SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW WITH HMCM [redacted], USN, 2 JANUARY 2001

On 2 January 2001 HMCM [redacted], Command Master Chief, 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 HMCM [redacted] were CDR Steve Rodgers, JAGC, USN and LCDR Thomas L. Copenhaver, JAGC, USN. HMCM [redacted] comments are summarized below:

Training in force protection prior to entering 5th Fleet:

Crew training was a priority on USS COLE. I believe the crew was very aware of force protection issues. The CPO mess was very aggressive with keeping crewmembers informed of ship's issues during quarters. I was comfortable that the ship and crew was prepared to enter the 5th Fleet AOR.

During the Inter Deployment Training Cycle, we practiced and exercised force protection. We recognized our weaknesses and worked on these areas. The Officers and CPOs got together and worked up some classroom exercises and we discussed these during the transit.

Anti-terrorism training was conducted and all members of the crew were required to attend. Information, including training literature, pamphlets, and cards were handed out to all crewmembers.

Additionally, Med Arabian University was conducted and it was stressed by the USS COLE leadership that all officers, CPOs and CIC Watch Standers attend this training. Subjects at this training included intelligence updates and the threat condition in the 5th Fleet AOR. The crew was well aware of the threat condition levels from their pre-deployment training. At our daily Intell briefing we covered things such as where the tankers were, where the submarines and gunboats were. We didn't have, to my knowledge, any specific Intell on Aden.

A high priority was placed on damage control training due to the large number of junior crewmembers, however, force protection training did not suffer as a result of this focus.

I do not recall a specific brief prior to pulling into Aden - but there was training on Middle East threats prior to entering the Suez Canal. We were not familiar with the Port of Aden or any dangers associated with it.

To my knowledge only one other crewmember had been to Aden before and that was the ship's independent duty corpsman - and he had only been in the airport. I knew we all thought it was a good idea to point the ship outward - as none of us knew much about where we were headed.

End of Summary ---