

HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE
HEARING ON THE DOWNING REPORT
OF THE BOMBING OF KHOBAR TOWERS
NEAR DHAHRAN, SAUDI ARABIA;

SEPTEMBER 18, 1996

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Saudi Arabia

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GENERAL JOHN SHALIKASHVILI (USA),
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GENERAL WAYNE DOWNING, USA (RET.),
DIRECTOR, THE DOWNING ASSESSMENT COMMISSION

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SPENCE: The meeting will please come to order. Today the committee will review the June 25, 1996 terrorist attack against United States service personnel in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Nineteen American servicemen lost their lives, and hundreds of others, including Saudi citizens, suffered horrible wounds as a result of this cowardly act of terror.

While the committee endorsed legislation last week honoring the victims, it is equally important that we confront the many issues raised by this unfortunate tragedy.

Since June both this committee and the Department of Defense task force led by retired General Wayne Downing, one of our witnesses here today, have investigated the circumstances surrounding the bombing. The conclusion of these reports are strikingly similar. Both identify significant failures in intelligence.

While terrorist organizations can be difficult targets for intelligence gathering, the inability of the department of Defense to fully appreciate the changing threats to our troops deployed in Saudi Arabia, is disturbing.

Even after the first bombing in the Saudi capital of Riyadh in November of 1995, formal threat assessments apparently never credited potential future threats with capabilities beyond those already demonstrated.

General Downing concluded -- and I quote -- "The ability of the theater and national intelligence community to conduct in-depth, long-term analysis of trends, intentions and capabilities of terrorists is deficient" -- unquote.

Even more disturbing are the Department's own organizational and institutional failures. Operation Southern Watch has been in existence since the Gulf War.

Since 1994, when Iraq moved forces back toward Kuwait and as the events of the past weeks confirmed yet again, there's been little doubt that Saddam Hussein is not prepared to comply with the UN resolutions that establish the no-fly zone mission. Yet the administration has perpetuated the fiction that Southern Watch is a temporary contingency operation.

The practical result has been that troops deployed to Saudi Arabia are confused about their basic mission. As one former squadron commander observed in his end-of-tour report – quote – "For some reason, we cannot or will decide whether we are in a contingency deployment, a normal temporary duty situation, or assigned to a major command, STAD (ph).

"The constant changing of gears confuses the troops, erodes our effectiveness as leaders and adversely impacts the mission" – unquote.

General Downing's report has I believe correctly noted the obvious. Operation Southern Watch is a long-term United States commitment, manned and resourced as though it were a short-time contingency operation.

It should come as no surprise that undermanned units with troops serving short tours of duty lack the resources or cohesion to carry out their mission. Neither should it be any surprise that under circumstances the risk to deployed United States troops at Khobar Towers or throughout the region was higher.

As a side note, this committee highlighted this very issue last year when it authorized funding for Operation Southern Watch through normal budget channels and required the department to designate their operation as a forward-presence and not a contingency operation.

SPENCE: However, despite having made such a designation, it is clear the Department continued to run Southern Watch as a temporary contingency.

As General Downing observes, overall responsibility for the conduct of Operation Southern Watch including force protection issues, lies properly within the chain of command. As a theater command vested with the direct responsibility for the region, U.S. Central Command has been rightly criticized for the lack of guidance and support through the troops deployed in Saudi Arabia.

For example, Central Command failed to physically inspect Khobar Towers and to review the vulnerability assessments rotation policy, terrorism training, or overall mission structure even after the November 1995 terrorist bombing in Riyadh.

Units remain understaffed, inadequately trained for terrorism threats and lacking standards for physical security. Despite these concerns CENTCOM apparently – passively – accepted the Air Force's manning and rotation policies.

Despite Secretary Perry's expressed support for General Peay, the CENTCOM commander in chief, it's apparent that many of the failures that contributed to the unpreparedness and vulnerability of our forces in Saudi Arabia to an act of terror, must be the laid at CENTCOM's feet.

General Downing's report also raises serious concerns about the role of senior Pentagon officials. The Joint Chiefs of Staff is criticized for failure to challenge the command relationships, structures and resources of the task force deployed in support of Operation Southern Watch as its mission expanded, its mandate lengthened and the threat of United States forces changed.

But while the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has a central role to play in all military operations, under the law it remains an advisory body that is not in the formal chain of command. Therefore, the issue of accountability is not clear to me that the Downing report upholds the cardinal principle that the military chain of accountability is the same as the chain of the command.

One of the key reforms of the Goldwater-Nickles legislation was to eliminate any ambiguity over the chain of command by having it flow directly from the commander in chief in the field to the secretary of defense, not to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This is an issue that clearly merits further discussion.

In conclusion, let me commend the vigor with which the Department has moved out on new enforcement protection measures. When the United States troops are deployed abroad, they deserve every protection consistent with the mission they have been sent to execute.

SPENCE: However, many of us are left with the nagging conclusion that the measures now being so aggressively implemented should have been undertaken sooner.

To help us address these difficult issues, I am pleased to welcome Secretary Perry and General Shalikashvili back to the committee this morning. Let me also welcome General Downing, a soldier's soldier who served with distinction throughout his long career.

Before proceeding, the chair would remind the members that the purpose of this hearing today is to explore the June 25 Saudi bombing and related issues.

While some of these issues may stray into questions associated with the current events in the Persian Gulf, and while Secretary Perry may choose to comment briefly on the current situation with regard to Iraq, the committee has scheduled a hearing specifically to focus on the Iraqi situation for next week. Accordingly, I would ask for the cooperation of all members in staying focused on the issue at hand.

Before recognizing the witness, I'd like to yield to the committee's ranking Democrat Mr. Dellums for any remarks he'd like to make.

Mr. Dellums?

DELLUMS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I'd like to first join you in welcoming our distinguished witnesses today, Secretary Perry; General Shalikashvili, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and General Downing, the director of the assessment task force.

Mr. Chairman, I've often expressed from this podium the view that the post-Cold War era demands that we develop and accept new ways of thinking and operating in response to the challenges and opportunities of this period. Part of those new responses will involve deployments of U.S. forces to promote stability in areas to which we have not regularly seen such deployment. Our deployment in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia is such a case in point.

As such operations become more common, troubling new concerns will emerge to deal with, such as logistics, PERSTEMPO, effects and the threats of terrorist attacks to deployed troops. In addition, more complicated diplomatic circumstances will lead to more difficult discussions about operational questions, whether those be affected -- those are the effects of training in the environment, the security conditions under which troops will be deployed, or any of the myriad of other considerations.

I believe the intensity and interest manifest here in these chambers and in the Department following the terrorist attack on U.S. forces in Beirut, Lebanon a decade ago, I remember that very clearly. I believe we all hoped that we would not relive that experience.

Now that something very similar has happened in Saudi Arabia, clearly recriminations are an integral and important part of the process. But I believe we here have an even greater challenge, and that is to go beyond the recriminations to the business of taking lessons learned to meet these challenges in the future.

DELLUMS: In that regard, I'm especially interested in your perspective -- respective views on how the United States military will be able to sustain its momentum in avoiding a repeat of these types of situations in the future.

It would be especially interesting to see how you the witnesses view the relative trade-offs between placing forces in more isolated postings, against which attacks by weapons of mass destruction may indeed be more politically acceptable to terrorist attacks, versus deployments of U.S. forces nearer to civilian locations where security monitoring is made more difficult but at which an attacker might find unacceptable political risk in using such weapons of mass destruction.

Also, it would be useful to know how you believe our nation should view the inevitable conflicts between host nation sensitivities, U.S. national security interests and force protection when those factors come in conflict.

And with those remarks, Mr. Chairman, I certainly look forward to the testimony of our witnesses and the response to these and other questions by my colleagues on the committee, and I thank you for your generosity.

SPENCE: Again, I'd like to welcome all of our witnesses this morning. And Mr. Secretary, you might proceed as you'd wish.

PERRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

On Monday night I returned from a trip to the Arabian Peninsula, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. I went there to consult with key Arabian, Gulf, and coalition allies about how to respond to Saddam Hussein's latest acts of aggression and provocation.

In three days I traveled 14,000 miles and met with leaders of five countries -- Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Turkey, and then I went to the United Kingdom and met my British and French counterparts.

I am happy to report to you that the coalition is alive and well, and it is united in its determination to contain Saddam Hussein and to continue the expanded Operation Southern Watch.

We are flying additional sorties from Saudi bases to enforce an expanded no-fly zone in southern Iraq. We have bedded down additional aircraft -- F-117s in Kuwait, F-16s in Bahrain. We are sending 3500 additional troops to fall in on the preposition equipment and to exercise in Kuwait.

Our British allies are in full agreement with us and have joined in the warning that we have given to the Iraqi regime to stop all operations that threaten any of our air crews. And

the French, while they are not in full agreement with us, are generally supportive and are continue to participate in Southern Watch.

While I was in the region I also visited our military forces there to review the measures that I have directed to protect them against terrorism. In particular, I visited our forces at the Prince Sultan Air Base near Al Kharj in Saudi Arabia.

PERRY: These are the forces that we moved from Riyadh and Dhahran after the bombing at Khobar Towers. Six weeks ago, I went there and got the approval of the Saudi government for the move.

The transformation in the last six weeks is stunning. Six weeks ago, it was a large air base but one that had not been used for several years. Today, it is a fully functional facility supporting more than a hundred sorties a day over southern Iraq, and it is the safest base of any base that I have ever seen, including a 1200 foot security perimeter around the entire base.

This is a tribute to the mobility and adaptability of our forces, and it is also a tribute to the very strong support and cooperation we have gotten from Prince Sultan, the Saudi minister of defense, and the Saudi air force.

So the terrorists who attacked our forces in Saudi Arabia last November and last June failed in their first objective. They failed to drive a wedge between the United States and Saudi Arabia.

Now we must ensure that the terrorists do not succeed in their other objective: To undermine America's will so that we will abandon our military presence, our interests, and our allies, and go home. We must not do that.

So in discussing this issue, we need to start with what is at stake. It is the same vital American interest that we fought Desert Storm to protect -- to protect access to the vast energy resources in the region; to protect the stability of the region and permit the Middle East peace process to move forward; to prevent Iraq from developing chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons; and to protect freedom of navigation through the air and sea lanes in that region.

These are vital American interests. We are not there as a favor to other countries, but we do have close cooperation with our friends in the region, and after my visit I can state flatly that they want us to remain, just as we want to remain.

Desert Storm ejected Saddam Hussein's armies from Kuwait, but it did not end his threats to the region. He has continued to ignore or obstruct the U.N. Security Council resolutions that define the terms of the cease-fire. He has also taken overt acts threatening peace in the region.

Each time, we have answered quickly and decisively. Each time Saddam has crossed the line, we have responded with force.

We have been able to respond appropriately and protect our interests because we have maintained a robust force presence, and in particular because we have maintained Operation Southern Watch which enforces the no-fly zone over southern Iraq.

PERRY: Therefore, I reject the option of withdrawing our forces in the region. That is certainly a way of protecting them, but it is not a way of protecting our national interests.

But clearly the threat of terrorist attack against our forces poses a direct challenge to our force presence overseas. Indeed, the attack at Khobar Towers dramatically underscored that for our forces overseas, terrorism is a fact of life.

We can expect terrorists to try again to attack our forces. Their next target could be anywhere in the region or anywhere in the world. The next weapon could be a larger bomb. They could even try to use a chemical weapon or nerve agent or even a crude nuclear device.

We still mourn for the five Americans killed in Riyadh or the 19 Americans killed at Khobar Towers. We cannot restore them to their loved ones, but what we can do is learn lessons from these tragedies.

The most important lesson is that Khobar Towers is a watershed event that points the way to a radically new mindset and dramatic ways, dramatic changes in the ways that we protect forces from a growing terrorist threat.

We'd learned lessons after the bombing in Riyadh last November. In response to that terrorist attack, we recognized the Saudi oasis of calm in the region had vanished, and we raised the threat assessment level in the kingdom to high. We beefed up security at all of our military facilities, including more than 130 separate force protection measures at Khobar Towers.

These measures did prevent a penetration of the security perimeter at Khobar Towers, thereby saving many lives. But clearly, clearly they were not enough.

Khobar Towers explosion was of an unprecedented magnitude. The Defense Special Weapons Agency, who are our best experts in demolitions and in weapon effects, now estimates that the bomb was more than 20,000 pounds, which is about 100 times larger than the previous terrorist attack in Riyadh.

The attack was of an unexpected sophistication. The terrorists had well developed intelligence, they maintained tight operational security, they penetrated the extensive Saudi domestic security apparatus.

The scale of the attack partially circumvented the extensive force protection measures we took after the Riyadh attack and in response to the intelligence indications we had.

We now know that we face an unprecedented threat.

PERRY: We must fundamentally rethink our approach to force protection, and we have done that along three lines: We are relocating, we are restructuring, and we are refocusing.

I have already described to you seeing one aspect of the relocation. Moving all of our combatant forces to Prince Sultan Air Base, whose remote location permits much more extensive security protection against terrorist attack.

Our noncombatant forces in Riyadh perform missions that require them to remain in that urban area, so we are consolidating them at EsCon Village (ph), and undertaking extensive security precautions there.

Secondly, we are restructuring. We are changing assignment policies and bringing most family members home.

Third, we are refocusing. We realize that incremental fixes in force protection can always be trumped by attacks of greater magnitude. Force protection in this new environment is not simply more barriers and more guards. It requires a fundamental re-evaluation of how we prepare for, equip and posture ourselves to do missions.

We have always worried about force protection, but now we must factor in our force protection plans the threat of sophisticated and massive terrorist attacks.

As we decide where and how to deploy our forces overseas, we will place the threat of terrorism front and center. Force protection against terrorist attacks will now be one of the most important considerations we weigh, along with other key mission tasks when we decide how best to undertake a deployment.

And we are re-examining our current missions in light of the new terrorist threat to make sure that we have thought through force protection in the way that we are carrying them out. This message has gone out to all of our commanders.

But hasn't force protection always been important?

Of course it has. A good example is Bosnia, where we face a variety of threats. When we approved the Bosnia mission, force protection was given a high consideration. Indeed, it was determined by General Nash, a force commander, to be a primary component of his mission.

Protections he installed include wearing flak vests when outside secure compounds, a no-alcohol policy, and extensive and specific threat training for everyone who was deployed to theater.

These were the right force protection measures of the Bosnia mission, and they have had truly, truly effective results.

But while force protection has always been important, I now believe that we must expand the scope and increase the priority of force protection in every mission because of the elevated terrorist threat.

PERRY: Putting force protection up front as a major consideration along with other mission objectives will require a change in mind set with which we plan and carry out operations. And it also requires structural changes in the Department.

It will require trade-offs in other areas such as costs, convenience and quality of life for our troops. This is a tough answer for our men and women in uniform who will live in less comfortable surroundings.

At Khobar Towers, they were living in an apartment building. At the Prince Sultan Air Base they will be living in tents. This will be a notable difference in quality of life. It is a tough answer for them and their families, more of whom must now experience the loneliness of unaccompanied tours.

We will have to compensate for these changes in order – and greater hardships in order to continue to maintain the superb quality forces which we have today.

The other important step that I took after the Khobar Towers attack was to ask General Wayne Downing to give me a fast, unvarnished and independent look at the incident and

our force protection policies and practices in the CENTCOM region, and to offer ideas on how we can prevent such tragedies in the future.

General Downing's report confirms my belief that we must make a fundamental change in our mind set. And we are responding to his report with an additional series of actions.

First, I am issuing DOD-wide force protection standards.

Second, we will ensure designated local commanders have full authority and responsibility for force protection.

Third, the secretary of state and I have agreed to transfer responsibility for force protection for most of our non-combatant troops in the Arabian peninsula from the State Department to the Defense Department. And we will consider this policy change for other locations as well.

Fourth, we will take steps to improve intelligence collection on the terrorists threat, making it more useful to commanders in the field.

Fifth, we will take steps to improve U.S.-host nation cooperation on force protection.

Sixth, we will raise the funding level and the resource visibility for force protection, including our efforts to seek out new technology.

And finally, I'm designating the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as the single DOD-wide focal point for force protection.

Since the first day that I have been the secretary of defense, my first priority has been the safety and the welfare of our forces. We have large forces, often exposed to danger, so we do have incidents where military personnel are killed by accident, killed by terrorists, are killed in military conflict. Each time that happens, I feel the loss deeply.

PERRY: And each time, I review what we can do to improve our processes, what we can do to reduce the risk to our military force.

It was in this spirit that I asked Wayne Downing to conduct this study. I did not want a white wash. I did not want a cover-up.

I wanted a hard-hitting analysis. And I wanted thoughtful recommendations on how to improve our system. Any of you who have had time to read the report will see that I got what I asked for, and I expected no less from General Downing.

Now it is up to General Shali and me to implement those recommendations. And I have described to you some of the actions we have already taken. We have already completed action on the extensive moves that we've made in Saudi Arabia for our forces in just six weeks.

I have approved and initiated action and many of the important changes recommended by General Downing. And maybe over the long term, most importantly, I have restructured our institutions so that these changes would endure because I believe that the terrorists pose a serious threat to our forces and will for many years to come.

Most of what I have described to you today is looking forward, what we can do to improve the protection of our forces from now on. But I must also be concerned with looking back.

What led to this tragedy and how do we determine human responsibility?

The day that I received the report, indeed, even before I read, I sent it to the secretary of the Air Force with a request to determine accountability and to consider possible disciplinary actions.

The Air Force has subsequently established a convening authority for that purpose which will report its findings by December 4th. And we will take appropriate actions at that time.

I cannot comment further today on the culpability of individuals without exerting command influence which would prejudice their findings.

But I also have to consider my own accountability, and this I can talk about. As the secretary of defense I am responsible for the safety and the welfare of all of our forces. And I feel that responsibility very deeply.

How do I manifest that responsibility? I cannot inspect every security fence, or determine the adequacy of every security patrol. But there is much that I can do.

I can establish policies, which guide our commanders, including policies on force protection.

PERRY: I organize and structure the Department, including ways to optimize our approach to force protection. I allocate resources so that they can do their job – the commanders can do their job properly, including the resources for force protection.

And I must carefully select and supervise the military and civilian leadership of the Department of Defense.

This is how I judge myself on how well I do in meeting my responsibilities. And this is how you can judge me as well.

Let me comment briefly on how I grade, how I assess, how I met those responsibilities. How well did we establish policies for core protection?

We did have policy guidance for force protection which spelled out in considerable detail for our commanders how they should carry out their force protection responsibilities.

General Downing has pointed out that these were not directives, and that they were not given sufficient emphasis. I believe General Downing was right, and I believe that that was my responsibility. And I have changed these to directives and have taken actions to improve the emphasis on them.

How well did we organize and structure to carry out these responsibilities?

Goldwater-Nickles gave us the authority to make sweeping changes in organization which give us clean lines of command, and those have been implemented – and successfully implemented – in the Defense Department.

We have benefited enormously from the organizational and structural changes in Goldwater-Nickles. General Downing has pointed out that in this theater, that force protection -- there was a disconnect in the command responsibilities for force protection, in that the people responsible for the force protection were 7,000 miles from the area.

General Downing is right in that, and we are making changes which General Shali will describe to you in more detail, and are considering further even more sweeping changes.

How well did we allocate resources for force protection?

We spend billions of dollars a year for force protection. But General Downing pointed out correctly that we do not have a focus in our budgeting process on force protection.

This is my responsibility, and I have correspondingly made substantial changes in that direction. First of all, to completely restructure our budgeting process so that we can identify, isolate and aggregate all of the programs that have to do with force protection.

PERRY: The importance of this is that it creates a handle so that if we want to make changes we know what handle to grab, so that we can make the changes.

The second change we have to make was find someone uniquely and specifically responsible for grabbing that handle and turning it. And so I've asked the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff to take the responsibility for force protection throughout the department.

And he has establishing an organization within the Joint Staff to assist him in that purpose. And we will describe to you more about that when he speaks.

Finally, I have thought very carefully, about my responsibility to select leaders, particularly, my principal military leaders in this field: General Shalikashvili and General Peay. I recommended them to the president with full confidence in their ability.

I still recommend them with full confidence in their ability. They are superb soldiers, they are strong military leaders, they are dedicated to the safety and the welfare of their troops.

In spite of that, this tragedy occurred and they are both working, jointly with me, working even harder to prevent a recurrence of such a tragedy. If this nation ever gets in a military conflict again in Southwest Asia or any part of the world we will thank God that we have superb warriors like General Shalikashvili and General Peay to lead our troops.

To whatever extent -- to whatever extent -- they are responsible for this tragedy then so am I, for I supported them for their positions and I still do.

This is how I see my personal responsibilities. From my first day as the secretary of defense, I have put all of my energies and talents into carrying out these responsibilities of this vitally important job.

I have enjoyed some substantial successes and I'm proud of those successes. But Khobar Tower was a tragic failure. In the wake of this failure many in Congress and many in the media are asking who's to blame.

I will not participate in the game of passing the buck. We have a systematic and judicious process of military justice. I will let it proceed carefully and objectively. In the meantime, I will not seek to delegate responsibility for this tragedy on any of my military commanders.

They have served our country with enormous distinction and considerable sacrifice.

PERRY: And they deserve our gratitude, not our blame.

To the extent that this tragedy resulted in the failure of leadership, that responsibility is mine, and mine alone.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SPENCE: General?

SHALIKASHVILI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

Before I elaborate on some of the major initiatives we have undertaken following the terrorist attack on Khobar Towers, I would first like to again express my deep condolences to the families of those 24 brave service members who so tragically lost their lives to terrorism on the Arabian peninsula in the last 10 months.

I would also like to briefly reflect on the magnitude and the complexity of the missions of Central Command, as well as on the dedication and the professionalism and the heroism of the men and women of that command.

Since 1992, CENTCOM has flawlessly executed so many diverse missions, the most widely known of which is Operation Southern Watch, the enforcement of the no-fly zone in the south -- the south of Iraq.

This mission alone -- just to point out the complexity -- this mission alone requires on the average over 2,300 air sorties per month.

But this is only the beginning. Within the last two years CENTCOM also conducted continuous maritime intercept operations as well as five major contingency operations.

And of course, most recently, the air strikes in the southern no-fly zone. And all of this was accomplished over lines of communication stretching more than 12,000 sea miles between the United States and the Gulf.

But CENTCOM hasn't just been busy. They've also been highly effective in getting the job done. Certainly starting with ejecting Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, but then year after year deterring further attacks against our allies and the region's oil supply, as well as enforcing numerous U.N. Security Council resolutions; in short, protecting America's vital interest and protecting them expertly.

And until recently, as Secretary Perry mentioned, CENTCOM's demanding military operations could safely be its primary focus. However, in November of last year when a bomb exploded near a U.S. security assistance office in Riyadh, this focus had to be broadened.

For terrorism in Saudi Arabia became a high priority issue that day. And in the Gulf our forces aggressively began to improve their posture against terrorism.

SHALIKASHVILI: In Saudi Arabia, force protection improvements were most extensive. In the half year after the November bombing, CENTCOM personnel, as you have now heard, on a number of occasions conducted numerous security interviews at nearly every installation in the region.

At Khobar Towers alone, CENTCOM personnel completed more than 130 anti-terrorist improvements. Indeed, I am convinced that a number of those measures -- barriers, sentries, roving patrols, extremely effective entry control procedures -- kept the terrorists from doing what they were able to achieve in Lebanon.

And this to get inside the compound and kill over 200 of our servicemen. Here, I believe because of the extensive measures taken by the people in Khobar Towers, their actions undoubtedly saved dozens and dozens of lives, preventing an even greater tragedy.

After the attack at Khobar Towers, more lives were saved by the sentries who risked their lives to alert the occupants; by the buddy teams who attended to others before themselves; by the physicians and medical technicians who were flown in within hours; and by the dedicated people all along the evacuation route through Europe to the United States.

And don't forget CENTCOM's Joint Task Force Southwest Asia, after this tragedy, was back flying again over the skies of Iraq within 48 hours after it suffered this attack. That's professionalism.

But this command is not operating in a radically different environment. After the bombing of Khobar Towers, it was clear that terrorism and especially terrorism in the Persian Gulf region, had in fact reached a new level of destructiveness and sophistication.

And to meet this challenge, requires a change in the way we go about our business of protecting our forces.

So let me highlight some major changes that I elaborated on in the secretary's report.

Let me begin with unity of effort. As Secretary Perry mentioned three days ago, he directed that I, as the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, assume the duties as his principal adviser and the department's focal point for all force protection matters.

And in turn, I'm establishing a permanent office within the joint staff under the direction of a general officer to deal with all matters of combating terrorism.

I would also draw on the Joint Requirements Oversight Council, the JROC, existing combat support agencies and others in and out of government, to help in this effort.

Among its many tasks, the office will help me assist field commanders to ensure that force protection considerations are included in every aspect of our activities worldwide.

SHALIKASHVILI: To do this we will focus on force protection doctrine, standards, training and requirements, as well as force protection programs and levels of funding.

We will pursue innovative technologies and work closely with our allies who face many of the same threats that we do. To ensure better coordination overseas, in agreement with the secretary of state, CINCCENT has been given force protection responsibility and

authority for all department of defense activities on the Arabian peninsula, other than those that are an integral element of the U.S. ambassador's country team.

Just yesterday, when I met with our unified commanders, I asked them to advise me whether this agreement might not also be a prototype for the force protection arrangements in their regions as well. Along with improving our unity of effort, command and control is a critical consideration in the organization of every joint task force.

As an immediate step we've given the command of the joint task force in Southwest Asia the specific authority and responsibility for force protection, for all combat units in the region, operating in support of operation Southern Watch.

And as further step we will investigate the feasibility and advisability of establishing a forward headquarters, Central Command forward. It would be large enough and resources enough to assume force protection responsibility for all forces on the Arabian peninsula.

To achieve key leader stability and reduce personnel and unit turbulence on the Arabian peninsula, we have lengthened the tours of senior leaders and we're extending the tours of other individuals, as well as units.

To strengthen our posture further, we require viable force protection standards, sound force protection doctrine and appropriate force protection training. As you already heard while we had advisory force protection standards, we have now reissued them as a directive. And I will be further refining these standards to ensure that they fully address the new terrorist threat.

Let me give you some examples of current efforts to improve doctrine development and training. First, we will be reviewing our extensive joint and service doctrine publications, to ensure that they also address the new threat and they we have common guidance, procedures and standards at all levels of command.

SHALIKASHVILI: Second, we will also review our force protection training to ensure that our schools and training centers teach the right material and that we have force protection training requirements that are specifically tailored to the individual needs of each regional command.

Third, we have learned a great deal about specialized predeployment training from our efforts last year to prepare our forces for deployment to Bosnia. Drawing on that experience, the U.S. Atlantic Command in conjunction with the services and the other unified commands has developed a draft anti-terrorism training plan to ensure that we provide theater-specific training to individuals as well as units before they're deployed to the theater.

Finally, I've directed the National Defense University to review the status of anti-terrorism instruction in our professional military education system to include risk assessment management training for our leaders.

Now, the last area I would like to address is intelligence. Despite our best efforts, improvements in tactical intelligence are warranted. Our intelligence goal must be to preempt and disrupt terrorist cells before they can plan and carry out acts of terrorism against our forces. Thus, the collection analysis and dissemination of timely and predictive tactical intelligence on the plans, methods and intentions of terrorists is of utmost importance.

This requires the use of all types of intelligence assets, including technical intelligence and human intelligence to accomplish all-source intelligence analysis on anti-terrorism matters. We have already increased the number of analysts who are working in anti-terrorism cells at every level -- from the Pentagon down to the Joint Task Force. Most of these cells are on a 24-hour watch.

Our primary concern today is to make sure we have enough analysts who are properly trained in terrorism-related issues assigned to these critical analytical positions.

At the user level, we must continue to ensure that the intelligence we acquire about terrorists can be sanitized and then quickly passed at the lowest classification possible to the individuals who must act on it to protect our men and women in uniform.

Overall, we must take action to increase the emphasis on terrorist-related intelligence and improve intelligence sharing with host nations. The department and the DCI are working in unison to determine what further improvements should be implemented.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, we will neither be deterred from pursuing our interests, nor will be prevented from protecting our forces. While future terrorist acts are certain, just as certain must be our resolve to protect the lives of our men and women in uniform and Americans everywhere from terrorist attacks.

SHALIKASHVILI: And to insure that this, indeed, happens, we are moving out with considerable dispatch on these and other initiatives outlining Secretary Perry's force protection report.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

SPENCE: General Downing.

DOWNING: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it's a pleasure to be here before you this morning.

Before I begin my opening statement, I'd like to comment you for your committee report on Khobar Towers. I read that as soon as it was released, and thought it was remarkable that you were able to come up with what you did in such short period of time with a very, very small staff.

Now, obviously, we don't -- we have a much larger staff that put this report together, and had over six weeks to work on it, but we thought that you captured many of the same principles that we got in our report.

Our charter as given to us by the secretary of defense directed us to assess the extent to which the casualties and damage sustained at Khobar Towers were the result of inadequate security policies, infrastructures or systems.

Dr. Perry also asked the team to recommend to him measures to minimize casualties and damage from such attacks in the future.

Within 24 hours of receiving the call on this and receiving our charter, we began to form a task force which was composed of officers, non-commissioned officers, DOD civilians, and retirees from the Army, the Marine Corps, the Navy, and the Air Force scattered throughout the United States. The task force also included representatives from the Department of State, Department of Energy, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

We interviewed over 400 individuals and this included General Peay, down to the sentry who was on the roof of building 131 at Khobar Towers on the 25 of June.

We analyzed literally hundreds of documents, and I must tell you that we received the full cooperation from not only the Department of Defense, but the other agencies of our government.

We also got good cooperation from the Saudis and the governments of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, as well as our allies and our friends in Great Britain, France, Israel and Jordan.

All recognized the importance of our mission to the future security of U.S. forces deployed overseas, and all fully supported our efforts to find more effective ways to deal with terrorism in the future.

Terrorism, ladies and gentlemen, represents an undeclared war against the United States. The military forces of the United States are clearly superior to all others in the world, and that margin of superiority continues to grow.

Convinced of the futility of challenging our forces directly, some potential enemies are waging war against us asymmetrically. Some of these enemies feel that our greatest vulnerability is our intolerance for casualties.

DOWNING: If we prove ourselves incapable of responding to terrorism, the terrorists will continue to represent a significant threat to us -- they will continue to target us, especially our service men and our women deployed overseas.

The secretary's report adequately addresses the main findings and recommendations of the task force. But the devil is in the details.

How is it going to be enacted? How is it actually going to be carried out -- 60, 120 days, a year, two years from now.

What is the follow-through going to be to insure that those actions are actually implemented and not forgotten?

Since Secretary Perry and General Shalikhshvili have discussed the majority of our major findings and recommendations, I'd just like to highlight a few this morning.

The first is unity of command. In order to have a unified approach to force protection, one man must be in charge in the gulf region. Now Goldwater-Nickles assigned great power to the unified combatant commanders. I believe the intent of that law was to strengthen joint operational command while allowing the services the missions of training, equipping and sustaining the force.

Force protection is an operational issue. It's not something separate. It's an operational issue. It's part of every mission. There are training and equipping pieces to it, but ultimately it is an inherent function of command.

Placing two of the service components -- the Air Force Central Command and the Army Central Command -- in charge from a distance of 7,000 miles away in the United States satisfies the letter of Goldwater-Nickles, but it does not satisfy the spirit of the law.

Now, while a commander-in-chief may, under Goldwater-Nickles, delegate operational control of his forces in his theater to the service components, doing so dilutes the unity -- the principle of unity of command, and circumvents the real intent of the law -- which was to put the joint commander-in-chief in charge of operational matters.

Now, as the secretary of defense report has stated, as General Shali has just stated, we're going to look at putting a CENTCOM forward headquarters over there to achieve such unity of command. We believe in our report that it is very important to assign operational control of all forces operating in Saudi Arabia and the gulf region to one forward-deployed headquarters.

I'd next like to talk about proper resource and manning.

Our units overseas must have the resources to do the job, especially when conditions change, when short-term missions become semi-permanent, when additional missions are added, and when a major new element is introduced like a terrorist threat.

Our manning policies must support continuity and cohesion. It's very difficult when people are on a 90-day rotating tour to get this kind of cohesion in some of our key units.

Intelligence did provide warning of the terrorist threat to U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia.

DOWNING: And as a result of this warning, those responsible for force protection had both the time and the motivation to reduce vulnerabilities, as the chairman has so eloquently expressed this morning.

However, it was not enough. Tactical details were needed and they could only have been provided by human intelligence.

The Long Commission, investigating the 1983 Beirut bombing, found that our HUMINT capability and counterintelligence capabilities had eroded, and recommended we take immediate action to address this significant shortfall.

Today, 12 years later, I'm saying the same thing. We found the same shortcoming. Today, we still have enormous difficulty in gaining first-hand inside knowledge of terrorist plans and activities.

The Department of Defense must invest more time, people and funds to develop human intelligence and counterintelligence capabilities in threatened areas to help thwart further attacks.

The director of central intelligence has personally assured me that he will carefully examine our perceptions that restrictions on the recruitment of sources currently hamper the efforts of national intelligence agencies.

We also need theater and national analysis of long-term trends, intentions and capabilities.

The task force found a manpower intensive approach to force protection in the gulf. We saw sentries with binoculars and personal weapons standing 12-hour shifts in 120-degree-plus heat.

We saw bomb dogs out there to detect explosives, who had an effectiveness span of 15 to 30 minutes in those kind of conditions.

We saw crude highway traffic control barriers as you see out here on 395 to reroute traffic during construction being used as blast protection for our buildings and for our forces.

American technology is the best in the world. We can and we must provide our forces with state-of-the-art sensors, blast protectors, automated entry points, and cargo inspection devices. We also need teams to assist our commanders in applying this technology overseas.

Ladies and gentlemen, we've got enough people out inspecting. What we need are people out there helping in the field, pointing out deficiencies to commanders, and then staying and fixing these deficiencies and helping these commanders install these advanced systems that I've described to you.

We believe that the Department of Defense estimate of a 20,000- pound bomb is inaccurate. Our estimates approximate the bomb size to be three to eight thousand pounds, most likely about 5,000 pounds, not 20,000.

Why is the size of the bomb so important? A 20,000-pound bomb might be seen as indefensible, an excuse for not taking appropriate counter measures.

DOWNING: And that is wrong. The key to an effective anti- terrorism program is to reduce vulnerabilities to probable threats. In any event, our task force found that even a 220 pound bomb which was the size of the device used in the bombing in Riyadh in November, 1995. Even that bomb, detonated 80 feet from building 131 -- would have caused significant loss of life and injury.

Finally, I would like to personally offer my sympathy and condolences to the families of those brave Americans who lost their lives at Khobar Towers. The loss of your loved ones was our motivation to make this assessment as thorough and as objective as possible. It is our most sincere desire that our recommendations will help prevent such tragedies in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SPENCE: Thank you very much General. And first of all, I want to thank you again General Downing for your support.

As you indicated, we had -- ourselves conducted a preliminary investigation of this matter and issued a report. And it's amazing to me that our reports had strikingly similar conclusions involved.

I know it's easy to Monday Morning Quarterback anything. People can look back at any situation and arrive at a different conclusion of how we should have looked at the overall matter, or played the game, or called which play and all the rest. And as you said, Mr. Secretary, we aren't here to dwell mainly on a fix and blame of anybody in particular. But we have to try to get to the bottom of what caused this kind of thing to happen so it won't happen again.

I've been impressed by the actions taken by the Department of Defense since this occurrence. The main thing that you referred to, Mr. Secretary, was the change in mind set in dealing with terrorism. I think that's the problem. We should have probably had this

change in mind set after the Riyadh bombing and maybe even before that. And we were a little late in having this change in mind set.

Nonetheless, the change in mind set has resulted, I think, with the future being better at taking care of -- from the standpoint of dealing with this problem. We can talk about the intelligence problems, failures, not getting the kind of information to our commanders and commanders maybe not acting properly on the information they had. The chain of command, whose responsible and all those kinds of things.

SPENCE: One question I want to deal with if I could, and my question is, is the one of the nature of the operation in Southern Watch, and the contribution that the nature of the undertaking might have had toward this whole tragedy.

In considering this temporary contingency operation, what was really a long-term commitment -- as I think most people agree our commitment is long-term, not temporary and contingent. And all of the manning and resourcing of General Downing you just referred to of our people in dealing with this whole operation, might have contributed to the way that they were able to react and handle the situation dealing with terrorism.

The fact that people who've transferred in and out on temporary type assignments and not having an opportunity to really get into the job and not having the resources given to them that you would have on a more permanent type deployment. These kind of things, I think, concern a lot of us, and has given us one of the reasons for this kind of thing happening.

And I just want to know that, and be satisfied that the administration and the Department of Defense has changed its view -- not only mindset on having to deal with terrorism -- but changed it's view on the nature of this deployment being a more permanent commitment rather than the short-term, and that the resources and the manning reflect that change in mindset.

Mr. Secretary, could you tell me kind of what the planning is in that direction?

PERRY: Mr. Chairman, I believe that the necessity, if we go back a little farther, to 1991, when we finished Desert Storm, we had an opportunity at that time to continue that war, go all the way to Baghdad to depose Saddam Hussein. We chose not to do that for reasons which were strong reasons. They've been challenged, but they were strong reasons for not doing that.

A consequence of not doing that is Saddam Hussein is still in power, and may be in power for a long time to come. Therefore I believe we will have, in our vital national security interest the task of containing him, of keeping him in his box for a long time to come.

The key to doing that is the U.S. military presence, in particular, Operation Southern Watch. Therefore, I believe we are going to have to -- we're going to find it in our vital interest to maintain Operation Southern Watch for a long time into the future.

PERRY: Therefore, I think it is entirely appropriate to change the policies of rotation we would have over there now. I'd like to invite General Shali to comment specifically on the rotation policies and how this will be effected.

SHALIKASHVILI: It is exactly for the reason that you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, that I said in my statement that we must change the rotation policy that has existed, particularly for key leaders, because the other ones that need to not only get a feel for the area, but also must be able to establish relations with the Saudi counterparts so there can be an open exchange of information, all the things that we felt were frustrated about and that General Downing reported on.

So key leaders have to be there on, we now feel one year on accompanied tours instead of temporary duty rotations. Additionally, you have other people that rotate in and out, sometimes as individuals, sometimes as units and rotate in and out very quickly.

For instance, security personnel must stay there longer so they can get a feel for the installation they need to protect. And units also that particularly, again, deal with security issues need to have a greater sense of stability there.

Others, like pilots, I think are probably on a right rotation, and they've been doing that and they are all on repetitive tours there. And there probably it's less significant.

What we are now doing in conjunction with all the services, to establish a policy that is geared to each kind of a position and making sure we establish the duration of stay commensurate with their requirements to get to know the area and to have the interface with host nation.

And the same thing is being done with resources. What you need to resource more heavily than we have done now, up to now, for instance, who needs to have anti-terrorism cells in there units that you normally would not find if you just rotate in and out?

But finally, Mr. Chairman, it is also an area of -- an issue of balance. We know very well that the more people that we have in a region raise the profile of Americans. And that in itself raises some of the terrorist threat.

So we must balance what we do, to on the one hand, that we can do the mission and protect our soldiers and airmen and Marines stationed there and sailors, and on the other hand, that we do not do things that unduly make us greater targets to terrorists.

SPENCE: Mr. Dellums?

DELLUMS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make the following observation. My view, as I listen carefully to our three witnesses make their opening remarks and then respond to you, is that this hearing, in my opinion, is a watershed hearing.

DELLUMS: I think it's extremely significant what has come forward thus far in these hearings. If I understand all three of our witnesses, what you have stated clearly and unequivocally is that terrorism has now become the new, very real, and increasing threat to American forces.

And I was particularly impressed with the compelling comment that you, General Downing, made when you pointed out in effect that because of America's military might, prowess, competence, capability, et cetera, that the probability of American forces being taken on frontally, i.e. direct war, starts to decrease significantly, and that the threat that now is being posed to the American forces stationed abroad is terrorism.

Now, I've sat here through hearings when we had the readiness gap, the modernization gap, based on the notion of frontal attack of American military forces. So we have all this equipment, all this deployment. And suddenly folks out there said, "I'm not going to take on this giant -- come at his mind, come at their spirit, come at their very essence," which is the awesome threat of terrorism.

So I think this is a watershed hearing. Whether my colleagues are prepared to join me in the significance of it is another question. Only time will tell.

I would appreciate a response to that observation, but against that backdrop, Mr. Secretary, I would ask the following questions.

Number one, are the recommendations and initiatives that have been articulated by all three of you, that have been forwarded to the president and presented to us, are they adequate given the notion that the war that we're facing on an increasing basis out there is terrorism, not frontal assaults as we've known in the past?

Are the recommendations adequate to meet that large issue, if I understand you that that's where we're headed into the 21st century, that's the likelihood of the major threat, so that force protection now becomes a major, major issue? Are these recommendations adequate to address this larger matter?

Secondly, if that is indeed the case, and if I've heard all of you correctly that that's the implication here, that in my opinion is incredible, what are the potential costs of addressing that problem with respect to American forces stationed around the world, from where do those resources come?

DELLUMS: And finally under that heading, what is your timetable for the review and implementation of these initiatives and recommendations in places other than Saudi Arabia, where troops are stationed around the world, and if I heard you correctly, are becoming increasingly vulnerable to these kinds of attacks that may even become larger and more complex?

My question -- first, I'd appreciate your observations as to whether or not this is a significant larger issue that you've laid on the table here.

PERRY: I think is a watershed, and for the reasons indicated. We, the United States, as the last remaining superpower, has interests all over the world. American forces are deployed many different places all over the world to protect those interests.

America has, I believe, the strongest military in the world, and therefore people and interests that are frustrated by American force protecting American interests seek to counter them. They do not, they are not able to counter them effectively with direct military attack, and so terrorism becomes the weapon of choice.

Therefore we can expect more terrorism in quantity and in quality and the nature of the terrorism. We have not seen the last or the worst examples of terrorism.

Are we doing enough? The changes which we have described to you and which are described in more detail in the report which I've submitted are sweeping changes in the way we do business, in the way we allocate resources, in the way we think about the problem.

I think they are enough. My guidance when we put this plan together was not to approach it incrementally, not to creep up on it, but to overreach it if we did anything. So I believe this is a bold plan and I believe it is enough.

What is the cost? The immediate cost we can identify for the actions that are already underway are measured in hundreds of millions of dollars. The cost for the move to the Prince Sultan Air Base, for example, cost to the U.S. is \$120 million with additional cost, substantial cost to the Saudis.

The other actions that are underway now involve several hundred million more, but those are -- that is the tip of the iceberg. The actions we have underway are going to cost substantially more than that.

DELLUMS: Into the billions?

PERRY: I cannot give you a number for it at this stage. But we're talking about billions, not hundreds of millions for incremental cost, beyond what we're already spending in force protection. In terms of timing, some of these important changes have already been implemented.

I told you, we have already moved the forces to Prince Sultan Air Base, and that was a very big and very extensive operation. But we will be making these changes for years to come, and we are even now, as we speak, implementing them into our planning in our five-year defense -- in our future year's defense program.

SHALIKASHVILI: My view is that, first of all...

DELLUMS: Just -- General, I'm sorry. Before you go on, it occurs to me that my last question had to do with the timing of both the review and the implementation of your recommendations to other areas around the world where troops are deployed.

PERRY: In that respect, Mr. Dellums, we are talking about months, not years. The -- that's proceeding intensively right now. We made a special focus on getting those inclusions completed in the Arabian Peninsula before we -- and those are essentially completed there, but the consideration around the world in other regions is we have requested it, we are probably months away from having -- several months away from having a conclusion there.

DELLUMS: If there are no other comments, Mr. Chairman, I just had a couple of other questions.

I would like to now turn your attention to the issue of relocation. You mentioned relocation, restructuring and refocusing, and I'd like to ask a question with respect to relocation in this specific situation.

You talk about the current status of the relocation in your opening remarks. I'd like to get a sense from you as to what has been the impact on the conduct of the operational mission now that you've moved from one place to a more isolated area.

And would you share with the committee your assessment of the risks and the trade-off, as I alluded to in my opening remarks, in moving to a more isolated location as opposed to being in a highly populated area?

If you recall, my opening remarks, I pointed out that in an isolated area, the potential for weapons of mass destruction being used as a terrorist effort increase when you're in isolated areas. Other forms of terrorism increase when you're in highly populated areas where weapons of mass destruction may not be politically acceptable.

I'd like to get your thoughts about both of those questions.

My final thing, then I will back off, I recall your admonishment with respect to culpability. I would simply like to ask -- and I'm not going to the question of individual or personal culpability -- but I would just like to, for my own reference, get a sense from you as to whether or not the referral of the report only to the secretary of the Air Force regarding individual actions or missions means that no person or commands other than the Air Force are being reviewed for the purposes of culpability?

DELLUMS: That's as far as I'd like to take that particular question today.

PERRY: Let me answer that one immediately and directly in that I have asked -- the Air Force will directly consider Air Force personnel. But I have also asked the Air Force to advise me if, during the course of the review, it identifies matters that I should consider or refer to another component of interest.

DELLUMS: I appreciate that clarification.

With respect to the issues that I raised regarding relocation and to do with that, I would yield back, Mr. Chairman.

PERRY: Two different major relocations that are underway. One I have described, which is moving our combatant forces to the Prince Sultan Air Base.

As I indicated to you, that is nearly complete. It's complete in the sense that we're conducting full operations out of that right now. But we will be working on improving that base in terms of quality of life, improving it in terms of security protections for many months into the future.

The other important move was to Eskan Village, which is located south of Riyadh. That's where we will be moving our non-combatant units in Saudi Arabia, which are very substantially more than 1,000 non-combatant forces there.

They were working in isolated -- they were working in offices in Riyadh, and were living in housing areas in Riyadh. We thought both the offices and housing areas were very difficult to protect -- to come up with protection measures. So, we have decided to consolidate those at Eskan Village. That is still underway. That will be several months before that is in -- although we have started moving people into Eskan Village already.

There we will be building a substantial security perimeter, and security protection around that area as well. We will also have some of the people doing both their job and their homes in Eskan Village, which reduces the risk we have not talked about here which is the risk during transportation.

That's a separate issue as to how we enhance the protection during transportation. General Downing has recommended to me some of the steps that the Israelis take in terms of providing armored buses for transporting people around.

(UNKNOWN): General Shali, do you want to add anything to that?

SHALIKASHVILI: No.

DELLUMS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for your generosity.

SPENCE: Mr. Hunter?

HUNTER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for being with us today.

Mr. Secretary, had you been to the Khobar Towers prior to this bombing?

PERRY: I have been at Dhahran, but not at Khobar Towers. I've been at the air base there.

Khobar Towers is a resident -- residence adjacent to the air base. So I have been at that air base. I've reviewed the activities of the air base. I did not go to Khobar Towers when I was there.

HUNTER: OK. General Shalikashvili, have you been to Khobar Towers? Have you seen the towers prior to the bombing?

SHALIKASHVILI: I also have only visited Dhahran Air Base, and I met with the commanders there and the pilots and crews. And we did talk force protection, but I did not go over to the living quarters themselves.

HUNTER: OK. Did either one of you when you were at the air base ever ask the commander about the proximity of the living quarters to the public roads?

PERRY: I can answer the question for myself, is that, yes. I have discussed -- most specifically I visited Saudi Arabia right after the bombing.

HUNTER: At Riyadh?

PERRY: At Riyadh, as well as several times since the bombing at Khobar Towers.

Right after the bombing at Riyadh. The primary prose of the visit was to review force protection. And while we were focusing on the force protection in the Riyadh area, I was also discussing with them force protection in the whole area, not just force protection of the working areas but force protection of residences as well.

HUNTER: Did you discuss the proximity of the living areas to the public roads?

PERRY: Yes, we did.

HUNTER: What was the essence...

PERRY: Not specifically relative to Khobar Towers, but we discussed that problem, which was not unique to Khobar Towers. It was a characteristic of all of the living areas we have.

HUNTER: OK. Well, did you ask the commander if he thought he had his people housed far enough away from the public roads, basically?

PERRY: I did. And in the case of Riyadh, his answer was "no." And we talked about ways that we could move and improve that. And, in fact, that is what the move that I described to you to Eskan Village already started before Khobar Towers bombing precisely because of that concern.

HUNTER: But I'm asking about...

PERRY: He did not raise to me the question of the proximity of the road to Khobar Towers.

HUNTER: OK. Gentlemen, let me ask the staff folks to carry down a 25-pound weight because I want to go to the size of this bomb and the bomb that was used at Riyadh, and the basic physical aspects of what we're dealing with here.

This room, this hearing room is approximately 56 feet long -- or wide. From the cameras on that side over to the wall on this side, it's about 56 feet wide, which is about 24 feet short of the distance between the public road and the American service personnel who were housed at the Khobar Towers. In other words, we had them right next to the public road.

Now, to your knowledge was there any type of constraint or check point that kept anybody who wanted to travel the public road from travelling the public road?

Was that a semi-military road? Was it checked? Or was it basically just a public road that you could drive trucks and cars down?

PERRY: Let me ask General Downing to answer that question. He specifically looked at that issue.

HUNTER: General Downing.

DOWNING: Prior to the blast there were two roads on either side of the Khobar Towers housing complex that civilian vehicles did have access to. The actual site of the bomb was a public parking lot.

And this parking lot was where they parked the truck, they backed it into the fence -- up into the fence -- which ended up to be a distance of 80 feet from 31.

HUNTER: So not only was there a public road...

DOWNING: That is correct.

HUNTER: ...but there was a public parking lot where you could drive a truck and park it within approximately 80 feet, a little wider than this hearing room, of where our service personnel were housed.

DOWNING: That's correct.

HUNTER: Mr. Secretary, that's a 25-pound weight. The bomb that blew up at Riyadh, you've testified and General Downing's testified, was approximately 220 pound, which is about 11 of those.

Obviously you could carry 11 of those in a Volkswagon. You can carry them very handily in a half-ton pickup.

You have said that the bomb at Khobar Towers was 20,000 pounds, which sounds pretty impressive. General Downing has said maybe between 3,000 pounds and 8,000 pounds -- probably 5,000 pounds.

At any rate, 10 of those weights equals the weight of the bomb -- or 11 of those weights equals the weight of the bomb that went off at Riyadh six months earlier.

Eight hundred of those weights put into the back of the truck equal the weight of the bomb -- the weight that you've claimed this bomb had that blew up at Khobar Towers, 20,000 pounds.

And less than half of that -- half of those -- 800 of those weights would equal the size of the bomb that General Downing says more accurately approximates the size of that bomb.

Why was it mission impossible to contemplate that somebody might have a big truck and might put the equivalent of 800 of those weights in the back of that truck, drive it up to the public parking area about 80 feet away from where our people were housed and blow it up?

Why was that a complicated thing?

I mean, that seems to me to smack more of common sense than a complex -- the failure in our anti-terrorism methods.

PERRY: Mr. Hunter, it is evident that that was, in fact, done. Therefore, it could have been contemplated. It was contemplated by the terrorists.

I could have been contemplated by the people who were trying to protect against the terrorists. That was a failure.

HUNTER: Well, so that was a failure to do that?

But now, Mr. Secretary, the chain of command does not go through General Shalikhshvili. As I understand it went...

PERRY: The chain of command goes to me, Mr. Hunter. I've testified to that very directly and very clearly.

HUNTER: Well, then you've testified to that, and you had a situation in the Middle East in which you had a public parking area after a major terrorist blast allowed to be within 80 feet, about as wide as this committee room, of those barracks.

Now that indicates to me, Mr. Secretary, that that was a major failure, not in the lack of having a comprehensive plan or understanding the new dawn of terrorism in the Middle East, but just a major failure in basic judgment. Do you agree with that?

PERRY: I already said that I thought this was a failure.

HUNTER: Well, do you think that was a failure in judgment on your part?

PERRY: Mr. Hunter, I did not know that the fence was 80 feet from building. If you think I should have known that, then you can regard that as a failure on my part.

There are many security fences around many of our installations -- thousands of them around the world -- and I do not know the details of all of them.

HUNTER: Well, you've -- just one last question, Mr. Secretary.

You did state that you asked about the proximity of the blast at Riyadh to the barracks, to the personnel.

PERRY: I asked the force commander what issues he had in providing protection for his forces there. One of the issues he described to me was that the working space he had in Riyadh was on a public street and that he was taking actions to correct that. He did not describe to me his concern -- whatever concern he may have about the Khobar Tower building.

HUNTER: OK, so when you left Khobar Towers, or when you visited those areas, that you visited on a number of occasions, but haven't visited Khobar Towers, you had no idea how close Khobar Towers was to the public street?

PERRY: I did not.

HUNTER: And it was never briefed to you that they were close?

PERRY: That is correct.

HUNTER: OK, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, do you have anything to add on that, were you briefed with respect to the proximity?

SHALIKASHVILI: No, I went over there, Mr. Hunter, around the May timeframe. My specific purpose was to have discussions in Riyadh with those who had experienced the bombing there to make sure that the corrective actions that needed to be taken were taken. Then I went to Dhahran. There I was briefed by the commander how -- what steps they were taking to increase their security. The issue of a road, or where the road was in relationship to that complex was never mentioned to me.

HUNTER: OK, just one last thing, Mr. Chairman. The roads are important because that's the way we get bombed at these places from Beirut on. We get bombed by vehicles that travel down public roads in close proximity to American troops and go off. We understand that, we've learned that twice before this bombing.

Lastly, Mr. Secretary, you have lauded General Peay, your CENTCOM commander. Do you think it was a lack of judgment or a negligence on his part that he had an installation under his command where you had a public parking area down which any terrorists could drive and park within 80 feet of American housing quarters at Khobar? Do you think that was a lapse?

PERRY: Mr. Hunter, there is some aspects of General Peay's performance which I'm critical of.

HUNTER: Was that one of them?

PERRY: That's one of them. But looking in totality of what he has done in force protection, look at the magnificent job he has done in improving force protection since then, and most importantly, looking at what he has done in carrying out our mission in that area -- the Operation Southern Watch -- the whole area of protecting our forces over there, looking in totality of that, I think he is a superb commander and he has my support.

He is not perfect, he has made mistakes and he'll probably make more mistakes in the future.

HUNTER: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. And Mr. Chairman, I'll close -- but let me just offer my opinion on that. If the one way American troops have been most badly damaged by terrorists acts was by people driving down public roads with large charges of explosives next to where Americans live and exploding those things, I would think that one of the criteria for a commander's capability would be whether or not he was smart enough to go out in a common sense way and say, expand those perimeters.

I don't want to have any Americans living and sleeping within a few feet of a terrorists parking area where a terrorist can drive a big truck up and park it. I would think that would be a major criteria, not a very small part of the spectrum of criteria through which you analyze whether or not one of your commanders has served you well.

HUNTER: I think that's a major thing.

SPENCE: Mr. Montgomery.

MONTGOMERY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, Mr. Chairman, I've worked with many secretaries, and I think you, Mr. Secretary, are one of the best secretaries I've ever served under, and I've been on this committee longer than anybody else. I think you do a splendid job. You care. You get personally involved -- maybe too much sometimes. But you work hard, you're smart and I'm very proud to have worked with you over these years.

And you've got over two million Americans around the world, somewhere. Next week, you'll be in here with another problem. You just can't have that many operations going on here in this country and around other parts of this great world without having some headaches about every week or every two weeks.

I think you and General Shalikashvili are doing a wonderful job. The General has served with great honor. And General Downing, we've known over the years, you've had a thankless job. You went after it, and you came in with a strong report.

I have three questions, maybe brief answers.

Mr. Secretary, in light of the negative press accounts from your recent trip to the Persian Gulf, can you elaborate on your assessment of the trip?

PERRY: I'll make several brief comments about that, Mr. Montgomery.

The first is that the necessity for maintaining Operation Southern Watch is very high, and that necessity is shared by all of coalition partners over there.

Secondly, we will not ask our air crews to conduct that operation in the face of unnecessary risks, and therefore, we will not tolerate Iraq taking threatening actions against them.

Third, they did take threatening actions last week. They were quite ineffective, but nevertheless, they expressed some intent.

And finally, those actions have stopped. We are watching very carefully what they are doing now, but I believe that our warning to them is probably taking hold, and I believe that they're going to back off the threats that they were making to Operation Southern Watch.

In the meantime, we have made our force deployments, and we are prepared to take military action if necessary. I hope it will not be necessary, and I believe it will probably not be necessary. We will watch very, very carefully.

MONTGOMERY: To follow up on that, what's administrations goal in regard to Saddam Hussein?

PERRY: As long as he is in power, we will have a continuing task -- to put it in the vernacular -- of keeping him in his box.

PERRY: Because he keeps trying to break out of that box and threatens his neighbors, tries to develop nuclear, biological, chemical weapons, and has continual problem keeping him in his box. It's not one that we will solve by any single action.

The key to our being able to succeed in that is our military presence in the region in Operation Southern Watch. So we will have to continue those for a long time, I think.

MONTGOMERY: Compared to Iraqi forces, compared to 1991, you just got back and many of us were over there during the Persian Gulf War. How do you compare those forces to 1991 and today?

PERRY: The Iraqi forces?

MONTGOMERY: Correct.

PERRY: The Iraqi forces are about half the size and about half the capability that they were in 1991. In the meantime, we have pre- positioned in the area substantial equipment that we did not have in 1990, when he went into Kuwait. So the relative correlation of forces is very much stronger in our favor.

MONTGOMERY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Stayed within my time.

PERRY: Mr. Montgomery, I might make one other point. Having just come back from the Gulf, the media coverage of that trip, which suggested that the various countries there were not supporting -- our coalition -- were not supporting Operation Southern Watch is just plain wrong.

We have very strong support from Saudi Arabia. We're continuing to the expanded Operation Southern Watch from Bahrain and Kuwait in accepting the new weapons systems that we have put in there in case we have to use them.

I want to make as strong a point as I can that we have our coalition truly is alive and well.

Thank you.

MONTGOMERY: Thank you, sir.

SPENCE: Mr. Weldon?

WELDON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, want to thank our witnesses for coming in. And General Downing, your report is excellent and deserves to be followed up by appropriate action, both administratively and within the Congress.

In response to -- part of the analysis in your report about the temporary nature of the assignment, resulting in a lack of centralized focus and adequate resources, I would like to take this time and follow up to the comments by General Shali to acknowledge the work of this committee.

Sixteen months ago, this committee, in last year's defense authorization bill, recognized that exact problem. In last year's defense bill, our committee, in a bipartisan way, in fact, fenced one-half of the dollars requested by the administration for enhanced Southern Watch. And we fenced it until we got a certification that in fact this was going to be declared a forward-presence operation. And we did it for a very specific reason, because we felt there was no clear coordination and adequate funding of resources.

Now we did get a piece of paper recently that said it was done on paper, but in fact the concern that I have is that it wasn't followed through with the intent of this committee, which was directly to deal with the problem that we're now talking about after the fact.

WELDON: Secondly, in terms of the issue of terrorism, it was this committee who displayed criticism of the administration, plussed-up the defense bill by hundreds of millions of dollars in the area of anti-terrorism.

My subcommittee, in a bipartisan way, in fact, put millions of dollars in the bill for counter-terrorism explosives research, not requested by the administration, and criticized for putting more money into the defense bill than what was asked for.

This committee has been aggressive in dealing with issue before Khobar Towers. And I want to applaud the members of my subcommittee on both sides of the aisle, and members of the full committee for having had the foresight despite, in many cases, being grossly criticized for doing what was right for our troops.

I want to also further add, General Downing, that I agree with you that what is said here is nothing unless it's followed up. And I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that this committee require the milestones to be put in writing so that we know what's going to be done regardless of who's elected president this year and who's going to be in a command position, that we have very specific milestones that we can measure about the recommendations made by the Downing report. That's the only way that we're going to prevent this from happening.

And I do have one final question. Secretary Perry, I have a copy of your memo to the Secretary of the Air Force, Sheila Widnall, and the chief of staff, Ronald Fogleman. And in that you asked the Air Force to look at this incident, to take appropriate action, including

empowering the commander of the 12th Air Force to convene a disciplinary review, or have disciplinary review authority and general court martial convening authority.

Now the rumors circulating is that there, in fact, is going to be a court martial for General Schwalier, and I understand you can't comment on that. My question is, and I agree with you, that there is a legal process that needs to be followed, and I don't want to have an unfair process anyway. I don't want to comment about that.

But I do have a question that follows up with a comment, the question raised by my friend and colleague, Mr. Dellums. You have tasked the Air Force, the commander of the 12th Air Force, who I believe is a three-star, to look at this situation. And he will look probably from his level down. Who's going to look from his level up in terms of culpability in this issue?

Are we saying that a three-star is going to be asked to review the efforts and work of a four-star, who in fact he reports to, and to come back with an honest assessment as to whether or not there was any culpability in the process as it relates to that three-star? I happen to think that there is some question that I have about whether or not that really is going to provide legitimate due process.

Mr. Secretary, my question is, do you really expect that three-star to be able to have the authority the capability, to be able to review in a very exhaustive manner, as you've asked the Secretary of the Air Force to do, anyone who may have been culpable or derelict in their responsibilities as leaders of our military in this situation?

PERRY: Yes.

WELDON: Furthermore, then what you're telling me is there is no one above the level of that three-star general who will look at the CINC command, and in this case -- and I understand your letter to General Peay -- but I also read the report by General Downing, which severely criticized the command.

Now, are we going to have someone independently look at that? Or is this going to be again the assignment of the three-star in the Air Force, who happens to report to that four-star, who in fact, in the report by General Downing, in fact, his command was responsible for major shortcomings in terms of this operation? And even beyond that, back to the leadership of the Pentagon itself?

PERRY: The convening authority has not only the responsibility to take actions directly. It also has the authority to refer anything it finds to another component for action. And therefore, the answer to my question -- your first question was, "Yes."

The reason I answered that question "Yes," is because that could reach out in any direction -- up, down or sideways.

WELDON: Mr. Chairman, just in closing, I thank you and I would just say that, as one member of this committee, I don't think that's adequate. I think any time you have someone that reports to you judging whether or not you are derelict in your duties, that presents an immediate and obvious conflict of interest.

And I would suggest that this committee should look seriously at what action we can take to have the same kind of review of General Schwalier and his actions all the way through the chain of command by whatever means and whatever group, in fact, that would take the required to occur.

Thank you.

SPENCE: Mr. Skelton. The gentleman from Missouri.

SKELTON: Thank you very much. General, we appreciate your testimony and which has proved very, very hopeful, not just to us but to the military and to our nation.

I must say, first, Secretary Perry, I admire your candor. I admire the way you are approaching this very difficult and distasteful subject. And I also thank you for your determination, which is quite obvious, to forge ahead and to give the very best in force protection to the young men and women in uniform.

I was intrigued a few moments ago by my colleague Mr. Dellums' clear thinking on describing the position in which we find ourself today.

The dynamics have changed. In his recognizing, probably for the first time, that we have changed from a confrontational threat to that of terrorism around the edges, which is designed to cause us to go home.

And I think that somewhere along the line -- a decision because General Downing correctly stated that terrorism is an undeclared war -- somewhere along the line, we will have to more than put band-aids on the problem of terrorism.

SKELTON: High level decisions will have to be made, maybe to go after the sources or to stop the sources. High level decisions will have to be made not to allow terrorism camps and training sanctuaries and possibly to punish those states who harbor them.

I was pleased to hear, Secretary Perry, your comments on the Goldwater-Nickles law, which we struggled so long and hard for in this committee. It does appear to be working, and I hope that it will continue to do so.

Gentlemen, a good part of my efforts on this committee has been urging the military to study the history of yesteryear to learn lessons from the past at the military command general staff colleges and at the war colleges and, of course, independently.

And that, of course, has met with some success, but here we have a situation where we possibly did not learn as well from lessons of the past, and I refer specifically to the Admiral Bob Long report from the 1983 bombing of Beirut.

Congressman Montgomery led a delegation -- I was part of it -- when they were still removing the remains in Beirut on those -- on that sad occasion.

So in that vein, let me ask some questions on where do we go from here. But first, General Downing, I want to ask you two questions and one of Secretary Perry.

General Downing, could you share the committee a side-by-side comparison of your report and the Long report from the 1983 bombing in Beirut?

Number two, General Downing, what support necessary for insuring the safety of U.S. military personnel was not provided to General Schwalier?

And Secretary Perry, would you comment -- I understand there is a discrepancy from your testimony -- would you comment on this discrepancy between the DOD report and General Downing's report regarding the size of the bomb.

DOWNING: Thank you, Congressman. Let me start off with the Long Commission report. It's a report that I was familiar with when I got the charter, and I think probably the first thing I did after I hung up the phone after talking with General Shali was to call to Washington and have a copy of that report faxed to me in Colorado because I wanted to read it again. And it was -- it was interesting. In fact, I personally talked to Admiral Long before we started this commission. There's an amazing amount of similarity between the things that we found on Khobar Towers compared to what he found in Beirut.

Certainly, it starts off with the chain of command. The chain of command in his case -- this is pre-Goldwater-Nickles -- was very scrambled above the forces physically ashore in Beirut.

DOWNING: And as you gentlemen and ladies know much better than I do, the Beirut bombing was one of the -- was an important factor in the subsequent Goldwater-Nickles legislation, which was passed in 1986.

Command and control was also tied up in that -- in that particular chain of command issue -- just like we found, not exactly the same, but as an issue, it was out there and it was present.

Certainly the mission had changed since those Marines had gone ashore. Conditions, just like we found at Khobar Towers, had changed significantly from when that particular mission had started. So that was another similarity.

Intelligence. Admiral Long, as I said in my opening statement, found that there was a paucity of human intelligence. It was degraded. It was weak. And we had to reinfuse that. I found the same thing.

He mentioned the need for intelligence fusion. We found intelligence fusion being done fairly well both back here and forward. However, we did find that General Schwalier did not have the right kind of intelligence apparatus to really service his needs, and I'll talk more about that later.

Admiral Long got into military preparedness -- doctrine, training, force structure, education, organization -- and we found the same kind of things, and these are explicitly stated in the report.

And then, finally, Admiral Long also talked about vulnerability analysis, physical security and the use of technology -- again, the same kind of things that we found.

Now interestingly, during the same period of time, Admiral Bobby Inman, former director of the CIA, undertook a study for the State Department on hardening their facilities because, as you remember, they had two bombings at the American embassy in Beirut. And one of them with considerable loss of life.

Admiral Inman, of course, looking through the State Department system, you know, came up with wordings that were -- or findings that were worded distinctly differently from this, but when you get into the philosophy behind these findings, when you get into what he was saying, you find the same kind of parallels that come out of this.

So what we're seeing then is something that has recurred.

I think one of the comments that I have to make about the actions that Secretary Perry and General Shalikashvili are making is that they are trying now to institutionalize an element within the structure that can look at this, and I think after Beirut, we all absorbed those lessons, and we applied them.

But then over time, we forgot them because we weren't targeted again.

The one thing that I think we've got going for us here is we're institutionalizing this now so that we can keep our fingers on it.

Let me go to your second question, Mr. Congressman, and that is on General Schwalier.

DOWNING: General Schwalier was -- he was dealt a bad hand. It was a tough mission over there. We've already talked about the mission had changed on him. He had it added to that a major change in the ground threat.

There was no ground threat, and all of a sudden with OPM/SANG we find out for the first time that the kingdom of Saudi Arabia has a viable terrorist threat and it's after us.

You've got to remember that General Schwalier has the mission of launching air operations up into the box over southern Iraq, and he's doing this, and he's doing this extremely well. And this is how that organization is tailored. It's tailored to do that mission, and it does it extremely well. That organization could take on any air force in the world and put it in the sand because it knows what it is doing.

He comes into a new world now with a tremendous physical security problem. He did not have the resources and the assets that he needed to take that on, and those were not forthcoming. He had a lot of people telling him what was wrong over there, but he didn't have a lot of people that was helping -- that were out there helping him fix this.

His flying squadrons that are flying up in the box in Iraq, these are units, these units have flown and trained together. They come into country and they are loaded for bear. They are trained to the highest standards that we can train an Air Force unit because they're ready to go to war at the drop of a hat. Not only are they trained when they get into theater, they are training while they are there.

And there's an intelligence organization that supports that. It's looking at air order of battle. And I mean if the slightest thing changes with that air order of battle up over Iraq, they're reacting to it a matter of seconds. And I mean these people are ready to go.

The security policemen who are charged with the security of this base, they're not a unit. They're coming over here as individuals. They're coming over for a 15 to a 90-day tour. Ten percent of those security policemen are turning over every week. They don't ever get a change to know each other.

There is no training conducted for them before they come into country. They're coming off a flight line or they're coming off a guard post on a gate of an Air Force base, and they're introduced into Saudi Arabia with no training.

They're applying the same rules of engagement, the same rules on the use of deadly force as they're applying back in the United States. There are no drills. There's nothing conducted to get these people ready.

And so I think this puts into a context some of the problems that General Schwalier faced. He had an air operation. He had a physical security problem. And he didn't have a lot of help getting that thing put together.

SPENCE: I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Saxton?

SAXTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, I have three questions which I would like to ask. And, Mr. Chairman, I hope that I will be able to do this quickly enough to be able to ask all three questions.

SAXTON: But before I ask the questions, let me just suggest, Secretary Perry, I believe you're a victim. I believe the five people who died in the Riyadh bombing were victims. I believe the 19 people who died in the Dhahran bombing were victims. I believe the soldiers and the commanders that General Downing was just talking about who have not had the training, proper training for these kinds of situations are victims.

You are all victims of a United States political infrastructure that has heretofore refused to acknowledge the threat posed by international terrorism.

And I'm glad that we're here today beginning to hear acknowledgment from all of us in the political infrastructure that we do have this kind of a problem.

Congressman Hunter and Congressman Longley and I, and four or five other members of Congress, I believe recognized what I just said some time ago. We formed an ad hoc group -- we call it the Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare.

And as evidence that it is possible to know about these events ahead of time, let me read to you from a report that we prepared -- and again, I don't mean this to be critical of you, I mean this to be critical of the United States political infrastructure on this issue.

We wrote in December of 1995, "On November 13, 1995, two massive explosions rocked Riyadh in quick succession. First, a car bomb exploded in a parking lot in front of a three story building housing Saudi-American National Guard development mission. The blast blew off one side of the building.

"This explosion alone also destroyed 45 cars and shattered windows for more than a mile. Then a few minutes later a secondary anti-personnel bomb exploded in the parking lot, inflicting additional casualties from among the people rushing to help those injured in the first explosion."

We concluded this 10-page report by saying, "The most important legacy of the November 13, parking lot bombing, explosions in Riyadh, is that the Saudi Islamists, alone with the Iranian and Sudanese and other states sponsoring them, have finally crossed the line. With active support and sponsorship from Teheran, the Islamist forces are ready to escalate their activities."

So we saw a parking lot explosion in Riyadh which we thought, our small group thought was a warning of things to come. And sure enough it was.

And we collectively weren't ready. It wasn't your fault. It wasn't General Shalikashvili's fault. I don't think it was the field commander's fault. I think all of us have to share responsibility for that because we refused to recognize collectively the threat.

So let me ask three questions.

Why, in your opinion, did we collectively refuse to acknowledge the threat?

Second, do you believe today that the United States political infrastructure acknowledges the threat and the threat posed by those who are sponsoring these acts -- i.e. Iran, Sudan, Syria and other state sponsors?

SAXTON: And the third question I have, I guess, is some -- I'll ask you to conjecture somewhat. Do you think there should -- if, in fact, we do collectively today acknowledge that Iran and Sudan and Syria and others are behind all this, is it, as General Downing suggests, an act of war?

And should there be a price to pay for the -- by those state sponsors? Because, in my view, there has been no price to pay.

So (A), should Riyadh have been a warning? And why didn't we react to it collectively? (B), was it state sponsored? And (C), was it an act of war, and if so, should there be a price for those countries to pay?

PERRY: Mr. Saxton, I applaud you and your group for calling attention to that problem.

I might say that the Riyadh bombing was also a warning to the Defense Department. We have testified before that -- and we write in our report of the many actions we took in response to that warning.

Clearly, those actions were not enough, but it was also clear that we saw the warning and had extensive measures under way, with while they did not avert the tragedy, greatly reduced casualties that would otherwise have occurred.

On the broader question that you're asking, I believe that we have, this country, has led the world in fighting terrorism. We have pushed globally to tighten up constraints on Iran, with very little support, I might say, from the international community. We keep the UN sanctions on Libya. We've helped put UN sanctions on Sudan.

On the third question you raised, is what if it can be established and be established clearly that any international -- any other country was behind this bombing, should we take action against that country? And my answer to that is yes, and strong action.

SAXTON: Mr. Secretary, I thank you for your response. I guess I would have just one follow-up.

I guess, you know, in American culture, we look for a burden of proof, that we often times recognize in our system of jurisprudence in this country, a burden of proof that goes far beyond the burden of certainty that we oftentimes look to in international events.

And so, I guess I would just hope -- in conclusion for my five minutes -- I would hope in conclusion that the burden of certainty or proof that we look for in determining who

sponsors these acts is not the same burden of proof that we use in our American court system.

PERRY: I understand.

SPENCE: Mr. Skelton had an answer he was expecting, I think, from Mr. Perry on...

PERRY: Yes. Mr. Skelton asked a question about the discrepancy in the evaluation of the size of the bomb.

We, of course, asked for this evaluation because we wanted to know what we were up against. And we do have in the Defense Department experts in the field of explosive effects.

But most of those experts in the DOD are in what used to be called the Defense Nuclear Agency, now called the Defense Weapons Support Agency. And so, we referred this to them, asked them to give us their best assessment.

They've visited the site.

PERRY: They made extensive measurements, did extensive calculations.

They come up with an evaluation of in excess of 20,000 pounds equivalent TNT. I have to tell you I was surprised at that answer -- surprised enough that I asked the Institute for Defense Analysis, IDA, to convene a panel of independent experts to review those results. They did. They convened 10 outside experts who basically validated the conclusion.

The analysis that they did is part of the report that we are submitting here so anybody can review the calculations, the analysis they made and come to their own independent conclusions. I have no grief for any particular size of the bomb. I have no reason for wanting it to be 20,000 or 5,000 or 3,000. I would like to know -- I'd like to get the best estimate.

What we have done is given you our best scientific evaluation of what it is. And that analysis ought to be regarded in technical, scientific terms and judged in technical and scientific terms.

General Shali?

SHALIKASHVILI: May I add a comment to that?

For me, it is important that we do not push aside the notion that it was or could have been a 20,000 pound bomb because we would be falling into the same mistake that perhaps we are faulting those after Riyadh for.

I would much rather that our forces out there go on the assumption that it could have been a 20,000 pound bomb, and that's what they could be facing in the days to come, as opposed to spending a lot of energy convincing them that it wasn't and therefore all you need to worry about is a 5,000 pound bomb.

I think it is conceivable that it could have been. Certainly, the scientific analysis that I looked at seemed very convincing to me. But either way, to me it's an issue -- what do we wish to get our service men and women ready for?

I think we -- to take that quantum jump forward and try to get ready for that kind of a threat that we're facing now which equals the threat of a weapons of mass destruction, is the prudent thing to do as opposed to trying to focus on some kind of a lower threat.

SPENCE: Mr. Ortiz, the gentleman from Texas.

DOWNING: I guess where we're -- if I could respond?

SPENCE: General Downing?

DOWNING: I guess where we come down on this is, I think it's important we've got accurate ways of estimating this, or we're going to respond and structure ourselves for things that are not there. Because this has lead in to how we are going to construct buildings in the future, how we're going to protect existing standards.

Now, I think the Defense Department's estimate comes from scientists who work with nuclear weapons and computer simulation.

DOWNING: Our explosive experts are people who are more into the physical effects of explosives. In other words, these are people who blow things up for a living, you know. These are military people.

They've gone out, and we went out, and looked at the physical evidence -- the size of the crater, the condition of the soil. We looked at the buildings. We also looked at the vehicles that were parked in the parking lot, and looked at the blast on those vehicles -- on the windshields, some of which were still intact -- the paint.

I personally walked in that parking lot looking at the vehicles, and actually found leaves on the trees of the -- on trees and bushes that were within 120 feet of the blast.

Perhaps one of the most compelling pieces of evidence, physical evidence, we came up with is there was a security policeman who, responding to the call for help from Khobar -- from Building 131 -- had parked his Humvee and was running towards the building when that blast went off. He was only slightly over 80 feet away from this blast, and he survived. In fact, he not only survived, he was on his feet talking the next day.

So, we just think the physical evidence says that the method that we used to estimate this bomb, by the scientific facts, is wrong. So, the reason we want to call this to the attention is that we've got to get -- we think we've either got to go with the people who look at physical evidence or we've got to adjust our computer models, or we're going to start getting wrong answers as we do these calculations in the future.

SPENCE: Now Mr. Ortiz, the gentleman from Texas.

ORTIZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask a question.

I think, Mr. Secretary, you said that non-combatants would be moved to an area where they will be residing, and they can do their work, and they can live there, and that you're working on the security aspects of it.

Are we talking about only Americans who are stationed there? Do we have any French or any British -- any others but Americans at that compound where they will be moving in?

PERRY: In the combatant area at the Prince Sultan Air Base, there are French -- there will be French and British and Saudis working and living, as well as Americans. But the majority, the great majority, of forces there will be American.

In Eskan Village, there will also be non-Americans living there. But again, the great majority of them are going to be Americans.

ORTIZ: The reason I ask is because the SOP that they have used -- and I'm talking about the terrorists where they used vehicles, utilized parking spaces, suicide bombings -- this area where they will be residing, can we assume that they won't have a threat, that the skies would be secure, that they might change their ways that they have operated before?

PERRY: I'm sorry. I don't understand the question.

ORTIZ: What they have used before is that they have used vehicles as suicide bombers, specifically when I would look back at Beirut.

ORTIZ: But, will the skies be secure that they will fire a missile into a compound or that they might use a helicopter? Has that been considered?

PERRY: Any of the compounds I describe or any that I can conceive of, will be vulnerable to a mortar attack or a missile attack. Short of going into deep underground bunkers, there's no way I know of protecting against that kind of an attack.

SPENCE: General.

SHALIKASHVILI: I fully agree with Secretary Perry's analysis. However, I must say that, for instance, to ensure that on Prince Sultan Base, we do have some degree of protection, we are moving a Patriot system to that air base to give them some measure of protection. But clearly, that doesn't protect you from mortars being fired or what not.

But, compared to where they're coming from, that base offers considerable, considerable improvement in their security. But, nothing is perfect.

And my whole notion is that the anti-terrorism effort is a living effort. That is, you can't say we're going to do these 10 things and then we're going to be all right. Because the terrorist is working just as fast and just as hard as you are to find ways to overcome what you did.

So, if you have a mindset that we can write out in an annex the things we must do and establish a timeline to do it, and then we wash our hands of, it won't happen -- it just won't work. So, as you work these things and as you learn more about what he's thinking, I think we're facing -- from now on -- a continuous cycle of improvements and changes that you make.

And how successful you are at staying ahead of him, depends how good your intelligence, and particularly your HUMINT, is so that you can get into what he's planning as far as methods and procedures are concerned.

ORTIZ: So, I think I can feel confident to say that now we know where the threat is -- at least what they utilized, vehicles -- but that we will be looking at the sky as well so that our troops would be safe as well from that threat.

SHALIKASHVILI: I think we have to be agile enough to look ahead at all of the things that he could do. But, we should not mislead ourselves that somehow there is a full-proof protection at anything that a terrorist could think of.

ORTIZ: Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SPENCE: The gentlelady from Jacksonville, Florida, Mrs. Fowler.

FOWLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank Secretary Perry and General Shalikhvili for being here today. And I know you both care deeply about the safety of members of our military who serve us. I also want to thank General Downing for the thoroughness and honesty of his report. I've been reading parts of it.

But, I'm very concerned. I had a constituent, Master Sergeant Michael Heiser, 35-years old from Palm Coast, Florida, a graduate of the Air Force Academy who was one of the 19 who died in this bombing. So, I have been very personally concerned about this and done some looking into it.

And I think it is truly inexcusable what we allowed to happen. I want to share Congressman Weldon's concerns about the investigations and to who is going to be held responsible. I think it needs to go up as well as down.

And I think, also senior civilian officials need to also be held accountable because we know the Pentagon is really run by the civilian officials too. And I there's definitely some accountability that needs to be held there.

I don't know how that is operating because I think you were not well informed, Secretary Perry, by people under you. And that someone in that chain -- your command -- needs, also, to be held accountable here.

And as I look through the report from General Downing. I was particularly concerned because I raised this question to you when you gave the briefing to a group of us in the Pentagon after the bombing.

FOWLER: Because you had up on the wall the listing of the 40 recommendations that had been made back in January by the Air Force Office of Special Investigations.

And I raised that question then, why wasn't one of those 40 recommendations, you know, sort of a basic one, moving the perimeter out.

As Representative Hunter had said earlier, it was not very far out. And yet this office -- that I think must need overhauling because if they eliminated, omitted, from their 40 recommendations a very basic one that would have saved very many lives, then somebody in that office isn't paying attention to what needs to be done for the security of our forces. Though they make 40 recommendations in January, one of which is not what would have helped us tremendously.

One which would have helped us, which is covering those windows with a plastic film. The recommendations made in January, six months later, that has not been done. Many of our service men who died would have been saved if that simple recommendation had been followed through.

And whether that's from the lack of funds or the lack of follow-up, I don't know why it wasn't. But those were specific recommendations made after the bombing in Riyadh by our Air Force Office of Special Investigations. And even that was not followed on.

Reading through his report, when I see that no member of the U.S. central chain of command ever inspected force protection at Khobar Towers, when I see that no member of the U.S. Air Force at Central Command, chain of command, inspected physical security at Khobar Towers, that's inexcusable.

You know, when they knew what was going on. And 90 days, I understand, before this occurred there had been a series of incidents that had raised concern about this particular facility and what would happen there. And yet no one within this chain of command is physically going there to look and see what has or has not been done?

That -- I just as I read this it was unbelievable to me.

So I am deeply concerned that here we have lost the lives of so many of our young men that could have possibly been prevented. And then I see the conflicts in testimony.

You know, we hear from the Pentagon that requests were made to move the fence back. And the Saudis didn't agree.

Then I read through this report and see that no one really ever officially asked that it be moved back. And the notes don't reflect that it was asked to be moved back.

So between the combination of it never being recommended to be moved back, and there being no official record anywhere that it was ever asked of the Saudis to move it back, leads me to think that we didn't.

But yet there's a conflict because we've got people within the Pentagon saying, oh, yes, it's really the Saudis' fault. We wanted it moved back and they never did.

Somebody is not telling the truth somewhere. And whoever that is I think needs to be taken care of also because that is something that should have been handled.

Then on this funding discrepancy. I know their report from the Joint Staff had said about the cuts in the funding. In my reading of it -- and I read your letter that you wrote back to Senator Daschle, Secretary Perry, and I know we spend \$5 billion on terrorist activities.

But you can spend \$20 billion. If it isn't spent properly it isn't going to do us any good.

In my reading of this that the Air Force account that was to go to anti-terrorist protection activities for our Air Force overseas, that that account over the past three years had been cut by 82 percent.

Now if that is correct, and in this letter it says this one Air Force program was reduced from \$10.6 million to \$1.9 million -- if that is that account, and that's correct, spending \$5 billion didn't help at all if you were cutting that particular account. Maybe -- is that why the windows weren't covered? Was the money not there?

I don't know. But I think again, there are a lot of questions that I hope are being asked within your investigations as to what was or was not done.

And what I'd appreciate because I couldn't really tell from the letter you sent to Senator Daschle, if we could get a better breakdown on what has spent historically over these past three years on force protection and counter-terrorism for these different accounts.

FOWLER: Because it's a little difficult to tell here. And if I'm incorrect I certainly ought to stand corrected.

But at a time when this administration is demanding that we put the defense dollars on the table and cut them again and again, and right now this week that's what we're dealing with, and yet we're not protecting our forces overseas, it does not match.

So I don't see how this administration can say cut defense dollars, and yet we aren't spending them to protect them. So I'd appreciate any follow-up you can do.

I know you're deeply concerned over this. And I feel that you didn't -- weren't furnished with the information you should have been furnished with earlier on in this process. So I hope there'll be some accountability up and down the chain -- both civilian and military. So I want to thank you.

PERRY: Mrs. Fowler, I would only comment that I have directed our comptroller to put together a different way of designating and aggregating our funds so that force protection issues are isolated and can be aggregated together, so that any decisions we make about force protection, we will have much better accounting methods for knowing what resource we're putting at them, how to increase those resources, and then we are measuring the effects we get from increasing those resources.

FOWLER: Thank you. But I would also like a history of what we've been doing with those accounts over the last few years.

PERRY: Yes.

FOWLER: Thank you.

SPENCE: The gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Pickett.

PICKETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to welcome our witnesses today. And, Secretary Perry, I would like to commend you on your statement this morning, which I think was thorough extensive and comprehensive in the way that it was presented and the action that you have taken.

There were some comments that I read in different articles on this incident that indicated that perhaps there was some lack of communication between the on-site commanders and the chain of command above them about action to be taken to ensure the security of this housing project.

Are steps being taken to ensure that when matters of security for installations is brought to the attention of the local commander that it does get to the right authority above to ensure that action is taken to correct any deficiencies that may be observed and reported?

PERRY: Yes. Let me ask General Shali to answer that more in detail.

SHALIKASHVILI: I think specifically what you are referring to, Mr. Pickett, is that there have been reports that General Schwalier did not notify his superiors when he experienced some difficulties in getting some things done.

Secretary Perry has specifically included in that directive that he referred to in his opening statement that I spoke to, a requirement to refer all such issues up the chain of command.

SHALIKASHVILI: It's very difficult to think that a commander would not automatically notify his subordinates. And we have been unable to find any incidents when in fact such requests were submitted higher up that everything wasn't done to fulfill those requirements, so I cannot explain to you why in this particular case it happened.

But just to be safe and to not allow this to happen again, it is not in writing that on the issue of self-protect -- on anti-terrorism force protection, commanders are required to report those issues up the chain of command when they cannot themselves resolve them rapidly.

PICKETT: The other matter to which reference has been made here that raises a considerable amount of concern in my mind is that the human intelligence issue that has been commented on several times. It's one of those matters that I know is not wholly under the control of the Department of Defense, and some reference was made to requirements imposed by the CIA on how we acquire and utilize the human intelligence factors that we require -- that would be required to provide adequate information on terrorist activities in these localities where the military bases are located.

Can you tell us a little bit more about what may be required to ensure that the Defense Department has adequate access to its own human intelligence and whether or not additional legislative action may be necessary to ensure that that authority is there?

SHALIKASHVILI: We have, of course, in the department, in the Defense Intelligence Agency, a division that deals with human intelligence, military in particular. All of human intelligence is extraordinarily closely coordinated between the CIA and us.

The first point I would make is that we should not draw the conclusion that while human intelligence was faulted in a Long Commission report that somehow nothing had been done about it and that we are still today where we were at the time of the bombing in Beirut.

A number of things have been done to streamline, make human intelligence more effective and to increase our capability.

One of the most vexing problems is that in order for human intelligence to be effective with terrorists, is that you have to be able to get into those organizations that are often very small, often very clannish. There's no way that you're going to train an agent in MIT and send him off and he will somehow get in there, into one of those cells and be able to report on it.

SHALIKASHVILI: You have to recruit people who by culture, by almost family a part of that group.

It is true that you can say we must recruit more case officers who can go out and find more such people that can do that. It is true that more money can help you. But it would be wrong if we walked out of here and we thought that we could appropriate more money

or just change some law, which I know you didn't imply, and somehow this problem will get better.

It is an extraordinary, complex thing because the terrorists themselves have realized that we and others are trying to infiltrate them, and so they are much more careful than they've ever been in keeping this very small, very tightly controlled. They themselves are so now compartmentalized because they've learned the danger of getting infiltrated.

That the issue is much more complex than money and procedures. Nevertheless, Secretary Perry's organization and Dr. Deutch's organization, all the best people are trying to find out a way that we can get at this.

And it could be that we will have to come back to you, Mr. Pickett, and to this committee and others and talk about some changes in law. So far, and I met yesterday with representatives of CIA, it is not apparent that any changes in law are required. It could be. But we are going to work this very hard because while we've gotten better, so have they in denying us access to that information that we need.

PICKETT: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SPENCE: Thank you, Mr. Pickett.

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Chambliss.

CHAMBLISS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me, first of all, say to Mr. Secretary, I hope you will pass on my commendation to the president for his decision to hold the briefing yesterday with members of Congress regarding the current situation that exists in the Middle East.

I fully understand that all 535 members can't be fully advised of what's going on, nor can all members of this committee be kept fully advised of what's going on, but I know that you agree that it is important that leaders of both sides of the aisle be fully informed of what is happening there, and I certainly hope those briefings will continue until this crisis is concluded.

General Downing, I want to commend you on a very straightforward and forthright report in a situation that had to be personally very difficult for you to carry out because of, certainly the loss of life of American servicemen, and I commend you for the job that you did. You once again served your country very well.

General Shali, you're certainly a great warrior and a real American hero. You serve with a lot of great warriors. But it's kind of obvious that, as we've talked about or heard you all talk about today, that even the greatest of warriors can't defeat an enemy that he can't see or doesn't know whether or not he exists.

CHAMBLISS: I understand, Mr. Secretary, what you're talking about, that we've got to expand the perimeters. We've got to take additional -- make additional capital improvements at various locations to try to ensure force protection.

But as you alluded to earlier in response to Mr. Ortiz's question, the safest of bases are really not safe from all terroristic attacks. And we know that there are weapons in the hands of terrorists that will penetrate that 1,200 foot barrier just like they did the 80 foot

barrier. They just change the significance and the whatnot of their weapons if that's what they want to do, if that's where they want to attack.

And General Shali, you and General Downing both alluded to the intelligence issue, which in my opinion is much more important than the physical improvement issue.

I know we've got to make certain physical improvements, but you're talking about spending the billions of dollars that you alluded to, and I just wonder, first of all, is our money not better spent on trying to improve that intelligence as opposed to improving the physical aspects of our bases.

And the second part of my question, gentlemen, is that this committee has had an ongoing battle with this administration over the DOD budget. And here we are talking about spending billions of dollars in capital improvements and intelligence and whatever else in a short period of time. I don't think we can afford to diminish the quality of life of our personnel. I don't think we can afford to cut back on R&D and procurement of weapons.

And I'm wondering if the administration is willing to reassess its decision to seek cuts in defense spending and if we can get together and agree on the fact that we've got to spend more money and that that budget is going to have to be plussed up to take care of the things that you're talking about.

So if I could get you gentlemen to address those two questions for me please.

PERRY: Let me make a quick comment on dollars in intelligence versus dollars in facilities. And I think for the reasons that you described, dollar for dollar we get a better investment in intelligence when we can identify projects that have a reasonably high payoff.

What General Shali was describing is sometimes human intelligence, which is our best source here, is very hard to develop. But the limitation should be the availability of the intelligence opportunities, not the dollars.

And so when we have those opportunities, that should be our first choice. We want to seek out and find the terrorists before they strike, not hunker down and protect ourselves from the strikes.

PERRY: So, I think the basic point you're making is absolutely correct.

Let me see if General Shali wants to comment on that.

SHALIKASHVILI: I couldn't agree with you more, but until we have a high assurance that we will be able to stay ahead of the terrorists and will know what their plans are and where and when and how they intend to strike us, you have to -- as an insurance policy -- proceed with providing the protective measures.

But if we don't get at the intelligence, we'll be pouring more and more money down protecting ourselves and never being able to fully protect ourselves.

CHAMBLISS: Do we plan to do that? I mean, I -- maybe this is not the right forum to do it, maybe we need a different hearing for that, but my question is, are we moving in that direction in addition to those physical improvements?

SHALIKASHVILI: Yes.

PERRY: I think we are, and I also would note we have had some successes in that regard. The successes are not as well publicized because averting a disaster, averting a tragedy is not the same news as the tragedy itself.

But the most remarkable success in that recently was in capturing the terrorist known as Yousef who was involved with the World Trade Center and was plotting other very extensive terrorist activities when he was captured, so there are some successes along the way, too. And without question in my mind, intelligence directed toward detecting and preempting terrorist activities is the best, dollar-for-dollar, the best way we can spend our money.

CHAMBLISS: But what about the second question on plussing up the budget?

PERRY: On that I will only comment that this committee and the Senate comparable committee did make -- put together a budget which was substantially higher than the president's budget for this coming fiscal year, and the president did sign that.

CHAMBLISS: Well, so, I'm assuming, then, that your response is in the affirmative that there will be a reassessment on the expenditure of moneys in the defense budget in future years.

PERRY: We will certainly have to -- as we get a better estimate of what the costs are of these various force protection improvements we're talking about, there will certainly have to be a reassessment.

SPENCE: Mr. Sisisky.

SISISKY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Because of the time we have a vote on, I won't compliment all you gentlemen.

General Downing, it's always nice to have you here. You've commanded a superb force of special operating forces. And we're proud of that.

And, Dr. Perry, you look like you've got jet lag this morning. Maybe you'd better rest a little bit to get back into normal condition.

I have some observations, and I've been observing what's happened here at the Capitol. Every time there's a bomb threat somewhere, they go on high alert, and they search the trunks and look underneath the cars and just in a couple of days that's done away with.

I imagine that's a pretty tough time to keep people on high alert all the time. I mean, in reality, in the real world it must be a very difficult thing. But I also notice to a certain degree, we've privatized security forces.

SISISKY: If the war of terrorism is there -- I'm talking about in the United States -- at your Pentagon, which is a vital place. You've privatized and you have -- you know, you're in competition now with 7-11 and Kmart and things like that.

You can walk on the Norfolk Naval Base, you can drive on the Norfolk Naval Base, where there are nuclear reactors without being stopped at a gate. So, I mean, we better worry about what's happening right here to if terrorism is the war of the future -- and I'll get to that in a minute -- then we better worry about right here too in our security. Maybe

not as high alert as we have overseas but certainly we need to look into -- particularly where you have nuclear reactors.

Now, I mean, if it's a school post, maybe you don't need the guards at the gates. But when you have nuclear reactors, I think you may have to look at that again.

But what I -- and the other thing that was missing in your testimony -- and I'm sure by design -- how is our investigation going? Is a foreign nation involved in this? And if it is, have we ever sent the word what we would do to a foreign nation involved in terrorism? I think we ought to have a definitive statement of what we would do. But what I'm really driving at with -- and I've got to be fast in doing this.

Mr. Dellums raised a point which kind of scarred me because you didn't answer it, and you know, I don't know whose watching here. And he raised the point, I think, I don't want to speak for him, but I think he raised the point, if terrorism is the war of the future, why do we need all of this equipment that we're amassing and researching. And I don't want to speak for him but -- because I would disagree with him -- that we need both. But I think I need to hear it from you if I'm right.

Am I right, Mr. Dellums?

DELLUMS: That wasn't the major thrust of my point but obviously that's a by-product of what I was raising. But my main point was to focus on the significance of terrorism. I was not trying to be cute.

SISISKY: No, I know you're not but I know --

DELLUMS: The question was very direct and it was trying to raise the status of the threat of terrorism to a higher order of magnitude based on what I had heard here. But obviously that may be a by-product, but that wasn't what I was -- where I was trying to go.

SISISKY: Well, I just wanted to clear it up because I think you need both, to fight both. But I think that's all, we've got to go vote -- so, thank you for being here today.

SHALIKASHVILI (?): Thank you, Mr. Sisisky.

SPENCE: Mr. Buyer.?

DELLUMS: It's your intention to keep going, Mr. Chairman?

SPENCE: Yes, the chairman wants us to keep going so I've already voted and we're going to keep running because --

DELLUMS: Just because my colleagues on this side -- that if you want to make the vote.

SPENCE: Yes, the secretary has a limited amount of time here with us.

SPENCE: So, we want to keep going. It's, there is a vote on right now, on support of the families of aviation disasters.

UNKNOWN: Mr. Chairman, since they've been here a while, can we ask unanimous consent for submitting questions we have for the record?

SPENCE: Absolutely, without objection.

UNKNOWN: I know their time's limited. And I want...

SPENCE: The secretary needs to leave understanding, correct me if I'm wrong, Mr. Secretary, by about 12:30.

PERRY: Yes, we have a...

SPENCE: Is that right?

PERRY: We have a hearing with the Senate this afternoon.

SPENCE: OK. At 12:45 I hear -- can you stick around until 12:45?

PERRY: Sandy? (OFF-MIKE) Yes.

SPENCE: OK. Let's say 12:45 folks.

PERRY: Mr. Chairman, may I make a suggestion?

SPENCE: Yes, Mr. Secretary.

PERRY: In staying to 12:45 I would suggest a five minute recess to give people a chance to vote and to give us a chance for humanitarian reasons to recover.

(LAUGHTER)

SPENCE: Without objection, Mr. Secretary. We'll convene at about 23 after.

(BREAK)

HUNTER:...Order, and Mr. Secretary while our members are coming back from their vote, let me ask you a question that goes back to my earlier line of questioning with respect to perimeters.

HUNTER: Approximately -- and maybe General Shalikashvili could help on this -- approximately how many installations, military installations which house substantial numbers of military personnel, do we have in the Middle East?

SHALIKASHVILI: I cannot give you the exact number. I have to do that for the record, but it's several hundred.

HUNTER: Several hundred installations. Have you made a review, in the wake of this bombing, in terms of perimeter distances or housing distances from public traffic areas?

SHALIKASHVILI: I have not personally, but we have asked CENTCOM to do so. They have completed a very extensive threat assessment, looking at all aspects of it including how close to the perimeter there are public roads, or parking lots, or whatever. So, that, in fact, has been done.

HUNTER: You haven't had a chance to take a look at that yet?

SHALIKASHVILI: No, I personally have not.

HUNTER: Is it your information that that's going to require a number of moves in the Middle East -- military locations, or the personnel that attended those locations?

SHALIKASHVILI: It already has in some cases. In some cases, the decision was made to disburse people so they would not, in fact, provide a target.

So, it's really being taken on a case-by-case basis to see what need to be done.

HUNTER: OK, question. Have you made any decisions with respect to a spacing, a mandatory spacing, of American barrack areas from public traffic areas in the Middle East. Where you said, "This is the way it is, you're going to be at least 200 meters, 300 meters from a public area; and if a commander can't do that, let me know, and we're going to find a way to either move you or do some MILCON that will accommodate those people in a different area?"

Have you laid down a standard, minimum standard of spacing from public traffic areas for American barracks...

SHALIKASHVILI: No, we have not...

HUNTER: ... living areas or operating areas?

SHALIKASHVILI: What we have done instead so far is what Secretary Perry has described, and that is take the majority of our people and move them onto the Prince Sultan Air Base where we know we have some 1,200 or whatever feet of stand-off distance. We have taken the majority of the families and moved them into Eskan Village where, again, we have the requisite stand-off distances.

What we now need to deal with are the remaining installations that we still have out there -- our housing area groupings of people -- and to see whether to take them and move them into tents, or whether to disburse them. That includes our post exchanges, and other installations like this. So, we're taking it case-by-case rather than establishing the standard that unless you can meet 1,200 feet or some other one, then we have to close it. At least so far, that has been our effort.

HUNTER: OK. Let me ask you a little different question then.

Have you looked at the -- I take it you've looked at the obvious cases where you don't have much spacing, you don't have much stand-off, and you said let's get those people to this air base where we have 1,200 feet of stand-off pending further action or decisions as to how we're going to deploy these personnel.

HUNTER: Is that what you've done?

SHALIKASHVILI: That's correct.

HUNTER: So you've taken the obvious trouble areas and you've at least have brought the people into a safe area, pending your...

SHALIKASHVILI: And that includes the vast majority of the personnel in Saudi Arabia.

HUNTER: OK. General Downing, on that point, we've taken you -- listen to the description of the department's force protection initiative. In light of your review, in the context of the information that you've assimilated in this review, how do you judge that initiative? Do you think it's any good? Do you think it's...

DOWNING: Yes.

HUNTER: ... mediocre? Do you think it's excellent?

DOWNING: In my opening comment, Congressman, I made the statement that we thought it was a good approach to the recommendations that we had set forth. In one of my subsequent answers to a question, I said one of the key factors I thought was important was to be able to institutionalize an agency there that can look after force protection.

And I believe that this action plan does this. I also said that we're going to have to watch this over time. You know, one thing about an effective combating terrorism plan is if it's really good, nothing happens.

In other words, you're protected. And of course, when nothing happens, this is when people can get lulled into a false sense of security. You know, things have been done in the past, as I mentioned, after Beirut. But then after a long period of time that nothing happens, people get lulled into a false sense of security. And that's what I think we have to watch.

HUNTER: OK. Let me...

DOWNING: Right now, there's a heightened awareness.

HUNTER: Let me just expand on that, then I'm going to recognize Mr. Buyer.

But just follow that. You made several comments early in the hearing that you thought that the commander of the base, who is presently being taken to task for the Khobar Towers bombing, was dealt a bad hand, that he was put into a crowded area where he had close proximity to public traffic; had a rotation of approximately 10 percent of his command leaving every week or so, where you did not have a continuity of leadership that allows you to do some far-reaching things.

This gentleman, as I understand it, is going to be, is -- potentially will be disciplined for what occurred. What could he have done -- and I'm looking at the fact that you had the public traffic right up against the housing area for these troops -- what was in his power to change that?

DOWNING: The report, the assessment very explicitly addresses this. There were things within his power that he could have done that could, in hindsight, 20/20 hindsight, made his position much stronger.

DOWNING: We believe there was an adequate body of information that there was a terrorist threat. Certainly, Khobar Towers was one of the three high-profile threat areas in the Gulf region. A tremendous amount of effort was directed towards what the chairman addressed, and this is stopping the penetrating bomber.

Now, and I agree 100 percent with General Shali on that. Had that truck bomb penetrated that perimeter, we would have had a disaster on our hands that could well have been of the magnitude of the Beirut in 1983. that didn't happen. Certainly, there was 19

lives we did not want to lose. But we could have lost -- the number of lives could have been up in the hundreds, if not 200s.

But what then happened is they...

HUNTER: So you're saying that the commander at a base was not negligent...

DOWNING: They stopped -- no...

HUNTER: ... with respect to -- he did take some action.

DOWNING: I'm not done yet...

HUNTER: OK, go ahead.

DOWNING: ... Mr. Congressman. But what he did do is he concentrated his effort on that penetrating bomb. There are a variety of other threats out there, not just a bomb parked outside the fence, but there was a variety of other terrorist threats that were not adequately guarded against.

He did get warning, specifically that that parking lot was a problem. They did not make any type of a request to move that fence out any distance other than 10 to 15 feet, and that was primarily for observation. They relied upon the Saudis to patrol that parking lot.

HUNTER: Who would they make the request to move the fence?

DOWNING: They were going to make that to the Saudi officials. And at the lower level, and the lieutenant colonel/colonel level, the U.S. forces claimed to have raised the issue of moving the fence 10 to 15 feet. Their Saudi counterparts do not acknowledge that. They said no, that didn't happen. And by the way, it didn't happen in writing.

But it was not done at the commander and his Saudi counterpart flag officer level. There was no training done. There were no alarm systems in the buildings. We've talked about the rotation policy. These kind of things cause problems, and these were not raised by the commander at the base, the wing commander to his superiors in the chain of command, nor to his Saudi counterpart.

So there was no way any one up the line could know there was a problem that they should have addressed. And so these were the kind of things that were in his purview, and inside of his charter as the commander.

HUNTER: He's got -- but he has purview in terms of changing the policy on personnel rotation?

DOWNING: He could certainly -- he could not change it, but he could certainly go back up...

HUNTER: He could complain about it.

DOWNING: ... through the chain of command and say this is not serving me well.

HUNTER: OK. Thank you. Mr. Buyer?

BUYER: Thank you. I appreciate your endurance to testify, especially after a long travel, Mr. Secretary.

I would disagree with Mr. Dellums and disagree with your comment about this is a watershed hearing, because I -- you know, a convoluted chain of command, open-ended mission, unclear end-state, unit housed in a central location, quality of life reasons. Without adequate protection, terrorist bomb, Americans killed.

BUYER: If that doesn't sound like 1983, I don't know what does -- what is. I mean that was 241 Marines and sailors and the European theater -- my gosh, while we were in Germany, the terrorist threats all the time while we were there.

I mean, this isn't anything new. So I would disagree that all of a sudden this is a watershed that terrorist attacks upon our force -- whether they're -- wherever they're concentrated, I think isn't anything new.

And so I would disagree with Mr. Secretary that this is watershed.

I do know that you have -- you've got a lot on your plate -- China, Korean peninsula, Haiti, Bosnia, the Gulf War area theater of operations, expansions of NATO, Partnerships for Peace, concerns within Moscow. You've got a lot on your plate. And I recognize that.

I congratulate you when you say, "I will assume responsibility." I cringe when you say, "I'm going to begin that investigation downrange." And because it does send the signals of -- gosh, who's about to hang for this one, scapegoat, that type of thing.

I did take to heart your comment that these commanders deserve our gratitude, not our blame. So I'll be forever watchful what's going to happen downrange, and I recognize what happens when you utter particular words and how the military interprets your words and whether or not they're serving whatever direction in leadership you're giving them.

I just wanted to share that with you.

PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Buyer.

BUYER: I also want to let you know that when you conducted the missile strikes, I quickly came to the defense of the president, and agreed with those missile strikes. I spoke at the American Legion national convention and shared that.

I was immediately followed by Ross Perot who brought up the issues of -- well, this is a lot about politics. I felt that the remarks were rather pale.

I will share with you -- I am -- I feel a little differently today. I feel a little differently because now that I see that some of the perhaps relationship-building, perhaps, maybe wasn't there like it could have been there, and that your trip has to mend -- I don't know if it necessarily mend fences, but it's consultations.

Friends don't particularly like consultations after the fact. They like to be part of it as it's an on-going relationship.

And I would say that our foreign policy in that part of the world, if I were in your shoes, is not only difficult, but it's fragile and complex because we had Turkey, a NATO ally, do a military incursion right in against the Kurds and it is very viable to ask what in fact did we do there on that one?

BUYER: We've got the Iranians and the Iraqis and what side are we going to be on, and I'm going to support the containment policy here, and I applaud you expanding the no-fly zone, but I don't want any saber-rattling here. This is very serious.

And if, in fact, you're going to say we have that open -- we have an open commitment and we're going to turn the vice on the containment policy, and we're going to remain in good relationships with those coalition partners to include our Arabs -- our Arab allies who not necessarily are so thrilled about perhaps discussions today here, about permanent fixed facilities on Arab soil.

And I understand why you have to be very careful about your words about -- well, it's contingencies and those kinds of things. But as for planning purposes, and rotations, and those kinds of things, we are talking about more fixed-time facilities.

And I couldn't help but also throw in the analogies of the Korean Peninsula here -- about the sub-unified commands. I mean why we don't have that there in operations -- I don't understand that.

Those are big policy decision that are made at your level, gentlemen, not at the base commander level, and how those feed in down line. I just wanted to share some of the things that I've been concerned with.

So I don't think this is watershed here today.

Can -- let me ask this. The question I want to ask about is the host nation cooperation on the investigation. I remember that when the terrorists were executed, they didn't permit us to go in and interview them. Isn't that right?

In the Riyadh incident?

PERRY: That's correct.

BUYER: And in...

PERRY: It's not right but it's correct.

BUYER: It's not right but it's correct?

Oh, OK, I'm with you.

Twenty thousand pounds -- whether it's 8,000 pounds or 20,000 pounds -- I mean we're talking about a country that has a closed society, a closed system. You can't even smuggle in alcohol. Twenty thousands -- up to 20,000 pounds of explosives?

We -- are we participating in this investigation? Are they being cooperative here?

Will you enlighten me here?

PERRY: Mr. Buyer, I will partially enlighten you but I want to qualify everything I say by observing that the investigation is being conducted by the Saudis with the cooperation and assistance of the FBI. The Defense Department is not a part of this investigation.

We care very much about the outcome of the investigation because it's our troops that are affected by whatever happens here.

I have, therefore, intervened to the extent of -- the two times I have met with King Fahd since the bombing, I have told him very strongly my views about the importance of full cooperation and full sharing of information because ultimately it affects the safety of our troops.

PERRY: So for that reason, I have had those discussions and I've had them at the highest levels in the Saudi government.

BUYER: Can I follow that up real quick?

SPENCE: OK, we've got three or four people...

BUYER: OK.

SPENCE: ... who want to get something answered.

HARMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm mindful that others are waiting and there are about five minutes, so I will just take one.

Mr. Secretary, the immensity of your job and the pain of human loss show on your face. I've been watching you here for 2 1/2 hours and it's impossible to miss.

I want to take my 45 seconds to commend your extraordinary opening statement. I hope everyone heard it. You said at the close that you were not passing the buck, and that you were not playing the blame game and the ultimate responsibility was yours. How refreshing to hear that in this silly political season that we're in at the moment, and how important for you to say that, and how much of a leader you are.

That is why you have the respect and affection of everyone at DOD and certainly of most of the people in this body.

I don't agree with Mr. Weldon that we should be micromanaging what you do from this point forward. I think this is an authorizing and oversight committee. Nonetheless, I'm confident that because mistakes were made and they are recognized and you have stepped up to them, that corrections will also be made and so I want to say as a middle bencher here how much affection and respect you have from me, and how confident I am that with your leadership at DOD this problem will be fixed.

Thank you and I yield back.

PERRY: Thank you very much, Mrs. Harman.

SPENCE: Thank you, Mrs. Harman. We're trying to get through about three or four more people and let the secretary go and because he has another appointment. Mr. Cunningham.

CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Shalikashvili, you know I consider you a friend and I also consider you a soldier because I've witnessed over the last couple of years your diligence to stay out of politics and take care of our troops and do what's right.

And I would say, General Downing, other than the Navy's going to kick your rear end in the next football game, that...

DOWNING: It will be the first time in four years or five years if that happens, I might add.

(LAUGHTER)

CUNNINGHAM: We're due, sir. We're due.

But let me just say that the tactical changes that you're making, I think are noteworthy and I think from the administration. But I think we're a country that where we should be controlling the flow of the river instead of swimming upstream.

And let me be specific.

First of all, there is a fundamentalist mood not just in Bosnia and Europe and Russia and Turkey and the United States that I don't feel that we're meeting adequately, that -- just like the drug program that, in my opinion, the administration has grossly not overseen to the problems worldwide that where you're talking about tactics and you talk about that first of all that the sanctions against Iran and Iraq -- I mean, they're still full speed.

CUNNINGHAM: That's not enough. And it's like saying that, "Well, we're going to stop interdiction for drugs and that's going to make it go away."

There's a much bigger picture, and I know all of you realize that.

But I've got a book here that lists by name many of the terrorist that are still in Bosnia today from Hamas and mujaheddin, from Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan and so on. While you got a few hundred of them that were escorted out after the Dayton accord, you still have Islamic fundamentalist units in Bosnia.

And just like TWA 800, the arms that the president sent there that violated the agreement the Congress made and sent arms to Bosnia -- I just had the delegation from Yugoslavia in the back room -- those arms are going to end up all over Europe, and they're going to end up against the United States. From the Hamas, from the mujaheddin. And the things like TWA are going to escalate in this country because of our policies, and that's why I say you're swimming upstream.

Secondly is that I see a bigger picture and a real problem. Russia today, if Yeltsin fell, is scared together of the fundamentalist and Islamic movement within their country. You look at Turkey. They're going toward fundamentalism.

You look at a lot of areas, even in our own country with Farrakhan trying to accept a billion dollars from Libya. I mean, those are real problems that we're not addressing.

And what you're trying to do is great. But when you've got a dam bursting, trying to swim upstream and maybe put a little dam isn't going to work.

There is a whole movement out there against Christianity, against Israel, and against the west. And unless we really adhere to that, I think we're in big trouble. And our little efforts that we're trying to make tactically, we're going to be in big trouble.

You talk about training. You know, I talked to Captain O'Grady. You know, when you talk about the superior training. The Air Force doesn't have F-16s now in its adversary program. It's flying -- the 64th and 65th are gone. The only adversary we have in the Navy now is Top Gun. And you know what we're flying instead of F-16s, simulating Su-29 and MiG-29 and Su-27? Pre-Vietnam A-4s and F-5s because of the Defense cuts.

The president is looking at adding \$6.5 billion in spending to let us -- pull us out of hostage, the Congress. but out of that \$6.5 million, he wants \$3.5 million out of Defense, General Shalikhshvili.

And I know in your own accords, you know, the modernization and everything, but these are the things that we really need to look at.

And I laud Secretary Perry for your work overseas and these things, but unless we look at this thing in a bigger picture, we're going to be in deep trouble in this country.

CUNNINGHAM: And focus on it, we know where a lot of those folks are. We could have still had sanctions on Saddam Hussein, we'd still be there. Until we really start getting tough on these things, I think.

But I look at things even like the shoot down of the helicopters and who took the heat for that, the air crews, the F-15s. But yet it was the United Nations that didn't coordinate with AWACS, didn't coordinate with the helicopters, didn't coordinate with the F-15 drivers. And did the UN take a heat for it, no. You lost some of your good military guys that are professionals that sit out there and fight for this.

And I would just ask you to expand this and take a look because both in our training, the moral of the armed forces. And I don't care what you say, I talk to these kids everyday, including Admiral Boorda that we lost -- who was a good friend of all of us.

I think we've got a bigger problem here but I laud you for attacking that portion of the puzzle, but it's just one piece in the puzzle, sir. Thank you.

SPENCE: Thank you.

We're trying to hurry on and get the secretary out.

Mr. McHale.

MCHALE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, good afternoon.

At the outset, I want to associate myself with the remarks of Jane Harmon regarding the secretary's opening statement. And with equal force, I want to associate myself with the remarks of my friend Duke Cunningham regarding the next Army-Navy football game.

(LAUGHTER)

My first question is without prejudice, I hope, General, are for General Shalikhshvili.

General, if you know, and perhaps if you don't General Downing might. Who in fact designed the physical security plan at Khobar Towers? Was that person adequately trained for the level of professional competence required by that security mission?

And then I guess, summarizing that line of questioning, in light of our experience in Beirut in 1983, and Riyadh in 1995, how could competent officers and security professionals have so obviously violated the basic military principle of dispersion by having 3,000 Americans at a single densely populated location?

SHALIKASHVILI: I cannot answer for you who initially designed it and maybe General Downing can. I can tell you that we had two separate office of special inspections by the Air Force conduct assessments of the security. And they came back with -- I guess an aggregate of some 40 suggestions. For reasons I cannot explain to you, neither the density of the population there nor the issue that Mr. Hunter spoke to that is the road and the proximity of the barrier to the road was addressed in that report.

So, the people there took those 40 steps and combined them with God knows how many others of theirs and worked very, very hard to do the best they could with the information that they had. And they worked, as I said before, on many things simultaneously. But the greatest nightmare scenario always was -- because they also had studied Beirut. The nightmare scenario always was a repetition of Beirut.

I will tell you they had meetings on Beirut to review exactly what happened there so they would not repeat it.

SHALIKASHVILI: And so they worked on that and I wish they had worked with the same diligence on the other aspects. But they worked more than just Beirut, they worked other issues as well.

MCHALE: General, that's really what I'm getting at. I don't think they learned the basic lessons of Beirut. Much of what we have discussed today has focused rightly or wrongly on questions of ultimate accountability. The secretary has spoken eloquently and courageously on that point.

My focus is really back down where the decisions are made. Initially, there was some captain, there was some major, there was some lieutenant colonel, or colonel who designed a security plan and did so in complete good faith. Those officers wanted to protect their men, I have no doubt about that. They did not achieve that mission and they did not achieve it because they attempted to accomplish it negligently.

I think anyone looking at how that plan was originally drawn up would be compelled to reach the conclusion that the fence was improperly placed. Basic military judgment concerning defense in depth, basic military judgment in support of the proposition of dispersion would have resulted in a different plan than the one that perhaps at a higher level should have been corrected but never was.

And so, I get back to you and I'm not trying to fix responsibility on an individual. Somebody made a mistake at a relatively low level of judgment. I assume that mistake was one of improper training or a lack of awareness in terms of what you need to do to physically secure a site. And it seems to me the most basic lesson of Beirut is don't put a lot of people in one place and yet, we did that.

Is there a problem in training? Or, the recognition of a threat, that allowed someone at a junior level -- for whom you are ultimately accountable -- to make that kind of misjudgment?

SHALIKASHVILI: I think my answer to you would be that the decision to move into Khobar Towers was made at a time when for all practical purposes, there was no terrorists threat, or no perceived terrorists threat in Saudi Arabia.

And as we have spoken here, we became aware of the terrorists threat and that the situation had changed at the time of OPM/SANG bombing. The bombing in Riyadh that took the lives of five Americans. And it is at that point, in November, 1995 that everyone contrary to what we've seen somewhere in the press, everyone went into very, very high gear to look at the things we had and said, we've got to do something to protect people living in these places.

SHALIKASHVILI: And in OPM and in Khobar Towers, they then made a very fundamental review of what they needed to do with the place they were -- that they had to make it more secure.

And if you look at what the condition was at the time, the security conditions were at the time of the bombing in November of '95 and then by the time that the bomb went off Khobar Towers in June, you will find that they really had done some tremendous improvements. But not enough.

Now, we go back some place along the way in this effort, someone had said we need to move all these people now out of Khobar Towers into some other place. In retrospect yes, but it didn't occur. But no one, knowing that there were terrorist and this could happen moved them into that place.

I think that -- I know that decision was made long before we thought of Saudi other than as a very secure place.

MCHALE: My red light is on. Let me simply say that it was a negligent judgment, regardless of the circumstances that gave rise to it, that resulted in the placement of 3,000 Americans at one site.

And then finally, a local commander always has the responsibility to protect his men. And at a level of volume that I don't believe took place, local commanders for whom you are ultimately accountable should have been saying in the clearest possible manner for a long period of time before that bomb went off, "Move the fence back."

That should have been a daily forceful communication from the site commander, and the fact that that didn't occur raises an enormous concern on my part.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SPENCE: Mr. Secretary, we've got two left, if you can -- I know you've got another appointment, and you won't have time to eat like we want to eat, but we've got Mr. Scarborough and Mr. Taylor here, been waiting around for a good while.

PERRY: I think it's only fair that we hear from everyone. I only urge that they be relatively brief.

SPENCE: I'm sure that they'll take that into consideration, and you can even tailor your answer to...

PERRY: I will promise to be relatively brief in my reply.

(LAUGHTER)

SPENCE: Yes. Yes, sir, Mr. Scarborough, the gentleman from Florida.

SCARBOROUGH: Mr. Secretary, I will avoid going into my four-point plan to save western civilization at this time. Simply say as the representative for Eglin Air Force Base, the base that lost the majority of those that died over there, I thank you all for coming here testifying today.

General, I thank you for going down to the memorial service. This is very difficult -- a very difficult time for all of us. And I would also commend you for your opening statement, but also state that ultimately the buck does stop with the president of the United States, and it is my hope and desire that next year, as we go through the budget process, whoever is the president of the United States will take this into consideration and make sure that we give adequate resources to our troops that we're sending all over globe.

SCARBOROUGH: It seems -- to those that were talking to me at the memorial service they just felt like -- their sons and daughters were being asked to do more and more with less and less. That's the big picture.

Let me just, very quickly, ask General Downing. You touched upon something that I think really lies at the heart of the problem. That is, our problem with human intelligence. You talked about the problems we had in 1983 with the Long Commission concluded. Obviously, we've had the same problems in 1996.

We had the same problems in the Gulf War, when not only were more people getting their news from CNN, it's what the President of the United States was watching who's better on the ground news. And in fact, 1979 a hostage takeover was blamed on the human resource -- human intelligence -- on the ground.

Do you have any specific recommendations on how much money we need or what we need to do to get that up to snuff so we're not coming back here five, ten years from now talking about how we have inadequate human intelligence on the ground in the Middle East?

DOWNING: I think probably, the principle thing that we have to do is make a commitment to the fact that we're going to do it. It's hard, it is difficult, it's not easy, it takes a long time to get results. But, it can be done. And if we have the commitment to do it, then we will accomplish something.

I did not mention -- but one of the key other aspects of the intelligence picture is -- we've got to have very strong relations with other nations. And we do. Generally, those are bilateral-type relations because the type of information that is shared about terrorists, generally, only two nations in an agreement want to share that with each other.

They don't want to bring a third party in. But, many times we need to be able to, regionally, share information. Especially, among our friends. And sometimes that's very difficult. But, I think we need to go out and we need to work that very, very diligently.

Money, I don't know what it would cost. Other than, I know it is going to cost some money. But, perhaps, our greatest concern and the one that I've passed on to John Deutch and I'm not sure I completely understand all the restrictions he is or is not under, is the fact that there are -- my perception is, there are -- restrictions on the intelligence community as far as what they can do, who they can recruit, who they can talk to.

Some of these people we're going to have to approach and make contacts with are not going to necessarily be very nice people. They may well be murders and thieves and drug traffickers. But yet, I think we've got to have the flexibility to conduct our business with them in a very responsible and a moral manner. But, I think we're going to have to recognize that to get some of the information we need, we're going to have to deal with some very unsavory types.

DOWNING: And we've got to have a system that will allow us to do that.

SCARBOROUGH: Would you agree, then, that there is a common thread running from 1979 and the hostage crisis through today?

DOWNING: Sure.

SCARBOROUGH: With the lack of -- and -- is that a direct result for sort of the Intelligence community purge in the early to mid '70s?

DOWNING: Well, you know, I think the members of this committee probably know a lot more about this than I do. But, yes, it -- as Americans, we're abhorred sometimes by some of the things we have to do to survive in a very, very tough world. It's not until we get into incidents like this, where we've lost American lives, we see shortcomings that some of these deficiencies really blow into our face.

But yes, I think it is the result of some of the past efforts to beat up and blame the intelligence community perhaps for failures. And there's going to be failures. I mean, this is not a game where you're going to win 100 percent of the time. But if you don't get out there and try you're not going to be in the game.

SCARBOROUGH: General, on behalf of the 11 families of those soldiers who died and, Mr. Secretary and General Shalikashvili, I thank all of you for your testimony today. I appreciate it very much.

SPENCE: Mr. Taylor, gentleman from Mississippi. It's up to you to wrap up.

TAYLOR: Let me thank the panel for their incredible patience and for putting up with all of us. Secretary Perry, I also want to echo Congressman Montgomery's remarks. I had the privilege of introducing him the other night. I spent most of my time poking fun at my good friend from Mississippi, but you have certainly done a great job for our state and for our nation.

Couple of things. I -- a couple of observations.

In 1990, I went to one of our Air Bases in Germany -- December of 1990, immediately prior to Desert Storm -- and noticed C-5As, literally wingtip to wingtip within, I know, rocket-propelled grenade range of a German thoroughfare.

A couple of years later, I flew into an installation in the Amazon with about 60 National Guardsmen manning a radar site, easily within distance of the M-19 guerrilla movement,

easily within distance of the Cinderero Luminoso. In that instance, the 60 National Guardsmen, because of local sensitivities, were forbidden from carrying weapons. I think that was changed when I got back and reported it.

I know in the case of the second instance, we were told that the reason they didn't carry weapons was because of local sensitivities, local political sensitivities of the host country. I'm thinking that was also the case why that thoroughfare was allowed to let people go right by the C-5s prior to Desert Storm.

But my question is, how often does this restrict the ability of our commanders to protect Americans in overseas installations?

Is this the norm?

And what can this Congress do to see to it that our young men and women in uniform aren't ever put at risk because of the sensitivities of the host country?

If they can't understand our concerns, I'm not so sure we need to be there for them.

PERRY: Let me give a general answer and then ask General Shali to comment as well.

Any one of the instances you describe -- the commander has to make a judgment. And if his judgment is the restriction put on him by the host nation makes it either impossible for him to carry out his mission or unnecessarily dangerous to carry out his mission than he has, I believe, a responsibility, if he cannot himself change the situation, he has a responsibility to bring that up the chain of command.

And that is up to me than I have a responsibility to either fix that problem, go into the host nation, whatever I have to do to fix the problem, or decide we cannot carry out that program. We may have to pull the forces out.

That would be my general answer to the question. I want to see what General Shali.

SHALIKASHVILI: I'm not sure I can add much more to that, Mr. Taylor other than to say that like in Khobar Towers, the thousands and thousands of places where we now reside overseas are things we have inherited from years and years of practices and so.

And yet in each instant overseas, we are in somebody's sovereign country. And so the local commander, very often, is limited in what he can do. That does not mean that in many, many countries when we agree on a threat like in Germany at the time that the terrorist threat arose, that we do not get enormous help from these host nations.

We had Germans who helped us safeguard our own installations throughout Desert Storm and there are Germans patrolling our the perimeter of our garrisons. And that's just one example.

But it is understandable that we do not always instantaneously agree on a degree of threat or which road or what road should or shouldn't be closed. And in a way, it isn't any different than in this town, witness just the discussions, we've all had whether to close Massachusetts Avenue or not, and the same thing happens there.

But in each case what we must ensure we instill in our commanders is that when they feel that because of these discussions or lack of unanimity on the threat that they cannot resolve this situation in favor of the safety of our soldiers, than they have to buck it up the

system and the discussion must not be allowed to linger down below.

TAYLOR: If I may follow up then, sir. The base or unit commander at the Towers in Saudi Arabia, at any time did he say my people are in danger and I want something done about it? That's question A. Question B is what if he had said that and no action was taken.

TAYLOR: What are his options at that point?

SHALIKASHVILI: First of all, I'm not aware nor have I talked to anyone who was told that that you implied in your question.

TAYLOR: I'm asking a question. I'm not implying anything.

SHALIKASHVILI: No, no, you implied that you stated that has he come to someone and stated that, to the best of knowledge he had not. Had he stated that? And if nothing had been done, what would have been his course of action?

When it comes to the safety of your people you just keep going up the chain of command until you find someone who will listen to you. Or if you, if you're not satisfied with the answer and you feel deeply that it is incorrect, then I think you have one choice, than say, then someone else has to be put in command of this organization.

I feel it's unsafe. I think that's part of our culture. I don't think we need a directive for that. Now, I wish I could tell you why it didn't happen, but I've been 38 years, I think most, all offices I've talked about feel the way I've just expressed it to you and becomes second nature.

TAYLOR: Again, thank you very much, for your generosity...

SHALIKASHVILI: Thank you.

TAYLOR: For your time.

SPENCE: And thank you too, gentlemen, I apologize again for running over. I think we've had a good hearing an airing of this whole matter. And I apologize again for keeping you. And thank you too, for coming.

The secretary especially, I know you've been drug all over the world, here lately. And you've, about run down, and a lot of strain. And I especially appreciate you coming with us today.

General Downing, than you, you've served your country well. You still doing it and thank you for brining your lovely bride along with you today.

The meeting is adjourned.