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INFO MEMO

CM-1684-04
12 April 2004

FOR: SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

FROM: GENERAL RICHARD B. MYERS, CJCS *RBM 4/12*

SUBJECT: Robin Moore, *The Hunt for Bin Laden*, 2003

ISSUE: Your request for an assessment of Moore's book (TAB A)

CONCLUSION: Moore's book is well written, duly appreciative of Special Forces, but riddled with inaccuracies that undermine his account.

DISCUSSION:

- *The Hunt for Bin Laden* is an engaging account of Task Force Dagger in Afghanistan. Moore is understandably impressed with, and sympathetic to, the Special Forces community. He does a solid job of depicting the unique warfighting synergies that emerge when special operations are used in conjunction with the latest technologies.
- Moore's account, however, lacks analysis of the overall strategic and operational picture for the Afghanistan operation. Moreover, when Moore describes non-SF personnel or organizations his comments can be gratuitously insulting assertions (e.g., "while generals fretted about body bags and downed aircraft, bin Laden was escaping," p244; "the CIA was still as inept as ever," p298)
- Finally, several members of the 5SFG expressed concern with various aspects of Moore's account (TAB B). These comments make a compelling case that *The Hunt for Bin Laden* is more of a historical novel than a purely factual account.

RECOMMENDATION: None, for information only.

Attachments

As stated

Prepared by: General Richard B. Myers, CJCS (b)(6)

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11-L-0559/OSD/23523

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March 2⁴, 2004

CJCS HAS SEEN

MAR 27 2004

TO: Gen. Dick Myers

FROM: Donald Rumsfeld

DA

SUBJECT: *The Hunt for Bin Laden*

Would you please do me a favor and read the book, *The Hunt for Bin Laden* by Robin Moore, and tell me what you think of it?

Thanks.

DHR:dh
032104-15

.....
Please respond by

4/30/04

'04 MAR 29 PM 1:59

11-L-0559/OSD/23524

Comments from SSFG Personnel Involved in Task Force Dagger

Comment 1:

The best description that I have heard given about the book is that it is "based on a true story". What I mean by this is that most of the story lines about the various elements are relatively accurate, but the comments attributed to many of the individuals are fictional. Additionally, there were comments made about (b)(6) as the Rear Detachment CDR for 3rd BN, about how he tried to avoid going down range, etc., etc. [158-59] This irritated many within the FRG, to include my wife (which I still hear about now), as they felt he did a great job, especially with many of the casualties coming from 3rd BN. He held everything together. The thought line being if CDRs truly feel that the Rear D and FRG are important and we want to take care of families, you have to leave back competent people. The book trashed him. The families loved him.

Comment 2:

I read the first 50 pages or so of the book before my stomach began to hurt too much from laughing so hard. I was sitting in Baghdad, escorting COL Mulholland around to talk to all of the big wigs and brought the book along to while away the hours. I was with Todd and some other guys and we started passing it around reading out loud. We were in stitches from laughing so hard. It was the equivalent of reading a "Sergeant Rock" comic book when I was younger--everything and everybody was a caricature. The whole thing read like some Mack Bolan book. Frankly, we were all kind of embarrassed to be associated with the generally fictitious account, however, we couldn't help but try and figure out which actors would play which role in the movie version (Costner for Mark Mitchell?).

Honestly, I didn't read anything that would withstand true historical scrutiny--all of the people I talked to about their interaction with Moore is that he twisted their words and thoughts and misrepresented them and are pretty pissed at him. Were you aware of all of the "back channel" dealings that went on with that book (e.g., the pressure by MG (b)(6) to accept the project and USASFC having to disapprove the first draft of the book because it was so factually flawed)?

Comment 3:

WRT to Mr. Moore's book, I have only read portions of the book...and scanned through others. I will tell you that his accounts are far from accurate and in some cases embarrassingly inaccurate. The book, like his new book on Iraq, strike me as nothing more than transparent attempts to capitalize on his relationship with the Special Forces community by being the first on the market - without regard to truth or accuracy. He never interviewed me for the portion of the book about Qala-I Jangi and I can't recall talking to a single person who was there that has spoken with him. Again, this is a small portion of the book but it appears to be indicative of the overall quality of scholarship/journalism that went into writing the book. I have also spoken with some of my peers here at the SOC who had firsthand knowledge of events described in the book and they have had the same reaction.

The other part of the book that was particularly galling was his characterization of (b)(6) actions following the friendly fire incident with ODA 574 on 05 Dec 01. LTC (b)(6) had gone to great pains to ensure that casualty notification was done properly, out of respect for the soldiers and their families, and was explicit in his

instructions to the rear detachment. (b)(6) following established Army procedure, would not confirm or deny whether specific individuals had suffered casualties until the official notification of the NOK. Mr. Moore finds fault with this and even goes so far as to claim that (b)(6) was failing to uphold the SF tradition of taking care of our own. However, the logical consequences of telling spouses that their husbands are OK while not commenting to other spouses is a process of elimination that precedes the official notification, with potentially dire consequences for the NOK. This is precisely why Mr. (b)(6) would not comment and Mr. Moore, who claims a long association with the military, should know better.

Finally, Mr. Moore's association with a man named (b)(6) (b)(6) leads me to call into question his judgment. (b)(6) is a charlatan and provocateur who somehow made his way into Afghanistan. We had standing orders to detain him because he was falsely claiming to be an ex-SF soldier now working for the CIA and was making mischief by representing himself as a USG official. I believe that (b)(6) is the basis for a character in the book that claims that COL Beckwith made him a Green Beret after witnessing him do the swim test - underwater. Any basic fact checking would likely reveal (b)(6) claims as the specious BS that they are.

Bottom line is that there are probably some portions of the book that are substantially accurate but there are more than a few whoppers thrown in. The book is probably a great recruiting tool but not something that we, the SF community...should associate ourselves with. Whenever somebody asks me to sign a copy of it for them, I always write "Based on a true story" on the top of the title page before signing it.

For full disclosure, I am compelled to reveal that I have spoken with Mr. Doug Stanton who is writing a book about SF in AFG. Mr. Stanton is the author of "In Harm's Way," a critically acclaimed recounting of the tragedy of the USS Indianapolis and, in my personal opinion, a serious author more concerned with getting it right than getting there first.

Comment 4:

Jeff Stein wrote a great review of Moore's new book ("Hunting Saddam"?) for the Washington Post (it was in the "Early Bird"). He pretty well captures all of my heartburn with Moore.

More specific comments:

Chapter 2, subsection: "Miller's Finest Hour". This is total creative writing. I was at SOCCENT for the OEF planning when it started in earnest on 16 Sep 01 and the guy who pushed the UW campaign plan through SOCCENT and then to GEN Franks was (b)(6) (now 1/5 battalion commander). The noted LTC Miller is a very decent man, but he was (b)(6) He had been working on some SOCCENT UW plans for quite awhile, but they were very methodical, based on the sequential phases of insurgency. The younger guys (Kelley, CW3 Bett Brown) developed a simultaneous plan that was based on the current environment, as opposed to the Vietnam-era work that Miller did. Miller was out on point pushing the UW campaign plan for Afghanistan for a couple of days before he was moved to a vault to conduct interagency coordinations. The aforementioned section is essentially fiction.

Chapter 19, subsection: "Blue-on-Blue Snafu". I was in the JOC with COL Mulholland--that's not how I remember it (i.e., "screams in the background"). Moore's general scheme of maneuver is correct although he misidentifies units and helicopters

(i.e., "160th **SOAR** MH-53J Special Operations helicopters"). The MH-53's were out of AFSOC and 160th wasn't involved in this operation (nor do they have MH-53s).

Chapter 22; subsection: "Take-Down of Mir Wais Hospital". I was the ground tactical commander for this operation (ref. page 265 in the hardcover). I would describe Moore's depiction as "inspired by a true story" like they caveat made-for-TV movies. Most of the events (although the language is b.s.) occurred, but his sequence is all wrong as well as his supposition that the operation was designed to let U.S. forces conduct it under the "cover" of the Afghans. The whole plan was predicated on the Afghans conducting the operation. Only when they had failed twice and sustained significant casualties, was the decision made to have U.S. forces lull the A.Q. in the hospital.

Finally, I'm sure everyone is aware that the center guy in the photo on the hard cover is (b)(6) who claims to be some "old school" Green Beret. He was actually in Afghanistan (don't ask me how) purportedly claiming to be an agent of the U.S. government. To the best of my understanding, it was determined that in fact he was in Afghanistan on his own accord (perhaps as a mercenary for the Northern Alliance). Mr. Idema is one of the prominent figures in the book. Additionally, it has been purported that Mr. (b)(6) was one of Mr. Moore's project managers for the book. I don't know the veracity of any of the above, but it is definitely one of the more firmly planted rumors (urban myths?) in the 5th SFG.

Comment 5:

Before I begin, please understand that I can speak accurately only about what I personally know from my own experience...

I estimate that -- AT BEST -- 60% of Moore's work about my team is truth, fact, or accurate. Worst case, I estimate that some sections approach 33% accuracy, and in many cases, his writing is pure fiction, reckless embellishment, and gross exaggerations. There are entire paragraphs in the chapter devoted to my team that are completely false. Well over 50% of the paragraphs in that same chapter have something wrong or completely blown out of proportion. Worse still, a significant amount of material that he presents as fact in reality is just plain wrong.

To ice the cake, please know neither Moore nor his surrogate author ever interviewed a single person on my team -- not one, not ever. He and his surrogate author had approached our compound in Mazari Shariff requesting interviews, but for a variety of understandable reasons (including ongoing ops), we had to refuse. He never asked again, and we didn't exactly run him down.

Despite not speaking to us, his surrogate author and he put together an entire chapter. Probably 80-90% of the hard data he has about us comes from the Jan 2002 Newsweek article by Donatella Lorch. Ms. Lorch had lived with us in the team house for 3 days as one of the first four experimental embeds in the WOT. Moore's chapter pretty much takes her article and retells it with a dramatic flair that would make Dick Marcienko jealous. He completely fabricates scenes and events that never happened in order to fill in gaps between Ms. Lorch's work. In the remaining 10-20% of the chapter's data, he just completely fabricates things. Where it isn't pure fiction, he dilutes his work with speculation, hearsay, and 'bullogna.' Whatever the example, his embellishment far exceeds any author's dramatic license, and honestly, it makes me sick.

My experience in Afghanistan was limited only to my UWOA, but notwithstanding, I feel pretty confident that I have a decent understanding of the region's culture. Working in Central Asia for several months before 9/11, I also think I know a

little bit about the region and its history. I feel reasonably confident in challenging a lot of his facts and analysis in his presentation of either Afghanistan's history or its culture.

Lastly, I know from conversations with one of my best friends...that both he and Pelton have each published many team photos that 595 gave those authors strictly for their personal collections. For that matter, Moore's book remains the absolute single source anywhere that has published my last name: at the time in direct breach of USASOC's PAO guidance and more importantly, my consent... Although this is probably no big deal to most people, it is to us, and was especially more so at the time. Hell, the guy never even asked.

In short, I have concluded that he will never allow facts, research, or command guidance to get in the way of his storyline. I wouldn't trust this guy or his surrogate to write my nephew's 1st grade homework assignment, and to this day, I have still not purchased the book in protest. My wife wants a souvenir copy for kicks, and though I recognize that I am just the XO in this relationship, I have delayed her efforts successfully thus far.

Comment 6:

I only reviewed one chapter of the book, and that was the one...that dealt with the seizure of Mazar-e-Sharif, the defense of that city, and the prison uprising at Qala-i-Jangi. What I remember is that the information recited in that chapter was not factually correct, full of conjecture, and the research did not appear to be thorough. I say that because at that time I was the Battalion XO for 3/5th SFG(A) and our unit was heavily involved in everything related to the liberation of Northern Afghanistan.

Comment 7:

In general, my response is that anything that overpraises the capture-kill portion is drawn to the shiny object of movie action. The true impact of special operations is on the achievements through or with indigenous troops. This is operational value added to the national defense scheme, vice capture-kill which turns into tactical value added. We don't need higher paid rifle squads. We need captains, warrants, and great NCOs who can merge with tribal chiefs and warlords to shape and direct them. US Air Power is the element that gives these small, independent teams their ability to work in a very risky environment. It turns us (and our indig) into a force to be reckoned with. And it harnesses indig eyes on situational awareness and intelligence that American eyes cannot see.



COALITION PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY
BAGHDAD

MEMO FOR: Secretary Rumsfeld

FROM: Paul Bremer *4/12/04*

SUBJECT: Office of Security Cooperation (OSC) in Iraq

I agree with your memorandum of April 7, 2004 regarding OSC, the importance of unity of command within OSC, and its subordination to MNF-I for the foreseeable future. That arrangement is in place and is working well.

The issue which I believe may have occasioned this exchange was a discussion with Secretary Powell in which we agreed that the OSC Commander should be "double hatted" in the sense that, as in most missions, he would continue to seek policy guidance from the Chief of Mission just as he does from me today. That is, I believe, in accordance with the coordinated policy among OSD, JCS and CPA.

I do want to clarify one point, which is the operational control of law-enforcement organizations. As part of OSC, the Coalition Police Assistance Training Team (CPATT) will monitor, advise, and certify law enforcement personnel and organizations. However, under normal circumstances law enforcement organizations will not be operationally employed by OSC or MNF-I. Command and control of law enforcement organizations will exist within standard civilian authority structures. Certainly there will be close coordination between military and law enforcement in many situations, but operational ownership falls within the purview of the civilian authorities.

Finally, you mention the issue of a three-star flag officer to advise the Chief of Mission. I completely agree -- the current template for MNF-I provides sufficient expertise and lines of communication for dialogue between MNF-I and the Chief of Mission.

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OSD 05285-04

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Bakalorz, Marion P, MAJ, OSD

From: Executive Secretary [execsec@orha.centcom.mil]
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2004 2:24 PM
To: MLA dd - SecDef Cables
Cc: Executive Secretary
Subject: Memo from LPB to SecDef - Office of Security Cooperation (OSC) in Iraq
Importance: High

This is in response to the Snowflake SecDef sent to Ambassador Bremer on 7 April regarding same subject.

Please confirm receipt.

4/12/2004

11-L-0559/OSD/23530