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**AUSTRALIAN ARMY**  
(Office of the Chief of Army)

**MINUTE**

OCA/OUT/2016/R25294020

**IGADF**

**REFERRAL OF SERIOUS CONCERNS REGARDING SPECIAL OPERATIONS  
COMMAND (SOCOMD)**

**Reference:**

A. AM2477026 Minute SOCAUST to CA of 9 Mar 16

1. On 9 Mar 16, SOCAUST wrote to me regarding distinct lines of narrative concerning the culture and behaviour of SOCOMD, including hearsay stories relating to Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) deployments in Afghanistan (Reference A). These came to the attention of SOCAUST from a variety of sources, including stories from members and ex-members of SOCOMD, media contacts, and Army contracted sociological research into SOCOMD culture. I am writing to request that you conduct a scoping inquiry into these matters.

2. As you are aware from our meeting, I am deeply concerned that Reference A (refer enclosures 2 – 10) contains unsubstantiated stories of:

- a. possible crimes (illegal killings and inhumane and unlawful treatment of detainees) over a lengthy period of time in the course of SOTG deployments in Afghanistan
- b. the cultural normalisation of deviance from professional standards within SOCOMD, including intentional inaccuracy in operational reporting related to possible crimes
- c. a culture of silence within SOCOMD
- d. the deliberate undermining, isolation and removal from SOCOMD units of some individuals who tried to address this rumoured conduct and culture and
- e. a systemic failure, including by commanders and legal officers at multiple levels within SOCOMD, to report or investigate the stories as required by Defence policies.

3. It is my professional judgement that there are many stories which are widely known, and believed to be essentially true by those who tell them. However, there is currently insufficient information to commence any criminal or disciplinary investigation without the very real risk that silence reasserts itself and the full appreciation of the problem be obscured.

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4. I believe an IGADF scoping inquiry is the best means by which to gather and assess the information that is available before determining the options for further action. The scoping inquiry might focus on identifying the depth and breadth of these matters and options to deal with them, in light of capability, institutional and accountability considerations. It is my view that appointing a suitably eminent person to conduct the scoping inquiry may assist in encouraging as much as compelling openness where a culture of silence has prevailed. I believe that the normal course of suspending the scoping inquiry, in part or whole, to refer any evidence which potentially indicates criminal or disciplinary offences for investigation should be balanced against the need to break down the culture of silence. I would also be greatly assisted if your inquiry report were to set out the range of existing or novel options that may be available, or could be created, should further action be required, with a view as to the likelihood of achieving closure through each of these options.

5. I appreciate that it is difficult to give a timeframe for completion of the scoping inquiry at this stage. However, it would be of assistance in managing the many strategic issues associated with your scoping inquiry if you would provide me with monthly progress reports.



AJ Campbell  
LTGEN  
CA

R1-4-B003

Tel: [REDACTED]

30 Mar 16

**Enclosures:**

1. Minute SOCOMD/CA of 9 Mar 16
2. Crompvoets, S, Special Operations Command (SOCOMD) Culture and Interactions: Insights and reflection, Jan 16
3. Email Crompvoets/Campbell and Sengelman, 'follow up note', 22 Feb 16 at 0853
4. Crompvoets, S, Special Operations Command (SOCOMD) Culture and Interactions: perceptions, reputation and risk, Feb 16
5. Email Morrison/Sengelman, 'RE: SOCOMD ISSUES BRIEF', 11 May 15 at 1557
6. Noetic Post-activity Report, Special Operations Futures Summit, 28 – 30 Apr 15
7. Sengelman, Commanding in Adversity: Modernising Special Operations Command, undated
8. Chief of Army's Senior Advisory Committee, SOCOMD Command review and Restructure, submission 05/15 (SOHQ / R23755273)
9. Sengelman, SOCOMD Governance Remediation – 2015, Oct 15 (AM2324225)
10. Cornell, R, Notes for meeting with Lieutenant General Campbell and Major General Sengelman, 8 Mar 16 at 1700