

**SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW WITH [REDACTED]
JANUARY 2001**

USN, 2

On 2 January 2001 LT [REDACTED], Force Protection Officer, USS COLE (DDG 67) met with two members of the CINCLANTFLT JAGMAN review team to discuss Force Protection on board USS COLE at the time of the terrorist attack. Those present with LT [REDACTED] were CDR Steve Rodgers, JAGC, USN and LCDR Thomas L. Copenhaver, JAGC, USN. [REDACTED]'s comments are summarized below:

Training in force protection prior to entering 5th Fleet:

All crewmembers were required to attend Level I Anti-terrorism training. This training was conducted one week prior to deployment. Make up sessions were conducted for those that missed it including one on 11 October, the day prior to the attack for those crewmembers who had recently joined the ship. Additionally, during the transit "Med Arabian University" was conducted. This training was attended by all officers, CPOs and CIC Watch Standers. Med Arabian University discussed issues that would arise in the 6th and 5th Fleet AORs. Threat levels and terrorists groups were addressed. I conducted much of this training and used available Intel information for background. The Executive Officer also briefed threat information. I know we held one message concerning a vague threat by Osama Bin Laden to launch a small boat attack in 6th Fleet. We got that information when we were off the coast of Slovenia during the Milosovich election. Training was often re-emphasized on the bridge and with the CIC watch teams.

Training on how to respond to small boats is dependant upon which THREATCON level the command is in. Other than the pier-side exercise run by Second Fleet we didn't do a lot of physical force protection training as I understand they do on the West Coast. It was never suggested that we practice using picket boats or charged fire hoses to ward off water-side threats.

Force Protection Plan for Yemen:

Prior to entering port a Force Protection Plan was developed by the ship. I put the plan together and it was submitted to the CO. The CO approved the plan and it was released by message. For the Port of Aden, USS COLE made

the plan as broad as possible because there were many unknown factors, e.g. would we be at a pier or refueling dolphin. Once we got into port and surveyed the situation "eyes on" the plan would be modified as necessary to deal with the actual environment. I did not have authority to waive force protection measures - nothing was "delegated to me." I was an action officer. I would clear this with the CO as it was the CO's plan. CDR Lippold believed in command by negation.

When it became necessary to "deviate" force protection plans we would communicate those deviations up the chain of command as quickly as we could. For example, earlier in Malta we were told by embassy people that we "should not" erect physical barriers on the pier. I reported this to the CO who concurred in the Embassy's request. In a later report, I then communicated this deviation to 6th fleet with an email. Had there been no bomb in Aden we would have reported the deviations to CTF 50 by message.

I was the Sea and Anchor OOD for the arrival in Aden. I was on the bridge with the CO from early in the morning until after we had tied up to the refueling dolphin. We discussed the force protection plan during the transit into the port, however, I can't recall the specifics of our discussions - we were always talking force protection in and around the business at hand. Additionally, we had a lot of time to discuss COLE's Force Protection measures prior to and during our Suez Canal transit.

We were not provided any specific brief prior to pulling into Aden. I had accessed the latest information from the NCIS website while they were putting together the force protection plan. I spoke with another ship's Force Protection Officer and learned that when they pulled into Bahrain that there would be small boats provided by the host nation for to provide security. I was never informed if there would be any kind of security provided by Yemen during the refueling.

Regarding USS COLE's position:

It was the ship's general policy to always anchor with the bow pointed towards the entrance to the harbor. This was done in Aden because it was considered the best position to be in to make a speedy exit from the port. There was no specific threat that caused the ship to be moored in this

position. This was addressed at the Navigation Brief the night prior to the port visit -this was viewed as a better option than tying up into the harbor and launching the RHIBs (small boats). No one knew what Aden was really like so we wanted to take a conservative get-away-fast posture. We wouldn't get a chance to put eyes on this place before we actually pulled in for fuel.

Regarding picket boats:

Picket boats would be deployed provided there was intelligence that warranted their use. They would be deployed as a show of force. There were no reports or intelligence that would indicate that small boats should be deployed in the Port of Aden. To launch the small boats there would need to be a threat to the ship. There was never a threat to USS COLE. They never practiced force protection using ship's boats.

My understanding of "inspecting" work boats would be to have the husbanding agent there to identify which boats were his and to give the boats a look as they came along side the COLE. Getting on the work boats for an on-board inspection is something we did if we chartered liberty boat ferries but we weren't doing that here. We would not simply challenge work boats. There would need to be some kind of intell or hostile intent indicators to cause us to challenge the boats. Without a reason we can't just start shooting.

Regarding fire hoses:

My understanding of fire hoses is that they are used as crowd control measure. There was no need to have charged fire hoses during this refueling as they were not tied to a pier and there were only a small number of persons on the fueling dolphin. We never received training in repelling small boats with fire hoses.

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