

(2.0CS)

Leadership and Ethics

Title: Accountability of Leadership

All of the intelligence, thought, and energies of the field commander are to be devoted to his command. He is like a sentinel on duty in the face of the enemy. His fundamental duties are clear and precise. It is not only the duty of the outpost commander to speculate or rely on the possibilities of the enemy attacking at some other outpost instead of his own. It is his duty to meet him at his post at any time and to make the best possible fight that can be made against him with the weapons with which he has been supplied.

Secretary of War Henry Stimson

“The Khobar Towers tragedy serves as yet another grim reminder of the increasing vulnerability and likelihood of attack to US forces in garrison both abroad and potentially at home. This research examines the chronology of events leading up to the explosion and offers varied analysis of the conflicting conclusions resulting from the multiple investigative reports which ensued. Were the lessons learned from the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, in October 1983 absorbed? Did they apply? Can future incidents such as this be effectively prevented? At what sacrifice? To what extent do we or should we hold commanders responsible, accountable, or culpable for acts of rogue states while executing their mission especially regarding Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) where requirements may exist to remain politically or culturally inert?”

Lt Col Rob Creamer (USMC) and Lt Col Chris Seat (USAF)

“Two terrorist attacks, two commanders’ investigations by their respective services to determine if they could have done more to protect their forces. One commander deemed to taken reasonable precautions to protect his forces given their assessments of the threat at the time; one failed to do so. One commander is punished by removing his name from a promotion list, the other, the other is not punished and allowed to compete for promotion. What signal does this send to commanders in the field?”

(June 02 – CDR Lippold’s name appears on the Navy O6 promotion list).

Lt Col Edward G. Worley (USAF)

Introduction: On June 25th, 1996, a truck bomb detonated just outside the Air Force barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. The explosion at the Khobar Towers apartment block killed 19 and injured 500. Ultimately, Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen held Brigadier General Terry J. Schwalier, Commander, 4404th Wing (Provisional) responsible for the incident and denied his promotion to Major General, effectively ending his career. Another casualty was the Air Force Chief of Staff. Anticipating Secretary Cohen’s action to deny the promotion of General Schwalier, General Ronald R. Fogleman, retired before the completion of his tour after disagreeing with Secretary Cohen’s conclusions.

Fast-forward four years to October 12, 2000, when terrorists attacked and bombed the destroyer USS Cole in harbor in Aden, Yemen, killing 17 and injuring 42. Following inquiries and a heated debate, Secretary Cohen made the decision not to hold any U.S. Military personnel accountable for exposing the USS Cole to a terrorist attack, but stated that the Cole’s vulnerability was to be shared collectively, and anonymously.

Lesson Objectives: Analyze senior officer accountability and responsibility while evaluating the complexities of command. **JPMELA-1a (SUPPORTED), 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d; SAE – 4.8; DC - Information; CV - Integrity First, Service Before Self, Excellence.**

Desired Learning Outcomes

1. Understand the standards of conduct, responsibility, and accountability for senior officers and commanders.
2. Analyze the lessons of Khobar Towers and the USS Cole as they relate to accountability and responsibility of command.
3. Analyze the impact of political realities and media actions in assessing responsibility and accountability.

Questions for Study and Discussion:

1. How would you compare the handling of the Khobar Towers' investigations with the investigation into the bombing of the USS Cole? Did each commander receive fair and equal treatment? Were Secretary Cohen's actions consistent with respect to these two cases? Why or why not?
2. Where does traditional military service accountability lie? Is it possible – is it appropriate – to find accountability for events like these? Contrast these events to the friendly fire incidents in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.
3. Is this a one mistake Armed Forces? Are there different standards for senior officers, should there be? Do other countries have similar views?
4. When the Federal Building in Oklahoma City was bombed the hue and cry was to bring the perpetrators to justice (accountability), not on who were responsible for preventing the incident (culpability). Where was this collective purpose during the Khobar and Cole incidents?
5. What senior leadership and ethical issues do these two incidents raise? What should be the standard by which we judge a commander's performance?
6. What were the lessons learned from the Khobar Towers and USS Cole tragedies? Will things happen that are beyond your control where you will be accountable?

Assigned Readings:

1. Dow Jones & Company, Inc, "Hobson's Choice: Responsibility and Accountability," *Wall Street Journal*, (14 May 1952), pg. 1, also *Concepts for Air Force Leadership AU-24*, pp. 53.
2. Cohen, Secretary of Defense William S. *Personal Accountability for Force Protection at Khobar Towers*, Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, 31 July 1997, pp.1-9.

3. La Bash, Matt. "How a Terrorist Bombing Destroyed a General's Career." *The Weekly Standard*, Volume 3, No 12 (November 24,1997), pp.1-11.
4. Newman, Richard J., "From Khobar to Cole," *Air Force Magazine*, Volume 84, No. 3 (March 2001), pp.1-5.
5. Perl, Raphael, and O'Rourke, Ronald, "Terrorist Attack on USS Cole: Background and Issues for Congress," *Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress*, Order Code RS20721, 30 January 2001, pp. 1-6.

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