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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE/NEW ZEALAND
DEFENCE FORCE

COVER SHEET
To accompany documents to
Minister of Defence



Subject:	CRU AND NZSAS OPERATIONS IN BAGHLAN PROVINCE AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2010		
MOD File No.	MoD Tracking #.	Minister's Tracking#: (For Minister's office)	
NZDF File No.	NZDF Tracking # 521/2010		
Priority:	ROUTINE	Request Ministerial response by:	
Contacts:	1 PSR(sen)1, PSR(IC)3 2	Tel: PSR(IC)3, PSR(sen)1 Tel:	A/H: PSR(sen)1, PSR(IC)3 A/H:

Sheet not to exceed one page. Please complete shaded areas.

Purpose:	The purpose of this note is to provide releasable information to the Prime Minister of the operations conducted by the Crisis Response Unit (CRU) and NZSAS Task Force in Baghlan Province, Afghanistan on 22 August and 03 October 2010.
Recommendations:	Note the risks associated with releasing the information. Refer this note to the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs for public release.
MOD/NZDF Consultation	NZDF
Minister's comments:	
Minister's Action:	Signed / Noted / Agreed / Approved / Declined Referred to:
Signature:	Date:

J. Mateparae
MATEPARAE
 Lieutenant General
 Chief of Defence Force

Date 13 Dec 10

PM & Min agreed not to release the information into the media

PSR(sen)1, PSR(IC)3

DIRECTORATE SPECIAL OPERATIONS (DSO)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Received:	10 FEB 2011	
File No:	3130/DSO/4	
Comment:	/	

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UNCLASSIFIED

CRU AND NZSAS OPERATIONS IN BAGHLAN PROVINCE AUGUST AND OCTOBER 2010

1. On 3 August 2010, a daytime NZPRT Patrol led by Lt O'Donnell was ambushed in the North Eastern region of Bamian province by an insurgent group that had an active history of targeting Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and coalition forces within the Baghlan-Bamian border region. This insurgent group was based in the neighbouring province of Baghlan, centred on the Talewa Berfak district (approx 20km away).
2. Following this attack, the Afghan Ministry of Interior (MOI) Crisis Response Unit (CRU) supported by the NZSAS Task Force and other ISAF coalition partners, commenced planning to disrupt this insurgent group's capacity and capability to target coalition forces, including the NZPRT within the Baghlan-Bamian border region. The Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant General Mateparae approved the operation and it was launched on the night 21 August after gaining additional approval from the MOI and Commander ISAF. The MOI issued Arrest Warrants for the two principal insurgent commanders, which were to be enforced by the CRU.
3. The force for the operation consisted of a combined ground force ^{PSR(S)1} CRU personnel and ^{PSR(S)2, PSR(S)3} NZSAS personnel) supported by coalition helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft (including Unmanned Aerial Vehicle or UAV). The ground force landed near a village of Tigiran in Baghlan province at 00.30am on Sunday 22 August. The force was on the ground for approximately three hours, and during that time a large number of armed insurgents, operating in small groups attempted to outflank the force and fire on it from high ground. The armed insurgents were engaged by coalition helicopters and aircraft. The ground force searched three buildings and destroyed a quantity of weapons, ammunition and explosives, but did not locate the two insurgent leaders. The ground force departed at approx 3.30am. During the operation nine armed insurgents were killed by the supporting coalition helicopters and aircraft, and one NZSAS soldier was injured when a wall collapsed on him. The soldier was evacuated and has subsequently returned to NZ for further medical treatment.
4. Following the operation allegations were made that up to twenty (20) civilians had been killed by aerial bombardment and twenty (20) houses destroyed by fire¹. Based on these allegations a joint assessment team composed of representatives from the Afghan MOI and Defence and ISAF officials conducted a full assessment of the operation. The assessment team visited the provincial and district capitals, the hospital where the alleged casualties were receiving treatment, viewed the "gun tapes" from the coalition aircraft and spoke to NZSAS personnel. As a result of their investigation the assessment team concluded that "having reviewed the evidence there is no way that civilian casualties could have occurred" and the actions of the ground force and coalition air were cleared of all accusations.
5. Headquarters ISAF assessed that as a result of this operation the insurgent group's capacity and capability to conduct further operations had been disrupted. A follow-on operation was conducted on the night of 2 October, but passed without incident. No insurgents were encountered and no shots fired.

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Note:

1. During the operation on 22 Aug, two of the three buildings searched caught fire, the first was caused by explosives igniting the structure and the second was caused by an unattended cooking fire left burning when the local inhabitants departed.

Risks (Not For Release)

Associated with Releasing Information

If New Zealand is identified as the main coalition ground force on these operations, then the risks are:

- Insurgent groups will be more motivated to conduct a retaliatory attack targeting the NZPRT along similar lines to their attack on 3 August 2010. [Medium]
- The release may undermine the cooperation from locals who interact with the NZPRT. However it has been reported that some locals have distanced themselves from the actions of the insurgents operating in their area. [Low]
- The release may compromise future operations by coalition forces including those of the NZDF within the Baghlan province. Insurgent groups may analyse the previous actions of the coalition force in an attempt to predict the likely tactics and techniques of any future action potentially denying the element of surprise to the coalition. [Low]
- The release may also have a positive effect by demonstrating New Zealand's resolve and high capability to strike insurgent groups that seek to undermine the GIRoA, ISAF and NZPRT.
- The release will place more pressure of the NZ Government to release more information about NZSAS operations in Afghanistan. (Release of information on NZSAS operations is on a case by case basis). [Medium]

From the Environment and Insurgents

The Talewa Berfak insurgent group operating within the Baghlan province still possess an ability to target Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and NZPRT operating within the Baghlan-Bamian border region. These groups have recently been reported threatening to target ANSF, coalition forces and the NZPRT.

Assessed risk remains as **Medium** and is unchanged from the current threat posed from insurgent activity in the Baghlan-Bamian border region

Risk Mitigation

As a result of the ambush on 3 August and recent threats by these insurgent groups, the NZDF and NZPRT have taken active measures to increase their force protection when operating in this border region. These have included
PSR(S)2, PSR(S)3

PSR(sen)1, PSR(IC)3

From: PSR(sen)1, PSR(IC)3
Sent: Tuesday, 31 August 2010 8:40 a.m.
To: PSR(sen)1, PSR(IC)3
Subject: Media article

[SEEMAIL] [RESTRICTED]

Morning ^{PSR(sen)1, PS} - the article below might be of interest, if you haven't already seen it (from the "War on Terror" website).

Monday, August 30, 2010

AFG Civilian Casualties in Baghlan Confirmed

Joint assessment team confirms possibility of civilian casualties in Baghlan

ISAF Joint Command

08.29.2010 KABUL - In response to Baghlan provincial governor's concerns about civilian casualties, a joint assessment team composed of representatives from the ministries of interior and defense, and International Security Assistance Force officials, conducted a full assessment of an operation on Aug. 22 in Talah wa Barfak District, Baghlan province.

The team determined that several rounds from coalition helicopters fell short, missing the intended target and instead striking two buildings, which may have resulted in civilian casualties.

Insurgents were using the building as a base of operations; however, it was not the intended target.

The team discovered the accidental short rounds during an examination of the air weapons team video. The assessment determined a gun site malfunction was the cause of the errant rounds.

"We regret any possible civilian loss of life or injury. Our first objective is to protect the people of Afghanistan, and in this case we may have failed," said U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Timothy M. Zadalis, ISAF Joint Command director of plans and projects and team lead. "Our thoughts and concerns are with the family and friends of those civilians who may have been injured or killed."

During their assessment, the team received operational briefings, met with the provincial governor and chief of police and reviewed weapons-system video.

Initial reports from the ground operation indicated 13 insurgents were killed, with no civilian casualties, however close examination of the weapons system video showed the errant rounds striking the unintended buildings.

"This is exactly why we send assessment teams to look into all civilian casualty allegations," said Zadalis. "We want to be sure we understand exactly what happened, review all information available and set the record straight."

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Joint assessment team confirms possibility of civilian casualties in Baghlan

296 words

31 August 2010

The Times of Central Asia

TCASIA

English

(c) 2010 Asia Pulse Pty Limited.

KABUL, August 30 (NATO News Release) -- In response to Baghlan provincial governor's concerns about civilian casualties, a joint assessment team composed of representatives from the ministries of interior and defense, and International Security Assistance Force officials, conducted a full assessment of an operation on Aug. 22 in Talah wa Barfak district, Baghlan province.

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"This is exactly why we send assessment teams to look into all civilian casualty allegations," said Zadalis. "We want to be sure we understand exactly what happened, review all information available and set the record straight."

Document TCASIA0020100901e68v0000d

ISAF to probe allegations of civilian casualties

133 words

30 August 2010

Pajhwok Afghan News

APAFGH

English

(c) 2010 Asia Pulse Pty Limited.

Pajhwok Report - Aug 30, 2010 - 17:53

KABUL (PAN): The International Security Assistance Force Joint Command Monday ordered an investigation into allegations of civilian casualties during an August 22 operation in northern Baghlan province.

In a statement, the NATO-led force said The ISAF Joint Command commander had ordered the investigation based on information contained in the joint initial assessment team's report.

The assessment team determined several rounds from coalition helicopters fell short, missing the intended target and instead striking two buildings, which might have resulted in civilian casualties.

"We are here to protect the people of Afghanistan. Civilian casualties reduce the confidence of the Afghan people and erodes trust placed in us," said US Army Lt. Gen. David M. Rodriguez, ISAF Joint Command commander.

Document APAFGH0020100831e68u0000b

Afghan violence reverses gains; 7 soldiers are killed after weeks of decline in NATO casualty rate

BY ROD NORDLAND

426 words

30 August 2010

International Herald Tribune

INHT

5

English

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Seven American soldiers were killed in fighting in eastern and southern Afghanistan over the weekend, after several weeks of declining death tolls among NATO forces.

In western Afghanistan, in Herat Province, police officers found the bullet-riddled bodies of five missing campaign workers for a female candidate in next month's parliamentary elections, and a body was found of another candidate for Parliament who had been shot and killed, Afghan officials said Sunday.

The American servicemen were killed in five separate incidents, according to statements from the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, known as ISAF. On Sunday, an American soldier was killed by an improvised explosive device in southern Afghanistan, while another died as a result of an insurgent attack in southern Afghanistan, the NATO force said.

On Saturday, attacks by militants in eastern Afghanistan killed two American soldiers in one incident and one in a separate incident, while two other Americans were killed by an improvised explosive device in southern Afghanistan.

NATO officials did not release any further details.

The incidents brought the monthly death toll among coalition soldiers to 62 as of Aug. 29, compared with 88 in July, according to icasualties.org, which tracks coalition fatalities. In June, the bloodiest month of the nine-year war, 102 NATO soldiers were killed, according to icasualties.org figures.

At the same time, NATO forces have nearly tripled in Afghanistan since the beginning of 2009, with a total of 123,000 now. About 100,000 of them are Americans.

In the Herat Province incident, the police said 10 campaign workers for Fawzia Gilani, a current member of Parliament who is running for re-election, had been abducted in the Adraskan District last week. Five of them were discovered shot and killed on Sunday, said Col. Noor Khan Nikzad, a spokesman for the provincial police.

Elsewhere in Herat, in the Shindand District, Abdul Manan, a candidate for Parliament who was on his way to a local mosque, was shot and killed by a gunman on a motorcycle, according to Colonel Nikzad.

In northern Baghlan Province, a NATO investigation gave credence to reports from local officials that eight civilians were killed during a night raid last week.

ISAF said in a statement released Sunday that a "full assessment" of the incident early last week in Talah wa Barfak district had determined that a helicopter that fired into the wrong building "may have resulted in civilian casualties."

Document INHT000020100830e68u00001

People protest against civilians death in US forces operation in Afghan north

216 words

29 August 2010

19:33

BBC Monitoring South Asia

BBCSAP

English

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Text of report by privately-owned Afghan Arzu TV on 28 August

[Presenter] A number of residents of Tala wa Barfak District of Baghlan Province [in northern Afghanistan] have staged a demonstration to protest against the killing of civilians in an operation of US soldiers. The protesters claim that at least 20 civilians had been killed as a result of the US forces' operation in the district.

[Correspondent] Protesters, who were chanting slogans of death to America, demanded the central government, the international community and human rights organizations to stop such operations. They claim that if this practice is continued they will close the Bamian-Baghlan road which passes through Tala wa Barfak District. According to them, five civilians were killed and 16 others injured in the US forces' operation in the Tirgaran area of Tala wa Barfak. It is reported that children and women were among the victims of the incident.

The protesters said that the [US] forces had attacked the village at night and the protest ended after two hours following issuing a resolution.

[Video shows an angry demonstration on a street, people stepping on a US flag]

Source: Arzu TV, Mazar-e Sharif, in Dari 1500 gmt 28 Aug 10

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Document BBCSAP0020100829e68t001md

People protest against civilians death in US forces operation in Afghan north

SAP20100829950033 Mazar-e Sharif *Arzu TV* in Dari 1500 GMT 28 Aug 10

People protest against civilians death in US forces operation in Afghan north

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[Video shows an angry demonstration on a street, people stepping on a US flag]

[Description of Source: Mazar-e Sharif Arzu TV in Dari -- privately-owned television station launched in 2007 by Kamal Nabizada who is said to have good ties with Balkh provincial governor Atta Mohammad Nur.]

Two NATO soldiers, eight civilians killed in Afghan violence

Sardar Ahmad

588 words

25 August 2010

03:01

Agence France Presse

AFPR

English

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Two foreign soldiers died Tuesday fighting insurgents in Afghanistan, the NATO alliance said, as Afghan authorities said international forces had killed eight civilians in a recent operation.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said it was aware of the charges by some Afghan officials that its soldiers had killed civilians during a raid against Islamist rebels in the northern province of Baghlan.

"On Sunday we saw 11 helicopters coming," Mohammad Ismail, the district chief for Tala Wa Barfak, where the incident took place, told AFP.

"Some of the helicopters landed deploying troops. They carried out attacks there. They killed eight people, all civilians," he said.

Tala Wa Barfak is a remote district in Baghlan, where Taliban insurgents have established a significant presence in recent months.

The district chief said that about a dozen other people, "all of them civilians," were injured in the raids, which he said had lasted for "hours".

An ISAF spokesman said the claims were being investigated, adding: "However, current operational reporting does not support any civilian casualties."

Civilian casualties caused by foreign forces have fallen this year, with NATO troops responsible for about 22 percent of more than 1,200 non-combatant deaths in the first half of 2010, a recent UN report said.

Afghan civilian casualties in the war launched against the Taliban regime in October 2001 is a sensitive issue that sometimes leads to violent anti-West protests.

President Hamid Karzai has long been calling on his Western backers, the US and NATO members with 141,000 troops in Afghanistan, to protect non-combatants during operations against rebels.

Karzai has said that civilian casualties erode public support for his administration, already unpopular among Afghans because of rampant corruption among its officials and its failure to provide security.

Meanwhile, ISAF said two foreign soldiers were killed in southern Afghanistan Tuesday, bringing to 13 the number of troops killed in the country since the weekend.

An American soldier was killed by a bomb in southern Afghanistan, and an ISAF soldier whose nationality was not disclosed was killed in fighting against insurgents, also in the south, the NATO-led force said.

The latest deaths bring to 458 the number of international soldiers killed in the Afghan war so far this year, compared with 520 for the whole last year.

Thirteen international soldiers have been killed since Saturday, seven of them Americans, according to an AFP tally based on that kept by the icasualties.org website.

The force said it had killed 35 rebels during operations east of Kabul launched to secure troubled regions ahead of Afghanistan's September parliamentary elections. The figures could not independently be verified.

The violence is worsening as the militants spread into the north and west of the country from their traditional strongholds in the south and east.

The head of the US Marine Corps, speaking in the United States after a visit to Afghanistan, said he believed Afghan forces would not be ready to take over from US troops in Afghanistan's southern provinces for a few more years.

"It will be a few years before conditions on the ground are such that turnover will be possible for us," General James Conway told reporters, referring to Marines deployed in the provinces of Helmand and Kandahar.

His comments were the latest sign from US military leaders that a major troop withdrawal remained a long way off, despite the July 2011 deadline set by President Barack Obama.

burs/bsk/dk

Document AFPR000020100824e680006mx

Afghan official says six civilians killed in NATO strike

SAP20100823950060 Kabul [Pajhwok Afghan News](#) in English 1203 GMT 23 Aug 10

Afghan official says six civilians killed in NATO strike

Text of report in English by [Afghan independent Pajhwok news agency website](#)

Pol-e Khomri: Six civilians, including a woman and a child, were killed and as many wounded during a NATO airstrike in northern Baghlan Province, an official said on Monday [23 August].

NATO helicopters pounded the Tirgaran village of Tala wa Barfak District, killing and wounding the civilians and burning 20 houses, the district chief, Mohammad Esmail, told Pajhwok Afghan News.

There were no militants in the area at the time of the predawn strike, he said, adding International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) soldiers did not inform district officials prior to the air raid.

"NATO helicopters struck our village at about 2:00am, killing six and wounding as many. Twenty houses were torched and foreign troops arrested four residents," said Mullah Mohammad, a local imam. All victims were civilians, he alleged.

Meanwhile, the alliance said a dozen individuals killed in the operation were insurgents and two Taliban commanders, known to lead attacks on Afghan and coalition forces, were the target of the operation.

"Combined forces located and destroyed a rocket-propelled grenade launcher, several RPGs and several boxes of small arms ammunition," the International Security Assistance Force said.

[Description of Source: Kabul Pajhwok Afghan News in English -- independent news agency]

PSR(sen)1, PSR(IC)3

From: PSR(sen)1, PSR(IC)3
Sent: Wednesday, 8 December 2010 3:29 p.m.
To: PSR(sen)1, PSR(IC)3
Cc: BRADSHAW PHIL, CDR; COLEMAN PETER, MR
Subject: FW: Defence - Afghanistan - Injury - unclassified

Merry Xmas ^{PSR(sen)1}
OIA from PSR(IC)3

Cheers

PSR(IC)3 | Media Manager
Defence Communications Group

DDI: PSR(IC)3 | Mobile: PSR(IC)3 | DTeIN: PSR(IC)3
NZDF website: [Click here](#) | DCG intranet site: [Click here](#)

Think before you print

PSR(IC)3 @nzdf.mil.nz

COMPLIANCE DATE 27/1/11

OIA-1454-2010

PLEASE LOG AS
OIA MIN PQ

REFER TO: DSO

CC:

FOR DRAFT/DIRECT REPLY
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IMMEDIATELY

From: PSR(IC)3
Sent: Wednesday, 8 December 2010 2:31 p.m.
To: PSR(IC)3, MR
Subject: FW: Defence - Afghanistan - Injury - unclassified

Hi ^{PSR(IC)3}

On 24 September 2010 NZDF provided information relating to injuries sustained by a New Zealand soldier in Afghanistan.

I make a request under the Official Information Act for a copy of all correspondence between NZDF personnel both here and overseas relating to this incident.

Thanks

PSR(IC)3

TVNZ
Television New Zealand Ltd
Te Reo Tātaki

PSR(IC)3
Political Reporter - Wellington

D. PSR(IC)3
M.
P:

CORRESPONDENCE ABOUT INCIDENT CAUSING INJURY TO NZ SOLDIER
IN AFGHANISTAN
8/12/2010

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8/12/2010

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