

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL
RELEASED BY THE SENATE
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
ADMIRAL VERN CLARK, U.S. NAVY
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
BEFORE THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
FORCE PROTECTION
3 MAY 2001

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL
RELEASED BY THE SENATE
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Senate Armed Services Committee with this update of the Navy's actions to improve our Antiterrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) program.

The attack on USS COLE was a terrible tragedy and dramatic example of the type of threat our military forces face worldwide on a day-to-day basis, emphasizing the importance of force protection both today and in the future. The Navy has taken action at home and abroad to meet this challenge, undergoing a sea change in the way we plan and execute self-defense. We have enhanced the manning, training, and equipping of naval forces to better realize a warfighter's approach to physical security, with AT/FP serving as a primary focus of every mission, activity, and event. Additionally, we are dedicated to ensuring this mindset is instilled in every one of our Sailors.

Key to implementing force protection are multiple, complementary initiatives to deter and prevent terrorist attack. First, we employ operational security to decrease the ability of an enemy to target our forces. Second, in accordance with international law, we depend on host nations to execute their responsibility to provide protection for ships and units visiting and training in their countries. Third, our commanders employ standoff zones around their ships and aircraft to protect them, including the employment of concentric assessment, warning, and threat zones.

Fleet Action

Aggressive action has been taken by our Fleets to strengthen force protection, including the issuance of detailed guidance regarding weapons posture and Rules of Engagement, the creation of dedicated AT/FP units, the institution of more robust training, and the development and deployment of additional equipment. Operationally, port and airport vulnerability assessments are now conducted in the United States and overseas prior to every visit.

All fleets have substantially increased the amount of pre-deployment training devoted to force protection. Every battle group staff and unit conducts realistic exercises during which commanders must consider all threat axes for possible terrorist action, including small boat, swimmer, airborne, and land-based attacks. For example, the ENTERPRISE Battle Group, which departed for deployment on April 25, 2001, received scenario-driven training on recognizing and countering Improvised Explosive Devices, small boat attacks while entering and leaving port, swimmer attack, and large vehicle (i.e. truck) bombs. Additionally, while underway, they were trained in countering airplane and waterborne threats.

Fifth Fleet, the naval component commander for Central Command, has created a Maritime Ship Security Augmentation Force. This team deploys to ports in advance of ship arrivals to ensure the site is secure, including the vetting of pilots and service boats. It enhances ship safety during harbor entry, while pierside, and when transiting back to

sea. The team is comprised of an advance element that conducts liaison with host nation police and security personnel, as well as support service providers and husbanding agents. It also includes pier and patrol boat sentries, Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians, Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) physical security specialists, military working dogs and handlers, corpsman, and a command and control element. Additionally, members of the team embark in the ships prior to arrival and remain aboard for the duration of the port visit while the remainder of the force provides waterside security in conjunction with the host nation.

Further security for deployed naval forces is provided by U.S. Marine Corps Fleet Anti-terrorism Support Teams (FAST). FAST is a rapidly deployable force specially trained in force protection. Currently U.S. European Command, Pacific Command, and Central Command have permanently deployed FAST teams. Immediately following the COLE bombing, an additional FAST team, a reserve Naval Coastal Warfare Unit, and a Coast Guard Port Security Unit were deployed to the Middle East to provide security augmentation for the ongoing investigation in Yemen as well as enhance security aboard civilian-manned Military Sealift Command ships operating in the area.

We are leveraging technology to better equip our forces. All deploying units have received a significantly improved allowance of AT/FP equipment, to include body armor, hand-held searchlights, riot control agents, collapsible batons, explosive detection kits, and water-filled barriers. Recently, the Naval Operations Other Than War Technology Center in Dahlgren, Virginia conducted a demonstration to validate available

systems, including electro-optic infrared detection systems, non-lethal weapon systems, miniature bomb detection systems, and electronic access control systems. As part of this effort, the Navy is working closely with the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory in Quantico, Virginia to develop next-generation non-lethal AT/FP technology.

Close coordination between the Departments of State and Defense is vital to the ultimate success of these endeavors. Country teams from both departments are increasing the dialogue with host nations to more fully articulate U.S. security needs. In cases where host nations lack the ability or desire to meet this increased security level, we are negotiating to allow U.S. forces to provide such measures. This may include allowing our Sailors to conduct armed patrols around U.S. assets. A joint Department of Defense and Department of State cable was recently released directing U.S. diplomats to request this cooperation.

Training, Education, and Doctrine Development

We are cultivating enhanced AT/FP awareness via a continuum of initiatives. These include the development of new warfare doctrine, the issuance of specific tactics, techniques, and procedures, and the accomplishment of basic and advanced training in the fleet, the schoolhouse, and by computer learning. As recommended in the Crouch/Gehman report, the new curricula incorporate realistic scenarios. We have updated the training provided to all Prospective Commanding Officers (PCOs). This training is taught during the Command Leadership Course in Newport, Rhode Island,

addressing the use of force and rules of engagement. Type commanders also provide PCOs with force-specific AT/FP training en route to their commands.

Concurrent with that effort, the Surface Warfare Development Group has published improved fleet guidance on force protection. These publications address new methods of defending against future terrorist attacks and are essential in institutionalizing the AT/FP mindset required in today's Navy.

Organizational Change

The Navy has instituted important organizational changes in the wake of the COLE attack. The Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) established a task force comprised of subject matter experts from the Navy and from external organizations to review and take prompt action to enhance our force protection posture and identify required actions in the mid- and long-term. The task force findings were in close alignment with the Department of Defense COLE Commission report issued by General Crouch and Admiral Gehman, including recommendations for improving departmental organization, antiterrorism/force protection programs, intelligence, logistics, and training.

The SECNAV Task Force is being transitioned to become a permanent Force Protection Council. To ensure it receives the necessary level of attention, the council is chaired by the Vice Chief of Naval Operations and includes senior flag officers from each of the principal branches within the Navy. The council monitors the status of initiatives

and charts the course of future AT/FP programs. It oversees the resourcing of AT/FP, monitors the continued development of naval AT/FP doctrine, and encourages the employment of advanced technologies.

One significant weakness identified by the SECNAV Task force's personnel working group was the size of the Navy's security force. To correct this problem, we are converting collateral duty Masters-at-Arms to full-time security professionals. 330 security force billets have been programmed for Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 to fill this emergent security need, working toward a goal of 6000 permanent naval security billets by 2003, up from approximately 4,000 billets prior to the COLE bombing.

AT/FP Resources

These improvements to the Navy's AT/FP posture have incurred significant cost. To the greatest extent possible, we have funded them from existing accounts. However, the long-term program to provide adequate security for our forces will require additional money. We diverted approximately \$50 million from existing accounts at the Fleet level in FY 2001 to address our most immediate AT/FP requirements. We have also identified additional AT/FP requirements in FY 2001.

To further streamline and focus our budget process for AT/FP, we have consolidated from nine resource sponsors on the OPNAV staff to two, one for ashore and one for afloat. This will ensure Navy AT/FP programs receive the proper level of

attention and support.

Intelligence Support

Better intelligence is vital to enhanced AT/FP. As identified in the Crouch-Gehman report, only a small percentage of the nation's intelligence resources are currently directed against terrorism. To correct this problem, the Defense Intelligence Agency, Naval Intelligence, and theater intelligence centers are now working more closely together to ensure the best all-source intelligence is provided to our commanding officers. Importantly, the intelligence community has modified the dissemination of human intelligence to provide wider availability and greater timeliness. The NCIS has also increased the deployment of agents overseas to meet increased fleet requirements. These agents are engaged in providing on-scene intelligence reporting and vulnerability assessments for ships' port visits and aircraft stopovers.

Command Accountability

While all of these programs are aimed at strengthening our ability to deter and react to terrorist acts, ultimate responsibility for the safety of naval units remains with the Commanding Officer. In the COLE bombing, the Navy conducted a Manual of the Judge Advocate General (JAGMAN) investigation into the actions taken before, during, and after the terrorist attack. As a reviewing authority of the investigation, I agreed with the conclusion of a prior reviewer, Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, that the

Commanding Officer of USS COLE acted reasonably in adjusting his force protection posture based on his assessment of the situation that presented itself when the ship arrived in Yemen to refuel.

In assessing the accountability of the Commanding Officer, reviewing authorities focused on two significant issues. First, were the decisions made and the actions taken by the Commanding Officer reasonable and within the range of performance we expect of our commanders? Second, would any of the force protection measures not implemented by USS COLE have deterred or defeated this determined attack if they had been implemented?

The conclusion of Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet - agreed to and supported by me as well as then-Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig and then-Secretary of Defense William Cohen - is that the Commanding Officer's decisions were reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances, and that even full implementation of all force protection measures specified under the existing threat condition, i.e., Threat Condition Bravo, would not have prevented or deterred this attack.

Based on a thorough review of the JAGMAN investigation, the chain of command agreed that the facts did not warrant punitive action against the Commanding Officer or other members of the COLE crew. The investigation and endorsements of reviewing authorities have been posted on Navy websites. These endorsements explain

in detail the rationale underlying the decisions made by reviewing authorities in assessing accountability.

Conclusion

The attack on USS COLE was a powerful reminder that our nation's forward deployed forces operate in a dangerous, potentially lethal environment. This will not change as we look to the future. The asymmetric threat is growing and constantly searching to exploit the vulnerabilities of our military forces, friends, and allies. It is only a matter of time before the next attack is attempted and we must be prepared. Constant awareness of this fact, coupled with exhaustive training and quality equipment, will help reduce the risk from the asymmetric threat and, if deterrence and prevention fail, limit the damage from such an attack.

We must keep our focus on mission accomplishment - namely the employment of naval forces to stabilize various regions of the world, respond to crises, and prepare for war - while we implement the AT/FP initiatives described in this statement.

Retrenchment and a bunker mentality are inappropriate and imprudent responses to the asymmetric threat. U.S. Navy Sailors and assets are better protected today than ever before. Nevertheless, we will strive to continually strengthen our antiterrorism/force protection program as we operate forward in support of America's defense.