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KHOBAR TOWERS: THE AFTERMATH AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMANDERS

by

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14. ABSTRACT

On 25 June 1996 a terrorist attack upon US forces deployed to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia resulted in nineteen fatalities and numerous injuries. The Khobar Towers tragedy serves as yet another grim reminder of the increasing vulnerability and likelihood of attack to US forces in garrison both abroad and potentially at home. This research examines the chronology of events leading up to the explosion and offers varied analysis of the conflicting conclusions resulting from the multiple investigative reports which ensued. Were the lessons learned from the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon in October 1983 absorbed? Did they apply? Can future incidents such as this be effectively prevented? At what sacrifice? To what extent do we or should we hold commanders responsible, accountable, or culpable for acts of rogue states while executing their mission especially regarding Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) where requirements may exist to remain politically or culturally inert? There have been four separate investigations into the circumstances leading up to and immediately following this event: 1. The Khobar Towers Bombing Incident- House Committee on National Security 2. The Force Protection Assessment of USCENTCOM AOR and Khobar Towers Report of the Downing Assessment Task Force- Gen. (Ret) Wayne A. Downing 3. The Independent Review of the Khobar Towers Bombing- Lt Gen James F. Record 4. The Report of Investigation, Volumes I - III, Khobar Towers Bombing, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia- Inspector General and Judge Advocate General of the US Air Force Based on these investigations, Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen wrote his report entitled: Personal Accountability for Force Protection at Khobar Towers. Using these and other sources, the research attempts to offer possible explanations regarding how or why certain decisions were made and concludes with thoughts and considerations for future commanders. The intent of this work is to provoke and promote further discussions regarding issues of accountability and responsibility.

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Preface

We have endeavored to look beyond the tragedy of the Khobar Towers bombing and it's immediate consequences in an attempt to encourage further thought and discussion regarding implications for consideration by future commanders. There is no intent to explore or account for specific force protection enhancements completed, planned for or considered as a result of this incident.

We wish to gratefully acknowledge the patience and timely guidance of Colonel Richard L. Hamer, USAF as faculty advisor for this project. In addition, special thanks is extended to Brigadier General (Retired) Terryl J. Schwalier, USAF for his gracious hospitality in granting the personal interview which provided invaluable insight regarding the complexities of command in the joint and combined arena.

Abstract

On 25 June 1996 a terrorist attack upon US forces deployed to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia resulted in nineteen fatalities and numerous injuries. The Khobar Towers tragedy serves as yet another grim reminder of the increasing vulnerability and likelihood of attack to US forces in garrison both abroad and potentially at home. This research examines the chronology of events leading up to the explosion and offers varied analysis of the conflicting conclusions resulting from the multiple investigative reports which ensued. Were the lessons learned from the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon in October 1983 absorbed? Did they apply? Can future incidents such as this be effectively prevented? At what sacrifice? To what extent do we or should we hold commanders responsible, accountable, or culpable for acts of rogue states while executing their mission especially regarding Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) where requirements may exist to remain politically or culturally inert?

There have been four separate investigations into the circumstances leading up to and immediately following this event:

1. *The Khobar Towers Bombing Incident*- House Committee on National Security

2. *The Force Protection Assessment of USCENTCOM AOR and Khobar Towers Report of the Downing Assessment Task Force*- Gen. (Ret) Wayne A. Downing

3. *The Independent Review of the Khobar Towers Bombing*- Lt Gen James F. Record

4. *The Report of Investigation, Volumes I - III, Khobar Towers Bombing,*

Dhahran, Saudi Arabia- Inspector General and Judge Advocate General of the US Air Force

Based on these investigations, Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen wrote his report entitled: *Personal Accountability for Force Protection at Khobar Towers.*

Using these and other sources, the research attempts to offer possible explanations regarding how or why certain decisions were made and concludes with thoughts and considerations for future commanders. The intent of this work is to provoke and promote further discussions regarding issues of accountability and responsibility.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The future of warfare for the United States (US) is clouded by an increasingly unstable world whose very instability was caused by achieving exactly what we sought -- the demise of the former Soviet Union. The steady and identifiable threat that enabled everyone to tailor doctrine, tactics, organization and training is gone. In its place, nations scramble to effect a if not the New World Order. The threats are varied, the lines of conflict faint and fluid. Drawn into this power vacuum the US finds itself torn between a historically isolationist attitude toward the rest of the world and a moral, economic, and political requirement to remain actively involved in shaping the global community for its survival. Herein also lie the challenges for America's armed forces and its commanders -- of carrying out the will of the people in defense of national interests -- interests which are becoming difficult to define. In a world environment increasingly characterized by a resurgence of ethnic cleansing, religious fanaticism, tribal disputes, and asymmetric approaches to power confrontations, military missions proliferate in unmilitary environments.

The recent loss of 19 American servicemen in the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia has again raised questions regarding US foreign policy and the readiness of our military forces. In particular are issues of force protection and the ability to manage

the competing interests of mission accomplishment with social, political, and cultural restraints. The maintenance of a suitable quality of life for our military and foreign service personnel, and the requirement to protect them without disabling their capabilities or purpose, adds to the challenges commanders face when brief deployments evolve into semi-permanent presence. Perceived sensitivities of American policy regarding inflicted casualties underscores the potential for adversaries to view asymmetric efforts as a means to affect that policy.

The fallout as a result of Khobar Towers spans a plethora of investigations; the departure of then Secretary of Defense William Perry in January 1997; the withholding of Brigadier General (Brig Gen) Schwalier's promotion to Major General (Maj Gen) and his subsequent retirement; the early resignation/retirement of General (Gen) Ronald R. Fogleman from his post as Chief of Staff, US Air Force. These have all contributed to speculation regarding the state of civil-military relations within the highest levels of government.

There are many complex issues that beg answers and may involve modifications within the US military and in the minds of its commanders to address the threats to future operations. Did we fail to heed the lessons of Beirut in 1983? Why do the multiple investigations following Khobar Towers come to such differing conclusions? Was too much emphasis placed on preparations for a penetration attack at Khobar Towers and not enough on a stand-off attack? What implications reside for future military commanders in their analysis of force protection measures?

These questions are addressed by first presenting a chronology of events, followed by an analysis and discussion of considerations for commanders. The chronology

consolidates facts from multiple unclassified sources and relies heavily upon the series of reports that were generated following the bombing. On 28 June 1996, Secretary of Defense William J. Perry appointed Gen (Retired) Wayne A. Downing, US Army to investigate the Khobar blast. *The Force Protection Assessment of USCENTCOM AOR and Khobar Towers Report of the Downing Assessment Task Force* (Downing Report) was issued on 30 August 1996. Secretary Perry forwarded the Downing Report (without review) to Secretary of the Air Force, Sheila Widnall for review and action as appropriate. On 4 September 1996 Secretary Widnall and Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen Ronald R. Fogleman appointed Lieutenant General (Lt Gen) James F. Record, Commander, 12th Air Force, to evaluate and submit recommendations regarding issues raised in the Downing Report. *The Independent Review of the Khobar Towers Bombing, Part A* (Record Report) specifically addressed each finding from the Downing Report and was completed on 31 October 1996. *Part B* followed on 20 December 1996 and addressed matters relating to accountability. The Record Report in its entirety was forwarded to Secretary of Defense Perry on 23 December 1996. On 24 January 1997 William S. Cohen replaced Secretary Perry as Secretary of Defense. Questions raised by the Deputy Secretary of Defense on 29 January 1997 regarding portions of the Record Report resulted in actions by the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force to further task the Inspector General, Lt Gen Richard T. Swope and the Judge Advocate General of the Air Force, Maj Gen Bryan G. Hawley to conduct additional analysis. *The Report of Investigation, Volumes I - III, Khobar Towers Bombing, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia* (IG/JAG Report) were submitted in April 1997.[1] Secretary of Defense, William S. Cohen issued his *Personal Accountability for Force Protection at Khobar Towers* on 31 July 1997.

The analysis chapter compares facts and conclusions from the four reports, an interview with Brig Gen Schwalier, the *Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983* dated 20 December 1983 (Long Commission Report), and several other sources. Further examination addresses accountability questions, the effectiveness of force protection at Khobar Towers, and similarities between the bombings at Khobar Towers and Beirut. Lastly, the chapter on considerations for commanders discusses force protection issues that may be useful to commanders.

Notes

[1] Lt Gen Richard T. Swope and Maj Gen Bryan G. Hawley, *Report of Investigation, Vol I, Khobar Towers Bombing, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia* (Washington D.C.: The Inspector General of the Air Force and The Judge Advocate General of the Air Force, April 1997), 1-2.

Chapter 2

Chronology

In 1979, the Saudi government completed construction of the Khobar Towers housing complex made up of over 180 residential buildings near the city of Dhahran.[1] Located in the midst of an urban environment, among residential and commercial areas and mosques, the facility was constructed to house nomadic Bedouin tribes.[2] However, apartment style living did not appeal to the Bedouins and their roaming lifestyle. Largely unused until 1990 when it was first occupied by US and coalition forces during the Gulf War, Khobar Towers housed service members from the US, Saudi Arabia, France, and the United Kingdom. The coalition military compound was only a small portion of the entire Khobar Towers complex (the rest housed Saudi civilians) and included living quarters that were primarily high-rise apartments up to eight stories tall as well as office and administrative facilities (Figure 1). Buildings 131 and 133 (most damaged in the June 1996 attack) were eight-story apartments facing the north perimeter. There was a parking lot outside the north perimeter which was adjacent to a park, mosque, and a small group of Saudi residences.[3]

Command Structure

Joint Task Force-Southwest Asia (JTF-SWA), a unit of US Central Command (USCENTCOM) was established in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in August of 1992 to support Operation Southern Watch. The task force was initially structured based on the national requirement for a short-term response to Iraqi aggression and for the policing of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 687, 688, and 949.[4] The Commander, JTF-SWA maintained tactical control over the 4404th Wing (Provisional) headquartered in Dhahran. The US Central Air Forces (USCENTAF) Commander at Shaw AFB, South Carolina exercised operational control over the wing. Under tactical control, JTF-SWA tasked the 4404th Wing (P) to perform the assigned mission, but the Commander, USCENTAF maintained authority to structure and direct the wing to carry out other specified tasks such as directing where to live and what force protection measures to take.[5]

Initial Security Climate

The 4404th Wing (P) consisted of five provisional groups and 5,000 personnel assigned throughout eleven locations in four countries.[6] The wing first moved into Khobar Towers in June 1992.[7] From 1992 to 1995, almost all personnel were on 90-day or less temporary duty rotations.[8] Thousands of Americans, both military and civilian, and other westerners had lived safely for many years in Saudi Arabia. The US military lived and worked in urban environments similar to other deployed forces overseas.

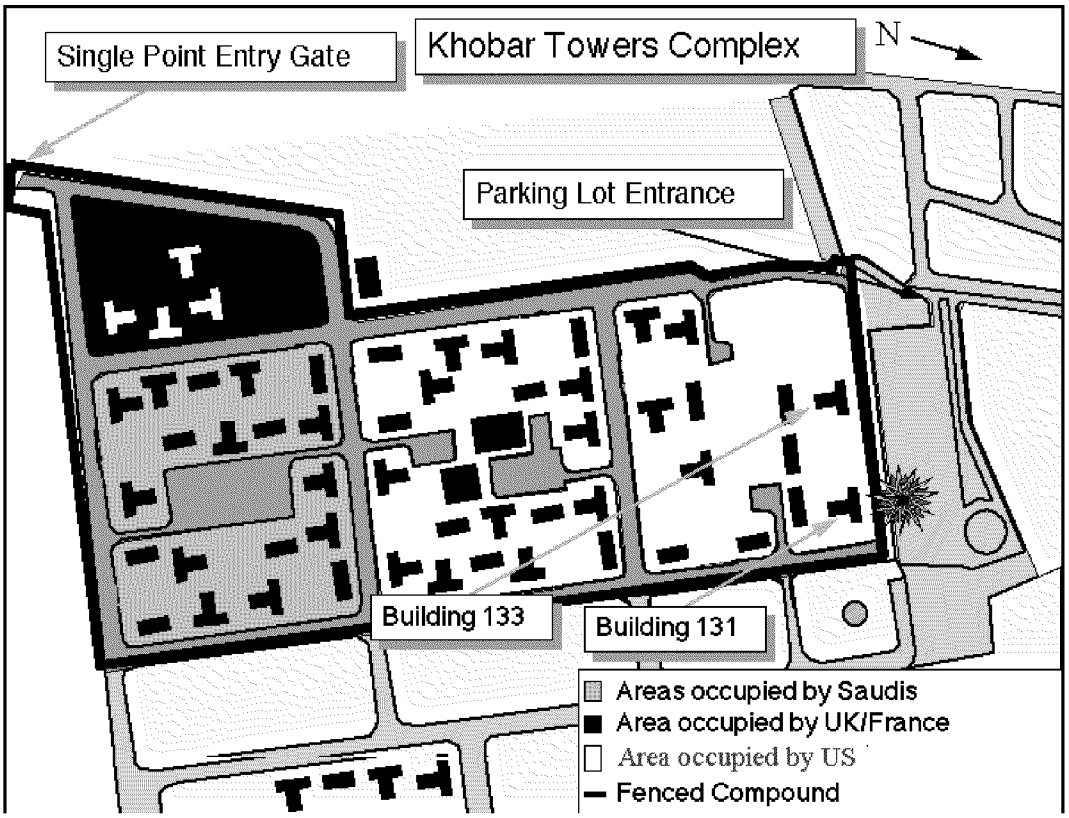

Figure 1. Diagram of Khobar Towers Compound

It was widely-held that Saudi Arabia was a secure country and the security posture at US military and state department facilities had not changed in years.[9] Prior to 1995, the last terrorist activity of any type recorded in Saudi Arabia occurred in 1992.[10] In April 1995, intelligence sources reported increasing terrorist-related developments and USCENTCOM dispatched a message to all US military units in the Area of Responsibility (AOR) instructing commanders to heighten security awareness.[11] A Vulnerability Assessment of the Khobar Towers complex was initiated by the Air Force Office of Special Investigation (AFOSI) in response to the increasing developments.[12]

Brigadier General Schwalier Commands the 4404th (P) Wing

Brig Gen Schwalier arrived in Dhahran in July 1995 to take command of the 4404th Wing (P). He was the first wing commander to have been assigned for a one-year tour, his predecessors had been assigned shorter tours of either 90 or 180 days each.[13] The increase in tour length for the wing commander position was initiated, in part, due to a request by Saudi officials at Dhahran who sought to increase continuity in working relationships between the wing and the local Saudi military.[14] In an effort to provide even greater continuity of relations in key positions, Brig Gen Schwalier sent a letter to the Commander, USCENTAF recommending that seven additional key positions be converted to one-year tours in August 1995. These positions in his immediate staff were the Vice Wing Commander, the commanders of the Services, Transportation, and 4402nd Reconnaissance Squadrons, the commanders of the Medical Group and of the 4406th Support Flight, as well as the Chief of the Wing Operations Center. The recommendations were implemented by USCENTAF and USCENTCOM.[15]

September 1995

In September, the wing received the AFOSI Vulnerability Assessment and began implementation of the recommendations.[16] Some of the security measures addressed included proper placement of concrete Jersey barriers and removing or repositioning objects near the vegetation on the north perimeter to increase visibility. The Assessment also commented on successful efforts by the security police to establish liaison with various local military and civilian police agencies.[17]

October 1995

In October, the AFOSI Detachment (Det) at the 4404th Wing (P) proposed that a wall be built around the perimeter of Khobar Towers. This was discussed in weekly security review meetings below the wing commander level between October 1995 and January 1996.[18] The security police objected to the wall on the grounds that it would restrict visibility from inside the compound. Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) personnel stated that "the wall might not be effective due to the physics of a blast wave." The proposal never left the discussion phase.[19]

November 1995

OPM-SANG Bombing

On 13 November, a bomb exploded in front of the Office of the Program Manager of the Saudi Arabian National Guard (OPM-SANG) in Riyadh. The size of the bomb was estimated to be between 200 and 250 pounds of equivalent TNT, and tragically killed five Americans and two Saudis.[20] USCENTCOM changed the threat level from "medium" to "high" and security reassessments of facilities were directed theater-wide.[21] By Battle Staff Directive, Brig Gen Schwalier raised the threat condition (THREATCON) from ALPHA to BRAVO.[22] The wing deployed additional physical barriers, moved parked vehicles and trash dumpsters at least 25 meters from buildings, restricted off-base travel to official business only, implemented measures to check for letter and parcel bombs, suspended non-essential commercial deliveries, instituted procedures to verify the identity of unannounced or suspicious visitors, directed buildings to be inspected at frequent intervals, searched all vehicles unless driven by a coalition member in uniform, installed

concertina wire on the southeast corner and east perimeter, and directed commanders to brief personnel at regular intervals on all forms of terrorist threats.[23] In response to the bombing, Maj Gen Hurd, USCENTCOM J-3, Lt Gen Jumper, Commander, USCENTAF, and Gen Ralston, Commander, Air Combat Command visited Khobar Towers.[24]

Security Responsibility Outside the Compound

Immediately after the OPM-SANG bombing, Col Boyle, the Support Group Commander and a Saudi liaison officer toured the Khobar Tower perimeter and inspected the fence and barriers. The liaison officer indicated that "any deficiencies noted outside the fence were the responsibility of the Saudi civilian police." Col Boyle asked to move the north fence outward 10 to 15 feet to expand the distance from Building 131. The liaison officer said he would coordinate with Saudi civilian officials about moving the north fence, but he did not think that would be possible citing the impact on the ability of Saudi families to access their homes. This fence had already been repositioned several feet closer to Buildings 131 and 133 in 1994 at the request of the Saudi Government for these same reasons. Col Boyle initiated needed repairs to the fence.[25]

Visitor Recommendations

Between November 1995 and June 1996 numerous officers from sister services, a representative from the Regional Security Office at the US Embassy in Riyadh, other State Department officials, and the Chief, National Intelligence Support Team (NIST) visited the wing on various occasions. Brig Gen Schwalier and his subordinate commanders asked these visitors for recommendations on their security measures and were told that "the wing was taking more than appropriate security measures."[26]

December 1995

In December, three small bombs (two to three pounds of black powder each) were placed in public areas in Bahrain. One exploded in a shopping center causing no injuries, and two were placed in post offices but disarmed prior to detonation. These bombs were not placed in areas frequented by westerners, and it was thought that these attacks were directed against the Bahrain government. Even though the attacks were not considered to be against westerners, several additional actions were taken at Khobar Towers to increase security. Night security posts were increased from six to seven (the same number as the day shift), Air Force security police overwatched Saudi security police during vehicle searches, a table top terrorist bombing exercise was completed, the telephone remote switching center was moved inside the compound for better control, and perimeter mobile patrols were increased. In addition, Brig Gen Schwalier initiated a weekly security review meeting with the Vice Wing Commander, the Support Group Commander, AFOSI Det Commander, the Security Police Commander, and the Senior Enlisted Advisor. Other wing members would attend as necessary. A weekly coalition meeting was started to ensure restrictions and other force protection measures were not significantly different from those initiated by British and French forces. Unofficial travel was again allowed outside Khobar Towers with restrictions such as limiting groups to two to four persons, and prohibiting eating in restaurants.[27]

January 1996

Two more bombs were found and disarmed in a hotel in Bahrain in January. Both bombs were constructed with ten to eleven pounds of black powder. Although the

Bahrain attacks were still not considered to be directed against westerners, the wing took additional force protection steps including more rigorous vehicle searches, a redesign of the serpentine entries for vehicle access, blocking vehicle access to parking garages that had been converted to recreation facilities, and setting up an alternate security police control center.[28]

January 1996 Vulnerability Assessment

Following the OPM-SANG bombing, the AFOSI Det began to immediately update the July 1995 Vulnerability Assessment. The updated assessment was released on 8 January 1996 with 39 recommendations.[29] The wing implemented 36 of the 39 recommendations. They included cutting back the vegetation along the fence, reinforcing the existing concrete barrier line with one-inch steel cable, and parking heavy vehicles along the fence to limit high speed penetration of the installation. The three recommendations not implemented were installation of Mylar on the windows of certain buildings (including Building 131), dispersal of mission essential personnel throughout the compound, and installation of fire alarms in Khobar Towers.[30]

Mylar. Mylar is a shatter resistant window film designed to reduce injury due to flying glass in the event of an explosion. After discussing the Mylar installation with the Support Group and Civil Engineering Squadron Commanders, Brig Gen Schwalier deferred installation based on the then-known threat, effects of other security enhancements which had been or were being implemented to mitigate risks (such as roof-top sentries, increased Saudi patrols, double jersey barriers, and installation of blackout curtains), the cost and complexity of the project, and other competing priorities. He put the $4 million Mylar improvement in the newly developed Five-Year Facilities

Improvement Plan.[31] Mylar installation is a complex process that can not be accomplished as a "self-help" project. For example, simply placing Mylar on windows, without improving the window frames can result in trading glass shard injuries for blunt trauma injuries when the entire window frame blows into a room. When the OPM-SANG headquarters was moved following that bombing, a contract for Mylar installation on the new building was let. Due to the complex installation process, the project was not competed until October 1996. Also after the OPM-SANG bombing, US State Department officials in Saudi requested Mylar installation on the windows of some State Department buildings. The State Department denied the request on the basis that the perceived threat level was not high enough to justify that expense.[32]

Dispersal of Mission Essential Personnel. The Vulnerability Assessment recommendation to disperse mission essential personnel, such as aircrew, throughout the compound was discussed at length. The wing leadership decided against adopting this recommendation because it was preferable to maintain unit integrity. The wing was in the process of implementing a recommendation to disperse key personnel as they rotated into theater. The wing's senior officers were spread out, living in several buildings to minimize the chances of the entire command element being killed in a terrorist attack.[33]

Fire Alarms. The recommendation to install fire alarms was deferred to the Five-Year Facilities Improvement Plan. The three fire chiefs believed a fire alarm system was not immediately required due to the concrete construction of the building. They also based their opinion on two USCENTAF civil engineering staff assistance visits that did not identify a need for fire alarms. Therefore, Brig Gen Schwalier and Col Boyle decided to defer the project.[34]

February 1996

In February, four more 10 to 15 pound black powder bombs were used in attacks in Bahrain. Two bombs were placed in a hotel and a tailor shop causing some injuries, one bomb significantly damaged a vehicle but caused no injuries, and one was disarmed in a supermarket. The wing also received an AFOSI report of an "imminent threat" against the US Embassy in Riyadh. Brig Gen Schwalier continued enhancements that included 100% identification (ID) checks during night hours, directing a 100% check of specific vehicle types, restricting unofficial travel in Bahrain to the Bahrain Naval Facility, directing frequent anti-terrorism articles in the base paper, and assigning security police to permanent sectors so they would be more familiar with each sector's force protection requirements.[35]

March 1996

Six small bomb attacks occurred in Bahrain in March. Two were set off in restaurants, and the others were placed in a shopping complex, a bank, a hotel, and a primary school. Eight fatalities resulted from these bombings (including the perpetrator in the bank bombing). At this point, all unofficial travel to Bahrain was prohibited by Brig Gen Schwalier. Also in March, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Station Chief in Riyadh gave an unverified report that a well known terrorist financier was planning to smuggle large quantities of high explosives into Saudi Arabia for possible use against US or United Kingdom facilities during the Hajj season. It was thought the primary targets would be in Riyadh, but there could be other targets. At the Jordanian-Saudi border, approximately 85 pounds of explosives were seized when a car was trying to enter Saudi

Arabia. Under interrogation, the smugglers said others may have succeeded. At Khobar Towers, a possible surveillance incident was reported where a Middle Eastern man engaged an off-duty AFOSI agent in a conversation through the north fence, asking questions about the facility.[36]

New Security Police Commander

Lt Gen Jumper, Commander, USCENTAF became increasingly concerned with force protection in Saudi. He sent Lt Col Traister, a member of his immediate staff to be the security police squadron commander for the 4404th Wing (P). On 20 March 1996, Lt Col Traister had his initial meeting with Brig Gen Schwalier. They discussed the need for increased emphasis on force protection. Brig Gen Schwalier asked Lt Col Traister how he would prevent a car bomb from entering the Khobar Towers complex. Lt Col Traister made that concern a primary focus as he surveyed the physical security of the facility. He improved measures at the main gate and strengthened the perimeter fence to prevent vehicles from crashing through. Additional Jersey barriers were added inside the fence around the entire perimeter. An additional checkpoint was established at the entry control point, resulting in two separate check stations. The serpentine approach to the gate was lengthened, insuring that vehicles approaching the complex slowed sufficiently for the security force to react to a possible penetration. M-60 machine guns were positioned on either side of the entry road in reinforced bunkers at the second checkpoint to defeat a forced entry. Additionally, two large trucks were positioned and continuously manned on either side of the road just behind the check point to block the road or ram any vehicle attempting to run the gate.[37]

At Lt Col Traister's first attendance of the weekly Wing Security Council Meeting on 26 March 1996, he wrote in the meeting minutes: "lessons learned: the things learned are there is a lack of follow-up on projects, the leadership are (sic) unaware of problems until too late, little or no staff assistance visits or assessment of Dhahran flightline." Based on his assessment, he worked to fix these problems. He arranged a staff assistance visit and an assessment of the flightline. Follow-up on projects was difficult with the constant rotation of personnel, but he worked to improve that process.[38] In late March, Lt Col Traister, Special Agent Reddecliff (AFOSI Det Commander) and the wing interpreter meet with Saudi military police. They asked to expand the north, east and west perimeters by moving the concrete Jersey barriers a short distance farther outside the fence. They also asked to clear out vegetation in order to provide better visibility. The request regarding the east and west perimeters was granted and the concrete barriers were placed approximately five feet outside the fence. The request to cut down the vegetation on the north perimeter was denied because the Saudis did not want their citizens to easily observe activities inside the compound, such as personnel jogging in shorts and other western attire. The request to expand the north perimeter was not granted because the Saudis believed the 80 foot distance from the fence to Buildings 131 and 133 was adequate to defend against a bomb such as the one used at OPM-SANG. Lt Col Traister briefed Brig Gen Schwalier on the meeting. Brig Gen Schwalier decided not to pursue the north perimeter issue based on the then-known threat, and all the recent force protection improvements including the 36 recommendations from the most recent vulnerability assessment.[39]

April 1996

JTF-SWA Receives Responsibility for Force Protection Oversight

As a result of the OPM-SANG bombing and based on increasing concern about force protection oversight, USCINCCENT issued a Letter of Instruction in April giving JTF-SWA the authority to inspect and oversee force protection efforts in the AOR, even though JTF-SWA did not have operational control of the wing. Since the JTF-SWA commander did not have operational control over the wing, he did not have the authority to order specific force protection actions, although in testimony the commander indicated that in practice this was not a problem due to the good working relationships.[40]

On 3 April 96, the wing sent a request to USCENTAF for four additional explosive detection dogs. The dogs arrived on 14 April.

AFOSI Det Commander's Assessment of Khobar Towers

Special Agent Reddecliff sent a message on 4 April 96 to Headquarters AFOSI on his assessment of security at Khobar Towers: "security measures here [Khobar Towers] are outstanding, which in my view would lead a would be terrorist to attempt an attack from a position outside the perimeter...and if a truck parks close to the fence line, and the driver makes a quick getaway, I think the building should be cleared immediately." Brig Gen Schwalier was not shown the message but he discussed the issue with Agent Reddecliff.[41] In response to this message, Headquarters AFOSI sent a Special Agent to Khobar Towers from 22-25 May 1996 to assess physical security. The agent gave his recommendations to the AFOSI Det Commander, but never talked to Brig Gen Schwalier. One of the recommendations was to build a 9 to 12 foot concrete wall around the Khobar

Towers complex, or at a minimum, along the north perimeter. The AFOSI Det Commander did not brief the recommendation to the wing because he believed most of the recommendations had already been implemented and the wall idea had been discussed and rejected in October 1995.[42]

Upcoming Hajj Season

On 12 April 1996, Special Agent Reddecliff briefed Brig Gen Schwalier and key wing staff on the possible current threat including the significance of the upcoming religious Hajj season which would bring crowds to a mosque near Khobar Towers. He briefed a report on the possible large quantities of explosives that could be destined for coalition military targets with the potential for use in a bombing attack against any US facility within the region (same report Riyadh CIA Station Chief Briefed in March). Reports also suggested the threat of a bomb similar in size to that used in the OPM-SANG bombing.[43] Other incidents in April included letters received at the US Embassy threatening suicide bombings, a confrontation between a Royal Air Force member and a Middle Eastern man who brandished a handgun, and explosives found in a small cosmetic case at the Jeddah airport.[44]

Ten Possible Surveillance Incidents

From April through June 1996, the security police reported ten incidents of possible surveillance of Khobar Towers. These incidents were investigated by the AFOSI, the Saudi military police, and local civilian police. Five incidents were explained and dismissed. Four incidents were reports of surveillance where Middle Eastern men drove by or parked and observed the compound. Saudi police thought this was not

uncommon due to curiosity and an increased number of people in the area during the Hajj season. One incident in May was a possible threat indicator when a Jersey barrier on the east perimeter was rammed by a slow moving car. The driver may have been testing to see if the barrier could be moved.[45] This test of the barrier reinforced to the wing leaders that a penetration attack was the most likely threat.[46] Force protection actions taken included staking all Jersey barriers down with steel rods, stringing more concertina wire on perimeters, compiling a list to monitor Third Country National (TCN) workers, obtaining night vision scopes for observation posts, briefing residents of Buildings 131 and 133 to maintain increased vigilance, training explosive detection dogs by EOD personnel using 250 pound category bombs, increasing security police posts to 13 for day and 15 for night, initiating roof-top observation posts at night, updating building evacuation plans, and coordinating with the Saudis to implement a procedure to check license plates of suspicious vehicles.[47]

THREATCON BRAVO Versus CHARLIE

In April, Col Boyle, the Support Group Commander discussed in a wing staff meeting the possibility of going to THREATCON CHARLIE. THREATCON CHARLIE applies when "an incident occurs or when intelligence is received indicating some form of terrorist action against personnel and facilities is <u>imminent</u> [emphasis added]." The Security Police Commander stated that no Air Force security unit has the manpower to sustain CHARLIE for an extended period of time. The wing could go to THREATCON CHARLIE, but it would be immediately necessary to obtain more security force manpower. He also indicated that he did not believe THREATCON CHARLIE was necessary or justifiable because the threat was not imminent.[48] Based on the consensus

that appropriate security measures had already been taken and the then-known threat was not imminent, the decision was to remain at THREATCON BRAVO.[49]

May 1996

In addition to the surveillance activity and barrier ramming incident already noted, three other events occurred in May. Phone calls were made to the US Embassy threatening retaliation if the perpetrators of the OPM-SANG bombing were executed. A small incendiary device was detonated in a Bahrain shopping center resulting in no injuries. Finally, a French Air Force member reported a sniper attack on the French area of the compound, but no evidence was found to substantiate the event. Force protection actions taken included requesting increased civilian police patrols in the Khobar Towers area, placing a quick reaction security force of eight to ten security police on duty each night, placing more barriers at an access road, increasing personnel at the observation post on Building 131 from one to two persons, increasing hours of operation for the roof-top observation post on the Southwest corner of the compound (Building 201) to 24 hours a day, additional sandbagging of gates and bunkers, instituting a more in depth search of all vehicles, building eight defensive fighting positions, and conducting force protection staff assistance visits for 4404th (P) Wing sites at Kuwait City International Airport, Ali al Salem, and Al Jaber.[50] After the request for more Saudi patrols, roof-top sentries reported seeing more frequent patrols.[51]

Brig Gen Schwalier's End-of-Tour Report

Brig Gen Schwalier wrote his end-of-tour report in May to his commander, Lt Gen Jumper. The report suggested seven more positions for tour extension, including

that of security police commander. He believed more continuity in additional key positions would foster better working relationships with Saudi counterparts and aid in the accomplishment of long-term projects. The report did not directly mention force protection issues.[52]

Building Evacuation

Building 131 was evacuated on 9 May due to a reported suspicious package which turned out to be a tool box. Time required to complete evacuation was recorded as 6 minutes, however the IG/JAG investigation places the time interval at 10-15 minutes. This was the 13th suspicious package incident at the compound since November 1995. No evacuation drills were conducted for Khobar Towers other than actual evacuations.[53]

Execution of OPM-SANG Bombing Perpetrators

On 31 May, the perpetrators of the OPM/SANG bombing were beheaded.[54]

June 1996

In June, the US Embassy in Riyadh received another telephone threat. The AFOSI Det reported a transportation of weapons over the Saudi-Bahrain causeway with no information of type or quantity. Two vehicles were destroyed in Bahrain by the detonation of small black powder bombs. Force protection actions at Khobar Towers included increasing French and Saudi security police assistance on the gates, increasing the interior Saudi patrols from one to two, and installing a direct telephone line from the main gate to all observation posts and the M-60 gun emplacements.[55] In early June, Brig Gen Schwalier had the Security Police Squadron Commander remove the guards from the M-60 gun emplacements for political reasons (according to testimony from the squadron

commander). The M-60 guns were replaced with dummy barrels so outsiders would not know if the emplacements were manned or not.[56]

The Bombing

At 2149 hours on 25 June, security police sentries posted on the roof-top of Building 131 observed a septic tank truck and car traveling east-bound in the parking lot just outside the north perimeter fence. When the truck was abeam Building 131, it turned left away from the compound. The truck then began to back up into the hedges just outside the fence. Occupants of the truck jumped in the waiting car and sped off. Sentries radioed the situation into the security desk and began alerting building occupants in Building 131 of Khobar Towers. The three security personnel ran door to door, starting from the top floor and working their way down.[57] At 2155 hours, the bomb detonated.[58] Estimates of the bomb's size vary. One estimate states the bomb was equivalent to 3,000 - 8,000 pounds of TNT, but most likely 5,000 pounds.[59] Another estimate puts the bomb size at 20,000 - 30,000 pounds of TNT.[60]

Nineteen American service personnel were killed and more than 200 injured. Hundreds of Saudi citizens and TCNs living in the complex and immediate vicinity were also injured, and some probably killed.[61] The bomb blast blew out windows throughout the compound and created a crater 85 feet wide and 35 feet deep. The blast was felt in Bahrain, 20 miles away.[62]

Aftermath

By December 1996, Secretary of Defense Perry had received both a DOD and Air Force report of investigation on the Khobar Towers incident. The DOD report was

authored by retired Army General Wayne A. Downing and had concluded that "the chain of command of the 4404th Wing (Provisional) did not take all measures possible to protect the forces at Khobar Towers."[63] The Air Force report was written by Air Force Lt Gen James F. Record and he found that "Brig Gen Schwalier performed his duties in a reasonable and prudent manner."[64] The Deputy Secretary of Defense asked the Air Force to prepare another report clarifying certain points in the Record Report and to readdress accountability. At the time of the bombing, Brig Gen Schwalier's promotion to Major General had already been confirmed by Congress with a pin-on date of 1 January 1997. Since the matter was not considered closed by the pin-on date, the Air Force Vice Chief of Staff asked Brig Gen Schwalier to sign a letter delaying his promotion until all questions could be answered to the Secretary of Defense. Brig Gen Schwalier agreed that he did not want to proceed with the promotion until the Khobar Tower matter was closed. The Air Force Inspector General and Judge Advocate General submitted their report in April 1997 in response to questions raised by the Deputy Secretary of Defense. That report concluded Brig Gen Schwalier and all those in the force protection chain of command "executed their responsibilities in a reasonable and prudent manner...no administrative sanctions are warranted."[65] In July 1997, Secretary Cohen issued his report on accountability that stated "there were lapses with respect to force protection at Khobar Towers for which Brig Gen Schwalier must be held accountable," and he would not support Brig Gen Schwalier's promotion to Major General.[66]

Since the tragic bombing at Khobar Towers, there has been a great resurgence in the focus on force protection throughout all the services. The Air Force in particular has made significant force protection changes with the implementation of the

recommendations on training, intelligence, and security forces structure from the Downing and Record Reports. These actions include the restructuring of the Air Force Security Police and the creation of a new force protection agency. The Force Protection Division, the 820th Security Force Group (SFG), and the Force Protection Battlelab have all been newly established at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. The new organizations integrate expertise from security forces, intelligence, Office of Special Investigation, and representatives from the Army, Navy, and Royal Air Force to provide commanders with enhanced force protection measures and resources. The 820th SFG provides a ready, rapidly deployable, highly trained force, tailored to the unique force protection needs of an Expeditionary Air Force.[67]

Notes

[1] Brig Gen (Ret) Schwalier E-Mail to authors, subject: Draft Feedback, 29 March 1998.

[2] House Committee on National Security, *The Khobar Towers Bombing Incident*, 14 August 1996, 3.

[3] Gen (Ret) Wayne A. Downing, *Force Protection Assessment of USCENTCOM AOR and Khobar Towers, Report of the Downing Assessment Task Force* (Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, 30 August 1996), 48.

[4] Lt Gen James F. Record, *Independent Review of the Khobar Towers Bombing, Part A* (Washington D.C.: US Air Force, 31 October 1996), 5. Downing, 17.

[5] Downing, 21.

[6] Brig Gen (Ret) Terryl J. Schwalier, interviewed by authors at his home, 12 February 1998.

[7] Downing, 16.

Brig Gen (Ret) Schwalier has wing historical data that indicates the move to Khobar Towers from Al Kharj occurred in 1991. Schwalier E-mail, Draft Feedback

[8] Downing, 18.

[9] Record, Part B, 7.

[10] Schwalier interview.

[11] Downing, 29.

[12] Ibid., 54.

[13] Schwalier E-mail, Draft Feedback.

[14] Schwalier interview.

Notes

[15] Record, Part B, 22.

Brig Gen (Ret) Schwalier stated to authors that nine, not seven positions were recommended and approved for extension to one year. The additional two positions were Liaison Officer to ARCENT and Intelligence. Schwalier E-mail, Draft Feedback.

[16] Downing, 54.

[17] Record, Part B, 43.

[18] Schwalier E-mail, Draft Feedback.

[19] Ibid., Appendix 1, 33.

[20] Swope, 79.

[21] Record, Appendix 1, 3.

[22] There are four THREATCON levels, ALPHA through DELTA. Definitions: THREATCON ALPHA- Applies when there is a general threat of possible terrorist activity against personnel and facilities, the nature of which are unpredictable, and circumstances do not justify full implementation of THREATCON BRAVO measures. However, it may be necessary to implement certain measures for higher THREATCONs resulting from intelligence received or as a deterrent. The measures in this THREATCON must be capable of being maintained indefinitely. THREATCON BRAVO- Applies when an increased and more predictable threat of terrorist activity exists. The measures in this THREATCON must be capable of being maintained for weeks without causing undue hardship, affecting operational capability, or aggravating relations with local authorities. THREATCON CHARLIE- Applies when an incident occurs or intelligence is received indicating some form of terrorist action against personnel and facilities is imminent. Implementation of this measure for more than a short period probably creates hardship and affects the peacetime activities of the unit and its personnel. THREATCON DELTA- Implementation applies in the immediate area where terrorist attack has occurred or when intelligence has been received that terrorist action against a specific location or person is likely. House, *The Khobar Towers Bombing Incident*, Appendix C.

[23] Record, Appendix 1, 34. Schwalier interview.

Force protection measures listed throughout the Chronology are representative and not inclusive of all force protection measures taken by the 4404th Wing (P).

[24] Ibid., Appendix 1, 6.

[25] Downing, 51.

[26] Record, Part B, 15.

[27] Schwalier interview.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Downing, 54.

[30] Record, Appendix 1, 44.

[31] Four million dollars was the original estimate Brig Gen Schwalier used to base his decision to defer the Mylar project and place it in the Five-Year Facilities Improvement Plan. It should be noted that when the Mylar project estimate was actually transferred to the Five Year Plan, it was entered as $50,000. Swope, Volume III, 4Q, 1-23

[32] Ibid., Part B, 38.

Notes

[33] Ibid., Part B, 39.
[34] Swope, 70.
[35] Schwalier interview.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Downing, 52.
[38] Record, Appendix 1, 22.
[39] Downing, 52. Record, Appendix 1, 24-25.
[40] Swope, 139.
[41] Record, Appendix 1, 29.
[42] Ibid., Appendix 1, 32.
[43] Downing, 44. Record, Appendix 1, 53, 60-61.
[44] Schwalier interview.
[45] Downing, 54. Record, Appendix 1, 20, 69.
[46] Schwalier interview.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Swope, 133.
[49] Record, Appendix 1, 47.
[50] Schwalier interview.
[51] Downing, 54.
[52] Record, Appendix 1, 22.
[53] Ibid., Appendix 1, 51. Swope, 60, 66.
[54] Downing, 54.
[55] Schwalier interview.
[56] Swope, Vol III, 4S-33.
[57] House, *The Khobar Towers Bombing Incident*, 1-2.
[58] Downing, 54.
According to Brig Gen (Ret) Schwalier, detonation time was 2125 hours, not 2155 hours. Schwalier E-mail, Draft Feedback.
[59] Ibid., 1.
[60] Record, Appendix 1, 54.
[61] The Saudi government has never said how many Saudi citizens living near the north end of Khobar Towers were injured or killed.
Schwalier interview.
[62] House, *The Khobar Towers Bombing Incident*, 2.
[63] Downing, viii.
[64] Record, Part B, 103.
[65] Swope, 150.
[66] William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense, *Personal Accountability for Force Protection at Khobar Towers*, (Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, 31 July 1997), 10, 13.
[67] "Force Protection," 9 January 1998, on-line, Internet, available from http://www.issues.af.mil/forcprot.html

Chapter 3

Analysis

In order to lay the ground work for the next chapter entitled "Considerations for Commanders," this chapter examines three questions that raise important issues for commanders. The first question looks at why the two DOD reports come to conclusions different from the two Air Force reports. This is accomplished by comparing selected findings and conclusions from the reports regarding the state of force protection at the 4404th Wing (P) prior to the bombing. The issue raised concerns the standards of performance commanders are expected to meet. The second question examines whether enough emphasis was placed on preparation for a stand-off perimeter bomb attack. The analysis uses a risk management model to understand what factors influenced Brig Gen Schwalier and his subordinate commanders to take the actions they did. Primary issues include how commanders manage risk, and assessing when a temporary deployment becomes permanent? The final question asks if Khobar Towers was a repeat of the 1983 Bombing in Beirut and could have been more accurately predicted. Similarities and differences are compared in the areas of intelligence, personnel turnover, accountability and oversight, and concentration versus dispersal of personnel. Issues include command structures that are built for missions of limited duration, but are maintained for indefinite

periods, and the ever increasing importance of the full spectrum of political and cultural influences that may affect mission considerations.

Why Do The Reports Come To Differing Conclusions?

The Downing Report states that Brig Gen Schwalier "did not adequately protect his forces from a terrorist attack."[1] The Cohen Report states that "while the report [Record Report] persuasively resolved criminal issues...the report had not thoroughly discussed the question of whether administrative sanctions were appropriate."[2] Secretary Cohen further concludes "that there were lapses with respect to force protection at Khobar Towers for which Brig Gen Schwalier must be held accountable."[3] In contrast, the two Air Force reports come to much different conclusions. The Record Report states Brig Gen Schwalier "performed his duties in a reasonable and prudent manner...he was not derelict in the performance of his duties."[4] The IG/JAG Report concludes that Brig Gen Schwalier and all those in the force protection chain of command "executed their responsibilities in a reasonable and prudent manner...no administrative sanctions are warranted."[5] Assuming the authors of these reports are all looking at the same facts, how is it possible for the two DOD reports and the two Air Force reports to reach such different conclusions? This question is addressed by comparing selected facts and conclusions. The Downing Report presents 26 findings (See Appendix A) with recommended solutions. There is general consensus among the four report authors on the majority of the findings of the Downing Report, however on a few critical findings, interpretations differ. This section looks at the facts available and compares some of the more important conclusions that do not agree.

Stated Report Objectives

The Downing Report. The charter of the Downing Report emphasizes that the assessment was "...not a criminal investigation." The Task Force assessed the following areas: adequacy of security at Khobar Towers, the division of responsibility between Saudi authorities and USCENTCOM for security, as well as the division of responsibility between DOD and the host country authorities elsewhere in the region, sufficiency and effectiveness of intelligence about terrorism in the AOR, adequacy of USCENTCOM's security policies, adequacy of funding and resources for security, adequacy of coordination on intelligence and anti-terrorism countermeasures, and recommendations on how to prevent new attacks, or minimize the damage of successful attacks.[6]

The Record Report. The charter for members of the Record Assessment Team was to consider and make recommendations on issues raised by the Downing Report, and make recommendations regarding how the Air Force organizes, trains and equips to support forces deployed with USCENTCOM, with a focus on force protection. Additionally, Lt Gen Record was designated the disciplinary review authority regarding actions or omissions by Air Force personnel associated with this incident.[7]

The IG/JAG Report. The IG/JAG Report responded to a specific tasking from the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Air Force, and the Air Force Chief of Staff to explain and/or analyze two separate areas. The first area requested further explanation or factual development of eight specific issues such as "develop additional facts concerning evacuation planning, practice, and evacuation." The second area requested "further consideration of the propriety of administrative action", even though

they had accepted Lt Gen Record's conclusion that no Uniform Code of Military Justice action was warranted.[8]

The Cohen Report. The Executive Summary of the Cohen Report states that since the tragedy, the DOD goals have been to: determine what happened that day, assess implications for future force protection efforts, make needed improvements in force protection, and assess issues of personal accountability for force protection at Khobar Towers. The issue of personal accountability is the subject of the Cohen Report, and Secretary Cohen gives his conclusions on accountability.[9] The Cohen report did not use any additional independent investigations. Findings and conclusions were drawn from material in the other three reports.[10]

Comparison of Facts and Conclusions

Some of the key disagreements between the four reports are:

- Adequacy of Available Intelligence
- Mylar Installation
- Force Protection Versus Quality of Life
- Chain of Command Support of the Wing
- Building Evacuation and Warning Capability
- THREATCON BRAVO Versus CHARLIE
- Wing Focus on a Penetration-Type Attack

These disagreements are discussed in some detail below. In general, the two Air Force reports essentially agree except on the issue of practice emergency evacuations. The DOD reports essentially agree except the Cohen Report plays down the role of

intelligence information available prior to the attack and bases the accountability decision primarily on what the Secretary considers reasonable measures to protect troops from a stand-off bomb attack.[11] Both the Downing and the Record Reports agree that insufficient attention has been given to antiterrorism measures and force protection throughout DOD, and agree for the most part on how to rectify the situation. Overall, there are few substantive disagreements between all four reports regarding the facts. Some testimonies are interpreted differently, there are disagreements among expert opinion (such as estimated bomb size), and the usefulness of available intelligence is disputed, but for the most part, the facts stated in all four reports are the same and not disputed. The differing conclusions may stem from the perspectives taken by each author.

The Four Report Authors' Perspectives. When comparing the facts and conclusion, it is important to keep in mind the perspective that the authors take in their investigations. One possible reason the reports reach different conclusions on Brig Gen Schwalier's duty performance boils down to the perspective taken by the report authors. The DOD authors (Gen Downing and Secretary Cohen) appear to take a perspective after-the-fact with the benefit of near perfect information since the event had already occurred. Given all the facts that are known after the incident, they believe that Brig Gen Schwalier "could and should have done more to prepare the 4404th to respond to a perimeter bomb."[12] The Air Force authors (Lt Gen Record, Lt Gen Swope, and Maj Gen Hawley) say the issue is not whether more could have been done, but "whether those individuals whose duties encompassed force protection met the standards of performance expected of them and acted reasonably and prudently under the circumstances as they existed."[13] The

IG/JAG Report talks about "the fog of war"- the Clausewitzian term used to describe the uncertainty imposed on a situation by the constantly changing environment of combat. Commanders have to deal with situations "as they are" in working towards the desired outcome.[14] Lt Gen Record states "risks are inherent in military operations...expecting Force Protection efforts to result in zero casualties could well lead to a situation where military missions are undertaken worldwide only when there are no risks of casualties, or only when such risks are extremely minimal."[15] Secretary Cohen agrees that commanders cannot "be asked to meet a standard of zero defects," but after weighing all the facts, he believes more could and should have been done to lower the level of risk.[16] Lt Gen Record concludes his findings by making the point that "this nation must never forget that the bombing of Khobar Towers was not an accident--it was a cold-blooded terrorist act of murder."[17]

Adequacy of Available Intelligence. Of all the findings and conclusions from the Downing and Record Reports, those regarding clear indications of an impending attack are some of the most important to an examination of adequate force protection and probably farthest apart. However, both reports do essentially agree that the intelligence structure in the AOR needs to change. Gen Downing states that Brig Gen Schwalier "was not well served by an *ad hoc* intelligence structure," and develops eight formal findings and recommendations to address that problem.[18] Lt Gen Record makes inputs on how these recommendations should be implemented, and adds additional recommendations, but for the most part agrees.

The major disagreement centers around the specificity of information that was available to indicate that Khobar Towers was a target for a stand-off attack. Since most

of the facts that would shed light on this disagreement are classified and cannot be used in this analysis, only the findings and recommendations are presented for comparison. Gen Downing states that the wing had clear warning that Khobar Towers was a "specific site of concern", but the Record and the IG/JAG Reports conclude no information was available that would single out Khobar Towers.[19] According to the IG/JAG Report, the primary piece of intelligence information that pointed to Khobar Towers as a possible target was a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) article dated 17 June 1996. This article was solely based on information that the AFOSI Det, 4404th Wing (P) had sent up to the DIA on the ten surveillance incidents from April - June 1996. Since local wing AFOSI agents had more detailed information on these incidents, it was concluded that this report did not provide any new information or really single out Khobar Towers.[20]

The Downing Report also points to a message sent by the AFOSI Det Commander at the 4404th Wing (P) to Headquarters AFOSI on 4 April 1996 which said "security measures here [Khobar Towers] are outstanding, which in my view would lead a would be terrorist to attempt an attack from a position outside the perimeter...and if a truck parks close to the fence line, and the driver makes a quick getaway, I think the building should be cleared immediately."[21] Gen Downing says this should have keyed Brig Gen Schwalier and his staff to the increased risk of a stand-off attack. Lt Gen Record counters that "with the benefit of hindsight, the message may be viewed as "prophetic", [but] at the time, it merely identified a known risk which the wing was thoroughly engaged in addressing."[22] According to that report, many of Brig Gen Schwalier's added security measures, such as roof-top sentries and increased Saudi patrols, were in direct response to the AFOSI Det Commander's assessment.[23]

In an interview with David Winn, Consul General of the Dhahran Consulate at the time of the bombing, he said he and his staff had the same intelligence information as Brig Gen Schwalier and thought that if any terrorist attack was to take place, it would have been in Riyadh. Mr Winn had close daily contacts with Saudi security officials in Dhahran and was certain the Eastern Region was in no danger. He stated that everyone at the Consulate thought Brig Gen Schwalier had "gone way overboard" on force protection measures in an area that had no real threat.[24]

Mylar Installation. The January 1996 Vulnerability Assessment recommended that Mylar be applied to windows of perimeter buildings at Khobar Towers. The Downing and Cohen Reports point to the deferment of this project as an example that Brig Gen Schwalier did not do all he could to protect forces under his command. Gen Downing states that this is an example of how "Brig Gen Schwalier was informed of a number of vulnerabilities, but he concentrated almost exclusively on preventing a penetration bomb attack...[and] failed to raise any force protection issues to his superiors."[25] He further states there was no reason to defer the Mylar project to a later year since in previous years unfunded requirements had always been approved by USCENTAF or Air Combat Command.[26] Secretary Cohen states "the decision not to install Mylar is further evidence that the wing commander did not effectively analyze how to minimize the risk of injury to his forces in the event of a perimeter bomb attack."[27]

The Record and IG/JAG Reports come to the different conclusion that the deferment of the Mylar project was reasonable. According to Lt Gen Record, Brig Gen Schwalier's decision to defer the $4 million project was based on "a variety of factors, including the then-known threat, the effects of other security enhancements which had

been or were being implemented to mitigate risks, the cost and complexity of the project, the absence of DOD or Air Force requirements for the installation of Mylar, the fact that Saudi approval would have been necessary, and other competing priorities."[28] The IG/JAG Report states that the decision was reasonable "based on the lack of specific guidance or directives, the other measures taken, the perceived threat, and finite resources."[29]

The lack of Mylar on building windows has been raised in virtually every newspaper and magazine article on Khobar Towers as an important issue when examining accountability. The Mylar issue has been used by some as a "litmus test" to indicate Brig Gen Schwalier was not properly protecting his forces from a stand-off attack since Mylar was recommended but not immediately installed. However, the lack of Mylar may not be a good test to prove negligence for three reasons.

First, Brig Gen Schwalier *had* accepted the recommendation to install Mylar and developed a plan for its installation. The question was where should that project fit with the other force protection enhancements that were being implemented? Mylar would be a piece of the force protection puzzle, but was it a critical piece that required immediate action? These were problems that Brig Gen Schwalier and his staff had to work as they made hundreds of force protection decisions. When commanders make any decision they use the best information available at the time to weigh the perceived benefits against the costs in relation to other pressing and competing priorities. Brig Gen Schwalier and his staff had concluded that the Mylar should be installed, but they believed the compound could withstand the perceived current and anticipated threat and there were more pressing issues for the present year. The Mylar project was complex and had to be done correctly

or blasts could send intact windows and frames flying, possibly causing more serious blunt-trauma injuries. Based on many factors such as the then-known threat and the complexity of the project, the Mylar project did not stand out as an enhancement that would be of immediate benefit to the wing when compared to other actions that could be taken. Certainly Brig Gen Schwalier's decision was consistent with other commanders and government officials in the region since no other installation had Mylar installed. The new OPM-SANG building was in the process of installing Mylar, but this project was not complete until October 1996. The Embassy in Saudi had requested Mylar but was turned down by the State Department because the threat level was not deemed high enough.[30]

Second, Mylar would not have substantially changed the number of fatalities in the Khobar Tower bombing. The Wright Laboratory reviewed the Downing data and concluded that Mylar would not have prevented any of the 18 deaths in Building 131, however it might have prevented one fatality in Building 133.[31] Mylar can reduce injuries due to flying glass and it was important to capture the requirement in the Five-Year Facilities Improvement Plan. However, in relation to the other steps that could be taken immediately to improve force protection, the Mylar project was one more additional enhancement and not an improvement that could be implemented quickly.

Third, using any action or lack of action to prove a commander "could and should have done more" may not be a sound test <u>since more can always be done</u>. No matter what risk a commander is working to mitigate, there are always more measures that could be taken if time and resources were unlimited. However, time and resources are not unlimited and commanders must make trade-offs and select measures that will have the

largest impact to mitigate risk. After-the-fact in any incident it is always possible to find that one additional measure that would have marginally enhanced safety.

If Mylar installation is a critical indicator that proves a commander is taking force protection seriously and doing all he or she can do, then shouldn't all federal buildings in the US and abroad have Mylar installed? The Oklahoma City bombing indicates all US federal installations could potentially be targeted. According to the head of the FBI's terrorism section, "another Oklahoma City could happen tomorrow."[32] If another attack on a federal facility occurs similar to the Oklahoma City bombing, will the commander or administrator of that facility be held negligent because he or she did not press to install Mylar immediately after that 1995 bombing? If investigations of future terrorist acts follow the same logic used in the DOD reports regarding Mylar, then officials responsible for force protection will certainly be chastised for not doing all they could have done regardless of what steps they have taken.

Force Protection Versus Quality of Life. The Downing Report states that the January 1996 Vulnerability Assessment indirectly mentioned movement of personnel to safer buildings. According to the report, the Support Group Commander, Col Boyle, told investigators that the reason personnel were not moved to the interior was because it would have adversely affected the quality of life at Khobar Towers had the wing been forced to put two or three persons into each room of the interior buildings.[33] Gen Downing is critical of what he considers a decision to put quality of life before safety of personnel. Secretary Cohen states "although relocating personnel from perimeter buildings could conceivably have exposed them to great danger in the event of a different

type of terrorist attack, such as a penetration bomb, Brig Gen Schwalier's judgment can be questioned for not considering this option..."[34]

Lt Gen Record says quality of life was not traded for force protection. According to the Record Report, the comment by Col Boyle regarding quality of life was taken out of context and interpreted wrong. The Downing investigators asked Col Boyle if, in hindsight, he "would take a less quality of life by going to a place like Jack and Jill Village" that was in a more rural area? In other words, would he accept a lower quality of life for personnel if moved to a rural environment. Lt Gen Record states that "Col Boyle's affirmative response must be considered in the context of his discussing the advantages of having facilities located in a rural, rather than an urban, environment." Khobar Towers was in an urban environment and that was the situation the wing had to deal with. Lt Gen Record also points out that "although there was a potential risk to airmen in rooms facing the northern perimeter, it represented only one of the many risks military people faced. Crowding personnel into interior-facing rooms, versus dispersing them, would have increased the risks from a penetration attack or a man-pack bomb, which the known intelligence indicated were the more likely scenarios."[35] Lt Gen Jumper, Commander USCENTAF, voiced this concern about a densely packed interior versus dispersal in interviews with Record investigators. It should be noted that the issue of interior packing of personnel versus dispersal was never discussed at the wing level prior to the bombing because Col Boyle and Brig Gen Schwalier did not believe clearing exterior rooms was necessary based on the then-known or anticipated threat.[36]

Chain of Command Support of the Wing. Finding 19 of the Downing Report (see Appendix A) states that the chain of command, starting with the Joint Chiefs of

Staff, did not provide adequate guidance and support to the Commander, 4404th Wing (P). He says as the mission expanded, the mandate became indefinite, and the threat to US forces changed, the Joint Chiefs of Staff did not challenge the command relationships, structure, or resources available.[37] There are 17 examples listed in the report of inadequate support from the DOD down through USCENTCOM and USCENTAF, but this section will address only two areas that were discussed at length in all reports: rotation policy and inspections.

Rotation Policy. Most tours in the wing were 90 days in length (91% of personnel were on 90-day temporary duty assignments). The Security Police Commander, AFOSI agents, and the Wing Intelligence officers were all assigned on 90 day tours. Gen Downing states "these extremely short tours adversely affected the continuity and effectiveness of force protection teams and individuals."[38] According to Gen Downing, Security Police did not have the opportunity to develop the teamwork critical to security operations, intelligence personnel could not develop or maintain effective liaison with host nation counterparts, and the constant rotations had an adverse impact on the continuity of operations and the carry-through of any initiatives. Gen Downing points out that a review was directed after the Blackhawk helicopter shoot-down in April 1994 by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff for each theater commander-in-chief to "review Joint Task Force operations to ensure that each is conducted in accordance with published joint doctrine and to establish programs of regular oversight of all Joint Task Forces." From this review, the Commander-in-Chief, USCENTCOM determined that "the program to require "seamless" transitions of individuals at Joint Task Force-Southwest Asia and the 4404th Wing (Provisional) ensured continuity for commanders, staff personnel, and

operating forces."[39] Gen Downing disagrees that continuity was sufficient based on this seamless transition.

The Record Report's primary response to the rotation policy issue is that Brig Gen Schwalier was working hard to increase tour lengths of key positions. Brig Gen Schwalier converted members of his key staff including the Vice Wing Commander, the commanders of the Services, Transportation, and Reconnaissance Squadrons, the commanders of the Medical Group and the 4406th Support Flight, as well as the Chief of the Wing Operations Center to one year tours. In his end-of-tour report, he recommended seven more positions for extension.[40] The Record Report does not directly address whether the chain of command above the wing had set too short a rotation policy.

The IG/JAG Report takes the view point that although there are disadvantages to a 90-day rotation policy, there were no indications that the policy contributed to the bombing. For instance, the report says all evidence indicates the security police functioned together very well during this tragedy and longer tours would not have necessarily improved their performance.[41] The report points to several factors that favor 90-day rotations. Consistent with Saudi desires, USCENTCOM wanted to avoid the appearance of having permanent forces in the region. Saudis perceived one-year tours as permanent. Short tours also lessened the impact on contributing organizations.[42] The Cohen Report also concludes that rotation policy was not a factor for determining accountability in this incident. It says the policy does "not appear to have been causally related to the bomb attack or to the casualties that resulted from the attack."[43]

Inspections. Gen Downing states that no member of USCENTCOM or USCENTAF chain of command inspected force protection at Khobar Towers. He says no

physical security inspections were conducted in the region and of the vulnerability assessments that were performed, none were reviewed by higher headquarters.[44]

Lt Gen Record responds that commanders in USCENTCOM, USCENTAF, and ACC had inspected Khobar Towers and were engaged in force protection matters. He further states many high ranking officials in USCENTCOM, USCENTAF and ACC visited and inspected force protection at Khobar Towers, several who were in the chain of command. This included Lt Gen Jumper (operational chain of command), Gen Ralston, Commander, ACC, Maj Gen Hurd, J-3, USCENTCOM, and two JTF-SWA Commanders, Maj Gen Franklin, and Maj Gen Anderson (both reported directly to the Commander, USCENTCOM).[45] The visiting USCENTCOM and JTF-SWA officials were part of the command structure that provided tactical (not operational) control of the wing. Also, the July 1995 Vulnerability Assessment was reviewed at Headquarters USCENTAF by Lt Col Traister before he deployed as the 4404th Security Police Commander.[46]

As a result of the OPM-SANG bombing, USCINCCENT issued a Letter of Instruction in April 1996 assigning the JTF-SWA Commander the authority for inspecting and overseeing force protection issues for the wing even though JTF-SWA did not have operational control.[47] The IG/JAG Report concludes that it was proper for USCENTCOM to delegate inspections and oversight on force protection to JTF-SWA. According to the report, although JTF-SWA had only tactical control over the wing, this did not cause command and control problems because of the good relationship between the commanders in the AOR. The Commander, JTF-SWA inspected the wing on several occasions and JTF-SWA complied with their obligation to provide oversight and

coordination of force protection issues. According to the report, USCENTAF had limited personnel to provide direct assistance, but they insured the necessary experts were available.[48]

As with the rotation policy, the Cohen Report also diverts accountability away from the chain of command above the wing on the issue of inspections. It states that "contrary to suggestions in the Downing Report, a number of Brig Gen Schwalier's superiors visited the installation one or more times to review its security and discussed force protection issues at length with Brig Gen Schwalier."[49] The report says that if Brig Gen Schwalier believed he needed additional assistance, he should have requested it from his superiors in the chain of command. Brig Gen Schwalier's superiors who were in most cases thousand of miles away could not have been expected to second-guess the commander's decisions. It should be noted, however, that this conclusion does not take into account the fact that inspections of units are usually planned by higher headquarters and not necessarily requested by a wing.

It is true that Lt Gen Jumper had visited the wing and he was in the operational chain of command. So why did Gen Downing state that no members of the chain of command had inspected Khobar Towers when the Record, IG/JAG, and Cohen Reports state there were inspections by Brig Gen Schwalier's superiors? Differing interpretations of Brig Gen Schwalier's "superiors" is one possible reason. All the officials that visited, other than Lt Gen Jumper, were not in the operational chain but were in the command structure for tactical control. These visits were considered just as important by the authors of the Record, IG/JAG, and Cohen reports since USCENTCOM had ultimate responsibility for the AOR and the USCINCCENT had issued a Letter of Instruction

giving oversight to the JTF-SWA Commander on force protection issues (although there may have been a potential for confusion since JTF-SWA did not possess the authority to order specific force protection actions).

Another possibility is Gen Downing may have been looking for inspections that were formal, with written findings, and not just walk-through visits. Lt Gen Record and Secretary Cohen refer to inspections that include tour-type visits. Tour-type visits are important for morale and for the higher level commander to assess resource needs, but may not be sufficient to determine force protection capabilities or compliance within an organization.

Building Evacuation and Warning Capability. The Downing Report uses the issue of evacuation and warning procedures as an important omission by Brig Gen Schwalier and an example of not protecting his forces from a terrorist attack. The criticism centers on the lack of pre-planned evacuation drills, no warning system other than Giant Voice, and floor-by-floor manual notification. According to that report, several actual evacuations had taken place for suspicious packages, but no drills were conducted, apparently in deference to Saudi sensitivities.[50] The Giant Voice warning system was designed during Operation DESERT STORM to alert personnel of SCUD missile attacks and was not appropriate for use in a terrorist attack. The system was barely audible inside the buildings and hard to understand outside the buildings. The procedure to activate the Giant Voice required permission from the commander, was unwieldy, and could not be placed into action quickly.[51] There were no other alarm systems in the US buildings and notification could only be accomplished by manually knocking on doors.

Secretary Cohen centers his entire accountability decision around four points concerning the evacuation and warning procedures. The first and second points cite the Giant Voice system and the manual door-to-door alerting system similar to Gen Downing's criticism. The third point asserts that evacuation planning was deficient. According to Secretary Cohen, there was nothing published on what to do in the event of a stand-off attack. Therefore, personnel did not know where to go or what to do once notified of an impending threat. Fortunately, on the night of the bombing, many of the people evacuating were on the back side of the building in the stair well and received some protection from the blast. The last point is the lack of evacuation drills. The report states that without the drills, the wing did not know if the evacuation plan and warning system were adequate in case of a stand-off attack.[52]

The Record Report points to the actual evacuations (one as recent as 9 May 1996 for Building 131) as appropriate substitutes for drills. The recorded evacuation time on 9 May was six minutes, which was considered as fast as possible by the Wing Fire Chief. One reason the wing had not conducted evacuation drills was that personnel worked in shifts around-the-clock and planned drills would have interrupted crew rest. Lt Gen Record also states that personnel were well aware of evacuation plans. Articles were routinely published in the base paper and everyone was briefed on evacuation procedures during the mandatory "Right Start" briefings attended by all incoming personnel.[53] A fire alarm system had been included in the Five-Year Facilities Improvement Plan that Brig Gen Schwalier started. There were no DOD standards for warning systems and a fire alarm was not a high priority because the buildings were constructed out of concrete.

USCENTAF Fire Protection Staff Assistance Visits in January 1995 and January 1996 did not state that fire alarms were needed for the buildings.[54]

The IG/JAG Report does not view the evacuation issue in the same light. It states that evacuation and attack procedures were in place, however practice emergency evacuations were required but not accomplished. Unlike the Record Report, the IG/JAG Report did not consider the actual evacuations a substitute for the required drills. This left the wing with an inflated estimate of its evacuation capability. The report concludes the lack of accurate evacuation estimates did not, however impact the wing's specific response on 25 June 1996.[55] The report further states that according to regulation, it would be inappropriate to use a fire alarm for purposes other than warning of a fire. For attack warning, the wing relied on Giant Voice which is common to virtually all Air Force installations and well known to all Air Force members. According to the report, while an alarm system in the building designed specifically for attack or bomb threats may have moved more people towards the exits, due to the short time available the night of the bombing, the system would most likely have not yielded increased survivability.[56]

THREATCON BRAVO Versus CHARLIE. The 4404th Wing (P) had been manned at minimum manning levels. This policy was intended to reduce the visibility of US personnel in Saudi Arabia, limit risk to personnel, reduce the impact on the permanent units where the personnel were assigned, and insure full commitment of personnel during their temporary duty in the AOR.[57] The Downing Report states that this minimum manning level did not give the wing sufficient capability to respond to a changing threat. As an example, the report cites a decision not to increase the THREATCON from BRAVO to CHARLIE in April of 1996. Increasing THREATCON levels required

additions in normal guard force manning that was commensurate with an enhanced state of alert. Gen Downing concludes "the decision not to go to THREATCON CHARLIE appeared to have been based on the availability of security forces and their ability to sustain operations for an extended period of time, rather than what was required by the threat."[58] He says if the threat level required more manning, Brig Gen Schwalier should have asked for the additional manning rather than let the manning level drive the proper state of alert. The Cohen Report does not address the THREATCON issue.

Lt Gen Record states the decision to not increase the THREATCON was not based on manning but on an assessment of the imminent threat. THREATCON CHARLIE is a state of alert used for threats that are imminent. The Support Group Commander had raised the issue in a staff meeting, but the consensus was that appropriate security measures had already been taken and the then-known threat was not imminent, therefore the decision was to remain at THREATCON BRAVO.[59]

The IG/JAG Report says that during the staff discussions, the Security Police Commander stated that no AF security unit has the manpower to sustain CHARLIE for an extended period of time. The wing could go to THREATCON CHARLIE, but it would be immediately necessary to obtain more security force manpower. He also indicated that he did not believe THREATCON CHARLIE was necessary or justifiable because the threat was not imminent.[60] The report also points out that the THREATCON was coordinated with JTF-SWA, the Army component commander (ARCENT), the British and the French. All agreed with the THREATCON level. Since indications of an attack were not imminent, the IG/JAG Report concludes that THREATCON BRAVO was appropriate.[61]

Wing Focus on Penetration-Type Attack. A terrorist attack against personnel assigned to Khobar Towers could be categorized into at least three types: a penetration attack where a man-carried or vehicle-carried bomb penetrates the interior, a stand-off attack where a bomb is detonated on the perimeter or the compound comes under fire by weapons such as mortars, and finally attacks against personnel while outside the compound. Gen Downing states that extensive force protection measures had been taken to defend against a penetration-type attack (measures listed in chronology). However the wing did not take adequate protective measures to meet other viable terrorist threats and antiterrorism procedures did not extend outside the compound.[62] According to Gen Downing, examples of inadequate measures included:

- Deferment of Mylar installation
- Personnel were not moved to less vulnerable buildings
- Decision to not initiate THREATCON CHARLIE was based on manning level rather than what was required by the threat
- Evacuation and warning procedures were inadequate
- Expansion of stand-off distance between the perimeter and the buildings was not appealed to Brig Gen Schwalier's Saudi counterpart or referred to his superiors
- Security police did not receive special training
- Third country nationals (TCN) were used extensively even though the Vulnerability Assessment warned of the security threat posed by TCNs.[63]

The issues regarding Mylar, movement of personnel to less vulnerable buildings, THREATCON, and evacuation and warning procedures have been covered earlier in this

section. Findings regarding stand-off distance, security police training, and threat of TCNs are now discussed. According to Lt Gen Record, the expansion of stand-off distance between the fence and buildings would have been pursued by Brig Gen Schwalier with his Saudi counterpart or elevated to his superiors without reservation if Brig Gen Schwalier felt it was necessary.[64] Brig Gen Schwalier had stated in an IG/JAG interview that "the threat was not perceived to have required that....[and] there were so many improvements going on in other areas it was not something that I felt as though it was required to be done."[65] The IG/JAG Report states that in order to make up for not moving the perimeter, the Saudis would increase patrols with a more active vigilance. This included increasing patrol coverage to 24 hours a day, checking suspicious license plates, and initiating an undercover police operation outside Khobar Towers' north perimeter. The IG/JAG Report also points out the 80 foot distance between the parking lot and building 131 met the suggested guidance of the applicable DOD instruction and the stand-off distance was consistent with those of other US occupied buildings in the AOR.[66]

Regarding security police training, the Downing Report says no special training program was given on the local threat, and terrorist response exercises were not conducted.[67] However, according to an IG/JAG interview with the Security Police Commander, the security police squadron did conduct scenario-based training despite the lack of training personnel. From April to June 1996, training included a response exercise to test patrols, an M-60 machine gun exercise at the main gate, and an exercise with vehicles to secure the main gate. Both Air Force reports state that no formal training

was available because the unit was not staffed to perform this function since the wing was provisional. Security police deploying from stateside were expected to arrive trained.[68]

TCNs are used extensively throughout Saudi for manual labor tasks. The Khobar Towers compound used these workers who were supplied by the Saudis. Gen Downing is critical of their use after the 1996 Vulnerability Assessment stated they were a risk.[69] The Record Report only says that the wing took a number of significant steps to protect against this threat.[70] The IG/JAG Report states that several Battle Staff Directives were issued to address the threat. Among them were orders that all TCN vehicles be searched. Personnel were advised to be suspicious and challenge strangers, and all hand-carried items were to be searched.[71]

All That Can Be Done Versus What Is Reasonable and Prudent

It is a long held military tradition that a commander is responsible for his or her troops regardless of the circumstances. If a unit takes losses in battle, the commander takes responsibility. If a tragedy such as Khobar Towers occurs, the commander takes responsibility. The commander cannot be held responsible for the actions of the enemy, but he or she must take responsibility for his or her decisions while executing the assigned mission. Given that the commander is responsible for his or her decisions, what is the standard by which we judge those decisions when something bad happens? There are at least two standards that could be used. The first standard is: "were all precautions taken that could have been taken?" The other standard is: "were decisions and actions reasonable and prudent under the circumstances?" The first standard is extremely difficult to meet because more precautions can always be taken. No matter if we are talking about force protection or airline safety, more can always be done. As discussed in

the section on Mylar, problems compete for an organization's time and resources. In this competition, trade-offs are made and measures are taken that are perceived to have the largest impact to mitigate risk.

The second standard (decisions and actions were reasonable and prudent under the circumstances) can be met, and in fact, asking for anything else from our commanders may undermine their ability to effectively lead. In a nut shell, a commander's job is to manage risk. Everyday decisions are made to allocate resources and manpower in a way that hopefully optimizes the organization's ability to execute the mission. In testimony to the IG/JAG investigators, Brig Gen Schwalier put it this way:

> "A Wing Commander on any day makes lots of decisions. He makes decisions based on inputs that he has at the time, and he makes decisions in an element of risk and uncertainty. Sometimes the information is not perfect, but regardless, a Wing Commander makes decisions. With respect to the Mylar, I had inputs. I measured the threat and risk at the time, and I made the decision that I made, and I stand by that decision."[72]

If we ask commanders to meet the first standard of doing all that can be done, they may avoid taking measured risks that are so necessary in command. The mission would suffer if commanders felt they had to drive risk to zero. For instance, in a flying unit, the risk of flight mishaps could be brought to zero if all aircraft were grounded, but mission accomplishment would be impossible. Also, to keep from being second-guessed commanders may be motivated to kick many decisions up a level of command. Such hesitation and delay in decision-making would certainly paralyze any organization.

The DOD reports seem to apply the first standard. Gen Downing states that "the chain of command of the 4404th Wing (Provisional) did not take all measures possible to protect the forces at Khobar Towers.", and Secretary Cohen concludes Brig Gen

Schwalier "could and should have done more to prepare the 4404th to respond to a perimeter bomb."[73] These views are taken from a perspective after-the-fact with the benefit of almost perfect information since the event had already occurred. The Air Force reports use the second standard, and take the perspective that the commander has to make decisions that are reasonable and prudent based on the circumstances as they exist. A commander always has to make decisions based on incomplete information available at the time. He or she does not have all the information available to an investigative team after the incident. This is one possible reason the reports differ on the conclusion regarding Brig Gen Schwalier's force protection duty performance.

The standard used by the DOD reports plays well in a public forum. If someone is accused of not doing everything possible to divert a disaster, a natural public reaction is "how could anyone not try to do <u>everything</u> possible to avoid the disaster?" However, as discussed previously, it is always possible to do more to avoid risk. For instance, if a critical component in an airliner has two back-up systems, wouldn't it be safer to add a third back-up system? If a third back-up system is safer, then wouldn't it be even safer to add a forth system? As can be seen from this example, it is always possible to do more to enhance safety, but at what point do the added back-up systems give an adequate margin of safety commensurate with other competing design considerations such as added weight, volume, and complexity of the additional equipment? These considerations are similar to the type of trade-off decisions commanders have to make everyday when working to reduce risk, and still accomplish the mission. Any one who has supervised an organization with more than a few personnel should also understand that all decisions are based on a compromise to get the most benefit for the resources and

manpower expended. Unfortunately, this concept is not well understood by many people and the argument that "more could have been done" is a very easy conclusion to put forth and have accepted publicly.

It appears the Khobar Towers accountability decision has already negatively impacted how some commanders make their decisions. In an interview, a current fighter wing commander gave one example. This commander attended a major command JAG briefing on the Khobar Towers incident where the lawyers emphasized that field commanders should not over react and attempt to cover themselves by sending every problem up the chain of command. He commented "that was easy for the lawyers to say since it was not their hide." Specific to his wing, an AFOSI vulnerability assessment had recommended many security enhancements that were not funded. He was working these enhancements, but felt he had to "cover" the wing by sending the report up to the major command so they shared responsibility if any terrorist event took place. At the time of the interview it had been months since the report was sent to command and no response had been received, indicating the command's priorities did not allow immediate attention to that issue. According to this wing commander, military operations are never risk free and it is impossible to guarantee the safety of every military member against acts of terrorism. He summed up his thoughts by stating "there are inherent risks in military operations, and Congress can't appropriate enough money to protect everyone in the military from terrorists who are committed."[74]

Did The Wing Concentrate On A Penetration Attack And Not Place Enough Emphasis On A Stand-Off Attack?

The Downing and Cohen Reports are most critical of Brig Gen Schwalier for concentrating too heavily on a penetration attack and not preparing enough for a stand-off attack.[75] Secretary Cohen bases his recommendation not to promote Brig Gen Schwalier to Major General on an incomplete preparation to defend against a perimeter attack.[76] Gen Downing states that "despite the risk to airmen identified in Findings #23 and #24 of the January 1996 [Vulnerability] Assessment, the rooms facing the vulnerable exterior perimeter of Khobar Towers remained occupied." This implies that allowing personnel to live on the perimeter is an example of not concentrating enough on a stand-off attack. The previous section entitled "Wing Focus on Penetration-Type Attack" further discusses the various reasons that each report uses to support conclusions regarding preparation for a stand-off attack.

The emphasis a commander applies to a potential problem should be commensurate with the risk he or she assigns to that problem. Whether or not a commander places increased emphasis on a problem depends on the perceived risks the problem presents. For instance, if a military base experiences a transportation deficiency that could be remedied by acquiring more vehicles, the commander may not place immediate emphasis on that acquisition if there are other pressing problems and the only risk is reduced efficiency. Therefore, to examine the above question regarding the emphasis Brig Gen Schwalier placed on a stand-off attack, it is helpful to understand what factors influenced the risk he and his staff placed on the probability and consequence of such an occurrence. The following analysis examines the perceived risk of a stand-off perimeter bomb attack.

Risk Assessment

The analysis model is taken from the discipline of System Safety that is used to assess risk during the development and operational life of new weapon systems for DOD.[77] A short explanation and example of how the risk assessment model is used to manage risk in flight test will be followed by an application to Khobar Towers. The model is a systematic way to manage risk when planning a task or course of action and is employed to assess the risk associated with an event. It has been used successfully in Air Force test programs at Edwards AFB, California to ensure tests accept no unnecessary risk, that decisions are made at the appropriate supervisory level, and the risk is understood and accepted when benefits of conducting a test outweigh the potential losses. Risk can be defined as the exposure to the chance of injury or loss.[78] In the risk assessment model, this exposure is broken down into two components: the probability of an event occurring and the consequences of that event. During test planning potentially hazardous events are assigned a risk level based on the probability of the event and its consequence. Figure 2 depicts how flight test risk levels relate to the probability and consequence of an event. Table 1 defines consequence and probability categories used in Figure 2.[79] The lines that divide "High", "Medium", and "Low" risk are considered guides and not hard and fast divisions. If risk of a test is assessed at the "Medium" or "High" level, then additional technical or procedural solutions are sought to lower the risk to "Low." If no solutions are found, and the benefits of conducting the test are considered to outweigh the potential losses, then the test is executed with increased supervision at the group or wing level. For instance, if a test is planned to expand the speed and structural loads envelope of an aircraft with a new external missile, the event analyzed with this

model might be “aircraft loss due to wing structural failure.” The probability of a wing failing may be “Remote,” but the consequence would be “Catastrophic.” Looking at Figure 2, the risk assessment may warrant a “Medium” risk level. There is not much that

	CONSEQUENCE- HAZARD SEVERITY CATEGORY			
PROBABILITY	CATASTROPHIC	CRITICAL	MARGINAL	NEGLIGIBLE
FREQUENT	**HIGH**			
PROBABLE				
OCCASIONAL		**MEDIUM**		
REMOTE			**LOW**	
IMPROBABLE				

Figure 2. Hazard Risk Assessment Matrix

Table 1. Definitions of Consequence and Probability Categories

Consequence- Hazard Severity Category	
Description	**Definition**
CATASTROPHIC	Death, system loss, or severe environmental damage.
CRITICAL	Severe injury, severe occupational illness, major system or environmental damage.
MARGINAL	Minor injury, minor occupational illness, or minor system or environmental damage.
NEGLIGIBLE	Less than minor injury, occupational illness, or less than minor system or environmental damage.
Probability Category	
Description	**Definition**
FREQUENT	Likely to occur frequently.
PROBABLE	Will occur several times.
OCCASIONAL	Likely to occur some time.
REMOTE	Unlikely but possible to occur.
IMPROBABLE	So unlikely, it can be assumed occurrence may not be experienced.

can be done to change the consequence of a wing failing, but the engineers may be able to reduce the probability to "Improbable" by a technical solution that allows closer real-time test monitoring by increasing data parameters telemetered to the ground station. If the probability component cannot be reduced, and it is determined that the benefits of the test outweigh the possible loss, then the test may be conducted with the higher degree of supervision associated with "Medium" risk.

Brig Gen Schwalier and his staff certainly did not specifically use this risk assessment model to assign risk to possibly hazardous events, but the model is still useful to dissect and better understand how the wing may have assessed the risk of a stand-off perimeter bomb attack. The first step in the analysis is to define the potentially hazardous event. In the case of a perimeter bomb attack, the event is "a bomb explodes outside the compound perimeter and injures personnel as a result." The second step is to break the risk into its two components. According to testimonies, the perceived consequence component of the event would most likely fall in the "Marginal" to "Negligible" categories since it was thought that any bomb would be of the same size used in the OPM-SANG bombing or the small ten pound or less size that had recently been used in Bahrain. It was thought the 80 foot stand-off distance between the fence and buildings was adequate for that size bomb.[80] Also, all the security improvements, such as building-top sentries, combined with the common belief that the building could be evacuated in just a few minutes once warned, convinced the decision makers that no one would be in a building if an explosion outside the compound did occur.[81] Therefore it was thought that the explosion of a small bomb outside the facility would have minimal effect on personnel.

Based on the testimony of the key decision makers, the perceived probability component of the event would most likely fall in the "Remote" to "Occasional" category for two reasons. First, the intelligence information was considered non-specific.[82] There were a lot of what were termed "junk" reports that made it difficult to sort valid information from the possibly valid reports. Decision makers believed intelligence concerning explosives was suggestive and inferential. Khobar Towers did come out in some reports as a possible terrorist target, but so did every other US facility in Saudi.[83] Second, since the Saudis had total responsibility for security outside the compound and it was noted that they had stepped up frequency of patrols, the perceived chances of a terrorist being able to get through Saudi security was considered less. Referring to Figure 2, the overall perceived risk level for this event would be "Low" in the framework of the model.

However in hindsight, the actual risk level of the event was not "Low." This implies the perception of one or both components of risk may have been skewed. The consequence component of risk was definitely perceived incorrectly as the event was obviously "Catastrophic." This was because the bomb was much larger than anyone had expected, and the building could not be evacuated quick enough prior to detonation. The actual probability component of risk is harder to determine because we do not know all the terrorist's actions in preparation for the attack or what other options they considered. According to the Gen Downing investigation, there was sufficient intelligence information available to indicate a high probability of attack on Khobar Towers.[84] On the other hand, Lt Gen Record's report states the intelligence information was not available to single out Khobar Towers as a potential target.[85] Most of the supporting facts to these

claims are classified and not considered in this analysis. As discussed previously, this is one of the primary differences between the two reports. It is also not clear from any of the available unclassified investigation data how thorough or effective Saudi security was outside Khobar Towers.

Based on this analysis, there are at least four perceptions that effected the wing's risk assessment (two from the consequence component and two from the probability component of risk):

- The wing believed any potential bomb would be small, similar to that used in the OPM-SANG bombing or the Bahrain bombings.
- The wing believed personnel could be evacuated prior to detonation if a bomb was spotted.
- Incorrect assessment of available intelligence reports (according to Downing) or intelligence was not specific enough to indicate Khobar Towers was a target (according to Record).[86]
- Possible overestimate of Saudi security effectiveness outside the compound.

Each of these perceptions are examined more closely to better understand how they contributed to the wing's decision making process.

The Bomb Would Be Small. It is stated in both the Downing and Record reports that no one in the region expected a bomb the size of that used at Khobar Towers.[87] Everyone was thinking along the lines of a 200 pound OPM-SANG sized bomb or attacks similar to those in Bahrain that used bombs of the 10 to 15 pound size. The size used (3,000 - 8,000 pounds according to Downing and 20,000 - 30,000 pounds equivalent TNT according to Record) was completely beyond the scope of what anyone imagined.[88] It is

not unreasonable that Brig Gen Schwalier focused in on a small bomb size since that was the recent experience and all other US officials in the AOR based decisions on a small bomb.[89]

The Khobar Towers bombing certainly adds to a trend toward more sophisticated terrorist weapons. The Marine barracks in Beirut was hit by a 12,000 pound bomb in October, 1983.[90] On 26 February 1993, a 1,200 pound bomb was used against the World Trade Center. In Oklahoma City, an ammonium nitrate-fuel oil bomb with the equivalent TNT rating of 4,000 pounds exploded on 19 April 1995.[91] Sarin gas was used, although ineffectively, in the Tokyo subways on 20 March 1995. These events all occurred before Khobar Towers, and if the trend was not seen at that time, then Khobar Towers must certainly be the "wake-up call." State-sponsored terrorism and a greater availability of information on weapons through media such as the internet have increasingly given the terrorist access to knowledge and equipment necessary to execute attacks of greater magnitude.

Personnel Could Be Evacuated Prior To Bomb Detonation. The time from spotting the suspicious truck to detonation was approximately five minutes. Even under the best conditions, the building probably could not have been fully evacuated in that short time. Not only was the terrorist's weapon more destructive than anticipated, but their ability to place the weapon and control detonation was better. As stated in the previous section entitled "Building Evacuation and Warning Capability," the Downing Report is critical of the lack of a warning system (except the Giant Voice) and absence of drills to practice evacuation.[92] The Record Report states that drills would not have helped since actual evacuations of Building 131 and other buildings had recently occurred for

suspicious packages. One evacuation of Building 131 was recorded as complete in six minutes. The wing believed drills would not have improved this performance. In addition, night shift workers slept during the day which made drills difficult at any hour.[93] The IG/JAG Report states that even if a fire alarm was present, it would have been wrong to use it as a bomb evacuation alarm since actions once outside the building in case of fire would be different than those for a bomb evacuation. The IG/JAG Report also states that evacuation drills were necessary by regulation and the real-life evacuations were an inadequate substitution for exercises. According to that report, evidence showed the real-life evacuations had taken closer to 10-15 minutes, not 6 minutes.[94]

It may be true that the best evacuation system and plan in the world may not have helped on 25 June 1996 due to the short notice warning, but an important point is brought out in the IG/JAG Report. The lack of specific evacuation data from exercises left the wing with an inflated estimate of its capacity to evacuate buildings in Khobar Towers. In short, the consequence component of risk for this event may have been assessed more accurately if evacuation exercises had been accomplished. A more realistic view of the wing's ability to evacuate may have increased the perceived risk of a stand-off attack and led to additional actions to mitigate that risk.

Incorrect Assessment Of Available Intelligence Or Intelligence Was Not Specific. The conclusions concerning clear indications of an impending attack could not be more different between the Downing Report and the Record and IG/JAG Reports. As discussed in the section on "Adequacy of Available Intelligence," Downing states the wing had clear warning that Khobar Towers was a "specific site of concern", where Record and the IG/JAG Report conclude no information was available that would single

out Khobar Towers.[95] In any case, the perceived probability component of risk did not increase because either the intelligence information indicated no increased threat (as Record and IG/JAG conclude) or the information was there and not heeded (according to Downing). Supporting facts to these conclusions are classified and cannot be resolved by this unclassified analysis.

Possible Overestimate of Saudi Security Effectiveness

An increase in Saudi patrols was observed immediately after the wing made a request for more patrols. This responsiveness was most likely construed as an indication that the Saudis would be an effective deterrent to any terrorist activities outside the compound. A clear picture of the Saudi's security capabilities may not have been available due to the working relationship between the wing and local authorities. Finding 22 of the Downing Report states "the Saudi forces were unable to detect, deter, and prevent the truck bomb attack outside the perimeter fence at Khobar Towers (see Appendix A)."[96] Included in Downing's recommendation was the need to increase coordination between the host nation and US forces by establishing and maintaining regular working relationships between senior commanders and appropriate host nation officials. Lt Gen Record agreed that liaison relationships required improvement. He recommended one-year tours for commanders and key personnel with job-related requirements to interact with host nation counter-parts on force protection matter. Both reports agree that short tour lengths inhibited personnel from making links with officials of the host nation that would have fostered a more integrated force protection plan.

One Approach to the Question: Was Enough Emphasis Placed On A Stand-Off Attack?

As discussed previously, a commander's job entails balancing and attempting to mitigate many risks in order to accomplish a mission. Risks are inherent in military operations. The risks can never be reduced to zero, so the objective is to bring the risks down to an acceptable level with the information and resources available and still accomplish the mission. Allowing personnel to live on the perimeter was based on a perceived acceptable risk level. So the answer to the above question depends on if one considers the risk acceptable given the information then available. The analysis from the risk model pointed to four perceptions that affected the wing's risk assessment: probable bomb size, perceived evacuation capability, specificity of intelligence, and estimate of Saudi security effectiveness.

Bomb Size. After the fact, it is easy to say a larger bomb should have been expected. However, the fact is no one else in the region (including all other US officials in the AOR) expected a large bomb so it may be unreasonable to expect Brig Gen Schwalier to be the only person to anticipate such a weapon.

Evacuation Capability. Formal inspections and a better knowledge of actual evacuation capability through drills may have led to a more accurate assessment of the consequence element of risk. However, the inflated estimate of evacuation capability at Khobar Towers may be more correctly rooted in the larger problem of no formalized plan for deployed forces to transition from a temporary to a semi-permanent presence. Organizations that are temporary will operate differently than permanent organizations that must do more long-term planning. As temporarily deployed forces transition to semi-

permanence, formal inspections and other tools normally associated with permanent operations must be phased into the operations. A standard plan for such a phase-in should be developed at the CINC or DOD level for uniformity across the deployed forces. In the case of Khobar Towers, the responsibility for a late and piece-meal transition plan to semi-permanence may more appropriately lie at command levels above the wing.

Intelligence. Specificity of intelligence is difficult to quantify in an unclassified analysis. If the intelligence singled out Khobar Towers as a specific target as the Downing Report contends, then perceived risk level would have to rise for those living on the perimeter from a stand-off attack as well as for those working or living in the interior from a penetration attack. But if the intelligence information received was no better and no more specific than what the wing had already gathered locally as the Record and IG/JAG Reports state, then perceiving a low risk level may have been reasonable given information then available regarding probable bomb size.

Saudi Security. A possible overestimate of Saudi security effectiveness may also have been rooted in the problem of transitioning from a temporary to a semi-permanent status. Working relationships with Saudi security counter-parts were inhibited because of the short 90-day tour lengths. A proper transition to a semi-permanent force should have included earlier tour extension for key positions. Brig Gen Schwalier recognized the need for more continuity in his staff that interfaced with host nation officials. He had extended key positions and was working to extend additional positions.

Beirut Comparison: Deja Vu?

Was Khobar Towers an unavoidable tragedy or was it a detectable and thus preventable mishap? For some, the similarities between this unfortunate event and another of some fourteen years previous suggest painfully that we failed to heed the lessons of the US Marines deployed to Lebanon in 1983. On 23 October of that year, 241 US servicemen perished when an explosive laden truck penetrated the headquarters building of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment of the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) and exploded with a force equivalent estimated at over 12,000 pounds of TNT.[97] The apparent similarities between these two events led Gen Downing to review the Long Commission Report prior to his investigation.[98]

Like the 4404th Wing (P), the deployment of the Marines in September 1982 and the established command structure were predicated upon a mission of limited duration that had, as so often happens, extended itself to the point of semi-permanence. In June of 1982 the Israeli invasion of Lebanon prompted an evacuation of US citizens that was conducted by the 32d MAU deployed to the Mediterranean as part of the Landing Force Sixth Fleet (LF6F). In July as a result of an Israeli blockade of the city of Beirut and intense diplomatic efforts to avoid further destruction, some 15,000 armed Palestinian and Syrian personnel were evacuated through the auspices of a Multi-National Force (MNF) comprised of French and Italian elements along with the 32d MAU. Following these actions, the MNF forces were withdrawn by 10 September. Lebanese President-elect Gemayel's assassination on 14 September, the occupation of West Beirut by the Israeli's, and the Sabra and Shatila massacres during 16 - 18 September resulted in a decision to reconstitute the MNF agreed upon by France, Italy, and the US. By the end of

September 1982, the MNF was established ashore and afloat in and around Beirut with the mission "to establish an environment which will permit the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to carry out their responsibilities in the Beirut area."[99] The US operational chain of command extended from Commander in Chief, US Forces Europe (USCINCEUR) through Commander-in-Chief, US Naval Forces Europe (CINCUSNAVEUR) to Commander, Sixth Fleet (COMSIXTHFLT). Authority continued to Commander, Amphibious Task Force 61 (CTF 61) also designated as Commander, US Forces, Lebanon and then to Commander, Task Force 62 (CTF 62) who was Commander, US Forces Ashore, Lebanon and of the MAU.[100] From September 1982 until November 1984, CTF-62 had successively been filled by the 32d MAU (25 September - 1 November 82), 24th MAU (1 November 82 - 15 February 83), 22d MAU (15 February - 29 May 1983), 24th MAU (30 May - 18 November 83), and 22d MAU (17 November 83 - 9 April 84).[101] The 31st MAU briefly reinforced the 24th MAU from 12 September - 13 October 1983 having chopped from the Indian Ocean.[102]

The 4404th Wing (P) was activated on 13 March 1991 at Al Kharj Air Base, Saudi Arabia and later placed under the tactical control of JTF-SWA which was activated in August of 1992. The Task Force had the primary mission to ". . . serve as the front line defense against possible Iraqi aggression. To enforce UN Security Council Resolutions 687, 688, and 949 and protect US Forces stationed in Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia."[103] The 4404th Wing (P) moved to Dhahran where its personnel occupied the facilities at Khobar Towers in June of 1992. Operational control for the 4404th Wing (P) extended from Commander in Chief, US Central Command (USCINCCENT) through the Commander, USCENTAF.

The mission of the 4404th to support the enforcement of UN sanctions against Iraq long after the end of Desert Storm, even with the acknowledged approval of the Saudi Government, could only reinforce perceptions of US imperialism considering the cultural, political, and religious sensitivities of long term US presence in the Islamic Holy-Land. In this instance the potential for a hostile act, noting the history of the region, could have been considered inevitable.

Whereas the Marines were initially welcomed to Beirut by the local populace as a stabilizing influence, their mission and subsequent actions to "assist the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)," soon identified them as partisan belligerents in an on-going civil war.[104] The longer their presence remained, the greater the potential for their targeting as a means of influencing both domestic (Lebanese) and international policy. So too did the potential threat to the 4404th Wing (P) steadily increase with the passage of time.

What follows is a comparison of selected findings from the Long Commission Report and the Downing Report which support the common perceptions of a failure of the US military to incorporate the lessons of Beirut 1983 or that those lessons and corporate knowledge were either lost or ignored. Particular attention should be noted regarding the vastly different environments faced by the commanders and personnel who served in each theater. Whereas Lebanon in 1983 was a country of little stability, occupied by essentially three separate external power interests (Israel, Syria, and the US led Multi-National Force), in the midst of a civil war; Saudi Arabia in 1996 was an extraordinarily stable nation in which tens of thousands of Americans had resided for years with little difficulty or threat to their existence and safety.

Occasionally there exist disparities and discrepancies between the facts and interpretations as exhibited in the four reports surrounding the Khobar Towers event. Some of the facts and findings from the Downing Report are disputed by the two Air Force reports (Record and IG/JAG). Where needed attempts to direct the reader toward further considerations or amplifying remarks are provided through notation.

Intelligence

The failure of intelligence assets to provide specifics on where, how and when a terrorist attack might occur was cited as contributing factors by the investigating commissions for both incidents. In the case of Beirut, over 100 intelligence reports of potential car bomb attacks were disseminated during the six months preceding the attack effectively overloading the command and contributing to a sense of complacency as specific threats failed to manifest.[105] Similarly, "while intelligence did not provide the tactical details of date, time, place, and exact method of attack on Khobar Tower, a considerable body of information was available that indicated terrorists had the capability and intention to target US interests in Saudi Arabia, and that Khobar Towers was a potential target."[106] In addition, each of the attacks was preceded by a similar event in theater. On 18 April 1983 the American Embassy in Beirut was demolished by a truck bomb resulting in 57 fatalities and demonstrating beyond any doubt the capabilities of terrorist adversaries.[107] Though not as geographically close, in the case of Khobar Towers, the 13 November 1995 bombing of the OPM-SANG in Riyadh served as a wake up call to any and all who may have questioned the increasing threat scenario developing in the region.[108]

Directly related was the lack of Human Intelligence (HUMINT) effectiveness and capability noted in the Long Commission Report as "being neither precise nor tailored to his [the commander's] needs." The commission went on to express the opinion that, "the paucity of US controlled HUMINT provided to the USMNF commander is in large part due to policy decisions which have resulted in a US HUMINT capability commensurate with the resources and time that have been spent to acquire it."[109] Likewise, the Downing Report was also critical of the lack of HUMINT and called for increased time, effort, and resources to be applied toward the development of what is considered quite possibly to be the most critical element of information sourcing for counter-terrorist operations.[110] This single recurrent failure on the part of national assets may prove to be the critical link in detecting and preventing any future such occurrences. Specific addressal of resources available during each of these periods is beyond the scope of this work due to classification levels.

It is interesting to note the Long Commission recommendation for the establishment of an "all-source fusion center" to improve intelligence support to the military commander deployed to threat or crisis areas in light of then Secretary of Defense Perry's statement regarding the development of intelligence fusion cells in Bosnia and the application of these to the Gulf in response to the Downing findings.[111]

Personnel Turnover

Further complicating the challenges of situational awareness were the rotational policies in effect in both Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. As previously mentioned, six different MAU's had occupied positions in Beirut during the roughly nineteen months

from September 1982 until the withdrawal in April 1984. This equated to an average on station duration of 104 days or about three and one half months per unit assignment.

In Saudi Arabia by comparison and in consonance with US Air Force policies intended to limit temporary duty assignments to no more than 120 days annually, the majority of organizational units and individual personnel were assigned to 15-, 30-, 45-, 60-, or 90 day rotations depending to the type of duty. As time lingered, this cycle resulted in a personnel exchange rate approximating 10% per week for the wing's overall manning at Dhahran.[112]

In hindsight, the practice of personnel rotation for the Marines and the 4404th personnel, could have contributed to a lack of continuity and detailed familiarity with the operating area. In the case of Saudi Arabia, Gen Downing noted several issues related to this difficulty. He cited the lack of opportunity for team building and the refining of small unit skills necessary for patrolling, escort duties, and rapid response actions common to security personnel. Additionally, he highlighted the adverse impact on intelligence and counterintelligence personnel with regard to cultivating trust and confidence with host counterparts emphasizing that such relationships require at a minimum one year of association. For security personnel in particular - the lack of permanence deprived them of the ability to establish close contacts with host nation support as well as the ability to develop detailed trend analysis of local behaviors and operating practices - deviations of which "may" have provided the one indication that "could" have prevented or at least provided advanced warning of the impending disasters.

The 4404th Wing (P) was not alone in this extremely fluid personnel flow. According to the Downing Report, with exception of the JTF commander and the recently

requested Force Protection Officer, the remaining 183 personnel of the JTF-SWA staff served on 90 day assignments.[113]

Accountability and Oversight

Following the Beirut bombing, both the commander and the chain of command were sharply criticized for acts of commission and omission with regard to their responsibilities for force protection. The Long Commission Report concluded, "the security measures in effect in the MAU compound were neither commensurate with the increasing level of threat confronting the USMNF nor sufficient to preclude catastrophic losses . . ."[114] Addressing the responsibilities of the chain of command, the Long Commission reported, "the failure of the USCINCEUR operational chain of command to inspect and supervise the defensive posture of the USMNF constituted tacit approval of the security measures and procedures in force . . ."[115]

Central to these issues was the decision by the BLT commander and concurrence by the MAU commander to billet nearly one quarter of the Marine forces ashore in the abandoned building that had formerly housed the Government of Lebanon's Aviation Administration Bureau and coincidentally been subsequently occupied by the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the Syrians, and most recently by the Israeli Army.[116] While recognizing the tactical utility of the building for its protection from numerous direct and indirect fire weapons that were judged a predominant threat to deployed personnel as well as the observation and communication enhancements afforded by its elevation, the Commission faulted the commanders for violating the security principal of dispersion and thereby presenting a lucrative target to any potential adversary and ultimately contributing to the huge loss of life.[117]

The Marine compound was the site of numerous "visits" by both principals and senior staff officers from the operational chain of command. However, the investigation noted the complete lack of any evidence these "visits" produced recommendations or directives regarding the status of security measures in effect or concerns over their appropriateness. This omission led to their conclusions regarding command oversight. It is particularly interesting to note that following the embassy bombing a Special Assistant for Security Matters (SASM) was dispatched from Headquarters US European Command (USEUCOM) to assess and evaluate the Office of Military Cooperation (OMC) specifically regarding anti-terrorist measures, yet was not tasked to perform like services for the USMNF forces.[118]

The Downing Report readily acknowledges the commander's responsibility and authority for force protection matters and concludes: ". . . he [the commander, 4404th Wing (P)] did not take those actions which would have mitigated the effects of clearly described vulnerabilities within his power to correct."[119] Among the issues specifically considered was the decision not to re-locate personnel billeted in perimeter buildings to less vulnerable areas.[120]

Regarding the execution of responsibility by the operational chain of command, the Downing Report states, "No member of the US Central Command chain of command inspected force protection at Khobar Towers." Continuing with the USCENTAF chain of command the report indicates "physical security inspections were not conducted in the region," and "no member of the US Air Force Central Command chain of command inspected physical security at Khobar Towers."[121]

In an ironic near repeat of the SASM visit to Beirut, the Headquarters of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations dispatched a Special Agent to Khobar Towers in May of 1996 to "assess physical security," yet the results and recommendation submitted by the agent were never briefed to the commander of the 4404th Wing (P) nor was he ever aware of the visit.[122]

Concentration Versus Dispersal

The debate/conflict over concentration versus dispersal comprises a perpetual dilemma for all military leaders. The issues involved relate to the competing natures of the parent principles of war, namely mass and economy of force. Both offer inherent advantages in offensive as well as defensive operations yet by nature one must come at the expense of the other. In addition, the relative advantages presented may perish with time if allowed to become overly static in nature.

In Lebanon, as previously mentioned, the commanders of the BLT and MAU accepted the risks of concentrating the Marines billeted in the headquarters building as a means of countering the prevailing threats from snipers and various indirect fire weapons such as mortars and rockets. This decision and the relatively static nature of its posture effectively surrendered the initiative to the dissident factions occupying the region surrounding the Marine compound. As such the time factor allowed for the development of a countermeasure to this "concentrated" defense resulting in the employment of the penetrating bomb and the tragic loss of life. Had dispersal been emphasized on the other hand, in all likelihood the relative frequency of fatalities due to ambush, snipers, and indirect fire engagements would have continued with a smaller but similarly tragic death toll.

In Saudi Arabia, the decision to concentrate US Forces in the Khobar Towers complex lies somewhere embedded in the socio-political-military circumstances that resulted in the continued US presence following Operation Desert Storm's conclusion in 1991. According to an interview with Brig Gen Schwalier, discussions had occurred prior to the bombing concerning the possibility of vacating the Dhahran complex and moving to Al Kharj. These discussions were based upon Saudi sensitivities to US presence in the city and not related to issues of force protection, or threat scenarios.[123] The fact personnel remained testifies as to the acceptance of all perceived risks then known. Although an AFOSI vulnerability assessment had identified the risks of concentrating essential personnel in one building or general area, there are no direct indications that anyone considered abandoning perimeter dwellings as a counter to exterior threats. After the fact discussions highlighted the increased vulnerability to an internal or penetrating threat should personnel have been concentrated in the inner most buildings of the compound.[124] Again, the relatively static nature of the defensive posture employed surrendered the initiative to those who ultimately committed the hostile act.

The common thread throughout is the inherent vulnerability of personnel concentrations to multiple attack scenarios. The controversy over penetrating bombs or standoff bombs becomes more academic when the following is considered. The FBI analysis regarding the bomb that leveled the barracks in Beirut concluded that major damage and significant casualties would have occurred had the bomb detonated on the perimeter located over 300 feet from the BLT headquarters.[125] According to the Downing Report, the conclusions of a background paper prepared by the Dhahran Explosive Ordnance Detachment on 19 November 1995, assessing the impact of an OPM-SANG

type bomb (200-250 pounds equivalent TNT) detonated some 165 feet from the Khobar Towers complex produced similar predictions of building damage and personnel fatalities.[126] There is no doubt of the consequent results should the weapon used at Khobar Towers have penetrated the compound.

The decision to concentrate personnel or the acceptance of personnel concentrations in either scenario contributed to their vulnerability knowing the threat capabilities present in theater. In essence, the conclusion of the Long Commission still applies:

> "From a terrorist perspective, the true genius of this attack is that the objective and the means of attack were beyond the imagination of those responsible for Marine security. As a result, the attack achieved surprise and resulted in massive destruction of the BLT Headquarters building and the deaths of 241 U.S. military personnel. The psychological fallout of the attack on the U.S. has been dramatic. The terrorists sent the U.S. a strong political message."[127]

At present the 4404th Wing (P) has been relocated to the remote site at Al Kharj yet the debate over concentration versus dispersal continues on a different scale. Many are criticizing the increased vulnerability of the forces to stand off weapons to include chemical or biological agents which could now be employed without the collateral damage risks to Saudi Arabian civilians that were prevalent at the urban site in Dhahran.[128]

Sequel or Not?

So, was Khobar Towers a sequel to Beirut? Brig Gen Schwalier rightfully points to the vast differences in the environments between Lebanon of 1983 and Saudi Arabia of 1996. The existence of an on-going civil war as opposed to a land of relative tranquillity where security concerns related to violent threats were relatively unheard of.

Accepting the differences in political environments and even the specific modes of attack is obvious but fails to exclude the possibility of insidious threats that may have existed yet were not in plain view. While the political environments were certainly very different, there had to have been rationale for the comparative findings of both the Long Commission and the Downing Report. The intelligence environment was very similar in that US assets were hard pressed to gather, develop and then exploit the levels of information critical to the commander's needs in terror prone areas especially within the Arab/Islamic culture which is alien to American understanding. The conclusions of both reports acknowledge this. In both instances, the deployment of forces was in response to far reaching US foreign policy initiatives involving the use or threat of military force over what became a protracted period of time and without a clear understanding of the regional culture. In this regard the similarity exists at a level far above that of the commander in the field.

David Winn, the Chief of the Political Section at the US Embassy in Beirut from 1983 to 1985, commented upon the perspectives in which these incidents are viewed: "When a military man says 'Beirut,' he is usually, of course, referring to the Marines, but we [State Department personnel] always think of the two Embassy bombings."[129] Mr. Winn may be hitting on a most important ideal here. All of our opinions, perceptions, and reactions to daily events are assessed against the combined backgrounds of collective knowledge and experiences. Together they form the paradigms in which we operate. This could contribute to the differing interpretations of what has been written and may explain the ease in which some comparisons have been made.

Elliot A. Cohen and John Gooch in *Military Misfortunes, The Anatomy of Failure in War*, illustrate a model often applied to post catastrophe analysis called, "The Man in the Dock." In this model the inclination to attribute failure to the actions of one man, normally a commander, is most prevalent. There are advantages to this method as it nests well with traditional views of the limitless responsibility of the commander and once applied answers the mail regarding accountability. They go on to caution however that, "as an explanation of failure it is really little more than a concealed confession of perplexity."[130]

Brig Gen Schwalier has implied through his remarks that this model may have been applied concerning Khobar Towers and there is much more to consider in order to understand the how's and why's of the intricate chain of events leading to this event. Whether or not one agrees with the comparisons is far less important than whether one is aware of the highly complex issues surrounding any military venture. There are no guarantees the US will be able to call the first shot and engage at will. History suggests otherwise. The value of each of these unfortunate occurrences lies within the diligent study and thought we are willing to invest to learn from the experiences of those who endured. Did Gen Downing's perspectives influence the interpretations of the evidence viewed to the exclusion of other possibilities? What are our individual perspectives? Are we pre-disposed to look for familiar territory? Would we be more likely to agree with something that we suspected?

Notes

[1] Downing, 50.
[2] Cohen, 3.
[3] Ibid., 13.

Notes

[4] Record, Part B, 103.
[5] Swope, 150.
[6] Downing, 1.
[7] Record, iii.
[8] Swope, 2-3.
[9] Cohen, i.
[10] Brig Gen (Ret) Schwalier E-Mail to authors, subject: Proposed Case Study, 23 January 1998.
[11] Cohen, 5.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Swope, 149.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Record, Part B, 138.
[16] Cohen, 3.
[17] Record, Part B, 138.
[18] Downing, 55, 29-34.
[19] Record, Part B, 47. Downing, 60. Swope, 83.
[20] Swope, 83.
[21] Downing, 44.
[22] Record, Appendix 1, 30.
[23] Ibid., Appendix 1, 31.
[24] David Winn, former Chief of the Political Section, Beirut Embassy, 1983-1985, and former Consul General of the Dhahran Consulate, 1996, interviewed by author (Lt Col Seat) at his home, 7 March 1998.
[25] Downing, 60.
[26] Ibid., 56.
[27] Cohen, ii.
[28] Record, Part B, 37.

Four million dollars was the original estimate Brig Gen Schwalier used to base his decision to defer the Mylar project and place it in the Five-Year Facilities Improvement Plan. It should be noted that when the Mylar project estimate was actually transferred to the Five Year Plan, it was entered as $50,000. Swope, Volume III, 4Q, 1-23.

[29] Swope, 101.
[30] Ibid., 101.
[31] Record, Appendix 1, 37.
[32] David Kaplan and Mike Tharp, "Terrorism Threats at Home," *U.S. News & World Report*, 29 December 1997, 22.
[33] Downing, 57.
[34] Cohen, 11.
[35] Record, Appendix 1, 44.
[36] Ibid., Part B, 40.
[37] Downing, 46.

Notes

It should be noted that under the Goldwater-Nichols legislation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff are not in the formal chain of command. The chain of command flows directly from the Secretary of Defense to the theater commander-in-chiefs.

[38] Downing, 18.

[39] Ibid., 20.

[40] Record, Part B, 22.

[41] Swope, 144.

[42] Ibid., 137.

[43] Cohen, 12.

[44] Downing, 47-48.

[45] Record, Appendix 1, 12.

Brig Gen (Ret) Schwalier stated to authors that Gen Ralston, ACC Commander, was in his operational chain of command although the investigative reports do not indicate this. Schwalier E-mail, Draft Feedback.

[46] Ibid., Appendix 1, 15.

[47] Downing, 23.

[48] Swope, 146.

[49] Cohen, 11.

[50] Downing, 59.

Brig Gen (Ret) Schwalier stated to authors that Saudi sensitivities did not impact decisions to not conduct evacuation drills. Saudis were only sensitive to the use of a Klaxon. Schwalier E-mail, Draft Feedback.

[51] Ibid., 60.

[52] Cohen, 7-8.

[53] Record, Appendix 1, 51.

[54] Ibid., Part B, 35.

[55] Swope, 68.

[56] Ibid., 72.

[57] Downing, 18.

[58] Ibid., 58.

[59] Record, Appendix 1, 47.

[60] Swope, 133.

[61] Ibid., 135.

[62] Downing, 55.

[63] Ibid., 56-59.

[64] Record, Part B 97.

[65] Swope, Volume III, 4Q1-8.

[66] Ibid., 53.

DOD guidance referred to is: DOD 0-2000.12-H

[67] Downing, 57.

[68] Swope, 31.

[69] Downing, 59.

[70] Record, Appendix 1, 50.

Notes

[71] Swope, 89.

[72] Ibid., Volume III, 4Q1-24.

[73] Downing, viii. Cohen, 5.

[74] Non-attribution interview by author (Lt Col Seat) with current fighter wing commander during Air War College Regional Studies Trip, 13 March 1998.

[75] Downing, 60. Cohen, 5.

[76] Cohen, 9.

[77] MIL-STD-882C, *Military Standard, System Safety Program Requirements*, 19 January 1993, 28-31.

[78] Random House College Dictionary, 1972 ed., s.v. "risk."

[79] MIL-STD-882C, 7.

[80] Record, Part B, 40. Swope, Volume III, 4Q1-6.

[81] Ibid., Part B, 88.

[82] Ibid., Part B, 46.

[83] Ibid., Part B, 47.

[84] Downing, 29.

[85] Record, Part B, 46.

[86] Downing, viii. Record, Part A, 12.

[87] Ibid., 45. Record, Part B, 40.

[88] Ibid., 1. Record, Appendix 1, 54.

[89] Swope, 83.

[90] Downing, 3.

[91] "Prosecution Wrapping Up Case Against Nichols," *CNN*, 1 December 1997; *CNN Online*, 27 February 1998.

[92] Downing, 59.

[93] Record, Appendix 1, 51.

[94] Swope, 68.

[95] Downing, 60. Record, Part B 47. Swope, 83.

[96] Ibid., 62.

[97] *Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983* (Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, 20 December 1983), 1.

[98] Downing, 3.

[99] *Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983*, 29-35.

[100] Ibid., 53.

[101] Frank M. Benis, *US Marines in Lebanon: 1982-1984* (Washington D.C., History and Museums Division, Headquarters, US Marine Corps., 1987), 154-158.

[102] Ibid., 88, 118.

[103] Downing, 17.

[104] *Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983*, 3.

[105] Ibid., 63.

[106] Downing, 43.

Notes

This point disputed by other reports, see section this chapter entitled "Adequacy of Available Intelligence."

[107] *Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983*, 30, 63.

[108] Downing, 43.

[109] *Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983*, 66.

[110] Downing, 8.

[111] *Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983*, 66.

William J. Perry, "The Target," *Defense 96*, Issue 6, 14.

[112] Downing, 19.

[113] Ibid., 16.

[114] *Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983*, 91.

[115] Ibid., 56.

[116] Ibid., 72.

[117] Ibid., 86.

[118] Ibid., 54.

[119] Downing, 60.

[120] Ibid., 57.

This point disputed by other reports, see section this chapter entitled "Force Protection Versus Quality of Life."

[121] Downing, 48.

This point disputed by other reports, see section this chapter entitled "Chain of Command Support of the Wing."

[122] Downing, 44.

[123] Schwalier interview.

[124] Record, Appendix 1, 42.

[125] *Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983*, 99.

[126] Downing, 56.

[127] *Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983*, 123.

[128] Hundreds of Saudi citizens and TCNs living in the complex and immediate vicinity were injured, and some probably killed. The Saudi government has never said how many Saudi citizens living near the north end of Khobar Towers were injured or killed.

[129] David Winn E-Mail to Brig Gen (Ret) Schwalier, 26 February 1998.

[130] Elliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: the Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 8.

Chapter 4

Considerations for Commanders

The challenges and responsibilities of command are limitless. Likewise are the rewards of a successful command tour. The nature of the military requires those so charged with the mantle of command to anticipate the unexpected and when this is not possible, to counter punch as if one had. What follows is a brief look at ways of thinking about some of the challenges, a look at risk management, and finally a few concerns from Brig Gen Schwalier as he reflected on issues from his perspective.

Mission Analysis For Force Protection

Force Protection as a concept and as an absolute requirement for military operations is neither unique nor new. In many respects it can best be described as an attitude -- much like safety as viewed in aviation circles -- a way of thinking about past, present, and future actions. So too like safety, success can rarely be measured quantitatively while failure manifests itself graphically in all dimensions. As such the planning and execution of force protection measures is dependent upon the management of perceptions just as much as on resources.

American culture pre-conditions attitudes toward concepts of good and evil, friend and foe, etc. Such preconditioning though generally healthy in forming the basis

for logical problem solving and decision making may also prevent us from seeing the "big picture" and reinforce perceptions which prevent us from acting in a necessary manner.

One such pre-conception involves how we look at terrorists and terrorism. The Beirut bombing and that of Khobar Towers were both quickly reported and accepted as terrorist acts and then in many circles additionally classified as criminal in nature. The lack of agreement in the political, military, and intellectual communities as to whether terrorism is a criminal act or an act of war often colors perceptions of these acts and our responses to them.

The US Marine Corps manual for combating terrorism unequivocally classifies terrorism as "a criminal act that is symbolic in nature."[1] In testimony on Khobar Towers, before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, Gen J.H. Binford Peay III, the regional commander in chief stated:

> The terrorist is a criminal. The terrorist is not a soldier. He strikes indiscriminately at the target of his choosing, with any means, at any time. All targets are legitimate in his eyes. He seeks to inflict as much damage as possible to horrify and shock the local population and global audience and to embarrass the leaders of a country.[2]

While terrorists and terrorist acts may fall into criminal classifications as viewed through national or regional judiciary processes, military personnel may inadvertently disguise potential threat indicators should they routinely accept "terrorist" as synonymous with "criminal". There <u>is</u> a mindset associated with being a warfighter that does not translate smoothly to that of being a crimefighter. General attitudes among military personnel confirm a willingness, even a zeal, to train for and execute warfighting missions yet enthusiasm tends to wane when the focus turns toward enforcement missions having more in common with police type actions. This institutional bias has and will

continue to effect the manner in which commanders perceive their missions and subsequently guide the execution of actions in that pursuit. As the sole super power and with ever growing dependence upon the global community for the economic welfare of the US, foreign policy decisions are apt to increasingly place US military forces into environments where the only credible adversarial capacity may rely upon asymmetric means such as those classified as terrorist acts.

The point to be made is that regardless of legality, the threats to US forces both at home and abroad are real, as real as any traditional military threat or act of aggression has ever been. Future commanders are well advised to consider this conclusion by then Major Frederic C. Hof USA in 1984:

> . . . the killing of 241 Americans at the Beirut International Airport was not an act of terrorism, but an unconventional military assault against a military target. That the victims and their chain of command never seemed to have realized they were at war in Lebanon only serves to compound the tragedy . . .even in the wake of yet another bombing, it may still come as a shock to many Americans to learn that there are people in Lebanon who (a) regard themselves as being at war with the US, and (b) consider the US to have initiated this war through continued American support for Israel and pat US support for the late Shah of Iran.[3]

Substituting the casualties of Khobar Towers and adding the US policies toward Iraq vividly underscores the continuing applicability of this statement today. It would serve us all well to remember this as we progress toward and into the 21st century. The rate of global change among haves and have-nots and the increasing gaps between them as a result of technology will inevitably be attributed by many as being a direct result of US influence, interference, or indifference.

Force protection thus assumes an even greater similarity to safety not only as a responsibility of command, but now too in its continuous applicability through periods of

peace and conflict, a subtle change from traditional views. Accepting this beckons a means to address force protection needs in both conventional and increasingly unconventional environments. Future commanders must accept the threat of terrorism from any source to be an unconventional asymmetric form of war no less real or dangerous than that of enemy air or ground capabilities. The issue of legality or criminality is a question best left to debate in the international law community. This is not to infer that the rules of engagement or established law be disregarded, however it does require the total realization of the inherent vulnerability of US Forces to terror attack. This is accentuated by our national strategy of engagement and enlargement, the impact of forward presence requirements, and the implications of intervention across sovereign boundaries.

Taking Measured Risk

As we are reminded in the story of The Sword of Damocles, a high office or command can be very challenging and rewarding, but the potential reward comes at a price. In the story, King Dionysius tells Damocles "It may be that a neighboring kingdom will send an army to seize this throne. Or I might make an unwise decision that will bring my downfall. If you want to be a leader, you must be willing to accept these risks. They come with the power, you see."[4]

Brig Gen Schwalier was chastised in the Downing and Cohen Reports for not doing all he could do in terms of soliciting help from his superiors and not sufficiently reducing the risk from a stand-off attack. Based on Brig Gen Schwalier's non-promotion, what is the message sent to future commanders? Should commanders be more cautious

in their approach to command, deferring decisions to higher levels and attempting to reduce risk at the possible expense of the mission? Certainly the mission would suffer if a commander felt he or she had to drive risk to zero. As pointed out by one senior Air Force official, commanders must not allow a fear of being second guessed or a fear of reprisals for taking measured risk inhibit their actions. A commander is not commanding if he or she avoids the responsibility of taking measured risks or making timely decisions. It is an honor to lead as a commander, and those selected to do so must step up to the tough day-to-day decisions and use their expertise and judgment to do what they believe is right. Regardless of the outcome, the commander is responsible and must accept the consequences.[5]

Brig Gen Schwalier stated in an interview he certainly agrees that a commander is responsible for all aspects of his or her command, and that he was responsible for all aspects of force protection at Khobar Towers during his tenure at the 4404th Wing (P). He further agrees that to be effective, commanders must not become overly cautious and avert risk at the cost of the mission based on the example of his non-promotion (although he is concerned this is the negative message sent). In a letter he sent to the Air Force Vice Chief of Staff regarding the delay of his promotion, Brig Gen Schwalier indicated his concern if the standards set for commanders are perceived as unattainable. He said in the letter officers are not interested in the spin and politics in the aftermath of an event such as Khobar Towers. Commanders just want to know that as they perform the mission in difficult circumstances, Air Force leadership will stand up and support them if they meet high, but attainable standards.[6]

Additional Lessons

The risk assessment analysis from Chapter 3 has yielded four possible reasons why the wing did not assign a higher risk level to this event. Two reasons (perceived bomb size and evacuation capability) are associated with the consequence component and two (available intelligence and possible overestimate of Saudi security effectiveness) are associated with the probability component of the risk model. Recommendations to improve available intelligence and coordination with the host nation for force protection are covered quite extensively in the Downing and Record Reports. There are two issues not addressed in the reports that stem from evacuation capability and perceived bomb size. These issues are the transitioning of deployed forces from temporary to semi-permanent status, and protecting forces at home.

Transition From Temporary To Semi-Permanent Status. At Khobar Towers, perceived building evacuation capability was inflated primarily because no evacuation drills were conducted. Had the drills been accomplished, the need for better evacuation procedures or notification methods may have surfaced. Beyond the specifics of Khobar Towers, this points to a more important issue regarding temporary versus semi-permanent basing of deployed forces. Organizations that are temporary will operate differently than permanent organizations that must do more long-term planning. Drills and inspections may not always be appropriate for deployed forces with a temporary mission, but as temporary transitions to semi-permanent, formal inspections and other tools normally associated with permanent operations must be considered. There is an understandable aversion by personnel to drills and inspections when executing the mission in a forward deployed area. The wing was originally set up in 1991 to be a temporary organization in

quick reaction to a specific threat. Unlike back at the home base, the men and women of the 4404th Wing (P) were performing a real mission, and no longer just training for the mission. Drills and inspections were generally considered events conducted by units in training and not really applicable to an actual mission, such as enforcing the "no fly" sanctions that was a 7-day a week, 24-hour a day operation.[7] In a temporary organization where the day-to-day challenges of performing the real mission are difficult enough, training events such as formal inspections and drills may be considered additional annoyances. However, by 1996 the 4404th Wing (P) was no longer a temporary organization and the mission had been extended indefinitely. Brig Gen Schwalier realized this and was making first time changes to reflect the more permanent nature of the wing. He changed several key staff positions from 90-day rotations to one year assignments for better continuity and relations with the Saudis. In his end-of-tour report, he recommended other positions go to a one year assignment. With the wing's first Five-Year Facilities Improvement Plan, he started a long-term improvement plan that would normally be associated with a permanent organization. Inspections and drills would have been other useful tools as the wing transitioned to a more permanent organization.

As evidenced by our extended involvement in Operation Southern Watch, and now Bosnia, temporary commitments that evolve into semi-permanent presence may be more the norm than the exception. Planners must develop procedures that map in advance how temporarily deployed forces will transition to semi-permanent organizations as commitments are extended. One possible method to address this issue would be to institute reviews at certain time intervals during the life of a deployed force. The purpose of the reviews would be to determine if changes are necessary to make an organization

look and function more like a permanent overseas operation. For instance, after the deployed forces' first year of operation, a review could be held to determine if certain temporary duty positions should be transitioned to one year assignments or if staffs should be increased beyond the "bare-bones" contingent given to temporary deployed forces.[8] At another pre-designated time interval, a review could take place to determine if more formal inspections from higher headquarters are warranted. In this way, forces that were deployed in quick reaction to an immediate threat could be shaped over time to meet longer-term commitments. These procedures should be developed at the CINC or DOD level rather than the field command level so they are uniform across deployed forces.

Protecting Forces At Home. There should be no question after this tragedy, and the other mentioned recent terrorist attacks, that terrorists will continue to use more effective weapons. As terrorists become more sophisticated, eventually using weapons of mass destruction (chemical, biological, or nuclear), we must look at not only how we base our troops overseas, but also our basing options here in the US. As a cost savings measure, some officials propose that Air Force bases maintain only the real estate, such as the runways and flightline, necessary to perform the essential mission[9] All other facilities, such as administrative buildings, would be sold to the private sector and leased back to the Air Force. This has been coined the "city-base" or "Fort Apache" concept. Essentially all base functions would be performed off base except for essential operations. This proposal raises several force protection issues, especially in light of increasingly sophisticated terrorists. How would we protect our personnel if most of them worked in leased buildings in commercial areas? If we sold off real estate around the flightline, could we properly protect our assets as commercial areas encroach? Privatization of Air

Force functions could adversely affect force protection if not handled correctly. At Khobar Towers, we saw the difficulty of maintaining force protection in close quarters with the local population. As we examine future basing operations in the US, we should ensure we do not place our personnel and assets in facilities that are difficult or impossible to defend.

Brig Gen Schwalier's Reflections on Command

In an interview, Brig Gen Schwalier was asked point blank what message he would pass along regarding the responsibilities of command. He was not asked what he would have done differently at Khobar Towers, but what should future commanders glean from his command experience. The issues discussed were the importance and need for strong commanders, public affairs preparedness, cultural influences, management of intelligence resources, a tendency to isolate a commander who has been struck with a tragedy, and the reward of command.

He began by reasserting the supreme importance and the nation's necessity for strong commanders. The actions and decisions of a commander must be founded in truth, and executed to the best of ones abilities. A commander's background and expertise plays heavily in any decision, but a successful commander must look beyond personal expertise and take advantage of the collective experiences of those around him or her. He cautioned however that "perfectly illogical things take place out of logical events, that's a risk" and a commander's best efforts may not be enough politically.[10]

Regarding the handling of a crisis, Brig Gen Schwalier stressed the imperative of public relations preparedness and the absolute requirement to get out the right first

message. Immediately following the bombing, he and his staff worked intensively to control the situation, focusing on the welfare of the casualties. Initially, he left the public affairs aspect of the incident to his Public Affairs Officer, but the magnitude of the situation quickly overwhelmed that person's expertise and ability, unfortunately allowing issues to develop through the media, and judgments to be passed before all the facts were known. Brig Gen Schwalier believes that as important as it was to control the immediate on-scene crisis, it was just as important to get the information out correctly the first time. In addition to restoring operational stability, he emphasized the importance of minimizing unnecessary speculation and its impact on the organization and surviving family and friends.

Brig Gen Schwalier continued with a discussion of the need to become intimately familiar with the environment paying particular attention to public and civilian sectors and how cultural influences may affect the ability to accomplish certain functions of the mission. He recounted his initial impressions of the degree to which religion permeated the entire fiber of the Saudi government and society. Although the Saudi government was supportive of US presence, many Saudis did not appreciate the intrusion of the non-Islamic West and wanted reassurance that US presence was temporary and not permanent. The Saudi government had to show its citizens it was in charge and the US was a temporary guest under Saudi control. Saudi sensitivity to US presence and its play on issues of sovereignty created an inertia in local Saudi/4404th Wing (P) interactions that rendered the simplest negotiations difficult and delayed many initiatives.

Complicating these concerns involved the issue of intelligence management. Brig Gen Schwalier was quick to emphasize the need to completely understand the local

intelligence structure, organization, and how it functions. He then advised of the necessity to get behind the doors, particularly in HUMINT areas, and acquire the requisite expertise to assess the credibility and scope of the available sources. Such baseline knowledge is integral in weighing the relative elements of intelligence analysis and assists the commander in validating decisions. He stressed the importance of being more than merely a recipient of information who is then expected to react.

Brig Gen Schwalier related a curiously unanticipated phenomenon as a result of the tragedy. A tendency of peers and senior officials to isolate themselves from the commander in times of crisis was unlike any situation he had ever experienced and was beyond any conscious explanation. He likened this reaction to one of two scenarios: a lack of knowing what to say or do and the associated discomfort, or an attempt to avoid association with him in an effort to preserve their own careers. He emphasized this isolation can only hurt the affected organization that is trying to get back on track.

Finally, the General summed up his thoughts and upon placing all that had happened in its proper perspective, expressed his gratification in having commanded what he views as the best and most challenging wing in the Air Force. This was an opportunity which required him to assimilate the entire repertoire of his experiences and training in a real world contingency operation. His message to those aspiring for command is to emphatically accept the challenges without reservation. There is no greater responsibility nor reward than that of command.

Notes

[1] *Fleet Marine Force Manual (FMFM) 7-14* (Washington D.C., US Marine Corps, October 1990), 1-1.

Notes

[2] Senate, *Bomb Attack in Saudi Arabia: Hearings before the committee on Armed Services*, 104th Cong., 2d sess., 1996, 25.

[3] Major Fredderic C. Hof, "The Beirut International Airport Bombing of October 1983: An Act of Terrorism?" (Course Paper, Armed Forces Staff College, Norfork, VA, 13 November 1984), 1-4.

[4] James Baldwin, "The Sword of Damocles," ed. William J. Bennett, *The Book of Virtues* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 215.

[5] Non-attribution briefing at the Air War College, 30 January 1998.

[6] Schwalier interview.

[7] Lt Col Collins, former 4404th Wing (P) Security Police Commander, 1992, interviewed by author over telephone (Lt Col Seat), 14 October 1997.

[8] House, *The Khobar Towers Bombing Incident*, 9.

[9] Non-attribution briefing at the Air War College, 17 December 1997.

[10] Schwalier interview.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Considering the extensive resources and time spent on three major investigations, the resulting force protection enhancements undertaken throughout the Air Force and DOD, and the fact that accountability was finally assigned to a single person, do these measures effectively close the books on Khobar Towers? Certainly the media has lost interest and a majority of the public has long forgotten this event. The steps taken by DOD appear to have satisfied congress' and the public's desire for accountability and perceived justice. The books may be closed for DOD, congress and the public, but it may be healthy for commanders to hold open the discussion on Khobar Towers. Commanders know that risk will not go away, and as they manage risk in their organizations, they are vulnerable at any time to the same scrutiny applied in this incident. Therefore, they must prepare to the best of their ability using lessons from incidents such as Khobar Towers, building their expertise and judgment to meet the challenges of command. This paper has discussed considerations for commanders based on Khobar Towers that may be useful in that preparation. Two of the more important lessons from this tragedy are now summarized followed by some additional questions that may deserve further discussion.

Commanders Must Command

Why did Secretary Cohen discount the determinations of the Air Force regarding accountability and press with the decision to have Brig Gen Schwalier's promotion to Major General withheld? One possibility lies in Brig Gen Schwalier's account. Brig Gen Schwalier, while fully acknowledging his responsibility and accountability as commander, has steadfastly maintained the focus of the DOD investigation following Khobar Towers was based upon a search for culpability and not accountability. He cites the lack of apparent due process and the ad hoc nature of the investigative process as indicative of a quest for the "right" answer. According to Brig Gen Schwalier, the investigation was essentially open-ended with no established procedure as DOD searched for a particular answer. He says the "right" answer was nothing short of placing blame on at least one individual to relieve congressional pressure on DOD. Even though no criminal or administrative actions were taken against Brig Gen Schwalier, his non-promotion to Major General and associated loss of credibility could not allow him to continue in the Air Force as a viable leader and was in every respect viewed as punishment by Brig Gen Schwalier. He is quick to point out that the cost of this punishment to him personally in no way compares to the pain and suffering endured by the affected airmen and their families.[1]

Regardless of whether culpability or accountability was the true objective, the perception may have been created that commanders can be sacrificed for political expediency. Considering the aftermath and series of investigations from Khobar Towers, what should be the response of future commanders to their concern that when a crisis occurs they may be held culpable for their actions based primarily on politics?

Commanders must not allow this concern to enter their decision making process at any level. This is easier said than done, but if commanders are to properly balance risks against mission accomplishment, they must adhere to what they believe is right. Commanders must command, and with their best efforts, be willing to accept the consequences, good or bad, deserved or undeserved.

Civil-Military Relations

In an evolving society with the dynamics of civil-military relations a curious trend may be forming as a result of the last three decades. With the suspension of the draft and the inception of the all-volunteer force there has been a noted decline in the degree of general military familiarity at all levels of civilian government. In a parallel development there is a claim by some of a gross politicization of the military to the right resulting in an increasingly unquestioned influence of the senior military leadership at civil policy formulation levels.[2] High expectations demanded of those entrusted with the defense of the nation has also led to the perceived over inflation of failures when they occur. Recent controversies such as the Navy's Tail Hook, the Army and Aberdeen, and the Air Force's experiences with the H-60 Blackhawk shoot-down over Iraq, the Kelly Flynn incident and Khobar Towers along with the associated magnification in the press, invite questions of both the readiness and competence of those in the military charged to faithfully carry out their duties and further raise suspicions between the military and its civilian masters. Accessing the state of civil-military relations hinges upon one key assumption, and that is the willing subordination of the military to civil authority and public acknowledgment by the military of that civilian authority's inherent right to be wrong.[3]

Having weathered the controversy surrounding Khobar Towers, Brig Gen Schwalier believes that civil-military relations are at a current low point, yet the foundation of civilian supremacy over the military is not threatened.[4] In fact, his decision to retire vice publicly defy the decisions of his civilian leaders is a testament to the sound nature of civil-military relations. He believed the civilian authority was in error, but he conceded to that authority's right to be wrong as he viewed it. Likewise, Gen Fogleman's decision to step down as the Chief of Staff of the Air Force further reinforces this basic tenet of our democracy. Both of these individuals have exercised through their action the most reinforcing commitment to the supremacy of civilian rule in our government. Hence, these events should not be viewed as further erosions of civil-military relations, but must be considered exemplary of a system that is working, self-correcting, and stable.

Lingering Debate

It has been only twenty-two months since this tragedy and it is still too fresh to be considered history. The questions to be answered and those yet to be asked are numerous. Who committed this act of war? The Federal Bureau of Investigation is still working with the Saudi government to identify the perpetrators. To what degree was Gen Fogleman's retirement decision linked directly to Khobar Towers and its aftermath? What will be the long term effects of Gen Fogleman's early retirement on the military, the Air Force, and commanders and how they view the challenges of command? Will the Air Force's big push for force protection enhancements be sustained over the years? Have the force protection measures addressed and implemented to date contributed significantly to the prevention of a future incident, or are they mere "window dressing" as

a result of the need for some politically expedient action? As the number of deployed contingency operations increase, can the newly established Air Force security structure cover the mounting requirements? Was Khobar Towers a military failure or a political failure? How will the answers to these questions and those that follow affect the way commanders approach their next mission? The future implies an ever increasing need for military leaders to be cognizant of not only their military area of expertise, but also intimately aware of the potential influences of both cultural and political constraints within their operating environment.

Notes

[1] Schwalier interview.
[2] Non-attribution briefing at the Air War College, December 1997.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Schwalier interview.

Appendix A

ABSTRACT OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DOWNING ASSESSMENT OF THE KHOBAR TOWERS BOMBING

The Findings and Recommendations of the Downing Assessment Task Force are extracted from the Report and presented here in summary format to assist the reader in obtaining an overview of the Assessment and in identifying specific areas of interest. Detailed explanations of each Finding and Recommendation are contained in the basic Report.

DoD PHYSICAL SECURITY STANDARDS FOR FORCE PROTECTION

FINDING 1: *There are no published DoD physical security standards for force protection of fixed facilities.*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING 1:

Establish prescriptive DoD physical security standards.

Designate a single agency within DoD to develop, issue, and inspect compliance with force protection physical security standards.

Provide this DoD agency with sufficient resources to assist field commanders on a worldwide basis with force protection matters. Consider designating an existing organization, such as a national laboratory, Defense Special Weapons Agency, or the Corps of Engineers, to provide this expertise.

Provide funds and authority to this agency to manage Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) efforts to enhance force protection and physical security measures.

DoD FUNDING AND RESOURCES FOR FORCE PROTECTION

FINDING 2: *Force protection requirements had not been given high priority for funding.*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING 2:

Establish priorities for force protection requirements in the Defense Planning Guidance and, as recommended by the Antiterrorism Task Force report, include force protection as a Defense-wide special interest item.

Coordinate DoD priorities for force protection of noncombatant forces with the Department of State (See Finding 16).

Address force protection in the Joint Warfighting Capabilities Assessment (JWCA) process.

Implement the recommendations of the Antiterrorism Task Force on establishment of a separate Office of the Secretary of Defense-managed program element to fund high priority antiterrorism requirements.

Encourage combatant commanders to articulate and prioritize force protection requirements in their Integrated Priorities List.

DoD REVIEW OF JOINT TASK FORCES

FINDING 3: *Joint Task Force-Southwest Asia and other U.S. Central Command units in the region were not structured and supported to sustain a long-term commitment that involved expanded missions, to include increased force protection from an emerging and viable terrorist threat.*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING 3:

Review the composition of Joint Task Force-Southwest Asia and other U.S. Central Command units to insure that they are structured and have resources appropriate for the mission and the conditions.

Review current manning and rotation policies, to include tour lengths for key leaders and staff, with the aim of promoting continuity in the chain of command and unit cohesion.

U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

FINDING 4: *Current U.S. Central Command command relationships do not contribute to enhanced security for forces operating in the region.*

RECOMMENDATION FOR FINDING 4: Assign operational control of all combatant forces operating in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region to one headquarters.

U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND SECURITY POLICIES

FORCE PROTECTION PRACTICES

FINDING 5: Force protection practices were inconsistent in Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Gulf region.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING 5:

Develop common guidance, procedures, and standards to protect the force. Assigning operational control of all combatant forces to one headquarters (Finding 4) will facilitate a common approach.

Closely coordinate all antiterrorism countermeasures with host country agencies.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION POLICIES

FINDING 6: *There is no theater-specific training guidance for individuals or units deploying to the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility.*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING 6:

Establish training qualification and certification procedures for all units, individuals, and civilians prior to deployment to and after arrival in the Area of Responsibility. This should include force protection measures and be applicable to service members on both permanent change of station and temporary duty assignment.

Conduct mandatory force protection and risk management training for all officers and senior noncommissioned officers deploying to high threat areas. Integrate this training into officer and noncommissioned officer professional military education to assure long-term development of knowledge and skills to combat terrorism at all levels.

Support development of antiterrorism training and education supporting materials, using innovative media methodologies, as recommended by the Antiterrorism Task Force and directed by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Conduct refresher training for installation/unit antiterrorism officers immediately prior to assignment in the theater, as outlined in DoD Instruction 2000.14.

SUFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF INTELLIGENCE IN THE U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

WARNING OF THE TERRORIST THREAT

FINDING 7: *Intelligence provided warning of the terrorist threat to U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia.*

INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION

FINDING 8: This finding and its recommendation are classified in their entirety.

INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

FINDING 9: *The ability of the theater and national intelligence community to conduct in-depth, long term analysis of trends, intentions and capabilities of terrorists is deficient.*

RECOMMENDATION FOR FINDING 9: Allocate sufficient analytic resources to conduct in-depth, detailed analysis of trends, intentions, and capabilities of terrorists.

THREAT LEVEL ASSESSMENTS

FINDING 10: *The Department of State and elements within the DoD ascribe different Threat Level assessments for countries of the same region, causing confusion among recipients of this information.*

RECOMMENDATION FOR FINDING 10: Institute one interagency methodology for assessing and declaring terrorist Threat Levels, allowing commanders to determine Threat Conditions in a local area.

INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT TO SECURITY POLICE

FINDING 11: *The lack of an organic intelligence support capability in U.S. Air Force Security Police units adversely affects their ability to accomplish the base defense mission.*

RECOMMENDATION FOR FINDING 11: Provide U.S. Air Force Security Police units assigned an air base defense mission an organic intelligence capability.

COUNTERINTELLIGENCE SUPPORT

FINDING 12: *This finding and its recommendation are classified in their entirety.*

U.S. AND SAUDI COOPERATION ON INFORMATION EXCHANGE

FINDING 13: *This finding is classified in its entirety (there was no recommendation for this finding).*

COMMUNICATIONS ARCHITECTURE TO SUPPORT INTELLIGENCE

FINDING 14: *While the communications architecture in the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility supported the flow of intelligence throughout the upper echelons of the chain of command, field units had limited access due to classification restrictions.*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING 14:

Make collateral communication systems available to the lowest appropriate level.

Distribute appropriate information to all key force protection officials, as well as coalition partners.

CLARITY OF THE DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SECURITY BETWEEN HOST NATIONS AND U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND

FINDING 15: *The division of responsibility between U.S. and host nation police and military forces for security at facilities throughout Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Gulf is clear.*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING 15:

Promulgate memorandums of understanding (MOU) between host nation and U.S. forces, delineating responsibilities for protecting U.S. operated facilities, to include procedures for upgrading security when Threat Levels change.

Increase the number of interpreters available to security forces.

DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OVERSEAS SECURITY IN THE REGION

FINDING 16: *(a) U.S. Embassy security resources are insufficient to adequately protect large numbers of noncombatant military forces in selected countries.*

(b) The U.S. Defense Representative has insufficient resources to adequately protect large numbers of noncombatant military forces in selected countries.

(c) The U.S. Defense Representative does not have directive authority over selected "stovepipe" organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING 16:

Assign all DoD personnel to the unified combatant commander, except those whose principal function supports the Chief of Mission.

Provide the U.S. Defense Representative directive authority for force protection matters over ALL DoD personnel not assigned to the unified combatant commander.

Provide the U.S. Defense Representative with appropriate staff to assist the Chief of Mission in the execution of force protection responsibilities, to include conducting vulnerability assessments, identifying funds for force protection, and developing force protection standards.

SECURITY OF U.S. FORCES AND FACILITIES IN THE REGION

FINDING 17: *U.S. forces and facilities in Saudi Arabia and the region are vulnerable to terrorist attack.*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING 17:

GENERAL SECURITY

Conduct vulnerability assessments for every site within the Area of Responsibility and repeat them on an appropriate schedule. Each site must be examined individually and in-depth.

Locate facilities in secluded areas, wherever possible.

Assign all security force members a weapon. Rifles and machine guns must be zeroed and fired for sustainment training. Identify special weapons requirements early and train to meet requirements. Stress weapons maintenance.

Examine and prioritize terrorist threats for both potential of occurrence and degree of vulnerability at each site. Prepare defenses accordingly.

Coordinate with host nation police and military forces to develop and maintain a combined ability to counter the surface-to-air missile threat from terrorist elements.

PHYSICAL SECURITY

Employ integrated technology, including intrusion detection systems, ground sensors, closed circuit television, day and night surveillance cameras, thermal imaging, perimeter lighting, and advanced communication equipment, to improve the security of all sites.

Employ technology-based explosive detection and countermeasure devices.

Physically harden structures based on the threat.

Develop guidance on required stand-off distances and the construction of blast walls and the hardening of buildings.

Relocate and consolidate units at vulnerable facilities to more secure, U.S.-controlled compounds or bases.

Reinforce the entry control points to U.S. facilities and provide defense in depth.

Cable single rows of Jersey barriers together.

Use enhanced barriers, similar to those designed by United Kingdom and Israel, to shield and protect vulnerable compounds and structures. (See Finding 26)

Establish threat based stand-off or exclusion areas around compounds and bases.

Procure personal protective equipment suitable for extreme hot weather operations.

The last recommendation of this section is classified.

TRANSPORTATION

Harden or procure armored buses to transport service members between housing areas and work sites.

Provide armed guards, at a minimum in pairs, on buses and provide armored escort vehicles.

Ensure host country military and police are actively involved in securing routes of travel.

Provide and maintain communications for all modes of transportation and centrally control and monitor transportation movements.

TRAINING

Provide personal protection antiterrorism training to all deployed service members and their families.

Conduct training exercises to rehearse responses to a terrorist attack, including building evacuation and re-assembly procedures.

Develop and use an extensive list of potential terrorist scenarios to assess force protection measures at each site in the Area of Responsibility.

FOLLOW-ON ASSESSMENTS

The Task Force could not physically survey all locations in the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility within the time frame of this Report. Locations in the theater which the Task Force did not survey should be assessed as soon as possible. These include Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Pakistan, Oman, Sudan, and Yemen. The Task Force had only a limited opportunity to assess force protection in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Bahrain. Urgent priorities to improve force protection have been identified at U.S. facilities in these countries. A follow-on assessment team should conduct a more in-depth survey of these sites.

INTELLIGENCE WARNING OF ATTACK ON KHOBAR TOWERS

FINDING 18: *While intelligence did not provide the tactical details of date, time, place, and exact method of attack on Khobar Towers, a considerable body of information was available that indicated terrorists had the capability and intention to target U.S. interests in Saudi Arabia, and that Khobar Towers was a potential target.*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING 18:

The first two recommendations for Finding 18 are classified.

Provide commanders of units operating in a high threat air base defense environment direct access to a dedicated intelligence analytic capability. (See Finding 11)

FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE BOMBING

THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

FINDING 19: *The chain of command did not provide adequate guidance and support to the Commander, 4404th Wing (Provisional).*

RECOMMENDATION FOR FINDING 19: That the Secretary of Defense take action, as appropriate.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SECURITY OF KHOBAR TOWERS

FINDING 20: *The Commander, 4404th Wing (Provisional) did not adequately protect his forces from a terrorist attack.*

RECOMMENDATION FOR FINDING 20: Refer to the Chain of Command for action, as appropriate.

ADEQUACY OF FUNDING AND RESOURCES FOR FORCE PROTECTION

FINDING 21:*Funding for force protection requirements was not given a high priority by the 4404th Wing (Provisional).*

RECOMMENDATION FOR FINDING 21: Separately identify force protection requirements in budget submissions and assign them appropriate funding priorities.

SAUDI RESPONSIBILITY FOR SECURITY

FINDING 22: *(a) The division of responsibility for the protection of Khobar Towers was clearly understood by both U.S. and Saudi officials.*

(b) Saudi security forces were unable to detect, deter, and prevent the truck bomb attack outside the perimeter fence at Khobar Towers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING 22:

Establish and maintain regular working relationships between senior commanders and appropriate host nation officials.

Raise critical force protection issues to the chain of command, if unable to solve them at the local level.

MEDICAL CARE AT KHOBAR TOWERS

FINDING 23: *The medical care provided to the victims of the June 25 bombing at Khobar Towers was outstanding; however, mass casualty procedures could be improved.*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING 23:

Continue emphasis on first aid, bandaging and splinting, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training for all individuals. Initiate similar training for all services, where appropriate.

Continue emphasis on realistic mass casualty training and exercise scenarios, and increase Advanced Trauma Life Support training for medical providers.

Provide an increased number of ambulances in Saudi Arabia.

Make the wearing of identification tags mandatory in contingency operations.

Provide a patient on-line data base at all medical facilities to assist in identification and treatment of patients.

Include requirements for patient administration in contingency plans for mass casualties.

Establish contingency contracting for local translator support in a crisis.

FINDING 24: *This finding and its recommendation are classified in their entirety.*

APPLICATION OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES TO FORCE PROTECTION

FINDING 25: *Technology was not widely used to detect, delay, mitigate, and respond to acts of terrorism.*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING 25:

Provide professional technical assistance and information on force protection from the DoD to units in the field.

Designate a DoD element to rapidly acquire and quickly field integrated force protection technology to deployed forces.

The third recommendation for Finding 25 is classified.

Train military leaders on an integrated systems approach to physical security and force protection technology.

ALLIED FORCE PROTECTION EFFORTS

FINDING 26: *U.S. allies have extensive experience and have accumulated significant lessons learned on force protection applicable to the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility.*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING 26:

Develop and implement an integrated systems approach to force protection planning, using lessons learned from U.S. allies.

Strengthen cooperative efforts between the United States and allies on terrorism and force protection matters.

Develop a means of sharing information obtained during cooperative exchanges with other force protection professionals in the United States.

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