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16 October 2000

RESULTS OF INTERVIEW WITH LTJG [redacted] USNR

On 16 Oct LTJG [redacted] USNR, was interviewed by LCDR [redacted] JAGC, USN. LTJG [redacted] primary billet is Strike Officer, and his main collateral duty is Assistant Force Protection Officer (AFPO). He is originally from [redacted] and he was commissioned from the NROTC program at the [redacted] He has been assigned to the USS COLE (DDG 67) since December of 1998, and he is due to transfer in November 2000.

As the Strike Officer, his duties include management of the Tomahawk missiles, harpoon missiles, the fire control systems, the gunfire control system, and nine enlisted personnel. AS the AFPO, he is responsible for the following:

- Ensuring the command has had Level I Force Protection / Anti-Terrorism (FP/AT) training
- Compiling a list of linguists
- Ensuring that warning signs in the appropriate foreign language are posted at the bottom of the ship's brow while moored in foreign ports

He indicated that the Force Protection (FP) Team tries to meet ten days prior to a port visit. However, in the case of the Aden BSF, the team did not hold a meeting the week prior to the Aden BSF. For the transit to Aden the ship was in Threatcon Bravo, in accordance with the most recent COMFIFTHFLT directives to the fleet. The ship's weapons systems were in the following respective weapons postures:

- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]

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For the COLE's BSF in Aden, Yemen, the following measures were taken for the inport watches while in Threatcon Bravo:

- Two topside sentries (rovers) would each be armed with shotguns; the Officer of the Deck and Petty Officer of the Watch would each have a 9-mm. sidearm; and the messenger would have a shotgun.
- The .50 caliber machine gun mounts would be assembled, but the ammunition would be in nearby lockers. [The forward ammo lockers are approximately ten feet from the mounts; the aft lockers are fifteen feet away from the mounts on the starboard side and twenty feet away from the port side mount, respectively.]

LTJG [redacted] reviewed the various Threat Conditions and some of the differences among the conditions. In Threatcon Alpha, there would be no topside rovers inport. In Threatcon Charlie, the ship would initiate a recall and get underway within one hour. Additionally, the ship would post an anti-swimmer watch. In Threatcon Delta, the ship would restrict personnel topside.

With regard to official Navy message traffic, LTJG [redacted] noted the following:

- COLE does not have the JMHS message system, so for classified messages a hard copy is created and routed to the appropriate offices on the ship.
- Operations Department is responsible for printing and routing hard copies of classified messages that impact other departments. Such messages would include the numbered fleet night intentions messages, and the combat warfare commander intentions messages.

As the AFPO, LTJG [redacted] downloaded the threat assessment information for Yemen from the COMFIFTHFLT secure website [www.cusnc.navy.smil.mil] on 5 October 2000. The NAVATAC information on Yemen as of that date listed the threat level for Yemen as High, based on the then-existing five-point scale (negligible, low, medium, high, and critical). On 11 October, DESRON 50 emailed the COLE with the latest NAVATAC assessment for Yemen based on the new

four-point scale [low, medium, significant, and high], in which Yemen was listed as significant. He said that the information the ship had did not equate to Yemen being an immediate threat to the ship, although it was a dangerous place. Additionally, the COLE did receive the COMFIFTHFLT message of 10 October that established a curfew of 2200 and placed additional liberty restrictions within the COMFIFTHFLT AOR.

LTJG [redacted] witnessed the Husbanding Agent for Aden come onboard the ship approximately five minutes prior to the explosion. At the time of the explosion on 12 October, LTJG [redacted] had just sat down to eat lunch in the wardroom. Initially he thought the explosion occurred due to a problem with the refueling.