

Murder of US Green Beret by Navy Seals in Mali exposes criminal military operations in West Africa

By Eddie Haywood
15 November 2017

Two Navy Seals are under investigation for the June murder of Staff Sgt. Logan Melgar, a Green Beret, after he was found dead in a housing complex provided by the US embassy in Bamako, Mali. No charges have yet been filed against the two commandos, but the case is being investigated as a homicide.

The two Seals, Petty Officer First Class Tony E. DeDolph and Chief Petty Officer Adam C. Matthews, were flown out of the country to the United States and were placed on administrative leave.

While the circumstances are not yet completely known, several special operations sources told the *Daily Beast* that there was an altercation between Melgar and the two Seals at around 5 a.m. on June 4, where the three grappled, resulting in one Seal, believed to be DeDolph, choking Melgar to unconsciousness.

According to AFRICOM officials, the two Seals drove Melgar to a nearby clinic, where medical personnel declared him dead. The two Seals claimed that Melgar had been intoxicated at the time of the altercation, but Melgar's autopsy examination report noted that no drugs or alcohol were found in his system.

Melgar, along with an unknown number of other elite commandos, were deployed to the West African nation to conduct intelligence and training operations against Al Qaeda-affiliated militants waging war against the US/French-backed government.

Reports from unnamed US officials indicate that the two Navy Seals were stealing cash from a "slush fund" set aside by the US embassy for the purpose of paying informants in the course of tracking down Islamist militants, and that Melgar had discovered the skimming

operation and threatened to alert authorities. According to the source, the two Navy Seals offered Melgar a cut of the illicit funds, but Melgar declined.

In a telephone call to his wife in the States, Melgar expressed his suspicions of the two Navy Seals, saying that he had a "bad feeling" about the two, but declined to specify his misgivings, informing her that he would reveal the full story when he returned home.

AFRICOM told the media that officials immediately suspected foul play in Melgar's death and had dispatched an investigator to Mali within 24 hours of the Green Beret's death. A military medical examiner declared the death a "homicide by asphyxiation."

According to the *New York Times*, military officials said that cash from such slush funds "have a way of going missing." The officials also said that in Mali's case, the amount stolen can be as much as \$20,000 at any given moment, and that it is relatively easy to skim from the fund as many instances of stealing involve the faking of receipts.

The housing complex in Bamako where Melgar was staying was shared by three other elite soldiers, including the two Seals. While the number of elite commandos in Mali are not disclosed by AFRICOM, the contingent deployed to the country is estimated to be smaller than the 800 elite soldiers in neighboring Niger, and are part of a wider contingent of around 2,000 special forces overall deployed to several countries in West Africa.

For his part, Melgar was officially assigned to provide security for US Ambassador to Mali Paul Folmsbee. His "security" duties included providing intelligence on militant groups directly to Folmsbee, as well as protecting the embassy and other US personnel,

and coordinating training exercises with Malian forces.

The murder of a Green Beret by two of his confederates highlights and exposes the broader criminal character of the American military offensive being waged in West Africa.

Far reaching US special operations conducted across the continent are shrouded in secrecy, and were only brought to public attention last month when an ambush by Islamist militants resulted in the deaths of four Green Berets in neighboring Niger.

The special forces troops deployed to West Africa are drawn from elite military units, including Green Berets, Navy Seals and Delta Force, and have conducted some of American imperialism's worst crimes against humanity. The list of often illegal duties these forces carry out include assassinations, counterterrorism operations, unconventional warfare, psychological operations, and training of foreign forces that Washington desires to utilize as a proxy force for regime change operations.

In Vietnam, elite American troops engaged in torture and mass execution of civilians, including children, and the razing of entire villages. In the recent period, these forces have engaged in torture, rape and murder in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The two Navy commandos currently under investigation for Melgar's death are drawn from Seal Team Six, the elite unit which was involved in the 2011 raid and assassination of Osama Bin Laden at his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

The backdrop to the American military offensive in West Africa is the 2011 US/NATO war conducted in Libya to remove Muammar Gaddafi from power. Enlisting and utilizing Al Qaeda-affiliated fighters to conduct a regime change operation that resulted in Gaddafi's removal and assassination, the Obama administration oversaw the complete destruction of Libyan society. The Islamist fighters spilled out from the ruins of Libya and scattered across northern African and down into the Sahel.

Washington has its military forces arrayed across West Africa not to "fight terrorism" but to secure by military force the region's vast economic resources and working class for the profit of American corporations. West Africa possesses enormous quantities of minerals, including gold, diamonds, ore, uranium, and gas and oil deposits.

Washington is also seeking to neutralize the increasing economic influence of China on the continent, with Beijing securing investment deals in nearly every economic sector, including mining, oil and gas, agriculture and infrastructure.

With the Trump administration loosening the restrictions on the rules of engagement for US special forces in Africa, which constitutes an official absolution of any crimes committed by its soldiers, the offensive conducted in West Africa by the American military threatens to consume the region with ever great levels of violence.

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