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MF04020722

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

Event: Orientation and tour of the National Military Command Center (NMCC) and National Military Joint Intelligence Center (NMJIC)

(U) Type of Event: Briefing

(U) Date: July 21, 2003

(FOUO) Special Access Issues: Access to the NMCC was at SECRET/NF level, to NMJIC was at TSC level

(U) Prepared by Miles Kara and Dana Hyde

(U) Team number: 8

(U) Location: The Pentagon

(FOUO) Participants Non-Commission: Colonel Susan Kuehl, Lt. Colonel Wayne Rezzonico, Maj Michael Canter, Brig Gen Michael Planert, Lt Col Mark Slatterly, Brig General Deppe, Lt Col John Sims, Maj Charles Chambers, and [redacted]

(FOUO) Participants - Commission: Philip Zelikow, Steve Dunne, Mike Hurley, Miles Kara, Dana Hyde, Kevin Shaeffer, John Farmer, John Azzarello, and Mark Bittinger

**Major Points:**

(FOUO)1. Colonel Kuehl led the briefing and began with a series of slides (Bates #NCT0008228 - NCT0008236) describing the role of the NMCC in the overall DOD structure. The NMCC has three main missions. The primary task of the NMCC is to monitor worldwide events for the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The NMCC also has a crisis response component (e.g., response to the bombing of the USS Cole) and a strategic watch component (e.g., monitoring nuclear activity). The NMCC is operated by five teams on a rotating watch system. Each team typically has 17-20 personnel on duty performing a wide variety of functions including communications. Teams are led by a Deputy Director for Operations (DDO) and Assistant DDO and are divided into five duty positions (1) Leadership (one DDO and one Assistant Deputy Director for Operations (ADDO)), (2) Current Operations Section (two Senior Operations Officers (SOO) and one Current Operations Officer (COO)), (3) Emergency Action Element (three Senior Emergency Actions Officers, EAO, EA NCO), (4) Surveillance (one Officer) and Supporting Sections (approximately 8-10 individuals) (See Bates#NCT00082320). Operations Team 2 was on duty the morning of 9/11 and didn't leave until 9:00 p.m. that evening (See Bates #NCT0008234 for NMCC schedule on 9/11).

(S) 2. The NMCC mechanism for setting up, transcribing and monitoring conferences is the Emergency Action Cell (EAC). It was that cell on 9/11 that was monitoring all ongoing exercises in the U.S. and [redacted] The key desk for ensuring conference integrity and membership

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is the secure console desk operated by non-commissioned officers (NCO). The NCO present during the staff tour was the same person who set up and monitored the Air Threat Conference Call on 9/11.

(S) 3. The NMCC had a system in place to manage crises. As a particular event unfolds, the first action is to convene a Significant Events Conference (SIEC) to gather and disseminate information from government entities according to established checklists. A SIEC is a "catch all" type of conference designed to address any significant event. If a situation continues to escalate, a SIEC may transition into an "event" conference; if the escalation continues, an "event" conference may then transition into a "threat" conference. For example, on 9/11, the NMCC had established protocols for an "Air Event Conference" and an "Air Threat Conference" [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The NMCC need not establish an Air Event Conference as a prerequisite to convening an Air Threat Conference. The primary difference between the types of conferences is the checklist of agencies that are designated to participate; all conferences are "controlled" by the DDO (i.e., he or she serves as the moderator) and a party not on the checklist can be added to the conference at the DDO's discretion (see Bates #NCT0008235). On 9/11, the NMCC went directly from a SIEC (which never really got started) to an Air Threat Conference Call (ATC) - bypassing an Air Event Conference Call. [REDACTED]

9/11 Classified Information

(S) 4. On 9/11 the acting-Deputy Director for Operations (DDO) was Navy Captain Charles Joseph Liedig, a trained back-up filling in for the Operations Team 2 leader, Army BG Winfield, who was at an unrelated, closed-door personnel meeting convened by the Air Force to discuss the rating of Air Force officers. Because of that meeting, at least one off-duty DDO, BG Seipe, was present and available on 9/11. Captain Liedig was the primary DDO during the initial phase of the NMCC's reaction to events as they unfolded; BG Winfield transitioned into the position upon his return to the NMCC. BG Seipe was on the National Operations-Intelligence Watch Officers Network Conference (NOIWON) phone (in the DDO's office) with the White House Situation Room for most of the day. (The White House Situation Room insisted on having a flag officer on an open line with the Situation Room.) Colonel Kiehl, the self-described "mayor of NMCC," was also present on 9/11. She is also a trained DDO and supervises the operation of the NMCC.

(S) 5. On the morning of 9/11 the Operations Team learned from CNN that the World Trade Center had been hit by an aircraft. It contacted the FAA, monitored media reports, sought to confirm reports of the hijackings and began making notifications up the chain-of-command through J-3. The decision was made to convene a Significant Events Conference. The NMCC prepared for a SIEC, but a [REDACTED] NOIWON call intervened. The NMCC abandoned its attempt to convene a SIEC so its Watch Officers could participate in the NOIWON Conference.

(S) 6. After the NOIWON call, the NMCC briefly considered convening an Air Event Conference, but decided to go directly to an Air Threat Conference, which was transcribed. NMCC briefers referred repeatedly to that conference. The ATC was in the process of coming up when the Pentagon was hit. The NMCC was not evacuated but did become a bit smoky. At

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some point, the oxygen masks and air quality monitoring devices were brought in to assist the staff.

(S) 7. The Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, came to the NMCC after examining the Pentagon wreckage from the exterior of the building. Vice Chairman General Myers also operated out of the NMCC. The Secretary used the DDO's phone to participate in the ATC, so the DDO was unable to moderate the conference for that period of time. The FAA was not on the established checklist of parties to call for either the SIEC or the ATC. We spoke to [redacted] who was responsible for bringing up both calls. She stated that she was asked by the DDO to add the FAA to the ATC, and was trying to contact the FAA Operations Center. She was having a difficult time getting through and finally asked the White House switchboard to assist her in connecting the call. Once the line was established it was repeatedly lost because of technical problems. She stated that on 9-11 "we were not aware" of the FAA Command Center in Herndon, Virginia, but the NMCC now knows about it. The NMCC was not aware of the military liaison at the FAA Operations Center.

(S) 8. Commission staff asked the participants whether the ATC was ever convened prior to 9/11. No one could recall convening an ATC for at least two years prior to that day. Post 9/11, the NMCC has established two new conferences – a Domestic Event Conference and a Domestic Threat Conference. The FAA is on the call list for both conferences.

(U) 9. A Crisis Action Team (CAT) was stood up sometime in the afternoon on 9/11. Commission staff toured the room in which it operated. In the initial days after 9/11, the CAT team had as many as 50 people assigned to it at any given time.

(S) 10. According to Colonel Kiehl, shoot-down authority came verbally from Vice President Cheney directly into the ATC.

(S) 11. Adjacent to the NMCC's main operations room is the office of the DDO and the ADDO. Two large computer screens face their desks. Projected onto these screens was the FAA feed of the air traffic across the nation (the FAA's Traffic Situation Display (TSD)). On 9/11, the NMCC did not have the software necessary to display this data; it relied on NORAD for all information regarding aircraft activity. [Note added by Miles Kara on 8/8/03. Typically the display would consist of multiple feeds on small screens. For our visit the small screens were linked together to form a single larger display, as above. On a pre-visit the Thursday before I found the NMCC prepared to show us their capabilities to monitor events in Iraq. I commented that a more useful approach would be to focus on domestic air defense/issues. Clearly, as noted above, the NMCC opted to do just that, hence the display that we say.]

(EQUO) 12. In response to questions about what information was saved from 9/11, the ADDO on duty during the briefing who served as Senior Watch Officer on 9/11 (does anyone recall his name? is it Sims?) stated that he pulled out all the tapes from phones and other machines and saved them in the DDO's cabinet.

(EQUO) 13. Commission staff asked how the NMCC determined what had hit the Pentagon and caused the explosion on 9/11. Colonel Kiehl stated that there was no procedure and that people in the NMCC did not know for some time exactly what had caused the explosion. She stated

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NMCC employees went outside the building at various times to assess the damage, but there was no process for determining what had caused the explosion, nor was there a procedure for relaying such information to decision-makers outside the Pentagon.

~~(FOUO)~~ 14. Follow Up: No specific items were tasked for follow up at the briefing. In interviews and/or document requests, Commission staff should determine the following: (1) the list of participants and call numbers for the SIEC and the ATC on 9/11, as well as the new Domestic Event and Threat Conferences; (2) who within the NMCC contacted the FAA prior to the SIEC – who did they speak to, and what information did they receive; (3) the difference between the NMCC conferences and NORAD's Noble Eagle conference.

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