A5, 102-104; Ex. A9, 108, 114).

After USV1 and USV3 consolidated, witnesses observed SGT Johnson firing the M240B from the back of USV3. (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) stated, "...there's Moody, he's doing good, and he was out there killing it. He looked like a green beret to me out there shooting his gun, he didn't look like a mechanic. He was getting after it," (Ex. A5, 105).

<sup>506</sup> (U) Ex. A91, 1-3.

<sup>507</sup> (U) Ex. A89, 1-2.

<sup>508</sup> (U) Ex. A89, 1-2.

<sup>509</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 105; Ex. A7, 91; Ex. A9, 103-104.

<sup>510</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 103-104.

<sup>511</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 189; Ex. A7, 92; Ex. A15, 22; Ex. A16, 2; Ex. A9, 103-104.

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2. (U//~~FOUO~~) Together, (b)(3) / (b)(6) ran approximately 600 meters north into the wood line in an effort to find USV2.<sup>512</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) maneuvered through the woods and approached a position from which they believed they should have seen USV2.<sup>513</sup> From that position, they engaged several enemy personnel.<sup>514</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) took cover under a thick tree close to the original TIC site but did not see USV2.<sup>515</sup>

3. (U//~~FOUO~~) Minutes after arriving at this tree, two partner Nigerien Soldiers (PN16 and PN17) ran towards (b)(3) / (b)(6) from the direction of the ambush site.<sup>516</sup> Flagging the two Soldiers down, (b)(3) / (b)(6) attempted to speak with them in the local language.<sup>517</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) asked them where the U.S. vehicle was, and one Soldier pointed in the direction of the TIC site directly in front of them.<sup>518</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) could not see anything directly in front of them.<sup>519</sup> The partner Nigeriens got up and ran back towards the swamp in the direction of Position Two.<sup>520</sup>

4. (S) At that same moment, enemy fire grew more intense and more accurate. (b)(3) / (b)(6) took cover behind the tree as DShK fire zeroed in on their position.<sup>521</sup> Believing they may have come up short on identifying the TIC location, they planned to (b)(1) 1.4a the TIC site.<sup>522</sup> Under heavy enemy fire, (b)(3) / (b)(6) broke contact, maneuvering back into the wood line.<sup>523</sup> As they moved back into the wood line near the swamp, (b)(3) / (b)(6) and (b)(3) / (b)(6) ran into (b)(3) / (b)(6) and (b)(3) / (b)(6).<sup>524</sup>

5. (U//~~FOUO~~) Several minutes after (b)(3) / (b)(6) left Position Two, SSG Howe and MSG Figaro determined they needed to provide additional support

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<sup>512</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 103-104.

<sup>513</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 105-107.

<sup>514</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 105-106.

<sup>515</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A9, 108-109. During his testimony (b)(3) / (b)(6) drew a diagram (A5, Encl. 3) of this location and stated it was "under the 1040." This reference was to the 1040Z marking on the diagram that was on the grid coordinate where "Troops in Contact" was first radioed.

<sup>516</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 109.

<sup>517</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 109.

<sup>518</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A9, 109. When interviewed, PN16 described a more chaotic exchange due to the language barrier. PN16 believed the American Soldiers were directing him to run back to the TIC site, and he was motioning that the enemy was in that direction, pointing back towards the TIC site, before departing (Ex. A42, 2).

<sup>519</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 109; Ex. A7, 96.

<sup>520</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 110.

<sup>521</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 110.

<sup>522</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 110.

<sup>523</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 110.

<sup>524</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 111-112.

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to (b)(3) / (b)(6) Moving from Position Two on foot, (b)(3) / (b)(6) and (b)(3) / (b)(6) also bounded back towards the TIC site, navigating around livestock corrals, eventually linking up with (b)(3) / (b)(6) approximately 500 meters from Position Two.<sup>525</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) first made contact with (b)(3) / (b)(6) on the radio, letting him know they were approaching from behind.<sup>526</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) linked up with (b)(3) / (b)(6) in the swampy area to the west of the original TIC site.<sup>527</sup>

6. (S) The four dismounted team members developed a plan to (b)(1) 1.4a back to the TIC site in search of USV2.<sup>528</sup> As the Soldiers moved, (b)(3) / (b)(6) repeatedly attempted to contact USV2 over the radio.<sup>529</sup> At that time, team members heard incoming mortar fire and they believed the enemy was (b)(1) 1.4a them with mortars.<sup>530</sup> The four Soldiers observed enemy closing in on them from as near as 200 meters, with heavy effective fire.<sup>531</sup> They broke contact working back towards Position Two just as USV1 approached at a high rate of speed.<sup>532</sup> (The concurrent actions of the remaining elements at Position Two are described in the next paragraph. This exact moment in the narrative is further described in paragraph (d.)(ii), below.)

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<sup>525</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 106-107, 112; Ex. A2, 105-106.

<sup>526</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 108.

<sup>527</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 108.

<sup>528</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 109, 113; Ex. A9, 113.

<sup>529</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 113-114.

<sup>530</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) "These guys were well trained with mortars. They were walking mortars in on us." (Ex. A5, 114).

<sup>531</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 115, 115; Ex. A2, 105-106.

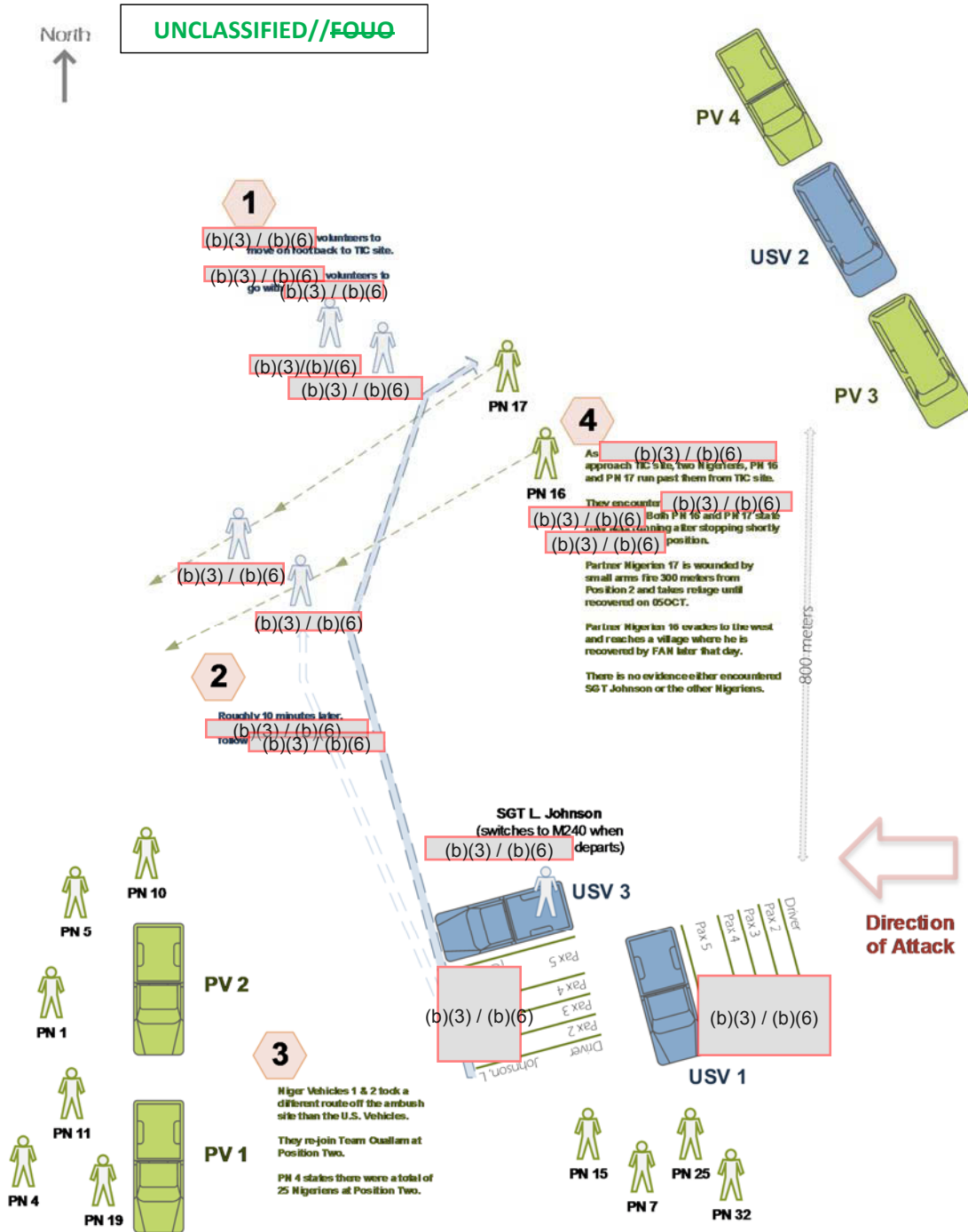
<sup>532</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A9, 114; Ex. A30, 16-17; Ex. A5, 115. (b)(3) / (b)(6) says they broke contact with an "Aussie peel" formation.

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(U) Figure 14 (See also Encl. 9.3)

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x. (U) Enemy Flanks Vehicles 1 and 3.

1. ~~(S)~~ After the four dismounted Soldiers departed towards the TIC site, USV1 and USV3 began receiving overwhelming effective fire at Position Two by advancing dismounted enemy and vehicles with mounted DShKs ("technical").<sup>533</sup> Approximately 30 enemy fighters were on line at 5 meter intervals with a technical in the middle. The enemy was organized and disciplined, using heavy weapons for support by fire, and maneuvering in [REDACTED] (b)(1) 1.4a

(b)(1) 1.4a

534

2. (U//~~FOUO~~) SGT Johnson ran out of ammunition on USV3's M240B,<sup>535</sup> so he retrieved the M2010 sniper rifle and began engaging enemy from the roof of USV1, killing several enemy.<sup>536</sup> SGT Johnson also helped spot enemy personnel for [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) who was engaging enemy with his M4 over the hood of USV1.<sup>537</sup> SGT Johnson continued to engage the enemy with an M2010 sniper rifle, moving from USV1 to a prone position near USV3.<sup>538</sup>

3. (U//~~FOUO~~) As the enemy closed in, [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) yelled that they needed to move from Position Two.<sup>539</sup> [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) yelled directly to SGT Johnson "we've got to go."<sup>540</sup> [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) observed SGT Johnson running to his vehicle, USV3, in an effort to move out of Position Two.<sup>541</sup> [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) last observed SGT Johnson throwing his M2010 rifle into the back seat of USV3.<sup>542</sup> Under extreme fire, [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) lowered his head and slammed on the accelerator of USV1 to evade pursuing enemy vehicles.<sup>543</sup>

4. (U//~~FOUO~~) After jumping into the back seat of USV1, PN7 observed SGT Johnson attempt to get into USV3, only to be repelled from his vehicle under heavy fire.<sup>544</sup> PN7 observed SGT Johnson bound back towards PN1 and PN10, both lying in

<sup>533</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 95; Ex. A1, 190; Ex. A50, 17; Ex. A15, 26-27

<sup>534</sup> (U) A3, 95, 132-133.

<sup>535</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A3, 88; [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) describing the M240B on USV3 when SGT Johnson was firing, "His 240 was still operational but they were critically low on ammunition. I think they may have had 200 rounds left. So I believe he was finishing off that belt and that is when he grabbed the long gun and he started engaging targets with the long gun." (Ex. A5, 106).

<sup>536</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 90; Ex. A1, 188.

<sup>537</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 88-90.

<sup>538</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 188; Ex. A15, 26; Ex. A37, 4-5; Ex. A30, 19, 22.

<sup>539</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 98; Ex. A30, 19-21; Ex. A50, 17.

<sup>540</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 99.

<sup>541</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 99; Ex. A37, 4.

<sup>542</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 99; Ex. A1, 191-192.

<sup>543</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 99-100; Ex. C5, Photographs 31, 32.

<sup>544</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) PN7 described what he observed to be heavy fire preventing SGT Johnson from getting into his vehicle (Ex. A30, 21-22).

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prone fighting positions.<sup>545</sup> PN7 did not relay his observations to anyone else in USV1. No Americans observed SGT Johnson bounding back from his vehicle.<sup>546</sup>

d. (U) USV1 Evades.

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) (b)(3) / (b)(6) accelerated from Position Two under heavy DShK fire that wounded five of seven occupants of USV1, one mortally.<sup>547</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) drove evasively, veering away from different enemy personnel as they appeared and engaged USV1.<sup>548</sup> At one point, the enemy shot PN32 in the back seat of USV1. Although not killed immediately, PN32 eventually succumbed to his wounds.<sup>549</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) was shot by a dismounted enemy (b)(6)<sup>550</sup> The enemy shot PN25 in the (b)(6) while standing on the running board on the side of the moving vehicle.<sup>551</sup> PN15 sustained a grazing wound to (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) suffered a superficial gunshot wound (b)(6)<sup>552</sup> In the course of evasive maneuvering, (b)(3) / (b)(6) was thrown from the bed of USV1 and also sustained (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) maneuvered USV1 back to pick up (b)(3) / (b)(6) who they found kneeling, disoriented, and under a tree.<sup>553</sup>

ii. (~~S~~) With enemy vehicles fast approaching, (b)(3) / (b)(6) accelerated USV1 directly towards the forest to the west of the original TIC site.<sup>554</sup> USV1 came to a sudden halt as it became stuck in the thick mud of the swamp.<sup>555</sup> The members of Team OUALLAM and the Nigerien partners on USV1 realized their unit was being overwhelmed and radioed higher headquarters for the first time since the initial contact. At 1233, (b)(3) / (b)(6) called (b)(1)1.4(a) over SATCOM and (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g<sup>556</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) attempted to retrieve a bag containing (b)(1)1.4g equipment and medical supplies clipped to the headrest behind him, but was unable to retrieve it under heavy DShK fire with his wounded (b)(6)<sup>557</sup>

<sup>545</sup> (U) Ex. A30, 20-22.

<sup>546</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 99-100; Ex. A15, 30; Ex. A1, 190-191.

<sup>547</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A3, 101-103. In addition to (b)(3) / (b)(6) driving, the following personnel also occupied USV1: (b)(6) (passenger seat), PN7, PN32, and PN15 (back seat), (b)(3) / (b)(6) (standing in bed of truck) and PN25 (hanging on to the passenger side door, assisted by (b)(6) (Ex. A30, 23-24; Ex. A15, 28-32; Ex. A16, 2).

<sup>548</sup> (U) Ex. A15, 30; Ex. A16, 2; Ex. A3, 101-105; Ex. A30, 23-25.

<sup>549</sup> (U) PN7, "observed him saying his last prayers," (Ex. A30, 25-26).

<sup>550</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 104-105; Ex. A15, 29, 34; Ex. A16, 2; Ex. A30, 25.

<sup>551</sup> (U) Ex. A30, 26-27.

<sup>552</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A30, 27; Ex. A1, 194-196, 222. A bullet remains lodged in (b)(3) / (b)(6)

<sup>553</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 192, 194; Ex. A15, 29, 31; Ex. A3, 103.

<sup>554</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 106; Ex. A15, 34; Ex. A37, 5; Ex. A30, 26-28.

<sup>555</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 106; Ex. A2, 112; Ex. A30, 28.

<sup>556</sup> (~~S~~) Ex. A3, 106; Ex. A15, 34; Ex. A16, 2. Neither an official brevity code nor a doctrinal term, (b)(3) / (b)(6) radioed (b)(1)1.4(a) (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g

<sup>557</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 106-7,112.

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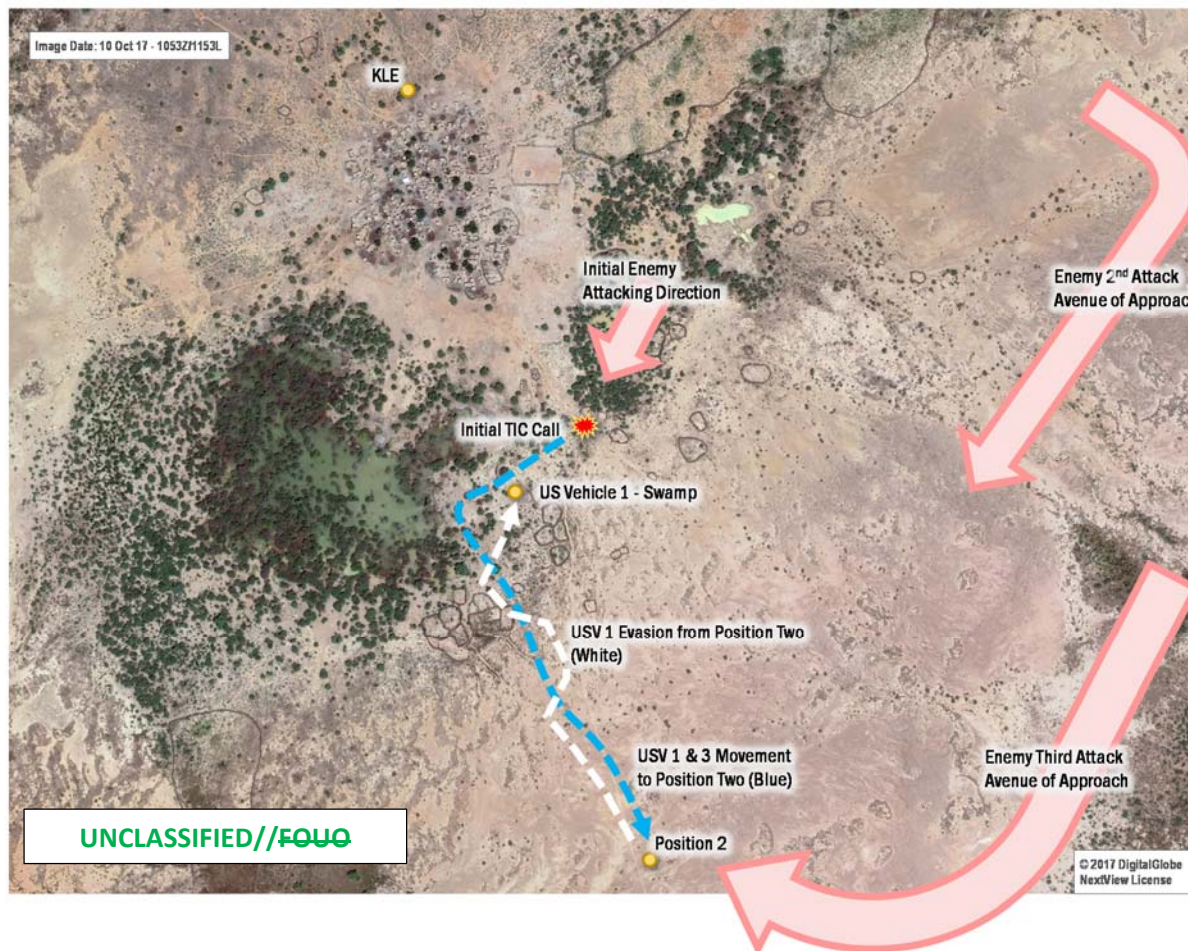
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iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6)

linked up with USV1 as the occupants were dismounting under fire.<sup>558</sup> [REDACTED] (b)(3) / (b)(6) attempted to carry one partner Nigerien who had been shot.<sup>559</sup> Heavy DShK fire forced the two to the ground, and the Nigerien crawled back toward the TIC site.<sup>560</sup>



(U) Figure 15 (See also Encl. 8.7)

<sup>558</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 107; Ex. A15, 36; Ex. A30, 28.

<sup>559</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 115-117; Ex. A5, 120.

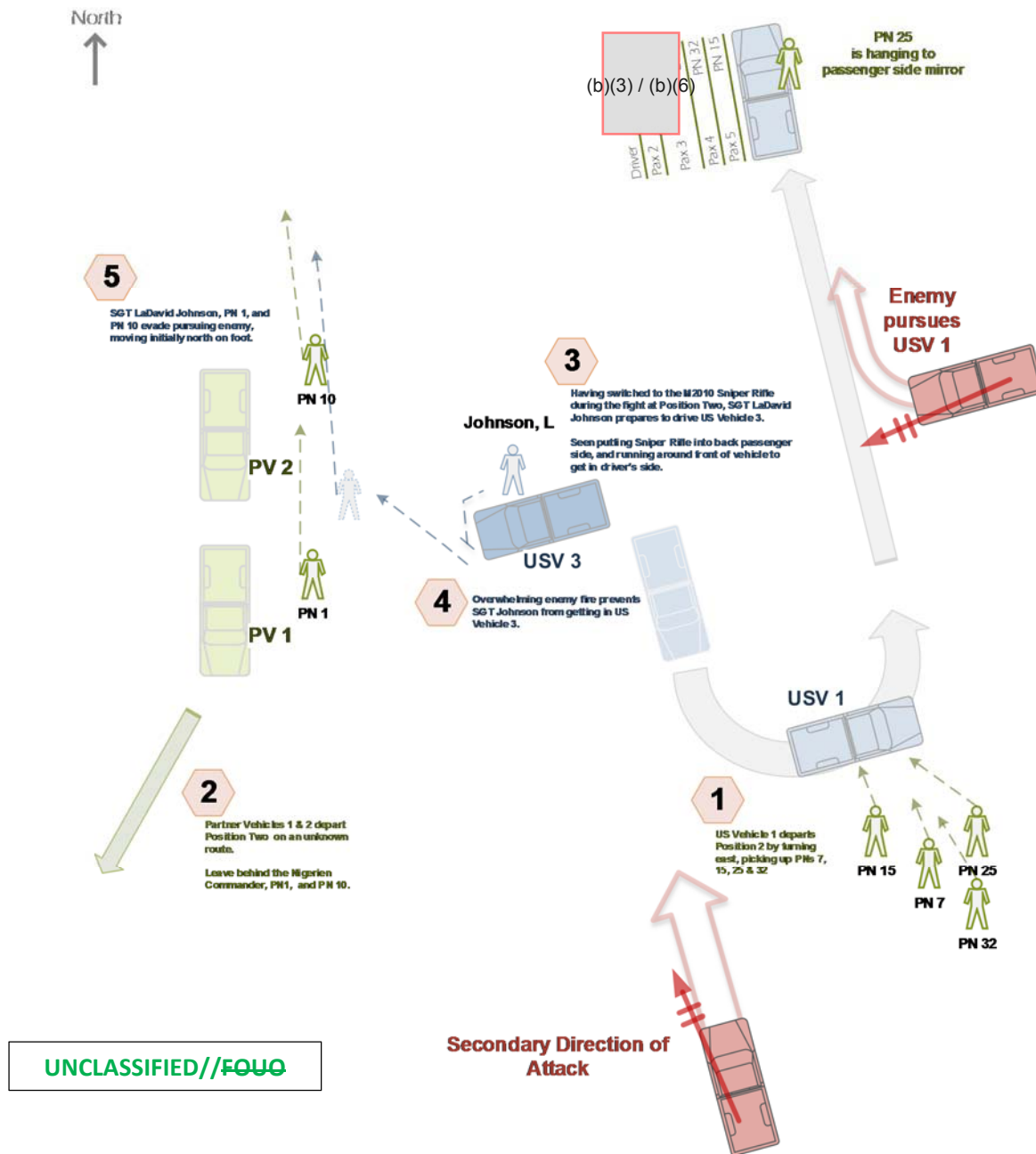
<sup>560</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A9, 116-117; Ex. A5, 120. Team members describe the Soldier as being extremely frightened and apparently disoriented as he crawled quickly in the direction of the enemy. Under withering fire, the team was not able to get this Nigerien back to them. The Soldier's identity, and fate, are unknown.

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(U) Figure 16 (See also Encl. 9.4)

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e. (U//FOUO) Team OUALLAM Consolidates, Moves to Alamo.

i. (U//FOUO) As the occupants of USV1 rejoined (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) enemy DShK fire and mortars were the heaviest they had been the entire attack.<sup>561</sup> DShK rounds were snapping by the team members' heads as the enemy focused its fire on USV1.<sup>562</sup> Under heavy fire, (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) and four partner Nigeriens maneuvered on foot away from USV1 through the wooded swamp.<sup>563</sup> While maneuvering, (b)(3) / (b)(6) applied a tourniquet to (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) was dazed and disoriented.<sup>565</sup> As the group moved away from USV1, enemy fire grew less frequent and less effective.<sup>566</sup>

ii. (U//FOUO) The group maneuvered northwest, alternating between running and walking fast, until they took a security halt in the northwest of the forest.<sup>567</sup> The team deliberated over options, assessing that it would be too dangerous to attempt to cross the open land to the east of Tongo Tongo, and too dangerous to return to Tongo Tongo.<sup>568</sup> The team quickly came to a collective decision to set up a security perimeter and prepare a final fighting position.<sup>569</sup> At the direction of (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) the team formed a security perimeter under some trees.<sup>570</sup> The wounded, including (b)(3) / (b)(6) gathered in the center of the perimeter while the remaining team members and Nigeriens lay in the prone position.<sup>571</sup> Team members referred to this position as "The Alamo."<sup>572</sup> They reached it at approximately 1300.<sup>573</sup>

<sup>561</sup> (S) Ex. A5, 118; Ex. A9, 114-115. (b)(3) / (b)(6) describes the mortar fire (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a (A9, 117).

<sup>562</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. A5, 118; Ex. A9, 116-118. (b)(3) / (b)(6) states, "All I know is that at this point the fire was as close to the extreme as it was in the entire fight. You could hear rounds coming by you and you could hear the big DShK rounds coming in. They are walking the mortars. At this point, they brought everything to bear. They are shooting everything that they have got at us. The fire was at an extreme level" (Ex. A5, 118).

<sup>563</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 121; Ex. A1, 197; Ex. A15, 34, 35; Ex. A15, 2; Ex. A3, 108-110; Ex. A30, 29-30.

<sup>564</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 116-117; Ex. A1, 198; Ex. A15, 35; Ex. A3, 109; Ex. A30, 29-30.

<sup>565</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 196; Ex. A5, 121.

<sup>566</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 121; Ex. A15, 35; Ex. A16, 2; Ex. A3, 109; Ex. A1, 196.

<sup>567</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 98; Ex. A3, 109; Ex. A5, 121; Ex. A15, 34; Ex. A16, 2.

<sup>568</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 122-123; Ex. A1, 197; Ex. A3, 108, 110; Ex. A9, 118; A7, 98.

<sup>569</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 123; Ex. A1, 199; Ex. A15, 35; Ex. A16, 2; Ex. A3, 110-112; Ex. A9, 118; Ex. A30, 29-30.

<sup>570</sup> (S) Ex. A1, 200; Ex. A15, 40. (b)(3) / (b)(6) described this security perimeter as a (b)(1) 1.4a enough to provide (b)(1) 1.4a of security, (b)(1) 1.4a (Ex. A9, 120).

<sup>571</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 123-124; Ex. A15, 40; Ex. A3, Encl. 6; Ex. A9, 120-121.

<sup>572</sup> (U) Ex. A15, 37; Ex. A3, 110, 114, 121, 122, 125; Ex. A9, 119.

<sup>573</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 100.

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iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) As the team lay in a small security perimeter, they prepared for what they expected to be their final fight.<sup>574</sup> The team heard celebratory cheers and shouts of “Allahu Akbar” from the vicinity of Tongo Tongo.<sup>575</sup> The team observed the enemy were as close as 50 meters from them, and several made eye contact with enemy fighters.<sup>576</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) continued to provide medical care to (b)(3) / (b)(6) and (b)(3) / (b)(6) communicated through the ISR platform which had arrived on station at 1311.<sup>577</sup>

iv. (U) Communication with ISR; Communication Challenges, Confusion about Missing Soldiers.

1. (~~S~~) Low on ammunition and with four wounded Soldiers, the team assessed they had to provide immediate security and attempt to call for support.<sup>578</sup> The team remained in their final defensive position at the Alamo from approximately 1300 until approximately 1554.<sup>579</sup> While in their final position, (b)(3) / (b)(6) communicated to the AOB using his (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g<sup>580</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) repeatedly reported the Team’s approximate location, 9-Line MEDEVAC Request, and personnel accountability.<sup>581</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) also asked for a QRF to be dispatched.<sup>582</sup> During that time, the team observed numerous military-aged males walking through and around the area.<sup>583</sup> The team had no knowledge of where SGT Johnson, SSG Wright, SSG Black, or SSG Johnson were at that time.<sup>584</sup>

<sup>574</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A1, 199; Ex. A3, 114-117; Ex. A2, 113. At that point, there were seven U.S. personnel and four Nigerien personnel.

<sup>575</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A1, 199; Ex. A16, 3; Ex. A15, 42; Ex. A3, 118; Ex. A7, 104; Ex. A2, 116; Ex. A5, 128; Ex. A9, 127; Ex. A50, 20. PN7 could hear the engine from USV1 revving as the enemy attempted to dislodge it from the mud (Ex. A30, 30).

<sup>576</sup> (U) Ex. A16, 2-3; Ex. A15, 43; Ex. A3 118-119; Ex. A7, 112; Ex. A5, 130; Ex. A9, 124-126; Ex. A30, 33.

<sup>577</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A2, 114-116; Ex. A16, 2; Ex. A15, 35; Ex. A9, 130. See also Annex 3 for a detailed analysis of ISR coverage and communications with ISR.

<sup>578</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 123-124.

<sup>579</sup> (~~S~~) 1300 is deduced from other known times. (b)(3) / (b)(6) radioed (b)(1) 1.4a at 1233, the point at which the team (b)(1) 1.4a and began evading on foot (Ex. G2, 1). At 1252, the Ouallam TOC attempted radio contact with Team OUALLAM, but was unsuccessful. This suggests Team OUALLAM was still maneuvering and unable to respond (Ex. G2, 1). At 1316 (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g reports Team OUALLAM has 2 casualties. This report suggests an initial accountability report from Team OUALLAM was sent after they established security (Ex. G2, 1).

<sup>580</sup> (~~S~~) Ex. A2, 114-116; Ex. A3, 63, 65, 113, 118, 122-123; Ex. A5, 129, 136, 139, 153; Ex. A7, 100, 102, 110, 116; Ex. A9, 134-135; Ex. G22, 23-24, 26-27, 29, 32-35, 37-38, 41-46, 48, 50-61, 63-64. Team OUALLAM was communicating (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g at all points. See Annex 3 for additional details regarding ISR communications.

<sup>581</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 114-116; A5, 136.

<sup>582</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 114-116, 125.

<sup>583</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A1, 202. The team fully expected the enemy to mount an attack to clear the forest (Ex. A5, 126; Ex. A16, 2-3; Ex. A15, 38; Ex. A7, 105-106; Ex. A2, 116; Ex. A30, 31-32).

<sup>584</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 126-127; A15, 36-37; Ex. A2, 118, 119; Ex. A3, 105, 111-112; Ex. A7, 108-109, 114; Ex. A9, 117, 118.

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2. (S) Communication between the team on the ground and U.S. forces at different commands became increasingly confused and disjointed.<sup>585</sup> With only (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g available, the team was unable to communicate back to the AOB directly.<sup>586</sup> At approximately 1309, the (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g ISR aircraft (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g established (b)(1) 1.4a communications with the Team.<sup>587</sup> (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g 588

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

3. (S) The ISR operator communicated with the AOB and other headquarters via Microsoft Internet Relay Chat (“mIRC chat”), relaying questions and communications to and from the Team on the ground.<sup>589</sup> (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g 590 ISR repeatedly relayed questions to the team in an effort to clarify the identification of the missing Soldiers.<sup>591</sup> At one point, the team heard over their (b)(1) 1.4a that helicopters had

<sup>585</sup> (U//FOUO) See Annex 6 for a detailed description of Command and Control issues.

<sup>586</sup> (S) Ex. A5, 129. (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g

<sup>587</sup> (S) Ex. A5, 129. (b)(1) 1.4a was the (b)(1) 1.4a ISR platform to arrive on station. See Annex 3 for more detailed analysis of ISR.

<sup>588</sup> (U//FOUO) See Annex 3 for a detailed description of how these ISR platforms communicated with U.S. forces in Niger.

<sup>589</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 135-136.

<sup>590</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 136.

<sup>591</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 136.

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picked up some wounded Soldiers.<sup>592</sup> Hearing this, the team felt relieved, believing this report to have been their separated team members.<sup>593</sup>

4. (S) Team members attempted to communicate with the French aircraft (callsign (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g) in an effort to request close air support, however, they were unable to establish communications.<sup>594</sup> By 1335, the (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g ISR platform (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g was on station over the Alamo and established communication with the two French Mirage fighter jets (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g.<sup>595</sup> (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g At 1458, a French Mirage fighter jet made a show of force by flying over the TIC site at a low altitude.<sup>596</sup> The enemy broke contact and departed the area after the show of force.<sup>597</sup>

5. (S) The inability of Team OUALLAM to communicate directly with French aircraft prevented the French from establishing positive identification of Team OUALLAM and their exact location. The French were also unable to positively identify and distinguish enemy personnel from potential friendly forces.<sup>598</sup> At 1544, (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g informed (b)(1) 1.4a

<sup>599</sup> Due to the uncertainty of enemy location relative to friendly personnel, (b)(1) 1.4a

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

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

<sup>601</sup> Absent

positive identification of friendly and enemy forces on the battlefield, the (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g

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

<sup>602</sup>

6. (S) While conducting ISR operations, (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g observed significant activity in and around Tongo Tongo. On multiple occasions, (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g

<sup>592</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 121-122; Ex. A1, 210; Ex. A2, 118; Ex. A15, 51.

<sup>593</sup> (S) Ex. A3, 121-122; Ex. A1, 210; Ex. A2, 118; Ex. A15, 51. See also Annex 3 (b)(1) 1.4a, 1.4g

(b)(1) 1.4a, 1.4g

<sup>594</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 139.

<sup>595</sup> (U) Ex. A91, 1-3.

<sup>596</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. A98, 2; Ex. A30, 31. In total, the French conducted four separate shows of force, though members of Team OUALLAM only recalled hearing two or three. These shows of force were conducted at 1320, 1325, 1458, and 1519.

<sup>597</sup> (U//FOUO) Every surviving member of Team OUALLAM believes the show of force by French Mirage pilots saved their lives (Ex. A1, 206; Ex. A3, 118-119; Ex. A16, 3; Ex. A9, 136-137). PN7 said "They were running away from the planes. The enemy actually went back to the woods to hide from the planes. I saw them with my own eyes." (Ex. A30, 33).

<sup>598</sup> (U) Ex. A98, 3; Ex. A91, 4.

<sup>599</sup> (U) Ex. A91, 2.

<sup>600</sup> (U) Ex. A91, 2.

<sup>601</sup> (U) Ex. A91, 4; Ex. A98, 3.

<sup>602</sup> (U) Ex. A98, 3.

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observed groups (b)(1)1.4g leaving the TIC site to the west or north, or walking back into Tongo Tongo.<sup>603</sup> (b)(1) 1.4g

f. ~~(U//FOUO)~~ Movement to HLZ, Friendly Fire Incident.

i. (S) Based on a request from the SOCCE, the French dispatched military helicopters to assist Team OUALLAM. Although Team OUALLAM could hear French helicopters circling above, they soon learned the French pilots could not locate the team. At 1554, Team OUALLAM radioed that they were moving from their position 100 meters into the open in order to be seen by the aircraft above.<sup>604</sup> As French aircraft circled above, the team left their Alamo position, moving by foot towards a suitable Helicopter Landing Zone (HLZ) to their northwest.<sup>605</sup> The team remained in contact with U.S. forces (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g (personal AN/PRC-152s) through the ISR platform and attempted to communicate with French aircraft.<sup>606</sup> They formed a hasty security perimeter as they attempted to wave down the circling aircraft.<sup>607</sup>

ii. ~~(S)~~ As they communicated (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g ISR operators told the team that the French aircraft were still unable to locate their position.<sup>608</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) remembered that he had an American flag tucked beneath his body armor plate carrier.<sup>609</sup> He moved from the security position into a more open area and began waving his American flag over his head to signal their location to the circling French aircraft.<sup>610</sup>

iii. ~~(U//FOUO)~~ As described in Part V(1.), below, a small convoy of FAN quick reaction force (QRF) vehicles moved toward the team's position just as the French aircraft were attempting to land,<sup>611</sup> The village elder from the morning KLE spoke to the FAN and pointed in the team's location.<sup>612</sup> At a distance of no more than 100 meters, the convoy opened fire on Team OUALLAM and their partner forces as the team lay in a security position out in the open near the HLZ.<sup>613</sup> Using their own mounted DShK heavy

<sup>603</sup> (U) Ex. D53; Ex. D54; Ex. D55; Ex. D59; Ex. D62; Ex. D63; Ex. D64.

<sup>604</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 144; Ex. A15, 44; Ex. A16, 3; Ex. A3, 121-122.

<sup>605</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 205; Ex. A15 45; Ex. A16, 3.

<sup>606</sup> ~~(S)~~ Ex. A7, 109. (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g

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

<sup>607</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 122-123; Ex. A2, 118; A5, 144-145.

<sup>608</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 123; Ex. A5, 145.

<sup>609</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 213; Ex. A15, 45, 47; Ex. A5, 145; Ex. A9, 143.

<sup>610</sup> (U) Ex. A15, 45; Ex. A16, 3; Ex. A3, 123; Ex. A9, 142-143.

<sup>611</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 123-124; Ex. A5, 145-146.

<sup>612</sup> ~~(U//FOUO)~~ Ex. A5, 146; Ex. A7, 120-121. It is unknown what the elder said to these FAN forces. While team members believe the elder was directing the friendly forces to fire on the team's position, the elder said that he merely pointed and said "the people you are looking for are over there." (Ex. A20, 3; Ex. A22, 3; Ex. A23, 12)

<sup>613</sup> ~~(S)~~ Ex. A1, 214; Ex. A15, 44-47; Ex. A16, 3; Ex. A9, 145. When questioned, FAN forces from the (b)(1) 1.4g QRF who fired on Team OUALLAM's position stated FAN received incoming fire first, which prompted them to return fire on

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machine guns, the friendly forces fired on Team OUALLAM's position for 48 seconds with heavy machine gun fire.<sup>614</sup> Team OUALLAM returned fire for a short amount of time before PN7 stood up, waving his arms above his head, yelling "Amie! Amie! Amie!" in French.<sup>615</sup> The fire from friendly forces stopped.<sup>616</sup> (The extraction of Team OUALLAM continues in paragraph 6, below.)

5. (U) SGT LaDavid Johnson Killed in Action.

a. (U//FOUO) There are no available eyewitnesses to the final moments of SGT Johnson's life. However, medical forensic analysis, terrain analysis, ISR video footage near in time to the firefight, and physical evidence collected from the battlefield support the following findings by a preponderance of the evidence.<sup>617</sup>

b. (U//FOUO) SGT Johnson was last seen returning to a prone fighting position with PN10 and PN1, after being repelled from his vehicle by enemy fire.<sup>618</sup> At the same time, enemy vehicles with heavy mounted machine guns were pursuing and engaging USV1 with overwhelming fire.<sup>619</sup> An estimated 20 – 30 dismounted enemy personnel were bounding on line towards SGT Johnson's position.<sup>620</sup>

c. (U//FOUO) Unable to enter USV3, SGT Johnson, PN10, and PN1 began evading by foot southwest away from pursuing enemy.<sup>621</sup> PN10 and PN1 were killed by small arms fire approximately 460 meters from position two.<sup>622</sup> SGT Johnson moved another 445 meters and made it to the only concealment in the vicinity, a single thorny tree.<sup>623</sup> There, SGT Johnson continued to return fire against the pursuing enemy. The enemy suppressed SGT Johnson with a vehicle-mounted DShK machine gun. The DShK fire ignited a blaze to the west and south of SGT Johnson's position. Dismounted enemy then maneuvered on SGT Johnson and killed him with small arms fire between 1230 and 1245.

d. (U//FOUO) As detailed below, the investigation further determined SGT Johnson was not captured alive. SGT Johnson's hands were never bound and he was not

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the friendly forces. Team OUALLAM disputes this account. Ex. D70 is the ISR footage of this event. (b)(1) 1.4g

(b)(1) 1.4g

<sup>614</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 124; Ex. D70.

<sup>615</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 214; Ex. A15, 45-49; Ex. A16, 3; Ex. A5, 146-147; Ex. A9, 145-146. "Amie" means "friend" in French.

<sup>616</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 125; Ex. A5, 147.

<sup>617</sup> (U) Encl. 8, 13-17.

<sup>618</sup> (U) Ex. A30, 20-22.

<sup>619</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 99-107; Ex. A30, 20-23.

<sup>620</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 98.

<sup>621</sup> (U) Encl. 8.8; Encl. 8.13; Encl. 8.14; Encl. 8.15; Encl. 8.16.

<sup>622</sup> (U) Encl. 8.8; Encl. 8.13; Ex. C3 Photographs 9, 11. See Enc. 8.13.

<sup>623</sup> (U) Encl. 8.8; Encl. 8.14; Ex. C5 Photograph 38.

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executed. Although the enemy did retrieve some equipment from SGT Johnson's body after his death, he was not stripped naked.

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) The investigating team photographed and collected five expended 5.56mm shell casings and a single unexpended 5.56mm round from the location where SGT Johnson's remains were discovered.<sup>624</sup> Four of these casings and the unexpended round were found outside of the tree to the immediate east of the tree.<sup>625</sup> One expended casing was found inside the perimeter of the tree, close to where SGT Johnson's body was discovered. The position of the shell casings relative to the tree indicate SGT Johnson engaged his U.S. M4 weapon at least five times on the advancing enemy before being killed.<sup>626</sup>

ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) Forty-two expended DShK shell casings were observed near tire tracks approximately 95m from SGT Johnson's last fighting position under the tree.<sup>627</sup> The tree was observed to have received high-caliber fire.<sup>628</sup> Additional AK47 shell casings (7.62 x 39mm) were observed in incremental positions between the DShK rounds and the tree.<sup>629</sup> The presence of these casings suggest the enemy suppressed SGT Johnson from a DShK mounted vehicle from a distance of 95m before dismounted enemy advanced on his position with AK47s.

iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) No medical forensic evidence exists suggesting SGT Johnson's wrists or arms were bound. No ligature marks were apparent at the time of the autopsy. The autopsy report notes the absence of soot or unburned gunpowder particles the presence of which would indicate close range discharge of a firearm.<sup>630</sup> Shell casings and (b)(6) discovered in the ground beneath where SGT Johnson's head was positioned demonstrate SGT Johnson was shot there and not subsequently carried or moved into this position.<sup>631</sup>

iv. (U//~~FOUO~~) When his remains were discovered by the village elder, SGT Johnson (b)(6)<sup>632</sup> This was the same position in which he was found and photographed by the FAN commander on the scene.<sup>633</sup> The photographs do not suggest SGT Johnson had been captured or bound before he was killed.

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<sup>624</sup> (U) Ex. C5 Photograph 38; Encl. 8.14.

<sup>625</sup> (U) Ex. D33.

<sup>626</sup> (U) Ex. C5 Photograph 38; Encl. 8.14.

<sup>627</sup> (U) Ex. C5, Photographs 42-46.

<sup>628</sup> (U) Ex. C5 Photographs 35, 37; Ex. D51; Ex. D52.

<sup>629</sup> (U) Ex. C5, Photographs 42-46; See also Encl. 8.14.

<sup>630</sup> (U) Ex. E10, 8.

<sup>631</sup> (U) Encl. E8, 14.

<sup>632</sup> (U) Ex. A18, 1.

<sup>633</sup> (U) Ex. C3, Photographs 19, 20; Ex. A36, 19-20.

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v. (U//~~FOUO~~) These findings also consider the investigating team's common understanding of enemy tactics and methods. It is unlikely the enemy would have suppressed SGT Johnson with heavy DShK fire except for SGT Johnson engaging the enemy from his position of concealment. As discussed above, SGT Johnson's helmet had three bullet holes through it. If captured alive, it is unlikely the enemy would have shot SGT Johnson through a protective helmet. The investigating team further believes if SGT Johnson were captured alive, the enemy would have attempted to keep him hostage for potential propaganda use. The tree under which SGT Johnson's body was discovered was an extremely thorny tree in an otherwise sparsely vegetated field.<sup>634</sup> The tree had thick thorny branches that hung low to the ground.<sup>635</sup> The tree would have been difficult to crawl under, other than in an attempt to seek cover from the enemy. It is unlikely the enemy would have crawled under this tree in an effort to dispose of SGT Johnson's body.<sup>636</sup>

e. (U//~~FOUO~~) Various print and television news outlets published reports stating SGT Johnson's hands were bound before the enemy executed him. The investigation established that these stories are inaccurate; there is no credible evidence supporting these claims.

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) These articles quote an "anonymous Nigerien soldier" and a "23-year old villager from Tongo Tongo named Adamou Aboubacar."<sup>637</sup> The Washington Post article quotes "Adamou Boubacar, a 23 year-old farmer and trader" as its source. Adamou Boubacar, however, is a (b)(6) year-old elder from the village of Tongo Tongo. The investigating team interviewed him in person. In a recorded interview, Adamou Boubacar disputes the account attributed to him in the Washington Post article. Adamou Boubacar was also interviewed by Debora Patta of CBS and said nothing about seeing SGT Johnson's remains.

ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) The investigating team made every effort to identify and locate the "anonymous Nigerien soldier" quoted in the CBS news piece cited above. We were unable to do so. CBS News declined the investigating team's request for the witness's contact information. The investigating team interviewed (b)(6) the village elder who first reported the discovery of SGT Johnson's remains. In a recorded interview, the elder describes SGT Johnson's body positioning in the same manner as it was observed and photographed by the FAN forces who recovered his remains.<sup>638</sup>

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<sup>634</sup> (U) Ex. C5, Photographs 38, 39, 42; Ex. C3, Photograph 16.

<sup>635</sup> (U) Ex. C5, Photograph 38; Ex. C3, Photograph 16.

<sup>636</sup> (U) Ex. C3; Photographs 16-18; Ex. C5, Photographs 35-38; Ex. A36, 18-20.

<sup>637</sup> (U) "New Details on Ambush in Niger that left 4 U.S. Soldiers Dead," Debora Patta, CBS News, 2 November, 2017. See also, "U.S. Soldier in Niger Ambush was Bound and Apparently Executed, Villagers Say," Sudarsan Raghavan, Washington Post, November 10, 2017.

<sup>638</sup> (U) Ex. A18, 1.

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iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) The investigating team also interviewed the commander of the FAN forces who were first to arrive at the scene where SGT Johnson's remains were discovered. This commander personally viewed and photographed SGT Johnson's remains at the site, and he disputes the account of the "anonymous Nigerien soldier" and the description in the Washington Post article.<sup>639</sup> The commander also stated no member of his organization spoke with any news outlet. Furthermore, ISR full motion video shows numerous FAN Soldiers as they discover SGT Johnson's remains, inspect the area, remove and wrap his remains, and place SGT Johnson's remains into a vehicle. None of these Soldiers corroborate the account by this "anonymous Nigerien soldier."<sup>640</sup>

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<sup>639</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 18-20.

<sup>640</sup> (U) Ex. D77; Ex. D78; Ex. D79.

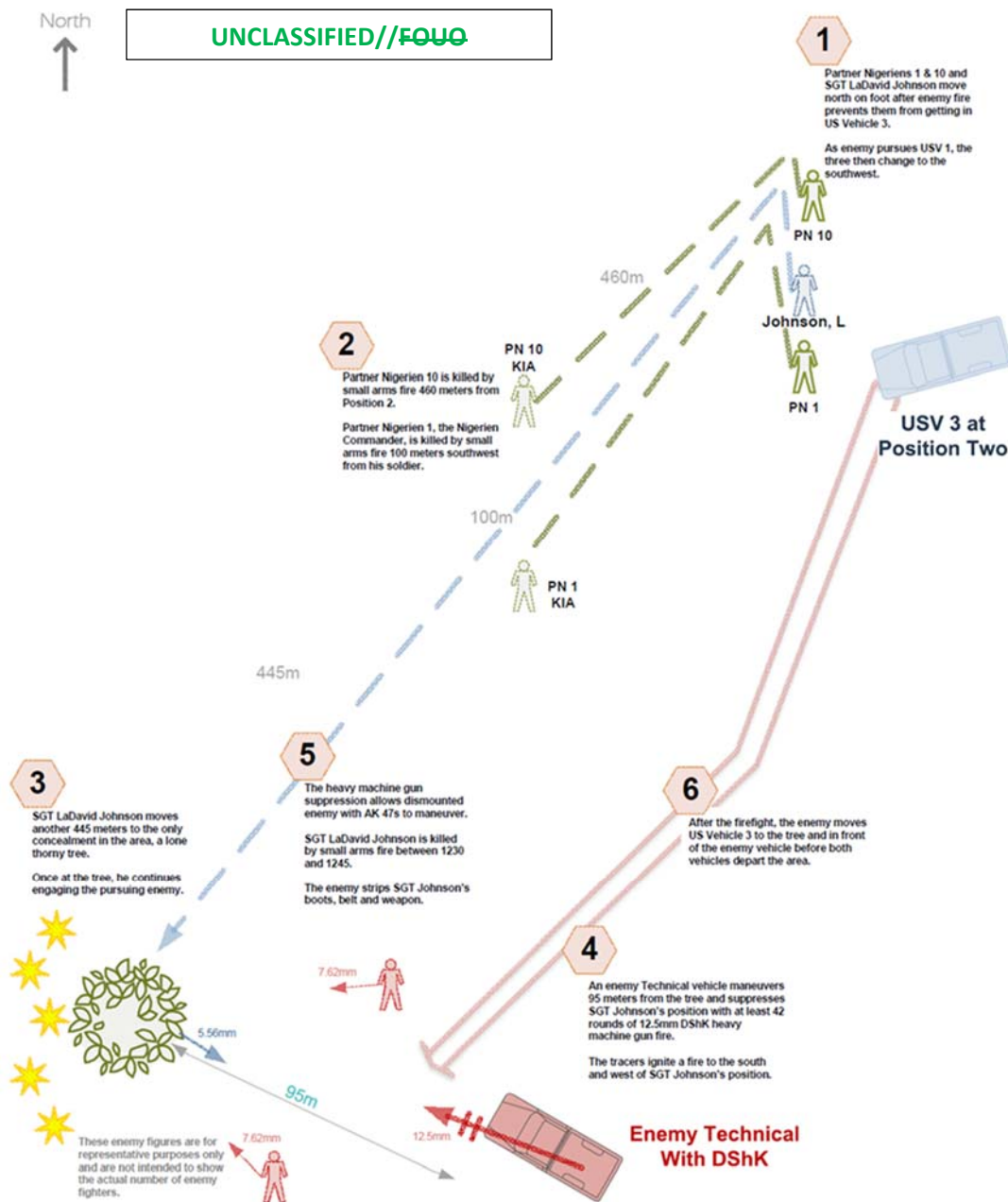
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## Enclosure 9.5: SGT LaDavid Johnson's Movement from Position Two to Final Position



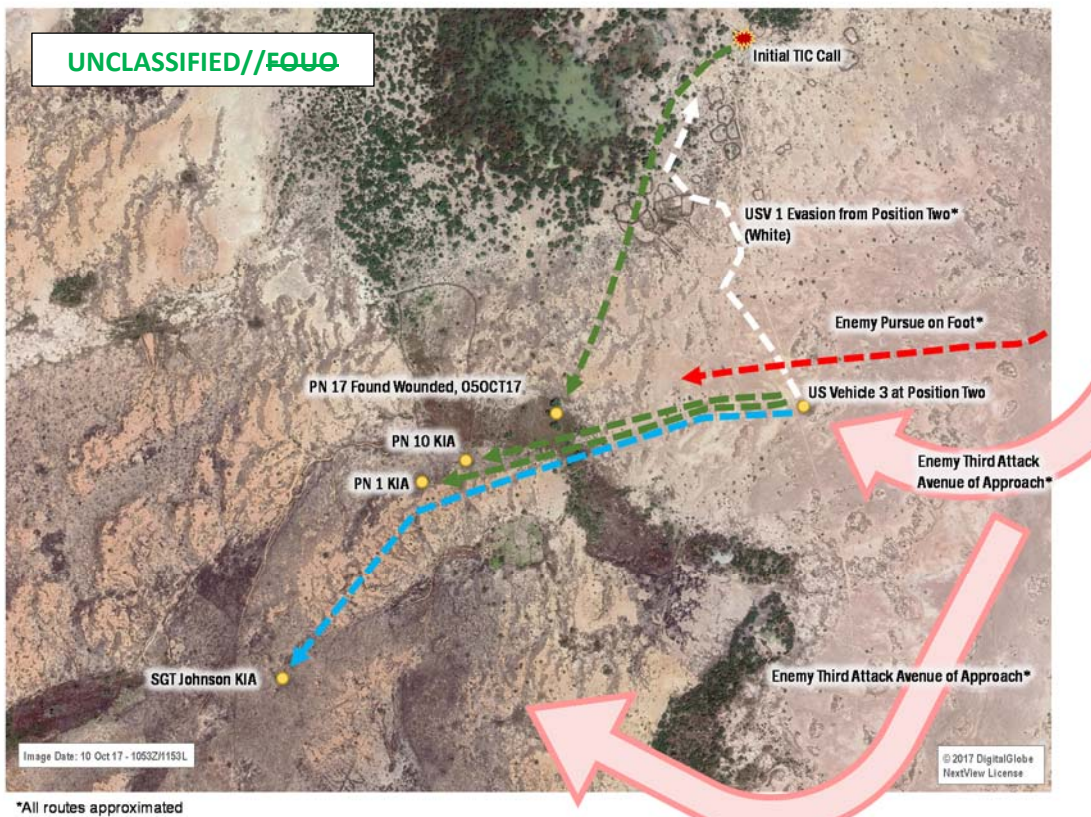
(U) Figure 18 (See also Encl. 9.5)

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Enclosure 8.8 – Route of SGT LaDavid Johnson from Position Two\*– 1230-1245L on 04OCT17

(U) Figure 19 (See also Encl. 8.8)

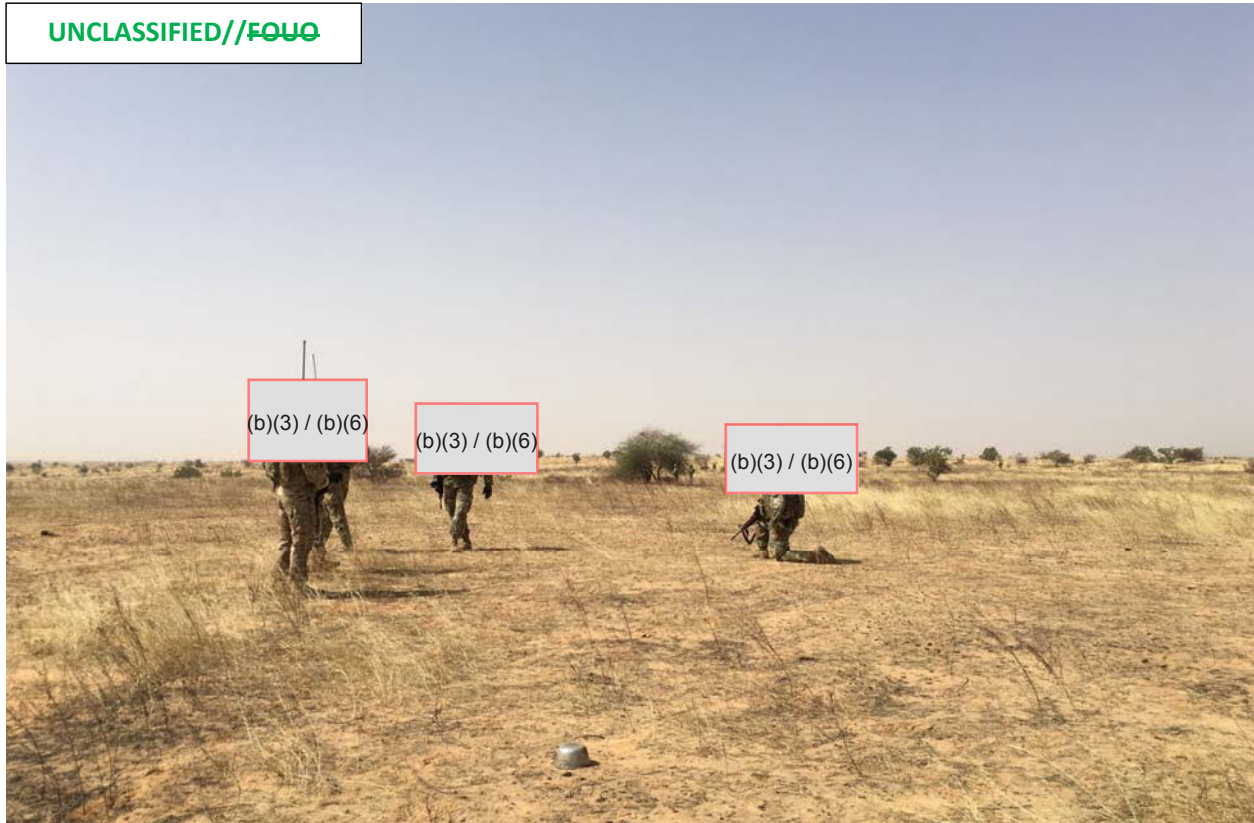
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(U) Figure 20 (See also Ex. C5, photograph 42)

((U//~~FOUO~~) This photograph is taken from the vantage point of where 42 DShK shell casings were discovered during the investigation's site survey. SGT Johnson's remains were discovered under the tree depicted in the center of the photograph.)

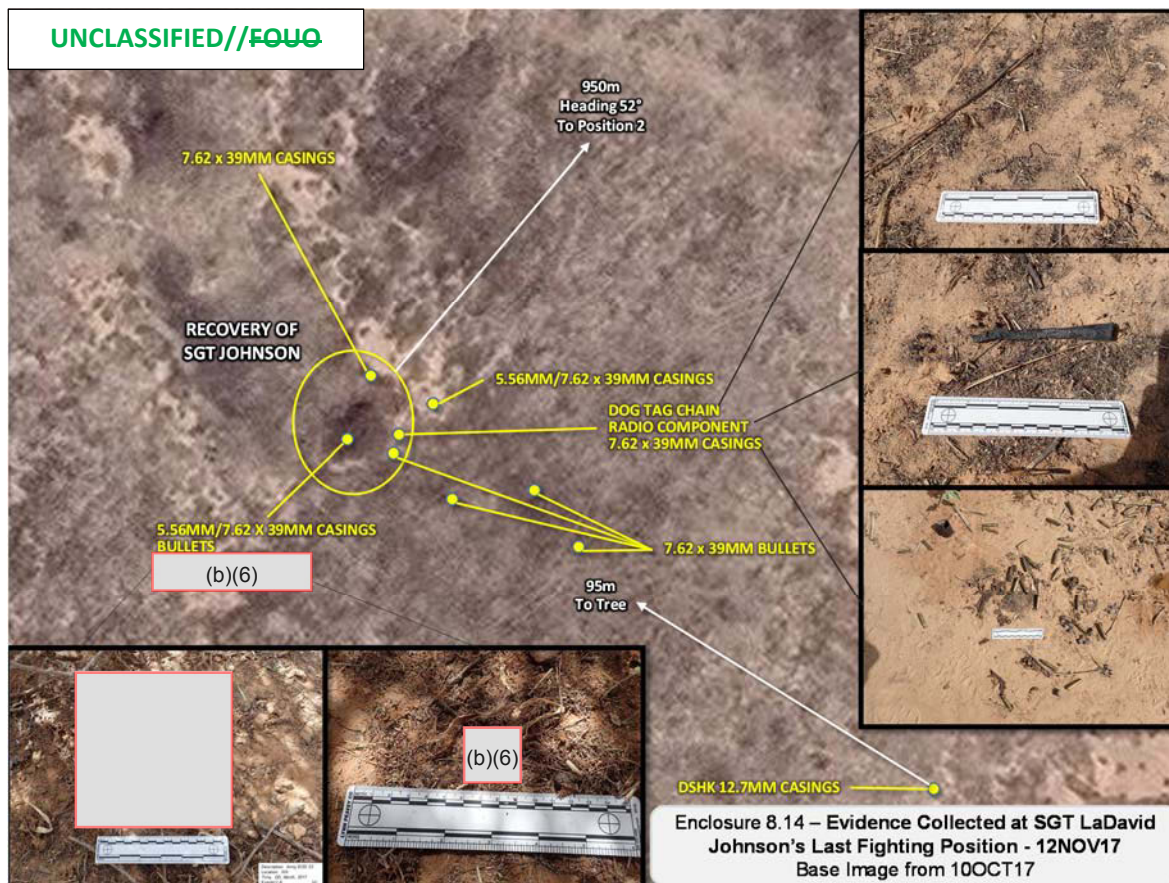
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(U) Figure 21 (See also Encl. 8.14)

6. (U//FOUO)-Team OUALLAM Extracted from Alamo.

a. (S) French forces evacuated the surviving members of Team OUALLAM from the battlefield. Shortly after the friendly fire incident, two French helicopters landed in the HLZ approximately 165 meters from Team OUALLAM. The aircraft unloaded approximately (1) 1. French forces who immediately formed a security perimeter as the aircraft lifted off again.<sup>641</sup> Knowing these were friendly forces, the team ran towards the French forces and entered their security perimeter.<sup>642</sup> The French commander spoke with the team members to assess the situation, and the French forces immediately tended to the casualties.<sup>643</sup>

b. (U//FOUO) Although the members of Team OUALLAM held out hope that missing members of their team had been picked up earlier, they discussed a plan to go

<sup>641</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 150-151.<sup>642</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 150-151.<sup>643</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 152.**SECRET//NOFORN**

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back and search, cross-leveling ammunition between (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) none of whom was wounded.<sup>644</sup> The French indicated they were only there to evacuate personnel and were not staying on the ground.<sup>645</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) the Team Sergeant, assessed that the four remaining team members were ill-equipped to remain on the ground without additional security or support.<sup>646</sup> The remaining element was combat ineffective: almost out of ammunition, severely dehydrated, and vastly outnumbered by the enemy. (b)(3) / (b)(6) assessed that U.S. forces had to refit and reconstitute before they could effectively sweep the engagement area.<sup>647</sup>

c. (U//~~FOUO~~) After the French helicopters touched down again, the French loaded the wounded (b)(3) / (b)(6) and one Nigerien Soldier) on one aircraft and directed the remaining team members to the other.<sup>648</sup> The remaining team members and one other Nigerien Soldier were flown on the second aircraft back to Niamey.<sup>649</sup> Landing in Niamey, (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) dropped equipment and received something to eat and drink, before moving to the JOC to attempt to assist in the effort to find and recover the four missing U.S. Soldiers.<sup>650</sup>

## 7. (U) The Enemy.

a. (~~S~~) On 4 October 2017, an enemy force massed more than 100 fighters in a coordinated, effective ambush on Team OUALLAM and their partner Nigeriens. Although there is insufficient evidence to establish the precise number of enemy fighters, the total force is an approximation based on eyewitness accounts and ISR full motion video. Members of Team OUALLAM estimate the enemy to have been upwards of 70 fighters.<sup>651</sup> Partner Nigeriens reported over 100 fighters in at least eight trucks and 30 motorcycles.<sup>652</sup> While lying in their final defensive position, members of Team OUALLAM and their partner forces heard (b)(1) 1.4a suggesting the enemy had 21 killed in action.<sup>653</sup> ISR full motion video shows 50-75 enemy fighters

<sup>644</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 127.

<sup>645</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 127; Ex. A9, 148-149.

<sup>646</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 149; Ex. A3, 126-127; Ex. A2, 113; A7, 123-124.

<sup>647</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 149; Ex. A3, 126-127; Ex. A2, 113; A7, 123-124.

<sup>648</sup> (~~S~~) Ex. A5, 153. (b)(1) 1.4d extracting the Nigerien partner forces who were still with Team OUALLAM. The French did evacuate PN25 (wounded with a gunshot wounded to his (b)(6) and PN7 (with whom the Americans insisted be evacuated). (b)(1) 1.4d eventually evacuating with Nigerien FAN forces on the ground (Ex. A5, 154; Ex. A15, 49-50; Ex. A16, 3; A2, 122; A9, 149).

<sup>649</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 154; Ex. A15, 49-50; Ex. A16, 3.

<sup>650</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 155; Ex. A15, 50-51, 52.

<sup>651</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 130-131; Ex. A3, 94-95; Ex. A9, 124, 126.

<sup>652</sup> (U) Ex. A25, 2.

<sup>653</sup> (U) Ex. A25, 2.

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congregating in three large groups.<sup>654</sup> The attacking force was multi-ethnic, consisting of sub-Saharan and Arab fighters wearing traditional African clothing, track suits, and camouflaged uniform pieces.<sup>655</sup>

b. (U//~~FOUO~~)The enemy forces were armed with mortars, AK-47s, and RPGs. They maneuvered on foot, on motorcycles, some containing multiple riders, and several DShK-mounted technical vehicles. The enemy's chosen ambush location, use and knowledge of the terrain, coordinated dismounted/technical vehicle movements, and organized flanking maneuver demonstrated a grasp of basic small unit tactics and a high degree of training.<sup>656</sup>

c. (U//~~FOUO~~)After the attack, multiple team members heard calls of "Allahu Akbar" and other cheers coming from the direction of Tongo Tongo.<sup>657</sup>

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<sup>654</sup> (U) Ex. D40; Ex. D62-64.

<sup>655</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 178-179; Ex. A2, 130-131; Ex. A3, 94-95; Ex. A9, 124.

<sup>656</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 175-176; Ex. A9, 87-88; A5, 100.

<sup>657</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 198-199; A5, 128; A9, 127; A2, 116.

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**PART V**  
**(U) SUPPORT, SEARCH, AND RECOVERY EFFORTS**

1. ~~(S)~~ Nigerien, French, and U.S. forces assisted Team OUALLAM after they called “Troops in Contact.” Upon hearing “Troops in Contact” over the radio, (b)(3) (10 U.S.C. § 130b) and the AOB immediately called the SOCFWD-NWA ISR collection manager requesting to divert ISR to Team OUALLAM’s location.<sup>658</sup> (b)(1) 1.4a

(b)(1) 1.4a  
 (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>659</sup> The AOB called (b)(3) (10 U.S.C. § 130b) at the Ouallam TOC and requested he coordinate with the (b)(3) / (b)(6) to push forward a QRF (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>660</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) called (b)(3) / (b)(6) from the SOCCE to discuss assistance from the French.<sup>661</sup> The AOB also began coordinating with the SFODA Team located in Arlit (Team ARLIT) to move from Arlit to Niamey.<sup>662</sup> When ISR arrived on station approximately 80 minutes later, the AOB worked through the ISR Tactical Controllers (ITC) to direct the ISR’s focus.<sup>663</sup> Those response forces saved the lives of the surviving members of Team OUALLAM and recovered the remains of the fallen U.S. and Partner Nigerien Soldiers.

2. (U) Support, Search, and Recovery Efforts on 4 October.

a. (U) Nigerien Efforts

i. ~~(S)~~ At approximately 1800 on 3 October 2017, a Nigerien infantry platoon (b)(1) 1.4a moved forward (b)(1) 1.4a to Mangaize at the direction of their commander, (b)(6)<sup>664</sup> (b)(6) directed that platoon to move up to Mangaize in order to serve as a QRF after learning that Team OUALLAM and their partner forces were being re-missioned to move to Objective NORTH on 3 October 2017.<sup>665</sup> (b)(6) directed the platoon to return (b)(1) 1.4a once Team OUALLAM and their partner force returned through Mangaize on 4 October 2017.

<sup>658</sup> (U) Ex. A60, 57.

<sup>659</sup> (U) Ex. A60, 57-58.

<sup>660</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A60, 60; Ex. A4, 30-31. (b)(3) / (b)(6) ran from the Ouallam TOC to (b)(6) informing him of the troops in contact; Ex. A26, 2, (b)(6) states he received a call from the Prefect for Tongo Tongo about the TIC and began organizing the QRF response then. (b)(6) does not mention (b)(3) / (b)(6) in his account.

<sup>661</sup> (U) Ex. A60, 59-60.

<sup>662</sup> (U) Ex. A60, 58-59.

<sup>663</sup> ~~(S)~~ Ex. A60, 62. Originally diverted from a separate mission, (b)(1) 1.4a arrived on station at 1309 and immediately began surveying the TIC site to identify the location of Team OUALLAM. (b)(1) 1.4a launched from Niamey, arrived at 1311 and also began searching for Team OUALLAM. See Annex 3 for a description of ISR efforts.

<sup>664</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 1; Ex. A4, 30-21, 33.

<sup>665</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) (b)(6) assessed that because he did not have any other friendly forces in the area of Objective NORTH, he wanted to have a QRF closer to Team OUALLAM’s objective (Ex. A36, 2).

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This platoon of approximately (b)(1) 1.4a Nigeriens convoyed to Mangaize and staged overnight.<sup>666</sup>

ii. (S) The Nigerian infantry platoon was the first ground force to respond to aid Team OUALLAM. (b)(6) called the QRF platoon leader, PN36, at 1217 on 4 October 2017, notifying him that Team OUALLAM's convoy was in contact with the enemy and directing the QRF to move forward to Tongo Tongo.<sup>667</sup> At 1222, the QRF began moving north from Mangaize to Tongo Tongo. At the same time, (b)(6) ordered the remaining platoons commanded by PN35 to begin moving from (b)(1) 1.4a to Tongo Tongo in support of his (b)(1)1.4g QRF.<sup>668</sup> (b)(6) also directed troops from (b)(1) 1.4a and an armed Nigerian helicopter from (b)(1) 1.4a to respond.<sup>669</sup>

iii. (S) At the direction of (b)(6) the Nigerian Gazelle helicopter took off from (b)(1) 1.4a at 1253.<sup>670</sup> Ten minutes out from the TIC site, the French Mirage pilots directed the Nigerian helicopter pilot to depart the airspace for deconfliction purposes.<sup>671</sup> The Nigerian Gazelle moved approximately 20 km from the TIC site and loitered for 50 minutes before moving up to Tiloa to refuel and assume a QRF role.<sup>672</sup> Three hours later, the Nigerian Gazelle took off from Tiloa in route to (b)(1) 1.4a where he completed his mission at 1807.<sup>673</sup> The Nigerian helicopter was never in communication with U.S. forces and was unable to be used in the TIC response effort.<sup>674</sup>

iv. (U//~~FOUO~~) The FAN QRF platoon approached Tongo Tongo from the southwest at approximately 1530, observing smoke and fire everywhere.<sup>675</sup> The QRF observed helicopters in the air and jets moving over head. Concerned about being mistaken as enemy, the QRF assembled to the southwest of the forested area outside Tongo Tongo, and waited for the "all-clear" and directive to move forward.<sup>676</sup> The QRF waited no more than ten minutes before PN36 decided they needed to move forward.<sup>677</sup>

<sup>666</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 2.

<sup>667</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) PN36 specifically remembers that the call came in at 1217. He described meeting with his team leaders and preparing for the order to move forward (Ex. A36, 2-3). (b)(6) was notified by the region prefect, who had received a phone call from the village elder (Ex. A36, 3).

<sup>668</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) PN36 said he departed no more than 5-minutes after getting the order because of the pressure he was getting from higher headquarters to move out (Ex. A36, 3).

<sup>669</sup> (U) Ex. A26, 2.

<sup>670</sup> (U) Ex. G38, Ex. A49

<sup>671</sup> (U) Ex. G38, Ex. A49

<sup>672</sup> (U) Ex. G38, Ex. A49

<sup>673</sup> (U) Ex. G38, Ex. A49

<sup>674</sup> (U) Ex. G38, Ex. A49

<sup>675</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 4.

<sup>676</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A36, 4. PN36 noted that because he was not in contact with the helicopters overhead, he did not want to be mistakenly targeted by them.

<sup>677</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 5.

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v. (U//~~FOUO~~) Two partner Nigerien Soldiers on the west side of the forest flagged down the QRF as it began moving towards the TIC site.<sup>678</sup> The QRF picked up the Soldiers, who then directed the QRF to a location to the west of the forest where they had seen the body of a fallen Nigerien.<sup>679</sup> The QRF moved to this position and recovered the partially charred remains of a Nigerien Soldier.<sup>680</sup>

vi. (U//~~FOUO~~) The QRF then moved east, skirting the southern edge of the forest, towards the original TIC site.<sup>681</sup> While moving towards the TIC site, the QRF picked up several injured and displaced Nigerien Soldiers before discovering an abandoned white truck, later determined to be USV1, in a wooded area.<sup>682</sup> The QRF examined the truck and the surrounding area to ensure it was not booby-trapped.<sup>683</sup> The QRF assessed a lot of gunfire had impacted the area.<sup>684</sup> At approximately 1655, the QRF was able to start the vehicle and drive the vehicle out to join the QRF convoy.<sup>685</sup>

vii. (U//~~FOUO~~) The QRF moved forward toward the TIC site, discovering two additional vehicles: one tan enemy Toyota Land Cruiser truck and one partner force vehicle.<sup>686</sup> The QRF then discovered three bodies, later determined to be SSG Wright, SSG Black, and SSG Jeremiah Johnson, in the immediate vicinity of the enemy truck.<sup>687</sup> Two bodies were found in the bed of the enemy truck, and one body was found on the ground next to the truck.<sup>688</sup> It appeared to PN36 that the enemy was attempting to collect the remains of the American Soldiers when they abandoned their effort.<sup>689</sup> The investigating team concludes the enemy abandoned this effort and fled when they heard the Mirage jets flying overhead. The QRF secured the area, then recovered the third

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<sup>678</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 5.

<sup>679</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 5.

<sup>680</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) The deceased Soldier appeared to have been shot at least once in the head. The remains were also partially burned by encroaching fires. The remains of this Soldier were determined to be PN13 (Ex. A36, 6).

<sup>681</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 5-6.

<sup>682</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 6; Ex. C3, Photograph 1; Ex. C2, Photographs 1-24.

<sup>683</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 6.

<sup>684</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 7.

<sup>685</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A36, 1. PN36 provided a Photograph on his cell phone of USV1 taken in the position it was found by the QRF. The Photograph shows the rear tires covered in mud around the complete circumference of the tire. The truck does not appear, in the photo, to be in deep mud or water (Ex. A36, 7, Ex. C3, Photographs 1-2). The enemy apparently pulled USV1 out of its original position in the swamp before the QRF discovered it. Team OUALLAM members described hearing the enemy, as the team maneuvered to the "Alamo" position, revving the engine in an effort to move the vehicle from its position in the mud. The enemy also stripped the vehicle of ammunition cans, weapons, and any other serviceable items before abandoning the truck. The investigating team concludes the enemy abandoned USV1 and fled when they heard the Mirage jets flying overhead. (Ex. A36, 7; Ex. A9, 136-137)

<sup>686</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 8; Ex. C4, Photographs 1-13; Ex. C2, Photographs 1-24.

<sup>687</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 8.

<sup>688</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A36, 8-9. Because these remains were recovered by Nigerien QRF forces, it could not be determined by a preponderance of the evidence whose remains were initially discovered in the truck.

<sup>689</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 8-9.

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body, placing it in the truck with the other two.<sup>690</sup> The QRF also placed the body of the recovered Nigerien Soldier in the truck with the three Americans.<sup>691</sup>

1. (U//~~FOUO~~) Each Soldier had been stripped of his individual equipment, boots, and serviceable uniform items.<sup>692</sup> The QRF Soldiers wrapped the remains in blankets in preparation for transfer to the U.S. forces.

2. (U//~~FOUO~~) Several other items were discovered in the bed of the enemy pickup truck, including a U.S. helmet and Peltor ear piece, two large components of enemy weapons, various writings and books in the local language and in Arabic, as well as expended and unexpended ammunition.<sup>693</sup> These items were eventually transferred to U.S. forces, and subsequently provided to the FBI for analysis.<sup>694</sup>

3. (U//~~FOUO~~) The QRF also observed various individual equipment items in the vicinity, including a pair of gloves, broken radio pieces, and a knee pad.<sup>695</sup>

viii. (U//~~FOUO~~) After the QRF recovered the U.S. Soldiers' remains, they continued north through the TIC site, gathering in the clearing just south of Tongo Tongo.<sup>696</sup> The village elder approached the QRF and informed them that he observed vehicle tracks on the north side of the village that appeared to have been from the enemy departing the village.<sup>697</sup> The elder told the FAN forces there was a displaced Nigerien Soldier in the forest, then led the QRF to find the Soldier.<sup>698</sup> PN36 offered the elder a sack of rice and macaroni as a token of appreciation for helping his platoon.<sup>699</sup> PN36 gave the elder his cell phone number in the event the elder could offer any additional support.<sup>700</sup>

ix. (U//~~FOUO~~) In the early evening of 4 October 2017, as it grew dark, PN36 directed his platoon to begin movement approximately 5 km south of Tongo Tongo to a bivouac site established by PN35 and the rest of his company, which had arrived from

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<sup>690</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 9.

<sup>691</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 9, 12.

<sup>692</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Notwithstanding media reports that these Soldiers were stripped naked, each Soldier's remains were discovered partially clothed (Ex. E5; Ex. E8; Ex. E2)

<sup>693</sup> (U) Ex. C4, Photographs 4, 7, 9, 14-21.

<sup>694</sup> (U) Ex. C4, Photographs 1-21; Ex. A52, 40-41.

<sup>695</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. F2, Photographs 1-54; Although first observed by members of the QRF on 4 October 2017, these items remained at the scene of the ambush when the investigating team returned on 12 November 2017. Ex. F2 are Photographs of the items recovered on 12 November 2017 by the investigating team.

<sup>696</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 9-10.

<sup>697</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 9-10.

<sup>698</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 17-18.

<sup>699</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 17-18.

<sup>700</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 18.

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Ouallam.<sup>701</sup> After arriving at this bivouac site, PN36 and his convoy linked up with Team ARLIT in order to transfer the U.S. Soldiers' remains. (The transfer of these remains is detailed in paragraph (c)(i)(4,5) below.)

b. (U) French Efforts<sup>702</sup>

i. ~~(S)~~ The French support efforts on 4 October 2017 were immediate and effective. At 1308, the French Task Force (TF) BARKHANE scrambled two (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a, Mirage-2000 fighter jets from Niamey to conduct low-altitude shows of force over Tongo Tongo. The French flew a total of four low-altitude passes over the TIC site and the Alamo position ultimately resulting in the enemy abandoning some vehicles and fleeing the ambush site as the Nigerien QRF forces were also moving into Tongo Tongo.<sup>703</sup>

ii. ~~(S)~~ Additionally, TF BARKHANE augmented a separate rotary wing (b)(1) 1.4a with their personnel recovery (b)(1) 1.4a helicopters to create a (b)(1) 1.4a task force capable of recovering the U.S. members from the TIC site. The helicopters departed Gao, Mali at 1444. After arriving in Tongo Tongo, they worked with Nigerien ground forces to secure the landing zone before ultimately extracting the seven remaining members of Team OUALLAM, and two Nigerien Soldiers.<sup>704</sup>

iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) During the flight to Niamey, French medical personnel on board provided in-flight emergency medical care to the wounded.

c. (U) U.S. Efforts

i. (U) Tactical Level Efforts.

1. ~~(S)~~ Forced to abort their mission to Objective NORTH the night of 3 October 2017, Team ARLIT was at their base camp on 4 October 2017 when they heard radio traffic that Team OUALLAM was in contact with the enemy.<sup>705</sup> Team ARLIT's Commander, (b)(3) / (b)(6) directed the team to grab their tactical gear and prepare for a movement to Niamey.<sup>706</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) called the AOB and told them that they were going to fly to Niamey in order to close the distance between Arlit and Tongo

<sup>701</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 18.

<sup>702</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) See Annex 5 for additional details on the French response and PR efforts.

<sup>703</sup> (U) Ex. A98, 1-2; A9, 136-137.

<sup>704</sup> (U) Ex. G41, 1-2

<sup>705</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 23.

<sup>706</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 23.

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Tongo.<sup>707</sup> Before they could load the aircraft, Team ARLIT heard "overwhelming force; (b)(1) 1.4a over the radio."<sup>708</sup> At 1315, Team ARLIT departed Arlit for Niamey.<sup>709</sup>

2. (S) While in route, Team ARLIT requested to go immediately to the TIC site as a QRF, but was directed by the AOB to come to Niamey instead.<sup>710</sup> Team ARLIT landed in Niamey at approximately 1600, and (b)(3) / (b)(6) immediately reported to the TOC.<sup>711</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) attempted to gain situational awareness in the TOC, (b)(1) 1.4a from the ISR platforms (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>712</sup> Up until that point, there had been conflicting reports (b)(1) 1.4a as to the total number of U.S. casualties. Once the French aircraft took off with the remaining members of Team OUALLAM, (b)(3) / (b)(6) learned that there were four Soldiers yet unaccounted for.<sup>713</sup> At approximately 1800, the SOCCE-LCB Commander approved Team ARLIT to move to Tongo Tongo.<sup>714</sup>

3. (S) Team ARLIT and their partner force departed Niamey on two Super Hueys at 1815 in route to Tongo Tongo.<sup>715</sup> Team ARLIT's plan was to land at the FAN forces' bivouac site approximately 5 km south of Tongo Tongo.<sup>716</sup> Team ARLIT was supported by three (b)(1) 1.4a remotely piloted aircraft and one (b)(1) 1.4a manned (b)(1) 1.4a aircraft, all focused on providing overwatch and searching (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>717</sup> It was

<sup>707</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 23.

<sup>708</sup> (S) Ex. A52, 23. (b)(1) 1.4(a) was called at 1233 (Ex. G2, 1).

<sup>709</sup> (S) Ex. A52, 24. (b)(3) / (b)(6) initially planned to bring the same composition as had been planned for the Objective NORTH mission the night before. Upon hearing (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(3) / (b)(6) reorganized his element adding additional U.S. forces.

<sup>710</sup> (S) Ex. A52, 24-25. Team ARLIT developed a hasty concept of operations while flying, (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g in support of Team OUALLAM (Ex. A52, 25; Ex. A60, 61). The SOCCE Commander made the decision not to send Team ARLIT into Tongo Tongo, relaying this through the AOB. "During this whole time, we kept pushing to put our (b)(1) 1.4a elements in. We kept pushing consistently and often, if they put Arlit in, I get it, it's (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g ...at least we would have somebody on the ground (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g" (Ex. A60, 70). Although (b)(3) / (b)(6) does not recall the events precisely this way, he does not dispute this entirely. "Team ARLIT...wanted to fly straight into the TIC site and at this point, I don't have a good understanding of what is happening on the ground, (b)(1) 1.4a I believe that the AOB had said 'you will come into Niamey' and 1-6 got upset with me about that. I just took it, because I don't believe I made that decision for them not to go straight in, but I wouldn't have let them go in if they had asked....I would never have let them go in. Not under those conditions," (Ex. A69, 108-109).

<sup>711</sup> (S) Ex. A52, 26. The majority of Team ARLIT and their (b)(1) 1.4a partners remained with their equipment at the airfield in order to be able to respond quickly.

<sup>712</sup> (S) Ex. A52, 27. (b)(3) / (b)(6) was aware that PN36's FAN QRF was on the ground, noting that they observed the QRF moving through the area (b)(1) 1.4a Ex. A52, 30).

<sup>713</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 30-31.

<sup>714</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 30-31; Ex. A60, 71.

<sup>715</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 31.

<sup>716</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 31.

<sup>717</sup> (U) Ex. A64, 1-2; Annex 3, 9-11.

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getting dark as Team ARLIT arrived south of Tongo Tongo at approximately 1900.<sup>718</sup> As they approached, Team ARLIT observed a large brush fire to the west of their landing zone.<sup>719</sup> Team ARLIT landed approximately (b)(1) 1.4a from the FAN forces' bivouac site, then moved on foot to link up with the FAN.<sup>720</sup> As they approached the FAN forces, PN35 walked up to (b)(3) / (b)(6) and told him "I have two American KIA in a truck."<sup>721</sup>

4. (U//~~FOUO~~) At approximately 1915 on 4 October 2017, PN35 walked (b)(3) / (b)(6) and his Team Sergeant, (b)(3) / (b)(6) over to the enemy truck which the FAN forces had recovered from the TIC site. (b)(3) / (b)(6) and members of Team ARLIT identified the remains of SSG Wright, SSG Black, and SSG Jeremiah Johnson, then radioed a report to the AOB while his team members prepared the bodies for movement.<sup>722</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) called for one of the Super Hueys to return from Ouallam in order to evacuate the three American fallen Soldiers and the one Nigerien fallen Soldier.<sup>723</sup> Team ARLIT sent one team member and one partner force Soldier to escort the remains back through Ouallam to Niamey as the remainder of the team stayed behind.<sup>724</sup>

5. (S) The FAN forces brought Team ARLIT to the recovered USV1 and allowed Team ARLIT to inspect the vehicle.<sup>725</sup> Team ARLIT recovered a tough-box that was left on the vehicle, and several other (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g that had been left behind by the enemy force.<sup>726</sup> Team ARLIT then called in the second Super Huey to evacuate the (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g back to Ouallam.<sup>727</sup> Team ARLIT also loaded any equipment or items of potential evidentiary value found on the enemy vehicle recovered from the TIC site.<sup>728</sup>

<sup>718</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 32.

<sup>719</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A52, 32. "So as we're coming in, a large swath of burning brush is to our west; a monstrous swath hundreds of meters wide."

<sup>720</sup> (S) Ex. A52, 33. The Super Huey aircraft (b)(1) 1.4a were sent back to Ouallam after dropping off Team ARLIT, in order to remain closer to Tongo Tongo than Niamey. Flight time from Ouallam to Tongo Tongo was approximately 20 minutes (Ex. A52, 47).

<sup>721</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A52, 33. Despite PN35 telling (b)(3) / (b)(6) that he had two American KIA, there were actually four bodies in the truck when (b)(3) / (b)(6) walked over, three Americans and one Nigerien (Ex. A52, 36). (b)(3) / (b)(6) describes PN35 as being a (b)(6) but then testified that PN35 received a battlefield promotion to (b)(6) that day. (b)(3) / (b)(6) explained that the next time he saw PN35, he was a (b)(6) (Ex. A52, 35).

<sup>722</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A52, 39. The SOCFWD-NWA Log reports a call from Team ARLIT at 1953 stating Team ARLIT was in custody of three U.S. remains (Ex. G2, 4). However, (b)(3) / (b)(6) believes they confirmed the three U.S. Soldiers' identities within the first fifteen (15) minutes on the ground (by 1930) (Ex. A52, 43).

<sup>723</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 39.

<sup>724</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A52, 42. (b)(3) / (b)(6) of Team ARLIT escorted the remains back to Niamey.

<sup>725</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 44-46.

<sup>726</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 44-46.

<sup>727</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 46-47.

<sup>728</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 48.

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assets, and that they were to return to the FAN bivouac site.<sup>740</sup> Team ARLIT called PN35 and requested he send trucks to pick them up.<sup>741</sup>

9. (U//~~FOUO~~) At 0216 on 5 October 2017, Team ARLIT arrived at the FAN bivouac site and radioed the AOB that they were running out of water, food, and batteries.<sup>742</sup> The AOB dispatched a Super Puma to pick up Team ARLIT and its partner forces.<sup>743</sup> Team ARLIT and partner forces were picked up from the FAN bivouac site in two lifts, leaving the site at approximately 0540 and returning to Ouallam.<sup>744</sup>

ii. (S) (b)(3) / (b)(6) decision to withdraw Team ARLIT from Tongo Tongo was made after careful consideration.<sup>745</sup> The deliberate decision was based upon an assessment that he lacked a complete understanding of the threat on the ground, and that his forces on the ground lacked (b)(1) 1.4a.<sup>746</sup> When Team ARLIT departed Tongo Tongo in the early hours of 5 October 2017, there were no American, Nigerian, or French ground forces in Tongo Tongo, though Nigerian forces remained at the bivouac site several kilometers (km) south of Tongo Tongo. Continuous ISR coverage continued to survey the area looking for SGT LaDavid Johnson and attempting to (b)(1) 1.4a that might identify SGT Johnson's whereabouts.<sup>747</sup>

iii. (S) Operational Level Efforts. Immediately following the (b)(1) 1.4a call, U.S. support, search, and recovery efforts at the SOCCE and SOCFWD-NWA headquarters were largely focused on coordinating for ISR coverage and for close air support from the French. The SOCCE immediately worked with SOCFWD-NWA to divert additional ISR platforms to Tongo Tongo.<sup>748</sup> The SOCCE also coordinated with the AOB to move additional partner forces from Ouallam to Tongo Tongo in support.<sup>749</sup> The SOCCE coordinated through SOCFWD-NWA with the USSOF liaison element (b)(1) 1.4a

<sup>740</sup> (S) Ex. A52, 58. (b)(3) / (b)(6) relayed this directive through the AOB. (b)(3) / (b)(6) assessed that at that moment, they had (b)(1) 1.4a U.S. forces, (b)(1) 1.4a partner forces on the ground with ISR coverage. FAN forces had returned to their bivouac site and French aviation was grounded. He directed Team ARLIT to return to Ouallam in order to consolidate forces with (b)(1) 1.4a so they had the right (b)(1) 1.4a (Ex. A69, 116). This decision was supported by the Commander, SOCFWD-NWA and the Commander, SOCAFRICA (Ex. A81, 82).

<sup>741</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 59.

<sup>742</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A52, 62. Team ARLIT identified that they would be out of food by morning, then turned off their SAT radio to conserve batteries.

<sup>743</sup> (U) Ex. A60, 77.

<sup>744</sup> (S) Ex. A60, 77. (b)(1) 1.4g, it took two sorties to extract all of Team ARLIT. The second sortie reported wheels up at 0539 and the landing zone was declared clear of Americans at 0546 (Ex. A52, 62; Ex. G2, 7).

<sup>745</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 116.

<sup>746</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 116.

<sup>747</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) See Annex 3; ISR assets maintained a continuous presence over the area looking for SGT Johnson.

<sup>748</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 104

<sup>749</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A69, 104. See also Annex 6 for a discussion on Command and Control efforts.

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(b)(1) 1.4a for support from the French.<sup>750</sup> During this time, SOCCE-LCB commander continued to coordinate with SOCFWD-NWA commander to identify what additional assets could be diverted to Tongo Tongo.<sup>751</sup>

3. (U) Search and Recovery Efforts on 5 October.

a. (U//FOUO) Nigerien Efforts.

i. ~~(S)~~ On the morning of 5 October 2017, the full Company of FAN forces from (b)(1) 1.4a conducted a broader sweep of the area, moving north from their bivouac site.<sup>752</sup> The FAN forces first discovered the body of PN10 under a tree approximately 1200m to the southwest of the original TIC site.<sup>753</sup> Approximately 100m to the west, the FAN discovered the body of PN1.<sup>754</sup> Both bodies appeared to have several gunshot wounds. PN1's body had been partially burned by encroaching brush fires.<sup>755</sup> As the FAN forces swept forward, they discovered the remains of PN32 under a tree.<sup>756</sup> The FAN forces gathered additional Nigerien forces who had been displaced from their unit.<sup>757</sup>

ii. (U//FOUO) The FAN forces continued a sweep of this area into Tongo Tongo when the village elder approached the element.<sup>758</sup> The village elder explained to the FAN forces that he had also discovered some other items north of the village, including a radio and a satchel of loose ammunition.<sup>759</sup> FAN forces collected the radio and the satchel before returning to their bivouac site.<sup>760</sup>

b. (U) U.S. Efforts.

i. (U//FOUO) Tactical Level Efforts.

1. ~~(S)~~ Once Team ARLIT returned to Ouallam from Tongo Tongo in the early hours of 5 October 2017, Team ARLIT began working with (b)(3) / (b)(6) and the

<sup>750</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 108.

<sup>751</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. A69, 108. "I am going back and forth with (b)(3) / (b)(6) on what options, what else can I bring to the fight (b)(1) 1.4g, (b)(1) 1.7e"

<sup>752</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 15-16.

<sup>753</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 15-16; Ex. C3, Photograph 9.

<sup>754</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 15-16; Ex. C3, Photograph 11.

<sup>755</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 15-16; Ex. C3, Photograph 11.

<sup>756</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 15-16; Ex. C3, Photograph 13.

<sup>757</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 12, 15-16.

<sup>758</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 16, 18.

<sup>759</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. A36, 16-17. The radio was described as being a radio similar to the ones the partner Nigeriens carried.

<sup>760</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 16-18.

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(b)(1) 1.4a commander on developing a plan to cordon and search Tongo Tongo for SGT Johnson.<sup>761</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) was the liaison to (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a. Shortly after dawn, Team ARLIT submitted a CONOPS through the AOB and SOCCE-LCB Commander seeking approval to clear Tongo Tongo using Team ARLIT, their partner forces, and elements from (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>762</sup>

2. (S) At approximately 0900 on 5 October 2017, the SOCFWD-NWA commander relayed to (b)(3) / (b)(6) that his CONOPS was denied, and that Team ARLIT was not approved to search Tongo Tongo with partner forces.<sup>763</sup> The SOCAFRICA Commander and SOCFWD-NWA Commander made this decision jointly in consideration of several perceived operational risks.<sup>764</sup> Absent specific intelligence identifying SGT Johnson's precise location, the SOCAFRICA Commander determined there was too much risk sending U.S. forces into Tongo Tongo with French forces (either with or without partner Nigerien forces) to search a village that may have been harboring enemy personnel.<sup>765</sup> It was unknown, at that time, the extent to which Tongo Tongo harbored enemy personnel.<sup>766</sup> It was also unknown whether SGT Johnson was in Tongo Tongo at all.<sup>767</sup> Maj Gen Hicks was concerned with sending U.S. and partner forces into Tongo Tongo to face an undetermined threat without clear intelligence as to where SGT Johnson was, as he did not wish to put SGT Johnson's life in greater risk by sending troops in to clear the village.<sup>768</sup> Maj Gen Hicks expressed concerns over the risk of (b)(1) 1.4d in the immediate aftermath of the ambush.<sup>769</sup> Most importantly, absent intelligence identifying SGT Johnson's location, Maj Gen Hicks did not believe he had the lawful authority (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4d<sup>770</sup>

3. (U//FOUO) At 1136 on 5 October 2017, (b)(6) told (b)(3) / (b)(6) and his partner force platoon leader that FAN forces in Tongo Tongo received an unverified report from a villager that a hostage had been taken to a village near the Mali border.<sup>771</sup> (b)(6) did not know whether the reported hostage was a U.S. or Nigerien Soldier, and the reliability of the report could not be assessed.<sup>772</sup> Believing

<sup>761</sup> (S) Ex. A52, 65. (b)(1) 1.4d, (b)(3) (10 U.S.C. § 130b), (b)(6)

(b)(1) 1.4b

(b)(1) 1.4d

<sup>762</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 117; Ex. A52, 65-66.

<sup>763</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 117.

<sup>764</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 76-83.

<sup>765</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 76-83.

<sup>766</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 76-83.

<sup>767</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 76-83.

<sup>768</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 76-83.

<sup>769</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 76-83.

<sup>770</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 76-83.

<sup>771</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 71; Ex. A105; Ex. G2, 8.

<sup>772</sup> (U) Ex. A105

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that report to be in reference to SGT L. Johnson, (b)(3) / (b)(6) requested an ISR platform shift towards the north in an effort to verify this report.<sup>773</sup> The unverified report proved false.<sup>774</sup> Meanwhile, the SOCCE and SOCFWD-NWA worked to verify various other reports of SHOUT Nano “pings” and “beacons” suggesting SGT Johnson may have been alive, either evading or captured.<sup>775</sup>

ii. (U) Operational Level Efforts.

1. (U//~~FOUO~~) In the early hours of 5 October 2017 (approximately 0100-0200), CDRSOCAFRICA discussed the mobilization of nationally-controlled assets with CDRUSAFRICOM and CDRUSSOCOM for what all three commanders then believed to be a personnel recovery mission.<sup>776</sup>

2. (~~S~~) At that time, U.S. forces had no reliable intelligence indicating SGT Johnson was either killed in action or captured by the enemy.<sup>777</sup> As Team ARLIT was consolidating with (b)(1) 1.4a and developing a plan to clear Tongo Tongo, the SOCCE-LCB and SOCFWD-NWA commands directed three separate ISR platforms in an effort to locate SGT Johnson.<sup>778</sup>

3. (U//~~FOUO~~) In the pre-dawn hours of 5 October 2017, CDRSOCAFRICA concurred with the mobilization of nationally-controlled personnel recovery assets. At 0322 on 5 October 2017, CDRUSAFRICOM activated the USAFRICOM Crisis Response Force (CRF) and requested nationally-controlled assets in support of personnel recovery operations. As command and control of the personnel recovery mission shifted to these nationally-controlled assets, USAFRICOM, SOCAFRICA, and SOCFWD-NWA prepared for the integration of numerous forces, aircraft, and equipment.

4. (U) Search and Recovery Efforts on 6 October.

a. (U) Nigerien Recovery Efforts.

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) On the morning of 6 October 2017, PN35 directed PN36 to link up with additional forces from Tiloa for a resupply.<sup>779</sup> As PN36 was preparing to do this, he received a phone call from the village elder informing him that another body had been found.<sup>780</sup> Children from the village, including the elder's (b)(6) were first to discover

<sup>773</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 71.

<sup>774</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A61, 34-35; Ex. A81, 81. Although untrue, reports such as this caused great confusion in the initial stages of the personnel recovery efforts. See Annex 2 for additional information.

<sup>775</sup> (U) See Annex 2 for a detailed discussion of these reports and the confusion they caused.

<sup>776</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 82-83.

<sup>777</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 76-79.

<sup>778</sup> (U) See Annex 3.

<sup>779</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 18-19.

<sup>780</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 18-19.

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SGT Johnson's body, and reported the location to the elder.<sup>781</sup> The elder was unable to determine if the body was a Nigerien or an American Soldier.<sup>782</sup> PN36 immediately reported this to PN35.<sup>783</sup>

ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) PN35 assembled a small element of four or five vehicles and drove north from the bivouac site to the village of Tongo Tongo.<sup>784</sup> The village elder met with PN35 and explained that the body was a bit of a distance from the village.<sup>785</sup> The elder got into a vehicle with PN35 and directed the element to the location of SGT Johnson's body, a lone thorny tree in an otherwise sparsely vegetated expanse of land southwest of Tongo Tongo.<sup>786</sup> The short tree had thorny branches draping to the ground that formed a thicket.<sup>787</sup> The FAN forces secured and examined the area around the tree.

iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) In order to gain access to SGT Johnson's remains, the FAN forces used a machete to cut away two large branches of the tree.<sup>788</sup> PN35 personally observed and photographed SGT Johnson's remains as they lay.<sup>789</sup> PN35 observed SGT Johnson's body (b)(6)<sup>790</sup> His helmet was laying on the ground two feet from his head, with apparent blood stained soil beneath it.<sup>791</sup> SGT Johnson's arms lay to the side of his body in a natural position.<sup>792</sup> SGT Johnson's boots, socks, and belt were missing and his pants were unbuttoned.<sup>793</sup> He wore a tan t-shirt.<sup>794</sup>

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<sup>781</sup> (U) Ex. A18, 1.

<sup>782</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 19.

<sup>783</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 19.

<sup>784</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 18.

<sup>785</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 19.

<sup>786</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A36, 19. The exact location where SGT Johnson's body was discovered was approximately 1.6 km from the initial TIC site. SGT Johnson's body was 960m from the last known fighting position at Position Two. Ex. C3, Photographs 16-18; See also Encl. 8.4.

<sup>787</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. C5, Photographs 35-38. PN35 testified that when he first met with the elder before driving to the tree, the elder noted that the tree was so thick and thorny that the only way someone would possibly have crawled into this tree was as a survival instinct. The elder brought a machete with him, explaining that they would have to cut away some branches in order to remove the remains (Ex. A36, 19-20).

<sup>788</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 20; Ex. D77.

<sup>789</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A36, 20. FAN forces documented the discovery of SGT Johnson's and some FAN forces' remains with Photographs. This was done for evidentiary purposes only. FAN forces did not Photograph the remains of SSG Wright, SSG Black, or SSG Jeremiah Johnson.

<sup>790</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 19.

<sup>791</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 20; Ex. C3, Photographs 16-18.

<sup>792</sup> (U) Ex. C3, Photographs 16-18.

<sup>793</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 20; Ex. C3, Photographs 16-18.

<sup>794</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 20; Ex. C3, Photographs 16-18.

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iv. (U//~~FOUO~~) FAN forces discovered several motorcycle and vehicle tire tracks in the vicinity of the tree.<sup>795</sup> FAN forces also discovered a large number of 12.7mm shell casings on the ground approximately 95 meters from the tree.<sup>796</sup>

v. (U//~~FOUO~~) Using latex gloves, Soldiers from the FAN force recovered SGT Johnson's remains and carried them to a vehicle parked near the tree. The Soldiers wrapped the remains and placed them in the back of the truck.<sup>797</sup> The FAN forces then moved south to link up with U.S. forces to conduct a dignified transfer of remains.

b. (U) U.S. Recovery Efforts.

i. (~~S~~) At approximately 0600 on 6 October 2017, as SOCFWD-NWA and SOCAFRICA prepared for a large increase in forces to plan and execute personnel recovery operations, the SOCCE-LCB Commander ordered Team ARLIT to return to Tongo Tongo and sweep through the wood line south of the village.<sup>798</sup> Having moved from Ouallam to Niamey the night before, (b)(1) 1.4a and additional members of Team ARLIT flew back to Ouallam in order to refuel and stage for the clearing operation.<sup>799</sup>

ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) As Team ARLIT and partner forces were developing a clearing plan in Ouallam, (b)(3) / (b)(6) received a SATCOM call that the FAN forces recovered a body.<sup>800</sup> Communicating through his partner force counterpart, (b)(3) / (b)(6) called PN35 on his cell phone and asked him to identify SGT Johnson's body by known tattoos.<sup>801</sup>

iii. (~~S~~) Members of Team ARLIT, (b)(1) 1.4a and (b)(3) / (b)(6) flew from Ouallam to a designated HLZ south of Tongo Tongo, landing at approximately 1300. FAN forces established a security perimeter as two aircraft landed.<sup>802</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) Team OUALLAM's Team Sergeant, personally identified SGT Johnson's remains.<sup>803</sup> U.S. forces prepared the remains for transit, before conducting a dignified transfer of the remains back to Niamey for medical processing.

5. (U//~~FOUO~~) SGT LaDavid Johnson's remains were recovered by U.S. forces approximately 48 hours after his time of death. At the time of his death, SGT Johnson did

<sup>795</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 21.

<sup>796</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A36, 20; Ex. C3, Photograph 15. Although the FAN forces photographed this evidence on 6 October 2017, they did not collect it or disturb it. The evidence remained exactly as described when the investigating team returned on 12 Nov 17 (Ex. C5, Photographs 43-46).

<sup>797</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) ISR full motion video shows FAN forces recovering SGT Johnson's remains with great care and dignity. His remains were wrapped and placed in the back of a FAN vehicle for transfer to U.S. custody (Ex. D78).

<sup>798</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 68.

<sup>799</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 70.

<sup>800</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 70.

<sup>801</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 71.

<sup>802</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 71.

<sup>803</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 73.

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not have a friendly force tracking device that could be used to determine his location. As a result, U.S. forces had no knowledge of his exact status or whereabouts. SGT Johnson's status remained "duty status – whereabouts unknown" (DUSTWUN) until his remains were recovered.

6. (U//~~FOUO~~) All four U.S. Soldiers KIA sustained wounds that would have been immediately fatal or fatal in a short time.<sup>804</sup> Notwithstanding USAFRICOM's (b)(1) 1.4a/1.7e CASEVAC goal, the lack of immediate CASEVAC did not play a role in the death of those Soldiers killed in action on 4 October 2017.<sup>805</sup> Both Soldiers wounded in action sustained injuries that were managed expeditiously by members of the Team before being evacuated by partner forces.

7. (~~S~~) During the course of the recovery efforts, (b)(1) 1.4g different "beacons", "SHOUT Nano hits", or "comms hits" were reported as coming from Team OUALLAM or specifically from SGT LaDavid Johnson.<sup>806</sup> These reports generated confusion, but ultimately proved false.

a. (~~S~~//NF) No signal was ever received from the one SHOUT Nano device carried in USV1 by Team OUALLAM, no calls were detected from any of the team's assigned or personal communications equipment (e.g. cell phones, iPads, etc.), and no distress signals were received from any of the team's Personnel Recovery (PR) equipment.<sup>807</sup> The preponderance of the evidence indicates that none of these reported signals came from equipment associated with any member of Team OUALLAM. (b)(1) 1.4g, (b)(1) 1.4a

(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

(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

(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

(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

(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

(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

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

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

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

<sup>804</sup> (U) Ex. E1-E12.

<sup>805</sup> (U) Ex. E1-E12.

<sup>806</sup> (U) Ex. G24, 23, 44, 46, 48, 53, 55, 57.

<sup>807</sup> (U) Ex. A83, 1; A85, 2; K3, 1.

<sup>808</sup> (U) G45, 4, 5.

<sup>809</sup> (U) Ex. A83, 2.

<sup>810</sup> (U) See Annex 2, pages 3-5.

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OUALLAM. This resulted in (b)(1) 1.4a deploying to conduct one ground and one aerial reconnaissance mission for (b)(1) 1.4a. The confusion (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a also resulted in ISR platforms being directed to (b)(1) 1.4a different locations, at least once by (b)(1) 1.4a ISR platform, to investigate these reports.<sup>811</sup>

c. (U//~~FOUO~~) In spite of errant reports, none of the signals detected from 4-6 October 2017 were associated with any member of Team OUALLAM.<sup>812</sup>

8. (U//~~FOUO~~) The 4 October 2017 attack was not the result of an “intelligence failure.”

a. (S//~~NF~~) Although there is no formal definition of “intelligence failure” in Department of Defense or Intelligence Community publications, the investigating team deemed an “intelligence failure” to be an event that the Intelligence Community *failed* to predict notwithstanding sufficient indicators to inform an assessment.<sup>813</sup> The investigation did establish significant gaps in intelligence regarding (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g in Niger and throughout Africa.<sup>814</sup> Capability gaps in the ability to collect intelligence, however, do not equate to a failure to interpret existing intelligence.

b. (S//~~NF~~) Team OUALLAM and AOB Niger had full access to the intelligence resources and assets available to them at the time they planned the 3 and 4 October 2017 missions.<sup>815</sup> Working with partner forces, Team OUALLAM and AOB Niger were aware of the VEO attacks in the Tillabéri region in the previous 12 months, as well as the sophisticated TTPs demonstrated by VEOs. However, Team OUALLAM and the AOB lacked (b)(1) 1.4g (b)(1) 1.4g which could have led to a more thorough consideration of the risk involved and, ultimately, avoided or prevented the 4 October 2017 attack in Tongo Tongo.<sup>816</sup>

<sup>811</sup> (U) See Annex 3, pages 9-10.

<sup>812</sup> (U) Ex. K3, 1.

<sup>813</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) TTN28, on file at USAFRICOM - “Follow-On To Intelligence Failure.”

<sup>814</sup> (U) See Annex 4.

<sup>815</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A75, 2; TTN28, on file at USAFRICOM - “Follow-On To Intelligence Failure.”

<sup>816</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A75, 3; Ex. A1, 18-19; Ex. A61, 2; TTN28, on file at USAFRICOM - “Follow-On To Intelligence Failure.” See Annex 7 for a detailed discussion of Risk Assessment.

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**PART VI  
(U) FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

(U//FOUO) This investigation identified deficiencies and areas of concern at every echelon warranting action, discussion, or further evaluation. In addition, highlighted below are some findings that address key questions following the events of 4 October 2017. Many of the following findings are discussed in greater detail in Parts I-V.

1. **(U//FOUO) FINDING:** The events of 4 October 2017 and the deaths of four U.S. and four Nigerien Soldiers were the results of the cumulative effect of a number of contributing environmental, tactical, organizational, and institutional factors, decisions, and deficiencies.

a. (U) DISCUSSION.

i. (U//FOUO) On 4 October 2017, the enemy massed more than 100 well-trained and well-equipped fighters to attack Team OUALLAM and their Nigerien partners.<sup>817</sup> The enemy was the proximate cause of the death of U.S. and Nigerien Soldiers.

ii. (U//FOUO) Notwithstanding the enemy's role in the events of 4 October 2017, this report identifies a number of other contributing factors. Some of those factors contribute more strongly or directly than others, but the cumulative effect of all of the factors created conditions that allowed the attack.<sup>818</sup> Cumulative factors are diagrammed on the following page in order of impact on the events of 4 October 2017.

b. **(U//FOUO) RECOMMENDATION:** None. The majority of these factors are identified and analyzed elsewhere in this report and are presented here to demonstrate their cumulative effect.

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<sup>817</sup> (U) Ex. A25, 2; Part IV(7)(a.).

<sup>818</sup> (U) Refer to diagram below.

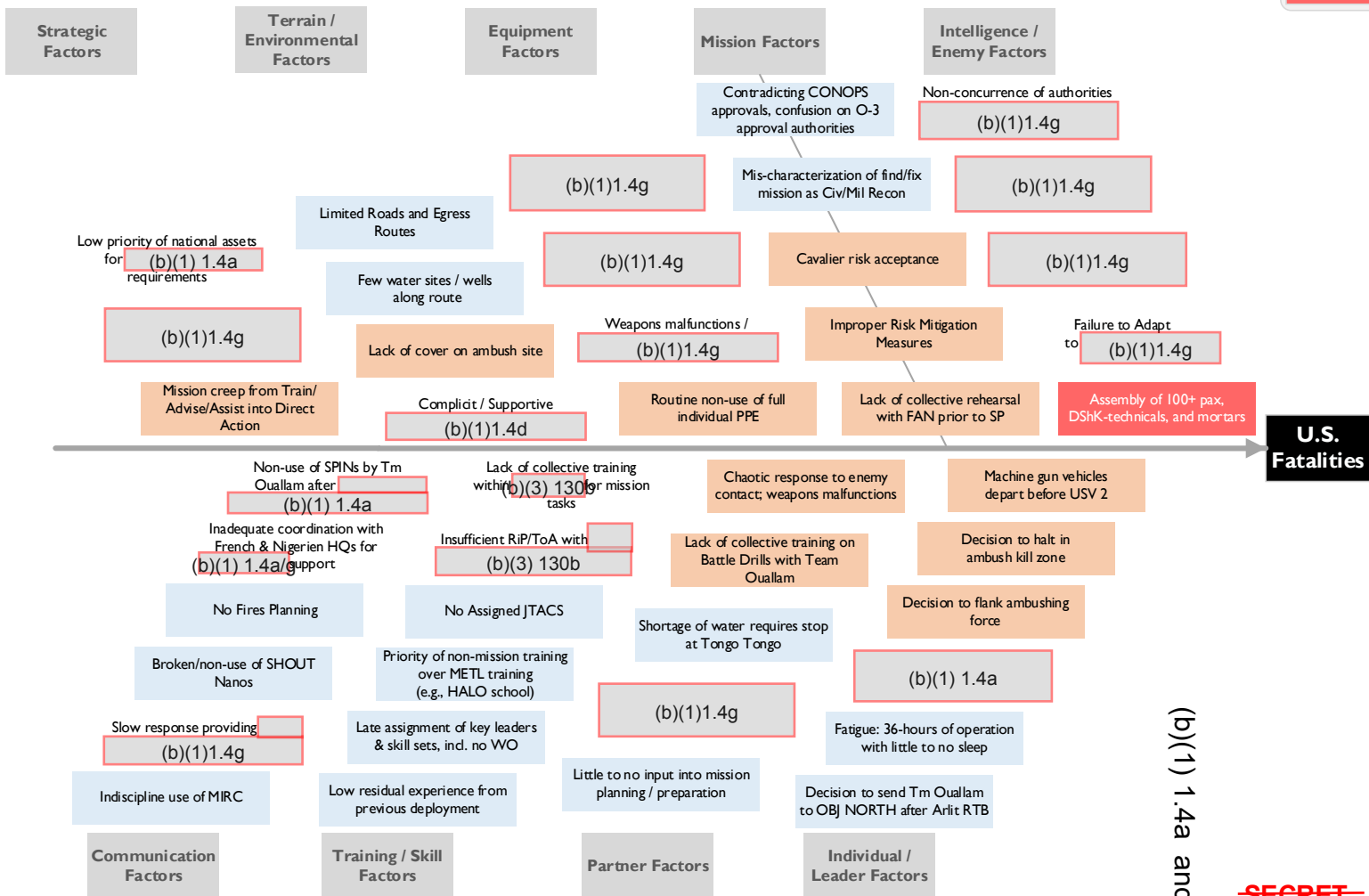
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This diagram is a representation of factors the investigation found contributed to the fatalities of the four U.S. Special Operations Forces. The factors are grouped by categories, and do not depict a cause-and-effect relationship. Factors closer to the centerline and right contributed more than those on the left or outside edges. Explanation of color is in the legend.

**Legend**

- Attenuated Contribution
- Strong Contribution
- Proximate Cause



(b)(1) 1.4a and 1.4g

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2. (U//~~FOUO~~) **FINDING:** Operational constraints meant to minimize the likelihood of USSOF engaging in direct combat are insufficient; USSOF in Niger are planning, directing, and executing direct action operations rather than advising Nigerien-led operations.

a. (U) DISCUSSION:

i. (~~S//NF~~) On 3 October 2017, the Executive Policy governing (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a on the continent of Africa was codified in the "U.S. Policy Standards and Procedures for the use of force in counterterrorism operations outside the United States and areas of active hostilities," (CT-PPG).<sup>819</sup> Since 3 October, the President has issued new guidance on (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>820</sup>. The PSP supersedes the CT-PPG and makes substantive changes to the standards and procedures for approval of U.S. direct action missions, but the core principle remains the same: decisions to use U.S. forces to conduct (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a will be made at the most senior levels after reasonable review and considerable oversight.

ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) Advise, assist, and accompany operations that Team OUALLAM and Team ARLIT were conducting and AOB Niger was approving more closely resembled U.S. direct action than foreign partner-led operations aided by U.S. advice and assistance. Team OUALLAM's initial mission was developed, planned, and executed entirely at the direction of the Team Commander and the AOB.<sup>821</sup> The subsequent re-missioning of Team OUALLAM and Team ARLIT was also developed, planned, and executed at the direction of USSOF.<sup>822</sup> No Nigerien partner forces were involved in the VTC directed by the SOCCE commander.<sup>823</sup>

iii. (~~S~~) Advise, assist, and accompany operations are authorized in CJCS EXORDS (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>824</sup> (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>825</sup>

iv. (~~S~~) (b)(1) 1.4a the SOCAFRICA Commander permits USSOF to accompany foreign forces on operations including movement to contact, ambushes, and

<sup>819</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. I14. Note: The CT-PPG itself is classified above the classification of this report, but the Obama Administration published an unclassified "Fact Sheet" outlining the principles of the policy for public release. The quotes above are from the unclassified Fact Sheet in Exhibit I14.

<sup>820</sup> (U) Ex. I17.

<sup>821</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A2, 60-61; Ex. A3, 37 (stating the partner force was notified when to be ready to depart).

<sup>822</sup> (U) Encl. 24, 6-7.

<sup>823</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 88.

<sup>824</sup> (U) See Ex. I8 for an example of an EXORD.

<sup>825</sup> (U) Exhibit I8, paragraph 3.C.6.B.

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raids.<sup>826</sup>

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

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

v. (S)

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

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

vi. (S//NF)

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

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

vii. (S)

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

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

<sup>826</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 31.

<sup>827</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 30; Ex. A69, 76.

<sup>828</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 101; Ex. A81, 35.

<sup>829</sup> (U//FOUO) Student Handbook 21-76 (Ranger Handbook), February 2011, paragraph 7-17b(6).

<sup>830</sup> (U) Ex. I6; Ex. I7.

<sup>831</sup> (U) Ex. I6; Ex. I7.

<sup>832</sup> (S) Ex. I6; Ex. I7 (CDRSOCAFRICA noting that in one month USSOF in (b)(1) 1.4a had engaged in firefights with the enemy and warning commanders to enforce the (b)(1) 1.4a standard).

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

viii. (~~S~~) In the course of this investigation, members of (b)(3) / (b)(6) expressed a casual understanding of the (b)(1) 1.4a rule and an equally casual application of the (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>833</sup> During their raid on Objective NORTH, members of the SFODA trailed within (b)(1) 1.4a of the Nigerien assault force as the FAN assaulted across the last known location of (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>834</sup>

ix. (~~S/NF~~) (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g  
(b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g

x. (U//~~FOUO~~) Missions described in this report and executed by Team OUALLAM and Team ARLIT were driven by U.S. intelligence, planned entirely by U.S. forces, and directed and led by USSOF. Nigerien forces had no input in the planning process or the decision to execute the missions.<sup>839</sup>

xi. (U//~~FOUO~~) This investigation revealed several problems with the advise, assist, and accompany activity as it relates to the CT-PPG and the PSP. Exercised conservatively, with advisors remaining far from the fight, advising higher echelon commanders, the policy could be executed in accordance with Presidential Policy. Exercised aggressively, with U.S. advisors accompanying platoons, squads, and fire teams, the direct actions of our partners cannot be distinguished from U.S. direct action.

<sup>833</sup> (~~S~~) Ex. A1, 48-49, 148-149; Ex. A9, 65 (b)(1) 1.4a  
(b)(1) 1.4a

<sup>834</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 65.

<sup>835</sup> (U) Ex. A77, 26.

<sup>836</sup> (U) Ex. A77, 26.

<sup>837</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 88.

<sup>838</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 93-94.

<sup>839</sup> (~~S~~) Ex. A1, 140 (“...they probably felt like we were just going through the motions again, you know. Americans say we are going here so we will go with them, you know. I don’t think they believed that what they were doing was going to end up in the capture of (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4d”)

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U.S. provisions of “advice and assistance” look more like U.S. direct combat operations that are not reported that way to Congress or acknowledged that way to the public.

**b. (U) RECOMMENDATIONS:**

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) Recommend USAFRICOM provide a clear and unequivocal standard to the force for advise, assist, and accompany operations that is consistent with Presidential Policy as it relates to U.S. direct action in Africa and ensure it is understood and enforced by Commanders.

ii. (~~S~~) Recommend USAFRICOM consider

(b)(1) 1.4a

(b)(1) 1.4a

(b)(1) 1.4a

(b)(1) 1.4a

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

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

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3. **(U//FOUO) FINDING:** There are no clearly defined standards for the wearing of personal protective equipment during combat operations in Niger.

a. (U) DISCUSSION:

i. ~~(U//FOUO)~~ The SOCCE-LCB Commander left uniform and PPE decisions to the discretion of SFODA Commanders citing differences in operating environments in his AOR.<sup>840</sup> Team OUALLAM exercised that discretion as follows: crew-served weapons gunners normally wore helmets and ballistic plate carriers during movement while the rest of the team did not.<sup>841</sup>

ii. ~~(U//FOUO)~~ All team members donned their PPE for deliberate assaults like the assault on Objective NORTH.<sup>842</sup>

iii. ~~(U//FOUO)~~ Team OUALLAM's decision not to wear body armor during movement was due partially to the extremely hot climate in Niger, but it was also due to their belief that it was unlikely that the enemy would attack them.<sup>843</sup>

b. ~~(U//FOUO)~~ **RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend Commander, SOCAFRICA and Commander, SOCFWD-NWA review PPE requirements in Niger to ensure they are appropriately tailored to the threat and issue a clearly defined standard for the wearing of PPE.

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<sup>840</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 102.

<sup>841</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 71, 76; Part IV(4)(a.).

<sup>842</sup> (U) Ex. A9, 71.

<sup>843</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 76; Part IV(4)(a.).

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4. **(S) FINDING:** Organizational failures at all echelons of command resulted in a lack of clear understanding of CONOPS development, approval, and notification requirements. Leaders at SOCAFRICA, SOCFWD-NWA, SOCCE-LCB, AOB Niger, and (b)(3) / (b)(6) did not share a common understanding of CONOPS categories or CONOPS approval levels in Niger. Conflicting CONOPS approval matrices and a lack of approval and notification guidance for time-sensitive-(b)(1) 1.4a at the SOCAFRICA and SOCFWD-NWA commands resulted in ambiguity and a lack of effective notification for time-sensitive operations.

a. (U) DISCUSSION:

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) Lack of Clear Understanding of CONOPS Development, Approval, Notification Requirements.

1. **(S)** Commander, SOCAFRICA published a CONOPS Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) via command message traffic on 28 September 2016.<sup>844</sup> This SOP delegated to the Commander, SOCFWD-NWA approval authority for (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS and permitted further delegation of approval authority to the "O-5 Level."<sup>845</sup> This SOP required notification of approved (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGOs to the SOCAFRICA J33 and JOC "in order to maintain situational awareness."<sup>846</sup> The SOP did not establish a timeline for this notification.<sup>847</sup>

2. **(S)** Separate from the CONOPS SOP message, SOCAFRICA generated a CONOPS Approval Matrix that included a (b)(1) 1.4a notification requirement for (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS and (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGOs.<sup>848</sup> Despite the very nature of a (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGO (b)(1) 1.4(a) (b)(1) 1.4(a) contemplating time-sensitive operations, SOCAFRICA did not implement any processes to account for time-sensitive or real-time approvals.<sup>849</sup>

3. **(S)** Although SOCAFRICA's (b)(1) 1.4a notification requirement for (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS and (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGOs was not articulated in the formal SOP, the requirement was seemingly acknowledged and adopted by SOCFWD-NWA.<sup>850</sup> SOCFWD-NWA developed and implemented a new CONOPS approval matrix that also included a (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a notification requirement to SOCAFRICA for approved (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS and (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGOs.<sup>851</sup> Like SOCAFRICA, SOCFWD-NWA did not implement any processes to account for time-sensitive or real-time approvals. In the absence of clear guidance from

<sup>844</sup> (U) Ex. I16.

<sup>845</sup> (U) Ex. I16.

<sup>846</sup> (U) Ex. I16.

<sup>847</sup> (U) Ex. I16.

<sup>848</sup> (U) Ex. I1.

<sup>849</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 60-62.

<sup>850</sup> (U) Ex. I2; Ex. I5, 2-4.

<sup>851</sup> (U) Ex. I2.

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SOCAFRICA as to the approval and notification process for time-sensitive missions (those planned and executed within (b)(1) 1.4a, the SOCCE-LCB commander routinely approved time-sensitive missions, and SOCFWD-NWA routinely notified SOCAFRICA of these missions within (b)(1) 1.4a of execution.<sup>852</sup> Over the 11 months prior to 2 October 2017, SFODAs within the SOCFWD-NWA area of responsibility executed (b)(1) 1.4a time-sensitive missions (planned and executed within (b)(1) 1.4a for which (b)(1) 1.4a prior notification was required by the SOCAFRICA approval matrix.<sup>853</sup> SOCAFRICA never denied or objected to any of these missions, and never raised concern over the fact they had not received (b)(1) 1.4a advanced notification.<sup>854</sup>

4. (S) SOCAFRICA's lack of guidance or corrective action following any of the previous (b)(1) 1.4a missions, a period spanning the command tenures of both BG Donald Bolduc and Maj Gen Mark Hicks, resulted in the implicit acceptance of short-notice operations. As a result, SOCFWD-NWA developed a practice of providing immediate notification of time-sensitive CONOPS, then executing the operations even though such notification did not comply with SOCAFRICA's or even SOCFWD-NWA's own (b)(1) 1.4a notification requirement.<sup>855</sup>

ii. (U//FOUO) Lack of Shared Understanding of CONOPS Categorization.

1. (S) The SOCAFRICA CONOPS approval matrix established the approval authority for six different categories of missions: (1) (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a (2) (b)(1) 1.4a (3) (b)(1) 1.4a CONOP"; (4) (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a CONOP"; (5) (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGO"; and (6) (b)(1) 1.4a CONOP."<sup>856</sup> The category is determined through a description of the mission and residual risk level associated with that mission.<sup>857</sup>

2. (S) A review of over 30 CONOPS reveals a lack of clear understanding as to the proper categorization of CONOPS developed by some SFODAs within Niger.<sup>858</sup> While many CONOPS accurately identify the CONOPS to properly reflect the mission, many conflate (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS with (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS.<sup>859</sup> (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS that would have required SOCCE-LCB approval and subsequent notification to SOCAFRICA (per the SOCAFRICA approval matrix) were routinely approved by the AOB Commander

<sup>852</sup> (U) Ex. G49.

<sup>853</sup> (U) Ex. G49.

<sup>854</sup> (U) Encl. 21.

<sup>855</sup> (U) Ex. G49.

<sup>856</sup> (S) Ex. I1. The matrix also provided the approval authority for a (b)(1) 1.4a Framework CONOPS. The (b)(1) 1.4a Framework CONOPS is the base document from which (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGOS are derived.

<sup>857</sup> (U) Ex. I1.

<sup>858</sup> (U) Ex. B11; Ex. B12; Ex. B13; Ex. B14; Ex. B16; Ex. B17; Ex. B18; Ex. B19; Ex. B20; Ex. B21; Ex. B22; Ex. B23.

<sup>859</sup> (U) Ex. B11; Ex. B12; Ex. B13; Ex. B14; Ex. B16; Ex. B17; Ex. B18; Ex. B19; Ex. B20; Ex. B21; Ex. B22; Ex. B23.

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based upon an inaccurate categorization and a belief that (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS could be approved by the AOB commander.<sup>860</sup>

3. (S) (b)(3) / (b)(6) conducted a total of three operations including the operation on 3-4 October 2017.<sup>861</sup> Each of these operations had unique tasks and purposes. The first mission was an area familiarization and key leader engagement and was labeled (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGO, (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>862</sup> The second mission was intended to provide reinforcement to partner forces in (b)(1) 1.4a in response to intelligence suggesting an impending attack.<sup>863</sup> That CONOPS was labeled (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGO (b)(1) 1.4a, but described by (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) as a (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS.<sup>864</sup> The third mission was intended to find/fix, and if possible capture a (b)(1) 1.4a and was labeled (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGO (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>865</sup> Like the prior mission, (b)(3) / (b)(6) considered this to be a (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS that could be approved by the AOB commander. (b)(3) / (b)(6) noted in his testimony "I put up a (b)(1) 1.4a CONOP that gets approved by the AOB. That is how we do missions. That is the only level of CONOP that I have ever submitted is a (b)(1) 1.4a that gets approved by the AOB."<sup>866</sup>

iii. (U//FOUO) Lack of Shared Understanding of Approval Levels.

1. (S) As outlined in Annex 1, on 2 October 2017 there were three conflicting CONOPS approval matrices to delineate authorities delegated from the SOCAFRICA commander.<sup>867</sup> The AOB followed a CONOPS matrix that SOCAFRICA had not approved.<sup>868</sup> On 3 October 2017, the acting AOB Commander incorrectly believed he had the authority to approve (b)(1) 1.4a and (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS for Team OUALLAM.<sup>869</sup>

2. (S) The confusion arose when the SOCFWD-NWA J3 proposed SOCAFRICA's concurrence with a revision to the SOCAFRICA CONOPS approval matrix, then redeployed to Fort Bragg.<sup>870</sup> The incoming SOCFWD-NWA J3 erroneously thought that the revised matrix had been approved and implemented it.<sup>871</sup> Similarly, the AOB Niger commander received a third revised CONOPS Approval matrix from his

<sup>860</sup> (U) Ex. B11; Ex. B12; Ex. B13; Ex. B14; Ex. B16; Ex. B17; Ex. B18; Ex. B19; Ex. B20; Ex. B21; Ex. B22; Ex. B23.

<sup>861</sup> (U) Ex. B21; Ex. B22; Ex. B23.

<sup>862</sup> (U) Ex. B21.

<sup>863</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 33; Ex. A9, 27; Ex. A3; 18

<sup>864</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 101-102.

<sup>865</sup> (U) Ex. B23.

<sup>866</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 101-102.

<sup>867</sup> (U) Ex. I1; Ex. I2; Ex. I3.

<sup>868</sup> (U//FOUO) See Annex 1 for a detailed description of the SOCAFRICA CONOPS approval matrix and the unapproved matrices that were being followed by subordinate commands.

<sup>869</sup> (U) Ex. I3.

<sup>870</sup> (U) Ex. I5.

<sup>871</sup> (U) Ex. I5.

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predecessor that was different than both SOCFWD-NWA's and SOCAFRICA's CONOPS matrices.<sup>872</sup> Although the investigation was unable to determine where the AOB's version of the CONOPS approval matrix originated, it differed significantly from the matrix implemented by SOCFWD-NWA.<sup>873</sup> Specifically, the AOB's matrix delegated to the AOB commander approval authority for (b)(1) 1.4a and (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS, and created a new approval authority for (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGOs. This discrete category of FRAGOs (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGOs) did not exist on either the SOCAFRICA or the SOCFWD-NWA approval matrices.<sup>874</sup> The AOB matrix required SOCCE-LCB commander approval for (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGOs.<sup>875</sup> The AOB matrix also created a (b)(1) 1.4a notification requirement to SOCFWD-NWA that did not exist on either the SOCFWD-NWA matrix or the SOCAFRICA matrix.<sup>876</sup>

3. (S) Members of AOB Niger and SOCCE-LCB did not have a common understanding of which authorities had been delegated and which had not even within the context of their contradictory matrices.<sup>877</sup> The SOCCE-LCB Commander asserted that he had not delegated authority to the AOB Niger Commander to approve (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS. Although the commander acknowledged that he could have, he said he was "was not there yet."<sup>878</sup> Despite this, the AOB operated under the belief that delegation had occurred for (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS and (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGOs.<sup>879</sup>

4. (U//FOUO) To add to the confusion, each of the CONOPS used different language to identify the commander to whom approval authority was delegated.<sup>880</sup> For example, the SOCAFRICA matrix delegated approval authorities to command "levels" (i.e., "may be delegated to the O-5 level").<sup>881</sup> The SOCAFRICA approval matrix authorized delegation to a specific rank (i.e., "may be delegated to the O-4 CDR").<sup>882</sup> Finally, the AOB matrix identified the approval authority as the commander of a designated unit without reference to a rank (i.e., "AOB/TU CDR"; and SOCCE-LCB

<sup>872</sup> (S) Ex. I2; Ex. I3. Specifically, the AOB matrix delegated to the AOB commander approval authority for (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS, and created a new approval authority for (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGOs. The AOB matrix required SOCCE-LCB commander approval for (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGOs. The AOB matrix also created a (b)(1) 1.4a notification requirement to SOCFWD-NWA that did not exist on either the SOCFWD-NWA matrix or the SOCAFRICA matrix.

<sup>873</sup> (U) Ex. I2; Ex. I3.

<sup>874</sup> (U) Ex. I1; Ex. I2.

<sup>875</sup> (U) Ex. I3

<sup>876</sup> (U) Ex. I3

<sup>877</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 78-79.

<sup>878</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 78-79.

<sup>879</sup> (U) Ex. I3.

<sup>880</sup> (U) Ex. I1; Ex. I2; Ex. I3.

<sup>881</sup> (U) Ex. I1.

<sup>882</sup> (U//FOUO) Ex. I2. This delegation authority was detailed notwithstanding the fact that the SOCAFRICA matrix only authorized delegation to the O-5 level of command.

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CDR”).<sup>883</sup> Several witnesses articulated different understandings of who could approve an operation that had been delegated, for example, to the “O-4 level.”<sup>884</sup> The SOCAFRICA Commander viewed the delegation to be tied to the rank, while the AOB Niger Commander thought that the authority was tied to the position, and therefore could be delegated to an “acting Commander” even if he was below the rank of O-4.<sup>885</sup>

5. (U//~~FOUO~~) Commanders at all echelons have a duty to ensure approval authorities and operational guidance provided to subordinate commands are clear and unambiguous. Likewise, in the absence of sufficient implementing guidance, commanders at all echelons owe a duty to seek clarification when directives are unclear or ambiguous.

**b. (U) RECOMMENDATIONS:**

i. (U//~~FOUO~~): Recommend Commander, SOCAFRICA establish clear and unambiguous CONOPS approval guidance to all subordinate commanders and require all delegations of authorities to be in writing and filed with their higher headquarters.

ii. (~~S~~) Recommend Commander, SOCAFRICA and Commander, SOCFWD-NWA review processes, procedures, and approvals for execution of time-sensitive (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a providing unambiguous guidance to subordinate commands.

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<sup>883</sup> (U) Ex. I3.

<sup>884</sup> (U) Ex. A57, 44-45; A81, 43-44; Ex. A79, 9-10

<sup>885</sup> (U) Ex. A57, 44-45; A81, 43-44; Ex. A79, 9-10

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5. (U//~~FOUO~~) **FINDING:** Team OUALLAM was not equipped with a vehicle set that would afford them the operational flexibility to adjust equipment based upon changes to the battlefield.

a. (U) DISCUSSION:

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) Team OUALLAM was equipped with seven vehicles: three sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and four pickup trucks. Some of those vehicles were used for administrative and logistical needs, while others were used for tactical patrols. On 3 October 2017, Team OUALLAM used three vehicles: two Toyota Land Cruiser four-door pickup trucks and a Toyota SUV. The team used the SUV as a make-shift ambulance.<sup>886</sup>

ii. (S) Team OUALLAM's vehicles were 4-wheel drive, (b)(1) 1.4g

(b)(1) 1.4g

iii. (S) Team OUALLAM's vehicles were unarmored (light-skinned) vehicles.<sup>890</sup>

(b)(1) 1.4g  
(b)(1) 1.4g  
(b)(1) 1.4g<sup>891</sup> The partner force vehicles would mount their (b)(1) 1.4g  
(b)(1) 1.4g on their trucks, although during the 3 – 4 October 2017 mission they had neither weapon system with them.<sup>892</sup>

iv. (S) Other SFODAs in Niger had different vehicles than Team OUALLAM had based upon the enemy situation, terrain, and weather in their areas.<sup>893</sup> (b)(1) 1.4g

(b)(1) 1.4g

<sup>886</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 64; Ex. A9, 28-30; Part IV(4)(b)(ii).

<sup>887</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 106; Ex. A9, 32.

<sup>888</sup> (U) Ex. A56, 18.

<sup>889</sup> (U) Ex. A56, 55.

<sup>890</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 139; Ex. A5, 17; Ex. A9, 89; Ex. A55, 32.

<sup>891</sup> (U) Ex. A4, 12-13; Ex. A52, 10-11; Ex. A56, 16-17.

<sup>892</sup> (U) Ex. A4, 113; Ex. A5, 11; Ex. A7, 73.

<sup>893</sup> (U) Ex. A52, 11.

<sup>894</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 37; Ex. A4, 10-11, 14; Ex. A5, 49.

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(b)(1) 1.4g<sup>895</sup>

b. (U//~~FOUO~~) **RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend USSOCOM and SOCAFRICA conduct a holistic review of vehicle requirements in theater based on mobility, protection, and weapon utilization. Consider implementation of a theater motor pool concept that will allow commanders the flexibility to choose vehicles based on mission requirements, changing terrain/climatological conditions, threat assessments, and partner force capabilities.

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<sup>895</sup> (U) Ex. A56, 18, 54-55.

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6. **(U//FOUO) FINDING:** Prior to 4 October 2017, approximately half of Team OUALLAM had never conducted a collective training event with the team.

a. (U) DISCUSSION.

i. (U//FOUO) As outlined in Part II of this report, higher echelon training guidance was published in a timely manner and properly nested from USSOCOM to USASOC through 1st SFG(A) to 3d SFG(A).<sup>896</sup> 3d SFG(A) FY17 Command Training Guidance (CTG) was published in 24 July 2016 and included the following provisions for the Battalions: ensure that all deploying units and attachments are incorporated into PMT; take responsibility for planning, resourcing, and executing a PMT CULEX; include mobility, sustainability, and recoverability in PMT; and incorporate academics on SOF programs, fiscal/operational authorities, and other mission critical subjects prior to deployment.<sup>897</sup> The CTG required Battalion Commanders to certify and validate SFODAs annually and prior to every deployment.<sup>898</sup>

ii. (S) Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS) levies and summer rotations cause personnel turnover for (b)(1) 1.4a deployments. Although (b)(3) / (b)(6) pre-deployment training complied with the 3d SFG(A) training guidance, it failed to take into account the composition of the team during the pre-deployment collective training events. Only six of 11 team members participated in the JADE HELM exercise together.<sup>899</sup> The Battalion considered JADE HELM to be the validation exercise required by 3d SFG(A) training guidance, although participating SFODAs do not appear to have been externally evaluated.<sup>900</sup> Three of the team's key leaders, the Commander, the Warrant Officer, and the Team Intelligence Sergeant left the team in June and August, after JADE HELM.<sup>901</sup> The new Commander, (b)(3) / (b)(6) arrived in June along with (b)(3) / (b)(6). The two participated in JADE HELM, but not with (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>902</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) and SSG Jeremiah Johnson arrived to the team in mid-September after they had already deployed to Niger.<sup>903</sup> (b)(6) joined the team

<sup>896</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 1.

<sup>897</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 5-6.

<sup>898</sup> (U) Ex. J2, 3-9.

<sup>899</sup> (U) Ex. J4, 3; Ex. A3, 3; Ex. A5, 1,3; Ex. A7, 2; Ex. A2, 4; Ex. A4, 2-3, A9, 7.

<sup>900</sup> (U//FOUO) USASOC 350-1 notes that USSOCOM has adopted FM 7-0 to direct training and training management for all ARSOF (para. 3-1). FM 7-0 requires that for units to be rated "Fully Trained" in a task, that task has to have been externally evaluated and has to have met requirements outlined in the T&EO (para. 1-7). (U//FOUO) Although (b)(3) / (b)(6) asserted that the exercise was externally evaluated, (b)(3) / (b)(6) SOCFWD-NWA J3, suggested the exercise was evaluated by 3d SFG(A). Ex. A69, 32-33 ; Ex. A79. Additionally, 3d SFG(A) has not been able to produce external evaluations despite requests for the training documentation. Accordingly, a preponderance of the evidence supports a determination that JADE HELM was not externally evaluated at the SFODA level.

<sup>901</sup> (U) Ex. B2, 1-2; Ex. J5, 3.

<sup>902</sup> (U) Ex. A3, 5; Ex. A7, 2.

<sup>903</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 3; Ex. A2, 19.

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temporarily only days before the events of 4 October 2017.<sup>904</sup> The turnover of the team along with late additions rendered key parts of the team's pre-deployment collective training ineffective. To compound the problem, the team failed to conduct battle drills or rehearsals when new personnel arrived.

iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) In addition to personnel turnover, a number of individual training events and administrative events precluded the team from conducting pre-deployment collective training with all personnel present.<sup>905</sup>

iv. (U//~~FOUO~~) 2/3 SFG(A) conducted semi-annual training briefs (SATB) in October 2016, March 2017, and July 2017.<sup>906</sup> In those briefings, (b)(3) / (b)(6) 2/3 SFG(A) Commander outlined training that the SFODAs had completed and planned to conduct in future quarters. Additionally, the SFODA Commander reported to the 2/3 SFG(A) Commander the training status of the Company in certain Mission Essential Tasks. The SATB failed to take into account personnel turnover and attendance at each scheduled training event when it assessed the units' training status.<sup>907</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) 2/3 SFG(A) Commander who gave the last SATB to the 2/3 SFG(A) Commander before deployment had just taken command that month. Neither the (b)(3) / (b)(6) nor the (b)(3) / (b)(6) Commanders had participated in any validation exercises with their units or conducted any collective training prior to deployment

**b. (U) RECOMMENDATION:**

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) Recommend the Commander, USSOCOM reassess Pre-mission Training Requirements and consider adjustments to manning priorities to ensure SFODAs and their enablers are locked in for the months leading up to deployment in order to enable requisite collective training as a deployable unit.

ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) Recommend battalion commanders amend their SATB to take personnel turnover and training attendance into account when assessing SFODA training status and deployment readiness IAW FM 7-0, paragraph 1-14.

iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) Implement operational stand-downs when SFODAs initially deploy to an African country if they were unable to meet their pre-deployment training requirements so that key collective tasks are completed prior to operations being conducted.

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<sup>904</sup> (U) Ex. A15, 1-2, 9.

<sup>905</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 3-5; Ex. A1, 57-58; Ex. A2, 5-6.

<sup>906</sup> (U) Ex. J6-J8.

<sup>907</sup> (U) See FM 7-0, Figure 3-7, noting that in order for a unit to achieve a "Fully Trained" or "T" rating in a mission essential task, it must have been externally evaluated and more than 75% of the unit's leaders must be present at the training. See also USASOC Regulation 350-1, which incorporates FM 7-0 methodology by reference (para. 3-1).

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7. (U//FOUO) **FINDING:** A perception of inflexible institutional policies and procedures resulted in a Relief in Place and Transfer of Authority (RIP/TOA) between (b)(3) / (b)(6) and (b)(3) / (b)(6) that was rushed and inadequate.

a. (U) DISCUSSION:

i. (U//FOUO) As discussed in detail in Part III of this report, (b)(3) / (b)(6) and (b)(3) / (b)(6) did not conduct a traditional left seat/right seat, conditions-based RIP/TOA. In light of the USSOCOM 200-day “door to door” dwell-to-deployment policy, 3d SFG(A) planned short RIP/TOA periods under the assumption that regionally aligned SFODAs in constant contact with their counterparts in-country via email did not require overlapping RIP/TOA processes.<sup>908</sup> AOB Commanders operated under the perception that RIP/TOA timelines could not be modified or extended to accommodate longer RIP/TOAs and they believed that the procedures they had in place were adequate.<sup>909</sup>

ii. (U//FOUO) Key to the RIP/TOA process is the ability of the incoming team to immediately assume the mission of the outgoing team. In this case neither the main body of the incoming team nor their equipment were in place at the moment the transfer of authority occurred.<sup>910</sup> The result was that (b)(3) / (b)(6) never rehearsed base defense with (b)(3) / (b)(6) never conducted battle drills with either (b)(3) / (b)(6) or their partner force to baseline tactical SOPs, and never conducted area familiarization or key leader engagements with (b)(3) / (b)(6)<sup>911</sup> When (b)(3) / (b)(6) conducted their first operation from Ouallam, only one member of the SFODA had ever been on a patrol in that area: (b)(3) / (b)(6)<sup>912</sup>

iii. (U//FOUO) The fact that (b)(3) / (b)(6) and (b)(3) / (b)(6) were “regionally aligned” and connected by email to (b)(3) / (b)(6) did not obviate the need for on-the-ground, face-to-face, area and partner force orientation. In the year between (b)(3) / (b)(6) (b)(3) / (b)(6) deployments to Niger, the partner force changed, the enemy changed, the area of responsibility changed, and their base of operations changed. The only thing that remained the same for them was the country.<sup>913</sup>

iv. (U//FOUO) Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) deployments did not coincide with SFODA deployments and JTAC coverage was gapped on 4 October 2017, leaving (b)(3) / (b)(6) without a JTAC.<sup>914</sup>

<sup>908</sup> (U) Encls.26 & 28

<sup>909</sup> (U) Encls. 26 & 28

<sup>910</sup> (U) See discussion Supra, Part III

<sup>911</sup> (U) See discussion Supra, Part III

<sup>912</sup> (U) See discussion Supra, Part III

<sup>913</sup> (U) See generally Exs. B1-B26

<sup>914</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 115-116

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**b. (U) RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- i. (U//~~FOUO~~) Recommend SOCAFRICA and SOCFWD-NWA commanders revise RIP/TOA timelines to ensure a conditions-based RIP/TOA with sufficient overlap between teams and their equipment vice a time/transportation-based RIP/TOA.
- ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) Recommend SOCAFRICA and SOCFWD-NWA develop and enforce a RIP/TOA methodology tailored to each operational environment that includes a comprehensive RIP/TOA checklist that will enable the incoming element to fully understand the enemy situation, the environment, and friendly force capabilities and training.
- iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) When key RIP/TOA tasks like partner force training and rehearsals cannot be accomplished prior to TOA, recommend AOB Commanders impose operational stand-downs on SFODAs until those tasks are completed to standard.
- iv. (U//~~FOUO~~) Recommend SOCAFRICA and SOCFWD-NWA commanders synchronize operational and enabler support RIP/TOA timelines to ensure uninterrupted coverage and support.

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8. (U//~~FOUO~~) **FINDING:** The (b)(3) / (b)(6) Team Leader and Team Sergeant failed to conduct battle drill and pre-mission rehearsals prior to executing operations on 3-4 October 2017.

a. (U) DISCUSSION:

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) (b)(3) / (b)(6) relied primarily on the training that (b)(3) / (b)(6) had conducted with (b)(3) 130b before their arrival in Ouallam. Before (b)(3) / (b)(6) arrived in Niger, (b)(3) / (b)(6) conducted Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) with (b)(3) 130b in Tahoua, and then brought them to Ouallam when they moved in June 2017.<sup>915</sup> (b)(3) / (b)(6) used the Ranger handbook as their textbook for training (b)(3) 130b on small unit tactics and battle drills.<sup>916</sup> They also conducted interoperability training and involved (b)(3) 130b in their pre-mission rehearsals and weapons checks prior to missions.<sup>917</sup>

ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) Although (b)(3) / (b)(6) conducted two previous missions with their Nigerien partners, they never conducted collective training or pre-mission rehearsals that covered convoy operations, battle drills, or other enemy contact drills.<sup>918</sup> Team OUALLAM would talk through TTPs and SOPs with (b)(3) 130b leadership, but they relied upon the training previously provided to (b)(3) 130b by (b)(3) / (b)(6)<sup>919</sup>

iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) To complicate the combined element's response to enemy contact, members of Team OUALLAM's partner force spoke a variety of languages including French, Hausa, and Zarma. The Team Sergeant was fluent in French. The other Team members had a cursory survival-level knowledge of French, Hausa, and Zarma.<sup>920</sup> They relied primarily on interpreters to communicate with the Partner Force. When the attack on 4 October 2017 happened, the one interpreter they had, who was unarmed and had no protective equipment, immediately fled and sought cover.<sup>921</sup>

iv. (~~S~~) The initial reaction to contact by Team OUALLAM and their Partner Force was incoherent and disjointed (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g. The reaction was also confused because there was not a well drilled and common understanding of what actions each element would take on contact. Similarly, when the Team Leader made the decision to break contact

<sup>915</sup> (U) See Part III, paragraph 3 supra.

<sup>916</sup> (U) Ex. A56, 55

<sup>917</sup> (U) Ex. A56, 23

<sup>918</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A1, 85-86 (The Team Leader said that rehearsals consisted of talking through actions on the objective and battle drills. They would not conduct physical rehearsals because (b)(3) / (b)(6) had taught them those things and they were very good at it).

<sup>919</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 85-86.

<sup>920</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 8; Ex. A9, 109; Ex. A1, 24; Ex. A3, 14; Ex. A5, 24.

<sup>921</sup> (U) Ex. A12, 14

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with the enemy, there was no rehearsed signal or planned order of movement to initiate and execute the break contact maneuver. The language barrier further complicated matters because Team OUALLAM had no way to effectively communicate what they wanted their partners to do. That problem could have been mitigated with battle drills and rehearsals.

v. (U//~~FOUO~~) Finally, several of the Partner Force witnesses testified that their weapons malfunctioned and were useless for most of the fight.<sup>922</sup> There is no evidence to indicate that the Partner Force test-fired their weapons prior to commencement of the mission, which might have identified deficiencies that could have been resolved before they left Ouallam.

**b. (U) RECOMMENDATIONS:**

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) Recommend SOCAFRICA and SOCFWD-NWA commanders include partner collective training in the RIP/TOA, incorporate pre-mission battle drill rehearsals as risk mitigation measures, and require battle drill rehearsals and test fire prior to the conduct of any operation.

ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) Recommend this finding be forwarded to the Commander, USSOCOM for other action as he deems appropriate.

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<sup>922</sup> (U) Ex. A42, 2.

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9. (U//~~FOUO~~) **FINDING:** The Team OUALLAM commander and AOB Niger acting commander failed to identify and implement adequate mitigation measures sufficient to reduce the residual risk to LOW during the planning process of their initial mission.

a. (U) DISCUSSION. This finding is thoroughly discussed in Annex 7.

b. (U//~~FOUO~~) **RECOMMENDATION.** Recommend the SOCAFRICA commander conduct a holistic review and revision of their risk assessment and mitigation methodology.

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10. (U//~~FOUO~~) **FINDING:** The acting AOB Niger commander failed to coordinate for emergency CASEVAC and personnel recovery support with French and Nigerien partner forces prior to operations, even though they were identified in the CONOPS "PACE" (Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency) plan.

## a. (U) DISCUSSION:

i. (~~S~~) Team OUALLAM's (b)(1) 1.4a CONOPS and Team ARLIT's (b)(1) 1.4a FRAGO on 3 October 2017 each listed French assets from (b)(1) 1.4a as part of their air evacuation PACE plan.<sup>923</sup> Both CONOPS also listed Nigerien forces in their PR plans.<sup>924</sup> Despite identifying these forces as medical and personnel recovery assets,

(b)(1) 1.4a  
(b)(1) 1.4a<sup>925</sup>

ii. (~~S~~) Team OUALLAM and AOB Niger did not conduct pre-mission coordination with French forces for (b)(1) 1.4a. Team OUALLAM was under the impression that (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4b and therefore they did not conduct (b)(1) 1.4a or include (b)(1) 1.4a assets in their mission planning process.<sup>926</sup>

iii. (~~S~~) The U.S. LNOs working with French Task Forces BARKHANE and (b)(1) 1.4g demonstrated the importance of integration with our Allies while conducting operations. Their ability to communicate with the French based on an established relationship provided Team OUALLAM with the necessary support from French Air Forces that ultimately saved lives.<sup>927</sup> However, (b)(1) 1.4g (b)(1) 1.4g their support on 4 October 2017 was limited to shows of force.<sup>928</sup>

<sup>923</sup> (U) Ex. B15, 9; Ex. B29, 10; Ex. A69, 56-58.

<sup>924</sup> (U) Ex. B15, 9; Ex. B29, 10; Ex. A69, 56-58.

<sup>925</sup> (U) Ex. B15, 9; Ex. B29, 10; Ex. A69, 56-58.

<sup>926</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 56-58.

<sup>927</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 206; Ex. A3, 118-119; Ex. A16, 3; Ex. A9, 136-137.

<sup>928</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 56-58.

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**b. (U) RECOMMENDATION:**

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) Recommend SOCAFRICA implement procedures to ensure sufficient pre-coordination with partner nation units when they are listed on the CONOPS as potential support assets.

ii. (~~S~~) Recommend USAFRICOM establish and maintain formal agreements (b)(1) 1.4d

(b)(1) 1.4d

iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) Recommend this finding be forwarded to the Commander, USSOCOM for other action as he deems appropriate.

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11. (U//FOUO) **FINDING:** Air Forces Africa's (AFAF) ISR and PR response was hindered by limited operational planning and procedures, and a lack of coordination and synchronization with U.S. forces and partner nations.

a. (U) DISCUSSION:

i. (S) [redacted] (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g

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

ii. (S) U.S. [redacted] crews re-tasked from [redacted] operations [redacted] were unfamiliar with operations in Niger and did not have access to mission CONOPS, a SITREP, or Commander's Intent in order to gain situational awareness [redacted] Team OUALAM commander's tactical decision to divert [redacted] to follow suspected enemy personnel from Objective NORTH resulted in [redacted] coverage as the Team returned to base through Tongo Tongo.<sup>933</sup> [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]

iii. (S) U.S. [redacted] crews had not previously interacted with French forces, either tactical air assets like the Mirage fighters or ISR assets [redacted] familiarity with French capabilities and an understanding of communications procedures (reinforced through exercises) would have significantly enhanced U.S.-French ISR support or possible [redacted] on 4 October 2017.<sup>936</sup>

iv. (S) The USAFRICOM SPINS provide supplemental information for PR planning to include [redacted] [redacted]

<sup>929</sup> (U) Ex. A91, 3.

<sup>930</sup> (U) Ex. A88, 2.

<sup>931</sup> (U) Ex. D67; Ex. D68.

<sup>932</sup> (U) Ex. D91, 2-3.

<sup>933</sup> (U) Ex. G22, 10-12.

<sup>934</sup> (U) Ex. G22, 18-19.

<sup>935</sup> (U) Ex. A88, 2; Ex. A91, 2.

<sup>936</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 109; Ex. A91, 2.

<sup>937</sup> (U) Ex. B37; Ex. B40.

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(b)(1) 1.4d <sup>938</sup> The SPINS are meant to be distributed to all affected agencies to ensure a basic level of understanding between all participants in any PR event. (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4d

(b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4d <sup>939</sup> After the attack there was difficulty coordinating actions between French, Nigerien, and U.S. forces in the area (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4d

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

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

(b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4d <sup>941</sup>

b. **(U//FOUO) RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend Commander Air Forces Africa and Commander SOCAFRICA review processes for coordination and synchronization between ground forces, partner forces, and ISR assets.

<sup>938</sup> (S) Ex. B37; Ex. B40; The USAFRICOM Weekly SPINS are generated at the U.S. only classification level (b)(1) 1.4d redacted for foreign disclosure to facilitate integration; no version was created for release to Niger.

<sup>939</sup> (S) Ex. A86, 2; (b)(1) 1.4d unfamiliarity with the SPINS mandated CSAR A frequency (Ex. A98, 3).

<sup>940</sup> (U//FOUO) See Annex 5 for a complete description of PR communication issues.

<sup>941</sup> (U) Ex. A49, 1; Ex. A86, 2, 61.

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12. (U//~~FOUO~~) **FINDING:** The Team OUALLAM Commander, the acting AOB Niger Commander, the AOB Niger Operations Warrant Officer and Sergeant Major failed to accurately characterize the mission that Team OUALLAM conducted in Tiloa to the SOCCE-LCB Commander. The mischaracterization was a result of complacency and an over-reliance on templated CONOPS.

a. (U) DISCUSSION.

i. (S) As discussed in greater detail in Part IV(1)(d.) of this report, the (b)(3) / (b)(6) Team Leader and the acting AOB Commander and his staff knew that the intended purpose of the original mission on 3 October 2017 was to act on time-sensitive intelligence in order to find/fix the location of (b)(1) 1.4a<sup>942</sup>

ii. (S) The (b)(3) / (b)(6) Team Leader developed a CONOPS that described the mission as a "civil / military reconnaissance."<sup>943</sup> The CONOPS inaccurately described the purpose of the mission to "improve situational awareness of the (b)(1) 1.4a region and effectiveness of current military efforts to disrupt AQIM/ISIS-GS activity in the area."<sup>944</sup> As prepared, the CONOPS outlined a series of key leader engagements (KLE) in various locations that Team OUALLAM never intended to actually visit.<sup>945</sup> The CONOPS made absolutely no mention of (b)(1) 1.4a

(b)(1) 1.4a

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iii. (S) Despite providing the intelligence that drove this mission, and active participation in developing the CONOPS, including allocating ISR assets to assist in fixing the location of (b)(1) 1.4a the acting AOB Commander and his staff reviewed and approved the CONOPS as developed by the (b)(3) / (b)(6) Team Leader.<sup>947</sup> The acting AOB Commander thereafter notified the SOCCE-LCB Commander of the mission as described in the CONOPS, but failed to inform the SOCCE-LCB Commander that the mission actually intended to find/fix the location of a named objective.<sup>948</sup> The SOCCE-LCB Commander was never aware of the true nature of the original mission to Tiloa.<sup>949</sup>

iv. (S) Had the original CONOPS been characterized accurately, it would have required a higher approval-authority and (b)(1) 1.4a notification to SOCAFRICA.<sup>950</sup> The

<sup>942</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 43, 56; Ex. A3, 34; Ex. A7, 16-17, 30, 50; Ex. A5, 54-55; Ex. A1, 109, 137.

<sup>943</sup> (U) Ex. B23.

<sup>944</sup> (U) Ex. B23.

<sup>945</sup> (U) Ex. B23.

<sup>946</sup> (U) Ex. B23.

<sup>947</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 81-84.

<sup>948</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 81-84.

<sup>949</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 84-85.

<sup>950</sup> (U) Ex. 11

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nature of the mission would have generated additional scrutiny, coordination, and supervision from levels of command higher than the AOB.<sup>951</sup>

v. (U//~~FOUO~~) A preponderance of the evidence does not support a finding that the mischaracterization was intended, but rather a result of the negligent use of templated CONOPS.<sup>952</sup>

vi. (U//~~FOUO~~) Commanders at all levels owe a duty of care in accurately characterizing the nature of their mission in order to ensure their CONOPS receive the required degree of scrutiny and coordination.

b. (U//~~FOUO~~) **RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend this finding be forwarded to the Commander, USSOCOM for action as he deems appropriate.

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<sup>951</sup> (U) Ex. I1

<sup>952</sup> (U) See Part IV(1)(d.)(iii)

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13. (U//~~FOUO~~) **FINDING:** Reports that the Tongo Tongo village elder intentionally stalled Team OUALLAM and their Nigerien partners to give the enemy time to attack are not supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

a. (U) DISCUSSION:

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) While there is some evidence to indicate that the enemy enjoys freedom of movement in Tongo Tongo, there is not enough evidence to conclude that the villagers of Tongo Tongo willingly (without duress) aid and support them.<sup>953</sup>

ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) ISR video footage following the attack on 4 October 2017 shows large groups of fighting-age males assembling near the southeastern corner of the village before dispersing into the village.<sup>954</sup> When questioned, villagers including the village elder acknowledge that they have regular contact with the perpetrators of the attack, but that perpetrators are not from the village and any aid or silence the villagers provide is under threat of being killed.<sup>955</sup>

iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) During the attack, the village elder called the regional prefect for Tongo Tongo and reported that U.S. and Nigerien forces were under attack.<sup>956</sup> After the attack, the same village elder aided Nigerien forces in finding wounded and dead U.S. and Nigerien personnel in the area surrounding the village.<sup>957</sup> (b)(6) (b)(6) also aided Nigerien and U.S. forces in finding the bodies of SSG Wright, SSG Black, and SSG Jeremiah Johnson.<sup>958</sup>

b. **RECOMMENDATION:** (U//~~FOUO~~) None.

<sup>953</sup> (U) Ex. A19, 6, 10; Ex. A20, 4; Ex. A21, 2, 4; Ex. A22, 10; Ex. A23, 2, 8; Ex. A24, 3, 8.

<sup>954</sup> (U) Ex. D50.

<sup>955</sup> (U) Ex. A19, 6, 10; Ex. A20, 4; Ex. A21, 2, 4; Ex. A22, 10; Ex. A23, 2, 8; Ex. A24, 3, 8.

<sup>956</sup> (U) Ex. A22, 3; Ex. A23, 2, 13.

<sup>957</sup> (U) Ex. A18, 1; Ex. A22, 3; Ex. A23, 2.

<sup>958</sup> (U) Ex. A17, 9-12.

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14. (U//~~FOUO~~) **FINDING:** SSG Justin Wright, SSG Bryan Black, SSG Jeremiah Johnson, and SGT LaDavid Johnson died actively engaging the enemy and were not captured and executed.<sup>959</sup> The enemy stripped their bodies of serviceable equipment and they were found partially clothed.

a. (U) Discussion.

i. (U) SSG Wright, SSG Black and SSG J. Johnson.

1. (U//~~FOUO~~) As noted in Part IV, paragraph 5 above, witnesses last saw SSG Wright, SSG Black, and SSG Jeremiah Johnson in the original TIC site, fighting from the cover of USV2.<sup>960</sup> Until January 2018, the investigating team based its findings of fact with regard to the deaths of SSG Wright, SSG Black, and SSG J. Johnson largely on circumstantial evidence as corroborated by physical evidence collected from the scene of the attack.<sup>961</sup> On 25 January 2018, ISIS-GS published a propaganda video that included video footage from a helmet camera that SSG J. Johnson was wearing during the attack and up until the moment he died.<sup>962</sup> Although the video is spliced and edited in places, its content and authenticity are corroborated by a substantial amount of physical evidence collected by the investigating team at the site of the attack.<sup>963</sup>

2. (U) Based upon a preponderance of the evidence:

a. (U//~~FOUO~~) SSG Bryan Black died instantly from a gunshot wound (b)(6) while actively engaging the enemy in an attempt to withdraw from the initial TIC site.<sup>964</sup> He was the first U.S. service member to die in the attack.<sup>965</sup>

b. (U//~~FOUO~~) The enemy critically wounded SSG J. Johnson, immobilizing him, as he and SSG Wright attempted to break contact and evade to the west of the initial TIC site.<sup>966</sup> SSG Wright came back to SSG J. Johnson's position after he was wounded and attempted to repel the advancing enemy.<sup>967</sup> The enemy killed both Soldiers with small arms fire approximately 85 meters west of USV2 in the vicinity of the initial TIC site.<sup>968</sup>

<sup>959</sup> (U) See Part IV, paragraph 4 and 5 supra for additional discussion.

<sup>960</sup> (U) A3, 83; A7, 87; A9, 99; A1, 182; A2, 98; A15, 19-20.

<sup>961</sup> (U) Exs. F2, F8-F10; Ex. C5, 11-23, 25-28; Encls. 8, 13, 18, 19.

<sup>962</sup> (U) Ex. D89.

<sup>963</sup> (U) Ex. D89; Exs. F2, F8-F10; Ex. C5, 11-23, 25-28; Encls. 8, 13, 18, 19.

<sup>964</sup> (U) Ex. D89.

<sup>965</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. D89; See Part IV, paragraph 5 for details of the death of SGT LaDavid Johnson (finding that the enemy killed SGT L. Johnson between 1230-1245).

<sup>966</sup> (U) Ex. D89.

<sup>967</sup> (U) Ex. D89.

<sup>968</sup> (U) Ex. D89; Exs. F2, F8-F10; Ex. C5, 11-23, 25-28; Encls. 8, 13, 18, 19.

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c. (U//~~FOUO~~) As the enemy assaulted through the TIC site, they fired bursts into the bodies of all three Soldiers.<sup>969</sup> They ultimately stripped the three bodies of any serviceable equipment and uniform items and later attempted to remove them from the battlefield in a pick-up truck.

d. (U//~~FOUO~~) Nigerien villagers from Tongo Tongo found the three bodies, later recovered by Nigerien armed forces, at the original TIC site.<sup>970</sup> Nigerien forces turned the remains of SSG Black, SSG Wright, and SSG J. Johnson over to U.S. Forces near the TIC site on the evening of 4 October 2017 for dignified transfer.

ii. (U) SGT LaDavid Johnson.

1. (U//~~FOUO~~) The investigating team photographed and collected five expended 5.56mm shell casings and a single unexpended 5.56mm round from the tree where SGT Johnson's remains were discovered.<sup>971</sup> The investigating team found four of those casings and the unexpended round outside of the tree to the immediate east of the tree.<sup>972</sup> One expended casing was found inside the perimeter of the tree, close to where SGT Johnson's body was discovered. Forensic scientists identified SGT Johnson's DNA on physical evidence collected from the site including 5.56 casings and a radio antenna. The position of the shell casings relative to the tree indicate SGT Johnson fired his U.S. M4 weapon a total of five times on advancing enemy before being killed.

2. (U//~~FOUO~~) The team found 42 expended DShK shell casings near tire tracks approximately 95m from SGT Johnson's last fighting position under the tree.<sup>973</sup> Investigators photographed the tree and it appeared to have been hit several times by large-caliber fire.<sup>974</sup>

3. (U//~~FOUO~~) Investigators found 7.62 x 39mm (AK-47) shell casings and projectiles in incremental positions between the DShK rounds and the tree.<sup>975</sup> The presence of those casings suggest the enemy suppressed SGT Johnson from a DShK-mounted vehicle from a distance of 95m before dismounted enemy advanced on his position with AK-47s.

4. (U//~~FOUO~~) Various print and television news outlets published reports stating that SGT Johnson's hands were bound before the enemy executed him. Those

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<sup>969</sup> (U) Ex. D89; Exs. F2, F8-F10; Ex. C5, 11-23, 25-28; Encls. 8, 13, 18, 19.

<sup>970</sup> (U) Ex. A17, 9-12.

<sup>971</sup> (U) Ex. F2, Photographs 14, 44.

<sup>972</sup> (U) Ex. D33.

<sup>973</sup> (U) Ex. C5, Photographs 43-45.

<sup>974</sup> (U) Ex. C5, Photographs 35-37. See also Ex. D51; Ex. D52.

<sup>975</sup> (U) See Figure 17 Supra.

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reports are false. Those articles quote an “anonymous Nigerien soldier” and a “23-year old villager from Tongo Tongo named Adamou Boubacar.”<sup>976</sup> A Washington Post article quotes “Adamou Boubacar, a 23 year-old farmer and trader” as its source.<sup>977</sup> Adamou Boubacar, however, is a (b)(6) year-old elder from the village of Tongo Tongo.<sup>978</sup> The investigating team interviewed him in person. In a recorded interview, Adamou Boubacar disputed the account attributed to him in the Washington Post.<sup>979</sup> Journalist Debora Patta also interviewed Adamou Boubacar in a televised CBS news story and he said nothing about seeing SGT Johnson’s remains.<sup>980</sup>

5. (U//FOUO) The investigating team made every effort to identify and locate the “anonymous Nigerien soldier” quoted in the CBS news piece cited above. CBS News declined the investigating team’s request for the witness’s contact information. The investigating team interviewed (b)(6) the village elder who first reported the discovery of SGT Johnson’s remains.<sup>981</sup> In a recorded interview, the elder described SGT Johnson’s body positioned in the same manner as it was observed and photographed by the FAN forces who recovered his remains.<sup>982</sup> The investigating team also interviewed the commander of the FAN forces who were first to arrive at the scene where SGT Johnson’s remains were discovered.<sup>983</sup> That commander personally viewed and photographed SGT Johnson’s remains at the site, and he disputed the account of the “anonymous Nigerien soldier” and the description in the Washington Post article.<sup>984</sup> The commander also stated no member of his organization spoke with any news outlet. Furthermore, ISR full motion video shows numerous FAN soldiers as they discover SGT Johnson’s remains, inspect the area, remove him from under the tree, wrap his remains, and place him into a vehicle.<sup>985</sup> None of those Soldiers corroborated the account by the “anonymous Nigerien soldier.”<sup>986</sup>

6. (U//FOUO) No medical forensic evidence exists to suggest that SGT Johnson’s wrists or arms were bound. No ligature marks were apparent at the time of the autopsy. The autopsy report notes the absence of soot or unburned gunpowder

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<sup>976</sup> (U) See, “New Details on Ambush in Niger that left 4 U.S. Soldiers Dead,” Debora Patta, CBS News, 2 November, 2017. See also, “U.S. Soldier in Niger Ambush was Bound and Apparently Executed, Villagers Say,” Sudarsan Raghavan, Washington Post, November 10, 2017.

<sup>977</sup> (U) “U.S. Soldier in Niger Ambush was Bound and Apparently Executed, Villagers Say”, Sudarsan Raghavan, Washington Post, November 10, 2017.

<sup>978</sup> (U) Ex. A17, 1.

<sup>979</sup> (U) Ex. A17, 14.

<sup>980</sup> (U) “New Details on Ambush in Niger that left 4 U.S. Soldiers Dead”, Debora Patta, CBS News, November 2, 2017.

<sup>981</sup> (U) Ex. A17; Ex. A18.

<sup>982</sup> (U) Ex. A18.

<sup>983</sup> (U) Ex. A36, 20.

<sup>984</sup> (U) Ex. C3, Photographs 17-18.

<sup>985</sup> (U) Ex. D40, 13-16.

<sup>986</sup> (U) Ex. A36.

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particles that would indicate the close range discharge of a firearm.<sup>987</sup> Shell casings and (b)(6) discovered in the ground beneath where SGT Johnson's head was positioned indicate SGT Johnson was shot there and not subsequently carried or moved into that position.<sup>988</sup> When the village elder discovered his remains, SGT Johnson was (b)(6). That was the same position in which he was found and photographed by the FAN commander on the scene.<sup>990</sup>

7. (U//~~FOUO~~) These findings also consider the investigating team's common understanding of enemy tactics and methods. It is unlikely the enemy would have suppressed SGT Johnson with heavy DShK machine gun fire except for SGT Johnson engaging the enemy from his position of concealment. SGT Johnson's helmet had three bullet holes through it.<sup>991</sup> If captured alive, it is unlikely the enemy would have shot SGT Johnson through a protective helmet. The investigating team further believes if SGT Johnson were captured alive, the enemy would have attempted to keep him hostage for potential propaganda use. The tree under which villagers and FAN personnel discovered SGT Johnson's body was an extremely thorny tree in an otherwise sparsely vegetated field.<sup>992</sup> The tree had thick thorny branches that hung low to the ground.<sup>993</sup> The tree would have been difficult to crawl under, other than in an attempt to seek cover from the enemy. Although the enemy did crawl under the tree in order to remove serviceable uniform items and equipment from SGT Johnson's body, a preponderance of the evidence suggests the enemy would not have crawled under this tree merely in an effort to dispose of SGT Johnson's body after he was killed.<sup>994</sup>

8. (U//~~FOUO~~) It took search and recovery forces two days to find SGT Johnson's body because they concentrated their search in the area immediately surrounding the initial attack and his last known location. SGT Johnson had evaded approximately 960 meters from his last known location and approximately 1.6 km from the initial attack site.

b. (U) **RECOMMENDATION.** None.

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<sup>987</sup> (U) Ex. 10.

<sup>988</sup> (U) Ex. F2, Photographs 21-23.

<sup>989</sup> (U) Ex. A18.

<sup>990</sup> (U) Ex. A36; Ex. C3, Photographs 17-18.

<sup>991</sup> (U) Ex. E11, 117-125.

<sup>992</sup> (U) Ex. C5, Photograph 42.

<sup>993</sup> (U) Ex. C5, Photograph 38.

<sup>994</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) This conclusion considers the fact that the enemy also removed serviceable uniform items from the bodies of PN1 and PN10, both killed near in time to SGT LaDavid Johnson, and left their remains where they were killed.

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15. (U//~~FOUO~~) **FINDING:** SGT LaDavid Johnson did not have a Friendly Force Tracker (FFT) when he was separated from Team OUALLAM.

a. (U) Discussion.

i. (~~S~~) As discussed in detail in Annex 2, Team OUALLAM had one FFT with them on 3-4 October 2017 and it was located on the dashboard of USV1. SGT Johnson did not have an FFT. Reports that an FFT that SGT Johnson may have been carrying (b)(1) 1.4g to search and rescue teams are erroneous.

ii. (~~S~~) There were (b)(1) 1.4g "beacons", "SHOUT Nano hits", or "comms hits" reported as coming from Team OUALLAM or even specifically from SGT LaDavid Johnson.<sup>995</sup> All of those reports proved false. No signal was ever received from the one SHOUT Nano device carried in USV1 by Team OUALLAM, no calls were detected from any of the team's assigned or personal communications equipment, and no distress signals were received from any of the team's Personnel Recovery (PR) equipment.<sup>996</sup>

iii. (U//~~FOUO~~) The preponderance of the evidence indicates that none of these reported signals came from equipment associated with any member of Team OUALLAM. Rather the evidence suggests that the technology, capabilities, and limitations of the SHOUT Nanos were not well understood outside of the USAFRICOM and SOCAFRICA Joint Personnel Recovery Cells (JPRCs).

iv. (~~S~~) (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<sup>997</sup> That misinterpretation was very difficult to correct once it was posted in the various (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g<sup>998</sup>

v. (~~S~~) Some (b)(1) 1.4a/g signals were also erroneously characterized as "beacons" and wrongly assumed to have originated with SGT Johnson.<sup>999</sup> The fundamental lack of understanding about (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g led to the characterization of unrelated (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g belonging to Team OUALLAM.<sup>1000</sup> That resulted in (b)(1) 1.4a deploying to conduct one ground and one aerial reconnaissance mission for (b)(1) 1.4a French personnel and equipment were unnecessarily placed at risk based on

<sup>995</sup> (U) Ex. G24, 23, 44, 46, 48, 53, 55, 57.

<sup>996</sup> (U) Ex. A83, 1; A85, 2; K3, 1.

<sup>997</sup> (U) Ex. G45, 4-5.

<sup>998</sup> (U) Ex. A83, 2.

<sup>999</sup> (U) See Annex 2.

<sup>1000</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) See Finding 19 for a detailed discussion on the misuse of mIRC.

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those inaccurate reports. The confusion (b)(1) 1.4a also resulted in ISR platforms being directed to (b)(1) 1.4a different locations, at least once by (b)(1) 1.4a ISR platform, to investigate these reports.<sup>1001</sup> None of the Iridium, or (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g signals detected between 4-6 October were associated with any member of Team OUALLAM.<sup>1002</sup>

b. **(U) RECOMMENDATION:** See findings 18 and 19 for recommendations.

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<sup>1001</sup> (U) See Annex 3.

<sup>1002</sup> (U) Ex. K3, 1.

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16. (U//~~FOUO~~) **FINDING:** Individual members of Team OUALLAM performed numerous acts of bravery while under fire on 4 October 2017.

a. (U//~~FOUO~~) **DISCUSSION.** In a fight where the enemy had a three to one advantage and were equipped with medium and heavy machine guns, including PKMs (7.62 x 54mm) and DShKs (12.7 x 108mm), rocket propelled grenades (RPGs), and mortars, members of Team OUALLAM and several of their Nigerien partners performed numerous acts of bravery.<sup>1003</sup> Those acts undoubtedly saved the lives of Nigeriens and Americans alike.

b. (U//~~FOUO~~) **RECOMMENDATION.** This report and the associated exhibits should be forwarded to the Commander USSOCOM to review for appropriate recognition.

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<sup>1003</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 175-176, 181, 183; Ex. A2, 105, 108, 130-131; Ex. A3, 77-78, 80-81, 88-90, 94-95; Ex. A5, 90, 92-94, 98, 100; Ex. A7, 81, 91; Ex. A9, 87-88, 90-91, 93, 97-99, 103-104, 110, 124, 126; Ex. A25, 2; Ex. D40; Ex. D62-D64; Ex. D89.

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17. (U//FOUO) **FINDING:** The French and Nigerien aerial and ground response was instrumental in saving the lives of the remaining team members.

a. (U) DISCUSSION:

i. (S) SOCCE-LCB initiated their request for French (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) support when Team OUALLAM reported that they were in contact with the enemy.<sup>1004</sup> One of the members of SOCCE-LCB was an LNO to the French Task Force (Task Force BARKHANE) co-located in N'Djamena, Chad.<sup>1005</sup> Upon declaration of the TIC, SOCCE-LCB called the LNO and requested TF BARKHANE support, particularly with TF BARKHANE's fixed wing assets (Mirage 2000) from Niamey, Niger.<sup>1006</sup> (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4d

(b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4d  
 (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4d Mirages  
 in Niamey, Niger.<sup>1007</sup>

ii. (S) Upon notification, the Mirages (b)(1) 1.4a took off (b)(1) 1.4a/g (b)(1) 1.4a/g<sup>1008</sup> The French Mirages were on station within seven minutes and immediately conducted two, single ship shows of force with a southeast offset from the TIC site at 1320 and 1325.<sup>1009</sup> Those two shows of force occurred at approximately the same time that the remaining members of Team OUALLAM were establishing their defensive position in the Alamo.<sup>1010</sup> While none of the team members specifically remember these two shows of force, a preponderance of the evidence indicates that they caused the enemy to abandon their battlefield recovery efforts on the TIC site itself.<sup>1011</sup>

iii. (S) After conducting (b)(1) 1.4d, (b)(1) 1.4g the Mirages performed two more shows of force at 1458 and 1519 directly over the Alamo position from south to north.<sup>1012</sup> Team members recall those two shows of force as instrumental in forcing the enemy to move away from their position and abandon the search for them.<sup>1013</sup> The French Mirages stayed on station until 1853 (aside from (b)(1) 1.4d, (b)(1) 1.4g), but did not conduct any more shows of force.<sup>1014</sup>

<sup>1004</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 103, 105-106.

<sup>1005</sup> (U) Ex. A74, 2.

<sup>1006</sup> (U) Ex. A69, 105-106; Ex. A74, 2.

<sup>1007</sup> (U) Ex. A74, 2.

<sup>1008</sup> (U) Ex. A98, 1.

<sup>1009</sup> (U) Ex. A98, 1.

<sup>1010</sup> (U) Ex. A7, 106; Ex. A9, 136; Encl. 6, 3-4; Encl. 10.

<sup>1011</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 206; Ex. A2, 130; Ex. A3, 64, 119; Ex. A5, 139; Ex. A7, 106, 109; Ex. A9, 136; Ex. A36, 8-9; Ex. D50; Ex. D53-D55.

<sup>1012</sup> (U) Ex. A98, 2.

<sup>1013</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 206; Ex. A2, 130; Ex. A3, 64, 119; Ex. A5, 139; Ex. A7, 106, 109; Ex. A9, 136; Ex. A36, 8-9; Ex. D50; Ex. D53-D55.

<sup>1014</sup> (U) Ex. A98, 2.

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iv. (S) [redacted] (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g  
 [redacted] (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g <sup>1015</sup> When the French Mirages came on station, they performed the first two shows of force before establishing communication [redacted] (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g

[redacted] (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g  
 [redacted] (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g <sup>1017</sup> Team OUALLAM wanted the Mirages to drop ordnance, [redacted] (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g  
 [redacted] (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g <sup>1018</sup>

v. (S) The Nigerien response was also immediate. [redacted] (b)(1)1.4g of the TIC, [redacted] (b)(6) the [redacted] (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4d commander, launched a ground QRF from [redacted] (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4d <sup>1019</sup> In addition, he launched a Gazelle helicopter from [redacted] (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4d that was the first aerial platform to arrive at the TIC site. <sup>1020</sup> The Nigerien helicopter was later moved off station to de-conflict with the French Mirages' shows of force. <sup>1021</sup>

b. (S) **RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend the SOCAFRICA commander continue to develop the relationship with French and Nigerien forces, and include them in CONOPS development and planning to the maximum extent possible. [redacted] (b)(1) 1.4a

[redacted] (b)(1) 1.4a  
 [redacted] (b)(1) 1.4a

<sup>1015</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 139.

<sup>1016</sup> (U) Ex. A91, 1-2.

<sup>1017</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 139; Ex. A7, 109.

<sup>1018</sup> (U) Ex. A91, 2, 4; Ex. 98, 3.

<sup>1019</sup> (S) [redacted] (b)(6) assessed that because he did not have [redacted] (b)(1) 1.4d in the area of Objective NORTH, he wanted to have a QRF closer to Team OUALLAM's objective (Ex. A36, 2).

<sup>1020</sup> (U) Ex. G38, 1-2; Ex. A49, 1.

<sup>1021</sup> (U) Ex. G38, 1-2; Ex. A49, 1.

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18. (S//NF) **FINDING:** USAFRICOM's request for (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g

(b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g was not part of the standard processes and procedures used for Personnel Recovery (PR) events.

a. (U//FOUO) DISCUSSION: This paragraph is classified above the classification of this report. Refer to Annex 2 for details.

b. (S//NF) **RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend referral of this finding to the Joint Staff to determine whether a comprehensive Department-wide review of th (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g

(b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g is necessary. (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g

(b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4f, (b)(3) 3605

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19. (S) **FINDING:** (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g and improper use of the mIRC battle management tool reduced situational awareness, caused confusion, and resulted in a disjointed crisis response.

## a. (U) DISCUSSION:

i. (S) The (b)(1) 1.4g battle management tool used during the TIC was mIRC, an Internet Relay Chat client for Windows that is a fully functional chat utility.<sup>1022</sup> It is used (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g to develop shared understanding of the battlefield across the entire battlespace. The main mIRC channel window used during the TIC (b)(1) 1.4a was created by the ISR Tactical Controllers (ITCs) in the SOCAFRICA JSOAC soon after the TIC was declared.<sup>1023</sup> This soon became the de facto Operations mIRC channel and at times had (b)(1) 1.4a members monitoring and commenting in the channel.<sup>1024</sup>

ii. (S) Designed to cross-level information in order to provide commanders (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g the information (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g this mIRC channel (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g instead became a clearing house (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g<sup>1025</sup> There was no control or oversight (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g<sup>1026</sup> Misinformation flourished and delayed attempts at gaining situational awareness.<sup>1027</sup> Legacy mIRC handles caused confusion (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g<sup>1028</sup>

iii. (S) In one instance, erroneous information was posted that two U.S. wounded had been picked up by French helicopters.<sup>1029</sup> When Team OUALLAM on the ground was asked if it was their wounded that had been picked up, they responded that it was not, but believed it could have been two of their other members who had been separated from them.<sup>1030</sup> The benefits of mIRC can also be its flaw. To the extent mIRC allows for flattened communications and shared understanding (b)(1)1.4g (b)(1)1.4g when imprecise information is shared it risks further confusion. For example, initial reports from Team OUALLAM of five missing personnel included an

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<sup>1022</sup> (U) Ex. G23.

<sup>1023</sup> (U) Ex. A88, 1.

<sup>1024</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 65; Ex. G22, 1-108.

<sup>1025</sup> (U) Ex. A89, 1; G22.

<sup>1026</sup> (U) Ex. A88, 2.

<sup>1027</sup> (U) Ex. A5, 135-137; Ex. A63, 4; Ex. A88, 2; Ex. A89, 1; Ex. A91, 2-3.

<sup>1028</sup> (U) Ex. A81, 65; G23.

<sup>1029</sup> (U) Ex. G22, 54-56.

<sup>1030</sup> (U) Ex. A1, 210; Ex. A3, 121-122.

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accounting of their missing interpreter who had also been separated from the Team.<sup>1031</sup> Subsequent mIRC communications sought to clarify the nationalities of the five MIA.<sup>1032</sup> Approximately 35 minutes after the initial report in mIRC, a message listed the five MIA as "5 x US MIA."<sup>1033</sup> A flurry of messages followed regarding five U.S. MIA, adding confusion [REDACTED] <sup>1034</sup>

b. (U//~~FOUO~~) **RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend SOCAFRICA commander develop business rules/SOPs for the use of mIRC and propagate at all subordinate echelons of command. Designate "owners" of standing functional and command channels and ensure they enforce chat discipline within their channels. Leverage existing multi-echelon exercises to train on and rehearse this and other battle management tools at a frequency that will ensure all members of the command are properly trained. Integrate outside agencies and commands that habitually support theater operations into these exercises.

<sup>1031</sup> (S) Ex. G22, 23. At 1321, [REDACTED] relayed from Team OUALLAM that they had "5 x FF MIA." This report did not distinguish that these five friendly personnel were four U.S. Soldiers and one interpreter, whom the Team included in their accountability reporting.

<sup>1032</sup> (U) Ex. G22, 26.

<sup>1033</sup> (U) Ex. G22, 30.

<sup>1034</sup> (U) Ex. G22, 30-42.

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20. (S//NF) **FINDING:** The 4 October 2017 attack was not the result of an intelligence failure. Rather, limitations on (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g activities in Niger contributed to Team OUALLAM's and the Intelligence Community's (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g of an attack.

## a. (U) DISCUSSION:

i. (U//FOUO) There is no formal definition of "intelligence failure" in Department of Defense or Intelligence Community publications, but the investigating team has determined an "intelligence failure" to be an event that the Intelligence Community failed to predict *even though there were sufficient indicators to inform an assessment.*<sup>1035</sup>

ii. (S//NF) Global collection prioritization, collection platform availability, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g and other issues all generate significant gaps in intelligence regarding (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4g in Niger and throughout Africa.<sup>1036</sup> These gaps have been thoroughly documented by USAFRICOM and briefed to the Joint Staff and Congress in USAFRICOM's 2017 Posture Statement and the 2017 Commander's Annual Joint Assessment.<sup>1037</sup> USAFRICOM's 2017 Counter-VEO Campaign Assessment stated "Only a fraction of USAFRICOM's ISR requirements are met. This limits situational understanding, support to operations, and fails to offer adequate threat indications and warnings."<sup>1038</sup> An inability to *collect* intelligence, however, does not equate to an intelligence failure.

iii. (U//FOUO) Team OUALLAM and AOB Niger had full access to the intelligence resources and assets available to them at the time they planned the 3 and 4 October 2017 missions.<sup>1039</sup> Working with their Partner Forces, Team OUALLAM and AOB Niger were aware of the VEO attacks in the Tillabéri region in the previous 12 months, as well as the sophisticated tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) demonstrated by VEOs. Despite this precedent for attacks against security forces in the region, no information existed to suggest a specific threat of ambush by VEOs against U.S. forces.<sup>1040</sup> Consequently, Team OUALLAM and AOB Niger did not believe the enemy would attack U.S. forces.<sup>1041</sup>

<sup>1035</sup> (U//FOUO) TTN28 Definition of Intelligence Failure, on file at USAFRICOM.

<sup>1036</sup> (U//FOUO) TTN28 Follow-on to Intelligence Failure, on file at USAFRICOM.

<sup>1037</sup> (U//FOUO) TTN21 Intelligence Prioritization and Resourcing in Niger and West Africa; USAFRICOM 2017 Posture Statement; USAFRICOM 2017 Commander's Annual Joint Assessment; all on file at USAFRICOM.

<sup>1038</sup> (U//FOUO) CY17 Global Campaign Plan-Violent Extremist Organizations Assessment – USAFRICOM 12 December 2017, on file at USAFRICOM.

<sup>1039</sup> (U//FOUO) TTN28 Follow-on to Intelligence Failure, on file at USAFRICOM; Ex. A75, 2. See Annex 4 for more detail on available intelligence.

<sup>1040</sup> (U//FOUO) Encl. 17; Ex. A7, 9-10; Ex. A1, 18-19; Ex. A61, 2; TTN28 Follow-on to Intelligence Failure, on file at USAFRICOM.

<sup>1041</sup> (U//FOUO) TTN28 Follow-on to Intelligence Failure, on file at USAFRICOM; Ex. A1, 42-43, 45, 47, 49, 139; Ex. A2, 24, 66-68, 128; Ex. A3, 35, 109; Ex. A9, 11; Ex. A59, 17-18; Ex. A60, 28; Ex. A75, 2.

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iv. (~~S~~//NF) Team OUALLAM and AOB Niger lacked (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g

(b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g  
(b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g which could have led to a more thorough consideration of the risk involved and, ultimately, avoided or prevented the 4 October 2017 attack at Tongo Tongo.<sup>1042</sup>

v. (~~S~~//NF) (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g

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

vi. (~~S~~) (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g

(b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g  
(b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g<sup>1044</sup>

b. (~~S~~//NF) **RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend Commander, USAFRICOM direct the USAFRICOM staff to engage with the Niger Country Team, (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g authorities and limitations currently in place in Niger.

Recommend Commander, USAFRICOM direct the USAFRICOM staff to develop an appropriate framework with the Niger Country Team that will allow USSOF working in Niger to maximize the use of (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g capabilities (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g

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

<sup>1042</sup> (U//FOUO) TTN28 Follow-on to Intelligence Failure, on file at USAFRICOM. See Annex 7 for a detailed discussion of risk assessment.

<sup>1043</sup> (U) Ex. A13, 1; Ex. A60, 5-6; Ex. A7, 12; Ex. A75, 2, 3.

<sup>1044</sup> (U) Ex. A13, 1.

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21. (U//~~FOUO~~) **FINDING:** The response time of PR and CASEVAC did not affect the outcome of the events of 4 October 2017.

a. (U//~~FOUO~~) **DISCUSSION:** All four Soldiers KIA on 4 October 2017 sustained wounds that would have been immediately fatal or fatal in a short time,<sup>1045</sup> and were deceased by the time the initial site was accessible to PR assets.<sup>1046</sup> Both Soldiers wounded in action sustained injuries that were managed expeditiously by Team members pursuant to pre-deployment training they had received in prolonged field care.<sup>1047</sup>

b. (U//~~FOUO~~) **RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend SOCAFRICA and service components sustain prolonged field care training programs.

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<sup>1045</sup> (U) Ex. E1-E12.

<sup>1046</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) The bodies of Black, J. Johnson, and Wright were discovered by Partner Force, reported at 1838, approximately seven hours after the initial TIC (Ex. G2, 4). Wounded (b)(3) / (b)(6) had already been evacuated by FRA MEDEVAC at 1725 (G22, 66). The body of L. Johnson was discovered on 6 October 2017 (Ex. G13, 9).

<sup>1047</sup> (U) Ex. A2, 28; Ex. A3, 4, 109-110; Ex. A9, 2-3, 117-119; Ex. A15, 35; Ex. J2, 6.

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22. (U//~~FOUO~~) **FINDING:** USAFRICOM Personnel Recovery Command and Control system had not been thoroughly rehearsed to ensure a timely, effective, and integrated response during contingency operations in Niger.

a. (U) DISCUSSION:

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) Communication between command elements was hampered by the inefficient use of mIRC (see finding 19) and loss of direct communication with Team OUALLAM. One impact of the poor communication was a three-hour delay from the notification of wounded U.S. Soldiers until a PR event was declared.<sup>1048</sup> Although this did not directly affect the end result of the event, it highlights the need for greater efficiency.<sup>1049</sup>

ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM exercises with an emphasis on PR (e.g. JUDICIOUS RESPONSE and EPIC GUARDIAN) are high-level large-scale exercises that did not adequately prepare the Command for PR execution during this real-world event. The last dedicated 'live' PR exercise for West Africa was led by JSOAD-Niger in May 2016.<sup>1050</sup> During that exercise, JSOAD-Niger attempted to identify and develop corrections for friction points that could hamper successful PR events. Several of the observations and lessons identified during that exercise were factors hampering recovery efforts for Team OUALLAM.<sup>1051</sup> Two examples of these lessons identified are the need for all agencies to focus on communication discipline and the utility of regular situational reports on mIRC.<sup>1052</sup>

iii. (~~S~~) USAFRICOM's limited footprint in Western Africa reinforces the need for close relationships with allied and partner nations to ensure successful operations. During this event, it was apparent that little pre-coordination, integrated training, or rehearsals had been conducted (see finding 10.).<sup>1053</sup>

(b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g, (b)(1) 1.7e

(b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g, (b)(1) 1.7e

(b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g, (b)(1) 1.7e

1054

iv. (U//~~FOUO~~) The lack of integrated PR practice was made apparent when several agencies were confused about PR roles and responsibilities.<sup>1055</sup> As a result, no pilot was declared the on-scene commander (air) to take full control of the airspace over the

<sup>1048</sup> (U) Ex. G23, 2, 34; Encl. 6, 3, 8.

<sup>1049</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) See Annexes 5 and 8 for a complete discussion on PR and medical status.

<sup>1050</sup> (U) Ex. 86, 6-17.

<sup>1051</sup> (U) Ex. A86, 8-17.

<sup>1052</sup> (U) Ex. A86, 9, 15-16.

<sup>1053</sup> (U) Ex. A86, 6-17.

<sup>1054</sup> (U) Ex. A86, 2; Ex. A98, 3.

<sup>1055</sup> (U) Ex. A86, 3-4; Ex. A88, 2; G22, 71.

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event in order to provide direction to the assets responding to the event.<sup>1056</sup> These issues stem from the lack of checklist execution by C2 agencies and doctrinal misunderstandings by units responding to a PR event.

**b. (U) RECOMMENDATIONS:**

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) Recommend USAFRICOM JPRC conduct a complete review of the Command's PR program with particular focus on command and control relationships, and foreign partner roles and responsibilities.

ii. (U//~~FOUO~~) Recommend USAFRICOM ensure the Command exercise program specifically exercises coordination and integration of PR efforts across all echelons of command. Recommend this program include regularly scheduled, small-scale training events that stress checklist execution/refinement and partner integration.

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<sup>1056</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A88, 2; G22, 71; See Annex 5 for additional discussion of PR roles and responsibilities.

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23. (U//~~FOUO~~) **FINDING:** The contracted MEDEVAC/CASEVAC capability in Niger does not meet USAFRICOM's Personnel Recovery requirement for operations against VEOs operating in West Africa.

a. (U) DISCUSSION:

i. (U//~~FOUO~~) The Search and Rescue (SAR) contract in Niamey, Niger was established in October 2014 to mitigate the risk-to-force caused by an unsourced PR Task Force (PRTF) request submitted by USAFRICOM.<sup>1057</sup> The contract requires Berry Aviation to provide 24/7 dedicated rotary-wing and Short Take Off and Landing fixed-wing aircraft, and paramedic-level field and in-flight patient care for PR, CASEVAC, airlift (passenger, cargo, or combination), and airdrop services.<sup>1058</sup> Berry Aviation aircraft are required to be capable of launching within 1-hour of notification (N+1).<sup>1059</sup>

ii. (~~S~~) The Berry contracted aircraft lack a robust communication package and (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g capability.<sup>1060</sup> This means the Berry aircraft are more akin to the Life Flight capability (b)(1) 1.4g. In contrast, a dedicated PRTF consists of military aircraft that are traditionally equipped with (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g. Additionally, PRTFs have extensive (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g and (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g teams that enable them to conduct the full spectrum of PR operations.<sup>1063</sup>

iii. (~~G~~) Task Force BARKHANE's ability to effect a landing on an uncertain landing zone was based on their standard (b)(1) 1.4d, (b)(1) 1.4g package (b)(1) 1.4d, (b)(1) 1.4g

b. (~~S~~) **RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend USAFRICOM reassess minimum MEDEVAC/CASEVAC requirements based upon increased (b)(1) 1.4(d), (b)(1) 1.4(g)

(b)(1) 1.4g Recommend Commander, USAFRICOM direct SOCAFRICA commander to re-evaluate their

<sup>1057</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) TTN45, on file at USAFRICOM - "Search and Rescue (SAR) Contract, Niamey."

<sup>1058</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) TTN45, on file at USAFRICOM - "Search and Rescue (SAR) Contract, Niamey"; Ex. A86, 1.

<sup>1059</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) TTN45, on file at USAFRICOM - "Search and Rescue (SAR) Contract, Niamey"; Ex. A86, 1.

<sup>1060</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) TTN45, on file at USAFRICOM - "Search and Rescue (SAR) Contract, Niamey."

<sup>1061</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) Ex. A83, 3; A86, 1; TTN45, on file at USAFRICOM - "Search and Rescue (SAR) Contract, Niamey."

<sup>1062</sup> (U//~~FOUO~~) JP 3-50, page VI-17, states that a PRTF is capable of locating and authenticating isolated personnel, protecting isolated personnel from adversary threats, providing Force Protection for itself, providing mission C2 systems support, and recovering Isolated Personnel.

<sup>1063</sup> (U) JP 3-50, page VI-17.

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CONOPS risk-assessment criteria based on the restricted PR capability afforded by contracted CASEVAC.

(U) This investigation was signed on 31 January 2018.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. L. Cloutier Jr.", with a large, stylized initial "R" and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ROGER L. CLOUTIER Jr.  
Major General, U.S. Army  
Investigating Officer

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**(U) TABLE OF EXHIBITS**

(U) For the purpose of this Report, an exhibit is directed evidence gathered by the investigating team in the course of the investigation. Exhibits may be sworn statements, interview transcripts, physical evidence, photographs, videos, logs, reports, etc. Exhibits are primary sources of evidence.

**(U) EXHIBIT A – WITNESS STATEMENTS**~~(SECRET)~~

A1 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
A2 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
A3 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
A4 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
A5 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
A6 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (DA FORM 2823)  
A7 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
A8 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (DA FORM 2823)  
A9 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
A10 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (DA FORM 2823)  
A11 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (07DEC17 PHONE INTERVIEW)  
A12 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
A13 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
A14 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (NULL)  
A15 – (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
A16 – (b)(6) (DA FORM 2823)  
A17 – (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
A18 – (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
A19 – (b)(6) (18JUL17 DEBRIEFING)  
A20 – (b)(6) (09OCT17 TIR)  
A21 – (b)(6) (10OCT17 TIR)  
A22 – (b)(6) (11OCT17 TIR)  
A23 – (b)(6) (12OCT17 DEBRIEFING)  
A24 – (b)(6) (14OCT17 TIR)  
A25 – (b)(6) (MFR)  
A26 – (b)(6) (MFR)  
A27 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 2 (MFR)  
A28 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 5 (MFR)  
A29 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 9 (MFR)  
A30 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 7 (TRANSCRIPT)  
A31 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 3 (MFR)  
A32 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 19 (MFR)  
A33 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 16 (MFR)  
A34 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 14 (MFR)

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A35 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 20 (MFR)  
 A36 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 35 / 36 (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A37 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 25 (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A38 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 23 (MFR)  
 A39 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 29 (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A40 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 29 (14DEC17 MFR)  
 A41 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 24 (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A42 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 17 (MFR)  
 A43 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 22 (MFR)  
 A44 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 26 (MFR)  
 A45 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 27 (MFR)  
 A46 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 28 (MFR)  
 A47 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 30 (MFR)  
 A48 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 31 (MFR)  
 A49 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 37 (MFR)  
 A50 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 33 (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A51 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 34 (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A52 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A53 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A54 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (NULL)  
 A55 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A56 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A57 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A58 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A59 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A60 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A61 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A62 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A63 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A64 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (08NOV17 MFR)  
 A65 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (08DEC17 MFR)  
 A66 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A67 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A68 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A69 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A70 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A71 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A72 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A73 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A74 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A75 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A76 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A77 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)

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A78 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A79 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A80 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (EMAIL)  
 A81 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (TRANSCRIPT)  
 A82 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (EMAIL)  
 A83 – SOCAFRICA PR CELL (06DEC17 MFR)  
 A84 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (13DEC17 EMAIL)  
 A85 – USAFRICOM JPRC DIRECTOR/DEPUTY (MFR)  
 A86 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A87 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A88 – JSOAC-A ITCs/BATTLE CAPTAIN (MFR)  
 A89 – NORTH DAKOTA ANG (MFR)  
 A90 – 603d AOC (MFR)  
 A91 – (b)(1) 1.4a (MFR)  
 A92 – (b)(1) 1.4a (MFR)  
 A93 – NIAMEY LAUNCH AND RECOVERY ELEMENT (MFR)  
 A94 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (14NOV17 MFR)  
 A95 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (05DEC17 MFR)  
 A96 – (b)(6) (NULL)  
 A97 – (b)(1) 1.4a OPERATIONS OFFICER (NULL)  
 A98 – TF BARKHANE MIRAGE PILOTS (MFR)  
 A99 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (MFR)  
 A100 – MORTUARY AFFAIRS AIRMEN NIAMEY (MFR)  
 A101 – FRENCH JFAC FMV REVIEW (MFR)  
 A102 – SOCAFRICA PR CELL (30NOV17 MFR)  
 A103 – (b)(6) (09NOV17 MFR)  
 A104 – PARTNER NIGERIEN 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21 (12DEC17 MFR)  
 A105 – (b)(6) (26JAN18 MFR)  
 A106 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) (EMAIL)  
 A107 – BRIG GEN MARK CAMERER

\*A roster of partner Nigeriens is maintained on file with the investigative materials.

**(U) EXHIBIT B – CONCEPTS OF OPERATION AND FRAGMENTARY ORDERS**

~~(SECRET)~~

B1 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B2 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B3 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B4 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B5 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B6 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B7 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a

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B8 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B9 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B10 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B11 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B12 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B13 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B14 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B15 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B16 – (b)(3) 130d TEAM OUALLAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B17 – (b)(3) 130d TEAM OUALLAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B18 – (b)(3) 130d TEAM OUALLAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B19 – (b)(3) 130d TEAM OUALLAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B20 – (b)(3) 130d TEAM OUALLAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B21 – (b)(3) 130d TEAM OUALLAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B22 – (b)(3) 130d TEAM OUALLAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B23 – (b)(3) 130d TEAM OUALLAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B24 – (b)(3) 130d TEAM OUALLAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B25 – (b)(3) 130d TEAM OUALLAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B26 – (b)(3) 130d TEAM OUALLAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B27 – TEAM ARLIT (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B28 – TEAM ARLIT (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B29 – TEAM ARLIT (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B30 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B31 – TEAM (b)(1) 1.4a  
 B32 – SOCFWD-NWA AO W OVERLAYS  
 B33 – US & FRANCE PR MOU  
 B34 – FRENCH MOU INFO PAPER TTN77  
 B35 – USAFRICOM MASTER SPINS - Rel 1OCT14  
 B36 – USAFRICOM MONTHLY SPINS 1OCT-1NOV  
 B37 – USAFRICOM WEEKLY SPINS 2-9OCT  
 B38 – USAFRICOM MASTER SPINS - Rel 1OCT14  
 B39 – USAFRICOM MONTHLY SPINS 1OCT-1NOV  
 B40 – USAFRICOM WEEKLY SPINS 2-9OCT  
 B41 – PR AND CASEVAC TASKORD N&W AFRICA  
 B42 – USAFRICOM JFACC COMM PLAN Eff 14AUG17

**(U) EXHIBIT C – PHOTOGRAPHS**~~(SECRET)~~

C1 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) MISSION PHOTOGRAPHS  
 C2 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) VEHICLE PHOTOGRAPHS  
 C3 – NIGERIEN FORCE PHOTOGRAPHS (CAUTION – SENSITIVE)  
 C4 – FBI INVESTIGATIVE PHOTOGRAPHS (CAUTION – SENSITIVE)

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C5 – INVESTIGATION SITE SURVEY

C6 – INTERVIEW OF (b)(6)

C7 – 03OCT17 (b)(1)1.4c FMV STILLS

**(U) EXHIBIT D – VIDEOS****(SECRET)**

- D1 – French Mirage show of Force (Site Survey) (:15)
- D2 – View of KLE area from vantage point of USV1's position (Site Survey) (:25)
- D3 – View of KLE area scanning north (Site Survey) (:40)
- D4 – Group of villagers walking out from Tongo Tongo (Site Survey) (:20)
- D5 – Group of villagers speaking with (b)(6) (Site Survey) (:22)
- D6 – (b)(6) addresses villagers at KLE site (Site Survey) (:40)
- D7 – Villagers describe seeing American bodies. Villager describes SGT Johnson's body when found. (Site Survey) (4:13)
- D8 – Walking the direction of travel from the KLE to the TIC site. (Site Survey) (:07)
- D9 – Walking the direction of travel south of Tongo Tongo towards TIC site. (Site Survey) (:11)
- D10 – Entering TIC site; discovery of initial casing (Site Survey) (:23)
- D11 – Entering TIC site; pile of 7.62 casings, disintegrated link, 40mm (Site Survey) (:40)
- D12 – Entering TIC site; 40mm (Site Survey) (:23)
- D13 – Pile of expended 7.62 linked ammunition; 40mm (Site Survey) (:38)
- D14 – Large amount of broken glass, blood stain, and location where villager said one body was discovered (Site Survey) (:56)
- D15 – Numerous 5.56, 7.62x39 and 7.62 x 51 shell casings; 40mm; disintegrated link (Site Survey) (:42)
- D16 – Continuation of Exhibit D15. Apparent blood pooling. (Site Survey) (:53)
- D17 – Two 7.62x39 (AK) shells next to burned pen/fencing on main TIC site. (Site Survey) (0:00)
- D18 – Expended green smoke canister (Site Survey) (:44)
- D19 – Surgical glove; tracks circle off main TIC site into wood line to the west. (Site Survey) (:36)
- D20 – Large pool of blood in soil; broken GPS pieces (Site Survey) (1:14)
- D21 – Pieces of combat glasses at same site as D20. (Site Survey) (:16)
- D22 – Ammunition pouch, Peltor ear pad, kneepad, 7.62x39 casings vicinity apparent blood pooling (Site Survey) (1:14)
- D23 – Broken automobile glass with tinting and deep tire tracks, suspected site of PV3 tow-away (Site Survey) (:21)
- D24 – Continuation of Exhibit D24; broken automobile glass with tinting and deep tire tracks, suspected site of PV3 tow-away (Site Survey) (:47)
- D25 – Lead edge of the flanking movement (b)(3)1307 7.62x39 casing (Site Survey) (:14)

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- D26 – From suspected PV3 location to lead edge of flanking movement (Site Survey) (:08)
- D27 – Southeast side of TIC site; tree damage from small arms fire (Site Survey) (:20)
- D28 – Examination of suspected mortar craters; magazine extender for handgun; (Site Survey) (1:23)
- D29 – Vehicle glass at Position Two; suspected enemy small arms casings (Site Survey) (:31)
- D30 – Thrown dirt from tires vicinity circular tracks; machine gun links at Position Two; tracks back to TIC site (Site Survey) (1:09)
- D31 – M2010 Sniper Rifle Bipod (Site Survey) (:26)
- D32 – Approach to SGT LaDavid Johnson's last location; view back to Position Two (Site Survey) (:28)
- D33 – Dogtag chain; Antennae; three (3) 5.56mm casings and unexpended round; view from tree to location of DShK casings; four (4) 7.62x39 casings (Site Survey) (1:08)
- D34 – Forty-two (42) DShK rounds; view back to tree (Site Survey) (:20)
- D35 – Continuation of Exhibit D34; view from DShK casings to tree (Site Survey) (:24)
- D36 – Continuation of Exhibit D33; Discovery of 5.56mm casings and 7.62x39 casings (Site Survey) (1:00)
- D37 – Recovery of human remains under tree (Site Survey) (:25)
- D38 – At Alamo; Combat Gauze wrapper, location of (b)(3) / (b)(6) during 1st Aid (Site Survey) (2:11)
- D39 – PN 7 explains Tm OUALLAM actions from Alamo to HLZ (Site Survey) (1:35)
- D40 – U.S. ISR Footage Compilation: Team OUALLAM actions on Objective NORTH; Arrival of (b)(1) 1.4a to TIC; Movement of enemy motorcycles on TIC; Movement of (b)(1) 1.4a vicinity Tongo Tongo; French Mirage Show of Force; Movement of Team OUALLAM to HLZ, Friendly Fire Incident; Evacuation by French Helicopters; Recovery of SGT L Johnson, Transfer of SGT L. Johnson (Site Survey) (21:25)
- D41 – (b)(1) 1.4a surveillance of (b)(1) 1.4a at 03/1631LOCT17 (ISR Footage) (:12)
- D42 – (b)(1) 1.4a surveillance of (b)(1) 1.4a on 03/1640LOCT17; 1 person with goat (ISR Footage) (:10)
- D43 – (b)(1) 1.4a surveillance of (b)(1) 1.4a at 03/1652L OCT17 (ISR Footage) (:35)
- D44 – (b)(1) 1.4a surveillance of (b)(1) 1.4a at 03/1729L OCT17, (b)(1) 1.4a (ISR Footage) (:57)
- D45 – (b)(1) 1.4a surveillance of (b)(1) 1.4a at 03/2030L OCT17, Motorcycle departing (ISR Footage) (:25)
- D46 – (b)(1) 1.4a surveillance of (b)(1) 1.4a at 03/2040L OCT17, Motorcycle stop and greet (ISR Footage) (1:50)
- D47 – (b)(1) 1.4a surveillance of (b)(1) 1.4a at 03/2055L OCT17, Motorcycle stops (ISR Footage) (1:44)

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- D48 – (b)(1) 1.4a surveillance of (b)(1) 1.4a at 04/0500L OCT17, Team OUALLAM movement to Objective (ISR Footage) (19:11)
- D49 – (b)(1) 1.4a surveillance of (b)(1) 1.4a at 04/0700L OCT17, Suspected enemy motorcycle departs Objective NORTH (ISR Footage) (2:15)
- D50 – (b)(1) 1.4a arrival at TIC site, 04/1311L OCT17, First ISR on-site (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a suspected enemy motorcycles maneuvering on TIC (ISR Footage) (2:14)
- D51 – (b)(1) 1.4a arrival at TIC site, 04/1312L OCT17, distant look at location of SGT LaDavid Johnson and vicinity fires (ISR Footage) (:12)
- D52 – (b)(1) 1.4a over SGT L Johnson last position, 04/1315L OCT17, closer view of fires vicinity PN 1, PN 10 and SGT L Johnson (ISR Footage) (:22)
- D53 – (b)(1) 1.4a over Alamo, 04/1320L OCT17, movement of (b)(1) 1.4a on foot and motorcycles (ISR Footage) (:57)
- D54 – (b)(1) 1.4a over Alamo, 04/~1322L OCT17, movement of (b)(1) 1.4a on foot and motorcycles (ISR Footage) (1:44)
- D55 – (b)(1) 1.4a over Tongo Tongo, 04/~1325L OCT17, movement of (b)(1) 1.4a on foot into Tongo Tongo (ISR Footage) (:28)
- D56 – (b)(1) 1.4a arriving, 04/1322L OCT17, arriving on station, view of TIC site (ISR Footage) (:08)
- D57 – (b)(1) 1.4a over Alamo, 04/1330L OCT17, close view of area vicinity US Vehicle 2 and area where SSG Jeremiah Johnson, SSG Wright, and SSG Black evidence found (ISR Footage) (:12)
- D58 – (b)(1) 1.4a over TIC Site, 04/1410L OCT17, (b)(1)1.4g moving near truck seen in Exhibit D57 and area where SSG Jeremiah Johnson, SSG Wright, and SSG Black evidence found (ISR Footage) (:29)
- D59 – (b)(1) 1.4a over TIC Site, 04/~1410L OCT17, (b)(1)1.4g moving near Alamo (ISR Footage) (:47)
- D60 – (b)(1) 1.4a over TIC Site, 04/1458 OCT17, 3rd Show of Force by French Mirage (ISR Footage) (:07)
- D61 – (b)(1) 1.4a over TIC Site, 04/1505L OCT17, (b)(1)1.4g moving towards Tongo Tongo from southwest (ISR Footage) (1:01)
- D62 – (b)(1) 1.4a over TIC Site, 04/1510L OCT17 (b)(1) 1.4a moving towards Tongo Tongo from south (ISR Footage) (1:16)
- D63 – Continuation of Exhibit D62; (b)(1) 1.4a over TIC Site, 04/~1510L OCT17, (b)(1) 1.4a moving towards Tongo Tongo from south (ISR Footage) (1:51)
- D64 – (b)(1) 1.4a over TIC Site, 04/1505 OCT17, movement of large group of (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a towards Tongo Tongo (ISR Footage) (4:42)
- D65 – (b)(1) 1.4a over Alamo, 04/1530 OCT17, eyes on Tm OUALLAM (ISR Footage) (:48)
- D66 – (b)(1) 1.4a over Alamo, 04/1545 OCT17, Tm OUALLAM movement from treeline at Alamo to HLZ (ISR Footage) (1:22)
- D67 – (b)(1) 1.4a over Alamo, 04/1554L OCT17, Tm OUALLAM moves west to HLZ (ISR Footage) (1:04)

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- D68 – (b)(1) 1.4a over Alamo, 04/1555L OCT17, Tm OUALLAM moves west to HLZ (ISR Footage) (:20)
- D69 – (b)(1) 1.4a over Alamo, 04/1600L OCT17, Tm OUALLAM member waving at French helicopters (ISR Footage) (1:35)
- D70 – (b)(1) 1.4a over HLZ, 04/1632L OCT17, Niger Partner Force fires on Tm OUALLAM for 42 seconds, French helicopters fly past, FAN and Tm OUALLAM link-up (ISR Footage) (13:34)
- D71 – (b)(1) 1.4a over HLZ, 04/1650L OCT17, French helicopter (b)(1)1.4a land at HLZ, link-up of Tm OUALLAM and TF BARKHANE forces (ISR Footage) (1:29)
- D72 – (b)(1) 1.4a over HLZ, 04/1715L OCT17, French helicopters (b)(1)1.4a and (b)(1) 1.4a land at HLZ, pick-up Team OUALLAM and TF BARKHANE ground forces, take off for Niamey (ISR Footage) (10:33)
- D73 – (b)(1) 1.4a over HLZ, 04/1725L OCT17, (b)(1)1.4a (Barry Aviation Super Puma) lands, picks up no one (ISR Footage) (15:09)
- D74 – (b)(1) 1.4a over HLZ, 04/1747L OCT17, (b)(1)1.4a (Barry Aviation Super Puma) takes off (ISR Footage) (1:23)
- D75 – (b)(1) 1.4a over Tongo Tongo, 04/1830L OCT17, Nigerien Partner Force departs TIC Site with 14 vehicles + 1 towed vehicle (suspected to be US Vehicle) (ISR Footage) (5:56)
- D76 – (b)(1) 1.4a over TIC Site, 05/0534L OCT17, helicopter lifts off with one (1) Nigerien Force wounded (ISR Footage) (5:59)
- D77 – (b)(1) 1.4a over site of SGT L. Johnson's last position, 06/1301L OCT17, approaching tree, recovering remains (ISR Footage) (13:54)
- D78 – (b)(1) 1.4a over Tongo Tongo, 06/1520L OCT17, transfer of SGT Johnson's remains to U.S. custody (ISR Footage) (8:46)
- D79 – (b)(1) 1.4a over Tongo Tongo, 06/1540L OCT17, transfer of SGT Johnson's remains to helicopter, lift-off for Niamey. (ISR Footage) (8:37)
- D80 – Fly-by pass of convoy parked south of Tiloa. (Team video) (:03)
- D81 – Scan of Team OUALLAM at Camp Tiloa. (Team video) (:10)
- D82 – Scan of Team OUALLAM at Camp Tiloa. (Team video) (:06)
- D83 – PN speaking with Team OUALLAM at Camp Tiloa. (Team video) (:04)
- D84 – Convoy driving from Camp Tiloa towards Mangaize. (Team video) (:04)
- D85 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) on SATCOM during re-mission halt. (Team video) (:04)
- D86 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) ground guides USV1. (Team video) (:03)
- D87 – SGT LaDavid Johnson during mission halt. (Team Video) (9:22)
- D88 – SGT LaDavid Johnson dash-camera (Team Video) (3:21)
- D89 – Islamic State propaganda video (Multiple Sources) (10:00)

**(U) EXHIBIT E – MEDICAL REPORTS****(U//FOUO)**

E1 – AUTOPSY (SSG JEREMIAH JOHNSON)

E2 – AUTOPSY PHOTOGRAPHS (SSG JEREMIAH JOHNSON)

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E3 – CT RECONSTRUCTION (SSG JEREMIAH JOHNSON)  
E4 – AUTOPSY (SSG DUSTIN WRIGHT)  
E5 – AUTOPSY PHOTOGRAPHS (SSG DUSTIN WRIGHT)  
E6 – CT RECONSTRUCTION (SSG DUSTIN WRIGHT)  
E7 – AUTOPSY (SSG BRYAN BLACK)  
E8 – AUTOPSY PHOTOGRAPHS (SSG BRYAN BLACK)  
E9 – CT RECONSTRUCTION (SSG BRYAN BLACK)  
E10 – AUTOPSY (SGT LADAVID JOHNSON)  
E11 – AUTOPSY PHOTOGRAPHS (SGT LADAVID JOHNSON)  
E12 – CT RECONSTRUCTION (SGT LADAVID JOHNSON)

**(U) EXHIBIT F – PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

**(U//FOUO)**

F1 – AOB NIGER EXPLOITATION CELL PHOTOGRAPHS  
F2 – TONGO TONGO SSE  
F3 – REQUEST FOR EXPEDITED FORENSIC ANALYSIS  
F4 – USACIL LAB REPORT 17-ATL-02136  
F5 – USACIL LAB REPORT 17-ATL-02136 (LATENT PRINT)  
F6 – USACIL LAB REPORT 17-ATL-02136 (TRIAGE)  
F7 – USACIL LAB REPORT 17-ATL-02136 (FIREARMS)  
F8 – USACIL LAB REPORT 17-ATL-02136 (DNA)  
F9 – DA 4137 EVIDENCE CUSTODY VOUCHER  
F10 – SSE EVIDENCE COLLECTION LOG

**(U) EXHIBIT G – JOC LOGS AND REPORTS**

**(SECRET)**

G1 – SOCFWD-NWA JOC LOG 04OCT17  
G2 – SOCFWD-NWA JOC LOG TIC  
G3 – SOCFWD-NWA JOC LOG 05OCT17  
G4 – MIRC (b)(1) 1.4a 040022LOCT17-042121LOCT17  
G5 – MIRC (b)(1) 1.4a 050112LOCT17-051939LOCT17  
G6 – MIRC (b)(1) 1.4a 061920LOCT17-062051LOCT17  
G7 – SOCFWD-NWA KEY EVENTS TIMELINE  
G8 – SOCAFRICA JOC LOG 04-06OCT17  
G9 – SOCAFRICA INITIAL TIC NOTIFICATION EMAIL  
G10 – SOCAFRICA CCIR LOG 061625Z  
G11 – SOCAFRICA CCIR LOG 062359Z  
G12 – SOCAFRICA CCIR SS1 - INITIAL TIC CCIR EMAIL  
G13 – USAFRICOM JOC LOG  
G14 – USAFRICOM CCIR19 DTD 051523ZOCT2017 W/UPDATES  
G15 – USAFRICOM CCIR12 DTG 041606ZOCT2017 W/UPDATES

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SUBJECT: Army Regulation (AR) 15-6 Investigation Findings: 4 October 2017 Enemy Contact Event in Tongo Tongo, Niger

G16 – USAFRICOM GENADMIN MESSAGE DTD 060011Z OCT 2017  
 G17 – USAFRICOM JOC LNO EMAIL DTG 061634 LOCT 2017  
 G18 – JSOAC-A STORYBOARD OPERATION CARRIAGE LIGHTNING  
 G19 – JSOAC TIC TIMELINE  
 G20 – USAFRICOM MAAD OCT 2017  
 G21 – TEAM OUALLAM\_TEAM ARLIT PRE-TIC TIMELINES  
 G22 – NIGER TIC MIRC LOG  
 G23 – MIRC (b)(1) 1.4a 041228Z OCT 17-042158Z OCT 17  
 G24 – MIRC (b)(1) 1.4a 052231Z OCT 17-052119Z OCT 17  
 G25 – MIRC (b)(1) 1.4a 041628Z OCT 17-042055Z OCT 17  
 G26 – MIRC (b)(1) 1.4a 052256Z OCT 17-051440Z OCT 17  
 G27 – AOB NIGER ADHOC 8 LINE REQUEST 03 OCT 17  
 G28 – (b)(1) 1.4a MEDEVAC TIMELINE  
 G29 – 040941Z OCT 17 JSOAC-A (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a MSS (b)(1) 1.4a  
 G30 – (b)(1) 1.4a COLLECTION PLAN - 20171004 - NA  
 G31 – (b)(1) 1.4a COLLECTION PLAN - 20171005 - NA  
 G32 – (b)(1) 1.4a COLLECTION PLAN - 20171006 - NA  
 G33 – SDO/DATT EMAIL DTG 161312Z OCT 2017  
 G34 – U.S. NAVAL OBSERVATORY ASTRONOMICAL APPLICATIONS DEPT  
 G35 – (b)(1) 1.4a PED BRIEF  
 G36 – SOCCE EMAIL REPORT DTG 052129 LOCT 2017  
 G37 – (b)(1) 1.4a STORYBOARD  
 G38 – NIGERIEN PILOTS LOG  
 G39 – (b)(3) (10 U.S.C. § 1601) EMAIL DTD 04 DEC 17  
 G40 – (b)(1) 1.4a NIGER PR EVENT TIMELINE  
 G41 – TF BARKHANE TIMELINE  
 G42 – NIGER EAC MINUTES DTG 042243Z OCT 2017  
 G43 – BG BOLDUC UPDATE TO LTG TOVO  
 G44 – SOCAFRICA SITREP DTD 26 APR 17  
 G45 – (b)(3) 360 EST CSAR CHAT LOG  
 G46 – SOCAFRICA JOC TIMELINE  
 G47 – SOCFWD-NWA TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT REQUEST  
 G48 – EMAIL NOTIFICATION OF SOCFWD-NWA CONOP APPROVAL MATRIX  
 G49 – SOCFWD-NWA TIME-SENSITIVE MISSION LOG

**(U) EXHIBIT H – OFFICER AND ENLISTED RECORD BRIEFS****(U//FOUO)**

H1 – ORB – (b)(3) / (b)(6)  
 H2 – ERB – (b)(3) / (b)(6)  
 H3 – ERB – (b)(3) / (b)(6)  
 H4 – ERB – (b)(3) / (b)(6)  
 H5 – ERB – (b)(3) / (b)(6)

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H6 – ERB – (b)(3) / (b)(6)

H7 – ERB – SSG DUSTIN WRIGHT

H8 – ERB – SSG BRYAN BLACK

H9 – ERB – (b)(3) / (b)(6)

H10 – ERB – SGT LADAVID JOHNSON

H11 – ERB – SSG JEREMIAH JOHNSON

H12 – ERB – (b)(3) / (b)(6)

H13 – ERB – (b)(3) / (b)(6)

**(U) EXHIBIT I – EXECUTE ORDERS AND DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY**

~~(SECRET//NOFORN)~~

I1 – CONOPS APPROVAL LEVEL MATRIX 1 - SOCAFRICA

I2 – CONOPS APPROVAL LEVEL MATRIX 2 - SOCFWDNWA

I3 – CONOPS APPROVAL LEVEL MATRIX 3 - AOB NIGER

I4 – OPERATION JUNIPER SHIELD EXORD (Redacted)

I5 – (b)(3) / (b)(6) - CONOPS APPROVAL PROPOSAL 14AUG17

I6 – (b)(1)1.4a WARNING 04MAR17- BG BOLDUC

I7 – (b)(1)1.4a WARNING 07MAY17- BG BOLDUC

I8 – JOINT STAFF COUNTERTERRORISM (CT) EXORD (Redacted)

I9 – SOCAFRICA BASELINE RSTA FINAL DRAFT 01JUL2016

I10 – TM (b)(3) 130b TASKING FOR 04OCT17 ISO OP JUNIPER SHIELD

I11 – USAFRICOM MAAD OCT17

I12 – DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY (DELAUTH) FOR CERTAIN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

I13 – CDRUSAFRICOM APPROVAL OF SOCAFRICA SROE (b)(1) 1.4a

I14 – CT PPG FACT SHEET

I15 – SOCFWD NWA ORG CHART

I16 – SOCAFRICA AMHS MESSAGE CONOPS APPROVAL SOP

I17 – (b)(1) 1.4a

I18 – JS CT EXORD (REDACTED)

**(U) EXHIBIT J – TRAINING DOCUMENTS**

~~(SECRET)~~

J1 – EMAIL FROM (b)(3) / (b)(6)

J2 – 3D SFG(A) COMMAND TRAINING GUIDANCE (CTG), FY17

J3 – 3D SFG(A) COMMAND TRAINING GUIDANCE (CTG), FY18

J4 (b)(3) 130b TRAIN-UP FINAL

J5 – JADE HELM BACKBRIEF

J6 – 2D BN SATB (V18 18OCT16)

J7 – 2D BN SATB (V18 13MAR17)

J8 (b)(3) / (b)(6) SATB (28JUL17)

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J9 – (b)(3) 130f ENCLOSURE 2 METL JPAT OUALLAM  
J10 – SGT LADAVID JOHNSON SFBCC-S ATTENDANCE CERT  
J11 – (b)(3) 130f ENCLOSURE 4 POI SUMMARY JPAT OUALLAM  
J12 – CY17 GCP-V 2ND SEMESTER ASSESSMENT  
J13 – SOCFWD-NWA (b)(3) 130f PARTNER FORCE ASSESSMENT AUG17  
J14 – SOCFWD-NWA (b)(1) 1.4d PARTNER FORCE ASSESSMENT AUG17  
J15 – CT COMPANY CASE PACKET

**(U) EXHIBIT K - CLASSIFIED ABOVE THE CLASSIFICATION OF THIS REPORT**

~~(SECRET)~~

K1 – CJCS NWA-CT EXORD  
K2 – Ongoing TIC in Niger: Update #6  
K3 – USAFRICOM RFI to (b)(1)1.4a/1.7e of EO 13526 Question 2

**(U) EXHIBIT L – INTELLIGENCE REPORTS**

~~(SECRET)~~

L1 – SOCAF Email Subject (S) Carriage Lightning FFT Inquiry  
L2 – USAFRICOM RFI (b)(1)1.4a/1.7e of EO 13526 Question 1  
L3 – Slide (b)(1) 1.4c "That Were Serviced"  
L4 – Search and Rescue Incident Report (SARIR) PR-AC-17-005  
L5 – Civil Info Quick Report - KLE with Defense (b)(1) 1.4a ACM 20170919  
L6 – IIR 6 602 0062 Battle Damage Assessment Ayorou Gendarme  
L7 – IIR 6 602 0062 Details of the Attack on FAN Forces from Tiloa  
L8 – IIR 6 602 0765 17 Post Attack Assessment Nigerien NG

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**(U) TABLE OF ENCLOSURES**

(U) For the purpose of this Report, an enclosure is an administrative document, or a product generated by the investigating team or other source to assist in depicting or contextualizing information. Enclosures are not primary sources.

**(SECRET)**

- 1 – SOCAFRICA Investigating Officer Appointment Order (17OCT17)  
with Report Reference Guide
- 2 – USAFRICOM Investigating Officer Appointment Order (20OCT17)
- 3 – USAFRICOM CDR Extension Approval (03NOV17)
- 4 – Investigation Timeline
- 5 – Witness List
- 6 – 02-06 OCT 17 Events Timeline
- 7 – (b)(1) 1.4a SIGACTS Slide
- 8 – Graphic Imagery Packet
- 9 – Vehicle Diagrams
- 10 – Operational Timeline 03-06OCT17
- 11 – ISR C2 Diagrams
- 12 – Diagram of Injuries (SGT LaDavid Johnson)
- 13 – Diagram of Injuries (SSG Bryan Black)
- 14 – Diagram of Injuries (SSG Dustin Wright)
- 15 – Diagram of Injuries (SSG Jeremiah Johnson)
- 16 – (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4d
- 17 – (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4c Overview
- 18 – Graphic of (b)(1) 1.4c
- 19 – 040941ZOCT17\_JSOAC-A (b)(1) 1.4a (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4d MSS\_FVEY
- 20 – 8-LINE ADHOC FOR (b)(1) 1.4a
- 21 – Certification of Opportunity to Respond to Adverse Information ( (b)(3) / (b)(6) )
- 22 – Response to Adverse Information ( (b)(3) / (b)(6) )
- 23 – Certification of Opportunity to Respond to Adverse Information ( (b)(3) / (b)(6) )
- 24 – Response to Adverse Information ( (b)(3) / (b)(6) )
- 25 – Certification of Opportunity to Respond to Adverse Information ( (b)(3) / (b)(6) )
- 26 – Response to Adverse Information ( (b)(3) / (b)(6) )
- 27 – Certification of Opportunity to Respond to Adverse Information ( (b)(3) / (b)(6) )
- 28 – Response to Adverse Information ( (b)(3) / (b)(6) )

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**(U) TABLE OF ANNEXES**

**ANNEX 1** – (U//~~FOUO~~) Operational and Fiscal Authorities Applicable to Team OUALLAM

**ANNEX 2** – (U//~~FOUO~~)<sup>b)(3) 360</sup> Support to Personnel Recovery (PR) and Explanation of False Friendly Force Tracking (FFT) Signals

**ANNEX 3** – (U) Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR)

**ANNEX 4** – (U) Intelligence Overview

**ANNEX 5** – (U) Personnel Recovery and CASEVAC

**ANNEX 6** – (U) Command and Control

**ANNEX 7** – (U) Risk Assessments and Risk Mitigation

**ANNEX 8** – (U) Medical Findings

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**(U) GLOSSARY**

**A**

AAD – Ansar al-Din

ABN DIV – Airborne Division

ACI – Africa Command Instruction

ADVON – Advance Echelon

AFAF – U.S. Air Forces Africa

AOB – Advanced Operations Base

AOC – Air Operations Center

AOR – Area of Responsibility

AQIM – Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

AR – Army Regulation

ATAK – Android Tactical Assault Kit

**B**

BICES – Battlefield Information Collection and Exploitation System

BG – Brigadier General (O7, U.S. Army)

BLOS – Beyond Line of Sight

(b)(3) 130b

**C**

C2 – Command and Control

CAS – Close Air Support

(b)(1)1.4c

– Commuter Air Technology / Twin Engine Beechcraft 350

CASEVAC – Casualty Evacuation

CCT – Combat Controllers

CBRN – Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Neurological

CDRUSAFRICOM – Commander, United States Africa Command

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CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

CJCS – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

CDR – Commander

COCOM – Combatant Command

COL – Colonel (O6, U.S. Army)

COM – Collection Operation Management

CONOPS – Concept of Operations

CONUS – Continental United States

CPT – Captain (O3, U.S. Army)

CRD – Chemical Reconnaissance Detachment

CSAR – Combat Search and Rescue

(b)(3) 130b

CT – Counterterrorism

CT-EXORD – Counterterrorism Execute Order

CTG – Command Training Guidance

CT-PPG – Counterterrorism-Presidential Policy Guidance

CULEX – Culmination Exercise

CW2 – Chief Warrant Officer 2

**D**

DOD – Department of Defense

DShK – *Degtyarev Shpagin Krupnokalibernyi*

**E**

(b)(3) 130b

ELOC – Entry Level Operator Course

EMT – Emergency Medical Technician

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EVM – *Evacuation Medicale*

**F**

FAN – *Force d'Armee Niger*

FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation

FFT – Friendly Force Tracking/Tracker

FID – Foreign Internal Defense

FMV – Full Motion Video

FOC – Full Operational Capability

FRAGO – Fragmentary Order

**G**

GEOINT – Geospatial Intelligence

GO/FO – General Officer/Flag Officer

GSM – Global System for Mobile Communications

**H**

HAF – Helicopter Assault Force

HC – High Confidence

HLZ – Helicopter Landing Zone

HRA – Helicopter Reaction Air

(b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1) 1.7e

HVI – High-Value Individual

**I**

IET – Initial Entry Training

IIR – Intelligence Information Report

IN BN – Infantry Battalion

IP – Isolated Personnel

ISIS – Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

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ISIS-GS – Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Greater Sahara

ISIS-WA – Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-West Africa

ISOPREP – Isolated Personnel Report

ISR – Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance

ITC – Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Tactical Controllers

**J**

JCET – Joint Combined Exchange Training

JFACC – Joint Forces Air Component Commander

JIDO – Joint Improvised-Threat Defeat Organization

JMD – Joint Manning Document

JNIM – *Jammat Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin*

JOC – Joint Operations Center

JSOAC – Joint Special Operations Air Component

JSOAD – Joint Special Operations Air Detachment

**K**

KLE – Key Leader Engagement

KIA – Killed In Action

**L**

LCC – Last Covered and Concealed Position

LNO – Liaison Officer

LRE – Launch and Recovery Element

LT – Lieutenant (O2, U.S. Army or Nigerien equivalent)

LTC – Lieutenant Colonel (O-5, U.S. Army)

**M**

MAJ – Major (O-4, U.S. Army)

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MCE – Mission Control Element

MEDEVAC – Medical Evacuation

MFF – Military Freefall School

MG – Major General (O-8, U.S. Army)

MILAIR – Military Air

mIRC – Microsoft Internet Relay Chat

MLF – Macina Liberation Front

MOS – Military Occupational Specialty

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

MP – Military Policeman

MSG – Master Sergeant (E-8, U.S. Army)

MUJAO – Movement for Unity and Oneness in West Africa

**N**

NASSIG – Naval Air Station Sigonella, Italy

(b)(3) 3605

NSC – National Security Council

**O**

ODA – Operation Detachment Alpha (also SFODA)

OBJ – Objective

ODB – Operational Detachment Bravo (also SFODB)

OP – Operation

OPCON – Operational Control

OPFOR – Opposing Force

OSC – On-Scene Commander

**P**

PDSS – Pre-Deployment Site Survey

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(b)(1)1.4c/1.7e

PMC – Pre-Mission Check

PMI – Pre-Mission Inspection

PMT – Pre-Mission Training

PN – Partner Nigerien

PPE – Personal Protective Equipment

PR – Personnel Recovery

PRCC – Personnel Recovery Coordination Cell

PRMS – Personnel Recovery Mission Software

PRTF – Personnel Recovery Task Force

PV – Partner Vehicle

**Q**

QRF – Quick Reaction Force

QRA – Quick Reaction-Air

**R**

(b)(1) 1.4a

R&S – Reconnaissance and Surveillance

RPA – Remotely Piloted Aircraft

RIP/TOA – Relief-In-Place/Transfer Of Authority

ROTC – Reserve Officer Training Corps

ROZ – Restricted Operating Zone

RTB – Ranger Training Battalion; Return to Base

**S**

SA – Situational Awareness

SAR – Search and Rescue

SATB – Semi-Annual Training Brief

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SATCOM – Satellite Communications

SCAR – Special Operations Forces Combat Assault Rifle

SDN-Lite – Special Operations Forces Deployable Node-Lite

SERE – Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape

SFARTAETC – Special Forces Advanced Reconnaissance, Target Analysis, and Exploitation Techniques Course

SFAS – Special Forces Assessment and Selection

SFAUC – Special Forces Advanced Urban Combat

SFC – Sergeant First Class (E-7, U.S. Army)

SFC – Special Forces Command

SFG(A) – Special Forces Group (Airborne)

SFODA – Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha

SFODB – Special Forces Operational Detachment-Bravo

SFQC – Special Forces Qualification Course

SGM – Sergeant Major (E-9, U.S. Army)

SGT – Sergeant (E-5, U.S. Army)

SHOUT Nano – a commercial, handheld, global, two-way satellite communication device and emergency beacon manufactured by Iridium.

SIGACT – Significant Activity report

(b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1) 1.7e

SIPR – Secret Internet Protocol Router Network

SITREP – Situation Report

SOAR – Special Operations Air Regiment

SOCAFRICA – Special Operations Command Africa

SOCCE – Special Operations Command and Control Elements

SOCCE-LCB – Special Operations Command and Control Elements-Lake Chad Basin

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SOCCE-SAM – Special Operations Command and Control Elements-Sahel and the Maghreb

SOCFWD-EA – Special Operations Command Forward-East Africa

SOCFWD-NWA – Special Operations Command Forward-North & West Africa

SOCOM – Special Operations Command (also USSOCOM)

SOF – Special Operations Forces; Show of Force

SOF-CF – Special Operations Forces-Conventional Forces

SOP – Standard Operating Procedure

SOTIC – Special Operations Target Interdiction Course

SOTF – Special Operations Task Force

SOWT – Special Operations Weather Technician

SPINS – Special Instructions

SSG – Staff Sergeant (E-6, U.S. Army)

SUV – Sport Utility Vehicle

SWCS – Special Warfare Center and School

**T**

TACON – Tactical Control

TIC – Troops in Contact

TF – Task Force

TTPs – Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

TSOC – Theater Special Operations Command

**U**

USV – U.S. Vehicle

USAFRICOM – United States Africa Command

USSOCOM – United States Special Operations Command

USSOF – U.S. Special Operations Forces

UW – Unconventional Warfare

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**V**

VDO – Vehicle Drop-Off

VEO – Violent Extremist Organization

VHF – Very High Frequency

VTC – Video Teleconference

**W**

WIA – Wounded In Action

**X**

XO – Executive Officer

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