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To: [Strategic Issues Management](#); [MSC MIE](#)
Cc: [Bethell, Nuala MS](#); [Chan, Adrian MR 2](#)
Subject: FW: CJOPS statement [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Friday, 29 September 2017 5:36:00 PM
Attachments: [170920 CIVCAS 30 Mar and 07 Jun 17 CONSOLIDATED V8 with online report.doc](#)

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Ladies and Gents,

Attached is final version of comms pack from today's engagement on CIVCAS by CJOPS.

OIR will release later this evening.

Kind regards

Michael Moroney

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CIVCAS Assessment – 30 March & 07 Jun 2017

**V8 Correct as at [29 Sep 17 1715K]
Includes Online Report - DRAFT**

Communication Pack

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Communication Approach

Proactive

CJOPS will conduct a background media briefing with specialist Defence writers on 29 Sep 17 (AEST). This will coincide with the Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) monthly CIVCAS report. The backgrounder will be on the record but under embargo until midnight 30 Sep. No cameras will be present.

CJTF-OIR has advised it will now publish the monthly CIVCAS report at the end of each month rather than the start of the month. Consequently the report scheduled for release on 06 Oct will now be released on 29 Sep (Kuwait local time).

Reactive

This pack is also designed to address follow on media enquiries that may arise regarding Australian involvement in the conduct of the air strike on 30 March or 07 June 17 in Mosul involving ADF force elements. Coordination with HQJOC is to occur before media responses based on this pack are provided.

CJOPS is the designated clearance authority for the reactive release of information on activities related to this strike mission.

Personnel, approved to utilise this Comms Pack, should in the first instance, redirect any media enquiries to ADF Media Ops (media@defence.gov.au or (02) 6127 1999), rather than engage directly.

SYNCHRONISATION REQUIREMENTS: JTF OIR, OMINDEF, OCDF.

~~UNCLASSIFIED -- Document Not For Public Release~~**KEY MESSAGES**

- Australia's military contributions to the US-led international coalition to disrupt and degrade Daesh in Iraq and Syria are in response to requests for assistance from both the Iraqi and US Governments.
- Daesh is the biggest perpetrator of civilian casualties in Iraq. Streets and buildings are booby trapped, and Daesh fighters capture civilians, hold them hostage, or worse, deliberately stage incidents that cause casualties.
- The Iraqi Security Forces have suffered significant casualties. In the eight month-long Battle for Mosul alone, 1,200-1,500 Iraqi personnel were killed with around 8,000 more wounded.
- Coalition strike operations to destroy Daesh's combat capability and to enhance Iraqi ground force manoeuvre are crucial to the success of the campaign, but Daesh's tactic of deliberately putting civilians in harm's way is designed to complicate and impede Coalition support to the Iraqi Security Forces on the front line.
- The ADF does its utmost to minimise the risk of civilian casualties and to ensure targeted locations are clear of civilians before and during air strikes. Any loss of civilian life is highly regrettable and we treat all allegations with the utmost seriousness.
- Unlike Daesh, the ADF is always discriminate and proportionate when targeting enemy forces and all ADF personnel operate under strict rules of engagement designed to protect our forces, our partner forces, and minimise the risk of injury to civilians while complying with Australia's obligations under domestic and international law.

UPDATED/CURRENT TPs**07 Jun 2017**

- On 07 June 2017, ADF aircraft conducted an air strike in West Mosul against a Daesh defensive fighting position in support of soldiers from the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) who were under direct fire in the area.
- ISF were operating in complex urban terrain and were being engaged by Daesh fighters using small arms.
- A thorough assessment of the target building was conducted to ensure all feasible precautions were taken to minimise harm to civilians, the ISF operating in the area, and to minimise any damage to civilian property.
- No civilians were observed in the area prior to the airstrike.

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- A single precision guided munition was released, striking the target and destroying a section of a building used by Daesh as a defensive fighting position.
- During the post-airstrike review process, ADF personnel reported it was possible that civilians may have been present in the strike location.

30 Mar 2017

- On 30 March 2017, a Coalition aircraft conducted an air strike in Mosul against what was assessed to be a Daesh fighting unit.
- There were no Australian aircraft involved in this strike mission.
- However, Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel were involved in the Coalition approval process.

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BACKGROUNDER STATEMENT

Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. Thank you for being here.

I understand holding this briefing on a Friday afternoon is not ideal, so I'll start with an explanation. As a coalition member, the public release of Australian information occurs in consultation with the Coalition and is coordinated with the US-led Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve.

This week, OIR advised it will now release its Monthly Civilian Casualty Report at the end of each month rather than the start. To ensure we are synchronised, we have adjusted our planning to coincide with the release of the OIR CIVCAS report later this evening. We had expected to release this information on 06 Oct.

You will be familiar with our fortnightly air strike reports which appear on the Defence website. For those yet to find them, the Air Task Group fortnightly reports can be found on the Defence website through the Global Operations link or by clicking on the Iraq icon on the map. Where ADF elements are involved in civilian casualty incidents that are assessed to be credible we will also advise details on the Defence Website. The release of the ADF reports will be timed to coincide with the associated monthly OIR civilian casualty reports.

We will be releasing details of two incidents tonight.

The purpose of this briefing is to talk you through two airstrikes that the Coalition OIR **HQ** has assessed that it is more likely than not that Australian force elements assigned to Coalition operations in Iraq were involved in civilian casualty incidents in Mosul.

Before I outline the two separate airstrikes, given the late hour, can I please ask that you limit your questions, which I will take at the end, to the airstrikes.

As the CDF reported to a Senate Estimates hearing in May this year, Australian Defence Force personnel were involved in a coalition airstrike on 30 March 2017 which may have resulted in civilian casualties.

At the time, Coalition forces were conducting airstrikes to support Iraqi ground forces against suspected Daesh fighters who were located in a built up area in West Mosul, 300m from Iraqi forces. Coalition elements positively identified a group of people as Daesh fighters. Based on the information available, an airstrike was authorised and tragically seven civilians were unintentionally killed or injured.

While no Australian aircraft were involved in the incident, ADF personnel were involved in the Coalition target approval process.

Following the airstrike, air crew reported that civilians may have inadvertently been targeted. The strike was referred by ADF personnel to CJTF-OIR for assessment and legal review.

The review found that, based on the information available, it was reasonable to believe the target was a valid military objective.

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The second incident occurred on 7 June 2017 in West Mosul. West Mosul was an incredibly dangerous area with Daesh taking over Iraqi civilian homes, booby trapping the buildings and using them as defensive fighting positions. The Iraqi Security Forces were conducting clearance operations which required removing Daesh fighters street by street.

During the operation to re-take West Mosul, Iraqi Security Forces were regularly engaged by Daesh fighters using small arms, heavy machine guns, mortars and rocket propelled grenade launchers.

On the 07 June, Australian F/A-18 aircraft supported Iraqi Security Forces who were under direct fire from Daesh fighters using small arms.

A thorough assessment of the target, a residential building that was occupied by Daesh fighters, was conducted to ensure all feasible precautions were taken to minimise harm to civilians, and ISF operating in the area, and to reduce potential damage to property.

A strike was conducted on the Daesh fighting position with one precision guided, low collateral, munition.

No civilians were observed in the area prior to the strike, however after the routine post-strike review and analysis process, ADF personnel assessed that it was possible that civilians may have been present in the location of the strike when people were observed to leave the rear of the target building. In accordance with our own processes, the ADF personnel reported the incident to the Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) for further assessment including a thorough legal review.

Consistent with our normal procedures, ADF personnel were involved in the Coalition strike approval process for this mission.

Based on the information available, OIR assessed that it was more likely than not a civilian was seriously injured or killed as a result of the strike against Daesh fighters on 7 June, however the report also noted that all feasible precautions were taken to prevent civilian casualties prior to the strike.

In addition to the OIR assessments of these two incidents, Defence conducted its own assessment of both strikes to assess whether ADF personnel complied with Australian rules of engagement (ROE) and to identify any lessons for future operations.

Both the Coalition and Defence evaluations found that, based on the Coalition information available to them at the time, the personnel involved in each incident complied with the laws of armed conflict and the strikes were conducted in accordance with the Australian rules of engagement.

To ensure ADF personnel meet the high standards expected of them, Defence continually reviews training and procedures, and adjusts when necessary, in order to further reduce the risk to civilians. As a result of our own assessments, we have reviewed our training and operating procedures.

As you are aware, the ADF does its utmost to minimise the risk of civilian casualties and to ensure targeted locations are clear of civilians before and during air strikes. Any loss of civilian life is highly regrettable and we treat all allegations with the utmost seriousness.

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While combat operations always involve risks, this process is highly effective. The commander of CJTF-OIR through the Mosul operation recently challenged anyone to find a more precise air campaign in the history of warfare. He highlighted that between August 2014 and July 2017 “The percentage of all Coalition engagements that resulted in a report of possible civilian casualties is 2.29 percent. The percentage of engagements that resulted in a credible report of civilian casualties was 0.32 percent.”

This has been achieved during operations in a complex and dynamic environment. The Battle for Mosul was fought in dense urban terrain against an enemy who has no regard for human life or the laws of armed conflict.

Daesh is by far the biggest perpetrator of civilian casualties in Iraq. Streets and buildings are booby trapped, and Daesh fighters capture civilians, hold them hostage, or worse, deliberately stage incidents that cause casualties.

The Iraqi Security Forces have suffered significant casualties. In the eight month-long Battle for Mosul alone, 1,200-1,500 Iraqi personnel were killed with around 8,000 more wounded.

That is why Coalition strike operations to destroy Daesh’s combat capability and to enhance Iraqi ground force manoeuvre are crucial to the success of the campaign, but Daesh’s tactic of deliberately putting civilians in harm’s way is designed to complicate and impede Coalition support to the Iraqi Security Forces on the front line.

Unlike Daesh, the ADF is always discriminate and proportionate when targeting enemy forces and all ADF personnel operate under strict rules of engagement designed to protect our forces, our partner forces, and minimise the risk of injury to civilians while complying with Australia’s obligations under domestic and international law.

As we have seen, a prolonged battle in dense urban terrain is devastating for ground forces and civilians alike. This is what Daesh wants. Momentum and staying the course is key to liberating the innocent civilians that have suffered so greatly under the Daesh occupation.

ENDS

Online Report (To be cleared – as at 29 1100K SEP 17)

30 September 2017

Operation OKRA – Credible civilian casualty reports

The ADF takes all allegations of civilian casualties seriously.

As a member of the Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR), all reports civilian casualties resulting from Australian operations are investigated as thoroughly as possible, including legal review. The Coalition interviews personnel involved in the targeting process, reviews strike and surveillance video if available, and analyses information provided by government agencies, non-governmental reports, partner forces, and traditional and social media. In addition, Australia and the Coalition will consider new information when it becomes available in order to ensure a thorough and continuous review process.

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In targeting Daesh and other enemy forces, the ADF is always discriminate and proportionate. All ADF personnel operate under strict rules of engagement designed to protect our forces, minimise the risk of injury to civilians and strictly comply with Australia's obligations under domestic and international law.

To ensure ADF personnel meet the high standards expected of them, Defence continually reviews training and procedures, and adjusts when necessary, in order to further reduce the risk to civilians.

On 7 June 2017, one Australian aircraft conducted an airstrike in support of Iraqi Security Forces who were under direct fire from enemy fighters in Mosul. Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel were also involved in the Coalition approval process.

A single precision guided munition was released, striking the target and destroying a section of a building used by Daesh as a defensive fighting position.

During the post-airstrike review process, ADF personnel reported it was possible that a civilian may have been present in the strike location.

The personnel involved, using the information available to them, acted in compliance with the laws of armed conflict and Australian rules of engagement.

On 30 March 2017, Coalition forces conducted airstrikes in support of Iraqi ground forces against suspected Daesh military forces in Mosul. No Australian aircraft were involved in the incident. ADF personnel were involved in the Coalition approval process.

Based on the information available, an airstrike was authorised and tragically seven civilians were unintentionally killed or injured.

ADF personnel self-reported the incident in accordance with ADF policy.

The personnel involved, using the information available to them, acted in compliance with the laws of armed conflict and Australian rules of engagement.

Q&A (If Asked)

07 Jun 2017

Q. How many ADF aircraft were involved in the airstrike?

A. Two ADF F/A-18F aircraft were supporting ISF in Mosul on 7 June 2017 when the airstrike was requested. One precision guided munition was released on the target.

Q. Were any other ADF assets or personnel involved?

A. ADF personnel were involved in the airstrike, targeting and review.

~~UNCLASSIFIED -- Document Not For Public Release~~**Q. What were the final results of the assessment?**

A. Due to the complex and dynamic operating environment, and the difficulty in accessing and identifying the civilians involved in the incident, the ADF is unable to definitively determine if a civilian death or serious injury occurred.

However, the Coalition conducted a thorough assessment of the incident. Based on the information available, the assessment indicated that the claim of a civilian casualty was credible given that it was more likely than not that the airstrike resulted in a civilian death or serious injury.

Q. How many people were killed during the airstrikes?

A. Due to the complex and dynamic operating environment, and the difficulty in accessing and identifying the civilians involved in the incident, the ADF is unable to definitively determine whether any civilians were injured or killed during the airstrike. A thorough Coalition assessment of the airstrike found it was more likely than not there was a civilian casualty.

Q. Were Australian aircraft involved?

A. Yes.

Q. What was the Australian involvement in the mission?

A. ADF personnel were involved in the Coalition targeting process.

Q. How was the incident brought to Defence's attention?

A. Following the post-strike assessment, the ADF self-reported the possibility of civilian casualties through its established reporting chains.

Q. What lessons did the ADF learn from the 07 June incident?

A. The ADF conducted the targeting process and airstrike in strict compliance with our rules of engagement and legal obligations. As such there were no definitive lessons to learn but the ADF continues to take all feasible precautions to minimise injury to civilians and damage to property.

Q. Were procedures reviewed after the 07 June incident?

A. The ADF continuously reviews procedures and training to ensure that we continue to conduct operations at the highest possible standard.

Q. What action [in ops sense not pers sense] was taken as a result of 07 June incident?

A. It is standard procedure for the ADF to self report any incident where there may be a concern that there were civilian casualties. This incident was self reported to CJTF OIR following the strike.

Q. What type of munition was used in the 07 June 17 airstrike?

A. A low collateral munition was used. A standard 500lb bomb body is a Mark 82. With the fitment of a GPS guidance system to the bomb body the munition is a Glide Bomb Unit-38 or

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GBU-38. A low collateral bomb is the same Mk82 bomb body with less explosive fill so that it has a smaller blast and a smaller damage effect. It is a very precise weapon.

~~UNCLASSIFIED -- Document Not For Public Release~~**30 Mar 2017****Q. Can you give a general overview of the incident that occurred on 30 March 2017?**

A. Under the coordination and control of a joint Coalition strike cell, Coalition forces, conducted airstrikes in support of Iraqi ground forces against suspected Daesh military forces in Mosul on 30 March 2017.

Based on the intelligence and actions on the ground, coalition personnel assessed that the target was a Daesh fighting force. Post-strike analysis, however, shows it more likely than not that civilians were in proximity of the strike when it occurred.

Q. What were the final results of the assessment?

A. The assessment concluded that prior to the strike the targets were identified as Daesh military forces. This was supported by the information reasonably available at the time to the decision makers, and the targets were struck in accordance with the laws of armed conflict

The Defence review confirmed that ADF personnel operated in accordance with the Australian rules of engagement.

Q. How was the incident brought to Defence's attention?

A. The ADF was advised through the established Coalition reporting process.

Q. How many people were killed during the airstrike?

A. A thorough Coalition assessment indicated that the claim of civilian casualty was credible. It was assessed that seven civilians were unintentionally killed.

Q. Were Australian aircraft involved?

A. No.

Q. What was the Australian involvement in the mission?

A. One Australian was involved in the Coalition targeting process.

Q. Did Australia conduct its own review of the incident?

A. Yes, in addition to the Coalition assessment, Defence conducted its own review to fully understand Australia's role in this incident.

Q. What lessons did the ADF learn from the 30 March incident?

A. While there were no identified deficiencies in the processes followed by the ADF during lead up to the airstrike, a minor change to improve record keeping of communications was made subsequently.

Q. Were procedures reviewed after the 30 March incident?

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A. Yes. The ADF continuously reviews procedures and training to ensure that we continue to conduct operations at the highest possible standard.

Q. What action [in ops sense not pers sense] was taken as a result of the 30 March incident?

A. The ADF works to ensure our training is relevant continues to be updated to reflect the fluid and dynamic environment it is operating in.

Common to both incidents

Q. Why has the ADF conducted airstrikes for two years without incident and now there are two civilian casualty reports in relatively close succession?

A. The incidents on 30 March and 07 June occurred during the Mosul offensive. As you would be aware, this was a complex high tempo operation in a dense urban centre, made more difficult because Daesh had deliberately impeded the ability of civilians to leave the area.

In targeting Daesh and other enemy forces, the ADF is always discriminate and proportionate.

All ADF personnel operate under strict rules of engagement designed to protect our forces, minimise the risk of injury to civilians and strictly comply with Australia's obligations under domestic and international law.

Q. Did Australia conduct its own review of the incidents?

A. Yes, in addition to the Coalition assessment, Defence conducted its own reviews to fully understand Australia's role in these incidents.

In each instance, we reviewed the Coalition findings to identify any lessons learned and to ensure ADF personnel complied with Australian rules of engagement.

If pressed: Why did the ADF carry out an assessment on these incidents and not the Dayr az Zawr incident?

Dayr az Zawr was a complex Coalition operation involving multiple aircraft from multiple nations.

Australia was not in a position to independently generate a complete and accurate picture of the entire operation.

However, the ADF was involved in an exhaustive Coalition investigation into the Dayr az Zawr incident and we subsequently conducted our own internal review of the Coalition's findings to ensure ADF personnel complied with Australian rules of engagement and to identify any lessons learned.

This is consistent with our approach to the incidents on 30 March and 07 June. In each instance, we reviewed the Coalition findings to identify any lessons learned and to ensure ADF personnel complied with Australian rules of engagement.

Q. Did the Government of Iraq approve the airstrike?

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A. Yes. Both airstrikes were approved by the Iraqi Government.

If pressed: Who was responsible?

Assessments of this nature are not about attributing blame. The assessment is conducted to identify lessons that may be applied in order to prevent a future occurrence.

To ensure ADF personnel meet the high standards expected of them, Defence continually reviews training and procedures, and adjusts when necessary, in order to further reduce the risk to civilians.

Q. Are you confident the correct targeting procedures were followed?

A. Both the Coalition and Defence evaluations found that, based on the Coalition information available at the time, personnel operated in accordance with the laws of armed conflict. The review conducted by Defence confirmed that ADF personnel operated in accordance with the Australian rules of engagement.

Q. Who made the decision to conduct the airstrike?

A. The Australian Air Task Group operates as part of a Coalition. Both the Coalition and Defence assessments found that decisions were made based on the Coalition information available at the time and in accordance with the Law of Armed Conflict.

The review conducted by Defence confirmed that ADF personnel operated in accordance with the Australian rules of engagement.

Q. How long did Coalition forces collect intelligence on the area before the strike?

A. As you will appreciate, in order to protect operational security, we do not talk about intelligence matters.

Q. What effect will this incident have on strike operations?

A. ADF operations will continue in an appropriate, measured way, as part of the broader international coalition.

The Coalition takes constant care to avoid and minimise the risk to civilians from air operations in support of Iraqi forces. Unfortunately, the tactics adopted by Daesh deliberately increase the risk to civilians.

Q. Why are these airstrikes being reported now?

A. The complex operating environment means that civilian casualty reports are received on an ad hoc basis, and are reviewed as soon as reasonably practicable after receipt. All reports of civilian casualties are taken seriously and are subject to thorough review and consideration on a case by case basis.

The Australian Air Task Group Operates as part of a Coalition. The release of public information occurs in consultation with the Coalition and coordination with OIR's monthly CIVCAS report.

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This week, OIR advised it will now release the monthly report at the end of the month rather than the start. So we have adjusted our planning to coincide with the release of the September CIVCAS report later this evening.

Q. Does this constitute a war crime?

A. No. Both the Coalition and Defence evaluations found that, based on the Coalition information available at the time, Australian personnel operated in accordance with the laws of armed conflict.

Q. Will the families of those killed be compensated?

A. The determination to pay compensation to families is at the discretion of the joint task force commander in accordance with existing policy and regulations. We will have to refer you to the Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) for additional details.

Q. Will there be any disciplinary actions as a result of this assessment?

A. The review conducted by Defence confirmed that ADF personnel operated in accordance with the Australian rules of engagement.

As such, no disciplinary actions were taken.

Defence continually reviews training and procedures, and adjusts when necessary, in order to ensure ADF personnel meet the high standards expected of them and to further reduce the risk to civilians.

If pressed: About other nation contributions in this event:

As you would appreciate, it would be inappropriate for Australia to discuss the involvement of other nations.

Q. Can you talk us through the assessment process?

A. Although we are unable to investigate all reports of possible civilian casualties using traditional investigative methods, such as interviewing witnesses and examining the site, the Coalition interviews pilots and other personnel involved in the targeting process, reviews strike and surveillance video if available, and analyses information provided by government agencies, non-governmental reports, partner forces, and traditional and social media. In addition, the Coalition considers new information when it becomes available in order to ensure a thorough and continuous review process.

Q. Is this process adequate?

A. Yes, this process thoroughly considers all reasonably available information and enables an informed determination to be made.

Q. Did the assessment team go to the site of the airstrikes?

A. No. The assessment involved a thorough and detailed review of all available information relevant to the coordination and execution of the airstrikes. These were a methodical and robust assessments that have been subject to legal review.

~~UNCLASSIFIED -- Document Not For Public Release~~**Q. Who led the Australian assessments?**

A. An Australian Officer conducted each of the assessments.

Q. How does the ADF create a Collateral Damage Estimate?

A. Australian ROE are designed to minimise the risk of harm and the goal is always to cause no harm to civilians or to civilian property.

A collateral damage assessment is based on a range of inputs and databases, including an analysis of the potential target, its construction, purpose and use, as well as scientific data on the performance of different weaponeering options.

This gives the commander the information necessary to decide what damage is likely to result from a potential strike, and then to decide on the information available whether the strike meets legal and policy requirements.

Q. How does the 'Red Card' position function and what is the remit?

A. 'Red cards' could be used in any situation where ADF personnel are not satisfied, on the evidence available to them, that the legal and ROE requirements for a particular strike are met, or continue to be met.

Australian personnel used their 'red card' authority from the earliest days of the Air Task Group's deployment. For example, Defence advised the media in October 2014 that ADF personnel had done so after tracking a potential target into a built-up area, where striking it would have involved a risk to civilians, on the very first day of ADF air operations in Iraq.

Q. What opportunity does an ADF officer have to examine the intelligence, imagery etc supporting a proposed strike – how does that work for both 'deliberate' strikes and 'dynamic' strikes?

ADF personnel participate in all aspects of the targeting process, including in embedded positions in the Combined Air Operations Centre.

Australian 'target engagement authorities' (red card holders) must be satisfied, on the information available to them at the time, that the legal requirements for any potential strike have been met. To do this, they must and do have access to the information needed to make those decisions, in both the deliberate and the dynamic targeting environment. A TEA who does not have the information he believes he needs for his decision will not approve a strike.

Q. Are there any other civilian casualty claims being investigated that may involve ADF personnel or assets?

A. The coalition are currently reviewing all allegations of civilian casualties. The ADF will continue to conduct thorough reviews of all incidents involving ADF assets or personnel in the targeting process. Until initial coalition assessment have been completed in to each incident, it would be inappropriate to discuss specific claims further.

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RECURRING TALKING POINTS

Daesh Tactics

- Daesh is a ruthless enemy.
- We know that many Iraqi civilians have been killed as a result of Daesh actions. Streets and buildings are booby trapped, and Daesh fighters capture civilians, holding them hostage in a cowardly attempt to protect themselves, or worse, deliberately stage incidents that cause casualties.
- Strike operations to destroy Daesh's combat capability and to enhance Iraqi ground force manoeuvre are crucial to the success of the campaign, but the despicable tactic of deliberately putting civilians in harm's way is designed to complicate and impede Coalition support to the Iraqi Security Forces on the front line.
- We are acutely aware of the brutal tactics used by Daesh and, as you are well aware, do our utmost to ensure civilians are clear of targeted locations before and during air strikes.

Targeting

- Coalition air strike operations support ground forces in Iraq and target Daesh forces in both Iraq and Syria.
- In targeting Daesh and other enemy forces, we are always discriminate and proportionate; and we are required, at all times, to operate within international and Australian domestic law.
- ADF personnel can be involved in the Coalition approval process for some air strikes by Coalition aircraft in support of Iraqi Forces fighting Daesh forces.
- ADF personnel undertake a detailed and robust sovereign approval process prior to conducting any strikes, which ensures that Australia's legal obligations are applied.
- Both the Australian F/A-18A Hornets and F/A-18F Super Hornets conduct strikes with precision GPS and laser guided bombs.
- As our knowledge of Daesh has evolved over the past two years, so has our targeting.

Rules of Engagement

- In our support for the Iraqi Security Forces, members of the ADF operate under strict rules of engagement.
- The rules of engagement are designed to protect our forces, minimise the risk of injury to civilians and strictly comply with Australia's obligations under domestic and international law.

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Civilian Casualties

- The ADF thoroughly reviews every ATG strike following the return of the aircraft to assess whether ensure the strike accorded with pre-strike approvals.
- The ADF takes all allegations of civilian casualties seriously. If an allegation was raised following an ATG strike, the matter is investigated and the findings are reported.
- In addition, ADF personnel are required to report any evidence of possible civilian casualties or human rights violations by any nation, through their chain of command.
- Australia's assessment of any possible civilian casualties resulting from its operations is based on the information available at the time.
- To date, Australian strike aircraft have been involved in a small number of incidents resulting in credible claims of civilian casualties.

~~UNCLASSIFIED -- Document Not For Public Release --~~**CLEARANCES**

Drafted	Name	Appointment	Date and Time
<i>Drafted/Updated by</i>	LCDR K. Lunt	J09	27 Sep 17
	A. Reis	SCA CDF	27 Sep 17

Operational Clearance	Name	Appointment	Date and Time
<i>OPSEC – (At Source)</i>			
<i>Fact – (Subject Matter Expert)</i>	WGCDR A. Rose	J06	27 Sep 17
	AIRCDRE P. Gordon	DGAIR	27 Sep 17
<i>Release Authority (1 Star)</i>			

Strategic Clearance	Name	Appointment	Date and Time
<i>Policy /IP etc</i>	S. Moore	ASGI	27 Sep 17
<i>MSC Branch</i>	COL J. Logue	A/DGMIE	
<i>DGStratCom (or delegate)</i>			
<i>O/CDF</i>			
<i>ASCAM (or delegate)</i>			

Minister	Name	Appointment	Date and Time
<i>Ministerial Action:</i>			
<i>(To be completed by ASCAM)</i>			
<i>Forward to/Cleared by</i>			

From: [Reis, Alison MS](#)
To: [Fraser, Katherine MRS 1](#); [Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1](#)
Cc: [Mayfield, Andrew COL](#); [HQJOC Military Public Affairs](#); [Media](#); [MSC MIE](#)
Subject: **FOR URGENT ACTION** Invitation CJOPS" Backgrounder [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Friday, 29 September 2017 9:23:04 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.jpg](#)

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Katherine (and Lauren), as previously discussed – pls see below the invitation for CJOPS' backgrounder at 1430 this afternoon.

Can you pls arrange for Media Ops to email the invitation to the following journalist asap (I will leave the logistics and invitation for s47F to phone-in to you).

We would be grateful for MECC's assistance to:

- email invitations
- provide list of RSVPs to HQJOC and OCDF
- open the Eucalyptus Room (Ground Floor R2 Conference Centre)
- provide a list of attendees to security
- facilitate phone in for s47F
- sign in journalists
- escort journalists to the Eucalyptus Room
- escort journalists from the Eucalyptus Room

OMINDEF has also requested MECC

- warn out iSentia
- record the briefing
- provide the audio file to iSentia for transcribing
- distribute transcript (once checked by HQJOC)

Invitees:

s47F
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

<<STARTS>>

Good morning,

Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations (CJOPS) will hold a background situation briefing **from 2.30 – 3.00pm today**, Friday 29 September 2017 in **R2 Building, Russell Offices Canberra**.

Please arrive by 2.15pm and present photo ID to security staff at the main gate. Defence staff will meet you at the front of the R2 building and escort you into the venue.

The briefing will be on the record and you will have the opportunity to ask CJOPS questions however the material must remain under embargo until midnight tonight.

As this is a background briefing, cameras and live social media will **not** be permitted, however we are happy if you wish to use personal audio recording devices.

Please RSVP via return email to accept or decline by **midday** today.

<<ENDS>>

Please call if you wish to discuss or clarify anything.
Many thanks, Ali



Alison Reis

Strategic Communications Advisor to
Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin
Chief of the Defence Force

T 02 6265 3398

M s22

F 02 6265 1345

E alison.reis@defence.gov.au

R1-5-CDF Suite, Russell Offices



[@MarkBinskin_CDF](#)



[Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin](#)

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From: [Reis, Alison MS](#)
To: [Lunt, Kelli LCDR](#); [Mayfield, Andrew COL](#)
Subject: Draft Invite [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Friday, 29 September 2017 8:31:52 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.jpg](#)

UNCLASSIFIED

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Please RSVP via return email to accept or decline by midday today.

Invitees:

s47F

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



Alison Reis

Strategic Communications Advisor to
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Davidson, Melissa MRS

From: Mayfield, Andrew COL
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 8:46 AM
To: Reis, Alison MS
Cc: HQJOC Military Public Affairs; Lunt, Kelli LCDR
Subject: RE: Draft Invite [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Ali,

a couple of edits (refer to the brief as a situation briefing to differentiate it from his normal operations updates).

You will need to get MECC to clarify the meet and greet details and preferably to enable internal parking as per previous Fiona guidance.

Regards

Andrew M
J09

From: Reis, Alison MS
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 08:32
To: Lunt, Kelli LCDR; Mayfield, Andrew COL
Subject: Draft Invite [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

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S47F



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Davidson, Melissa MRS

From: Reis, Alison MS
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 8:38 AM
To: Fraser, Katherine MRS 1; Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1
Subject: RE: Support to CJOPS media backgrounder [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Can someone pls call me to discuss arrangements for this afternoon's activity.

Thanks, Ali

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From: Fraser, Katherine MRS 1
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 5:28 AM
To: Reis, Alison MS
Subject: Re: Support to CJOPS media backgrounder [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Ali

Apologies I've just seen this email. Lauren Tyrrell and Nick Stewart in my team manage JOC enquiries, so they would be best placed to assist.

Katherine Fraser
A/Director Defence Media
Ph: s22

On 28 Sep 2017, at 10:59 am, Reis, Alison MS <alison.reis@defence.gov.au> wrote:

UNCLASSIFIED

Morning ladies,

Can you pls advise who is the most appropriate POC in MECC to assist JOC with the logistic support for tomorrow's CJOPS media backgrounder?

In particular, issuing invitations and escorting journalists to the location.

Many thanks, Ali

<image001.png>

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<image001.png>

<image002.png> [@MarkBinskin_CDF](#) <image003.jpg> [Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin](#)

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Fraser, Katherine MRS 1
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 5:28 AM
To: Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1
Subject: Fwd: Support to CJOPS media backgrounder [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Attachments: image003.jpg; image002.png; image001.png

Katherine Fraser
 A/Director Defence Media
 Ph: s22

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Fraser, Katherine MRS 1" <katherine.fraser1@defence.gov.au>
Date: 29 September 2017 at 5:27:31 am AEST
To: "Reis, Alison MS" <alison.reis@defence.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Support to CJOPS media backgrounder [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

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 E alison.reis@defence.gov.au

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Reis, Alison MS
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 9:23 AM
To: Fraser, Katherine MRS 1; Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1
Cc: Mayfield, Andrew COL; HQJOC Military Public Affairs; Media; MSC MIE
Subject: **FOR URGENT ACTION** Invitation CJOPS' Backgrounder [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Katherine (and Lauren), as previously discussed – pls see below the invitation for CJOPS' backgrounder at 1430 this afternoon.

Can you pls arrange for Media Ops to email the invitation to the following journalist asap (I will leave the logistics and invitation for s47F to phone-in to you).

We would be grateful for MECC's assistance to:

- email invitations
- provide list of RSVPs to HQJOC and OCDF
- open the Eucalyptus Room (Ground Floor R2 Conference Centre)
- provide a list of attendees to security
- facilitate phone in for s47F
- sign in journalists
- escort journalists to the Eucalyptus Room
- escort journalists from the Eucalyptus Room

OMINDEF has also requested MECC

- warn out iSentia
- record the briefing
- provide the audio file to iSentia for transcribing
- distribute transcript (once checked by HQJOC)

Invitees:
s47F



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Please RSVP via return email to accept or decline by **midday** today.

<<ENDS>>

Please call if you wish to discuss or clarify anything.

Many thanks, Ali

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[Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin](#)

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Moroney, Michael SQNLDR 1 on behalf of HQJOC Military Public Affairs
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 10:20 AM
To: Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1; Mayfield, Andrew COL
Cc: Media; HQJOC Military Public Affairs
Subject: RE: Recording of background briefing today ~~[DLM-For-Official-Use-Only]~~

For-Official-Use-Only

Yes please Lauren

Michael Moroney
Squadron Leader
Military Public Affairs
Headquarters Joint Operations Command
Kings Highway
Bungendore NSW 2621

Tel: (02) 612 84111

Mob: s22

Duty MOB: s22

Group Box: Military.PublicAffairs@defence.gov.au

From: Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 10:19
To: Mayfield, Andrew COL
Cc: Media; HQJOC Military Public Affairs
Subject: Recording of background briefing today ~~[DLM-For-Official-Use-Only]~~

For-Official-Use-Only

Hi Andrew,

Further to Ali's email, we can arrange for the briefing to be transcribed for record keeping/fact checking purposes. I understand OMINDEF has requested this occur.

We will only arrange to do so with your go ahead. Please let me know either way whether we should proceed to arrange this.

Many thanks,
Lauren

Lauren Tyrrell
Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division
Department of Defence | R1-5-A060 Russell Offices | PO Box 7909 Canberra BC ACT 2610
Phone: (02) 6127 1987 Email: media@defence.gov.au | Follow us on Twitter: @DeptDefence

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 1:30 PM
To: Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1
Subject: FW: Today's briefing in the Eucalypt room [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Importance: High

UNCLASSIFIED

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From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 1:17 PM
To: Blasi, Bruno MR
Cc: Media; Reis, Alison MS; Fraser, Katherine MRS 1
Subject: Today's briefing in the Eucalypt room [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Importance: High

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Bruno,

The Eucalypt Room is booked for a meeting today from 2.00pm and we will require external people to be signed in for this. Their names are:

- s47F
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

They have been advised to bring photo ID with them and will arrive at approximately 2.15pm.

Please do not hesitate to call me to discuss this.

Kind regards,

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Mayfield, Andrew COL
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 4:12 PM
To: Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1
Subject: 7 Jun 17 strike acft [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Lauren, the Australian aircraft involved in the 7 Jun 17 strike was a F/A-18F Superhornet.

This can be provided to s47F

Thank you for your assistance today it was greatly appreciated.

Andrew M

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 9:29 AM
To: Reis, Alison MS; Fraser, Katherine MRS 1
Cc: Mayfield, Andrew COL; HQJOC Military Public Affairs; Media; MSC MIE
Subject: RE: **FOR URGENT ACTION** Invitation CJOPS' Backgrounder [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Ali,

Thanks so much for sending through the below.

Conforming we will distribute the invitation to the journalists listed below by email and follow up with phone calls to ascertain RSVPs.

Confirming also we will carry out the tasks listed below also.

Many thanks,
 Lauren

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
 Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

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- warn out iSentia
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s47F



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From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 9:50 AM
To: Reis, Alison MS
Cc: Media
Subject: RE: **FOR URGENT ACTION** Invitation CJOPS' Backgrounder [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Ali,

No problem. FYSA, the invitations have been distributed and iSentia warned.

Cheers,
 Lauren

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From: Reis, Alison MS
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 9:49 AM
To: Media
Subject: RE: **FOR URGENT ACTION** Invitation CJOPS' Backgrounder [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Thanks Lauren, pls let me know if you need anything further.

Ali

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Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 9:49 AM
To: s22
Cc: Media; s47F
Subject: Briefing today [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi s47F

I wanted to give you warning that at 1430 today, there will be a background briefing held in Canberra. We will record the exchange and send through an audio file for transcription when it finishes, around 1530.

We will need the transcript turned around fairly quickly. As this is a close-hold briefing, we won't require iSentia to attend the briefing.

Thanks and will touch base with you again later today.

Lauren

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 9:46 AM
To: s22
Cc: Media
Subject: BRIEFING TODAY - invitation to background briefing from Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations, 2.30pm TODAY [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Good morning s47F

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Department of Defence | R1-5-A060 Russell Offices | PO Box 7909 Canberra BC ACT 2610
Phone: (02) 6127 1987 Email: media@defence.gov.au | Follow us on Twitter: @DeptDefence

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 9:45 AM
To: s22
Cc: Media
Subject: BRIEFING TODAY - invitation to background briefing from Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations, 2.30pm TODAY [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Good morning s47F

Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations (CJOPS) will hold a background situation briefing **from 2.30 – 3.00pm today**, Friday 29 September 2017 in **R2 Building, Russell Offices Canberra**.

Please arrive by 2.15pm and present photo ID to security staff at the main gate. Defence staff will meet you at the front of the R2 building and escort you into the venue.

The briefing will be on the record and you will have the opportunity to ask CJOPS questions however the material must remain under embargo until midnight tonight.

As this is a background briefing, cameras and live social media will **not** be permitted, however we are happy if you wish to use personal audio recording devices.

Please RSVP via return email to accept or decline by **midday** today.

Kind regards,

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
 Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

Department of Defence | R1-5-A060 Russell Offices | PO Box 7909 Canberra BC ACT 2610
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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

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Cc: Media
Subject: RE: BRIEFING TODAY - invitation to background briefing from Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations, 2.30pm TODAY [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi s47F

Fantastic, thank you for RSVPing. I will meet you at security at R2 to sign you in.

Kind regards,

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

Department of Defence | R1-5-A060 Russell Offices | PO Box 7909 Canberra BC ACT 2610
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From: s22
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 9:53 AM
To: Media
Subject: Re: BRIEFING TODAY - invitation to background briefing from Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations, 2.30pm TODAY [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

RSVPing

s47F

On 29 Sep 2017, at 09:45, Media <media@defence.gov.au> wrote:

UNCLASSIFIED

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Kind regards,

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This email may contain information that is confidential. If you receive an email in error please delete it immediately.

Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 11:38 AM
To: s22
Cc: Media
Subject: FW: BRIEFING TODAY - invitation to background briefing from Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations, 2.30pm TODAY [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi s47F

As discussed, please see below details of today's briefing at the Russell Offices in Canberra.

I look forward to hearing from you about whether or not you can attend.

Many thanks,
 Lauren

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
 Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

Department of Defence | R1-5-A060 Russell Offices | PO Box 7909 Canberra BC ACT 2610
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Cc: Media
Subject: RE: BRIEFING TODAY - invitation to background briefing from Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations, 2.30pm TODAY [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

H s47F

Wonderful, we will see you at 2.15pm.

Many thanks,
Lauren

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

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From: s22
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 11:46 AM
To: Media
Subject: RE: BRIEFING TODAY - invitation to background briefing from Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations, 2.30pm TODAY [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks Lauren.
I will attend.
Kind regards,

s47F

From: Media [<mailto:media@defence.gov.au>]
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 11:38 AM

To: s22
 Cc: Media
 Subject: FW: BRIEFING TODAY - invitation to background briefing from Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations, 2.30pm TODAY [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

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Lauren Tyrrell

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 Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 10:35 AM
To: HQJOC Military Public Affairs; Mayfield, Andrew COL
Cc: Media
Subject: RE: Recording of background briefing today ~~[DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]~~

Categories: No Security Classification Required

For-Official-Use-Only

Terrific, thanks Michael.

Cheers,
 Lauren

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From: Moroney, Michael SGNLDR 1 **On Behalf Of** HQJOC Military Public Affairs
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 10:20 AM
To: Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1; Mayfield, Andrew COL
Cc: Media; HQJOC Military Public Affairs
Subject: RE: Recording of background briefing today ~~[DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]~~

For-Official-Use-Only

Yes please Lauren

Michael Moroney**Squadron Leader**

Military Public Affairs
 Headquarters Joint Operations Command
 Kings Highway
 Bungendore NSW 2621

Tel: (02) 612 84111

Mob: s22

Duty MOB: s22

Group Box: Military.PublicAffairs@defence.gov.au

From: Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 10:19
To: Mayfield, Andrew COL
Cc: Media; HQJOC Military Public Affairs
Subject: Recording of background briefing today ~~[DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]~~

For-Official-Use-Only

Hi Andrew,

Further to Ali's email, we can arrange for the briefing to be transcribed for record keeping/fact checking purposes. I understand OMINDEF has requested this occur.

We will only arrange to do so with your go ahead. Please let me know either way whether we should proceed to arrange this.

Many thanks,
Lauren

Lauren Tyrrell

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Categories: No Security Classification Required

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Cc: Media
Subject: FW: BRIEFING TODAY - Invitation to background briefing from Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations, 2.30pm TODAY [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi s47F

Further to our discussion, please see details below of today's briefing. I apologise for sending this to the incorrect email.

See you at about 2.15pm.

Kind regards,

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
 Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

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Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi s47F

Unfortunately we're unable to facilitate your attendance today. However, we will have a journalist from The Australian attending.

My apologies.

Kind regards,

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
 Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

Department of Defence | R1-5-A060 Russell Offices | PO Box 7909 Canberra BC ACT 2610
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From: s22
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 12:23 PM
To: Media
Subject: Fwd: BRIEFING TODAY - invitation to background briefing from Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations, 2.30pm TODAY [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi, My name is s47F from The Australian. Can you please put me down as attending?

Thanks

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Media <media@defence.gov.au>
Date: 29 September 2017 at 09:45
Subject: BRIEFING TODAY - invitation to background briefing from Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations, 2.30pm TODAY [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
To: s22
Cc: Media <media@defence.gov.au>

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s47F

s47F



Item 2 Serial 5

s47F



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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 1:17 PM
To: Blasi, Bruno MR
Cc: Media; Reis, Alison MS; Fraser, Katherine MRS 1
Subject: Today's briefing in the Eucalypt room [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Importance: High

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Bruno,

The Eucalypt Room is booked for a meeting today from 2.00pm and we will require external people to be signed in for this. Their names are:

- s47F
-
-
-
-
-

They have been advised to bring photo ID with them and will arrive at approximately 2.15pm.

Please do not hesitate to call me to discuss this.

Kind regards,

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 1:28 PM
To: Reis, Alison MS; Fraser, Katherine MRS 1
Cc: Mayfield, Andrew COL; HQJOC Military Public Affairs; Media; MSC MIE
Subject: RE: **FOR URGENT ACTION** Invitation CJOPS' Backgrounder [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi all,

Please see below list of attendees for today's briefing:

- s47F
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Bruno has been advised of these names.

I'll be heading over now to ensure all goes smoothly but will be available on my mobile – s22 [REDACTED]

Thanks,
 Lauren

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
 Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

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To: Fraser, Katherine MRS 1; Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1
Cc: Mayfield, Andrew COL; HQJOC Military Public Affairs; Media; MSC MIE
Subject: **FOR URGENT ACTION** Invitation CJOPS' Backgrounder [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Katherine (and Lauren), as previously discussed – pls see below the invitation for CJOPS' backgrounder at 1430 this afternoon.

Can you pls arrange for Media Ops to email the invitation to the following journalist asap (I will leave the logistics and invitation for s47F to phone-in to you).

We would be grateful for MECC's assistance to:

- email invitations
- provide list of RSVPs to HQJOC and OCDF
- open the Eucalyptus Room (Ground Floor R2 Conference Centre)
- provide a list of attendees to security
- facilitate phone in for s47F
- sign in journalists
- escort journalists to the Eucalyptus Room
- escort journalists from the Eucalyptus Room

OMINDEF has also requested MECC

- warn out iSentia
- record the briefing
- provide the audio file to iSentia for transcribing
- distribute transcript (once checked by HQJOC)

Invitees:

s47F

<<STARTS>>

Good morning,

Vice Admiral David Johnston, Chief of Joint Operations (CJOPS) will hold a background situation briefing **from 2.30 – 3.00pm today**, Friday 29 September 2017 in **R2 Building, Russell Offices Canberra**.

Please arrive by 2.15pm and present photo ID to security staff at the main gate. Defence staff will meet you at the front of the R2 building and escort you into the venue.

The briefing will be on the record and you will have the opportunity to ask CJOPS questions however the material must remain under embargo until midnight tonight.

As this is a background briefing, cameras and live social media will **not** be permitted, however we are happy if you wish to use personal audio recording devices.

Please RSVP via return email to accept or decline by **midday** today.

<<ENDS>>

Please call if you wish to discuss or clarify anything.

Many thanks, Ali

Alison Reis

Strategic Communications Advisor to

Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin
Chief of the Defence Force

T 02 6265 3398

Ms22

F 02 6265 1345

E alison.reis@defence.gov.au

R1-5-CDF Suite, Russell Offices



[@MarkBinskin_CDF](https://twitter.com/MarkBinskin_CDF)



[Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin](#)

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 1:30 PM
To: Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1
Subject: FW: Today's briefing in the Eucalypt room [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Importance: High

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

IMPORTANT: This email remains the property of the Department of Defence and is subject to the jurisdiction of section 70 of the Crimes Act 1914. If you have received this email in error, you are requested to contact the sender and delete the email.

From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 1:17 PM
To: Blasi, Bruno MR
Cc: Media; Reis, Alison MS; Fraser, Katherine MRS 1
Subject: Today's briefing in the Eucalypt room [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Importance: High

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Bruno,

The Eucalypt Room is booked for a meeting today from 2.00pm and we will require external people to be signed in for this. Their names are:

- s47F
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

They have been advised to bring photo ID with them and will arrive at approximately 2.15pm.

Please do not hesitate to call me to discuss this.

Kind regards,

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
 Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

Department of Defence | R1-5-A060 Russell Offices | PO Box 7909 Canberra BC ACT 2610
 Phone: (02) 6127 1987 Email: media@defence.gov.au | Follow us on Twitter: @DeptDefence

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 5:10 PM
To: HQJOC Military Public Affairs
Cc: Media; Fraser, Katherine MRS 1; Reis, Alison MS
Subject: Transcript- CJOPS Press Briefing- 29 September 2017 ~~[DLM-For-Official-Use-Only]~~
Attachments: Vice Admiral David Johnston - Press Briefing - 29 September 2017.doc

Categories: No Security Classification Required

For-Official-Use-Only

Good afternoon team,

Please see attached transcript from this afternoon's briefing for your records and checking against delivery.

Kind regards,

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

Department of Defence | R1-5-A060 Russell Offices | PO Box 7909 Canberra BC ACT 2610
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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 8:33 PM
To: Budd, Henry MR
Cc: Media; Fraser, Katherine MRS 1
Subject: FW: Air strike query [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Henry,

FYSA, in addition to s47F [REDACTED] the below email came through tonight.

Many thanks,
Lauren

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

Department of Defence | R1-5-A060 Russell Offices | PO Box 7909 Canberra BC ACT 2610
Phone: (02) 6127 1987 Email: media@defence.gov.au | Follow us on Twitter: @DeptDefence

From: s22 [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 7:28 PM
To: Media
Subject: Air strike query

Hi, it's s47F [REDACTED] from the Courier Mail. I'm trying to find out if there was briefing today in regards to Australian involvement in an air strike in Iraq. If so, was anyone from News Corp informed about the briefing? Can someone please let me know, I can be contacted on this email or s47F [REDACTED]

--

s47F [REDACTED]

This message and its attachments may contain legally privileged or confidential information. It is intended solely for the named addressee. If you are not the addressee indicated in this message or responsible for delivery of the message to the addressee, you

may not copy or deliver this message or its attachments to anyone. Rather, you should permanently delete this message and its attachments and kindly notify the sender by reply e-mail. Any content of this message and its attachments which does not relate to the official business of the sending company must be taken not to have been sent or endorsed by that company or any of its related entities. No warranty is made that the e-mail or attachments are free from computer virus or other defect.

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 8:52 PM
To: Reis, Alison MS; Media
Cc: Budd, Henry MR; Fraser, Katherine MRS 1
Subject: RE: Vice Admiral David Johnston - Press Briefing - 29 September 2017.doc [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Ali,

Thanks so much for sending this through. Confirming I will provide this to s47F and s47F

Many thanks,
 Lauren

Lauren Tyrrell

Assistant Director | Corporate Communication
 Ministerial Executive Co-ordination & Communication (MECC) Division

Department of Defence | R1-5-A060 Russell Offices | PO Box 7909 Canberra BC ACT 2610
 Phone: (02) 6127 1987 Email: media@defence.gov.au | Follow us on Twitter: @DeptDefence

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From: Reis, Alison MS
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 8:41 PM
To: Media
Cc: Budd, Henry MR
Subject: Fwd: Vice Admiral David Johnston - Press Briefing - 29 September 2017.doc [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Media Ops,

As per Henry's request - pls find attached a copy of the transcript from today's briefing for News Ltd - provided in email text for convenience.

Pls give Henry or I a call if you need to clarify.

Many thanks, Ali

Begin forwarded message:

From: s22
Date: 29 September 2017 at 8:35:16 pm AEST
To: "Reis, Alison MS" <alison.reis@defence.gov.au>

Subject: Re: Vice Admiral David Johnston - Press Briefing - 29 September 2017.doc
[SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

DAVID JOHNSTON: Good afternoon and thank you for coming. I think Andrew has just given you a short explanation, so let me add to that a little and explain why we've asked you to come in on a Friday afternoon, which we understand is not ideal timing at all. But we have been- we're adjusting because the OIR reporting - which you'd be aware occurs on a monthly basis - they've shifted their approach from reporting at the start of the month to the end of the month, so we had expected the next report to come out on 6 October.

That's what we were prepared for. They're actually going to release the report tonight, and we will consequently also make a public release of Australian involvement in two civilian casualty incidents, and I'm going to give you a background to those two incidents. So that- when the OIR report, Operation Inherent Resolve report is released tonight, there will be an accompanying release on the same Defence website that we use to do the fortnightly airstrike reporting. We will use that in order to put up the advice of these two particular incidents.

So, what I want to do is just give you a background to those two strikes. I will- if I can read through a statement which has got a series of facts in it, and then I'll be happy to take your questions at the end and give you some context to that where you would like me to be able to fill in further for you.

You might recall CDF at Senate Estimates in May this year, in his opening statement, referred to advice that we had then of a- that Australian elements may have been involved in a coalition airstrike on 30 March, which potentially involved civilian casualties, and that will be one of the incidents which I talk through with you now.

And if I just describe - and I'll start with the 30 March incident - and the two events are both in West Mosul and I'll give you the dates for both of them, but for 30 March, the first of the two circumstances; as you know, coalition were supporting the Iraqi Security Forces on the ground as they sought to, on a street by street basis, step through and remove Daesh fighters.

In this particular incidence, there was a group of Daesh fighters who were identified about 300 metres from Iraqi forces. Coalition elements positively identified the group as a group of Daesh fighters, and based on that information an airstrike was authorised, and tragically, seven civilians were unintentionally killed or injured in that strike.

Importantly, there were not Australian aircraft involved in that strike, but we did have people who were involved in the target approval process for that strike, and so the second incident, when I brief it, is about an Australian aircraft. This one is no Australian aircraft involved, but we had people in the decision-making chain.

Just returning- so following the airstrike, the air crew from the strike platform, reported that civilians may have been inadvertently targeted. The strike was then referred by Australian Defence Force personnel to the headquarters of Operation Inherent Resolve for assessment and legal review. So we self-reported what we thought was a potential civilian casualty incident into the organisation that is responsible for reviewing those incidents.

QUESTION: Was that 30 March as well?

DAVID JOHNSTON: That was- I'm still talking 30 March.

QUESTION: Okay.

DAVID JOHNSTON: But we became aware of it immediately afterwards, and then the reporting, I think, was within 24 hours.

A review was conducted by the headquarters of Operation Inherent Resolve. So they conduct what's called a civilian casualty assessment review on every allegation they receive. This was one of them. They stepped through a review, and they came to a conclusion that, based on the information available to those involved in the strike, it was reasonable to believe the target was a valid military objective, and, as I will repeat with the second one, that the people involved in the strike acted in accordance with our laws of armed conflict and our rules of engagement.

The second strike occurred on 7 June, also in West Mosul, and West Mosul – you will all understand – heavily built-up area, meaning very dangerous area for combat operations to be performed in. Daesh, we know, uses civilian homes, booby-trapped buildings, used those homes as defensive fighting positions, and in that environment the Iraqi Security Forces were trying to, again, street by street, clear and remove Daesh from that.

So it was during the period where West Mosul was underway, an Iraqi Security Force element – there happened to be an Iraqi Army element – was engaged by Daesh fighters using small arms. So they found themselves within about 20 metres of a building in which Daesh fighters were. They were being engaged by small arms fire and, in our terms, were pinned down. So they were unable to move because of the nature of the effective fire that was upon them.

We had a pair of Hornets that were airborne at the time, and then the normal targeting process occurred. So the Iraqi Army sought assistance. A thorough assessment then is made of the

target. It was a residential building that was assessed as a legitimate target. They took all the precautions that we would expect our forces to take when attacking a target of that nature, and they then performed the strike. And we used, for the strike- it was a single weapon; a precision guided weapon, a low-collateral weapon. So, if you're not ...

QUESTION: A what, sorry? Low-collateral?

DAVID JOHNSTON: A low-collateral. So, we, of course, have a range of different munitions on the aircraft. Because of the nature of the target and its location, the decision was made – for this target – to use one precision weapon, but it was a low-collateral weapon. What that means is it's got a reduced amount of explosive so its collateral hazard area is reduced.

No civilians were observed in the area prior to the strike, however, in the post-strike review – and of course, we have weapon systems video – we stepped through that process. We recognised that it was possible that civilians may have been present in the location of the strike when people were observed to leave the rear of the building that was struck, after the strike occurred.

And then, again, in accordance with our processes, we identified it and we reported it to the headquarters of Op Inherent Resolve to enable that assessment and legal process to be subsequently followed.

Based on the information available for this strike, it was assessment that it was more likely than not that a civilian – one person – was either seriously injured or killed as a result of that strike, but that all feasible precautions were taken to prevent civilian casualties prior to the strike. That was the outcome

of the assessment that OIR performed.

In addition to the OIR assessment, we, Defence, conducted our own assessment. We looked at the manner in which our- either the decision making for the first incident, 30 March, or the application of the strike for the 7 June incident, we reviewed them and similarly came to a conclusion that Australian rules of engagement were followed and that it was conducted consistent with the laws of armed conflict.

If I'd just follow up, then, on just some of the actions that we take. Having reviewed them, we did then look back through all the processes leading up to the decision making on both. We do that regularly after- every strike, of course, is reviewed and that's why in these circumstances the potential for casualties was identified. But we review all the strikes, including our practices and procedures, to see how we might be able to improve them. There was, from the first one, we made some adjustments around record keeping, particularly to ensure there was a thorough process of recording decisions so that we had a good understanding of when and how they were made, and we revised some of the training around the process called target engagement authority. So, that's the process by which an individual who's authorised conducts assessments and makes a decision that a target or a strike activity can occur. So that was done on both those two incidents and in fact all of the events that we were involved on.

You'd be aware, a couple of comments really for context for you, we do everything that we can to minimise casualties, to ensure targeted areas are clear of civilians before and during air strikes, and that we do everything possible to avoid any civilian casualties at all.

And- well, combat operations are- always carry some risk, but the process is highly effective.

And if I can give you General Townsend, who some of you may know was the previous Lieutenant-General who commanded Operation Inherent Resolve, the US Three Star that was in theatre, he recently made a public statement which just has some useful facts in it. He highlighted that between August '14 and July '17, the percentage of all coalition engagements that resulted in a report of possible civilian casualties is 2.29 per cent. The percentage of engagements that resulted in a credible assessment is 0.32 per cent, so of the- I wrote down, the number- so how many weapons, there's been 24,160 strikes, 51,033 engagements. That's the percentage associated with the overall- what has been a significant number of munitions dropped during the full period between when operations in Iraq and Syria started.

If I could perhaps finally add, just, you know, the battle and the environment in Mosul is very difficult. I think some of you had the opportunity to see the nature of activities that we performed there. It's a dense urban environment against an enemy who does have no regard for human life or the laws of armed conflict themselves and, as others and I would stress, Daesh is by far the greatest perpetrator of civilian casualties in Iraq; streets and buildings booby trapped, fighters capturing civilians, holding them as hostage, and, as we have seen, in the worst case deliberately staging events to cause casualties.

Iraqi Security Forces, again, just relevant context, suffered significant casualties in the eight month Battle of Mosul; between 1,200 and 1,500 Iraqi Security Forces killed, around 8,000 have

been wounded. And I offered that as context of, that is why coalition is providing strike support to them. We're there to defeat Daesh and to enable Iraqi ground forces to recover their own country, but Daesh's tactic of deliberately putting civilians in harm's way is designed to complicate and impede coalition support to the Iraqi forces. Our actions always discriminate and proportionate when targeting enemy forces; we operate under strict rules of engagement, which are designed to protect both our forces, partner forces, and minimise the risk to civilians, and ensure that we meet our international and domestic law responsibilities.

And I think I'll draw a conclusion there. So, two strikes, 30 March and 7 July are probably the two key elements

Sent from my iPad

On 29 Sep 2017, at 8:30 pm, Reis, Alison MS <alison.reis@defence.gov.au> wrote:

UNCLASSIFIED

<image001.png>

Alison Reis
Strategic Communications Advisor to
Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin
Chief of the Defence Force

T 02 6265 3398
M s22
F 02 6265 1345
E alison.reis@defence.gov.au
R1-5-CDF Suite, Russell Offices

<image001.png>

<image002.png> [@MarkBinskin_CDF](#) <image003.jpg> [Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin](#)

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<Vice Admiral David Johnston - Press Briefing - 29 September 2017.doc>

Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 9:12 PM
To: s22
Cc: Media
Subject: RE: Media briefing [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Good evening s47F

Please find copied below the transcript from today's briefing.

Please be aware this information is embargoed until midnight tonight. This is because the report mentioned in the transcript will be released at this time, made available on the Defence website. You may attribute quotes to the Chief of Joint Operations and use the transcript for information.

<<STARTS>>

DAVID JOHNSTON: Good afternoon and thank you for coming. I think Andrew has just given you a short explanation, so let me add to that a little and explain why we've asked you to come in on a Friday afternoon, which we understand is not ideal timing at all. But we have been- we're adjusting because the OIR reporting - which you'd be aware occurs on a monthly basis - they've shifted their approach from reporting at the start of the month to the end of the month, so we had expected the next report to come out on 6 October.

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And I think I'll draw a conclusion there. So, two strikes, 30 March and 7 June are probably the two key elements

<<ENDS>>

Kind regards,

Defence Media

Department of Defence | R1-5-A061 Russell Offices | PO Box 7909 Canberra BC ACT 2610
Phone: (02) 6127 1999 Email: media@defence.gov.au | Follow us on Twitter: @DeptDefence

From: s22

Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 7:12 PM

To: Media

Subject: Media briefing

Hello,

Can you please tell me why I did not receive notification of the defence briefing today?

This has happened before and I've complained before.

Why does it keep happening?

Can you please tell me if anyone News Corp tabloid reporters were invited. As it is a major breakdown in communications at our end if anyone was invited and no-one attended.

If no-one was invited I'd like to know the reasons why.

I have also made the Minister's office aware of this situation.

I would like a response to this ASAP please.

s47F

addressee. If you are not the addressee indicated in this message or responsible for delivery of the message to the addressee, you may not copy or deliver this message or its attachments to anyone. Rather, you should permanently delete this message and its attachments and kindly notify the sender by reply e-mail. Any content of this message and its attachments which does not relate to the official business of the sending company must be taken not to have been sent or endorsed by that company or any of its related entities. No warranty is made that the e-mail or attachments are free from computer virus or other defect.

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Tyrrell, Lauren MRS 1

From: Media
Sent: Friday, 29 September 2017 9:15 PM
To: s22
Cc: Media
Subject: Transcript from today's briefing [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Good evening s47F

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Please be aware this information is embargoed until midnight tonight. This is because the report mentioned in the transcript will be released at this time, made available on the Defence website. You may attribute quotes to the Chief of Joint Operations and use the transcript for information.

<<STARTS>>

DAVID JOHNSTON: Good afternoon and thank you for coming. I think Andrew has just given you a short explanation, so let me add to that a little and explain why we've asked you to come in on a Friday afternoon, which we understand is not ideal timing at all. But we have been- we're adjusting because the OIR reporting - which you'd be aware occurs on a monthly basis - they've shifted their approach from reporting at the start of the month to the end of the month, so we had expected the next report to come out on 6 October.

That's what we were prepared for. They're actually going to release the report tonight, and we will consequently also make a public release of Australian involvement in two civilian casualty incidents, and I'm going to give you a background to those two incidents. So that- when the OIR report, Operation Inherent Resolve report is released tonight, there will be an accompanying release on the same Defence website that we use to do the fortnightly airstrike reporting. We will use that in order to put up the advice of these two particular incidents.

So, what I want to do is just give you a background to those two strikes. I will- if I can read through a statement which has got a series of facts in it, and then I'll be happy to take your questions at the end and give you some context to that where you would like me to be able to fill in further for you.

You might recall CDF at Senate Estimates in May this year, in his opening statement, referred to advice that we had then of a- that Australian elements may have been involved in a coalition airstrike on 30 March, which potentially involved civilian casualties, and that will be one of the incidents which I talk through with you now.

And if I just describe – and I'll start with the 30 March incident – and the two events are both in West Mosul and I'll give you the dates for both of them, but for 30 March, the first of the two circumstances; as you know, coalition were supporting the Iraqi Security Forces on the ground as they sought to, on a street by street basis, step through and remove Daesh fighters.

In this particular incidence, there was a group of Daesh fighters who were identified about 300 metres from Iraqi forces. Coalition elements positively identified the group as a group of Daesh fighters, and based on that information an airstrike was authorised, and tragically, seven civilians were unintentionally killed or injured in that strike.

Importantly, there were not Australian aircraft involved in that strike, but we did have people who were involved in the target approval process for that strike, and so the second incident, when I brief it, is about an Australian aircraft. This one is no Australian aircraft involved, but we had people in the decision-making chain.

Just returning- so following the airstrike, the air crew from the strike platform, reported that civilians may have been inadvertently targeted. The strike was then referred by Australian Defence Force personnel to the headquarters of Operation Inherent Resolve for assessment and legal review. So we self-reported what we thought was a potential civilian casualty incident into the organisation that is responsible for reviewing those incidents.

QUESTION: Was that 30 March as well?

DAVID JOHNSTON: That was- I'm still talking 30 March.

QUESTION: Okay.

DAVID JOHNSTON: But we became aware of it immediately afterwards, and then the reporting, I think, was within 24 hours.

A review was conducted by the headquarters of Operation Inherent Resolve. So they conduct what's called a civilian casualty assessment review on every allegation they receive. This was one of them. They stepped through a review, and they came to a conclusion that, based on the information available to those involved in the strike, it was reasonable to believe the target was a valid military objective, and, as I will repeat with the second one, that the people involved in the strike acted in accordance with our laws of armed conflict and our rules of engagement.

The second strike occurred on 7 June, also in West Mosul, and West Mosul – you will all understand – heavily built-up area, meaning very dangerous area for combat operations to be performed in. Daesh, we know, uses civilian homes, booby-trapped buildings, used those homes as defensive fighting positions, and in that environment the Iraqi Security Forces were trying to, again, street by street, clear and remove Daesh from that.

Transcript

Station: **BRIEFING** Date: **29/09/2017**
Program: **N/A** Time: **15:00PM**
Compere: **NONE** Summary ID: **C00071999992**
Item: **BRIEFING WITH CHIEF OF JOINT OPERATIONS, VICE ADMIRAL DAVID JOHNSTON, REGARDING TWO INCIDENTS IN WHICH CIVILIANS MAY HAVE BEEN INJURED OR KILLED IN WEST MOSUL.**

Audience:	Male 16+ 5000	Female 16+ 8000	All people 14000
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believe the target was a valid military objective, and, as I will repeat with the second one, that the people involved in the strike acted in accordance with our laws of armed conflict and our rules of engagement.

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So it was during the period where West Mosul was underway, an Iraqi Security Force element – there happened to be an Iraqi Army element – was engaged by Daesh fighters using small arms. So they found themselves within about 20 metres of a building in which Daesh fighters were. They were being engaged by small arms fire and, in our terms, were pinned down. So they were unable to move because of the nature of the effective fire that was upon them.

We had a pair of Hornets that were airborne at the time, and then the normal targeting process occurred. So the Iraqi Army sought assistance. A thorough assessment then is made of the target. It was a residential building that was assessed as a legitimate target. They took all the precautions that we would expect our forces to take when attacking a target of that nature, and they then performed the strike. And

we used, for the strike- it was a single weapon; a precision guided weapon, a low-collateral weapon. So, if you're not ...

QUESTION:

A what, sorry? Low-collateral?

DAVID JOHNSTON:

A low-collateral. So, we, of course, have a range of different munitions on the aircraft. Because of the nature of the target and its location, the decision was made – for this target – to use one precision weapon, but it was a low-collateral weapon. What that means is it's got a reduced amount of explosive so its collateral hazard area is reduced.

No civilians were observed in the area prior to the strike, however, in the post-strike review – and of course, we have weapon systems video – we stepped through that process. We recognised that it was possible that civilians may have been present in the location of the strike when people were observed to leave the rear of the building that was struck, after the strike occurred.

And then, again, in accordance with our processes, we identified it and we reported it to the headquarters of Op Inherent Resolve to enable that assessment and legal process to be subsequently followed.

Based on the information available for this strike, it was assessment that it was more likely than not that a civilian – one person – was either seriously injured or killed as a result of that strike, but that all feasible precautions were taken to prevent civilian casualties

prior to the strike. That was the outcome of the assessment that OIR performed.

In addition to the OIR assessment, we, Defence, conducted our own assessment. We looked at the manner in which our- either the decision making for the first incident, 30 March, or the application of the strike for the 7 June incident, we reviewed them and similarly came to a conclusion that Australian rules of engagement were followed and that it was conducted consistent with the laws of armed conflict.

If I'd just follow up, then, on just some of the actions that we take. Having reviewed them, we did then look back through all the processes leading up to the decision making on both. We do that regularly after- every strike, of course, is reviewed and that's why in these circumstances the potential for casualties was identified. But we review all the strikes, including our practices and procedures, to see how we might be able to improve them. There was, from the first one, we made some adjustments around record keeping, particularly to ensure there was a thorough process of recording decisions so that we had a good understanding of when and how they were made, and we revised some of the training around the process called target engagement authority. So, that's the process by which an individual who's authorised conducts assessments and makes a decision that a target or a strike activity can occur. So that was done on both those two incidents and in fact all of the events that we were involved on.

You'd be aware, a couple of comments really for context for you, we do everything that we can to minimise casualties, to ensure targeted areas are clear of civilians before and during air strikes, and that we do everything possible to avoid any civilian casualties at all. And- well, combat operations are- always carry some risk, but the process is highly effective.

And if I can give you General Townsend, who some of you may know was the previous Lieutenant-General who commanded Operation Inherent Resolve, the US Three Star that was in theatre, he recently made a public statement which just has some useful facts in it. He highlighted that between August '14 and July '17, the percentage of all coalition engagements that resulted in a report of possible civilian casualties is 2.29 per cent. The percentage of engagements that resulted in a credible assessment is 0.32 per cent, so of the- I wrote down, the number- so how many weapons, there's been 24,160 strikes, 51,033 engagements. That's the percentage associated with the overall- what has been a significant number of munitions dropped during the full period between when operations in Iraq and Syria started.

If I could perhaps finally add, just, you know, the battle and the environment in Mosul is very difficult. I think some of you had the opportunity to see the nature of activities that we performed there. It's a dense urban environment against an enemy who does have no regard for human life or the laws of armed conflict themselves and, as others and I would stress, Daesh is by far the greatest perpetrator of civilian casualties in

Iraq; streets and buildings booby trapped, fighters capturing civilians, holding them as hostage, and, as we have seen, in the worst case deliberately staging events to cause casualties.

Iraqi Security Forces, again, just relevant context, suffered significant casualties in the eight month Battle of Mosul; between 1,200 and 1,500 Iraqi Security Forces killed, around 8,000 have been wounded. And I offered that as context of, that is why coalition is providing strike support to them. We're there to defeat Daesh and to enable Iraqi ground forces to recover their own country, but Daesh's tactic of deliberately putting civilians in harm's way is designed to complicate and impede coalition support to the Iraqi forces. Our actions always discriminate and proportionate when targeting enemy forces; we operate under strict rules of engagement, which are designed to protect both our forces, partner forces, and minimise the risk to civilians, and ensure that we meet our international and domestic law responsibilities.

And I think I'll draw a conclusion there. So, two strikes, 30 March and 7 July are probably the two key elements ...

QUESTION: [Interrupts] 7 June.

DAVID JOHNSTON: Did I say June? 7 June, yes. Thank you.

QUESTION: Can I just clarify for the 30 March event: was the group that was identified as Daesh fighters, was that group

	wrongly identified? Were the casualties in addition to that group?
DAVID JOHNSTON:	It would appear the group was wrongly identified.
QUESTION:	And when you say there were seven killed or injured, is that just because of the- how can there be- I guess what I'm trying to get at is how can you know whether anyone was killed if seven are killed or injured, or conversely if all seven were?
DAVID JOHNSTON:	It's based on the imageries. The post-strike imagery, I think, showed a number of people prone, lying down on the ground, essentially. They would have observed it for a period of time. But whether people subsequently recovered and moved off, or ...
QUESTION:	[Talks over] Or were taken away.
DAVID JOHNSTON:	Or assistance was, yes, brought to them and they were taken away and received some treatment. That's why we can't be absolutely definitive, but I described, I think, as well as we know. Either killed or seriously injured.
QUESTION:	So we don't know 100 per cent whether people died?
DAVID JOHNSTON:	No.
QUESTION:	And how were they wrongly identified? Is there any explanation for that?

DAVID JOHNSTON: It appeared the observing unit- I won't mention it, the country wasn't ours and I won't mention it, that's appropriately for that country to identify itself if they choose to in the future. But they conducted what we would call a positive ID, so they formed an assessment of what they were viewing, they formed a view that it was an armed group and that information was relayed to an Australian who was involved in the decision making process, came from a credible source, one that we would have no reason to question, so it was accepted as credible and reliable, but it would- in the post-strike imagery, an assessment was formed that the weapons that had been reported, they didn't observe on the ground or in the vicinity of the people. So the credibility of an armed group was questioned when there was no apparent weaponry around.

QUESTION: You're saying the Australian involvement is one person at headquarters at Inherent Resolve?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Not in- I won't- one person who was performing a targeting decision making process at- it depends what you mean by ...

QUESTION: [Talks over] In an undisclosed location.

DAVID JOHNSTON: He was in a location where they were providing decision making over-support to the Iraqi ground forces.

QUESTION: And is that ultimate yea or nay support or is that part of a chain?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Part of a chain, but the individual did carry authority as to enable the strike to be approved.

QUESTION: And do we know which country is involved in the strike and that incident?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Yes, I do. But I'm not prepared ...

QUESTION: Can we know?

DAVID JOHNSTON: No. Out of respect to them.

QUESTION: Of course, yeah.

DAVID JOHNSTON: We wouldn't expect them to disclose Australian sensitive items and we expect them to do the same.

QUESTION: Will that be the subject- will that be reported tonight?

DAVID JOHNSTON: No, I don't expect so.

QUESTION: On the second strike that was Australian aircraft, you said they were low-collateral bombs. I was in the Middle East recently on an embed with the Air Task Group, so I've seen the bombs.

DAVID JOHNSTON: Yes.

QUESTION: Were they sort of the laser-guided ones or the GPS-guided ones or different ones?

DAVID JOHNSTON: No, GBU-38 is the designator for it so they are GPS-guided bombs. It's the same bomb ...

QUESTION: So the one that did the strike ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: Was a GPS bomb.

QUESTION: It was a GPS bomb.

DAVID JOHNSTON: Yes. Yep.

QUESTION: Can you tell us anything about the buildings that- in both cases, were they multi-storey buildings?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Not a great deal. I think they were multi-storey, I can't confirm that. I haven't seen the video footage myself of it but knowing that it was in a- that urban environment that is West Mosul it is probable, but I can't give that to you definitively.

QUESTION: Do we know if any of the civilians were women and children or is it likely they were just men?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Most of them were men. It is possible that there were children involved.

QUESTION: In both instances?

DAVID JOHNSTON: In both strikes, yes. And that's just drawn from the height of the people that were observed afterwards.

QUESTION: Can you tell us how many were possibly involved?

DAVID JOHNSTON: One in each.

QUESTION: So one child each?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Yes.

QUESTION: And the ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: Possibly.

QUESTION: Possibly, of course.

QUESTION: Possibly killed or injured.

DAVID JOHNSTON: Yes.

QUESTION: And that's based on a height assessment.

DAVID JOHNSTON: That's right, yes.

QUESTION: So after the Hornet's sent in the bombs sort of thing, obviously it's still filming the imagery ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: For a period afterwards, yes.

QUESTION: ... for a period afterwards, and the people were seen leaving the building after the bomb had ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: After the bomb has struck, yes.

QUESTION: ... had struck.

DAVID JOHNSTON: So the bomb- the target was the front end of the building which was successfully hit. The strike was accurate. The people were observed to leave the back end of the buildings. That was where they walked out from.

QUESTION: In terms of their response to the reports about the reviews, basically, you talked about changing how the targeting works or some sort of training around targeting ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: Training around the decision making, yes.

QUESTION: Yeah, okay, so that was the case for both responses ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: For the first one.

QUESTION: Oh, just for the ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: For the first one, yes.

QUESTION: Okay. And for the second one was there any response to it?

DAVID JOHNSTON: We reviewed the processes. We were satisfied that they did everything that they should have, in terms of understanding whether there was a civilian pattern of

life in the area beforehand. There was nothing that we identified that was inconsistent with our processes, or that the processes themselves had failed that suggested that we needed to review our practices.

QUESTION:

Can I just ask on the second instance – if it was people leaving the rear of the building, how do you determine- how do you know there weren't more people inside the building that were potential casualties?

DAVID JOHNSTON:

We can't definitively. What they've- they counted that and most people- and it was- the way the report reads they walked out calmly. Now, I don't- whether they were shocked or they had been- we know many of the buildings have basements in them and so they'd left after they'd heard it occur, but they'd walked out. It is possible that there were other people still in there. The one person who is suspected killed or injured was carried out and that's the basis by which they formed that view.

QUESTION:

Okay, so there could have been other dead people left behind in the building?

DAVID JOHNSTON:

There could have been, yes.

QUESTION:

So can I just- sorry, can I just get that clear. So the people who walked out, they were the ones who were injured or was that the- or did that sort of indicate that, oh hang on, there's civilians in this building?

DAVID JOHNSTON: No, it was the group of people who were suspected to have walked out. We don't know if they were Daesh fighters or not. But I mentioned it was possibly a child amongst them. We do not think children are Daesh fighters although ...

QUESTION: And was that a child carried out?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Carried out, yes.

QUESTION: Okay. It's probably sort of a secondary issue really, but presumably as you say they were- this Iraqi unit was pinned down. The Hornets provided this tactical- this targeted low-collateral weapon. Did the Iraqi unit then- was it still pinned down afterwards?

DAVID JOHNSTON: The strike was effective. So that particular threat was negated for them. Whether there were then- came into contact with other Daesh forces I'm not sure. It was not addressed in any of the reports, but certainly that threat that was emanating from the building – the small arms fire – that threat was dealt with.

QUESTION: And can we know how many Daesh fighters were killed in that strike, successfully?

DAVID JOHNSTON: I think it's two, it's a small- it was a relatively small number. I think it is two.

QUESTION: A handful?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Yes, it's a handful.

QUESTION:	So how do you know that two Daesh fighters were killed when we don't know if the child was killed?
DAVID JOHNSTON:	Because the threat- there was no further fire. On the assumption that they would have- if they were alive they would have continued to engage the Iraqi Security Forces. That stopped. So that is an assumption. I cannot say it definitively either, but we did not see them walk away, where there was observation of other people walking away.
QUESTION:	In a case where- in the first case, which relied on a certain source, was that source now not used again or that kind of thing? Was there consequences around that?
DAVID JOHNSTON:	The country involved has done a review into its own participation. I don't know the outcomes of its own review. The source itself has been- would have been used again. Whether it's the same people involved or not I cannot say, but the type of platform that was involved is still providing support in Iraq now.
QUESTION:	Can I- sorry to dwell on this and please feel free to say I'm being stupid or whatever, but I just want to get it clear in my head with the second strike. So, Iraqis are pinned down, airstrike's called in, set off the bomb, it kills the two- a handful of Daesh fighters ...
DAVID JOHNSTON:	Yes.

QUESTION: ... they building they're- the people- civilians are seen leaving ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: Post-strike, at the back of the building.

QUESTION: ... post strike out the back of the building. Are they injured at that point or anything like that, or are they fleeing?

DAVID JOHNSTON: They don't appear to be. Some, I think most of them, just walked out of the building; one carrying a person with them, and I think one may have been assisted in their movement as well but was otherwise walking. So it would appear that most of them, no, were not injured apart from- the only one that we'd say clearly probably was, was the potential child that was carried out.

QUESTION: Yep okay. So they were sort of, otherwise, other than the child, they walked freely.

DAVID JOHNSTON: That's why I described- they walked calmly out was the actual description in the reporting. So they weren't running to move to another location that- which would suggest that- well, I- no, I couldn't say with- not to say they hadn't suffered some shock or potentially minor injuries.

QUESTION: Were these daytime events or night?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Both of them are daytime.

QUESTION: And this is area that's now considered recaptured?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Yes.

QUESTION: Yep.

DAVID JOHNSTON: Yes. To our knowledge, neither of the events have been raised by any of the- Airwars or other groups, so both of them, as I said were self-reported incidents. We're not aware of any collaboration in terms of the timing with any other claims of civilian casualties from these two incidents.

QUESTION: Has there been any sort of follow up done in terms of finding out from the- do the Iraqi forces, after it's calmed down, do they go into this building afterwards and try and talk to the people there?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Not when they're normally in combat, if they're in that environment. Sometimes we do know that the civilian residents of the area will come back and either recover people that they know and report them through, but that's speculation on my part. I'm not aware of the Iraqi military forces going in and then providing a report of any civilian casualties from the incident, either of the two.

QUESTION: I don't normally cover this area, so where does this fit in in the context of the overall campaign? Is this- are these the- have there been incidents like this before in this campaign?

DAVID JOHNSTON: In terms of civilian casualties? Yeah, I can give you like a news- these are just some of the stats that I had on the- through OIR reporting, their assessment is that about 735 civilians have been killed as a result of coalition activity so far. There are 350 reports of potential incidents that are still subject to investigation, so there are a number that are still being reviewed to determine their credibility and to understand the circumstances of them. So, if your question is have there been a number of incidents where- of both allegations and, in a number of cases, then substantiated allegations, the answer is yes.

QUESTION: With implications for Australia?

DAVID JOHNSTON: That- for Australia, no. These are the only two credible assessments that we are aware of at the moment. You might recall, I think when we changed the reporting earlier this year we did raise there were two incidents back in 2014, an October and a December event; both of which potentially involve civilian casualties, neither of which have been confirmed with allegations coming through. But these are the only two credible events that we are aware of at the moment.

QUESTION: Wasn't there another one in September last year as well?

QUESTION: Are you making a distinction between civilians and Syrian forces?

DAVID JOHNSTON: [Talks over] Yeah, sorry, you're talking about the Deir al-Zor strike which we think was a militia group with the Syrian- a pro-Syrian forces.

QUESTION: Oh, okay. Yep.

QUESTION: Can you tell us how big the bomb was that was dropped by the Hornet?

DAVID JOHNSTON: It's a Mark 82 weapon, but low-collateral means, as I said, the lower explosive- so, the designation is it's a low-collateral weapon. That's help- that's probably the most useful description.

QUESTION: [Inaudible question]

QUESTION: It's 500 pounds though?

DAVID JOHNSTON: If you- you can Google- 500 pound is the standard Mark 82. This one is, because of its reduced explosive content, is different to it. But if you Google GBU-38 you might I think be able to get a reasonable description.

QUESTION: GBU-38?

DAVID JOHNSTON: G- Yes. Golf bravo uniform three eight.

QUESTION: Just as long as I don't end up in a room like this for doing so.

[Laughter]

QUESTION: Does a weapon like that, a bomb like that destroy a building or does it just sort of ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: No, typically not. It's very precise in its nature, so it will cause damage in part of a building. And as I said, this one, the building was still standing enough at the rear that people could leave it. But being low-collateral it's a much reduced explosive effect than a larger collateral or larger weapon.

QUESTION: And when you were talking about Daesh using civilian homes and so on as shields in these sorts of engagements, is that what they were doing in that second instance?

DAVID JOHNSTON: We don't know. We know they certainly had a pattern of doing so, including in some cases deliberately putting snipers on buildings to draw fire knowing that they had locked people in that couldn't escape, so we're uncertain whether that was the case in this circumstance or it was a different environment.

QUESTION: The figure that you gave – 735 civilian casualties – before, are they fatalities or are they people who are suspected of being killed or ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: It's suspected of being killed ...

QUESTION: Or?

DAVID JOHNSTON: ... or fatalities.

QUESTION: Okay, fatalities okay.

QUESTION: Hasn't ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: That figure, Jen, on the OIR - the monthly - they've got that tally total there, so ...

QUESTION: No, I just want to make the distinction between a casualty and a fatality.

DAVID JOHNSTON: Right, yes.

QUESTION: In a circumstance like this, I mean obviously it's very tragic, but as you say, it's in accordance with the rules of engagement, it doesn't seem like the pilots did anything wrong sort of thing. Is there counselling offered to them and things like that?

DAVID JOHNSTON: There is. Our people hold themselves to a high standard throughout, and they do take their responsibilities to minimise civilian casualties seriously, so we have had a program of mental health support in particular. While they're deployed, they have support from counselling services, chaplains, psychologists available to them, and of course their own command environment that helps explain the context of the operation environment that they're in. So, both when they're deployed and as both- when they're back home, that support is very much available and offered to them.

QUESTION: Are they stood down for anything? Obviously, they have ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: That depends on the- case-by-case with the individual. So, if they need some respite, then that's very much offered to them. And pilots in particular are very good at knowing I'm not fit to fly, and will regularly in those sorts of circumstances self-declare that is the case with them. But typically our people are, if they have confidence in the work they've done and they think they did everything reasonably to avoid it, they understand that and they continue on with their job.

QUESTION: Is that a legal requirement they don't fly or- while the investigation ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: No. No. If we had concerns that they had acted inappropriately or had not followed procedures then that's actions that we would take, but that was not the judgement on this case.

QUESTION: Have we clarified, sorry, what munitions were used in the first instance?

DAVID JOHNSTON: I do know. I can't say it because it would reveal the platform very quickly from doing so.

QUESTION: Right, okay. But in general terms ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: But it was a precision weapon.

QUESTION: ... a precision weapon? And we don't know how many weapons?

DAVID JOHNSTON: One.

QUESTION: One. One precision weapon. Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sir, probably just a couple more, sir, and then you've got to get off to your next appointment.

DAVID JOHNSTON: Thank you.

QUESTION: In the case of the first incident, is it a decision by the Australian- is it a decision that is made quickly? Or is there- what sort of input is that person making in that?

DAVID JOHNSTON: It depends. It depends on the environment with the decision. So, some of them, yes, need to be made quickly. But the broad- there's what's called a six-step process that an individual that makes this kind of decision has to step through. There are six mandatory requirements, which, if they can meet each of those thresholds, the decision can be made very quickly. If they're dissatisfied with anyone it stops until they're able to form a view that they have met that criteria. So it can be very quick if all the parameters are there, or it can take some significant time if the- particularly the positive identification is one of those very important steps that needs to be made. That can take significant time, so it depends. On this occasion, I wouldn't call- describe it rushed. They had time to step through it

	methodically and form a judgement and enable a decision to be made.
QUESTION:	And that decision, was that made out of the CAOC in Qatar?
DAVID JOHNSTON:	No. No, it was made in the field. But there were- but I should- there were multiple people making the judgements, but the engagement decision was made by an individual. When I say in the field, he wasn't in a headquarters in the CAOC or in Baghdad or Kuwait, he was in another sub-unit headquarters that was closer to the fight in Mosul.
QUESTION:	Thank you very much.
QUESTION:	Thank you.
DAVID JOHNSTON:	Thank you all.
QUESTION:	Sure.
QUESTION:	Hi, I just missed the start and I'm just wondering what time this goes up online?
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:	Midnight.
QUESTION:	Midnight.
QUESTION:	Midnight, streaming online?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Thank you for your time.

QUESTION: Much appreciated.

QUESTION: ... you were recently accused of being a ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: ... a former Defence Minister, I did have a few texts that were sent my way, and I said I was moonlighting.

QUESTION: Wonder if you can get the pension?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Yes, that's right.

QUESTION: What are the rules in terms of recording, in terms of not for attribution quotes? I ...

DAVID JOHNSTON: For- I'm happy for you to quote me. No, yes.

QUESTION: Oh, great, thank you. Quote you and name you, to be clear?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Yes, yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How was it? Was it good?

QUESTION: Yeah, he was very helpful.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Nah, nah, nah.

* * End * *

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