

DEA MUSEUM LECTURE SERIES  
J. CARSON ULRICH - 10-13-10

SF = SEAN FEARNES (ph.); CU = J. (ph.) CARSON ULRICH;  
FS = UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER; MS = UNIDENTIFIED  
MALE SPEAKER

[SOMETIMES SPEAKERS TALK SO FAST, WORDS ARE  
UNINTELLIGIBLE, ESPECIALLY WITH ACRONYMS]

SEAN FEARNES

00:00:01:04 SF: Just got a few folks coming in at the back end.  
Good morning. My name is Sean Fearn. On behalf of  
all of us on the DEA Museum staff, I want to welcome  
you this morning. Today we begin the second in what  
will be four programs for our fall lecture series that  
focus on the central theme of DEA in Afghanistan.

00:00:20:25 Certainly, it is hard not to see a story in the news  
or on television or on the radio about Afghanistan;  
however, what many folks may not be aware of is how  
deeply enmeshed DEA is in that country. Last month we  
started off the series by looking maybe at the 50,000  
foot level DEA overall. Today we're going to get a  
lot closer to ground level.

00:00:44:10 We are joined this morning by J. Carson Ulrich. Mr.  
Ulrich has been a special agent with DEA since 1990  
starting with Operation Snowcap, a program some ways  
similar to the FAST teams in Afghanistan. I think

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he'll hopefully how they're similar and how they're different.

00:01:04:01      Currently, he is an acting deputy section chief for FAST, (that is Foreign Deployed Advisory and Assistant Support Teams), having been a team leader for the program since 2007. Team Leader Ulrich has led FAST teams through three tours in Afghanistan and has briefed the capabilities and objectives of the program to numerous agencies and organizations outside of DEA.

00:01:29:01      Before working for FAST Ulrich was a group supervisor in the Bogotá, Colombia, country office. Two quick notes before we bring him to stage - out of courtesy both to the speaker and to your fellow audience members, if you could kindly silence your cell phones or pagers or Blackberries, and then the second is that Mr. Ulrich is going to encourage questions and we encourage you to ask questions.

00:01:53:00      If you could please wait for just a moment when you have a question until one of the ladies on the aisle passes you a wireless microphone. We are recording today's program, as we always do, and we'll be

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publishing a transcript of this on the museum website and we'd like to get all the questions as well as all the answers.

00:02:10:16 So if you could just wait for your microphone, we'd appreciate it. Ladies and gentlemen, Special Agent Carson Ulrich.

**CARSON ULRICH**

00:02:21:17 CU: If any of you would like to move down, I'd encourage you to do so. I'm not going to give you a prepared speech or a prepared presentation, and, as was pointed out, if you do have a question during any part of it, I would encourage you to ask it. I think that the product will be much better and you may have some questions that I'm not going to address.

00:02:39:13 And regardless of how specific they are, I really would like to answer them. I'm going to speak to you as if you really don't know a whole lot or anything at all about FAST. Some of you in the audience obviously know more than others, but if I use a military acronym or something like that, I'll try and catch myself and explain them.

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00:02:58:27 But if you have a question, it's not disruptive to the presentation at all if you please raise your hand and ask a question. I would—I would be appreciative of you doing so. I've been with DEA for 20 years. When I was a young man in college, I remember reading a *Time Magazine* article about Kiki Camarena and it kind of decided for me what I wanted to do as far as a career.

00:03:24:08 And when I started looking into DEA, I heard about a program called Snowcap and... There wasn't a lot of information about it but I felt like it was a way for me to achieve a higher form of service being a DEA special agent and do something a little more than being just an agent, and I felt like maybe it was an agency that was forward-leaning and it was something that enticed me and one of the reasons I became an agent with DEA.

00:03:50:08 Before I came to FAST, before I went to Selection in 2006, I was a GS in Bogotá and I was part of the Operation Snowcap in the early '90s. I worked in a number of offices. And one thing in FAST that we do

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not forget is that first and foremost every member of FAST is a criminal investigator.

00:04:11:08      And although you're gonna see that in our training and what we do working integrated with the military, we're not trying to make DEA agents into special forces operators or SEALs. We're trying to be value-added in trying to do things that—what we specialize in and bring those skills to the fight against the enemy in Afghanistan.

00:04:38:26      This is basically—this is FAST's mission statement. FAST is the Foreign Deployed Advisory and Support Team. It is a—kind of like a foreign tactical team. And FAST does not have its own area of operation. In FAST teams, there's five teams currently. We're all in Quantico, Virginia.

00:05:03:28      So whenever we work or operate, we operate in another country in their area of operation and we answer to that country's chain of command, to the country attaché or the regional director, and, ultimately, to the ambassador. But what FAST is intended to do is to be able to work pretty much anywhere in the world and

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as a support element to the country office investigations.

00:05:31:27 So that is not isolated to Afghanistan; it includes the western hemisphere. We are currently working in Honduras, we've worked in Guatemala, we've worked in Haiti. So we support DEA investigations through the world, and that's what our role is basically. As I said, for the longest time we've only had three FAST teams.

00:06:03:05 We're fortunate enough to get funding. We have put up two more FAST teams, so we have five now, and it's made it easier on us to be able to do our job and less difficult on being able to have a family life and not be deployed constantly. Before, what FAST would do is it would have three teams and each team would have the responsibility of being deployed to Afghanistan for four months of the year.

00:06:29:13 And because you were there for four months, you had—as a team leader and a team, you had the same location, you'd be in Afghanistan the same amount of time. With the addition of two more FAST teams, it's given us the

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ability to change the program rotation in that we can—we have decided to put one more team into rotation.

00:06:47:31 So instead of being in Afghanistan for four months and back for eight, the team is in Afghanistan for four and back for twelve. And then the fifth team is a specialized team that concentrates primarily on the western hemisphere. It doesn't do all the western hemisphere missions itself, but is often augmented by other teams to do those missions as well.

00:07:14:01 The team is 10 personnel. There are eight special agents, a team leader and an intel specialist, and that's how each team is made up. One of the things that makes FAST unique is it's—well, obviously, it's training and equipment. The DEA has rules, if you will, about what weapons a DEA agent is allowed to carry that's very specific with make, model and what you have.

00:07:51:06 You can carry a Glock 9mm or a Glock 45 caliber pistol, for example. And I'm not gonna get into all the guru weapons, you know, discussions, the technical, but to paint a broad (unint.) to explain,

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to operate in Afghanistan and operate alongside the U.S. military in a war zone, it would require specialized equipment, especially communication equipment and weaponry.

00:08:14:04 And these pieces of equipment were not—were not authorized for a DEA special agent to use until FAST. And so DEA has kind of changed its guidelines for FAST to operate in a foreign area. Now FAST has been designed to work only in foreign areas, and that's the intention of it.

00:08:32:06 There has been a recent exception where FAST did support operations in the El Paso country offi—El Paso division office, excuse me, supporting tactical missions that were at the—at the request of the El Paso office. Ideally, that would be something we would like to see, as FAST leaders, in the future to open this more up, to... Yes, ma'am.

00:09:08:10 FS: You have spoken several times of the FAST teams as being with the U.S. Army. I thought when FAST began that some DEA people were with the Afghan

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National Police. Is there still that relationship, and if not, what happened?

00:09:24:21 CU: That's a very good question. They're not exclusive of each other, and like a-special forces, ODA is a-is a-(Operation of Detachment Alpha), an A-team, one of the roles of the-of the ASF (ph.) team is FID (Foreign Internal Defense). It's very similar to what we do. FID is to basically train and equip and prepare foreign troops to work alongside U.S. troops.

00:09:50:21 And-and-and I'll get into this later in detail but I'd really like to answer the question now as well. In Afghanistan, FID is also our responsibility. We don't call it FID, but we have our own Afghan forces, our own Afghan police forces, counter-narcotics police forces, and that's our-one of our primary roles. The..

00:10:13:27 There's three types of-there's three types of Afghan police forces that we've worked with; there's TIU and SIU and the NIU. And I'll go into those a little more detail perhaps later but the NIU is like a-an Afghan tactical team, and that's the force that FAST works

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with. And the SIU are the more cerebral investigators.

00:10:36:01 There are like SIUs throughout DEA. And then a TIU is a—is an intercept (ph.)—an Afghan intercept investigator resource concentrated on phone lines. Nowhere in the world ever, and I'm going to avoid hyperbole in anything I say, but I'll say nowhere ever does DEA, FAST or any DEA office, especially FAST, do anything unilateral in a foreign country.

00:11:05:24 The rule of law and operating under the rule of law and the execution of foreign search warrants or arrest warrants is what FAST does. So never has FAST ever gone on or will ever go on a mission without Afghan counterparts. The Afghan police officers that accompany the the FAST agents are the reason why we're actually there.

00:11:29:22 It's to support them and to develop them to be able to hopefully eventually one day conduct missions on their own. Now that being said, in Afghanistan, up until around November of '08, DOD had a different view of drugs in relationship to terrorism. And I could spend

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the entire hour talking about just that, but suffice it to say that until around that time period, to simplify it, drugs were not a target of DOD missions—drug mission—drug operations.

00:12:09:27      And as a FAST agent, we would go over drug trafficking organizations but they were one in the same in a lot of ways with the terrorist organizations. We would go after a drug cachet that we knew to be a drug cachet and all of our collection, all of the information that we were looking at, was that this was an opium cachet.

00:12:34:16      Now upon seizing and destroying or denying that cachet of opium, it would be full of munitions of war - anti-tank (ph.) and anti-personnel mines, DISHGA (ph.), which is like the Soviet equivalent of a 50 cal ammunition, weapons of war that the enemy is using to obviously fight us.

00:13:00:17      And I'll get into this later as well. I'm getting way ahead of my Power Point but the Power Point's not important. That the drugs are an asset of the enemy. And so to answer your question fully, they're not exclusive of each other. We work always with Afghan

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forces. The U.S. military has the same requirements. They have a ratio of Afghans per U.S. forces that are required to go on every mission.

00:13:25:05 And the SODIF (ph.), the Special Operations... Basically, the-the-the-leaders of the-of those special forces teams, you know, they scrutinize the con-ups, the planning (ph.) for which they do the missions, and they make sure that there's not an excessive number of Americans versus the Afghans on this mission. Does that answer your question?

00:13:42:00 FS: (Inaud.).

00:13:42:20 CU: Okay. Now we talked a little bit about Snowcap and every photograph that I use in this presentation, they're my personal photographs either taken from my camera or given to me by other people. They all have a unique significance to me. I'll go over some of the photographs but, you know, I'm gonna keep my presentation to FAST, but I'll explain a little bit the meaning to me of each of the photographs.

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00:14:09:04 This is actually my Snowcap class when I went to Snowcap Selection in '92 at Fort Benning. There are obvious comparisons from Snowcap to FAST but as a member of both programs, I believe that the distinctions outweigh the similarities. Snowcap... And I'm not gonna give a presentation on Snowcap but, basically, Snowcap was a collateral duty mission that DEA agents undertook in the late '80s and terminated around 1994.

00:14:42:01 And I think '87 is when it started. I came into DEA in 1990 and immediately wanted to go into Snowcap. That's what I wanted to do. And within a year in the program I found myself at language school and I found myself at Selection. And, you know, with every program, be it Snowcap or be it FAST, you know, there are critics of the program and I'm fully aware of that.

00:15:04:26 I see this as an opportunity and—to basically do something that we're not really good at in FAST, is that explaining or telling people what we do. But in Snowcap, Snowcap was a collateral duty in that agents were taken from their... They served two masters. They

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served the office in which they're assigned to (maybe it was the Houston office) and then they would—they would try to get in a tour, if you will, and they worked primarily in Central and South America.

00:15:34:15 FAST learned a lot of lessons from what happened in Snowcap and a better program as a result. It's not a collateral duty; it's what the agents in FAST do constantly. There is a much smaller number of agents in FAST than there were in Snowcap, and there's a number of reasons why and I'll talk about that later.

00:16:05:26 Basically, D-FAST is the Drug Flow Attack Strategy and (unint.) to Afghanistan as where *[sic]* as—as well as worldwide. FAST is basically one enforcement option for D-FAST. The FAST agents, there's only 10 of em in the country, in Afghanistan, at any one time. It's a very small resource and so we wanna get as much bang for our buck.

00:16:33:13 Obviously, the (unint.) is the largest... You in the back, please, I—there's plenty of seats up here if you'd like to come sit down. I... Definitely come on if you wanna sit. The... There's... Being the world's

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largest producer of opium, as a FAST leader, anyone in FAST who had the idea that I'm gonna go into FAST—I'm gonna go to Afghanistan and not be as completely productive as I could, is gonna face the iron scrutiny of us when they come back because it's like playing a football game and all you have is one quarter.

00:17:08:04      And so you wanna make sure you get as many yards cause that's all you have is that one quarter. You wanna get as much work done as possible. What FAST basically does is interdiction operations in a foreign environment, and I said, I don't wanna use the term "ignorance" in a bad way but there is a lot of ignorance about even what DEA is, much less what FAST is.

00:17:37:08      And we encounter it constantly. Some of the first SFA teams we work with, they had seen that show on Spike TV and, you know, about half the team didn't wanna (unint.) this. I'm not saying it's because of that show; I'm just saying they didn't know anything about FAST. And to kind of break the ice I told them...

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00:17:55:12      The DOD guys would like this one but you may not get the joke. The... I told em I'd seen that show on Spike TV called Big Army where the guy's driving a truck, so I know exactly what you guys do in NS (ph.). And... Anyway, the-what we do work alongside these.

00:18:15:08      Now what's unique, and it really started November of '08 and it really... It's the first... I mean, I've been with DEA 20 years and so the importance and significance is not lost on me, but the integration of military and law enforcement operations together is-I don't (unint.) they're occurring anywhere else where you actually have a significant amount of military assets supporting drug missions.

00:18:43:00      As an example, currently there are joint training opportunities that DEA undertakes. One is called (Unint.) Warrior. It's basically... You wanna come in, please? There's just plenty of seats right up here. (Unint.) Warrior basically... I'm not gonna go into a lot of detail but what it is is it's a [sic] Air Force (Unint.) Special Operations Command Post (ph.) that...

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00:19:07:24     It involves Army special operations. There's 10 ODAs participating, 10 A-teams with SF, SEAL teams participating, Marine Corps Special Operations forces and two FAST teams working alongside all of the military air assets so that DEA agents are learning how to work Call For Fire from AC130, how to work all our communications equipment, how to do joint missions together.

00:19:35:12     It's one thing to find yourself in Afghanistan and find yourself in this partner relationship with a SEAL team or an ODA force; it's another thing for both organizations to basically say, "We're gonna do these planned three week exercises where this team's gonna completely integrate and operate with this team." It has a big significance.

00:19:58:03     Afghanistan. What DEA FAST does in Afghanistan is a number of DEA operations and DEA missions that DEA just do worldwide, whether it's a capture mission, any type of... What we're doing is basically enforcement operations. Part of the ignorance is... And, again, I hate to use the word ignorance but the misunderstanding is that, you know, DEA in Afghanistan

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are—they're doing eradication, you know, going down and chopping down poppy fields.

00:20:35:22 Well, as I said, there's only 10 DEA FAST guys in there. We would wear our out arms trying to chop down the poppy fields. What DEA FAST is currently doing, its mission statement is, is to interdict the insurgency where there's a nexus to drugs. And what that basically means is that DEA has tried to explain for a number of years that it is difficult to dissect completely what is going on in counter-terrorism missions and counter-drug missions, and that the insurgency that relies upon the drugs as an asset as a means at which to sustain itself..

00:21:17:05 If you target an asset of the enemy, it's almost like saying, "Well, I'm gonna go only have a unit that takes away the enemy's bullets but not their explosives." Obviously, the enemy uses both of them to kill coalition forces, and so we'd wanna stop both of them.

00:21:32:02 By taking away the drugs we attack that symbiotic (ph.) relationship that the drug economy has with the

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Taliban. A very similar comparison could be made to the FARC (ph.). In Colombia that's what I did, conduct criminal investigations against a narco-terrorist organization.

00:21:52:20 The FARC is a—is—basically in English is a revolution of the armed forces of Colombia. It's been around for some 40 plus years. It's a Marxist organization in that it's a revolutionary, you know, (unint.), Castro Cuba-type where their intention is to overthrow and to rule the government of Colombia. But they are the largest cocaine trafficking organization in the world and control all aspects—many aspects of what the Colombian cocaine trade is doing.

00:22:27:29 But first and foremost they're revolutionary insurgents, but have learned that the profit through getting their hands dirty in the—in the—in the cocaine trade allows it to sustain itself. And I'm gonna relate more of it. I have another slide that shows basically a study from Stanford, I believe it is, the number of insurgencies historically in the world that have had a nexus to trafficking in contraband versus those that have not, and the survivability, the

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longevity and success of those—of those versus those that have not.

00:23:07:05 Just as the FARC relies upon the cocaine trade and can be unequivocally addressed as a terrorist organization, Mexican trafficking organizations... I mean, we're all aware of what's going on in Mexico, the terrorist activities occurring by that organization. As DEA agents, as attacking, trying to dismantle this type of organization or disrupt its activities, we use an investigative approach to try to bring a law enforcement solution sometimes to this organization.

00:23:41:05 Taliban, in many ways, is very similar. Every mission that a DEA FAST agent goes on, he goes on from a law enforcement perspective in that he has executed a search warrant and he brings arrest powers which can be a huge club and another asset in a synergistic relationship with the military to bring—in that our combined resources are much more effective than what we can do working independent of each other.

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- 00:24:09:11      This slide talks about obviously corruption, which is a huge problem. HVT organizations... Yes, ma'am. (Unint.) two questions.
- 00:24:30:12      FS: You mentioned arrest powers. Does the Afghanistan government give those powers to the FAST teams, and how much support do you have with the government if you're also going against corruption?
- 00:24:46:01      CU: It's a great question. There is a fine line there and there are—there have been instances, and I want to avoid by telling—I wanna avoid telling war stories but some of them actually relate to—they answer some of the questions you have. There have been instances where we're on the objective, we're actually seizing and destroying drugs and conducting a criminal investigation alongside the special forces and one of our targets is actually the chief of police in the area.
- 00:25:14:09      And so police forces actually respond to try to retake the drugs that are being stolen or seized, if you will, destroyed, but they see that now it's the U.S. forces out there and then they change their whole

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posture. They're on gun trucks, they're coming to retake the drugs and then once they see there's Americans there, they, okay..

00:25:33:29 Whereas, if it was simply an Afghan force, they would probably try to retake those drugs by force. DEA agents aren't effecting the arrests; it's an Afghan police officer that's effecting those arrests. And one of the clubs that we use, and again there's a slide on this but I'll address it now, is...

00:25:53:23 Please, come on in and have a seat. One of the clubs is the threshold amounts. Two kilograms of heroin, 10 kilograms of opium or 50 kilograms of hashish are the arrest thresholds amounts. And whenever I speak to any ODA team and when... There's a captain's course for young O3s (ph.) that go through the ODA selection course.

00:26:18:08 They all have to come to the State Department and we give presentations to each of them and show them how, as a partner force, we can assist them. If you will, what DEA does is, FAST, is looks for the commonality of objectives in that the ODA has its own interest in

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an area and we have our own—as well, have our own drug interests and we find where these meet and then these are the missions we conduct.

00:26:47:12      The ODA con-up could be an ID facilitation cell, but the number of drug labs in the area would encourage our involvement in the mission. We may actually do the mission with DEA air assets supported by DEA ISR or other platforms. Now it has happened where the ID facilitators were not killed by the ODA and were captured, but they did not meet the threshold by which—for them to remove them from the battlefield.

00:27:27:10      But the amount of opium that was seized in their compound exceeded the threshold amounts and gave us the ability to arrest them. So we achieved both objectives. We removed that terrorist, if you will, from the battlefield for a drug charge, arrested by Afghan police officers, allowing him to be interrogated and processed so that all the information that can be cultivated and gleaned from them is being provided to DOD forces.

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00:27:52:03      And then the (unint.) 10 years, a 10 year incarceration. As criminal investigators, DEA special agents, what we do very well, and if I could brag for a second, is what the military would call "Humint." We work informants, CSes (ph.). And every special agent that goes to the DEA Academy is trained and one of the first things he learns as they move down the street is how to work informants.

00:28:26:27      That's what we do. Now informant information or human information or CS is generally used in conjunction with other forms of information, whether it's phone intercept or signal intelligence or imagery or a variety of other forms, but what we do as DEA special agents is—what we do very well is corroborate and determine the veracity of the information being provided by our informants in comparison by other alphabet agencies that will work humint, and are not as concentrated, would make reporting on stuff they probably even known as not being true.

00:29:09:01      As us, because our mentality is criminal prosecution, we have no tolerance, none, for false humint or false CS information. And so I'll tell you a little story

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and it's—it—really, it brought a source of pride to my team in what we were doing in Afghanistan at the time. We were working in Jalalabad and we had 35 human sources in Jalalabad and it gave us a very good picture of what was going on in the area.

00:29:44:21 And what DEA does very well is ensures that the dissemination of the information that is not drug related is given to who we believe needs that information right away. And if you look at our TIU or our intercept program, I'm not an expert in that program, it's not my field, but I was—have been told that around 20% or 30% of that information is drug related.

00:30:09:27 The rest of the information that is cultivated from those intercepts are relating to suicide bombers or V-BIEDs (ph.), Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices, or other terrorist acts that are occurring in conjunction with what was initiated as a drug intercept.

00:30:27:10 And DED, obviously, goes out of its way to make sure that the other organization that needs that

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information gets it right away. Well, there was a mission... I'm not gonna go into any classified information; I'm gonna talk about it again in a broad brush (ph.). But there was a mission by a Tier One Unit.

00:30:41:04 You have Tier Two Units and Tier One. Tier Ones are the most supported units within the Special Operations Command basically. A Tier One Unit was executing a mission at night and their target was the boss of one of our targets. Now our target was also at the time a J-PEL (ph.) target, meaning a priory (ph.) target in Afghanistan.

00:31:06:17 In addition to being a prolific drug trafficker, he was also a Taliban leader. Well, the boss of this—of this target was—they were attempting to capture him and he was wounded by EC-130 (ph.) fire. And our informant came and told us about it immediately. He said, "Look, Target A, the Americans try to get him and he's been wounded and he's trying to make his way to Pakistan right now on a mule train."

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00:31:35:04 We have our own—our own little unmanned aircraft, UAV, that we operate. Now it's not as sexy as a Predator or a Reaper but it's ours and it flies when we want it to fly, and it goes exactly where we ask it to go. It's a Tiger Shark but it's got a very nice payload on it. It provides very good high resolution photos and very good real-time imagery.

00:31:58:06 We offered this asset up to the ODP, to the—a sub team that we resided in Jalalabad and they made use of it as well. Whenever it wasn't flying a mission for us, it would fly for them as well. So we tasked this to go locate this mule train that's bringing this wounded target into Pakistan and went over to the taskforce Lieutenant Commander Furblue (ph.) or (Unint.) and woke him up and said, "Listen, I think you guys are just finishing a target up. I don't know what your—you know, your deal was; it's your business, but we think we might have information on your target."

00:32:35:07 And his operators were just arriving, coming back on a helicopter, and we provided live feed in a humint report. "Look, according to our source, he was wounded by aircraft fire and he's currently trying to

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make his way into Pakistan. In fact, here's a live feed of him."

00:32:50:01 Now our threshold amount is different than their threshold amount and... We simply provided information and what they do with it, that's their business. I would have liked to have seen them (unint.). You know, it would make me feel better about it. But... I mean, drop a bomb on him. But that's—that's their—that's their prerogative.

00:33:08:18 They do what they want with that information. The point is that our humint, our information, is not simply drug related; it is being disseminated throughout other forces as well. And what made me feel proud about what we were doing is that two days later another alphabet agency came in and gave this brief and it had a huge storyboard about how they had figured out through handsets and everything what happened and how the guy escaped, and by mule train into Pakistan.

00:33:34:24 And that deputy commander cut them short and said, "Don't come to me 48 hours later when—and tell me what

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DEA gave me real time." And that's the significance of, I think, what we're doing in Afghanistan. Any questions before I... Yes, sir.

00:33:56:28 MS: Good morning. I guess my question is the V... The DEA FAST teams support and enable the role of law, and you had talked about that a little bit, you know, that line of operations, and that's part of the stabilization and reconstruction efforts basically in the (unint.) commander's battle space.

00:34:16:04 You had also mentioned that the FAST teams report to and they're operationally subordinate to the country office, to the Afghan country office. So my question is how is DEA's drug campaign plan integrated into the (Unint.) commander's basic campaign plan, cause they're coming from... You know, one's military, the other is primarily stabilization and reconstruction.

00:34:39:05 CU: It's a great question. I have to admit I was intimidated, the fact that you actually read the question. You're asking about outside of my role as a team leader in FAST and basically the meetings within ISAF (ph.) and those ISAF commanders generally occur

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at the regional director level, and—and—and that—that communication and working together occurs there.

00:35:04:23      What we do is I work with generally a much lower level in that chain of command. I'm working directly with a partner force. My last tour was a SIL (ph.) Team One and SIL Team Seven, and a 7<sup>th</sup> Group (ph.) ODA, and what we do is we sit down and we map out exactly what our mission objections were.

00:35:22:19      I'll show you a slide later on of one of our fallen agents. That was a DEA mission where we lost three agents. DEA Humint initiated that mission. Did it have a co-mingled military objective as well? Yes. Their reporting was there were a hundred fighters in this area and that they—it had not been interdicted by coalition forces yet.

00:35:51:12      So what we do is basically we will develop a target package and I would say about 70% of the targets that we—that we executed were DEA-generated targets, and sometimes the ODA or the SIL team would come up with a target and I'd meet with the commander, where we did 10 times a day, and we would go over mission

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priorities and we would—we would look at it for the drug nexus because make no bones about it, it's combat, just (unint.) agents in a combat.

00:36:17:24      And if they're killed, there's gonna be a scrutiny as to why you were there. And so we have to make a decision as to does this target—is it within our guidelines, is it worth sending these FAST agents. And so that's how we work at it at our level. Now at the ISEP commander's level, I—as a team leader in FAST, I didn't have any interaction.

00:36:39:11      I mean, that's a great question, but I'm really not in a position to answer all that. I do know that DEA Headquarters is constantly briefing and meeting with the Pentagon and this drugs and terrorism link is constantly being, you know, discussed and addressed.

00:36:57:13      And there's an ebb and flow of DOD's impression of the drugs as a problem there. But, you know, this is what we do, is target the drugs with or without DEA participation. Up until November of '08, as a DEA FAST team leader, I never had the benefit or never had

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the ability to operate in a lot of areas in Afghanistan.

00:37:22:09 I didn't have the force protection, I didn't have close air support, I didn't have EOD (ph.) support, I didn't have dog teams, I didn't have all the other facilitation means by which—that we could survive in these areas. But with that added, it allows us to do these missions that we would not be able to do.

00:37:39:11 So the critical part, the most important aspect for FAST, is this relationship with SOC (ph.). When I say SOC, I'm talking about Special Operations Community SEALs, SF (Unint.). And these relationships that we develop with these—with these—with these leaders and operators in there is what we do.

00:38:00:17 I apologize I can't answer all of your question but I hope I did, you know, the best I could. Is there any part of it that I didn't address that you want me to go over?

00:38:08:01 MS: That was great. Thank you.

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00:38:09:05 CU: Okay. Another question now before we go to the next slide? Okay, this is basically what we talked about a little bit earlier in that the TIU, SIU and NIU are the Afghan forces that we work with, that we try to take under our wing, train and enable them to do missions outside of their capability and to hope that one day they'll continue this mission without us.

00:38:49:00 The idea of corruption, rule of law impacting the mindset of the local populous is what Americans do constantly. When you find our—we find ourselves in an Afghan village, the Taliban actually charge an Afghan civilian or his surviving family members if one of them steps on it and—and—and either maims or kills themselves with an IED, cause that is an asset of the Taliban.

00:39:14:22 They pay money to have that in place and they don't want Afghans stepping on their mines. They want Americans or other coalition forces stepping on their mines. So as a result the Taliban villagers generally have a good idea of where all these mines are, so it's in our interests when we arrive to speak to them and try to determine where these mines are.

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00:39:35:04 I don't wanna step on a mine and I'm pretty confident that no one else on my force does as well. And so immediately we let them know that we're with the Afghan police, you know; we're not going to, you know, violate their rights. We're [sic] speak to them and we begin to get as much information about what's going on the battlefield, you know, as possible, because the Taliban is communicating and is reacting and, more often, they'll attack us, you know, whether they wait for us to exit or leave or while we're on the ground.

00:40:10:29 This is the last slide I think I have. Yes, sir. Why don't you read this. If you have any questions about it, I'll (inaud.).

00:40:19:17 MS: Which agency's in charge of the eradication effort and what kind of successes have they had?

00:40:25:27 CU: Very good question. I'll tell you what I do know. Again, it's a question outside of my expertise, if I had an expertise in anything. The State Department, basically, was responsible for the eradication program. And it's not a popular program

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in any country, whether it occurs in Colombia or Bolivia or Afghanistan.

00:40:50:16      And so the eradication mission is kind of like... I'm just telling you as a guy on the ground, you know, what I know about it, which isn't probably a whole lot more than everyone else in this room. To answer your question, the State Department does that and it's not a DEA role anywhere worldwide.

00:41:09:02      DEA doesn't have anything to do with eradication. So I could speak about eradication as easy as I could speak about almost any other subject. It is drug related but it's not something that we really deal with. Was there a second part of your question I didn't answer?

00:41:22:27      MS: I was just asking what kind of success they've had with that.

00:41:25:16      CU: You know, I could not answer that without just winging it. As far as what success they've had, I don't know. Now they have experts that could give you crop amounts and estimations and all that. I just, as

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a tactical leader for FAST, am not in a position to answer that. I don't know. I couldn't answer that at all. I'm sorry.

00:41:47:14 This one here gets a bonus. This is her third question. Everyone else needs to take note. And very good questions, too.

00:41:55:28 FS: Yikes. Well, thank you. You mentioned that a FAST team was deployed to the El Paso division at its management's request. Where's the division of labor between FAST and domestic MET teams, and why FAST instead of a MET team?

00:42:14:14 CU: Okay, I'll answer that question and kind of blot (ph.) out what is kind of—may not be a secret but mine and the shared FAST command's goal or objectives for the—what's—the future of what FAST can do. Why FAST and not MET? It has to do with training and ability and techniques.

00:42:38:06 FAST is trained at very high levels, (and we'll go over selection in a bit, to conduct missions in the most least permissive... You know, least permissive

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areas are dangerous areas in the world. So if it was a dangerous mission and it was at request by FAST, we would—we would embrace the opportunity to do it.

00:43:02:24 FAST also, because of its relationship with DOD in training and inner-working with these groups, we had to develop other skills. A police officer's mentality, and a cop myself, you know, you kind of fall into the role, or if I can't do surveillance on this guy in my car...

00:43:21:29 You know, we can't really do surveillance and so surveillance may be sporadic or non-existence in some areas cause if I drive through there, it's gonna heat it up or he's gonna see that we're doing surveillance there. FAST is developing and establishing a role in specialized surveillance that the military does constantly -- reconnaissance teams, dismounted, clandestined, eyes on.

00:43:42:21 And so this is a—this is a role we're trying to develop and offer up to DEA commands, not simply foreign but also domestic. It's going to empower that ASAC or that SAC and give him a trigger or information

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he needs to initiate the enforcement operation.

Whether it's FAST executed... Give her mike, please.

00:44:00:17      Whether FAST executes the mission or an enforcement team from that division, the idea would be that we haven't done this yet. The idea would be that FAST agents would roll in, put eyes on, give a live video feed to a GS or to an ASAC, and if they're waiting for a personality to arrive or depart from a residence, they're waiting for a package to arrive or depart, or give them the information they need to make the decision to go ahead and affect the arrest or the enforcement operation.

00:44:33:28      FS: Does New York—does the New York division already have such a specialized unit?

00:44:39:17      CU: I don't know. I'm not familiar with DEA's capabilities in different divisions. And, believe me, I'm not going to take a position of arrogance or saying, "Oh, we're the best in DEA," you know. The... I just know that... No, I'll—we'll talk about selection and training.

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00:44:57:11 I just know that FAST agents have an opportunity to receive specialized training that, generally speaking, other DEA agents do not have. And our intention is we're always a support element. We may also be the main effort, but we support a DEA mission (inaud.). And so we're trying to, you know, basically assist that command, whether it's the Kabul country office, Port-au-Prince or in El Paso. Right there's one. Right there.

00:45:38:04 FS: Just out of curiosity, I was wondering how is the FAST team received in Afghanistan by the individuals that you support? Are you warmly received, are you welcomed and how are you received by the villagers? And then Part B is what would you consider some of the most challenging things? What are your challenges in terms of accomplishing your mission?

00:46:04:09 CU: Certainly. It's a great question. As far as our reception with—when you say by the people there, I'm assuming you mean villagers. You don't mean like the other DEA agents in the Kabul office or you don't mean the Afghan NIU. (Unint.)... I could tell you some... Anyway, how are we—how are received by the villagers?

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00:46:24:00      You know, we go out of our way to try to, you know, keep up with the hearts and minds, the big smiles and, you know, give out the food to the kids and stuff. And, obviously, it is a combat area and so our safety is first and foremost. But, you know, we'll sit down and talk to everyone, through interpreters, and explain to them, you know, what we're doing there and that we—you know, we're not going to harm anyone, obviously, that doesn't need to be harmed.

00:46:48:28      But that's—it's an important part of what we do as far as establishment of rule or law, the use of Afghan police officers to work in areas that are really outside of Afghan government control. And it varies, you know, what your reception is. Obviously, if they had any ill feelings, they're not gonna really say it to you, you know, if you saw our—you see our attire, you know. Question?

00:47:11:11      MS: Yeah. Can you describe in depth what you mean by increased understanding of the rate (ph.) of influence in Afghanistan that they're (unint.) down there?

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00:47:25:01 CU: Basically, it—when you deal with Afghanistan, you cannot dissect Iran and Pakistan. And if we do missions near the Iranian border, we're looking for Iranian handsets (ph.), what Iranian influence is there. Now our focus is simply drug related, but we have to recognize, depending upon where we're going, the foreign fighter situation in Afghanistan.

00:47:48:28 Again, we're getting outside of my presentation, but the influence of foreign fighters in Afghanistan creates a threat that—far, far beyond what the Taliban is doing, whether it's Chechian fighters arriving with Soviet night vision devices on their weapons or other foreign fighters...

00:48:05:21 A lot of times we can tell by the tick, by the battle we're in, if they involve foreign snipers or not, if they are actually affecting the shooting, the people around us, versus just winging (ph.) it around til we're (unint.). But, again, I'm not gonna go into the influx of foreign fighters and outside governments in this presentation. Go ahead, please.

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- 00:48:30:25      You've mentioned that you go in with the foreign troops to go in and arrest people, search warrants, arrest people. What is the conviction rate, and do these people stay in prison or can they buy their way out?
- 00:48:43:11      CU: I don't have statistics to tell you but the conviction rate is very high because the threshold is so low and it's very easy for them to make a prosecution. If there is a political or corruption avenue on it, I can't speak to that in that as a FAST team we're only in the country for four months, and we don't have the same visibility that the DEA agent there for two years would have as to what's going on with that guy that was arrested.
- 00:49:12:03      And so I might hear what happened to a guy that we arrested a tour ago, a year ago. More than likely, I don't know and, again, I'm not able to answer that. But from what I am being told is that it is a very high conviction rate and they're—they are incarcerated for a very long time.

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- 00:49:29:10      And then in addition to Afghan prosecutions... You know, there's a whole presentation on 959 and 960, basically, U.S. law being brought to bear in Afghanistan, extradition or removal of key personalities that has occurred in Afghanistan. Yes, sir.
- 00:49:46:24      MS: Yeah, I wonder if you could address what you think will be the impact of the troop draw down on your activities?
- 00:49:55:02      CU: For us to operate, we can do so with simply a partner force, NODA and CAS (ph.) and air support. How will a reduction in forces in Afghanistan affect our ability to operate? Probably not as much. Again, you know, we're in conjuncture, in speculation here. I just know that eventually DOD is going to leave.
- 00:50:27:20      It's not going to have the same presence there, but I don't see us leaving for a very, very long time. And let me get to the next slide. I think the next slide addresses that. You may have difficulty reading this and I've addressed this before. It's basically talking about Angola, Cambodia, Colombia, the FARC,

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the link of the insurgencies and its contraband or a revenue source that it utilized to sustain itself.

00:50:57:24 The Taliban, its association with illicit drugs (hashish and opium), lends itself to a higher survivability rate than those that do not. And so it paints a bleak picture if you look at a model or a study of other—of other insurgent organizations and our ability to disrupt and—and—and stop this one.

00:51:26:03 reliance upon drugs would lend itself to, as a case study, an increased percentage of its—the length of its ability to sustain and survive and fight against us. Selection for FAST. Invariably when I talk to a young group of ODA captains, it's not intended to be a recruiting spiel, but every one of em has a question.

00:51:54:16 You know, they're thinking to themselves, well, if I get out of the Army, hey, how do I become a FAST agent. And I, of course, talk about being a DEA agent and how that—that's critical that you would want to have a mindset of, well, I wanna go and be just a FAST agent in DEA but I really don't have an interest in

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being a DEA agent, and how cool, if you will, or how fun or how rewarding it is to be a DEA agent.

00:52:17:18 But I always give them their respect, their props, if you will, and our very capability as a program and our relevance in Afghanistan is a direct result of what we have achieved through our relationships with these teams. That we are far more effective with them and with their assistance than we would be—ever be without them.

00:52:42:06 And our selection process is, in some way, similar. We have about a 70% attrition rate in our selection. Our community is very small and it allows us to be very selective. We have three phases in our selection. Phase One is in Virginia and it's basically the beginning phase, the most difficult, the most physically intense phase.

00:53:10:29 There's no instruction really. It's an observation phase and there are physical tasks that must be overcome. There's no really hazing or induced stress. The tasks themselves are stressful enough. That box on the back of Number 30, it weighs a hundred pounds

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in addition to his rucksack which weighs 40 pounds, and the other boxes he's carrying.

00:53:32:11      So they're given basically a number of... I'm not gonna be here to tell you what's going on in selection, in case any of you are thinking of going next year, the- but it's very, very hard. After they have completed Phase One, they may be invited to go to Phase Two, which is a training phase with DEA cadre, overseen by some SEALs or an SF.

00:53:53:19      And then recently Phase Three for us has been land warfare school with NSW, Naval Special Warfare SIL team, west coast guys, train (unint.), which is a train attachment. So what you have is that we find schools where we could learn the TTPs or SOPs, the procedures, if you will, the operating procedures of that team, to enable us to operate alongside them, to learn what they're doing.

00:54:20:27      And so rather than require that they make up a school for us, we'll simply send our candidates. And land warfare school for the Navy is a (unint.). It is very difficult. And the average age of our FAST candidates

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are around 34, 35 years old, but we have not had a candidate that's survived Phase One and Two and not Phase Three because we're dealing with a very small pool at that point.

00:54:50:09 But the selection process, it could be argued maybe it's too difficult. It creates a product where the agent is very proud of what he's accomplished and he has the ability to look to his left and his right and have confidence in the people that have survived with him because they'll find themselves in Afghanistan in a combat situation soon, you know, probably within a year of attending these selection processes.

00:55:21:13 Today's mission is basically to continue our relationship with DOD, continue to try to fight the insurgency, work and project DEA's will, if you will, or influence our enforcement missions in the western hemisphere, to be able to do more of that than we have been.

00:55:49:20 As I said, every picture I've showed you has been a private picture of mine. This picture here was sent to me a week ago by a Navy SEAL lieutenant. And he

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took this picture with his—with his camera of CHAD (ph.) and it was a big loss to us. The mission that occurred there, I'll tell you a little bit about it. Everyone's heard about the three agents that were killed, as well as the other SF guys.

00:56:22:17      And I'll finish up here and I'll take any questions you may have. Basically, it was a DEA mission up near Turkmenistan in Afghanistan where a DEA source said, "Look, there's a bazaar up there that has not been hit. There's about a hundred Taliban fighters and there are weapons and drugs everywhere. A very ripe target."

00:56:47:18      So we brought this target... It was given to us, actually, by the country office and we brought this target to our SOF partners and we said, "Hey, man, this will be of interest to you guys." And as it turns out, they had not adapted, they had not realized that, you know, the U.S. Army can fight at night and have aircraft that can kill them at night.

00:57:29:00      But the... Like many targets we do... And this is—this one is heralded, you know—because we lost agents. I'm

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here to tell you we do similar missions like this all the time. We just don't happen to lose people. On this mission the decision was made to do it under one period of darkness.

00:57:48:18 Normally we would enter (ph.) a one period of darkness and direct action with the enemy is less of a threat to us than IEDs. And so we prefer to move slower, methodical, throughout a period of daylight to increase our chance of finding these mines, if you will. Usually, we're relying on dogs and explosive ordinance teams to help us do that.

00:58:08:05 But the position of this geographically (inaud.) it difficult to support with other assets, meaning it was so far away to refuel our aircraft, to send out supporting gunships is difficult. So a decision was made to hit this bazaar under one period of darkness, and it went very well.

00:58:30:28 Without exaggeration, there were 30 enemy fires killed on the mission. Throughout the execution of the original mission, with the mishap and the aircraft going down, the second aircraft arriving to support

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the survivors on the ground and having to wait for the ultimate (unint.), the number of Taliban fighters and their willingness to sustain and fight us occurred for a very long time.

00:58:53:22 But, obviously, if you ask my personal opinion... You know, as a DEA agent everyone says, "Oh, there's no amount of drugs worth anyone's life." You know, I don't wanna die and I know the people around me don't wanna die, but if you can have a relevance and a sense of service that exceeds simply seizing drugs, it makes our mission worth it. Do you have any questions at all? I'm done. Thank you for your time.

**SEAN FEARNES**

00:59:31:26 SF: Carson, thank you very much for a fascinating presentation. Just a couple of quick notes before folks leave. First of all, on behalf of all of us on the museum staff, we wanna thank you, and Catie has a small token of our appreciation. If you haven't had a chance to hit DEA Today, if you're an employee here in the building inside DEA, the DEA Today page has some additional, good information.

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00:59:51:15 I encourage you to visit that. Two upcoming events. Next Tuesday, this coming Tuesday, and Carson alluded to it when he began his talk talking about being influenced by the events surrounding Kiki Camarena, next Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. right back here in the auditorium is the kickoff rally for DEA's commemoration of Red Ribbon.

01:00:13:03 So I encourage you to come back for that. Hard to believe it's been 25 years this year since that happened. And then second, and finally, on Wednesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, we'll have our third presentation in this series. We're gonna step back in time, probably a lot less sophisticated in terms of equipment, but when DEA was in Afghanistan in the '70s. Retired Special Agent Chuck Carter is gonna come in and talk about DEA in Afghanistan 30 years ago.

01:00:40:14 And that'll be, again, on Wednesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 10:00 a.m. Thank you all very much for coming. Carson is up here if you'd like to come up and speak with him after the program. And thank you all for coming.

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END OF TAPE