



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 # <i>521/2010</i>		
Priority:	ROUTINE	Request Ministerial response by:	
Contacts:	1 PSR(sen)1, PSR(IC)3 2	Tel: PSR(sen)1, PSR(IC)3 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
Lieutenant General
Chief of Defence Force

Date *13 Dec 10*

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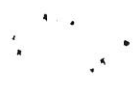
CRU AND NZSAS OPERATIONS IN BAGHLAN PROVINCE AUGUST AND OCTOBER 2010

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, PSR(S)2, PSR(S)3 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

