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# **Report of Investigation**

**CONCERNING**

## **THE KHOBAR TOWERS BOMBING, 25 JUNE 1996**

**PREPARED BY**

**The Inspector General and The Judge Advocate General**

### **I. INTRODUCTION.**

#### **A. BACKGROUND.**

1. On 25 June 1996, a terrorist truck bomb exploded outside the northern perimeter of the US portion of the Khobar Towers housing complex, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. The US controlled portion of Khobar Towers was a facility housing US Air Force, US Army and British and French allied forces supporting the coalition air operation over Iraq, Operation SOUTHERN WATCH. The explosion killed 19 Air Force service members and injured hundreds more. It also injured many Saudi Arabian citizens and third country nationals.

2. On 28 June 1996, three days after the bombing, Secretary of Defense William J. Perry issued a charter and appointed General Wayne A. Downing, US Army, Retired, to head an Assessment of the facts and circumstances surrounding the Khobar Towers bombing, and to make recommendations for improving force protection measures. General Downing's Assessment was conducted from 29 June 1996 - 30 August 1996. In this Assessment, General Downing made 26 separate findings with concomitant recommendations. Two of these findings specifically related to the performance of the chain of command in the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P).

3. The Secretary of Defense forwarded General Downing's Assessment to the Secretary of the Air Force for review and appropriate action. Specifically, the Secretary of Defense asked the Secretary of Air Force to consider the issues raised in the Downing Assessment concerning how the Air Force organizes, trains and equips in order to support forces deployed to combatant commands, and to address

issues of individual actions or omissions. On 4 September 1996, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force appointed Lieutenant General James F. Record, Commander, 12<sup>th</sup> Air Force, to consider and make recommendations on issues raised in General Downing's Assessment regarding how the Air Force organizes, trains, and equips to support forces deployed to US Central Command (USCENTCOM). Lieutenant General Record conducted such a review and forwarded the first portion of his report (Part A) on 31 October 1996. Part A included 13 major action recommendations to improve the Air Force organization structure, education and training and the use of advanced technology to reduce the risk to Air Force personnel and resources from terrorist threats world-wide. The Air Force accepted these recommendations and is currently implementing them, in addition to other force protection improvements.

4. Lieutenant General Record was also appointed as the disciplinary review and court-martial convening authority for actions or omissions by Air Force personnel associated with the Khobar Towers bombing. The second portion of Lieutenant General Record's report (Part B) concerning accountability was forwarded to the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff on 20 December 1996. Lieutenant General Record found that all commanders in the chain of command acted in a reasonable manner under the circumstances as they were known at the time. He found no dereliction of duty warranting either disciplinary action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) or adverse administrative action.

5. On 23 December 1996, the Secretary of the Air Force forwarded Lieutenant General Record's report to the Secretary of Defense.

6. On 29 January 1997, the Deputy Secretary of Defense identified several areas of Lieutenant General Record's report that required further examination. The Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff agreed. Committed to ensuring all the facts and circumstances surrounding the Khobar Towers bombing are thoroughly reviewed and any additional lessons learned are identified and applied to Air Force units world-wide, on 5 February 1996, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff tasked The Inspector General and The Judge Advocate General to undertake an expanded analysis of these issues. This report is a result of those efforts. It presents a detailed discussion of the issues identified by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, an exhaustive review of the regulations and standards applicable to the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) on 25 June 1996, and a comprehensive expanded

analysis concerning accountability of individuals in the chain of command.

## **B. TASKING.**

1. The Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff identified two separate areas meriting further explanation and/or analysis. The first area was further explanation or factual development of eight specific issues:

- (1) Explain the rationale for Lieutenant General Record's recommendations relating to command and control of HUMINT service personnel;
- (2) Explain the rationale for Lieutenant General Record's recommendations relating to the need for organic intelligence assets at the wing level;
- (3) Explain the rationale for Lieutenant General Record's recommendation to expand the rules of engagement in countries where there is no Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) in place;
- (4) Examine further the facts concerning training, equipping, and manning the guard force;
- (5) Develop facts concerning convoy and personnel transportation procedures;
- (6) Investigate the adequacy of efforts to protect against threats from the perimeter exterior;
- (7) Develop additional facts concerning evacuation planning, practice, and evaluation; and
- (8) Assess communications deficiencies at the time of the bombing including the lack of automated building alarm system, the lack of direct links between sentries and the Giant Voice system, and the absence of full-time translators for the Saudi security forces and the

## US Air Force Security Police.

2. Second, while the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff accepted Lieutenant General Record's conclusion that no UCMJ action was warranted, they requested further consideration of the propriety of administrative action, including detailed identification of applicable standards and substantive analysis of the evidence.

### **C. SCOPE AND AUTHORITY.**

1. On 5 February 1997, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff tasked The Inspector General and The Judge Advocate General to undertake an expanded analysis of eight specific issues and the propriety of administrative action. Pursuant to this direction, The Inspector General appointed an investigative team on 6 February 1997. The nine-person team was comprised of: an investigator (team chief) and legal advisor from The Inspector General's office; experts in the fields of Security, HUMINT, Fire and Disaster Preparedness, Counterintelligence and Antiterrorism, and Intelligence; and an additional legal advisor. The Investigation was conducted using applicable guidance from Air Force Instruction (AFI) 90-301, *Inspector General Complaints*.

2. In the later stages of the investigation and during report production, an additional team of lawyers from the Department of the Judge Advocate General led by the Director, Air Force General Law, provided legal sufficiency reviews and further development of the accountability review.

### **D. METHODOLOGY.**

1. **Review of Evidence.** The Investigation began with a thorough review of the Downing Assessment and the Record Report relating to the Khobar Towers Bombing. Then, all of the documentary evidence collected by the previous teams was reviewed. The Downing task force collected thousands of documents currently stored in 26 boxes in the custody of the Joint Staff. Additional documentation collected by the Record team filled a five-drawer safe. Also, individual members on the Record team were contacted and provided additional documentation. All of the documents were examined for information relating to the eight specific areas in the tasking and/or any information relevant to the issue of personal accountability.

## 2. Witnesses.

a. As with the other documentary evidence, members of the investigative team reviewed the transcripts of all interviews available from the previous investigations. It was found reasonably early in the data gathering stage that not all of the taped interviews had been transcribed. In those cases, the tapes were listened to by team members, and the decision to have them transcribed was based on whether they contained additional evidence this team thought pertinent.

b. Notwithstanding the significant amount of testimonial evidence collected by the previous investigations, the level of detail requested for the specific areas under investigation required re-interviewing eight individuals and conducting interviews with twelve additional individuals. Consistent with standard Inspector General investigative practices, those witnesses who could possibly be subjected to adverse administrative action were first read their rights under Article 31, Uniform Code of Military Justice (the equivalent of their Fifth Amendment rights under the U. S. Constitution). One witness exercised his Article 31, UCMJ, rights.

**3. Regulatory Guidance.** Additionally, the investigation entailed identifying and reviewing all relevant regulatory guidance. Department of Defense (DoD) Publications, Joint Publications, USCENTCOM Publications, Air Force Publications, Air Combat Command Publications, and US Central Command Air Forces (USCENTAF) Publications were screened for relevant information. Using electronic databases (where available), searches were conducted using key phrases such as: *installation commander*, *antiterrorism*, *force protection*, and *exercises*. "Hits" on these phrases were then screened for applicability.

## E. PUBLICATIONS AND DIRECTIVES.

**1. Command Relationships.** Command relationships establish the regulatory guidance applicable to the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P). Briefly, USCENTCOM exercised operational control (OPCON) of the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) through US Central Command Air Forces (USCENTAF). Concurrently, the wing fell under the tactical control of Joint Task Force South West Asia (JTF SWA), USCENTCOM's most forward based component located in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. JTF SWA is charged with the execution of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH, the enforcement of the United Nations no fly/no drive sanctions against Iraq. USCENTCOM has

responsibility for all Department of Defense Combatant Activities within their Area of Responsibility (AOR) including Southwest Asia. Finally, as a provisional unit, the wing was activated by Headquarters Tactical Air Command, which was later reorganized and became part of Headquarters Air Combat Command.

**2. Applicability of Publications Based on Command.** Based on these command relationships, the following sets of publications were applicable to the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) on 25 June 1996.

**a. DoD Publications.** These publications are applicable to all organizations and personnel within the Department of Defense.

**b. Joint Publications.** Joint Publications are applicable to joint activities. They set forth doctrine, principles, and policy to govern the joint activities and the performance of the Armed Forces of the United States applicable to combatant commands and their immediate subordinate commands, and to the Service forces of these commands. The guidance in Joint publications is "authoritative." Authoritative guidance "will be followed except when, in the judgment of the commander, exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise."

**c. Air Force Publications.** Air Force publications are applicable to all Air Force units. They do not distinguish applicability between permanent Air Force units and provisional units such as the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P). Air Force publications supplement joint publications for units attached to a unified command. Air Force doctrine must be consistent with approved joint doctrine and, if the contents of Air Force publications conflict with the contents of Joint Publications, the Joint publications take precedence.

**d. USCENTCOM Publications.** USCENTCOM Publications are applicable to units deployed to USCENTCOM's Area of Responsibility (AOR) and under the OPCON of USCENTCOM.

**e. ACC Publications.** Air Combat Command (ACC) publications and supplements to Air Force publications are applicable to ACC provisional units attached to a unified command. They must be consistent with Air Force doctrine and approved joint doctrine. If the content of ACC publications conflict with the contents of Joint Publications, the Joint publication takes precedence.

f. **USCENTAF Publications.** These publications are applicable to Air Force units in USCENTAF's AOR and under OPCON of USCENTAF.

3. **Antiterrorism Publications.** There is a significant number of publications dealing with antiterrorism programs within the DoD.

a. **DoD Directive 0-2000.12, *DoD Combating Terrorism Program.*** This directive was applicable to all Department of Defense units and provided broad guidance. The directive was implemented for Air Force units by AFI 31-210.

b. **DoD Instruction 2000-14, *Combating Terrorism Program Procedures.*** This instruction established policies and procedures to implement the DoD Directive 0-2000.12. The instruction was implemented for Air Force units by AFI 31-210.

c. **DoD Handbook 0-2000.12-H, *Protection of DoD Personnel and Activities Against Acts of Terrorism and Political Turbulence.*** This handbook contained detailed discretionary guidance. The handbook was implemented for Air Force units by AFI 31-210.

d. **Joint Publication 3-07.2, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism.*** This publication established procedures for the joint conduct of US antiterrorism operations. The tactics, techniques, and procedures in this publication are "authoritative, but not directive" and "should be followed, except when, in the judgment of the commander, exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise." This publication was implemented for Air Force units by AFI 31-210.

e. **Air Force Instruction (AFI) 31-210, *The Air Force Antiterrorism (AT) Program.*** This instruction was applicable to the 4404th Wing (P) at the time of the bombing. It implemented the DoD publications listed above as well as Joint Publication 3-07.2.

f. **USCENTCOM Regulation 190-2, *USCENTCOM Antiterrorism Measures.***

(1) This regulation was not applicable to the 4404<sup>th</sup> because, according to USCENTCOM's office of primary responsibility, it was written to govern Security Assistance Organizations and joint military units, but did not govern single service

military units attached but not assigned to USCENTCOM. Therefore, this regulation was not implemented for the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) and did not set accountability standards for personnel assigned to the wing.

(2) However, at the time of the Khobar Towers bombing this was the only USCENTCOM regulation available to carry out the Commander in Chief, Central Command (CINCCENT)'s responsibilities in DoD Directive 0-2000.12 and Joint Publication 3-07.2 Further, according to the Unified Command Plan, USCENTCOM is responsible for the *security* of all military units in its area of responsibility, regardless of whether they are attached or assigned.

g. **USCENTAF 208-1, *USCENTAF Antiterrorism Program***. This regulation was written in 1988 and referred to Air Force Regulation (AFR) 208-1, which was rescinded in 1994. The USCENTAF office of primary responsibility at USCENTAF was not aware of this regulation. It was written before the reorganization of 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force (and concurrently USCENTAF) as a tactical echelon under Air Combat Command. It contained oversight and management provisions which USCENTAF is no longer responsible for providing. Therefore, this regulation was not implemented for the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) and did not set accountability standards for personnel assigned to the wing.

h. **Air Combat Command Supplement to AFI 31-210**. This supplement was also applicable to the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) because it was a provisional ACC unit.

4. **Summary**. The review of publications highlighted several problems. First, the command relationships created ambiguity concerning the applicability of regulatory guidance. Second, AFI 31-210, the Air Force Instruction implementing the DoD and Joint Antiterrorism publications, made general references to the DoD and Joint publications but did not include specific requirements. This required review of five separate publications before the requirements for a unit antiterrorism program can be fully understood.

F. **REPORT FORMAT**. The following sections of the report are set forth based on the tasking document. Section II contains separate analyses of each of the eight specific areas identified as requiring expansion or clarification. Each of the separate areas is organized to: 1) describe the issue and the facts; 2) identify the applicable standards; 3) enumerate any unique known limitations; 4) analyze the

facts, as applied to the standards; and 5) set forth conclusions. Section III addresses the issue of accountability. It is organized in a slightly different manner to accommodate additional factors relating to accountability that were not included in Section II. Finally, Section IV sets forth the overall conclusion of the investigation. Recognizing that the Air Force has instituted many organizational and procedural changes based on the earlier reports; some of those efforts, where applicable, have been recognized in this report. The complete transcripts of all the additional interviews conducted during this investigation are included at Tab 4 of the attachments.

## **II. SPECIFIC ISSUES**

1. Section II discusses the specific issues identified for further explanation and/or analysis.
2. The first three issues—Command and Control of HUMINT Service Personnel; Intelligence Assets at Wing Level; and Rules of Engagement in Countries Without a Status of Forces Agreement—were part of the recommendations made by Lieutenant General Record in Part of A of his Report. The discussion below explains the rationale for these recommendations.
3. The remaining five issues—Training, Equipping, and Manning the Security Force; Convoy and Personnel Transportation Procedures; Defense Against Stand-off Attack; Evacuation Planning, Practice and Evaluation; and Communications—answer specific questions resulting from Part B of Lieutenant General Record's Report.

### **A. COMMAND AND CONTROL OF DOD HUMINT PERSONNEL**

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

a. **HUMINT.** The importance of timely, responsive human resource intelligence (HUMINT) collection and reporting to operationally deployed forces was underscored by the Khobar Towers bombing. Although intelligence furnished a good picture of the broad threat facing US forces in Southwest Asia, neither HUMINT nor counterintelligence provided specific tactical details on the threat which might have enabled the wing commander to better prepare his force and facilities to prevent or blunt the effectiveness of the terrorist attack.

b. **Purpose.** This section provides an expanded explanation and analysis of the observations and recommendations made in Part A of the Record Report concerning command and control of HUMINT assets in Southwest Asia. Two issues are involved in this area. One is the establishment of a focal point for formulating requirements, coordinating collection activities and assessing collection results in response to theater needs. The second is establishing the authority to control the activities of collectors. As discussed below, the Air Force supports on-going actions for assigning a focal point for collection requirements management and analysis. [Classified material omitted].

#### **c. Downing Assessment.**

(1) [Classified material omitted]

(2) [Classified material omitted]

(3) [Classified material omitted]

#### **d. Record Report.**

(1) The Record Report supported the Downing Assessment findings and further specified the Joint Rear Area Coordinator (JRAC) as the single focal point for counterintelligence and HUMINT in

USCENTCOM's AOR. Lieutenant General Record's rationale was to promote a closer relationship between intelligence and operations. The JRAC Director is the CINC's representative in the AOR for coordination of force protection issues. [Classified material omitted] Through the JRAC, intelligence information relevant to theater issues would be more readily accessible to operations. [Classified material omitted]

(2) [Classified material omitted] According to Lieutenant General Record's proposal, the CINC, through the JRAC, should have the authority to task Defense HUMINT Service (DHS) and military counter intelligence personnel to collect HUMINT information. [Classified material omitted]

(3) [Classified material omitted]

e. **Definition.** HUMINT is the intelligence discipline which uses human beings as both the primary collection instrument and the source of information. It focuses on acquiring information relating to capabilities, intentions and activities of foreign powers, organizations or persons, including terrorists. [Classified material omitted] HUMINT's unique contribution is the ability to put eyes and ears on the ground, get inside the mind of the target, and provide direct knowledge of the target's plans and intentions. It is this characteristic of HUMINT that can make it more suitable against terrorist targets than other methods of intelligence collection. However, the close-in, face-to-face aspect of HUMINT also carries with it varying degrees of risk, not only to US government foreign policy interests, but also to the personal safety of the agent and the agent's case officer. In addition, there is no guarantee that the potential intelligence source will actually have that one vital piece of information needed to complete the intelligence puzzle.

f. **Organization.** In 1993, the Deputy Secretary of Defense directed the consolidation of the separate General Defense Intelligence Program (GDIP)-funded HUMINT elements of the Services into a single, joint field operating agency subordinate to the DIA. In this new DoD HUMINT structure, the Services were only authorized to maintain carefully focused, overt, non-sensitive HUMINT activities to support Service-unique requirements. This capability was sourced from the Services' Tactical Intelligence and Related Activities (TIARA) funds, which are used to support capabilities designed chiefly to respond to operational commanders' needs for tactical, time-sensitive intelligence.

g. **Mission.** [Classified material omitted].

h. **DHS in SWA.** [Classified material omitted].

i. **Air Force HUMINT and Counterintelligence.** [Classified material omitted] The Air Force had no TIARA HUMINT capability prior to the 1993 consolidation, [Classified material omitted]. Today, apart from the Air Force Office of Special Investigations' counterintelligence (CI) capability (see Part II-B of this review), the Air Force has no organic capability to collect information using HUMINT sources and methods, but rather levies requirements on the DHS to respond to its strategic and operational intelligence needs. [Classified material omitted].

j. **The Tasking Process.** There are four mechanisms for tasking the HUMINT system.

(1) [Classified material omitted].

(2) [Classified material omitted].

(3) The requirements tasking process is shown below:

### PEACETIME HUMINT REQUIREMENTS FLOW

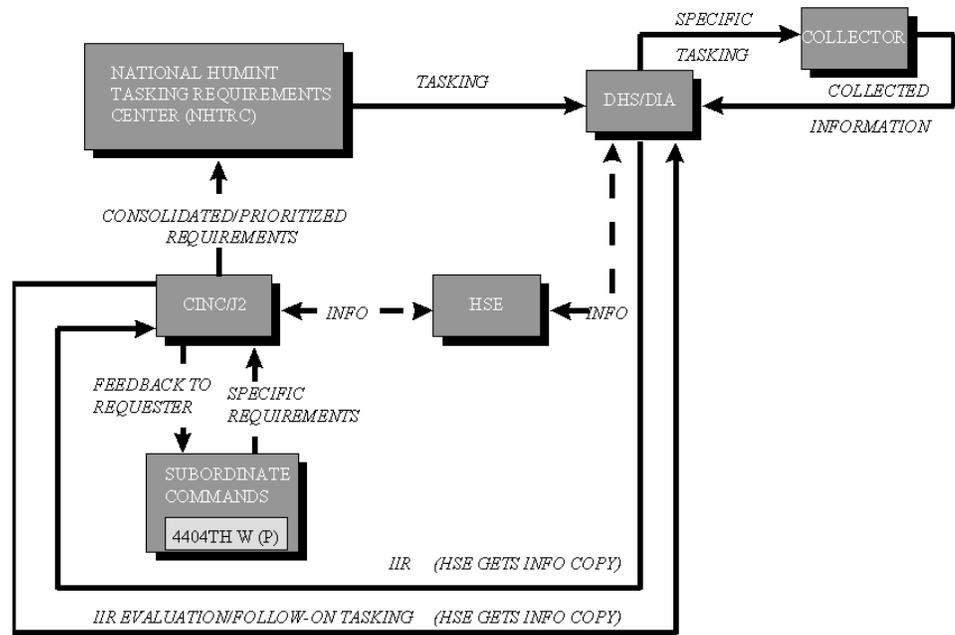


FIGURE 1

UNCLAS



k. **Command and Control of HUMINT Operations.** [Classified material omitted]

l. **The J-2X Concept.** [Classified material omitted] The following diagram demonstrates the J-2X organization.

## HUMINT STAFF ELEMENT J-2X

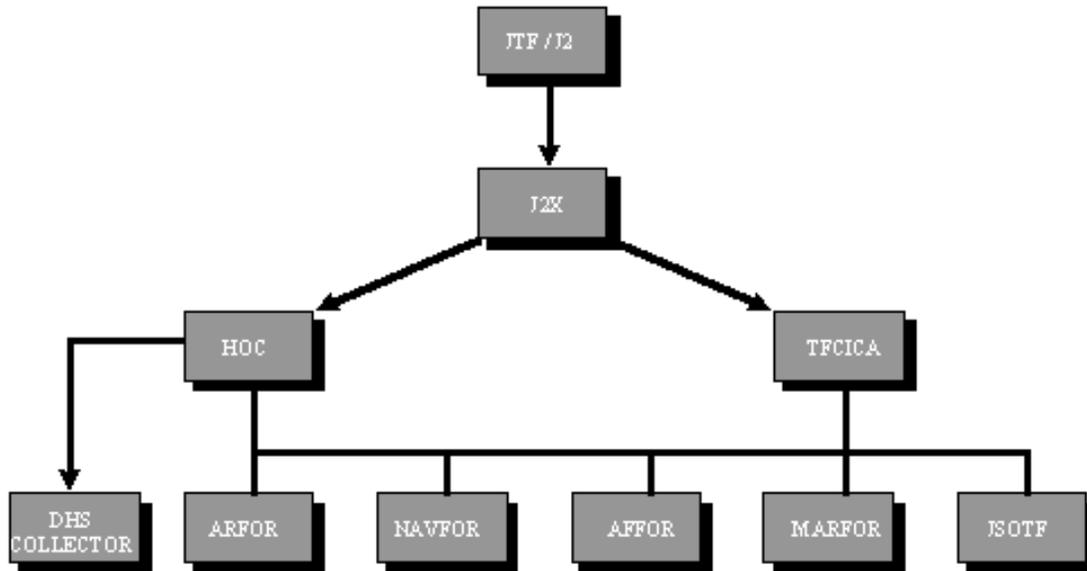


FIGURE 3

UNCLASS

m. **HUMINT Information Dissemination.** HUMINT Intelligence Information Reports (IIRs) are entered in two databases—INTELINK and the DIA Support to Analysts File Environment (SAFE) system—for intelligence users in the field. The unified command Joint Intelligence Center (JIC) is responsible for disseminating HUMINT-derived intelligence up and down echelons of command. [Classified material omitted]

### 2. STANDARDS, REGULATIONS, AND INSTRUCTIONS.

a. DIA Manual 58-12, *DoD HUMINT Management System* (U), 31 Jan 97. Outlines authorities and responsibilities for the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, as the DoD HUMINT manager. The policies and procedures in this manual regulate Defense HUMINT Service and other DoD HUMINT collection management activities, to include the intelligence requirements system, the intelligence reporting process, and the HUMINT evaluation system.

b. DIA Manual 58-11, *DoD HUMINT Policies and Procedures* (U), Mar 97 (Draft). Outlines authorities, responsibilities and procedures for the conduct of HUMINT collection activities by the Defense HUMINT Service and the TIARA collectors of the Military Departments.

c. Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Consolidation of Defense HUMINT," 2 Nov 93, directs the consolidation of all GDIP HUMINT activities into a single HUMINT agency.

d. Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Transfer of Operational Control and Civilian Oversight

of USAF HUMINT," 16 Mar 95, transfers this responsibility to DIA.

e. Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Transfer of Operational Control and Civilian Oversight of USAF Overt Human Intelligence Responsibilities," 25 Sep 95, transfers this responsibility to DIA.

f. OASD Memorandum, "Activation of Defense HUMINT Service," 4 Oct 95, marks the stand-up of the DHS.

g. Joint Publication 2-0, *Joint Doctrine for Intelligence Support to Operations*, Appendix C, Intelligence Disciplines, Annex A, Human Intelligence (HUMINT) Draft, Nov 96, defines HUMINT roles and missions in support of joint operations.

### 3. LIMITATIONS.

a. **Personnel.** [Classified material omitted]

b. **Operational Environment in SWA.** Few military personnel have Arabic language capability or are familiar with Arab culture. [Classified material omitted]

c. **Assignment Policy and Operational Restrictions.** [Classified material omitted].

### 4. ANALYSIS.

a. [Classified material omitted].

b. [Classified material omitted]

c. General Downing recommended empowering a single authority to coordinate and direct all military counterintelligence and HUMINT in the USCENTCOM AOR. Lieutenant General Record agreed and further recommended designating the USCENTCOM JRAC to perform this function. His vision of the JRAC included a J-2 representative and a Joint Task Force Counterintelligence Coordinating Authority (TFCICA) to coordinate and direct these activities. However, USCENTCOM rejected this approach, and Operations Order 97-01, which established the JRAC, did not realign responsibilities for directing and coordinating HUMINT in the AOR. [Classified material omitted].

### 5. CONCLUSIONS.

a. Both Lieutenant General Record and General Downing recognized that military commanders' needs for tailored HUMINT and counterintelligence in Southwest Asia were not satisfied by existing capabilities. Lieutenant General Record's proposed methodology for improving intelligence support was through the JRAC concept. He viewed the JRAC as the most efficient and effective locus to serve as the single authority for coordinating and directing these activities.

b. [Classified material omitted]. The JRAC is a staff element of USCENTCOM with responsibility for providing policy guidance on force protection issues in the AOR. [Classified material omitted].

## **B. INTELLIGENCE ASSETS AT WING LEVEL.**

### **1. BACKGROUND.**

#### **a. Purpose.**

(1) Finding 11 of the Downing Assessment states, "the lack of an organic intelligence support capability in the Air Force Security Police units adversely affects their ability to accomplish the base defense mission." The Record Report states, "the lack of organic intelligence capability did not inhibit the 4404th WG (P) internal base defense mission."

(2) This section provides expanded explanation and analysis for the basis of several Record Report, Part A, recommendations regarding the need for organic intelligence assets at the Wing level. Lieutenant General Record recognized that US Army assets may not be available to provide ground order of battle expertise or protection outside Air Force installations overseas. Therefore, he recommended intelligence personnel be assigned to Security Police units to support force protection activities in contingency operations. He also recommended that Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) counterintelligence special agents be under the operational control of the installation commander to act as liaison among AFOSI, Security Police (SP), and US and foreign security/police agencies charged with antiterrorism missions. This section provides the rationale and additional relevant information and analysis regarding these recommendations.

(3) In response to the two previous reports, the Air Force established the Headquarters Air Force Security Forces Center (SFC). The SFC will be the first ever integrated Air Force force protection staff, combining the expertise of the Air Staff Security Force Division, 820<sup>th</sup> Security Forces Group (SFG), and the Force Protection Battle Lab under a single director. This center will have a multi-functional staff comprised of experts from AFOSI, intelligence and security with a dedicated mission of enhancing the protection of Air Force personnel and resources when deployed and at home station. Force Protection Cells were also established and are deployed to support force protection efforts at the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P), Prince Sultan Air Base and JTF SWA, Riyadh.

(4) The USAF Security Force Division, 820<sup>th</sup> Security Forces Group, the Battle Lab and Force Protection Cells will have intelligence and AFOSI counterintelligence personnel assigned. AFOSI personnel supporting contingency operations will be under direct control of the deployed wing commander and be attached to the SP unit. These individuals will be responsible for integrating intelligence and counterintelligence functions with force protection operations. They will also ensure the timely flow of intelligence and counterintelligence data in support of force protection. A strong intelligence and counterintelligence presence in these organizations will fortify and institutionalize relationships between security, intelligence and counterintelligence disciplines.

(5) Intelligence and counterintelligence (CI) are the first line of defense in an antiterrorism program. A well-planned, systematic, all-source intelligence and CI program is essential to combating terrorism. Following the normal structure for Air Force wings, the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P)'s organic intelligence was provided by the wing's intelligence flight and CI was provided by the Air Force Office of Special

Investigations (AFOSI) Detachment 241 at Dhahran. However, Lieutenant General Record recognized this relationship was not institutionalized.

#### **b. Wing Intelligence Structure.**

(1) In the Air Force, intelligence is organic to wings and organized, manned and equipped to accomplish its objective. At wing level, the objective of all intelligence wartime functions is to provide combat intelligence support to the operational mission. Threat assessment is the most common intelligence function conducted in support of tactical operations. Wing intelligence also aids the commander and battlestaff members controlling those defensive resources or forces that ensure air base operability and other combat support functions, including force protection.

(2) Combat intelligence provides current assessment, penetration analysis and target intelligence support to aircrews performing combat or combat-support missions. Accurate, timely and tailored intelligence support to the commander and key decision-makers is also vital to maintain threat warning and situational awareness. Intelligence personnel apply their skills, knowledge and training to accomplish these tasks. They also use a variety of automated systems to receive, analyze, display and communicate threat information for use in mission planning and situational awareness.

**c. Automated Data Systems.** The wing intelligence flight had access to various intelligence databases through a variety of automated systems. The flight was equipped with three different communication/computer systems. The systems were the Joint Deployable Intelligence Support System (JDISS), the Combat Intelligence System (CIS), and elements of the Cryptologic Support Group (CSG). The JDISS operates at the Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) level, permitting retrieval of SCI information and access to INTELINK, the SCI-level world-wide-web. The CIS operates at the Secret level, permitting retrieval and transmission of collateral information and electronic connectivity to subordinate units operating in the region. The CSG element operates at the SCI level, permitting direct connectivity to CSG counterparts at JTF SWA.

#### **d. Wing Intelligence Support for Force Protection.**

(1) The wing intelligence flight performed several roles in support of force protection. First, as a 24-hour operation, it established written procedures to notify AFOSI and Security Police following receipt of a CI message. This checklist of required actions, points of contact and phone numbers was to be used by intelligence personnel any time a CI message was received in the flight's Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF). AFOSI was contacted immediately when "hot" messages were received. Other applicable messages were flagged for distribution to AFOSI. However, the intelligence flight relied almost exclusively on the AFOSI agent to pass information to security police representatives. The Chief of Security Police (CSP) indicated his primary source of intelligence was AFOSI, not wing intelligence.

(2) Second, the intelligence flight published and disseminated a daily Situation Summary (SITSUM) of enemy military activity, terrorist information (when applicable) and items of interest to intelligence operations. These reports were distributed in writing to the wing commander and AFOSI, and electronically to subordinate units. In addition, sanitized versions of SITSUMs were passed to Multinational Forces (MNF)—British, French and Saudi—intelligence counterparts collocated on King

Abdul Aziz Air Base. From February-June 1996, the intelligence flight published 30 articles on terrorist issues in its SITSUMs. Ten of these articles featured comments by wing intelligence analysts.

(3) Third, the intelligence flight commander (IFC) participated in the wing's weekly Security Review Meeting. The wing commander established this forum to enhance the exchange of information between his key force protection personnel. The IFC presented a general view of military and terrorist threats in the region. AFOSI talked specifics, while focusing on the aspect of antiterrorism. The CSP would then discuss actions to improve force protection. The intent was to examine the threat from a wide field of view, provided by wing intelligence, and narrow the field of view with information provided by AFOSI.

e. **AFOSI DET 241 Structure.** On 25 June 1996, AFOSI Detachment 241, Dhahran, had three Special Agents assigned—two on 179 day rotations and one on a 90 day rotation—and one information manager also on a 90 day rotation. The detachment commander, Special Agent (SA) Richard Reddecliff arrived in Saudi Arabia on 8 February 1996. AFOSI Det 241 provided counterintelligence and force protection support to the wing commander; however, the detachment falls under the command of the 24<sup>th</sup> Field Investigations Squadron at Shaw AFB, South Carolina. The AFOSI 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Investigations Region commander at Langley AFB, VA is responsible for all AFOSI Southwest Asia detachments.

f. **AFOSI Responsibilities.** AFOSI Detachment 241 was responsible for collecting, analyzing and disseminating threat information. They were also responsible for coordinating with US and host nation security and law enforcement agencies concerning threats to the security of the 4404th Wing (P). AFOSI Det 241 conducted vulnerability surveys to identify security weaknesses and recommend improvements.

g. **Counterintelligence Process.**

(1) Counterintelligence is a unique discipline bridging intelligence, law enforcement and security countermeasures. AFOSI is responsible for CI in the Air Force. The role of CI in antiterrorism is to identify the threat. Additionally, CI provides warning of potential terrorist attacks and information for counterterrorism operations.

(2) Certain elements of the intelligence cycle have particular importance in a viable antiterrorism program. Effective CI support requires effort, planning and direction; collection and analysis; and production, investigations and dissemination. The entire process is important to providing commanders with information and timely warning upon which to recommend antiterrorism actions.

(3) The primary sources of CI for the antiterrorism program are open source information, criminal information, government intelligence, CI and local information.

h. **Collecting, Analyzing and Disseminating of Threat Information.** AFOSI agents at Dhahran were responsible for collecting, analyzing and disseminating threat information.

(1) **Collecting.**

(a) AFOSI Det 241 collected information through various sources in Saudi Arabia to include weekly meetings at the Consulate and the US Embassy Riyadh. [Classified material omitted].

(b) From March through June 1996, AFOSI Det 241 prepared over 35 Intelligence Information Reports (IIR) or CI Collection Reports (CICR) . Reported information covered a gamut of suspicious activity, information on suspected surveillances, [Classified material omitted] and request for assistance. SA Reddecliff reported he briefed the information contained in the IIRs and CICRs either in person to the wing staff or at the weekly threat meetings.

(c) [Classified material omitted].

(d) They were also visited by AFOSI Investigations Operations Center (IOC), Bolling AFB, DC, personnel who provided classified briefings [Classified material omitted]. Some highly classified information could not be discussed at Dhahran because there were no facilities certified for the level of the information being briefed. Detachment members would go to Riyadh to receive these briefings.

(2) **Analysis.** The detachment did not conduct in-depth analysis of threat information. Deployed AFOSI members relied on AFOSI IOC for analysis. AFOSI IOC provided oversight, guidance, and assistance to AFOSI Det 241. The IOC Antiterrorism Operations Division provided threat assessment information to the detachment. [Classified material omitted].

(3) **Dissemination.** Most AFOSI collected information was briefed verbally, telephonically or sent by message. AFOSI disseminated reports either via IIR or CICR. General threat information was sent via IIR. [Classified material omitted]. The Task Force Counterintelligence Coordinating Authority at JTF SWA was also on distribution for most of the CICRs. AFOSI Det 241 personnel opined AFOSI Investigations Operations Center would inform them if the CICR required additional dissemination.

i. **Customers.** AFOSI briefed threat information to the wing commander, the chief of security police and the intelligence flight commander. They also briefed other CI organizations in country including US Army Military Intelligence, Naval Criminal Investigation Service in Bahrain, JTF SWA/J-2 and the National Intelligence Support Team. Threat information was then passed to the appropriate headquarters. All IIRs went to DIA and HQ AFOSI. Most reports went to USCENTCOM as well. In addition, threat information was circulated throughout the intelligence community in Washington DC. For example, the Military Intelligence Digest published by DIA on 17 May 1996 echoed AFOSI IIRs.

**j. US Coordination with Host Nation Security and Law Enforcement Agencies - On and Off Base.**

(1) [Classified material omitted].

(2) [Classified material omitted].

k. **Sourcing.** [Classified material omitted].

**l. Vulnerability Surveys.**

(1) Vulnerability surveys are an integral part of preventive security measures taken to counter terrorist activity. Vulnerability surveys provide commanders with a critical examination of airfield and support facilities from an adversarial viewpoint. Surveys do not guarantee absolute safety; however they can reduce the probability of a successful attack. Surveys provide Air Force personnel with a viable tool for decreasing the potential for attack. Vulnerability surveys are purpose specific. They consider factors such as local threat, terrorist capabilities and available resources. The "requester" retains the discretion to implement or alter recommendations.

(2) The AFOSI detachment conducted a vulnerability survey in June 1995. This was underway when Brig Gen Schwalier arrived at Dhahran. Brig Gen Schwalier received the vulnerability survey in September 1995 and began working the recommendations contained in the report. The wing was still in the process of working the recommendations when the bomb exploded at Office of Program Management, Saudi Arabia National Guard (OPM SANG) Headquarters, Riyadh in November 1995.

(3) A new vulnerability survey of Khobar Towers was started by AFOSI based on heightened security concerns resulting from the OPM SANG bombing. Both surveys were conducted prior to SA Reddecliff's arrival.

(4) The wing commander received and reviewed the second vulnerability survey of Khobar Towers in January 1996. The survey recommended 39 security measures. The wing had completed 36 of the recommendations by the time the bomb exploded on 25 June 1996.

m. **Wing Intelligence and AFOSI Detachment Interface.** The wing's intelligence and CI assets complied with Air Force principles separating these two disciplines and were arranged to focus on their areas of expertise. Wing intelligence was energized to support Operation SOUTHERN WATCH (OSW) air operations. AFOSI, with assistance from wing intelligence, was active in collecting and assessing CI information. Testimony reveals a consistent, close association between wing intelligence and AFOSI. Open communication and information comparison were routine. Key individuals declared their satisfaction with this arrangement. The commander indicated he was happy with this scheme. Others agreed it was an effectively structured, albeit informal, way of doing business. However, the chief of security police and the support group commander believed they did not get all intelligence needed to posture against a ground threat. While the dissemination of some information may have been controlled by the originator, pertinent facts of all available information, regardless of its sensitivity, were provided to the wing commander as a minimum. Other information, sanitized or unrestricted by caveats, was provided in daily SITSUMs or briefed to key staff members, including the CSP.

## 2. STANDARDS, REGULATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS.

a. **Intelligence.** The guidance provided in DoD Directives, Joint Publications (JP), Air Force Instructions (AFI) and other directives outline requirements for unit intelligence support to air operations, force protection and antiterrorism activities.

### (1) Air Operations Support.

(a) JP 2.0, *Joint Doctrine for Intelligence Support To Operations*, 5 May 1995, provides instruction for coordination of intelligence production at all echelons, including unit level. It also requires military

services provide trained personnel and interoperable command, control, communication and intelligence (C4I) equipment per the command intelligence architecture plan (CIAP).

(b) USCENTCOM *Command Intelligence Architecture/Planning Program (CIAP)*, 23 February 1996, requires dissemination of intelligence information by the fastest means possible, at the lowest level possible and to the units who need it. It states intelligence officers will strive to produce at a level that is releasable to the allies and coalition partners.

(c) Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 14-1, *Air Force Intelligence Planning and Operations*, 1 October 1995, states Air Force intelligence readiness will be sustained by developing and maintaining a force structure with the proper rank and specialty allocations of military and civilian personnel, training and educating mission-ready professionals, regularly exercising wartime system capabilities and by equipping and maintaining an infrastructure capable of supporting high operating tempo levels. In addition, Air Force intelligence will foster strong relationships with allied partners to maximize the exchange of intelligence information in support of mutual interests.

(d) AFI 14-105, *Unit Intelligence Mission and Responsibilities*, 1 July 1995, states the wing/group senior intelligence officer (SIO) is responsible for the planning and execution of intelligence support during all phases of operations. It also states, wing/group SIO's are also responsible for providing the commander with information regarding enemy capabilities and the ongoing threat situation.

(2) **Force Protection Support.** AFI 14-105 states wing intelligence will provide support to the commander and staff through current and relevant intelligence information and products. This includes support to air base operability (as applicable), intelligence inputs to unit exercise, and answering intelligence-related questions. In addition, AFI 14-105 requires units provide intelligence support to base agencies, tenant organizations and transient units, as required.

(3) **Antiterrorism Support.**

(a) Joint Publication 3-07.2, *Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Antiterrorism*, 23 June 1993, requires intelligence staff elements at all echelons to report actual or suspected terrorist activities, maintain liaison with security police and CI offices, and, in cooperation with CI offices, develop and present terrorism threat awareness briefings.

(b) AFI 71-101V1, *Criminal Investigations, Counterintelligence, and Protective Service Matters*, 22 Jul 94, directs Air Force personnel to immediately report to AFOSI all information regarding the intentions of terrorist organizations.

(c) AFI 31-210, *The Air Force Antiterrorism Program*, 1 Jul 95, states the installation commander's responsibility is to ensure active intelligence support.

**b. Counterintelligence.**

(1) DODI 2000.14, *DOD Combating Terrorism Program Procedures*, 15 June 1994, states "The Secretaries of the Military Departments shall: Ensure the capability exists to receive, evaluate from a

Services perspective and disseminate all relevant data on terrorist activities, trends and indicators of imminent attack."

(2) JP 2-01.2, *Definition of CI Activities, Collections Investigations and Operations*, 5 April 1994, [Classified material omitted]

(3) JP 3-07.2, *Joint Tactics Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism*, 25 June 1993, states that in DoD Directive 2000.12 the Secretaries of the Military Departments were responsible for ensuring that a capability exists to receive, evaluate, from a Service perspective, and disseminate all relevant data on terrorist activities, trends, and indicators of imminent attack. To accomplish this, the Secretary of the Air Force appointed AFOSI to conduct intelligence and CI activities directed against terrorists and to detect, neutralize, or deter terrorist acts.

(4) USCENTAF, *Regulation 208-1*, 17 November 1988, establishes the authority for and defines the USCENTAF antiterrorism program. It outlines AFOSI District 21 OL-C (now 24<sup>th</sup> FIS) responsibilities.

(5) USCENTAFI 10-105, *Air Operations Center Organization and Functions*, 8 February 1996, states Security Police is responsible for developing/coordinating air base defense, law enforcement and antiterrorism requirements within the AOR. They will work closely with the AOR AFOSI representative monitoring terrorist activities within the AOR.

(6) AFMD 39, *Air Force Office of Special Investigations*, 1 November 1995, designates AFOSI to conduct CI activities according to EO 12333. The AFOSI provides CI, force protection and antiterrorism services for the Air Force.

(7) AFI 31-301, *Air Base Defense*, 1 June 1996, states AFOSI provides CI activities to include collection/production of information concerning foreign intelligence, investigations of terrorism, sabotage and related acts, offensive operations against foreign intelligence services, and antiterrorism services to the defense force commander (DFC) as well as establishing an effective liaison with host nation intelligence, security, and law enforcement sources.

(8) AFI 71-101, Vol 1, *Criminal Investigations, Counterintelligence and Protective Service Matters*, 22 July 1994, requires AFOSI to initiate and conduct all CI investigations, operations, collections and related CI activities in the Air Force. Outside the CONUS the AFOSI is responsible for coordinating these activities with the CIA. AFOSI conducts installation level training for CI awareness briefings and informs individuals they are required to report any information received about the intentions of terrorist organizations to the AFOSI.

(9) AFOSII 71-104, Vol 1, *Counterintelligence and Security Services*, 1 March 1995, directs AFOSI to support Air Force and DoD antiterrorism programs by gathering information; providing briefings, specialized services and equipment; and by making recommendations to command officials. AFOSI should have a thorough knowledge of the capability and method of operation of the terrorist groups in their AOR.

### 3. ANALYSIS.

#### a. Intelligence Operations.

(1) Directives and instructions governing the conduct of wing intelligence operations mandate those actions necessary to provide support to the flying mission, CI and antiterrorism (AT). These directives codify military service requirements for intelligence, the wing intelligence infrastructure and relationships with allied partners. This guidance also describes how wing intelligence will support air base operability, base agencies, tenant organizations and transient units. Furthermore, this guidance requires intelligence staff elements at all echelons to report actual or suspected terrorist activities and maintain liaison with security police and CI offices.

(2) The 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) intelligence flight was organized to support air operations and the wing staff. It possessed several automated systems to receive, analyze and disseminate intelligence products. For example, the flight used JDISS to retrieve SCI message traffic. It also used JDISS to access INTELINK, retrieving items of interest from intelligence producers world-wide. The flight also operated the CIS to augment receipt of collateral message traffic and to electronically disseminate the SITSUM to subordinate units.

(3) The flight's performance focused primarily on support to coalition air forces. It concentrated its resources to ensure up-to-date intelligence was available to coalition aircrews and the wing staff. It sustained the wing commander's situational awareness with weekly briefings and daily SITSUMs. In addition, the flight maintained a partnership with Saudi intelligence counterparts and cultivated this relationship with twice weekly meetings. It also provided releasable versions of the SITSUM to other MNF counterparts. Accordingly, the wing commander expressed his satisfaction with his intelligence support.

(4) Counterintelligence and antiterrorism support were realized through close association with the AFOSI detachment. Relevant information was regularly passed from the intelligence flight to AFOSI. Flight personnel flagged messages of interest for AFOSI, immediately notifying AFOSI when critical information was received. In addition, wing intelligence and AFOSI maintained open channels of communication permitting continuous information exchange. Information comparison prior to weekly meetings crystallized the available regional and local threat situation for presentation to the wing staff. However, the intelligence flight did not have a similar relationship with the wing's SP forces. The flight relied predominantly on AFOSI to pass CI and AT information to the SP. There were occasions when the intelligence flight notified SP regarding CI or AT information, but this practice was not entrenched in the flight's procedures. Likewise, the CSP stated he did not view the intelligence flight as a CI or AT resource. His data came from AFOSI.

b. **Counterintelligence Operations.** AFOSI Det 241 was conducting their mission in accordance with applicable Directives and Instructions. [Classified material omitted]. AFOSI provided commanders timely information and had a solid working relationship with the security police and worked closely with the intelligence flight chief.

c. **Analytical Summary.** AFOSI and intelligence were conducting separate, but related missions. While AFOSI and intelligence maintained close association with one another, relationships with the

CSP appeared to be somewhat personality driven. As such, AFOSI had a closer working relationship with the CSP than did the intelligence flight commander. This may also be true because AFOSI and the CSP were heavily focused on the ground terrorist threat and base vulnerabilities while the intelligence flight commander focused on support to air operations.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS.

a. **Lieutenant General Record's Rationale.** Lieutenant General Record's rationale was to not "dictate" assignment of intelligence and AFOSI personnel to security police units. He did not see the need to permanently assign intelligence and AFOSI assets to security police units. However, he recognized the need to assign these personnel to security police units in certain situations, such as when the US Army was unavailable to provide protection of Air Force installations overseas. Therefore, he recommended intelligence personnel and AFOSI assets be assigned to SP units during contingencies to support force protection activities.

b. **Air Force Response.** The recommendations from the two previous reports, led the Chief of Staff to establish the Headquarters Security Forces Center, Force Protection Battle Lab, 820<sup>th</sup> Security Forces Group, and Force Protection cells now operating in South West Asia. These organizations are comprised of experts from AFOSI, intelligence and security forces with a dedicated mission of enhancing the protection of Air Force personnel and resources when deployed and at home station. This should ensure the timely flow of intelligence and counterintelligence, as well as fortify and institutionalize relationships between security forces, intelligence, and counterintelligence disciplines.

### C. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT IN COUNTRIES WITHOUT A STATUS OF

#### FORCES AGREEMENT.

##### 1. BACKGROUND.

###### a. Purpose.

(1) Lieutenant General Record recommended that for future deployments in contingencies a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) be obtained before the deployment whenever possible. If a SOFA could not be obtained, Lieutenant General Record recommended that the JCS and CINC provide specific guidance through Rules of Engagement (ROE), including exceptions to the Standing ROE, concerning operations and particularly force protection. This specific guidance would then be provided to individual military members. In the Executive Summary, this recommendation was described as "expanding" the ROE for force protection.

(2) The Record Report recommendation was part of his response to Finding Five in the Downing Assessment and one of the recommendations under that finding. The finding was that force protection practices were inconsistent in Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Gulf region. The Downing Assessment recommendation was that antiterrorism measures be closely coordinated with host country agencies.

(3) The Record Report found that key officials from the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) made major efforts over the 7-

month time frame preceding the bombing to coordinate antiterrorism measures with Saudi officials. In this coordination process, Saudi officials made it clear that installation security was primarily a Saudi responsibility and US personnel could not extend force protection measures beyond the perimeter fence line. At the time of the bombing, US and Saudi officials had worked out their coordination process; there was a common understanding on force protection measures US military personnel were authorized to take and the restrictions placed on them by Saudi officials.

(4) The Record Report recommendation was focused on future deployments and the importance of establishing the coordination process and a common understanding of authorized force protection measures before the deployment. He recognized that a SOFA was the best solution, but if no SOFA could be obtained, he recommended other avenues be pursued to obtain as much general agreement between the US and the host nation in advance.

(5) This review provides an expanded explanation of the rationale for these recommendations with supporting background, standards, analysis, and conclusions.

**b. Status of Forces Agreements Provide Important Protections for US Forces.** SOFAs provide protections concerning status, rights, privileges, and immunities to US forces stationed in a host country. It is the policy of the DoD "to protect to the maximum extent possible the rights of US personnel who may be subject to criminal trial by foreign courts and imprisonment in foreign prisons;" this is done by obtaining a SOFA when practical. The Department of State is responsible for negotiating a SOFA with a host country in which US forces are stationed.

**c. No Status of Forces Agreement with Saudi Arabia.** Although the United States has attempted since 1991 to negotiate a Status of Forces Agreement with Saudi Arabia, there is still no comprehensive agreement to protect military members stationed there. For various other countries in Southwest Asia hosting US forces, the US has negotiated SOFAs.

**d. Rules of Engagement.** Rules of engagement are directives issued by competent military authority which delineate the circumstances and limitations under which US forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered. According to the Joint Chiefs of Staff Standing Rules of Engagement, "A commander has the authority and obligation to use all necessary means available and take all appropriate action to defend his unit and other US forces in the vicinity. These rules and supplemental measures ... do not limit that inherent right. Judgment, necessity, and proportionality must prevail ... as to what is an appropriate response...." The purpose of ROE is to "implement the inherent right of self-defense and provide guidance for the application of force for mission accomplishment." These rules guide military personnel in different situations when they must decide the type and level of response to a potentially harmful or hostile act.

## 2. STANDARDS, REGULATIONS, AND INSTRUCTIONS

**a. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Guidance on ROE.** The JCS Standing Rules of Engagement (SROE) "establish the fundamental policies and procedures governing the actions to be taken by US force commanders during all military operations, contingencies, and prolonged conflict" regarding the application of force. These SROE are to be used by commanders at all levels as the "fundamental guidance" for training and directing troops. The SROE state that "Commanders of US forces subject to

international agreements governing their presence in foreign countries (e.g., Status of Forces Agreements) are not relieved of the obligation to use all necessary means and take appropriate action for unit self-defense."

#### **b. Available Options to Expand ROE.**

(1) The SROE annexes have supplemental measures. To activate any of these measures requires a command decision, sometimes at higher levels. A subordinate commander who believes existing guidance is insufficient, may request supplemental measures be authorized. In addition, if a situation develops that does not appear to be covered by any of the supplemental measures, a commander may request a special measure to fit the situational needs.

(2) ROE guidance for the Southwest Asia region from USCENTCOM dated 4 February 1995, stated, "If operationally required, subordinate commanders will promulgate specific ROE applicable to units under their command and will submit them to the appropriate component or Joint Task Force Commander and USCINCCENT." Commanders are directed to ensure modified and supplemental ROE remain compatible with the intent of the ROE, result in more definitive guidance to subordinate commanders, and do not impair the commander's inherent right to self defense.

(3) Under the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing's Installation Security Plan, commanders of personnel bearing firearms were directed to review the ROE and guidance on use of deadly force during hostilities or increased THREATCONs. If the ROE needed to be altered, commanders were tasked to coordinate with the Staff Judge Advocate and the Installation Commander.

(4) The US Army, with knowledge of the 25 June 1996 Khobar Towers bombing, added the following specific guidance to its ARCENT Supplemental Rules of Engagement. "Terrorist attacks are usually undertaken by civilian or paramilitary organizations or by individuals under circumstances in which a determination of hostile intent may be difficult. However, any attempt to abandon a vehicle (mini-van or larger) near the perimeter and hastily depart, whether on foot or in another vehicle, is deemed hostile intent." The rules also state, "When a hostile act or hostile intent is recognized, deadly force is authorized to prevent the escape of persons fleeing from a hastily abandoned vehicle, as follows: (1) to disable any visible getaway vehicle, or (2) to halt anyone fleeing on foot."

**c. Self-Defense Must Be Based On An Imminent Attack.** A commander and US military personnel are authorized and obligated to use force in self-defense. Self-defense requires two elements: proportionality and necessity. Necessity consists of either a hostile act or hostile intent. A hostile act is defined as an attack or other use of force by a foreign force or terrorist unit against US people or property. Hostile intent is defined as the threat of imminent use of force by a foreign force, terrorist unit, or others against US people or property. When the use of armed force is imminent against US interests, the "right exists to use proportional force, including armed force, in self-defense by all necessary means available to deter or neutralize the potential attacker or, if necessary, to destroy the threat." US land forces will not respond unless there is clear evidence of hostile intent. The JCS ROE provides examples of hostile intent. Hostile intent "is considered to exist when a foreign force or terrorist unit is clearly detected to maneuver into a weapon launch position, and/or prepares to fire, launch, or release weapons" against US personnel or assets.

#### d. Other Higher Headquarters Guidance on ROE.

(1) AFI 31-207, *Arming and the Use of Force by Air Force Personnel*, provides requirements for arming Air Force personnel and the use of deadly force. Commanders must insure that all armed personnel understand the rules of engagement, and when feasible, these rules should be published in a local contingency plan. Use of deadly force is a last resort when (1) one reasonably believes they or others to be in imminent danger of death or serious bodily harm, (2) to prevent serious violent offenses that could result in death or critical bodily harm, or (3) to protect priority resources.

(2) AFI 31-209, *The Air Force Resource Protection Program*, states that US policy is to avoid any confrontation between US military forces and host-nation demonstrators or other dissidents posing a potential treat to Air Force resources. Local plans to counter such events must include provisions to require host-nation civil military support as quickly as possible.

e. **Local Guidance.** The wing installation security plan, specifically the section titled Rules of Engagement, also provided guidance about the use of deadly force for the security police. The security forces may use force only when "absolutely necessary." "The application of an excessive amount of force is detrimental to the maintenance of law and order and may subject the one who applies it to disciplinary action." Deadly force is justified "only under conditions of extreme necessity as a last resort, when all lesser means of force have failed or cannot be reasonably used...." Deadly force can be used for self-defense and defense of others "when it reasonably appears necessary" to protect themselves or when there is a reasonable belief that they are in imminent danger of death or serious bodily harm, in accordance with Air Force Instruction 31-207. The security police commander understood that the rules of engagement needed to be clear for his troops, ages 18-24 who might have to make decisions in 3-4 seconds about using deadly force. Security police supervisors would routinely give local threat scenarios to the security forces as further training on the above listed ROE.

f. **Unique Rules For Saudi Arabia.** The Air Force rules were adapted to local conditions in the following ways. The order to "HALT" had to be given in English and Arabic. Warning shots were not authorized at King Abdul Aziz Air Base, Khobar Towers, or anywhere in the area of responsibility of the wing. The guidance stated that Saudi Arabia law did not recognize the use of deadly force to protect property, including priority resources; thus for Saudi Arabia, deadly force could not be used, except for the protection of human life.

g. **US Army and British Rules Of Engagement Similar.** The US Army security force at Dhahran used ROE that were similar to Air Force ROE. Their Guard Force Standard Operating Procedures provide almost identical rules for the use of deadly force. The British ROE for their security forces at Khobar Towers was similar to US ROE. Firearms were to be used as a last resort. A challenge had to be made in English and Arabic unless to do so would increase the risk of death or grave injury. Security force personnel are permitted to open fire only if a person "is committing or about to commit an act likely to endanger life, and there is no way to prevent the danger." The guidance to the security force provides several examples of such acts, including the following: "(1) firing or being about to fire on a person, (2) planting, detonating or throwing an explosive devise (including any mortar or other improvised explosive devise)."

### 3. ANALYSIS.

**a. ROE In Place Permitted Response To Attack From Outside Fence.**

(1) The ROE that was in place before the 25 June bombing provided the authority and flexibility for security forces to respond to an imminent threat outside the fence directed at US Air Force personnel inside the fence. The written guidance given to the security forces on post gave short, clear instructions on when to use force or deadly force. They could use such force to protect their life or others. These rules are taught Air Force wide so that when security policemen from different bases deploy to support an overseas unit for a short 90-day period, all are trained on the same procedures. The Army and the British have almost the identical guidance and rules about the use of force.

(2) The rules of engagement should be kept as short, clear, and straightforward as possible—just as they are presently. As viewed by the security police commander, his troops—ages 18-24—could have to make decisions to engage a potential threat in 3-4 seconds. The security police supervisors provided extra local training and discussed threat scenarios, but the critical rules about use of deadly force are ingrained in security police by Air Force standardized procedures.

**b. Procedures Currently Available to Expand ROE.** The JCS Standing Rules of Engagement provide the necessary flexibility to commanders to adapt or expand ROE for specific circumstances or threats. The wing, once it believed it possessed reliable, specific intelligence information about a potential threat, could have requested supplemental ROE to address that threat if existing guidance was insufficient.

**c. Status of Forces Agreements and Expanding the SROE.** With or without a SOFA, US forces face the uncertainty of potential host nation legal action after the use of force or deadly force. If the ROE is expanded—for example as explained above with the Army directing deadly force against people outside the fence line who park a vehicle and flee – the host nation may not approve of US use of force in the host's area of responsibility and seek to claim jurisdiction for any legal action. The Saudis have been quite emphatic in stating they are responsible for the area beyond the fence. They have professed a willingness and ability to protect the perimeter; thus it is unlikely the Saudis would welcome an expanded ROE that infers they are unable to protect US forces in their country. However, if a US member uses force in accordance with their ROE, including expanded ROE, US authorities would be in a better position to advise Saudi authorities that the use of force was authorized under US law of self-defense.

**4. CONCLUSIONS.**

a. Lieutenant General Record found that agreement to a SOFA in advance of a deployment best protects US military personnel and assures authorities they will have the widest latitude to accomplish and exercise the right of self-defense. In the absence of agreement on a SOFA, he recommended that other avenues should be pursued to obtain as much general agreement between the US and host nation in advance. One area for agreement would be the circumstances authorizing the use of force by US military personnel.

b. With or without a SOFA, commanders maintain the inherent responsibility and authority to defend their forces and assets. Under the standard SOFA, US authorities will often decide the lawfulness of the

use of force by US military personnel arising from the performance of their official duty. Commanders should ensure their personnel—who may need to extend US deadly force beyond the fence line in accordance with ROE—know US authorities will take all possible action to insure such military actions will not result in Air Force personnel being subjected to a foreign nation's criminal process.

#### **D. TRAINING, EQUIPPING AND MANNING THE SECURITY FORCE.**

##### **1. BACKGROUND.**

a. **Purpose.** This section develops the facts and circumstances surrounding the training, equipping and manning of security forces in the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P). Specifically, it addresses these questions: Were ammunition stores adequate? How were weapons assigned and maintained? What were the policies and practices regarding weapons proficiency?

##### **b. Facts.**

(1) **Training the Security Force.** The security police squadron did not provide formal training to its members because the unit was not staffed to perform this function. Security police deploying from stateside units were expected to arrive trained. Despite the lack of training personnel, the security police commander conducted scenario-based training with his personnel. Training conducted from April to June 1996 included a response exercise to test patrols, an M-60 machine gun exercise at the Main Gate, and an exercise with vehicles to secure the Main Gate. Air Force guidance requires a training program and does not differentiate between permanent and provisional units. The chief of security police establishes and directs the unit training program; there are no delineated exceptions for deployed units.

(2) **Security Force Equipment.** Before the bombing, there were 181 M-16 rifles with 79,418 rounds of ammunition; 35 M9 9mm handguns with 3,760 rounds; eight M203 grenade launchers with 252 40mm rounds; and seven M-60 machine guns with 20,395 rounds. The total number of people to be armed determines the amount of ammunition required. Using THREATCON CHARLIE as a baseline, the unit required 134 weapons to be issued with ammunition. The unit armed each person with a single weapon.

(a) **Weapons and Ammunition Available.** In THREATCON CHARLIE, the basic load of ammunition for each person armed with an M-16 rifle is 210 rounds. Given this baseline and assuming each armed individual were armed with an M-16, 28,140 rounds of M-16 ammunition (134 X 210) were required. After allocating the 28,140 rounds, 51,278 would remain. However, not all posts required the issuance of an M-16 rifle. Some required the 9mm semi-automatic pistol, which used 9mm ammunition (basic load = 30 rounds) or the M-60 machine gun, which used 7.62mm ammunition (basic load = 800 rounds). The wing had 35 M9 9mm handguns and 3760 rounds of ammunition. If all 9mm handguns were issued with the requisite basic load 1050 rounds (35 X 30) were required, leaving 2710 rounds. The wing had 7 M-60 machine guns with 20,395 rounds of ammunition. If all 7 M-60 machine guns were issued with their basic load, 5600 rounds were required (7 X 800), leaving 14,795 rounds.

(b) **Weapons Assignment.** The security police used two methods to assign weapons. M16s were assigned to an individual for the duration of their 90-day temporary duty. That individual was then

responsible for cleaning the assigned weapon. 9mm handguns, on the other hand were rotated among different individuals because the wing did not have enough to issue individually.

(c) **Weapons Cleaning.** Handguns were cleaned by the armory staff and M-16s by the individuals to whom they were assigned. Surface rust was discovered on approximately 10-25 of the weapons (M-16s and M-60) that had been in theater the longest. Two M-60 machine guns were continuously kept in an air-conditioned static machine gun bunker. The end of the barrel near the flash suppresser stuck out of the bunker into the heat and humidity while the rest of the weapon was in the bunker. Surface rust accumulated as a result, and the weapons had to be rotated weekly to remove the surface rust. Other weapons at times had loose dirt on them from being on post and sometimes dust down the barrel. Rust problems were typical of the environment and were kept under control by Combat Arms Training and Maintenance (CATM) inspections and weapons cleaning within the squadron. Until early June 1996, the squadron policy required that all weapons be cleaned at a minimum of every fifth cycle. Every fifth cycle equated to once each 15 days. The cycle for SPs was to work two days and then have one day off. In early June 1996, prior to the bombing the chief of security police changed the weapons cleaning policy to require cleaning once a week.

(d) **Weapons Maintenance.** The CATM technician oversaw the maintenance of the wing's weapons. Weapons in daily use required a semi-annual functional inspection. During the inspection, the weapon was function-checked to determine if it will operate without actually firing it. Although assigned in Dhahran, the CATM technician was responsible for maintaining the weapons at all sites in the AOR. This was accomplished by trips to the sites once every six months. According to the CATM technician, one six-month weapons inspection at a site may not have been completed as required. With the exception of this site, all weapons in Southwest Asia were inspected as required by a CATM technician. At the time of the bombing, all weapons assigned to the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing were functional.

### (3) **Manning.**

(a) Air Force requirements and local commanders determine how many posts security police must work daily. The chief of security police identified 39 24-hour posts to be manned in THREATCON BRAVO. Posts included stationary sentries, vehicle patrols and supervisors. In THREATCON CHARLIE, the unit was required to man 67 posts.

(b) There were 169 personnel assigned to the security police squadron at Dhahran before the bombing. They worked rotating 12 hour shifts in order to provide 24-hour coverage of posts dispersed throughout the King Abdul Aziz Air Base flight line and Khobar Towers complex. At THREATCON BRAVO, a minimum of 78 security police (39 X 2) were required. At THREATCON CHARLIE, a minimum of 134 (67 X 2) security police personnel were needed. For extended THREATCON CHARLIE, the unit needed 44 additional personnel. Preliminary coordination had been accomplished in the event this became necessary.

(c) At the time of the bombing, the security police manned the 39 posts required by THREATCON BRAVO. The wing had been in THREATCON BRAVO since the OPM SANG bombing in November 1995.

(d) The formula for peacetime security police shift manning is 5.340 persons for each 24-hour post.

However, peacetime manning assumes an 8 hour workday, a six day workweek with three days off, and normal rates of leave, TDY, training and illness. In this deployed location, the security police worked 12 hour shifts (two days on duty and one day off) to man the required posts. It was not uncommon for individuals to work more hours in the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P).

(e) Sentries on static posts during 12-hour shifts were periodically rotated to other duties to shield them from the elements and keep them alert.

#### **(4) Policies and Practices Regarding Weapons Proficiency.**

(a) **Individual Proficiency.** The security police squadron did not routinely provide proficiency (weapons qualification) training for its TDY members. Weapons proficiency training for deploying security forces was conducted at their home base. Therefore, like formal training, deployed security police were expected to arrive in Dhahran proficient in their weapons from their home base. The security police squadron had set up procedures to check the weapons cards of incoming personnel to make sure they were proficient. There was no firing range readily available for security police personnel to fire their weapons. Even without a firing range, the unit coordinated with the French to provide weapons training to one newly arrived airman whose proficiency was overlooked. The French range was approximately 30 miles from Khobar Towers. The US Army also used the French range for their weapons training.

(b) **Sighting of Weapons.** The evidence shows that Air Force M-16 rifles and M-60 machine guns throughout Southwest Asia had not been fired since the Gulf War. Without being fired, a weapon cannot be battle sighted to zero. All weapons at Dhahran were mechanically zeroed when they were inspected semiannually by the CATM Technician.

## **2. STANDARDS, REGULATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS.**

### **a. Instructions Affecting Training.**

(1) AFI 36-2225, *Security Police Training and Standardization Evaluation Programs*, 1 March 1996. This instruction explains procedures and establishes requirements and guidelines for the security police unit training and standardization evaluation programs. Mandatory standards for the chief of security police:

- (a) Establish the unit training program with guidance from the major command.
- (b) Schedules and conducts orientation and initial training.
- (c) Determine contingency training requirements.
- (d) Conduct job certification and standardization evaluation.
- (e) Insure training records are maintained.

(2) AFI 36-2226, *Combat Arms Training and Maintenance (CATM) Program*, 16 June 1994. This instruction describes how to plan, conduct, administer, evaluate, and manage the CATM Program, which develops individual ground-weapon skills. Key standards:

(a) It requires CATM technicians to supervise and perform maintenance and inspections on all weapons assigned.

(b) The Installation Commander funds ranges and ensure support facilities, weapons maintenance facilities, and an adequate number of qualified combat arms personnel are available to the installation's CATM program.

(c) The chief of security police appoints a CATM Superintendent or NCOIC who is at least a 7-skill level.

(d) Exempts personnel serving short overseas tours from firearms training until they complete their original tours, not to exceed 24 months. However, commanders at these overseas locations are encouraged to provide firearms training to meet normal firearms training requirements whenever possible.

(3) AFM 36-2227, Volume 1, *Combat Arms Training and Maintenance (CATM) Training Management and Range Operations*, 1 February 1996. This manual provides procedures and guidance for managing the CATM section. It includes procedures on firearms training programs, range operation and management, and weapons maintenance. It requires weapons to be inspected semiannually for cleanliness, lubrication, and proper function.

**b. Instructions Applicable to Manning.** HQ USAF/SFX Memorandum, 18 March 1996 with attachments provides security police post manning factors to compute manpower requirements per authorized position. In addition, it provides an outline of the objective wing security police squadron manpower requirements.

**c. Instructions Applicable to Equipment.** Air Force Catalog (AFCAT) 21-209, *Ground Munitions*, 28 October 1994. This catalog lists who has operational and training munitions authorization and explains how these authorizations are established, reviewed and changed. USCENTAF minimum requirements include:

(1) 168 rounds of 5.56mm ball ammunition for each M-16.

(2) 800 rounds of 7.62mm ball ammunition for each M-60.

(3) 30 rounds of 9mm ball ammunition for each M9 handgun.

(4) Various amounts of different types of rounds for the M203 Grenade Launcher depending upon the type of ammunition.

### 3. KNOWN LIMITATIONS.

a. **Manning.** All members of the security police squadron were on 90-day temporary duty rotations. Constant rotation complicated continuity and stability. It also degraded the unit's ability to establish substantive professional relationships with Saudi police and security agencies.

b. **Environment.** The climate at Khobar Towers was hot, humid and characterized by blowing dust and sand.

#### 4. ANALYSIS.

a. **Was training provided the security force adequate?** Yes. The actions of the chief of security police regarding formal training are consistent with the standard in AFI 36-2225, *Security Police Training and Standardization Evaluation Programs*. There were no resources provided to conduct formal training and the chief of security police had the discretionary authority to determine his contingency training requirements. While the unit did not provide formal training to its members, the commander provided situational training to acquaint them with the threat and appropriate responses. The security police squadron did not have a responsibility to provide weapons training to deploying members. Deployed personnel were expected to be trained when they arrived. In addition, the unit had no routine access to a firing range or training munitions to conduct this training. In recognition of this situation, the current Air Force standard in AFI 26-2226, *Combat Arms Training and Maintenance*, exempts persons on short tour from firearms training for up to 24 months. While the routine 90-day temporary duty to Southwest Asia is not classified as a short tour, the duration is much shorter—which is why it is more appropriate for the stateside unit to provide this training. In one reported case where a member deployed and was not current in weapons training, the unit received approval to use the French firing range to provide the training.

b. **Equipment. Were ammunition stores adequate?** Yes. The unit had more than sufficient weapons and ammunition for each person they would have armed - even under THREATCON CHARLIE. The number of weapons and ammunition is consistent with the Air Force standard outlined in Air Force Catalog 21-209, *Ground Munitions*. There were 134 people needed to fulfill THREATCON CHARLIE requirements. With 181 M-16 rifles and over 79000 rounds of ammunition the unit was properly equipped. Only 28,140 M-16 rounds were actually required to arm all assigned personnel. Also, not everyone would have been armed with an M-16 rifle as the posting chart illustrates. There were also posts that required either the 9mm handgun or the M-60 Machine Gun.

(1) **How were weapons maintained?** A CATM specialist oversaw the weapons maintenance program. He used a prescribed inspection and maintenance program, which includes physically checking the operational parts to ensure the weapon would fire. Operators were also charged with the care of their weapons. With one exception, the weapons maintenance program is in compliance with AFI 36-2226, *Combat Arms Training and Maintenance*, and AFH 36-2227 volume 1, *Combat Arms Training and Maintenance Training Management and Range operations*. There is no Air Force standard for how often a weapon carried and not fired must be cleaned. On average, most security police units clean their unfired weapons weekly. Thus, the new practice of cleaning weapons weekly implemented by security police commander is acceptable. Despite the fact that surface rust and loose dirt were observed on several weapons, the ability of the weapons to fire was not in question.

(2) **What were the policies and practices regarding weapons proficiency?**

(a) **Individual Proficiency.** Air Force policy cited in AFI 36-2226, *Combat Arms Training and Maintenance*, exempts personnel serving in short overseas tours from weapons training for up to 24 months. For troops deployed to Southwest Asia, training must be completed stateside. This is the same philosophy used since the Gulf War and is consistent with the reality that ranges are not available. In addition, the short 90-day duration far exceeds the 24-month standard specified for other overseas locations.

(b) **Sighting of Weapons.** There is no Air Force standard for sighting weapons. Battle sighting is a normal part of annual qualification training; it is done when the individual fires his or her assigned weapon. The Air Force decision to centralize weapons in the AOR and deploy security police without their assigned weapons prevented the weapons from being battle sighted. The unit was mechanically zeroing the sight as an alternative because they did not have routine access to a firing range. This is not the preferred method to ensure the accuracy of weapons. The Air Force is currently examining its policy on battle sighting of assigned weapons.

c. **Manning. Was the manning adequate?**

(1) Yes. There were 169 personnel assigned to the security police squadron and the unit required only 134 to support THREATCON CHARLIE. As the posting chart illustrates there were 67 posts to be manned. Using 12-hour shifts the unit needed two flights of 67 people to cover 24 hours for a total of 134. There is no Air Force standard for manning a provisional security police squadron. The unit manning is otherwise consistent with an objective security police squadron with the exception of training and other administrative functions. The chief of security police realized he could not sustain THREATCON CHARLIE and appropriately made arrangements to get more personnel should the need arise. As cited earlier, no Air Force unit is expected to sustain THREATCON CHARLIE indefinitely with organic resources.

(2) As the evidence indicate, the wing was in 12-hour shifts at the time because of the bombing. In addition, the operations tempo of the wing was such that 12-hour shifts were not unusual. Finally, security police used post rotations and extended breaks to keep sentries alert. Security police worked 12 hour shifts for two days followed by a day off. Security police units worldwide work 12-hour shifts often to support contingencies and train for them.

5. **CONCLUSIONS.** The 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) was in compliance with standards regarding training, equipment and manning for the security force, although one CATM inspection at a different location may not have occurred.

a. A formal training program did not exist in the security police squadron, because the unit was not manned for it. Despite not having a formal program, the security police squadron commander provided scenario, roll call and exercise training to keep the force prepared. Regarding weapons proficiency, security police deploying to Southwest Asia were exempt from weapons training in theater by Air Force standard. Security police forces received weapons training at their stateside bases before deploying.

b. Weapons and ammunition stores were adequate. The unit had sufficient weapons and ammunition for each type of weapon in its arsenal.

c. Weapons were assigned in one of two ways depending on the type of weapon. M-16s were assigned to each security force member who used that particular weapon for the duration of his or her stay. The 9mm handguns were rotated among different people because the wing did not have enough to issue to each SP.

d. Weapons maintenance was provided by the CATM specialist through functional inspections every six months. In addition, security police cleaned and lubricated the weapons they carried. There are no Air Force standards for cleaning weapons that are carried but not fired. The weekly cleaning policy implemented by the security police commander in early June 1996 is consistent with the practices of most units worldwide. While weapons assigned to the wing were not battle sight zeroed, they were all mechanical zeroed. Again, there is no Air Force standard for zeroing weapons. The weapons were functional because the CATM specialist inspected them.

e. With respect to manpower, the security police squadron had sufficient people to accommodate any emergency requirement up to THREATCON CHARLIE for a limited time. This is consistent with security police units worldwide. In addition, the chief of security police had arranged for more forces if necessary.

## **E. CONVOY AND PERSONNEL TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES.**

### **1. BACKGROUND.**

a. **Purpose.** This section develops the facts and circumstances surrounding the "inconsistent" travel security for US service members between housing and work areas observed by members of the Downing Assessment while in USCENTCOM's Southwest Asia areas of responsibility (AOR). These observations illustrated the absence of published standards with regard to force protection. This section reviews the guidance for convoy and personnel transportation at the 4404th Wing (P) and examines the facts surrounding the employment of that guidance.

b. **Facts.** In Finding Five of the Downing Assessment, it was observed that force protection practices were inconsistent in Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Gulf Region. This finding was consistent with Finding One of the Downing Assessment: "There are no published DoD physical security standards for force protection of fixed facilities" Elaborating on this the Report went on to say, "Because ... no directive provides formal force protection standards with which the service components must comply, commanders are left to a subjective determination of what is safe or unsafe." Relevant to the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P), the Report said, "Security for travel of US service members between housing and work areas was inconsistent." The specific observations follow:

1. [Classified material omitted]

2. "In Dhahran, unarmed pilots and other key persons traveled to and from King Abdul Aziz Air Base and Khobar Towers in commercial vehicles."

### 3. [Classified material omitted]

(1) From gate to gate, the trip from Khobar Towers to King Abdul Aziz Air Base was approximately one kilometer (6/10ths of a mile) and took about three minutes. Alternate routes would have taken up to 30 minutes through populated sections of the suburbs of Dhahran. The roadway between Khobar Towers and the airfield was heavily traveled with security police. There was some concern that the overpass on the route to King Abdul Aziz Air Base might be a target for attack, and vigilance was raised with an increase of security police presence on the road after the OPM SANG bombing. Other travel security precautions at Khobar Towers included route surveillance provided by security police in an "overwatch" capacity. Posted on top of a building in the Khobar Towers complex, security police personnel were able to visually observe the route between Khobar Towers and King Abdul Aziz Air Base. Equipped with radios, these rooftop personnel were required to monitor traffic movement and sound the alarm with Central Security Control (CSC) if or when necessary. Rooftop security personnel did not have radio contact with transportation drivers. The wing commander had never considered arming pilots or key personnel on the trip between Khobar Towers and the airfield.

(2) The trip between Eskan Village and King Fahd Air Base in Riyadh took approximately 30 minutes. The procedures for force protection there included varying the routes and staggering the times of trips between the housing area and the air base. The Downing Assessment stated that they saw no evidence that the routes were varied. Armed security police were either in the buses or followed the buses. Passengers in the buses wore civilian clothes. The trip from Abu Dhabi to Al Dhafra Air Base took 30 or more minutes and involved a choice of any of six routes immediately before the trip.

(3) The only guidance on transportation security was in the installation security plan and consisted of the following recommendations: "advise all base personnel to limit all travel to the installation except for mission essential and emergency situations" during THREATCON CHARLIE, and, "consult local authorities about closing public (and military) roads and buildings that might make sites vulnerable to terrorist attacks" during THREATCON DELTA. Other wing travel precautions and restrictions were addressed in various wing commander Battle Staff Directives (BSDs), published between November 1995 and June 1996. The emphasis of the BSDs was on limiting and/or prohibiting the movement of wing members off base, decreasing their visibility and avoiding their concentration. At times, off base travel to specific areas was prohibited (Bahrain, Qatif and Hofuf), travel was required in groups of at least two but no more than four, and travel was required to be by "low profile" vehicles, use of other than chartered buses was prohibited and travel was to be in civilian clothing, or overshirts, except when on official business and at specified locations.

## 2. STANDARDS, REGULATIONS, AND INSTRUCTIONS.

a. Regulations in force at the time of the Khobar Towers bombing included: Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 2000.12, *DoD Combating Terrorism Program*, August 27, 1990; Headquarters United States Central Command (HQ USCENTCOM) Regulation 190-2, *USCENTCOM Antiterrorism Measures*, July 12, 1995; Headquarters US Central Command Air Forces (HQ USCENTAF) Regulation 208-1, *USCENTAF Antiterrorism Program*, November 17, 1988; Air Force Instruction (AFI) 31-210, *The Air Force Antiterrorism (AT) Program*, July 1, 1995; Air Combat Command Supplement 1 (ACC - Sup 1), *The Antiterrorism (AT) Program*, July 25, 1995; 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing

(Provisional) Installation Security Plan, King Abdul Aziz Air Base, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, May 24, 1995; 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) Instruction 31-101, *Security Police*, June 1, 1996; and 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P)/CC Battle Staff Directives (various dates).

b. Most of these publications touch on transportation of personnel. None, however, set out requirements or mandate the use of specific force protection measures, with the exception of the wing commander's own Battle Staff Directives (BSDs), as described earlier. For example, DoDD 2000.12 refers to "suggested" security measures associated with various THREATCONs. Specific references to transportation considerations are found under Measure 24 of THREATCON BRAVO and Measure 49 of THREATCON CHARLIE. They read, respectively: "Protect off-base military personnel and military transport in accordance with prepared plans. Remind drivers to lock parked vehicles and to institute a positive system of checking before they enter and drive a car." And, "Minimize all administrative journeys and visits." References to transportation security in the wing's "prepared plan"—the 4404<sup>th</sup> WG(P) Installation Security Plan – consisted of two suggested measures in THREATCONs CHARLIE and DELTA.

c. DoD 0-2000.12-H, *Protection of DoD Personnel and Activities Against Acts of Terrorism and Political Turbulence*, lists a number of suggested ways to increase the security of transportation of personnel. The general guidance includes such measures as avoiding dangerous areas, avoiding the establishment of regular patterns of movement, never traveling in a single vehicle, avoiding travel at night, using vehicles that do not stand out, planning alternate routes, planning communications requirements, planning in advance, and, a catchall, providing adequate security.

d. AFI 31-210 refers to DoDD 2000.12 for "guidance" in implementing threat condition measures, while ACC Supplement 1 makes recommendations on steps Americans could take to lower their profile while traveling. USCENTCOM Regulation 190-2 repeats measures listed in DoDD 2000.12, but adds a measure in THREATCON DELTA to, "provide armed escort for school children or keep them at home. Hardened or armored vehicles should be used to transport children going to school." This requirement was not a factor at Khobar Towers.

e. Wing Operating Instruction 31-101 identified the wing chief, security police as the single focal point for security issues within the AOR and required all security police supporting the wing to functionally report to him. The "chief, security police" is also the 4404<sup>th</sup> security police squadron commander.

3. **KNOWN LIMITATIONS.** The wing did not have armored vehicles for enhanced transportation security operations. Neither the Air Force nor the wing's local plans required use of such vehicles.

#### 4. ANALYSIS.

a. There were no regulatory requirements to have "consistent" force protection measures among the different sites in the AOR. Nothing required the specific measures that had been implemented at the sites to have been implemented or required that any given measure of protection implemented at one site be applied at all sites. No written guidance required armed guards on buses, travel in civilian clothing, altering routes of travel, altering times of travel, the use of scout or trailer cars with armed guards or the use of rooftop sentinels. These types of measures were all suggested by the DoD

Handbook, but not required. It is evident that various sites took a slightly different approach to protecting its personnel in transit.

b. At Khobar Towers, the route to be traveled between the housing area and the air base was very short, about a kilometer; frequently traveled by security police; and overseen by a sentry assigned to a roof top overlooking the route. Armed guards did not accompany each vehicle. The commander, in spite of showing no reluctance to imposing conditions and absolute restrictions on off base travel in his Battle Staff Directives, didn't consider it necessary to arm pilots or other key officials for this short trip. Alternate routes would have exposed personnel to travel for considerably longer times and taken vehicles through the adjoining urban area. Longer trips made at other sites within the AOR used a combination of armed guards, alternate routes, alternate times, civilian vehicles and civilian dress to enhance transportation security.

c. Based on different threat conditions at the various sites located in different areas of Saudi Arabia and other countries, it is not surprising that the Downing Assessment would observe different degrees of force protection. As the Downing Assessment observes, in the absence of guidance, such decisions are left to the discretion of individual commanders, based on their exercise of discretion to match resources against the local threat. At Khobar Towers, the wing commander's frequent and explicit Battle Staff Directives show a continuing and frequent response to the ever changing local threat. They show he was concerned and interested in protection of his forces while off-base or in transit from one facility to another.

**5. CONCLUSION.** The absence of standard regulatory or directive guidance for force protection contributed to differences in travel security measures observed by the Downing Assessment. The recommendations of the Downing Assessment simply add additional degrees of force protection to those that existed. It does not follow that just because the force protection measures in practice were not consistent among sites in the AOR, that the practices were necessarily deficient. Similarly, it does not follow that because more force protection was recommended after the Khobar Towers bombing, that the force protection measures taken prior to the bombing were inadequate or unreasonable. As the threat varies from time to time and place to place, so should force protection.

## **F. DEFENSE AGAINST STAND-OFF ATTACK.**

### **1. BACKGROUND.**

a. **Purpose.** This section address the facts and circumstances concerning defense against stand-off attack at Khobar Towers. Following the Record Report, additional factual investigation of the adequacy of efforts to protect against the very type of attack that ultimately occurred was necessary. As a result, the investigative team was tasked to answer the following questions:

(1) Did an Air Force "mind-set" cause Air Force commanders at Khobar Towers to fail to appreciate the danger to the perimeter in the face of existing threat and vulnerability assessments?

(2) Did the chain of command direct its focus toward threats to the interior of the base perimeter?

b. **Areas to Examine.** This section examines what drove the specific "inside - outside" delineation of responsibilities between US forces and Saudi officials at Dhahran. It examines how wing leaders viewed the threat; moving the perimeter fence; actions taken by wing personnel to counter or mitigate the threat; the standards applicable at the time of the bombing; and known limitations associated with the wing's force protection planning efforts. Analysis of the questions noted above is included.

### **c. Delineation of Responsibilities.**

(1) The specific "inside - outside" delineation of responsibilities between US forces and Saudis at Dhahran is grounded in a number of documents. The Joint Chiefs of Staff Standing Rules of Engagement state that a foreign nation has the principal responsibility for defending US citizens and property within the host country. Joint Pub 3-07.2, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism*, recognizes that in preparing antiterrorism plans, "In many situations, through agreement with host nation authorities, the plan will probably evolve into the installation having responsibility 'inside the wire or installation perimeter' and the host nation having responsibility 'outside the wire or installation perimeter.'" Finally, AFPD 31-3, *Air Base Defense*, says, "Outside the air base TAOR (Tactical Area Of Responsibility), US Army, US Marine, or host-nation forces will have sole responsibility for security requirements."

(2) In addition to this written guidance, principal American and Saudi leaders expressed their understanding of US forces and host nation responsibilities. Lt Gen Carl E. Franklin, USCENTAF Commander, believed the Saudis' "security was certainly sufficient to protect the compounds that they were guarding" and [referring to exterior security] "the host nation is responsible for security." Major General Sultan Bin Adi Al Mutiri, Saudi Eastern Province commander, viewed the division of responsibility for security within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as follows: (1) inside a base, the base commander is responsible for security--a shared responsibility with the coalition forces commanders housed in Khobar Towers, and (2) outside the base, civilian police agencies had sole responsibility. Further, MGen Sultan Bin Adi Al Mutiri said the commander of the Security Wing, Royal Saudi Air Force, who was "dual hatted" as the Director of the Coalition Support Unit, was responsible for coordination of internal security and liaison for external security. General Sultan reinforced this division of responsibility after the bombing when he reminded the American wing commander not to assign any patrol vehicles outside Khobar Towers.

### **d. Threat.**

(1) In the historically volatile Middle Eastern environment, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia enjoyed a

comparatively long period--roughly thirty years--of relative calm. That calm was shattered when a terrorist bomb detonated outside the Office of Program Management Saudi Arabia Air National Guard (OPM-SANG) building in Riyadh on 13 November 1995. This was the impetus for USCENTCOM's change in the threat level from Medium to High for the Kingdom, as chronicled in AFOSI's July 1995 and January 1996 Antiterrorism Vulnerability Assessments, respectively. The latter assessment cited a list of five terrorist scenarios for US facilities overseas [Classified material omitted]. Listed in order of potential damage and not in order of likelihood, the scenarios included: [Classified material omitted].

(2) Though members of the wing did not exclude any type or magnitude of threat, testimony supports that their thinking and planning gravitated to a threat on the order of 250 pounds of TNT. The commander and his staff were aware of the size and damage caused during terrorist attacks in Beirut, Oklahoma City and the World Trade Center. But closer to home, the attacks were on a much smaller scale. For example, during the Spring and early Summer of 1996 there were numerous attacks in neighboring Bahrain, but they had been on the order of fifteen pounds of explosives or less. In fact, the necessity of wing commander's restrictions on personnel travel to Bahrain was questioned by the Ambassador to Bahrain. The notable exception to this small-scale threat was the attack on OPM-SANG. This effort on the part of the terrorists was considered a logistics coup in the respect that neither the Saudis nor intelligence sources believed terrorists capable of smuggling and assembling such a large amount of explosives. The wing commander summed up the threat by indicating that it was general in nature, focused primarily in Riyadh, and that there were no warnings of a device the size of that used at OPM-SANG.

(3) Wing members varied on what they viewed as more probable delivery methods for explosives. For example, the wing commander placed greatest emphasis on preventing the penetration of the Khobar Towers compound. This concern was communicated to the security police commander during the latter's in-brief with the wing commander on 20 March 1996. In addition to a penetration threat, the support group commander was particularly concerned with a suicide bomber and a satchel charge thrown over the compound fence as possible scenarios to defend against.

(4) With varying emphasis, commanders around the wing expressed other threat concerns, including: standoff weapons including rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), surface to air missiles, or any other shoulder fired weapons; sniper fire; kidnappings, assassinations and highjackings; sabotage carried out by third country nationals; aerial attack; a car bomb detonating outside the complex's northern barrier; and a penetrating car bombing similar to what the US Marines had experienced in Beirut, Lebanon in 1983. Focusing on the high rise buildings along Khobar's northern perimeter, the security police commander described his challenge as preventing the kind of major structural damage that collapsed the Marines' building in Beirut and the federal building in Oklahoma City.

e. **Extension of the Perimeter:** Wing leadership recognized the vulnerability from beyond the existing perimeter and took the following steps to address it:

(1) The support group commander asked his Saudi counterpart, Colonel Qahtani, to expand Khobar's perimeter by moving the concrete barriers a short distance outside the fence. The request also included moving the fence and clearing the vegetation growing on the north perimeter to improve visibility. The request regarding the east and west perimeters was granted and concrete barriers were placed approximately five feet outside the fence. The requests to remove the vegetation and move the fence and place the concrete barriers outside the north perimeter were denied. According to the support group commander, Colonel Qahtani explained that expanding the perimeter would encroach on an existing parking lot which serviced a city park and a mosque. The security police commander and the AFOSI Detachment Commander were also rebuffed by their Saudi counterparts when they asked to expand the perimeter a short distance. The likelihood

of moving the fence was expressed in most doubtful terms by several Americans.

(2) When it appeared the Saudis would not allow the perimeter to be expanded, wing officials took another approach. They sought to have the parking lot closed—the Saudi response was no. The next request was for the Saudi police to patrol the area just outside Khobar Towers. After repeated requests, Saudi officials continued to assure their counterparts that the patrols would begin and increase to a level sufficient to satisfy the concerns. Over time, wing officials verified that Saudi police patrol coverage increased to twenty-four hours a day.

(3) The Saudis also agreed to establish a method for wing security officials to conduct license plate checks of vehicles viewed as suspicious around the American compound. However, the Saudis did not respond to requests for information in a timely manner. There were often no follow-up checks, leaving US security officials "skeptical" of the program's value.

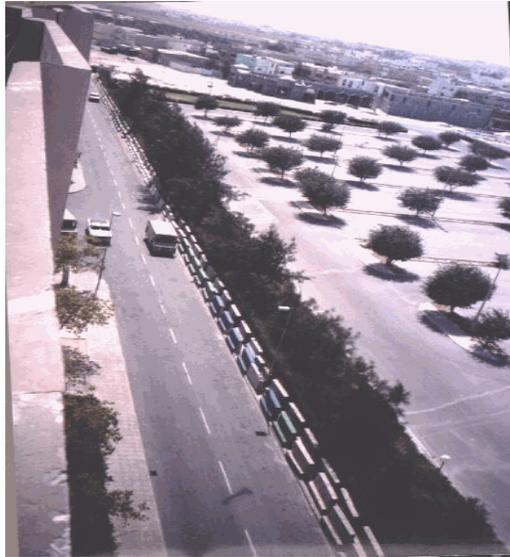
(4) Al-Khobar civilian police initiated undercover police operations outside Khobar Towers' north perimeter. The Saudis repeated their assurances of external protection, guaranteeing they could lock down the entire city (Dhahran) in five minutes. Responding to concerns expressed by US personnel about possible surveillance in the parking lot north of the compound, the Officer in Charge of the Red Beret, Royal Saudi Land Force Military Police said, "We've got (sic) patrols out there. We've got undercover police. We've got sources watching that area. It's not a problem at all." The combination of: Saudi actions outside the fence; their repeated assurances that they had security outside Khobar Towers taken care of; the perceived threat; and the security enhancements the wing had produced specifically designed to counter the perceived threat, led the wing leadership to delay further efforts to move the fence.

(5) The wing commander did not broach the subject of moving the fence with his counterpart for a number of reasons. First, the threat was not perceived to require it. Second, he was encouraged with what he viewed as improving Saudi police performance. And third, given the force protection improvements being accomplished throughout the wing, the commander did not believe extending the fence was required.

**f. Wing Security Enhancements:** Wing security enhancements included:

(1) Increasing security police presence by adding additional posts when the wing transitioned to THREATCON BRAVO immediately following the Riyadh bombing.

(2) Placing concrete "jersey" barriers around the Khobar Towers complex as depicted in photo 1 below. A second row of barriers was later added around the perimeter of the complex which served to harden the perimeter against a penetration attempt and to help mitigate the blast effects of a bomb detonated at the perimeter. Discussions between the security police commander and the wing's explosive ordinance disposal flight led leaders to believe that while an OPM-SANG size device could blow out all the windows of the buildings along the perimeter, such a blast "would not bring down one of those buildings." The support group commander also believed the jersey barrier placement provided "reasonable protection given the threat that we had." Many of these barriers were subsequently spiked down to the street after a vehicle driven by an unknown individual pushed one of the barriers with his car.



**Photo 1 - Khobar Towers Northern Perimeter**

- (3) Reinforcing those portions of the fence line adjacent to streets with trash dumpsters to offer additional protection against high speed penetration.
- (4) Repairing damaged portions of the fence line around the complex.
- (5) Installing concertina wire along the top of the perimeter fence to preclude personnel access as illustrate in photo 2 below.
- (6) Moving jersey barriers away from the perimeter fence to preclude an intruder from using it as an assist to step over the fence as shown in photo 2 above.
- (7) Installing two rows of concertina wire on the ground along the outside length of the compound's perimeter.
- (8) Increasing security police manning at static posts. This included building two sandbagged defensive fighting positions to use as M-60 machine gun positions at the Khobar Towers main gate.
- (9) Increasing security police vehicle and foot roving patrols inside the compound.
- (10) Posting security police on top of towers within the Khobar Towers complex to provide an over-watch or early warning function. Equipped with binoculars, night vision devices, and a land mobile radio, security police observers represented the wing's best defense, in terms of early warning, against a sniper or other standoff threat. Once these posts were established, the security police squadron commander conducted scenario-based training with posted security policemen to ensure they understood their mission—particularly the rules of engagement associated with their duties. These training sessions consisted of an exchange of ideas based on "what if" scenarios posed by the commander. He extended these training sessions to include security force members assigned to M-60 machine gun positions, as well as the one and a half ton truck ramming posts. In addition to threat detection, they were also able to monitor and assess the patrolling patterns of Saudi civil and military police outside the compound. Notations of Saudi police patrol frequency were made by security police rooftop observers. These data were used by the security police commander to seek additional

Saudi support if patrol frequency declined. Observations recorded and maintained on top of building 131 were not recovered after the bombing.

(11) Creating two mobile ramming posts where security police used two and a half ton trucks as a blocking force for gate runners.

(12) Implementing 100% identification checks at compound entry point.

(13) Initiating 100% inspection of all contract and non-coalition vehicles at compound entry point.

(14) Initiating random inspections of coalition vehicles.

(15) Increasing the total number of military working dog (MWD) teams (shown in photo 3 below) at Khobar Towers from two to six.

(16) Initiating random MWD inspections of all parked vehicles inside the compound and of all non-coalition vehicles entering the compound entry point.

(17) Installing jersey barriers to form a serpentine approach along access roads to limit speed on ingress and egress as shown in photo 4 below.

(18) Pruning back vegetation along the northwest perimeter to improve visibility outside the compound.

(19) Denying all vehicle access to garages within the compound.

(20) Securing jersey barriers in place along the perimeter by staking them to the road with pin posts.

(21) Blocking service roads which provided vehicle access to the spaces between individual buildings within the compound.

(22) Altering travel patterns for wing personnel to avoid unnecessary exposure or to prevent lucrative targets.

(23) Increasing security police patrols between Khobar Towers and King Abdul Aziz Air Base.

(24) Initiating discussions within the Wing Security Council to control the movement of third country nationals at King Abdul Aziz Air Base. This issue was still being worked at the time of the 25 June bombing.

(25) Instructing and reminding all wing personnel to be suspicious and inquisitive about strangers, to inspect the interior and exterior of buildings for suspicious packages, and to increase examination of all mail for letter or parcel bombs. The battle staff directives (BSDs) directing the increased vigilance yielded almost instant results. On 16 November 1996, for example, a wing member reported finding a suspicious package at the military post office. Another suspicious package was found, and dealt with, the evening of 29 January 1996 on the ground floor of the Army dormitory.

(26) Wing leaders received feedback from visitors concerning the visible improvements to security. The Consul General from Dhahran, for example, remarked that it appeared the wing commander had "created Fortress America," prompting him (Consul General) to wonder what may be overlooked at his own

compound. Likewise, Major General Kurt B. Anderson, JTF SWA commander, said that a good deal of improvement [security enhancements] was evident every time he visited Khobar Towers. He specifically mentioned increases he observed in observation posts, barriers at the front gate, as well as barriers used to block internal portions of Khobar Towers.

g. **The Attack.** Shortly before 2200 local, 25 June 1996, an explosive-laden truck penetrated the defensive measures established by the Saudis and parked against the northern perimeter fence of the Khobar Towers complex. Moments later the truck exploded, killing 19 Americans, injuring hundreds more American and Saudi citizens. The size of the bomb was later estimated as the equivalent of 20,000 pounds of TNT. After the bombing, the majority of forces were moved out of Khobar Towers.

## 2. STANDARDS, REGULATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS.

a. DoD D 0-2000.12, *DoD Combatting Terrorism Program*, 27 August 1990. THREATCON BRAVO measure 14 required, "Where possible, cars and objects such as crates, trash containers, etc, are to be moved at least 25 meters from buildings, particularly those buildings of sensitive or prestigious nature."

b. DoD 0-2000.12-H, *Protection of DoD Personnel and Activities Against Acts of Terrorism and Political Turbulence*, February 1993, offered general security considerations for new construction at DoD Sites. Chapter 9 included suggested stand-off distances for buildings. Paragraph B.4.b.(1), states, "100-foot minimum setback between perimeter and building exterior whenever possible." For existing facilities, DoD 0-2000.12H states that an unobstructed area or clear zone should be maintained on both sides of perimeter physical barriers. The inside clear zone should be 30 feet and the outside clear zone should be 20 feet.

c. AFPD 31-3, *Air Base Defense*, March 2, 1995, established policy for base defense operations, and in the context this report, addressed: Air Force components' of joint commands responsibilities in ensuring force protection; and outlined installation commanders' responsibilities for the defense of assets under their control. Following are the specific references:

(1) Para 2.3 "USAF components of joint commands will provide planning support to ensure adequate forces and intelligence are dedicated to protect USAF resources. The Air Force component, in coordination with the joint command, will determine defense force latest arrival times and tailor defense force structure and equipment to match force protection needs for Air Force warfighting resources."

(2) Para 2.4 "Installation commanders are responsible for the defense of assets under their control. The installation chief of security police is normally the defense force commander (DFC) and will plan and execute base defense operations. The DFC will lead those forces provided by the installation commander and other defense forces in the air base TAOR."

d. AFI 31-209, *The Resource Protection Program*, November 10, 1994, set requirements for the physical security of Air Force personnel, installations, operations, and assets, and identified the requirements of the Resource Protection Program (RPP).

(1) Of the four primary objectives of the RPP highlighted in the this AFI, two applied to perimeter defense. These included: maintaining the Air Force war fighting capability by reducing damage to Air Force resources and safeguarding Air Force property by reducing the opportunity for theft or terrorist attack by making a potential target inaccessible or unattractive.

(2) Specific wing level responsibilities contained in this AFI are limited to Chapters 1 and 2, Responsibilities and Program Management, respectively, and apply only to the installation commander. Following are the applicable references:

(a) Para 1.7. "Develop and implement either an installation RPP (IRPP) or installation security plan (merging is acceptable)."

(b) Para 2.5.6. "Installation Entry Point Checks. The installation commander determines when, where, and how to implement random checks of vehicles or pedestrians."

e. AFI 31-210, *The Air Force Antiterrorism (AT) Program*, July 1, 1995, established responsibilities and guidance for the Air Force Antiterrorism Program, and in the context of this report, provided guidance on how to establish a local Antiterrorism Program. Specific wing level responsibilities contained in this AFI are contained in Chapter 2, Responsibilities, and apply to the installation commander.

(1) Para 2.14. "Installation Commanders. Establish an antiterrorism program, tailored to local mission, conditions, and terrorist threat using the publications listed in attachment 1." Note: Attachment 1 referenced in para 2.14 above lists twenty-three separate and various DoD, Joint, Air Force, and Army directives, regulations, instructions, publications, handbooks, and guides.

(2) Para 2.15.2. Commanders At All Echelons, "Plan, train, exercise, and execute antiterrorism measures as specified in DoDD 0-2000.12, where appropriate. Each organization implements physical security procedures to protect against terrorism by installing physical security equipment, implementing THREATCONs, employing RAMs, and responding to terrorist acts."

f. The wing published the wing Installation Security Plan to execute its force protection mission. Provisions of the plan included aspects of physical security, law enforcement, resource protection, antiterrorism, and base defense. The plan established the wing's antiterrorism program addressing the mission, conditions, and terrorist threat. In the context of preparing for perimeter attack, the plan's following annexes applied: tasked organizations; intelligence (including a terrorist threat appendix); operations (including entry control procedures and measures addressing THREATCON ALPHA, BRAVO, CHARLIE, AND DELTA).

g. The office of primary responsibility for USCENTCOM Regulation 190-2, *USCENTCOM Antiterrorism Measures*, July 12, 1995, indicated that this publication was "written primarily for security assistance organizations" and was intended for USCENTCOM units only. This publication was not implemented in the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P).

### 3. KNOWN LIMITATIONS.

a. In the context of preparing for a perimeter attack, the wing's force protection planning efforts were hampered by several limitations. These included:

(1) **No Written Agreements.** The effects on US forces operating overseas in countries without written agreements with the host nation, particularly no status of forces agreement, is detailed in the Section II-C.

(2) **Inability to Operate Off Base.** In the context of force protection efforts, US forces were prohibited from freely operating outside of their compound--Saudis had the sole responsibility. This division of responsibility--Americans and Saudis inside the fence, Saudis outside the fence--produced an unavoidable seam in the overall

defensive posture.

(3) **Higher Headquarters Assistance.** While the wing hosted many visits from general officers in its chain of command and their functional staffs, higher headquarters support to the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) in the form of traditional inspections or staff assistance visits were limited to a visit from Headquarters AFOSI, a USCENTAF Civil Engineer Staff Assistance Visit (SAV), and a USCENTAF Fire Protection SAV. The wing had not been subjected to any formal inspections.

(4) **Available Intelligence.** While intelligence information was available to security police forces to use in their defense plans, it lacked specificity in two critical areas: location and magnitude of a likely attack.

#### 4. ANALYSIS.

##### a. **Did an Air Force "mind-set" cause Air Force commanders at Khobar Towers to fail to appreciate the danger to the perimeter in the face of existing threat and vulnerability assessments?**

(1) No. Existing DoD publications clearly spell out the delineation of responsibilities between US and host nation forces vis-à-vis "inside" or "outside" the perimeter responsibilities. This division of responsibility applies to all services, not just the Air Force. This division of responsibility was well understood at Khobar Towers; it was clear that the Saudis had responsibility for force protection outside the perimeter and shared responsibility inside the perimeter.

(2) At Khobar Towers, Air Force commanders appreciated the danger from a stand-off attack in the face of existing threat and vulnerability assessments. Wing leadership, as well as most people in the theater, generally viewed their threat in terms of an explosive device comparable in size to the device which terrorists had detonated at OPM-SANG in November 1995. They also developed a list of likely scenarios terrorists could employ to deliver such a device. These two elements—the size of the expected bomb and the possible delivery methods—formed the basis for the antiterrorism measures carried out by the wing.

(3) Antiterrorism measures were implemented in accordance with the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) Installation Security Plan. Provisions of the plan included aspects of physical security, law enforcement, resource protection, antiterrorism, and base defense. The plan established the wing's antiterrorism program and was tailored to its mission, conditions, and its assessment of the terrorist threat, satisfying the antiterrorism measures specified in DoDD 2000.12. It should be noted that the measures listed in DoDD 2000.12 were suggested measures based on the nature of the threat. In the context of preparing for a stand-off attack, the plan's annexes specified, among other things, responsibilities for intelligence (including a terrorist threat appendix) and operations (including entry control procedures and measures addressing THREATCON ALPHA, BRAVO, CHARLIE, AND DELTA). This plan also satisfied the requirements set forth for the installation commander in AFIs 31-209 and 31-210. Namely, its existence satisfied the requirement for the installation commander to implement an installation security plan (AFI 31-209, para 1.7.).

(4) The combination of increasing patrols, adding an additional four military working dog teams, adding a rooftop watch, and increasing security police roving vehicle and foot patrols provided the wing added vigilance both inside and outside the perimeter fence. Although assigned "inside" the wire, these troops were mobile and capable of making, noting, and reporting observations "outside" the wire. Likewise, increasing the manning at static posts, pruning back the vegetation along the perimeter, and increasing the travel of security police patrols between Khobar Towers and King Abdul Aziz Air Base, directly contributed to increased security awareness inside and outside the compound.

(5) In addition to preparations for a stand-off attack, efforts were made to extend the perimeter. Wing leaders made several requests to the Saudis to extend the perimeter. While the Saudis agreed to move concrete barriers outside the east and west perimeter of Khobar Towers approximately five feet, they refused to grant the wing's requests to expand the north perimeter a short distance. Americans then sought permission for the Saudis to close the parking lot located north of the Khobar Towers complex. This request was also denied by Saudi officials. Instead, the Saudis agreed to: increase civil police patrol coverage to twenty-four hours a day; check license plates of suspicious vehicles as requested by American security officials; and initiate undercover police operations outside Khobar Towers' north perimeter. Every expression of concern about the north perimeter vulnerability made by wing officials received repeated assurances by the Saudis that they were responsible for, and in control of, the area outside Khobar Towers.

(6) The stand-off distance on the northern perimeter of Khobar Towers was approximately 80 feet. This included a hard distance of approximately 60 feet between the buildings and the perimeter fence, and another 20 feet, covered with fairly heavy vegetation, from the fence to the curb in the parking lot. On 25 June 1996, the tank truck parked at this curb; the bomb crater was centered approximately 80 feet from the front of building 131. This standoff distance met the suggested guidance of DoD 0-2000.12-H for existing buildings and was consistent with the stand-off distances for other US occupied buildings in the AOR.

**b. Did the chain of command direct its focus toward threats to the interior of the base perimeter?**

(1) Yes. This was their primary responsibility based on the division of responsibility between the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) and the Saudi government. This focus was not, however, at the expense of appreciating the danger to the perimeter. Efforts undertaken by the wing to harden Khobar Towers from a penetration attack were extensive. Encircling the entire perimeter of the compound with a row of concrete jersey barriers (later doubled), served as the centerpiece for their anti-penetration efforts. Many of these barriers were subsequently spiked down to the street after wing members discovered a barrier had been displaced by a vehicle driven by an unknown individual. At the same time, these barriers served to deflect blast from a stand-off weapon.

(2) The jersey barriers were complemented with a variety of other physical security enhancements. For example, the concertina wire strung along the length of, and on top of, the perimeter fence served to increase the difficulty for personnel intrusion. Repairing damaged portions of the fence and moving jersey barriers away from the perimeter fence also served to harden the perimeter against personnel infiltration. Denying all vehicle access to garages within the compound and blocking service roads which provided vehicle access to spaces between individual buildings within the compound eliminated the ability of a would-be bomber to deliver an explosive device next to, inside, or under a building within the compound.

(3) Jersey barrier placement also helped distance the interior of the compound from a satchel charge threat. Additional jersey barriers, as well as dumpsters, were also strategically placed to limit speed on ingress and egress and to reinforce areas thought to be vulnerable to high speed approaches. Building two M-60 machine gun positions and creating two mobile ramming posts where security police used two and a half ton trucks as a blocking force for gate runners, capped the wing's anti-penetration efforts.

(4) Security measures taken at the compound's entry point were also extensive. These included: conducting random, and frequent, inspections of coalition vehicles and instituting 100% identification checks. The wing commander implemented these checks through his battle staff directives, satisfying the requirement in AFI 31-209. In addition, all contract and non-coalition vehicles were subjected to a complete vehicle inspection, as well as a military working dog explosive check prior to obtaining entry to the compound. Made possible through USCENTAF support, these efforts were designed to discourage or disrupt the efforts of any would-be

saboteur.

(5) Again, the command's focus was not exclusively turned inward. For example, through numerous battle staff directives, the leadership took steps to educate the wing's population on the hazards of off-base travel. Designed to lower their individual profiles, the wing commander's travel security directives were aimed at increasing personnel security by lowering the probability of victimization through kidnapping or assassination.

### **c. Preparations for Perimeter Attack.**

(1) Preparations for a perimeter attack undertaken by the wing, while extensive, were geared toward a threat of an explosive device of roughly 250 pounds in size, the size anticipated by all involved. The device, estimated in the 20,000 pound range, far exceeded what the wing had prepared for based on the threat assessment, and far exceeded the size of any device ever before witnessed in the region. As for specific preparations, when wing leaders were unsuccessful in their efforts to have the perimeter fence moved, they pursued other options with the Saudis. Beginning with failed requests to close the parking lot, wing members persisted until assurances were made by the Saudis to provide 24-hour police patrol coverage, check license plate numbers of suspicious vehicles requested by American, and provide undercover police coverage in the area.

(2) Wing officials also intensified their efforts to protect buildings along the compound's northern perimeter. These efforts included doubling the jersey barriers which was calculated to mitigate the blast effects of a device the size of what they believed to be the threat. Again, in the context of blast effects, the security police commander was concerned about preventing the kind of major structural damage capable of collapsing their apartment buildings in the same fashion witnessed during the bombings in Beirut and Oklahoma City. The wing's explosive ordinance disposal input during blast mitigation discussions led leaders to believe that while an OPM SANG size device could blow out all the windows of the buildings along the perimeter, such a blast would not bring down one of those buildings.

(3) Based on what he thought the nature and size of the threat to be, the wing commander did not consider redistributing wing members who lived in exterior rooms (closest to the perimeter) to interior rooms (farthest from the perimeter), which would be more vulnerable to a penetration bomb exploding inside the compound. Likewise, the wing commander considered mylar treatment for windows, but deferred it to the wing's five-year plan. As discussed in detail below, he believed other force protection measures the wing had implemented allowed this postponement.

(4) The wing obtained tactical high-ground by creating security police observation posts on the rooftops of buildings strategically located along Khobar's perimeter. These posts were designed to address a number of concerns. Most obvious was their early warning capability in detecting threats external to the compound. Rooftop observers were able to visually assess all avenues of approach to the compound for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Equipped with binoculars, night vision devices, and a land mobile radio, security police observers represented the wing's best defense, in terms of early warning, against a sniper or other standoff threat. It was from one of these rooftop posts (top of building 131) that a security policeman detected the truck bomb at approximately 2150 local, 25 June 1996. And as mentioned earlier in this report, these observers also provided route surveillance--an "overwatch" capability--for US forces traveling between Khobar Towers and King Abdul Aziz Air Base. In addition to threat detection, they were also able to monitor and assess the patrolling patterns of Saudi civil and military police outside the compound. Notations of Saudi police patrol frequency were made by security police rooftop observers. The security police commander used this information to seek additional Saudi support if patrol frequency declined. Observations recorded and

maintained on top of building 131 were not recovered after the bombing.

(5) Given the perceived threat, the scale, magnitude, and progress of physical security enhancements undertaken throughout the wing, and the continuous reassurances of protection outside the compound by the Saudis, the wing commander's efforts to protect the perimeter were reasonable to protect against the type of attack that ultimately occurred.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS.

a. The 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) was in compliance with the applicable Air Force instructions detailing requirements for resource protection and antiterrorism security. Force protection efforts against a stand-off attack were reasonable based on the known and expected threat.

b. Wing leaders protected those areas over which they had responsibility to control. The magnitude and scope of on-going force protection efforts illustrates that Air Force commanders at Khobar Towers did not fail to appreciate the danger of a stand-off attack in the face of existing threat and vulnerability assessments.

c. [Classified material omitted].

d. Air Force commanders at Khobar Towers did not fail to appreciate the danger to the perimeter in the face of existing threat and vulnerability assessments.

e. The chain of command did focus toward threats to the interior of the base perimeter, but not at the expense of appreciating the danger to the perimeter.

## G. EVACUATION PLANNING, PRACTICE AND EVALUATION.

### 1. BACKGROUND.

a. **Purpose.** This section addresses the facts and circumstances concerning evacuation planning, practice, and evaluation at Khobar Towers. Specifically, the investigative team has been tasked to answer the following questions:

(1) What were the evacuation plans in place at Khobar Towers on 25 June 1996?

(2) Did those plans take into account efforts to minimize injury from an explosive blast?

(3) Did prior building evacuations occur in five minutes and, if so, why were only three of ten floors of Building 131 evacuated on June 25 in approximately the same time?

(4) Were the prior evacuations sufficient as substitutes for planned evacuation drills?

### b. **Khobar Towers Compound.**

(1) The 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) has occupied the United States portion of Khobar Towers since June 1992. Khobar Towers was built by the Saudi Government in 1979 and remained essentially unoccupied until it was used to house the almost 3,000 US military personnel of the wing, along with British and French military personnel.

(2) Khobar Towers is approximately one kilometer east of King Abdul Aziz Air Base. The US military housing area occupies a small portion of the Saudi housing compound of approximately 14 city blocks. The US military section is bordered to the northeast by civilian housing, to the southeast by Saudi military housing, to the southwest by a large vacant lot, and to the northwest by a public park and parking lot. The complex is located in the midst of an urban environment, surrounded by residential and commercial areas and mosques.

(3) The US military compound--approximately 40 buildings--is in an area roughly the size of two city blocks. Four of these buildings are used by the British and French Coalition Forces. The buildings range in size from four to eight stories.

(4) The buildings that suffered the most damage as a result of the 25 June 1996 bombing are located at the north end of the compound, buildings 131 and 133. These dormitory-type structures are eight story "T" shaped structures constructed of 5 ½ inch precast, concrete wall panels and 6 ½ inch floor panels. The exterior wall contained approximately 18% glass. The facilities, when originally built, did not have any fire protection devices such as evacuation alarms, sprinkler systems or smoke detectors. Smoke detectors were later installed in all occupied areas of the dorms. A complete discussion of building alarm systems is included below in section II H, Communications.

**c. Building Evacuation Planning.** There were two separate emergency response procedures for Khobar Towers in place on 25 June 1996. The first procedure was an evacuation procedure used to respond to bomb threats and fire. The second procedure, outlined in the emergency response plan and contained in the dormitory attack response procedure, was used to respond to warning of an enemy attack. The night of 25 June 1996, the security police posted on the roof of Building 131 reacted to the truck as a potential bomb threat and initiated evacuation procedures. If they had viewed this as an enemy attack, then they would have initiated the attack response procedures.

**(1) Bomb Threat/Suspicious Package and Fire Evacuation Procedures.**

(a) In the event a suspicious package or smoke or other fire indicators were discovered, the individual discovering the event would report it to central security control (CSC) or the fire department. The CSC or fire department would then direct the individual reporting the event to initiate an evacuation of the building. A security police patrol or fire response team was then sent to the scene. Additionally, CSC could request Giant Voice activation by first contacting the chief of security police who would call the wing operations center (WOC) who would then get permission from the wing commander to activate Giant Voice. In the event of a suspicious package, the arriving patrols would set up a 300 foot cordon. To evacuate additional buildings within the 300 foot cordon, a security police patrol would be dispatched to the building, use the elevator to go to the top floor and begin knocking on doors, notifying the occupants to evacuate. As individuals left their rooms, they were instructed to notify other occupants to evacuate as they worked their way down and out of the building. This method of evacuation notification was described as a waterfall method.

(b) Individuals would evacuate the building through the stairwell and proceed to their designated squadron assembly area for personnel accountability. These procedures were developed in April 1996 after the AFOSI detachment commander suggested to the wing commander that evacuation plans for the Khobar Towers facilities be re-accomplished to include evacuation procedures in the event of a terrorist attack. On 13 April 1996, at a meeting concerning the terrorist threat, each squadron was tasked to develop individual evacuation plans for its facilities. These were submitted to the civil engineer readiness flight to consolidate and deconflict the assembly points. A review of all the plans collected after the bombing indicates that evacuation plans were

submitted in April 1996, coordinated and deconflicted, and returned to the squadrons. Plans for 21 of 34 buildings within the Khobar Towers compound were available for review. Plans for buildings 131, 133, 129, and 127 were included in the submissions. Additionally, a review of the plans indicated at least one unit distinguished fire evacuation procedures from terrorist evacuation procedures by changing the assembly point–perimeter for fire and interior of the compound for terrorist attack. However, most units did not make a distinction. A copy of these new plans was provided to each of the squadrons and posted on the inside of the doors of each room.

## (2) **Enemy Attack Response Procedures.**

(a) The wing developed standardized emergency procedures for an enemy attack. These procedures were used to meet the threat of a SCUD attack during the Gulf War. In the event of an incoming attack, Giant Voice would be activated by the wing operations center (WOC) in the siren mode, followed by voice instructions that an attack was probable (Alarm Yellow) or imminent (Alarm Red). Giant Voice is a base-wide loud speaker system with speakers located on selected roofs of the Khobar Tower buildings and throughout the American portion of King Abdul Aziz Air Base. A further discussion of Giant Voice is contained in Section II-H, Communication.

(b) After a Giant Voice warning that an attack was imminent, the Dormitory Attack Response Procedures directed individuals to seek shelter in the front hallway, the inner most area of their suite. The procedure specifically instructed them to remain away from the kitchen, television room, and individual bedrooms because these rooms were located to the outside of the building. The procedures were published in 1994 and posted in the dormitories. The attached example sheet was recovered from one of the rooms in Building 133 after the bombing on 25 June 1996.

(3) **Training.** Personnel assigned to live in Khobar Towers received a briefing on general evacuation procedures during the Right Start Program from senior wing officials. Briefings on the specific evacuation plans for each dormitory were the responsibility of each squadron. Squadrons posted the instructions on bulletin boards and on the backs of their room doors.

## d. **Evacuation Practice.**

(1) There was no formal program within the wing to practice evacuation exercises. However, from November 1995 through June 1996, there were 14 suspicious package incidents within Khobar Towers. These incidents were reported in the security police blotters. In three incidents, the blotters had specific entries noting building evacuations. Circumstantial evidence indicates some of the other incidents may have also resulted in evacuations. For example, on 18 November 1995 a suspicious vehicle was parked adjacent to Building 111. The Security Police blotter indicates a 300 foot cordon was established, but it does not specify that any buildings were evacuated. Applying a 300 foot cordon around building 111 indicates that buildings 109, 110, 112, and 113 should have been evacuated. The security police blotter indicates this incident was initiated at 1509 and at 1518 evacuation of all personnel from the affected area was complete. Thus, it appears that the evacuation took nine minutes from the time the suspicious package was first reported to CSC until evacuation of personnel was complete.

(2) A review of the 14 suspicious package incidents, indicates that a 300 foot cordon was implemented in six of the incidents. In each of these incidents, the establishment of the cordon should have driven building evacuations. This is consistent with witness recollections of about six evacuations during this period. A copy of the Khobar Towers Plot Plan was used to determine which facilities fell within the 300 foot cordon around

the effected facility. Using the premise that the Security Police conducted an evacuation of all facilities within the 300 foot cordon, building 131 would have been evacuated twice during this period. The chart below indicates building evacuation and timing information available for each incident:

### Suspicious Package Incidents Nov 95 - Jun 96

Date of Incident	Time Initiated	300' Cordon	Buildings Evacuated	Time Evacuation 300' Cordon Complete	Time Incident Terminated	Time Required to Complete Evacuation
14 Nov 95	1350	X	<b>108, 109, 110, 111, Garage 12</b>	unknown	1453	unknown
16 Nov 95	0936	X	not Khobar Towers	unknown	1101	unknown
18 Nov 95	1509	X	109*, 112*, 113*	1518	1522	9 min
14 Dec 95	1218	X	127*, 129*, 130*, 131*, 132*	unknown	1225	unknown
29 Jan 96	1935	X	115*, 117*, 118*, 119*, 120*	unknown	1950	unknown
3 Feb 96	1817	no cordon	n/a	n/a	1822	n/a
13 Feb 96	1245	no cordon	n/a	n/a	none listed	n/a
14 Feb 96	2155	no cordon	n/a	n/a	2240	unknown

16 Feb 96	0652	no cordon	n/a	n/a	none listed	n/a
8 Mar 96	1304	no cordon	<b>101</b>	1306	1315	2 min
27 Mar 96	1050	no cordon	n/a	n/a	none listed	n/a
6 May 96	1950	no cordon	n/a	n/a	2010	n/a
9 May 96	1700	X	<b>129, 127*, 130*, 131*, 132*</b>	1706	1836	6 min
14 Jun 96	2105	no cordon	n/a	n/a	2114	n/a

\*No entry in blotter that building evacuated, but within the 300' cordon

(3) **Fire Protection Evacuations.** The fire protection unit did not schedule or conduct any fire evacuation exercises, but they encouraged facility monitors to conduct drills. Emergency evacuation procedures were discussed during the mandatory Right Start inprocessing briefing for all new personnel. Additionally, the fire department performed internal exercises for proficiency training of its personnel which were conducted on a monthly basis during April, May and June 1996. Each time a different facility within Khobar Towers was used. One of these drills was in the civil engineer facility, building 133. These fire training exercises tested the fire department's capabilities of fighting a fire in a high-rise facility or office complex. During these exercises fire department personnel evacuated the facility before conducting the exercise. However, they did not time or evaluate the evacuation of personnel. Of note, the British coalition members within the Khobar complex conducted monthly fire evacuation exercises.

e. **Evacuation Evaluations.** As noted above, the wing had no program to evaluate the conduct of evacuations. The only noted evaluations of any programs related to evacuations were two USCENTAF Staff Assist Visits (SAVs), a fire protection SAV in January 1995 and a civil engineer SAV in January 1996. Neither SAV identified any deficiencies related to evacuations by the fire department. Further, although the SAVs identified a number of deficiencies in the civil engineer readiness flight, none were related to evacuation planning.

## 2. STANDARDS, REGULATIONS, AND INSTRUCTIONS.

### a. Contingency Planning and Evacuation.

(1) Joint Publication 3-07.2, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism*.

(a) Joint Pub 3-07.2, by its own terms, applied to commanders of combatant command, subunified commands,

joint task forces, and their component commands. Thus, it applied to USCENTCOM, USCENTAF, and the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P). Joint Pub 3-07.2 procedures were to be followed except in exceptional circumstances.

(b) Joint Pub 3-07.2 reaffirms the basic responsibilities of command, but also provides specific procedures. Drills and exercises are mandated as the best test of an installation's ability to respond to a terrorist incident short of an actual event. Guards provide early warning and detection and special orders should address, at a minimum, their response to an approach by unauthorized personnel.

(c) In the event of a bomb threat in a building, the Joint Pub 3-07.2's directed response was search, movement within the building, partial evacuation, and total evacuation. Evacuation procedures were to be prepared, publicized, and rehearsed in advance. Also to be addressed in the plan are alarm systems, assembly areas, routes to assembly areas, personnel evacuation response, building and area clearance, and evacuation drills. The alarm system should be easily distinguished from the fire alarm. Routes to assembly areas should not approach the bomb at any time. Evacuation drills were to be periodically practiced under the supervision of the installation or unit senior office.

(d) As to enemy attack, Joint Pub 3-07.2 contains no specific procedures beyond calling for drills and exercises.

(e) Above the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) Commander level, USCENTAF and USCENTCOM had command responsibility. As Joint Pub 3-07.2 states, "every commander, regardless of echelon of command or branch of Service, has an inherent responsibility for planning resourcing, training, exercising and executing antiterrorism measures to provide for the security of the command. Theater Combatant Commanders are to "Ensure proper coordination of all local policies and measures for protecting DoD facilities, resources, equipment, personnel, and family members in foreign areas from terrorist acts and for assisting their subordinate commanders in implementing Military Service programs." These combatant commanders were also to designate a staff office, usually the J-3 or law enforcement or security section, to supervise, inspect, test, and report on the base antiterrorism programs within theater.

(2) AFI 31-210, *The Air Force Antiterrorism (AT) Program*, 1 Jul 95.

(a) AFI 31-210 establishes the Air Force's antiterrorism program. Major commands are required to establish an antiterrorism program tailored to the local mission, conditions and the terrorist threat. This was in addition to their oversight responsibility exercised through their command security police chief under AFPD 31-2, Law Enforcement, 6 May 94.

(b) Installation commanders are required to establish an antiterrorism program tailored to local mission, conditions and terrorist threat. They are directed to use DoD 0-2000.14-H, Protection of DoD Personnel and Activities Against Acts of Terrorism and Political Turbulence, and Joint Publication 3-07.2, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism. Installation commanders are also required to ensure the installation can respond to a terrorist attack. AFI 31-210 required commanders at all echelons to plan, train, exercise and execute antiterrorism measures as specified in DoD 0-2000.12 where appropriate. Commanders are also responsible for integrating lessons learned from actual incidents and operation exercises, to correct deficiencies. The installation chief of security police has the functional responsibility for implementing these requirements.

(3) AFI 32-4001, *Disaster Preparedness Planning and Operations*, 6 May 94.

(a) Requires each Air Force Installation to have a disaster preparedness plan to include an annex on enemy attack. There is no requirement for the plan to address evacuation. Similarly, training of installation personnel in disaster preparedness responses is required.

(b) Under AFI 32-4001, the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) Commander was required to conduct attack response exercises twice a year as the installation was located in a chemical-biological threat area. These exercises were to provide "realistic, integrated, large-scale training for the installation and the DRF [Disaster Response Force]." It also directs the conduct of a major accident response exercise (MARE) at least once every quarter. It requires the Installation Commander to establish an Exercise Evaluation Team (EET). The EET develops exercise scenarios and debriefs and critiques performance and prepare a report to track discrepancies.

b. **Fire Protection.** Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 32-20, *Fire Protection*, requires fire drills be conducted by referencing and adopting the requirement set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Code 101, *Code for Safety to Life In Buildings and Structures*. Fire exit drills must be conducted with sufficient frequency to familiarize all occupants with the drill procedures and to have of the drill a matter of established routine. There is no established time standard in which fire drills or actual fire evacuations must be completed.

### 3. LIMITATIONS.

a. **90 Day Rotation.** The 90 day rotation increased the number of personnel to be trained and the frequency necessary to ensure all were trained in evacuation procedures. Approximately 10% of the wing's personnel turned over every week. There would be approximately 200 to 300 new arrivals each week. At this rate of turnover, for example, only 30% of the personnel living in Khobar Towers on the 25 June 96 would have been present for the 9 May 1996 evacuation of several buildings.

b. **Saudi Restrictions on Exercises.** Conduct of wing exercises was limited to King Abdul Aziz Air Base and inside the Khobar Towers compound. Exercises were limited so as not to offend the Saudis. These restrictions were never written down but expressed verbally to commanders. Specific Saudi restrictions included using the Giant Voice system in the siren mode and not being able to use the primary crash net for exercises. The Saudi restrictions are evidenced by the last minute cancellation of the mass casualties exercise in December 1995 and the Saudi reluctance to allow the wing to test the Giant Voice siren after the 25 June 1996 bombing.

c. **Chemical Gear Requirements.** The readiness flight within the civil engineer was also responsible for the chemical defense program. They spent a significant amount of time working chemical gear requirements. They were required to complete a 100% check of chemical gear for each individual arriving in the AOR, 200 to 300 people each week. When 100% checks of chemical gear were started in the fall of 1995, only 20% of personnel arriving in the AOR had all required gear. As a result of the readiness flight efforts, by June 1996, this figure had improved to approximately 90%. The effort expended in ensuring chemical gear requirements were met distracted the readiness flight from completing other responsibilities.

d. **4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) Mission.** The wing's flying mission in support of the "no fly" sanctions was a 7-day a week, 24-hour a day operation. Exercises in the Khobar Towers compound were limited to avoid disturbing the crew rest (a 12-hour non-duty period with 8 hours of uninterrupted rest before a flying mission) of aircrews. Additionally, most personnel assigned to the wing worked significantly longer during their 90 day temporary duty than when assigned to CONUS units. Finally, the provisional wing was not staffed for all the functions of a permanent Air Force wing.

e. **Readiness Personnel.** The civil engineer readiness flight had four authorizations. In the two weeks before the bombing, the flight was only 50% staffed as a result of early rotation of personnel. Additionally, although the most recent readiness flight chiefs were trained, several previous readiness flight chiefs had no training or experience in readiness. This was identified in the USCENTAF Civil Engineer Staff Assistance Visit in January 1996 and had been corrected for the rotations after April 1996.

#### 4. ANALYSIS.

##### a. Evacuation Planning.

(1) **Responsibility for Evacuation Planning.** Within the wing, each squadron was responsible for establishing procedures for evacuation of their facility. The readiness flight within the civil engineer squadron assumed the responsibility to review the plans and were in the process of trying coordinate and develop a wing plan. They also had the responsibility to develop the attack response emergency plans. These responsibilities are outlined in AFI 32-4001. The Readiness Flight coordinated on the April 1996 rendition of evacuation plans submitted by the squadrons.

(2) **Initiation of Emergency Response Procedures.** On the night of 25 June 1996, security police were posted on the roof of Building 131. Their posting required them to specifically watch and note any unusual occurrences on the northern and eastern perimeters. If they perceived any unusual occurrences they were required to notify Central Security Control (CSC). They observed the Saudi fuel truck back up to the fence on the north perimeter and immediately notified CSC. Based on the nature of the perceived threat they characterized it as a bomb threat; and initiated immediate evacuation procedures.

b. **Evacuation Procedures In Place at Khobar Towers.** On 25 June 1996, two emergency response plans were in place at Khobar Towers.

(1) Evacuation. Upon notification to evacuate, all personnel were to proceed down the stairwell to their squadron area for accountability. Notification was via the "waterfall" method of starting at the top floor and going room-to-room to notify personnel to evacuate. On 25 June 1996, notification was made by the three roof-top security policemen who observed the truck pull up to the northside fence. These procedures had been updated in April 1996 and posted in Khobar Tower buildings. These procedures met the requirements in Joint Publication 3-07.2, as implemented by Air Force Instruction 31-210. They were written, described escape routes, and included procedures to account for all personnel after evacuation. These evacuation procedures had been previously used to respond to seven suspicious packages which necessitated evacuations from November 1995 to June 1996. The evacuation procedures did not specifically take into account efforts to minimize injuries from an explosive blast. These evacuation procedures were not designed to minimize injuries from blast, they are used to quickly remove individuals from the vicinity of a perceived threat, including a suspected bomb.

(2) Although the evacuation procedures employed did not specifically take into account minimizing the effects of explosive blast, the difficulty of designing a plan to account for multiple possibilities is demonstrated by applying the following possible timing sequences to the bombing at Khobar Towers.

(a) Bomb exploding approximately three minutes after notification to evacuate. On 25 June 1996, the top three floors had evacuated and most personnel who were notified were in the stairwell when the bomb went off. This provided them some protection from the effects of explosive blast.

(b) Bomb exploding 12 minutes after notification to evacuate. If the bomb had exploded 8 minutes later, 12 minutes after notification to evacuate, it is likely personnel would have been outside but close to the building with little or no protection from explosive blast.

(c) Bomb exploding 20-30 minutes after notification to evacuate. If a timing device similar to the one used in the OPM-SANG bombing had been used, there would have been 20 - 30 minutes from the time the Security Police saw the truck and the bomb explosion. This would have allowed for a 300 foot cordon to have been set up and complete evacuation of buildings 131, 130, and 129 away from the area. This would have minimized injuries from explosive blast.

(3) **Dormitory Attack Response Plan.** The second procedure in place was the Dormitory Attack Response Plan. This was a written procedure for enemy attack, developed in December 1994 and posted on the doors of each room in the Khobar Tower facility. The attached copy of the procedure was recovered from building 133 after the bombing. These procedures were implemented through the wing Survival Recovery Center plan. Personnel were directed to take cover until the attack was over. Accountability was reported to the dormitory manager. These procedures also met Air Force requirements for an emergency response plan. They were written, described emergency actions, and included procedures to account for all personnel after the attack. By directing personnel to seek shelter in the inner most area of the suite, away from the exterior of the building, the Dormitory Attack Response Plan took into account efforts to minimize injuries from an explosive blast.

c. **Previous Evacuations.** As discussed in the background section, the security police blotters indicate that there were 14 suspicious package incidents between November 1995 and June 1996. The blotters indicate that 3 of these suspicious packages were treated as bomb threats and resulted in building evacuations. Four additional incidents have a blotter entry indicating a 300 foot cordon was setup. This is consistent with security police quick reaction checklist (QRC) #14 which required a cordon be setup for a bomb threat. QRC #14 also requires evacuation of all the buildings within the 300 foot cordon. Thus it appears from an analysis of the blotters that there were seven bomb threat incidents which resulted in building evacuations. This number of evacuations is consistent with the support group commander's recollection of 6 to 10 evacuations as a result of suspicious packages.

d. **Timing of Previous Evacuations.** The support group commander estimated that the suspicious package evacuations were all completed within five minutes. He based this estimate on information he received from his fire chiefs. Evidence available to assess this estimate includes security police blotter entries, the on-scene fire chief from the 9 May 1996 evacuation, and several other witnesses who were present during the evacuation on 9 May 1996.

(1) Security police blotters. Of the seven incidents which resulted in building evacuations, the security police blotters indicate timing for three events. On 18 November 1995, the blotter indicates all personnel were evacuated from within the cordon nine minutes after the incident was reported. This entry does not specify how many buildings were evacuated. Three buildings should have been within the 300 foot cordon. Thus it appears it took nine minutes to evacuate the three buildings on this occasion. The blotters also indicated an evacuation of building 101 on 8 March 1996. The security police blotter indicates this took two minutes. There is no indication that a 300 foot cordon was set up for this incident.

(2) On 9 May 1996, the security police blotters indicate that building 129 was evacuated in six minutes. Evidence indicates that a total of five buildings were evacuated on this occasion, including building 127. At least one witness who was evacuated from building 127 estimated it took 10 to 15 minutes to evacuate. Additionally, another witness estimated that it took about ten minutes to evacuate the eight story buildings. Finally, the fire chief who was present and on scene for the 9 May 1996 evacuation opined that it was not

possible to evacuate one of the larger facilities within 5 minutes.

(3) There is no evidence to indicate that any procedures were established to accurately assess the time it took to evacuate facilities during these incidents. As noted above, the only written records that could be used to determine any evacuation times comes from the security police blotters; they were not consistently annotated with evacuation times. Additionally, testimonial evidence indicates that it took longer five minutes to evacuate the buildings.

(4) Summary. The evidence does not support that prior evacuations were completed within five minutes. Evidence 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.

**e. Prior Evacuations - Adequacy as Substitute for Exercises.**

(1) The investigative team was also tasked to review whether the building evacuations for suspicious packages were sufficient substitutes for planned evacuation drills. They were not.

(2) The basic Air Force contingency exercise program is contained in AFI 32-4001, *Disaster Preparedness Planning and Operations*. This instruction establishes the Major Accident Response Exercise (MARE) program. A MARE is any one of various accident scenarios and must be conducted at least quarterly. MARE scenarios frequently require the establishment of a cordon and the evacuation of personnel and buildings within the cordon. AFI 32-4001 also requires an Attack Response Exercise be conducted twice a year in chemical threat areas, including Saudi Arabia. Further, the Antiterrorism program requires exercises to evaluate the effectiveness of the base antiterrorism program.

(3) Under the Air Force exercise program, each exercise is evaluated by the wing exercise evaluation team (EET). The chief is appointed by the installation commander. The EET establishes exercise objectives and provides a debriefing, critique, and report for each exercise. Additionally, if the EET identifies a discrepancy during the exercise, the EET must also track concomitant corrective actions and complete a trend analysis. The purpose of exercises is to determine the installation's and assigned units' capability to respond to operate during, and recover from combatant and noncombatant contingency operations. Additionally, in AFI 31-210, commanders at all echelons are required to integrate lessons learned using after-action reports from actual incidents and operational exercises, to correct deficiencies.

(4) Using these guidelines then, a real-world event may be an adequate substitute for an exercise, as long as the real-world event is used to identify potential deficiencies and integrate lessons learned. Wing officials indicated they were confident in their procedures because of the previous real-world evacuations. However, no documentary evidence was found indicating the wing used the real-world evacuations to evaluate their response program and identify any areas requiring improvement. Additionally, because there was no accurate method used to time the evacuations, wing officials did not have a reliable estimate of lead-time necessary to evacuate a facility. This is particularly true of the large tower facilities. Finally, with the high-rate of turn over of personnel, the frequency of these real-world events may not be enough to properly ensure personnel were aware of procedures to follow in the event of an evacuation. For example, there were no evacuations between 8 March and 9 May 1996. During this time, almost 60% of personnel in the wing would have turned-over.

**f. Fire Drills.** Fire drills were not conducted. The standard for conducting fire drills is in the National Fire Protection Association, Code 101, *Code for Safety to Life from Fire In Buildings and Structures*. This code does not specify an interval to perform the drills; but it does require them to be conducted frequently enough

for everyone to be familiar with the procedure and to have the conduct of the drill "be a matter of established routine." The suspicious package evacuations performed within the wing did not meet this requirement.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS.

a. Evacuation and attack response procedures were in place at Khobar Towers on 25 June 1996.

(1) Evacuation plans were updated in April 1996. They were not designed to minimize injuries from an actual explosive blast. They were designed to remove individuals from the vicinity of a perceived threat as quickly as possible. If time had permitted, people would have been evacuated.

(2) Dormitory attack response procedures were developed in December 1994. These plans require individuals to take immediate cover in the interior of the building in the event of an imminent attack. As such, they minimize the risk of personal injury from explosive blast.

(3) The security police personnel on the roof of building 131 made a decision to initiate an evacuation rather than an attack response. Such action was reasonable based on the uncertainty of the perceived threat.

b. Prior evacuations of buildings in Khobar Towers occurred in approximately 10 to 15 minutes. This is consistent with the time it took to evacuate the top three floor of building 131 on 25 June 1996. There are no set time standards for the evacuation of buildings.

c. The wing was required to practice emergency evacuation procedures, but did not do so. Although the wing had a number of real-life evacuations from November 1995 to May 1996, these real-life evacuations were an inadequate substitute for exercises. The lack of specific data collection during the real-life evacuations left the wing with an inflated estimate of its capability to evacuate the buildings in Khobar Towers. The lack of an accurate estimate of building evacuation times did not impact the wing's response on 25 June 1996.

d. The wing did not have procedures in place for the practice of fire drills as required by the National Fire Protection Association Code 101.

## **H. COMMUNICATIONS: (1) AUTOMATED BUILDING ALARM SYSTEM, (2) RADIO LINKS BETWEEN SENTRIES AND THE GIANT VOICE SYSTEM AND (3) FULL-TIME INTERPRETERS.**

**PURPOSE.** This section provides an expanded factual analysis of communication capabilities and deficiencies as they existed at Khobar Towers on 25 June 1996. Specifically, it addresses:

a. the lack of an automated building alarm system

b. the lack of direct radio links between sentries and the Giant Voice system

c. the absence of full-time interpreters, and whether that impeded rapid communications with Saudi security forces and police

### **AUTOMATED BUILDING ALARM SYSTEM.**

## 1. BACKGROUND.

- a. US military personnel stationed within the vicinity of Dhahran were housed in a number of high rise buildings located within a fourteen city block residential area in a suburb of Dhahran called Al Khobar. The US compound was comprised of approximately 40 high rise and other buildings within the northwest two city blocks of the Al Khobar complex. In addition to housing personnel, the area also contained the normal range of service and support functions found on other US military facilities. US Army soldiers were also billeted in the US compound, as were British and French coalition forces, who occupied four buildings in the southwest corner of the compound.
- b. The Downing Assessment stated " . . . Saudi construction standards for Khobar Towers-type buildings did not require a fire alarm system. Consequently, US forces moved into facilities that did not have a system that could have served for mass warning notification of an attack." Use of a building fire alarm system as a general automated building alarm system for attack warning violates the provisions of Joint Publication 3-07.2, which notes the distinction between the two types of alarms and cautions that the "bomb threat system should be easily distinguished from the fire alarm."
- c. The wing relied on a Giant Voice system, with siren and voice capability, for attack notification. This system is common to most operational Air Force wings. The system at Khobar Towers had been installed during the Gulf War, primarily to warn of Scud missile attacks. Because bomb threats are localized, the wing used a "waterfall" notification system to alert people to evacuate building(s) and areas affected by the particular threat. The Giant Voice system and the wing's evacuation and attack response plans are discussed more specifically in Section II G.
- d. Saudi building codes did not require the installation of a fire alarm system. Smoke detectors were installed in the sleeping areas of the US occupied buildings. Smoke detectors were installed instead of an automated facility alarm (fire alarm) system largely because of the small amount of flammable items contained in the buildings and the fact that the buildings were constructed predominantly of prefabricated cement sections and other masonry products. The civil engineering squadron commander, who was also the base fire marshall, and his deputy concurred with earlier opinions that the buildings were not combustible. In fact, the fireball resulting from the bomb did not result in a fire.
- e. The British coalition forces living at Khobar Towers occupied buildings equipped with fire alarm systems.
- f. The lack of an automated fire alarm system was brought to the attention of senior staff members on several occasions by the wing fire chiefs. The fire chiefs were virtually unanimous in their opinion that the lack of a centralized fire alarm system was not a problem. Three stated that, based on their experience, an automated fire alarm system was not needed at Khobar Towers and that the wing did not need to spend the money on one. Their reasoning was also due to the very few flammable items in the facilities, the most flammable being the air conditioners. This belief was further supported by the fact USCENTAF, during two civil engineering staff assistance visits, did not identify the lack of a fire alarm system as a deficiency. With this information in mind, the support group commander and wing commander did not see the requirement for a near-term project. However, they did not want to lose sight of the improvement and, hence, provided the planning wedge in the outyears of the five year plan.
- g. With the evolution of an overall wing facilities plan, the purchase and installation of an automated fire alarm system was included in the wing's Five-Year Facilities Improvement Plan, called Vision 2000, dated 24 May 1996. The project for a centralized alarm system was programmed for FY00 with an estimated cost of

\$250,000.

h. The basic premise of a fire alarm system is to provide a quick warning and have people expeditiously exit the building to a safe place. This differs from an attack warning which (1) warns people to seek refuge in the interior of facilities away from glass windows, (2) to close the doors as they leave their rooms, and (3) to await the notification of the "all clear," or other instructions.

i. In the event of the need to immediately evacuate a building for fire or a bomb threat, the individual discovering the event would report it to central security control (CSC) or the fire department. The CSC or fire department would then direct the individual reporting the event to initiate an evacuation of the building. Evacuation was completed by taking an elevator to the top floor and knocking on doors, notifying the occupants to evacuate. As individuals left their rooms, they were instructed to notify other occupants to evacuate as they worked their way down and out of the building. This method evacuation notification was described as the waterfall method.

## 2. STANDARDS, REGULATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS.

a. AFI 32-2001 and DoD Instruction 6055.6 required compliance with Military Handbook 1008B, *Fire Protection for Facilities Engineering, Design, and Construction*, 15 Jan 94. AFI 32-2001, *The Fire Protection Operations and Fire Prevention Program*, 15 May 1994, applies to personnel who develop and implement fire protection and fire prevention at Air Force installations, facilities, and contractor-operated facilities. Para 3.5, *Fire Engineering*, states that the fire chief provides operational expertise and also requires the engineering flight chief to manage fire engineering as prescribed by Military Handbook 1008, *Fire Protection for Facilities Engineering, Design, and Construction*. Additionally, provisions of DoD Instruction 6055.6, *DoD Fire and Emergency Services Program*, 15 Dec 94, required facility compliance with Military Handbook 1008B. Para E.2. requires DoD Components' fire and emergency services programs to include the elements described in Enclosure 2 to DoDI 6055.6.

b. Military Handbook 1008B establishes protection engineering policy and criteria for DoD components and applies to DoD facilities located on or outside of DoD installations, whether acquired or leased, or third party financed and constructed. The Handbook incorporates by reference *National Fire Codes* fire protection criteria published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). National Fire Codes include NFPA Standard 101, *Life Safety Code* Para 2.1.1 of the Handbook requires that building construction related to building egress and safety must comply with NFPA Standard 101. NFPA Standard 101 contains requirements for fire alarm systems. For existing dormitory and apartment buildings, para 1.3.2 of the Handbook does not require modification of the buildings to meet more stringent Handbook 1008B requirements, so long as the buildings are acceptable to the "authority having jurisdiction" and they meet NFPA 101 standards. The sole "authority having jurisdiction" for the Air Force is the Chief Fire Engineer of the Air Force, HQ AFCESA/DFE, at Tyndall AFB.

c. Chapter 17 of NFPA 101 contains general fire protection requirements for existing buildings occupied as dormitories. Paragraph 17-3.4.1 requires installation of a fire alarm system. Paragraphs 17-3.4.3.1, 7-6.3.2, and 7-6.3.4 require the evacuation notification to occupants to be an internal audible alarm that meets the NFPA's *National Fire Alarm Code*.

d. *Joint Pub 3-07.2, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism*, (25 June 1993), Appendix K, paragraph 1f, requires bomb threat procedures to address an alarm system. Paragraph 1g notes the distinction between bomb threat systems and fire alarm systems, the "bomb threat system should be easily

distinguished from the fire alarm."

### 3. ANALYSIS.

- a. The decision not to install a fire alarm system was based on the construction of the facilities and the opinions of numerous fire chiefs and headquarters fire protection specialists that such a system was not required. Based on these inputs, the wing commander, support group commander and civil engineering squadron commander deferred the planned upgrade, programming the \$250K cost for a fire alarm system into the wing's first Five-Year Facilities Improvement Plan.
- b. If more personnel had simply evacuated to the outside of their buildings, there may have been additional casualties as evidenced by the fact local Saudis located approximately 800 feet from the blast site received serious injuries.
- c. In the instant case, had a fire alarm system been activated, security police and fire department emergency response units could have been reacting to building 131 when the explosion occurred. Members of these units could have been exposed to the blast, as well as building occupants responding to a fire, versus evacuation alarm. A fire alarm system should not be used as a substitute for a bomb threat warning system.

### 4. CONCLUSIONS.

- a. Fire alarm systems were not installed based the professional opinions, experience, and recommendations of various fire protection experts. In light of the buildings' construction, low incidence of flammable material and the availability of smoke detectors, the wing commander, as did preceding commanders, did not believe the installation of a fire alarm system was immediately required.
- b. Joint Publication 3-07.2 explicitly cautions against any procedure that may confuse fire and other types of alarms. Implication that a fire alarm system might be used as a general automated building alarm system are not in line with this directive.
- c. There is no DoD requirement for an *automated* building alarm system designed and installed for other than fire warning purposes, i.e. attack or bomb threats.
- d. For bomb threat warning and notification, the alarm system planned and relied on by the wing employed the "waterfall" process. While not automated, it was an effective notification method and satisfied the requirement of Joint Publication 3-07.2 for an alarm system in the event of a bomb threat.
- e. For attack warning, the wing relied on its installed, tested and operational Giant Voice system, which is specifically designed to provide base-wide notification of impending or imminent attack. This system is common to virtually all Air Force installations at both CONUS and overseas locations, and well known to Air Force members.
- f. On 25 June 1996, the security police perceived the tank truck as a potential bomb threat, vice attack, and initiated the appropriate notification and evacuation procedures. While the activation of an automated alarm system (not fire) for the building would most likely have had more people moving toward exits, the short time between recognition of the threat and the explosion makes any meaningful estimates of survivability unlikely.

### **DIRECT RADIO LINK BETWEEN SENTRIES AND THE GIANT VOICE SYSTEM.**

## 1. BACKGROUND.

a. On 25 June 1996 the land mobile radio communications system at Khobar Towers and King Abdul Aziz Air Base (KAAAB) included the wing command net and the security police communication networks. The wing command net fell under the operational control of the wing operations center (WOC) and central security control (CSC) controlled the security police net. This arrangement was a legacy from Desert Storm and is similar to that found at most Air Force installations.

b. The WOC was located at KAAAB approximately four miles from Khobar Towers while the CSC was located at Khobar Towers. During normal day-to-day activities, the WOC provided the wing's emergency actions response and reporting, was the primary interface for the wing's senior commanders, and was the primary point of contact between the wing and higher headquarters. During emergencies and contingencies, the WOC was staffed by senior organizational representatives to advise the battle staff (wing commander and his senior staff) of operations within their respective units. The CSC was connected to the WOC by telephone and radio.

c. The Giant Voice siren was the means used to notify base personnel of an impending enemy or Scud missile attack and was controlled by the WOC. Procedures for the security police to activate the Giant Voice system were as follows:

(1) observation post/patrol requests CSC to activate the alert system

(2) CSC requests the WOC activate Giant Voice

(3) WOC notifies the wing commander of the request seeking his permission to activate Giant Voice

(4) if permission received, the WOC activates Giant Voice to warn KAAAB and Khobar Towers of an emergency.

d. Security police used a quick reaction checklist for the activation of Giant Voice. The checklist is a variation of a well known protocol for activating Giant Voice. Though procedures may vary slightly from base to base, these procedures preclude the inadvertent activation of the Giant Voice siren which may unnecessarily alarm the civilian and base populace.

e. Security police sentries and patrols did not have direct access to the WOC or to the command net. They communicated with the CSC and between one another via the security net. WOC personnel monitored the security police net on a continuous basis.

f. On 25 June 1996, the security police commander and his personnel were not allowed to activate Giant Voice. This was in accordance with wing procedures and their quick reaction checklist that required the security police sentries to notify the CSC who would then notify the WOC, which had sole authority for activation of Giant Voice. This checklist is a variation of a well known protocol for activating Giant Voice. Though procedures may vary slightly from base to base, they are designed to preclude the inadvertent activation of the Giant Voice siren which may unnecessarily alarm the civilian and base populace. Shortly after the bombing the wing commander adjusted procedures to authorize the chief of security police, his operations officer or the senior security police manager to directly activate Giant Voice.

## 2. STANDARDS, REGULATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS.

- a. There are no regulations or instructions for the connectivity of radio nets or the activation of Giant Voice.
- b. AFI 32-4001, *Disaster Preparedness Planning and Operation*, 6 May 1994, provides only general guidance concerning warning and notification systems.

(1) "7.1. Warning and Notification. Every Air Force installation must have a rapid and effective system to disseminate disaster information quickly. These alarm signals are for passive defense applications: do not use them for active ground defense warning and notification."

(2) "7.1.1. Use signals that are compatible with local, host-nation, or theater systems. Follow command or theater guidance when more than one warning and notification system could apply."

3. **LIMITATIONS.** Giant Voice is effective in the siren mode but is difficult to understand in the audio mode. As an outdoor audio system, it was difficult to hear in enclosed rooms, especially over the sounds of air conditioners, televisions or music. The system tended to draw listeners to the windows to hear better, which may place personnel in harms way.

## 4. ANALYSIS.

- a. At issue is whether the multi-tiered procedure for activating the Giant Voice system was appropriate. Since there are no objective standards providing direction or guidance on the employment of a Giant Voice system, it is necessary to analyze the reasonableness of the commander's decision to provide this multi-layered process for activation. Under all the circumstances, it appears that the system in place was reasonable.
- b. The most significant limitation is in the system itself. It is difficult to hear. Messages must be spoken very slowly to be understood. As noted in the limitations, it draws personnel to the window in order to hear the message. As such it is only appropriate for use in certain circumstances not requiring the most urgent response, such as assuming mission oriented protective postures well in advance of attack or in announcing all clear. The wing operations center could use radios and telephones, as needed, to supplement Giant Voice.
- c. Another important factor is the political environment. The Saudi government was sensitive to public displeasure at having a large foreign military force stationed in one of its major cities. It was thought that frequent use of the Giant Voice would alarm the local citizens and exacerbate the situation. Thus, the US forces, in deference to the Eastern Province Commander, would have minimized the use of Giant Voice to those circumstances consistent with the host nation's desires.
- d. Since Giant Voice is not particularly suitable to urgent cases, and the political concerns mitigated against its use except for limited circumstances, a system carefully controlling its use was appropriate.

5. **CONCLUSION.** The decision concerning the procedures for Giant Voice activation, voice or siren, is left to the discretion and considered judgment of the commander. Limited authorization to activate the system, used to warn of attacks, was reasonable under the circumstances.

## FULL-TIME INTERPRETERS.

### 1. BACKGROUND.

a. From the time the wing moved to Dhahran in 1991, it relied on coordinating with the Saudis through those host nation contacts who spoke English. Shortly after his arrival, Brig Gen Schwalier observed the difficulties associated with not having a full-time interpreter and hired the wing's first, and only one, in September 1996. Wing senior leadership were of the belief that the interpreter did an outstanding job interfacing with the Saudis.

b. The interpreter was assigned to the support group commander, but the majority of his time was spent supporting the security police. In addition to assisting the security police, the interpreter worked on various claims and assisted the AFOSI detachment. In the event of competing requests for his services, the support group commander would set priorities. When the interpreter was on vacation, the wing returned to its old methods of coordination, relying on English speaking Saudi liaisons until his return.

c. The interpreter was provided a pager and cell phone for easy contact. When security police saw what they believed to be suspicious activity outside the fence line, they paged the interpreter and requested he coordinate their concerns with the proper host nation forces. The Saudis required US authorities to contact their Saudi military police counterparts, who would in turn notify the civilian police. The system was not timely, and many times the suspicious person had departed the area before host nation forces arrived. The night of the bombing, he was off-base at a local mall and was paged by security police. He immediately contacted them via his cell phone. Security police advised him that a fuel tank truck had just backed up and parked near the bushes along the northern perimeter, and they needed him to call the Saudi military police as soon as possible. The interpreter attempted to immediately call the Saudi military police (the Red Hats), but their telephones were busy. He then heard the bomb explosion.

(1) Security Police Support. Prior to the wing hiring the interpreter, the security police had limited communications with the Red Hats who had security responsibilities at Khobar Towers. After the interpreter was hired, the security police used the wing interpreter at will—night and day.

(2) AFOSI Support. AFOSI mostly relied on English speaking Saudis, but in those cases where an interpreter was required they used the wing interpreter. They also used the services of the Protocol Officer at the US Consulate, Dhahran and a US Army Military Intelligence linguist for introductions and translations with host nation officials.

**2. STANDARDS, REGULATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS.** There are no standards for assigning or hiring interpreters for wings.

### **3. ANALYSIS.**

a. Brig Gen Schwalier was the first wing commander assigned for one year, and the first to recognize the limitations imposed by the lack of an interpreter and to do something about it. He hired the first interpreter for the wing and assigned him to the support group since its members had the most frequent contact with the Saudis, especially the security police.

b. The assigned interpreter was on-call 24-hours a day and did an admirable job for one individual. Other than those times he was on leave, he always responded when paged, called or requested. However, one interpreter was hard pressed to satisfy all the needs of the wing. In fact, even the wing commander recognized that the wing would have benefited from an additional interpreter, but efforts to hire another interpreter were not initiated before 25 June 1996.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS.

a. There are no standards for assigning or authorizing interpreters for wings. As in this case, wing commanders must rely on their own judgment and resources to fill the position. That is what Brigadier General Schwalier did.

b. On the night of 25 June 1996, the interpreter had been contacted and was seeking to establish contact with the Saudi military police when the explosion occurred. Given the wing's reaction time from assessment of a potential threat to explosion, approximately three to four minutes, and the fact the interpreter was attempting to call the Saudi military police, indicates that the notification was proceeding in a timely manner. Saudi procedures for notifying their military police who would notify their civil police were being followed. The availability of the one full-time interpreter was not a factor in the wing's response to the suspicious truck.

c. There is no indication having only one interpreter affected coordination with Saudi officials on 25 June 1996.

### **III. PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY.**

#### **A. OVERVIEW.**

##### **1. Purpose.**

a. Section III expands the discussion of the facts and standards from section II and examines the reasonableness of the actions taken by those responsible for force protection and readiness at Khobar Towers. The Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Air Force Chief of Staff accepted Lieutenant General Record's conclusion that no action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) is appropriate. This investigative team was tasked to determine whether actions or omissions of any Air Force member merit administrative sanctions.

b. This section describes the applicable standards of performance and analyzes the facts as applied to those standards. It is divided into three major topic areas. They are Adequacy of Force Protection Measures Taken, Readiness Issues, and Chain of Command Responsibilities. Topics of special interest and importance are discussed under these general areas.

##### **2. General Discussion of Standards.**

a. Even though UCMJ sanctions have been determined not to be appropriate, the analysis begins with the provisions of Article 92(3), derelictions, which is the most relevant standard.

b. To establish a dereliction under Article 92(3), UCMJ, it must be shown, that: (1) an individual had a certain duty, (2) the individual knew or reasonably should have known of the duty, and (3) the individual willfully, or through culpable neglect or culpable inefficiency was derelict in the performance of that duty. A duty may be imposed by treaty, statute, regulation, lawful order, standard operating procedure, or custom of the Air Force. The third element of dereliction can be established by showing that an individual having a duty exhibited a lack of that degree of care that a reasonably prudent person would have exercised under the same or similar circumstances, or the individual performed inefficiently without reasonable or justifiable excuse. Under either analysis, individual performance must be evaluated in the context of all the surrounding circumstances.

### **3. General Background.**

a. On a daily basis, the Commander, 4404th Wing (P) was responsible for personnel and facilities at eleven different sites in four countries. His span of control was further expanded when air expeditionary forces (AEFs) were deployed to the theater. Between mid-1995 and mid-1996, three AEFs were deployed - to Bahrain, Jordan and Qatar. In addition to the wing's normal personnel strength of approximately 5,000, the AEFs would increase the size of the force by one to two thousand. The wing's mission was to support Operation SOUTHERN WATCH, the enforcement of the UN sanctions against Iraq. The wing routinely flew about 100 sorties a day, involving up to 15 different types of aircraft, operating from several air bases throughout the area of responsibility (AOR).

b. The Commander, JTF-SWA, commanded the joint forces dedicated to the task force, and served as liaison for the host nation, allies and headquarters. The commanders of USCENTCOM and USCENAF were engaged in commanding, planning, and coordinating the joint forces dedicated to Operation SOUTHERN WATCH.

c. Khobar Towers is a large, 14 city-block residential section located in a suburb of Dhahran called Al-Khobar. The buildings are primarily eight story apartment complexes interspersed with four story apartment buildings, underground garages and other multi-purpose buildings. The US controlled portion of Khobar Towers encompassed approximately two city-blocks, oriented on a north-south line, located in the northwest corner of the overall Khobar Towers section. It contained approximately 40 buildings. The compound is located in an urban environment, separated from Saudi civilian occupied portions and the Saudi military occupied portion by city streets (other separation measures are enumerated below). Options to provide separation between the US compound and other sections were limited by its proximity to other apartment buildings, city streets, private homes, mosques, and a city park. The northern perimeter abuts a parking lot serving a mosque and a city park. The western side of the compound overlooks primarily open space with a small number of Saudi houses near the northwest corner. To the east, the complex is separated from the civilian housing by parallel city streets separated by an earthen median approximately 250 feet wide. On the southern edge of the compound, a street separates the US and Saudi military housing areas with a fence precluding access.

d. **Khobar Towers Occupants.** In addition to US Air Force personnel, the US compound was occupied by US Army personnel and British and French members of the coalition force. The four British and French apartment towers were located in the southwest corner of the compound.

e. **Security Responsibility.** The responsibility for security within the Khobar Towers compound was shared jointly between the Saudi military police and US Air Force security police. Security outside the compound's perimeter was the responsibility of the Saudi civil police. Direct coordination between US security forces and the Saudi civil police was not permitted by the Saudis. Any coordination between the two agencies had to be effected through the Saudi military police. The wing leadership would communicate their concerns or make their requests through their Saudi military counterparts. US and coalition security forces were frequently reminded of this arrangement by the Saudi's eastern province commander. Saudi civil police security procedures for the exterior of the compound consisted of periodic patrols, which were augmented with undercover operatives in the Spring of 1996.

f. **Pre Office of Program Manager Saudi Arabian National Guard (OPM SANG) Bombing (13 November 1995).** Until the Fall of 1995, force protection was not a major consideration within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The last serious incident, in February 1991, was considered an anomaly. The country was viewed as secure and stable with the government in firm control of any potential threats. This was a common view shared by both the US State Department and the Department of Defense. In July 1995, the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) detachment at Dhahran performed a Vulnerability Assessment of the Khobar Towers compound which pointed to several potential vulnerabilities with the defensive posture at the compound. The report was provided to the wing commander in September 1995. The assessment made 20 recommendations, several of which pertained to the state of the perimeter fence, barriers and security checks. Among them was a recommendation to repair the barbed wire that had been removed from portions of the fence, repositioning many of the barriers that could be used as step stones to climb over the fence, removal or repositioning of construction equipment, materials and debris that was stacked up against the fence, and cutting back vegetation along the fence line. These recommendations were being acted upon in November 1995 when the OPM SANG bombing occurred in Riyadh.

**g. Bombing of OPM SANG.** On 13 November 1995, a terrorist bomb exploded in the parking lot of the building housing OPM SANG. The explosion was sufficient to bow the outer concrete walls of the building. Five Americans and two Saudis died of blunt force and penetration injuries. The bomb was the equivalent of 200 to 250 pounds of TNT. The explosives were most likely encased in galvanized water containers and transported to the parking lot in the cargo bed of a small pickup. There were two distinct craters approximately 39 feet from the front of the building. The parking lot was approximately six to eight feet below the level of the building, mitigating some damage and most likely saving some lives. For all locales within Saudi Arabia, the OPM SANG terrorist attack opened a new chapter with respect to the threat.

**h. Bombing of Khobar Towers.** On 25 June 1996, shortly before 2200 hours, a tank truck pulled into the public parking lot abutting the northern perimeter of the Khobar Towers complex. USAF security police sentries on the roof of building 131 saw the truck pull into the parking area, and then back into the hedges along the perimeter. Two men got out of the truck and got into the car, which sped away. One of the sentries radioed the situation into the security desk. The three sentries immediately began to evacuate the building, using a procedure known as the "waterfall." The three ran door-to-door, beginning at the top floor, knocking loudly on the doors and yelling for the occupants to evacuate. The occupants alerted on the top floors were to help notify the residents on the floors below. About three to four minutes after the truck had backed up to the perimeter, it exploded. The blast ripped off the entire front facade of Building 131, nearest to the parked truck, and damaged five adjacent buildings. Nineteen American service members were killed, eighteen in Building 131 and one in Building 133, and hundreds of others were wounded. Saudis and third-country nationals living in the area were also injured. The bomb blew out windows throughout the compound, and left a crater 60 feet wide and 16 feet deep. The blast was heard in Bahrain 20 miles away.

## **B. ADEQUACY OF FORCE PROTECTION MEASURES TAKEN.**

**1. Introduction.** This section addresses whether Air Force members met their obligations in the area of force protection. It begins with an evaluation of the assessment of the threat to Khobar Towers. It then discusses the adequacy of force protection efforts, with particular focus on the timing of the installation of Mylar window treatments and the extension of the perimeter. It ends with a discussion of

the adequacy of security arrangements for transportation.

## **2. Assessment of the Threat.**

### **a. Facts.**

(1) The Downing Assessment found that, "while intelligence did not provide the tactical details of date, time, place, and exact method of attack on Khobar Towers, a considerable body of information was available that indicated terrorists had the capability and intention to target U.S. interests in Saudi Arabia, and that Khobar Towers was a potential target (emphasis in original)." The Downing Assessment noted the unconfirmed report [Classified material omitted] of explosives had been shipped into the AOR, and concluded that the commander "was aware of a considerable body of information," indicating terrorists had the "capability to target U.S. interests." This conclusion was used to support Finding 7 that, "Intelligence provided warning of the terrorist threat to U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia," and Finding 20 that, "the Commander, 4404th Wing (P) did not adequately protect his forces from a terrorist attack." Brigadier General Terryl J. Schwalier, the commander of the 4404th Wing (P), recognized the potential for a terrorist attack using a stand-off weapon, such as a car-bomb, from the parking lot on the northern perimeter of the Khobar Towers compound. Brigadier General Schwalier estimated the size of a potential stand-off bomb to be no larger than the bomb at OPM SANG. This section examines the adequacy of the commander's assessment concerning the nature of the attack, specifically the size of the potential weapon. This issue also bears on the adequacy of other force protection measures, discussed later in this report.

(2) Historically, within Saudi Arabia there has been no substantial threat from terrorism. The Saudi government was in control. On November 13, 1995, that changed with the bombing of OPM SANG in Riyadh. There was no forewarning of the OPM SANG terrorist attack, although it became a benchmark with respect to the evolution of intelligence gathering and defensive measures within the AOR.

(3) Following the November bombing, intelligence continued to actively gather and report any indications that US personnel or assets might be the object of surveillance or terrorist action. In the first half of 1996, there were numerous terrorist incidents involving small bombs in the country of Bahrain, which borders Saudi Arabia. None of these incidents involved Americans, or American targets.

(4) Between April and 23 June 1996, ten events occurred in the vicinity of Khobar Towers that may have indicated surveillance and/or interest in the Americans or coalition forces stationed there.

(a) Of six incidents in April, two involved Arab men taking photographs, two involved Arab men watching the compound, one involved four Arab males hiding near the perimeter fence and the last involved an Arab male accosting a British airman driving to Khobar Towers.

(b) The three incidents in May included a vehicle spinning its tires in the north parking lot, an unconfirmed report of a sniper attack against a Frenchman within the Khobar Towers compound, and a vehicle moving one of the barriers on the eastern perimeter.

(c) The lone incident in June involved two Arab males firing a handgun in the air.

(5) The wing looked into all of these incidents and determined they were most likely unrelated to terrorist activity. For example, the June incident involved two young men who had just purchased the gun and decided to test it by firing it into the air; the sniper incident was investigated extensively, but no evidence was found confirming the reported sniping; those observing and photographing the compound could have been visitors to Dhahran during the Hajj who were merely curious about Americans or they could have been undercover members of the civil police doing their job; and, the incident involving the British member was most likely a traffic dispute. Another explanation was that many of the incidents were normal, but were reported just because of the heightened sensitivity of the wing's members and the emphasis placed on reporting any suspected incidents.

(6) The most serious incident involved the car moving the barrier. The incident was fully investigated. The car slowly approached a row of barriers on the eastern perimeter, hit the barrier at approximately four to six miles per hour and displaced the barrier two to three feet. The car then backed up and drove off. The investigation was inconclusive, with explanations ranging from the possibility of an accident to the more serious concern that it may have been a test of the perimeter. Whatever the explanation, the incident revealed that the barriers could be moved which caused the wing to respond by taking the initiative to have them spiked down.

(7) As to intelligence reports on the likelihood of a bomb and the size of a bomb, there was only one intelligence report suggesting that terrorists may have had access to a large quantity of explosives. [Classified material omitted]. [Classified material omitted] Lieutenant General Franklin, then the commander of JTF-SWA, was provided a copy of this message, and it was discussed during force protection meetings. The AFOSI at the wing had been briefed on the report. [Classified material omitted]. In the course of a briefing on intelligence in general, Brigadier General Schwalier was briefed on the report. [Classified material omitted]. There was no other information confirming this message. [Classified material omitted].

(8) US intelligence agencies recognized the likelihood of another terrorist attack in the AOR. According to Mr. David Winn, the Consul General, Dhahran, "Everyone assumed ... there would be another bombing," and, the "Focus was Riyadh. No one really thought anything was going to happen in Dhahran." Nonetheless, intelligence estimates recognized Khobar Towers as one of the more likely points of attack.

(9) The Defense Intelligence Agency prepared an article for the Military Intelligence Digest (MID), dated 17 June 1996, which indicated there was an increased threat of terrorist attack at Khobar Towers. The, MID merely summarized information that the AFOSI at the wing had sent up for consideration and relied heavily on the ten incidents in April, May and June as discussed above. The local AFOSI offices had more information about each individual occurrence, which suggested the incidents did not present as threatening a picture as reported by the MID. Also, national intelligence advisories were thought to be of limited value because they did not provide new information. The MID was dated 17 June 1996. Brigadier General Schwalier never saw it prior to the bombing on 25 June 1996. He had been briefed on the information on which it was based.

(10) Other US authorities in Dhahran considered the intelligence reports. The general belief was that the size of a terrorist bomb would be similar to that employed in the OPM SANG bombing. The US Consul General in Dhahran stated, "the thought of a 20,000 or even a 5,000 pound bomb driving up was pretty inconceivable." The Chief of the National Intelligence Support Team (NIST), located in Riyadh indicated, "the reports... didn't give a target ... there weren't many specifics ... we didn't have a specific [threat] ... whether it would be [a] ... truck bomb ... kidnapping, assassination." He also stated that intelligence considered the threat to be a bomb about the size of the one that exploded in Riyadh

(200-250 lbs.), "maybe 500 pounds but ... we never went above 1,000 pounds." Major General Sultan and Colonel Qahtani, Saudi Military Officials, indicated they had received no threats against Khobar Towers, and that it was a high priority security area for them. Major General Hurd, the Director of Operations at USCENTCOM, stated he would never have guessed terrorists would go from a 200 pound bomb to a 3,000 pound bomb. Colonel Boyle, the 4404th Support Group commander, assessed the threat from a car bomb at a size comparable to the OPM SANG bomb. Major Patenaude, an AFOSI officer assigned as the force protection officer for the JTF-SWA, stated that the general impression was that they had to defend against "an OPM/SANG type bomb."

(11) In summary, officials reviewing the available intelligence recognized the threat of a vehicle-carried bomb, and estimated the size as being comparable to the OPM SANG bomb. They were aware Khobar Towers was a possible target, but had no intelligence indicating the specifics of a planned attack. There was no information available to indicate that the threat was any different than that experienced numerous times in the preceding months in Bahrain or that the size of a bomb would exceed the capabilities demonstrated in-country by the perpetrators of the OPM SANG attack.

#### **b. Standards.**

(1) DoD 0-2000.12, *DoD Combating Terrorism Program* (Aug 27, 1990), requires the development, publication and maintenance of DoD 0-2000.12-H to provide guidance on means to assess general threat levels. The directive does not provide guidance on methods for commanders to predict a specific type of terrorist attack.

(2) DoD 0-2000.12-H, *Protection of DoD Personnel and Activities Against Acts of Terrorism and Political Turbulence* (February 1993), specifically applies to unified and specified commands, and defense agencies. It is intended to be a reference document, and provides general guidance to commanders on assessing threat levels. It does not provide guidance in predicting the specific nature of threats.

(3) Joint Publication 3-07.2, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism* (25 June 1993) provides general guidance on force protection. Joint doctrine is authoritative but not directive. "Commanders will exercise judgment in applying the procedures herein to accomplish their missions." The joint publication restates the general rule that "every commander, regardless of echelon of command

..., has an inherent responsibility for planning, resourcing ..., and executing antiterrorism measures to provide for the security of the command." The publication specifically provides that theater combatant commanders are required, among other things, to "assess the terrorist threat for the theater" as a first step in the continuing process of improving force protection. The commander must then prioritize critical personnel, facilities and equipment, conduct a vulnerability survey, take corrective action to correct or reduce vulnerabilities, and review the vulnerability at least annually. It is recommended that these tasks be performed by a committee made up of staff members with specialized training, including security police, intelligence, engineers and public affairs.

(4) Air Force Instruction 31-210, *The Air Force Antiterrorism (AT) Program* (1 July 1995), prescribes broad areas of responsibility for antiterrorism efforts for higher headquarters. The instruction implements DoD O-2000.12 and DoD O-2000.12-H.

### **c. Analysis.**

(1) This section focuses specifically on the wing commander's assessment of the size of the potential weapon. This assessment must be distinguished from the general threat level for the AOR established by USCINCCENT pursuant to DoD O-2000.12, or the local threat condition (ALPHA, BRAVO, etc.) set by the wing commander. There is an abundance of guidance on methods and formulas for use in assessing a general threat level in a region. However, none of this guidance assists commanders in assessing the size or specific type of attack they might face. In other words, these formulas are helpful in providing an overall framework for the evaluation of the general threat level, but do not and cannot predict whether an attack will be by a sniper, a vehicle ambush, or a stand-off bomb of a certain size.

(2) As noted above, DoD O-2000.12, DoD O-2000.12-H and Joint Pub 3.07.2 indicate a commander has an obligation to assess the threat facing his forces. There are no objective standards by which to measure the adequacy of a commander's evaluation of the size or specific type of threat which faces his installation. Therefore, this analysis examines the basis for the commander's determination, based upon all the facts and circumstances.

(3) The assessment of the size of the bomb must be placed in context. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia enjoyed a long period of calm in an otherwise turbulent

region of the world. The OPM SANG bombing in Riyadh set a new benchmark for the region involving a bomb in the range of 200-250 lbs. The commanders were generally aware of the penetration bomb used in Beirut in 1983. The Beirut bombing was remote in time and appeared to have been done for a specific political reason that did not apply in Saudi Arabia. The terrorist attacks closest to Dhahran occurred in the neighboring country of Bahrain. They consisted of small explosives in the range of 15 lbs., and were not targeted at US personnel or facilities. The most proximate terrorist incidents indicated the likely threat was from a small bomb.

(4) The wing commander knew the general threat level for the AOR had been set at HIGH after the OPM SANG bombing. He received regular intelligence briefings from the AFOSI agents at Khobar Towers, and additional intelligence from the NIST. He was provided an AFOSI Vulnerability Assessment in September 1995, followed by a second Vulnerability Assessment in January 1996 that included 39 specific recommendations for corrective action to remedy perceived weaknesses. He had implemented 36 of the 39 recommendations, and programmed 2 more for inclusion in the wing's first five-year plan. The final recommendation was considered but not implemented. It recommended dispersal of members of individual units throughout the compound. The purpose was to mitigate the effects of an attack on any unit so that if a bomb or another attack were made, not all personnel of a given skill would be at risk. The recommendation complicated squadron integrity and operations. It was considered and not adopted in order to maintain unit cohesiveness. The vulnerability assessments were part of the discussions of the weekly force protection committee for the wing.

(5) The commander was aware of the intelligence report suggesting a plan to smuggle a large amount of explosives into the AOR. The report focused the time frame of a possible attack on the period around the Hajj--that time passed without incident. No other intelligence source confirmed the February report from the CIA. Major General Hurd, Director of Operations, USCENTCOM, recalled the intelligence reports concerning movements of explosives into the AOR, and noted, "we never had a report that was verified ... it's a one-hit intel, not from a source that's been reliable, maybe ... an unknown source ... from no direction, and no timing and you find nothing about it ... I think you can't make a prediction off of that type of intel."

(6) A commander is expected to rely upon the advice and opinions of experts in this area. [Classified material omitted], the Chief of the NIST stated there was no

specific indication that the potential threat was larger than the bomb at OPM SANG. Capt Weyerstrass, Joint Intelligence Center Analyst, USCENTCOM, indicated there was no specific information on the size of the bomb. The JTF-SWA Joint Intelligence Center prepared for a 200 lb. bomb.

(7) The wing commander's assessment was in the same general range as the assessments and conclusions of others reviewing the same information. Other commanders and senior staff officers perceived the threat at Khobar Towers as a 200-250 lb. bomb. Lt Gen Neal, USMC, reviewed the intelligence reports and "couldn't create a mosaic that would give me indications Khobar Towers was going down." General Peay, USCINCCENTCOM, testified that intelligence showed no clear indication of an impending major terrorist attack. Indeed, if USCINCCENT or the Commander, USCENAF, had perceived the threat to be 20,000 lbs. of TNT at the perimeter, they likely would have decided that the urban site was indefensible.

(8) The wing commander recognized the north perimeter was vulnerable to a stand-off weapon. His assessment of the threat to Khobar Towers from a stand-off bomb was "smaller" than the 200-250 pound bomb used at OPM SANG. Other commanders in the AOR collectively estimated the size of the bomb to be no more than 200-250 lbs. Brigadier General Schwalier's estimate generally was consistent with these estimates.

#### **d. Conclusion.**

(1) Commanders at all levels have an inherent responsibility for force protection. Part of that duty includes the responsibility to assess the nature of the threat. The wing commander, in conjunction with his staff, had the responsibility to set the local threat condition for Khobar Towers. He expended considerable resources to protect personnel at Khobar Towers from potential threats. He considered the one previous bombing in Saudi Arabia at OPM SANG (estimated between 200 and 250 pound of TNT) and the bombings in neighboring Bahrain (estimated between 10 and 15 pounds of TNT). In addition, he received routine intelligence briefings, one of which reported that there could be a large amount of explosives being smuggled into Saudi Arabia. No subsequent report confirmed or elaborated on this information. He considered his AFOSI vulnerability estimate from January 1996. Based on this information, the commander determined that the most likely threat to Khobar Towers was from a bomb no larger than the OPM SANG bomb. Measuring his decision against others in similar circumstances, commanders above and below

the wing level as well as senior government officials in the area receiving their own intelligence reports and forming their own opinions of the nature of the threat, uniformly expressed the opinion that an OPM SANG size bomb was the most likely. None expected a bomb of the magnitude of the one that exploded on 25 June 1996.

(2) Based on the intelligence he was receiving, the nature of other observed threats in the area and the assessment of the threat by others in the AOR in positions to appreciate the threat, the commanders' assessment of the threat was reasonable and consistent with the estimate for the area. Subordinate commanders in the wing and the AFOSI had responsibilities to advise the wing commander. Their assessments were also reasonable based on the intelligence and facts known to them at the time.

### **3. Defense Against Stand-Off Attack.**

#### **a. General Force Protection Efforts.**

##### **(1) Facts.**

(a) In Finding 20 the Downing Assessment concludes that, "The Commander, 4404th Wing (P) did not adequately protect his forces from a terrorist attack." This section will review whether the commander's efforts at force protection met standards.

(b) As discussed in the preceding section on Assessment of the Threat, the OPM SANG attack in November 1995 significantly altered the attention paid to the potential for terrorist attack. Within the wing, the commander used battle staff directives (BSDs) to implement various personnel and installation security measures. These measures covered a range of activities including THREATCON changes, building checks, deploying physical barriers and restricting personnel travel. The OPM SANG bombing also provided an impetus to implement the remaining recommendations from the September 1995 Vulnerability Assessment. Overall, the bombing aftermath saw the beginning of a continuing effort to improve the security posture of the wing, especially at the Khobar Towers compound.

##### **(c) January Vulnerability Assessment.**

1. In January 1996, another Vulnerability Assessment was conducted. It specifically included the parking lot facing Building 131 as a vulnerable or weak point. This assessment made 39 recommendations to improve security. Many of the recommendations were directed at perimeter security, to include cutting vegetation near the fence, repair of the fence and reinforcing barriers by placing dumpsters at strategic locations. The Assessment also recommended the installation of Mylar, a window film designed to minimize the effects of flying glass in explosions (see separate discussion of Mylar), and the installation of a fire alarm system in the buildings (see separate discussion of fire alarm systems in discussion of communications, alarms, radio links and translators). The Assessment did not recommend that the perimeter be extended.

2. During preparation of the January 1996 Assessment the AFOSI detachment commander had discussions with the wing commander concerning security for Khobar Towers. The AFOSI detachment commander indicated that during these discussions the wing commander stated "don't turn this place into 'Fortress America,' give me things I can implement." The wing commander testified that he remembered discussing the Vulnerability Assessment with the detachment commander, but did not recall using the term "Fortress America," nor did he intend to restrict the detachment commander's recommendations. In follow-on testimony, the detachment commander stated that his earlier comment may have been misunderstood. He made clear that he felt he "could put whatever [he] felt was appropriate in that document."

(d) **Security Improvements.** Through April 1996 the wing initiated several programs and projects to improve overall security. The threat against stand-off attack was one of many threats faced by the wing. The threat from a penetration bomb and a suicide bomber, as well as security during personnel travel, were among the issues of importance. Specific actions taken included:

1. Redesign and strengthening of the access route into the compound through the main gate, including the installation of machine gun positions and the use of trucks as blocking vehicles;

2. Repair and reinforcement of the perimeter fence line with concertina wire to preclude personnel access;

3. Barriers on the east west and south perimeters were placed five feet outside the

fence line and inside the fence line on the north perimeter to enhance the protection against penetration;

4. Portions of the fence line adjacent to streets were further reinforced with dumpsters along the interior of the fence line to offer additional protection against high speed penetration;

5. BSDs instituted more thorough identification checks and vehicle inspection procedures;

6. BSDs used to alter personnel travel patterns to avoid unnecessary exposure or to prevent lucrative targets;

7. Discussions with the Saudis concerning the perimeter of the complex met with mixed results: the north perimeter was not extended but alternate measures were initiated such as increased Saudi patrols, Saudi undercover surveillance, roof top lookouts/sentries, trimming of vegetation along the fence line.

8. Saudis stated that they would provide increased patrols to satisfy the US concerns; this was subsequently confirmed by the observation of increased Saudi patrols both inside and outside the perimeter fence line;

9. Wing established and manned rooftop observation posts to provide warning of any problems around the perimeter of the compound. This initiative addressed the concern identified by SA Reddecliff in a 4 April 1996 message to Headquarters, Air Force Office of Special Investigations in which he suggested that evacuation be initiated immediately if a truck parks close to the fence line, and the driver makes a quick getaway. Although the wing commander did not see the message, he was briefed on the recommendation. This was the procedure initiated by the security police in response to the bomb threat on 25 June 1996.

10. In April, the Saudis confirmed that they had undercover agents monitoring the compound's exterior and the north parking lot.

11. In April the AFOSI detachment suggested that evacuation plans be developed for the Rescue Squadron (one of the units occupying building 131); this prompted the evacuation plans be prepared/updated by all units; this was to be accomplished

by the first sergeants of each squadron and reviewed by the civil engineering readiness flight.

(e) **Third-Country Nationals.** The wing staff was aware of the threat posed by third-country nationals (TCN). The support group commander went so far as to ask his Saudi counterpart, Col Qahtani, if he could facilitate the removal of all TCN employees that worked at Khobar Towers. It was not possible to exclude the TCNs because of a contract with the Ministry of Defense and Aviation that required TCN presence at Khobar Towers. The wing commander did issue several Battle Staff Directives that addressed the threat posed by TCNs. Among them was the requirement that all vehicles driven by TCNs be searched. Personnel were advised to be suspicious and inquisitive about strangers, especially those carrying suitcases or other containers. The identity of unannounced or suspicious visitors was to be verified. They were to be visually inspected, and any hand-carried items were to be searched. Security police were instructed to perform 100% identification checks of those entering the installation during evening hours and to be prepared to do the same at other times.

(f) **Actions In Response to the Vulnerability Assessment.** By the 25th of June 1996, the wing leadership had addressed each of the 39 issues raised in the assessment. Thirty-six had been accepted and implemented. Of the remaining three, one had been considered and dismissed and two had been placed in the outyears of the wing's five-year facilities improvement plan. Specifically, the three issues not immediately implemented were:

1. The dispersal of mission essential personnel such as aircrews and key maintenance personnel throughout the compound rather than concentrating them in any one dormitory. The recommendation was considered, but in weighing the estimated threat against the benefits of maintaining unit integrity/crew rest considerations, the wing commander opted for maintaining squadron integrity. A plan was generated for the dispersal of the senior wing leadership. Brigadier General Schwalier's successor was to be the first to occupy the new "dispersed" quarters identified for the wing commander. The group commanders would have followed a similar procedure, in that their successors would move into new, dispersed quarters as the positions turned over.

2. The planned installation of Mylar (see separate section on Mylar).

3. The planned installation of fire alarms (see separate section on fire alarms).

(g) **Installation Five-Year Plan.** The wing's five-year facilities improvement plan, Vision 2000, its first long-term budget plan, provided for several other force protection upgrades in addition to those previously addressed. For example: in FY97, \$200K was earmarked for fence line improvements; in FY98, \$150K was identified for perimeter lighting; and in FY00, \$125K was set aside for establishing clear zones, \$220K for a perimeter sensor system, \$300K for the installation of fire alarms and \$50K for the installation of Mylar.

(h) **Wing Preparation.** Wing senior leaders were confident that the wing was adequately prepared for a myriad of threats. For example:

1. Penetration of the perimeter by a car or truck.

a. Main gate. A serpentine ingress route, barriers, increased security police presence, methods to block the roads and heavy weaponry convinced them that penetration through the main gate would have been virtually impossible.

b. The fence line. There were areas of the fence line that were exposed to high speed approach routes from the various city streets surrounding the compound. In the preceding months, these "avenues" had been bolstered with heavier barriers, and additionally had been reinforced with dumpsters to assist in thwarting a high speed penetration attempt.

2. Suicide bomber.

a. Extensive repairs were made to the perimeter fence and barriers were positioned to preclude an easy stepping stone for scaling the fence.

b. Additional concertina wire was strung along the top and bottom of the perimeter fence to thwart a potential intruder.

c. Identification checks at the main gate refined to preclude unauthorized access.

3. Satchel Charge: The wing leadership was confident that it had provided adequate separation between the fence line and facilities or exercise areas to preclude serious

impact from a thrown satchel charge.

4. Sniper, mortar, other standoff weapon: The wing leadership understood the threat posed by these weapons, and concluded that the urban environment, to include the close proximity (100 meters) of adjacent high-rises, did not permit further mitigation. The risk was weighed, and considered to be within acceptable parameters.

5. Personnel Travel.

a. The wing leadership was concerned with the threat to individuals traveling off base and weighed the risks against the probability of a problem and the inconvenience of an indefinite "lockdown" of the base.

b. The decision to allow personnel to depart the base was caveated with the admonition that they were to do so in small groups, and to avoid congregating so as to not provide a lucrative target.

c. At times, travel to various locations was restricted altogether.

6. Perimeter Car/Truck Bomb.

a. The wing had worked the perimeter problem on numerous occasions because they were well aware of the threat posed by a car/truck bomb.

b. The Saudis responded to US concerns by increasing civil police patrols and providing undercover operatives to monitor perimeter activities.

c. To provide additional measures to forewarn of potential problems, the wing leadership installed observation posts on the rooftops of selected buildings. The purpose was to provide additional warning of any difficulties along any portion of the perimeter fence line or outside the compound in general.

d. The wing requested authority to trim the vegetation to increase visibility along the fence line.

e. The wing tracked and reported suspicious vehicle license plates to Saudi police

f. The support group commander was advised, following the OPM SANG investigation, that the vehicle carrying the explosives had been parked 20-30 minutes prior to the explosion. Based on this experience, the wing believed that it would have some unspecified length of time, perhaps 10 to 15 minutes, certainly more than the 3 or 4 minutes it actually had to respond to a threat.

g. A double barrier was added around the entire perimeter.

(i) **Recurring Meetings.** The commander used a number of forums to make known his direction for the wing and to receive information concerning its operations, including its potential problems. He met on a daily basis with his group commanders, those senior members of his staff responsible for the various functional areas within the wing such as operations, logistics, support, medical, security police, civil engineering, etc. He held a staff meeting each Friday that included not only key personnel located in Dhahran, but those commanders or supervisors from the wing's separate units, whenever they could attend. He developed a follow-on to the wing's Wednesday "cops and robbers" meeting--normally a review of ongoing security police, AFOSI and legal matters--into an overall wing security meeting complete with intelligence briefings and discussions of current security plans and concerns. A weekly operations scheduling meeting held on Fridays provided the "big-picture" for SOUTHERN WATCH flying operations, and allowed the commander to identify problems and make the decisions necessary to accomplish the mission, yet maintain the high readiness status of his assigned aircraft.

(j) The first meeting of the wing (installation) security council was held on 30 Oct 95, approximately four months after the arrival of Brigadier General Schwalier. The council was chaired by successive vice commanders and met on a recurring basis. The recorder for the council was the chief of security police and attendees included the group commanders, selected squadron commanders and key staff members.

(k) **Security Plans.** As permitted under AFI 31-209, the Installation Security Plan (ISP) was developed as a single source document, embracing resource protection requirements as well as antiterrorism. The chief, security police, appointed the superintendent, security police administration, to be responsible for the resource protection program. The wing security council also provided the forum for the

Resource Protection Executive Committee (RPEC). The office of primary responsibility for both the wing instruction and the ISP was the chief of security police. Both laid out specific responsibilities and procedures for resource protection, to include armed response procedures and quick reaction checklists within the ISP.

(l) The wing's ISP was also the local source document for the wing commander's antiterrorism program. The plan employed a building block approach for reacting to potential problems, ranging from normal law enforcement activities to immediate detection and armed response to hostile acts.

(m) **Threat Conditions.** Additionally, a menu, or checklist, of potential threat condition (THREATCON) options provided considerations in advance of potential wing responses to various acts.

(n) The ISP included a specific annex which described the role of intelligence in various scenarios. The importance ascribed to the intelligence function carried over to the wing security council and the weekly (Wednesday) security meetings as each began with a detailed intelligence update.

(o) **Contact with Assigned Personnel.** The commander made his goals, objectives and priorities for the wing known to all members. He started with the Right Start newcomer's briefing, held weekly and mandatory for all newly arrived personnel. In addition to the normal wing commander's welcoming comments, he used this opportunity to talk about potential threats. The topic of potential threats were then expanded by the AFOSI detachment commander, who followed the wing commander. The wing commander also used the base newspaper and the commander's channel (on-base cable television) to reinforce his current interests and concerns for members of the wing. With respect to readiness and personnel protection issues, he published numerous battle staff directives (BSDs) which outlined specific requirements for members of the wing based on the current threat.

(p) **Manning.** On 30 August 1995, Brigadier General Schwalier requested that seven billets under the 4404th Wing (P) be converted to one year tours. These included the following positions at Dhahran: the services squadron commander; the transportation squadron commander; the chief of the wing operations center; the medical group commander; and the vice wing commander. USCENTAF added two additional one-year tours for intelligence officers. The seven additional one-year

tours were approved.

(q) **Wing Commander's End-of-Tour Report.** The Downing Assessment commented that despite the significant change in the terrorist threat, the wing commander did not mention force protection in his two-page end-of-tour report. The report was written shortly before the Khobar Towers bombing and highlighted areas for future improvements. These included lengthening tours of key personnel, putting more money into operations and maintenance, and continuing to improve relations with the Saudis. The report was addressed to USCENTAF who was aware of the force protection improvements that had already been made.

## (2) Standards.

(a) AFPD 31-3, *Air Base Defense*, March 2, 1995, established policy for base defense operations, and, addressed: Air Force components' of joint commands responsibilities in ensuring force protection; and outlined installation commanders' responsibilities for the defense of assets under their control. Following are the specific references:

2.3 USAF components of joint commands will provide planning support to ensure adequate forces and intelligence are dedicated to protect USAF resources. The Air Force component, in coordination with the joint command, will ... tailor defense force structure and equipment to match force protection needs for Air Force war-fighting resources.

2.4 Installation commanders are responsible for the defense of assets under their control. The installation chief of security police is normally the defense force commander (DFC) and will plan and execute base defense operations. The DFC will lead those forces provided by the installation commander and other defense forces in the air base tactical area of responsibility (TAOR).

(b) AFI 31-209, *The Resource Protection Program*,

November 10, 1994, sets requirements for the physical security of Air Force personnel, installations, operations, and assets, and identifies the requirements of the Resource Protection Program (RPP). Of the four primary objectives of the RPP

highlighted in the this AFI, two applied to perimeter defense.

1. These included: (1) Maintain the Air Force war fighting capability by reducing damage to Air Force resources, and (2) Safeguard Air Force property by reducing the opportunity for theft or terrorist attack by making a potential target inaccessible or unattractive.

2. Specific wing level responsibilities contained in this AFI are limited to Chapters 1 and 2, Responsibilities and Program Management, respectively. Installation commanders:

1.7. Develop and implement either an installation RPP (IRPP) or installation security plan (merging is acceptable).

2.5.6. Installation Entry Point Checks. The installation commander determines when, where, and how to implement random checks of vehicles or pedestrians.

(c) AFI 31-210, *The Air Force Antiterrorism (AT) Program*, July 1, 1995, established responsibilities and guidance for the Air Force Antiterrorism Program, provides guidance on how to establish a local Antiterrorism Program. Specific wing level responsibilities contained in this AFI are contained in Chapter 2, Responsibilities. Following is the specific reference:

2.14. Installation Commanders. Establish an antiterrorism program, tailored to local mission, conditions, and terrorist threat using the publications listed in attachment 1.

2.15. Commanders At All Echelons.

2.15.2. Plan, train, exercise, and execute antiterrorism measures as specified in DoD 0-2000.12, where appropriate. Each organization implements physical security procedures to protect against terrorism by installing physical security equipment, implementing THREATCONs, employing Random Antiterrorism Measures (RAMs), and responding to terrorist acts.

### (3) **Analysis.**

(a) The evidence establishes that the wing leadership, to include the wing commander, support group commander, security police commander and AFOSI detachment commander, were aware of and engaged in fulfilling their responsibilities under AFPD 31-3, *Air Base Defense*; AFI 31-209, *The Resource Protection Program*; and AFI 31-210, *The Air Force Antiterrorism (AT) Program*.

(b) **Security Improvements.** The force protection measures taken are listed in the facts of this subsection. Briefly, these included implementation of 36 of the 39 recommendations in the January Vulnerability Assessment; scheduling two of the remaining three for the future; and improving overall security, by repairing and reinforcing the fence line and perimeter (double barriers on all sides, trimming vegetation, repairing fence line, concertina wire, etc.). Brigadier General Schwalier's Battle Staff Directives placed restrictions on travel, instituted identification checks and elaborated on vehicle inspection procedures in response to the threat. Improvements were primarily directed at minimizing or eliminating the threat from penetration attack, a suicide bomber, perimeter attack, or satchel charge. The wing commander also expanded the scope of formal and informal meetings in which security concerns and measures were addressed.

(c) Specific efforts to extend the fence line and protect the installation from an attack from outside the perimeter are discussed separately below. The wing made numerous improvements to the perimeter, and the wing leadership actively engaged their Saudi counterparts regarding perimeter defense, causing the Saudis to make improvements of their own. The support group, security police and AFOSI detachment commander all asked their Saudi counterparts to extend the perimeter a short distance. The AFOSI detachment commanders also asked to have the north parking lot closed. Alternate measures, including increased Saudi security patrols, increased Saudi undercover surveillance, rooftop lookouts/sentries, and trimming the vegetation were implemented.

(d) The wing complied with the requirement found in AFI 31-209 by developing and implementing an Installation Security Plan (ISP) and an installation Resource Protection Plan (RPP). The wing published the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) Installation Security Plan to execute its force protection mission. Provisions of the plan included aspects of physical security, law enforcement, resource protection, antiterrorism, and base defense. The plan established the wing's antiterrorism

program and adapted it to the local mission, conditions, and terrorist threat. In preparation for perimeter attack, the plan's annexes included: Intelligence (including a terrorist threat appendix); and operations (including entry control procedures and security measures addressing THREATCON ALPHA, BRAVO, CHARLIE, AND DELTA). The ISP served as the source document for the commander's antiterrorism program. The plan addressed threats including attack from outside the perimeter, penetration of the perimeter by car or truck, suicide bombers, and satchel charge thrown over the perimeter. While the threat from a sniper, mortar, or other stand-off weapon existed, the urban setting made counter-measures difficult.

(e) The antiterrorism program was tailored to local mission conditions and known terrorist threats as required by AFI 31-210. The security police squadron commander conducted several exercises and desk top scenarios to address concerns. Senior leaders in the AOR, from the Air Force, other services, [Classified material omitted] and the State Department, commented on the defenses established by the wing. Mr. David Winn, a 25-year State Department veteran of the Middle East and frequent visitor to Khobar Towers, commented that General Schwalier's force protection initiatives "were so stringent, so draconian, so professional that I thought he almost overreacted." Mr. Winn further commented that Khobar Towers was "in a league by itself" in comparison to other facilities in the AOR. Mr. Theodore Kattouf, the Deputy Chief of Mission in Riyadh, when interviewed, was emphatic that General Schwalier took numerous and timely actions to protect people and resources in his command. Colonel James R. Ward, the Army Commander with several hundred members living at Khobar Towers, said, "there was a real sense of urgency;" "[w]e were worried about a car bomb;" [g]iven what we had done, we thought we had done a good job of presenting a hardened area that was not accessible."

(f) Members of the chain of command, from the wing commander down, and the AFOSI detachment commander were actively engaged in force protection either in terms of initiating new and/or improved measures, requesting increased Saudi participation, drafting and implementing antiterrorism and security plans or involved in increasing base population awareness to the threat of terrorist attack.

(g) **Wing Commander's End-of-Tour Report.** As discussed throughout this report, the wing initiated numerous force protection measures under the wing commander's leadership. The USCENTAF commander was very much aware of

these measures. The end-of-tour report was not a comprehensive account, but simply highlighted areas for future improvement. Although force protection was not directly addressed, tour lengths, relations with the Saudis, and operation and maintenance funding all indirectly related to force protection. The end-of-tour report does not reflect that the wing commander was unconcerned with force protection.

(4) **Conclusion.** Commanders at all levels have an inherent responsibility for force protection tailored to local conditions and threats. It includes taking measures to protect against acts of terrorism. After assessing the nature of the threat at Khobar Towers, based on intelligence, the history of the region, recent events and vulnerability assessments, the wing leadership made a substantial number of force protection improvements to the Khobar Towers compound. Among them were measures to stop a penetrating bomb, to protect against a manned bomber and to strengthen the perimeter against a stand-off attack. Because the Saudi government was responsible for force protection outside the perimeter of the compound, efforts were made to extend the perimeter by increasing Saudi surveillance and patrols outside the compound. The efforts made at Khobar Towers were generally recognized by senior U.S. officials and commanders in the AOR as exceeding the efforts made at other installations. Commanders at all levels at Khobar Towers were actively engaged in force protection, taking reasonable measures and meeting their general force protection obligations.

**b. Mylar.**

(1) **Facts.**

(a) The January 1996 Vulnerability Assessment of Khobar Towers made 39 recommendations to improve security. One recommendation called for the installation of Mylar, a window film designed to minimize the effects of flying glass in explosions. Specifically, recommendation 36 stated,

Install 4 mil SRWF (Shatter Resistant Window Film) on all perimeter glass. ... If the cost of upgrading all perimeter windows is deemed too great, begin with the perimeter faces of Buildings 133 and 131 and then work roughly clockwise around KT [Khobar Towers] through to building 117.

The explosive ordnance disposal personnel (EOD) told the wing commander and the operations group commander that the benefits of Mylar were inconclusive.

(b) **Estimated Cost.** The estimate quoted in the vulnerability assessment indicated the cost of Mylar to be on the order of \$50 per square meter. The AFOSI detachment commander obtained the estimate from informal discussions. The support group commander recalled that he had asked one of his civil engineering officers to develop an estimate for the entire Khobar Towers compound. The wing commander testified that he received the overall estimate of \$4 million from the support group commander. No additional evidence was located to pinpoint who developed the estimate or how the figure was derived. The civil engineering squadron commander indicated that he was not personally involved in any discussions involving Mylar until after the June bombing. The figure may have been based on a rough estimate of the amount of glass to be covered and the \$50 per square meter estimate. The \$4 million cost was a factor in deciding to include the Mylar installation in the five-year plan.

(c) **Alternative Measures.** The decision on Mylar not only affected Khobar Towers but was also a consideration for the 10 other installations for which the wing was responsible for force protection. The wing commander believed, based on the estimate of the probable nature of the threat, the new barriers and active surveillance that Khobar Towers could withstand a blast of 200 to 300 pounds without suffering major damage or loss of life. The wing commander took alternative steps to achieve force protection instead of installing Mylar immediately. Among them were:

1. Sentries were posted on the roofs of key buildings including Building 131.

2. The Saudi's increased their patrols.

3. Double Jersey barriers were installed.

4. Blackout curtains were installed in October 1995. It was believed the curtains would provide some protection from flying glass. One witness, MSgt Howard, explained that he believed the blackout curtains saved his roommate from getting badly cut-up.

(d) **Other Installations/Facilities.** As of June 1996, most other installations/commands within Saudi Arabia had not installed Mylar on windows. Lieutenant General Record observed that other U.S. Armed Forces potential targets in Saudi Arabia (e.g., the International School, USMTM, and the commissary at Riyadh) did not have Mylar at the time of the Khobar Towers bombing. The American Embassy in Saudi Arabia did not have Mylar on its windows. Also, there was no Mylar installed on windows in Qatar. After the OPM SANG bombing, the American Embassy requested Mylar for some of its buildings, such as the school. According to the Consul General, the State Department denied the request because the threat level was not high enough. Only two installations in the region were known to have installed Mylar. Buildings at OPM SANG had just had Mylar installed when Brigadier General Smith was interviewed by the Downing Assessment on 24 July 1996. One Navy unit in Bahrain had Mylar on the ground floor only; the evidence as to whether it had been installed before or after the Khobar Towers bombing was unclear.

(e) Following the bombing, Mylar was obtained through USCENTAF at a cost of approximately \$16 per square meter and installed by teams of wing members trained by civil engineers.

## (2) Standards.

(a) A search of directives failed to reveal any requirement for the installation of Mylar.

(b) As mentioned previously, AFI 31-209, *The Resource Protection Program*, 10 November 1994, sets requirements for the physical security of Air Force personnel, installations, operations, and assets, and identifies the requirements of the Resource Protection Program (RPP). The instruction contains general guidance regarding the maintenance of Air Force war fighting capability by reducing damage to Air Force resources, and reducing the opportunity for terrorist attack by making a potential target inaccessible or unattractive. It contains no guidance specific to Mylar.

(c) Similarly, AFI 31-210, *The Air Force Antiterrorism (AT) Program*, 1 July 1995, established responsibilities and guidance for the Air Force Antiterrorism Program. In paragraph 2.15.2., it requires commanders at all echelons to "Plan, train, exercise, and execute antiterrorism measures as specified in DoDD O-2000.12, where appropriate." DoD Handbook O-2000.12-H, February 1993, was published

under the authority of DoDD O-2000.12. Although the following language by its express terms, applies only to buildings other than dwellings, it provides:

1. Several steps can be taken to harden windows in offices and residences. (The reference to "residences" here is not clear; residences are addressed in a later chapter of the Handbook.)

2. Among these are the following:

INSTALL SHATTER RESISTANT SECURITY WINDOW FILM. Installation of thousands of square feet of polycarbonate and/or glass safety glazing may not always be practical or cost effective. An alternative approach is to install a safety film on the inside of windows. A polyester film applied in a 4-mil thickness can substantially increase penetration time for cutting or smashing attacks, and will reduce concrete spalling (to break into chips) and flying glass injuries from explosive attacks.

### **(3) Analysis.**

(a) **Standard.** There is no objective standard against which General Schwalier's decision to forego immediate installation of Mylar can be judged. While the above guidance is relevant as a consideration, nothing requires commanders to install Mylar. The wing commander delayed the installation of Mylar in light of the perceived threat at the time. It was programmed into the budget.

(b) According to the Defense Special Weapons Agency:

Every potential terrorist target is unique, making "cookbook" mitigation measures potentially ineffective, and possibly counterproductive. For example, simply placing Mylar on windows, without improving the window frames may result in trading shard injuries for blunt trauma injuries when the entire window frame is blown into the room. There are powerful calculation and design tools available for improving a structures ... response to a terrorist bombing, but these must be applied by professionals who not only understand the engineering implications, but also the threat implications of the retrofits and new construction they propose to

implement.

(c) **Threat Assessment.** The threat from a stand-off bomb (discussed in the previous section on Assessment of the Threat) was acknowledged throughout the AOR. However, the magnitude of the threats, i.e., the size of bomb, was also perceived throughout the AOR and by the commander to be from a bomb significantly smaller than the one that detonated on the 25th of June. The commander assessed the threat to be from a bomb not larger than the bomb at OPM SANG detonating outside the perimeter. He believed Khobar Towers could withstand such an attack.

(d) **Circumstances.** The wing commander's decision was made in the context of what was known at the time and under the circumstances then existing. The OPM SANG bombing was a seminal event shattering the many years of peacefulness within Saudi Arabia. In the aftermath of the OPM SANG bombing, it was evident that much needed to be done based on the heightened threat. The facts establish that a number of force protection initiatives and improvements were made at Khobar Towers (see discussion in previous section on Adequacy of Force Protection Efforts). Many of the improvements, such as placing sentries on the roof, increased patrols by the Saudis, and installation of double jersey barriers were specifically designed to deter or mitigate the effects of a bomb attack from outside the perimeter.

(e) The commander made an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of Khobar Towers and allocated his resources accordingly. Based on the best estimate available, the commander believed the cost of installing Mylar to be approximately four million dollars. Believing the compound could withstand the perceived threat, he placed the installation of Mylar into the long range budget.

(f) **Actions of Others in the AOR.** It appears that the commander considered installation of Mylar to be appropriate at some time in the future. His conduct was consistent with the actions being taken by other commanders and government officials in the AOR. Additionally, his assessment of the threat was consistent with that of other commanders and senior government officials. Other installations in Saudi Arabia and Qatar, as well as the American Embassy in Saudi Arabia had not installed Mylar and the Embassy's request to do so after the OPM SANG bombing was denied by the State Department in part because the threat level in Saudi Arabia was not high enough to justify the expense.

(4) **Conclusion.** There was no specific directive requiring the installation of Mylar at Khobar Towers. The wing accomplished numerous force protection measures, many designed to mitigate the effects of a stand-off bomb similar in size to the one that detonated at OPM SANG. Based on the lack of specific guidance or directives, the other measures taken, the perceived threat, and finite resources, the wing commander's decision to delay the installation of Mylar was reasonable.

### c. **Extending the Perimeter.**

#### (1) **Facts.**

(a) This section will address whether efforts to extend or improve the perimeter were reasonable. In Finding 20 of his Task Force Report, General Downing found that the wing commander never raised to his superiors force protection matters that were beyond his capability to correct. More specifically, the report stated, "Nor did he raise the issue of expanding the perimeter or security outside of the fence with his Saudi counterparts in the Eastern Province."

(b) **Requests to Extend the Perimeter.** Although the wing commander recognized the vulnerability associated with the perimeter fence, he did not personally direct a request to his Saudi counterpart to extend the perimeter, nor did he specifically direct his subordinates to do so. Senior members of his wing staff did address the issue with their Saudi counterparts.

(c) After the OPM SANG bombing, the support group commander, Colonel Boyle, along with Colonel Abdullah al-Qahtani, the Saudi Royal Air Force liaison officer, inspected the condition of the perimeter of Khobar Towers. Colonel Boyle pointed out numerous deficiencies, drew special attention to the closeness of the perimeters, and indicated he would like them "moved back." No specific distance was mentioned, but considering the potential threat of an OPM SANG size bomb, Colonel Boyle explained that he would have been happy to get a 100 or 150 foot distance from the building. The existing perimeter setback was about 60 feet to the fence plus approximately another 20 feet to the curb of the parking lot, with vegetation in between. According to Col Boyle, Colonel Qahtani explained that although he did not have the authority, he did not think it was possible to move the perimeters out any further. He explained to Colonel Boyle that the parking lot on the north perimeter was for the public park, one of the few parks available to the

Saudis. In addition, the parking lot serviced a mosque on the other side. Colonel Qahtani also advised Colonel Boyle that a strip mall was about to be constructed next to the lot. According to Colonel Boyle, Colonel Qahtani expressed the opinion that the parking lot was essential for the recreation facility and the eventual mall, because it was the only place people could park. Colonel Qahtani opined that the distance was adequate for an OPM SANG size bomb. According to Col Boyle, Colonel Qahtani believed that moving the perimeter was not possible and recommended they concentrate on other active security measures.

(d) Others also requested extension of the perimeter. SA McDonald addressed the issue with the 2-star general in the Saudi equivalent to the FBI. The request was denied. SA Reddecliff's request to close the north parking lot was also refused. Not only did the Saudi's consistently deny requests to move the perimeter, they asked for a screen to block vision into the Khobar Towers complex in the area of the north fence. According to Lt Colonel Traister, Lieutenant Badr of the Royal Saudi Military Police refused to agree to trimming the vegetation along the fence line. The purpose of trimming the vegetation was to allow better observation of the perimeter. Lieutenant Badr explained that the vegetation served as a barrier to prevent local Saudis from viewing what Americans were doing inside the compound. Lt Colonel Traister renewed both his request to extend the perimeter and trim the vegetation outside the perimeter to Colonel Qahtani in March of 1996. Again, both requests were denied. Lt Colonel Traister had civil engineering trim the vegetation inside the perimeter.

(e) **Saudi Refusal to Extend Perimeters.** The Saudi's concerns regarding matters that impacted on daily Saudi life were mirrored in other denials and limitations placed on exercises and tests of warning systems. Colonel Boyle concluded that repeated requests would damage host nation relations.

(f) There were other indications that suggested that the Saudis would never agree to move the perimeter. For example, according to the Saudi commander of the Eastern Province, about two years earlier, the Saudi government had moved a portion of the perimeter in as a result of complaints from Saudi families who were concerned about access to their homes. The difficulty in moving the fence was illustrated by the Consul General in Dhahran who stated, "Now for them (the wing) to have extended the perimeter, I think it would have required moving heaven and earth."

(g) The CENTAF commander said he seriously doubted anyone in the chain of

command above Brigadier General Schwalier could have gotten the perimeter extended. He further explained that in his opinion, it was necessary to take measured steps to progress with the Saudis.

(h) Mr. Theodore Kattouf, the Deputy Chief of Mission, Riyadh, explained that it is a poorly understood fact that in a foreign country [Classified material omitted] United States forces have very limited capability to take actions outside those areas specifically reserved for United States forces control. [Classified material omitted]. Mr. Kattouf opined that even if Brigadier General Schwalier had asked for the fence to be moved, it is very improbable the Saudis would have agreed. [Classified material omitted].

(i) **Alternate Measures.** Instead of pursuing the issue of the location of the perimeter, the wing leadership concentrated its efforts on alternate measures to protect the perimeter. These have been fully detailed in previous portions of this section. Among other measures, these included:

1. Installing concertina wire along the top of the perimeter fence to preclude personnel access

2. Doubling up the barriers on the east, south and west perimeter and placing them 5 feet outside the fence line, and on the north perimeter inside the fence line, to enhance the protection against penetration.

3. Repositioning the existing barrier line along the west perimeter which had sunk into the sand.

4. Reinforcing portions of the fence line adjacent to streets reinforced with dumpsters along the interior of the fence line to offer additional protection against high speed penetration.

5. Posting sentries on the roofs of key buildings including Building 131 on a 24 hour a day basis and equipping them with radios and binoculars.

6. Increasing security police manning at static posts. This included building two sandbagged defensive fighting positions to use M-60 machine guns at the Khobar Towers main gate.

7. Increasing security police vehicle and foot roving patrols inside the compound.

8. Convincing the Saudi's to increase their civil patrols and undercover surveillance to monitor perimeter activities.

9. It was believed that previously installed blackout curtains would provide some protection from flying glass.

(j) The wing believed the above measures were a reasonable approach to protecting the perimeter under the circumstances. Others in the AOR expressed the same belief about the position of the perimeter. At its narrowest point on the north perimeter, the setback was approximately 80 feet: 60 feet from the buildings to the fence and 20 feet, covered with heavy vegetation, from the perimeter fence to the parking lot curb. The bomb crater was about 80 feet from building 131. Major General Hurd testified that a 25 meter setback (approximately 82 feet) was not unreasonable for the perceived threat. According to Lieutenant General Franklin, a 25 meter setback was accepted as sufficient. The Regional Security Officer (RSO) at the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh related that a representative of his office had visited Khobar Towers prior to the bombing and was satisfied that the existing stand-off distance was adequate. EOD had previously advised AFOSI that damage would be kept to a minimum if vehicles were kept at least 25 yards from the building. The distance from the building to the curb of the parking lot met the EOD recommended distance.

## (2) Standards.

(a) There was no mandatory standard regarding the appropriate stand-off distance at the time of the bombing. DoD Handbook O-2000.12-H, *Protection of DoD Personnel and Activities Against Acts of Terrorism and Political Turbulence*, February 1993, recommended, "100-foot minimum setback between perimeter and building exterior **whenever possible**" **when siting for new construction** (emphasis added). With regard to existing facilities, the DoD Handbook states the following:

Para 9 (C)(1)a. An unobstructed area or clear zone should be maintained on both sides of and between permanent physical barriers. Vegetation should not exceed 8 inches in height in these areas. The inside clear zone should be at least 30 feet. The outside

clear zone should be at least 20 feet.

(b) A review of applicable instructions and guidance failed to reveal any standards for commanders to apply in determining when to escalate force protection issues up the chain of command. In these areas, commanders make such determinations depending on the totality of the circumstances, using their experience, training and judgment as officers and commanders to guide them.

**(3) Analysis.**

(a) At the time of the Khobar Towers bombing, there were no objective standards establishing a fixed standoff distance for existing buildings. The total standoff distance of approximately 80 feet met the guidance suggested by the DoD Handbook for clear zones. The guidance suggested a minimum total distance of 50 feet: 30 feet of clear zone inside a fixed barrier, such as a fence, and 20 feet beyond the fixed barrier. In this case, there was a distance of 60 feet between the buildings and the perimeter fence and an additional approximately 20 feet covered with heavy vegetation that the Saudis were reluctant to clear, outside the perimeter fence. This created a total standoff distance of about 80 feet. This was consistent with the standoff distances at other US buildings in the AOR. Nevertheless, the wing commander, support group commander, security police commander, and AFOSI detachment commander remained concerned about the stand-off distance, especially at the north perimeter.

(b) The support group commander, security police commander and AFOSI detachment commander asked their Saudi counterparts either to extend the perimeter or, at the north perimeter, to close the parking lot. When those efforts failed, they initiated alternate force protection measures to increase the security of the perimeter.

(c) Brigadier General Schwalier was aware of the fact that the requests to move the fence had been denied by the Saudis. He was satisfied that the "work-arounds" to overcome the vulnerability were progressing well.

(d) The wing concentrated on the "work-arounds" such as trimming the vegetation, roof top sentries, double barriers, increased Saudi patrols and undercover surveillance. They did not focus on a penetration bomb to the exclusion of preparing for a stand-off weapon. The efforts were designed with an OPM SANG

bomb in mind, a belief that was pervasive throughout the AOR.

(4) **Conclusion.** While there was no mandatory stand-off distance, the perimeter at Khobar Towers met the guidance for existing facilities. The wing commander and his staff recognized the vulnerability of the perimeter and initiated multiple efforts to improve perimeter security. The actions were taken considering the refusal of the Saudis to extend the perimeter, the stand-off distance at other facilities, the perceived threat, and other force protection measures implemented. These actions of the wing commander, support group commander, security police commander, and AFOSI detachment commander were reasonable under the circumstances.

#### 4. **Transportation Security (Convoy).**

##### a. **Facts.**

(1) This section analyzes the adequacy of the security provided for the transportation of personnel. In Finding 5 of the Downing Assessment, it was observed that force protection practices were inconsistent in Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Gulf Region. This finding was consistent with Finding 1 of the Downing Assessment: "There are ... [no] published DoD physical security standards for force protection of fixed facilities." Elaborating on this, the Assessment went on to say, "Because no directive provides formal force protection standards with which the service components must comply, commanders are left to a subjective determination of what is safe or unsafe." Relevant to the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P), the Assessment stated, "Security for travel of U.S. service members between housing and work areas was inconsistent." The specific observations follow.

"In Dhahran, unarmed pilots and other key persons traveled to and from King Abdul Aziz Air Base and Khobar Towers in commercial vehicles."

(2) The trip from the gate at Khobar Towers to the gate at King Abdul Aziz Air Base (KAAAB) was approximately one kilometer (6/10ths of a mile) and took about three minutes. The remainder of the trip was within the Khobar Towers compound or the guarded areas of the air base. Alternate routes would have taken up to 30 minutes through populated sections of the suburbs of Dhahran. The roadway between Khobar Towers and the airfield was heavily traveled by security police and armed Army personnel. There was some concern that the overpass on

the route to KAAAB might be a target for attack, and vigilance and the security police presence on the road was increased after the OPM SANG bombing. Other travel security precautions at Khobar Towers included route surveillance provided by security police in an "over-watch" capacity. Posted on top of a building in the Khobar Towers complex, security police personnel were able to visually observe the route between Khobar Towers and KAAAB. Equipped with radios, these rooftop personnel were to monitor traffic movement and sound the alarm, if necessary. Traffic was not allowed to back up on the route between Khobar Towers and KAAAB, to give commuting personnel a "straight shot" back and forth. The security police squadron would have considered placing armed guards in vehicles, had conditions warranted, and discussed this possibility. The wing commander was asked if he ever considered arming pilots on the trip between Khobar Towers and the airfield prior to the bombing, and indicated, "I would not have entertained that." Neither the 1995 nor the 1996 Vulnerability Assessments identified the need for additional security precautions on this route.

(3) In contrast, the trip between Eskan Village and King Fahd Air Base in Riyadh took approximately 30 minutes. The procedures for force protection there included varying the routes and staggering the times of trips between the housing area and the air base. No evidence was observed that the routes were varied. Armed security police were either in the buses or followed the buses. Passengers in the buses wore civilian clothes. The trip from Abu Dhabi to Al Dhafra Air Base took 30 or more minutes and involved a choice of any of six routes. The route selection was made immediately before the trip.

(4) The only guidance on transportation security was in the installation security plan and consisted of the following recommendations: "Advise all base personnel to limit all travel to the installation except for mission essential and emergency situations" during THREATCON CHARLIE, and "Consult local authorities about closing public (and military) roads and buildings that might make sites vulnerable to terrorist attacks" during THREATCON DELTA. Other wing travel precautions and restrictions were addressed frequently in various wing commander Battle Staff Directives (BSDs), published between November 1995 and June 1996. The emphasis of the BSDs was on limiting and/or prohibiting the movement of wing members off base, decreasing their visibility and avoiding their concentration. At times, off base travel to specific areas was prohibited (Bahrain, Qatif and Hofuf), intermediate stops between Dhahran and Bahrain were prohibited, travel was required in groups of at least two but no more than four, travel was required to be

by "low profile" vehicles, use of other than chartered buses was prohibited (at times, buses of any kind were prohibited) and travel was to be in civilian clothing, or overshirts, except when on official business and at specified locations.

**b. Standards.**

(1) Applicable regulatory guidance at the time of the Khobar Towers bombing included: Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 0-2000.12, *DoD Combating Terrorism Program*, August 27, 1990; DoD 0-2000H, *Protection of DoD Personnel and Activities Against Acts of Terrorism and Political Turbulence*; Air Force Instruction (AFI) 31-210, *The Air Force Antiterrorism (AT) Program*, July 1, 1995; Air Combat Command Supplement 1 (ACC - Sup 1), *The Antiterrorism (AT) Program*, July 25, 1995; 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) Installation Security Plan, King Abdul Aziz Air Base, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, May 24, 1995; 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) Instruction 31-101, *Security Police*, June 1, 1996; and 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P)/CC Battle Staff Directives (various dates).

(2) Most of these publications touch on transportation of personnel. None, however, set out requirements or mandate the use of specific force protection measures, with the exception of the wing commander's own Battle Staff Directives (BSDs), as described earlier. For example, DoDD 0-2000.12 refers to "suggested" security measures associated with various THREATCONs. Specific references to transportation considerations are found under Measure 24 of THREATCON BRAVO and Measure 49 of THREATCON CHARLIE. They read, respectively: "Protect off-base military personnel and military transport in accordance with prepared plans. Remind drivers to lock parked vehicles and to institute a positive system of checking before they enter and drive a car, and minimize all administrative journeys and visits." References to transportation security in the wing's "prepared plan"--the 4404<sup>th</sup> WG(P) Installation Security Plan--consisted of two suggested measures in THREATCONs CHARLIE and DELTA.

(3) DoD 0-2000.12-H, *Protection of DoD Personnel and Activities Against Acts of Terrorism and Political Turbulence*, listed a number of suggested ways to increase the security of transportation of personnel. The general guidance includes such suggested measures as avoiding dangerous areas, avoiding the establishment of regular patterns of movement, never traveling in a single vehicle, avoiding travel at night, using vehicles that do not stand out, planning alternate routes, planning communications requirements, planning in advance, and a catchall, providing

adequate security.

(4) AFI 31-210 refers commanders to DoDD 2000.12 for "guidance" in implementing threat condition measures. ACC Supplement 1 to this instruction makes recommendations on steps Americans could take to lower their profile while traveling.

(5) Wing Operating Instruction 31-101 identified the chief of security police as the single focal point for security issues within the wing and required all security police supporting wing units to functionally report to him. The chief of security police is also the security police squadron commander.

### **c. Analysis.**

(1) There are no written objective standards for force protection regarding the transportation of personnel. The general guidance provided by DoDD 2000.12, *DoD Combating Terrorism Program* and DoD 0-2000.12H, *Protection of DoD Personnel and Activities against Acts of Terrorism and Political Turbulence*, requires commanders to consider such measures as avoiding dangerous areas, avoiding the establishment of regular patterns of movement, never traveling in a single vehicle, avoiding travel at night, using vehicles that don't stand out, planning alternate routes, planning communications requirements, planning in advance and "providing adequate security." It appears from the measures taken that the wing took such factors into consideration. The measures for force protection of personnel employed some of the suggested measures, and the Battle Staff Directives (BSDs) published periodically by the wing, addressed avoiding high threat areas, the wear of unobtrusive clothing, travel in small groups, and avoiding concentration of personnel.

(2) Similarly, there is no requirement that force protection practices be the same at all locations within the AOR, as local conditions, threats, alternatives and resources vary from place to place. At Khobar Towers, the route between the gate and the gate to King Abdul Aziz Air Base was short, approximately one kilometer (.62 miles), heavily traveled by military personnel, frequently traveled by security police and armed Army personnel and overseen by a sentry on a roof top within Khobar Towers. Alternate routes would have increased exposure of personnel to attack by increasing the travel time up to 30 minutes and routing vehicles through urban areas. Traffic was not allowed to back up on the route to reduce exposure of

personnel. The route had not been identified as a weakness in earlier vulnerability assessments conducted in 1995 and January 1996. Given these circumstances, the actions of the wing commander not to arm pilots or important persons for the one kilometer trip or to use armed guards were reasonable.

(3) That the force protection measures at Khobar Towers differed from more stringent measures at other locations does not necessarily indicate these precautions were not reasonable. Other locations used additional measures such as alternate routes, armed guards, armed scout vehicles, travel by commercial buses and travel in civilian clothing, depending on the local threat and circumstances. Procedures were established based on the perceived threat at Khobar Towers, the absence of any indicated vulnerability in the threat assessments, the short distance involved, and the conditions that existed prior to the bombing at Khobar Towers.

(4) The measures taken show that the wing commander, as well as other commanders within the AOR, were taking into consideration and employing different facets of the measures suggested by the general guidance. The security police squadron commander at Khobar Towers was engaged in reviewing the route between Khobar Towers and KAAAB and taking precautions such as placing a sentry in a position to overwatch the route.

**d. Conclusion.** Transportation security is a part of force protection. There are no set standards for transportation security. Applicable guidance requires consideration of a number of factors beginning with an assessment of the local threat and conditions. Commanders are told to consider a number of different measures and to tailor their measures to the conditions and threat. Because local conditions vary from installation to installation and country to country in the AOR, so did the precautions taken at those locations vary. The adequacy of a location's measures does not depend on what other locations, with different threats and conditions, are doing. The transportation of personnel from Khobar Towers to King Abdul Aziz Air Base was short (one kilometer from gate to gate), heavily traveled by security police personnel, and observed from a vantage point within Khobar Towers. Alternate routes exposed personnel to urban areas for a considerably longer time than the two to three minutes it took to travel the most direct route. The route had not been identified as a vulnerability in the past two vulnerability assessments. Under the circumstances, the security measures employed by the wing were reasonable for the threat conditions existing at the time.

## **C. READINESS ISSUES.**

**1. Introduction:** This section addresses whether Air Force members met their obligations in the area of readiness. It discusses several issues concerning communications, specifically the lack of automated alarms in dormitories, the lack of radio links between sentries and the operators of the Giant Voice system, and the accessibility of interpreter services for quick response to a threat. It also reviews the planning, practice and evaluation of building evacuations, and issues relating to the training, equipping and manning of the security force, with special attention to procedures for cleaning and maintaining weapons. Finally, it reviews the appropriateness of the wing threat condition level.

### **2. Evacuation Planning, Practice and Evaluation.**

**a. Background.** One of the issues raised by the Downing Assessment was the adequacy of evacuation procedures at Khobar Towers. The Downing Assessment found that there were no DoD standards for warning systems and concluded that the absence of a warning system was a significant factor that contributed to the injuries sustained in the attack on Khobar Towers. The Assessment noted that Saudi construction standards did not require a fire alarm system. Later it indicated that a fire alarm system could have doubled for a mass warning notification of an attack. This section examines evacuation planning.

#### **b. Facts.**

(1) The buildings most damaged in the bombing at Khobar Towers, Buildings 131 and 133 on the north perimeter, are similar to apartment or dormitory structures. They are eight story "T" shaped buildings constructed of 5 ½ inch precast, concrete wall panels and 6 ½ inch floor panels. Access to and exit from the buildings is by way of a central entrance. The facilities, as originally built, did not have any fire protection devices. Sometime after occupancy, the wing installed smoke detectors.

(2) There were three separate emergency responses in place at Khobar Towers on 25 June 1996. The first was a bomb threat evacuation procedure. The second was a fire evacuation procedure. The third was the attack warning procedure. The fire evacuation procedure and the bomb threat evacuation procedure relied on the same notification system.

(3) On the night of 25 June 1996, security police posted on the roof of Building 131 saw a tank truck pull up to the fence and the driver run to another awaiting vehicle. The guards reacted to the truck as a potential bomb threat and initiated a bomb threat evacuation procedure.

(4) In the event of a bomb threat or indications of fire, the individual discovering the event would report it to central security control (CSC) or the fire department. After reporting the event, the individual could initiate an evacuation of the building. Security police or fire personnel would respond to the scene. Giant Voice had not been activated during previous bomb threats. In the event of a bomb threat, responding patrols would set up a 300 foot cordon. To evacuate buildings within the 300 foot cordon, a security police patrol would be dispatched to go to the top floor of the building to be evacuated and begin knocking on doors, notifying the occupants to evacuate. As individuals left their rooms, they were instructed to notify other occupants on lower floors to evacuate. This method of evacuation notification was described as a "waterfall" method. Individuals would evacuate the building through the central entrance and proceed to their designated squadron assembly areas for a personnel accounting.

(5) In April 1996, the AFOSI detachment commander recommended that evacuation plans for the Khobar Towers facilities be re-accomplished. On 13 April 1996, each squadron was tasked to develop individual evacuation plans and assembly areas for its facilities. These were submitted to the civil engineer readiness flight for consolidation and deconfliction of squadron assembly points. A review of the plans collected after the bombing indicates that evacuation plans were submitted in April 1996, deconflicted, and published. Copies of the new plans were provided to each of the squadrons and posted in each building.

(6) In addition to the evacuation procedures for fire or bomb threats, the wing had established emergency procedures for an enemy attack. In the event of an incoming attack, Giant Voice, a roof-top speaker system, could be activated by the wing operations center (WOC) in the siren mode. It could be followed by voice instructions that an attack was probable (Alarm Yellow) or imminent (Alarm Red). Upon notification of an attack warning, personnel were to seek shelter in their front hallways, the innermost areas of their suites. The procedure specifically instructed them to remain away from the kitchen, television room, and individual bedrooms because these rooms were located toward the outside of the building. The written procedures were posted in the dormitories.

(7) All personnel assigned to live in Khobar Towers received a mandatory briefing on general evacuation procedures during the Right Start Program. Briefings on the specific evacuation plans for each dormitory were the responsibility of each squadron. Squadrons posted the instructions for evacuation and attack response on bulletin boards and/or the doors of individual suites. Support offices were located in the same buildings used as dormitories, meaning some personnel lived and worked in the same building, including Building 131 on the north perimeter.

(8) There was no program within the wing to practice dormitory evacuation exercises. There were actual evacuations. They were not evaluated. From November 1995 through June 1996, there were fourteen suspicious package incidents within Khobar Towers. All of these incidents were reported in the security police blotters. Three of these incidents in the blotters were reported in sufficient detail to determine the times of the evacuations and the buildings evacuated. Assuming established procedures were followed, other suspicious package incidents resulted in three other actual building evacuations. This number is consistent with witness recollections of about six evacuations during this period.

(9) The requirements for fire drills are separate from bomb threat evacuations and attack warnings. The fire protection unit did not schedule or conduct any fire drills for occupants, but encouraged facility monitors to conduct drills. Some fire drills may have been conducted. Additionally, the fire department performed internal exercises for proficiency training of its personnel which were conducted on a monthly basis during April, May and June 1996. A different facility within Khobar Towers was used for each exercise. One of these drills was in the civil engineer facility, Building 133 on the north perimeter. These fire training exercises tested the fire department's capabilities for fighting a fire in a high-rise facility or office complex. During these exercises, fire department personnel evacuated the facility before conducting the exercise. There is no indication that these evacuations were timed or evaluated.

(10) The Wing had no formal program to evaluate dormitory evacuations. Two staff assistance visits (SAVs) were conducted by the USCENTAF staff, a fire protection SAV in January 1995 and a civil engineering SAV in January 1996. Neither SAV identified any deficiencies related to fire drills.

**c. Standards:**

(1) DoD 0-2000.12-H, *Protection of DoD Personnel and Activities against Acts of Terrorism and Political Turbulence* (February 1993), provides general guidance on evacuations. It states:

(a) **Evacuation Procedures:** Evacuation procedures depend upon circumstances. 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.

(b) **Alarm system:** The bomb threat alarm system should be easily distinguished from the fire alarm.

(c) **Evacuation Drills:** Periodically practice evacuation and search drills under the supervision of installation or unit senior officer. Hold drills in cooperation with local police if possible. Avoid unnecessarily alarming personnel and civilians in adjacent premises.

(2) Joint Publication 3-07.2, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism*, provides guidance to commanders.

(a) It provides: every commander, regardless of echelon of command or branch of Service, has an inherent responsibility for planning, resourcing, training, exercising and executing antiterrorism measures to provide for the security of command.

(b) Joint Publication 3-07.2 goes on to say that drills and exercises are the best test of an installation's ability to respond to a terrorist incident short of an actual event. In the event of a bomb threat in a building, search, movement of personnel within the building, partial evacuation, and total evacuation are possible responses. Evacuation procedures are to be prepared, publicized, and rehearsed in advance. Also to be addressed by plans are alarm systems, assembly areas, routes to assembly areas, personnel evacuation response, building and area clearance, and evacuation drills. The alarm system should be easily distinguished from the fire alarm. Evacuation drills should be periodically practiced under the supervision of the installation or unit senior officer. As to enemy attack, Joint Publication 3-07.2 contains no specific guidance beyond calling for drills and exercises.

(3) AFI 31-210, *The Air Force Antiterrorism (AT) Program*, 1 July 95, establishes the Air Force's antiterrorism program. Installation commanders are to establish an antiterrorism program tailored to local mission, conditions and terrorist threat. In doing so they are to use a number of publications including: DoD 0-2000.12H, *Protection of DoD Personnel and Activities Against Acts of Terrorism and Political Turbulence*, and Joint Publication 3-07.2, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism*. Installation commanders are expected to ensure the installation can respond to a terrorist attack. Commanders at all echelons are expected to plan, train, exercise and execute antiterrorism measures as specified in DoD 0-2000.12 where appropriate. Commanders are also responsible for integrating lessons learned from actual incidents and operation exercises, to correct deficiencies. The installation chief of security police coordinates and directs operations and programs to protect the installation.

(4) AFI 32-4001, *Disaster Preparedness Planning and Operations*, 6 May 94, requires each Air Force Installation to have a disaster preparedness plan to include an annex on enemy attack. There is no requirement for the plan to address evacuation. Training of installation personnel in disaster preparedness responses is required. The base civil engineer oversees the disaster preparedness program. The instruction required the wing to conduct attack response exercises twice a year as the installation was located in a chemical-biological threat area. These exercises are to provide "realistic, integrated, large-scale training for the installation and the DRF [Disaster Response Force]." It also directs the conduct of a major accident response exercise (MARE) at least once every quarter. Further, it requires the Installation Commander to establish an Exercise Evaluation Team (EET) to develop exercise scenarios and debrief and critique performance. It requires a report to track discrepancies in performance.

(5) Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 32-20, *Fire Protection*, requires fire drills to be conducted by referencing and adopting the requirement set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Code 101, *Code for Safety to Life In Buildings and Structures*. Fire exit drills must be conducted with sufficient frequency to familiarize all occupants with the drill procedures and to make them a matter of established routine. There is no standard establishing a set frequency for drills.

#### **d. Analysis.**

(1) **General.** Buildings are evacuated for different reasons: bomb threats, fire,

accidents, gas leaks, natural disasters, hostage situations, etc. Consequently, the responsibility for evacuation of a building may fall within the scope of several different programs to include AFI 31-210, *The Air Force Antiterrorism Program*; AFI 32-4001, *Disaster Preparedness Planning and Operations*; and AFD 32-20, *Fire Protection*.

(2) **Bomb Threats.** Regarding bomb threats, the antiterrorism program, AFI 31-210, requires the wing commander to establish an antiterrorism program using a number of different publications as guidance. One of the publications providing general guidance, Joint Pub 3-07.2, states that evacuation procedures are to be prepared, publicized and practiced in advance. The bomb threat plan should address alarm systems, assembly areas, routes, personnel evacuation response building and area clearance and evacuation drills. It also states that drills and exercises are the best test of an installation's ability to respond to a terrorist incident, short of an actual event. The guidance indicates that bomb threats should be exercised in advance, but establishes no specific requirements for the frequency of drills or exercises.

(3) **Bomb Threat Procedures.** The wing had established procedures for bomb threat evacuation. There is no requirement for an automated bomb threat alarm. Responses to bomb threats change as the nature of the threat changes. The bomb threat evacuation procedures at Khobar Towers were last updated in April 1996. They were posted in dormitories and briefed at the mandatory Right Start program. The procedures were written, described escape routes, and included procedures to account for all personnel after evacuation. All but those few personnel with rotations longer than 90 days should have had the briefings within the last 90 days. Some people worked in the same buildings in which they had their rooms. The system of notification, via the "waterfall" method was flexible, simple and used for other evacuations as well. These procedures, and their predecessors, had been used to respond to at least three and probably six or more suspected bomb threats requiring evacuations between November 1995 and May 1996. The guidance in Joint Publication 3-07.2 recognizes that real world scenarios are the best training and that evacuation procedures "depend upon circumstances." Given this guidance, actual evacuations could substitute for training. The blotter entries for these incidents note no problems with the evacuations and the times noted to establish a 300 foot cordon were six and nine minutes.

(4) The purpose of a bomb threat evacuation is to remove personnel from the area

of a suspected bomb. It is premised on having enough time for personnel to distance themselves far enough from a suspected bomb to reduce or eliminate injury. If a bomb goes off during the evacuation, injury may result. On the other hand, the purpose of an attack warning is to alert personnel of an imminent attack: to take cover. The procedures for an attack warning at Khobar Towers required personnel to take shelter in the interior portions of their dormitories. This response was designed to afford maximum protection to personnel when it was believed attack was imminent. The guards who saw the truck drive up to the fence perceived it to be a possible bomb threat and initiated a bomb threat evacuation rather than an attack warning. They had no way of knowing the size of the bomb or the amount of time that would transpire between the time they saw it as a potential threat and the time it would detonate.

(5) **Disaster Preparedness.** In addition to the antiterrorism program, the disaster preparedness program, AFI 32-4001, generally requires the wing commander to ensure that his installation has the capability to respond to a disaster. The base civil engineer has a duty to oversee the disaster preparedness plans. Disaster preparedness, including the planning and execution of exercises and drills, normally falls under the purview of the readiness flight. Building evacuations may be required in conjunction with disaster preparedness. The disaster preparedness plan does not, however, establish standards for building evacuation exercises. It does establish requirements for the frequency of other types of exercises such as major accident response exercises (MAREs) and base attack response exercises. Building evacuations are often included, but are not required to be included, in these major exercises. Exercises were conducted but MAREs were practiced at King Abdul Aziz Air Base and not at Khobar Towers. Some attack exercises were restricted by Saudi sensitivities, and conducted as "table top" exercises. The MARE plan was activated for a real world airplane crash.

(6) **Attack Warning.** Distinct from the evacuations discussed above, there is a separate requirement under the disaster preparedness program for an attack warning response and alarm. This differs from an evacuation in that its purpose is to warn and prepare personnel for an imminent attack. It is a basic "take cover" warning. The readiness flight, under the base civil engineer, has the responsibility for developing the attack response emergency plans outlined in AFI 32-4001. The wing commander through the base civil engineer and communications organizations installs and maintains an installation warning system. Each installation is required to have a rapid and effective system to disseminate disaster

information quickly, consistent with local and host nation signals.

(7) Attack warning procedures had been posted in each building in the Khobar Tower facility. A copy of the procedure was recovered from building 133 after the bombing. The procedures were written, described emergency actions in detail and included procedures to account for personnel after attack. By directing personnel to seek shelter in the innermost area of the suite, away from the exterior of the building, the Dormitory Attack Response Plan took into account efforts to minimize injuries from an imminent explosive blast.

(8) **Squadron Responsibilities.** Each squadron within the wing had been tasked to establish procedures for evacuation of the facility they occupied.

(9) **Timing of Evacuations.** The evidence does not indicate that any formal process was used to accurately establish the time it took to evacuate facilities during these incidents. The evidence suggests that it took from 6 to 15 minutes to evacuate a building the size of Building 131. There are however, no time standards for evacuation of a building. The support group commander's estimate of 5 minutes appears to have been optimistic or optimal. The waterfall system depended on those on the upper floors notifying those on the floors below. That the process at the top of the building would be slower than for lower floors would be a function of the number of personnel available to keep the notice cascading down. Notification of the lower floors would be expected to be faster and faster. From all accounts, whatever time expectations there were for the evacuation, people took the threat seriously and were evacuating the building quickly.

(10) **Purpose of Evacuation.** Bomb threat evacuations are dependent on having enough time for personnel to remove themselves to a safe distance. Evacuation may not be effective if the time between detection of a bomb and its detonation is insufficient for personnel to achieve a safe distance. Given the unknown size of the bomb on 25 June 1996 and the uncertainty of the time it would detonate, there was no way of knowing in advance if there would be sufficient time to remove personnel from the building or not. There was a risk that the bomb would go off while the evacuation was in progress, as it did, some three to four minutes after the truck was identified as a potential threat.

(11) **Evacuation on 25 June 1996.** On the night of 25 June 1996, security police were posted on the roof of Building 131. Their posting required them to

specifically watch and note any unusual occurrences on the northern and eastern perimeters. If they perceived any unusual occurrences they were required to notify central security control (CSC). They observed a Saudi tank truck back up to the fence on the north perimeter and immediately notified CSC. Based on their observations, they determined it was a bomb threat and immediately took the initiative to evacuate the building. The actions of the occupants of the truck indicated to the security police that it was a potential bomb; the guards had no way of knowing the size of the bomb or the time it would detonate.

(12) **Fire Drills.** In addition to evacuations for bomb threats and as a part of the disaster preparedness program, there is a specific requirement for fire drills. There is some indication that fire drills were conducted at Khobar Towers. The responsibility for evacuations had been delegated to the individual squadrons. Standards for conducting fire drills are found in the National Fire Protection Association, Code 101, *Code for Safety to Life from Fire In Buildings and Structures*, made applicable by AFPD 32-20 . While the code indicates that fire drills should be conducted in facilities of the kind found at Khobar Towers, the Code does not specify the number of drills that must be conducted, only that they be conducted frequently enough for everyone to be familiar with the procedure such that conduct of the drill will "be a matter of established routine." Two different Staff Assistance Visits failed to observe any deficiency in this area.

(13) As discussed later in the section on fire alarms, fire in the dormitories was not a major concern because of their concrete construction and the general absence of flammable materials. Personnel at Khobar Towers were briefed on fire evacuation procedures at the Right Start program within the last 90 days, based on the rotation policy. Additionally, evacuation diagrams were posted in each building in rooms or on the squadron bulletin board. Some personnel worked as well as lived in the buildings and should have been very familiar with exit routes. The procedures for evacuation for fire were essentially the same as those for an evacuation of a building for a bomb threat. The purpose of the evacuations could be different and more instruction might be necessary during a bomb threat evacuation because the response to a bomb threat must be flexible enough to protect personnel to the extent possible from the threat during the evacuation. Because there was no fire alarm system, the notification system was the same as for all other evacuations. Although not practiced, it appears reasonable that personnel knew how to exit the building through the central entrance/exit, whether the threat was posed by a fire or a bomb threat.

(14) **Substitution of a Fire Alarm for a Bomb Threat.** The Downing Assessment suggested that a fire alarm system could have been used at Khobar Towers as a substitute for a bomb threat alarm. DoD 0-2000.12-H and Joint Pub 3-07.2 make it clear that fire alarms are not to be the same as bomb threats alarms, because a fire evacuation is or can be fundamentally different than an evacuation for a bomb threat. A fire evacuation substituted for a bomb threat may increase the exposure of responding emergency personnel to the threat of the bomb and mislead personnel as to the nature of the threat. A bomb threat evacuation must be designed to avoid exposing people being evacuated to the bomb whereas a fire drill would not take that factor into consideration. A bomb threat warning procedure requires the flexibility to tailor the response to the threat. The "waterfall" notification system was well suited for this purpose. Because no single bomb threat alarm can adequately address all bomb threat scenarios, none was required. It was also suggested that Giant Voice might have been initiated to warn personnel more quickly. Giant Voice in siren mode had a specific meaning; general attack. It had not been used for prior bomb threats. Whether it would have been effective in voice mode is questionable and at least the superintendent of disaster preparedness believed its activation on 25 June 1996 would have been disastrous as it would have drawn personnel to their balconies and windows in order to hear the message.

(15) According to personnel assigned to the readiness flight and the support group commander, the wing was conducting disaster preparedness exercises, although they may not have measured up to stateside standards. One concern was that exercises interfered with crew rest and a balance had to be struck between crew rest and exercises. Primarily because of host nation sensitivities, the Giant Voice siren was not used in exercises so as not to alarm the civilian populace, and for the same reason, chemical protection gear was not worn outside. Evacuation drills were not being conducted, but actual evacuations were. There is some indication fire drills were held, but because this responsibility had been delegated to the individual squadrons, there is no evidence it was being done on a regular basis. Given the limitations on exercises, the turnover in personnel, the simplicity of the evacuation plans in use and the actual building evacuations taking place, real-world events did provide training on evacuation. Personnel had demonstrated that they knew how to evacuate the buildings, whether for a bomb threat which used the same evacuation plan or for a fire. However, these evacuations were not being evaluated as required, and any lessons learned from the evacuations were not being captured for the future.

(16) **Conclusion:** The evidence indicates that the wing commander was fulfilling his general obligations under the antiterrorism and disaster preparedness plans. Plans were in place and disaster preparedness exercises, within the constraints of local conditions, were being used to provide training to wing personnel. Evacuation procedures were in place and notification procedures in use to address different kinds of threats. The base civil engineer and security police squadron commander were fulfilling their general obligations under their respective plans. Evacuation drills and fire drills were not being conducted. Actual evacuations were being conducted in response to suspected bombs. The responsibility for drills had been delegated down to the squadron level. This did not relieve the fire chief, the base civil engineer, the group commander, or the wing commander of their supervisory oversight responsibilities. The findings of two SAVs had not identified fire drills as a deficiency at Khobar Towers. The wing commander's reliance on these reports and his experts in the area was reasonable. The actions of the base civil engineer and the fire chief are explained in part by the general absence of the possibility of dormitory fires. As evidenced by the absence of any fire after the bombing, the concrete buildings eliminated much of the normal concern about fire and perhaps the need for fire drills. Under the circumstances, the actions of wing personnel in response to required evacuation and fire drills appear to have been reasonably adapted to local conditions, threats and constraints, but the lessons learned, if any, from actual evacuations were not being captured.

### **3. Communications, Alarms, Radio Links and Interpreters:**

#### **a. Automated Fire Alarm Systems**

##### **(1) Facts.**

(a) This section reviews the lack of automated fire alarm systems in dormitories, focusing on the appropriateness of the commander's decision to defer installation of fire alarms. Saudi building codes did not require the installation of a fire alarm system. Some time after the US began to occupy the compound in 1992, smoke detectors were installed in the sleeping areas of the US occupied buildings. The decision to install smoke detectors versus an automated facility alarm (fire alarm) system was based on the small amount of flammable items contained in the buildings and the fact that the buildings were constructed predominantly of prefabricated cement sections and other masonry products. The civil engineer squadron commander, who was also the base fire marshal, and his deputy

concurred with earlier opinions that the buildings were not combustible. In fact, the fireball resulting from the bomb did not cause a fire.

(b) The British coalition forces living at Khobar Towers had fire alarm systems in their facilities.

(c) The topic of an automated fire alarm system was discussed among senior staff members on several occasions. These discussions were initiated by the wing fire chiefs. The fire chiefs were virtually unanimous in their opinion that the lack of a centralized fire alarm system was not a problem. Three prior chiefs stated that, based on their experience, an automated building alarm system was not needed at Khobar Towers and that the wing did not need to spend the money on one. Their reasoning was also due to the very few flammable items in the facilities, the most flammable being the air conditioners. This belief was further supported by the fact USCENTAF, during two civil engineering staff assistance visits, did not identify the need for a fire alarm system. In January 1996, the Vulnerability Assessment addressed the need for a fire alarm system. The assessment recommended installation of an alarm system to notify occupants and the fire department. The recommendation was unrelated to security, it simply addressed the shortcoming with fire alarm procedures.

(d) The purchase and installation of an automated building fire alarm system was included in the wing's Five-Year Facilities Improvement Plan, called Vision 2000, dated 24 May 1996. The project for a centralized alarm system was programmed for FY00 with an estimated cost of \$250,000. The commander included it in the fire year plan to "capture" the input for the benefit of follow on commanders. He placed the alarm system in the last year of the program because he felt it was appropriate based upon the risk.

(e) An automated fire alarm system provides a quick warning and allows people to expeditiously exit a building. This differs from an attack warning which (1) warns people to seek refuge in the interior of facilities away from glass windows, (2) to close the doors as they leave their rooms, and (3) to await notification of the "all clear", or other instructions.

(f) An automated fire alarm system also differs from a notification system for a bomb threat. A response for a bomb threat may require additional, more elaborate precautions than those envisioned in a standard fire evacuation. For example, if

there is a small bomb outside a building, or near the exit, it may be more appropriate to stay inside the building and take cover. A proper response to a bomb threat might require evacuating a building through some but not all the exits, to avoid coming near the bomb. Thus, a bomb threat warning system must be more flexible than a fire alarm to properly notify residents of the danger. The "waterfall" notification system was used for bomb threats and building evacuations. Guidance requires that fire alarms be readily distinguishable from bomb threat notifications.

## **(2) Standards.**

(a) AFI 32-2001 and DoD Instruction 6055.6 required compliance with Military Handbook 1008B, *Fire Protection for Facilities Engineering, Design, and Construction*, 15 Jan 94. Military Handbook 1008B establishes protection engineering policy and criteria for DoD components and applies to DoD facilities located on or outside of DoD installations, whether acquired or leased, or third party financed and constructed. The Handbook incorporates by reference fire protection criteria published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), which requires fire alarm systems. For existing dormitory and apartment buildings, para 1.3.2 of the Handbook does not require modification of the buildings to meet more stringent Handbook 1008B requirements, so long as the buildings meet NFPA 101 standards and are acceptable to the "authority having jurisdiction," who is the Chief Fire Engineer of the Air Force, HQ AFCESA/DFE.

(b) *Joint Pub 3-07.2, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism*, (25 June 1993), requires evacuation plans to address alarm systems. Appendix K, paragraph 1g, notes the distinction between bomb threat systems and fire alarm systems. The "bomb threat system should be easily distinguished from the fire alarm."

## **(3) Analysis.**

(a) It is necessary at the outset to distinguish between the objective requirement to have a fire alarm system installed in dormitories, and the general requirement to have a system to warn against attacks. As noted in Joint Publication 3.07.2, Appendix K, bomb threat systems must be easily distinguished from the fire alarm. A fire alarm alerts residents to vacate a building in the event of a fire. An attack warning is used for the purpose of having personnel take appropriate responsive action to an imminent attack, which could include taking cover immediately, going

to a shelter, evacuating a building or donning protective gear.

(b) The wing did not meet the objective requirement of having an automated fire alarm system installed in the dormitories at Khobar Towers. In assessing accountability for this shortcoming, one should consider that the buildings were not built, owned or leased by the United States--rather they were provided by the government of Saudi Arabia for the use of the US armed forces. The US occupancy was originally intended to be temporary but was extended. The cost of an installed automatic fire alarm system was estimated at \$250,000. Smoke alarms had been installed, and the buildings' construction presented a very low risk of fire, in the opinion of a number of assigned fire chiefs. The US occupied the buildings for five years before the time period in question. This shortcoming was not recognized in two different staff assistance visits.

(c) The wing commander decided to program funding for the fire alarm system in the five-year plan, rather than attempt to have an alarm system installed immediately. The appropriateness of this decision must be evaluated in terms of the information available to him. Apparently, his decision was based, in large part, upon the unanimous opinions of several fire marshals, the civil engineering squadron commander, and the support group commander, that such a system was not required. It is expected that a commander will rely upon the advice of functional experts, absent significant evidence to the contrary. Additionally, the commander was aware that the wing had occupied the buildings for five years, and that the cement construction of the buildings did not present a significant threat of fire. Given the opinions of the experts, the history of the occupation of the buildings at Khobar Towers, the construction of the buildings, the absence of any fire related incidents in the dormitories, the advice of his experts and the cost of the system, the wing commander's decision was reasonable.

## **b. Radio Links Between Sentries and Giant Voice**

### **(1) Facts:**

(a) This section analyzes the adequacy of the procedures for activating the Giant Voice system in response to a bomb threat. In contrast to fire alarms, the Giant Voice system was multi-purpose. In siren mode, consistent with local practice, it was an attack alarm historically used as the alert for Scud missiles. In siren mode, it could also be used as a general attack warning. Any warning sent over Giant Voice

would go out to the entire Khobar Towers complex. The siren warning could be augmented by voice messages to moderate the sense of emergency as required. However, the voice mode was difficult to hear.

(b) The Wing Operations Center (WOC) was located at King Abdul Aziz Air Base (KAAAB) while the central security control (CSC) was located at Khobar Towers. During normal day-to-day activities, the WOC provided the wing's emergency action response and reporting, was the primary interface for the wing's senior commanders, and was the primary point of contact between the wing and higher headquarters. During emergencies and contingencies, the WOC was staffed by senior organizational representatives to advise the battle staff (wing commander and his senior staff) of operations within their respective units. The CSC was connected to the WOC by telephone and radio. On 25 June 1996 the land mobile radio communications system at Khobar Towers and KAAAB included the wing command net and the security police communication networks. The wing command net fell under the operational control of the wing operations center (WOC) and CSC controlled the security police net. This arrangement was a legacy from Desert Storm and is similar to that found at most Air Force installations.

(c) Security police used a quick reaction checklist for the activation of Giant Voice. The checklist at Khobar Towers is a variation of those used at other bases for activating Giant Voice.

(d) Security police sentries and patrols did not have direct access to the WOC or to the command net. They communicated with the CSC and between one another via the security net. WOC personnel monitored the security police net on a continuous basis.

(e) The Giant Voice siren was the means used to notify the local populace and base personnel of an impending enemy attack and was controlled by the WOC. It was not used for previous bomb threat warnings within the compound. Procedures for the security police to activate the Giant Voice system were as follows:

1 Observation post/patrol requests CSC to activate the alert system

2 CSC requests the WOC activate Giant Voice

3 WOC notifies the wing commander of the request seeking his permission to activate Giant Voice

4 If permission received, the WOC activates Giant Voice to warn KAAAB and Khobar Towers of an emergency.

(f) On 25 June 1996, the security police commander and his personnel could not activate Giant Voice without going through the established procedures; the procedures in place reserved that authority to the wing commander or his designee under emergency response plans. The requirement that Giant Voice be approved by the commander or his designee was designed to avoid the unnecessary or inadvertent activation of the system, in deference to the host nation's sensitivities about alarming its citizens.

**(2) Standards:**

(a) AFI 32-4001, *Disaster Preparedness Planning and Operation*, (6 May 1994), provides only general guidance concerning warning and notification systems.

7.1. Warning and Notification. Every Air Force installation must have a rapid and effective system to disseminate disaster information quickly.

7.1.1. Use signals that are compatible with local, host-nation, or theater systems. Follow command or theater guidance when more than one warning and notification system could apply.

(b) There are no regulations or instructions prescribing radio links between sentries and those who activate Giant Voice.

**(3) Analysis:**

(a) At issue is whether the procedure for activating the Giant Voice system was inappropriate, because it did not allow for the timely activation of the Giant Voice System in response to a bomb threat. The general adequacy of warning systems is discussed earlier in this report. Since there are no objective standards providing direction or guidance on the employment of a Giant Voice system, it is necessary to

analyze of the commander's conduct in continuing this multi-layered process for activation in light of all the circumstances.

(b) The Giant Voice system was not the appropriate warning system for a suspected bomb threat. In siren mode, it was used as a general attack (take cover) warning alarm. It was difficult to hear the outdoor loudspeakers, especially when people were inside, with air conditioners, radios or televisions operating. Messages had to be spoken very slowly to be understood. Giant Voice announcements drew personnel to their windows and balconies in order to hear the message. As such, it was only appropriate for use in limited circumstances, in siren mode as a general attack warning, and in voice mode in those circumstances not requiring the most urgent response, such as assuming mission oriented protective postures (MOPP conditions) well in advance of attack, or in announcing all clear. Giant Voice was not used at Khobar Towers for previous bomb threats. The purpose of the Giant Voice system was to warn of general attacks. The procedures for activating Giant Voice were consistent with this purpose.

(c) Based on its limitations and history, Giant Voice was not a suitable alarm system for a bomb threat. The citizens of Dhahran experienced the threat of Scud missile attacks during the Gulf War. The Saudi government was sensitive to having a large foreign military force stationed in one of its major cities. It was thought that frequent use of the Giant Voice in siren mode would alarm the local citizens and exacerbate the situation. The US forces, in deference to the host nation's wishes, minimized the use of Giant Voice to those circumstances consistent with the host nation's concerns. Under the circumstances, a procedure designed to avoid unnecessary or inadvertent activation is appropriate.

(d) The wing had specific procedures in place to react to bomb threats. The wing's antiterrorism plan included roving and stationary police patrols, including rooftop sentries, to alert personnel. While not automated, this flexibility permitted an appropriate response to the wide variety of forms a terrorist attack or a bomb threat could take. Guidance in the area specifically recognizes that evacuations depend on the circumstances. Consequently, while procedures exist for bomb threats, and bomb threats may employ general evacuation plans, there is no requirement for a bomb threat alarm system. Each threat must be evaluated and guidance tailored to the specific threat posed.

(e) The established procedures for activating Giant Voice recognized the Saudi

sensitivity to the use of Giant Voice, and required approval of the wing commander or his designee. The limitations inherent in the system made it unsuitable as a warning system for terrorist attacks or bomb threats. While the approval system in place was slower than having direct access, it was sufficient for the limited use for which the Giant Voice system was intended. This limited use is consistent with the manner in which Giant Voice is used at other installations. Another system of notification by security police patrols was in place to warn personnel of localized bomb threats. Under the circumstances, the multi-level activation process was reasonable.

### **c. Full-Time Interpreters**

#### **(1) Facts:**

(a) This section addresses the reasonableness of having only one interpreter for the wing in responding to a terrorist threat. From the time the wing moved to Dhahran in 1992, it relied on coordinating with the Saudis through those host nation contacts who spoke English. Shortly after his arrival, General Schwalier observed the difficulties associated with not having a full-time interpreter and hired the wing's first, and only, interpreter in September 1995.

(b) The interpreter was assigned to the support group commander, but the majority of his time was spent supporting the security police. In addition to assisting the security police, the interpreter worked on various claims and assisted the AFOSI detachment. In the event of competing requests for his services, the support group commander would set priorities. When the interpreter was on vacation, the wing returned to its old methods of coordination, relying on English speaking Saudi liaisons until his return.

(c) The interpreter was provided a pager and cell phone for easy contact. When security police saw what they believed to be suspicious activity outside the fence line, they paged the interpreter and requested he coordinate their concerns with the proper host nation forces. The Saudis required US authorities to contact their Saudi military police counterparts, who would in turn notify the civilian police. The system did not facilitate an immediate response by civilian police, and many times the suspicious person had departed the area before civilian police forces arrived.

(d) The night of the bombing, the wing interpreter was off-base at a local mall.

After security police on Building 131 contacted the CSC, the CSC paged the interpreter. He immediately contacted them via his cell phone. Security police advised him that a tank truck had just backed up and parked near the bushes along the northern perimeter and they needed him to call the Saudi military police as soon as possible. The interpreter immediately attempted to call the Saudi military police, but their telephones were busy. He then heard the bomb explosion.

(e) Prior to the wing hiring the interpreter, the security police had limited communication with the Saudi Military Police who had security responsibilities at Khobar Towers. After the interpreter was hired, the security police used the wing interpreter at will, night and day.

(f) AFOSI mostly relied on English speaking Saudis, but in those cases where an interpreter was required, they used the wing interpreter. They also used the services of the Protocol Officer at the U.S. Consulate, Dhahran and a U.S. Army Military Intelligence linguist for introductions and translations with host nation officials.

(2) **Standards:** There are no specific standards for assigning or hiring interpreters for wings.

(3) **Analysis:**

(a) Brigadier General Schwalier was the first wing commander assigned for one year, and the first to recognize the benefits of having an interpreter working for the wing. He hired the first interpreter for the wing and assigned him to the support group, because its members had the most frequent contact with the Saudis.

(b) The assigned interpreter was on-call 24-hours a day. Other than those times he was on leave, he responded when paged, called or requested. Wing personnel preferred to use the wing's interpreter than to go through the Saudi liaisons. The interpreter had to work hard to satisfy all the desires of the wing. Wing leadership believed that the interpreter did an outstanding job interfacing with the Saudis. In fact, the wing commander later recognized that the wing would have benefited from an additional interpreter, because the present interpreter worked so hard.

(c) On the night of 25 June 1996, the interpreter had been contacted and was seeking to establish contact with the Saudi military police when the explosion

occurred. Given the wing's reaction time from assessment of a potential threat to the explosion, approximately three to four minutes, the fact the interpreter had been contacted and was attempting to call the Saudi military police indicates that the notification was proceeding in a timely manner. The security police followed established Saudi procedures for notifying Saudi military police who would notify their civil police. The availability of the one full-time interpreter was not a limiting factor in the wing's response to the suspicious truck.

(d) There are no standards for assigning or authorizing interpreters for wings. As in this case, wing commanders must rely on their own judgment and resources to fill the position. Brigadier General Schwalier's decision to hire an interpreter showed initiative. It would have been possible to coordinate with the Saudi law enforcement offices without the wing interpreter, as the wing had done for the preceding five years. Indeed, having an interpreter in the wing may have speeded up the efforts to contact the Saudi military police. There is no indication having only one interpreter affected coordination with Saudi officials on 25 June 1996. It was reasonable to have only one interpreter.

#### **4. Training, Equipping and Manning the Guard Force:**

a. **General.** This section discusses the lack of a formal training program for security police personnel on temporary duty at Khobar Towers, the adequacy of the supplies of weapons and ammunition for the security force, and the maintenance of weapons.

##### **(1) Facts.**

(a) **Training the Security Force:** The security police squadron did not provide formal training to its members; the unit was not staffed to perform this function. Security police deploying from stateside units were expected to arrive trained. Despite the lack of training manpower for formal training, the security police commander conducted scenario-based training with his personnel. Training conducted from April to June 1996 included a response exercise to test patrols, an M-60 machine gun exercise at the Main Gate, and an exercise with vehicles to secure the Main Gate. Air Force guidance requires a training program and does not differentiate between permanent and provisional units. The chief of security police establishes and directs the unit training program which does not contain exceptions for deployed units.

(b) **Security Force Equipment:** Before the bombing, there were 181 M-16 rifles with 79,418 rounds of ammunition; 35 9mm handguns with 3,760 rounds; eight M203 grenade launchers with 252 40mm HE rounds; and seven M-60 machine guns with 20,395 rounds. The total number of people to be armed determines the amount of ammunition required. Using THREATCON CHARLIE as a baseline, the unit required 134 weapons to be issued with ammunition. Each member of the unit was armed with a single weapon.

(c) In THREATCON CHARLIE, the ammunition requirement for each person armed with an M-16 rifle is 210 rounds. Given this baseline and assuming each individual were armed with an M-16, 28,140 rounds of M-16 ammunition (134 x 210) were required. After allocating the 28,140 rounds, 51,278 would remain. However, not all posts required the issuance of an M-16 rifle. Some required the 9mm semi-automatic pistol, which used 9mm ammunition (basic load = 30 rounds) or the M-60 machine gun, which used 7.62mm ammunition (basic load = 800 rounds). The wing had 35 9mm handguns and 3,760 rounds of ammunition. If all 9mm handguns were issued with the requisite basic load, only 1,050 rounds (35 x 30) were required, leaving 2,710 rounds. The wing had 7 M-60 machine guns with 20,395 rounds of ammunition. If all 7 M-60 machine guns were issued with their basic load, 5,600 rounds were required (7 x 800), leaving 14,795 rounds.

(d) **How weapons were assigned:** The security police used two methods to assign weapons. The M-16s were assigned to an individual for the duration of their 90-day TDY. That individual was then responsible for cleaning the assigned weapon. 9mm handguns, on the other hand were rotated among different individuals because the wing did not have one to issue each SP.

(e) **Weapons Cleaning and Maintenance:** A detailed discussion of the facts, standards, and analysis pertaining to those subjects and the finding by the Downing Assessment regarding the discovery of dirty weapons or weapons that were not well maintained is contained in the next section.

(f) **Manning.** Air Force requirements and local commanders, the wing commander and his chief of security police, determine how many posts security police must work daily. The chief of security police identified 39 24-hour posts to be manned in THREATCON BRAVO. Their duties included stationary sentries, vehicle patrols and supervisors. In THREATCON CHARLIE, the unit was required to man 67

posts.

(g) There were 169 personnel assigned to the security police squadron at Dhahran before the bombing. They worked rotating 12 hour shifts in order to provide 24-hour coverage of posts dispersed throughout the King Abdul Aziz Air Base flight line and Khobar Towers complex. At THREATCON BRAVO, a minimum of 78 security police (39 x 2) were required. At THREATCON CHARLIE, a minimum of 134 (67 x 2) security police personnel were needed. For extended THREATCON CHARLIE, the unit needed an additional 44 personnel to allow assigned personnel time off. Preliminary coordination had been accomplished in the event this became necessary.

(h) At the time of the bombing, the security police manned the 39 posts required by THREATCON BRAVO. The Wing had been in THREATCON BRAVO since the OPM-SANG bombing in November 1995.

(i) The formula for security police shift manning in peacetime is 5.340 persons for each 24-hour post. Peacetime manning assumes an 8 hour workday, a six day work week with three days off, and normal rates of leave, TDY, training and illness. In this deployed location, the security police worked 12 hour shifts (two days on duty and one day off) to man the required posts. It was not uncommon for individuals to work more hours in the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) than they worked when they were not deployed.

(j) With respect to security forces working 12-hour shifts, this was noted when the wing was in advanced threat conditions after the bombing, which necessitated additional posts. It was common for personnel in the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) to work 12-hour shifts. Finally, sentries on static posts during 12-hour shifts were periodically rotated approximately every six hours to other duties to shield them from the elements and keep them alert.

**(k) Policies and Practices Regarding Weapons Proficiency.** The security police squadron did not provide proficiency (weapons qualification) training for its TDY members. Like formal training, deployed security police were expected to arrive in Dhahran proficient in their weapons from their home base. AFI 36-2255 does not require re-certification during a 90-day rotation. The security police squadron had set up procedures to check the weapons cards of incoming personnel to make sure they were proficient. There was no firing range readily available for security police

personnel to fire their weapons. Even without a firing range, the unit coordinated with the French to provide weapons training to a newly arrived airman whose proficiency was overlooked prior to his arrival. The French range was approximately 30 miles from Khobar Towers. The evidence shows that M-16 rifles and M-60 machine guns throughout Southwest Asia had not been fired since the Gulf War. Without being fired, a weapon cannot be battle-sighted to zero. However, all weapons at Dhahran were mechanically zeroed when they were inspected by the Combat Arms Training and Maintenance (CATM) Technician. Basically, mechanical zeroing is not as accurate as zeroing after firing, but it is close. The security police commander was very confident that the weapons were properly calibrated for targets up to 300 meters. Deploying security forces' weapons proficiency training was conducted at their home base.

(2) **Standards:**

(a) Standards, regulations and instructions applicable to security police training, equipment and manning are cited below.

(b) **Instructions affecting training.** AFI 36-2225, *Security Police Training and Standardization Evaluation Programs*, 1 Mar 96. This instruction explains procedures and establishes requirements and guidelines for the security police unit training and standardization evaluation programs. Mandatory standards for the Chief of Security Police are:

(1) Establish the unit training program with guidance from the major command.

(2) Schedule and conduct orientation and initial training.

(3) Determine contingency training requirements.

(c) AFI 36-2226, *Combat Arms Training and Maintenance (CATM) Program*, 16 Jun 94. This instruction describes how to plan, conduct, administer, evaluate, and manage the CATM Program, which develops individual ground-weapon skills. Key standards:

(1) It requires CATM technicians to supervise and perform maintenance and inspections on all weapons assigned.

(2) The Installation Commander funds ranges and ensures support facilities, weapons maintenance facilities, and an adequate number of qualified combat arms personnel are available to the installation's CATM program.

(3) The Chief of Security Police appoints a CATM Superintendent or NCOIC who is at least a 7-skill level.

(4) Exempts personnel serving short overseas tours from firearms training until they complete their original tours, not to exceed 24 months. However, commanders at these overseas locations are encouraged to provide firearms training to meet normal firearms training requirements whenever possible.

(d) AFM 36-2227, Volume 1, *Combat Arms Training and Maintenance (CATM) Training Management and Range Operations*, 1 February 1996. This manual provides procedures and guidance for managing the CATM section. It includes procedures on firearms training programs, range operation and management, and weapons maintenance. It requires weapons to be inspected semiannually for cleanliness, lubrication, and proper function.

(e) **Instructions applicable to manning.** HQ USAF/SFX Memorandum, 18 Mar 97 w/atch. This memorandum provides security police post manning factors to compute manpower requirements per authorized position. In addition, it provides an outline of the objective wing security police squadron manpower.

(f) **Instructions applicable to equipment.** Air Force Catalog (AFCAT) 21-209, *Ground Munitions*, 28 October 1994. This catalog lists who has operational and training munitions authorizations and explains how these authorizations are established, reviewed and changed. USCENTAF minimum requirements include:

(1) 168 rounds of 5.56mm ball ammunition for each M-16;

(2) 800 rounds of 7.62mm ball ammunition for each M-60;

(3) 30 rounds of 9mm ball ammunition for each M9 handgun;

(4) Various amounts (of different numbers) of rounds for the M203 Grenade Launcher depending upon the type of ammunition.

(3) **Analysis:**

(a) This analysis will not address issues relating to the maintenance and cleaning of weapons. That subject is addressed separately in the next section.

(b) **Training.** AFI 36-2225 requires the Security Police Commander to establish a training program. AFI 36-2201, provides general guidelines for that program. It is generally understood that a training program will include some systematic process including a system of record keeping and job certification. While Lieutenant Colonel Traister did initiate training scenarios, it is doubtful that these would qualify as a training program. On the other hand, there were significant limiting factors which made the establishment of a formal training program nearly impossible.

(c) All of the personnel assigned were required to arrive fully qualified and, after 90 day rotations, returned to their parent organizations which were required to maintain their own formal training program. To maintain the continuity of such a formal program with all personnel rotating every 90 days, including the commander, would have been a tremendous undertaking and would have detracted from other efforts to support the mission. A significant level of effort to improve the physical security of Khobar Towers was in progress.

(d) The requirements of AFI 36-2225 for mission oriented training were being addressed by Lieutenant Colonel Traister who initiated several training exercises and scenarios. Concentration on these training scenarios and exercises would appear to have been a prudent use of time, resources and personnel. The deviations from what would officially be considered a training program were minor in light of the mission and the actual training that took place. Lieutenant Colonel Traister did not request additional manning to fulfill the technical requirements of a formal training program for record keeping and certification of individuals who were suppose to be fully qualified on arrival and were only in country for 90 days.

(e) **Ammunition and Manning.** The standards regarding ammunition and manning were clearly met. The standards are mathematical in their application. The squadron was manned to maintain the various THREATCON levels for the requisite time periods and had made initial arrangements for increased manning

should they need to sustain THREATCON CHARLIE for long durations.

(4) **Conclusion:** Standards regarding ammunition stocks and manning levels were met. The security police commander did not meet the requirement for a formal training program. When Lieutenant Colonel Traister arrived, there was no formal training program. He did initiate mission oriented training as required. While manning was adequate for all mission oriented activities including the various threat conditions, Lieutenant Colonel Traister would have had to request additional manning to satisfy the administrative record keeping requirements of a formal program. In light of the 90-day rotation policy, the fact that personnel were to arrive fully trained, the initiation of mission oriented training, and the sensitivity regarding the size of the force, the failure to institute a formal training program was reasonable.

#### **b. Maintenance of Weapons:**

##### **(1) Facts:**

(a) Within Finding 20 of the Downing Assessment it was observed that weapons "were dirty and/or not well maintained at Khobar Towers and other locations in the region. In some instances, it was doubtful that these weapons would have functioned properly, if fired." This section focuses on the maintenance and condition of weapons at Khobar Towers.

(b) The 4404th Security Police Squadron had a Combat Arms Training and Maintenance (CATM) specialist assigned to at the time of the Khobar Towers bombing. He was the only CATM specialist in the AOR at the time. As such, he was responsible for inspecting and maintaining all the Air Force weapons in the AOR. Weapons in daily use required semi-annual functional inspection. During the inspection, the weapon is disassembled-checked to determine if it will function without actually firing it. During his rotation, the CATM specialist conducted the inspection at Dhahran, three locations in Kuwait, Ali Al Salem, and Al Jaber. Most other locations belonging to the 4404th Wing (P) did not require inspections during his rotation, however one site may have been due an inspection that was not completed.

(c) The CATM specialist inspected all the M-16s at Dhahran before the bombing and mechanically zeroed them. All the weapons were in operational condition.

Because of the heat and humidity, the CATM specialist found some surface rust on the outside of some of the barrels near the front sight and flash suppresser. There was no rust on the internal components including the bolt and other operational parts. He discovered the surface rust on the 10 to 25 weapons that had been there the longest.

(d) There were continuing problems with rust on the M-60 machine guns. Two were kept at all times in the air-conditioned static machine gun bunker. The end of the barrel near the flash suppresser stuck out of the bunker into the heat and humidity while the rest of the weapon was in the air-conditioned bunker. Some rust developed externally where the humidity condensed on the cold barrel. The weapons had to be rotated to wipe off any surface rust and re-oiled. As with the M-16s, there was no rust on the internal components. The M-60s were rotated every Tuesday and Saturday.

(e) The armory maintained approximately 35 9mm handguns. As with the other weapons, some developed surface rust despite daily lubrication by the armorers.

(f) (U) The CATM specialist never found a weapon of any type that did not function, nor was one ever reported.

(g) Originally, the squadron required security police personnel to clean their assigned weapon, at a minimum, every fifth cycle. This normally meant every two weeks as each cycle consisted of two days on and one day off duty. Prior to the Khobar Towers bombing, the minimum cleaning cycle was reduced to one week. In order to enforce the requirement, armory personnel posted the names of those security police who returned "dirty" weapons to the armory. "Dirty" in the context of the environment meant a thin coat of dust from being outside with the weapon during the day. The wind would blow fine sand onto the weapon which would stick to the lubricated parts. If the member did not have a plastic muzzle cap, sand could travel down the barrel as well. Normally a "dirty" weapon merely needs to be wiped off followed by a coat of lubricant. Since the weapons were not fired, there would not be any carbon. Normally the sand would be around the front sight, the rear sight and the outside of the barrel.

(h) Prior to the Khobar Towers bombing, personnel did not deploy with weapons but were assigned a weapon on arrival. They were assigned the same M-16 for their entire rotation. Because the number of 9 millimeters was limited, they would be

rotated. The armorers were responsible for cleaning and maintaining the unassigned M-16s and the 9-millimeter handguns.

(i) After the Downing Assessment visited the facility, the CATM specialist was informed by the operations officer that the Downing Assessment had inspected the two M-60 machine guns and was of the opinion that the weapons were non-operational. The CATM specialist immediately inspected the guns. One had a thumbprint size rust spot on the outside of the receiver, the spot where the user would hold on to the weapon. The spot did not interfere with the operation of the weapon. Function checks were performed immediately and both M-60 machine guns were found to function properly.

(j) It is not possible to determine if a weapon is functional merely by looking at it absent obvious damage. Unless the weapon is taken apart and inspected for such things as the placement of the firing pin, an observer cannot tell if it is operational without firing it.

## (2) **Standards:**

(a) AFI 36-2226, *Combat Arms Training and Maintenance (CATM) Program*, 16 Jun 94. This instruction describes how to plan, conduct, administer, evaluate, and manage the CATM Program, which develops individual ground-weapon skills. It requires CATM technicians to supervise and perform maintenance and inspections on all weapons assigned.

(b) AFM 36-2227, Volume 1, *Combat Arms Training and Maintenance (CATM) Training Management and Range Operations*, 1 February 1996. This manual provides procedures and guidance for managing the CATM section. It includes procedures on firearms training programs, range operation and management, and weapons maintenance. It requires weapons to be inspected semiannually for cleanliness, lubrication, and proper function.

(c) 4404th Wing (P) Security Police Squadron Operating Instruction 31-201, 8 Jun 1996, *Operation of the Security Police Armory*, required all flight personnel to clean their assigned weapon weekly. Weapons exposed to adverse weather were required to be cleaned and lightly oiled before turn in. Maintenance of weapons assigned to the Armory was the responsibility of the Armorer.

(3) **Analysis:**

(a) The semi-annual inspections were being completed as required by AFM 36-2227, with the possible exception that one six month inspection at one site. The requirements of AFI 36-2226 were being discharged by the CATM specialist. He also enforced the provisions of the Squadron Operating Instruction.

(b) While there was some rust on weapons, it was not unexpected considering the conditions in the AOR, It did not affect the operation of the weapons which were fully functional. It was natural for some fine sand to cling to the weapons by the end of the day. The operating instruction requiring weapons to be cleaned was being enforced.

(4) **Conclusion:** The wing was in compliance with all directives dealing with weapons maintenance, with the possible exception of the inspection of one site.

**5. Establishment of THREATCON Levels.**

**a. Facts.**

(1) This section examines the adequacy of threat conditions for Khobar Towers established by the wing commander. From March 1992 through November 1995, USCENTCOM declared the terrorist threat level in Saudi Arabia as MEDIUM. After the bombing at OPM-SANG, USCENTCOM raised the threat assessment to HIGH.

(2) After the OPM-SANG bombing in November 1995, the wing commander established the threat condition at Khobar Towers and King Abdul Aziz Air Base at BRAVO. Additionally, a number of measures for CHARLIE had been implemented. He coordinated the THREATCON with the JTF-SWA, the Army component commander, the British and the French. He conducted weekly meetings with his staff to address force protection issues, providing an opportunity to reevaluate the appropriateness of the threat condition. The commander's staff discussed, at length, the appropriate threat condition.

(3) US authorities recognized the likelihood of another bomb attack in the AOR. Khobar Towers was recognized as one of the more likely points of attack. A

Military Intelligence Digest (MID) report dated 17 June 1996 indicated there was an increased security threat for Khobar Towers. The MID summarized information that the AFOSI had sent up for publication. The local AFOSI offices actually had more information about each individual occurrence, which suggested the incidents were not as threatening as reported in the MID. The wing commander had not seen the MID which was published just eight days prior to the bombing, although he had been briefed on the underlying incidents.

(4) The Downing Assessment stated that, when considering raising the THREATCON level from BRAVO to CHARLIE, the support group commander was told by the security police squadron commander that there were insufficient personnel to sustain the number of posts at THREATCON CHARLIE, suggesting that the decision not to go to THREATCON CHARLIE was driven by manning considerations. However, the support group commander specifically denied that manpower constraints dictated the threat level. Instead, he indicated the THREATCON was not raised because the conditions for CHARLIE were not present. The support group commander explained that an "imminent threat" against a "specific target" had not been identified. The security police squadron commander also indicated that he did not believe THREATCON CHARLIE was necessary or justifiable because the threat was not imminent. He also stated that additional manning would be requested for THREATCON CHARLIE. Most such requests had been granted by USCENTAF and USCENTCOM.

**b. Standards:** Several regulations and guides provide instructions on establishing the threat condition. This is handled as a part of overall efforts dedicated toward force protection.

(1) DoD 0-2000.12-H, *Protection of DoD Personnel and Activities Against Acts of Terrorism and Political Turbulence* (February 1993), specifically applies to unified and specified commands, and defense agencies. It provides general guidance to commanders, and suggestions for programs to be implemented.

(2) DoD 0-2000.12-H, Appendix BB, also defines the criteria for threat conditions.

THREATCON ALPHA ... applies when there is a general threat of possible terrorist activity against installations and personnel, the nature and extent of which are unpredictable, when the circumstances do not justify full implementation of the measures of

threat condition BRAVO.... The measures in this threat condition must be capable of being maintained indefinitely.

THREATCON BRAVO ... applies when an increased and more predictable threat of terrorist activity exists. The measures in this threat condition must be capable of being maintained for weeks without causing undue hardship, without affecting operational capabilities, and aggravating relations with local authorities.

THREATCON CHARLIE ... applies when an incident occurs or when intelligence is received indicating some form of terrorist action against personnel and facilities is imminent. Implementation of measures in the THREATCON for more than a short period will create a hardship and affect peacetime activities ....(emphasis added)

(3) Air Force Instruction 31-210, *The Air Force Antiterrorism (AT) Program* (1 July 1995), defines the installation commanders' role in terms of certain functions, but does not use mandatory language. The installation commander's functions include implementing THREATCON measures as specified in DoDD 0-2000.12, *DoD Combating Terrorism Program*, as appropriate.

(4) Joint Publication 3-07.2, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism*, (25 June 1993), provides general guidance on the establishment of threat conditions, as part of force protection. Joint doctrine is authoritative but not directive. Joint Pub 1-01 specifically provides that "Commanders will exercise judgment in applying the procedures herein to accomplish their missions. This doctrine ... should be followed except when, in the judgment of the commander, exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise."

(5) USCENTCOM Message, 10 April 1996, *Letter of Instruction for Force Protection within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, was directive for all U.S. military forces in Saudi Arabia. It provided that the Commander, JTF-SWA, was to perform force protection oversight for all combatant forces. It also stated the commander, JTF-SWA, had the authority necessary to "set minimum threat conditions for all deployed combatant forces; monitor actual threat conditions at all deployed combatant force locations; direct the preparation of vulnerability assessments; direct or conduct security related inspections; and direct or conduct security related assistance/site visits."

(6) The 4404th Wing (P) Installation Security Plan set forth various guidelines for executing its force protection mission. The plan specifically addressed measures to be taken in threat conditions ALPHA, BRAVO, CHARLIE, and DELTA.

### c. Analysis

(1) Under AFI 31-210, the wing commander, was required to establish the installation's threat condition as specified in DoDD 0-2000.12, *DoD Combating Terrorism Program*, as appropriate. The objective standards required for establishing threat conditions were set out in the definitions. Even though objective criteria for threat conditions are provided, commanders are nonetheless required to exercise their own judgment in establishing threat conditions, considering the mission, the local environment and the nature of the threat.

(2) The wing commander set the THREATCON for his installation. He coordinated the THREATCON with the JTF-SWA, the Army component commander, the British and the French. He conducted weekly meetings with his staff to address force protection issues, providing a weekly opportunity to reevaluate the appropriateness of the threat condition. Also, the commander's staff discussed at length the appropriate threat condition.

(3) According to DoD 2000.12H, Appendix BB, THREATCON BRAVO is appropriate in situations where "an increased and more predictable threat of terrorist activity exists." Given the generalized nature of the threat (discussed in section III.B.2, above), and the lack of any indication that an attack was "imminent," it appears the THREATCON BRAVO was appropriate. There was no specific information of an imminent threat--indeed none of the intelligence provided any indication of when a terrorist attack might occur. In the complete absence of any indication that an attack was "imminent," THREATCON CHARLIE was neither required nor appropriate. Nevertheless, the wing commander implemented some measures from CHARLIE. He acted in accordance with the objective criteria for establishing threat conditions.

(4) The suggestion that the decision to establish the THREATCON at BRAVO was driven by manning is not supported by the evidence. The conclusion seems to be based upon Lieutenant Colonel Traister's observation that his unit could only support THREATCON CHARLIE for two or three weeks. However, it is clear that

going to THREATCON CHARLIE is *expected* to cause such manning problems. DoDD 2000.12, paragraph 8, specifically anticipates such a manning problem in THREATCON CHARLIE, and therefore notes that it is a condition to be maintained for a short time. Moreover, the commanders at Khobar Towers were aware of the need for additional manning should CHARLIE be required, and they stood ready to request such manning should it have been necessary. When Lieutenant Colonel Traister made the comments about the manning difficulties presented by THREATCON CHARLIE, he noted that he would have to request additional manning. It is appropriate that commanders consider the impact on manning when THREATCON change--indeed, the objective guidance cited above makes this consideration a required part of the decision process.

#### **D. CHAIN OF COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. **Facts.** This section analyzes the adequacy of the supervision and support provided by the chain of command in the area of force protection.

a. On August 26, 1992, USCINCCENTCOM activated the JTF-SWA at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. At the outset of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH, USCENCOM approved a 90 day rotation policy for Air Force personnel, implemented after 15 October 1992. In January 1995, the 90-day rotation policy was reviewed by Headquarters, Air Force Military Personnel Center, and coordinated with the commanders of joint commands. This review was driven by the increase in TDY taskings for Air Force members world-wide which greatly increased the operations tempo for the Air Force, and the desire to minimize the hardships which accompany such requirements. In response, USCENCOM expressed the opinion that a standard tour length "between 120 to 179 days provides a degree of continuity and allows enough flexibility to meet service/mission specific requirements ...." USCINCCENT observed that, "although a 90 day tour length works well for the Air Force, it may not provide required continuity and transition time for other services ...." USCENCOM continued the 90-day rotation policy for Air Force personnel, with exceptions for select positions. As the Joint Task Force mission continued into 1995, the Commander, USCENAF, requested that the tour lengths for the commanders, JTF-SWA and the 4404th Wing (P), as well as nine other positions be extended to one year. After coordination with USCENCOM and Air Combat Command (ACC), these tours were extended.

b. The United States Air Force provided personnel to Operation SOUTHERN

WATCH taken from various Air Force organizations, including, in order of priority, USCENTAF, ACC, and other Air Force resources world-wide. Most were deployed on temporary duty (TDY) for 90 day rotations. At the time of the bombing in June 1996, a few positions within the 4404th Wing (P) required TDYs longer than 90 days, including the commanders of JTF-SWA and 4404th Wing (P). Brigadier General Schwalier requested that seven additional positions within the wing, including the chief of security police, be converted to one-year tours. USCENTAF supported the request, adding two one-year billets for intelligence officers. The number of personnel at the 4404th Wing (P) and their tour lengths were as follows:

99 Less than 90 days

2,139 91 days

163 120 days

24 179 days

15 (1 pending) 1 year remote

c. There were disadvantages to having most personnel on 90-day tours. One disadvantage of 90-day tours was that it resulted in a turnover of about 10 percent of the personnel each week. While this turnover rate affects continuity, having key billets on one year tours helped provide necessary continuity. The Downing Assessment found that the short tours affected the continuity and effectiveness of force protection teams and initiatives, prevented the development of teamwork necessary for security operations, hampered effective liaison with host-nation intelligence counterparts, and prevented development of low-level intelligence sources.

d. Other factors weighed in favor of 90-day rotations. Having few personnel on longer tours is consistent with Saudi desires to avoid the appearance of having a permanent force in the AOR. At the time of the bombing, the Saudis perceived one-year tours as permanent. Saudi Arabia was recognized as a harsh environment in which to conduct a mission, even more so if personnel are required to maintain THREATCON CHARLIE on a daily basis. Limiting TDYs to 90 days helps reduce

the hardships experienced by the members tasked to support the operation. It also reduces the impact on the personnel of the units which give up members to the task force. As Lieutenant Colonel Traister noted, after the drawdown of forces in the Air Force, security police manning was reduced about 50 percent. Even though there is a ten percent turnover each week, the new personnel join a force with 90 percent experienced personnel, providing a constant level of preparedness. If a new unit replaces an existing one, it takes time for the new unit to become fully adjusted to the new duty assignment. A constant rotation of personnel provides greater continuity than turning over whole units..

**e. USCENTCOM Involvement.**

(1) USCENTCOM had operational control over the AOR including Saudi Arabia. USCINCCENT, General J.H. Binford Peay, III, commander of the combatant command, had authority over assigned commands to organize, employ and direct all aspects of military operations necessary to accomplish OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH. As such, USCENTCOM had operational control over USCENTAF, JTF-SWA and the 4404th Wing (P).

(2) From March 1992 through November 1995, USCENTCOM determined the terrorist threat level in Saudi Arabia to be MEDIUM. After the bombing at OPM-SANG, USCENTCOM raised the threat level assessment to HIGH. This threat level differs from the threat condition, which refers to an installation's defensive posture. After the bombing in November 1995, USCENTCOM established a force protection board as a link to the component commanders and the field.

(3) USCINCCENT communicated regularly with commanders on force protection issues. He briefed Major General Anderson before his assignment as Commander, JTF-SWA, specifically emphasizing force protection. USCENTCOM sent out a series of messages between November 1995 and April 1996 to give commanders guidance on force protection issues. He or his staff also visited several sites in the AOR, though not all. Between September 1994 and June 1996, USCINCCENT made 16 visits to Saudi Arabia, including visits with the commander, JTF-SWA, in September 1995 and April 1996. Major General Hurd, Director of Operations, J3, USCENTCOM, visited sites in the AOR, including Khobar Towers. Brigadier General Schwalier showed Major General Hurd the perimeter and discussed force protection issues with him.

(4) In February 1996, USCENTCOM hosted a two day conference for component commanders, including USCENTAF and JTF-SWA, which included a briefing on force protection and a one hour discussion on division of responsibilities. This discussion prompted the production of the 10 April 1996 message, Letter of Instruction, outlining USCENTCOM's and JTF-SWA's responsibilities with respect to force protection. Because USCENTCOM was not forward-stationed, (the headquarters is at MacDill AFB, Florida) USCINCCENT relied upon the Commander, JTF-SWA, to perform much of USCENTCOM's oversight role, and gave him specific authority to inspect the units for force protection measures.

(5) USCENTCOM involvement with the wing was minimal below the wing commander level. Testimony indicated that the USCENTCOM staff considered any staff interaction to be the responsibility of the component. The opinion that the wing was an attached versus assigned unit (a contingency versus permanent unit) further reinforced their belief that oversight was not within their purview as a "war-fighting" headquarters. The USCENTCOM IG staff was small, and did not undertake the same functions as an IG staff at a major command. Instead, USCENTCOM relied upon component commanders for IG inspections.

#### **f. USCENTAF Involvement.**

(1) As the Air Force component command to USCENTCOM, USCENTAF had operational control over the 4404th Wing (P). USCENTAF is located at Shaw AFB, South Carolina. The headquarters was not located in the AOR, consistent with the political sensitivity to the number of US forces stationed in the AOR.

(2) Lieutenant General Jumper, the Commander, USCENTAF, was a direct supervisor of the Commander, 4404th Wing (P). The members of the wing understood USCENTAF to be their immediate headquarters. Lieutenant General Jumper had previously served as the Commander, JTF-SWA, and was thoroughly familiar with the AOR. He spoke regularly with the wing commander. Lieutenant General Jumper, and members of his functional staff, visited the AOR several times, touring facilities and discussing force protection efforts. They visited Khobar Towers on 19-20 November 1995.

(3) USCENTAF did not have experts on its staff to assist subordinate units. There was no security police section on the USCENTAF staff. The Downing Assessment found that USCENTAF relied upon Air Combat Command for some critical

functions, such as Inspector General inspections. Most of the USCENTAF personnel were dedicated to operational issues; about 25 people were assigned to provide assistance to support functions. USCENTAF relied on experts from other organizations to provide assistance.

(4) The USCENTAF civil engineering section conducted annual staff assistance visits which included an inspection of fire prevention measures. These were the only ones performed by functional staff representatives. Although their visits and reports focused on inspections rather than assistance, they appeared to be the most involved. Another significant factor affecting the interface between USCENTAF and the wing was the small size of the USCENTAF support staff and their other taskings, such as exercise support and contingency planning.

(5) The 4404th Wing (P) requested that seven positions within the wing be converted to one-year tours. USCENTAF supported the request, and recommended that two additional positions for intelligence officers be converted to one-year tours. The additional nine one-year tours were approved.

**g. JTF-SWA Involvement.**

(1) When the Joint Task Force-Southwest Asia was created in November 1992, USCENTCOM delegated tactical control (TACON), but retained the operational control (OPCON) over assigned forces. TACON is the detailed and usually local direction and control of movements necessary to accomplish assigned missions. Thus, JTF-SWA controlled the aircraft of the 4404th Wing (P) after they were airborne.

(2) Major General Anderson, Commander of JTF-SWA, had tactical control over the forces under the wing. His role concerning force protection for subordinate organizations was limited to coordination and oversight. He indicated he was not able to order a supporting commander to take a specific action, although he did not feel it presented any problems, due to the nature of his relationships with the commanders concerned, and the fact that he had the authority of USCINCENT behind him. Major General Anderson's coordination function arose from the USCENTCOM Letter of Instruction on force protection, dated 10 April 1996, which he discussed with the drafters and his legal staff. Major General Anderson did not establish any standardized measures for force protection for supporting units, rather he coordinated on the protective measures taken by each organization.

JTF-SWA had a force protection officer assigned, who was in daily contact with his counterparts in intelligence and the security police.

(3) In performing his oversight function, Major General Anderson visited support units, personally or by using functional experts. His second highest priority for inspection, right behind mission accomplishment, was force protection. He visited Khobar Towers on several occasions and inspected their force protection efforts. Meetings of the force protection committee were chaired by the Vice Commander, JTF-SWA.

(4) Lieutenant General Franklin served as the commander of JTF-SWA prior to Major General Anderson. He served a 90-day rotation beginning in February 1995, and went on to serve the first one year tour as the commander of JTF-SWA. He was committed to force protection, and, as the threat increased in Saudi Arabia, initiated measures to protect the security of the US personnel. He negotiated with the Saudis for physical improvements to compounds, directed that vulnerability assessments be conducted, disseminated intelligence and antiterrorist information, and provided guidance to other units.

## 2. Standards.

a. DoDD 0-2000.12, *DoD Combating Terrorism Program* (Aug 27, 1990), requires the development, publication and maintenance of DoD 0-2000.12-H to provide guidance to commanders on force protection. Paragraph 8, of DoDD 0-2000.12 provides:

(1) The Commanders of the Unified and Specified Commands with territorial responsibilities shall:

(a) Establish command policies and programs for the protection of DoD personnel and their families, facilities, and other materiel resources from terrorist acts.

(b) Assess the terrorist threat for the theater according to this Directive, and provide a copy of the threat assessment to the Military Services....

(c) Keep subordinate commanders and chiefs of mission informed of the nature and degree of the local threat, and ensure that commanders are prepared to respond to threat changes.

(d) Assist subordinate commanders and DoD Agencies, within their geographic regions, in implementing antiterrorism programs.

(e) Ensure that THREATCONs are uniformly implemented and disseminated as specified by this Directive and by guidance in supporting Directives.

b. DoD 0-2000.12-H, *Protection of DoD Personnel and Activities Against Acts of Terrorism and Political Turbulence* (February 1993), specifically applies to unified and specified commands, and defense agencies. It is intended to be a reference document, and provides general guidance to commanders on force protection.

c. Air Force Instruction 31-210, *The Air Force Antiterrorism (AT) Program* (1 July 1995), prescribes broad areas of responsibility for antiterrorism efforts among the headquarters. The instruction implements DoDD 0-2000.12 and DoD 0-2000.12-H. Major commands are required to establish an antiterrorism program tailored to the local mission, conditions and the terrorist threat. This was in addition to their oversight responsibility exercised through their command security police chief under AFPD 31-2, Law Enforcement, 6 May 94. The instruction defines the installation commanders' role in terms of certain functions, but does not use mandatory language.

d. Joint Publication 3-07.2, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism*, (25 June 1993) provides commanders "guidance on how to organize, plan and train for the employment of US forces in interagency and multinational antiterrorism operations." Joint doctrine is authoritative but not directive. Joint Pub 1-01 specifically provides that "Commanders will exercise judgment in applying the procedures herein to accomplish their missions. This doctrine ... should be followed except when, in the judgment of the commander, exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise." Combatant Commanders are to designate a staff officer, usually in the J-3 or law enforcement or security section, to supervise, inspect, test and report on the base antiterrorism programs within theater. Joint Pub 3-07.2, applies to commanders of combatant commands, subunified commands, joint task forces, and their component commands. Thus, it applied to

USCENTCOM, USCENTAF, and the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P). Joint Pub 3-07.2 procedures were to be followed except in exceptional circumstances. It provides:

(1) [E]very commander, regardless of echelon of command or branch of Service, has an inherent responsibility for planning, resourcing, training, exercising, and executing antiterrorism measures to provide for the security of command.

(2) Theater Combatant Commanders:

(a) Through their chain of command, create a level of awareness, appreciation, and readiness commensurate to the threat.

(b) Ensure proper coordination of all local policies and measures for protecting DoD facilities, resources, equipment, personnel, and family members in foreign areas from terrorist acts and for assisting their subordinate commanders in implementing Military Service programs.

(c) Ensure DoD THREATCONS for combating terrorism are uniformly implemented ....

(d) Serve as the DoD point of contact with US embassies and host nation officials ....

(e) Assess the terrorist threat for the theater and provide a copy of the threat assessment to the Services.

e. USCENTCOMR 190-2, *USCENTCOM Antiterrorism Measures* (12 July 1995), applies to all units under operational control of USCINCCENT. Under the regulation, USCINCCENT is not responsible for setting the THREATCON for an installation, but is expected to:

(1) Ensure USCENTCOM installations and activities develop, maintain and make available protective procedures, guidance and instructions suitable to the local terrorist threat conditions, and in accordance with the organization's mission and other local

conditions.

(2) Keep commanders informed of the nature and degree of the local terrorist threat and ensure they are prepared to respond appropriately to changes in that threat.

(3) Ensure proper coordination of all local policies and measures to protect DoD personnel from terrorist acts, and assist military theater commanders in implementing programs developed under DoDD 0-2000.12.

f. Additionally, specific offices within USCENTCOM are tasked to assist USCINCCENT in providing such support to the USCENTCOM activities. It appears that USCENTCOM regulations were not intended to apply to the 4404th Wing (P) or other similar units. At the time it was written, the drafters of USCENTCOMR 190-2 thought they did not have the authority to issue instructions on force protection to attached units. For that reason, it appears this regulation was never communicated to JTF-SWA or the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P).

g. USCENTCOM Message, 10 April 1996, *Letter of Instruction for Force Protection within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, was directive for all U.S. military forces in Saudi Arabia. It provided that the Commander, JTF-SWA, was to perform force protection oversight for all combatant forces. It also stated the commander, JTF-SWA, had the authority necessary to "set minimum threat conditions for all deployed combatant forces; monitor actual threat conditions at all deployed combatant force locations; direct the preparation of vulnerability assessments; direct or conduct security related inspections; and direct or conduct security related assistance/site visits."

h. AFPD 31-3, *Air Base Defense*, March 2, 1995, established policy for base defense operations, addressed the responsibilities of Air Force components of joint commands in ensuring force protection, and outlined installation commanders' responsibilities for the defense of assets under their control. The policy directive specifically provided:

2.3 USAF components of joint commands will provide planning support to ensure adequate forces and intelligence are dedicated to

protect USAF resources. The Air Force component, in coordination with the joint command, will ... tailor defense force structure and equipment to match force protection needs for Air Force war-fighting resources.

### 3. (U ) **Analysis.**

#### a. **USCENTCOM.**

(1) USCINCCENT was responsible for assuring each organization planned, trained, exercised and executed antiterrorism measures, where appropriate. USCINCCENT did visit the AOR on numerous occasions, however there is no evidence that USCINCCENT personally visited the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) or other units, or that formal inspections were conducted by USCENTCOM personnel. USCENTCOM was located over 7,000 miles from Dhahran. The commander of a large unit with widely separated facilities cannot be expected to personally perform all inspections--rather, he must rely on subordinate staff officers and commanders to complete such functions. Major General Hurd, the USCENTCOM Director of Operations, visited Khobar Towers and other sites in the AOR. Brigadier General Schwalier took Major General Hurd on a tour of the perimeter and discussed force protection issues with him. The 10 April 1996 Letter of Instruction outlining USCENTCOM's and JTF-SWA's responsibilities delegated from USCINCCENT to JTF-SWA the authority for inspecting and overseeing the force protection efforts of the wing. Considering the relative locations of both organizations, the decision to delegate force protection responsibilities to the local commander was reasonable.

(2) Under DoDD 0-2000.12 and USCENTCOMR 190-2, USCENTCOM is responsible for providing a threat assessment to subordinate units. USCENTCOM fulfilled this objective requirement by providing a threat assessment for the AOR, and updating it as circumstances dictated. As noted above, USCENTCOM raised the threat level for the AOR from MEDIUM to HIGH after the bombing at OPM-SANG in November 1995. USCENTCOM does not set the threat condition for individual installations, but is expected to ensure a subordinate bases' procedures are adequate. USCENTCOM's supervision was sufficient to meet its responsibility to oversee force protection.

(3) The intelligence concerning the nature of the terrorist threat to Khobar Towers was available to USCINCCENT, who had the responsibility to review the

intelligence and assess the nature of the threat as part of his inherent duties to take adequate measures to protect forces. USCINCENT indicated he kept himself constantly apprised of the intelligence reports from the AOR. He stated that, although there were general indications of increased activity, there was no clear indication of an impending major terrorist attack. This is consistent with the evaluations of others and the nature of the information available which lacked specificity as to a time, place or method of attack.

(4) USCENTCOM oversight of the daily operations of the wing was minimal given the immense geographical distance between them. This is consistent with Joint Pub 0-2, Chapter III, paragraph 3, which provides that command authority should normally be exercised through the commanders of subordinate organizations, and Joint Pub 3-07.2, p.I-3, which indicates theater combatant commanders should work "through the chain of command," to "create a level of awareness, appreciation and readiness commensurate to the threat."

(5) USCENTCOM coordinated on and accepted the 90-day rotation policy in the AOR. The Downing Assessment found that the 90-day rotation policy contributed to problems in force protection. There were disadvantages to the 90-day rotation, however, there was no indication that the rotation policy contributed to the bombing.

(a) The Downing Assessment found that the short tours affected the continuity and effectiveness of force protection teams and initiatives. Force protection initiatives at the 4404th Wing (P) began in earnest after the bombing at OPM-SANG in November 1996. They were handled by several standing committees, including the force protection working group and the Security Council. The groups considered the vulnerability assessments, discussed the various recommendations for corrective action, and implemented most of the proposals. There is no evidence establishing that any turnover in personnel during the working groups' consideration of these matters resulted in some adverse impact on these initiatives.

(b) The Downing Assessment also found that the 90-day rotations prevented the development of teamwork necessary for security operations. The commander of the security police squadron agreed that longer tours would increase the continuity and improve the ability of units to function together. On 25 June 1996, the guards spotted the tank truck as soon as it pulled up outside the fence, notified the CSC and began an evacuation of the building. There is no evidence indicating that the

security police squadron's ability to function together caused or contributed to the bombing at Khobar Towers.

(c) The Downing Assessment opined the 90-day tours hampered effective liaison with host-nation intelligence counterparts. SA McDonald, an AFOSI agent assigned to the 4404th Wing (P) agreed that longer tours would help US intelligence agents develop a rapport with their Saudi counterparts. There is no indication that any shortcoming in relations with Saudi intelligence caused or contributed to the bombing, or hampered readiness.

(d) The Downing Assessment found that the 90-day tours prevented intelligence agents from developing low-level intelligence sources. However, there is evidence indicating US intelligence assets were not authorized to develop low-level intelligence sources in Saudi Arabia. SA Reddecliff consulted with the CIA representative in Riyadh, and was advised that he was not to attempt to develop low-level sources.

(e) The Downing Assessment found that frequent rotations among intelligence personnel contributed to a lack of intelligence support for the 4404th Wing (P) commander. However, there is no evidence demonstrating the wing commander was deprived of any intelligence because of the rotation of intelligence personnel. The Downing Assessment characterized SA Reddecliff's 9 April 1996 message as an example of a failure of intelligence. The message did not contain any new intelligence information. SA Reddecliff only recommended that, in the event of an attack by a stand-off weapon from the northern perimeter, that adjacent buildings should be evacuated immediately. The wing had already recognized this possibility and planned to evacuate if necessary and did so on 25 June 1996. Brigadier General Schwalier was aware of the intelligence reports indicating the terrorist threat. No intelligence information was denied him because of tour length restrictions.

(f) The Downing Assessment found that "no effort was made to modify the Air Force 90-day rotation policy." As the mission evolved, critical positions were changed to one year tours, including the commanders of JTF-SWA and the 4404th Wing (P). The requests from the 4404th Wing (P) and USCENTAF for nine additional billets as one-year tours were approved. Also, the 90-day rotation policy was reviewed at the highest levels.

## **b. USCENTAF.**

(1) USCENTAF was tasked, in coordination with USCENTCOM, to tailor defense force structure and equipment to match force protection needs. Under DoDD 0-2000.12 and AFI 31-210 it had the general responsibility to ensure the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) had adequate force protection plans in place. USCENTAF has no role in setting the THREATCON for a particular installation.

(2) As the direct supervisor of the wing commander, the USCENTAF commander had supervisory and inspection responsibilities over the wing. It appears USCENTAF was the only headquarters to conduct staff assistance visits at Khobar Towers. Through regular telephonic contact, and personal visits by the commander and functional staffs, USCENTAF took reasonable measures to ensure the wing was in the proper threat condition, considering the information known at the time, and taking reasonable steps to address the threat. Lieutenant General Jumper and his staff visited Dhahran in October 1995, and again in November 1995, when he visited facilities and was briefed on security measures. He made additional trips to the AOR in December 1995 and April 1996, although these trips did not include visits to Dhahran. Given the physical separation of the organizations, the level of contact and supervision was reasonable.

(3) The Downing Assessment indicated that USCENTAF did not review the vulnerability assessments of the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P). The vulnerability assessments were reviewed by the Force Protection Board at USCENTCOM, although USCENTCOM relied upon the services to perform this function for combat units. Lieutenant General Jumper recalled discussing with Brigadier General Schwalier the progress made in implementing the recommendations contained in the vulnerability assessments.

(4) Lieutenant General Jumper was dual-hatted as the commander, 9th Air Force and the commander, USCENTAF. He noted that he did not have any experts on his staff at 9th Air Force. USCENTAF did not have a security police section. USCENTAF had personnel to assist the operations side, but only about 25 people assigned to provide assistance on the support side. Nonetheless, the commander, USCENTAF brought in experts to assist subordinate headquarters. USCENTAF made sure the JTF SWA obtained the expert assistance they needed. Lieutenant Colonel Schellhous, the commander of the 4404<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineering Squadron, related that he normally forwarded requests for assistance to USCENTAF, and that they eventually got most of what they asked for, although they sometimes were required

to go through "bureaucracy" to get it. It appears USCENTAF would have benefited from additional manning in areas dedicated to provide assistance to support units. Considering the manning limitations affecting the entire Air Force, and the mission in the AOR at the time, the manpower dedicated to assist the support sections was appropriate.

**c. JTF-SWA.**

(1) In accordance with USCINCCENT Letter of Instruction, 10 April 1996, paragraph 3, the Commander, JTF-SWA had the authority to set threat conditions for all deployed combatant forces. It does not appear that JTF-SWA was required to set a uniform threat condition, where, as here, the individual organizations did so. The Commander, JTF-SWA did have the responsibility for oversight and coordination on force protection matters. It appears Major General Anderson met these objective requirements by having his representative, the vice commander, chair the force protection meetings, and by inspecting the various locations' force protection measures. JTF-SWA fulfilled the suggestion contained in Joint Publication 3-07.2, Chapter I, paragraph 3, by having a force protection officer assigned, who coordinated with the security forces and intelligence assets.

(2) The commander made sure he maintained he had sufficient manpower to complete the force protection mission. The size of the JTF-SWA staff was controlled by the Saudis. The size of the JTF-SWA staff did not negatively impact the mission.

(3) In Finding 4, the Downing Assessment criticized the fact that the JTF-SWA commander did not have operational control over the wing, and thus could not direct that specific actions on force protection be taken. The evidence indicates the wing commander at the 4404th Wing (P) understood the relationship between USCENTCOM and JTF-SWA. No problems were reported. Major General Anderson did not believe he would have had any problem accomplishing specific recommendations, because he spoke for USCINCCENT on force protection matters. There is no evidence indicating that JTF-SWA's role as USCENTCOM's delegate for inspection and coordination of force protection matters was misunderstood, or in any way hindered force protection efforts.

**4. Conclusion:**

a. USCENTCOM met their obligations under existing regulations and directives. It was appropriate under the circumstances to delegate inspection and oversight of force protection to JTF-SWA. USCENTCOM properly assessed and set the threat level. Although they provided minimal day to day oversight to the wing, this was consistent with applicable guidance.

b. USCENTAF met their obligations to provide supervision and inspection. They insured the wing was in the proper threat condition and taking reasonable steps to address the threat. Although USCENTAF had limited personnel to provide direct assistance to the wing, they insured that the necessary experts were made available.

c. JTF-SWA complied with their obligation to provide oversight and coordination of force protection issues. The commander personally inspected the wing. The force protection officer coordinated with security forces and intelligence assets. Although JTF-SWA did not have operational control, this limitation did not cause any problems.

d. The senior officers in the chain of command above the wing reasonably discharged their duties related to force protection.

## **IV. CONCLUSION.**

1. This report follows and expands on the work done by the Downing task force and the Record team. In addition to reviewing all of the information gathered in connection with those efforts, we have collected additional facts, interviewed additional witnesses and re-interviewed others. Our focus has been to address eight particular areas identified for further analysis or explanation, and to consider more specifically the issue of the propriety of administrative action for those charged with the responsibility of force protection. We have identified and described in some detail applicable standards of performance and analyzed the facts as applied to those standards.

2. In addressing these issues, we have considered: chain of command responsibilities; guidance and standards; host nation considerations; the availability of intelligence information; management of resources--money, manpower, equipment and time; and risk management. We have also recognized the impact of the "fog of war"—the term Clausewitz used to describe the uncertainty imposed on a situation by the constantly changing environment of combat—as it related to commanders having to deal with situations "as they are" in working toward a desired outcome.

3. In evaluating the deployment and location of our military forces, we recognized the risk as well as benefit for each location when we assess it as an operating site and potential enemy target. Until the tragic bombing on 25 June 1996, the risk associated with the mission as executed from Dhahran, including the urban location of Khobar Towers, was acceptable. The analysis of all these factors, integrated with existing standards, was used to assess the performance of the senior commanders in the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P).

4. In addressing the adequacy of force protection measures, it is important to understand that terrorists will use any one of a number of options. In recognition of these risks, the commander took full account of the threat and the opportunities the urban setting offered to terrorists. He responded to the information he received using the resources available. His careful, extensive facility and procedural changes were notable and forced the terrorists outside the compound. The wing's actions to protect and provide overwatch for the perimeter and the single practical access route to the airfield forced the terrorists to attack from a distance. The wing pursued several issues with local authorities in an attempt to better secure the

perimeter. In addition to US security policemen to provide overwatch, increased local national coverage for ground level exterior security was in place. These actions effectively expanded the resources available to protect Khobar Towers and forced the would-be terrorists to put host nation civilians at risk. Detachment, squadron and group commanders and the wing commander were assured on numerous occasions by the host nation that the necessary terrorism counterforce was in place. The wing commander believed that he had deterred the terrorists from attacking his wing.

5. The wing commander clearly understood the value of intelligence. While the classic wing intelligence function focused primarily on the flying mission in support of the UN sanctions, it was sensitive to unit security needs and responded appropriately when terrorist issues arose. The interface between the unit intelligence function and OSI while not formal was effective. The regular, routine and unconstrained access of OSI agents to the wing commander as well as selected group and squadron commanders demonstrated the wing commander's appreciation of and firm support for responding to all levels of intelligence. This was further demonstrated by his willingness to act in improving compound security when others did not see the need.

6. Security police manpower in the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) was adequate to meet the standards required for THREATCON BRAVO on 25 June 1996. The requirements for THREATCON CHARLIE were being met after the bombing at the time of the Downing Assessment. In accordance with established guidance, a unit is not expected to sustain operations at THREATCON CHARLIE without augmentation. The security police commander was aware of this and had made arrangements for such a request, if necessary.

7. The training, equipping and manning of the security force received careful examination. The unit was not in compliance with the full range of formal training required for permanent squadrons. The security police squadron was not assigned the manpower to manage a formal unit training program. Air Force personnel are required to be fully qualified for the full period (90 days) of their assigned duties prior to their deployment. Therefore, the only significant training needed was specific to the duty location. Testimony shows this training was done, although the absence of a dedicated training staff resulted in little formal documentation.

8. The condition of weapons was called into question by the Downing Assessment.

The investigative team made a detailed review of available records and gathered further testimony. The weapons maintenance technician was responsible for assuring the quality of all weapons according to established standards. During the semi-annual inspections, weapons were checked for proper functioning. The weapons were also mechanically sighted. The weapons maintenance technician was aware of and reduced the spread of surface rust. After the Downing team questioned the condition of some weapons, he immediately inspected and checked the weapons. All weapons were functional.

9. The Downing Assessment noted different transportation security practices for several locations in the theater. During this investigation, it was noted that required THREATCON measures were uniform throughout the wing at its various sites; however some commanders had implemented additional transportation security measures based on local threat conditions. There are no established DoD or Air Force standards concerning the use of armed escorts. Although transportation security measures at diverse sites in the wing varied, they were effective for each location.

10. Evacuation planning and warning are inter-linked. The OSI detachment commander recognized a need for improved evacuation planning when reviewing the status of building 131 in April 96. The result was direction for all units to review and update evacuation plans. The task was assigned to each squadron, and the plans were reviewed and deconflicted by the civil engineer squadron readiness flight. This was done for buildings 131, 133 and others. These evacuation plans had not been formally practiced. This did not comply with standards. The absence of a fire alarm in the buildings also made them non-compliant with Air Force standards. Also, there are specific prohibitions on use of a fire alarm for any purpose other than fire warning. The fire hazard, however, was deemed insignificant given the lack of combustibles in the buildings. Therefore, the only notification options available for a bomb threat were the use of Giant Voice or the universal standby--knocking on doors. Saudi concerns regarding the use of the Giant Voice siren stemming from Desert Storm foreclosed any Giant Voice practices in the siren mode, removing consideration for its employment outside a threat of an attack. Ultimately the sentry observing the truck initiated evacuation with door-to-door notification. The 3-4 minute interval from decision to act to explosion enabled most of the occupants of three floors to escape to the stairwell. Given the options available, this system worked quickly. Although the evacuation was proceeding effectively, the bomb exploded in an unprecedented short period,

before complete evacuation, resulting in the tragic loss of life and injury.

11. Mylar window treatment was considered by the wing commander. He relied on his staff for inputs concerning its use and installation. The information that he received led him to conclude that the threat was not high enough to warrant its immediate installation. Specific information concerning Mylar that he had available was that its utility was uncertain, installation required special skills and estimates were approximately \$50 a square meter. Further, the standoff distances for the postulated threat achieved by the fence-barrier combination plus the additional distance provided by added Saudi security at the northern perimeter were thought to be adequate to prevent a major problem. Though he deferred immediate installation, the wing commander included Mylar in his long range plan to ensure his successors would not lose sight of a potential option for risk reduction should it be necessary.

12. The wise commander takes advantage of every opportunity to improve his operational capability. This act of terrorism has prompted a number of important changes at each level in the Air Force. Starting from combatant command levels, the coordination of Humint resources in support of theater operations has been refined. Further unit level access to significant intelligence information has been improved through expanded communications. The Air Force has already activated the 820th Security Forces Group comprised of security police, OSI, intelligence and explosive ordnance disposal personnel. This organization will institutionalize improved force protection for the Air Force.

13. It is clear that on 25 June 1996, the men and women of the force deployed at Khobar Towers were not fully protected. Tragic deaths and injuries were suffered on that day as a result of a wanton act of terrorism. The issue is not whether, with the benefit of hindsight, responsible officials could have succeeded in preventing or further defending against this terrorist attack. Rather, it is whether those individuals whose duties encompassed force protection met the standards of performance expected of them and acted reasonably and prudently under the circumstances as they existed.

14. After a thorough review and in consideration of all the facts and circumstances, it is the conclusion of this investigation that the commanders of the 4404<sup>th</sup> Wing (P) and all those in the force protection chain of command, executed their responsibilities in a reasonable and prudent manner. They were vigorous and

diligent and fully engaged in providing the full range of security for the Khobar Towers compound. No administrative sanctions are warranted.

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The Judge Advocate General

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