



Special Operations Command
Department of Defence

Minute

AM2477026

CA

**NOTICE OF POSSIBLE SERIOUS UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR WITHIN
SOCOMD**

1. A range of stories and anecdotes have come to my attention as I undertake fundamental reform and modernisation of Special Operations Command. Some of these are deeply disturbing and imply that serious or criminal behaviour may have occurred within the Command. While I have been provided no direct evidence nor received any formal allegation linked to any of these matters, based on their seriousness, I am obligated to report these to you and to seek both your and CDF's guidance on how to proceed.
2. I have attached a range of documents that inform my concerns. As a Commander I have also informally sought verification of the nature and extent of these 'stories' with some of my staff. These random consultations have affirmed to me that some of these matters are widely known and circulated within the Command. My own understanding of my Command and the matters of unacceptable behaviour and Governance non-compliance uncovered last year, lead me to conclude that there is sufficient substance to warrant formal reporting and more detailed Inquiry to ascertain the facts. Additionally, I am of the understanding that some of these 'stories' may have been shared outside of Defence with journalists, author's and researcher's.
3. As a Commander, I strongly desire to confront these matters. If unsubstantiated, they represent a highly corrosive and damaging threat to the reputations of individuals, Special Operations and Army that undermines the chain of command and trust. If found to have substance, then they need to be dealt with and resolved consistent with standards and approaches established for such matters within Defence.
4. At this point, I do wish to highlight that as you consider this matter and how to proceed, I am conscious of a range of complicating and strategic aspects that should be taken into account in your deliberations. These include the understanding that the stories appear to cover a period of over a decade and are closely associated with operations in Afghanistan. I note that in at least one instance, a named individual is a nationally significant personality. My cursory understanding of these matters suggest that a range of leaders with Special Operations background have been aware of these stories but failed to formally report them through agreed mechanisms. I also note that much of this is likely to be of significant media interest and in some cases, it might also constitute a risk to operational security. Finally, I admit to some reserve that our approach to understand and act on these matters might of itself, constitute a process that inadvertently visits significant harm to the well being and reputation of the Command, its people and their families disproportionate to the findings.
5. At this point, I intend as early as next week to address my Command on the general nature of these stories and anecdotes, and to invite people to come forward to me with any evidence or allegations of serious or criminal behaviour. My intent is to confront this issue as a leader while it remains unsubstantiated, and to encourage all to either act on their knowledge, or alternatively, should there be no substance, put a stop to the toxic gossip and story-telling. In so doing, I will be clear to all that any formal allegations or matters of

substance is likely to be subject to formal Inquiry. Should any allegations come to light, I will of course immediately pass them to you for formal consideration.

6. I remain available to discuss this with you.



JJ Sengelman
MAJGEN
SOCAUST

9 Mar 16

Enclosures:

1. Supporting documentation