

**PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR FORCE PROTECTION  
AT KHOBAR TOWERS**

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 25, 1996, terrorists exploded a massive truck bomb outside the Khobar Towers housing complex, in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. That terrorist act killed nineteen American service members, and hundreds of other service members and Saudis were injured. Since this tragedy, the Department of Defense has engaged in searching investigations of what took place at Khobar Towers. Our goals have been, first, to determine as precisely as we can what happened that day, and why so many of our service members were killed and injured; second, to assess the implications of this tragedy for our future force protection efforts; third, to make needed improvements in force protection; and fourth, to assess issues of personal accountability for force protection at Khobar Towers.

This final issue -- personal accountability -- is the subject of this report. After carefully reviewing the previous reports on the Khobar Towers attack, as well as some of the underlying evidence, I have reached the following conclusions with respect to this question of accountability.

In light of the available strategic intelligence and a precursor attack in Riyadh in November 1995, the risk that there could be further terrorist attacks on U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia was clear. Brigadier General Terryl Schwalier, Commander of the 4404th Wing (Provisional), recognized that a car or truck bomb parked at the perimeter of the Khobar Towers compound, where many of his forces were housed, represented one of the most serious threats facing his command. He did not, however, take adequate account of the implications of this threat or develop an effective plan for how his command should respond to it. Deficiencies of the compound's alarm and evacuation systems make this clear:

-- Khobar Towers had no effective alarm system with which to warn our service members of an impending terrorist attack. The principal means for sounding an alarm at Khobar Towers consisted of having personnel go from door-to-door throughout an eight-story dormitory, alerting residents to the danger. This primitive approach was not appropriate for a high-threat environment like Dhahran. On the night of the attack, even with heroic efforts the sentries were able to contact fewer than half the floors in the building before the bomb exploded.

-- Although there was a base-wide siren and loudspeaker system (the "Giant Voice" system) that could, in theory, have been used to alert residents to the terrorist threat, that system also was plainly inadequate. The siren component of the system had not been tested since 1994, out of deference to the local authorities; the loudspeaker system was incomprehensible to those inside the buildings, according to the testimony taken by investigators; and the procedures in place to activate either portion of this system were cumbersome and slow. On the night of the attack, Wing personnel were still seeking permission to activate the system when the bomb exploded.

-- There were no plans and procedures informing Wing personnel how to respond in the

event of a suspected perimeter bomb attack. There were no instructions explaining when individuals should evacuate the buildings, and when they should instead take cover inside the buildings.

-- Although the buildings had been evacuated on several prior occasions in response to suspicious packages, evacuation drills were never conducted at Khobar Towers. Without regular, timed drills, the Wing leadership was unable to assess the adequacy of its evacuation plans or to make needed improvements in those plans; and Wing members had no opportunity to learn recommended evacuation procedures. Moreover, because of the frequent rotation of personnel at Khobar Towers, many service members had never participated in an evacuation.

The testimony of the sergeant who sounded the alarm on the night of the attack demonstrates the inadequacy of the procedures that were in place. As this sergeant testified, he had not been told what method to use to evacuate the building in question; indeed, initiating evacuations was not even part of the responsibilities of the roof-top sentries. He had never participated in any practice evacuations at Khobar Towers, and had evidently not been given any instructions as to when residents should evacuate the buildings, and when they should take cover inside the buildings. This sergeant's good judgment and prompt action unquestionably saved lives the night of the bombing -- but one individual's exemplary performance cannot take the place of functional alarm systems and well-conceived evacuation plans and procedures.

Other issues also reflect a lack of sufficient attention to the possibility of a perimeter bomb attack. For example, the Command was aware that the parking lot on the northern perimeter of the Khobar Towers compound -- which was only 80 feet from the nearest building - - was a point of serious vulnerability. While Brig Gen Schwalier's subordinates were unsuccessful in persuading the local authorities to extend the perimeter even a small amount, he never raised this issue himself with his Saudi counterparts. Nor did he ever raise this issue with his chain of command. Because it is questionable, however, whether the northern perimeter could have been extended far enough to protect against the massive bomb used by the terrorists, this issue was not as important in my decision as the other issues discussed above.

The same is true of the Command's decision not to install Mylar (a shatter-resistant coating) on the windows in Khobar Towers, contrary to an express recommendation in a vulnerability assessment on Khobar Towers prepared six months before the bombing. Although the Wing commander implemented most of the recommendations of the vulnerability assessment, he decided to defer this important item. In light of the size of the bomb used at Khobar Towers, it is unlikely that Mylar would have prevented the vast majority of the fatalities, which resulted from the partial collapse of one of the buildings. Mylar might, however, have reduced the number of injuries from flying glass. 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.

We expect a high standard of performance from our commanders in the field who are entrusted with the safety of our troops. A general officer must display judgment and

resourcefulness well beyond that expected of more junior officers. Commanders must display insight capable of a comprehensive assessment of the command's vulnerabilities, and they must continually weigh the risks and benefits of measures to address those vulnerabilities. I have concluded that Brig Gen Schwalier's actions with respect to force protection did not meet the standard required for a Major General, and I have therefore recommended to the President that his name be removed from the list of those to be promoted to that grade. This was a difficult decision. Brig Gen Schwalier is a fine officer, who has had a distinguished career and who ably discharged his primary mission of enforcing the no-fly zone in Southern Iraq through Operation Southern Watch. I have concluded, however, that the security lapses at Khobar Towers make his promotion inappropriate.

We also expect a high standard of performance from the entire chain of command. Our field commanders, who in the final analysis are accountable for all that their units do or fail to do, must know that they will receive support from the chain of command that enhances their ability to succeed in the difficult missions with which the nation has entrusted them. It is incumbent on senior headquarters to provide comprehensive assistance to those subordinate units most at risk. The true nature of accountability mandates that all who serve in uniform understand that a tragedy such as the Khobar Towers attack reflects on more than one man. All in the chain of command need to draw from this experience those lessons, however painful, which may help others who follow, and who will be at similar risk. Indeed, the sacrifice of our service members at Khobar Towers demands that we do so.

Although the chain of command shares responsibility for the safety of our troops, force protection is, as Brig Gen Schwalier himself has acknowledged, first and foremost the responsibility of the commander on the scene. His chain of command kept him apprised of the level of the threat in his area of responsibility, and they consulted with him about force protection issues. He never referred any force protection problems -- including those discussed above -- to his seniors. If he believed that he needed further assistance to implement additional force protection measures, he could have requested it. He did not do so. That failure should not be imputed to all above him in the chain of command. I have therefore concluded that no adverse action should be taken against those senior to Brig Gen Schwalier in the chain of command.

## **PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR FORCE PROTECTION AT KHOBAR TOWERS**

The threat of terrorism is not new to the United States military. Nor is the requirement for force protection new; force protection has always been an implied mission in all that our commanders do.

As we continue to deploy forces around the globe to accomplish new and varied missions, we place increasing demands on our commanders to perform these missions while also protecting their troops from acts of terrorism. The Khobar Towers bombing confirmed this challenge and accelerated the Department's efforts to improve force protection worldwide. These efforts are, and must be, geared to deterring terrorists from attacking our forces and to minimizing casualties should an attack occur. While we had taken many steps before the Khobar Towers bombing to enhance force protection, the Department learned many lessons in the aftermath of the attack, and has implemented a host of measures in response.

But it is not enough merely to learn and move forward. We must ask whether the lessons learned in the aftermath of the Khobar Towers tragedy were matters that should have been anticipated and addressed before the attack. This question requires a critical assessment of the roles key members in the chain of command played in developing the force protection measures in place at Khobar Towers at the time of the attack.

### **A. Background**

Any discussion of the Khobar Towers attack must start with the November 1995 car bombing of the Office of the Program Manager, Saudi Arabia National Guard (OPM SANG) in Riyadh. The bomb used in that attack, containing some 250 pounds of explosives, had exploded in a parking lot next to a building where American military forces trained Saudi military personnel. Seven people were killed, including five Americans, and 35 others were injured. This was a watershed event in Saudi Arabia, which had previously known little terrorist activity. Following the OPM SANG bombing, intelligence indicated that terrorists were continuing to target U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the Eastern Province, where Dhahran and the Khobar Towers housing complex are located. In light of this intelligence, USCINCCENT declared a "high" threat level in the entire country.

The King Abdul Aziz Air Base, located one kilometer west of Khobar Towers, is the site from which coalition aircraft conduct Operation Southern Watch, which enforces the no-fly zone in Southern Iraq. At the time of the bombing, U.S. forces operating from that base were housed at Khobar Towers, a high-rise building complex in a densely populated urban environment. A vulnerability assessment performed at Khobar Towers after the OPM SANG bombing concluded that among the most serious threats to Khobar was a vehicle bomb that either penetrated the compound or was detonated at the perimeter. In the wake of the increased threat level and the vulnerability assessment, Brigadier General Terryl Schwalier, commander of the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing

(Provisional) that included the U.S. forces at Khobar, instituted a number of significant improvements in force protection designed to tighten security and counter the anticipated terrorist threat.

Shortly before 10:00 p.m. on June 25, 1996, three sentries posted on the roof of building 131 at Khobar Towers saw two men park a fuel truck at the edge of a nearby parking lot, about eighty feet from the base of their building, and then speed away in a car. Recognizing the possibility of a truck-bomb, the sentries reported the threat to the Central Security Control (CSC) and then initiated an evacuation of the building, knocking on doors and orally alerting personnel to the danger. In about four minutes, the sentries were able to alert only the top three floors of the eight-story dormitory. Meanwhile, the CSC attempted to contact the Wing Operations Center to activate "Giant Voice," a base-wide loudspeaker and siren system, to sound an alert.

Before Giant Voice could be activated, however, the truck-bomb exploded, causing a partial collapse of building 131 and lesser damage to nearby buildings. Nineteen American service members were killed in the blast, all but one of whom resided in building 131. Hundreds of other service members and Saudis were injured, mostly by flying glass from windows shattered throughout the compound. Fortunately, most of the personnel who were evacuating from the top floors of building 131 were caught in the interior stairwells when the bomb went off, which in retrospect may have saved them from serious injury.

There is no doubt that the extent of the casualties at Khobar Towers resulted, in part, from the extraordinary size of the terrorist bomb. Reports initially estimated that the bomb contained the equivalent of 3,000 to 8,000 pounds of TNT, but a study by the Defense Special Weapons Agency concluded that the power of the bomb was actually closer to 20,000 pounds of TNT. Although there had been one uncorroborated report that a large amount of C-4 explosive had been smuggled into Saudi Arabia, no one -- either in Saudi Arabia or in the U.S. -- had anticipated the possibility of an attack of this magnitude. The 250-pound OPM SANG bomb had been the largest terrorist bomb deployed in Saudi Arabia up to that time and had served as a baseline for counter-terrorism efforts in that country.

## **B. Investigative Efforts**

Immediately after the tragedy at Khobar Towers, Secretary Perry appointed General Wayne A. Downing (USA, Ret.) to assess the adequacy of force protection on the Arabian Peninsula, and specifically at Khobar Towers. General Downing conducted an expedited investigation and delivered his report to the Secretary on August 30, 1996.

General Downing concluded that there were serious deficiencies in force protection at Khobar Towers and other CENTCOM facilities and made recommendations for improved force protection worldwide. As discussed in Secretary Perry's September 16, 1996 report to the President, the Department has adopted virtually all of General Downing's recommendations.

The Downing report also addressed issues of personal accountability and concluded (1)

that Brig Gen Schwalier did not adequately protect the forces at Khobar Towers from a terrorist attack, and (2) that the chain of command did not provide adequate guidance and support to General Schwalier. Secretary Perry referred these issues to the Secretary of the Air Force with instructions to consider them and take appropriate action. The Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force subsequently named Lieutenant General James F. Record to be the disciplinary review authority and General Court-Martial Convening Authority with jurisdiction over any actions or omissions by Air Force personnel associated with the bombing of Khobar Towers.

The Air Force delivered General Record's report on accountability issues to the Deputy Secretary of Defense in December 1996. His report concluded that no one was guilty of a criminal offense or merited any administrative sanction. While the report persuasively resolved criminal issues, Deputy Secretary White, with the concurrence of the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force, concluded that certain other issues were not adequately dealt with in the report. In particular, the report had not thoroughly discussed the question of whether administrative sanctions were appropriate, and it lacked sufficient detail about certain factual issues, including the preparedness of the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing to protect itself against a terrorist attack involving a bomb at the perimeter of Khobar Towers. The Air Force accordingly tasked its Inspector General, Lieutenant General Richard T. Swope, and Judge Advocate General, Major General Bryan G. Hawley, to perform additional work to supplement the Record report. In April 1997, Deputy Secretary White received the report of Generals Swope and Hawley. As did the Record report, their report concluded that no one should be sanctioned administratively as a result of the Khobar Towers bomb attack.

I have now personally reviewed all three reports, as well as some of the underlying evidence, and have reached my own conclusions about the difficult issues of personal accountability for force protection at Khobar Towers. In my view, the Air Force reports do not reflect a thorough, critical analysis of all of the facts and issues, nor, in many instances, do they arrive at conclusions fully supported by the facts. On the other hand, in the course of my review, it also became apparent that several conclusions reached by the Downing Assessment Team during its expedited review are overstated.

### **C. Standards for Command Accountability**

In judging the performance of a military commander, we must remember that commanders have myriad responsibilities and tasks for which they are accountable. We cannot expect perfection from them in meeting these responsibilities and accomplishing these tasks. The demands upon their time, intellect, and energy are too numerous and too varied to justify an expectation of perfection. Nor can commanders be asked to meet a standard of zero defects. Service in our armed forces is inherently dangerous, not only in time of war, but also in time of peace. This is even more true today, as we send our forces on missions that blur the traditional distinctions between war and peace. Even the most skilled officer may suffer the death or injury of members of his or her command when events that could not reasonably have been anticipated or guarded against befall that command.

Nonetheless, we can and do expect a high standard of performance from our commanders in the field, who are entrusted with the safety of our troops. A general officer must demonstrate judgment, awareness, and resourcefulness well beyond that expected of more junior, less seasoned officers. Such an officer should, moreover, display insight capable of deep and broad assessment of all the varied threats arrayed against his command. This includes understanding his command's vulnerabilities and thoughtfully assessing both the adequacy of measures taken to address those vulnerabilities and the risks associated with not taking certain measures.

There can be no rigid template for determining a commander's accountability that can be mechanically applied to every factual scenario. Each commander faces different risks, has different resources with which to counter those risks, and confronts different constraints. Each commander is expected to assess the risks and to weigh carefully those steps that are within his or her authority, consistent with both budgetary and manning limitations and with other special constraints (such as those posed, in the case of Khobar Towers, by its particular international setting). When, in the commander's judgment, the various limitations and constraints he or she is facing leave the command with an unacceptable level of risk, that commander should raise those issues to higher levels in the chain of command.

More senior commanders have an affirmative responsibility to oversee and assess the activities of their subordinates and to support their requirements. Although they cannot be expected to be as familiar with day-to-day concerns as their subordinates, they must actively assist their field commanders in handling the complex issues that inevitably confront them in protecting their forces from harm. Senior leaders must also take steps to become aware of the significant issues that their field commanders are addressing at any given time, and of the actions taken to resolve those issues. Unless their supervisory efforts reveal problems, however, more senior commanders may reasonably rely on their subordinate commander's representations that things are well in hand and may reasonably expect their subordinate commanders to request assistance as needed.

#### **D. Assessment of Force Protection Measures at Khobar Towers**

Defending the Khobar Towers compound in its urban environment was a particularly difficult task. The compound was close to Saudi homes, businesses, parks, and places of worship. Terrorists could strike our forces at Khobar without warning, in many different ways, and from many directions. As I have noted above, there was strategic intelligence indicating an escalation in terrorist activity targeted at U.S. forces in eastern Saudi Arabia and identifying Khobar Towers as a potential terrorist target. As reported by General Downing, however, "[t]here was no intelligence from any source which warned specifically of the nature, timing, and magnitude of the June 25, 1996 attack on Khobar Towers." Although Wing leaders realized that terrorists were capable of building a bomb bigger than that used at OPM SANG, they did not anticipate a bomb as large as the one that was ultimately deployed.

In January 1996, the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) completed a



vulnerability assessment of Khobar Towers in light of available intelligence, which was shared with the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing, including Brig Gen Schwalier. That assessment identified various threats to Khobar Towers, including vehicle bombs that either penetrated the interior of the compound or were detonated on the compound's perimeter. This assessment also identified a significant vulnerability of the compound: the close proximity of a public parking lot 80 feet north of dormitories 131 and 133, where the June attack ultimately occurred.

In response to the vulnerability assessment, the Wing command promptly implemented thirty-six of the vulnerability assessment's thirty-nine recommendations, and two more were planned for the future. The implemented measures included repairing the perimeter fence, stringing concertina wire along the fence, creating specially-designed serpentine access routes defended by armed security police (with a 2-1/2 ton truck prepared to block oncoming vehicles), surrounding the compound with double rows of concrete jersey barriers and placing dumpsters at key locations, building M-60 machine gun emplacements at the main gate, posting roof-top sentries on many of the dormitories, increasing Saudi patrols inside and outside the compound, trimming vegetation along the perimeter, and tightening identification checks at the main gate. Brig Gen Schwalier's efforts to prevent a bomb from entering the compound may well have deterred the bombers from attempting a penetration attack, which could have resulted in a greater number of casualties.

Nonetheless, Brig Gen Schwalier could and should have done more to prepare the 4404<sup>th</sup> to respond to a perimeter bomb. He and his staff recognized that there was a serious risk of a perimeter or "stand-off" bomb attack. Although they anticipated that such a bomb would likely be comparable in size to the one used at OPM SANG, they knew that they could not discount the possibility that terrorists could use a bigger bomb. Regardless of the anticipated size of the bomb, however, they had to take reasonable measures to protect their troops from harm if a stand-off bomb attack occurred. Their planned response to such an attack consisted of having roof-top sentries detect the threat and then seek promptly to evacuate affected personnel. It is evident that this plan could only work if an alarm could be sounded quickly, safe havens could be rapidly identified, and personnel could be moved swiftly to those safe havens.

Accordingly, Wing leaders were obliged to have a thorough plan for protecting personnel in the event a perimeter attack materialized. They had to consider how personnel in danger would be alerted to the threat, whether the alert would be timely and effective, whether and how to distinguish among the different types of threats in alerting personnel (e.g., mortar fire vs. perimeter bomb), and where personnel would be directed to go to protect them from harm. In addition, they also had to ensure that Wing personnel understood the evacuation plans and knew instinctively how and where to evacuate.<sup>1</sup> This was a particular concern because the cadre of

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1 An Air Force Instruction requires installation commanders to "[e]stablish an antiterrorism program, tailored to local mission, conditions, and terrorist threat," to "[e]nsure the installation can respond to a terrorist attack," and to "plan, train, exercise, and execute antiterrorism measures . . . where appropriate." AFI 31-210, The Air Force Antiterrorism

personnel at Khobar was constantly changing due to the short tours of duty: new personnel were arriving every week.

The testimony indicates, however, that the command did not develop an effective plan for how personnel would be alerted and removed from harm's way in the event a stand-off bomb attack occurred. The Wing's tools for alerting and safeguarding personnel consisted of (1) "Giant Voice," the base-wide loudspeaker and siren system; (2) a primitive evacuation method, which consisted of having personnel knock on individual doors of the dormitories and tell the occupants to evacuate and to alert others, starting on the top floors of the buildings and working downward; (3) notices posted on the backs of suite doors providing information to dormitory residents on how and where to evacuate in a crisis; and (4) other notices directing building residents to take cover in the interior of their suites in the event of an enemy attack. Even for a perimeter bomb attack comparable in size to that at OPM SANG, this patchwork emergency response program would have been unsatisfactory in many respects.

First, because of problems with the Giant Voice system and the procedures for its use, that system was of little value in a terrorist attack. This system was originally used as an alarm for SCUD missile attacks during the Gulf War, warning base personnel to take cover inside their suites. But many Wing personnel, including Brig Gen Schwalier, identified Giant Voice as one of the means of alerting personnel to the need to evacuate their suites in response to bomb threats. Thus it was not clear whether in any given case this system -- either in voice mode or in siren mode -- was to be used as a "take cover" warning or an evacuation warning. There were no clear procedures identifying the emergencies for which Giant Voice would be activated, and no procedures governing when to use the voice mode and when to use the siren mode.

In any event, the voice mode of Giant Voice was reportedly incomprehensible to personnel located indoors. As some Wing personnel testified, voice announcements would only draw personnel to their windows to try to make out what the loudspeaker was saying, thus potentially exposing personnel to greater risk of injury. The siren component of Giant Voice had not been tested since 1994, despite the high state of alert, in deference to the wishes of local authorities. Accordingly, Wing leaders could not be confident of its effectiveness in an emergency.

Furthermore, the procedures for activating either the voice or the siren component of Giant Voice were too cumbersome and slow. To activate the system, it was necessary (1) for the observation post to request the Central Security Control (CSC) to activate the system, (2) for CSC to pass the request to the Wing Operations Center (WOC), (3) for WOC to pass the request

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Program ¶¶ 2.13-2.14.

to the Wing commander, and (4) for the Wing commander to give permission, upon which WOC could then activate the system. As Brig Gen Schwalier and his Support Group Commander testified, on the evening of the bomb attack, Wing personnel were still seeking permission to activate the system when the bomb went off.

Second, knocking on doors and using word-of-mouth was an unsatisfactory method of alerting personnel to terrorist threats in the high threat environment that existed in Dhahran. This primitive method of alert simply could not provide a timely warning in response to a bomb attack or other emergency. It was not a substitute for an automated mass notification system. Wing leaders had decided not to install fire alarms in the dormitories, contrary to the recommendation of the January 1996 vulnerability assessment, because the buildings at Khobar Towers were not constructed of combustible materials and there were very few flammable items in them. Even if the risk of fire was minimal, however, this did not obviate the need for an effective automated alarm system to alert Wing personnel to terrorist threats.<sup>2</sup> On the evening of the bomb attack, the roof-top sentries immediately recognized the threat as planned; however, during the four minutes available to alert personnel to the danger, the sentries had no expeditious means to do so.

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2 Joint Publication 3-07.2, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism, states (at p. K-3) that "[t]he bomb threat alarm system should be easily distinguished from the fire alarm," thus indicating that some type of bomb threat alarm system is required. The Swope/Hawley Report (at p. 69) concluded that "Joint Pub 3-07.2, by its own terms, applied to commanders of combatant commands, subunified commands, joint task forces, and their component commands. Thus, it applied to USCENTCOM, USCENTAF, and the 4404th Wing (P). Joint Pub 3-07.2 procedures were to be followed except in exceptional circumstances."

Third, the procedures and plans concerning where and how Wing personnel should seek safety once alerted to a danger were deficient. Although the Wing had reviewed and updated its evacuation plans in April 1996, and had posted notices in the dormitories as to how to evacuate to the outside of the buildings in an emergency, the Wing had not published guidance on what to do in the event of a stand-off bomb attack, i.e., whether to evacuate the building or to take cover in its interior. Therefore, on the night of the bombing, Wing personnel did not know where to go to maximize their safety. It was only by good fortune that many personnel who were evacuating building 131 were still in the interior stairwells when the bomb went off and therefore received some protection from the effects of the blast. Both Air Force reports point out that evacuation of personnel to the exterior of a building is not necessarily the safest course when faced with an imminent stand-off attack or other emergencies. The established response to SCUD attacks, for example, was for personnel to take cover in the interior of a building, not to evacuate.<sup>3</sup>

The testimony indicates, moreover, that for the most part personnel at Khobar Towers were not at all conversant with the evacuation/"take cover" procedures that were in place: many Wing personnel testified that they were unaware of any procedures for how to respond in the event of terrorist incidents, or that the only procedure they knew was to knock on doors and get people out. While the Swope/Hawley report indicated that there was a systematic and organized evacuation method in place at Khobar Towers known as the "waterfall" method, Wing personnel who testified in the investigations generally made no reference to such a method. Some personnel were aware of notices posted on doors and said they knew where to go in the event of an evacuation to the exterior of a building. A smaller number mentioned the "take cover" response. Virtually no one, however, testified that Khobar Towers had established an emergency response system calling for different reactions depending on the nature of the threat.<sup>4</sup>

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3 A post-attack analysis of building 131 by the Army Corps of Engineers determined that its stairwells were structurally sound and were relatively isolated from the exterior of the building. The stairwells, which did not collapse in the blast, offered some protection from flying glass and probably provided the safest haven to occupants of building 131 in the face of an imminent threat.

4 See Appendix (providing excerpts from the testimony of Wing personnel concerning alarms and evacuation procedures).

Fourth, evacuation drills had never been practiced at Khobar Towers. As the Swope/Hawley report recognizes (at p.76), "[t]he Wing was required to practice emergency response procedures but did not do so. Although the Wing had a number of real-life evacuations from November 1995 to May 1996 [in response to suspicious packages], these real-life evacuations were an inadequate substitute for exercises."<sup>5</sup> In the absence of timed and regular drills, Wing leaders could neither assess the speed and efficacy of their evacuation methods nor ensure the familiarity of all of their personnel with those methods. They could not know whether security police would detect a potential stand-off bomb promptly, how they would react if they did, how long it would take them to alert those in danger, whether personnel once alerted would evacuate or take cover to avoid the danger, and how long it would take them to do so. Similarly, they could not assess the effectiveness of the Giant Voice system and the procedures for activating it without actually using the system in a simulated emergency scenario.

The ad hoc nature of the alarm systems and evacuation planning and training at Khobar Towers is illustrated by the testimony of a staff sergeant who, by happenstance, was overseeing the sentries on the roof of building 131 at the time of the bomb attack. This sergeant decided, on his own initiative, to begin an evacuation of the building in response to the threat posed by the truck bomb. His good judgment and prompt action unquestionably saved lives. But his commendable performance is not a substitute for thorough emergency planning and training. He had never been told whether knocking on doors and evacuating was the right procedure for building 131, nor had he been told that initiating evacuations was part of the responsibilities of roof-top sentries. He had never participated in any practice evacuations at Khobar Towers, he had never heard Giant Voice before the bombing, and he was not aware that Giant Voice was available for a truck-bomb threat. Moreover, he had apparently not been instructed on whether residents should take cover inside or evacuate to the outside in the event of a stand-off bomb attack.<sup>6</sup>

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5 Joint Publication 3-07.2 called for the Wing to "prepare, publicize, and rehearse evacuation plans in advance. Address alarm systems, assembly areas, routes to assembly areas, personnel evacuation response, building and area clearance, and evacuation drills." Joint Publication 3-07.2, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism, at p. K-3. Specifically, the Wing was required to "[p]eriodically practice evacuation and search drills under the supervision of the installation or unit senior officer." The Joint Publication explains that "wargaming of possible terrorist attacks is the best test, short of an actual incident, to analyze the ability of an installation, base, unit, or port to respond. Drills and exercises test suspected vulnerabilities and antiterrorist measures." Id. at p. V-10.

6 See Appendix (providing excerpts from the testimony of Staff Sergeant Alfredo Guerrero, the security policeman who initiated the evacuation).

We cannot know whether a better alarm system and better evacuation/"take cover" procedures and drills would have saved lives on the night of the bombing. Had timed and regular drills been conducted, however, Wing leaders might have determined that the alarm and evacuation systems at Khobar Towers were too slow or otherwise inadequate, or that personnel did not understand the response procedures. Although Brig Gen Schwalier and his Support Group Commander believed that the eight-story dormitories at Khobar Towers could be evacuated in five minutes, the Swope/Hawley report concluded (at p.75) that "[e]vidence indicates prior evacuations of buildings in Khobar Towers complex were completed in 10-15 minutes. This is consistent with time it took to evacuate the first three floors the night of the bombing." Timed drills would have provided Wing leaders with a more accurate assessment of how long it would take to evacuate a dormitory by knocking on individual room doors, and thus perhaps an indication that this rudimentary method of alert was inadequate.

Of course, even with the best alarms and evacuation procedures and training in place, there would not have been much time to respond to the threat on the night of June 25. The security police did in fact respond heroically that night, both in recognizing the danger and attempting to alert as many people as possible. There is also no dispute that Brig Gen Schwalier made great strides in enhancing the force protection measures of his command. Brig Gen Schwalier also unquestionably carried out with distinction his primary mission under Operation Southern Watch of enforcing the no-fly zone in Southern Iraq. Nonetheless, given the incomplete preparation of the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing to defend against the serious threat of a perimeter attack -- a risk that Brig Gen Schwalier himself recognized -- I have concluded that Brig Gen Schwalier did not exhibit that degree of judgment, awareness, and resourcefulness that I would expect in an officer that I would support for promotion to Major General.

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It is also important in reviewing Brig Gen Schwalier's overall performance to say a few words about force protection issues that have received considerable public attention, but which played a smaller role in my decision. There has been public discussion of the failure of the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing to extend the fence line on the vulnerable northern perimeter of the Khobar Towers compound, in order to achieve a greater separation between the northern parking lot and buildings 131 and 133. Brig Gen Schwalier's subordinates did ask local authorities to extend this perimeter somewhat, but their efforts were unsuccessful. Brig Gen Schwalier did not follow up these efforts by raising the perimeter issue with his Saudi counterparts. Nor did he raise the issue with his chain of command.

While Brig Gen Schwalier's judgment can be questioned for not pursuing this issue more aggressively, it is doubtful that Saudi officials would have approved the extension of the perimeter to a distance which would have protected Khobar Towers against a 20,000 pound bomb, although they did so after the bombing. In any event, because Brig Gen Schwalier did not elevate this issue, we cannot say for certain how it would have been dealt with by senior Saudi officials or by Brig Gen Schwalier's superiors.

Another issue that has received public attention is the failure of the 4404<sup>th</sup> to install Mylar (a protective coating designed to prevent shattering of glass) on the windows of the dormitories. The January 1996 vulnerability assessment for Khobar Towers recommended installation of Mylar. Based on the projected cost of installing Mylar, his assessment of the threat, and the other force protection measures he had taken (including approval of black-out curtains for the windows), Brig Gen Schwalier decided to postpone the installation of Mylar and to include it in his five year budget instead.

Brig Gen Schwalier's judgment can be faulted for postponing the installation of Mylar. For the OPM SANG-size bomb that was anticipated, Mylar offered protection from perhaps the most significant hazard of a perimeter attack: flying glass from shattered windows. For the much larger bomb that was in fact used by the terrorists, Mylar might have prevented some of the injuries that were caused by flying glass in buildings throughout the Khobar Towers compound. Although Brig Gen Schwalier testified that cost was a factor in his decision to postpone this measure, he had never been denied funding for force protection measures in the past.

It is true that Mylar would not have prevented the majority of the fatalities at Khobar Towers, however, which were caused by blunt force trauma suffered in the partial collapse of building 131.7 Moreover, it is not clear that Mylar, which was first recommended in January, could have been properly installed at Khobar Towers by June. Nonetheless, Brig Gen Schwalier's decision to defer the installation of Mylar is further evidence that he did not give sufficient consideration to how he would minimize the risk of injury to his forces in the event of a bomb attack.

General Downing has also faulted the Wing leadership for having allegedly rejected an express recommendation to relocate the personnel housed in the two buildings closest to the northern perimeter. In fact, however, there was no such recommendation.<sup>8</sup> This option was never broached to or considered by Brig Gen Schwalier. In retrospect, relocating personnel --

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7 The Defense Special Weapons Agency and Army Corps of Engineers performed a site survey and report last summer which determined that, in the absence of structural changes, Mylar would not have been effective against the bomb actually used at Khobar Towers, nor would its use have lessened the structural damage that caused all but one death. Defense Weapons Systems Agency, Report of Khobar Towers Bomb Damage Survey, p. 10.

8 The January 1996 vulnerability assessment did recommend dispersal of mission essential and other key personnel in the various dormitories in the Khobar Towers compound. This recommendation was rejected in order to maintain unit integrity. Dispersal of key personnel was a separate issue entirely from relocating personnel housed in the perimeter buildings.

which was a measure entirely within Brig Gen Schwalier's control -- might well have protected the occupants of the perimeter buildings from even a massive stand-off bomb in the north parking area. Given the difficulty of extending the perimeter, relocation might have provided one of the few effective ways of reducing the casualties from a perimeter bomb. Although relocating personnel from perimeter buildings could conceivably have exposed them to greater 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, especially in light of his failure to implement alternative measures to protect against a perimeter attack.

#### **E. The Accountability of The Chain of Command**

The chain of command shares in the responsibility for the safety of our troops. As Brig Gen Schwalier recognized, however, force protection at any installation is first and foremost the responsibility of the installation's commander. 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. USCENTCOM also established a force protection board as a link between the component commanders and the field on force protection matters. However, Brig Gen Schwalier never referred any force protection problems up his chain of command.

The particular deficiencies that I have identified with respect to force protection at Khobar Towers are, by their very nature, precisely the kinds of issues that must be dealt with by the commander in the field. Brig Gen Schwalier's superiors in the chain of command, who were in most instances located thousands of miles from Saudi Arabia, could not have been expected to second-guess the local commander's decisions on issues of this sort. Ultimately, as the on-scene commander, the responsibility was his. If he believed that he needed additional assistance to implement additional force protection measures, he could have requested it from his superiors in the chain of command. He did not do so.

Other issues that were raised by General Downing's report with respect to the chain of command included the somewhat confusing command relationships, the fact that most of the service members in Saudi Arabia were on short, 90-day tours, and the lack of theater-wide force protection standards and training. Although some of these criticisms may be legitimate, and we have made changes in our force protection efforts that address these issues, they do not appear to have been causally related to the bomb attack or to the casualties that resulted from the attack. With respect to the command relationships, while General Downing concluded that command structures led to confusion with respect to commanders' responsibilities for force protection, the testimony of the relevant commanders is to the contrary. Brig Gen Schwalier testified repeatedly that he understood that he had responsibility for force protection at Khobar Towers and that the structure of the chain of command did not affect his abilities to carry out that responsibility. General J. H. Binford Peay III, Commander-in-Chief, USCENTCOM, kept Brig Gen Schwalier apprised of the strategic environment and made force protection a priority issue in the command. Subordinate commanders in turn made it a corresponding priority and consulted with Brig Gen



Schwalier on force protection issues.

This does not mean that the chain of command should be satisfied that they did all that they could have done to support Brig Gen Schwalier's force protection efforts. A tragedy such as the Khobar Towers bombing necessarily reflects on more than one man. Our commanders in the field must be able to count on support from their chain of command to enhance their ability to succeed in the difficult missions with which they are entrusted. In the aftermath of the bombing, we have made important institutional changes to make certain that, in the future, our senior military leaders will play a much more proactive role in counterterrorism and force protection matters. Particularly with the non-traditional missions that our forces are increasingly asked to perform in the post-Cold War environment, countering the threat posed by terrorism to our forces abroad must be among the top priorities of our senior leadership.

Our forces, regardless of location, are potential targets of terrorists and others who seek to use unconventional means to offset their lack of numbers, sophistication of weaponry, or courage to meet us on the field of battle. All of our military leaders should constantly question whether enough has been done to ensure that the forces in their charge are protected. We unfortunately cannot guarantee that there will be no new terrorist attacks on our forces. But with the heightened attention to these issues and greater involvement of the entire chain of command, we can reduce the risk of another tragedy like that at Khobar Towers.

## **F. Conclusion**

In light of the above analysis, I have concluded that there were lapses with respect to force protection at Khobar Towers for which Brig Gen Schwalier must be held accountable. Accordingly, I have recommended to the President that his name be removed from the list of those to be appointed to the grade of Major General.<sup>9</sup> I have also concluded that no adverse action should be taken against those senior to him in the chain of command. While the entire chain of command must shoulder the responsibility for the safety of our troops, in this instance, the failings that I perceive in force protection at Khobar Towers lie primarily with the commander in the field.

We must not ignore the ultimate truth about the Khobar Towers tragedy: a determined and resourceful adversary, armed with a massive amount of explosives and given a setting that made surveillance easy and defense challenging, exploited one of the few, but patent, vulnerabilities of a highly fortified compound. In the period leading up to the attack, the compound's force protection posture was significantly enhanced. Nevertheless, vulnerabilities that had been identified in the months before the attack remained exposed at the time the terrorists acted. The commander, who had been made aware of these vulnerabilities, failed to take actions within his authority to address them. Given his range of authority, Brig Gen Schwalier may not have been able to eliminate the vulnerability of the compound's northern perimeter, but he could certainly have minimized the damage that would ensue if the terrorists sought to exploit it. He failed to prepare a rigorous plan for his command to respond to this threat.

Accountability in this instance relates to basic force protection issues, the resolution of which was within this commander's authority. In the final analysis, the commander on the scene is responsible for the safety of his or her personnel. This principle has served us well in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

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<sup>9</sup> The Senate has confirmed Brig Gen Schwalier's promotion to the grade of Major General, but his appointment has been delayed pending completion of my review of the accountability issues raised by the Khobar Towers bombing.

## APPENDIX

### Excerpts from Interviews of Wing Personnel Concerning Evacuations and Alarms

The following are selected excerpts from interviews conducted after the Khobar Towers bomb attack with members of the 4404th Wing (Provisional) who lived in the Khobar Towers compound:

**Q: Were there any warning systems in place that would alert people of a terrorist attack? . . .**

**MSGT ALLEN (Security police manager): We have a Giant Voice system here. That's all I'm aware of that would--**

**Q: Were there ever any plans that you are aware of to use Giant Voice for those purposes? . . .**

**MSGT ALLEN: I'm not aware of any, no. I'm not saying there's not any, but I'm not aware.**

**Q: There was no procedure that if the desk sergeant had information, that he could pick up the phone or activate Giant Voice himself, get Giant Voice activated?**

**MSGT ALLEN: Not at that time. On Giant Voice--I'll just throw this in. It's kind of a double edged sword in its various situations and its usefulness. In this particular case, I believe that if Giant Voice had ben used, the casualties would have been a lot higher. . . . Even when Giant Voice goes on, you can hear it, but you really don't know what it is saying. . . . The first thing that people do is go to the window and either look out or open the window and try to hear what's being said. In this particular bombing, with the damage that was done by glass, I'm of the opinion if they would have tried to use it, that the injuries would have been much worse than what they were. (Allen 7/19/96 at 7)**

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**Q: What procedures were in place, what policies that you knew of for evacuation procedures?**

**MAJOR AMBROSE: Every one of the suites had inside the door the evacuation**

procedures. We practiced one time for a bomb threat about a month before that, a real world bomb threat which turned out not to be, but to go down in the parking lot like everybody was and to get out of the building immediately and clear the buildings from the top floor to the bottom floor and it worked just like that evacuation did. I met guys on the fourth floor that had just finished searching the fourth floor and it was perfect and we knew exactly who was left in the building. I personally went through every suite as I was coming down.

**Q:** How was that trained? Were you guys briefed on evacuation?

**MAJOR AMBROSE:** We were told at commander's call how to evacuate the building, how to get out, things along that line, yes. So the word was out. Plus, the notices on the door. Plus, we had done it one time. So everybody knew we were serious about it.

....

**Q:** Do you think more drills would have been helpful?

**MAJOR AMBROSE:** No. I don't think a drill would have done anything at this point, from what I understand. Just from what I've heard, from the time the SPs saw the truck to the time it went off, they couldn't have gotten people out of the building. Had they set off an alarm, people would have just been grabbing their boots or whatever just to go running out, and who knows, a lot of them would have maybe gone out in the street or maybe gone--if the bomb had been in that parking lot outside my building, they would have gone to that parking lot. So, you know, where do you evacuate to? You know, where do you have the foresight to know where that bomb is or what is going on? But no, we did evacuation plans and I felt they were adequate.

**Q:** If they had evacuated behind building 127, do you think the majority of personnel would have been safer by getting out of there?

**MAJOR AMBROSE:** Had we gotten an alarm do you mean?

**Q:** Yes sir.

**MAJOR AMBROSE:** Had we gotten an alarm and gotten the people out of 127, we would have formed up out in the parking lot and, yes, there would have been less cuts from flying glass, given ten minutes, I'd say, to evacuate the building because you have got people in the shower and people everywhere and that is going to take time. And you go down the steps. You don't use the elevators. So you go down eight floors. It's going to take about ten minutes.

**Q:** Yes sir. What about building 131? Are you aware of what their evacuation route was, if any?

**MAJOR AMBROSE:** I believe, I couldn't say for sure. I believe theirs was the same as ours, to go to the parking lot outside 127. And I was in 131 a number of times talking to my people and working things out, but I never paid any attention as to where they were actually going to--what it said on the door.

**Q:** At the very least, they probably would have been in the stairwells as opposed to being in their rooms when the blast occurred in 131, correct?

**MAJOR AMBROSE:** That's true if you had an instantaneous alarm system to where that cop hit the button immediately. (Ambrose 7/15/96 at 3, 10-11)

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**Q:** What was the alert notification process for a terrorist incident?

**CAPT ANDERSON:** It was basically just kind of word of mouth--some yelling--

....

**Q:** While you were deployed was there any type of drills or practical exercises that were tested to evacuate buildings or response to emergency procedures?

**CAPT ANDERSON:** We--I wouldn't say there was practice--there was an actual I guess bomb threat that occurred while we were there. . . . I guess someone was working on the elevators, and I guess one of the guys that were working there left their bag on top of the elevator. Someone noticed that, and we all evacuated the building in a safe perimeter from there until they figured out what was going on. That was the only incident that I knew of reacting to something.

**Q:** Okay. Were you aware of any procedures that you could follow in case that there was an attack; a terrorist attack? Were there any written procedures or instructions?

**CAPT ANDERSON:** Not to my awareness there wasn't.

....

**Q:** Were any type of emergency procedures practiced on a regular basis?

**CAPT ANDERSON:** No.

**Q:** Can you think of any security measures or procedures that were either very, very

good or things that could be improved upon in your opinion or perception and observations?

**CAPT ANDERSON:** Yeah, I felt that there could have been some kind of quick response type of warning in case something like this was going to happen, something suspicious out there. I guess the SP on top of the building saw what was happening, and he got only a couple of floors down before it went off, so there's got to be some kind of--where everyone in the compound knows "Hey something is going on!" There needs to be some kind of system like that, whether it be klaxon horns or what have you. (Anderson 7/15/96 at 1, 4)

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**Q:** What measures were you to take in the event you were alerted that there was a terrorist attack ongoing?

**MSGT ARMSTRONG:** Well, we would--they would post--it was posted in every suite, procedures as to where to evacuate to. Of course, you don't use the elevators. There was emergency stairwells and stuff, that you went down the stairwells to evacuate the buildings. And we would congregate in the parking lot adjacent to the building for a roll call or accountability of folks. As a matter of fact, we actually had to do that at one point about three to four weeks into the deployment. . . . [T]here was an object in building 129 that was a suspicious object. So they evacuated our building as a precaution.

....

**Q:** And did it run relatively smoothly?

**MSGT ARMSTRONG:** It took a while because there really isn't no alarm, you know, any kind of alarm or any way to let people know to get out of the building other than to go to each suite and knock on rooms.

**Q:** And that was the procedure, just that individuals would knock on the door and request people to evacuate?

**MSGT ARMSTRONG:** And, the first sergeant, I'm not sure if he informed the team and was doing it with a team--I know it was him that came and was banging on my door, quite loudly because we have people that were working all different shifts. I was actually sleeping during that incident, and woke me up and--

**Q:** And the first sergeant was the one who more or less ensured that everybody was there?

**MSGT ARMSTRONG:** Right, he was kind of in charge of that particular exercise if you want to call it that. We didn't think it was an exercise--I don't believe it was an exercise. It was a real suspected threat and we evacuated the building. It did take quite--because I think that now after the incident had happened and they said that they had like 4

minutes notice because it took probably 10 to 15 minutes or more to get everybody out of that building because you physically had to go and beat on doors and tell everybody to get out of the building, evacuate. (Armstrong 7/15/96)

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**Q:** Were there ever any reaction plans to a terrorist incident developed and promulgated , tested throughout the command?

**COL BOYLE (Support Group Commander):** Yes. In a new sense we had conducted a terrorist bomb exercise last December. In a more direct sense we had updated our evacuation plans in April of this year for each one of the dormitories here at Khobar Towers. We had planned an exercise of those evacuation plans, but on the--sometime in May, early part of May, we found a suspicious package in building 129 which was right behind building 131, which was the one destroyed. As part of responding to that live event, we evacuated the 5 buildings immediately around 129. 131 was one of the buildings evacuated. That event worked very, very well. The on scene commander and others on the scene reported that all of those people had been evacuated in under 5 minutes from all of those Towers. . . . In the largest building there are 24 doors to knock on and use the waterfall effect. As you knock on the doors and notify people, they go down the steps and they notify the others. So that's what we had done recently. I would say over the past eight months since November we've evacuated any number of buildings 6 or 10 times for similar suspicious packages. (Boyle 7/18/96 at 7)

....

**Q:** What kind of signal system did you have to evacuate people and where were they supposed to go?

**COL BOYLE:** Okay, we had the opportunity since OPM/SANG, I would say to evacuate buildings 6-10 times in response to actual sightings of suspicious packages. And when we evacuated a building we evacuated the immediately surrounding buildings as well, so each time we would evacuate roughly 5 different buildings. We--each time we did that used our back-up system for practice to see how fast we could do it, of sending an individual to a building, riding all the way to the top and then knocking on the door and then using the waterfall effect and the buddy system to bring people out of the buildings. The--5 minutes was the max it usually took to empty 5 buildings or so. We have an Air Force standard system called the Giant Voice system and you can see those loud speakers on top of these buildings here. It has a siren and an audio capability. We test the audio capability every Thursday and we tweak it to get the sound right and add repeaters as necessary. So that was the system that we had in existence for evacuating things. We did not test the siren system because of concern in the local providence here. . . .

**Q:** Why was Giant Voice not used on the 25th of June?

**COL BOYLE:** The Giant Voice was the next step on the quick reaction checklist and as the law enforcement desk was making the call to activate the Giant Voice, the blast occurred and knocked down all the land lines and power for 2 hours.

....

**Q:** What kind of system do you have out there now?

**COL BOYLE:** We still have the siren system along with the audio portion of Giant Voice. In addition, we have bought these air horns that we have put in a bag on each floor and all someone would have to do is screw the horn on top of the canister and then sound that. We want to make this faster than 5 minutes, our goal would be about two minutes, don't know if we can achieve two minutes. We had a test we didn't achieve two minutes with the air horns and the siren, but we'll keep practicing to see if we can do better than 5 minutes. . . .

. . . We've changed the quick reaction checklist to move the activation of Giant Voice higher. I guess now in the second step, we've also taken one of our LMRs our radios and we've completed it so that it sits at the law enforcement desk so the patrol may call the law enforcement desk. The law enforcement desk can pick it up and make an immediate audio announcement right from his desk, so that should save us the time that it would have taken that night to make a phone call to our Wing Operations Center and tell them to make the following announcement over the Giant Voice network. (Boyle 7/20/96 at 14)

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**Q:** What policies or procedures were you aware of that were in place for getting people--making them aware of contingency evacuation, terrorist attacks, whatever, and moving out of there?

**SSGT DAVIS:** I know there was an evacuation plan posted like on every suite door that told you where to evacuate to, but like we had gotten evacuated a couple of weeks prior to that for a suspicious package in one of the buildings. But they had to come around and like knock on everybody's door.

....

**Q:** Besides fire alarms, was there any other method that you are aware of that was in place to help evacuate people?

**SSGT DAVIS:** I know there was a base PA system. I heard them test it a few times. I guess there wasn't time that night for them to do anything, but as far as I know, that was the only other system because I don't think there was really time to go around and knock on everybody's door.



....

**SSGT DAVIS:** You know, if they can't use the base PA system, they need to come up with something else, you know, to do. . . . You know, there has got to be something in place to get everybody out in a big hurry. (Davis 7/15/96)

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**Q:** Could you describe to me, you know, like if you were in Building 127, and you were alerted to the fact that there was an imminent terrorist attack, what would you do?

**SSGT DENNARD:** Get out of the building and don't take the elevator down, exit out the fire escape and stuff, and meet up at a designated point.

....

**Q:** The procedure--how did you expect that you would be notified?

**SSGT DENNARD:** Well, we--basically runners or somebody--basically runners would come around and knock on the door. (Dennard 7/15/96)

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**Q:** What were the plans and procedures for response to a suspected or possible terrorist incident?

**AIRMAN DIXON:** I don't know.

....

**Q:** What type of system was in effect to evacuate personnel prior to the bombing?

**AIRMAN DIXON:** I'm not aware of that. I don't know.

**Q:** Was there a system in place to notify everyone in that building?

**AIRMAN DIXON:** No. Not except for word of mouth running downstairs.

....

**Q:** Were emergency procedures practiced on a regular basis?

**AIRMAN DIXON:** No. (Dixon 7/15/96 at 3-4)

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**Q: In Khobar Towers is there a written directive or a standard operating procedure for evacuation in case of fire, bombs, terrorist threats?**

**MSGT EBBS (Security superintendent): Yes sir. . . . If the alarm sounds off everybody is supposed to meet down here on the ground floor in the center of the building. (Ebbs 7/18/96 at 8)**

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**Q: Were there any type of emergency drills or practical exercises to practice? Like an emergency evacuation?**

**MSGT FRANK: No. They had one of them. I don't recall when. When we first got there, we had a drill to get out. And, everybody was notified. They went to the rooms and knocked on the doors, opened the doors, and told everybody to get out. (Frank 7/15/96)**

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**Q: Was initiating the evacuation procedure part of the responsibilities for the rooftop observers?**

**SSGT GUERRERO (Security Policeman who initiated evacuation of Building 131): We very rarely--never told the observers that was part of their duties. The only thing we told them that were a part of their duties is document things that were going on and anything that looked unusual or suspicious they needed to be checked out; they were to call it in, and we would get somebody out there to check it out. That was pretty much their primary duties. Other than that, it really had no other purpose, other than observation purposes only.**

**Q: If they weren't intended to initiate an evacuation, how would that occur? What did the procedures call for?**

**SSGT GUERRERO: When they would observe unusual activity, they would relate that, and if the control center deemed that as inherently dangerous or something that would need to be upgraded into an evacuation, they would do that. But the observation post would have to relay the matter to do that, to get that ball rolling.**

**Q: Was this a procedure you had practiced or the Security Police Squadron had practiced?**

**SSGT GUERRERO: No.**

....

**Q:** Do you know, did all the buildings have the same evacuation plan, or did it vary from building to building?

**SSGT GUERRERO:** I really don't know. I know when I got into mine, we had signs on the doors as far as what you were responsible for whenever an alarm went off or whenever Giant Voice went off. You just had to read that and know what was going on. I don't know if the other buildings had the same procedures.

**Q:** So the knocking on doors was just what you did for the minute. You didn't know if that was the right procedure for that building or not?

**SSGT GUERRERO:** Right.

....

**Q:** You were the element sergeant of the night, so you felt empowered to go ahead and start this recall, to start the evacuation of the building, and you did that.

**SSGT GUERRERO:** Right.

**Q:** If you hadn't been there, would the host person have had to stop and go through the procedure in calling the command center and getting approval to start that recall, following your standard procedures?

**SSGT GUERRERO:** They would have called it in as suspicious activity as far as what was going on, and depending on how it was relayed to the control center, I believe the observation post would have wanted to initiate an evacuation as well. They probably would have went ahead and did so as well. They probably wouldn't have--I don't know if they would have recognized they had the authority to do that. . . . I think their security police kind of--we would teach them as far as to not leave their post kind of would have kicked in. . . . I don't know if they had enough experience of what needed to be done because the one that was with me was a one-striper and hadn't been in very long, and the other one on the other side really wasn't fully aware of what was going on at that time. Like I said, it was just a coincidence how things occurred.

....

**Q:** Had you ever heard Giant Voice?

**SSGT GUERRERO:** Before? No. Not before the incident I never heard Giant Voice. Actually, it didn't occur to me that we even had Giant Voice before that happened, to tell you the truth. (Guerrero 9/23/96 at 9, 11, 13, 21)

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**Q:** What types of procedures were in place that you were aware of regarding evacuation, bomb attack, what to do during a contingency situation bomb attack, fire drill, terrorist attack, whatever?

**SSGT HENDERSON:** All we had that I know of was the checklist for bomb threats which we were to follow and a post-it evacuation plan for a fire drill--for a fire. That was it. There was no plan of action as I recall as far as a bomb threat.

....

**Q:** What type of systems were--that you knew were in existence or in effect for people to evacuate? In case something happened how would you know about it?

**SSGT HENDERSON:** As far as the dorm there was none. It was word of mouth. I don't remember seeing any flyers, but as far as the base wise they had the giant voice, sometimes you could understand what they were saying and sometimes you couldn't.

....

**Q:** Did they ever say, "Hey, if anything happens, giant voice will tell you what's going on"?

**SSGT HENDERSON:** No sir. Nothing I could think of that comes to mind of any kind of plan as far as getting together. Nothing.  
(Henderson 7/15/96)

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**Q:** What were the plans and procedures for response to a suspected or possible terrorist incident?

**TSGT JAY:** Basically, we had some instructions posted up on a wall in our suite. If we were ordered to do so, we would gather up in the inside hallway near the exit door and wait there for the all clear signal or any other further directions.

**Q:** What was the alert notification system?

**TSGT JAY:** Basically you could get verbally notified or telephone notification. Some of the crews were carrying beepers and radios. So I think for us it would have been more or less a telephone notification primarily.

....

**Q:** Any drills or exercises that were worked on or developed to respond to a terrorist activity?

**TSGT JAY:** No sir.

....

**Q:** Is there anything that you would like me to know, recognizing that what we want to do is try and prevent this thing in the future?

**TSGT JAY:** The only thing I kind of wished they had in place--like I say, I was glad the SP saw it. That was great. I guess they made it to the fifth floor notifying people. I just wish we would have had something in our building like a fire alarm or something, some kind of an alerting type stuff. . . . Maybe that could have saved more people on the bottom floors. . . . If there had been an alarm bell or something to say something is going on or maybe some other kind of system where if you hear the bell, you have to run to a certain area or something. Maybe it might have been different, but who knows? It could have been even worse. I don't know. It is hard to say. . . . But I don't know, like I said, the only thing I could really think of in retrospect is the alarm system. (Jay 7/15/96)

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**Q:** What was the notification process for terrorist incident?

**SSGT JOHNSON (Security Policeman):** Suite chiefs. . . personnel would send runners to the dormitories, and the suite chiefs were responsible for ensuring that all personnel took cover within their suites.

....

**Q:** What warning systems were in place to alert personnel of a terrorist attack?

**SSGT JOHNSON:** What they call the Giant Voice.

**Q:** Could you hear the Giant Voice inside your room with the air conditioner on?

**SSGT JOHNSON:** Yes. (Johnson 7/19/96 at 1, 3-4)

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**Q:** What were the plans and procedures for response to a suspected or possible terrorist incident in Khobar Towers?

**MSGT KEAN:** The only thing we went over was evacuation of a building. We were

supposed to evacuate the building, go downstairs, and meet in the center of the parking lot.

....

**Q:** Was there a security plan or threat plan posted in your quarters?

**MSGT KEAN:** Yes there was--I'm trying to think. It was a paper posted on the inside of our door about what we were supposed to do in the event. And, I believe it was, grab whatever you had, a blanket or what have you. Go down to the first floor, and we were supposed to take shelter on the ground floor. . . . It was posted on my suite door. I know that was. Which varied a little from the evacuation plan, which we were supposed to go out to the assembly area.

....

**Q:** Again, what procedures were you to follow in case of an attack?

**MSGT KEAN:** Like I said, evacuation plan. I think it was designed primarily for bomb threats. It was just an evacuation of the building to the assembly area in the parking lot. (Kean 7/15/96)

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**Q:** What were the plans and procedures for response to a suspected or possible terrorist incident?

**AIRMAN KING:** We didn't really have a plan. There wasn't one that was noted about where to go or what to do in case of terrorist attack.

**Q:** What was the alert notification process for a terrorist incident?

**AIRMAN KING:** All we had--well, I don't honestly know. All we had was SPs on top of the dorm from what I was told. . . . Only thing I found out afterwards was the SPs on the roof was the only warning system. I was told that they were told not to pull fire alarms or give off any horns because of local area might think it would be an attack on Saudi or something. (King 7/15/96 2, 6)

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**Q:** What procedures would you follow in case of an attack?

**MSGT MARTONE:** The procedures are to evacuate to the center of the building and await further orders from the giant voice or through radio channels.

....

**Q:** What type of system was in effect to evacuate personnel?

**MSGT MARTONE:** None. We just all did it.

....

**Q:** What warning systems were in place that would alert personnel of terrorist attacks?

**MSGT MARTONE:** None that I know of. (Martone 7/19/96 at 3)

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**Q:** Was there any difference between a fire evacuation plan and/or a terrorist activity or terrorist bomb or bomb threat evacuation plan?

**MSGT MELLO (Fire Chief):** Well, I don't really think there [is] much of a difference. . . . The only thing you had for alarm systems within those facilities were battery operated smoke detectors, so it was very difficult to have a fire alarm evacuation plan that was practiced and that really worked because there was no way of setting off a bell that everyone in that facility would hear. Basically what they had to do was go floor to floor, suite to suite and simulate a fire evacuation or else, you know, if there actually was some kind of problem, they would still have to do it floor to floor, suite to suite, and that was time consuming.

**Q:** Thank you. The Giant Voice system, what was it used for?

**MSGT MELLO:** The Giant Voice system was used quite a bit for evacuation if they needed to. You know the Giant Voice system worked as well as it could when you could hear it above air conditioners and televisions, stereos, and that kind of thing. It worked pretty well if you were outside or if you happened to be in rooms where windows were open or the doors were open.

....

**Q:** Prior testimony indicates that the dorms at Khobar Towers were evacuated within 5 minutes. Do you have any knowledge on how this was timed or if this is even-- or do you believe that this is even possible? And if so, could you give some explanation?

**MSGT MELLO:** I don't know where they got the time of five minutes. If it's a four story and an eight-story, there's a big difference, and we had a lot of our facilities out there were eight stories. To effectively go through and ensure that everybody is out of that eight-story facility in five minutes, that's pretty good. I find it kind of hard to believe due to the

fact that we did not have a fire alarm system that will notify everyone at the same time. You will have to depend on folks yelling on stairwells, going floor to floor, suite to suite. It takes time. Five minutes is an awful short time, and it would surprise me.

**Q:** Would you have any idea of how long it possibly would take to evacuate one of the seven story buildings there?

**MSGT MELLO:** The only thing I would say would be pure speculation or guess. I have no idea. (Mello 3/14/97 at 2-6)

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**Q:** Was there an alert notification process for a terrorist incident?

**CAPT MORELOCK:** Yes there was. I don't know it off the top of my head. . . . I know there was a checklist and it involved calling the security police and they would get it out through the nets and that type of thing. Specifically, I don't know.

. . . .

**Q:** Any type of evacuation system for personnel?

**CAPT MORELOCK:** Well, there was a diagram on each door that showed the exits and I believe there was, thinking back on it now, I think there was something about if we came under attack, it showed little shelters where--being the garages that are in between and it showed the evacuation. You know, you go out of your suite, you go to the hallway, go down the emergency stairs, you don't use the elevator, that kind of thing, and you go to the garage. But again, I felt that was more of an attack, i.e. a war kind of thing, versus a terrorist. All of the reactions should be, I would say looking back on it, very similar. (Morelock 7/15/96)

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**Q:** Were there any type of drills or practical exercises developed or used to respond to emergency situations--you know-- evacuating the building or that sort of thing?

**CAPT NEAL:** Other than the evacuation route posted on the room in the hallways, there was nothing--no drills or anything, no.

**Q:** But there were evacuation routes posted in the hallways?

**CAPT NEAL:** Yes.

**Q:** So, there were no written procedures then to follow in the event of a terrorist attack



that you were aware of?

**CAPT NEAL:** Not that I was aware just for a terrorist attack. We always had--we were supposed to have our helmets and wet belt and gas masks at all times, but there was no real specific immediate actions things that I can remember being briefed. (Neal 7/15/96 at 4)

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**Q:** If something were to happen, was there a method there that they would inform everybody very quickly?

**SR AIRMAN NEVINS:** No.

....

**Q:** Was there any type of warning system in effect that could have been used?

**SR AIRMAN NEVINS:** I think what could have been a good idea is that, if they were going to have guards up on the roof, there should have been some sort of bell system or something installed with a throw switch up there you know, so if something was seen they could throw the bell and everybody--you know, just like a fire drill that is set up at a school and actually have periodic drills to make sure that everybody knows that is happening. . . . (Nevins 7/16/96)

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**Q:** Were any drills or practical exercises developed to respond to terrorist incidents?

**MSGT REID (Security Manager):** Terrorist incidents, no. . . . We did have actual evacuation drills prior. . . I don't recall the exact dates, but it was building 129. . . We actually had to evacuate the building because of a suspicious object found on an elevator in the Security Police dormitory.

....

**Q:** What procedures were you trained, here, to follow in case of terrorist attack?

**MSGT REID:** It depends on where the attack occurred in the Towers. Again, Security Police are the primary office of responsibility for that. In my role, I was the security manager, and worked closely with the cops to help assist them in developing evacuation plans. Procedures that were briefed was if your building was a suspected target or required evacuation, you would assemble in a designated spot away from your building for personnel accountability, and remain under shelter. . . .

....

**Q:** What warning systems were in place that would alert personnel of a terrorist attack?

**MSGT REID:** The only system we had that was in effect in Khobar Towers area was the giant voice and a siren system.

....

**Q:** Was the giant voice operating at the time of the attack?

**MSGT REID:** It was in operation, but it was not operated as a result of the attack.

....

**Q:** Did you have emergency drills to evacuate people from the buildings?

**MSGT REID:** No sir. Not to my knowledge. Again, barring the real world incident, there were procedures. . . there were plans established by each one of the units where they would go.

....

**Q:** Sergeant Reid, what type of early warning system would you have put in if you were in charge? . . .

**MSGT REID:** Oh. The giant voice, again, my whole opinion, had they activated the giant voice the night of the explosion, or at least prior to the explosion, it would have probably injured or killed more personnel due to the whole volume of that PA system when you enter the buildings. . . . Most people could not hear the giant voice system, voice announcements as they call in every week. I was told following the giant voice test. Again, standing on my balcony with the air-conditioner off, you could barely hear the giant voice system. Had I had more time to do it, I would install, again, a larger siren. A louder PA system in the compound in addition to the speakers inside the . . . each individual quarters.

...

**Q:** Did anyone ever voice any fears that the Saudis might not be acceptable to us using a siren?

**MSGT REID:** Yes. In fact, on my checklist on the armed box itself, it prohibited me from actually testing a siren. That was to be used in a real world instance only. It was last tested in May of 1994. (Reid 7/19/96 at 4-9)

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Q: What were the alert notification procedures for a terrorist incident? . . .

SR AIRMAN RIVERA: We were just told to evacuate the, you know, building. That's all we were told to do.

....

Q: What building were you in?

SR AIRMAN RIVERA: Building 131.

Q: Where did you go?

SR AIRMAN RIVERA: I went out there, outside my suite to the elevator because two weeks prior we had received the same thing. But, except this was in regard to the SP building and we thought it was another drill, so I didn't bother to take the stairs.

Q: What type of system was in effect to evacuate personnel?

SR AIRMAN RIVERA: Well, as far as the building is concerned, the only best way to do it is just have everybody go down suite to suite, but you need about 2-3 people to go into each suite because you got about 10 rooms in each suite.

Q: What warning systems were in place that would alert personnel of a terrorist attack?

SR AIRMAN RIVERA: The only thing they had was loudspeakers throughout the compound. We didn't even hear that.

Q: Do you feel like this system was adequate?

SR AIRMAN RIVERA: No, I think like the possible use of like maybe a fire alarm. The building did not even have a fire alarm system. (Rivera 7/15/96 at 2, 5)

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Q: What was the alert notification process for a terrorist incident?

SSGT ROUSE: Terrorist incidents? I knew of none for terrorist type incidents. What we had was a memorandum that we posted on both sides of the bulletin boards and sheets in the dormitories stating just in case of an actual attack, I would assume like a bomb attack, where to go and different siren warnings. But other than that, there was nothing in specific for a terrorist type attack.

....

**Q:** Were there any drills or exercises conducted to prepare for reaction to a terrorist incident?

**SSGT ROUSE:** No sir.

....

**Q:** Was there any system in effect to evacuate people?

**SSGT ROUSE:** No sir.

**Q:** In case of a situation?

**SSGT ROUSE:** No sir, because after the bomb went off, it was just mass chaos, people just everywhere. the only thing I did, we left the building-- was to-- we didn't know if there was going to be another bomb in another building--just to get away and get out in the open to see-- kind of see what was going on. (Rouse 7/15/96)

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**Q:** What were the plans and procedures for response to a suspected or possible terrorist incident? Did you have any feeling of what to do in the event that there was a terrorist attack?

**SSGT SANDERS:** Basically, you know--no, not really; just to help other guys out and get yourself out, but to being told, no.

**Q:** Were you aware of any type of alert notification process for a terrorist incident?

**SSGT SANDERS:** No. (Sanders 7/15/96 at 2)

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**Q:** What type of system was in effect to evacuate the personnel from the building?

**MSGT SCHAEFFER:** What system? There is none that I was aware of.

**Q:** What warning systems were in place in Building 131 that would alert personnel of terrorist attacks?

**MSGT SCHAEFFER:** Other than people going floor to floor, there is nothing that I'm

aware of.

....

**Q: Were emergency procedures practiced on a regular basis?**

**MSGT SCHAEFFER: No. (Schaeffer 7/16/96 at 3)**

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**Q: What type of training was established for evacuation procedures?**

**LT COL SCHELLHOUS (Base Civil Engineer):** Each unit had their own . . . readiness representative . . . they were supposed to cover a brief--I don't want to say a briefing-- but a couple of statements about evacuation. "Go out this way and go down there." The different methods of notification might be banging on the door, might be Giant Voice, might be siren. As far as wing-wide training all at once, probably nothing, left to the unit level.

**Q: What were the notification procedures?**

**LT COL SCHELLHOUS:** Notification would have been by telephone or somebody running over to the dorm saying, the first person he sees, "Start at the top and evacuate everybody out of the building," or by Giant Voice if they could understand what it was saying or by siren. Now warning signals were pretty well briefed at every unit, wavering, steady tone, that normal-- we had the regular Air Force vis aids that have that kind of stuff on them.

**Q: What was your assessment of the operational capabilities of the Giant Voice system?**

**LT COL SCHELLHOUS:** It worked fine. It just, if you were inside the building, you couldn't hear it very clear, depending on where you were. It wasn't something that if you were in any location in any building in Khobar, could you hear it? The answer is no. (Schellhous 3/6/97 at 23, 26-27)

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**Q: Was there some indirect way you were involved [in evacuation plans]?**

**COL SCHULTZ (Vice Wing Commander):** We obviously looked at that closer after, and had an exercise on a couple of different occasions following the bombing to make sure that we had a better workable system of notifying people for the particular kind of circumstance we had there with the bombing.

**Q:** When you say a better system, in which way, to the best of your knowledge, was the system improved?

**COL SCHULTZ:** It was improved in that our focus before the bombing was to get people out of the building. But afterwards it became that running out of the buildings may not be the best thing to do, so it became more important to us to be able to communicate and tell people what to do collectively rather than blowing a horn and having everybody in the compound running out in the street. . . . [W]e attempted to make improvements in the Giant Voice system, and we used some temporary measures to alert people. What our--our goal was to be able to get Giant Voice to work to the point where we could say "Everybody take shelter; individuals in Building 131, evacuate." We didn't have that capability. . . . [W]e experimented with the speakers that we had and added some and relocated some. . . . We had some portable sirens I guess you'd call them air horns that were placed in some of the buildings to improve notification. Our game plan was to modify the standard signal to add, and we did add a response where we had a fairly short attention-getting siren followed by a message.

**Q:** Was this connected to the Giant Voice siren?

**COL SCHULTZ:** Yes. Our philosophy was that if we sat with a two or three-minute wavering tone, it might be too late, so we experimented with a shorter attention-getting siren with the Giant Voice which--that we needed to-- people would relay with these horns within buildings, that we would be able to notify everybody. Everybody knew that something was happening and needed to listen to find out whether they were just to take cover. . . . [W]e identified some blind spots, some shortfalls within the siren and Giant Voice capability. We also had full time people at all the buildings. . . . which allowed rapid communication of information to the buildings because you had somebody on duty there that could hear Giant Voice or be contacted, and then they could use their air horns or begin going through the buildings to notify people immediately of the proper course of action. So in that regard, we improved our notification and our accountability for people in buildings dramatically.

**Q:** Do you recall any discussions after the bombing about, you know, estimates and/or timing of evacuations?

**COL SCHULTZ:** I don't remember any specific numbers, again, being mentioned, other than it was clearly part of our discussion when we modified the siren procedures because it was important to us to get information out immediately. . . . [W]e cut that time down considerably from the system before that would have caught people relatively by surprise with regard to specifically what they were supposed to do. (Schultz 3/14/97 at 20-23)

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**Q:** Were there any procedures for any kind of alarm to be sounded inside the compound or inside building 131, which I assume is the barracks building?

**GENERAL SCHWALIER:** Yes, sir. Sir, as you know, there's no fire alarm inside that building or our buildings. The plan--the next phone call that the security policeman at the law enforcement desk would have made would have been to the Wing Operations Center and then to use big voice as appropriate. . . . In practice, that evacuation--in fact, it updated the plans in April and it found that our timing was about five minutes, so I felt comfortable with that timing, based on the inputs that I received from fire chiefs that that's about as good as you can do.

**Q:** So big voice was a loud speaker system inside the compound?

**GENERAL SCHWALIER:** Yes sir. . . . And we test it once a week in the compound to make sure it worked.

**Q:** And you say that you actually ran a physical evacuation of the building. How many times did you run those kind. . . .

**GENERAL SCHWALIER:** Sir, in the months after the OPM/SANG bombing, of course, we talked potential threat quite a bit. The people in the Wing were quite vigilant and were calling off suspected packages fairly frequently. In fact, the most recent that we had and that we reacted to was on the 9th of May in which we cleared out those specific buildings. I can say for sure 129 is where it took place. That took 5 minutes and I would have to refer you to my Support Group Commander to talk about the buildings around there. We were going through evacuations I would have to say fairly frequently, based on that increased vigilance of the people in the Wing.

**Q:** So the way I understand that then is, to the best of your recollection, April you ran a full-up evacuation?

**GENERAL SCHWALIER:** Through April we had our evacuation plans reworked through the readiness division, turned back at that time. We never did the full-up evacuation. We did it in the actual reactions to suspected packages that were called in.

**Q:** So, how many times did that occur? How many times did you evacuate 131?

**GENERAL SCHWALIER:** Sir, I would just have, I'm guessing, I'd say 8 or 9. (Schwalier 7/15/96)

.....

**Q:** Was Giant--did you ever envision using Giant Voice as an emergency alert system?

**GENERAL SCHWALIER:** Sir, we knew it was available. But, I was satisfied with the information I was getting from my fire chiefs that were telling me that five minutes is really good.

**Q:** Giant Voice is not really considered--what was the purpose of Giant Voice?

**GENERAL SCHWALIER:** Sir, it could have been used. In fact, that was the next call the security police would have made. But my sense was by the time we had that plugged in, we would have people moving out of buildings. (Schwalier 7/19/96 at 3)

....

**Q:** The notification schemes within the towers I believe was described as the waterfall. Somebody would start at the top and it would just waterfall down. Did anyone ever consider any other alternative forms of notification to notify people more rapidly?

**GENERAL SCHWALIER:** Did I ever consider using the fire alarm system? Probably not, if you ask me that question right now. . . . Certainly [there was] Big Voice, but again the environment in the Towers is that we had security policemen on duty all the time. It is very easy to go into a building and start the process. If you called via Big Voice, again, people would go to the windows to try to hear what was going on and it would probably take a couple of calls. My sense is that with the amount of Security Police present always in the Towers, as I've described already, that we got the word to people fairly quickly. Was there a better way? There's always a better way. . . . I observed a couple of evacuations during the year. I can't tell you the specific months--February, March-- and they were very expeditious. . . . Very quick.

....

**Q:** You mentioned a few moments ago about the difficulties within the building of hearing the Giant Voice clearly. So the effectiveness was somewhat degraded. Do you know what--was there an ongoing effort to try to improve that? Was it an ongoing COMM squadron concern?

**GENERAL SCHWALIER:** I could not tell you if it was or was not. Again, I felt as though we had very quick reaction to be able to get everyone in the Towers because of the roving presence that we continuously had. Was I continuing to crank up and down Giant Voice? I can't tell you that. With air conditioners going on inside every building, we had a process that we knew worked within a few minutes. (Schwalier 3/11/97 at 28-29)

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**Q:** What procedures would you follow in case of an attack there?



**LTCOL SHAFER:** I think we would have done what we did do, head towards the chow hall because that is a central location. After the attack, we headed away from the damage, which ended up being toward the chow hall also and then moved on from there to the clinic which was fairly close to the chow hall, a little further away from our building actually.

**Q:** No personal evacuation system in place that you had been briefed on or were aware of?

**LTCOL SHAFER:** No, just like I say, the fire plans on the door told everyone how to go. You know, no one was using the elevator. . . .

**Q:** Was there any signal like a giant voice or a blast of a horn or a warbling tone? I mean, did they say if you hear three long blasts of a whistle, take this type of action?

**LTCOL SHAFER:** Not that I know of. I mean, I know that they had the giant voice set up but, and again, it may be my fault that I didn't read everything on the bulletin boards. (Shafer 7/15/96 at 6-7)

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**Q:** There was nothing planned on a monthly or weekly basis where you actually practiced a procedure for a certain scenario where it would be a terrorist threat or a bombing?

**LTCOL SHEALY:** No, sir, not that I know of. (Shealy 7/18/96 at 9)

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**Q:** Was there an alert notification process for terrorist activity or terrorist incident?  
**SSGT SOVELENKO:** Not that I know of.

....

**Q:** Was there any type of system in effect to evacuate people?

**SSGT SOVELENKO:** Not that I know of besides word of mouth. (Sovelenko 7/16/96)

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**Q:** How would you respond to a terrorist threat or incident within the compound?

**SSGT TIMBERMAN:** We were supposed to leave the building. And, as far as if the threat was to my building, you were supposed to evacuate the building and meet in the

street. . . . That's what was on the door when you entered my suite.

. . . .

**Q:** What was the alert notification process for terrorist incident? Is there a process that you went through as far as the alert? You did what, what time, so on and so forth?

**SSGT TIMBERMAN:** Not to my knowledge. (Timberman 7/15/96)

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**Q:** Had you worked any evacuation plans?

**LT COL TRAISTER: (Security Police Commander):** Okay, evacuation plan was looked at. As a matter of fact, sometime in April the Support Group Commander had all the squadrons re-look their evacuation plans. We had, including me, have to submit our plan of attack, for example, how it's going to work. . . . Serious discussion as to where the rendez-vous point was going to be, where the collection point's going to be, how are you going to do with that, accountabilities, and the bottom line was it was discussed and everybody came up with one. And then disaster preparedness was tasked to put that into one mass plan. To take that further we had several incidents. One happened to happen in 129. A TCN went in to work on an elevator, accidentally left something, I think it was a toolbox, on top of the elevator shaft. . . . We actually tested our evacuation plan, evacuated everybody out of 129 and I also believe there's a precautionary measure, I think 131 which was right behind it, was also evacuated. And there were a couple of other incidents that again, with the plan, not exercising them but in a reality they were tested. And we also had a bomb threat two days after the bombing which this whole south perimeter here were all evacuated too. So I say the plan itself is sound. People pretty much know what they have to do.

. . . .

**Q:** How successful was the evacuation? How long did it take?

**LT COL TRAISTER:** Okay, the one you are referring to would be 129, which is my facility and I monitored that on the radio. . . . [B]ased on the monitoring that I did, within 5 minutes the building was evacuated. It took initial, like anything else, until people honestly understand that this is for real, you're getting it very slow, until you get the trickle down effect, where everybody starts moving again. Once that happens, they move real quick.

**Q:** Are there any alarm systems in any of these buildings, fire alarms or any other kind of alarms?

**LT COL TRAISTER:** No.

....

**Q:** Let me ask you a question, what is the purpose of Giant Voice?

**LT COL TRAISTER:** Giant Voice in my opinion is public announcements. It could be used for a you know, if you wanted to use it for evacuation you could mostly use that, and I've seen it done in Korea somewhat effectively. But the thing is the potential for problems with Giant Voice is also built in. For example, you get somebody who's trying to transmit a message and that person is hyper, talking real fast, all you hear is loud sounds. So would that help? It's questionable. . . .

. . . . [T]he night of the bombing, even if we did use the Giant Voice how effective would that be. I don't know, I'll be honest with you, because we do know one thing, it's not very coherent. You've gotta be stepping out onto your balconies trying to get a better reading on it, and if the blast went off then, you'd probably be killed or you'd probably get hurt worse. (Traister 7/18/96)

. . . . [M]y recommendation to the group was, if we want to spend money and we expect to stay here for any length of time, is to invest in a fire alarm. That way you have a fire alarm on each floor and that way if it's all set up and all my folks have to do here if my folks have to initiate the alarm is bust the glass, break it in, and pull it and the whole facility will alarm. (Traister 7/18/96)

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**Q:** What were the capabilities of Giant Voice prior to the 25 June 96 bombing, and what was it originally designed to accomplish?

**CAPT WILLSON (Readiness Officer):** . . . Giant Voice was instituted to warn the Khobar Towers area of potential attack, whether it be SCUD launch which was its best use during the war, any type of activity that needed to get the attention of the Khobar Towers residents as quick as possible.

**Q:** What about its capabilities?

**CAPT WILLSON:** Capabilities? They had loud speakers on top of the buildings, and you could hear it most of the time. Sometimes it was a little dense. Again, it was one of those things when you couldn't have it too loud to avoid-- and this is, again, is probably my opinion is the reason why it wasn't too loud, and it was to avoid bothering the host nation.

....

**Q:** Evacuation plans, we're going to get there. Were plans developed to evacuate the vicinity of Khobar Towers, and what types of plans were developed?

**CAPT WILLSON:** That was--I think that was initially done-- that was early on in my tour. I'm trying to remember the Security Police Squadron Commander. He came from CENTAF, came over as squadron commander, and it was one of the things, again, as he looked, he took upon himself to bring up to the wing leadership that we needed an evacuation plan. . . . That was everybody in Khobar Towers. And we came up with between the first sergeants, squadron commanders how we would evacuate the buildings under a terrorist threat, and this is with notice that--well, not so much a terrorist threat because it was more of a terrorist or a bomb threat or something that we had notice of. For instance, you know, let's say for someone--someone told us that there was, you know, a bomb, you know, where the truck blew up, and we had enough time in which to cause the evacuation, and everybody in certain buildings would then be evacuated and would have a reporting point to go to. Those signs were then--of course, it was briefed to all the first sergeants to then post the signs as to where their squadron was going to go meet. . . . [B]asically everybody that was in Khobar Towers was going to run to the Desert Rose.

. . . .

**Q:** You mentioned where people would recover to, but how would they get notified?

**CAPT WILLSON:** I think that would have been through Giant Voice, radios, radio traffic, whatever. Whatever means it was, I think it was probably identified. Again, that was a Security Police action and a Security Police plan. . . .

. . . .

**Q:** Okay. You're asleep in your room, and an attack was incoming, how did you expect to be notified?

**CAPT WILLSON:** I would expect either to hear it over Giant Voice. If I were sleeping in my room, the best way I could have heard anything is over Giant Voice or somebody knocking on my door.

**Q:** Okay. And was there a plan to tell somebody to knock, or do you know anything about that?

**CAPT WILLSON:** The only plan I think we had in our squadron was that the first sergeant would make sure that each person on the floor got notified and worked its way up the floors until all floors were notified, and then we'd all evacuate down through the stairwell. . . .