

(b)(6)

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From: Smith, Gregory J USA RDML USN ISAF
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2009 6:39 AM
To: Whitman, Bryan Mr OSD PA
Cc: Floyd, Price B Mr OSD PA; Lapan, David COL OSD PA; (b)(6) USA COL USA
USFOR-A; (b)(6)

Subject: Response to Rendon query (UNCLASSIFIED)
Attachments: 24 AUG Analysis.ppt; Reporter Profile Aug 09.pdf

Bryan,

Below is our expanded response to the S&S query on Rendon and media embeds. We are responding to CNN, AP, AFP, NPR and others. Let me know what else you need. R, GJS

US Forces – Afghanistan (USFOR-A) assumed a Rendon contract (W91B4N-09-F-5000) from the Commander Joint Task Force - 101 (an Army HQ element from the 101st Airborne Division, Ft Campbell, KY). The 101st Airborne Division subsequently rotated back to the United States in April 2009. The contract was awarded on 28 Jan 09 and is set to expire on 27 Jan 10.

The contract provides a range of services to include: writing of press releases, talking points, speeches, white papers and other briefing materials, and strategic communication plans. Additional services available under this contract include analyzing media coverage trends, measuring effectiveness of communications by tracking publication of messages and opposing news/viewpoints, and measuring effectiveness of events by tracking news products generated as a result of media events.

The Rendon contract provides several analytic reports, to include characterization of specific topical stories/events as positive, negative or neutral, as well as whether media reporting is an accurate portrayal of the facts as we know them (example daily brief slide attached).

USFOR-A has only used this information to in part help assess performance in communicating information effectively to the public. These reports do not "rate" reporters or news outlets themselves, nor do we keep any reports on individual reporters other than personal information used in the accreditation process, i.e. name, passport or ID number, media outlet, etc....

USFOR-A has not used or requested personal profiles to determine either embed or interview opportunities. We have used background information, which typically includes basic biographical information about the reporter and a snapshot of what they have been covering recently, to prepare leaders for interviews as any public affairs office might prepare for any media engagement (example attached).

USFOR-A has never denied access to any reporter based upon their past stories. However, violations of ground rules, which are agreed upon in advance by the reporter, are subject to revocation of media credentials and denial of future access.

Stars and Stripes reporting appears to pre-date the assumption of the Rendon contract by USFOR-A in May 2009. I would have to refer you to the Commander of 101st Airborne Division (b)(6) to answer any questions regarding their use of information from the Rendon contract during their time in Afghanistan.

Memorandum

TO: CJTF-82 MOC
FROM: The Rendon Group
DATE: 14 August 2009
RE: XXXXXXX Journalist Profile

The purpose of this memo is to provide an assessment of the body of work of XXXXXXX, both through a summary of content and analysis of style, in order for the MOC to successfully place him on an embed assignment in Afghanistan.

Background:

- XXXXXXX is a freelance journalist based in Amman, Jordan.
- XXXXXXX contributes to XXXXX and XXXXX with regularity, and primarily reports on the Middle East, Islam and military conflict.
- Since 2003, XXXXXXX has completed various embeds with US forces in Iraq.
- While embedded in Iraq, XXXXXXX produced coverage for XXXXX, XXXXX, XXXXX and XXXXX.
- Though primarily a print journalist, XXXXXXX often produces photographic coverage, as well as an occasional online video.
- His website, <http://www.XXXXXX.com> contains samples of both his written and photographic coverage.

Coverage:

- The majority of XXXXXXX's previous coverage has focused almost exclusively on the Middle East.
- He has reported extensively from the ground in Iraq, the West Bank, Jordan, and Kuwait. XXXXXXX recently completed an embed with US forces in Diyala, Iraq in August 2009.
- XXXXXXX's recent coverage of Iraq focused on the progress of US counter-insurgency efforts, often through the perspective of US soldiers or Iraqi civilians.
- XXXXXXX's article "XXXXX" (08/02/09) describes the shift in US military strategy, from rigid and weaponry-driven to a more creative and adaptive strategy.
- In addition to counter-insurgency related reporting, XXXXXXX also focuses on the human-interest aspects of military life. His article, "XXXXX" (8/03/09) discusses the recent rise in married military couples being deployed to the same location.

Perspective, Style and Tone:

- XXXXXXX's work is straightforward and often falls into one of two distinct categories; reporting on military strategy and operations, or reporting on human-interest aspects of military life.
- When reporting on military strategy and operations, XXXXXXX appears to have an

interest in the progress being made by the US military in Iraq. He frequently quotes members of the US Military when describing the success of specific operations and strategies, and Iraqi civilians when describing the progress yet to be made.

- XXXXXX appears to report in an unbiased-manner, incorporating multiple viewpoints and perspectives into his articles.
- His human-interest stories often highlight aspects of military life that are less commonly reported on. His article, entitled "XXXXXX" (07/27/09) focuses on the types of recreation US troops are involved in when not engaged in combat. He highlights the aspects of military life that US soldiers find to be enjoyable, as well as the unpleasant aspects.

Expectations for Embed:

- XXXXXX has requested to embed with a combat arms unit in Kunar, and in Paktika, where he plans to focus on the on-going efforts to stop cross border movement of insurgents between Afghanistan and Pakistan. We assess that he may have interest in including interviews with US soldiers and Afghan military partners in these stories, as well as local Afghans.
- He additionally expresses an interest in covering "daily operations;" we expect that in addition to military reporting, he may also focus on the daily lives and experiences of the troops.
- XXXXXX indicates that he will produce print, photographic and video coverage of his embed experience.



USFOR-A Media Analysis 24 August 09

Note: Illustrates Stories Filed By Region

Produced for USFOR-A by:

THE RANDOLPH GROUP

Afghanistan / Pakistan / Asia

- (N) Afghan Election Results Coming out Informally Amid Charges of Fraud—** *Xinhua*
- (-) Two NATO Soldiers Killed in Southern Afghanistan—** *Xinhua*
- (-) Mine Blast Injures Two Policemen in Afghan East—** *AIP*
- (N) Relative Confirms Afghan Reporter Killed in Pakistan Tribal Area—** *Aaj TV, AIP*
- (+) Four 'Suspected Militants' Reported Arrested in Afghan East—** *Pajhwok*
- (+) Senior Taliban Commander Reported Killed in Afghan North—** *Pajhwok*
- (N) Afghan Daily Says Election Turnout Showed People Happy with Democratic System—** *Daily Afghanistan*
- (N) Diggers on Patrol in Wake of Afghan Poll—** *ABC News (Australia)*

Europe

- (N) Afghanistan Awaits First Election Results—** *AFP, DPA, Reuters.* Preliminary results will be released on Tuesday; UN officials urged calm.
- (-) Two Estonian Soldiers Killed in Afghan Attack: Ministry—** *AFP, BNS, DPA, ITAR-TASS*
- (N) UN Supports Afghan Vote Fraud Probe—** *AFP*
- (N) Signs that Security Situation in Afghanistan is Improving - Estonian Chief of Staff—** *BNS* quoted the commander who didn't give specifics but said based upon intelligence data and estimates the GIRoA was regaining areas that were once out of their control.
- (N) Afghan Reporter Shot Dead in Pakistan—** *AFP, BBC, DPA, Reuters.* Motive for the killing remains unclear.
- (N) US Instructors Start Working With Georgian Soldiers Ahead Of Afghanistan Mission—** *Interfax*
- (-) I'm Sorry, But I Was Wrong To Support the War in Afghanistan—** *Independent columnist cited deteriorating security as a reason for now being against the war.*

US / Canada

- (-) Three NATO Troops Killed in Southern Afghanistan—** *AP, VOA*
- (N) Afghan Vote Fraud Allegations Increase—** *LA Times, Toronto Star, USA Today.* Officials cautioned it was too early to question the legitimacy of the results.
- (N) Afghan Cabinet Minister Claims Karzai Victory—** *NYT*
- (N) Afghans Move Toward Reconciliation with Taliban—** *AP* reported that leaders in Helmand, along with Gen. Conway, are planning talks with midlevel Taliban fighters in the province.
- (-) Afghan Elections Seen as a Setback for Women—** *AP* cited poor security and the lack of women election workers as reasons behind Afghan women not voting.
- (+) Canadian Helps Afghans Create First National Park—** *CP*
- (N) Area Troops Helped Prepare for Election—** *Philadelphia Inquirer*
- (N) Afghanistan is Worth the Fight—** *Washington Times* editorial

Middle East

- (-) In Afghan War, Roadside Bomb Kills Three NATO Soldiers—** *Khaleej Times, Press TV*
- (-) Voters Targeted After Afghan Polls—** *Al Jazeera*
- (N) Egypt, Canada to Discuss Cooperation in Afghanistan—** *MENA*
- (N) Afghanistan and the Democratic Challenge—** *Al-Madinah* editorial praised Afghans for standing up to the Taliban and voting.
- (N) Pakistan: Mullah Omar Not in Baluchistan—** *Press TV*
- (N) Gunmen Kill Afghan Journalist in Pakistan—** *Gulf News, Khaleej Times, Press TV*
- (N) US 'Requires More Troops' in Afghanistan—** *Press TV*
- (-) Seven Afghan Troops Killed by Taliban—** *Press TV* reported on attacks from the weekend.