

**Enclosure 3**  
**Executive Summary**

1. **Task, Purpose, and Method of Investigation.** Pursuant to AR 15-6, General Lloyd J. Austin III, Commander, US Central Command (USCENTCOM), appointed Lieutenant General (LTG) William B. Garrett III (US Army) and Major General (MajGen) Thomas M. Murray (US Marine Corps) to investigate the circumstances surrounding the attack on Camp Bastion, Leatherneck, and Shorabak in Afghanistan, collectively referred to as the BLS Complex, that occurred on 14-15 September 2012, and report any fault, negligence, or failure of responsibility.

2. **Scope of Investigation.** The scope of the investigation was to determine the accountability of US commanders and staff at all levels for the planning and execution of force protection in relation to the attack. The scope of the investigation did not include a directive to assess any potential responsibility of other coalition forces. As directed, this investigation only focused on US accountability.

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

**a. Friendly Situation Before and During the Attack.**

(1) **RC(SW).** On 14 September 2012, RC(SW) was one of six regional commands operating in Combined Joint Operations Area-Afghanistan (CJOA-A) as part of ISAF. The RC(SW) staff was primarily composed of the staff from I Marine Expeditionary Force (FWD) [I MEF (FWD)] deployed from Camp Pendleton, California. Coalition partners rounded out the staff, primarily from the UK. The Commanding Officer (CO) of RC(SW) was MajGen Mark Gurganus, who assumed command of RC(SW) on 12 March 2012. MajGen Gurganus' Deputy Commanding Officer was a Brigadier from the British Army. The CO of the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) [3d MAW (FWD)], the subordinate Aviation Combat Element (ACE) for RC(SW), was MajGen Gregg Sturdevant.

(2) **RC(SW) Mission, Area of Operations (AO), and Composition.** The RC(SW) mission was to conduct counterinsurgency operations focused on protecting the Afghan people, developing the Afghan National Security Forces capabilities, and supporting the improved governance and economic development in conjunction with the Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Inherent in this mission was the requirement to protect the force. The RC(SW) AO covered the Helmand and Nimruz provinces of Afghanistan. The RC(SW) Headquarters was located on Camp Leatherneck, part of the BLS Complex. The complex was originally only Camp Bastion supporting UK forces in RC South, but it had seen rapid and expansive growth of Camps Leatherneck and Camp Shorabak before and after the creation of RC(SW) in June 2010.

(3) **BLS Complex.** By 2012, the BLS Complex was the largest and most important coalition base in SW Afghanistan, hosting the RC(SW) headquarters, the main hub of USMC and UK forces in Afghanistan, an ANA training facility, a sizeable contingent of ANA and other coalition forces, thousands of US and non-US contractors, critical logistics functions, and the primary airfield to support USMC and coalition air operations across SW Afghanistan. The BLS Complex covers approximately 100 square kilometers (40 square miles), and can accommodate almost 30,000 personnel. The perimeter of the BLS Complex is composed of approximately 40 kilometers (25 miles) of fence line.

(4) **Drawdown.** At the time of the attack on Camp Bastion, RC(SW) was nearing the end of a reduction in its Force Management Level (FML) personnel manning authorization as part of ISAF's Phase II Surge Recovery. From March-September 2012, RC(SW) reduced its strength from approximately 17,000 to 7,000 Marines. This drawdown occurred during the middle of the fighting season, during a period of increased insider attacks, and during a period of ANA growth which produced numerous adjustments in force posture across the regional commands. As commanders across Afghanistan adapted to achieve the mission with fewer forces, MajGen Gurganus requested an FML increase to augment his security forces (SECFOR). The FML increase for the SECFOR was ultimately disapproved by higher headquarters prior to the 14-15 September 2012 attack.

(5) **BLS Anti-Terrorism and Force Protection (AT/FP) Command and Control (C2).** MajGen Gurganus and RC(SW) inherited the BLS Complex AT/FP C2 arrangement, established by a January 2011 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between USCENTCOM and the UK Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ). The 2011 MOU established that the separate camps would "run on national lines," and several personnel described the two camps as separate "sovereign" territory. Although the boundaries between Camps Leatherneck and Bastion were not clearly demarcated, there was definitely a sense that the US was completely in charge of Camp Leatherneck, and the UK was completely in charge of Camp Bastion. The 2011 MOU clearly established the separate camps in addition to the Bastion airfield, which was a UK-US shared airfield located on Camp Bastion and operated by the UK 903d Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW) as the Airfield Operating Authority (AOA). The 2011 MOU further specified that the US would protect Camp Leatherneck and conduct security operations in Area of Operation Belleau Wood (AOBW), which included the area surrounding the BLS Complex. The MOU specified that the UK was responsible for protection of Camp Bastion, including the airfield, and that they would provide security patrols to assist US security operations in AOBW.

(6) **Camp Leatherneck and Camp Bastion Base Commanders.** The 2011 USCENTCOM-PJHQ MOU did not establish a single commander responsible for the BLS Complex, including overall force protection. As the commander of RC(SW), MajGen Gurganus was ultimately responsible for force protection, but he delegated the day-to-day execution of security and force protection at the various bases in RC(SW) to the respective base commanders. This is common practice across Afghanistan, and consistent with doctrine. Therefore, even though the RC(SW) Headquarters was located on the BLS Complex at Camp Leatherneck, MajGen Gurganus was not the Camp Leatherneck base commander. Force protection responsibilities for the BLS Complex were shared between CO Task Force Belleau Wood (TFBW) [also the CO of I MEF Headquarters Group or MHG (FWD)] for Camp Leatherneck, CO Bastion Joint Operating Base (CO BSN) [also the CO of the UK 903d Expeditionary Air Wing] for Camp Bastion, and CO 215th ANA Corps for Camp Shorabak. The 3rd MAW(FWD) Headquarters was located on Camp Leatherneck, with subordinate squadrons located on the Camp Bastion airfield. Despite this geographic separation, MajGen Sturdevant retained his inherent responsibility as a commander to ensure the security and protection of his forces.

(7) **Security Force (SECFOR) Structure.** CO TFBW on Camp Leatherneck and CO BSN on Camp Bastion each had a security force (SECFOR) to help protect the BLS Complex. At the time of the 14-15 September 2012 attack, the TFBW SECFOR consisted of 110 Marines from the 2/10 Marines, a 134-person element from the UK (only controlled by TFBW SECFOR during patrols off the BLS Complex), a 105-person element from the Bahrain Special Security Force (BSSF), a 288-person element from the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF), approximately 50 ANA Soldiers for combined patrolling, and a 255-person contracted security force provided by the Personal Security Contractor (PSC) company called Triple Canopy. Triple Canopy was a MARCENT contracted, USAFOR-A funded contract security force, which provided security in the Camp Leatherneck guard towers and at Entry Control Points on base. The TFBW SECFOR Commander (CO TFBW SECFOR) was also CO of 2/10 Marines, a Field Artillery battalion.

(8) **2/10 Marines.** 2/10 Marines provided the bulk of the patrolling force for the TFBW SECFOR. However, 2/10 Marines also had several other responsibilities, to include a field artillery mission for Task Force Leatherneck, manning the Combined Joint Operations Center (CJOC), manning Entry Control Points on Camp Leatherneck, manning a Quick Reaction Force, manning Patrol Base Boldak, and manning the Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP) mission. As part of the planned drawdown, 2/10 Marines was reduced to 110 Marines by September 2012. Due to the list of required tasks and reduced personnel, 2/10 Marines could generate one squad per 24-hour period to conduct patrolling for TFBW, and this squad combined with their UK counterpart could, in turn, generate an average of 3-4 squad-sized mounted patrols in that same 24-hour period. At the time of the attack on 14-15 September 2012, there was one patrol operating in AOBW – a squad from 2/10 Marines several kilometers south of the BLS Complex.

(9) **UK 5 FP Wing and Tonga Defence Services.** The primary counterpart to the TFBW SECFOR on the Camp Bastion side of the BLS Complex was the UK 5 FP Wing, who reported directly to CO BSN and who was comprised of members of: the Wing Headquarters, 51st Squadron, RAF Regiment; 2622 (Highland) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force Regiment; the No 2 (Tactical) Police Squadron; the Tonga Defence Services; and elements of the 16th Regiment Royal Artillery.

(10) **AT/FP Reporting Chain of Command.** Although CO TFBW and CO BSN shared responsibility for delivering FP measures and effects across AOBW, they reported to different commanders. TFBW reported to RC(SW). CO BSN reported to UK Joint Forces Support-Afghanistan (JFSpA). JFSpA did not have operational responsibilities, so it did not report to RC(SW). Rather, the chain of command from CO BSN to CO JFSpA to PJHQ was a purely national chain of command for support-related matters. However, the TFBW SECFOR and the BSN SECFOR coordinated their force protection efforts out of the jointly manned Combined Joint Operating Center (CJOC).

(11) **Terrain Analysis.** The eastern edge of the Camp Bastion airfield contains a significant amount of undulating terrain, both within and outside of the perimeter fence. Whereas the terrain outside of the Camp Leatherneck perimeter and most of the BLS Complex consisted of flat desert that provided unhindered observation, the area outside of the breach point consisted of undulating terrain with hills and shallow wadis. The villages of Sheik-abad and Naw-abad are located to the east and southeast of the Camp Bastion eastern perimeter, respectively. The main North-South ground Line of Communication (LOC), Highway 1, runs along a wadi approximately 1 km from the eastern perimeter. The perimeter line was composed of a single row of concertina wire, a ditch and berm obstacle designed to mitigate the threat from vehicle-borne attacks, and a 30-ft high boundary chain link fence.

(12) **Camp Bastion Guard Towers.** Twenty-four concrete guard towers protect Camp Bastion, and they are set at varying intervals along the Camp Bastion eastern perimeter at varying setback distances from the chain link fence. Eleven of the twenty-four guard towers (called "sangers" by UK personnel) on Camp Bastion were manned at the time of the attack. The UK 5 FP Wing did not employ a dedicated security force on the Camp Bastion perimeter. Instead, they relied upon a "camp tax" (tasking to provide guards) from various UK tenant units at the BLS Complex to augment the Tonga Defence Services in the perimeter guard towers. Of the eleven guard towers manned on 14-15 September 2012, five were manned by UK "camp tax," and six were manned by Tongan forces. Tower manning rotated in an attempt to avoid a pattern, and tower manning selection was also based on the external terrain and interlocking fields of fire and observation. It was also typical on Camp Leatherneck to man approximately 50% of the existing towers. On the night of the 14-15 September 2012 attack, the guard tower closest to the breach point, Tower 16, was unmanned. Tower 15, to the south of the breach point and Tower 17, to the north of the breach point, were manned by guards from the Tonga Defence Services. Tower 17 was the closest manned guard tower to the breach point on the night of the attack.

(13) **Towers 15 and 17.** The primary investigating officer in the Joint Review Board Initial Report of Administrative Inquiry, was able to interview one of the two tower guards on duty in Tower 17 at the time of the breach. The guard indicated he did not see the attackers come through the fence or move towards the airfield. There was just 2% illumination on the night of 14-15 September 2012. The attackers' movement was partially obscured by the route through a shallow wadi, and if the guards would have oriented their observation primarily east (forward from the tower), the breach point, although definitely visible, would have been to the right side of their vantage point in an area of low ground approximately 250m away. Tower 15 did not have direct line of sight to the breach point due to undulating terrain between the tower and the breach point.

(14) (U) **HRH Prince Henry of Wales (Captain Harry Wales).** This investigation found no evidence that Camp Bastion personnel reduced their security posture on the perimeter to provide enhanced internal security for Captain Wales, who was serving as an Apache Co-Pilot Gunner on Camp Bastion at the time of the 14-15 September 2012 attack.

(15) **Observation and Patrolling of Camp Bastion.** Other than the guard towers' surveillance of the fence line, surveillance for Camp Bastion on the night of the attack was limited to a Persistent Ground Surveillance System (PGSS or aerostat), monitored in the CJOC. The CJOC used the PGSS to scan for threats over the entire 40 square miles of the BLS Complex and its exterior. Very few barriers and obstacles existed between the perimeter and the airfield, and the area behind the towers was not under persistent surveillance. In late July 2012, the 3d MAW (FWD) completed a project to secure vulnerable areas of the airfield and to channelize pedestrian traffic to ECPs by emplacing concertina wire, which the Taliban attackers breached with wire cutters on their way to the airfield. Two UK mounted patrols checked the perimeter each 24-hour period to detect any breaches in the fence, and the UK randomly patrolled the roads in the area between the towers and airfield. The 3d MAW (FWD) utilized Marine MPs from the Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS) to patrol internally at the airfield, later augmented by MPs from Camp Leatherneck as the drawdown reduced MWSS capacity.

(16) **3d MAW (FWD) Security Posture.** While the 3d MAW (FWD) headquarters was located on Camp Leatherneck, the Squadrons of the 3d MAW (FWD), MALS-16, HMH-361, HMH-362, VMM-161, HMLA-469, and VMA-211, were located on the Camp Bastion airfield. 3d MAW (FWD) was a tenant unit on Camp Bastion, which Joint Publication 3-10 (JP 3-10), *Joint Security Operations in Theater*, describes as a unit that resides and operates on a base, but does not fall under the direct command of the base commander. 3d MAW (FWD) did not have a defense plan or crisis management plan at the time of the attack, and they were similarly not integrated into the UK defensive plan for Camp Bastion or into the OP CONGO crisis response plan (discussed below). Two of the squadrons, HMLA-469 (Huey and Cobra helicopters) and VMM-161 (MV-22 Ospreys) had their own internal security plan, but this local security was the exception. The posture of 3d MAW(FWD) was inconsistent with JP 3-10, which "provides the doctrinal basis for...US military involvement in multinational operations," and instructs that, "Tenant unit commanders must actively participate in the preparation of base security and defense plans. They will normally be required to provide security of their own forces and high value assets, provide individuals to perform perimeter/gate security, and will often be assigned battle positions IAW base security plans."

**b. Significant Events Shaping the Environment on the BLS Complex Before the Attack.**

**(1) The 14 March 2012 Airfield Incursion ("Burning Man Incident").**

On 14 March 2012, two days after MajGen Gurganus took command of RC(SW), he and other members of the RC(SW) staff were waiting on the airfield for the arrival of Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta. At the same time, a disgruntled local national interpreter working for coalition forces commandeered a vehicle and drove onto the airfield. He narrowly missed MajGen Gurganus and his party before being pursued into a ditch. The individual set himself on fire and exited the vehicle, dying of his wounds that evening. The CJOC ordered a response to the incident, but it took longer than expected because both US and UK personnel in the CJOC were

directing actions at the same time. As a result of the 14 March 2012 airfield incursion, CO TFBW and CO Bastion created OP CONGO, which was an RC(SW)-approved US/UK crisis action and consequence management plan to be coordinated out of the CJOC for major incidents that occurred within the BLS Complex or AOBW. According to OP CONGO, CO TFBW would be the supported commander, and CO Bastion would be the supporting commander, if a response was required on Camp Leatherneck. The opposite was true for a response on Camp Bastion. Also after the 14 March 2012 airfield incursion, MajGen Gurganus learned of the 2011 MOU between USCENTCOM and the UK PJHQ, which established command arrangements between US and UK personnel on Camps Leatherneck and Bastion as described above. MajGen Gurganus identified that the MOU established a C2 structure, which violated Marine Corps unity of command doctrine. MajGen Gurganus directed his Chief of Staff to correct the C2 problem after the 14 March 2012 airfield incursion. The Chief of Staff drafted a new MOU, which unified command by providing one commander for the base and for the security forces, but the BLS Executive Steering Group (ESG) did not agree to it. The ESG was a combined US-UK board designed to integrate actions affecting both Camp Bastion and Camp Leatherneck. Following the ESG's decision, the Chief of Staff spoke to MajGen Gurganus and subsequently elevated the C2 issue to IJC and ISAF. The Chief of Staff stated his effort to clarify the C2 met with "friction" from the IJC and ISAF staffs, and stated neither were supportive of combining the two camps. According to the Chief of Staff, IJC and ISAF directed RC(SW) to work on a supported/supporting command relationship instead. RC(SW) complied and began to focus on strengthening unity of effort instead of creating unity of command, resulting in OP CONGO and better integrating the CJOC into AT/FP. Personnel from both SECFORs staffed the CJOC, shared information, monitored the ISR feeds, synchronized the patrol plan, and rehearsed OP CONGO.

(2) **The Joint Staff Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (JSIVA).** The JSIVA Program is managed by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) as the executive agent for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. The JSIVA is a vulnerability-based assessment of military installations to determine susceptibility to a terrorist attack. The program consists of six assessment teams composed of eight people in each team. A JSIVA Team conducted an assessment of the TFBW AT/FP Plan and Camp Leatherneck 10-14 June 2012. In addition to Camp Leatherneck, the JSIVA team assessed the Camp Bastion East Gate and airfield. A JSIVA "vulnerability" is "a situation or circumstance that if left unchanged may result in the loss of life or damage to mission-essential resources." The JSIVA Team provided an outbrief to the TFBW leaders and some of their UK counterparts at the conclusion of the JSIVA on 14 June 2012, and the team produced an official report, dated 7 August 2012. The JSIVA identified six vulnerabilities at the BLS Complex, including uncontrolled access to the airfield, which left personnel and equipment exposed. Commanders are not required to mitigate the force protection vulnerabilities and concerns identified by a JSIVA, nor does a JSIVA team have the responsibility to re-assess a base for compliance.

(3) **Insider Threat and Contractor Control.** All RC(SW) members interviewed expressed a concern for the insider threat posed by the local national (LN) and third country national (TCN) contractors on the BLS Complex. Over 6,000 US, local national, and third country national contractors performed duties on the BLS Complex. The 14 March airfield incursion made this concern even more acute. RC(SW) significantly increased efforts to improve vetting, badging control measures, and contractor accountability. TFBW and the RC(SW) C2X

Counterintelligence (CI) Officer led a large effort to combine the US and UK vetting and badging procedures out of a common location near the CJOC, to identify and account for all contractors on Camp Leatherneck, and to ramp up random inspections of contractor living areas to search for illegal activity and restricted items like cell phones, cameras, and other electronics.

(4) **External Fence Breaches.** The RC(SW) command knew of external fence breaches before the 14-15 September 2012 attack. CO TFBW informed the investigation team of a breach of the perimeter fence in the Camp Leatherneck sector near Tower 40 or 41 that occurred in late June 2012. CO TFBW also learned during Operations and Intelligence (O&I) briefings at the CJOC of three unobserved breaches that occurred in the Camp Bastion perimeter in the July-August 2012 timeframe, identified by UK patrols after the breaches occurred. All interviewees informed the investigation team about the problem with “scrappers” at the BLS Complex – individuals who would try to come near the base to take or steal metal to sell on the economy. The cause or purpose of the breaches is unknown, but the 5 FP Wing assessed them as “scrapping” activity. Many people throughout the RC(SW) chain of command, including MajGen Gurganus, expressed concern about the fence breaches, but accepted them as related to scrapping or theft activity.

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

#### 4. Findings.

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

b. **Command Responsibility.** Commanders are responsible for force protection. While MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant appropriately delegated authority to their staffs for the development and execution of plans and operations designed to protect the force, such delegation

does not relieve the commander of continued responsibility for the success or failure of the mission. Moreover, as in all aspects of military operations, it should be a commander's skill and judgment that remains of primary importance when making decisions about force protection. The staff can provide recommendations, but it has no responsibility for resulting actions. The commander alone is responsible; therefore, the commander alone is accountable.

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

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

c. **Causal Factor.** The underlying causal factor of the successful Taliban attack on 14-15 September 2012 was the failure of MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant to adequately ensure that an integrated, layered, defense-in-depth was in place to protect US personnel and equipment on the Camp Bastion airfield.

(1) **Defense-In-Depth Doctrine.** US and Marine Corps doctrine emphasizes the importance of an "integrated, layered, defense-in-depth plan" utilizing the protection concepts of deterrence, prevention, active security, passive defense, and mitigation to support base protection. While a commander is free to use any approach to manage operational risk, the base defense plan for the BLS Complex did not display these essential characteristics and was, therefore, inadequate to protect the force. Several elements of a successful defense-in-depth were lacking.

(2) **Patrolling.** The SECFOR's patrolling effort in AOBW was inadequate to detect, deter, or counter enemy forces seeking to attack the BLS Complex. Aggressive patrolling is an important part of the protection concepts of active security and deterrence, and is a critical component of a layered defense. While MajGen Gurganus requested additional SECFOR personnel, when those forces were not approved, he should have reassessed his troop-to-task ratios and adjusted his available forces and resources to meet operational requirements, including protection of the force.



### (3) Perimeter Security.

(a) **Camp Bastion Perimeter Fence.** On 14-15 September 2012, the Camp Bastion perimeter consisted of single strand concertina wire, a 30-foot chain link fence, and guard towers of varying distance from each other and from the fence line. Manning only Towers 15 and 17 in vicinity of the breach point was inadequate, given the distance between the towers and the expansive area the personnel in these towers had to observe. In fact, Tower 15 did not have observation of the breach point in the fence due to the undulating terrain, so only Tower 16 (unmanned) or Tower 17 (manned) could have detected the breach on the night of 14 September 2012. Additionally, Camp Bastion lacked Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capability to provide redundant observation of the eastern perimeter from the CJOC. After the 14-15 September 2012 attack, RC(SW) increased ISR capability, and performed a significant amount of engineer work to reduce the undulating terrain and to add lighting to the perimeter.

(b) **Tower Observation.** During the investigation team's Camp Bastion site survey, the investigation team observed the perimeter from Tower 17 at night. The AT/FP Officer for 3d MAW (FWD) had previously informed the investigative team that with the amount of ground and the type of terrain Tower 17 had to cover, it would have been difficult to observe an approaching attacker who was attempting to conceal his movement, even on a night with better illumination, and even if the guard was constantly scanning back and forth with a night vision device. Having observed the vantage point from Tower 17 at night during the site survey, the investigation team concurred with the AT/FP Officer's assessment. Regarding the Tongan guards in Towers 15 and 17, the preponderance of the evidence does not support various reports that the Tongans were asleep at the time of the attack. The Tongan guards had different guard procedures than the Marines, and they stayed in the towers for longer periods of time. Typically, two Tongans were on duty in the top of the tower, and two Tongans were off duty in the bottom of the tower, which also served as their living and sleeping area. The Tongans on the bottom level could rest, watch television, or conduct other off-duty activities. Marines typically ran on the gravel road near the Camp Bastion towers, so Marines without knowledge of the living and working arrangement in the guard towers may have misinterpreted and misreported what they observed the Tongans doing in and around the lower level of the towers. Leaders within TFBW knew of the reports from Marines about the Tongans, but they were also aware of the working arrangements in the Camp Bastion guard towers, so they had no concerns about the ability of the Tongans to conduct their duties.

(c) **Tower Manning.** MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant did not make themselves aware of the capabilities and limitations of the coalition forces responsible for protection of the Camp Bastion perimeter, nor did they direct TFBW or their staffs to make the assessment. MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant both held the general assumption that security along the Camp Bastion perimeter was adequate, but they did not base this assumption on an assessment of the capabilities and limitations of coalition forces there, nor did they communicate on the subject with one another.

(4) **Unobserved Terrain.** Camp Bastion lacked persistent observation of the terrain between the perimeter fence and the airfield. Due to this vulnerability, the 3d MAW (FWD) AT/FP Officer at the time of the attack described the perimeter fence as the "single point of

failure.” If an enemy force could breach the Camp Bastion perimeter fence and move past the guard towers, there was unimpeded access all the way to the hard surface road abutting the eastern side of the airfield. Even at the hard surface road next to the airfield, the only barrier consisted of short four-foot Hesco barriers with single strand concertina on top at approximately chest height. The attackers breached this obstacle. Although personnel in the CJOC monitored the PGSS feed, which had the ability to observe this area, the PGSS did not detect the attackers on 14-15 September 2012.

(5) **Exploitable Airfield Access.** MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant failed to implement adequate measures to control pedestrian access to the airfield, which the enemy exploited on 14-15 September 2012. MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant primarily focused on mitigating the vehicular threat, even after recognizing pedestrian access to the airfield was practically unimpeded. The high-speed avenues of approach highlight another gap in the layered, defense-in-depth of the Camp Bastion Airfield, which neither MajGen Gurganus nor MajGen Sturdevant corrected until after the 14-15 September 2012 attack.

(6) **Limited Local Security on the Airfield.** 3d MAW (FWD) failed to ensure its squadrons located on the Camp Bastion airfield had an integrated force protection plan, which essentially would have served as the last line of defense in addition to the QRF and other crisis response assets in a defense-in-depth. MajGen Sturdevant stated local security on the airfield was a “Squadron Commander’s call.” The majority of the 3d MAW (FWD) and VMA-211 leadership that we interviewed did not believe they had the manpower to accomplish their mission while also providing their own security. However, shortly after the attack, MajGen Sturdevant was able to rapidly implement an integrated force protection plan that enabled 3d MAW (FWD) to perform its own local security and prevent unimpeded access to the flight line while accomplishing its mission.

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

d. **Contributing Factors.** Three contributing factors influenced the existence of the underlying causal factor discussed above.

(1) **First Contributing Factor: MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant Underestimated the Enemy.** RC(SW) had adequate manpower, access to all forms of intelligence, and all the tools necessary to receive, produce, and analyze intelligence properly. While there was a lack of explicit reporting on any direct threats to the BLS Complex prior to the attack, MajGen Gurganus should have ensured that stronger force protection measures were in place, based on the known general threat to large coalition bases throughout Afghanistan. The RC(SW) Intelligence Officer indicated that the threat to all major installations was “high” at the time of the 14-15 September 2012 attack, and there were consistent indicators that the Taliban

wanted to gain access to and attack the BLS Complex. Yet, RC(SW) and 3d MAW (FWD) leaders at every level expressed complete surprise by the mode of attack on 14-15 September 2012, specifically the boldness of the enemy breach of the perimeter and dismounted assault on the airfield.

(a) **Faulty Threat Assessment.** MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant failed to adequately assess the enemy situation and plan accordingly. They made a faulty threat assessment based primarily on recent enemy activity as opposed to analyzing the full range of enemy options based on Taliban capabilities and intentions. Most of the RC(SW) and 3d MAW (FWD) personnel interviewed seemed to overly rely on the lack of historical attacks on the BLS Complex, and they did not consider other possibilities outside of their top three assessed threats. Enemy intentions are normally the product of thought processes different than our own, which can lead to surprise. To counter enemy surprise, leaders must consider all possible enemy capabilities and intentions despite the apparent weight of evidence and decision-making predisposition. MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant did not adequately do so, which caused them to overlook and fail to guard against potential enemy COAs.

(b) **Failure to Address All Enemy COAs.** MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant were aware of the general threat to BLS, but they failed to adequately consider all modes in which that attack might be carried out. Threat assessments must constantly be updated in a dynamic security environment. By failing to revisit their initial assumptions, MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant overlooked the mode of attack on 14-15 September.

(2) **Second Contributing Factor: RC(SW) Lacked Overall Unity of Command and Effort for AT/FP on the BLS Complex.** While MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant inherited the C2 arrangement imposed by the CENTCOM-PJHQ MOU, they failed to take adequate measures to mitigate the MOU's negative effects on the force protection of their forces by ensuring unity of effort.

(a) **Effects of the Absence of Unity of Command.** The C2 arrangement allowed the separate camps to have different force protection capabilities and limitations, to include doctrine, standards, weapons, equipment, and rules of engagement (ROE), and the differences were not fully understood by their coalition partners on the other camps. The BLS Complex also lacked a single commander with unity of command over all forces to determine the capabilities and limitations of each of the forces, and then develop a force protection plan based on the various skill sets and the assessed threat. Finally, unity of command would have provided the single commander with common oversight and enforcement of standards for all units responsible for protection of the BLS Complex. Due to the negative effects on AT/FP created by the MOU, MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant should have taken more measures to ensure unity of effort with coalition partners, especially on Camp Bastion, due to the presence of the 3d MAW (FWD) squadrons on the airfield.

(b) **Failure to Ensure Unity of Effort in the Absence of Unity of Command.** MCDP 1-0, *Operations*, recognizes that unity of command is difficult to achieve in multinational operations, and directs commanders to concentrate on obtaining unity of effort when this is true. RC(SW) did not ensure unity of effort to account for and mitigate the differences in the force protection capabilities and limitations noted above. Further, 3d MAW (FWD) did little to

coordinate with coalition forces on Camp Bastion regarding security of the perimeter, an internal defense plan, or an integrated crisis response plan. Leaders throughout RC(SW) and 3d MAW (FWD) expressed a belief that they achieved unity of effort with coalition partners through the CJOC and the ESG, but these mechanisms were not adequate to effectuate complete unity of effort.

(c) **Post-Attack Unity of Command and Effort.** RC(SW) unified command in December 2012 after the attack, establishing a CO for the entire BLS Complex. However, the force protection measures employed immediately after the attack and before RC(SW) unified command, which included enhanced internal security on the airfield, an integrated base defense plan that encompassed all of the BLS complex, 100% manning of guard towers, better coordination with coalition forces for perimeter security on Camp Bastion, improved communications, and increased ISR capability for the perimeter, demonstrate that alternatives for better unity of effort existed for MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant prior to the 14-15 September 2012 attack, even without obtaining unity of command.

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

(a) **Failure to Adequately Address Airfield Vulnerability.** MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant failed to adequately address previously identified airfield vulnerabilities.

1 **Failure to Adequately Address the 14 March 2012 Airfield Incursion.** After the 14 March 2012 airfield incursion, both MajGen Gurganus and MajGen Sturdevant, based on the advice of their staffs, believed that the force protection project in development to address the vehicle-borne threat was adequate given the assessed enemy threat. However, the project did not address the entire threat identified, which included the threat of unimpeded pedestrian access.

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

3 **Failure to Utilize the Core Vulnerability Assessment Management Program (CVAMP).** Unit AT/FP Officers may access CVAMP, a Joint Staff portal, to submit requests for force protection funding via the Combating Terrorism Readiness Initiatives Fund (CbT RIF).

CVAMP also ensures that long-term program funding for the requirement will be tracked in case it does not gain funding under CbT RIF. CVAMP directly ties funding requests to JSIVA observations and vulnerabilities within the database. The JSIVA Team 4 Chief informed the investigation team that inputting JSIVA-identified vulnerabilities into CVAMP is the best way to get visibility of those vulnerabilities up the chain of command, all the way to the Joint Staff. RC(SW) did not input their vulnerabilities and mitigation strategies into CVAMP, and therefore RC(SW) did not take advantage of an opportunity to address the airfield vulnerabilities.

**4 Failure to Adequately Address the VMA-211 FP Assessment.** VMA-211, the Harrier squadron hit hardest by the attack, moved to Camp Bastion from Kandahar in early July 2012. Upon their arrival, their AT/FP personnel conducted a vulnerability assessment and provided it to the 3d MAW (FWD) staff. Similar to previous assessments, VMA-211 found the airfield to be vulnerable. VMA-211 requested barrier material and other improvements for their portion of the airfield, but the project was disapproved due to lack of barrier materials and engineer support. It is true that the Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS) had been reduced in numbers by 80% during the drawdown, and its engineers were stretched extremely thin doing base improvement or retrograde across the entire AO, not just on the BLS complex. MajGen Sturdevant prioritized his resources to meet other operational requirements, but he nonetheless failed to adequately respond to the vulnerabilities identified by VMA-211.

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

**1 MajGen Gurganus Resource Allocation.** Command includes the authority and responsibility for effectively using available resources to accomplish assigned missions. Commanders constantly use their judgment for allocating resources, including determination of appropriate troop-to-task ratios. Commanders have an obligation to inform their superiors when insufficient resources have been allocated to accomplish the mission. In July 2012, MajGen Gurganus submitted a request for an FML increase for the SECFOR. Although the request was disapproved, MajGen Gurganus did not effectively adapt to achieve the mission with fewer resources, and he did not take prudent steps to reallocate his own forces to reduce unnecessary exposure to risk. Instead, he made the conscious decision to continue accepting risk at the BLS Complex. Regardless of the wisdom of MajGen Gurganus's troop-to-task decision, the responsibility for this decision falls upon MajGen Gurganus as the commander who consciously assumed that risk.

**2 MajGen Sturdevant Failure to Adequately Address AT/FP.** MajGen Sturdevant appropriately focused his forces on generating aircraft sorties to support ground operations, but he failed to simultaneously address the inherent responsibility of commanders at every echelon to provide security and protection for their forces. Every individual interviewed from 3d MAW (FWD) and subordinate units expressed that they were focused offensively and not defensively. Many of the 3d MAW (FWD) interviewees, including MajGen Sturdevant, expressed that they were a tenant unit, and they relied upon TFBW and the UK FP Wing to protect them. By solely

relying upon other units for the protection of his forces, MajGen Sturdevant ignored his responsibility to be an active participant in the preparation of base security and defense plans, and to protect his own forces and high-value assets. Further, the decision to cut 80% of the MWSS was a troop-to-task assignment which eliminated AT/FP assets like engineers and MPs which could have improved the force protection posture.

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

1 **Inadequate Guidance (MajGen Gurganus).** RC(SW) had a major subordinate unit and a major source of its combat power located on a camp not protected by Marines. MajGen Gurganus failed to adequately direct his staff to assist 3d MAW (FWD) with force protection measures to ensure that they were secure on Camp Bastion. MajGen Gurganus failed to ensure that 3d MAW (FWD) was adequately integrated into the UK defensive plan of Camp Bastion or the OP CONGO crisis response plan.

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

e. **Finding Regarding the UK.** The scope of this investigation is limited to US accountability pertaining to the Camp Bastion attack, so it will not draw findings regarding the effectiveness or efficiency of UK forces. However, an initial UK review of the attack warrants the recommendation in paragraph 5.b. below.

**5. Recommendations to Commander, US Central Command.**

- a. Refer this report to Commandant, USMC, for review and action as appropriate.
- b. Refer this report to UK Ministry of Defence for review and action as appropriate.
- c. Refer this report to Commander, ISAF, for review and action as appropriate.



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