

xx XXX 06

References:

- A. HQ MND (SE) FRAGO 163 – OP [REDACTED] - [REDACTED]
- B. MND (SE) CBRN Team Site Report - [REDACTED] (Enclosed)
- C. MND (SE) CBRN Team [REDACTED] After Action Review report

BACKGROUND

1. On 14 Jan 06 the MNF LO to Maysaan Provincial Joint Operations Centre (PJOC – responsible for co-ordination and monitoring of ISF units and activities within the province) was informed that the IPS had arrested two individuals in possession of 16 suspicious canisters in the AL Huteen district of Al Amarah. Two men had been seen unloading the items from the back of a truck into a house in the district. One was released immediately [REDACTED]. The second was subsequently detained by the Serious Crimes Unit (SCU) and the canisters confiscated and held at the PJOC in Al Amarah at [REDACTED].

2. The PJOC LO, [REDACTED] requested UK EOD assistance from Camp Abu Naji (CAN) to confirm the nature of the munitions. In response, the UK Jt Force EOD Gp BDO base at CAN was dispatched to the PJOC, and identified the munitions to be 122mm AL BORAQ canisters - similar to those destroyed during previous iterations of Operation [REDACTED], and therefore possibly containing a GB (Sarin) fill. The canisters were immediately leak-seal packaged on-site by the BDO, and the PJOC LO and protection party remained in the PJOC overnight to guard the rounds until judicial authority has been granted to remove them for destruction.

2. Once authorisation for release had been granted at about 141130CJAN06 by Maysaan Province Chief Judge [REDACTED] (since deceased), the canisters were transported to [REDACTED] via CAN for immediate emergency destruction by a CMD Team from the UK Jt Force EOD Gp. Once the destruction had been completed at 1650hrs, the MND (SE) CBRN Team conducted a chemical survey of the destruction area in order to ensure that all canisters had been destroyed and that no chemical contamination remained. All ordnance was destroyed and the subsequent CBRN survey confirmed that no chemical contamination was present at the site, indicating a successful disposal. A detailed chronology of events can be found at Annex A.

9. **Key CBRN Findings.** The CBRN survey of the destruction site indicated very low vapour concentrations of "G" agent on all detectors. [REDACTED] gave a "G" indication of 4 bars in one small area near the demolition crater but this was not corroborated by other technologies. There was no visual indication of any liquid contamination in the area. The CBRN Site Survey report can be found in Ref B (enclosed).

KEY ISSUES

10. A detailed summary of issues identified during the course of the op can be found at Ref C. A brief précis of the key issues is as follows:

a. [REDACTED] is required for the conduct of operations involving suspected chemical ordnance. EOD and CBRN have the combined capability to fulfil all requirements at the decon site but lack commonality of methods and drills, and require water to be provided by the framework BG. **EOD and CBRN Teams should undertake further joint training, particularly as part of pre-deployment packages and mission rehearsals and preparation for Operations involving framework troops and supporting units once deployed.** 7 Armd Bde, UK Jt Force EOD Gp, Div CBRN Team.

c. The 122mm AL BORAQ canisters had been leak-seal packaged before any pictures had been taken of them. It was assumed that the munitions were GB-filled on the basis that they looked like the same munitions destroyed during Ops [REDACTED]. It was not possible thereafter to attain a positive identification of the munitions before they were destroyed. **The BDO is an SME who is trained to identify munitions that are chemical capable. However, where possible, munitions with suspected chemical fill should be photographed before they are leak-seal packaged.** MNF to note.

f. SH is probably the safest, quickest and most convenient method of carriage to a destruction site for suspected CW canisters. However, this is very much dependent on units having the correct equipment and qualified personnel in the right place at the right time, as highlighted in Annex A. **JHF-I and JHSU should be fully involved in the planning process in order to ensure that all requirements for the safe and efficient movement of these potentially hazardous materials are met.** JHF-I, JHSU, 7 Armd Bde.

NEXT STEP

11. Op [REDACTED] was completed within the required timeframe and in spite of a number of delays. Key avenues for development are as follows:

- a. EOD and CBRN Teams to conduct further joint training alongside framework and supporting units in order to integrate SOPs.
- b. Establish a set of SOIs or guidelines in order to establish minimum safe operating standards and to maintain continuity between units in the event that these types of op endure beyond future unit changeovers.

SUMMARY

12. Op [REDACTED] has provided further evidence that the current, explosive method of disposing of suspected CW munitions is effective, and post-destruction testing has proven that no residual threat of contamination remains. These ops can certainly be conducted by MND(SE) without the assistance of US forces; the only limitation to the capabilities of UK forces is the current inability to conduct intrusive testing if samples were required. With this in mind, POLAD has submitted a summary of observations on MND(SE) policy in regard to seizure, handling and disposal of suspected legacy CW munitions.

13. The operation was also rather simpler than the [REDACTED] series of operations, mainly due to the fact that fewer agencies were involved and the 'Rules of Engagement' on handling suspected chemical munitions (based on the UK interpretation of the Chemical

Weapons Convention) were not such an inhibiting factor. However, as far as inter-agency co-operation is concerned, the observations highlighted above demonstrate the clear requirement for detailed planning and mission rehearsal in order to ensure that these munitions are disposed of safely and successfully.

[REDACTED]
Col
COS MND(SE)

Annexes:

A. Operation [REDACTED] – Chronology of Events

Enclosure:

1. MND (SE) CBRN Team Op [REDACTED] CBRN Site Survey Report.

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ANNEX A TO
J3/3012/01
DATED xx XXX 06

OPERATION [REDACTED] – CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

1. At 151200CJAN06, on confirmation that the AL BORAQ canisters had been released to the Maysaan BG from IPS custody, the leak-seal packaged canisters were transported by Maysaan BG convoy to CAN to be prepared for [REDACTED] helicopter lift to the destruction site at [REDACTED].
2. Concurrently, the MND (SE) CBRN Team was transported by EH-101 to Shaibah Logistic Base (SLB) to RV with the Jt (UK) EOD Team detachment and the pallet of L9A1 barnines to be used as bulk explosives. The helicopter arrived at SLB at 1230hrs, and departed immediately for the destruction site once all pax and equipment had been loaded. The helicopter arrived at the destruction site at 1340hrs, dropping off pax and explosives before moving to CAN to pick up the prepared [REDACTED] load of the 16 x AL BORAQ canisters which had been packaged by the Maysaan BG CMD Team and batched into four MFO boxes.
3. The EH-101 arrived at CAN at 1410hrs to pick up the canisters. There was, however, no trained rigger marshaller at CAN or on the helicopter qualified to supervise the rigging and lift of the payload. Therefore the EH-101 had to return to the demolition site in order to pick up a suitably qualified operator, which delayed subsequent stages of the operation by approximately 75 minutes. Once returned to CAN and the payload rigged, the EH-101 returned to the demolition site, dropping of the [REDACTED] load 100m downwind of the destruction site. The CBRN Team then checked the canisters to ensure no leakage had occurred during transit. Once confirmed clear, the EOD team then moved the canisters into the prepared destruction pit.
4. Once the charges were prepared, all personnel were moved by helicopter back to the firing point at the 2000m cordon. The demolition was fired at 1650hrs. The EOD and CBRN Teams were lifted back to the destruction site to confirm that the demolition was successful and that no contamination remained at the site. The site was declared free from contamination and explosives at 1704hrs. All EOD and CBRN Team personnel were then moved to CAN prior to the helicopter move back to SLB and BAS.