



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

9 JAN 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: Review of USS COLE (DDG-67) Attack Reports and Suggestions for Additional Recommended Actions

Combating terrorism, including the protection of our forces serving around the world, has long been a primary concern of the Department of Defense. In the aftermath of the attack on Khobar Towers in June 1996, the Department established a formal combating terrorism program and took significant steps to improve force protection efforts worldwide. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was named the principal advisor and focal point for the Secretary of Defense on all anti-terrorism and force protection issues, and the Combatant Commanders were given expanded responsibility for force protection of all DoD activities within their geographic areas of responsibility. The Joint Staff created J-34 to focus exclusively on counter-terrorism force protection issues, and force protection was made a point of emphasis for all commanders, especially those of deploying units.

Each year, we have undertaken new initiatives to improve force protection. The FY97 Anti-terrorism Supplemental to the DOD Appropriations Bill provided \$353M for emergent anti-terrorism needs, and the Combating Terrorism Readiness Initiative Fund was created to permit the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to assist the Combatant Commanders in meeting unfunded and emergent needs. A 1996 Memorandum of Understanding on Arabian Peninsula Security between DoD and the Department of State, followed in December 1997 by a Worldwide MOU, permitted DoD and DoS to define authority and responsibility for the security of DoD elements and personnel that are not under the command of a Combatant Commander. As of January 2001, implementing Memoranda of Agreements have been signed for over 100 countries, and 40 others are being aggressively pursued. The General Accounting Office's July 2000 report on Combating Terrorism commended the Department's progress in clarifying security responsibility for 75 percent of non-CINC assigned forces overseas. But there remains more to be done.

The attack on USS COLE (DDG-67) on October 12, 2000, visibly reinforced the fact that our forces are always at risk of terrorist attack. Immediately after the attack, we took additional steps to improve force protection worldwide. Now we must review all of our policies and procedures in light of that attack, and take every step possible to improve our responses to the threat of terrorism. Our goal must be continued vigilance to identify potential vulnerabilities and to appropriately strengthen our defenses.

By separate cover, I am forwarding for your review and advice a copy of the report submitted by General Crouch and Admiral Gehman regarding the attack on USS COLE (DoD USS COLE Commission). In addition, I will also forward to you for your review the Navy's



Manual of the Judge Advocate General investigation into the attack as soon as that report is available. The report submitted by General Crouch and Admiral Gehman provides a view of force protection issues that is focused on the challenges for in-transit units. Consistent with your responsibility as my principal military advisor under Section 151 of Title 10, United States Code, and as my principal advisor and focal point for force protection, I request your advice concerning implementation of the USS COLE Commission recommendations, and any additional actions the Department should now take.

As part of your review, I request your assessment of operational and administrative matters associated with this incident, including issues of accountability, as well as any other matter you deem appropriate. Should you determine that you need to make further inquiry before providing your advice, you may gather information from anywhere in the Department.

I am very proud of the determination and dedication that the military has brought to the fight against terrorism, and I am confident that we will continue to find new ways to defend our interests and our engagement in a dangerous world.

William J. 