

Tuesday December 5 4:50 PM ET

Persian Gulf Security Increased

By ROBERT BURNS, AP Military Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Defense Secretary William Cohen has authorized military commanders to send dozens of additional U.S. forces to the Persian Gulf to strengthen port security, Pentagon (news - web sites) officials said Tuesday.

The move is part of a Pentagon effort to improve the protection of American ships and other military forces in the region in the aftermath of the Oct. 12 terrorist bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen.

The Navy, meanwhile, said the heavily damaged Cole is due to arrive back in the United States next week.

The Cole, which lost 17 sailors in the suicide bombing, has been in transit from the Middle East since early November aboard a Norwegian-owned heavy lift ship. It will be off-loaded at Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Miss., for repairs that are expected to take one year and cost roughly \$240 million.

A small boat maneuvered close to the Cole while it was refueling in Aden harbor and detonated a bomb that blew a hole in the ship's hull 40 feet wide and 40 feet high.

Yemeni and American law enforcement authorities are still investigating the attack, for which no credible claim of responsibility has been made.

The day the Cole was attacked, U.S. Navy commanders in the Middle East ordered all ships out of port and they have not returned since. Pentagon spokesman Rear Adm.

Craig Quigley said Tuesday "there is a great desire" to ease the security restrictions

"to have a more comfortable and relaxed standard of living, if you will, for our sailors and marines in that area, and yet the first priority has to be force protection."

To strengthen port security in the Gulf, Cohen authorized the deployment of extra Navy and Coast Guard security personnel, Quigley said. He did not immediately have any details and said the Pentagon would be deliberately vague about where the security forces would operate and how they would be equipped.

Adm. Vern Clark, the chief of naval operations, told reporters that he could not comment on the ongoing Cole investigations, which include an internal Navy probe focusing on whether the Cole's captain took the required self-protection measures prior to entering Aden harbor for what was supposed to be a four-hour stop.

A separate investigation, by an outside panel appointed by Defense Secretary William Cohen, is reviewing whether the U.S. military as a whole can take steps to improve the way it protects and supports U.S. forces abroad.

Clark said the Navy investigation's preliminary results are expected to be forwarded in the next few days from the U.S. Fifth Fleet commander in Bahrain, Vice Adm.

Charles W. Moore Jr., to the commander of U.S. Atlantic Command in Norfolk, Va.,

Adm. Robert Natter. Because it ultimately will come to Clark for review, "it would be totally inappropriate" to comment on the specifics of the investigation, he said.

Clark said one of the toughest issues raised by the Cole attack is how the Navy can better improve the security of its ships in foreign ports without violating the sovereign interests of host nations.

To illustrate his point, the four-star admiral postulated a circumstance in which a foreign ship entered an American port and established its own security perimeter with armed guards that prohibited U.S. vessels from moving about.

"How long would we tolerate that?" he asked. "About four seconds. We can't go do that in other people's countries, either."

Washington, D.C., Nov. 9, 2000 - The Navy announced today that Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Miss., will repair USS Cole (DDG 67), which was damaged in a Oct. 12 terrorist attack while in the port of Aden, Yemen. The decision followed a thorough review of the capabilities, costs and schedules associated with public and private shipyards, and included an assessment of how the selection would impact Cole sailors and their families. Ingalls Shipbuilding was determined to be the shipyard best suited to make repairs to Cole. The project is scheduled to begin in January 2001 and is expected to take about one year to complete.

The selection of Ingalls will allow most of the work to be done by civilian workers experienced in building this type of ship. Ingalls was the builder of Cole. Most of the ship's crew will be able to remain in Norfolk, Va., living and working as a team based in existing pre-commissioning facilities.

Under this arrangement, the majority of the crew will be able to use shore-based trainers and schools to sustain seagoing skills and qualifications while a small group of Cole sailors will serve aboard the ship on a rotational basis.

Cole is an Arleigh Burke-class, or Aegis, guided missile destroyer, and is based in Norfolk. The ship was part of the USS George Washington Battle Group, and was in transit from the Red Sea to a port visit in Bahrain when the ship stopped in Aden for routine refueling. The destroyer departed Norfolk for its deployment Aug. 8 and was scheduled to return home Dec. 21.

Cole is currently being brought back to the United States aboard the Norwegian heavy transport ship M/V Blue Marlin, owned by Offshore Heavy Transport of Oslo, Norway. Blue Marlin is being escorted by the Norfolk, Va.-based USS Donald Cook (DDG 75). A small contingent of Navy volunteers from various commands have assumed charge of the damaged destroyer and are riding with her aboard Blue Marlin back to the U.S.

Cole was towed out of Aden harbor Oct. 29 to deeper water by the Military Sealift Command's fleet ocean tug USNS Cataba (T-ATF 168). The process of loading Cole onto the transport ship required a water depth of at least 75 feet since it involved partially submerging Blue Marlin and maneuvering Cole into position over Blue Marlin's deck. The transport ship was then raised, and Cole was lifted aboard. The destroyer was canted on Blue Marlin's deck to protect her propellers and her sonar dome. The voyage back to the United States is expected to take a few weeks.

Two hundred sixteen crewmembers of the guided missile destroyer were given an emotional welcoming as they landed at the Norfolk Naval Station in Virginia Nov. 3. As they stepped off the chartered flight that brought them from the layover stop in Germany, they were greeted by family members, friends, Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vern Clark and Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Admiral Robert J. Natter at the Naval Station's new Air Mobility Command terminal.

In a press conference in the Pentagon Nov. 2, Army Gen. William W. Crouch, former vice chief of staff of the U.S. Army, one of the two leads of the Cole Commission appointed by Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen, had high praise for Cmdr. Lippold and the Cole crew. Gen. Crouch said "the actions of the commanding officer and the crew, following the attack, saved the ship and several of their shipmates." He described the efforts of the Cole crew as an "inspired performance."

He said that the crew of the stricken destroyer also saved the ship during the period when two days after the attacks some seals broke loose and there was additional progressive flooding.

Navy Adm. Harold W. Gehman, Jr., former commander-in-chief of U.S. Joint Forces Command, said that he was very impressed with the strength of this class of Navy ship and how well it took the force of the blast.

Gen. Crouch and Adm. Gehman were appointed by Secretary Cohen to provide a comprehensive review of all actions of all agencies, departments, and commands of the Department of Defense for lessons learned. Adm. Gehman said that his commission will be "aggressive" in following any lead, even it goes into other areas. A separate Navy review is looking at the preparations that USS Cole made for refueling in Aden.

Two injured Cole Sailors continue to receive medical treatment at the Naval Medical Center in Portsmouth, Va., and one Sailor remains at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

-USN-

Tuesday December 5 11:40 AM ET

USS Cole Will Be Home Next Week

By ROBERT BURNS, AP Military Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - The USS Cole, the destroyer heavily damaged by a terrorist bomb while refueling in a Yemeni port Oct. 12, is due to arrive back in U.S. waters next week, the Navy's top officer said Tuesday.

The crippled Cole, which lost 17 sailors in the attack, has been in transit from the Middle East since early November aboard a Norwegian-owned heavy lift ship. It will be off-loaded at Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Miss., for repairs that are expected to take one year and cost roughly \$240 million.

A small boat maneuvered close to the Cole while it was refueling in Aden harbor and detonated a bomb that blew a hole in the ship's hull 40 feet wide and 40 feet high. Yemeni and American law enforcement authorities are still investigating the attack, for which no credible claim of responsibility has been made.

Adm. Vern Clark, the chief of naval operations, told reporters that he could not comment on the ongoing investigations, which include an internal Navy probe focusing on whether the Cole's captain took the required self-protection measures prior to entering Aden harbor for what was supposed to be a four-hour stop.

A separate investigation, by an outside panel appointed by Defense Secretary William Cohen, is reviewing whether the U.S. military as a whole can take steps to improve the way it protects and supports U.S. forces abroad.

Clark said the Navy investigation's preliminary results are expected to be forwarded in the next few days from the U.S. Fifth Fleet commander in Bahrain, Vice Adm.

Charles W. Moore, Jr., to the commander of U.S. Atlantic Command in Norfolk, Va., Adm. Robert Natter. Because it ultimately will come to Clark for review, "it would be totally inappropriate" to comment on the specifics of the investigation, he said.

Clark said one of the toughest issues raised by the Cole attack is how the Navy can better improve the security of its ships in foreign ports without violating the sovereign interests of host nations.

To illustrate his point, the four-star admiral postulated a circumstance in which a foreign ship entered an American port and established its own security perimeter with armed guards that prohibited U.S. vessels from moving about.

``How long would we tolerate that?" he asked. ``About four seconds. We can't go do that in other people's countries, either."

U.S. citizen suspected in Cole attack

U.S. sources say suspect held  
in Jordan is tied  
to bin Laden

A port-side view shows the damage the USS Cole sustained Oct. 12 in Aden.

#### NBC NEWS AND WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4 - A U.S. citizen alleged to have close links to Islamic militant Osama bin Laden is a prime suspect in the suspected terrorist attack on the USS Cole in October, said U.S. sources, who told NBC News on Monday that Jaed Hijazi, who is in custody in Jordan, has also told investigators of plans to "attack U.S. military aircraft" in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere in the Middle East.

'We are a victim of terrorism, not a source of terrorism.'  
- ABDULKADER BAJAMMAL  
Yemen's foreign minister

NBC'S JIM MIKLASZEWSKI reported that one U.S. source said Hijazi has topped the list of suspects for some time.

The Syrian government took Hijazi into custody last month and turned him over to Jordan, where he has already been tried, convicted and sentenced to death in absentia for plotting to attack U.S. and Israeli targets during the millennium celebrations. Jordan now plans to retry Hijazi.

The government sources said Hijazi has "direct links" to bin Laden, who is America's No. 1 suspect in the Oct. 12 bombing of the Cole in the Yemeni port of Aden, which killed 17 sailors and wounded 39 others.

Hijazi "personally trained and supported" those responsible for the Cole attack, the sources said. The United States has been tracking Hijazi for at least eight months, and "he's clearly implicated in the attack," the sources said.

A U.S. diplomat has already visited Hijazi in jail in Amman, and U.S. officials are hopeful that his citizenship will make it easier to extradite him for trial in the United States on any possible terrorism charges.

Syria arrested Hijazi in September, before the Cole bombing. But NBC News has previously reported that other suspects now in custody have told investigators that planning had been under way for 13 months before the Cole was bombed.

At least one attack was thwarted when a small boat that was overloaded with explosives sank in shallow water just offshore in Aden harbor.

YEMEN CITES U.S.

Separately Monday, Yemeni Foreign Minister Abdulkader Bajammal said the United States itself bears some responsibility for the attack on the Cole because it helped create the terrorists who consider America their worst enemy.

"The operation was not Yemeni, not pure Yemeni," Bajammal said in an interview with The Associated Press. "It is a network involving so many countries. Terrorism has no nation."

No one has been charged in the bombing, although Yemeni authorities are reportedly poised to indict at least two people.

WashPost: U.S. weighs reprisal options

Bajammal said that if any Yemenis are found to have been involved, they may have simply been corrupt bureaucrats who provided logistical help in exchange for "a little baksheesh" - or payoff - not out of ideology.

"We are a victim of terrorism, not a source of terrorism," Bajammal added.

The attack on the Cole followed anti-U.S. and anti-Israeli protests in Yemen and across an Arab world enraged by violence in Palestinian areas. Nearly 300 people, most of them Palestinians, have been killed in Israeli-Palestinian clashes since September.

But the roots of anti-U.S. terrorism are older and deeper, running back to the 1980s, when one of the last-gasp Cold War battles was waged in the rugged mountains and valleys of Afghanistan.

Attack in Yemen

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Bajammal said that because the investigation was continuing, he could not comment on the possibility that Yemeni or other Arab veterans of the Afghan war were involved in the Cole attack.

But, he said, "terrorism did not appear by accident. It is a historical phenomenon. Just as the Soviet Union created a man like [international terrorist] Carlos, the other side created the Afghan Arabs. We have inherited the remnants of the Cold War."

#### U.S. REJECTS BLAME

In Washington, a senior U.S. official said the Clinton administration rejects any suggestion that the United States is somehow responsible for the Cole attack. He spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Yemen, whose central government is struggling to expand its authority over tribal areas, has long been a haven for Muslim extremists, including groups linked to bin Laden.

Bin Laden was one of the thousands of fighters from across the Arab world who went to Afghanistan after the 1979 Soviet incursion to fight alongside Afghan guerrillas, whose chief financial and military backers included the United States.

After the Soviets withdrew in 1989, many so-called Afghan Arabs turned their anger against the United States, which they see as a threat to Islam and to Arab independence. Bin Laden continues to live in Afghanistan, where he periodically issues calls for violence against the United States.

Yemeni leaders, embarrassed to have a U.S. ship attacked in their waters just as they were trying to expand relations with Washington, at first rejected the idea that Yemenis could have had anything to do with the Cole attack.

But Yemeni sources close to the inquiry, speaking on condition of anonymity, have said several Yemenis had key roles in organizing the attack. Other Yemenis working for the government allegedly helped the bombers by providing fake identification and other documents.

Bajammal said his government wants stronger ties with the United States, despite signs of anti-U.S. sentiment among the Yemeni people.

The United States and Yemen signed an agreement last week calling for cooperation between U.S. and Yemeni investigators trying to determine who was behind the bombing of the Cole.

Details of the agreement have not been officially released. A U.S. law enforcement official, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said in Washington last week that the agreement called for FBI agents to observe interviews of witnesses and suspects and submit questions for Yemeni agents to ask. U.S. officials have said this arrangement preserves Yemeni sovereignty while allowing FBI agents to testify later in U.S. courts, if charges are brought there, that torture was not used to extract statements.

Bajammal said he hoped for more and broader agreements with the United States. He said Yemen needs U.S. technology, equipment and training to strengthen security and fight terrorism.

The USS Cole is part of the battle group of the aircraft carrier George Washington, now deployed in the Persian Gulf to monitor ship traffic there. The Cole, launched in 1994, is one of 28 Arleigh Burke class destroyers in the U.S. Navy.

Select a topic above for more information.

**Crew:** The Cole carries 350 sailors and Marines and is part of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet based in Norfolk, Va. The Cole is named for a U.S. Marine Corps hero. Its captain, Commander Kirk Liphold, took over in mid-1999 after serving as an administrative assistant to the secretary of the navy.

**Armament:** Like all Arleigh Burke class destroyers, the Cole's main role is protecting its carrier from attack. Thus it carries an array of anti-aircraft weapons, including Standard surface-to-air (SAM) missiles and Vulcan close-defense gatling guns. All of this is coordinated by highly sophisticated Aegis radar.

But the Cole is also highly capable of striking at other targets on land or sea. The Cole carries 56 Tomahawk cruise missiles as well as 8 Harpoon anti-ship missiles.

**Size and composition:** The Cole is a small ship relative to its huge carrier -- about 9,000 tons as opposed the George Washington's 102,000 tons. The ship is 504 feet long and 66 feet across at its widest point.



Speed and composition: The Cole, like all Arleigh Burke class destroyers, features a steel hull and superstructure, making them less vulnerable than their predecessors which had steel hulls and aluminum superstructures but not as strong as WWII-era destroyers. Modern naval design operates under the theory that the advanced radar arrays on ships like the Cole would keep it out of range of such weapons so it does not need to be as weighed down with heavy materials. The Cole is capable of speeds of up to 32 knots.

Printable version

Source: Jane's Information Group

NBC's Jim Miklaszewski, The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Monday December 4 2:49 PM ET

Yemen Blames Terrorists for Attack

By DONNA BRYSON, Associated Press Writer

SAN'A, Yemen (AP) - The United States itself bears some responsibility for the attack on the USS Cole because it helped create the terrorists who now consider America their worst enemy, Yemen's foreign minister said Monday.

Speaking in an interview with The Associated Press, Foreign Minister Abdulkader Bajammal also said Yemen wants to work closely with the United States to combat terrorism.

``The operation was not Yemeni, not pure Yemeni," Bajammal said. ``It is a network involving so many countries. Terrorism has no nation."

No one has yet been charged in the Oct. 12 bombing of the USS Cole, which killed 17 sailors and wounded 39. Asked if any indictments were forthcoming, Bajammal said he had no information, noting it was not his area of responsibility.

But Bajammal said that if any Yemenis are found to have been involved, they may have simply been corrupt bureaucrats who provided logistical help in exchange for ``a little baksheesh," - or payoffs - not out of ideology.

``We are a victim of terrorism, not a source of terrorism," Bajammal added.

The attack on the Cole followed anti-U.S. and anti-Israeli protests in Yemen and across an Arab world enraged by violence in Palestinian areas. Nearly 300 people - mostly Palestinians - have been killed in Israeli-Palestinian clashes since September. But the roots of anti-American terrorism are older and deeper, running back to the 1980s when one of the last-gasp Cold War battles was waged in the rugged mountains and valleys of Afghanistan.

Bajammal said that because the investigation was continuing, he could not comment on the possibility that Yemeni or other Arab veterans of the Afghan war were involved in the Cole attack.

But, he said, ``Terrorism did not appear by accident. It is a historical phenomenon. Just as the Soviet Union created a man like (the international terrorist) Carlos, the other side created the Afghan Arabs. We have inherited the remnants of the Cold War."

In Washington, a senior U.S. official said the Clinton administration rejects any suggestion that the United States is somehow responsible for the Cole attack. He spoke on condition of anonymity.

Yemen, whose central government is struggling to expand authority over tribal areas, has long been a haven for Muslim extremists, including groups linked to Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, a veteran of the Afghan war who today is America's No. 1 terrorist suspect.

Bin Laden was one of the thousands of fighters from across the Arab world who went to Afghanistan after the 1979 Soviet incursion to fight alongside Afghan guerrillas, whose chief financial and military backers included the United States.

After the Soviets withdrew in 1989, many so-called Afghan Arabs turned their anger against the United States, which they see as a threat to Islam and to Arab independence. Bin Laden continues to live in Afghanistan, where he periodically issues calls for violence against the United States.

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The United States and Yemen signed an agreement last week calling for cooperation between U.S. and Yemeni investigators trying to determine who was behind the bombing of the USS Cole after it entered Aden harbor for refueling.

Details of the cooperation agreement have not been officially released. A U.S. law enforcement official, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said in Washington last week that the agreement called for FBI agents to observe interviews of witnesses and suspects and submit questions for Yemeni agents to ask. U.S. officials have said this arrangement preserves Yemeni sovereignty, while allowing FBI agents to testify later in U.S. courts, if charges are brought there, that torture was not used to extract statements.

Bajammal said he hoped for more and broader agreements with the United States. He said Yemen needed U.S. technology, equipment and training to strengthen security and fight terrorism.

A U.S. official in San'a, speaking on condition of anonymity, said cooperation between the United States and Yemen was likely to increase in the aftermath of attack on the Cole. The Cole and other U.S. warships that patrol the Gulf had been refueling at Yemen's southern port of Aden as part of an effort to bring the United States and Yemen closer.

Yemeni investigators have reportedly completed their probe and recommended to prosecutors that at least two unidentified people be charged in the bombing. It was not clear when prosecutors would act or whether a trial would begin before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan ends in late December.

Personal stories surface after USS Cole blast

By Jessie Halladay and Dave Moniz

USA TODAY

At 11: 15 a.m. on Oct. 12, as an oppressive sun baked the port of Aden, Yemen, two smiling men in a small white boat approached the port side of the USS Cole while it

was refueling. The men guided the water-borne equivalent of a truck bomb -- several hundred pounds of explosives -- next to the Cole and blew themselves to bits. The explosion gouged a 40-by-40-foot hole in the \$1 billion guided-missile destroyer, blasting through the half-inch thick steel midsection of the ship's hull. The bomb killed 17 of the Cole's 294 crewmembers and wounded another 39.

Death in today's military is an odd calculation, with isolated acts of terrorism often more lethal than months-long battles. More sailors perished on the Cole than were lost in Operation Allied Force and Operation Desert Fox, U.S. military strikes involving thousands of combat sorties flown against Serbia and Iraq.

Seven weeks after the attack, U.S. authorities say they are closing in on those believed responsible. The suspected mastermind: Osama bin Laden, a Saudi exile living in Afghanistan. At the same time, military investigators are trying to determine whether the bombing could have been averted or whether the rules for defending the nation's young warriors will always be inadequate against fanatical, unseen enemies willing to sacrifice their lives for a greater cause.

USA TODAY interviewed a dozen crewmembers who recalled the terrifying moments after the blast, the crew's frantic efforts to care for the wounded while keeping the ship afloat and the hellish conditions they endured on the crippled ship until they were flown home three weeks later.

On Friday, the sailors -- and their shipmates -- reported for to duty at the Norfolk, Va., naval base after a month-long leave.

Here are the stories of four of them:

Petty Officer 1st Class John Washak butted in the lunch line to avoid the crowd snaking outside the mess deck. Washak, 35, thought about the day ahead while he grabbed a bite.

The son of a Navy man, Washak knew the importance of staying in touch with his family during long cruises. The 16-year Navy veteran e-mailed his wife, Teresa, in Chesapeake, Va., virtually every night. She and their two boys were fine, Teresa had told him on the phone the night before.

It had been more than two months since he had shipped out.

The Cole had left Norfolk for the Persian Gulf on Aug. 8, with stops along the French Riviera, in Barcelona, Spain, and in Malta.

Aden was no garden spot, but the Cole was scheduled to stay there for just a few hours.

Sonar technician Jennifer Kudrik discussed chemical warfare with a supervisor as her shipmates headed for the chow line. It was the first trip to the Middle East for the 21-year-old from North Carolina, and she felt jumpy.

Kudrik joined the Navy three years ago, in part because of her love for the ocean. Her dream: to go to college and become a marine biologist.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Craig Freeman stood guard topside in the 100-degree heat while the 505-foot-long ship guzzled thousands of gallons of fuel for its journey to the Persian Gulf. A 12-year Navy vet, the 31-year-old Georgian planned to stay 20 years before starting a civilian career.

As it refueled, the Cole operated under Threat Condition Bravo, the second lowest of four states of alert. That's why Freeman's 9mm pistol was unloaded. On orders from the skipper, he carried an ammo clip on his belt as he roamed the starboard side.

Three other sailors standing watch topside also carried unloaded weapons as they watched service boats skimming the harbor near the Cole. The sentries were trained to load and fire within six seconds.

It wouldn't have mattered. No one standing watch thought the two men waving at them as they approached in a boat were a threat. Their harbor boat looked like several others that had helped haul off ship's garbage and tie the Cole to a refueling dock known as a "dolphin."

Who knew the pair carried a death wish?

Hull technician Michael Hayes prepared paperwork for an inspection in his office near the rear of the 5-year-old destroyer named for World War II hero Darrell Samuel Cole. Hayes, 36, a 16-year Navy vet from Virginia Beach, was making his last cruise before going to shore duty back in Norfolk. Now, he was enjoying some quiet work time.

The quiet did not last very long.

"People had feet barely hanging on, legs mangled to really weird positions, internal injuries, amputations, broken jaws. In the meantime, we're DIW (dead in the water with no power at all)." -- Ship's Counselor 1st Class Christina Huber, in an e-mail home several days after the attack.

Washak thought he was dying. The concussion from the blast seemed to grab him by the back of his neck and toss him to the floor.

A few feet away, a sailor had been sliced in two. Another shipmate close to Washak didn't have a scratch.

Kudrik's supervisor was catapulted across the floor. "The boom and the movement were at the same time," Kudrik remembers. "It was like two bounces, but there was this shaking in between."

Some crewmembers closest to the blast were torn limb from limb. The torsos of others were burned in the mangled midsection. Some survived the blast only to be swept into the dark blue waters of Aden harbor.

Washak stood up. His face was cut and burned, an elbow throbbed in pain, his hair was saturated with oil and soot. Despite his injuries, others more seriously wounded needed help first. Washak donned a bulletproof vest, grabbed a shotgun and headed topside.

On deck, commanders issued weapons and told those who had been standing watch to arm their 9mm pistols. Then Cmdr. Kirk Lippold ordered everyone inside until a security force could be organized.

Hayes had difficulty making his way toward the blast site to assess the damage.

"Everything was . . . (covered in) a black, sooty smoke."

All around him were cries of "Help, Help!" Hayes donned a breathing mask and made his way through the smoke and mangled metal to the heart of the explosion, the mess deck. He saw dead comrades. Hayes ignored them to assist those still alive, many with broken bones and horrific gashes.

"You're hurting them because you're moving them and they're just screaming, 'Oh, my God! Oh, my God!' " Hayes recalls. "We kept going in to try to see how many people we could save."

In the log room, next to the center of the damage, Kudrik sat and prayed: "Dear Jesus, help us now, we need you bad," she said as shipmates' screams reverberated through the walls.

"I could hear somebody say, 'We need help moving the dead bodies,' " she says. That's when it hit her: Was she going to die?

Using cardboard from desk calendars and broomstick handles, Kudrik and others devised makeshift splints for their shipmates' broken bones. They tore T-shirts for tourniquets and bandages and told the injured they would be OK.

Freeman helped move the wounded off the ship and to a Yemeni hospital. It took six hours to realize that he needed treatment, too, for injuries to his head and ears. "My head was hurting pretty bad and my eye was blurry. I didn't think about ruptured eardrums or a concussion."

"The ship was listing to the port side. I have never seen such a horrible sight. Everything was blown towards the starboard side and mangled. There were people pinned against the walls, body parts in and under metal. . . . very few people have cried. How we avoided (a fire) is a mystery to everyone." -- Huber, in her e-mail. As doctors, many of whom didn't speak English, worked on the injured at an Aden hospital, sailors still aboard the Cole worked furiously to save their ship -- all the while fearing a second attack.

Fire crews closed off areas where live electrical wires could mix with oil and fuel that had splashed throughout the ship. Sailors sprayed firefighting foam on areas that might ignite.

Flooding also was a serious risk. Water poured into the hole in the hull. Minutes after the explosion, sailors rushed to comply with "Material Condition Zebra" -- an emergency defensive measure to limit damage -- by shutting all watertight doors on the ship to prevent further flooding.

But that wasn't enough. Filled with seawater, Machinery Room #1 and Auxiliary Room #2 submerged. The boat listed four degrees to the port as sailors tried to prevent a catastrophe. Generators pumped non-stop to get water out as fast as it was coming in. The Cole was critically damaged and could have been lost had the crew not quickly mobilized to limit flooding. Electricians tried to restore light and power. The ship's internal communications were disabled by the blast, which collapsed decks onto the mess and wrecked the galley, chief's mess, the main engine room and a workshop.

After stemming the flooding, sailors manned a constant vigil of areas that might take on seawater. The first 72 hours were critical as other Navy ships in the Persian Gulf raced to the ancient port. On the third day, there was new flooding, and a compartment was lost after a bulkhead seal failed.

That flooding added at least 1,000 tons to the 8,300-ton Cole. Within five minutes of the explosion, Washak found himself topside, overlooking a chaotic scene. Later, small boats ferried the injured off the ship and sentries warned others to stay away. He stood a near-constant watch on deck, handling at various times a 9mm pistol, a shotgun, an M-14 rifle and an M-60 machine gun. In the first few days, he couldn't sleep. "Every time I closed my eyes, I could see the explosion, feel it, smell it."

Hayes lived it 96 hours straight. "I guess I lost my mind. I was just working, working, working."

The Cole was its own Dante's Inferno, an oily, befouled warship with no refuge.

Topside, there was no shade. Below, temperatures soared above 100 degrees.

Night was the worst. Without work, the Cole's remaining crew could slow down enough to think. That's when thoughts of home and dead shipmates surfaced. "If it was humanly possible, we would have all slept with one eye open," Kudrik said. "We had our own security, but you still didn't trust anything."

Anyone who tried to sleep went topside to grab a blanket and a stretch of deck. Crewmembers devoured what they could scrounge from the ship's store: chips, cheeseballs, candy bars and soda.

The toilets didn't work. There were no showers to wash off the blood of their shipmates. And there was no way to remove the remains of a dozen sailors.

"Yes, I did know everyone who perished. Some of them were my friends. I was working packages (re-enlistment cases) on several of them. I finally started breaking down yesterday and tonight. How do I try to talk these kids into staying in the Navy after this?"-- Huber.

For two days after the attack, the Cole was virtually alone with a relatively small contingent of help, including Marines. The isolation left sailors nervous and paranoid. At the same time, they lived with the thought that there were still trapped bodies to retrieve. "They were almost impossible to get out. The people that were in the engine room, all that was underwater," Hayes said.

The Navy was able to locate five gravely injured or dead sailors immediately after the explosion. By the third day, more ships began arriving in port with divers and heavy equipment to extract the remains of the dead.

Each time a body was found, all hands were called topside. Sailors draped American flags around the bodies and the crew saluted.

Kudrik was uncomfortable not knowing the names of the sailors being carried off the ship. She tried to figure out who had died based on the shipmates who escorted their bodies.

The Cole's crew repeated the grim ceremony 13 times. Later, they hugged one another, cried and wished it were all a dream.

On the fifth day, the remains of the final trapped sailor were removed. "When the last body left, I was sad for my shipmates, sad for their families," Washak said. "And in the same breath, I was thankful that it could have been me in one of those bags. I thought about my family and what they would be going through had that been me." Despite their ordeal, few sailors who escaped injury asked to be taken away from the scene of their misery. The Cole's sailors were determined to stay with their ruptured ship and keep her afloat. Over the next two weeks, many bore marks -- lips swollen from the sun, bodies deprived of sleep and the most meager creature comforts -- that served as reminders of their deeds.

The crewmembers were finally flown home after the Norwegian salvage ship Blue Marlin arrived to transport the destroyer back to the United States.

For Freeman, who was sent home early because of his wounds, peace would not come until his shipmates returned:

"I thought about those people every day. They had to stay there every day with the bodies still trapped. Not feeling safe. Wondering if they were going to live or they were going to die."

Epilogue: A chartered DC-10 carrying 215 sailors from the USS Cole touched down at Norfolk Naval Station at 12:59 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 3. Teresa Washak and her sons Jonathan and Joshua stood in a crowd of several hundred. Her husband, John, had taken 50 mg of Benadryl so that he could sleep on the plane.

Walking out into the bright November sunlight, a sailor standing next to Washak said, "It sounded like the Beatles had arrived!"

Christina Huber's family, standing near an American flag three stories tall, held up a huge sign.

It proclaimed: "Welcome Home!"

Yemen 'charges' USS Cole suspects

The Cole taken home on a floating dry dock

Reports from Yemen say six people have been charged with complicity in the suicide bomb attack on the American destroyer USS Cole, which killed 17 seamen as the ship lay at anchor in Aden harbour.

There has been no official statement, but the reports quote official sources as saying the six - who are all from the Yemeni city of Lahij - are likely to appear in court next month.

Yemeni authorities have detained a number of people since the 12 October attack in the southern port city, which almost sunk the destroyer.

One report says the six suspects all fought as mujahedeen in Afghanistan.

Two are accused of involvement in organising the attack, while the others are described as junior employees in the Lahij civil records office who are accused of having abetted the perpetrators and helped them obtain forged identity cards.

Washington says it believes the attack was instigated by, among others, the Saudi fugitive Osama bin Laden, who now lives in Afghanistan, under the protection of the Taleban Government.

Cole Attack Rooted in Afghan War

Yemenis watch as the crippled USS Cole is towed away. (AP)

Special Report

- Attack on the USS Cole

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By Karl Vick

Washington Post Foreign Service

Sunday, December 3, 2000; Page A31

ADEN, Yemen -- The last time the mujaheddin made this much trouble in Aden, they burned the beer factory to the ground. It was 1994, years before a pair of extremists killed themselves and 17 American sailors aboard the USS Cole on Oct. 12.

South Yemen, long ruled by communists, had recently united with conservative North Yemen, but now the communists were trying to secede. As government troops from the north fought their way south, they were joined by bands of battle-hardened, fundamentalist guerrillas--veterans of the war against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. These mujaheddin regarded the Yemeni communists as no better than their old Soviet enemies. And when the Afghan veterans finally swarmed into the humid streets of this city, they formed the leading edge of what would be a righteous sword.

"First, they broke every bottle of beer," said Mohamed Abdullah. As the mujaheddin imposed their rule in following weeks, Christmas was canceled, the brewery blazed and couples strolling on the beach were interrogated about their relationships.

"They fired in the streets, beat you if you didn't fast at Ramadan," Abdullah recalled from behind the counter at a local Internet cafe. "Many stupid things. They had their own militia. They had guns. Very strong fighters, sir."

As FBI, CIA and Yemeni investigators probe the Cole bombing, Aden is once again focused on veterans of the Afghan war. Yemeni investigators who have unraveled numerous local strands in the plot against the Cole say both men who steered a skiff laden with plastic explosives into the side of the refueling warship were likely Yemeni--and certainly veterans of Afghanistan.

That bit of biography is one of the few details authorities will reveal about the Cole probe, except to say the conspiracy against the U.S. guided missile destroyer reaches beyond this strategically important country at the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula. But the nugget speaks volumes to those who have followed a decade of attacks from the crucible of Islamic militancy that was Afghanistan in the 1980s. Once again, holy warriors hailed by President Ronald Reagan as "freedom fighters" when they fought Soviet troops have turned up to attack their former sponsors.

Yemeni and U.S. sources with knowledge of the Cole investigation say the plot has strong parallels to--and at least one name in common with--the 1998 suicide bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. A U.S. indictment charges that those operations were ordered by exiled Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden, the Afghanistan veteran who heads the FBI's Most Wanted List.

The mujaheddin fought the Soviet Union effectively in Afghanistan with the blessing of the United States, which helped fund and train them. When that war was won, an unknown number--perhaps thousands--exploited Yemen's loose entry requirements to flock to a country that, with its landscape of craggy brown mountains looming over timeless rural enclaves, "looks just like Afghanistan," as one Yemeni put it.

But the resemblance, like the immigrant veterans, is no longer welcome. The Yemeni government, which regarded the mujaheddin as useful when the country still had communists to fight, has found them something else altogether in a unified country that President Ali Abdallah Salih wants to be friendly with the United States.

Salih's strategy, which after 1998 brought U.S. warships to Aden under a coveted refueling contract, has won popular approval in this hospitable land of 16 million. But it was a red flag to Islamic extremists, who saw a new enemy in the United States, which established military bases in Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region after the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

So it was that four years before the Cole attack, Salih was encouraging non-Yemeni veterans of the Afghan war to find somewhere else to go, recalled Abdul Barri Atwan, editor of the London-based Arabic language daily Al-Quds. Some left for Sudan or



Afghanistan, countries the State Department accuses of sheltering terrorists. Others, who failed to take the hint, found themselves deported to such countries as Egypt or Saudi Arabia.

Those who remained were for the most part Yemenis. "You can't deport Yemenis," Atwan said. "They were home."

It was a home many had not seen since childhood, when Yemen was divided in two. The northern half of what once appeared on maps as Arabia Felix, or Fortunate Arabia, is a land of steep ridges separated by fertile valleys and dotted with villages that seem to rise out of the rock. Women shroud themselves in black. Men sport outsize ceremonial daggers, AK-47 assault rifles and an independent air.

In the south, a similar culture was tempered by a desert climate and the British colonial legacy. The colony itself was confined to Aden, whose sheltered deep-water port provided a way station for the empire. But treaties with tribal chiefs in the hinterlands defined the entire south as a protectorate, effectively bisecting the country. "Yemen as a modern state is less than 40 years old," said Prime Minister Abdel-Karim Ali Iryani, explaining the limited reach of central authority in a country where large sections remain under tribal leaders' control.

In a broad sense, the events of Oct. 12 were set in motion on Nov. 30, 1967, the day the British gave up Aden. The socialists who took their place established the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, the only communist state in the Arab world. Its regime confiscated private property and jailed dissenters, forcing hundreds of thousands of residents to flee.

"I think as much as 50 percent left," said Mohamed Salih, an Aden butcher whose family took up residence in Saudi Arabia.

Thus, when Arab states mounted a holy war against Soviet forces in Afghanistan, Yemeni exiles were among the first to answer the call. "The Americans pushed us to," said Saif, an Afghanistan veteran who asked that his full name not be published.

"America used religious sentiments to mobilize people."

In Afghanistan, Saif said he met plenty of Yemenis--many from the south--who, like him, were happy to commit to a just cause. After the Soviet Union withdrew and the Yemenis returned home, he said, almost all settled down to find jobs and start families, as he did. By then the Soviet collapse had stranded the Marxist government in South Yemen, and in 1990 it agreed to join the north to form one country.

"The Yemeni are not as violent as people think," Saif said, his cheek bulging with khat, the mildly narcotic leaves Yemeni men chew for hours a day. Tucked under his traditional woven belt were, from right to left, a 9mm pistol, a dagger and a pager. Saif echoed Yemeni officials by denying that Afghanistan veterans had established any sort of underground network in Yemen, and certainly not one answering to bin Laden. In fact, of the six Yemenis held as accomplices in the Cole attack, none fought in Afghanistan, according to Yemeni and U.S. officials.

But the officials acknowledge that the suspects, who allegedly helped adapt the boat for explosives or sheltered the technicians who assembled the bomb and detonator, were locals. Yemeni officials said they apparently absorbed their militancy from the Afghan veterans who helped defeat the communist secession in 1994.

The remnants of that force linger in such places as Lahij, a market town 15 miles north of Aden. There, militants chased down and beat Bader Salmin Basunaid, a lawyer and human rights activist, because he defended a man accused of drinking beer. And it was there that at least one of the suicide bombers went to obtain false identification papers.

Officials say it is unclear whether the clerk who supplied the false identity, and is now in custody, was in on the plot against the Cole or merely inclined to help a fellow Islamic militant. But it is widely acknowledged that he was given his official position as part of an effort by the government to employ former militants and thus draw them from extremism into mainstream society.

U.S. officials say Yemen seems sincere in its efforts to overcome its reputation as a safe haven for terrorists. Salih's government has embraced U.S. initiatives to train border guards and supply boats to patrol the country's frontiers. And at the airport in Sanaa, the capital, a U.S. official said, immigration officers turn away Islamic radicals trying to enter the country under vague circumstances.

But when it came to militants who were already in Yemen, the government opted to draw them as close as possible, according to officials, analysts and diplomats. The strategy was to try to keep potential troublemakers in the government's fold, rather than risk having them run around loose in a country with fewer than one police officer for every 100,000 people.

"We give them a job, we give them a stake, we give them enough money to marry and have kids," said one diplomat, explaining the government's thinking. "The alternative is to have these people outside the government, getting all their money from Islamists."

The policy caused questions to be raised about the Lahij clerk's office and also put a fundamentalist known as Abu Ammar into the town's police department. In the village of Mudiyah, Basunaid said, a former member of the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army, the fundamentalist group responsible for the 1998 kidnapping of 16 Western tourists and the deaths of four, was named commissioner of police.

"You know, some of these Islamists, what they want is money," said Thah Ghanem, governor of Aden province. "You can control them if you have money. But, yes, some extremists, they don't want money. They just want to act on their beliefs."

Friday December 1 5:22 PM ET

Navy Estimate To Repair Cole: \$240M

By ROBERT BURNS, AP Military Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Navy now believes it will cost about \$240 million to repair and refit the USS Cole, the guided missile destroyer damaged by a terrorist bomb in Yemen on Oct. 12, killing 17 sailors.

A Navy official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Friday that Congress has been informed that repair of the holed midsection of the Cole will cost \$150 million to \$170 million, and associated costs such as replacing damaged weapons, equipment and supplies will add another \$70 million.

Shortly after the attack the Navy told Congress it thought repair costs would run about \$150 million. It did not offer an estimate then of the cost to replace equipment and weapons.

The Cole cost about \$1 billion when it was built in 1995.

The Cole, which stayed afloat in Aden harbor after the attack but was unable to move on its own, is being transported back to the United States aboard a Norwegian-owned heavy-lift ship, the Blue Marlin. Officials said the ship is to arrive at Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Miss., in about 10 days. The repair work at Ingalls should take about one year.

The FBI is investigating who was behind the attack, and the Navy is looking into the conduct of the ship's crew and officers.

Prosecution could get USS Cole bombing case this weekend

The USS Cole in Aden, Yemen, on October 20

December 1, 2000

Web posted at: 2:37 p.m. EST (1937 GMT)

ADEN, Yemen (CNN) -- The case against six suspects in the bombing of the USS Cole may go to the prosecution in Yemen this weekend, Yemeni officials told CNN, although any trials in the case likely won't begin until early next year.

The suspects are being held in the Yemeni port of Aden in connection with the October 12 suicide attack on the Navy destroyer, in which 17 U.S. sailors were killed and 39 injured.

Prosecutors will consider the case against the suspects and decide whether to bring formal charges against them, the officials said.

#### GALLERY

Images of Cole being loaded onto transport ship

Photographs give closeup view of Cole damage

#### INTERACTIVE

Timeline: The attack on the USS Cole

#### MESSAGE BOARD

USS Cole attack

If the suspects are brought to trial, it would probably begin in January, after the conclusion of Ramadan, Islam's holiest month, which began this week.

Yemeni officials said U.S. investigators want to delay the trial until the investigation into the bombing is finished. Yemeni law allows a trial to begin as soon as enough evidence is collected, a Yemeni government official said.

U.S. and Yemeni officials signed an agreement on Wednesday that will allow U.S. investigators to submit questions during interviews with suspects and witnesses. Until now, U.S. investigators have not been allowed to play a role in those interviews.

Repair bill goes up

In another development, the Navy has raised its estimate of how much it will cost to repair the Cole.

The tab is now \$240 million, according to a revised estimate sent by the Navy to Congress this week, Navy officials said.

The original estimate of \$150-\$170 million only covered the rebuilding of the ship's superstructure, and did not account for the cost of replacing equipment, supplies and weapons damaged in the bombing, and water damage to the ship, the officials said. The Cole is being transported to Mississippi for repairs, and is expected to arrive in about a week.

CNN Producer Rym Brahimi and CNN Military Affairs Correspondent Jamie McIntyre contributed to this report.

U.S., Yemen Sign Pact on Cole Probe

\_\_\_\_\_Special Report\_\_\_\_\_

- USS Cole Attack

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By David A. Vise and Dan Eggen

Washington Post Staff Writers

Thursday, November 30, 2000; Page A20

U.S. and Yemeni officials signed an agreement yesterday that will enable FBI agents to observe the questioning of suspects and witnesses in the investigation of last month's bombing of the USS Cole, Clinton administration officials said.

The new rules give U.S. law enforcement officials better prospects of seeking criminal charges against terrorists and others who played a role in the suicide attack, which killed 17 sailors as the Cole refueled in the Yemeni port of Aden.

The deal will permit FBI agents to submit follow-up questions to Yemeni authorities, who in turn may pose the questions to suspects, and allows agents to testify in U.S. courts about the conditions under which information was obtained.

The "Guidelines for Joint Investigation" document was signed in Aden by Ambassador Barbara K. Bodine for the United States, and by Rashid Ahmed Al-Gholom, the deputy secretary of interior for police affairs, on behalf of Yemen.

"These arrangements will build upon the excellent cooperation that we've already had, that's already been developed between U.S. and Yemeni investigators," said State Department spokesman Richard Boucher. "It lays out ways of proceeding--access to

information and evidence and potential witnesses--that meet the needs of both sides in terms of being able to conduct their investigations in a manner that's consistent with their legal principles."

Yemeni authorities may file charges soon against some suspects in the case, in part as a legal maneuver to permit continued detention, U.S. officials said. While numerous terrorist cells may have played a role in the carefully planned attack, the operating theory among U.S. law enforcement officials remains that Saudi fugitive Osama bin Laden, who lives in Afghanistan under the protection of the ruling Taliban militia, ultimately was responsible for the blast.

Vincent M. Cannistraro, a former CIA director of counterterrorism operations, said the lack of direct interrogation would make it difficult for investigators to build a case that would hold up in American courts. But Robert M. Blitzer, former head of the FBI's domestic terrorism unit, said the agreement with the Yemenis reflects progress. "Even though bureau agents won't be able to directly question them, they'll be sitting right there," Blitzer said. "I'm sure they'll have the opportunity to raise any question they want and listen to the answers. . . . It's a little artificial, but it appears to be a good solution."

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Wednesday November 29 1:50 PM ET

U.S., Yemen Agree on Probe Into USS Cole Bombing

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The United States said on Wednesday it had signed an agreement with Yemen on how to proceed with investigating the bombing of a U.S. warship in Aden, following reports of U.S. demands for more access.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher told a news conference the agreement ``meets the need of both sides in terms of being able to conduct their investigations in a manner that is consistent with their legal principles."

The agreement, signed in Aden on Wednesday morning by the U.S. ambassador and a Yemeni Interior Ministry official, ``lays out ways for proceeding, access to information and evidence and potential witnesses," Boucher said.

He declined to give further details, or say whether the Yemenis were now allowing U.S. investigators sent to probe the Oct. 12 attack on the USS Cole to attend interviews with suspects, as they had requested.

That was one of a number of concerns reported by U.S. media as Yemeni authorities weighed their own legal restrictions and need to preserve their security with efforts to cooperate with U.S. demands for full involvement in the probe.

Boucher and other spokesmen have repeatedly praised cooperation in public, although there have been signs of impatience in Washington.

The agreement ``sets out the modalities, the arrangements for cooperation between the United States and Yemeni investigators as we proceed with the investigation into the bombing of the USS Cole," Boucher said.

``These arrangements will build on the excellent cooperation we have already had ... between U.S. and Yemeni investigators," he added.

Yemeni Prime Minister Abdul-Karim al-Iryani said over the weekend investigators had concluded that Saudi exile Osama bin Laden was at least indirectly involved in the bombing that killed 17 sailors, but had yet to find hard evidence.

``Investigations into the USS Cole blast have revealed that the two men who carried out the operation were Saudis of Yemeni origin," the London-based Arabic daily Asharq-al Awsat quoted him as saying.

``Investigators also found that Osama bin Laden, who is also of Yemeni origin, was also involved in the attack on the destroyer, even if indirectly. But the investigation has not found evidence of this yet," Iryani told the newspaper.

Defense Secretary William Cohen said earlier this month it had not been determined whether the attackers had ties to bin Laden, who is accused by the United States of masterminding the 1998 attacks on two U.S. embassies in Africa.

Bin Laden, who reportedly lives in Afghanistan, has denied involvement.

Wednesday November 29 3:53 PM ET

Yemeni Justice System Questioned

By DONNA BRYSON, Associated Press Writer

SAN'A, Yemen (AP) - Suspects in the bombing of the USS Cole likely will not go on trial for four weeks, and when they do, attention will focus on Yemen's justice system - a system branded anything but just.

The State Department, in its most recent review of Yemeni justice, described security forces torturing suspects to extract confessions, defendants denied lawyers and judges swayed by bribes or government pressure.

``The two main issues are lack of training and lack of independence," Jamal Adimi, a Yemeni lawyer who seeks to reform the legal system, said Wednesday. ``We have good laws, but they are not implemented because the judges are not strong enough." The Yemeni government has acknowledged the problems. Reforms announced in 1997 included publishing a judicial code of ethics. Last year, the government dismissed several judges accused of corruption or incompetence, and it has accepted World Bank help in training judges.

But observers say the reforms have not yet had time to produce results. The evidence must not only be admissible in a Yemeni court but also must hold up in U.S.

proceedings, a U.S. official in San'a said.

Such concerns are part of the reason U.S. investigators want to at least be present at the interrogations of suspects in the deadly attack on the Cole. The Yemeni government has yet to grant the United States such access, though U.S. investigators have been given transcripts of interrogations and allowed to take physical evidence for analysis.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the United States and Yemen agreed Wednesday on how the inquiry would be carried out. He gave no details, except to say the accord calls for cooperation between U.S. and Yemeni investigators. It was signed in Aden by U.S. Ambassador Barbara Bodine and a Yemeni official, Boucher said.

The attack on the Cole occurred Oct. 12, when two suicide bombers steered a small boat laden with explosives alongside the U.S. warship and detonated it in Aden harbor at Yemen's southern tip. Seventeen U.S. sailors were killed and 39 others injured.

A Yemeni source close to the investigation said this week that Yemeni police had concluded their inquiry and would recommend prosecutors bring charges against at least two suspects on charges of carrying out the attack, threatening state security, forming an armed gang and possessing explosives.

It was not clear when charges, some of which carry the death penalty, would be filed. The U.S. official in Yemen - who spoke on condition of anonymity - said a trial was not expected before Ramadan ends in late December.

If information gleaned from proceedings in Yemen were someday to be used in a U.S. prosecution, ``you have to have integrity in the chain of evidence - that means the evidence has to be gathered by U.S. law enforcement," Vincent Cannistraro, former CIA chief of counterterrorism, said in a telephone interview.

He said information gleaned from the Yemeni proceedings, particularly physical evidence such as bomb fragments and tissue samples that could lead to DNA identification of the suicide bombers, could provide leads for U.S. investigators who believe a broad, international conspiracy is behind the attack on the Cole. But information won't be evidence, he said.

A Yemeni trial ``won't help the U.S. criminal prosecution at all, because none of the evidence is up to the standards of a U.S. court," Cannistraro said.

The U.S. official in San'a said U.S. concerns could be met but would not elaborate on how that would be accomplished.

The American official said it was apparent Yemeni officials were aware of the attention focused on them and were working to ensure that no charges of judicial or prosecutorial impropriety would be leveled in the Cole case. The official expressed the hope that the Yemenis would be as scrupulous as possible.

Yemeni authorities have been accused of using brutal tactics and ignoring due process.

In August 1999, eight Britons and two Algerians - who prosecutors said were linked to Islamic radicals - were convicted of forming an armed gang with the aim of plotting terrorist acts in Yemen. Four of the Britons also were found guilty of plotting to bomb the British consulate, an Anglican church and a Swiss-owned hotel in Aden. Britain said there was insufficient evidence against the men. In its verdict, the court overruled the defense contention that the defendants confessed after they were tortured. Two of the defendants said they were sexually abused in detention.

Lawyer Adimi, who was on the defense team, said international attention forced Yemeni officials to ensure that the trial was more open than most.

But in the end, he said, the judge did what the government wanted - return convictions. ``And that case was as important as this one."

Pact with Yemen permits U.S. presence at USS Cole interviews

The USS Cole in Aden, Yemen, on October 20, 2000

November 29, 2000

Web posted at: 12:40 p.m. EST (1740 GMT)

From CNN State Department Correspondent Andrea Koppel

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- After weeks of negotiation, the Clinton administration on Wednesday authorized its envoy in Yemen to sign an agreement to allow U.S. presence at all future interviews in the investigation of the USS Cole bombing. Yemen, conducting the investigation into the blast that killed 17 U.S. sailors, had barred U.S. investigators from interviews with suspects and witnesses. But according to the new agreement, a senior U.S. administration official told CNN, the U.S. investigators may attend and submit questions that the Yemenis will then ask the interviewees.

"This removes a significant hurdle in allowing the FBI to proceed with its investigation," said the official, who has intimate knowledge of the ongoing query.

#### GALLERY

Images of Cole being loaded onto transport ship

Photographs give closeup view of Cole damage

## INTERACTIVE

Timeline: The attack on the USS Cole

## MESSAGE BOARD

USS Cole attack

Two suicide bombers pulled alongside the destroyer on October 12 in a small boat laden with explosives. The subsequent explosion wounded 39 sailors in addition to the 17 killed.

The administration official added that the United States is "extremely pleased" with the agreement and that final instructions were sent to U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Barbara Bodine "to sign it."

The United States "looks forward to its rapid implementation," the official said. Yemeni officials had arrested at least six people in connection with the investigation as of November 26, and were expected to detain more suspects. Trials are not likely to begin until January, after the Islamic holy month of Ramadan has passed.

Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon said on Tuesday that the crippled USS Cole would arrive, from Yemen, in Pascagoula, Mississippi, during the second week of December. Nov. 29 - American and Yemeni officials have reached an agreement that will allow FBI officials to participate more in the investigation of the deadly attack on the USS Cole.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said in a briefing that the United States and Yemen signed a document called the Guidelines for Joint Investigation.

"It sets out the modalities, the arrangements for cooperation between the United States and Yemeni investigators, as we proceed with the investigation into the bombing of the USS Cole," he said.

"These arrangements will build upon the excellent cooperation that we've already had, that's already been developed between U.S. and Yemeni investigators," Boucher said

But Yemeni officials, said to be reacting to what they perceive as American arrogance, have been described as uncooperative toward FBI efforts to investigate the bombing.

Since shortly after the bombing, American investigators have been operating from warships off the coast of Yemen, and visiting Aden, the city nearest the bombing, only as needed.

Earlier this month, Yemen's government refused to allow any U.S. Navy helicopters to land on its soil, leaving American investigators stranded.

Boucher refused to go into detail about the document, saying it was not public, and involves the arrangements for criminal investigation.

Sources have told ABCNEWS that FBI investigators would be allowed to attend Yemeni questioning of witnesses and suspects. They will not be able to address the



suspects, but they will be able to write down follow-up questions for the Yemenis to ask.

#### Plenty of Ground to Cover

Seventeen U.S. sailors were killed and 39 more injured on Oct. 12, when two suicide bombers steered a small boat laden with explosives alongside the Cole and detonated it while the destroyer was refueling.

U.S. and Yemeni officials have said the attack appeared to be a carefully planned, well-financed operation, and the bomb materials were expertly prepared.

American officials have said they believe the operation was carried out by a network of small cells of two or three people, probably from one or more anti-American Islamist organization, including Yemen's Islamic Jihad, Egypt's al-Gamaa al-Islamiya and followers of Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden.

Bin Laden, an exiled Saudi millionaire, lives in Afghanistan. U.S. officials believe he ordered the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed 224 people.

Meanwhile, Yemeni investigators are preparing to charge at least two people in the attack on the Cole, a source said Sunday.

Charges are expected to be filed as soon as this week against the two suspects, the source said. They could be sentenced to death if convicted.

But any charges are unlikely to mean the end of the probe: U.S. investigators suspect an international conspiracy was behind the bombing.

ABCNEWS' investigative unit contributed to this report.

At least 6 arrested in Cole investigation, Yemeni official says

The USS Cole when it was in Aden, Yemen

November 26, 2000

Web posted at: 4:46 p.m. EST (2146 GMT)

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- Yemeni authorities have arrested at least six people -- and are expected to detain more suspects -- in connection with the USS Cole blast in October, a senior Yemeni official said.

Three other suspects, probably of Yemeni origin, are believed to be in Saudi Arabia, the source said.

Meanwhile, local media have reported the trial in Yemen of the suspects may be delayed due to Ramadan, the Islamic holy month that begins Monday.

Yemen's courts will be adjourned for the month of Ramadan, the Yemen Observer newspaper reported. However, another senior Yemeni official told CNN that prosecutors were expected to review the case during the month, and prepare for a trial expected to begin in January.

#### GALLERY

Images of Cole being loaded onto transport ship

Photographs give closeup view of Cole damage

## INTERACTIVE

Timeline: The attack on the USS Cole

## ALSO

\* Report: FBI testing remains from USS Cole blast

## MESSAGE BOARD

USS Cole attack

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, is a time when Muslims fast from sunrise to sundown and concentrate on their faith. During this time, Muslims are not allowed to eat or drink in the daytime, and smoking and sex are forbidden.

The USS Cole was attacked on October 12 while docked in the Port of Aden, Yemen. The blast killed 17 sailors and injured 39. Investigators believe two suicide bombers detonated a small boat filled with explosives alongside the Cole.

The Yemen Observer also reported that U.S. officials in Washington were about to give final approval to a memorandum of understanding signed with Yemen that would allow FBI agents to monitor Yemeni officials' interrogation of blast suspects and witnesses.

The document is expected to be signed by U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Barbara Bodine and Yemeni Deputy Minister of Interior Rashid Jerhoom.

Yemeni Prime Minister Dr. Abdel-Karim Ali Iryani told CNN last week that "legal intricacies" had caused the weeks-long delay in finalizing the memorandum.

Meanwhile, U.S. officials are conducting DNA tests on human remains found at the explosion site, and Yemeni intelligence agencies are expected to take DNA samples from family members of the suspected bombers, a source close to the investigation told the Observer.

The officials are hoping the tests will prove the bombers' identities and make connections with other terrorist attacks.

From CNN Researcher Susan Bassal and CNN State Department Correspondent Andrea Koppel.

Sunday November 26 12:26 PM ET

Two May Be Charged for Cole Bombing

By AHMED AL-HAJ, Associated Press Writer

ADEN, Yemen (AP) - Yemeni investigators are ready to charge at least two people in the apparent terrorist attack on the USS Cole, a source said Sunday, six weeks after an explosion tore through the warship as it sat in Aden's harbor.

Charges are expected to be filed as soon as this week against the two suspects, the source said. They could be sentenced to death if convicted.

But any charges are unlikely to mean the end of the probe: U.S. investigators suspect an international conspiracy was behind the bombing.

Seventeen U.S. sailors were killed and 39 more injured on Oct. 12, when two suicide bombers steered a small boat laden with explosives alongside the Cole and detonated it while the destroyer was refueling. U.S. and Yemeni officials have said the attack appeared to be a carefully planned, well-financed operation, and the bomb materials were expertly prepared.

The Yemeni source close to the investigation would not identify the two men he described as main suspects about to be charged. But last week, other sources said authorities had detained six Yemeni men they believe were key accomplices - including one who was allegedly in charge of the operation in Yemen.

American officials have said they believe the operation was carried out by a network of small cells of two or three people, probably from one or more anti-American Islamist organizations, including Yemen's Islamic Jihad, Egypt's al-Gamaa al-Islamiya and Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden's followers.

Bin Laden, an exiled Saudi millionaire, lives in Afghanistan. U.S. officials believe he ordered the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed 224 people.

Officials have suggested that the Cole attackers were from various Arab countries, including Yemen, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and that they may be operating from both Afghanistan and Yemen.

A Yemeni security official, also speaking on condition of anonymity Sunday, said investigations revealed that an Egyptian suspect whom he identified only as Hamdi fled Yemen a month before the bombing along with five others, including a Libyan man. He said all six men had links to Islamic Jihad, but he did not elaborate further. The first Yemeni source said the charges planned against at least two suspects included carrying out the attack, threatening state security, forming an armed gang and possessing explosives.

Conviction on all four charges would carry a minimum sentence of 10 years in prison, the source said, adding that the suspects could be executed if convicted of threatening state security or carrying out the bombings. Most executions in Yemen are by firing squad and are performed in public to set an example.

The prosecution will review the case by Tuesday before filing charges, the source said on condition of anonymity. The prosecutor declined to comment Sunday.

In Yemen, a court generally sets a trial date within a few days of charges being filed. That date usually is within a week. According to Yemeni law, the trial will take place in Aden, where the attack took place, the source said.

In the weeks after the attack, Yemeni investigators rounded up scores of people for questioning, from known Islamic fundamentalists to people who lived near any of the Aden buildings the bombers used as staging grounds. Yemeni authorities also have detained lower- and midlevel Yemeni security officials - an embarrassing acknowledgment that some within their government sympathize with anti-American groups.

Terrorism expert Frank Cilluffo said in a recent interview that in preparing to charge their own citizens, the Yemenis have showed they are serious about the investigation. But tracing the plot from Yemen will be difficult because those involved were reportedly organized into small, autonomous cells and may be unable to provide investigators much information about the other plotters.

``You may have one person doing the bidding of another without even knowing it," said Cilluffo, director of the terrorism task force at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Saturday November 25 8:02 AM ET

## Yemen Links Bin Laden to Cole Bombing, Seeks Proof

DUBAI (Reuters) - Yemen's Prime Minister said investigators have concluded that Saudi exile Osama bin Laden was at least indirectly involved in the bombing of the U.S. warship Cole that killed 17 sailors, but have yet to find hard evidence.

"Investigations into the USS Cole blast have revealed that the two men who carried out the operation were Saudis of Yemeni origin," the London-based Arabic daily Asharq-al Awsat quoted Prime Minister Abdul-Karim al-Iryani as saying.

"Investigators also found that Osama bin Laden, who is also of Yemeni origin, was also involved in the attack on the destroyer, even if indirectly. But the investigation has not found evidence of this yet," Iryani told the newspaper.

The remarks were carried in the newspaper's Friday edition, obtained in Dubai on Saturday.

Defense Secretary William Cohen said last week it had not been determined whether the attackers of the Cole had ties to bin Laden, accused by the United States of masterminding the 1998 attacks on two U.S. embassies in Africa. Bin Laden, who reportedly lives in Afghanistan, has denied involvement.

Witnesses saw two men carry out the apparent suicide bombing with a small boat that exploded alongside the Cole as it refueled in Yemen's southern port of Aden last month.

Saudi Arabia's media on Saturday quoted a Saudi Foreign Ministry source as saying there was no evidence that the two were Saudi nationals.

"We have to await the outcome of further investigations, for this is not the first time allegations of this type are made by certain Yemeni circles," the source was quoted as saying.

USS Cole survivor finds welcome refuge at Mom's house  
11/24/2000

By Terri Williams / The Dallas Morning News

MESQUITE - Just call Christopher Hagad an adrenalin junkie.

As a teen, he got involved in a number of activities that quickened the pulse.

Chris Hamilton / DMN

Christopher Hagad of Mesquite is on a convalescent leave.

He joined the Police Explorers, a group that allowed boys and girls to shadow police. And he was a member of the Civil Air Patrol in Mesquite, a group that exposes young people to the art of flying.

And one day, he'd like to learn to sky dive, as well as scuba dive in the Indian Ocean among whale sharks.

But there was one job that eluded him: becoming a pilot.

"I'm blind," Mr. Hagad said with a laugh, explaining his nearsightedness.

So it was no surprise that Mr. Hagad, 21, wanted to find adventure by enlisting in the U.S. Navy. But he never expected that his ship, the USS Cole, would be the target of a terrorist explosion.

That was too much for this self-proclaimed risk seeker.

"It was something we were ready for, but we didn't expect it to happen," he said.

Now, Mr. Hagad is on a convalescent leave for a month. He is a fire controlman who handles radar, missiles and computer displays, he said. He'll return to Norfolk, Va., by December. His ship is undergoing repairs in Pascagoula, Miss., and he and crew will return to aid in its restoration in phases, he said.

Since he has been on leave, the Ralph H. Poteet High School graduate has been a celebrity of sorts. He's spoken at his sister's school, Agnew Middle. He was also interviewed during halftime at a football game at Poteet.

And for now, his mother's house on Wildflower Lane is a welcome refuge for the young seaman.

At the front door, visitors are welcomed by two American flags that are neatly appointed in two pots spilling over with vibrant, yellow flowers. Inside, there are scented candles nestled on bookshelves and coffee tables. There are blankets draped on chairs and there are photos of fellow seamen and relatives on several tables around the living room.

A time to heal

For Mr. Hagad, this is his safe harbor until he is required to return to duty.

But his overseas experience wasn't easy for his relatives.

His mother, Charito Hagad, and his three siblings, Charles, 18, Curtis, 16, and Christina, 13, got word of the explosion from the television set. Ms. Hagad is divorced from Chris Hagad's father, Carlos, who works in Austin.

When Ms. Hagad and her daughter first got word of the explosion, they said they could barely cope. What made the waiting even more unbearable was the fact that the explosion occurred near the mess hall and they knew how much Chris Hagad loves to eat, she said. They also knew that he handled the lines, which helped to anchor the ship, meaning he also could have been hit.

"I was leaving to go to work and my daughter turned on the TV," Ms. Hagad recalled.

"And we just stared at the TV. I just didn't know what to do. I took her to school because it was no use for both of us crying."

His aunt, Dr. Evangeline Cayton, who lives in Dallas, was also worried. She had visited the young sailor just weeks before the explosion when they docked in the Adriatic Sea in the European country of Slovenia, she said.

"I spent the whole time praying and crying," Dr. Cayton said of the time she heard the news from her television set.

Indeed, thousands of miles from Texas in Yemen, Mr. Hagad's life completely changed in those brief minutes.

Explosion in Yemen

On Oct. 12, an explosion ripped the side of the USS Cole when it was refueling in Yemen. The ship, carrying 330 crewmembers, left Norfolk on June 21 for a six-month tour in the Persian Gulf. Seventeen sailors, including Tim Gauna of Rice, were killed and 39 sailors injured.

Mr. Hagad describes that day as chaotic.

He said he and his friends were getting ready to walk to the mess hall for lunch when the blast jolted them.

"It kind of felt like one of those psychotic roller coasters that goes up and down," he said of the explosion.

From that point, life moved at a frenetic and surreal pace. One could smell the fear in the air. The power went out with a deadening, definitive thud. The air became thick as the ship lost ventilation, he said. All the alarm panels abruptly shut off.

"We weren't sure if it was safe to go outside the ship because we didn't know if there was someone on the ship," Mr. Hagad said.

Immediately, the seamen were ordered to don resistance hoods and gloves and instructed to move toward the front of the ship, away from the blast. Mr. Hagad worked with other seamen who helped moved the injured and dead to safety. He

recalled loading three seamen on stretchers, one who was a friend who later died, he said. But it wasn't easy maneuvering through the obstacles of disaster.

"It got real tough with the oil and water on the floor and passageways, where everything is narrow," he said.

In the end, Mr. Hagad was one of the lucky ones, a thought that is now just sinking in. When he was aboard the ship, he said he didn't have time to think about his life but instead the safety of his shipmates. Even a day after the blast, he was called to stand on security watch, where thoughts of guilt or sadness could break concentration.

"I just tried not to think about it there," Mr. Hagad said of his watch. "But I have thought about it here."

His demeanor runs contrary to what he describes as his action-seeking personality, but his mother says he is indeed the swashbuckling type. "He loves action," Ms. Hagad said with a laugh.

Looking up

For now, the future is bright for him. He said he feels fortunate because he could have perished like his seamates, such as Mr. Gauna, whom he briefly knew, and the friend he carried on a stretcher. He'd like to eventually become an officer or a Navy Seal. But he's still counting on the day that he'll dive among the whale sharks and scuba dive.

"I have to do something exciting," Mr. Hagad said with a smile. "I have to do something that seems exciting."

Yemen president: Boat used in Cole attack bought in Saudi Arabia

The U.S. Navy destroyer USS Cole is towed from the port city of Aden, Yemen, into open seas on October 29

November 24, 2000

Web posted at: 10:19 a.m. EST (1519 GMT)

SANAA, Yemen (CNN) -- Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh told reporters on Friday that the small boat used in last month's deadly attack on the destroyer USS Cole was purchased in Saudi Arabia. He gave no details.

Two suicide bombers are believed to have sailed the boat filled with explosives to the side of the destroyer and detonated it on October 12, killing 17 U.S. sailors and injuring dozens more.

On Wednesday, Yemeni Prime Minister Abdel Karim al-Iriyani told CNN that one of the bombers had been identified as a Saudi citizen with Yemeni family ties who fought Soviet forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s. He said both suicide bombers were from Yemeni families from the province of Hadhramaut, which borders Saudi Arabia.

#### MESSAGE BOARD

USS Cole attack

The province is also the home of the family of fugitive Saudi Osama bin Laden, an accused terrorist suspected by U.S. officials to have ordered the bombing of the Cole. Officials admit, however, they have no proof of a bin Laden connection to the bombing.

CNN Correspondents Walter Rodgers and David Ensor contributed to this report.

U.S. warships to resume use of Suez Canal for first time since attack on USS Cole

The U.S. Navy destroyer USS Cole is towed from the port city of Aden, Yemen, into open seas by the tug USNS Catawba on October 29

November 22, 2000

Web posted at: 5:00 p.m. EST (2200 GMT)

In this story:

['Routine transits' to resume](#)

[Link to embassy bombings denied](#)

RELATED STORIES, SITES

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- The U.S. Navy will resume use of the Suez Canal for the first time since the USS Cole went through the vital Egyptian waterway days before it was attacked in the port of Aden, Yemen, U.S. defense sources told CNN on Wednesday.

The canal was quietly declared off limits by the Navy after the October 12 attack on the Cole, which killed 17 sailors and injured dozens more. The decision to halt use of the canal was based on "threat assessments" in the aftermath of the bomb attack.

GALLERY

[Images of Cole being loaded onto transport ship](#)

[Photographs give closeup view of Cole damage](#)

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[USS Cole attack](#)

The warship USS Hawes will be the first to complete the transit through the 101-mile canal, on a northbound trek from the Red Sea into the Mediterranean Sea, the sources said on condition of anonymity.

'Routine transits' to resume

U.S. warships will travel through the canal "both north and south" in the coming days, according to one informed official.

The Navy will "once again be conducting routine transits of the Suez Canal in the coming days" said the official, adding that after the guided missile frigate Hawes completes the transit, at least two more ships would make the trip from the Mediterranean Sea into the Red Sea en route to the Persian Gulf.

The decision to resume use of the canal was based on updated intelligence assessments of the threat to U.S. warships there, and on "augmented" or "enhanced" security procedures adopted by U.S. and Egyptian security forces.

Link to embassy bombings denied

Also Wednesday, Yemen's prime minister denied reports in the Yemen Times and The Washington Post that Yemeni investigators had evidence linking the two suspects who died in the attack on the Cole to the 1998 truck bombings of two U.S. embassies in East Africa.

"There is no strong evidence at all or clear evidence. ... I believe that's speculation. It's not yet hard fact," Dr. Abdel-Karim Ali Iryani told CNN.

He did not rule out, however, that U.S. investigators may have found some evidence of a linkage. And he reiterated that Yemeni investigators believe that the attack was an orchestrated act of terrorism. "Our conviction is that this kind of sophisticated work must have had outside assistance," he said.

U.S. officials told CNN the only link so far is that one of the names that has come up in the Cole investigation -- a suspect in the case who has not been apprehended -- is similar to a name that came up during the investigation into the East Africa bombings. One official called the similar names "at best a tenuous connection."

Iryani also confirmed more details on the unfolding investigation into the identities of the two men aboard a small boat that exploded beside the Cole in the attack. "They are of Yemeni origin," he said. "One of them, at least, the one we know, was born in Saudi Arabia and returned to Yemen after reunification."

He also noted that at least one of the men "may have been in the Afghan Mujahadeen" during the 1980s war in Afghanistan and that, at the very least, both men called themselves Mujahadeen.

Six suspects, all of Yemeni origin, have been detained in the last three days according to Iryani.

Iryani also said that Yemen was very close to signing a memorandum of understanding with U.S. law enforcement officials regarding cooperation on the Cole investigation.

He attributed the slowness in signing the memorandum to "legal intricacies." He said, "American laws are quite different than our laws, and therefore our legal experts are trying to find a midway agreement that does not violate Yemeni law but satisfies American requirements."

CNN National Security Producer Chris Plante contributed to this report.

USS Cole Retaliation Possible

\_\_\_\_\_Special Report\_\_\_\_\_



- Attack on the USS Cole

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By Thomas E. Ricks

Washington Post Staff Writer

Wednesday, November 22, 2000; Page A08

U.S. retaliation with cruise missiles or other weapons for last month's attack on the USS Cole remains a possibility, Gen. Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said yesterday.

"That is an option," Shelton, the nation's top military officer, told a small group of reporters at the Pentagon. "Whether or not it would be the option selected would be driven by the circumstances."

He declined to elaborate or say who would be targeted. But even discussing the possibility was a departure from the Pentagon's usual stance of refusing to discuss potential military actions.

After the 1998 bombing of two U.S. embassies in East Africa, the United States blamed exiled Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden and launched cruise missiles to sites it linked to him in Afghanistan and Sudan. But those strikes were widely criticized as ineffective or mistaken. Investigators also have said they suspect bin Laden played a role in the bombing of the Cole, which killed 17 U.S. sailors.

Since the Cole attack, Shelton said, he has had all the regional commanders-in-chiefs--the military "proconsuls" who oversee operations in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and South America--assess their security arrangements and report back to him. But he said that until two Pentagon investigations of the incident are concluded, "it's premature for me to say at what level [of command] . . . we need to take corrective actions." Among the questions that Pentagon officials are investigating are whether the captain of the Cole took the steps warranted by the threats in the area, and whether his superiors adequately warned him about those threats.

Shelton's chat with three reporters yesterday was part of an effort to improve communications with the media. His views may take on additional significance in coming months because he will remain in office until his four-year term expires in

September, providing continuity on national security issues between the old and new administrations.

He devoted most of his comments to next year's Quadrennial Defense Review of force, structure and strategy, and to the related issue of the Pentagon's budget.

Essentially, Shelton said the Pentagon got it wrong in the last quadrennial review, conducted in 1997. Back then, he said, defense officials seeking to retool the military to fit the post-Cold War world didn't understand the strain that would be put on military forces by the activist U.S. strategy of "shape, engage and respond."

Shelton said he endorses that strategy, because the alternative was "to become an isolationist nation and say we're only going to use our military when our vital national interests are threatened." But, he said there aren't enough people in the U.S. military to continue carrying out that mission.

"They're trying to do the strategy and you're killing them in the process," he said.

"The tempo is too high. Their families suffer. Divorce rates go up. Retention starts to go down."

Shelton also wants a bigger defense budget. Even if the Pentagon ultimately persuades Congress to authorize more base closings, he said, that would eventually produce annual savings of less than \$5 billion. That wouldn't be sufficient to pay for the weapons programs currently planned, he said, citing the F-22 fighter, the Joint Strike Fighter and the DD-21 Zumwalt-class ship program, among others.

He confirmed the Joint Chiefs are worried that the expense of building a national missile defense system could undercut their plans for those other weapons purchases.

"The affordability piece is a piece that the chiefs have been worried about," he said.

Shelton said trying to build the system--which the Pentagon says would cost at least \$20 billion and some outsiders say would cost far more--without sharply increasing the Pentagon budget "would be a major challenge for our services."

Cole, Embassy Bombings Linked

\_\_\_\_\_ Special Report \_\_\_\_\_

- Attack on the USS Cole

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By David A. Vise and Karl Vick

Washington Post Staff Writers

Wednesday, November 22, 2000; Page A08

The attack on the USS Cole last month appears to have been orchestrated by terrorists with links to the truck bombings of two U.S. embassies in East Africa in 1998, Clinton administration officials said yesterday.

The FBI is performing DNA tests on some bodily remains to try to confirm the identities of two men who were aboard a small boat that exploded alongside the Cole in a Yemeni harbor on Oct. 12, killing 17 American sailors. Yemeni authorities also are conducting blood tests on people believed to be related to those involved in the attack, sources said.

So far, Yemeni investigators tentatively have identified one of the suspected suicide bombers and have detained scores of people who may have seen, met or helped the bombers.

"There are some interesting links between some of the individuals involved in the Cole and East Africa," a U.S. official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "A name has come up in Aden of someone involved in Nairobi. We found a number of things on the Cole we are taking a look at right now."

The official declined to specify the links or to elaborate on the evidence. American and Yemeni authorities have not claimed that the evidence is sufficient yet to prove that the same terrorist group was behind the bombing of the Cole and the devastating attacks on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, which killed more than 200 people.

But the working hypothesis of U.S. investigators is that Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi exile who lives under the protection of the ruling Taliban militia in Afghanistan, played a central role in both attacks, sources said.

Bin Laden has been indicted in federal court in New York for allegedly plotting the East African bombings. Yemen's prime minister, Abdel-Karim Ali Iryani, has said the perpetrators of the attack on the Cole were veterans of the Arab guerrilla war to drive the Soviet army out of Afghanistan in the 1980s--the same conflict that gave rise to bin Laden's organization, known as al Qaeda or "the Base."

The English-language Yemen Times reported yesterday that among the dozens of potential witnesses who have been detained by Yemeni authorities are six key suspects who may be brought to trial later this year. Some already have confessed to participating in the bombing, and authorities are searching for two others who left the port of Aden soon after the bombing, the newspaper reported.

U.S. officials confirmed two parts of the Yemen Times report--that key suspects have been detained and that authorities are looking for two individuals who disappeared immediately after the bombing. But the Americans said they could not confirm that any confessions have been obtained or that a trial is imminent.

"The Yemenis have a large group in custody, and there are a limited number who are primary suspects . . . we have a deep interest in," a Clinton administration official said. He added, however, that this phase of the probe could last for months. "We are going to let the investigation run its course on the law enforcement and intelligence side of the house," he said.

Bob Blitzer, a former head of counterterrorism at the FBI who is not involved in the investigation but has been following it closely, said he believes the evidence made public so far points to bin Laden's network.

"Osama has perfected a lot of these contacts. They are all over the place," Blitzer said, adding that he expects investigators to find "a lot of people involved in this beyond the two guys who killed themselves. There is a whole infrastructure there."

U.S. officials said the FBI is eager to begin observing the interrogations of key suspects as soon as the United States and Yemen sign a memorandum of understanding on their cooperation. The draft agreement would allow FBI agents to watch through a one-way mirror or closed-circuit television and to submit questions to Yemeni investigators.

In the meantime, Yemeni authorities have been reporting the results of their own interrogations to U.S. law enforcement officials.

"The cooperation is still good," a Clinton administration official said. "I would characterize the lack of the [memorandum of understanding] as an annoyance right now impeding some FBI work, and were it not to be concluded shortly, it could be a larger problem. We are looking to the Yemenis to finalize this and give political blessing to it."

Investigators have said the attack on the USS Cole was carried out with military-type plastic explosives. But people familiar with the probe said they do not have any hard evidence that the bombing was an act of state-sponsored terrorism, and they noted that terrorists with enough money can obtain military-type explosives from a growing number of sources around the world.

The Taliban has denied that bin Laden was involved in the attack. Blitzer predicted that U.S. calls for the Taliban to turn over the Saudi fugitive--who is on the FBI's most-wanted list--would be unsuccessful. He said bin Laden's funding of the Taliban, and his support in driving the Soviets out of Afghanistan, have left him with close ties to Taliban leaders.

"They feel obliged to him," Blitzer said. "I don't see them kicking him out under any circumstances. He is there for the duration."

Vise reported from Washington, Vick from Yemen.

Yemen Detains Possible Accomplices in Cole Bombing

By Karl Vick

Washington Post Foreign Service

Monday, November 20, 2000; Page A12

Authorities have detained some alleged accomplices, all Yemenis, in the Oct. 12 suicide bombing of the USS Cole, a Yemeni security official said today.

The suspects numbered "less than 10" of the more than 50 people still being held for questioning more than a month after the U.S. destroyer was attacked while refueling in Aden harbor, said the official, who asked not to be identified. Seventeen sailors were killed.

The Associated Press quoted Yemeni sources close to the investigation as saying authorities have detained six men they believe were key accomplices, including a main plotter.

Yemen's prime minister said last week that the two men who steered a small boat packed with plastic explosives into the Cole were veterans of the U.S.-backed guerrilla war in Afghanistan. In that 1980s conflict, Islamic fundamentalists were recruited to drive out Soviet forces. Abdel-Karim Ali Iryani said both men were believed to be Yemenis, although only one has been positively identified.

But the security official said today that none of the alleged accomplices is known to have fought in the Afghan conflict, known as a jihad, or holy war. He quoted them as telling Yemeni authorities they supported the attack because "they see nothing wrong with it."

The security official said the two men who piloted the small boat, although natives of Yemen, had moved in and out of the country since the Afghan war. He said they returned to Aden from abroad to carry out an attack on an American warship.

The Yemen Observer newspaper said an attack planned for January failed when TNT packed into the hull of a small boat absorbed seawater and became much heavier, causing the craft to sink after being launched toward another American warship. The security official called the report accurate.

The as-yet-unidentified group of plotters then had an explosives expert reconfigure the charge using relatively lightweight C-4 plastic explosive, according to Yemeni officials. The source of the explosive has not been determined, the security official said.

The Yemen Observer also quoted a well-placed source as saying the fiberglass boat used in the attack on the Cole was brought to Yemen from another country. It said a length of red rope used to tether the skiff to a trailer was blown onto the Cole's deck. Also recovered, according to the Observer, was a pair of glasses matching those one of the bombers wore in a fraudulent photo ID found at one of several safe houses where the attack was prepared.

Yemeni officials said it appears the plot against the Cole employed a network of cells, each with one to three sympathetic operatives who lived quietly in the general population until alerted to act.

The Cole attack has several parallels with the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, including the initial reliance on TNT, outside explosive specialists, sophisticated electrical detonation devices and long-standing local cells. U.S. officials have blamed the 1998 attacks on exiled Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden, whose terrorist network has roots in the Afghan war.

But the Yemeni security official said today that the Aden suspects have not mentioned bin Laden. "They just talk about the United States being 'the enemy,' " the official said.

Remains of 1 Cole bomber found, U.S. officials say

The U.S. Navy destroyer USS Cole is towed from the port city of Aden, Yemen, into open seas by the tug USNS Catawba on October 29

November 17, 2000

Web posted at: 5:51 p.m. EST (2251 GMT)

In this story:

One bomber identified

Experience in Afghanistan

The bin Laden trail

Yemen, U.S. disagreement

RELATED STORIES, SITES

CNN State Department Correspondent Andrea Koppel, State Department Producer Elise Labott, Susan Bassals and Rym Brahimi contributed to this report.

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- Investigators have found remains of at least one person believed to have been on the small boat used to bomb the USS Cole, two U.S. administration officials told CNN on Friday.

Yemeni officials told CNN on Thursday that investigators had retrieved teeth from the ocean. While U.S. officials would not directly confirm that this body part had been found, one official explained, "When they're involved in a bombing they don't completely vaporize ... but tooth or bone matter will be analyzed along with what they [investigators] found in other places."

## GALLERY

Images of Cole being loaded onto transport ship

Photographs give closeup view of Cole damage

## INTERACTIVE

Timeline: The attack on the USS Cole

## MESSAGE BOARD

USS Cole attack

One bomber identified

Other U.S. officials said Yemeni investigators have identified one of the two bombers as a Yemeni, born in the eastern province of Hadramaut. Yemeni officials told U.S. officials they believe the second bomber was of Yemeni origin.

Since the investigation began, investigators have begun analyzing a variety of materials retrieved from the suspects' apartment in Yemen, and from other, unspecified locations.

U.S. officials said they will try to get a DNA sample from the remains and added that the FBI laboratory has not completed its report on forensic work done in recent weeks.

On October 12, suicide bombers in a small, explosives-laden boat approached the Cole while it was refueling in Aden harbor and detonated the explosives, ripping a 60-by-40-foot hole in the steel hull.

The blast killed 17 American sailors and injured 39.

Yemeni officials told CNN on Thursday that some of the suspects in the bombing have been or were in Afghanistan "at one time or another." But they said no direct link has been made to accused terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden, who is living in Afghanistan.

Experience in Afghanistan

"There are a reduced number of trails to follow," said a U.S. official. It is "increasingly unlikely that state sponsors of terrorism are behind this," he said. But this official cautioned that, just as "mystery novels take odd turns, this story too, could change in the last three or four pages."

In addition, he said, the United States is assuming the investigation could be wrapped up within a matter of weeks and that they now have "a fair idea" which direction to move.

The bin Laden trail

U.S. officials said the trail is increasingly leading in the direction of Osama bin Laden. However officials stress other possibilities cannot be eliminated, including at least one Islamic terrorist organization with no known ties to bin Laden.

Meanwhile, the memorandum of understanding, or MOU, that would give U.S. investigators greater access to witnesses and suspects is still awaiting the approval of Yemeni President Saleh, officials say.

U.S. officials said cooperation with the Yemenis is good, but one senior policy maker did draw a line in the sand.

"Were Saleh to further delay [signing this MOU] over the next few days," he said, "then the U.S. might begin to question his commitment to a fully joint investigation." This official did not elaborate on what the U.S. reaction might be.

Yemen, U.S. disagreement

On Thursday, senior Yemeni officials said the investigation into the attack on the USS Cole was almost over. But U.S. officials strongly denied the investigation was close to a conclusion.

"Things are going well," a senior Yemeni official, who asked not to be identified, told CNN. "They are very close to concluding the investigation."

A published report Thursday in Yemen quoted Yemen's interior minister, Hussein Mohammad Arab, as saying, "Yemeni security investigators have gotten closer to concluding the ongoing investigation into the USS Cole bombing."

Hussein was further quoted as saying, "The security forces have arrested a number of people accused in the case. The case will be transferred to the prosecution within the upcoming weeks."

Two senior U.S. officials, however, denied that the investigation is close to a conclusion. They said the United States has no plans to take any suspects to court anytime soon.

"The Yemenis have been trying to wrap up the investigation since it began," one U.S. official said. "That's certainly not the opinion of the FBI."

Also on Thursday, an interior ministry official told CNN a video camera and pager were found in a fourth house involved with the investigation.

According to Yemeni officials, the person living in the house was to be paged with the code "101010," giving him the go-ahead to get to the site and film the explosion. But this person apparently fell asleep, then realized he had failed his mission and ran away, leaving the evidence behind.

A Yemeni official also confirmed that the bomb used in the attack was a mixture of C-4 and TNT.

Cohen: The US will not leave the region

Bahrain, Politics, 11/17/2000

The US defense secretary William Cohen said on Thursday that the US will not leave the region despite the attack which targeted the US warship USS Cole in Yemen on October 12 and resulted in killing 17 American navy personnel.

News reports quoted Cohen saying to journalists upon his arrival in Manama where the American 5th fleet is positioned that he thinks the attack on the ship was behind a plan that aim to push the US away from what he called international obligations and subsequently away from the region, but he stressed that will not happen.

Cohen added that Washington intends to get involved in the international issues and to make the necessary arrangements in order to protect the American forces and to arrest those who are responsible for carrying out the attack against the Americans as well as to bring them before the court.

Replying to a question on whether he seeks during his visit to the region to draw arrangements to use the airspace to launch strikes as soon as the side responsible for attacking warship USS Cole is specified, Cohen said that it is still early to talk about that, adding that the most important is that the US will keep its contacts as a precaution against any crisis.

However, the visit of the US defense secretary comes as his first in a tour during which he will also visit Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates UAE, Oman, Egypt and Israel.

Meantime, Bahrain's crown prince and commander general of Bahrain's defense force Sheikh Salman Bin Hamad al-Khaleifa on Thursday met with Cohen currently in a tour on the Middle East that will cover nine states.

The Gulf News agency said that the two sides stressed during the meeting the need of backing security and stability in the region and to revive peace efforts in the Middle East so as to ensure a just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy resolutions.

The two sides also exchanged views on current conditions and developments on the Gulf and Arab arenas and ways of finding out backing for mechanism of joint cooperation between the two countries especially in the military areas.

Cole Bombers Identified as Veterans of Afghan War

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By Karl Vick

Washington Post Foreign Service

Friday , November 17, 2000 ; Page A30

ADEN, Yemen, Nov. 16 -- The two men who steered a small boat laden with plastic explosives into the USS Cole on Oct. 12 have been identified as veterans of the U.S.-backed guerrilla war to drive Soviet forces from Afghanistan, according to Prime Minister Abdel-Karim Ali Iryani.

One of the two who carried out the attack, which killed 17 U.S. sailors as the Cole refueled in this port, has been identified as a Yemeni born in the eastern province of Hadramaut, Iryani said. He declined to provide further details. But in an interview Wednesday in Sanaa, Yemen's capital, he revealed that authorities have solid leads to the identity of the second bomber, who is also believed to be a native of Yemen.

Iryani said the identity of the first bomber was established by false identification discovered in one of the rented houses around Aden from which the plotters prepared the attack. The name on the ID forms, which included a boating license, was false, but the photo was genuine. And as investigators worked the document trail, which included phone records from the safe houses, the photo was recognized, he said.

The prime minister said he could not elaborate, but noted that Yemeni investigators, who still have dozens of people in custody for questioning, have learned a great deal from relatives of the identified bomber, who lived in the Aden area, as well as from a person "who I think was involved," Iryani said.

"The picture inside the country should be very clear very soon. The question is outside. Who was involved outside the country?"

The description of the bombers as Arab veterans of the 1980s Afghan conflict came as no surprise to investigators. Since the beginning, they have focused on Muslim extremists angered by the U.S. military presence in the Arabian Peninsula, especially Saudi Arabia. U.S. officials have said the attack on the Cole bears the earmarks of followers of Osama bin Laden, the exiled Saudi millionaire--and Afghanistan veteran--who U.S. officials say ordered the 1998 bombing of U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

The prime minister said Yemeni investigators have not linked the Aden bombing to bin Laden, who has Yemeni citizenship by dint of his father's birth in the Hadramaut region. But Iryani said a wider conspiracy seems obvious to Yemeni officials, who believe the Cole attack displayed technological savvy unknown in their country.

A "shaped charge," the bomb was military-style C-4 plastic explosive encased in a metal housing fashioned to maximize the impact on the destroyer, which narrowly stayed afloat with a 40-by-40-foot hole at its waterline. The sophistication suggested the work of an explosives expert such as the one U.S. prosecutors say was dispatched to Nairobi to prepare the truck bomb that two other men drove to the U.S. Embassy on Aug. 7, 1998; when it exploded, the bomb killed more than 200 and injured 5,000.

The expert in that attack, a native of the Comoros Islands who has used a number of aliases but has been identified as Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, remains at large.

Yemeni authorities have been told that at least one explosives expert was brought into Aden after a January attempt against another U.S. warship ended in embarrassment.

In that failed effort, at least one of the men who perished in the Cole attack launched a skiff into the Aden harbor planning to bomb a U.S. vessel refueling there. But the craft began to sink under the weight of the explosives.

Yemeni and U.S. officials differ on whether Cole investigation is almost over

The U.S. Navy destroyer USS Cole is towed from the port city of Aden, Yemen, into open seas by the tug USNS Catawba on October 29

November 17, 2000

Web posted at: 12:23 p.m. EST (1723 GMT)

In this story:

New evidence revealed

U.S.: Investigation over when conspiracy unraveled

#### RELATED STORIES, SITES

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- Senior Yemeni officials say the investigation into the attack on the USS Cole is almost over. But U.S. officials strongly denied the investigation was close to a conclusion.

"Things are going well," a senior Yemeni official, who asked not to be identified, told CNN. "They are very close to concluding the investigation."

#### GALLERY

Images of Cole being loaded onto transport ship

Photographs give closeup view of Cole damage

#### INTERACTIVE

Timeline: The attack on the USS Cole

#### MESSAGE BOARD

USS Cole attack

A published report Thursday in Yemen quoted Yemen's interior minister, Hussein Mohammad Arab, as saying, "Yemeni security investigators have gotten closer to concluding the ongoing investigation into the USS Cole bombing."

Hussein was further quoted as saying, "The security forces have arrested a number of people accused in the case. The case will be transferred to the prosecution within the upcoming weeks."

Yemeni officials said that some of the people involved in the attack have been or were in Afghanistan "at one time or another." But they said that no direct link has been made to accused terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden.

New evidence revealed

Meanwhile, an interior ministry official told CNN a video camera and pager were found in a fourth house involved with the investigation.

According to Yemeni officials, the person living in the house was to be paged with the code "101010," giving him the go-ahead to get to the site and film the explosion. But this person apparently fell asleep, then realized he had failed his mission and ran away, leaving the evidence behind.

A Yemeni official also confirmed that the bomb used in the attack was a mixture of C-4 and TNT.

Yemeni officials did not elaborate on the minister's statement regarding prosecution or to explain whether that legal action would take place in Yemen or in the United States.

U.S.: Investigation over when conspiracy unraveled  
Two senior U.S. officials, however, denied that the investigation is close to a conclusion. They said the United States has no plans to take any suspects to court anytime soon.

"The Yemenis have been trying to wrap up the investigation since it began," one U.S. official said. "That's certainly not the opinion of the FBI."

Another Clinton administration source said the Yemenis are likely talking about the "immediate incident itself," while the United States is interested in "taking it all the way back to the whole conspiracy."

Suicide bombers in a small, explosives-laden boat approached the Cole while it was refueling October 12 in Aden harbor and detonated the explosives, ripping a 60-by-40-foot hole in the steel hull.

The blast killed 17 American sailors and injured 39.

U.S. Cites Cooperation by Yemen

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By David A. Vise

Washington Post Staff Writer

Thursday, November 16, 2000 ; Page A40

U.S. officials, indicating that friction between the FBI and Yemeni authorities has eased, said yesterday that the two sides were now working more closely in the investigation of last month's bombing of the USS Cole.

Yemeni authorities have detained a number of people whom U.S. officials want questioned and arrangements are being made for FBI agents to watch the

interrogations on a "real-time" basis--via television monitor, one-way mirror or other methods, a U.S. official said.

The parties have reached oral agreement on terms of a "memorandum of understanding" that outlines how the questioning and information-sharing will take place. Both sides are due to sign it shortly, sources said. The president of Yemen, who must approve the agreement, recently returned home from a meeting of 56 Islamic states in Qatar.

"We are making good progress," an administration official said. "On an operational level, we are receiving information from the Yemenis and it is a pretty good stream of information. We are reviewing it and doing our own checks and seeing the results of their interrogations and how they stack up with information we have learned from other sources."

Investigators in the probe of the Oct. 12 suicide attack, which killed 17 sailors aboard the Cole as it was refueling in the Yemeni port of Aden, are leaning away from the belief that the bombing was state-sponsored terrorism, sources said.

Instead, the operating theory is that the investigative trail eventually will lead to Osama bin Laden, the wealthy Saudi fugitive who lives in Afghanistan and has been accused of masterminding the 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in East Africa that killed 224 people.

The Taliban militia, which controls Afghanistan, has said bin Laden was not involved in the Cole attack, in which a small boat loaded with military-style explosives pulled alongside the destroyer.

But U.S. officials familiar with the investigation say information is mounting that bin Laden was not only behind the attack, but also played a central role in a plan, which was not carried out, to attack a U.S. warship in Aden around last New Year's Eve.

The agreement to allow FBI agents to watch the questioning of suspects and witnesses would be critical in the event criminal charges were filed in the United States, because agents would be able to testify that the information was obtained through lawful means and without torture, sources said.

Under the agreement, FBI agents will be allowed to submit questions to Yemeni investigators, who will maintain their authority over the probe by reserving the right to decide which questions to ask. But as a practical matter, sources said, the new level of cooperation suggested that the interrogation process would go more smoothly. Just a few weeks ago, the previously cordial relationship between the two groups of investigators had deteriorated over various issues, including interrogation arrangements.

U.S. officials said the current cooperation in Yemen was in contrast with the difficulties American investigators encountered in Saudi Arabia after the 1996 bombing of a U.S. military housing complex there.

"We are pleased with the general level of cooperation," a U.S. official said. "We are able to receive information and exchange information that has advanced our investigation."

U.S. officials said the use of military-style explosives in the Cole attack--which in recent years would have strongly indicated state-sponsored terrorism--does not necessarily suggest that other countries played a role. A wide variety of military explosives are increasingly available to terrorist groups and others with money, they said.

The FBI also has been reviewing telephone records and information obtained through electronic eavesdropping, sources said.

"There is a broad group in custody that made a lot of calls to a lot of places," one administration official said. "We know the people we want to talk to, and the Yemenis have them."

Cohen trip to Persian Gulf delayed by security concerns

Cohen is delaying his trip to the Middle East and Persian Gulf due to security concerns

November 13, 2000

Web posted at: 7:33 p.m. EST (0033 GMT)

In this story:

Suspects, explosives seized in region

Cohen to consult with Gulf allies

RELATED STORIES, SITES

From Jamie McIntyre

CNN Military Affairs Correspondent

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- Pentagon sources tell CNN that plans for U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen to visit countries in the Middle East and Persian Gulf have been delayed at least one day, in part because of security concerns in the region.

The Pentagon announced last week that Cohen was planning to leave Tuesday for Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, and Israel.

Now Pentagon officials will give no timetable for Cohen's departure, but said the trip has been delayed, not canceled.

"We are going, we're just not saying when," said one high-ranking official.

Suspects, explosives seized in region

U.S. military forces in the region remain on the top two levels of alert for possible terrorist attacks in the wake of the October 12 bombing of the USS Cole in the Yemen port of Aden. The attack killed 17 sailors and wounded 39 others.

Over the weekend, Kuwait announced that it arrested several Kuwaitis suspected of plotting to attack U.S. interests in the region.

Another suspect was detained in Qatar, and a large quantity of high explosives was seized, according to Kuwaiti officials.

Kuwait is one of the countries Cohen is scheduled to visit.

Danzig told CNN that U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf remain on high alert

In an interview with CNN on Monday, Navy Secretary Richard Danzig said U.S. warships in the region were taking precautionary measures.

"We are not refueling at the port of Aden now. We do remain on high alert in that region," he said.

"We have sent most of our ships to sea and are refueling in only very selected ports and with the use of tankers at sea because we are still not confident that we have complete ability to protect those ships in situations like this," Danzig said. "By moving them out to sea, we do achieve that higher degree of the protection."

Cohen to consult with Gulf allies

As a security precaution, Pentagon officials are keeping a close hold on details of Cohen's itinerary for the long-planned trip.

A Pentagon announcement last Thursday said Cohen was scheduled to leave on November 14 to visit U.S. forces in the Gulf region and to consult with his counterparts and senior government officials in the eight countries he is planning to visit.

Cohen's trip was scheduled before the Cole bombing and is one of his periodic visits to consult with Gulf allies on regional issues such as the Middle East peace process and containment of Iraq's military.

Cohen is scheduled to return on November 23, Thanksgiving Day in the United States.

USS Cole Guards Told Not to Fire First Shot

\_\_\_\_\_Correction\_\_\_\_\_

A Nov. 14 article about the bombing of the Navy destroyer USS Cole incorrectly reported how much ammunition the ship's sentries were given. The sailors were issued two magazines for their 9mm pistols, not two rounds.

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By Thomas E. Ricks and Steve Vogel

Washington Post Staff Writers

Tuesday , November 14, 2000 ; Page A01

The sailors on sentry duty aboard the USS Cole when it was bombed last month did not have ammunition in their guns and were not authorized to shoot unless fired upon, according to members of the ship's crew.

Even if the sentries had recognized the threat from a small boat approaching the guided missile destroyer in a Yemeni harbor on Oct. 12, their "rules of engagement"

would have prevented them from firing without first obtaining permission from the Cole's captain or another officer, the crew members said.

Petty Officer John Washak recalled that shortly after the small boat blew a 40-by-40-foot hole in the destroyer's side, killing 17 sailors, he was manning an M-60 machine gun on the Cole's fantail when a second small boat approached. Washak said he pointed the machine gun directly at the boat to warn it off. But, he recalled, a senior chief petty officer ordered him to turn the gun away.

Washak protested, fearing that the ship was still under attack. But even in the aftermath of the bombing, "with blood still on my face," he said, he was told: "That's the rules of engagement--no shooting unless we're shot at."

The rules of engagement aboard a U.S. warship are set by its captain following Navy guidelines. Pentagon officials have declined to discuss publicly the specific rules in effect aboard the Cole, but senior officers said in congressional testimony that the ship had filed a detailed security plan, which they believe was followed.

Interviews with about 20 members of the ship's crew in recent days also revealed several other previously undisclosed aspects of the bombing:

- \* The Cole may have been boarded and surreptitiously surveyed by Islamic militants, possibly including one of the suicide bombers, as it passed through the Suez Canal a few days before the attack, crew members said they have been told by FBI investigators.

- \* The FBI also has been questioning crew members about the behavior of the Yemeni pilot who guided the Cole into port, which some described as "agitated." In addition, some crew members believe that Yemeni harbor workers acted suspiciously.

- \* The boat that exploded may first have attempted to tie up to the Cole's stern, then moved around to the side of the ship after being ordered away.

As the FBI tries to determine who was behind the suicide attack, the Defense Department and congressional committees are searching for broader lessons about how to protect U.S. ships. Overwhelmingly, crew members dwelt on the limitations placed on their ability to defend the Cole, especially in the paradoxical situation of visiting a supposedly friendly port during a time of extreme tension in the Mideast. When it sailed into the Yemeni port of Aden, the ship was operating under "Threat Condition Bravo," the second-lowest on a scale of four threat conditions. Under this moderate posture, crew members said, the ship had a few guards on deck, but no one was posted on big machine guns near the bow and stern.

"It wasn't supposed to be a high-threat port," said Nathan Bair, a fire controlman on the Cole.

Kevin Benoit, a gunner's mate, said the sailors "weren't given any kind of instruction that it was dangerous" to refuel in Aden. "Nothing like that was put out. . . . It wasn't a big deal," he said, adding that he been surprised that the ship even had armed "rovers" patrolling the deck.

"I thought it was kind of far-fetched," he said.

Even now, members of the Cole's crew say they are hard-pressed to think of what they would have done differently as the small boat approached with no outward sign of hostility.

"If we had shot those people, we'd have gotten in trouble for it," said Petty Officer Jennifer Kudrick, a sonar technician. "That's what's frustrating about it. We would have gotten in more trouble for shooting two foreigners than losing 17 American sailors."

"It's kind of hard to say what we should have done," added Washak. "In the military, it's like we're trained to hesitate now. If somebody had seen something wrong and shot, he probably would have been court-martialed."

Benoit, who issued weapons for the security patrol during the refueling, confirmed that the guns were not loaded. He said he issued 9mm pistols to two sailors assigned as roving guards during the refueling, and that those sailors each carried two rounds of ammunition but did not load the weapons. "You can't fire unless fired upon," said Benoit. "We were in no kind of threat-con where we would fire."

But one of the Cole's officers added that the guards could have loaded and fired quickly if the threat had been more clear. "They were prepared to fend off any attack had it been apparent," said Lt. j.g. Robert Overturf. "They have a load that takes a second, and then they're ready to fire."

The threat from the small boat, however, was anything but apparent. Crew members who saw it approaching said "it looked like the boats that had assisted in the mooring" of the Cole to a refueling station in the middle of the harbor, according to Overturf, who was not on deck at the time. "We thought they were one of the boats we had hired."

Even after the attack, crew members said, they were told they should fire only warning shots in the air if strange boats approached.

The Cole's captain, Cmdr. Kirk S. Lippold, has declined to be interviewed since coming back to the United States with the unwounded members of his crew on Nov. 3. But a Pentagon official who has spoken with Lippold, and is familiar with what happened aboard the ship, said one reason for the order to fire only warning shots was that boats were approaching the stricken warship to offer help. "You didn't want sailors shooting up those boats," he said.

Cmdr. J.D. Gradeck, a spokesman for the Navy in the Persian Gulf area, declined to comment on the crew's accounts, citing the Navy's ongoing investigation of the incident.

Cole crew members also said they now realize that their ship may have been looked over by Islamic militants as it passed through the Suez Canal on the way to Yemen. While in the canal, the ship followed the Navy tradition of bringing Egyptian vendors aboard to sell souvenirs, they said.

Paul Riddle, an operations specialist who worked in the Cole's combat information center, said FBI investigators told him that "they think the Egyptians might have been doing a reconnaissance on us." And they told him that one of the two men who carried out the suicide attack may have been among those who visited the Cole, he said.

Crew members also disclosed that the boat that exploded may at first have attempted to tie up to the Cole's stern. Several sailors said they were told by a shipmate, Russell Dietz, that a small boat with two men aboard pulled up to the stern, where Dietz was working and keeping an eye on a larger scow that had made several trips to haul away the Cole's trash.

Dietz, who shipmates said was injured in the explosion, could not be reached for comment. But he told others on the Cole that he had asked the two men on the smaller boat what they were doing.

The men said they had come to help with the trash, and they may even have tried to throw a line to Dietz, one sailor said. Dietz then called the bridge, which told him to send the boat away. He did, and the boat quickly "veered away" to the port side of the ship, where it blew up. Nsilo Greene, an electronics technician, said he was told by Dietz.



Almost every member of the crew who was interviewed had heard talk that the Yemeni pilot who guided the destroyer into port was extremely anxious and tried to leave the ship earlier than usual. "I was told the Yemeni pilot was pretty much trying to jump ship before it was tied up," said Bair.

Riddle said he was told that the pilot "was real agitated and getting in arguments with the captain." The pilot was prevented from leaving the ship on the orders of an officer, several crew members said.

Kudrick, who met the pilot when he first arrived on the ship, said that he seemed "kind of huffy" but that she just assumed he did not like working with female sailors. Along the same lines, many members of the crew believe that Yemeni harbor workers on the fueling station near the Cole ran into a cement hut just before the explosion. Kathy Lopez, a petty officer who was involved in the refueling operation, also said that in retrospect, she thinks it is suspicious that Yemeni workers conducted the refueling with unusual speed.

"They were pumping a whole lot faster from the fuel barge than they had for the last ship," said Lopez. In fact, she added, "They were pumping a lot faster than we thought they were capable of pumping."

On the other hand, no one who was interviewed claims to have actually seen the harbor workers run away or the pilot demand to leave the ship, so it is possible that those accounts may be no more than rumors that passed through the Cole in the traumatic days after the attack.

If the accounts are correct, however, they would indicate that knowledge of the impending attack was widespread. That would be consistent with evidence found by investigators that the attack was planned months in advance and that the original target may have been another Navy warship, The Sullivans, which visited Yemen in January. This, in turn, would raise questions about whether any Yemeni government officials knew of the attack and failed to stop it or to warn the United States.

State Department spokesman Philip Reeker declined to comment yesterday on reports of tension between the FBI and the U.S. Embassy in Yemen over the possible involvement of well-connected Yemenis.

According to the reports, which surfaced last week in the Arab-language daily Al Hayat, the FBI wants to broaden the probe to include people close to the Yemeni government. The embassy, with backing from the State Department, is said to be concerned about the diplomatic consequences of such a move.

Lt. Ann Chamberlain, the Cole's navigator, said an FBI agent asked her about the actions of the Yemeni harbor workers. But, she added, "I think everything is being investigated," from solid fact to unfounded rumor.

Researchers Madonna Lebling and Bobby Pratt contributed to this report.

Bin Laden 'denies' Yemen blast

The attack on the USS Cole killed 17 sailors

By Frank Gardner in Qatar

Osama bin Laden is not making life easy for US investigators in the Middle East.

Osama bin Laden: Americans' prime suspect

From his secret hideout in Afghanistan, he has reportedly denied having any links with suspects arrested in Yemen and Kuwait accused of plotting to attack American targets.

On Monday, Kuwait's respected newspaper, Al-Rai al-Aam, printed an alleged telephone conversation with Mr Bin Laden.

The paper quotes him as saying that neither he nor his followers have any intention of striking civil or military installations in any Arab country.

That is not the way Washington is thinking.

Prime suspect

The Saudi-born Islamist has long been America's prime suspect for nearly every attack on US interests in the region.

The US Government suspects him of masterminding the bombings of two US embassies in East Africa two years ago, as well as the suicide bombing of a US warship in Yemen in October.

In the last few days, Kuwait has arrested a number of its citizens in possession of explosives.

Kuwait's Interior Ministry says they were planning a suicide bombing of a US military convoy.

Once again, they were suspected of being linked to Osama bin Laden.

But if Osama bin Laden says he is not behind these various plots and attacks, then who is?

The world of militant Islamists is a shadowy and confusing one with no shortage of fanatics prepared to die in order to strike at US and Israeli interests.

If Osama bin Laden's denial is confirmed, it removes the most obvious suspect and makes the job of US detectives that much harder.

Standing Guard With No Ammunition?

? Cole Sentries Reportedly Had Unloaded Guns

? Some Crew Members Unhappy About 'Rules Of Engagement'

? Defense Secretary Cohen Might Still Be Headed For Persian Gulf

WASHINGTON, Nov. 14, 2000

CBS

(CBS) The Navy is refusing comment on a report that the sailors on sentry duty aboard the USS Cole when it was bombed last month did not have ammunition in their guns and were not authorized to shoot unless fired upon.

That report comes from a Washington Post story based on interviews with 20 members of the ship's crew.

The paper says that even if the sentries had recognized the threat from the small boat which approached the Cole in Aden, Yemen, on October 12, the ship's "rules of engagement" would have prevented them from firing without first obtaining permission from the Cole's captain or another officer.

At a Tuesday afternoon briefing, Pentagon spokesman Kevin Bacon said he had "nothing to say" about the report and furthermore does not intend to "comment on various slices" of the several Cole bombing investigations which are underway.

"We should respect the process," said Bacon. "We all want the most complete picture of what happened."

Bacon similarly declined to comment on the specific rules of engagement applying to the Cole, saying only that the rules of engagement are determined by each commander and depend on each individual situation.

Seventeen sailors were killed and the Cole was severely damaged when a small boat laden with explosives blew up alongside the guided missile destroyer while it was refueling in the southern Yemeni port of Aden.

Witnesses had said two men were aboard the boat when it exploded and ripped a huge hole in the Cole's side.

"If we had shot those people, we'd have gotten in trouble for it," said Petty Officer Jennifer Kudrick, a sonar technician, in an interview with the Post. "That's what's frustrating about it. We would have gotten in more trouble for shooting two foreigners than losing 17 American sailors."

Petty Officer John Washak told the Post said he was manning an M-60 machine gun shortly after the Cole was hit. Washak said he waved the weapon at a second small boat that was approaching, but a senior chief petty officer ordered him to turn the gun away.

Washak said he protested, fearing that the ship was still under attack. But even in the aftermath of the bombing, "with blood still on my face," he said he was told: "That's the rules of engagement, no shooting unless we're shot at."

The Post quotes a Pentagon official as saying crew members were ordered to fire only warning shots because many boats approaching the ship after the blast came to offer help.

The Post reports crew members said they have been told by FBI investigators that the ship may have been boarded and surreptitiously surveyed by Islamic militants, possibly including one of the suicide bombers, as it passed through the Suez Canal a few days before the attack.

The FBI also has been questioning crew members about the reportedly "agitated" behavior of a Yemeni pilot who guided the Cole into port. Some crew members also believe other Yemeni harbor workers acted suspiciously.

The boat that exploded may first have attempted to tie up to the Cole's stern, then moved around to the side of the ship after being ordered away.

### One Year Of Sanctions

November 14 marks one year of United Nations-imposed sanctions on Afghanistan. The sanctions are intended to force that country to hand over Osama bin Laden, who the U.S. has accused of masterminding the 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa.

Bin Laden's name has also come up as a target of investigation in connection with the Cole attack, although no authorities so far have made public any evidence directly linking bin Laden to the blast.

When it sailed into Aden, the ship was operating under "Threat Condition Bravo," the second-lowest on a scale of four threat conditions. Under this moderate posture, crew members said, the ship had a few guards on deck, but no one was posted on big machine guns near the bow and stern.

The Cole is continuing its voyage home to the U.S., aboard a Norwegian heavy lift transport vessel.

Sources say some 60 suspects remain in custody in Yemen, with another 20 having been released. One of the suspects in custody is said to be an Islamic Jihad member who escaped from jail in 1993 after being convicted of blowing up two Aden hotels frequented by foreigners.

A source close to the probe reported on Sunday that the Cole attack was masterminded by a man who gave his orders by telephone from the United Arab Emirates. Investigators were told of the man behind the scenes by another man, now in custody, who has admitted being the one to purchase the attack boat.

Debris from the bombing, along with the car which pulled the boat to port, were shipped to the U.S. Sunday for further forensic tests.

U.S. forces remain on high alert, in reaction to recent evidence of terrorist plots, and the Pentagon Monday put a lid on discussion of the itinerary of Defense Secretary William Cohen. He was supposed to have left Monday for the Persian Gulf and the Mideast, but that was put off, and it's not clear now when he might leave. He had planned to visit Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Egypt and Israel.

## COLE BLAST PROBE SPARKS FIGHT AMONG U.S. OFFICIALS

From Tribune News Services

November 12, 2000

SAN`A, Yemen -- A month after the bombing of the U.S. destroyer Cole, a bitter dispute has erupted within the Clinton administration over whether to accept Yemeni limits on the American investigation here or press for a wider-ranging inquiry that could implicate powerful Yemenis, U.S. officials on both sides of the dispute say. Officials in Washington said the dispute has become so heated that there have been personal exchanges between the leading American officials on opposing sides, FBI Director Louis J. Freeh and U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Barbara K. Bodine.

According to a report this week in Al Hayat, an Arab-language newspaper published in London, the FBI wanted the U.S. Embassy in Yemen to demand that the Yemeni investigation be extended to "social, political and military figures" with close ties to the Yemeni government. Officials say the State Department has resisted for fear of further upsetting the delicate strategic relationship with Yemen.

The Al Hayat account was indirectly confirmed by an FBI official, who said a critical aspect of the case--whether the bombers had help from powerful figures within Yemen--was difficult, if not impossible, to determine as long as the Yemeni government decided exclusively whom to detain and interview.

A senior State Department official in Washington who was asked about the issue refused to comment but said it was true that the inquiry needed to go "all the way back to the spider in the web."

Separately, at least three plots against American targets in Yemen failed in the past year before the Cole bombing, Yemeni sources close to the investigation said Saturday.

More than one suspect in Yemeni custody being questioned in connection with the Oct. 12 Cole bombing has admitted to involvement in a campaign targeting Americans in Yemen, the sources said, insisting on anonymity. They did not provide a specific number but did say the suspects belong to the Islamic Jihad and other Islamic groups.

The Islamic Jihad is linked to America's No. 1 terror suspect, Osama bin Laden. Seventeen sailors were killed and 39 others were injured when the Cole was bombed. Two Yemenis arrested over US warship explosion

Yemen, Politics, 11/10/2000

Yemen announced on Thursday that American experts working in a program to eliminate mines in Yemen left the country after they had received threats.

The Yemeni weekly the " al-Wahdawi" said that a well-informed Yemeni source said that the Yemeni experts left the country after they had received threats. A matter which forced them to close their office and to go to Bahrain and to reduce their representation to one person. The weekly explained that the American experts are working in the national technical unity to eliminate the land- mines. This unit is working to eliminate some 200,000 land mines in Yemen.

An official at the US embassy in Yemen stressed that what was said about the departure of the experts was true but no more details were given about this matter.

Meantime, one US diplomat said that the departure of the US experts comes in the course of security measures in the region that followed the explosion in the US warship " USS Cole."

On the other hand, the Yemeni authorities arrested two persons suspected to be directly involved in the explosion of the US warship.

NBC reported that one of the suspects had a main role in the attack and he gave the investigators details on how it was planned for the explosion which took place on October 12 in Aden. He added that the explosion was planned since more than one year.

Kuwait smashes 'Bin Laden plot'

The Saudi rebel is in the frame for the attack on USS Cole

Kuwait has announced the seizure of a large cache of explosives and the arrest of three of its nationals alleged to be linked with the Islamist dissident Osama Bin Laden.

Local newspapers alleged the men were plotting to attack US targets outside Kuwait. A fourth suspect is said to be still at large. On Friday, Kuwaiti officials said he was a Moroccan travelling on a fake Saudi passport.

The US, which has extensive military interests in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, holds Mr Bin Laden responsible for the 1998 bombings of its embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and describes him as a prime suspect in the October bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen.

The dissident, who comes from a wealthy Saudi family, has taken refuge in Afghanistan where he is thought to be waging a violent campaign against the US presence in the Gulf.

"We are discussing these particular arrests with the government of Kuwait," US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said on Thursday.

Alleged clampdown

Kuwaiti police said they had seized 133 kilogrammes (293lb) of powerful explosives, five hand grenades and about 1,450 detonators in the operation.

No smoke without fire? A Kuwait reads about latest developmes

Al-Siyassah newspaper said the Moroccan had fled the country with the help of a police captain linked to the group, citing "highly-informed security sources".

There has been no official confirmation of earlier reports quoting Islamist sources in Egypt which said that 11 Arabs had been arrested in recent days.

On Friday, a London-based Islamist group said Kuwait had deported an Egyptian and a joint Bosnian-Yemeni national with their families for suspected links to the Bin Laden group.

The Egyptian, identified by the Islamic Observation Centre as Youssri Ahmed, was described as a father-of-four who had worked as a doctor in Kuwait since 1982.

Last week, US forces in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were put on maximum security alert because of a "credible threat" of attacks on unspecified targets.

Kuwait: Four persons were arrested for having explosives

Kuwait, Local, 11/10/2000

The Kuwaiti ministry of the Interior announced on Thursday that four persons were arrested including three Kuwaitis for having explosives weighing 100 Kg.

In a statement the ministry said that " four persons were arrested including three Kuwaitis and one fleeing citizen from North Africa and they were planning to carry out acts of destruction in Kuwait and outside the country."

The statement explained that " explosives items weigh 133 Kg were found with the said men besides five bombs.

Cole attack was terrorists' second try, U.S. officials say

Authorities believe the USS The Sullivans was the target of a planned bombing in January

Millennium attempt on USS The Sullivans failed, suspect reveals  
November 9, 2000  
Web posted at: 9:56 p.m. EST (0256 GMT)

In this story:

Four suspects have fled

'The final pieces of the puzzle'

FBI still frustrated

Shipyard for Cole chosen

RELATED STORIES, SITES

CNN National Security Correspondent David Ensor, CNN Military Affairs Correspondent Jamie McIntyre and CNN National Security Producer Chris Plante contributed to this report  
WASHINGTON (CNN) -- Terrorists tried, but failed, to attack another U.S. warship in Yemen some 10 months before the October 12 attack on the USS Cole, U.S. officials told CNN.

The information comes from a suspect now in custody in Yemen, said the officials, speaking on condition of anonymity.

INTERACTIVE

Cole commander thanks America for support

GALLERY

Images from the homecoming

Images of Cole being loaded onto transport ship

Photographs give closeup view of Cole damage

INTERACTIVE

Timeline: The attack on the USS Cole

MESSAGE BOARD  
USS Cole attack

ALSO

\* Associated Press report: Kuwait arrests bombing plot suspects

The suspect told Yemeni investigators an attack almost identical to the Cole bombing failed in early January when the first small assault boat sank in the port of Yemen because it was overloaded with explosives.

At that time, the destroyer USS The Sullivans was refueling in Aden.

U.S. officials said it appears the failed attack would have been identical to the bombing of the Cole and was timed to coincide with the celebration of the millennium.

The plot also seemed linked to arrests in Jordan during December of last year of more than a dozen men believed to be plotting terrorist attacks against Americans and Israelis.

Four suspects have fled

Four suspects in the deadly bombing of the USS Cole are believed to have fled Yemen shortly afterward, The Associated Press reported Thursday, citing a source close to the investigation.

The source did not give a breakdown of the nationalities of the four men, but said some of them were not Yemeni.

On October 12, two suicide bombers apparently steered a small boat up to the Cole while it was refueling in Aden harbor in Yemen and detonated the explosives on board, blowing a 60-by-40 foot hole in the steel hull.

The blast killed 17 sailors and injured 39.

While dozens of people have been questioned and detained, there have been no official reports of any arrests.

Eyewitnesses told The Associated Press that Yemeni security forces have been searching Lahej, 22 miles (35 kilometers) north of Aden, looking for an alleged accomplice in the attack whose name came up during the questioning of the detainees. 'The final pieces of the puzzle'

Yemeni authorities have "advanced a good deal" in their investigation into last month's bombing of the USS Cole, drawing information from suspects that has helped to "put together the final pieces of the puzzle," Yemeni sources tell CNN.

USS The Sullivans may have been the target of a failed terrorist attack in Yemen, according to sources



While U.S. officials also said they are making progress and developing promising leads, they added there have so far been no major breakthroughs in the case. One Yemeni official said detailed information on the attack has come from a number of recent detainees.

A fourth house was recently searched, providing more clues in the investigation, and information on how the boat used to carry the explosives suggests "at least a few months of preparation," Yemeni sources said.

The same sources discounted completely any Yemeni involvement in the attack. U.S. investigators have said from the beginning they believe they will find ties to accused terrorist fugitive Osama Bin Laden, though no clear evidence of such a connection has yet been disclosed.

**FBI still frustrated**

Nearly four weeks after the bombing, Yemen continues to exclude the FBI from access to suspects. But Yemeni and U.S. authorities say they are close to a compromise.

Under the proposal, FBI agents could observe the interrogation of witnesses and suspects, but would not ask questions themselves. The New York Times reported that the observation would be through a one-way mirror or on live television relay.

**USS Cole seen after the attack in Aden, Yemen**

Talks on such an agreement have dragged on for weeks, frustrating U.S. investigators. Yemeni law does not allow outsiders to interview Yemeni nationals.

Yemeni officials also confirmed they are continuing a joint effort with U.S. divers to retrieve more mud from the bottom of the Port of Aden, where the Cole was bombed, to search for explosive or human remains. No such forensic evidence has yet been retrieved, the officials said.

Defense Secretary William Cohen plans to head to the Persian Gulf next week where he will consult with his counterparts in Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Israel and Kuwait.

He will also visit U.S. troops in the region.

The Pentagon on Thursday would release few details about Cohen's trip. It was scheduled before the Cole bombing and is one of his periodic visits to consult with Persian Gulf allies on regional issues such as the Middle East process and containment of Iraq's military.

**Shipyard for Cole chosen**

The U.S. Navy announced Thursday that the severely damaged destroyer will be repaired at Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Mississippi.

Those repairs are scheduled to begin in January 2001 and will take "about one year to complete." The Navy estimates the cost of the project to be between \$150 million and \$170 million.

The decision to select Ingalls "followed a thorough review of the capabilities, costs and schedules associated with public and private shipyards and included assessment of how the selection would impact Cole sailors and their families," a Navy statement said.

A "small group of Cole sailors (will) serve aboard the ship on a rotational basis," the statement added.

Navy sources told CNN the USS Cole, which is now traveling toward the United States aboard the Norwegian ship Blue Marlin, will first make a stop in the Norfolk, Virginia-area. area to offload cruise missiles and other weapons.

Report: Suspects in USS Cole bombing fled Yemen

The USS Cole rests on the deck of the Blue Marlin, a Norwegian dry dock vessel, off the coast of Aden, Yemen

November 9, 2000

Web posted at: 2:18 p.m. EST (1918 GMT)

ADEN, Yemen (CNN) -- Four suspects in the deadly bombing of the USS Cole are believed to have fled Yemen shortly afterward, The Associated Press reported Thursday, citing a source close to the investigation.

The source, speaking on condition of anonymity, did not give a breakdown of the nationalities of the four men, but said some of them were not Yemeni.

Two suicide bombers apparently steered a small boat up to the Cole while it was refueling October 12 in Aden harbor in Yemen and detonated the explosives on board, ripping a 60-by 40-foot hole in the steel hull.

#### INTERACTIVE

Cole commander thanks America for support

#### GALLERY

Images from the homecoming

Images of Cole being loaded onto transport ship

Photographs give closeup view of Cole damage

#### INTERACTIVE

Timeline: The attack on the USS Cole

#### MESSAGE BOARD

USS Cole attack

The blast killed 17 sailors and injured 39.

While dozens of people have been questioned and detained, there have been no official reports of any arrests.

Eyewitnesses told The Associated Press that Yemeni security forces have been searching Lahej, 22 miles (35 kilometers) north of Aden, looking for an alleged accomplice in the attack whose name came up during the questioning of the detainees. Yemeni sources who told CNN that the investigation has "advanced a good deal" said a newly conducted house search turned up more clues. They also said information on how the attack boat was assembled suggests "at least a few months of preparation."

U.S. officials also reported promising leads. But, they added, there have been no major breakthroughs so far.

Nearly four weeks after the bombing, Yemen continues to exclude the FBI from access to suspects. But Yemeni and U.S. authorities say they are close to a compromise.

Under the proposal, FBI agents could observe the interrogation of witnesses and suspects, but would not ask questions themselves. The New York Times reported that the observation would be through a one-way mirror or on live television relay.

Talks on such an agreement have dragged on for weeks, frustrating U.S. investigators. Yemeni law does not allow outsiders to interview Yemeni nationals.

Yemen denies any of its officials were involved in USS Cole attack

The USS Cole is lifted by a Norwegian dry dock vessel off the coast of Aden, Yemen

November 7, 2000

Web posted at: 8:30 p.m. EST (0130 GMT)

In this story:

'We expect pressure from the U.S.'

Nine people questioned, say sources

RELATED STORIES, SITES

Jamie McIntyre, CNN Military Affairs Correspondent, Susan Bassal of CNN's White House Unit, and Elise Labott, CNN State Department Producer contributed to this report

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- Senior Yemeni officials denied Tuesday accusations that government officials from their nation aided in the attack on the USS Cole.

Published reports in the region said Yemeni government officials provided a car to the bombers in the October 12 attack that killed 17 U.S. sailors.

INTERACTIVE

Cole commander thanks America for support

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## INTERACTIVE

Timeline: The attack on the USS Cole

## MESSAGE BOARD

USS Cole attack

"There is not a drop of truth to these rumors; it is a lie," said a senior official in Yemen. "Whoever says that the government had anything to do with this is trying to destroy the good relationship between our countries," the official added, referring to Yemen's relationship with the United States.

Yemeni officials said they were surprised by reports that their government was not cooperating with U.S. investigators.

"The investigation has been going very well," said the senior official, who added the Yemeni government was pleased "we have discovered so much in such a short time." He said that thoroughness on the part of the Yemenis conducting the investigation has been perceived as reluctance to cooperate.

"It is just that we are struggling to do a top-to-bottom investigation," this senior official said. "We really want to get to the bottom of this. And we want to pass the information along to the U.S. government."

'We expect pressure from the U.S.'

"Look, we expect pressure from the U.S. It is justified, given the situation," said another senior official. "But from our side, we are doing everything we can."

Both officials said the FBI has told the Yemeni government that the United States "is at ease" with the level of cooperation.

The Yemenis said the Cole investigation is moving faster than the investigations into the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya.

"And we have shown more cooperation to the U.S. than some of its closest allies," said one official.

Officials said a memorandum of understanding between the two countries is "very close" to being signed, but the agreement is being held up over a Yemeni law, which prohibits people from other countries from interrogating Yemeni citizens. While foreign nationals can interview Yemenis, the questions must be posed through a Yemeni national.

"It is hard for us to violate our laws," said one senior Yemeni official, who added that his government is trying to find ways to allow U.S. investigators to take part in the questioning indirectly.

This senior official said another reason the agreement had not been completed was because the Americans and the Yemenis wanted to "spell it out clearly," rather than find discrepancies later on how the investigation should move forward.

"We don't feel any rush," he said. "We want to make sure what we have is something that will stay."

Nine people questioned, say sources

Earlier on Tuesday, Yemeni sources told CNN that officials have detained and questioned nine people in connection with the explosion that damaged the USS Cole. According to the sources, four of those detained in Aden were traced through phone records. Five others, detained in Sayoun and Lahj, were described as "Yemeni officials" who may have had some contact with the bombers during March. No arrests or formal charges were made, the sources said. Several have already been released.

A pair of suicide bombers detonated a bomb in a small boat alongside the U.S. warship in Aden harbor on October 12.

Seventeen sailors were killed and 39 injured. The heavily damaged ship is en route back to the United States aboard a heavy lift transport ship.

Since the bombing, U.S. officials have been pressuring Yemeni authorities to allow the United States to take part in the investigation.

Shortly after the attack, bomb-making materials were found in an apartment near the harbor. Authorities found what they believe to be a hideout used by the attackers and a car and trailer that they suspect were used to put a boat carrying the explosives into the water.

The bombers are believed to have used as much as 600 pounds of C-4, a plastic explosive, to build the bomb.

In an effort to put an end to speculation that the USS Cole may have a damaged keel that would require the billion-dollar-warship to be scrapped, the U.S. Navy on Tuesday released the information that the USS Cole has no keel.

Navy officials said the modern destroyer is built with a series of separate compartments that are joined together, and that there is no single beam that forms the spine of the ship.

Officials said the ship will be repaired by essentially removing the compartments in the center section, and replacing them.

The repairs are estimated to cost at least \$150 million.

USS Cole sailor shares story of his survival

He said he's haunted by images of attack

November 7, 2000

BY BRIAN BALLOU

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Paul Riddle arrived home in Beverly Hills on Sunday afternoon, physically unscathed by the explosion that tore a hole in the side of the vessel he had lived in for about 3 years. But he said he will be emotionally scarred forever by the memories of injured and dead fellow sailors aboard the USS Cole in the Middle East.

"I saw a lot of things I wish I hadn't seen, and that will haunt me for the rest of my life," said Riddle, 22, sitting in the living room of his parents' house.

"I was really good friends with four of those who died," he said.

U.S. investigators said they believe suicide terrorist bombers aboard a small boat were responsible for the Oct. 12 blast that killed 17 sailors and left 39 injured. The USS Cole had docked at a port on the southern tip of Yemen, a Middle Eastern country, to refuel when the attack occurred.

Another sailor who was aboard the USS Cole during the blast, Kristofer Dettloff, 24, returned home to Troy on Saturday.

"I've been spending my time getting in touch with all my friends," said Dettloff, who worked as an electrician aboard the ship. He also was not injured in the blast.

Riddle said he had just awakened from a midday nap in his quarters when he felt a jolt that almost knocked him off his feet. He said his first thought was that something had gone wrong with the refueling line. But as he attempted to make his way to the area where the blast had occurred, he said, he saw thick smoke billowing through the tight hallways and realized something more serious had happened.

Riddle said he immediately attempted to make his way to the Combat Information Center near the front of the ship as he had been trained to do in the event of a major incident. But he couldn't get there.

"Everything was blocked off, so I headed to the other side of the ship, and that's where I started to see some of the injuries," Riddle said.

"There was a flow of people running toward the back of the ship," he said. Mingled in with the rush were sailors in fire-retardant suits heading in the other direction, toward the blast.

Riddle said he tried to help injured sailors. For several hours, chaos ensued, and by midnight, the sailors returned to their bunks. But many were afraid to close their eyes, Riddle said.

"I kept looking off toward the harbor, and every little boat made me nervous. We were aboard this massive ship, but we were basically defenseless to another attack," he said.

In the days following the blast, Riddle, an E5 operations specialist who supervises the audio link between ships in a battle group, said he searched for bodies and volunteered to help search for damage throughout the ship.

After an 8-hour commercial flight that brought him and other survivors to Norfolk, Va., on Friday, Riddle walked into the embrace of his parents, who had driven about a thousand miles to greet him.

"We're just so glad to have him back," said his mother, Nancy Riddle.

Paul Riddle, a graduate of Birmingham Groves High School, said that when his 4-year enlistment ends in April, he plans to enroll in college. He has orders to return to Norfolk for duty Dec. 1, and will probably work in a building rather than a ship for the rest of his duty.

Outside the family house on Beverly Road is a banner that states, "Welcome Home Paul, USS Cole."

Nancy Riddle said she recently received a letter of support from her son's first-grade teacher.

"The outpouring of support has meant so much to all of us."

Sources: Yemeni authorities question 9 about Cole attack

The USS Cole is lifted by a Norwegian dry dock vessel off the coast of Aden, Yemen

November 7, 2000

Web posted at: 7:36 a.m. EST (1236 GMT)

ADEN, Yemen (CNN) -- Yemeni officials have detained and questioned nine people in connection with the explosion that damaged the USS Cole, Yemeni sources told CNN on Tuesday.

Four of those detained in Aden were traced by phone records. Five others, detained in Sayoun and Lahj, were described as "Yemeni officials" who may have had some contact with the bombers during March.

None was arrested or formally charged, and several, the sources said, have already been released.

#### INTERACTIVE

Cole commander thanks America for support

#### GALLERY

Images from the homecoming

Images of Cole being loaded onto transport ship

Photographs give closeup view of Cole damage

#### INTERACTIVE

Timeline: The attack on the USS Cole

#### MESSAGE BOARD

USS Cole attack

A pair of suicide bombers detonated a bomb in a small boat alongside the U.S. warship in Aden harbor on October 12. Seventeen sailors were killed and 39 injured. The heavily damaged ship is en route back to the United States aboard a heavy lift transport ship.

Since the bombing, U.S. officials have been pressuring Yemeni authorities to allow the United States to take part in the investigation.

Shortly after the attack, bomb-making materials were found in an apartment near the harbor. Authorities found what they believe to be a hideout used by the attackers and a car and trailer that they suspect were used to put a boat carrying the explosives into the water.

The bombers are believed to have used as much as 600 pounds of C-4, a plastic explosive, to build the bomb.

C-4 quantity may be clue in USS Cole bombing

C-4 high explosive, used to bomb the USS Cole, is a mix of RDX and a plasticizer that makes it firm but pliable

November 3, 2000

Web posted at: 7:48 p.m. EST (0048 GMT)

In this story:

Size of bomb may be clue

Explosive residue tells on its maker

RELATED STORIES, SITES

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- The amount of the explosive C-4 used to attack the USS Cole may serve investigators as a clue, according to U.S. and Yemeni officials. Unlike Czech-made Semtex, the more popular choice among terrorists, C-4 is an expensive and relatively hard to get explosive, yet the suicide bombers used as much as 600 pounds of it.

INTERACTIVE

Cole Commander thanks America for support

VIDEO

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U.S. Navy video shows the USS Cole being lifted out of the water

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## GALLERY

Images from the homecoming

Images of Cole being loaded onto transport ship

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## INTERACTIVE

Timeline: The attack on the USS Cole

## MESSAGE BOARD

USS Cole attack

## ALSO

- \* Happy homecoming for Cole sailors
- \* U.S., Yemen close to deal on USS Cole probe

"It's not an explosive that is available on the market except for highly sophisticated, organized groups capable of getting it from certain governments or states," said Yemeni Prime Minister Dr. Abdul Karim al-Iryani.  
Developed in the '50s

Every bomb squad in the United States is familiar with C-4, which was developed in this country in the 1950s.

"A pound and a quarter can destroy a vehicle, can take out a room in a house or something of that nature," said Montgomery County, Maryland, Assistant District Fire Chief Brian Geraci.

C-4 -- short for Composite-4 -- is a mix of a material called RDX (Research Development Explosive) and a plasticizer that gives the material a firm but pliable form like putty. It can be pushed into any shape and has a long shelf life.

U.S. officials believe C-4 was used in 1996 to blow up the Khobar Towers, killing 19 U.S. service personnel in the military housing complex in Saudi Arabia.

The use of C-4 against the USS Cole suggests to some bomb experts that a government hostile to the U.S., such as Iran or Iraq, may have been the original source of the material. However, C-4 is widely distributed around the world.

Many U.S. allies have it and experts say a similar formula has also been produced in Canada, Austria and possibly Iran.

In the 1970s, renegade ex-CIA agent Edwin Wilson was convicted of shipping 21 tons of C-4 to Libya for use in what the U.S. government said was a school for terrorists that he set up there.

Explosive residue tells on its maker

Experts say careful lab work may determine exactly where the C-4 used against the Cole came from if technicians can identify traces of other chemicals in the explosive. The United States and many other countries have signed a pact mandating that plastic explosives be tagged with selected chemical marking agents to facilitate their detection.

That agreement was negotiated in the wake of the 1988 Pan Am 103 bombing and is aimed at combating the use of plastic explosives by terrorists.

"Each (C-4) factory will have something of a signature, based on the other things that are produced there, that will be contaminants in the explosive residue from the Cole," said explosives expert Jack McGeorge.

U.S. officials hope with patient police work to find the C-4's origin and then trace how the explosive ended up in the hands of the suicide bombers who attacked the Cole.

Milam says US has no intention to attack Afghanistan

US Embassy official describes visit as a courtesy call; US envoy says 'rumours about US attack on Afghanistan work of media'; Afghan envoy says both sides agree to resolve differences through negotiations

By Raja Zulfikar

ISLAMABAD: Amid growing speculation of a US attack against Afghanistan, the Afghan Envoy to Pakistan Abdul Salam Zaeif held a detailed meeting with US Ambassador William B Milam, an embassy official confirmed on Thursday.

"It was a courtesy call," the US Embassy official in Islamabad said in a brief comment after the meeting. "I cannot comment on details," he said about what was a pre-scheduled meeting. It was the first high-level contact between the Afghan government and the US officials in recent times, especially after the October 12 explosion that had killed 17 sailors on a US ship, which docked at the port of Yemen for refueling. Since then Washington has warned of retaliation against what it calls terrorism. Only recently, US Secretary of State Madeline Albright hinted that the US would not let the incident go unpunished.

A joint US-Yemen investigation has not found a concrete evidence of the involvement of Osama bin Laden in the October 12 explosion but investigators and experts in the United States tend to believe that bin Laden could be responsible for the blast.

Sources said that the main item of discussion between Zaeif and Milam was the possibility of US attack on the hideouts of bin Laden. US has already blamed him for the twin bombing of East African embassies and demanded Afghanistan to expel bin Laden for trial.

Zaeif's call on the US ambassador is apparently a follow-up of instructions from Kandahar to explain afresh to the Americans their stance about bin Laden, whom Afghan government treats a guest.

There were reports that a special Afghan delegation had arrived in Islamabad and held a meeting with the Taliban ambassador but officials in the Afghan embassy said nothing to the effect.

Islamabad has already voiced serious concern over reports of a US attack against Afghanistan and said that any initiation of violence by Washington would only lead to aggravation of the situation and resolve nothing.

AFP adds: The Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) quoted Zaeif as saying the talks lasted two hours and centered on Afghanistan's concern about the possibility of a US strike against suspected hideouts of Osama bin Laden. US investigators have not discounted the possibility that bin Laden could be responsible. It may be recalled Washington launched cruise missiles at some of bin Laden's suspected terrorist camps in Afghanistan in August 1998 in retaliation for the twin bombings of US embassies in Africa which killed more than 220 people.

AIP quoted Zaeif as saying after the meeting that he and Milam, whose country does not recognise the Taleban government, held "detailed talks on bin Laden, narcotics, US-Russian stance on Afghanistan and rumours about a US attack on Afghanistan". Zaeif said Milam assured him that "rumours about US attack on Afghanistan is only the work of media" and that Washington had no concrete evidence linking bin Laden to the bombing of the US destroyer. Zaeif said both sides agreed to resolve their differences through negotiations.

NNI adds: Afghan Ambassador said "We discussed various issues including Osama as well as reports about any possible attack on Afghanistan." The Afghan Ambassador described the two-hour talks as highly fruitful and constructive. Zaeif said both sides agreed to resolve their differences through negotiations.

US Bin Laden demand rejected

Taleban say Osama bin Laden is their "guest"

Afghanistan has rejected a fresh demand by the United States to expel militant Islamist Osama Bin Laden.

The demand was made at a meeting between the US ambassador to Pakistan, William Milam, and his Afghani counterpart, Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, on Thursday.

We didn't get anything really new from the Taleban

State Department spokesman

A US State Department spokesman said the two diplomats discussed "developments in Afghanistan" and the "continuing demand that Osama bin Laden be expelled from Afghanistan".

"We didn't get anything really new from the Taleban," the spokesman was quoted as saying by the Reuters news agency.

Osama Bin Laden is living in Afghanistan as a "guest" of the Taleban administration. The US says it suspects him of masterminding the bombing of one of its destroyers in Yemen, in October.

Seventeen American soldiers were killed in the incident.

Speculation

For the past few days, Pakistani newspapers have been speculating that the US might be preparing to launch military strikes against Afghanistan.

Bin Laden figures on FBI's 'Ten Most Wanted' list

But Mullah Zaeef told reporters after the meeting that the US ambassador had assured him that they had no evidence, so far, linking Bin Laden to the bombing in Yemen.

In 1998, the United States launched missiles on suspected Bin Laden hideouts in eastern Afghanistan.

The strike was described as the US response to the bombing of its two embassies in east Africa, which left more than 200 people dead.

The US suspects Bin Laden of masterminding those attacks and he figures in FBI's list of "Ten Most Wanted" fugitives.

The United Nations Security Council imposed aviation and financial sanctions against the Taleban regime last November, for refusing to expel Mr Bin Laden.

Cole crew return to US

The commander and crew of the American destroyer, the Cole, have returned home three weeks after seventeen sailors were killed by a suspected suicide bomb in Yemen.

The American Navy Secretary, Richard Danzig, and other senior officials joined family and friends of the crew to welcome the two-hundred-and-seventeen sailors on their arrival at the Norfolk naval station in Virginia.

The American navy is investigating the actions of the Cole's crew -- it will decide whether anyone should be held responsible for allowing a small boat to get alongside the ship as it refuelled at the port of Aden in the Yemen.

US forces have been placed on heightened alert in predominantly Islamic regions since the attack on the Cole.

Happy homecoming for Cole sailors

A USS Cole crew member is given a hug after arriving in Norfolk, Virginia

WEB EXCLUSIVE

On the scene with CNN's

Gary Tuchman in Norfolk, Virginia

Bombed ship set to begin slow journey back

November 3, 2000

Web posted at: 7:53 p.m. EST (0053 GMT)

In this story:

'Welcome home our heroes'

Grateful for gifts

Security 'crack'?

Hole in hull bigger than first reported

#### RELATED STORIES, SITES

NORFOLK, Virginia (CNN) -- More than 200 sailors from the USS Cole received a joyous welcome in their home port of Norfolk, Virginia, today as their crippled ship, bombed in a deadly terrorist attack in Yemen, gets ready to begin a slower journey back to the United States.

The Cole remains in the Gulf of Aden, loaded atop the heavy lift vessel, the Blue Marlin. Pentagon sources said the piggy-back combination will depart Saturday. Of the remaining 217, all but one were flown Friday from Germany to Norfolk, where they were reunited with loved ones at the Norfolk Naval Station air terminal.

#### INTERACTIVE

Cole Commander thanks America for support

#### VIDEO

CNN's Gary Tuchman speaks with some of the reunited families

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Go to the homecoming (November 3)

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U.S. Navy video shows the USS Cole being lifted out of the water

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#### GALLERY

Images from the homecoming

Images of Cole being loaded onto transport ship

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## INTERACTIVE

Timeline: The attack on the USS Cole

## MESSAGE BOARD

USS Cole attack

## ALSO

- \* C-4 quantity may be clue in USS Cole bombing
- \* U.S., Yemen close to deal on USS Cole probe

One sailor stayed behind in Germany to be with family members there.

'Welcome home our heroes'

In Norfolk, a military band played patriotic tunes, including the Navy theme,

"Anchors Aweigh," as a charter plane pulled up to the terminal.

As the uniformed sailors began climbing down a mobile stairway rolled up to the DC-10, a crowd of hundreds -- some dressed in T-shirts reading "USS Cole Welcome Home" -- erupted in cheers and screams of joy.

The sailors, making their way toward the hugs and kisses of loved ones, were greeted first by a reception line that included Navy Secretary Richard Danzig, Navy Chief of Staff Admiral Vern Clark and Admiral Robert Natter, commander of the Norfolk-based Atlantic Fleet.

Emotional family reunions followed the formalities. "I love you," one woman said as she embraced her sailor husband, just one episode in a sea of tearful celebrations.

The October 12 suicide bombing of the Cole killed 17 sailors and injured another 39. Some of the survivors, who had returned earlier to the United States, were part of the welcoming crowd.

Homecoming banners made by family members adorned the air terminal. One large banner, signed by dozens of people, read: "Welcome home our heroes."

"I can't wait," said Cathy Quel, of Cincinnati, Ohio, as she stood by for the arrival of her son, uninjured Cole crew member Brian West, 22.

Quel said her son has told her in telephone conversations that the attack wouldn't deter him from continuing his Navy career. "It's his decision, his choice and I respect that," she told CNN.

Navy officials say most of the Cole's crew members will be given some time off to be with family and friends. "But then, they'll be getting back to work ... repairing their ship and getting it ready to go back to sea," said Capt. Joe Bouchard, the naval station's commanding officer.

Grateful for gifts

The Navy thanked local and national businesses that donated gifts and entertainment for Cole sailors and their families.

Donations have included more than \$150,000 in cash; tickets and transportation to an NBA basketball game for 40 sailors; tickets to Game 4 of the World Series; tickets to the November 12 Detroit Lions' football game; food and discounted hotel rooms; telephone calling cards; and movie passes.

"It is heartening to see the dedication and service of our men and women recognized and appreciated," said Natter.

The Cole is expected to arrive in Norfolk around December 10.

Plans call for the Blue Marlin -- escorted by another U.S. warship, the USS Donald Cook -- to carry the Cole around the southern tip of Africa, a route that avoids the Suez Canal in Egypt.

Navy officials said security in the narrow canal was a concern, but the primary factor in choosing the longer route was a request by the Blue Marlin's Norwegian owners to take advantage of expected better weather.

Security 'crack'?

A commission appointed by Defense Secretary William Cohen is examining whether the Pentagon needs to pay more attention to in-transit troops, like the more than 300 aboard the Cole when it was attacked during a refueling stop in the port of Aden.

The commission, headed by retired Navy Adm. Harold Gehman and retired Army Gen. William Crouch, will look not only at protection policies for U.S. ships in transit but also U.S. warplanes, which make refueling stops in many obscure parts of the world while en route from one established base to another.

An arriving sailor greets a little girl

The commission, headed by retired Navy Adm. Harold Gehman and retired Army Gen. William Crouch, will look not only at protection policies for U.S. ships in transit but also U.S. warplanes, which make refueling stops in many obscure parts of the world while en route from one established base to another.

"Maybe we have a crack here, maybe we have a seam" in the Pentagon's system of force protection, Gehman told a news conference Thursday.

He said the commission would not try to pin blame on anyone for the security lapse in the Cole bombing.

"We're not out here to find fault with anybody," he said. "We're out here to make recommendations for improvement. We're out here to find ways the Department of Defense can better execute our national strategy. We're not out to find culpability, we're out to make the process better and safer."

Gehman said determinations on whether the ship's captain or others in the Navy are culpable will be made by the Navy's own internal investigation, which has been quietly under way since the bombing.

Hole in hull bigger than first reported

Questions have arisen about whether adequate steps were taken to protect the ship. The attackers managed to maneuver alongside the 505-foot Cole in a small boat and detonate their bomb. The Cole had armed patrols on the top deck, but there is no indication anyone tried to stop the small boat.

The FBI is doing a separate investigation to find out who was behind the bombing. That effort has bogged down in a dispute with the Yemeni government over FBI access to suspects and witnesses.

A sailor is greeted by loved ones

Crouch said the review will not investigate the circumstances surrounding the explosion or the actions by the ship's commander and crew in the hours leading up to the attack.

The size of the hole torn into the left side of the Cole's hull is now put at 40 feet high and 60 feet wide, a figure 800 square feet bigger than the initial estimate of 40-by-40 feet.

FBI laboratory tests have concluded that the bomb was made from C-4, a military-style plastic explosive that can be shaped to direct the force of the blast.

Photographs obtained by CNN reveal that a large section of the hull below the hole is significantly crumpled.

Navy officials said the ship appears not to have suffered any irreparable damage and that repairs will cost between \$150 million and \$170 million.

FBI Probes Source of Explosives in Attack

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By David A. Vise and Thomas E. Ricks  
Washington Post Staff Writers  
Friday , November 3, 2000 ; Page A08



The FBI is probing the source of the C-4 military-style plastic explosives used by suicide bombers to kill 17 sailors aboard the USS Cole last month, attempting to track down the producer of the explosives as one way of identifying the attackers, sources said yesterday.

The use of C-4 is considered significant by some security experts who believe a sophisticated device composed of a large amount of military-style explosives indicates that a government hostile to the United States may have been involved in the operation.

However, a number of U.S. intelligence analysts continue to believe the Oct. 12 terrorist attack in the Yemeni port of Aden was masterminded by Saudi fugitive Osama bin Laden.

The use of C-4 also caught the attention of FBI investigators because several thousand pounds of the same explosive were used in the 1996 bombing of Khobar Towers, a U.S. military housing complex in Saudi Arabia, in which 19 American servicemen died. The probe of who was responsible for that attack has not been completed. Meanwhile yesterday, the two retired military officers conducting the Pentagon's inquiry into the bombing of the Cole described the damage to the warship as "horrific," saying that parts of the ship were blown clear across its 66-foot-wide midsection.

"This was a big weapon, and did an enormous amount of damage," retired Adm. Harold W. Gehman, co-chairman of the Defense Department's commission on the Cole, told reporters at the Pentagon. "Pieces of debris were thrown all the way across" the inside of the Cole, he added in a subsequent interview.

Gehman, who commanded a destroyer similar to the Cole before becoming an admiral, said he was surprised the ship, which was being refueled at the time of the attack, didn't catch fire.

"There are 21 fuel tanks on that ship, and the fuel was moving through pipes," he said. "We have no idea why it didn't light."

After identifying the type of explosives used in the deadly blast, the FBI has begun working with intelligence analysts to try to follow the trail to the producer of the explosives. That, in turn, could provide clues about who was behind the surprise attack on the Navy warship.

Residue from the explosives retrieved at the scene is being analyzed to determine when the explosives were manufactured, based on their chemical composition and other identifying characteristics. Experts said this is standard procedure and a necessary part of the effort to determine which parties played a role in the attack.

"Sometimes you can do it and other times it is difficult and becomes a dry hole," said Bob Blitzer, former head of counterterrorism at the FBI. "There are probably a limited number of manufacturers out there." It requires, he said, "a lot of shoe leather to [find out] where it was made, when it was made and who it was sold to. . . . Was it something that went to Russia and was captured in Afghanistan? You don't know. There are a thousand scenarios."

Some experts argue that the amount of C-4 used in the bombing, and the sophistication needed to attack a U.S. warship on a short port visit, indicated that the two men aboard the small boat that exploded alongside the Cole likely were backed by a government hostile to the United States.

"This wasn't just two guys getting a week's training in the mountains of Afghanistan," said one security expert.

"If I were betting, I would say Iran," said retired Army Gen. Wayne Downing, who led the Pentagon's review of the security lapses involved in the Khobar Towers bombing. But he added: "On the other hand, Iraq has strong ties in Yemen."

The FBI is also continuing negotiations with Yemeni authorities over what access FBI agents will have to suspects and witnesses detained in Yemen. The bureau wants its agents to work alongside Yemeni authorities during interrogations, but Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Salih has said he is opposed to having FBI agents question detained Yemenis. A possible compromise would be for FBI agents to be present while Yemeni authorities question witnesses and suspects.

"Negotiations between the FBI and Yemeni authorities are continuing to determine plans and procedures on how the investigation will continue," bureau spokesman Steven Berry said yesterday.

At the Pentagon, Gehman and retired Army Gen. William W. Crouch, co-chairman of the Pentagon's Cole commission, said that during their recent visit to the Navy's Mideast headquarters in Bahrain, they were impressed by the energy and attention that Navy commanders in the Gulf region have paid to "force protection," as the military calls its defensive security measures.

The Cole commission is one of four federal inquiries into the bombing. The main investigation, led by the FBI and including U.S. intelligence organizations, is aimed at uncovering who launched the attack and how. A Navy inquiry is looking into the conduct of the captain and crew of the Cole. A separate Navy-wide review is underway into what other security measures can be taken immediately aboard ships and installations.

Gehman and Crouch said they want to determine how the Pentagon and the rest of the Defense Department "supported" the Cole. To do that, they will look, for example, at what sort of intelligence information was available and whether it was conveyed in a timely manner to those who needed it.

Overall, they said, they are focusing on whether the Pentagon has paid adequate attention to the security of isolated forces in transit--solitary warships, charter ships and aircraft.

New Cole photos show bomb damage more extensive than thought

## GALLERY

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Obtained by CNN from unofficial U.S. Navy sources

November 2, 2000

Web posted at: 2:30 p.m. EST (1930 GMT)

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- As new photographs of damage to the USS Cole became available Thursday, the U.S. Navy said the size of a hole ripped into the side of the warship by suicide bombers in Yemen is much larger than was previously reported. The new estimate is 60 feet wide and 40 feet high. Previously, the Navy said the size of the waterline hole on the port side of the destroyer was 40-by-40 feet.

The October 12 terrorist attack in the port of Aden killed 17 U.S. sailors. At a Pentagon briefing, the co-chairmen of the Cole Commission -- assigned by the Defense Department to review military procedures, protection and intelligence gathering in Yemen -- said they had not yet reached any conclusions. Retired Army Gen. William W. Crouch and retired Navy Adm. Harold W. Gehman spent time in Yemen gathering information. Their investigation, however, is being conducted separately from the criminal probe being carried out by FBI agents and Yemeni authorities.

#### VIDEO

U.S. Navy video shows the USS Cole being lifted out of the water

Play video

(QuickTime, Real or Windows Media)

#### INFORMATION

More about C-4

#### ALSO

? Pentagon: Cole not irreparably damaged

#### GALLERY

Images of Cole being loaded onto transport ship

Photographs give closeup view of Cole damage

#### INTERACTIVE

Timeline: The attack on the USS Cole

#### MESSAGE BOARD

USS Cole attack

Photographs obtained by CNN show the extent to which the \$1-billion warship was damaged by a boat bomb loaded with several hundred pounds of what law enforcement sources confirm was C-4, a military-style plastic explosive.

The photographs reveal that there was significant crumpling of a large section of the Cole's hull below the waterline. Navy officials said the ship appears not to have suffered any irreparable damage and that repairs will cost between \$150 million and \$170 million.

That figure is unchanged despite the upward revision on the size of the hole.

The crippled Cole has been placed on the deck of a specialized transport ship, the Blue Marlin, for the trip back to the United States.

The return voyage has not yet begun, however, according to Pentagon officials, who spoke Thursday on condition of anonymity. They said the Norwegian-owned Blue Marlin remains in the Gulf of Aden.

A few crew members will stay with the ship. Plans call for the remaining 217 to be flown Friday to Norfolk Naval Station in Virginia -- the Cole's home port.

The Cole itself is not expected back in Norfolk until around December 10, depending on weather and other variables.

No decision has been made about where the warship will be repaired.

Critical Talks Underway on U.S. Role in Cole Probe

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By David A. Vise

Washington Post Staff Writer

Thursday , November 2, 2000 ; Page A16

With their previously cordial relationship deteriorating, the FBI and Yemeni authorities are engaged in sensitive negotiations over the role American investigators will play in the investigation of the terrorist bombing that killed 17 sailors aboard the USS Cole last month, officials familiar with the matter said yesterday.

The next 24 to 48 hours will be critical, Clinton administration officials said, as the two sides bargain over a "memorandum of understanding" outlining the degree of access FBI agents will have to witnesses who have been detained and are being interrogated in Yemen.

The FBI wants its agents to work alongside Yemeni authorities during interrogations, a partnership similar to the one that quickly yielded results in East Africa after the

bombing of two U.S. embassies there in 1998. But Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Salih has stated emphatically that he is opposed to having FBI agents question detained Yemenis.

In the days after the Oct. 12 blast in the port of Aden, Yemeni officials worked closely with the FBI during the gathering of physical evidence, quickly scoring investigative successes by retrieving debris from the Cole and finding safe houses used by the bomb makers.

Those discoveries helped FBI forensics specialists identify the type of bomb used in the blast as a C-4 military-style plastic explosive. They also helped investigators develop a better idea of how the terrorist group planned and executed the attack. But more recently, friction has arisen over a number of issues, including the possibility that the Yemenis gave U.S. investigators an edited videotape of footage taken by a harbor security camera on the day of the blast, rather than providing them all the footage. That prospect has prompted some American law enforcement authorities to consider whether the government of Yemen has something to hide. However, Clinton administration officials cautioned yesterday against jumping to conclusions about whether the tape had been edited. "It is being analyzed, and if we believe there is something else that should be there that is not, we will go back" and ask for it, an official said.

After Yemen submitted a memo to the United States outlining its legal procedures for handling such an investigation, the FBI responded with a proposed memorandum of understanding stating its own demands, in particular an arrangement that would give U.S. investigators greater access to witnesses.

The Yemenis then made a counterproposal, which is being translated, sources said. Among the things the Yemenis are allegedly seeking is access to all evidence the FBI has gathered anywhere in the world that may relate to the terrorist attack, a request that U.S. officials characterized as a "deal breaker."

"The next 24 to 48 hours will tell us a lot," a Clinton administration official said. "We will wait to see what happens. . . . There is a middle ground that can be reached, and I am hopeful."

Intelligence and law enforcement experts who are following the investigation said the bureau's probe has appeared to run into serious obstacles on the ground in Yemen. They cited reports that Yemeni authorities had denied landing rights to small U.S. ships and a helicopter ferrying FBI agents into Aden from their quarters aboard a U.S. Navy vessel in the harbor.

The FBI agents had been staying in an Aden hotel, but were moved to a ship for security reasons, sources said, a shift that confused some Yemenis, who wondered why law enforcement agents in the midst of an investigation would suddenly leave town.

"There partly has been some misunderstanding and miscommunication about just what [we] are trying to do," a Clinton administration official said.

So far, FBI agents have been allowed to submit questions to Yemeni law enforcement authorities, who have given them oral reports or transcripts of the interrogations of suspects and witnesses. But U.S. officials want greater access to the witnesses themselves because they believe the transcripts they have seen are incomplete, sources said.

This is a major issue for the FBI, which wants to know everything about the chain of custody of evidence and how it was gathered in case the Justice Department ultimately brings charges against suspects in the suicide attack.

"This is a fundamental issue. If we are ever going to indict someone, there has to be an evidence trail that can stand up in a court of law," a U.S. official said.

Former CIA counterterrorism chief Vince Cannistraro said the FBI's role in the probe is in serious trouble. "They have had the door slammed on them," Cannistraro said, adding that it was "pretty clear" that the videotape had been edited because it showed gaps in time sequencing.

But Bob Blitzer, former chief of counterterrorism for the FBI, said he doubts "we have hit a real wall. They are trying to work through some significant issues that have to be resolved before they can move ahead effectively. . . . They are going to make it or break it in the next few days."

The remainder of the Cole's sailors, meanwhile, are to arrive in Norfolk Friday.

Holes in the Probe

### Yemenis May Have Erased Critical Tape, U.S. Officials Say

The U.S. Navy destroyer USS Cole is towed from the port city of Aden, Yemen, into open sea by the Military Sealift Command ocean-going tug USNS Catawba, Oct. 29. (U.S.M.C., Sgt. Don L. Maes/AP Photo)

Oct. 31 - American officials suspect Yemeni authorities erased critical parts of a videotape recorded by a harbor surveillance camera the day the Cole was hit, ABCNEWS has learned

The USS Cole is painstakingly loaded on to the deck of a cargo ship and welded to its deck.

RealVideo

(download RealPlayer)

The video could have contained crucial clues to what happened when the Cole was attacked on Oct. 12, killing 17 sailors and injuring 39.

Earlier, Yemeni officials handed over a surveillance camera videotape of the harbor sought by the FBI, but it turned out to be useless. The camera was pointing in the wrong direction.

American officials now wonder if Yemen's government might have something to hide.

Cooperation between Yemeni and U.S. authorities seemed to break down completely today. Yemen's government - said to be apparently reacting to what its officials perceive as American arrogance - refused to allow any U.S. Navy helicopters to land on its soil today. That left American investigators stranded on warships where they now live.

Last week, FBI investigators moved to a Navy ship offshore and are visiting Aden only as needed.

Following President Ali Abdullah Saleh's election in October 1999, the government has taken a number of measures to fight the widely held perception of the country as a haven for international terrorist groups

Hitching a Ride

The Cole was loaded today onto the Blue Marlin, a 700-foot-long Norwegian salvage ship.

The 500-foot-long warship was placed at an angle so its propeller in the rear and its underwater sonar dome in the front would hang over the side.

Using steel braces, the Cole is being welded to the deck of the Blue Marlin.

The Navy estimates it will cost at least \$150 million to repair the ship. But Pentagon sources say damage - especially to the keel - may be greater than first believed. This \$1 billion warship, officials warn, may have to be scrapped.

The Navy today also decided to bring the Cole home via the southern tip of Africa, instead of via the Suez Canal.

They made the decision after U.S. officials conferred with Egyptian officials over security concerns. The canal, which connects the Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea, is owned by Egypt.

The canal hasn't been used by American ships since the Cole was attacked.

U.S. military forces have been on heightened alert throughout the Middle East and other regions after the surprise attack. U.S. ships have also been banned from putting into any port in the Gulf (see related story on warnings to U.S. forces).

The decision to go around Africa rather than through the canal stretches the Cole's journey home from two weeks to three, and could cost the Egyptian government thousands of dollars. When an entire battle group goes through the canal, Egypt can earn as much as \$1 million.

Another Appeal for Cooperation

Meanwhile, the U.S. presence in Yemen continued to shrink, as many U.S. military and State Department personnel departed Aden on Monday. U.S. Ambassador Barbara Bodine was expected to return to Yemen's capital of San'a.

Bodine has said that the Cole's departure did not mean the probe into the bombing has ended.

"This will be the second phase. ... It will not be short. It will not be easy," she said.

President Clinton on Monday also appealed to Saleh for direct access to witnesses, suspects and evidence, saying the two countries should have "a genuine, joint investigation."

Yemeni officials confirmed the questioning of sources and detainees was being conducted by Yemenis with no FBI agents present.

Transcripts of the interrogations are sent to U.S. investigators who pose follow-up questions for Yemenis, the officials said.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said Monday that Yemen "had to cooperate more."

U.S. investigators said last week that they were frustrated by Yemeni investigators not giving them access to witnesses and suspects.

Outside Aden, Clues and 'Afghan Arabs'

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By Alan Sipress

Washington Post Staff Writer

Wednesday, November 1, 2000 ; Page A26

AL HAWTA, Yemen, Oct. 31 -- The distance between the port city of Aden and the market town of Al Hawta is far greater than the 25 miles of dusty plain and cotton fields that separate them.

Aden fancies itself cosmopolitan, a former bustling British outpost where the grandchildren of colonial-era African and Indian immigrants mix with native Arabs, and a few Western-style restaurants still serve beer.

Al Hawta remains a neglected provincial town of low cinder-block and mud-brick buildings, where goats snarl traffic on the main street and nearly all men eschew trousers for traditional, skirt-like clothing. In recent years, Al Hawta and its surrounding region, Lahej, also have become home to Islamic militants who fought against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Now, investigators have traced the bombing of the USS Cole in Aden harbor to Al Hawta. Yemeni security officials are examining what role employees of the Lahej government--which is controlled by an Islamic party often allied with President Ali Abdallah Salih--played in helping a pair of suicide bombers stage their Oct. 12 attack on the destroyer that killed 17 U.S. sailors.

Yemeni investigators are detaining several men in Lahej who may have been involved in issuing a false identity card used by a bombing suspect to rent houses in Aden where the attack was prepared. The card, made out in the name of a fictional Lahej resident, also was used to register the fiberglass skiff that investigators believe was packed with explosives and detonated next to the Cole.

Security forces investigating the attack also are holding two men in Lahej believed to have taken part in a pair of bombings at Aden hotels in 1993 that killed two people, officials said. At the time, officials and diplomats blamed the attacks on Islamic militants opposed to the presence of a small group of U.S. troops in Yemen supporting the American intervention in Somalia. About a dozen Islamic activists, including civil servants and security officers, have been questioned in Lahej.

In a television interview last week, Salih said his security forces have rounded up Islamic activists from Yemen, Egypt, Algeria and elsewhere in connection with the attack on the Cole, which he linked to militants who fought in Afghanistan in the 1980s and then came to Yemen. Yemeni officials said today they were focusing on four suspects believed to be behind the plot. U.S. officials say a growing body of evidence connects the attack to exiled Saudi militant Osama bin Laden, now living in Afghanistan under the protection of its ruling Taliban militia.

In Al Hawta's sweltering market, where merchants lay out local produce on the ground and hawk bushels of the popular leafy stimulant, khat, from the back of pickup trucks, anti-American sentiment is clear. "We all don't like America," said Abdurrahman Ali, a doctor.



Ali Muhammad, an office worker, said attacks such as the one on the Cole "are expected because America acts provocatively toward poor people of the world." With the dragnet out in Lahej, Islamic activists, including Afghan war veterans, are lying low or have fled, local Yemenis say.

Many returnees from the war in Afghanistan, known as Afghan Arabs, made common cause with Salih after 1990 when his forces, based in northern Yemen, struggled for power with the socialists of the south. That culminated in a brief civil war in 1994, when Salih called on the Afghan veterans and other Islamic fighters to help impose his rule over Aden and the surrounding southern territories.

The Islamic activists were rewarded with pay and patronage. Leaders of the Islah party, a combined Islamic and tribal movement that counts Afghan Arabs among its members, streamed into some southern regions to take government posts relinquished by the defeated socialists. Lahej became known as an Islamic stronghold.

Islah leaders have repeatedly condemned acts of terrorism and stated their commitment to democratic principles. And specialists on Yemen said the heavy presence of Islamic activists in Lahej did not mean they were necessarily conspirators in the attack on the Cole. Militants, perhaps from outside Yemen, may have taken advantage of having fellow travelers in the right places.

For instance, sympathetic employees at the Lahej civil registration department--housed in one of the few buildings of any consequence in Al Hawta--might have issued the false identity card without asking for an explanation or perhaps in return for a small bribe. "Maybe there are members of the organization in that department and they helped him . . . [without being] aware of what was behind it," said Mohammed Hatem Qadhi, managing editor of an independent weekly, the Yemen Times.

Indeed, the forged ID card was issued in 1997, a year before the U.S. Navy's decision to begin refueling at Aden might have inspired anyone to envision the attack.

The Yemeni government's effort to buy off Islamic militants has been part of a strategy by Salih to defuse the kind of threat that returning Afghan Arabs have posed in countries such as Egypt and Algeria. "They are not dangerous like in other countries," said Jalal Fakerah, a political scientist at Sanaa University. "They became just like other Yemenis."

USS Cole Departs 'Proudly,' With Help

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By Alan Sipress

Washington Post Staff Writer

Monday , October 30, 2000 ; Page A21

ADEN, Yemen, Oct. 29 -- Seventeen days after the most modern destroyer in the U.S. fleet was attacked during a brief refueling stop, the USS Cole was towed out of Aden's harbor today by Yemeni tugboats, the blackened crater on its port side visible to residents on nearby hillsides who cheered its departure.

The vessel raised a giant U.S. flag and signal flags warning it would have trouble maneuvering. Then it started home with more than 200 sailors on board, finally budging from the port where a massive bomb detonated by a small skiff killed 17 of its crew Oct. 12 and left it paralyzed.

Two yellow Yemeni harbor boats tugged the destroyer from the bow while a yellow and gray pair shoved from the stern. Survivors gathered on the Cole's deck. U.S. and Yemeni patrol boats buzzed below, keeping the waters clear of any threats that might be posing as freighters or fishing boats.

Strains of "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "America the Beautiful" blared from the destroyer, carrying over the roofs of Aden's ramshackle harbor buildings. Aboard a Yemeni frigate docked nearby and on the adjacent pier, local sailors in white uniforms snapped to attention. As it inched out of port, the Cole began to blast the rap song "Cowboy" by Kid Rock.

"The Cole left proudly," said U.S. Ambassador Barbara K. Bodine. "She left with some help from her friends, but she still left proudly."

The Cole leaves behind questions about whether appropriate security measures had been taken for visiting a country identified as a haven for Islamic militants and whether the selection of Aden two years ago as a refueling port had been prudent. Behind these is the broader issue discussed by officials here and in Washington of whether American prowess, including a vessel armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles, can ever be immune from the zealotry of a few determined foes.

With the destroyer's departure, the U.S. Navy will focus on reviewing the moratorium, imposed after the attack, on visits by its ships to Aden, Bodine said. She also said that the military and State Department officials dispatched to Aden immediately after the blast will leave, but the joint FBI-Yemeni investigation will press on.

"It will not be short. It will not be easy and we know this," Bodine said. Both President Clinton and Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Salih "are committed to seeing this through to the end," she said.

As the Cole moved slowly out into the Gulf of Aden, it passed the inlet where investigators believe the skiff used in the apparent suicide attack was launched, and then the town of al-Baraiqa, nestled at the foot of jagged mountains, where a pair of suspects are believed to have rented a safe house and readied their bomb.

At the mouth of the harbor, the Yemeni tugboats handed the Cole off to the USNS Catawba, a Navy tugboat. As a pair of U.S. Cobra helicopters circled above, the destroyer headed for deeper waters and its rendezvous with the giant transport ship, the Blue Marlin, more than 20 miles offshore.

The 712-foot Blue Marlin usually carries commercial cargo such as oil rigs and platforms, but the Navy has signed a \$4.5 million contract with its Norwegian owner to convey the destroyer back to the United States. While the Navy initially said it would be brought to its home port in Norfolk, officials said the Cole may instead be taken to the shipyard in Pascagoula, Miss., where it was built, or to a shipyard in Bath, Maine, where similar destroyers have been constructed.

The Blue Marlin must fill its ballast tanks, submerging its deck, and then maneuver under the destroyer. That process is expected to take at least 24 hours.

The sight of the crippled destroyer being towed out of the harbor attracted a crowd to the narrow road hugging the hillsides. In the old stone buildings above, men lined up on long balconies and women peered out of windows.

Many were in a buoyant mood, glad to be through with the Cole. "We were not comfortable with Americans on our territory," said Mujahed Awad. "This is an Arab country. They have no business here."

The influx of American military personnel and investigators after the bombing had raised fears among some Yemenis that the United States was planning to establish a permanent base in Aden. Yemenis have also grown increasingly bitter about American support for Israel in its clashes with the Palestinians. So today, some Yemenis bid good riddance to the Cole, even shouting from passing cars as police struggled to keep traffic flowing.

"What a relief," said Nabil Ali, staring out to sea from the low stone wall that runs along the roadside. "I got tired of looking at that American ship in our harbor."

Battered US warship heads home

The once mighty USS Cole now reliant on tugboats

The American warship severely damaged earlier this month in a bomb attack in Yemen has been towed out of the port of Aden.

Yemenis watched the ship leaving from the port

As the battered destroyer glided out of the harbour, sailors stood to attention and saluted the American flag to the music of the national anthem, the Star Spangled Banner.

The 12 October blast killed 17 sailors and left a gaping hole in the side of the USS Cole.

The destroyer was towed by yellow tugs and will be loaded onto a Norwegian heavy-lift vessel, which will take it back on its five-week journey back to the US.

Yemeni authorities have reached major, positive results in their investigation

Yemeni minister

"She left with some help from her friends, but she still left very proudly," the US Ambassador to Yemen, Barbara Bodine, said of the ship.

The procession was led by two US patrol boats, and included a helicopter flying overhead.

Correspondents say the departure of the USS Cole was a relief for many ordinary Yemenis uncomfortable with an American presence in the port.

Many Yemenis are angry with the US over what they believe to be bias towards Israel over the Palestinians.

The recent tight security in the port had also made it difficult for Yemeni fishermen to work.

Egyptian suspect

Yemeni authorities said on Sunday that they had information on a second suspect involved in the blast.

The damage that crippled USS Cole

"Yemeni authorities have reached major, positive results in their investigation,"

Yemeni Interior Minister General Hussein Arab said.

"One result is the determination that one perpetrator of this operation is Egyptian."

Osama bin Laden

Ms Bodine said the investigation into who carried out the attack could be a very long one.

Ms Bodine said the investigation could be long

American officials believe a group led by the millionaire Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden may be responsible.

The USA Today newspaper reported on Friday that US intelligence agents had "hard evidence" that he was behind the bombing.

The US has accused the bin Laden - who has taken refuge in Afghanistan - of masterminding the 1998 US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in which more than 220 people died.

On Saturday, the US called on the Yemeni authorities to allow American experts to carry out their own investigation.

Jihad group

On Wednesday, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh said the several suspects arrested included "top leaders" of the Islamic Jihad organisation from Yemen, Egypt, Algeria and other Arab states.

President Saleh: Investigation is going "very well"

He did not say how many people were in custody.

The militants had come to Yemen after fighting against Soviet forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s, he said.

Suicide bombers are believed to have manoeuvred a small boat packed with explosives next to the USS Cole and detonated it.

Warnings of Terror Attack Were Broad, Vague

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By Vernon Loeb

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sunday , October 29, 2000 ; Page A34

Senior intelligence officials say that before the bomb attack on the USS Cole earlier this month, they had broadly disseminated a report of possible terrorist activity in the region but lacked any specific information on an imminent strike in the Yemeni port of Aden.

"There was nothing that said, 'This time, this place, this ship,' " said Vice Adm.

Thomas R. Wilson, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency. "There just was no smoking gun there. I wish there had been."

With members of Congress questioning whether U.S. intelligence agencies failed to pass on warnings of a possible terror attack, Wilson said the real problem lies not in disseminating information, but in sifting through a deluge of vague messages and tips that typically aren't specific enough to warn a ship such as the Cole of an imminent attack.

"We get hundreds of messages a day dealing with terrorism and dozens that deal with threats," Wilson said in an interview. "One of the challenges of this whole thing is the amount of information that is received and how you process it in a way so you get the right warning out, but you don't warn so often that it's just ambient noise, and the warning is lost."

Wilson said a CIA report issued the day before the Oct. 12 attack on the Cole warned of possible terrorist activities in Yemen and other Middle Eastern countries. It had been disseminated and reviewed at DIA headquarters in Washington, the U.S. Central Command in Tampa and the Navy Central Command in Bahrain before the bombing. After reviewing intelligence reportings before and after the attack, Wilson said he found nothing "that could have possibly been applicable that wasn't available . . . throughout the chain of command. I have not seen any dissemination breakdowns on this case."

But with the Cole and most other cases, he said, reporting on terrorist activity is so voluminous and vague that analysts are left trying to discern patterns that clarify threat levels in different countries, not that warn of specific attacks.

"You can find, over the course of a year, almost every country in the Middle East mentioned multiple times [in terms of] different kinds of potential attacks," Wilson said. "All of that stuff has to get synthesized to come up with what is the real threat."

To maximize the chances of that happening, Wilson said, as with the Oct. 11 CIA report, raw intelligence is immediately disseminated via secure networks to military analysts around the world at various points in the chain of command.

"An analyst who receives a message here at midnight on the watch [desk] may have a different reaction than a day shop that receives it in the Middle East--in Bahrain," Wilson said. "That group there knows exactly what the fleet's schedule is, what ships are where."

If specific reports of an imminent attack are obtained, Wilson said, technology exists to broadcast a flash warning to every military command in a matter of minutes.

Similarly, if a warning had come in about an imminent attack on the Cole--or, more vaguely, a U.S. naval vessel--watch officials would have had no problem broadcasting a message to the Cole, or the entire U.S. fleet, almost instantaneously.

But those kinds of reports, Wilson and other officials say, are few and far between.

One senior counterterrorist official compared sifting through dozens of reports to "making a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle when you've only got 500 pieces, if that many,

plus a few pieces from another puzzle. The picture is always almost just about to come into focus."

Wilson said he has spoken at length with a mid-level DIA counterterrorist analyst who submitted his resignation one day after the attack on the Cole in protest of what he believes was a failure by the agency to act on his predictions of likely terrorist attacks against U.S. interests.

Wilson said the analyst has conceded he did not have specific information about a possible attack against the Cole in Yemen. But he said the analyst--identified in media accounts as Kie C. Fallis--is a respected professional whose views are being taken seriously.

"He is a good analyst, a respected analyst for us," Wilson said. "We had a good discussion. I intend to talk with him again about the situation--and others as well."

Limited Witness Access Hinders FBI Cole Probe

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By Alan Sipress

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sunday , October 29, 2000 ; Page A32

ADEN, Yemen, Oct. 28 -- FBI investigators are having difficulty getting access to possible witnesses and suspects detained by Yemeni security forces probing the bombing of the USS Cole, U.S. officials said today.

The officials said that while cooperation with local investigators was exemplary as physical evidence was collected during the probe's initial phase, the relationship has grown awkward as the investigation turns increasingly toward questioning Yemeni citizens and others in custody.

"I won't minimize that it isn't without some work that we are shifting from one phase of the investigation--which was largely if not entirely focused on physical evidence--to other phases," one senior U.S. government official said today, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The official's comments came a day after Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright and FBI Director Louis J. Freeh urged in a joint statement that the Yemeni government treat U.S. investigators as partners in questioning witnesses and others who may have information about the apparent suicide bombing on Oct 12. that killed 17 U.S. sailors.

Some FBI officials in Aden were already grumbling that they were being prevented from participating in interrogations and were not being given complete accounts of testimony from witnesses and suspects.

President Ali Abdallah Salih has made clear his adamant opposition to having FBI agents question Yemeni citizens. "It is out of the question for Americans to investigate Yemenis," he said during an Arabic television interview this month. "This is one of the taboos. . . . Interrogating a Yemeni citizen constitutes a violation of sovereignty." Interior Minister Hussein Mohammad Arab said today that Yemeni security officials are handling the investigation and "the Americans have no interference . . . except for some questions that they could pose to Yemeni investigators who in turn perform the investigations."

Yemeni security forces have questioned more than 100 people. Salih said this week they have rounded up Islamic activists from Yemen, Egypt, Algeria and elsewhere in connection with the blast, which he linked to militants who fought against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s and then migrated to Yemen. U.S. officials say a growing body of evidence connects the attack in particular to fugitive Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden, now living in Afghanistan under the protection of its governing Taliban militia.

Using descriptions from fishermen and other witnesses, Yemeni investigators have created composite sketches of two suspects that will be sent to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the Associated Press reported, quoting sources close to the investigation. Salih's insistence on keeping interrogations in the hands of his own security forces comes at a time when some Yemenis and other Arabs fear that the influx of American troops and investigators following the attack on the Cole is a veiled effort by the United States to establish an imperial presence here.

Salih has bristled at suggestions that Yemen is acting at the United States' beck and call.

He previously said that American investigators in Aden have been largely confined to their hotels but were being provided copies of "all the information our security bodies collect." Yemeni officials would not comment further today.

A senior U.S. official acknowledged that communication between U.S. and Yemeni investigators has at times broken down. The official noted the two sides were trying to establish a working relationship starting at "ground zero" and to craft a joint investigation from two police systems that are structured quite differently. "They have never worked with us before. We have never worked with them before. And this is certainly a major case by anyone's definition," the official said.

American concerns about the evolution of the investigation have been raised with Salih, including in a recent meeting with U.S. Ambassador Barbara K. Bodine. U.S. officials said they have highlighted the advantage of working closely with the FBI, which can muster expertise and sophistication far beyond what is possible in Yemen. "There has been a real learning curve on the part of the Yemenis about what we bring to the table, which I don't think they appreciated three weeks ago," the senior U.S. official said.

So far, the tenor of American remarks has remained restrained and has not reflected the kind of deep frustration expressed by U.S. investigators during their probe of the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers apartments in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, which killed 19 American servicemen. Saudi efforts to keep U.S. officials from questioning possible witnesses and suspects proved to be a major irritant in relations between the two allies.

Meanwhile, retired Army Gen. William W. Crouch and retired Navy Adm. Harold W. Gehman Jr. arrived in Aden today to begin a review of Defense Department policies and procedures in light of the attack on the Cole.

The main purpose of their trip was to tour the Cole before its scheduled departure from Aden's port on Sunday, officials said. The crippled destroyer is to be towed out of the harbor and then loaded onto the Norwegian-owned Blue Marlin, a massive transport ship, for the voyage back to the United States.

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New Global Role Puts FBI in Unsavory Company

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By David A. Vise

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sunday , October 29, 2000 ; Page A01

When a terrorist blast killed 17 sailors aboard the USS Cole earlier this month, more than 100 FBI agents, laboratory experts and forensics specialists swarmed into Yemen. Among the FBI horde was Director Louis J. Freeh.

Freeh has been a familiar face overseas as he has transformed the bureau from a domestic crime-fighting corps targeted at organized crime and bank robbers into a global police agency with an anti-terrorism mission and a permanent presence in 44 nations.

"We have the ability to work, literally, every place in the world," Freeh declared recently.

That expansion has sometimes put the FBI in unsavory company. As the bureau extends its crime-fighting network to places such as Yemen and Saudi Arabia, it confronts police tactics, including torture and a lack of due process, that would be barred in the United States. Such practices are sharply at odds with Freeh's oft-stated message about the FBI's need to respect "human dignity" and the tenets of democracy while fighting crime.

But last year Freeh made a secret deal with Saudi Prince Naif, brother of King Fahd, to return a Saudi Arabian bombing suspect being held in a federal prison in Atlanta to a jail in Riyadh where human rights groups say torture is routinely used. Freeh's pact permitted FBI agents to watch Hani Al-Sayegh's interrogation through a one-way mirror and submit questions to his Saudi inquisitors, officials familiar with the arrangement said.



Al-Sayegh was a suspect in the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing that claimed the lives of 19 U.S. servicemen in Saudi Arabia. He had reneged on his pledge to cooperate with U.S. law enforcement authorities.

"It is really a dirty little case," said Clarisa Bencomo, a researcher with Human Rights Watch who has monitored Al-Sayegh's case closely. To Freeh's FBI, she said, it seems that "the information that may come out of this is more useful or worthwhile to them than the possibility of this guy being tortured or executed."

After a U.S. immigration judge officially ordered the Saudi suspect sent back, Freeh merely was ensuring that FBI agents would have access to whatever information the Saudis obtained, officials said.

A friend of Al-Sayegh says that he has been tortured in prison, an allegation that Saudi officials deny. FBI officials say they have not seen any indication that Al-Sayegh has been tortured.

"To suggest we are not very mindful of these concerns would be wrong," said FBI Assistant Director John Collingwood. "We collect information and seek witnesses to present in U.S. courts subject to all the scrutiny and challenges inherent in that process."

But agents say privately that when entering a foreign culture to do police work they do not have control over how prisoners are treated and must tread lightly.

"They do not ask, 'How did you question them?' They will just ask, 'Is it good information?' " said Otwin Marenin, a criminal justice professor at Washington State University who has studied the FBI's overseas practices. "You learn how to live with that part even though you wouldn't do it yourself."

Yemeni interrogation techniques have been criticized by no less than the State Department, which found in its most recent human rights report that Yemen's security forces arbitrarily torture prisoners, sometimes fatally. But the Yemenis also have allowed FBI agents to submit questions. They have shared some of the results of their interrogations, but the FBI is pressing for even greater access, sources said.

U.S. law does not prohibit the bureau from developing close ties with foreign governments whose practices, laws and ethics differ dramatically from those in the United States. Freeh and others argue that the FBI's approach is necessary to save American lives.

With information from the Saudi government, "we were able to thwart at least a couple of major incidents," said Bassem Youssef, who served as the FBI's top agent in Saudi Arabia until last summer.

#### FBI Academy in Budapest

From his early days as FBI director in 1993, Freeh had a vision of where he wanted to take the bureau: abroad. As a prosecutor in the vaunted Southern District of New York, Freeh concluded that he needed to go global to fight crime after pursuing a complex drug case that tracked back to Sicily.

A down-to-earth former FBI agent with a law degree from Fordham University and a federal judgeship on his resume, the high-energy, 50-year-old Freeh likes to go jogging with new agents and gets so engrossed in the details of big cases that he is jokingly referred to as the "presidentially appointed case agent" when an international crime occurs.

Freeh is a frenetic globe-trotter good at networking. Many foreign police agency chiefs and some heads of state now view a visit with the FBI director as a compulsory stop when they are in Washington.

Freeh is quick to point out that the globalization of the bureau, whether it is in fighting terrorism, organized crime, money laundering or computer hacking, mirrors the globalization of crime. He argues passionately about the need for FBI agents on the ground in countries around the world, building "cop-to-cop" relationships. He wants his agents abroad, known in FBI parlance as "Legats" (short for legal attaches), to field requests for information from FBI offices in the United States and to handle inquiries from their host countries.

FBI agents are posted today not only in London and Paris--once dismissed as the "wine and cheese circuit"--but also in Moscow, Riyadh, throughout Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia and South America. Under Freeh, the bureau has more than doubled its counterterrorism budget, to \$547 million. And the FBI now runs a training academy for foreign police officers in Budapest.

"This is the forward deployed part of the FBI, and it gives us a perimeter of defense and an ability to work directly in liaison with our [foreign] colleagues on matters of grave importance," said Freeh, whose 10-year term runs out in 2003.

If the agents abroad constitute the frontiers of the 21st century FBI, the nerve center remains in bureau headquarters on Pennsylvania Avenue, where Freeh has built a lasting part of his legacy.

For years in the movies, the FBI has been depicted as being on the cutting edge of technology. But the bureau did not have the type of "situation room" that existed in Hollywood fiction.

It wasn't until 1998, at Freeh's insistence, that the Strategic Information and Operations Center (SIOC) was born, a sleek and secure 40,000-square-foot colony within the bureau composed of elite analysts, ultra-fast computers, global teleconferencing screens, top-secret phones and a bank of giant televised images with up-to-the minute news.

Its James Bond decor runs to stainless steel floorboards and digital time-zone clocks. In a crisis, Freeh and his closest aides become residents of SIOC, conferring with the White House, Pentagon, CIA, foreign governments and the FBI's network of field offices at home and abroad. SIOC can handle four international crises at once.

A few congressional critics consider the FBI's growth abroad a waste of taxpayers' money. Former House Appropriations Committee chairman Bob Livingston (R-La.) slowed the opening of FBI offices abroad in the 1990s by withholding funding.

"I just did not feel, and still do not feel, the FBI, whose charter is to be our domestic and paramount federal law enforcement agency, has any business spreading themselves so thin all over the world," Livingston said. "I would feel better off if they were doing their job better here."

FBI officials strongly disagree.

"We have got to be very vigilant to make sure we protect the American people," said former FBI deputy director Robert M. Bryant. "Anybody who went to Oklahoma City and saw that building, or went to Khobar Towers and saw those families, or saw Pan Am 103 on the ground in Lockerbie, Scotland, does not underestimate the ability of people . . . to do harm."

Some view the expansion as a power grab, particularly since the Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Customs Service, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the State Department have had personnel abroad for years.

"There is a lot of pushing and shoving to get into the game," Marenin said.

Freeh and other FBI officials draw a sharp distinction between their primary mission abroad--gathering evidence to make criminal cases--and the CIA's role, collecting intelligence for decision makers. The FBI also gathers intelligence with a goal of

preventing terrorist acts. The agencies overlap in their pursuit of information about terrorism.

After World War II, so the apocryphal tale goes, FBI agents posted temporarily in South America drove the bureau's cars into the water rather than turn them over to the CIA. While that kind of fierce rivalry continued for decades, it is fading away. CIA Director George J. Tenet said the two agencies have never worked together better, and he praised the bureau's overseas growth.

"Our relationship is seamless in many areas," Tenet said.

#### Friendly Governments

Despite the allegations of torture and the moral issues posed, FBI officials say they need relationships with the Saudis, Yemenis and others in the Middle East to fight terrorism effectively. The methods that worked so well for the FBI in its pursuit of gangsters Al Capone, John Dillinger and others are simple compared to the complex challenge of pursuing an international terrorist such as Osama bin Laden.

Bin Laden has proven virtually immune to the FBI's traditional methods of wiretapping and informants. Worse for the FBI, bin Laden is the head of an anti-Western radical Islamic movement that experts say would survive even if he were killed or captured.

Born in Saudi Arabia in 1957 into a wealthy family with a construction empire, bin Laden joined the mujahedeen resistance to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The 10-year guerrilla war against Russia taught him that fanatical violence could triumph over even a superpower.

He and other Afghanistan alumni increasingly targeted the United States after the 1991 Persian Gulf War. An FBI investigation of bin Laden linked him to the 1993 World Trade Center bombing in New York and the 1996 Khobar Towers attack.

Bin Laden gained worldwide notoriety with the Aug. 7, 1998, simultaneous bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. They were the deadliest terrorist acts of the past decade, killing hundreds and wounding thousands.

The FBI rushed to East Africa to assist in the investigation, which included more than 1,000 interviews. The FBI's investigation led to bin Laden's indictment in New York for masterminding the explosions and put him on the top of the FBI's "Most Wanted" list. Bin Laden also is a prime suspect in the recent USS Cole bombing in Yemen.

Inside SIOC, FBI analysts work in a special room 24-hours-a-day alongside a poster of bin Laden that proclaims him "The Face of Evil." The room is off-limits to visitors.

The FBI's pursuit of bin Laden has led to the capture of nine of the 17 indicted suspects in the East Africa case, including one who has agreed to explain how bin Laden and his terrorist network move people and explosives around the world. But the FBI has not been able to apprehend bin Laden, who reportedly lives in Afghanistan under the protection of the ruling Taliban militia.

In large part, the FBI depends upon "friendly foreign governments," not only to arrest and extradite fugitives but also to permit the bureau to operate on their soil.

Afghanistan is not a friendly foreign government.

Freeh believes the FBI cannot bring the killers of Americans to justice without doing business with governments such as Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Jordan whose justice systems are antithetical to American principles.

Last December, Jordanian security forces, with help from the CIA and FBI, foiled a terrorist plot to kill American and Israeli tourists at two locations.

"People say, 'I thought the CIA was overseas and FBI was in the U.S,' " said Scott Jessee, an FBI agent based in Tel Aviv who took part in the Jordanian probe. "It has become absolutely necessary to work these issues with the rest of the world. You

cannot work them in a vacuum. You cannot work them alone. That is why we, the FBI, are overseas."

#### Monitoring Interrogation

After the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing, Hani Al-Sayegh fled Saudi Arabia for Canada, as Saudi authorities began rounding up hundreds of members of the Shiite minority. He feared that he would end up beheaded, his lawyers said. Others said Al-Sayegh might have been a possible witness or suspect in the bombing.

As Canadian authorities were on the verge of returning him to Saudi Arabia, Al-Sayegh agreed to cooperate with the FBI, sources said. But after arriving in the United States and retaining Frank Carter, a criminal defense lawyer, Al-Sayegh refused to cooperate and asked for asylum.

Freeh then negotiated the secret deal permitting FBI agents to watch Al-Sayegh's interrogation in Saudi Arabia.

Senior Justice Department officials said arrangements were made to monitor Al-Sayegh's treatment, although they declined to offer details.

Ivan Yacub, an immigration lawyer who tried to prevent Al-Sayegh's return to Saudi Arabia, said Attorney General Janet Reno conferred with someone at the State Department, who received assurances from the Saudis that Al-Sayegh would not be tortured. But Yacub is skeptical.

"The State Department report on Saudi Arabia talks about 200 people being incarcerated and tortured for the same attack. So why believe they wouldn't torture this guy?" Yacub said.

Ali AlAhmed, a 33-year-old Saudi-born man who befriended Al-Sayegh in Canada, recently briefed State Department officials on alleged religious persecution in Saudi Arabia. AlAhmed has established an organization in Northern Virginia to publicize alleged abuses. He said Al-Sayegh has been subjected to taleeq, a painful torture where a person is hung from his handcuffs on a steel door, leaving the hands extremely swollen.

Saudi officials have denied requests from Amnesty International to visit Al-Sayegh in prison. They also said neither he nor anybody else has been tortured in jail, calling that a myth perpetuated by opponents of the Saudi government.

His wife, Hakima Al-Sayegh, is permitted to visit her husband roughly once a month. She speaks to him through a glass panel in the presence of guards. Recently, when asked whether her husband's hands appeared swollen, she said, "There are no traces of swelling in his hands."

She knows that her telephone is monitored. During a recent telephone interview, Hakima said: "Every time I go, I see his health is better. . . . When he returned from the U.S., his glasses were really in bad shape. They have provided him with a new pair of glasses."

Staff writer Nora Boustany contributed to this report.

#### PROBERS CREATE COMPOSITE SKETCHES OF COLE BOMBERS

From Tribune News Services

October 29, 2000

ADEN, YEMEN -- Using descriptions from fishermen and other witnesses, Yemeni investigators have created composite sketches of two suspects in the USS Cole bombing, sources close to the investigation said Saturday.

The sketches will be sent to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, where they will be checked against photographs of Arab veterans of the anti-Soviet rebellion in Afghanistan, the sources said on condition of anonymity.

The Oct. 12 attack on the Cole killed 17 U.S. sailors and wounded 39 others in the port of Aden. Officials believe two suicide bombers maneuvered a small boat next to the destroyer and detonated explosives.

Yemen's president has said one of the two suspects was identified by witnesses as an Egyptian and that a number of Arab fighters from the Afghanistan war have been detained in connection with the blast.

Also Saturday, retired U.S. Army Gen. William W. Crouch and retired Navy Adm. Harold W. Gehman Jr. arrived in Aden to review military procedures, protection and intelligence gathering in Yemen.

Yemen bomb suspects held

USS Cole: US foreign policy is unpopular in Yemen

The Yemeni authorities say they have arrested several Islamic militants in connection with the bombing of a US warship in which 17 sailors died.

The Yemeni President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, said the 12 October attack on the guided-missile destroyer, USS Cole, in the southern port of Aden was carried out by an Egyptian.

He said those arrested included "top leaders" of the Islamic Jihad organisation from Yemen, Egypt, Algeria and other Arab states. He did not say how many people were in custody.

President Saleh: Investigation is going "very well"

The militants had come to Yemen after fighting against Soviet forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s, he told London-based MBC television.

Two suicide bombers are believed to have manoeuvred a small boat packed with explosives next to the USS Cole and detonated it. The blast also injured 39 sailors. Yemeni police were quoted as saying three Yemenis and a Somali woman were being held on suspicion of involvement in the attack.

Bin Laden suspected

President Saleh said it was too early in the investigation to implicate the millionaire Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, whom US officials suspect of involvement.

Bin Laden is wanted in the United States, which accuses him of masterminding the 1998 US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania which killed more than 220 people. He is living in Afghanistan, and the ruling Taleban militia have refused to hand him over.

The investigations "show that the person who carried out the operation - and perhaps another person with him - is an Egyptian national," Mr Saleh said.

"The inquiry is progressing very well and the results are promising," he added.

He previously disclosed that two people carried out the attack on the USS Cole. Dozens of people have been questioned by police in Aden in connection with the bombing, many of them port workers.

US alert

Agents from the US Federal Bureau of Investigations are involved in the search for those responsible.

Some US forces in the Gulf and Turkey have been put on the highest state of alert, following threats of another possible attack.

US troops in Qatar, Bahrain and Turkey are reported to be on "Delta" alert, the highest state of military alert.

U.S. Investigators Depart

Yemenis Create Sketches of Suspects; but U.S. Wants More Cooperation

An explosion believed to have been a bomb detonated by terrorists blew this gaping hole estimated at 40 feet wide and 40 feet high in the left side of the hull of the U.S. Navy destroyer USS Cole. (National Security News Service)

Oct. 28 - As Yemeni authorities create composite sketches of suspects in the USS Cole attack, U.S. officials are pulling out most of the American investigators sent to probe the bombing.

FBI agents investigating the attack on the USS Cole are sent home.

RealVideo

(download RealPlayer)

Nearly 200 U.S. investigators were sent to Yemen following the Oct. 12 blast that killed 17 sailors and injured 39 others aboard the USS Cole. But Friday, most of them headed for home.

Although U.S. officials have taken great care to show a united front with Yemeni investigators, the Yemenis have placed severe restrictions on FBI activity. FBI sources told ABCNEWS Yemeni authorities are denying Americans direct access to suspects.

The FBI hasn't interviewed a single witness or suspect, and only gets access to locations once the Yemenis are done with them, FBI sources said.

Composite Sketches

Meanwhile, Yemeni investigators appear to be moving forward on their own. They have created composite sketches of two suspects in the bombing based on descriptions from fishermen, landlords and a 12-year-old boy, sources close to the investigation said today.

The sketches will be sent to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, where they will be checked against photographs of Arab veterans of the anti-Soviet rebellion in Afghanistan, the sources said on condition of anonymity.

Yemen's president has said one of the two suspects was identified by witnesses as an Egyptian and that a number of Arab fighters from the Afghanistan war have been detained in connection with the blast.

The sources said artists from the Yemeni capital, San'a, drew the sketches based on conversations with fishermen whom the two suspects had quizzed about the comings and goings of ships in the harbor. The artists also spoke to landlords of at least three properties where the men prepared for the bombing and to a 12-year old boy that one suspect paid to watch his car before the blast.

Witnesses have described the two suspects as well-built and have said one had a beard and wore glasses.

U.S. Wants 'Full Cooperation'

On Friday, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and FBI Director Louis Freeh issued a joint statement, urging "full cooperation" from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

"The next critical phase will require Yemeni and U.S. personnel to work as partners in the collection of information and participants in the interview process of witnesses to this criminal act of terrorism," they said.

U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Barbara Bodine and FBI investigator John O'Neill met with President Saleh Thursday to try to further the level of cooperation, but were met with frustration, sources said.

The FBI is also moving its headquarters offshore, to the USS Tarawa, a Navy ship sitting off Yemen's coast, as it reduces its presence in Yemen to only 35 investigators.

The agency feels that they can be just as efficient - and safer - basing themselves on U.S. ships offshore and venturing into Aden only when necessary.

A small number of U.S. State Department personnel, embassy personnel, military and journalists remain in Aden.

Security is still tight at the Movenpick Hotel in Aden, the unofficial U.S. headquarters there. A bomb threat late Wednesday night led to armed guards setting up checkpoints outside the hotel and the street in front of the hotel being closed off.

The street has been reopened, but the armed guards remain.

**Blue Marlin, on the Way**

This weekend, the heavy lift ship MV Blue Marlin, under contract to the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command, is expected to arrive in Yemen.

The Blue Marlin will literally give the USS Cole a ride on her deck to the United States.

It will stay well out of the harbor. The USS Catawba, a fleet tug, will tow the Cole out to the Blue Marlin.

Due to security concerns about traveling through the Suez Canal, there are growing indications the route back to Norfolk may be around Africa rather than through the Mediterranean. The Blue Marlin would be a very large and slow target for potential terrorists.

A group of Navy engineers will be sent out to the area soon so they can ride back home with the Cole and begin to get a better look.

Damage to the USS Cole may be so severe the ship cannot be repaired. The keel or "spine" has suffered severe stress and is deformed, sources told ABCNEWS.

Whether that is "fatal" will only be known after some "soundings" or non-destructive tests are done by the engineers. So far all they really have is eyeballing by divers and some initial computer modeling.

**Possible Egyptian Connection**

On Arabic satellite television channel MBC, Saleh said eyewitnesses had identified one of the two suicide bombers as Egyptian.

Saleh also said several senior members of a Muslim militant group called Islamic Jihad have been detained in connection with the blast. There are several groups that go by the name Islamic Jihad, including one Egyptian and one Palestinian group, but Saleh didn't specify which group was involved.

Saleh said the detainees included Yemenis, Egyptians, and Algerians, and described the group as composed of Arabs who fought Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

Terrorism suspect Osama bin Laden was prominently involved in the Afghan resistance and now lives in Afghanistan, but Saleh declined to say whether the attackers or detainees had any connection to bin Laden's Al-Qaida group.

A senior U.S. intelligence official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that while bin Laden is a "likely suspect," the investigation has not yet established firmly that he had a direct hand in the bombing.

"There are no conclusions made at this point" about who is behind the bombing, the official said. "Bin Laden is a leading candidate but not the only candidate."

The attack on the Cole as it was refueling in Aden has the earmarks of a carefully planned, well-financed operation, and the bomb materials were expertly prepared, U.S. and Yemeni officials have said.

Asked whether a clear link has been established to bin Laden, FBI spokesman Jim Margolin said Thursday, "That's an obvious question that's being looked into. We're not confirming such a link exists."

Margolin said the FBI would not comment further.

Talk about links to bin Laden is "speculation at this point," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Friday.

#### Top Brass Discusses Protection

Defense Secretary William Cohen and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff are urging military commanders to use the Cole bombing as an impetus for strengthening anti-terrorist protections for their troops.

The Pentagon meanwhile has appointed a special commission headed by retired Adm. Harold Gehman and retired Army Gen. William Crouch to find "force protection" lessons in the Cole attack.

The Gehman-Crouch commission's work is separate from the FBI's investigation, which is aimed at determining who committed the crime.

The standard legal investigation is also under way, reconstructing the following: did the ship file a force protection plan and was it adequate, did the ship's crew follow that plan, including did the crew get proper training and understanding of the procedures.

A senior Pentagon official told ABCNEWS the intelligence that came the day before the bombing was identical to the report circulated the day after the bombing - "It didn't add anything to the first - and neither of them said an attack was imminent."

However, one possible problem for the crew and skipper is emerging. Under the standard military procedures for Threat Condition Alpha (which is below the Cole's Threat Con Bravo) there is a rule that states "unauthorized craft should be kept away from the ship, authorized craft should be carefully controlled, surveilled and covered."

'I Just Didn't Want to Die on the Ship'

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By Steve Vogel

Washington Post Staff Writer

Saturday , October 28, 2000 ; Page A01

The boat speeding toward the USS Cole caught Seaman Raymond Mooney's eye, interrupting his reveries in the sweltering heat. But the small craft slowed as it approached the Navy destroyer, and Mooney relaxed when the two men on board waved to him. A garbage scow, he thought, coming to carry away trash.

He waved back.

Standing watch on the deck of the Cole, the 20-year-old sailor's task was to make sure no fuel spilled as the warship refueled in Yemen on Oct. 12. He was unarmed, and he did not radio a warning to the bridge.

"There were all kinds of boats, it's a busy harbor," Mooney said in an interview. "One getting close to you was not unusual."

Eyewitness accounts of the explosion and its immediate aftermath, gathered from sailors who have returned to the United States to recover from their injuries, indicate that the Cole had a good, experienced crew but was unprepared for the apparent terrorist attack that killed 17 sailors and wounded 39 others.

Several crew members said they had been concerned about entering Middle Eastern ports but were told of no particular risk in Yemen. "We're at the mercy of people in Washington making those decisions" about where to refuel, said Chief Petty Officer Keith Lorensen of Chesapeake.

Members of the Cole's crew also said that, to the best of their knowledge, no special measures were taken to protect the ship during the refueling, other than posting armed sailors to patrol the deck.

Unauthorized boats "aren't supposed to get that close to us," said Fireman Apprentice Andrew Nemeth. "We usually trust people."

While perhaps insufficiently wary, the crew of the Cole clearly did not lack courage or resolve. After the small boat with two unidentified passengers blew a 40- by 40-foot hole in the destroyer's side, sailors fought heroically through smoke, seawater and twisted metal to save not only themselves, but also their crew mates and their ship. The 505-foot destroyer was heading to the Persian Gulf to enforce sanctions against Iraq. After passing through the Suez Canal and Red Sea, the Cole pulled into the port of Aden. By 9:30 a.m. local time, it had moored. Refueling began about an hour later.

The explosion at 11:18 a.m. caught the 335 crew members with no warning.

In the ship's laboratory, Petty Officer Kathy Lopez, 31, was testing the fuel being pumped aboard. It had a flash point of 300 degrees, a bit high, but adequate.

Suddenly, Lopez and two co-workers, Ensign Andrew Triplett and Petty Officer Robert D. McTureous, felt the whole ship shake.

"I thought we had blown something up in the lab," she said. "The ship shook for what seemed like an eternity. I remember seeing a red flash, and just this horrible smell, and more smoke than you'd ever seen in your life."

Lopez groped for a breathing apparatus but couldn't find it. Everything was in darkness. Nothing was where it had been.

An enormous hole had opened in the hull. She and McTureous started crawling, looking to escape from the smoke and heat. Then a thought hit her. Where was Mr. Triplett?

Lopez went back to look for the officer in what had been the lab. The floor was gone, and she wasn't even sure what deck she was on. She'd lost her flashlight. She poked around blindly. As she searched for Triplett, she suffered burns to her face and arms and was almost overcome by the smoke. She realized she had to get out.

"I started crawling out with the intention of not dying on that ship," she said. "I didn't think I was going to live, but I just didn't want to die on the ship."

She made it through the hole in the hull, joining McTureous in the water. Floating, slowly becoming aware of the second-degree burns that covered 35 percent of her body, Lopez was struck with a devastating possibility.

"Me and McTureous thought we'd blown the ship up," she said.

#### A Premonition

In the chief's mess, where senior noncommissioned officers eat, Lorensen was thinking the stop in Yemen might not be so bad. The Cole had been planning an 8- to 10-hour layover, but the refueling was going fast. "We were well ahead of schedule," he recalled.

The Cole's executive officer ordered preparations to get underway. Then, Lorensen said, "we kind of hit a lull in the activity."

Some of the chief petty officers decided to watch television. "We sat down, and that was the last thing I remember," Lorensen said.

Richard Costelow, 35, was a newcomer in the chief's mess. The communications whiz had been promoted in September, as the ship sailed toward the Middle East.

As much as he loved the Navy, he was devoted to his three young boys and had been anguished at leaving his family when the ship departed from Norfolk in August. "He didn't want to go," said his wife, Sharla Costelow. "None of us wanted him to go." Costelow had several times told his wife that he did not think he would live past 35, and before leaving his family at Patuxent River Naval Air Station, where they had recently moved, he made an odd request: "Promise me you'll take care of my boys for me, okay?"

Sharla Costelow got upset. "Why would you say something like that? As if I wouldn't?" she remembers saying.

"And he just said, 'No. . . . I don't mean it like that. It's just that . . . well, never mind, just take care of them, okay?'"

"And I said . . . 'You know I will.' "

#### 'Watch Out for Body Parts'

When Lorensen came to, he was under a table 25 feet from where he had been sitting. The walls had collapsed. Electrical cables hung in the air. Some of the chiefs were calling for help, and one who was badly injured yelled frantically.

Lorensen saw a leg lying near him in the rubble. "Watch out for body parts!" he called out. Then he realized that it was his own right leg. It had nearly been severed and was lying underneath his shoulder, with his boot next to his head.

Lorensen managed to pull off his belt and make a tourniquet. He didn't want to yell, knowing he had to conserve strength. But "I was afraid nobody would see me," he recalled.

He reached for his flashlight. It was damaged, but it worked. That light, one of his rescuers later told him, was the only reason they found him.

Petty Officer John Thompson had been called from the engine room to an 11 a.m. meeting in the aft of the ship. When the explosion hit, he thought the Cole had been struck by a missile, according to Thompson's mother, Dee Zander. Thompson worked his way back, looking for his colleagues. The engine room was devastated. Two of Thompson's closest friends were dead.

"That should have been me," he later told his mother.

In the galley, the explosion hit just as lunch was starting. Sailors standing in line were blown against a wall. Others were crushed by kitchen equipment.

Seaman Tim Eerenberg had been washing pots and pans on the port side of the ship but walked 20 feet to chat with a friend. That move may have saved his life, he said. During the explosion, he was hit in the head by a flying object. "When I woke up, my head was ringing," he said Wednesday at a press conference in West Virginia.

"Everything was black."

Fireman Apprentice Nemeth was in the food line. He never heard a sound.

"I remember being thrown up to the ceiling and . . . back down to the deck, and I am not sure what I hit my face on, but after that, it was pretty much kind of a blur," he said. Covered with soot and fuel, his face cut, he staggered out for help.

'I Was Going to Get Home'

On the main deck, the blast from the boat he'd spotted sent shrapnel into Mooney's face and burned his eyes. Swearing, he jumped to a lower deck and ran around offering assistance. "The guys were doing their best to keep the ship afloat," Mooney said.

Lorensen, who was brought to the main deck with other injured sailors, could feel the Cole listing. "We were definitely at risk of losing the ship," he said.

The water that poured into the destroyer threatened to drown some sailors but was a blessing for others, carrying them to higher decks.

Floating alongside the ship, Lopez saw that the blast had come from outside the Cole. The realization that it could not have been a lab accident was a relief.

Sailors on deck had thrown lines down to her and McTureous, but were too busy to hoist them up. She kept being washed back toward the hole in the hull, and she feared getting trapped. Lopez steadied herself by thinking of her husband, her 7-year-old son and her 4-year-old daughter back in Virginia. "I was going to get home to see them," she said. "We floated for two hours, maybe more. Then they pulled us in."

On the main deck, Navy corpsmen were working frantically to save the injured, some of whom had grievous wounds--mangled legs and arms, broken jaws, internal bleeding. One sailor performed CPR on Costelow.

The ship was stabilized, and the injured were evacuated first to a hospital in Yemen, then to Germany. Like many, Lopez keeps thinking of her shipmates still aboard the Cole. "They went days without water," she said. "They had nowhere to sleep. They are the true heroes."

After awakening from heavy sedation, Lopez joined her family in their Hampton home this week. Mooney is in Racine, Wis., with his wife and 7-week-old daughter, who was born after he went to sea. Lorensen was brought in a hospital gurney to a memorial for the Cole's casualties last week in Norfolk. McTureous, along with four other Cole sailors, attended Wednesday's World Series game at Shea Stadium.

Triplett's body was returned to his family for a funeral in Hampton Wednesday.

Costelow was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on Oct. 20, at a funeral attended by his widow and three boys, Dillon, 13, Brady, 5, and Ethan, 4. "If he hadn't made chief, he'd still be alive," said Sharla Costelow. "It's a strange thing."

Before it all happened, before the Cole disaster, Sharla Costelow had hated the Navy for taking her husband away. It's different now. "I can't hate something he loved," she said.