

[REDACTED]

Results of Investigator Interviews of LT [REDACTED] USN,
conducted on 16, 19, 20 and 21 October 2000

LT [REDACTED] USN, USS COLE (DDG 67), was interviewed on 16 and 19 October by LCDR [REDACTED] and on 20 and 21 October 2000 by the Investigating Officer, CAPT [REDACTED] and LCDR [REDACTED]. The summary that follows is a compilation of LCDR [REDACTED] notes, when he talked to LT [REDACTED] alone, and both officers' notes when they were conducting joint interviews.

LT [REDACTED] is a [REDACTED] graduate of the Naval Academy. His primary billet on USS COLE is Weapons Officer, and his primary collateral duty is Force Protection Officer (FPO). The Commanding Officer (CO) appointed him in writing as the FPO on the ship's collateral duties list. Along with the other six members of the ship's Force Protection Team (FP Team), LT [REDACTED] attended a four-day Force Protection / Anti-Terrorism course conducted by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) at Little Creek, Virginia, in June 2000. The other members of COLE's FP Team are: LTJG [REDACTED]; ENS [REDACTED]; FCC [REDACTED]; ISC [REDACTED]; GM1 [REDACTED] and MA1 [REDACTED].

As the ship's FPO, he was responsible for proposing a Force Protection Plan (FP Plan) to the CO prior to each port the ship would visit. After the CO's tentative approval of the plan, a message would be sent to the Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) requesting that the ship's FP Plan be approved. In the COMFIFTHFLT Area of Responsibility (AOR), the ship's ISIC was Commander, Task Force FIVE ZERO (CTF 50). On 7 October 2000, the ship submitted a FP Plan for its brief stop for fuel (BSF) in Aden, Yemen, and on 11 October 2000 DESRON 50 approved the plan. In the COLE's approved plan for Aden during Threatcon Bravo, the ship indicated it would accomplish all sixty-two (62) measures listed under Threatcons Alpha and Bravo, with no deviations. On 11 October 2000, LT [REDACTED] submitted a Threatcon Implementation Plan (derived from COLE's FP instruction) to the CO indicating that all 62 FP measures listed in the COMFIFTHFLT Opord would be carried out, and the CO signed his approval to that document.

As LT [REDACTED] explained, deviations to the approved FP Plan (to include both enhancing measures and deleting measures) are driven by the nature of the port in general and the ship's berth in particular. Due to the incomplete advance information the ship had regarding its BSF to the Port of Aden (for example, where the ship would tie up, how long it would take to onload fuel, etc.), he recommended the strictest course of action with regard to FP measures. He indicated that on one occasion during

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the Mediterranean phase of the ship's deployment they deviated from the approved FP Plan because the actual conditions in the port warranted such a deviation. He said that the COLE's ISIC in the COMSIXTHFLT AOR, Destroyer Squadron TWO TWO (DESRON 22), authorized the COLE to deviate from its approved FP Plan as necessary under the circumstances and to report such deviations in the ship's after-action port visit message: [LCDR [REDACTED] USN, the N8 of COMDESRON 22, confirmed to CAPT [REDACTED] the Investigating Officer, in a telephone conversation on 22 October 2000 in which LT [REDACTED] participated, that DESRON 22 authorized the above described method for reporting a FP deviation for one port visit in particular but did not intend to set a precedent.]

In actuality the ship did not accomplish all 62 FP measures during its BSF to Aden, Yemen. After the ship moored to Refueling Dolphin 7, a small, isolated pier a few hundred yards from the harbor shoreline, LT [REDACTED] believed that several of the 62 FP measures did not need to be accomplished, so he recommended to the CO that the measures be waived, and the CO agreed. At this juncture the COLE was reporting to CTF 50, not DESRON 22, and LT [REDACTED] had not established a reporting procedure with CTF 50 that would indicate the ship had deviated from its approved FP Plan. He said his intention was to notify CTF 50 in a message after the ship departed from Aden, but with the events of 12 October that never occurred.

The following summarizes all 62 FP measures (from COMFIFTHFLT Opord) that COLE said it would accomplish in its approved FP Plan, and whether or not the ship deviated from the measure upon mooring in Aden, Yemen, according to LT [REDACTED]

<u>Measure</u>	<u>Accomplished?</u>	<u>Reason for Deviation</u>
1. Brief Crew	Yes	
2. Brief Security Personnel on the Threat and ROE	Not sure	
3. Review Security Plans	Yes	
4. Secure spaces not in use	Yes	
5. Post qualified armed fantail and foc'sle sentries	Yes	Encl (50) Page 2 of 12

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<u>Measure</u>	<u>Accomplished?</u>	<u>Reason for Deviation</u>
6. Post qualified armed pier sentries	Waived	No brow was installed and pier had no vehicle access
7. Ensure two forms of communication for watchstanders	Yes	
8. Issue night vision goggles issued to security personnel	Waived	N/A (daytime BSF)
9. Review pier & shipboard access control procedures	Yes	
10. Coord pier & fleet landing security	Waived	No collocated forces
11. Tighten shipboard & pier access procedures	Yes	Husbanding Agent was only visitor expected onboard & ship did not have a brow to the pier
12. Establish unloading zones on the pier away from the ship	Waived	N/A due to location of refueling pier
13. Deploy barriers to keep vehicles away from the ship	Waived	N/A due to no vehicle access to pier
14. Post signs in local language to explain visiting & loitering restrictions	Waived	N/A due to fact there was no brow in place and Husbanding Agent was only expected visitor onboard
15. Inspect all vehicles entering pier	Waived	N/A due to no vehicle access to pier

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BSF

<u>Measure</u>	<u>Accomplished?</u>	<u>Reason for Deviation</u>
16. Inspect all personnel, hand carried items, etc.	Yes	
17. Direct departing & arriving liberty boats	Waived	N/A because Aden was not a liberty port
18. Keep unauthorized watercraft from ship and control authorized craft	Yes	Watchstanders thought they were accomplishing this
19. Identify & inspect workboats	No	N/A because it was not feasible to physically board every workboat
20. Secure spaces not in use	Yes	Same as measure #4
21. Regulate ship-board lighting to best meet threat environment	Yes (N/A)	N/A due to daytime BSF (but would have been accomplished had the refueling evolution run past sunset
22. Rig hawsepipe covers and rat guards on lines	Waived	N/A due to fact pier not readily accessible to foot and vehicle traffic
23. Raise accommodation ladders, etc.	Yes	Accommodation ladder was up; pilot's ladder was raised as soon as Husbanding Agent was onboard
24. Conduct security drills	Waived	Brevity of visit
25. Review individual actions in Threatcon Bravo for possible implementation	Yes	COLE was in Threatcon Bravo

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<u>Measure</u>	<u>Accomplished?</u>	<u>Reason for Deviation</u>
26. Maintain appropriate Threaton Alpha measures	Yes	
27. Review liberty policy	Waived	N/A because Aden was not a liberty port
28. Conduct divisional quarters at foul weather parade	Yes	N/A, really, because all hands onboard, not a liberty port, and Husbanding Agent was only authorized visitor
29. Ensure up-to-date list of bilingual personnel; ensure warning tape in pilot house and/or quarterdeck warns small craft to remain clear in both English and local language	Yes → list No → tape	Caveat: ship did not have an Arabic linguist
30. Remind personnel to lock their vehicles and to carefully check them before entering	Waived	N/A because the pier was not accessible to vehicles
31. Designate & brief picket boat crews; place boats on 15-minute alerts	Waived	Ship's boats are located on starboard side, & ship was moored starboard side to; COLE would have had to launch boats prior to tying up
32. Post armed brow watch on pier	Waived	N/A because ship did not have brow in place
33. Restrict vehicle access to pier	Waived	N/A because pier was not accessible by vehicle
34. Man signal bridge or pilot house & Encl (50)	No	Neither pilot house nor signal bridge was manned

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<u>Measure</u>	<u>Accomplished?</u>	<u>Reason for Deviation</u>
ensure flares are available to ward off approaching craft		
35. After working hours, post armed sentries on superstructure level	Yes (N/A)	N/A because Aden was a working port & the visit was a BSF
36. Arm all members of quarterdeck watch & SAT	Yes	
37. Provide shotgun and ammunition to quarterdeck	Yes	
38. Issue arms to selected qualified officers to include CDO	No	CDO was not armed
39. Implement measures to keep unauthorized craft away from ship. Carefully control Authorized craft.	Yes	Caveat: the watch team thought they were doing this
40. Arm sounding & security patrol	Yes	
41. Muster and brief ammunition bearers or messengers	Not sure	
42. Implement procedures for expedient issue of firearms and ammunition from small arms locker	Yes	50 caliber machine guns were mounted (two forward, two aft)

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<u>Measure</u>	<u>Accomplished?</u>	<u>Reason for Deviation</u>
43. Inform local authorities of actions taken as the Threatcon increases	Yes	American Embassy and local authorities were informed of the explosion and increased threat conditions
44. Test comms internally, with local authorities, and with other U.S. Naval Ships	Yes	Caveat: no other U.S. Naval ships in port
45. Conduct pier searches	Waived	N/A because pier not accessible to vehicles or foot traffic from shore
46. Conduct searches of ship's hull and boats	Yes	
47. Move cars and objects such as crates and trash containers as far from the ship as possible	Yes	Most of this measure was N/A
48. Hoist boats aboard when not in use	Yes	Ship's small boats were never launched
49. Consider terminating all public visits	Yes	N/A, because there was no general shipboard visiting and no distinguished visitors were scheduled
50. Set material condition Yoke main deck and below	Yes	COLE was in Damage Control condition Modified Zebra, main deck and below since its patrol in the Adriatic Sea

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<u>Measure</u>	<u>Accomplished?</u>	<u>Reason for Deviation</u>
51. After working hours, reduce entry points to the ship's interior	Yes	Mostly N/A because Aden was a working port and ship was expected to get underway in the early afternoon
52. Duty department heads ensure all spaces not in regular use are secured and inspected periodically	Yes	Same as or similar to measures #4 and #20
53. If two brows are rigged, remove one	No	N/A because no brows were rigged
54. Be able to get underway on short notice	Yes	
55. Ensure .50 caliber mount assemblies are in place with ammunition in ready service lockers	Yes	
56. Prepare fire hoses & brief designated personnel on procedures for repelling boarders, small boats, and ultralight A/C	Waived	Ship felt this was primarily a method to repel boarders, which was N/A due to location of refueling pier, and that it would be impractical for other purposes
57. Obstruct possible helicopter landing areas	Waived	N/A due to the fact that helo landing area would be obstructed by working parties carrying out ship's routine

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<u>Measure</u>	<u>Accomplished?</u>	<u>Reason for Deviation</u>
58. Review riot & crowd control procedures, asylum-seeker procedures, & bomb threat procedures	Yes	
59. Monitor local communications (e.g., ship-to-ship, TV, radio, & police scanners)	Yes	Communications Department was manned
60. Implement additional security measures for high-risk personnel	Waived	N/A because there were no distinguished visitors scheduled to visit, or other high-risk personnel
61. Inform local authorities of actions being taken as threatcon increases	Yes	The ship informed local authorities of situation updates after the explosion
62. Review individual actions in Threatcon Charlie for possible implementation	Yes	

Additional comments regarding the COLE's FP Program

Prior to the COLE's deployment in August 2000, LT [REDACTED] and MA1 [REDACTED] attended a brief on the COMFIFTHFLT AOR conducted by LT [REDACTED] of the Navy Anti-Terrorism Alert Center (NAVATAC). The brief was held onboard the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON in Norfolk Naval Base. Every ship in the GEORGE WASHINGTON Battle Group sent a representative. In addition to the Fifth Fleet AOR, the Sixth Fleet AOR was covered as well. LT [REDACTED] said the brief is

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available on the NAVATAC website and that he used the brief as the basis for shipboard training he conducted at a later date.

The COLE had an active FP training program. Nearly the entire crew had received Level I Force Protection/Anti-Terrorism training at the time of deployment. Level I training was again conducted on 11 October to ensure that all hands had received the training. ENS Sierra conducted the training. During the deployment periodic briefings were conducted on the mess decks under the collective title of "Med-Arabian University," which reflected the two areas in which the ship would be operating. The target audience for these briefings was officers, chief petty officers and Bridge/CIC watchstanders who were not on watch. Additionally, the COLE conducted daily operations-intelligence briefings, usually around 0730.

LT [REDACTED] confirmed that per the ship's instruction, the Threatcon Implementation Plan is supposed to be submitted to the CO ten days prior to each port visit.

Ship's weapons systems and weapons posture. During the ship's transit to Aden, the ship's weapons systems were in the following weapons postures:

- SM-2 Weapons Posture 1
- Harpoon Weapons Posture 2
- TLAM Weapons Posture 2
- CIWS Weapons Posture 1
- VLA Weapons Posture 3
- SVTT Weapons Posture 2

While inport the Weapons Postures would necessarily have to change, as the SPY-1 Radar would normally be secured approximately five nautical miles from land in order to prevent the radar from disrupting and/or damaging local communications networks.

[REDACTED]

The COLE has two mounts for its Close-In Weapons System (CIWS), Mount 21 and 22. Mount 22, the aft mount, was the only one operational, as Mount 21 was CASREPped. Mount 22 has a relative firing radius of 040 degrees relative to 290 degrees relative. CIWS is designed to destroy incoming missiles flying at low altitude.

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According to LT [REDACTED], for the DDG 51 class ships, the CIWS system cannot be fired manually; in the AW Auto Mode it will track and shoot targets of opportunity. Consequently, the ship has to control its capabilities in order to prevent indiscriminate firing and collateral damage. As such, it not a good system for combating incidents such as small boat attacks in a harbor setting. [REDACTED]

LT [REDACTED] discussed the short-range assets that were available on the COLE. The ship has four .50 caliber machine gun mounts, and their maximum range is 3700 yards. Additionally, the ship has the M-79 grenade launcher, concussion grenades, M-14 shotguns, and 9 mm. sidearms. For the Aden BSP, LT [REDACTED] felt it was necessary to enhance the ship's small caliber potential. The COMFIFTHFLT FP requirement is for the .50 caliber tripods to be on station, but COLE was configured to have both the tripods and weapons on station, with the ammunition in the ready service lockers. He estimated that it would take about 5-7 minutes to get the .50 caliber machine guns manned and ready.

The COLE has a Small Caliber Action Team (SCAT), which is designed as an underway vice inport defense against small boat attacks. He said that the acceptable length of time for the SCAT to be manned and ready is seven minutes maximum.

LT [REDACTED] statements regarding the COLE's sea and anchor detail and working with the Aden Harbor Pilot

On the morning of 12 October 2000, LT [REDACTED] assumed the duty of Officer of the Deck (underway) for the COLE's Sea and Anchor Detail during the transit to Aden Harbor. [During the course of this investigation, the investigators had heard many comments made about the demeanor of the Yemeni Harbor Pilot. The comments went along the following lines: Initially the ship had difficulty raising Aden Harbor Port Authority on the Bridge-to-Bridge radio. Secondly, the Pilot (Mr. Ibrahim) was about one late getting onboard. Third, once onboard, the Pilot was argumentative and wanted the ship to increase its speed. Fourth, the Pilot wanted to tie the ship up to the Refueling Dolphin port side to, against the CO's desires, and he was argumentative about it. Lastly, after the ship tied up he was in a hurry to get off the bridge.] LT [REDACTED] confirmed some of these statements but also provided rational explanations for some of them: First, he knew the Yemeni Pilots had a reputation for being late. Second, he felt there were legitimate reasons (the fueling rig line-up) for tying the ship up port side to. In summary, he thought Mr.

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Ibrahim's behavior was different from other Pilots whom he had encountered only with regard to his discourse with the CO. He said that usually when the Pilot enters the bridge there is a ritual between the Pilot and CO in which they trade greetings, compliments, and small talk, but in this case that did not occur.

Another topic of comment among some crewmembers was whether or not the ship had authorized barges to come alongside in Aden to collect ship's trash. [The ship did not request trash services in its LOGREQ message.] LT [REDACTED] related the following: While the ship was still being maneuvered into its mooring a trash barge came alongside. This was reported by the aft phonetalker to the bridge. Initially, the CO decided that no trash barges were to be accepted, as the cost was too high. [Accordingly, one trash barge was turned away by GM2 [REDACTED].] A couple days after the explosion, LT [REDACTED] heard from others that the COLE was in fact dumping trash onto a barge. [Interviewer note: per CO, the Supply Officer told the CO that the cost was only \$150 per barge and that the ship had lots of trash and plastic materials to dump. The CO reconsidered his earlier decision and gave approval for the trash barges to come alongside.]

On the day of the BSF in Aden, the Husbanding Agent was the only visitor expected to be onboard that day. Originally, the ship expected to leave in mid-afternoon. But the XO came over the LMC and said the pumping rate was going faster than expected (indeed, the ship had to ask the Yemeni to decrease the rate of speed. Accordingly, the ship expected to leave around 1300 local instead of 1500.

At the time of the explosion, LT [REDACTED] was in the wardroom, about to eat lunch. Initially, he thought the explosion had something to do with the refueling evolution, but when he proceeded out of the wardroom and into the passageways he smelled gunpowder and knew it had been the result of a bomb. After the explosion, the crew had to slide stretchers down ladders to the pier, because the ship had not rigged a brow for this BSF.

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