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PREFACE

On 23 October 1983, a truck laden with the equivalent of over 12,000 pounds of TNT crashed through the perimeter of the compound of the U.S. contingent of the Multinational Force at Beirut International Airport, Beirut, Lebanon, penetrated the Battalion Landing Team Headquarters building and detonated. The force of the explosion destroyed the building resulting in the deaths of 241 U.S. military personnel. This report examines the circumstances of that terrorist attack and its immediate aftermath.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport (BIA) Terrorist Act of 23 October 1983 was convened by the Secretary of Defense on 7 November 1983 to conduct an independent inquiry into the 23 October 1983 terrorist attack on the Marine Battalion Landing Team (BLT) Headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon. The Commission examined the mission of the U.S. Marines assigned to the Multinational Force, the rules of engagement governing their conduct, the responsiveness of the chain of command, the intelligence support, the security measures in place before and after the attack, the attack itself, and the adequacy of casualty handling procedures.

The Commission traveled to Lebanon, Israel, Spain, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom, interviewed over 125 witnesses ranging from national policy makers to Lebanese Armed Forces privates, and reviewed extensive documentation from Washington agencies, including the Department of State, Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Council and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as all echelons of the operational chain of command and certain elements of the Department of the Navy administrative chain of command.

The Commission focused on the security of the U.S. contingent of the Multinational Force through 30 November 1983. Although briefed on some security aspects of other U.S. military elements in Lebanon, the Commission came to no definitive conclusions or recommendations as to those elements.

The Commission was composed of Admiral Robert L. J. Long, USN, (Ret), Chairman; the Honorable Robert J. Murray; Lieutenant General Lawrence F. Snowden, USMC, (Ret), Lieutenant General Eugene F. Tighe, Jr, USAF, (Ret), and Lieutenant General Joseph T. Palastra, Jr, USA.

Background

U.S. military forces were inserted into Lebanon on 29 September 1982 as part of a Multinational Force composed of U.S., French, Italian and, somewhat later, British Forces. The mission of the U.S. contingent of the Multinational Force (USMNF) was to establish an environment that would facilitate the withdrawal of foreign military forces from Lebanon and to assist the Lebanese Government and the

Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in establishing sovereignty and authority over the Beirut area. Initially, the USMNF was warmly welcomed by the local populace. The environment was essentially benign and continued that way into the spring of 1983. The operation was intended to be of short duration.

The destruction of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut on 18 April 1983 was indicative of the extent of the deterioration of the political/military situation in Lebanon that had occurred since the arrival of the USMNF. By August 1983, the LAF were engaged in direct conflict with factional militias and USMNF positions at Beirut International Airport began receiving hostile fire. Attacks against the Multinational Force in the form of car bombs and sniper fire increased in frequency. By September, the LAF were locked in combat for control of the high ground overlooking Beirut International Airport and U.S. Naval gunfire was used in support of the LAF at Suq-Al-Gharb after determination by the National Security Council that LAF retention of Suq-Al-Gharb was essential to the security of USMNF positions at Beirut International Airport.

Intelligence support for the USMNF provided a broad spectrum of coverage of possible threats. Between May and November 1983, over 100 intelligence reports warning of terrorist car bomb attacks were received by the USMNF. Those warnings provided little specific information on how and when a threat might be carried out. From August 1983 to the 23 October attack, the USMNF was virtually flooded with terrorist attack warnings.

On October 1983, a large truck laden with the explosive equivalent of over 12,000 pounds of TNT crashed through the perimeter of the USMNF compound at Beirut International Airport, penetrated the Battalion Landing Team Headquarters building and detonated. The force of the explosion destroyed the building, resulting in the deaths of 241 U.S. military personnel.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Forensic Laboratory described the terrorist bomb as the largest conventional blast ever seen by the FBI's forensic explosive experts. Based upon the FBI analysis of the bomb that destroyed the U.S. Embassy on 18 April 1983, and the FBI preliminary findings on the bomb used on 23 October 1983, the Commission believes that the explosive equivalent of the latter device was of such magnitude that major damage to the

Battalion Landing Team Headquarters building and significant casualties would probably have resulted even if the terrorist truck had not penetrated the USMNF defensive perimeter but had detonated in the roadway some 330 feet from the building.

Summary of General Observations.

1. Terrorism.

The Commission believes that the most important message it can bring to the Secretary of Defense is that the 23 October 1983 attack on the Marine Battalion Landing Team Headquarters in Beirut was tantamount to an act of war using the medium of terrorism. Terrorist warfare, sponsored by sovereign states or organized political entities to achieve political objectives, is a threat to the United States that is increasing at an alarming rate. The 23 October catastrophe underscores the fact that terrorist warfare can have significant political impact and demonstrates that the United States, and specifically the Department of Defense, is inadequately prepared to deal with this threat. Much needs to be done, on an urgent basis, to prepare U.S. military forces to defend against and counter terrorist warfare.

2. Performance of the USMNF.

The USMNF was assigned the unique and difficult task of maintaining a peaceful presence in an increasingly hostile environment. United States military personnel assigned or attached to the USMNF performed superbly, incurring great personal risk to accomplish their assigned tasks. In the aftermath of the attack of 23 October 1983, U.S. military personnel performed selfless and often heroic acts to assist in the extraction of their wounded and dead comrades from the rubble and to evacuate the injured. The Commission has the highest admiration for the manner in which U.S. military personnel responded to this catastrophe.

3. Security following the 23 October 1983 Attack.

The security posture of the USMNF subsequent to the 23 October 1983 attack was examined closely by the Commission. A series of actions was initiated by the chain of command to enhance the security of the USMNF, and reduce the vulnerability of the USMNF to further catastrophic losses. However, the security measures implemented or planned for implementation as of 30 November 1983 were not adequate to

prevent continuing significant attrition of USMNF personnel.

4. Intelligence Support.

Even the best of intelligence will not guarantee the security of any military position. However, specific data on the terrorist threats to the USMNF, data which could best be provided by carefully trained intelligence agents, could have enabled the USMNF Commander to better prepare his force and facilities to blunt the effectiveness of a suicidal vehicle attack of great explosive force.

The USMNF commander did not have effective U.S. Human Intelligence (HUMINT) support. The paucity of U.S. controlled HUMINT is partly due to U.S. policy decisions to reduce HUMINT collection worldwide. The U.S. has a HUMINT capability commensurate with the resources and time that has been spent to acquire it. The lesson of Beirut is that we must have better HUMINT to support military planning and operations. We see here a critical repetition of a long line of similar lessons learned during crisis situations in many other parts of the world.

5. Casualty Handling Procedures.

The Commission examined the adequacy of casualty handling procedures, with the advice and support of professional medical staff.

The Commission found that, following the initial, understandable confusion, the response of the U.S., Lebanese and Italian personnel in providing immediate on-scene medical care was professional and, indeed, heroic. The CTF 61/62 Mass Casualty Plan was quickly implemented: triage and treatment sites were established ashore, and medical support from afloat units was transported to the scene. Evacuation aircraft were requested.

Within thirty minutes of the explosion the British offered the use of their hospital at the Royal Air Force Base in Akrotiri, Cyprus, and this offer was accepted by CTF 61. The additional British offer of medical evacuation aircraft was also accepted. Both offers proved invaluable.

Offers of medical assistance from France and Israel were subsequently received but were deemed unnecessary because the medical capabilities organic to CTF 61 were already operational and functioning adequately, the hospital at Akrotiri was by then mobilized and ready, and sufficient U.S. and Royal Air Force medical evacuation aircraft were

enroute. The Commission found no evidence to indicate any considerations but the desire to provide immediate, professional treatment for the wounded influenced decisions regarding these offers of outside assistance.

The Commission found no evidence to indicate that deaths among the wounded in action resulted from inadequate or inappropriate care during evacuation to hospitals.

The Commission did find several serious problem areas in the evacuation of casualties to U.S. military hospitals in Germany. Actions were taken that resulted in some seriously wounded patients being delayed about four hours in arriving at hospital facilities. The Commission believes that these actions warrant further investigation. The Commission found no evidence, however, that any patient was adversely affected by these delays.

6. Accountability.

The Commission holds the view that military commanders are responsible for the performance of their subordinates. The commander can delegate some or all of his authority to his subordinates, but he cannot delegate his responsibility for the performance of the forces he commands. In that sense, the responsibility of military command is absolute. This view of command authority and responsibility guided the Commission in its analysis of the effectiveness of the exercise of command authority and responsibility of the chain of command charged with the security and performance of the USMNF.

The Commission found that the combination of a large volume of unfulfilled threat warnings and perceived and real pressure to accomplish a unique and difficult mission contributed significantly to the decisions of the Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) and Battalion Landing Team (BLT) Commanders regarding the security of their force. Nevertheless, the Commission found that the security measures in effect in the MAU compound were neither commensurate with the increasing level of threat confronting the USMNF nor sufficient to preclude catastrophic losses such as those that were suffered on the morning of 23 October 1983. The Commission further found that while it may have appeared to be an appropriate response to the indirect fire being received, the decision to billet approximately one-quarter of the BLT in a single structure contributed to the catastrophic loss of life.

The Commission found that the BLT Commander must take

responsibility for the concentration of approximately 350 members of his command in the BLT Headquarters building thereby providing a lucrative target for attack. Further, the BLT Commander modified prescribed alert procedures, thereby degrading security of the compound.

The Commission also found that the MAU Commander shares the responsibility for the catastrophic losses in that he condoned the concentration of personnel in the BLT Headquarters building, concurred in the relaxation of prescribed alert procedures, and emphasized safety over security in directing that sentries on Posts 4, 5, 6, and 7 would not load their weapons.

The Commission found further that the USCINCEUR operational chain of command shares in the responsibility for the events of 23 October 1983.

Having reached the foregoing conclusions, the Commission further notes that although it found the entire USCINCEUR chain of command, down to and including the BLT Commander, to be at fault, it also found that there was a series of circumstances beyond the control of these commanders that influenced their judgement and their actions relating to the security of the USMNF.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All conclusions and recommendations of the Commission from each substantive part of this report are presented below.

1. PART ONE - THE MILITARY MISSION

A. Mission Development and Execution

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that the "presence" mission was not interpreted the same by all levels of the chain of command and that perceptual differences regarding that mission, including the responsibility of the USMNF for the security of Beirut International Airport, should have been recognized and corrected by the chain of command.

B. The Expanding Military Role

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that U.S. decisions as regards Lebanon taken over the past fifteen months have been, to a large degree, characterized by an emphasis on military options and the expansion of the U.S. military role, notwithstanding the fact that the conditions upon which the security of the USMNF were based continued to deteriorate as progress toward a diplomatic solution slowed. The Commission further concludes that these decisions may have been taken without clear recognition that these initial conditions had dramatically changed and that the expansion of our military involvement in Lebanon greatly increased the risk to, and adversely impacted upon the security of, the USMNF. The Commission therefore concludes that there is an urgent need for reassessment of alternative means to achieve U.S. objectives in Lebanon and at the same time reduce the risk to the USMNF.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense continue to urge that the National Security Council undertake a reexamination of alternative means of achieving U.S. objectives in Lebanon, to include a comprehensive assessment of the military security options being developed by the chain of command and a more vigorous and demanding approach to pursuing diplomatic alternatives.

2. PART TWO - RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (ROE)

A. ROE Implementation

(1) Conclusions:

(a) The Commission concludes that a single set of ROE providing specific guidance for countering the type of vehicular terrorist attacks that destroyed the U.S. Embassy on 18 April 1983 and the BLT Headquarters building on 23 October 1983 had not been provided to, nor implemented by, the Marine Amphibious Unit Commander.

(b) The Commission concludes that the mission statement, the original ROE, and the implementation in May 1983 of dual "Blue Card - White Card" ROE contributed to a mind-set that detracted from the readiness of the USMNF to respond to the terrorist threat which materialized on 23 October 1983.

3. PART THREE - THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

A. Exercise of Command Responsibility by the Chain of Command Prior to 23 October 1983

(1) Conclusions:

(a) The Commission is fully aware that the entire chain of command was heavily involved in the planning for, and support of, the USMNF. The Commission concludes, however, that USCINCEUR, CINCUSNAVEUR, COMSIXTHFLT and CTF 61 did not initiate actions to ensure the security of the USMNF in light of the deteriorating political/military situation in Lebanon. The Commission found a lack of effective command supervision of the USMNF security posture prior to 23 October 1983.

(b) The Commission concludes that the failure of the operational chain of command to correct or amend the defensive posture of the USMNF constituted tacit approval of the security measures and procedures in force at the BLT Headquarters building on 23 October 1983.

(c) The Commission further concludes that although it finds the USCINCEUR operational chain of command at fault, it also finds that there was a series of circumstances beyond the control of these commands that influenced their judgement and their actions relating to the security of the USMNF.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense take whatever administrative or disciplinary action he deems appropriate, citing the failure of the USCINCEUR operational chain of command to monitor and supervise effectively the security measures and procedures employed by the USMNF on 23 October 1983.

4. PART FOUR - INTELLIGENCE

A. Intelligence Support

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that although the USMNF Commander received a large volume of intelligence warnings concerning potential terrorist threats prior to 23 October 1983, he was not provided with the timely intelligence, tailored to his specific operational needs, that was necessary to defend against the broad spectrum of threats he faced.

(b) The Commission further concludes that the HUMINT support to the USMNF Commander was ineffective, being neither precise nor tailored to his needs. The Commission believes that the paucity of U.S. controlled HUMINT provided to the USMNF Commander is in large part due to policy decisions which have resulted in a U.S. HUMINT capability commensurate with the resources and time that have been spent to acquire it.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense establish an all-source fusion center, which would tailor and focus all-source intelligence support to U.S. military commanders involved in military operations in areas of high threat, conflict or crisis.

(b) The Commission further recommends that the Secretary of Defense take steps to establish a joint CIA/DOD examination of policy and resource alternatives to immediately improve HUMINT support to the USMNF contingent in Lebanon and other areas of potential conflict which would involve U.S. military operating forces.

5. PART FIVE - PRE-ATTACK SECURITY

A. Command Responsibility for the Security of the 24th MAU and BLT 1/8 Prior to 23 October 1983

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The combination of a large volume of specific threat warnings that never materialized and the perceived and real pressure to accomplish a unique and difficult mission contributed significantly to the decisions of the MAU and BLT Commanders regarding the security of their force. Nevertheless, the Commission concludes that the security measures in effect in the MAU compound were neither commensurate with the increasing level of threat confronting the USMNF nor sufficient to preclude catastrophic losses such as those that were suffered on the morning of 23 October 1983. The Commission further concludes that while it may have appeared to be an appropriate response to the indirect fire being received, the decision to billet approximately one quarter of the BLT in a single structure contributed to the catastrophic loss of life.

(b) The Commission concludes that the BLT

Commander must take responsibility for the concentration of approximately 350 members of his command in the BLT Headquarters building, thereby providing a lucrative target for attack. Further, the BLT Commander modified prescribed alert procedures, thereby degrading security of the compound.

(c) The Commission also concludes that the MAU Commander shares the responsibility for the catastrophic losses in that he condoned the concentration of personnel in the BLT Headquarters building, concurred in the modification of prescribed alert procedures, and emphasized safety over security in directing that sentries on Posts 4, 5, 6, and 7 would not load their weapons.

(d) The Commission further concludes that although it finds the BLT and MAU Commanders to be at fault, it also finds that there was a series of circumstances beyond their control that influenced their judgement and their actions relating to the security of the USMNF.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense take whatever administrative or disciplinary action he deems appropriate, citing the failure of the BLT and MAU Commanders to take the security measures necessary to preclude the catastrophic loss of life in the attack on 23 October 1983.

6. PART SEVEN - POST-ATTACK SECURITY

A. Redeployment, Dispersal and Physical Barriers

(1) Conclusions:

(a) The Commission concludes that the security measures taken since 23 October 1983 have reduced the vulnerability of the USMNF to catastrophic losses. The Commission also concludes, however, that the security measures implemented or planned for implementation for the USMNF as of 30 November 1983, were not adequate to prevent continuing significant attrition of the force.

(b) The Commission recognizes that the current disposition of USMNF forces may, after careful examination, prove to be the best available option. The Commission concludes, however, that a comprehensive set of alternatives should be immediately prepared and presented to the National Security Council.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) Recognizing that the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have been actively reassessing the increased vulnerability of the USMNF as the political/military environment in Lebanon has changed, the Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the operational chain of command to continue to develop alternative military options for accomplishing the mission of the USMNF while reducing the risk to the force.

7. PART EIGHT - CASUALTY HANDLING

A. On-Scene Medical Care

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that the speed with which the on-scene U.S. military personnel reacted to rescue their comrades trapped in the devastated building and to render medical care was nothing short of heroic. The rapid response by Italian and Lebanese medical personnel was invaluable.

B. Aeromedical Evacuation/Casualty Distribution

(1) Conclusions:

(a) The Commission found no evidence that any of the wounded died or received improper medical care as a result of the evacuation or casualty distribution procedures. Nevertheless, the Commission concludes that overall medical support planning in the European theater was deficient and that there was an insufficient number of experienced medical planning staff officers in the USCINCEUR chain of command.

(b) The Commission found that the evacuation of the seriously wounded to U.S. hospitals in Germany, a transit of more than four hours, rather than to the British hospital in Akrotiri, Cyprus, a transit of one hour, appears to have increased the risk to those patients. Similarly, the Commission found that the subsequent decision to land the aircraft at Rhein Main rather than Ramstein, Germany, may have increased the risk to the most seriously wounded. In both instances, however, the Commission has no evidence that there was an adverse medical impact on the patients.

(2) Recommendations:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in coordination with the Services, to review medical plans and staffing of each echelon of the operational and administrative chains of command to ensure appropriate and adequate medical support for the USMNF.

(b) The Commission further recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct USCINCEUR to conduct an investigation of the decisions made regarding the destination of aeromedical evacuation aircraft and the distribution of casualties on 23 October 1983.

C. Definitive Medical Care

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that the definitive medical care provided the wounded at the various treatment facilities was excellent, and that as of 30 November 1983, there is no evidence of any mortality or morbidity resulting from inappropriate or insufficient medical care.

D. Israeli Offer of Medical Assistance

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission found no evidence that any factor other than the desire to provide immediate, professional treatment for the wounded influenced decisions regarding the Israeli offer; all offers of assistance by Israel were promptly and properly referred to the theater and on-scene commanders. At the time the initial Israeli offer was reviewed by CTF 61, it was deemed not necessary because the medical capabilities organic to CTF 61 were operational and functioning adequately, the RAF hospital at Akrotiri was mobilized and ready, and sufficient U.S. and RAF medical evacuation aircraft were enroute.

E. Identification of the Dead

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that the process for identification of the dead following the 23 October 1983 catastrophe was conducted very efficiently and professionally, despite the complications caused by the destruction and/or absence of identification data.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the creation of duplicate medical/dental records, and assure the availability of fingerprint files, for all military personnel. The Commission further recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Service Secretaries to develop jointly improved, state-of-the-art identification tags for all military personnel.

8. PART NINE - MILITARY RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

A. A Terrorist Act

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that the 23 October 1983 bombing of the BLT Headquarters building was a terrorist act sponsored by sovereign states or organized political entities for the purpose of defeating U.S. objectives in Lebanon.

B. International Terrorism

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that international terrorist acts endemic to the Middle East are indicative of an alarming world-wide phenomenon that poses an increasing threat to U.S. personnel and facilities.

C. Terrorism as a Mode of Warfare

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that state sponsored terrorism is an important part of the spectrum of warfare and that adequate response to this increasing threat requires an active national policy which seeks to deter attack or reduce its effectiveness. The Commission further concludes that this policy needs to be supported by political and diplomatic actions and by a wide range of timely military response capabilities.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Joint Chiefs of Staff to develop a broad range of appropriate military responses to

terrorism for review, along with political and diplomatic actions, by the National Security Council.

D. Military Preparedness

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that the USMNF was not trained, organized, staffed, or supported to deal effectively with the terrorist threat in Lebanon. The Commission further concludes that much needs to be done to prepare U.S. military forces to defend against and counter terrorism.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the development of doctrine, planning, organization, force structure, education and training necessary to defend against and counter terrorism.

FOREWORD

I. THE REPORT

A. Organization.

Organization of the report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983 into ten parts reflects the Commission's conviction that a thorough understanding of the circumstances surrounding the bombing of the BLT Headquarters on 23 October 1983 requires comprehension of a number of separate, but closely related, substantive areas. The order of presentation of the several parts is designed to provide a logical progression of information.

PART ONE of the report addresses the development of the mission assigned to the USMNF, assesses mission clarity and analyzes the continued validity of the assumptions upon which the mission was premised. PART TWO addresses the adequacy of the rules of engagement that governed the execution of the mission. PART THREE outlines the chain of command that was tasked with the accomplishment of the military mission and assesses its responsiveness to the security requirements of the USMNF in the changing threat environment. PART FOUR examines the threat to the USMNF, both before and after the attack, and assesses the adequacy of the intelligence provided to the USMNF commander. PART FIVE analyzes the security measures that were in force prior to the attack. PART SIX provides a comprehensive recapitulation of the tragic events of 23 October 1983. PART SEVEN describes the security measures instituted subsequent to the bombing and assesses their adequacy. PART EIGHT is a reconstruction and evaluation of on-scene casualty handling procedures, aeromedical evacuation and definitive medical care provided to the victims of the attack. PART EIGHT also addresses the circumstances surrounding the Israeli offer of medical assistance and examines the basis for its non-acceptance. PART NINE addresses the 23 October 1983 bombing in the context of

international terrorism and assesses the readiness of U.S. military forces to cope with the terrorist threat. PART TEN lists the Commission's major conclusions and recommendations.

PARTS ONE through NINE consist of one or more subparts providing a recitation of the Commission's principal findings of fact in that substantive area, a discussion of the significance of those findings, and, as appropriate, conclusions and recommendations.

B. Philosophy.

In preparing this report, the Commission analyzed those factors bearing upon the security of the USMNF in Lebanon in general, and the security of the BLT Headquarters building in particular. The Commission began with the premise that U.S. participation in the Multinational Force was designed to support the efforts of the United States and its allies to facilitate the withdrawal of foreign military forces from Lebanon and to assist the Lebanese Government in establishing sovereignty and authority over the Beirut area. The Commission did not question the political decision to insert the Marines into Lebanon and did not address the political necessity of their continued participation in the Multinational Force following the 23 October 1983 terrorist attack. Although those political judgements are beyond the purview of the Commission's Charter, and are not addressed in the report, that fact did not impede the work of the Commission in examining the impact of those policy decisions on the security of the USMNF.

The Commission reviewed the responsiveness of the military chain of command as it pertained to the security requirements of the USMNF. The Commission did not conduct an administrative inspection of any headquarters element during the review process.

The Commission's focus was on the bombing of 23 October 1983 and the security of the USMNF both prior to and subsequent to that catastrophic event. The security of off-shore supporting forces was not reviewed in depth by the

Commission. The security of other American personnel in Lebanon was not considered, being outside the Commission's Charter.

II. THE COMMISSION

A. Charter.

The five member DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983 was established by the Secretary of Defense on 7 November 1983 to conduct a thorough and independent inquiry into all of the facts and circumstances surrounding the 23 October 1983 terrorist bomb attack on the Marine Battalion Landing Team (BLT) Headquarters at the Beirut International Airport (BIA).

The Commission was established pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 92-463) and was governed in its proceedings by Executive Order 12024 and implementing General Services Administration and Department of Defense regulations. The Charter provided that the advisory function of the Commission was to be completed within 90 days.

The Commission was tasked to examine the rules of engagement in force and the security measures in place at the time of the attack. The Commission was further charged to assess the adequacy of the security measures established subsequent to the explosion and to report findings of facts, opinions, and recommendations as to any changes or future actions.

The Charter specified that the Commission was to be granted access to all information pertinent to its inquiry and authorized the Commission to visit such places as it deemed necessary to accomplish its objective.

The Secretary of Defense directed the Commission to interpret its Charter in the broadest possible manner and tasked the Department of Defense, including the Services, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Defense Agencies, to provide such overall support and assistance as the Commission might require.

B. Members.

The Commission was composed of the following five members:

ADMIRAL ROBERT L. J. LONG, U.S. NAVY (Ret)
CHAIRMAN

Admiral Long retired as the Commander in Chief Pacific in July 1983, after 40 years of commissioned service which included combat duty in World War II and the Vietnam conflict. He has commanded the USS Sea Leopard; USS Patrick Henry; USS Casimir Pulaski; the Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; Submarines, Allied Command; and Submarine Force, Western Atlantic Area. Admiral Long has served as Executive Assistant and Naval Aide to the Under Secretary of the Navy; Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Submarine Warfare); and Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

HONORABLE ROBERT J. MURRAY

Mr. Murray is on the faculty at Harvard University. He is a former Under Secretary of the Navy and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) with responsibilities for U.S. policy toward the Middle East. Mr. Murray has served in various positions in the Defense and State Departments since 1961.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOSEPH T. PALASTRA, JR., U.S. ARMY

Lieutenant General Palastra is currently the Deputy Commander in Chief, and Chief of Staff, United States Pacific Command. The Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Command is responsible to the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense, through the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and is the U.S. military representative for collective defense arrangements in the Pacific Theater. Lieutenant General Palastra's 29 years of commissioned service include multiple combat tours in Vietnam, among them duty as an Infantry Battalion Commander.

During the past eight years, Lieutenant General Palastra has commanded an air assault infantry brigade and a mechanized infantry division. He has served as Senior Military Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL LAWRENCE F. SNOWDEN, U.S. MARINE CORPS (Ret)

Lieutenant General Snowden retired as Chief of Staff, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, in May 1979, after 37 years of active service which included combat duty in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Lieutenant General Snowden served as a regimental commander in Vietnam; Director of the Marine Corps Development Center; Chief of Staff, U.S. Forces, Japan; and Operations Deputy of the Marine Corps with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Upon his retirement, Lieutenant General Snowden joined Hughes Aircraft International Service Company in Tokyo where he is currently Vice President, Far East Area.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL EUGENE F. TIGHE, JR., USAF (Ret)

Lieutenant General Tighe retired from the Air Force and as Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency on 1 September 1981 after 39 years of Active and Reserve USAF and U.S. Army duty, which included service in the Southwest Pacific, Korea and Vietnam. Lieutenant General Tighe served as Director, Defense Intelligence Agency for 4 years and as Deputy Director and Acting Director for 2 years. He also held the senior intelligence position at Headquarters, United States Air Force; Strategic Air Command; the U.S. Pacific Command; and Headquarters, Pacific Air Force.

A complete biography of each Commission Member is provided in Annex A.

C. METHODOLOGY.

The Commission convened on 7 November 1983 in Washington, D.C., and developed its plan for conducting the inquiry. Liaison was established by the Chairman with key members of Congress to ascertain any particular areas of interest that they considered useful for the Commission to

explore.

The Commission assembled a staff of experts to advise the Commission in the various technical areas that would be encountered. Experts in the fields of intelligence, planning, operations, special warfare, terrorism, command relations, medicine, and international law were assigned as full time staff assistants. Liaison was also established with non-DOD governmental agencies which were involved in, or had special knowledge of, the events leading up to and following the 23 October 1983 terrorist attack.

The substantive information to be gathered necessarily involved highly classified matters of national security concern. Because these matters could not reasonably be segregated into separate classified categories, all witnesses were interviewed in closed session. Principal witnesses with direct knowledge of the circumstances leading to the formulation of the Multinational Force, the development or execution of the mission of the USMNF, or the events of the October attack and its aftermath, were interviewed by the full Commission. Collateral witnesses were interviewed by individual Commission members accompanied by appropriate staff experts.

The Commission and staff assistants were authorized access to all levels of classified information.

The Commission visited USCINCEUR Headquarters in Stuttgart; CINCUSNAVEUR Headquarters in London; COMSIXTHFLT in USS PUGET SOUND at Gaeta, Italy; CTF 61 in USS AUSTIN offshore Lebanon; and CTF 62 ashore in Beirut. Commission members and staff also visited Tel Aviv, Israel; Rota, Spain; Akrotiri, Cyprus; and Wiesbaden, Germany. During these visits, the Commission received command presentations and technical briefings, interviewed witnesses and acquired written documentation of the events leading up to and following the 23 October 1983 attack.

The Commission arrived in Beirut before the rotation of the 24th MAU from Lebanon. The Commission toured USMNF positions on the perimeter of Beirut International Airport

and inspected the rubble of the BLT Headquarters building. Eyewitnesses to the explosion were interviewed in depth. The Commission also met with Ambassador Bartholomew and members of the U.S. Embassy staff; the Commanding General of the Lebanese Armed Forces; and the French, Italian and British MNF Commanders.

The Commission approach to the inquiry was to avoid reaching any preliminary conclusions until the fact finding portion of the mission was completed. The Commission recognized, however, that some of its preliminary findings were time-sensitive, and, upon the Commission's return from Beirut, provided the Secretary of Defense with a memorandum regarding existing security procedures for the USMNF.

A second memorandum was forwarded to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommending that the Federal Bureau of Investigation's comprehensive briefing on the nature of the explosive devices used in the terrorist attacks on the United States Embassy Beirut and the BLT Headquarters building be received by the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the earliest opportunity.

All written documentation, including planning documents, operational orders, witness interview summaries, Congressional hearings, media reports, technical analyses and after action reports, was assembled and reviewed by the Commission members or staff assistants. All principals involved in the planning and execution of the USMNF mission, and in the events that preceded and followed the explosion, were interviewed.

The analytical work of the Commission was accomplished by first reviewing all available material in each area of inquiry and then compiling a list of principal findings related to that area. Following discussion of the principal findings, conclusions and recommendations were postulated by individual Commission members and discussed in detail. Using this deliberative process, the Commission reached agreement on each conclusion and recommendation.

BACKGROUND

I. LEBANON OVERVIEW

A. Geography and History.

Lebanon, a country approximately the size of Connecticut, contains three million people, seventeen officially recognized religious sects, two foreign armies of occupation, four national contingents of a multinational force, seven national contributors to a United Nations peace-keeping force, and some two dozen extralegal militias. Over 100,000 people have been killed in hostilities in Lebanon over the past eight years, including the 241 U.S. military personnel that died as a result of the terrorist attack on 23 October 1983. It is a country beset with virtually every unresolved dispute afflicting the peoples of the Middle East. Lebanon has become a battleground where armed Lebanese factions simultaneously manipulate and are manipulated by the foreign forces surrounding them. If Syrians and Iraqis wish to kill one another, they do so in Lebanon. If Israelis and Palestinians wish to fight over the land they both claim, they do so in Lebanon. If terrorists of any political persuasion wish to kill and maim American citizens, it is convenient for them to do so in Lebanon. In a country where criminals involved in indiscriminate killing, armed robbery, extortion, and kidnapping issue political manifestos and hold press conferences, there has been no shortage of indigenous surrogates willing to do the bidding of foreign governments seeking to exploit the opportunities presented by anarchy in Lebanon.

Yet a picture of Lebanon painted in these grim colors alone would not be complete. Lebanese of all religions have emigrated to countries as widely separated as the United States, Brazil, Australia, and the Ivory Coast, where they have enriched the arts, sciences, and economies of their adopted nations. Lebanon has, notwithstanding the events of the past eight years, kept alive the principle and practice of academic freedom in such institutions as American

University Beirut and Saint Joseph University. No one who visits Lebanon can resist admiring the dignity and resiliency of the Lebanese people and their determination to survive.

There is no sense of national identity that unites all Lebanese or even a majority of the citizenry. What it means to be Lebanese is often interpreted in radically different ways by, for instance, a Sunni Muslim living in Tripoli, a Maronite Christian from Brummana, a Greek Orthodox Christian from Beirut, a Druze from Kafr Nabrakh, or a Shiite Muslim from Nabatiyah. This is because the Lebanon of antiquity was Mount Lebanon, the highland chain running north-south through the center of the country, where Maronite Catholicism had over 1,000 years of relative isolation to develop its own national identity. In 1920, France, which acquired part of the Levant from the defeated Ottoman Empire, added non-Maronite territory to Mount Lebanon in order to create Greater Lebanon, a new state in which Maronites comprised but 30 percent of the population rather than the 70 percent of Mount Lebanon that they had previously constituted.

B. Religious and Political Factions.

Most politically-conscious non-Maronites, especially Sunni Muslims and Greek Orthodox Christians, were opposed to integration into the new state. The idea of being ruled by Maronites was particularly objectionable to the Sunni Muslims who had been preeminent in the Ottoman Empire; hence their attraction to the concept of a unified Greater Syria. When the French were prepared to leave Lebanon, however, the Maronite and Sunni elites were ready to strike a deal. The unwritten "National Pact" of 1943 stipulated that the Maronites would refrain from invoking Western intervention, the Sunnis would refrain from seeking unification with Syria, and Lebanon's political business would be premised on the allocation of governmental positions and parliamentary seats on the basis of the sectarian balance reflected in the 1932 census, i.e. confessionalism. The National Pact set forth what Lebanon was not. It was not an extension of Europe, and it was not part of a pan-Arab state. It did not

establish in positive terms what Lebanon was. As a Lebanese journalist once put it, "Two negations do not make a nation."

Much has been made of the outward manifestations of Lebanese confessionalism. The President of the Republic and Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief are always Maronites; the Prime Minister must be a Sunni; the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies will be a Shiite; and for every five non-Christian deputies there must be six Christians. This allocation reflects the recognition of the founders of independent Lebanon that sectarian cooperation was the key to the country's survival. Lebanese confessionalism was the mechanism which they hoped would facilitate compromise.

The central government rested not only on confessionalism, but on localism as well. Political power in Lebanon traditionally resides in the hands of local power brokers, i.e. Maronite populists, Druze and Shiite feudalists, and Sunni urban bosses. These local leaders draw their political power from grass-roots organizations based on sectarian and clan relationships. Local leaders periodically have come together in Beirut to elect presidents and form governments, but none of them are prepared to allow the central government to penetrate their constituencies unless it is to deliver a service for which they have arranged and for which they will take credit. They guard their turf jealously against unwanted encroachments by the central government, whether it is in the form of the civilian bureaucracy or the military. If one of their Maronite number becomes President, the rest tend to coalesce in order to limit his power. The basic institutions of government, i.e the army, the judiciary and the bureaucracy, are deliberately kept weak in order to confirm the government's dependency. If the local chiefs argue among themselves, especially over issues that tend to pit the major sects against one other, the central government simply stops functioning.

This, in essence, is exactly what has happened. Lebanon had survived earlier crises, but the Arab-Israeli confrontation proved to be a fatal overload for this fragile

system. Over 100,000 Palestinian refugees fled to Lebanon in 1948, and over time an armed "state within a state" grew on Lebanese territory, a process accelerated by the arrival from Jordan in 1971 of several thousand fighters and the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The PLO fired and raided across the border into Israel, and shored up its position in Lebanon by forming alliances with dissident Lebanese groups which hoped to harness Palestinian firepower to the cause of social revolution. This in turn encouraged the more conservative elements of Lebanese society, mainly from the Maronite community, to organize militarily. From 1968 on, the PLO-Israeli confrontation in southern Lebanon caused the progressive polarization of the Lebanese along confessional lines, with Maronite Christians in particular opposing the PLO presence and Muslims in general supporting it. It also caused many of the local power brokers to fall back onto their own resources and to seek support from foreign sources. The central government, deprived of its lifeblood, was left debilitated. In the civil warfare of 1975-1976 it ceased to exist in all but name.

Syria had historically supported the PLO and its Lebanese allies but in June 1976, fearing that a revolutionary regime in Beirut would drag it into a war with Israel, intervened on behalf of the Maronite militias. A stalemate was created, and from 1976 until June 1982 Lebanon lay crippled under the weight of de facto partition and partial occupation by Syria. The basic issues underlying the Lebanese civil war were left unresolved.

On 6 June 1982, Israeli forces launched a massive operation against Palestinian forces based in southern Lebanon, an invasion which brought the Israel Defense Forces to the outskirts of Beirut within three days. The three considerations that prompted Israel's assault were (1) putting an end to the military capabilities and political independence of the PLO; (2) putting Israeli population centers in Galilee beyond the threat of hostile actions emanating from Lebanon; and (3) breaking the internal Lebanese political paralysis in a manner that would facilitate official relations between Israel and Lebanon.

Notwithstanding the evacuation of PLO and Syrian forces from Beirut - an event made possible by American diplomacy backed by U.S. Marines acting as part of a Multinational Force - Lebanon slipped back into chaos and anarchy. No sooner had the PLO departed Beirut than the new Lebanese President-Elect, Bashir Gemayel, was assassinated. That tragedy was followed by the massacre of hundreds of unarmed civilians, Lebanese as well as Palestinians, by Christian militia elements in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps; an atrocity which, along with similar acts perpetrated by all sides, has come to symbolize the nature of sectarian hatred in Lebanon. This bloodletting, as well as the outbreak of fighting between Druze and Maronite militias in the mountainous Shuf area overlooking Beirut, demonstrated that the reconciliation long hoped for by most ordinary Lebanese was not at hand. Exacerbating the political ills that have afflicted Lebanon over the past several years, a new element of instability and violence has been added: the ability of Khomeini's Iran to mobilize a small, but violently extremist portion of the Lebanese Shiite community against the government and the LAF.

In summary, the Government of Lebanon is the creature of confessionalism and localism. Without consensus, any controversial stand taken by the central government will be labeled as sectarian favoritism by those who oppose it.

II. MAJOR EVENTS.

A. June 1982 - October 1983.

The 6 June 1982 Israeli invasion into Lebanese territory reached the outskirts of Beirut within three days, and by 14 June the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) had linked up with the Christian Lebanese Forces (LF) militia in East Beirut. The 32d U.S. Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) deployed to waters off Lebanon and on 23 June 1982 conducted the successful evacuation of U.S. citizens from the port city of Juniyah. On 28 June, the LF began moving up the Beirut-Damascus Highway past Jumhur, and on 29 June entered Alayh, killing twelve Druze militiamen. On 30 June, two key "firsts" occurred: the LF entered the Shuf for the first time, and the first Druze-LF artillery duel occurred.

On 2 July 1982, the IDF instituted a military blockade of Beirut, causing intense diplomatic activity aimed at averting an all-out battle for the capital. Ambassador Habib's efforts were successful and some 15,000 armed personnel (Palestinians and Syrians) were evacuated from Beirut under the auspices of a Multinational Force (MNF) consisting of French and Italian contingents and the 32nd MAU. All MNF forces were withdrawn by 10 September 1982.

The assassination of President-Elect Bashir Gemayel on 14 September 1982, followed by IDF occupation of West Beirut and the massacre of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians in the Sabra and Shatila camps on 16-18 September 1982, resulted in the agreement of France, Italy and the United States to reconstitute the MNF. On 26 September, the French and Italian contingents reentered Beirut, and on 29 September, the 32d MAU began landing at the Port of Beirut.

The 1,200-man Marine contingent occupied positions in the vicinity of Beirut International Airport (BIA) as an interpositional force between the IDF and populated areas of Beirut.

On 3 November 1982, the 24th MAU replaced the 32d MAU. By 15 November, a DoD team had completed a survey of Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) capabilities and requirements. Marine Mobile Training Teams (MTT) from the USMNF began conducting individual and small unit training for the LAF at BIA. Training of a LAF rapid-reaction force by the USMNF began during the week of 21 December. The last significant event of 1982 was the beginning of negotiations between

Lebanon and Israel on 28 December calling for the withdrawal of foreign forces.

On 5 January 1983, the IDF began conducting patrol operations (including reconnaissance by fire) south of Marine positions along the Old Sidon Road. Stray IDF rounds landed on USMNF positions, and there were at least five IDF attempts to penetrate Marine positions during the month. On 2 February, a USMC officer felt obliged to draw his pistol in order to stop an IDF penetration. On 20 January 1983, the Office of Military Cooperation, which had been established in late 1982, was formally opened. On 15 February, the 24th MAU was relieved by the 22d MAU. From 20-25 February, the USMNF, at the request of the Government of Lebanon, conducted emergency relief operations in the Lebanon Mountains in the wake of a mid-winter blizzard and sub-zero temperatures. On 16 March, five Marines were slightly wounded by a terrorist hand grenade in the southern Beirut suburb of Ouzai. Incidents involving IDF elements and USMNF patrols were recorded during the month of March and April as USMNF patrolling was expanded in support of LAF deployments.

On 18 April 1983, the U.S. Embassy in Beirut was destroyed by a massive explosion which took the lives of 17 U.S. citizens and over 40 others. The bomb was delivered by a pickup truck and detonated. U.S. Embassy functions were relocated to the British Embassy and to the Duraffourd Building. The USMNF established a detachment to provide security for both locations.

Fighting between Christian LF and Druze militias in the Shuf spilled over into Beirut in the form of artillery shelling between 5 and 8 May. On 17 May 1983, Israel and the Government of Lebanon signed an agreement calling for the withdrawal of the IDF and the institution of special security measures for southern Lebanon. Israel, however, predicated its own withdrawal on the simultaneous withdrawal of Syrian and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) forces from Lebanon, parties which had not been included in the negotiations. Syria refused to initiate withdrawal of its forces while the IDF remained in Lebanon. The stage was set for renewed violence.

On 30 May 1983, the 24th MAU relieved the 22nd MAU. On 25 June, USMNF personnel conducted combined patrols with the LAF for the first time. On 14 July, a LAF patrol was ambushed by Druze militia elements, and from 15 to 17 July, the LAF engaged the Shia Amal militia in Beirut over a

dispute involving the eviction of Shiite squatters from a schoolhouse. At the same time, fighting in the Shuf between the LAF and Druze militia escalated sharply. On 22 July, BIA was shelled with Druze mortar and artillery fire, wounding three U.S. Marines and causing the temporary closing of the airport.

In July 1983, President Amin Gemayel traveled to Washington and obtained a promise of expedited delivery of military equipment to the LAF. On 23 July, Walid Jamblatt, leader of the predominantly Druze Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), announced the formation of a Syrian-backed "National Salvation Front" opposed to the 17 May Israel-Lebanon Agreement.

In anticipation of an IDF withdrawal from the Alayh and Shuf districts, fighting between the Druze and LF, and between the Druze and LAF, intensified during the month of August. Druze artillery closed the BIA between 10 and 16 August, and the Druze made explicit their opposition to LAF deployment in the Shuf. The LAF also clashed with the Amal militia in Beirut's western and southern suburbs.

As the security situation deteriorated, USMNF positions at BIA were subjected to increased fire. On 10 and 11 August, an estimated thirty-five rounds of mortar and rocket fire landed on USMNF positions, wounding one Marine. On 28 August 1983, the USMNF returned fire for the first time. On the following day, USMNF artillery silenced a Druze battery after two Marines had been killed in a mortar attack. On 31 August, the LAF swept through the Shia neighborhood of West Beirut, establishing temporary control over the area.

On 4 September 1983, the IDF withdrew from the Alayh and Shuf Districts, falling back to the Awwali River. The LAF was not prepared to fill the void, moving instead to occupy the key junction at Khaldah, south of BIA. On 4 September, BIA was again shelled, killing two Marines and wounding two others. As the LAF moved slowly eastward into the foothills of the Shuf, accounts of massacres, conducted by Christians and Druze alike, began to be reported.

On 5 September, a Druze force, reportedly reinforced by PLO elements, routed the Christian LF militia at Bhamdun and all but eliminated the LF as a military factor in the Alayh District. This defeat obliged the LAF to occupy Suq-Al-Gharb to avoid conceding all of the high ground overlooking BIA to the Druze. USMNF positions were subjected to constant indirect fire attacks; consequently, counter-battery fire based on target acquisition radar

data was employed. F-14 tactical airborne reconnaissance/ DoD (TARPS) missions were conducted for the first time on 7 September. On 8 September, naval gunfire from offshore destroyers was employed for the first time in defense of the USMNF.

On 12 September 1983, the U.S. National Command Authorities (NCA) determined that the successful defense of Suq-Al-Gharb was essential to the safety of the USMNF. On 14 September, an emergency ammunition resupply to the LAF was instituted. On 19 September, Navy destroyers provided gunfire support of the LAF defenders at Suq-Al-Gharb. The battleship USS NEW JERSEY arrived in Lebanese waters on 25 September. A ceasefire was instituted that same day and Beirut International Airport reopened five days later.

On 1 October 1983, the LAF began to receive additional shipments of APC's, M-48 tanks, and howitzers from the U.S. training of LAF recruits and units by the USMNF resumed. On that date, Walid Jumblatt announced a separate governmental administration for the Shuf and called for the mass defection of all Druze elements from the LAF. Nevertheless, on 14 October the leaders of Lebanon's key factions agreed to conduct reconciliation talks in Geneva, Switzerland.

Although the ceasefire officially held into mid-October, factional clashes intensified and sniper attacks on MNF contingents became commonplace. On 19 October 1983, four Marines were wounded when a USMNF convoy was attacked by a remotely detonated car bomb parked along the convoy route.

B. <u>23 October 1983</u>.

At approximately 0622 on Sunday, 23 October 1983, the Battalion Landing Team (BLT) Headquarters building in the Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) compound at Beirut International Airport was destroyed by a terrorist bomb. This catastrophic attack took the lives of 241 U.S. military personnel and wounded over 100 others. The bombing was carried out by a lone terrorist driving a yellow Mercedes Benz stakebed truck that accelerated through the public parking lot south of the BLT Headquarters building, crashed through a barbed wire and concertina fence, and penetrated into the central lobby of the building, where it exploded. The truck drove over the barbed and concertina wire obstacle, passed between two Marine guard posts without being engaged by fire, entered an open gate, passed around

one sewer pipe barrier and between two others, flattened the Sergeant of the Guard's sandbagged booth at the building's entrance, penetrated the lobby of the building and detonated while the majority of the occupants slept. The force of the explosion ripped the building from its foundation. The building then imploded upon itself. Almost all the occupants were crushed or trapped inside the wreckage. Immediate efforts were undertaken to reestablish security, to extricate the dead and wounded from the building's rubble, and to institute a mass casualty handling and evacuation operation.

Almost simultaneously with the attack on the U.S. Marine compound, a similar truck bomb exploded at the French MNF headquarters.

C. 24 October - 30 November 1983

As cleanup and rescue operations continued at the bombing site in the ensuing days, the USMNF came under sporadic sniper fire. Deployment of forces to replace those lost began on the day of the bombing. By the day following, replacement personnel had been airlifted into Beirut. On 28 October, The Secretary of Defense approved the assignment of an additional Marine rifle company to the USMNF. That augmenting force was airlifted into Lebanon and deployed at BIA by the end of October.

On 4 November 1983, the Israeli Military Governor's Headquarters in Tyre was destroyed by a suicide driver in a small truck loaded with explosives. There were 46 fatalities. The Israeli Air Force conducted retaliatory strikes later that day against Palestinian positions east of Beirut.

On 8 November 1983, the BLT Company located at the Lebanese Scientific and Technical University was withdrawn to BIA, and subsequently redeployed aboard ship as the USMNF ready reserve.

Ambassador Rumsfeld, appointed by the President on 3 November 1983 to replace Ambassador McFarlane as The President's Special Envoy to the Middle East, began his first Middle East mission on 12 November.

On 16 November 1983, the Israelis conducted additional retaliatory air strikes, hitting a terrorist training camp in the eastern Bekaa Valley. The next day, the French conducted similar strikes against another Islamic Amal camp in the vicinity of the northern Bekaa Valley town of

Baalbak.

Throughout the 23 October to 30 November period, USMNF positions at BIA were the target of frequent sniper attacks, and occasional, but persistent, artillery, rocket, and mortar fire. On 16 November, four 122mm rockets impacted at BIA. The MAU received small arms fire several times on 19 November, the date the turnover by the 24th MAU to the 22nd MAU was completed.

Persistent and occasionally heavy fighting between the LAF and Shia militias in the southern suburbs of Beirut continued through November. As the month ended, the mountainous Shuf continued to be the scene of frequent artillery and mortar exchanges between the LAF and Druze forces.

PART ONE - THE MILITARY MISSION

I. MISSION DEVELOPMENT

A. Principal Findings.

Following the Sabra and Shatila massacres, a Presidential decision was made that the United States would participate in a Multinational Force (MNF) to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in carrying out its responsibilities in the Beirut area. Ambassador Habib, the President's Special Envoy to the Middle East, was charged with pursuing the diplomatic arrangements necessary for the insertion of U.S. forces into Beirut. His efforts culminated in an Exchange of Diplomatic Notes on 25 September 1982 between the United States and the Government of Lebanon which formed the basis for U.S. participation in the MNF. The national decision having been made, the Secretary of Defense tasked the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to develop the mission statement and to issue the appropriate Alert Order to the Commander in Chief United States European Command (USCINCEUR). Commission discussions with the principals involved disclosed that the mission statement was carefully drafted in coordination with USCINCEUR to ensure that it remained within the limits of national political guidance.

The Joint Operational Planning System (JOPS) Volume IV (Crisis Action System) provides guidance for the conduct of joint planning and execution concerning the use of military forces during emergency or time-sensitive situations.

The mission statement provided to USCINCEUR by the JCS Alert Order of 23 September 1983 read as follows:

"To establish an environment which will permit the Lebanese Armed Forces to carry out their responsibilities in the Beirut area. When directed, USCINCEUR will introduce U.S. forces as part of a multinational force presence in the Beirut area to occupy and secure positions along a designated section of the line from south of the Beirut International Airport to a position in the vicinity of the Presidential Palace; be prepared to protect U.S. forces; and, on order, conduct retrograde operations as required."

The wording "...occupy and secure positions along...the

line..." was incorporated into the mission statement by the JCS on the recommendation of USCINCEUR to avoid any inference that the USMNF would be responsible for the security of any given area. Additional mission-related guidance provided in the JCS Alert Order included the direction that:

- The USMNF would not be engaged in combat.

- Peacetime rules of engagement would apply (i.e. use of force is authorized only in self-defense or in defense of collocated LAF elements operating with the USMNF.)

- USCINCEUR would be prepared to extract U.S. forces in Lebanon if required by hostile action.

USCINCEUR repromulgated the mission statement, essentially unchanged, to Commander United States Naval Forces Europe (CINCUSNAVEUR) on 24 September 1982. That OPREP-1 message designated CTF 61 (Commander Amphibious Task Force) as Commander, U.S. forces Lebanon and provided the following concept of operations:

> "...land U.S. Marine Landing Force in Port of Beirut and/or vicinity of Beirut Airport. U.S. forces will move to occupy positions along an assigned section of a line extending from south of Beirut Airport to vicinity of Presidential Palace. Provide security posts at intersections of assigned section of line and major avenues of approach into city of Beirut from south/southeast <u>to deny passage of hostile armed elements</u> in order to provide an environment which will permit LAF to carry out their responsibilities in city of Beirut. Commander U.S. Forces will establish and maintain continuous coordination with other MNF units, EUCOM liaison team and LAF. Commander U.S. Forces will provide air/naval gunfire support as required." (Emphasis added)

The USCINCEUR concept of operations also tasked CTF 61 to conduct combined defensive operations with other MNF contingents and the LAF and to be prepared to execute retrograde or withdrawal operations.

The USCINCEUR OPREP-1 tasked CINCUSNAVEUR, when directed, to:

- Employ Navy/Marine forces to land at Beirut.

- Provide required air and naval gunfire support to forces ashore as required.

- Be prepared to conduct withdrawal operations if hostile actions occur.

- Provide liaison teams to each member of the MNF and to the LAF.

That OPREP-1 also included tasking for other Component Commands and supporting CINC's.

On 25 September 1982, JCS modified USCINCEUR's concept of operations for CTF 61 to read "...assist LAF to deter passage of hostile armed elements..." (vice "deny passage of hostile armed elements...").

The original mission statement was formally modified by directive on four occasions. Change One reduced the estimated number of Israeli Defense Force (IDF) troops in Beirut. Change Two, issued on 6 October 1982, defined the line along which the USMNF was to occupy and secure positions. The third change (undesignated) was issued on 2 November 1982, and expanded the mission to include patrols in the East Beirut area. The fourth change (designated Change Three), was issued on 7 May 1983 and further expanded the mission to allow the USMNF to provide external security for the U.S. Embassy in Beirut.

B. Discussion.

Although some operational details were added, the original mission statement was repromulgated unchanged down the chain of command through Alert/Execute Orders and OPREP-1's. CINCUSNAVEUR provided position locations for the USMNF forces ashore in Beirut. Commander Sixth Fleet (COMSIXTHFLT) designated CTF 61 as On-Scene Commander and CTF 62 as Commander U.S. Forces Ashore Lebanon and defined the chain of command. CTF 61 promulgated detailed operational procedures for amphibious shipping, boats and aircraft to facilitate ship-to-shore movement. CTF 62 provided the detailed ship-to-shore movement plan for the MAU and the concept of operations for the initial three days ashore.

USCINCEUR engaged in some mission analysis (e.g., crafting the concept of operations and working operational constraint wording with JCS) and provided detailed tasking to subordinates and to supporting CINC's. However, the mission statement and the concept of operations were passed down the chain of command with little amplification. As a result, perceptual differences as to the precise meaning and importance of the "presence" role of the USMNF existed throughout the chain of command. Similarly, the exact

responsibilities of the USMNF commander regarding the security of Beirut International Airport were not clearly delineated in his mission tasking.

Clarification of the mission tasks and concepts of operations would not only have assisted the USMNF commanders to better understand what was required, it would also have alerted higher headquarters to the differing interpretations of the mission at intermediate levels of command. The absence of specificity in mission definition below the USCINCEUR level concealed differences of interpretation of the mission and tasking assigned to the USMNF.

The commission's inquiry clearly established that perceptions of the basic mission varied at different levels of command. The MAU commanders, on the ground in Beirut, interpreted their "presence" mission to require the USMNF to be visible but not to appear to be threatening to the populace. This concern was a factor in most decisions made by the MAU Commanders in the employment and disposition of their forces. The MAU Commander regularly assessed the effect of contemplated security actions on the "presence" mission.

Another area in which perceptions varied was the importance of Beirut International Airport (BIA) to the USMNF mission and whether the USMNF had any responsibility to ensure the operation of the airport. While all echelons of the military chain of command understood that the security of BIA was not a part of the mission, perceptions of the USMNF's implicit responsibility for airport operations varied widely. The U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon, and others in the State Department, saw an operational airport as an important symbolic and practical demonstration of Lebanese sovereignty. On television on 27 October 1983, the President stated: "Our Marines are not just sitting in an airport. Part of their task is to guard that airport. Because of their presence the airport remained operational." The other MNF commanders asserted to the Commission that, while BIA is not specifically the responsibility of any one MNF contingent, an operational airport is important to the viability of the MNF concept. The MAU Commanders interviewed by the Commission all believed they had some responsibility for ensuring an open airport as an implicit part of their mission.

C. Conclusion.

The Commission concludes that the "presence" mission was not interpreted in the same manner by all levels of the chain of command and that perceptual differences regarding that mission, including the responsibility of the USMNF for the security of Beirut International Airport, should have been recognized and corrected by the chain of command.

II. THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

A. Principal Findings.

The mission of the USMNF was implicitly characterized as a peace-keeping operation, although "peace-keeping" was not explicit in the mission statement. In September 1982, the President's public statement, his letter to the United Nations' Secretary General and his report to the Congress, all conveyed a strong impression of the peace-keeping nature of the operation. The subject lines of the JCS Alert and Execute Orders read, "U.S. Force participation in Lebanon Multinational Force (MNF) Peacekeeping Operations." (Emphasis added) Alert and Execute Orders were carefully worded to emphasize that the USMNF would have a non-combatant role. Operational constraint sections included guidance to be prepared to withdraw if required by hostile action. This withdrawal guidance was repeated in CINCEUR's OPREP-1.

A condition precedent to the insertion of U.S. forces into Beirut was that the Government of Lebanon and the LAF would ensure the protection of the MNF, including the securing of assurances from armed factions to refrain from hostilities and not to interfere with MNF activities. Ambassador Habib received confirmation from the Government of Lebanon that these arrangements had been made. These assurances were included by the Government of Lebanon in its exchange of notes with the United States.

It was contemplated from the outset that the USMNF would operate in a relatively benign environment. Syrian forces were not considered a significant threat to the MNF. The major threats were thought to be unexploded ordnance and possible sniper and small unit attacks from PLO and Leftist militias. It was anticipated that the USMNF would be perceived by the various factions as evenhanded and neutral and that this perception would hold through the expected 60 day duration of the operation.

The environment into which the USMNF actually deployed in September 1982, while not necessarily benign was, for the most part, not hostile. The Marines were warmly welcomed and seemed genuinely to be appreciated by the majority of Lebanese.

By mid-March 1983, the friendly environment began to change as evidenced by a grenade thrown at a USMNF patrol in 16 March, wounding five Marines. Italian and French MNF contingents were the victims of similar attacks.

The destruction of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut on 18 April, was indicative of the extent of the deterioration of

the political/military situation in Lebanon by the spring of 1983. That tragic event also signaled the magnitude of the terrorist threat to the U.S. presence. A light truck detonated, killing over 60 people (including 17 Americans) and destroying a sizable portion of the building. An FBI investigation into the explosion later revealed that the bomb was a "gas enhanced" device capable of vastly more destructive force than a comparable conventional explosive. Although the technique of gas-enhanced bombs had been employed by Irish Republican Army terrorists in Northern Ireland and, on at least two occasions, in Lebanon, the magnitude of the explosive force of the device used in the Embassy bombing was, in the opinion of FBI explosive experts, unprecedented.

During August, rocket, artillery and mortar fire began impacting at BIA. On 28 August 1983, the Marines returned fire for the first time. Following the deaths of two Marines in a mortar attack the following day, the USMNF responded with artillery fire. On 31 August, Marine patrols were terminated in the face of the sniper, RPG and artillery threats.

Fighting between the LAF and the Druze increased sharply with the withdrawal of the IDF from the Alayh and Shuf Districts on 4 September 1983. Two more Marines were killed by mortar or artillery rounds at BIA on 6 September 1983. By 11 September, the battle for Sug-Al-Gharb was raging. The USMNF, under frequent attack, responded with counter-battery fire and F-14 tactical air reconnaissance pod TARPS missions were commenced over Lebanon.

On 16 September 1983, U.S. Naval gunfire support was employed in response to shelling of the U.S. Ambassador's residence and USMNF positions at BIA. On 19 September, following a National Command Authority (NCA) decision, Naval gunfire support was employed to support the LAF fighting at Suq-Al-Gharb. On 20 September, the F-14 TARPS aircraft were fired on by SA-7 missiles.

During the period 14-16 October 1983, two Marines were killed on the BIA perimeter in separate sniper incidents.

By the end of September 1983, the situation in Lebanon had changed to the extent that not one of the initial conditions upon which the mission statement was premised was still valid. The enviroment clearly was hostile. The assurances the Government of Lebanon had obtained from the various factions were obviously no longer operative as attacks on the USMNF came primarily from extralegal militias. Although USMNF actions could properly be classified as self-defense and not "engaging in combat", the environment could no longer be characterized as peaceful. The image of

the USMNF, in the eyes of the factional militias, had become pro-Israel, pro-Phalange, and anti-Muslim. After the USMNF engaged in direct fire support of the LAF, a significant portion of the Lebanese populace no longer considered the USMNF a neutral force.

B. Discussions.

The inability of the Government of Lebanon to develop a political consensus, and the resultant outbreak of hostilities between the LAF and armed militias supported by Syria, effectively precluded the possibility of a successful peace-keeping mission. It is abundantly clear that by late summer 1983, the environment in Lebanon changed to the extent that the conditions upon which the USMNF mission was initially premised no longer existed. The Commission believes that appropriate guidance and modification of tasking should have been provided to the USMNF to enable it to cope effectively with the increasingly hostile environment. The Commission could find no evidence that such guidance was, in fact, provided.

III. THE EXPANDING MILITARY ROLE

A. Principal Findings.

The "presence" mission assigned to the USMNF contemplated that the contending factions in Lebanon would perceive the USMNF as a neutral force, even handed in its dealings with the confessional groups that comprise Lebanese society. The mission statement tasked the USMNF to "establish an environment which will permit the Lebanese Armed Forces to carry out their responsibilities in the Beirut area." When hostilities erupted between the LAF and Shiite and Druze militias, USMNF efforts to support the LAF were perceived to be both pro-Phalangist and anti-Muslim.

USMNF support to the LAF increased substantially following their arrival in September 1982. The first direct military support to the LAF was in the form of training which the USMNF began to provide in November 1982.

In August and September 1983, the U.S. resupplied the LAF with ammunition. The LAF were engaged in intense fighting against the Druze and various Syrian surrogates. The ammunition came from MAU, CONUS and USCINCEUR stocks and was delivered by Military Sealift Command, Mobile Logistic Support Force (CTF 63), and CTF 61 ships.

On 19 September 1983, naval gunfire was employed in direct support of the LAF at Suq-Al-Gharb.

Following the U.S. action in providing Naval gunfire support for the LAF at Suq-Al-Gharb, hostile acts against the USMNF increased and the Marines began taking significantly more casualties. A direct cause and effect linkage between Suq-Al-Gharb and the terrorist bombing on 23 October 1983, cannot be determined. The views of the senior civilian and military officials interviewed by the Commission varied widely on this issue. Some believe that it was not a consequence of our relationship with any faction; that regardless of its actions, the USMNF would still have been targeted by terrorists. Others believe that certain factions wanted to force the MNF out of Lebanon and that the bombing of the BLT Headquarters building was the tactic of choice to produce that end. The prevalent view within the USCINCEUR chain of command, however, is that there was some linkage between the two events. Whether or not there was a direct connection between Suq-Al-Gharb and the increase in terrorist attacks on the USMNF, the public statements of factional leaders confirmed that a portion of the Lebanese populace no longer considered the USMNF neutral.

B. Discussion.

The Commission believes that from the very beginning of the USMNF mission on 29 September 1982, the security of the USMNF was dependent upon the continuing validity of four basic conditions.

(1) That the force would operate in a relatively benign environment;

(2) That the Lebanese Armed Forces would provide for the security of the areas in which the force was to operate;

(3) That the mission would be of limited duration; and

(4) That the force would be evacuated in the event of attack.

As the political/military situation evolved, three factors were impacting adversely upon those conditions. First, although the mission required that the USMNF be perceived as neutral by the confessional factions, the tasks assigned to the USMNF gradually evolved to include active support of the LAF. A second factor was the deep-seated hostility of Iran and Syria toward the United States combined with the capability to further their own political interests by sponsoring attacks on the USMNF. And finally, the progress of diplomatic efforts to secure the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon faltered. The combination of these three factors served to invalidate the first two conditions and to complicate the third.

U.S. policy makers recognized that the conditions upon which the mission of the USMNF was premised were tenuous and that the decision to deploy the USMNF into Beirut involved considerable risk. The military mission was directed in concert with extensive diplomatic initiatives designed to shore up the Government of Lebanon and establish a climate for political reconciliation. At the same time that the political/military conditions in Lebanon deteriorated, the U.S. military role expanded in the form of increased USMNF training and logistic support for the LAF and in the form of changes to the rules of engagement of the USMNF to permit active support of LAF units engaged in combat with factional forces. That expanded role was directed in an effort to adjust to the changing situation and to contiue to move toward realization of U.S. policy objectives in Lebanon. On the diplomatic front, achieving the withdrawal of foreign troops proved to be more difficult than had been anticipated. The overall result was the continued erosion of the security of the USMNF.

C. Conclusion.

The Commission concludes that U.S. decisions regarding Lebanon taken over the past fifteen months have been to a large degree characterized by an emphasis on military options and the expansion of the U.S. military role, notwithstanding the fact that the conditions upon which the security of the USMNF were based continued to deteriorate as progress toward a diplomatic solution slowed. The Commission further concludes that these decisions may have been taken without clear recognition that these initial conditions had dramatically changed and that the expansion of our military involvement in Lebanon greatly increased the risk to, and adversely impacted upon the security of, the USMNF. The Commission therefore concludes that there is an urgent need for reassessment of alternative means to achieve U.S. objectives in Lebanon and at the same time reduce the risk to the USMNF.

D. Recommendation.

The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense continue to urge that the National Security Council undertake a reexamination of alternative means of achieving U.S. objectives in Lebanon, to include a comprehensive assessment of the military security options being developed by the chain of command and a more vigorous and demanding approach to pursuing diplomatic alternatives.

PART TWO - RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

> "Rules of Engagement: Directives issued by competent authority which delineate the circumstances and limitations under which United States forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered."
>
> - JCS Pub 1

I. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

A. Principal Findings.

The basic Rules of Engagement (ROE) for USMNF forces in Beirut have been in effect since the second USMNF insertion on 29 September 1982. The ROE were promulgated on 24 September 1982 by USCINCEUR, the responsible authority for contingency operations in the Eastern Mediterranean. They are consistent with the guidance provided in the JCS Alert Order of 23 September 1983. The ROE developed by USCINCEUR are derived from U.S. European Command Directive 55-47A, "Peacetime Rules of Engagement."

They were tailored to the Lebanon situation by the adaptation of ROE developed through the summer of 1982 for use in the evacuation of PLO elements in Beirut from 24 August to 10 September 1982. There had been extensive dialogue on ROE up and down the European Theater chain of command during July and August 1982.

JCS guidance to USCINCEUR was that USMNF forces were not to engage in combat and would use normal USEUCOM peacetime ROE. Force was to be used only when required for self-defense against a hostile threat, in response to a hostile act, or in defense of LAF elements operating with the USMNF. USCINCEUR incorporated the JCS guidance and elaborated thereon. Reprisals or punitive measures were forbidden. USMNF elements were enjoined to seek guidance from higher authority prior to using armed force for self-defense unless an emergency existed. The ROE defined "hostile act" and "hostile force," and designated the Combined Amphibious Task Force Commander (CTF 61) as the authority to declare a force hostile. "Hostile threat" was not defined. If non-LAF forces infiltrated or violated USMNF assigned areas or lines, they were to be informed they were in an unauthorized area and could not proceed. If they failed to depart, the USMNF Commander (CTF 62) was to be informed and would determine the action to be taken. The LAF had responsibility for apprehension and detention of any intruders. The USMNF was authorized to use force only if the intruder committed a hostile act. Finally, commanders were to be prepared to extract forces if necessary.

By message to subordinate commands on 28 September 1982, CINCUSNAVEUR elaborated on the ROE provided by USCINCEUR and directed that further ROE development for U.S. forces ashore be for self-defense only. Detailed ROE, consistent with command guidance, were issued by CTF 62 on 27 October 1982, and again on 12 November 1982.

Following the terrorist bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut on 18 April 1983, a USMNF unit was formed to provide external security for U.S. Embassy functions relocated at the Duraffourd Building, the British Embassy, and the U.S. Ambassador's Residence at Yarze. On 1 May 1983, CTF 62 requested specific ROE to counter the vehicular and pedestrian terrorist threat to those buildings. On 7 May 1983, USCINCEUR promulgated ROE specifically for that security force which expanded the definition of a hostile act to encompass attempts by personnel or vehicles to breach barriers or roadblocks established on approaches to the Duraffourd Building, the British Embassy or the U.S. Ambassador's Residence.

Following the 4 September 1983 IDF pull-back to the Awwali River, fighting intensified in the mountainous Shuf region southeast of Beirut. Phalange and Druze militias fought for control of the territory vacated by the IDF. LAF units also

moved to gain control of the strategically important Shuf high ground, and were engaged by Druze forces in heavy fighting at Suq-Al-Gharb. When defeat of the LAF appeared imminent, the National Command Authorities (NCA) authorized the use of naval gunfire and tactical air strikes in support of the LAF at Suq-Al-Gharb. Occupation of the dominant terrain in the vicinity of Suq-Al-Gharb by hostile forces would pose a danger of USMNF positions at BIA. Direct support of the LAF in those circumstances was to be considered as an act of self-defense authorized by the existing ROE. Early on 12 September 1983, the acting CJCS notified USCINCEUR of that decision. Later that day, USCINCEUR directed CINCUSNAVEUR to inform his subordinate commands to provide fire support to the LAF when the U.S. ground commander (CTF 62) determined that Suq-Al-Gharb was in danger of falling to an attack by non-Lebanese forces. USCINCEUR directed in the same message, "Nothing in this message shall be construed as changing the mission or ROE for USMNF."

In the aftermath of the 23 October 1983 terrorist attack at the BLT Headquarters, review of the basic USMNF ROE was conducted at virtually every level of command. ROE were promulgated to govern the use of electronic warfare, and reviews of specific ROE for F-14/Tactical Aerial Reconnaissance PODS (TARPS) flights, for air defense, and for defensive activities of afloat elements of the U.S. presence (i.e. CTF 60 and CTF 61) were conducted. Late on 23 October, CTF 61 submitted a ROE change request to COMSIXTHFLT requesting that USMNF personnel at BIA be authorized to take under fire any civilian vehicle which approached USMNF positions at a high rate of speed and failed to acknowledge signals to stop. COMSIXTHFLT forwarded the request up the chain of command. On 25 October 1983, USCINCEUR responded that the authority requested was already covered under the self-protection rules of the ROE in effect. The USCINCEUR response noted that the promulgation in early May 1983 of additional ROE for the U.S. Embassy security tasking was considered necessary because the USMNF had been assigned an additional mission which went beyond its self-defense. On 26 October 1983, CINCUSNAVEUR approved the ROE modification requested by CTF 61. On 26 November 1983, COMSIXTHFLT proposed to CINCUSNAVEUR that the ROE be further changed to authorize the taking of prompt, forceful action against any unauthorized attempt to gain entry into an area occupied by the USMNF. CINCUSNAVEUR and USCINCEUR responded on 27 November 1983 that such action was already authorized by existing ROE. USCINCEUR, however, agreed to provide specific rules in a forthcoming revision of the original ROE.

B. Discussion.

The ROE were developed in accordance with established JCS guidance, and promulgated by the appropriate command authority,

USCINCEUR. Although the rapid deterioration of the situation in Beirut which led to reinsertion of the USMNF caused understandable compression in the process, each command echelon participated in the development of the ROE provided to the USMNF.

The environment into which the USMNF was inserted on 29 September 1982 was clearly permissive. The judgement that the USMNF was perceived as a neutral, stabilizing presence by most, if not all, factions in the Beirut area can be drawn from the general absence of hostile reactions in the initial months of their presence. The ROE were appropriate for such a permissive environment. But the environment proved to be dynamic, and became increasingly hostile to the USMNF component as the U.S. presence stretched beyond the brief stay envisioned by the original Exchange of Notes.

The Commission believes that for any ROE to be effective, they should incorporate definitions of hostile intent and hostile action which correspond to the realities of the environment in which they are to be implemented. To be adequate, they must also provide the commander explicit authority to respond quickly to acts defined as hostile. Only when these two criteria are satisifed do ROE provide the on-scene commander with the guidance and the flexibility he requires to defend his force. By these measures, the ROE in force at BIA subsequent to the U.S. Embassy bombing in April were neither effective nor adequate. That event clearly signaled a change in the environment: the employment of terrorist tactics by hostile elements.

The emergence of the terrorist threat brought the guidance and flexibility afforded by the ROE into question. The modified ROE promulgated for the security force assigned to U.S. Embassy facilities were necessary. For the first time, threatening actions such as attempts to breach barriers or checkpoints were specifically defined as hostile acts justifying the use of military force. USMNF personnel providing security for the Embassy were authorized to take adequate defensive action in those circumstances. But the commander of the USMNF perceived that the new ROE from USCINCEUR were for use only by the Embassy security element. The presumption at HQ USEUCOM, subsequently apparent in both messages and discussions with principals, was that the USMNF Commander had already been given sufficient guidance and authority to respond to vehicular terrorist attacks against his forces at BIA in the original ROE promulgated on 24 September 1982. In the view of the Commission, the ROE provided in May for the Embassy security contingent should have been explicitly extended to the entire USMNF.

The Commission believes that ROE developed for the insertion of the USMNF into Lebanon in late September 1982, were appropriate

to the relatively benign environment that existed at that time. That environment, however, was dynamic and became increasingly anti-USMNF. The Commission also believes that development by the chain of command of ROE guidance for the USMNF at BIA did not keep pace with the changing threat.

II. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

A. Principal Findings.

The ROE contained in the 24 September 1982 USCINCEUR OPREP-1 were implemented by Commander Amphibious Task Force/Commander U.S. Forces Lebanon (CTF 61), and Commander 32d Marine Amphibious Unit/Commander U.S. Forces Ashore Lebanon (CTF 62), upon insertion of the USMNF into Beirut on 29 September 1982. CTF 62 implemented the ROE for the USMNF through the issuance of specific instructions to his personnel on 27 October and 12 November 1982. (COMSIXTHFLT and CTF 61 were information addressees on that traffic.) The central guidance for implementation of the ROE was that USMNF elements would only engage in defensive actions.

Briefly summarized, the following points constitute the ROE guidance utilized by the individual members of the USMNF from 29 September 1982 until 7 May 1983.

- Action taken by U.S. forces ashore in Lebanon would be for self-defense only.

- Reprisal or punitive measures would not be initiated.

- Commanders were to seek guidance from higher headquarters prior to using armed force, if time and situation allowed.

- If time or the situation did not allow the opportunity to request guidance from higher headquarters, commanders were authorized to use that degree of armed force necessary to protect their forces.

- Hostile ground forces which had infiltrated and violated USMNF lines by land, sea, or air would be warned that they could not proceed and were in a restricted area. If the intruder force failed to leave, the violation would be reported and guidance requested.

- Riot control agents would not be used unless authorized by the Secretary of Defense.

- Hostile forces would not be pursued.

- A "hostile act" was defined as an attack or use of force against the USMNF, or against MNF or LAF units

operating with the USMNF, that consisted of releasing, launching, or firing of missiles, bombs, individual weapons, rockets or any other weapon.

Following the 18 April 1983 destruction of the U.S. Embassy, USCINCEUR promulgated an expanded set of ROE for use by USMNF personnel assigned to provide security for the British Embassy and the Duraffourd Building where U.S. Embassy functions had been relocated. Those expanded ROE were implemented by CTF 62 through the issuance to each Marine assigned to Embassy security duty of an ROE card, the so called "Blue Card". Since the USCINCEUR expanded ROE were promulgated for specific use of those members of the USMNF assigned to provide security for the Embassy, USMNF elements at BIA continued to operate under the ROE previously provided. In order to ensure that each Marine of the USMNF understood what set of ROE were applicable to him at any given time, CTF 62 issued a "White Card" delineating the ROE for those not assigned to Embassy duty, as follows:

"The mission of the Multi-national Force (MNF) is to keep the peace. The following rules of engagement will be read and fully understood by all members of the U.S. contingent of the MNF:

- When on post, mobile or foot patrol, keep a loaded magazine in the weapon, weapons will be on safe, with no rounds in the chamber.

- Do not chamber a round unless instructed to do so by a commissioned officer unless you must act in immediate self-defense where deadly force is authorized.

- Keep ammunition for crew-served weapons readily available but not loaded in the weapon. Weapons will be on safe at all times.

- Call local forces to assist in all self-defense efforts. Notify next senior command immediately.

- Use only the minimum degree of force necessary to accomplish the mission.

- Stop the use of force when it is no longer required.

- If effective fire is received, direct return fire at a distinct target only. If possible, use friendly sniper fire.

- Respect civilian property; do not attack it unless absolutely necessary to protect friendly forces.

- Protect innocent civilians from harm.

- Respect and protect recognized medical agencies such as Red Cross, Red Crescent, etc.

These rules of engagement will be followed by all members of the U.S. MNF unless otherwise directed."

All USMNF personnel were required to carry the appropriate card and know its content at all times while on duty. The practical result was that USMNF elements operated under two sets of ROE from early May 1983 until after the 23 October 1983 bombing of the BLT Headquarters building.

The Blue Card/White Card ROE guidance continued in effect until 24 October 1983 (the day following the BLT Headquarters bombing) when CTF 62 sought a ROE change from USCINCEUR, via the chain of command, to allow USMNF personnel to take under fire speeding vehicles approaching USMNF positions at BIA. On 26 November 1983, COMSIXTHFLT requested that USMNF personnel be authorized to fire, without warning if necessary, on vehicles attempting unauthorized access to an area of USMNF positions. As noted in Section I of this Part, on both of those occasions CINCUSNAVEUR and USCINCEUR held the view that the original ROE (24 September 1982) authorized CTF 62 to take such actions as he, the on-scene commander, considered necessary to defend his force against hostile action. Nonetheless, approval was provided to CTF 62.

B. Discussion.

CTF 62 determined that restraint in the use of force was key to accomplishing the presence mission he was assigned, and that strict adherence to the ROE was necessary if his forces were to maintain the "neutral" stance that the presence role entailed.

The Commission views with concern the fact that there were two different sets of ROE being used by USMNF elements in Beirut after the Embassy bombing on 18 April 1983. Those ROE used by the Embassy security detail were designed to counter the terrorist threat posed by both vehicles and personnel. Marines on similar duty at BIA, however, did not have the same ROE to provide them specific guidance and authority to respond to a vehicle or person moving through a perimeter. Their "White Card" ROE required them to call local forces to assist in all self-defense efforts.

Message transmissions up and down the USCINCEUR chain of command revealed that COMSIXTHFLT subordinate elements had different perceptions of the commander's latitude in implementing ROE than did CINCUSNAVEUR and USCINCEUR. The latter believed

authority to forceably halt vehicles attempting unauthorized entry into the area of USMNF positions was inherent in the original 24 September 1982 ROE. CTF 62 obviously did not share that view.

The Commission believes there were a number of factors which cumulatively affected the "mind-set" of the Marines at BIA. One factor was the mission, with its emphasis on highly visible presence and peace-keeping. Another was the ROE, which underscored the need to fire only if fired upon, to avoid harming innocent civilians, to respect civilian property, and to share security and self-defense efforts with the LAF. Promulgation of different ROE for those performing Embassy security duties contributed to a sense among the officers and men at BIA that the terrorist threat confronting them was somehow less dangerous than that which prevailed at the Embassy. The "White Card - Blue Card" dichotomy tended to formalize that view. Interviews of individual Marines who performed duty at the two locations confirm this mind-set. In short, the Commission believes the Marines at BIA were conditioned by their ROE to respond less aggressively to unusual vehicular or pedestrian activity at their perimeter than were those Marines posted at the Embassy locations.

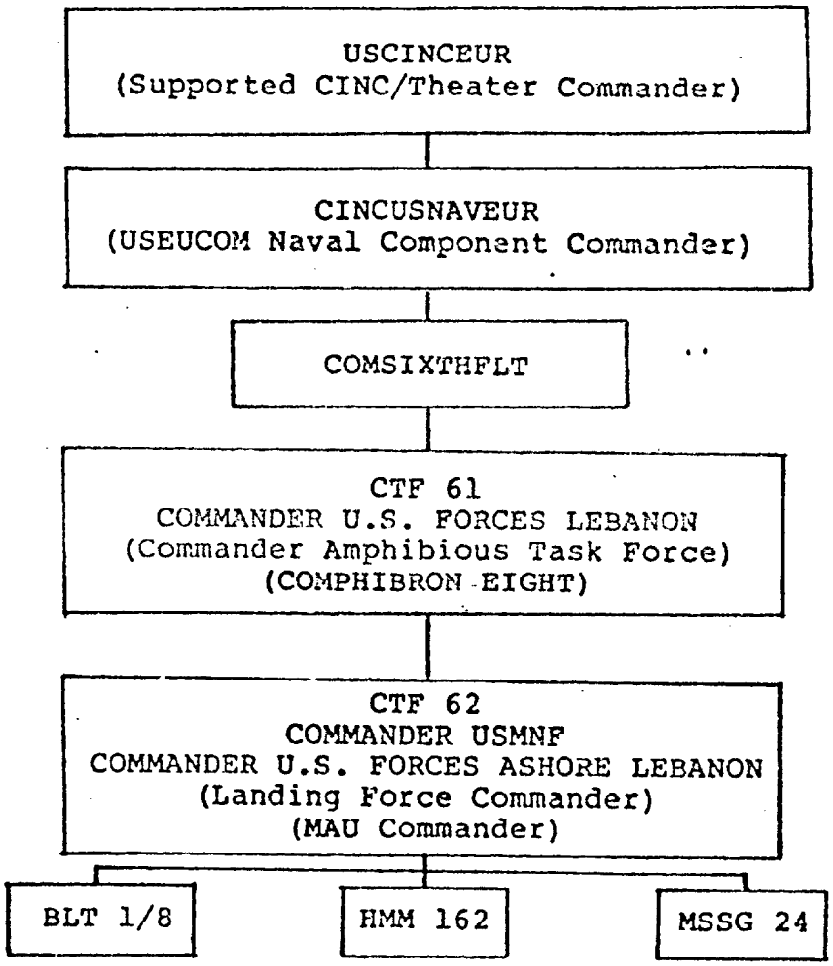
C. Conclusions.

The Commission concludes that a single set of ROE providing specific guidance for countering the type of vehicular terrorist attacks that destroyed the U.S. Embassy on 18 April 1983 and the BLT Headquarters building on 23 October 1983 had not been provided to, nor implemented by, CTF 62.

The Commission further concludes that the mission statement, the original ROE, and the implementation in May 1983 of dual "Blue Card" - "White Card" ROE contributed to a mind-set that detracted from the readiness of the USMNF to respond to the terrorist threat which materialized on 23 October 1983.

FIGURE 3-1

OPERATIONAL CHAIN OF COMMAND



to CJCS on 18 October 1983 that long term objectives of the USMNF presence be reassessed in light of the increasing threat and that withdrawal of the force be considered.

Security measures taken by the USMNF elements at BIA prior to 23 October 1983 are described in detail in PART FIVE of this report. Documentation available to the Commission contains little to indicate that these measures were subject to effective scrutiny by the operational chain of command. In fact, the Commission's inquiry revealed a general attitude throughout the chain of command that security measures in effect ashore were essentially the sole province of the USMNF Commander and that it would somehow be improper to tell him how best to protect his force. As a consequence, the chain of command promulgated no direction to USMNF elements ashore with respect to physical security at BIA prior to 23 October 1983

The Commission was apprised of a HQ USEUCOM staff element with specific responsibility for analyzing security against terrorist attack. The Special Assistant for Security Matters (SASM) went to Beirut following the terrorist bombing of the U.S. Embassy to evaluate the security of the operations of the Office of Military Cooperation (OMC) against terrorist actions. SASM subsequently initiated a number of anti-terrorist actions designed to enhance the security of OMC personnel. (This effort is more fully described in PART NINE of this report.) The SASM survey team was not charged by USCINCEUR to evaluate the anti-terrorist defenses of the USMNF elements at BIA, and did not do so.

Principals and senior staff officers within the operational chain of command visited the USMNF at BIA prior to 23 October 1983. There is no evidence that any visit resulted in recommendations through the chain of command to enhance the security of the USMNF there. (Specific security measures in effect at the MAU compound preceding and at the time of the 23 October 1983 attack are addressed in PART FIVE of this report.)

B. Discussion.

The Commission holds the view that military commanders are responsible for the performance of their subordinates.

The commander can delegate some or all of his authority to his subordinates, but he cannot delegate his responsibility for the performance of any of the forces he commands. In that sense, the responsibility of miltiary command is absolute. This view of command authority and responsibility guided the Commission in its analysis of the effectiveness of the exercise of command authority and responsibility of the chain of command for the USMNF in Lebanon.

The Commission believes there was a fundamental conflict between the peace-keeping mission provided through the chain of command to the USMNF, and the increasingly active role that the United States was taking in support of the LAF. The Commission believes that as the political/military situation in Lebanon evolved, aggressive follow-up and continuing reassessment of the tasks of the USMNF and the support provided by the chain of command were necessary. As the environment changed, the unique nature of the "presence" mission assigned to the USMNF demanded continuing analysis and the promulgation of appropriate guidance to assist the USMNF Commander to take those actions necessary to protect his force.

Although the documentation gathered by the Commission clearly established that every echelon of the chain of command was concerned with the safety of the USMNF in the deteriorating political/military environment of Beirut, the Commission's investigation revealed a lack of systematic and aggressive chain of command attention to the anti-terrorist security measures in use by the USMNF on the ground at BIA. This was in sharp contrast to the direct involvement of the USCINCEUR SASM team in the security posture of the OMC in Beirut against terrorist attack. The prompt, positive action taken by USCINCEUR to improve the security of the OMC is illustrative of the aggressive command involvement that could and should have been directed toward the USMNF as well. We note here and in our findings and discussion on terrorism in PART NINE of this report that USCINCEUR has taken action subsequent to the 23 October 1983 attack to include the security of the USMNF in the charter of the SASM. A further example of how its aggressive involvement might have assisted the USMNF Commander, was the positive action of the chain of command prior to 23 October 1983 to enhance the protection of ships of CTF 61.

C. Conclusions.

The Commission is fully aware that the entire chain of command was heavily involved in the planning for, and support of, the USMNF. The Commission concludes, however, that USCINCEUR, CINCUSNAVEUR, COMSIXTHFLT and CTF 61 did not initiate actions to effectively ensure the security of the USMNF in light of the deteriorating political/military situation in Lebanon. In short, the Commission found a lack of effective command supervision of the USMNF prior to 23 October 1983.

The Commission concludes that the failure of the USCINCEUR operational chain of command to inspect and supervise the defensive posture of the USMNF constituted tacit approval of the security measures and procedures in force at the BLT Headquarters building on 23 October 1983.

The Commission further concludes that although it finds the USCINCEUR operational chain of command at fault, it also finds that there was a series of circumstances beyond the control of these commanders that influenced their judgement and their actions relating to the security of the USMNF.

D. Recommendation.

The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense take whatever administrative or disciplinary action he deems appropriate, citing the failure of the USCINCEUR operational chain of command to monitor and supervise effectively the security measures and procedures employed by the USMNF on 23 October 1983.

PART FOUR - INTELLIGENCE

I. THE THREAT

A. Principal Findings.

Intelligence assessments available to the National Command authorities and the military chain of command, and produced in support of this Commission, divide the spectrum of threat to the USMNF into two broad categories: conventional military action, and terrorist tactics. These assessments highlight the complexity of the threat environment confronting U.S. military units in Lebanon.

The potential use of terrorist tactics against American targets in Beirut - The USMNF, U.S. Embassy offices in the Duraffourd Building and co-located with the British Embassy, the U.S. Ambassador's Residence, apartments housing U.S. military and Embassy personnel, hotels housing U.S. officials, and even American University Beirut - is not the exclusive province of Iranian-backed Shiite terrorists. Radical Palestinian and Lebanese groups, some in conjunction with or with the support of Syria, could also employ terrorist tactics against the USMNF or other American targets. Stockpiles of explosives, built up over a decade prior to the Israeli invasion of June 1982, are reportedly still in place and available for future terrorist operations in and around Beirut.

B. Discussion.

The Commission believes it important to recognize that the "threat" to the USMNF, as described above, did not exist in that form when the USMNF was inserted into Lebanon in the wake of Sabra-Shatila refugee camp massacre by Christian militia forces. A good many Lebanese Shiites were among the victims of that massacre, and American Marines arriving to position themselves between the largely Shiite populace of the southern Beirut suburbs and the IDF were initially welcomed by that populace as heroes and protectors. Clearly, important segments of that citizenry no longer regard them as such, to say nothing of the hostility manifested toward the USMNF by Iranian-inspired fanatics and Syrian-supported Druze gunners. In the view of the Commission, the threat confronting the USMNF evolved incrementally to its present alarming state, and reflects the fact that internally, Lebanon continues to suffer from violent political competition among a number of domestic sectarian groups, some of whom consider the MNF troops to be less peace-keepers than supporters of the Maronite Christian faction of the Lebanese ethnic fabric.

The warmth of the reception first accorded the USMNF did not, however, reflect the U.S. intelligence community's estimation of the likely pitfalls that awaited American peace-keepers in Lebanon. The Commission considers the following passage from a study dated 23 July 1982 (weeks before the first insertion of U.S. Marines) to be particularly instructive:

"If a peacekeeping force is to avoid the problems of divining the intentions of armed elements and avoiding entrapment in Lebanese internal conflicts, it will be essential for the question of extralegal armed presence in the area to be settled before its deployment. If a multinational force is to be used, basic issues affecting its ability to accomplish its mission must be settled in advance. If these issues are not clarified and resolved during a predeployment phase, no one should be surprised if the peacekeeping force encounters intractable political and military problems on the ground (as was the case with UNIFIL)."

In short, the experience of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) demonstrated that a peace-keeping force requires certain conditions to be present if it is to operate effectively. In the context of Lebanon, this meant that extralegal militias could not be allowed to operate in or near the MNF area of responsibility. There was, however, no force in being to prevent them from doing so.

As demonstrated elsewhere in this report, political and military developments on the ground in Lebanon caused the USMNF to be viewed in some quarters not as a peace-keeper, but as a belligerent.

An abundance of open-source statements by Syrian and Druze spokesmen makes it clear that there is a widespread belief among its adversaries that the key actors within the Government of Lebanon - the President of the Republic and the Commander in Chief of Lebanese Armed Forces - are Maronite Phalangists first and foremost, and that Muslim and Druze officials and soliders in the government or serving in the LAF are either traitors, opportunists, or unwitting dupes of the Maronite establishment. The factual basis of this perception is moot. What counts is that certain measures undertaken by the USMNF, such as training the LAF and providing naval gunfire support to the defenders of Suq-al-Gharb, has - in the eyes of the LAF's opponents - confirmed their belief that by 23 October 1983, the USMNF had long since abandoned its peace-keeping/presence position.

A number of watershed political/military events marked the steady evolution of the threat from the relatively benign environment of August-September 1982 to that which confronted the USMNF on 23 October 1983. Lebanon's current military predicament began during the last week of June 1982, when the Maronite-dominated Lebanese Forces (LF) militia began to move steadily up the Beirut-Damascus highway toward Alayh, where it engaged militia elements of the Druze Progressive Socialist Party (PSP). The LF, in an effort to establish its presence in new areas, moved into Saida and the western fringes of the Shuf by the end of the month. It was in the Shuf, under the watchful eyes of the IDF occupation force, that the LF and PSP maneuvered toward an inevitable confrontation. The significance of the LF advance is that it rekindled the Lebanese civil war.

Political lines within Lebanon were hardened considerably by the Israel-Lebanon Agreement of 17 May 1983. The agreement had, among other things, established Lebanese-Israeli security arrangements for southern Lebanon, and made provision for the withdrawal of the IDF. Yet the IDF predicated its own withdrawal upon that of two parties not included in the negotiations: Syria and the PLO.

Israel began in July 1983 to plan for the withdrawal of

its forces from the Alayh and Shuf Districts to the Awwali River line. In anticipation of this withdrawal, the PSP, LAF, and LF began to maneuver for position. LAF-PSP clashes in the Shuf resulted in Druze shelling of BIA on 22 July which closed the airport and wounded three Marines. LF-PSP fighting spilled over in the form of artillery attacks that closed BIA from 10-16 August. During the same timeframe (15-17 July) the LAF engaged the Shiite Amal militia in Beirut follwing the LAF's eviction of Shiite squatters from an area near the Holiday Inn.

As the LAF struggled to establish control over the Shiite neighborhoods (a process which eventually failed), the IDF prepared to evacuate Alayh and the Shuf. On 4 September 1983, the IDF withdrew to the Awwali River and the Lebanese civil war resumed in earnest in the hills overlooking BIA.

On 5 September 1983, the LF began to feel the full impact of its ill-considered move into the Alayh District over a year before, as its forces were routed in Bhamdun. The disaster was later extended to the Shuf, as an estimated 1,000 LF fighters were trapped in Dayr-Al-Qamar.

These then, were the events that led to the LAF's stand at Suq-Al-Gharb. In the view of the Commission, U.S. support of the LAF in that operation, timely and effective though it was, nevertheless confirmed definitively, in the eyes of the LAF's enemies, the belligerent status of the USMNF.

The Commission recognizes that there was abundant evidence that Syrian, Druze, and some Shiite leaders had come to consider the USMNF as a partisan participant on the Lebanese scene well before Suq-Al-Gharb. CINCUSNAVEUR advised the Commission that "by mid-to-late August 1983, Druze, Shia, and Syrian leaders had begun making statements to the effect that the Multinational Forces, especially the U.S. element, was one of 'the enemy'." On 25 August PSP leader Walid Jumblatt claimed that "the Marines have bluntly and directly threatened us. This is proof of the U.S. alliance with the Phalange Party."

The Conventional threat to the USMNF - land, sea, and air - is largely a function of the progress (or lack thereof) toward an internal Lebanese political settlement acceptable to Syria. All data available to the Commission suggest that a strong relationship exits between Lebanon's

steady slide back toward anarchy and the tendency of some parties to label the USMNF a belligerent. It is obviously not the intention of the United States to place its power and prestige at the disposal of one or more of Lebanon's sectarian-based political factions. It is undeniable, however, that the facts of political life in Lebanon make any attempt on the part of an outsider to appear nonpartisan virtually impossible. The Government of Lebanon is not an antiseptic instrument of a collective Lebanese will; nor is it a collection of disinterested public servants isolated from the forces of family, clan, religion, and localism that are fundamental to life in Lebanon. President Gemayel is a Maronite Phalangist who is the son of the Phalange Party's founder and the brother of the man who built the LF militia. General Tannous is likewise a Maronite who has a history of close connections with the Phalange Party and the LF militia. Whatever their true intentions may be concerning the future of Lebanon, they are caught in the same tangled web of distrust, misunderstanding, malevolence, conspiracy, and betrayal that has brought Lebanon to political bankruptcy and ruin. Whatever good will, decency, competence and dedication they now bring to bear in the execution of their duties, they can neither undo that which they have been in the past nor renounce their origins. No Lebanese can easily escape the rigid categorizations that begin with the circumstances surrounding his birth. For someone named Gemayel, the escape is all the more difficult.

The Commission views Lebanon as an ideal environment for the planning and execution of terrorist operations. For over eight years, Beirut has been an armed camp featuring indiscriminate killing, seemingly random acts of terror, and massive stockpiling of weapons and ammunition. We are told that it is difficult, if not impossible, to find a Lebanese household which does not possess firearms. Notwithstanding the opportunity presented the Government of Lebanon by the evacuation of the PLO and the dispersal of LNM militias in September 1982, there are still neighborhoods in and around Beirut's southern suburbs which the LAF dare not enter.

The Iranian connection introduces a particulary ominous element to the terrorist threat in that the incidence of Iranian-inspired terrorism need not be connected directly with the reconciliation process in Lebanon. Iranian operatives in Lebanon are in the business of killing Americans. They are in that business whether or not the USMNF trains the LAF or provides indirect fire support to the defenders of Suq-Al-Gharb. If the reconciliation process succeeds in restoring

domestic order and removing foreign forces, it may be more difficult for Iranian inspired terrorists to avail themselves of the support mechanisms (personnel, basing, supply, training) now so readily available. It is clear, however, that progress toward reconciliation in Lebanon will not dissuade Iran from attempting to hit American targets; indeed, any evidence of such progress may spur new Iranian-sponsored acts of political violence as a means of derailing the process. The only development which would seriously impede the terrorist activities of Iranian-dominated Shia groups in Lebanon, short of a change of regime in Tehran, would be a decision by Syria to shut down the basing facilities in the Bekaa Valley and sever the logistical pipeline.

In the wake of the 23 October 1983 bombing, intelligence reporting continues to be voluminous regarding the plans of various groups to use terrorist tactics against the USMNF. None of the reports specify the date or time of the purported operations. Moreover, most individual reports cannot be independently verified. It is difficult to overstate the magnitude of the intelligence problem in a milieu where high casualty terrorist acts are relatively easy to perpetrate yet hard to stop. The types of attacks mounted thus far in Beirut - and those most likely to be attempted, according to available reporting - require little in the way of material resources or manpower, making them particularly difficult to intercept in the planning stage. The fact that political and sectarian affinity is reinforced by family and clan solidarity, particularly among radical Shiites, makes timely intelligence penetration problematical at best.

As noted above, the entire spectrum of threat - conventional and terrorist - is further complicated by something which, over the past eight years, has assumed the character of a national pastime in Lebanon: covert provocation. "X" hidden from view, hits "Y" with the expectation that "Y" will lash out at "Z", who is the mortal enemy of "X". The USMNF and other American personnel in Lebanon are ideal targets for this sort of activity. The USMNF is well aware of this prospect, which constitutes yet another threat multiplier in what amounts to a veritable jungle of threats.

II. INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT

A. Principal Findings

Intelligence provided over 100 warnings of car bombings between May and 23 October 1983, but like most of the warning information received by the USMNF, specific threats seldom materialized. Seldom did the U.S. have a mechanism at its disposal which would allow a follow up on these leads and a further refinement of the information into intelligence which served for other than warning.

The National Command Authorities and the chain of command received regular updates on the broadening threat to the USMNF.

Although intelligence was provided at all levels that presented a great deal of general information on the threat, there was no specific intelligence on the where, how and when of the 23 October bombing.

It should be noted that the FBI report on the 18 April 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, a report which described the use of explosive-activated bottle bombs in that incident, stayed within FBI, CIA, and Department of State channels. The report demonstrated that the gas-enhancement process, which requires only small amounts of explosives to activate the explosion of ordinary gas bottles, introduces a sizeable blast multiplier effect, and is relatively simple to employ. The necessary materials are readily available throughout the world and are relatively easy to deliver to the target. Indeed, oxygen, propane and similar gas bottles are common in most parts of the world. With regard to the BLT Headquarters bombing, FBI forensic experts have stated that it was the largest non-nuclear blast that they have ever examined; perhaps six to nine times the magnitude of the Embassy bombing.

Intelligence support to conventional, tactical military requirements received praise from many in the administrative and operational chains of command. The ability to locate hostile artillery positions, tanks, and militia strong-holds was considered excellent.

At the direction of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the DOD conducted a survey from 13 to 27 May 1983 to determine whether there was a need to improve military intelligence or counterintelligence support to the USMNF.

The DOD survey team made the following recommendations:

B. Discussion.

Intelligence provided a good picture of the broad threat facing the USMNF in Lebanon. Every intelligence agency in the national community and throughout the chain of command disseminated a great amount of analysis and raw data. Key Defense officials and the military chain of command were alert to, and concerned with, the insights it provided them. There was an awareness of the existing dangerous stiutation at every level, but no one had specific information on how, where and when the threat would be carried out. Throughout the period of the USMNF presence in Lebanon, intelligence sources were unable to provide proven, accurate, definitive information on terrorist tactics against our forces. This shortcoming held to be the case on 23 October 1983. The terrorist threat was just one among many threats facing the USMNF from the many factions armed with artillery, crew served weapons and small arms.

Technical intelligence was responsive to the USMNF Commander's conventional tactical needs. Organic CTF 61/62 intelligence,

reinforced by national level support, were able to keep track of the growing conventional military threat.

The intelligence staffs at various echelons within the European Command initiated some innovative measures and, in general, tried to improve U.S. intelligence capabilities against adversaries in the region. The situation as of 30 November 1983, shows improvement as a result of the chain of command's efforts.

The USMNF was operating in an urban environment surrounded by hostile forces without any way of pursuing the accuracy of data in order to head off attack. The intelligence structure should be reviewed from both a design and capabilities standpoint. We need to establish ourselves early in a potential trouble spot and find new techniques to isolate and penetrate our potential enemies. Once established, our military forces (and especially ground forces) need to have aggressive, specific intelligence to give the commander the hard information he needs to counter the threats against his force. U.S. intellignece is primarily geared for the support of air and naval forces engaged in nuclear and conventional warfare. Significant attention must be given by the entire U.S. intelligence structure to purging and refining of masses of generalized information into intelligence analysis useful to small unit ground commanders.

It is also essential that all government agencies develop a heightened awareness of the potential intelligence significance to the USMNF commander of information they develop or hold for their own needs. If DOD elements had been provided the relevant data pertaining to the characteristics of the explosive device employed against the U.S. Embassy in Beirut on 18 April 1983, specifically with regard to the capacity terrorists have to greatly enhance destructive effects through relatively simple means, the USMNF Commander may have acquired a better appreciation of the catastrophic potentialities arrayed against him.

In summary, the U.S. did not have the specific intelligence, force disposition or institutional capabilities sufficient to thwart the attack on the BLT Headquarters building on 23 October 1983. The USMNF commander received volumes of intelligence information, but none specific enough to have enabled the prevention of the attack or provide him other than general warning. There was no institutionalized process for the fusion of intelligence disciplines into an all-source support mechanism.

C. Conclusions.

The Commission concludes that although the USMNF commander received a large volume of intelligence warnings concerning potential terrorist threats prior to 23 October 1983, he was not provided with the timely intelligence, tailored to his specific operational needs, that was necessary to defend against the broad spectrum of threats he faced.

The Commission further concludes that the HUMINT support to the USMNF commander was ineffective, being neither precise nor tailored to his needs. The Commission believes that the paucity of U.S. controlled HUMINT provided to the USMNF commander is in large part due to policy decisions which have resulted in a U.S. HUMINT capability commensurate with the resources and time that have been spent to acquire it.

D. Recommendations.

The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense establish an all-source fusion center, which would tailor and focus all-source intelligence support to U.S. military commanders involved in military operations in areas of high threat, conflict or crisis.

The Commission further recommends that the Secretary of Defense take steps to establish a joint CIA/DOD examination of policy and resource alternatives to immediately improve HUMINT support to the USMNF contingent in Lebanon and other areas of potential conflict which would involve U.S. military operating forces.

PART FIVE - PRE-ATTACK SECURITY

I. 24 MAU, BLT 1/8 HEADQUARTERS COMPOUND

A. Principal Findings.

The USMNF/MAU Headquarters compound primarily occupied three buildings in the administrative area of the Beirut Internationl Airport (BIA). BIA is an active international airport which serviced an average of some 35 flights and 2,400 passengers a day during the two-week period preceding the bombing of the BLT Headquarters building. Approximately 1,000 civilians are employed at BIA, and ground traffic to and from the area is estimated at about 3,000 vehicles daily.

Figure 5-1 depicts the major features referred to hereafter. The MAU Headquarters was located in the former Airport Fire Fighting School factilities at Beirut International Airport. The structure is a two-story building with floors, ceiling, and walls constructed of reinforced concrete. The first (ground) floor consists of six vehicle bays accessed by metal doors, several offices and a utility room.

The second floor, accessed by a circular staircase, consists of administrative offices. Exposed openings had been reinforced with protective sandbag walls. The roof, accessed by an exterior ladder, was used as an antenna farm. The MAU Service Support Group (MSSG) Headquarters was located immediately across the road to the northwest of the MAU Headquarters building. The structure is a single story, reinforced concrete and steel building which was reinforced at exposed openings by protective sandbag walls.

The Battalion Landing Team (BLT) Headquarters was located in a four-story building southwest of the MAU Headquarters. (The BLT Building is described in detail in the following section).

Buildings utilized by Lebanese Civil Aviation Authorities in the immediate vicinity of the USMNF facilities included the Civil Aviation School directly west

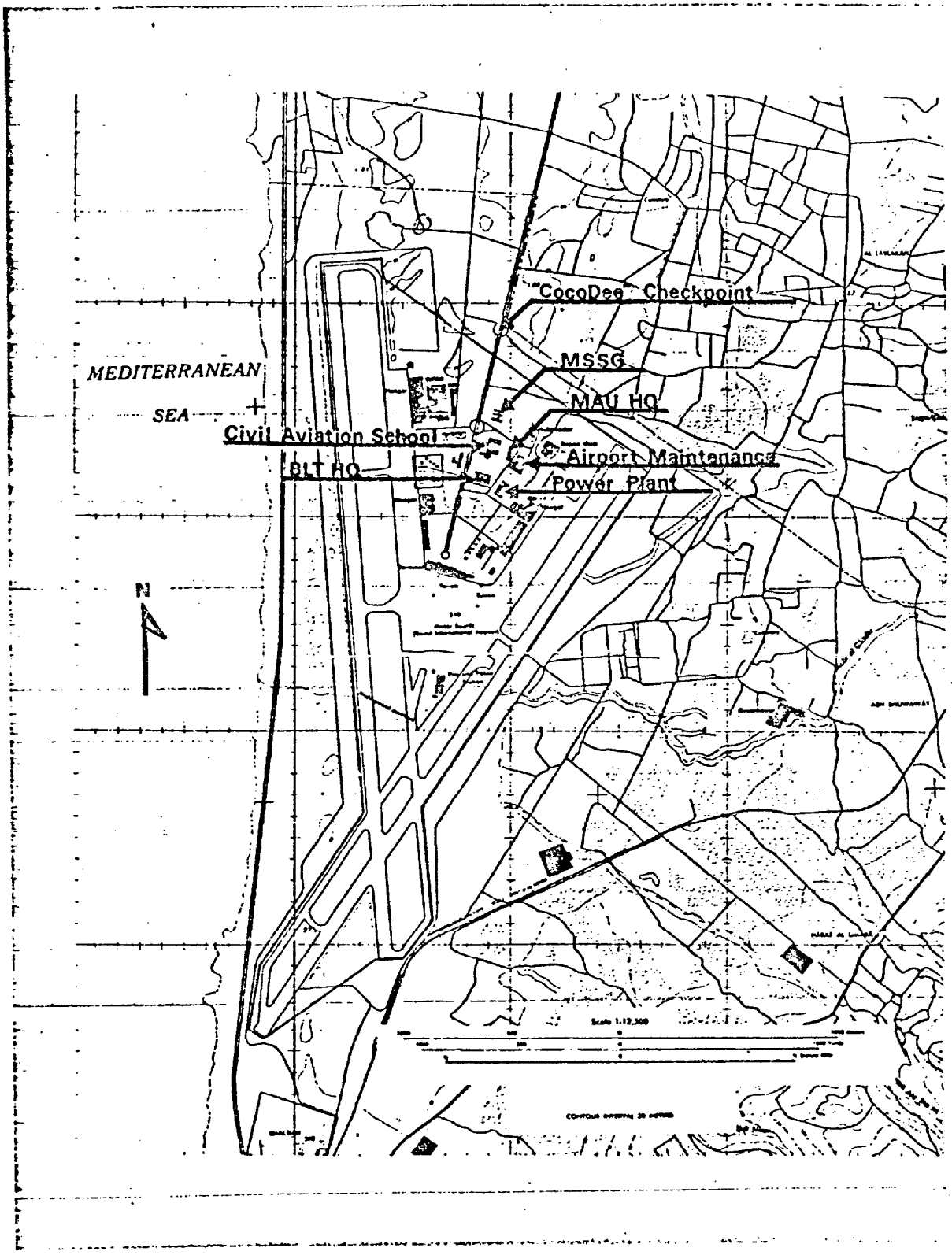

CocoDee Checkpoint
MSSG
MAU HQ
MEDITERRANEAN
SEA
Civil Aviation School
BLT HQ
Airport Maintenance
Power Plant
N

Figure 5-1

of the MAU Headquarters, the airport maintenance building directly east of the MAU Headquarters, and the airport power Plant and the air conditioning building directly east of the BLT Headquarters. These buildings, along with other buildings throughout the area, were facilities utilized by Lebanese nationals in the daily activities of airport business. Normal access to the compound area on 23 October 1983 was via public roads into and within BIA, and then through a gate in the immediate vicinity of the MAU Headquarters building. (A complete description of the security posts and barriers in the area is found in Section IV, Security Guard Organization and Execution.) Overall security for BIA was the responsibility of the LAF. Between the hours of 2100 and 0600 daily, civilian traffic into BIA was not permitted. This prohibition was controlled by the LAF checkpoint known as "Cocodee" on the main airport access road.

B. Discussion.

Interviews with personnel of the LAF liaison element and with LAF soldiers who manned checkpoint "Cocodee" on the morning of 23 October 1983 confirm the restricted access to BIA. Vehicles already in the BIA administrative area by 2100, however, were not required to depart. In fact, because of the extensive repair and construction activity at BIA, many vehicles, including large trucks similar to the vehicle utilized in the bombing, routinely remained in the area overnight.

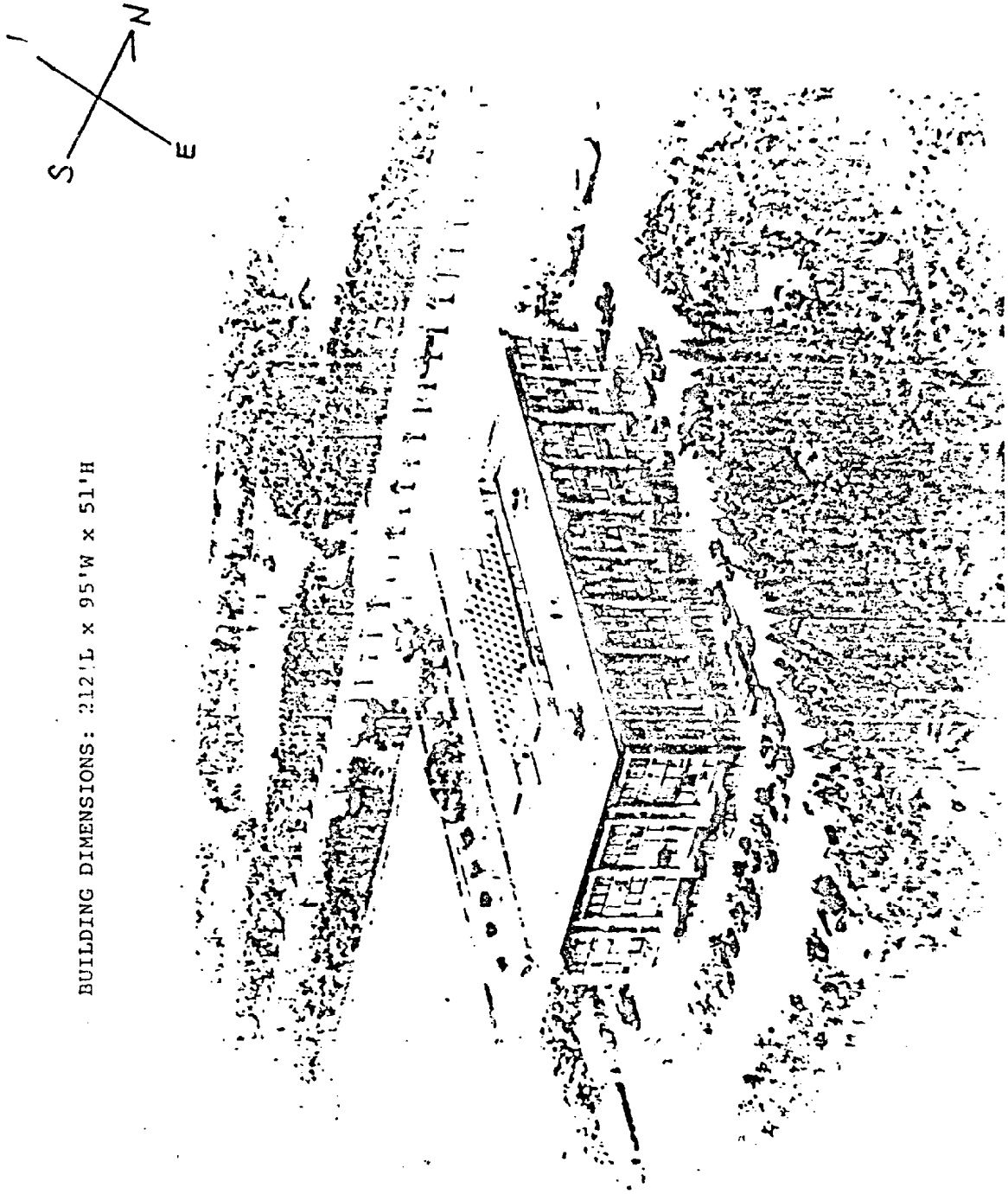


Figure 5-2

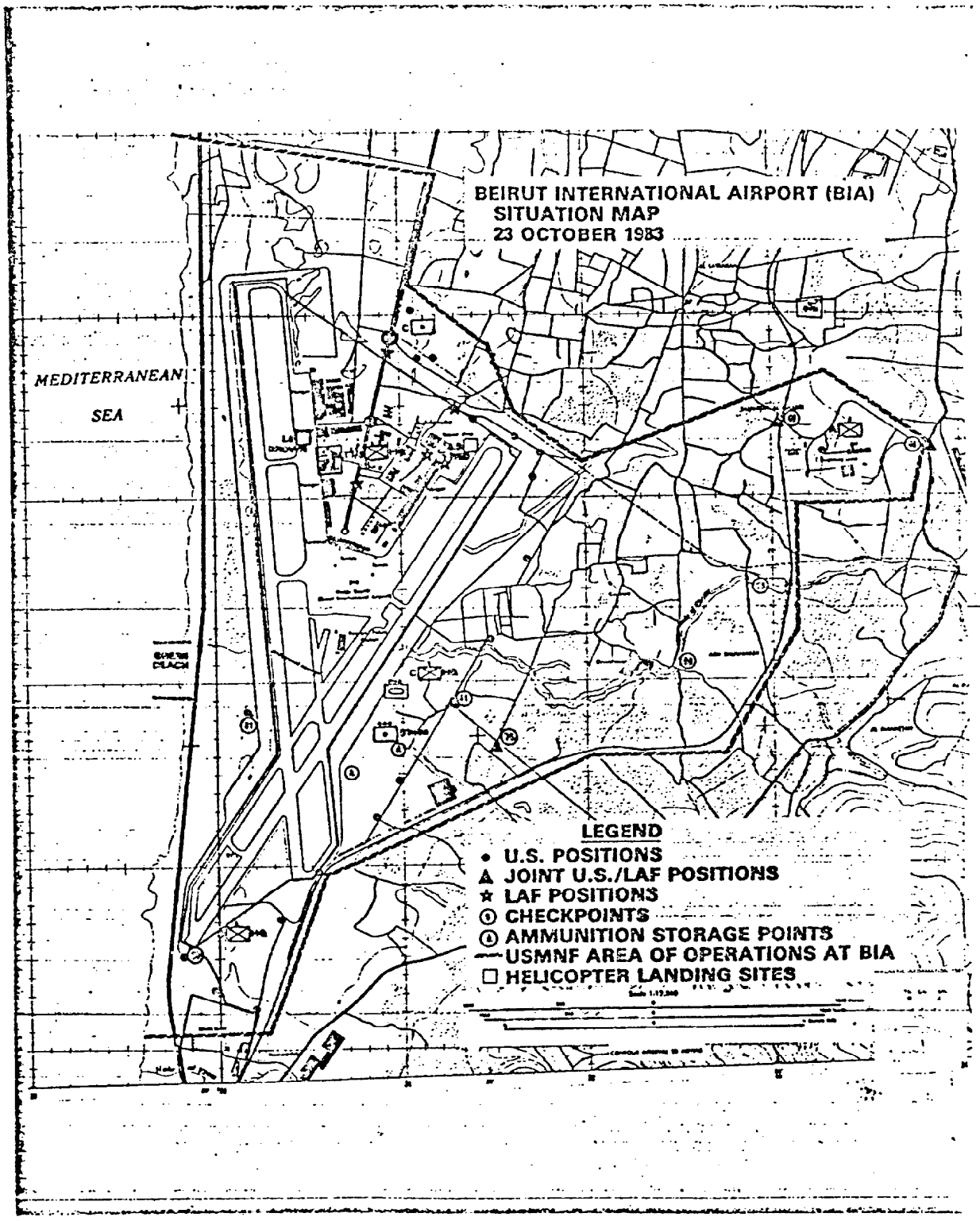

BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (BIA)
SITUATION MAP
23 OCTOBER 1983
MEDITERRANEAN
SEA
LEGEND
• U.S. POSITIONS
▲ JOINT U.S./LAF POSITIONS
★ LAF POSITIONS
① CHECKPOINTS
Ⓐ AMMUNITION STORAGE POINTS
— USMNF AREA OF OPERATIONS AT BIA
□ HELICOPTER LANDING SITES

Figure 5-3

II. BLT HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

A. Principal Findings.

The BLT Headquarters was located in a bombed-out, fire-damaged, four story building located north of the BIA terminal building and just south of the building utilized as the 24th MAU Headquarters (See Figure 5-2). The building was constructed of steel and reinforced concrete. At one time large plate glass windows encompassed the second, third and fourth stories. All of the windows on the upper three floors had been replaced with an assortment of plywood, sand bag cloth, screen, and plastic sheeting. The ground floor was an open area which has been enclosed with substantial sand bagging and barbed wire. At the center of the building was an open courtyard extending to the road with a ventilated covering to ward off rain while providing for cooling and illumination of the building's interior. There were two inoperable elevator shafts which had been fire damaged. Access to upper stories was gained via two concrete stairwells located on the east and west ends of the courtyard.

The building originally housed the headquarters of the Government of Lebanon's Aviation Administration Bureau. It had been successibly occupied by the PLO, the Syrians, and finally by the Israelis, the latter using it as a field hospital during their 1982 invasion. The first U.S. Marine Corps unit ashore in September 1982 occupied the building as the command post for a Battalion Landing Team (BLT).

Initially, security for the force was not the paramount consideration of the USMNF. The Marines, for the most part, were welcomed, particularly so in clearing up mines and unexploded ordnance left behind as a result of the PLO/Israeli conflict. Tactical security was established appropriate to mission tasking and the perceived threat. Subsequently, as military involvement between warring Lebanese confessional groups worsened, LAF training was halted, mobile patrols were reduced and security enhancements were instituted as follows:

- Bunkers were hardened.
- The number and depth of defensive positions were increased.
- Perimeter security was improved.

Security provisions from 29 September 1982 to 22 October 1983 were such that, despite occasional light to heavy hostile artillery, rocket and sniper fire, Marine casualties

were relatively light. The limited number of casualties was attributable in part to the fact that the reinforced concrete construction of the BLT headquarters building provided good protection from the attacks by fire that the BLT Headquarters received. During this period, no one was ever wounded or killed in that building.

Starting on 29 MAY, BLT 1/8 (24th MAU) relieved BLT 2/6 (22d MAU) in place at the BIA. During this relief period from 26 May to 30 May, Commanding Officer, BLT 1/8, and the Commanding Officer, BLT 2/6, conferred extensively on the situations at BIA, at the U.S. and British Embassies, and at the Lebanese Scientific and Technical University.

The changeover of the two BLTs at the airport was normal. The infantry companies occupied previously prepared defensive positions on the airport perimeter and the U.S. Embassy responsibility; "B" Company assumed the eastern and northern airport perimeter and check points 76 and 11; and "C" Company located at the Lebanese Scientific and Technical University and check points 35 and 69. The Weapons Company was put into a supporting role; its 81mm mortar platoon occupied a position on the eastern perimeter, slightly west of check point 11. Subsequently, the companies were rotated, and on 23 October 1983, BLT 1/8 was positioned as shown on Figure 5-3.

Upon assuming BIA defensive positions, BLT 1/8 continued the security enhancement work of BLT 2/6. Sandbags were filled and emplaced within all positions. It is estimated that from 29 May to 23 October 1983, some 500,000 sandbags were filled and emplaced in addition to 10,000 feet of concertina wire, and 1,000 engineer stakes. This equates to approximately 20 tons of materials.

On 30 May 1983, BLT 1/8 (24th MAU) occupied the building. The 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment formed the nucleus of BLT 1/8. The battalion consisted of three infantry companies, a weapons company, and a headquarters and service company. BLT 1/8 had a strength of approximately 1250 personnel. This figure remained relatively constant. On any given day from 30 May 1983 until 23 October, BLT 1/8 consisted of approximately 59 Marine officers, 1143 enlisted Marines, 3 Navy officers, 52 Navy enlisted, 3 Army officers and 28 Army enlisted.

B. Discussion.

The mission of the USMNF at the time of its deployment at BIA was to be one of presence. The decision to occupy BIA was based upon several factors:

- BIA was an important symbol of the new Lebanese government's influence and control.

- Israel would not agree to withdraw from BIA unless replaced by U.S. units.

- The airport was a comparatively favorable position for the USMNF, away from the refugee camps and inner city of Beirut. Yet it enabled the Marines to visibly assist the Lebanese government in an area of practical and symbolic importance. The airport location also facilitated both ingress and egress for U.S. Forces ashore.

The BLT Headquarters building was occupied from the outset for a variety of reasons. The steel and reinforced concrete construction of the BLT Headquarters building was viewed as providing ideal protection from a variety of weapons. The building also afforded several military advantages that could be gained nowhere else within the BLT's assigned area of responsibility. First, it provided an ideal location to effectively support a BLT on a day-to-day basis. Logistic support was centrally located, thus enabling water, rations and ammunition to be easily allocated from a single, central point to the rifle companies and attached units. The Battalion Aid Station could be safeguarded in a clean, habitable location that could be quickly and easily reached. Motor transport assets could be parked and maintained in a common motor pool area. A reaction force could be mustered in a protected area and held in readiness for emergencies. The building also provided a safe and convenient location to brief the large numbers of U.S. Congressmen, Administration officials, and flag and general officers who visited Beirut from September 1982 to October 1983. In sum, the building was an ideal location for the command post of a battalion actively engaged in fulfilling a peace-keeping and presence mission.

Second, the building was an excellent observation post. From its rooftop, a full 360 degree field of vision was available. From this elevated position, forward air controllers, naval gunfire spotters and artillery forward observers could see into the critical Shuf Mountain area. Also from this position, observers could see and assist USMNF units in their positions at the Lebanese Science and Technical University. Further, this observation position facilitated control of helicopter landing zones that were

critical to resupply and medical evacuation for the MUA. In sum, many of the key command and control functions essential to the well-being of the USMNF as a whole could be carried out from the building. No other site was available within the bounds of the airport area which afforded these avantages.

Third, the building provided an excellent platform upon which communications antennae could be mounted. In that the supporting ships were initially as far as 3,000 to 6,000 yards off shore, antenna height was a major factor in maintaining reliable communications with the supporting elements of the 6th Fleet. Reliable communication with the ships of CTF 60 and CTF 61 was critical to the defense and safety of not only the USMNF, but to the U.S. Embassy, the U.S. Ambassador's residence, the Duraffourd building, and our allies in the MNF as well. Reliable communications meant that naval gunfire missions could be directed at hositle artillery and rocket positions in the Shuf Mountains when they fired into the airport. Line-of-sight communications are also essential in calling for and adjusting air strikes. Moreover, such communications were key to the rapid evacuation of casualties via helicopter to secure medical facilities offshore.

In summary, the Commission believes that a variety of valid political and military considerations supported the selection of this building to house the BLT Headquarters. The fact that no casualties were sustained in that building until 23 October 1983, attested to its capability to provide protection against the incoming fire received by the BLT Headquarters, while simultaneously providing the best available facility to allow the USMNF to conduct its mission.

III. BLT HEADQUARTERS ORGANIZATION, OPERATION AND SECURITY

A. Principal Findings.

The basement of the building consisted of two larger rooms connected by an east-west passageway (See Figure 5-4). The west room was basically a storage area for foodstuffs for the field mess to include produce, dry storage, canned goods, paper materials, and dairy products. The east room was divided between a troop recreation area and the battalion aid station. An access tunnel into this room was securely blocked and quarded 24 hours a day (See Figure 5-5). In the recreation area were picnic chairs and tables, pool and ping-pong tables, video games, and a television set with a video cassette recorder for movies. Beer, soda and snacks were stored and sold in this area. In the aid station, the battalion's medical equipment was arranged to handle normal sick call, emergencies, and, if required, casualty triage. All battalion medical records were stored in this area.

The ground floor lobby (See Figure 5-6) was kept clear for security reasons. Should be building be penetrated, fire could be directed from the upper stories down into an open area. The field mess was located beneath the extreme western side of the building overhang, behind a sandbag and screen wall which completely enclosed the area. Seating capacity for the mess was approvimately 150 personnel. Adjacent to the mess, and within the building proper, were the armory and S-4 (logistics) storage areas. A small number of anti-tank missiles prepositioned here for use in building defense and on foot and mobile patrols. A definitive listing of ordnance involved cannot be compiled until the final results of the FBI's forensic investigation are made available. From available information, however, it appears that the only other ordnance in the building was the basic load of ammunition carried by individual Marines.

The TOW (anti-tank missile) section was billeted behind a sandbag wall beneath the overhang on the extreme eastern side. Adjacent to the TOW section, and within the building, was the Lebanese vendor's shop. The vendor sold soda, candy, souvenirs, and health and comfort items. He often slept in his shop's storage area and is believed to have been killed in the explosion on 23 October. Adjacent to the vendor's area was another storage room used for beer and

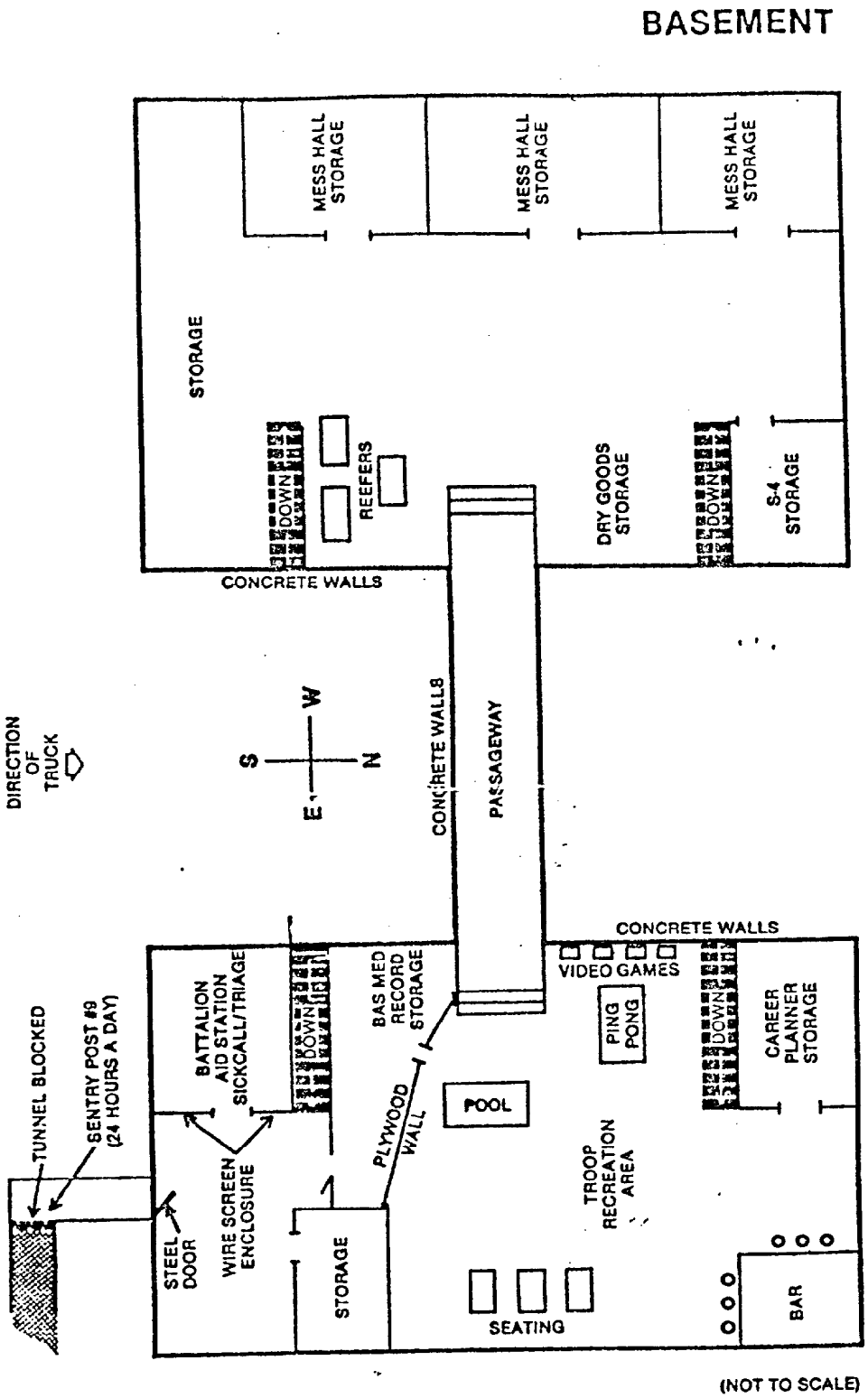

BASEMENT
MESS HALL STORAGE
MESS HALL STORAGE
MESS HALL STORAGE
STORAGE
DOWN
REEFERS
DRY GOODS STORAGE
DOWN
S-4 STORAGE
CONCRETE WALLS
DIRECTION OF TRUCK
W
S
N
E
CONCRETE WALLS
PASSAGEWAY
CONCRETE WALLS
VIDEO GAMES
TUNNEL BLOCKED
SENTRY POST #9 (24 HOURS A DAY)
BATTALION AID STATION SICKCALL/TRIAGE
DOWN
BAS MED RECORD STORAGE
PING PONG
DOWN
CAREER PLANNER STORAGE
POOL
PLYWOOD WALL
TROOP RECREATION AREA
STEEL DOOR
WIRE SCREEN ENCLOSURE
STORAGE
SEATING
BAR
(NOT TO SCALE)

Figure 5-4

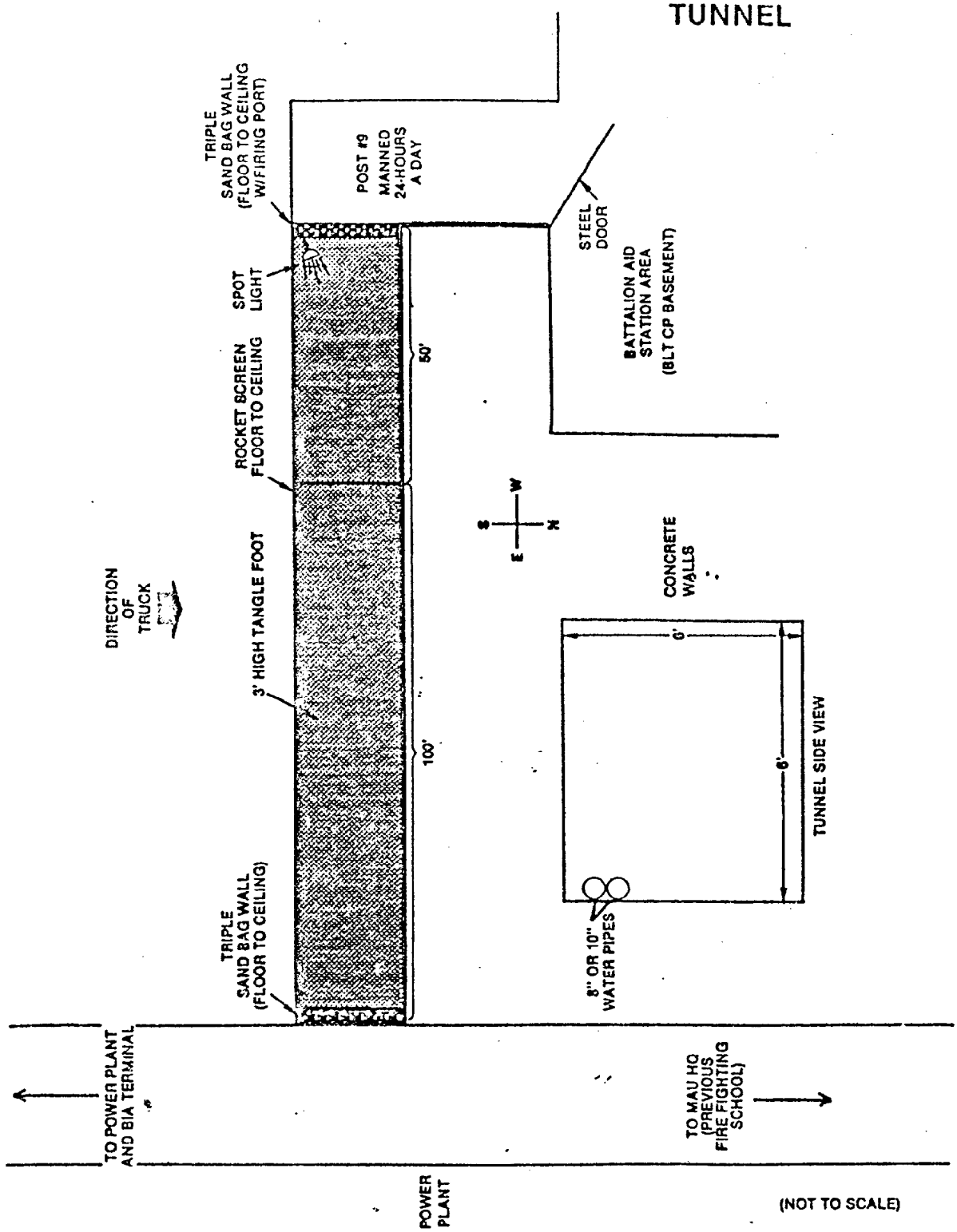

TUNNEL
TRIPLE SAND BAG WALL (FLOOR TO CEILING W/FIRING PORT)
POST #9 MANNED 24-HOURS A DAY
STEEL DOOR
SPOT LIGHT
BATTALION AID STATION AREA (BLT CP BASEMENT)
ROCKET SCREEN FLOOR TO CEILING
50'
DIRECTION OF TRUCK
3' HIGH TANGLE FOOT
CONCRETE WALLS
6'
8'
TUNNEL SIDE VIEW
100'
TRIPLE SAND BAG WALL (FLOOR TO CEILING)
8" OR 10" WATER PIPES
TO POWER PLANT AND BIA TERMINAL
TO MAU HQ (PREVIOUS FIRE FIGHTING SCHOOL)
POWER PLANT
(NOT TO SCALE)

Figure 5-5

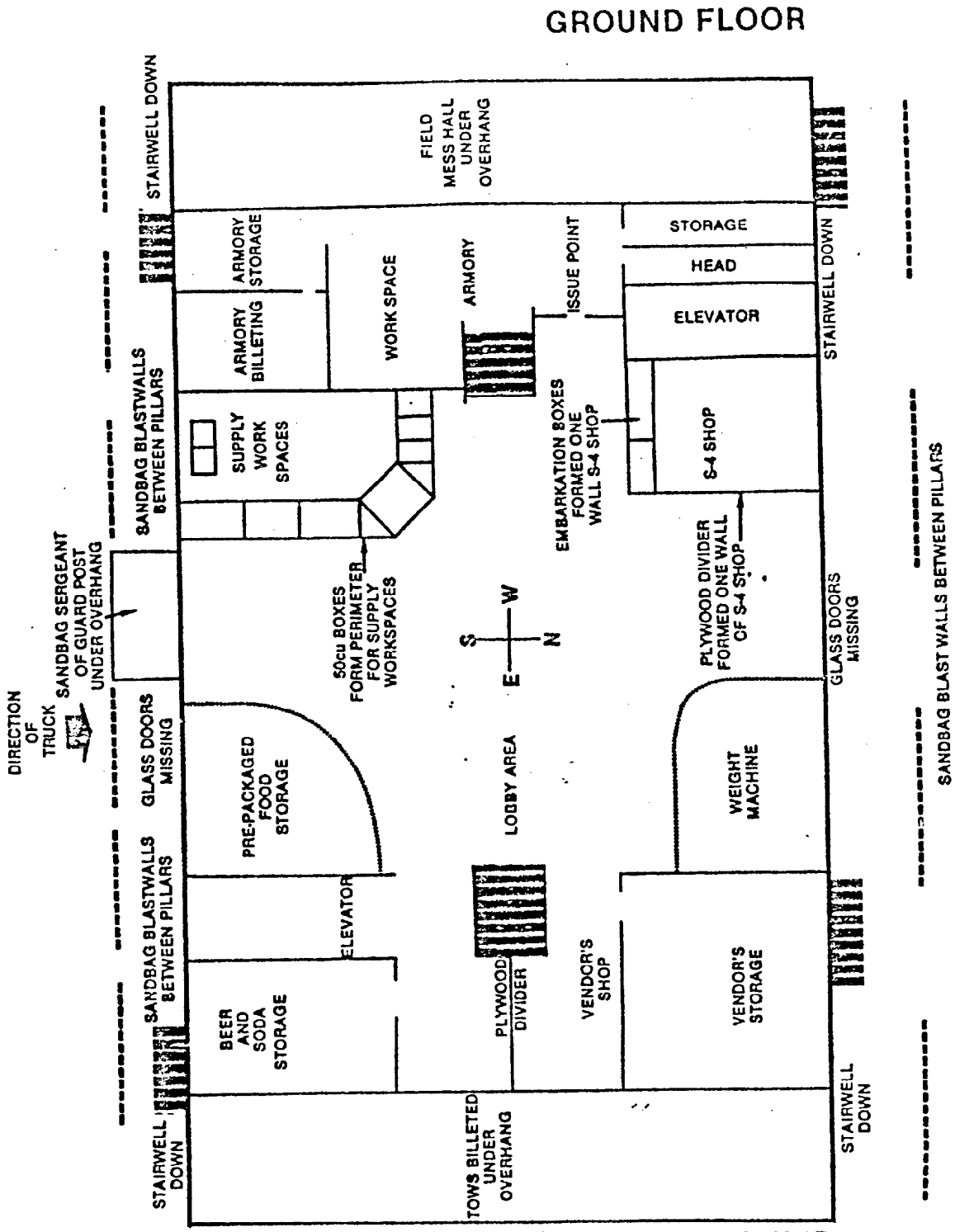

GROUND FLOOR
STAIRWELL DOWN
FIELD MESS HALL UNDER OVERHANG
ARMORY STORAGE
ARMORY BILLETING
WORK SPACE
ARMORY
ISSUE POINT
STORAGE
HEAD
ELEVATOR
STAIRWELL DOWN
SANDBAG BLASTWALLS BETWEEN PILLARS
SUPPLY WORK SPACES
EMBARKATION BOXES FORMED ONE WALL S-4 SHOP
S-4 SHOP
SANDBAG SERGEANT OF GUARD POST UNDER OVERHANG
50cu BOXES FORM PERIMETER FOR SUPPLY WORKSPACES
PLYWOOD DIVIDER FORMED ONE WALL OF S-4 SHOP
GLASS DOORS MISSING
DIRECTION OF TRUCK
GLASS DOORS MISSING
PRE-PACKAGED FOOD STORAGE
LOBBY AREA
WEIGHT MACHINE
SANDBAG BLAST WALLS BETWEEN PILLARS
SANDBAG BLASTWALLS BETWEEN PILLARS
ELEVATOR
PLYWOOD DIVIDER
VENDOR'S SHOP
VENDOR'S STORAGE
BEER AND SODA STORAGE
STAIRWELL DOWN
TOWS BILLETED UNDER OVERHANG
STAIRWELL DOWN
S
W
E
N
(NOT TO SCALE)

Figure 5-6

1st FLOOR

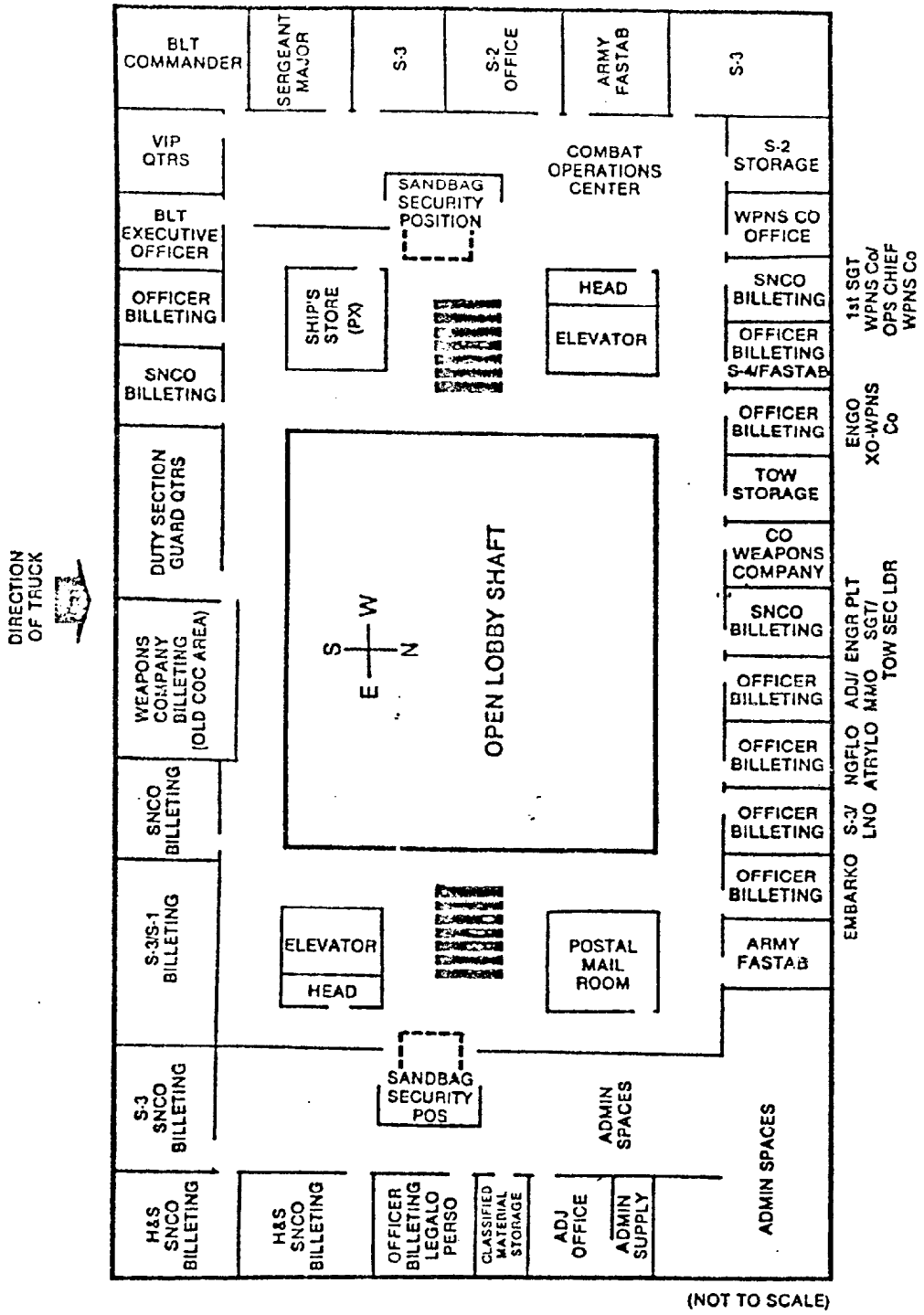


Figure 5-7

2nd FLOOR

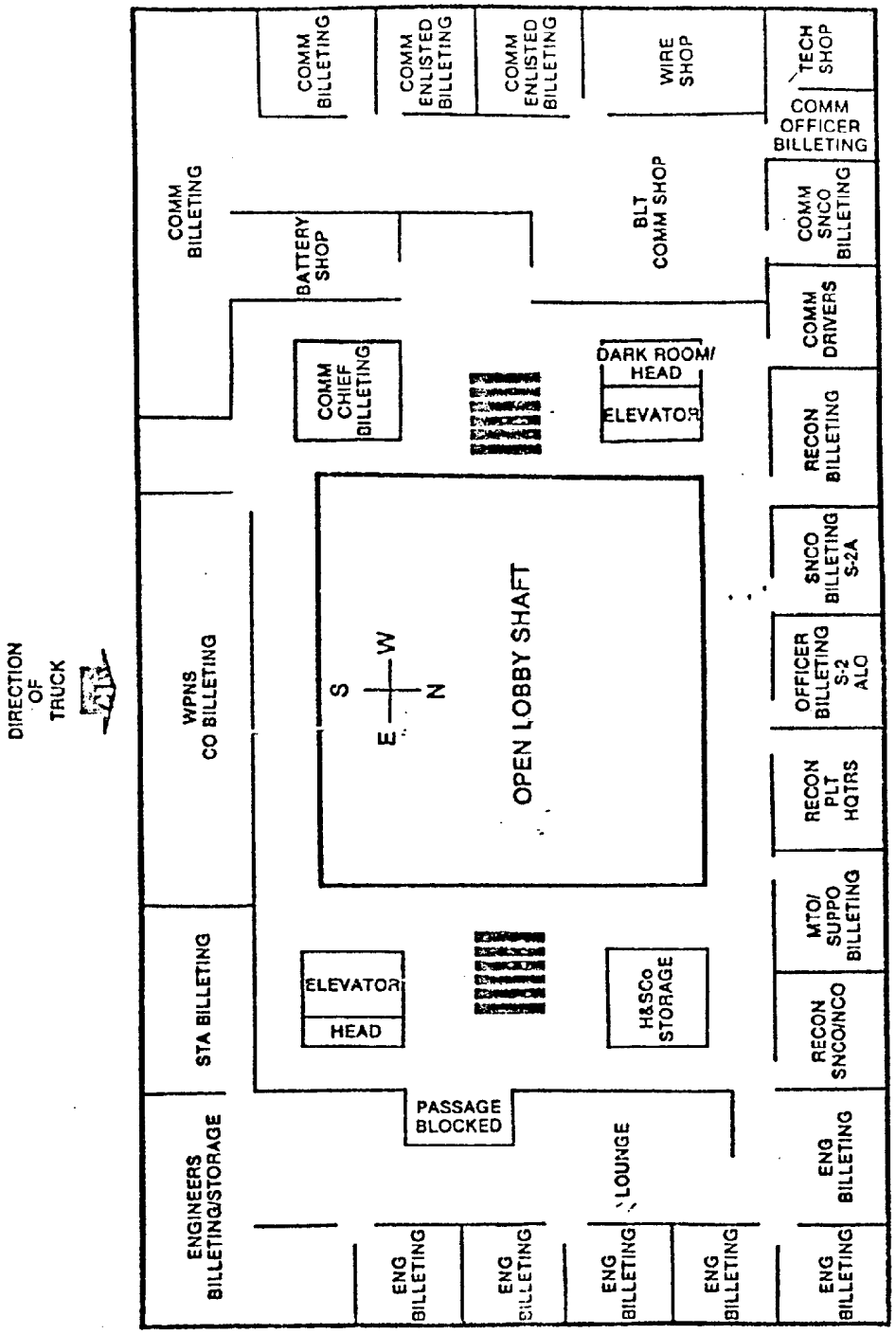


Figure 5-8

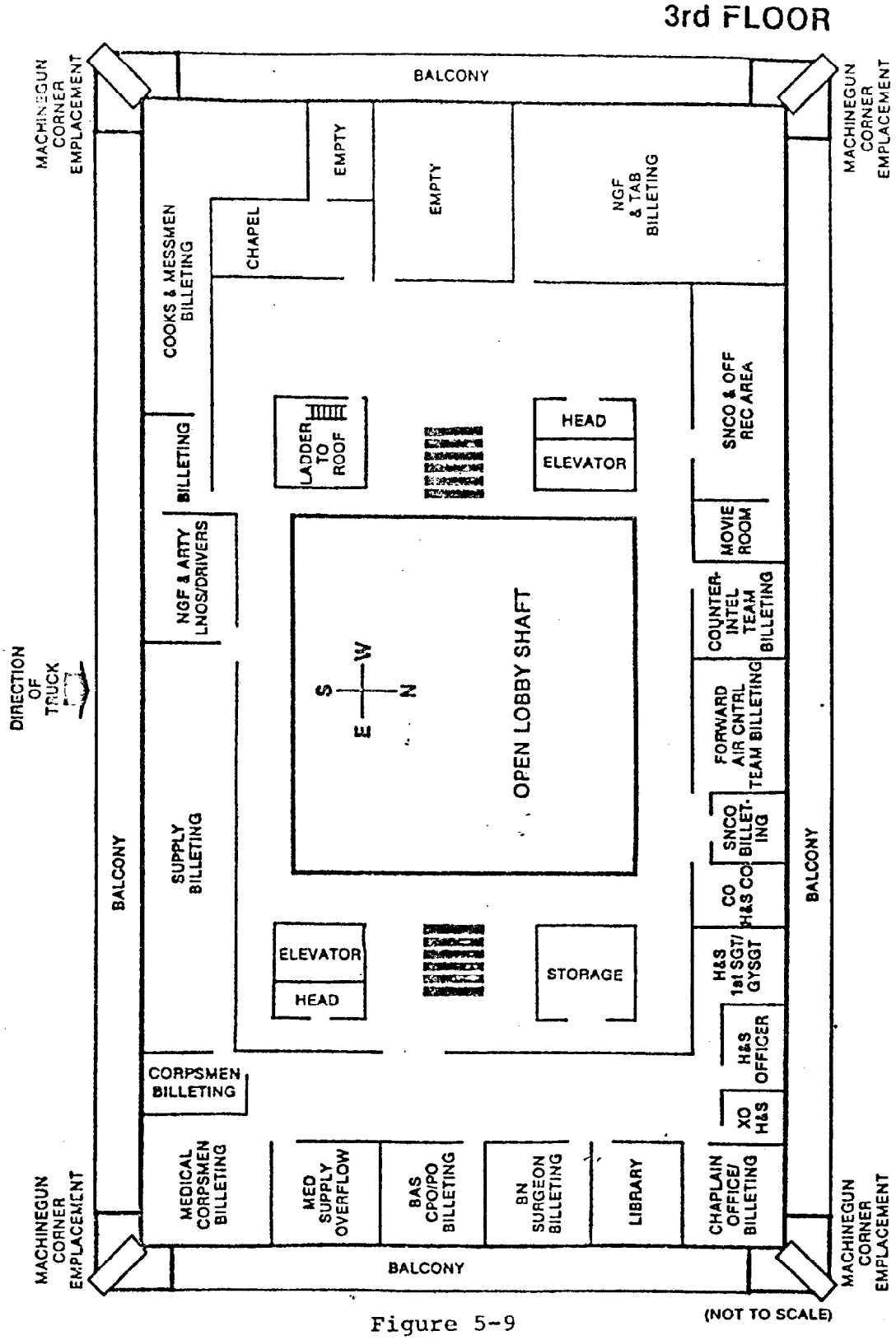

3rd FLOOR
MACHINEGUN CORNER EMPLACEMENT
BALCONY
COOKS & MESSMEN BILLETING
CHAPEL
EMPTY
EMPTY
NGF & TAB BILLETING
BILLETING
LADDER TO ROOF
HEAD
ELEVATOR
SNCO & OFF REC AREA
NGF & ARTY LNOS/DRIVERS
MOVIE ROOM
COUNTER-INTEL TEAM BILLETING
DIRECTION OF TRUCK
OPEN LOBBY SHAFT
S
W
E
N
FORWARD AIR CNTRL TEAM BILLETING
SUPPLY BILLETING
SNCO BILLET-ING
CO H&S CO
ELEVATOR
HEAD
STORAGE
H&S 1st SGT/ GYSGT
H&S OFFICER
CORPSMEN BILLETING
XO H&S
MEDICAL CORPSMEN BILLETING
MED SUPPLY OVERFLOW
BAS CPO/PO BILLETING
BN SURGEON BILLETING
LIBRARY
CHAPLAIN OFFICE/ BILLETING
(NOT TO SCALE)

Figure 5-9

ROOF

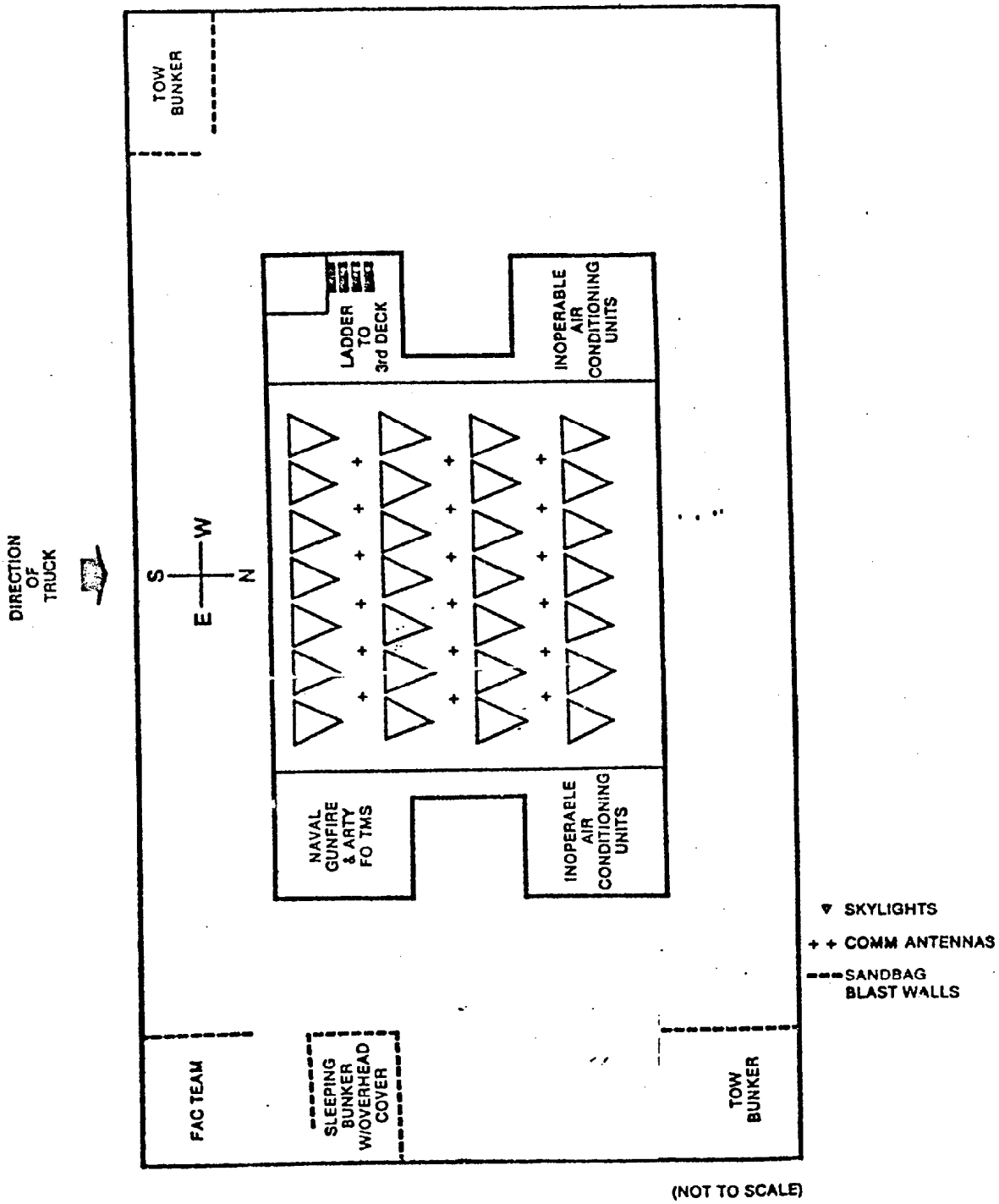


Figure 5-10

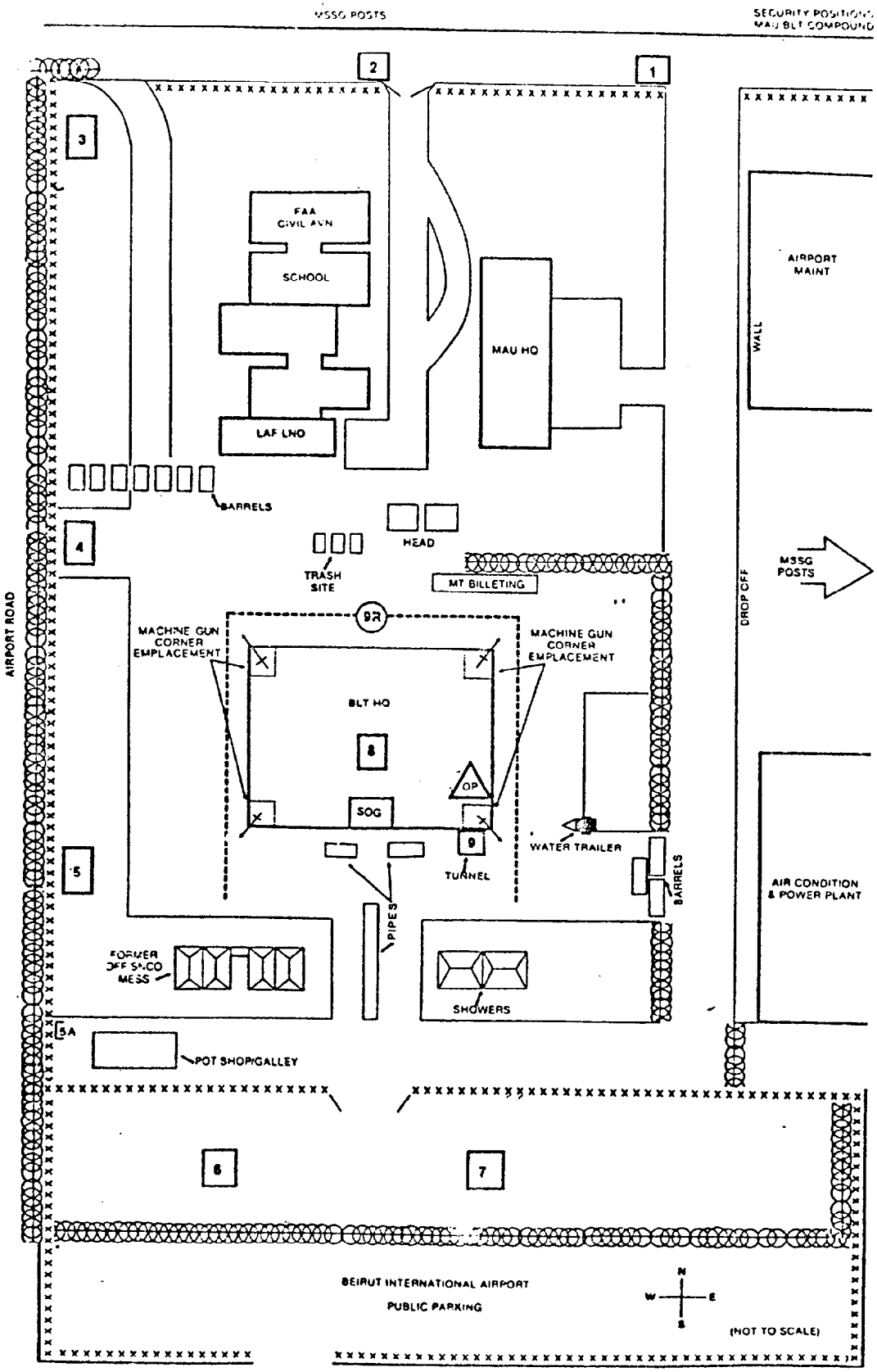

MSSG POSTS
SECURITY POSITIONS
MAU BLT COMPOUND
2
1
3
FAA
CIVIL AVN
SCHOOL
MAU HQ
AIRPORT
MAINT
WALL
LAF LNO
BARRELS
HEAD
4
TRASH
SITE
MT BILLETING
MSSG
POSTS
DROP OFF
AIRPORT ROAD
MACHINE GUN
CORNER
EMPLACEMENT
MACHINE GUN
CORNER
EMPLACEMENT
BLT HQ
8
OP
SOG
9
TUNNEL
WATER TRAILER
BARRELS
5
PIPES
AIR CONDITION
& POWER PLANT
FORMER
OFF SNCO
MESS
SHOWERS
5A
POT SHOP/GALLEY
6
7
BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
PUBLIC PARKING
N
W
E
S
(NOT TO SCALE)

Figure 5-11

soda.

In the northeast corner of the lobby was a weight lifting machine; in the southeast corner was a storage area for portable food (pre-packaged) containers. In the southwest corner were battalion storage and work areas partitioned off by stacked supply bosed. The S-4 (logistics) working area was located in the northwest corner. The Sergeant of the Guard's post was located in a small structure beneath the overhang at the main entrance on the south side of the building.

The first floor housed the key personnel of the battalion's command structure (See Figure 5-7). In the western-most offices were the Battalion Commander, the Intelligence Officer, the Operations Officer, and the Sergeant Major. Adjacent to their offices was the Combat Operations Center from where the battalion's day-to-day functions were controlled and coordinated. The eastern section of the first floor housed the battalion's administrative offices, classified material storage, and postal services. In the southern connecting hallway were the guards' quarters. There were small rooms in the northern hallway where company grade officers and staff NCO's lived and worked.

The second floor (See Figure 5-8) was more open that the first floor. The battalion's communications platoon worked and resided in the west section which contained their maintenance, battery, and wire shops. The east section housed the engineers and their portable equipment storage area. The north hallway housed the reconnaissance platoon and the south hallway housed that portion of the weapons company which had not been attached to the outlying rifle companies or deployed to general support positions (81mm mortar platoon).

The third floor (See Figure 5-9) was the most open and least populated of the three floors. The west section contained a small chapel, and a recreation area and movie room for staff NCO's and officers. The west section also housed the cooks and messmen. The east section contained a small library and the chaplain's office. The battalion medical officer and senior enlisted members of the medical platoon also resided in this area. Medical supplies were stored there, and sick call had been held in the southeast corner room until early August. Both the north and the south hallways housed a variety of key personnel who manned roof top positions. They included teams of artillery forward observers, naval gunfire spotters, forward air

controllers, and counter-battery radarmen. At each corner of this floor on the exterior balcony were sandbagged machinegun (7.62mm) emplacements.

On the roof (See Figure 5-10) were several sandbagged observation positions used by the various team members. Also on the roof were over a dozen communications antennae, including those on HF, VHF, and UHF frequencies.

Two enlisted Marines from the Forward Air Control (FAC) team were asleep on the roof on the morning of the explosion and escaped unharmed. They testified that the IOS was manned 24 hours a day, everyday. These team members manned the position on the extreme eastern end of the roof in order to observe their area of primary interest: the Shuf Mountains. It sould be emphasized that these teams were not responsible for security in the immediate vicinity of the building proper; that was the responsibility of the Security Gaurd Force.

B. Discussion.

The interior of the building was utilized in a manner that facilitated command, control, coordination and communication both within the battalion and to senior, subordinate and supporting units. Effective use was made of the rooftop by key supporting arms team members. The total number of personnel billeted and working in and around the building averaged approximately 350 out of an average BLT strength of 1250. Since the BLT Headquarters building contained the only field mess in the 24th MAU, the number of personnel in and around the building during meal hours may have exceeded 400.

Notwithstanding the utility derived from the use of the building in question, and acknowledging the fact that the building did provide protection to personnel from incoming fire, the BLT commander failed to observe the basic security precaution of dispersion. The practice of dispersion is fundamental and well understood by the military at every echelon. It basically is the spreading or separating of troops, material activities, or establishments to reduce their vulnerability to enemy action. The BLT commander did not follow this accepted practice and permitted the concentration of approximately one-fourth of his command in a relatively confined location thereby presenting a lucrative target to hostile elements. The MAU commander condoned this decision.

IV. SECURITY GUARD ORGANIZATION AND EXECUTION.

A. Principal Findings.

The BLT Commander was responsible for the security of the MAU/BLT compound and the BLT Headquarters. The Officer of the Day (OOD) was appointed on a 24-hour rotational basis to represent the BLT Commander in his absence. The BLT Commander designated the H&S Company Commander as the permanent Guard Officer. A non-commissioned officer was designated as the permanent Commander of the Guard and was directly responsible to the Guard Officer for the instruction, discipline and performance of the guard. The Sergeant of the Guard (SOG) was directly accountable for the instruction, discipline and performance of the guard force during his twenty-four hour tour of duty. The three Corporals of the Guard (COG) rotated on four-hour shifts as the direct supervisors of the guard reliefs. These posts were manned by sentries organized into three reliefs, each of which stood four-hour rotational shifts. Like the COG, the sentries were appointed for two-week tours. The MAU/BLT compound security chain of command is illustrated in the following diagram.

BLT Commander --- OFFICER OF THE DAY

H&S Company Commander
(Guard Officer)

Commander of the Guard

Sergeant of the Guard

Corporal of the Guard (3)

Sentries of the Guard (3 Reliefs)

Battalion Landing Team Order 1601.8, dated 15 July 1983, was the basis for the security guard at the 24 MAU/BLT compound (Annex F). This order provided a coordinated structure of the various MAU/BLT elements within the compound to establish security. Instructions common to all posts were covered in the basic order. Special orders were

provided for each position and post in separate enclosures. Modifications and changes to the guard order were promulgated from the BLT Commander, through the Executive Officer and Guard Officer, for implementation by the Commander of the Guard. Additionally, the MAU Commander (CTF 62) issued two directives in message form that prescribed four alert conditions with required specific actions for each condition. Changes were to be logged by the Commander of the Guard.

Permanently designed posts on the MAU/BLT compound are indicated on the diagram at figure 5-11. Specific actions for each post were determined by the designated alert status and the guard order. There were four alert conditions, with Alert Condition I being the highest state of alert. The appropriate level of alert was determined in the Combat Operations Center (COC).

In practice, modifications were made to the guard order. For instance, only sentries at Posts 1, 2, and 3 kept magazines in their weapons at all times. Post 4, 5, 6, and 7 were manned with one sentry during daylight hours. Post 8 was not manned at the time of the attack. The BLT Order specified that such modifications would be noted in the Guard Logbook, which is presumed to have been destroyed in the explosion. The security posture on 23 October 1983 at the MAU/BLT compound, as described in testimony by surviving witnesses, was not in compliance with published directives for Alert Conditons II or III.

Marines assigned to the BLT guard wore the utility uniform with helmet, flak jacket, belt suspenders, M16 rifle, flashlight and a cartridge belt containing two filled canteens, first aid kit, two magazine pouches with six magazines and a total of 120 rounds. The SOG was armed with a .45 caliber pistol. All personnel carried an ROE card in their flak jacket. During hours of darkness, night vision goggles were issued. There were no anti-tank weapons on any post. Anti-tank missile launchers (TOW) were, however, positioned on the roof.

V. COMMAND RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SECURITY OF THE 24th MAU AND BLT 1/8 PRIOR TO 23 OCTOBER 1983

A. Principal Findings.

The Commanders of the 24th MAU and BLT 1/8 took a number of actions to enhance the security of their forces while performing the assigned USMNF mission. The 24th MAU Commander was aware of the deteriorating situation in the late summer and early fall of 1983 which resulted in a wide spectrum of threats to his command, ranging from conventional military threats to the use of terrorist tactics. Although deluged with daily threat information, the MAU Commander received no specific warning of the time, place or technique of the 23 October 1983 attack. Moreover, he was not briefed on the 18 April 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in specific terms until after the BLT Headquarters bombing. He was not apprised of the detailed information derived by the analysis of the Embassy bombing as to the destructive potential of gas-enhanced explosive devices.

B. Discussion.

Competing with the MAU commander's reaction to the growing threat to his force was his dedication to the USMNF mission assigned to his command and his appreciation of the significance of peace-keeping and presence in achieving U.S. policy objectives in Lebanon. He perceived his mission to be more diplomatic than military, providing presence and visibility, along with the other MNF partners, to help the Government of Lebanon achieve stability. He was a key player on the U.S. Country Team and worked closely with the U.S. leadership in Lebanon, to include the Ambassador, the Deputy Chief of Mission, the President's Special envoy to the Middle East and the Military Advisor to the Presidential Envoy. Through these close associations with that leadership and his reading of the reporting sent back to Washington by the Country Team, the MAU commander was constantly being reinforced in his appreciation of the importance of the assigned mission.

Given his understanding of the mission, coupled with the perception that the greatest real threat to the MAU and to the BLT Headquarters personnel was from conventional small arms, mortar, rocket, and artillery fire, the BLT Commander enacted security procedures concurred in by the MAU Commander which resulted in billeting approximately 350

personnel in the BLT Headquarters building. Similarly, guard orders and procedures were characterized by an emphasis on peaceful neutrality and prevention of military action inadvertently directed against the civilian population using the airport. The security posture decisions taken by the MAU and BLT Commanders were further reinforced by the absence of any expression of concern or direction to change procedures from seniors in the military chain of command during visits to the MAU prior to 23 October 1983.

C. Conclusions.

The combination of a large volume of specific threat warnings that never materialized, and percieved and real pressure to accomplish a unique and difficult mission contributed signifcantly to the decisions of the MAU and BLT commanders regarding the security of their force. Nevertheless, the Commission concludes that the security measures in effect in the MAU compound were neither commensurate with the increasing level of threat confronting the USMNF nor sufficient to preclude catastrophic losses such as those that were suffered on the morning of 23 October 1983. The commission further concludes that while it may have appeared to be an appropriate response to the indirect fire being received, the decision to billet approximately one-quarter of the BLT in a single structure contributed to the catastrophic loss of life.

The commission concludes that the Battalion Landing Team Commander must take responsibility for the concentration of approximately 350 members of his command in the Battalion Headquarters building thereby providing a lucrative target for attack. Further, the BLT Commander modified prescribed alert procedures, degrading security of the compound.

The Commission also concludes that the MAU Commander shares the responsibility for the catastrophic losses in that he condoned the concentration of personnel in the BLT Headquarters building, concurred in modification of prescribed alert procedures, and emphasized safety over security in directing that sentries on Posts 4, 5, 6, and 7 would not load their weapons.

The Commission further concludes that although it finds the BLT and MAU Commanders to be at fault, it also finds that there was a series of circumstances beyond their control that influenced their judgement and their actions relating to the security of the USMNF.

D. Recommendation

The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense take whatever administrative or disciplinary action he deems appropriate, citing the failure of the BLT and MAU Commanders to take the security measures necessary to preclude the catastrophic loss of life in the attack on 23 October 1983.

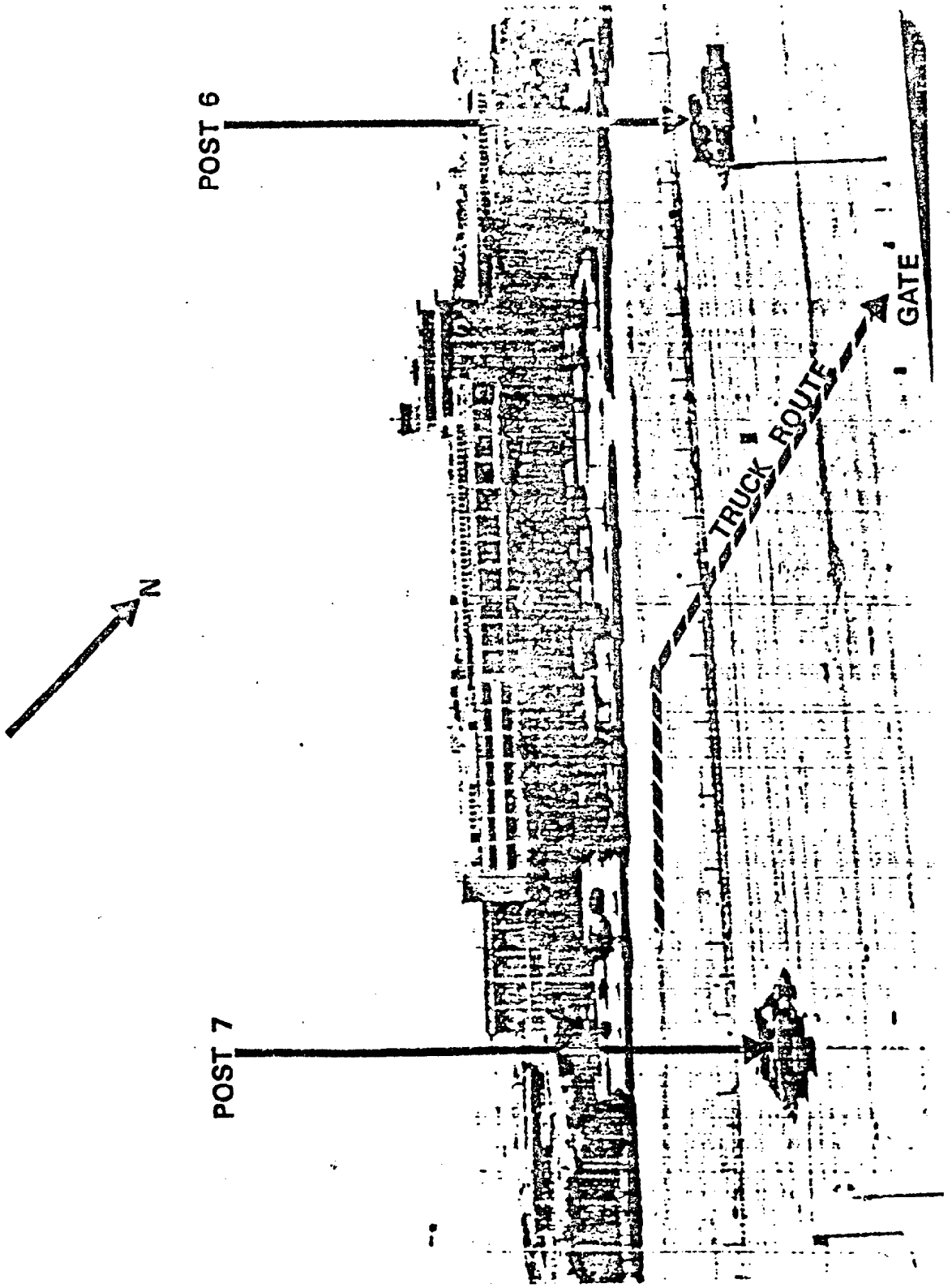


Figure 6-1

PART SIX - 23 OCTOBER 1983

I. THE TERRORIST ATTACK

A. Principal Findings.

Five eyewitnesses described a large yellow Mercedes Benz stakebed truck traveling at a speed reportedly in excess of 35 MPH moving from the public parking lot south of the BLT Headquarters building through the barbed wire and concertina fence, into the main entrance of the building where it detonated at approximately 0622, Beirut time, on Sunday, 23 October 1983. The truck penetrated the perimeter barbed and concertina wire obstacle (See Figure 6-1), passed between guard Posts 6 and 7 without being engaged, entered an open gate, passed around one sewer pipe and between two other pipes, flattened the Sergeant of the Guard's sand bagged booth, entered the interior lobby of the building and exploded.

An eyewitness was defined as an individual who actually saw the truck but not necessarily its driver. Four of the eyewitnesses are Marines who were members of the guard: three lance corporals and a sergeant. The other eyewitnesses was a Marine corporal who had just returned from a security patrol. Their accounts are detailed and corroborative.

In general, based on descriptions provided by the eyewitnesses who saw him, the driver of the truck was a young adult caucasian male with black hair and mustache and wearing a blue or green shirt, open at the front. No other individuals were seen in the truck by the eyewitnesses.

A similar yellow Mercedez Benz type truck was observed at about 0500 by the sentry on Post 6 entering the parking lot south of the BLT Headquarters building. The truck circled once, then exited to the south. Because that truck did not stop, it was not reported.

A truck was observed by the sentry on Post 6 accelerating westward and parallel to the wire barricade (See Figure 6-2). The truck then abruptly turned north, ran over the wire barricade, and accelerated northward between Posts 6 and 7.

The sentry on Post 7 heard the truck as it ran over the wire, then observed it and immediately suspected it was a vehicle bomb. He inserted a magazine in his M-16 rifle,

chambered a round, shouldered the weapon, and took aim but did not fire because by that time the truck had already penetrated the building.

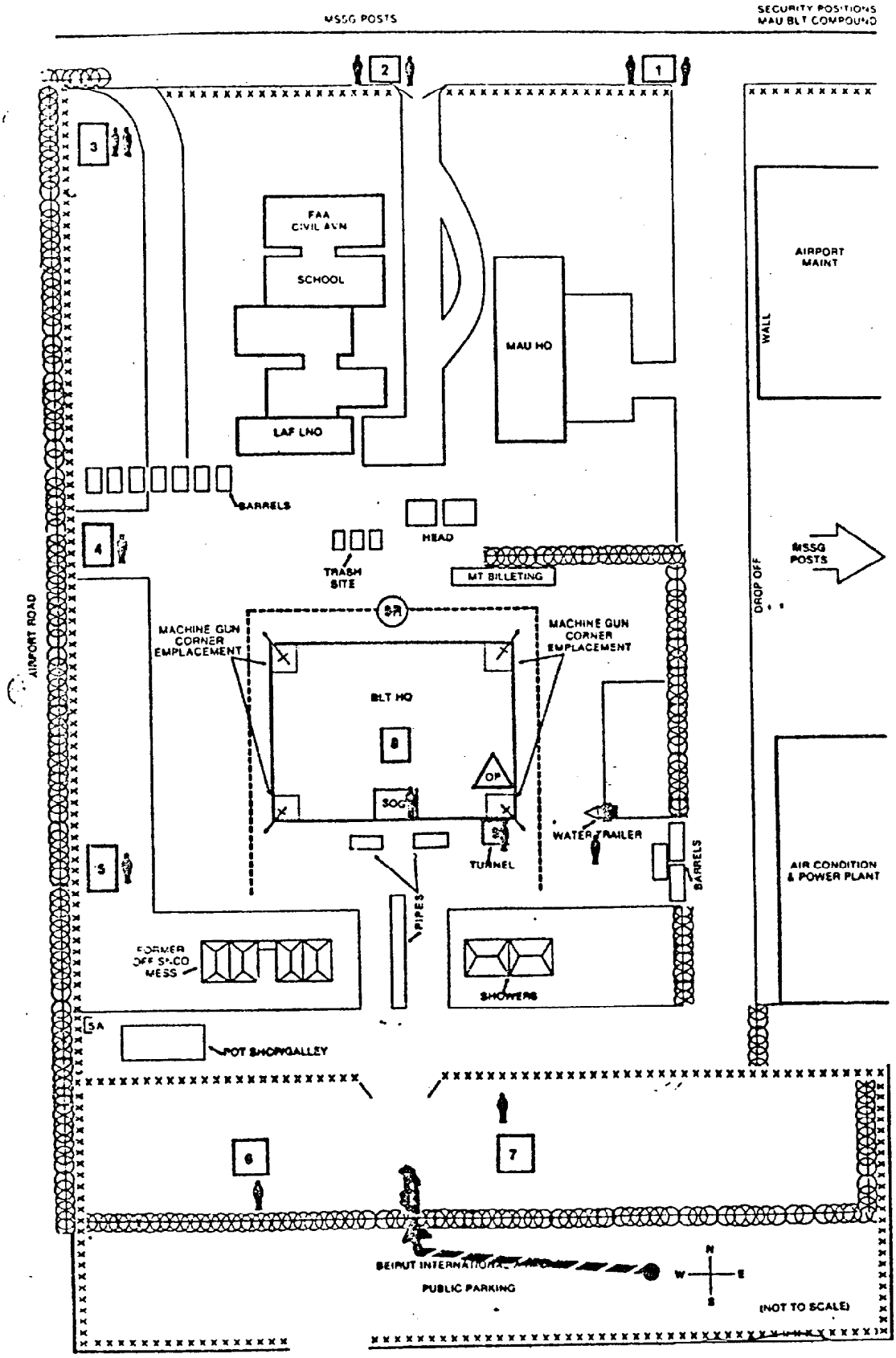
Both sentries realized the truck was, in fact, a "car bomb" and therefore took cover within their respective bunkers. One sentry hid in the corner of his bunker and did not observe the detonation. The other sentry partially observed the detonation from behind the blast wall to the rear of the bunker. He saw the top of the building explode vertically in a V-shape. He then took cover inside his bunker for protection from the falling debris.

The sentry on Post 5 also spotted the truck as it accelerated northward into the building. The truck passed so quickly that he could not react in any way although he understood the truck's purpose. He was unable to take cover in his bunker and was knocked to the ground by the blast; however, he escaped uninjured.

A reconnaissance NCO was standing near a water trailer located approximately 25 meters east of the southeast corner of the building. He had just returned from a security patrol. He was facing east when he heard an accelerating engine behind him. Thinking it was a large Marine truck speeding, he turned westward and saw the terrorist's truck accelerating from left to right in his field of vision. He, too, immediately suspected the truck's hostile purpose. As the vehicle entered the building, he turned to run for cover in a nearby shower gutter but was knocked down by the blast.

Meanwhile, the Sergeant of the Guard was at his post located at the building's main entrance (south). His post was a small booth-shaped structure, similar in size and positioning to that of a ticket vendor's booth in a movie theater. The structure had been reinforced with a double-wall of sandbags around its girth.

The Sergeant of the Guard was alone at his post, facing inward (north) toward the lobby, when he heard noises to his rear, to include a high-revving engine. He turned and saw the truck closing rapidly on his post as it passed through the open gate of the permanent (Lebanese-constructed) fence (See Figure 6-3). His first reaction was a surprised question: "What is that truck doing inside the perimeter?" or thoughts to that effect. Immediately thereafter he realized the truck was hostile and ran out of his post and across the lobby toward the rear entrance (north). As he ran, he repeatedly yelled "Hit the deck! Hit the deck!" and glanced back over his shoulder as the truck continued toward


MSSG POSTS
SECURITY POSITIONS
MAU BLT COMPOUND
2
1
3
FAA
CIVIL AVN
SCHOOL
MAU HQ
AIRPORT
MAINT
WALL
LAF LNO
BARRELS
HEAD
4
TRASH
SITE
MT BILLETING
MSSG
POSTS
DROP OFF
AIRPORT ROAD
MACHINE GUN
CORNER
EMPLACEMENT
MACHINE GUN
CORNER
EMPLACEMENT
BLT HQ
8
OP
SOG
WATER TRAILER
TUNNEL
BARRELS
AIR CONDITION
& POWER PLANT
5
PIPES
FORMER
OFF SNCO
MESS
SHOWERS
5A
POT SHOP/GALLEY
6
7
BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL
PUBLIC PARKING
N
W
E
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(NOT TO SCALE)

Figure 6-2

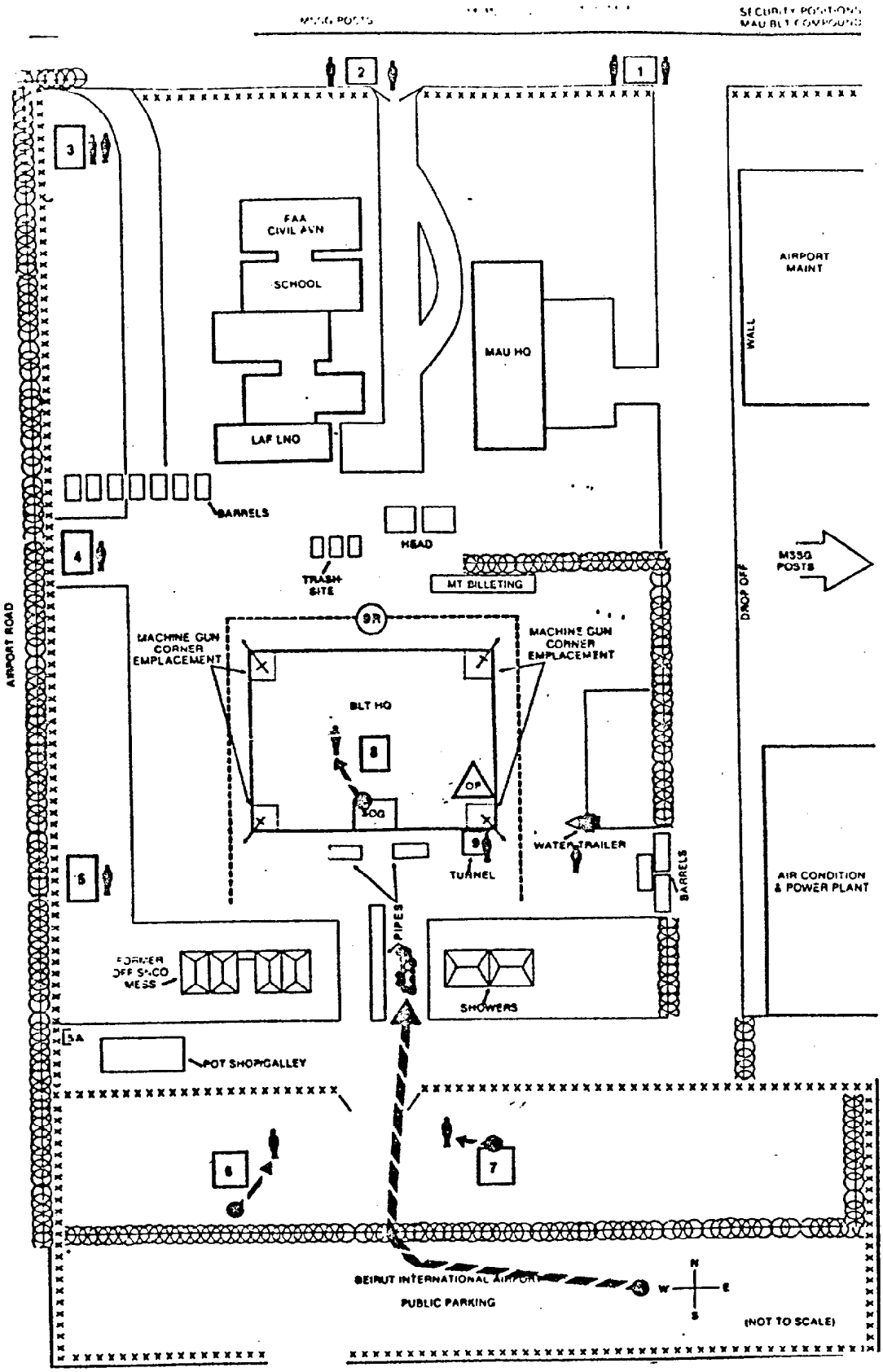
SECURITY POSITIONS
MAU BLT COMPOUND
FAA
CIVIL AVN
SCHOOL
LAF LNO
MAU HQ
AIRPORT
MAINT
WALL
BARRELS
HEAD
TRASH
SITE
MT BILLETING
M33G
POSTS
DROP OFF
AIRPORT ROAD
MACHINE GUN
CORNER
EMPLACEMENT
MACHINE GUN
CORNER
EMPLACEMENT
BLT HQ
OP
TOG
TUNNEL
WATER TRAILER
BARRELS
AIR CONDITION
& POWER PLANT
PIPES
FORMER
OFF SNCO
MESS
SHOWERS
POT SHOP/GALLEY
BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
PUBLIC PARKING
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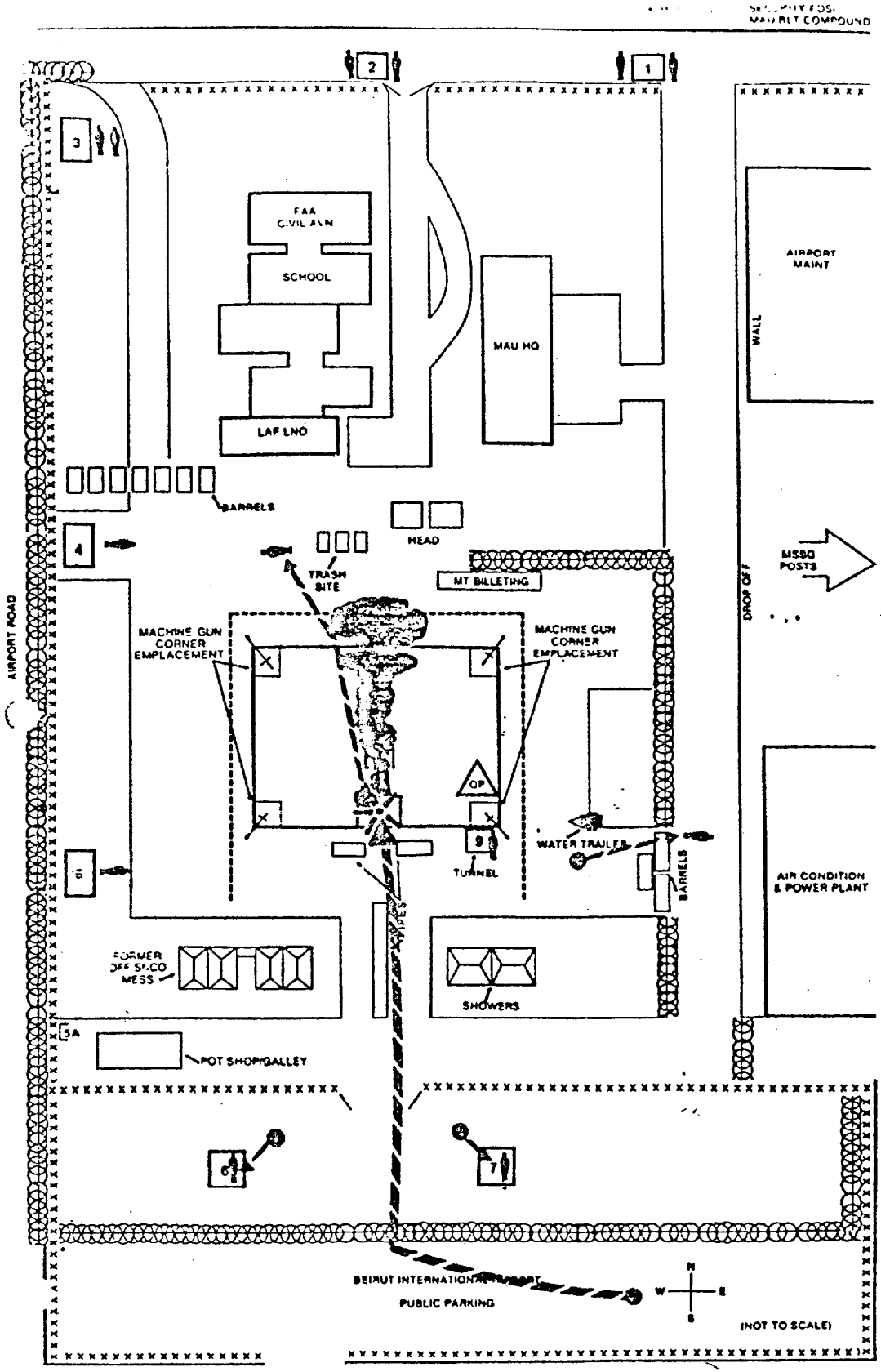
Figure 6-3



MAU RLT COMPOUND
2
1
3
FAA
CIVIL AVN
SCHOOL
LAF LNO
MAU HQ
AIRPORT
MAINT
WALL
BARRELS
HEAD
4
TRASH
SITE
MT BILLETING
MSSG
POSTS
DROP OFF
AIRPORT ROAD
MACHINE GUN
CORNER
EMPLACEMENT
MACHINE GUN
CORNER
EMPLACEMENT
OP
9
TUNNEL
WATER TRAILER
BARRELS
AIR CONDITION
& POWER PLANT
FORMER
OFF SNCO
MESS
SHOWERS
5A
POT SHOP/GALLEY
6
7
BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
PUBLIC PARKING
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(NOT TO SCALE)

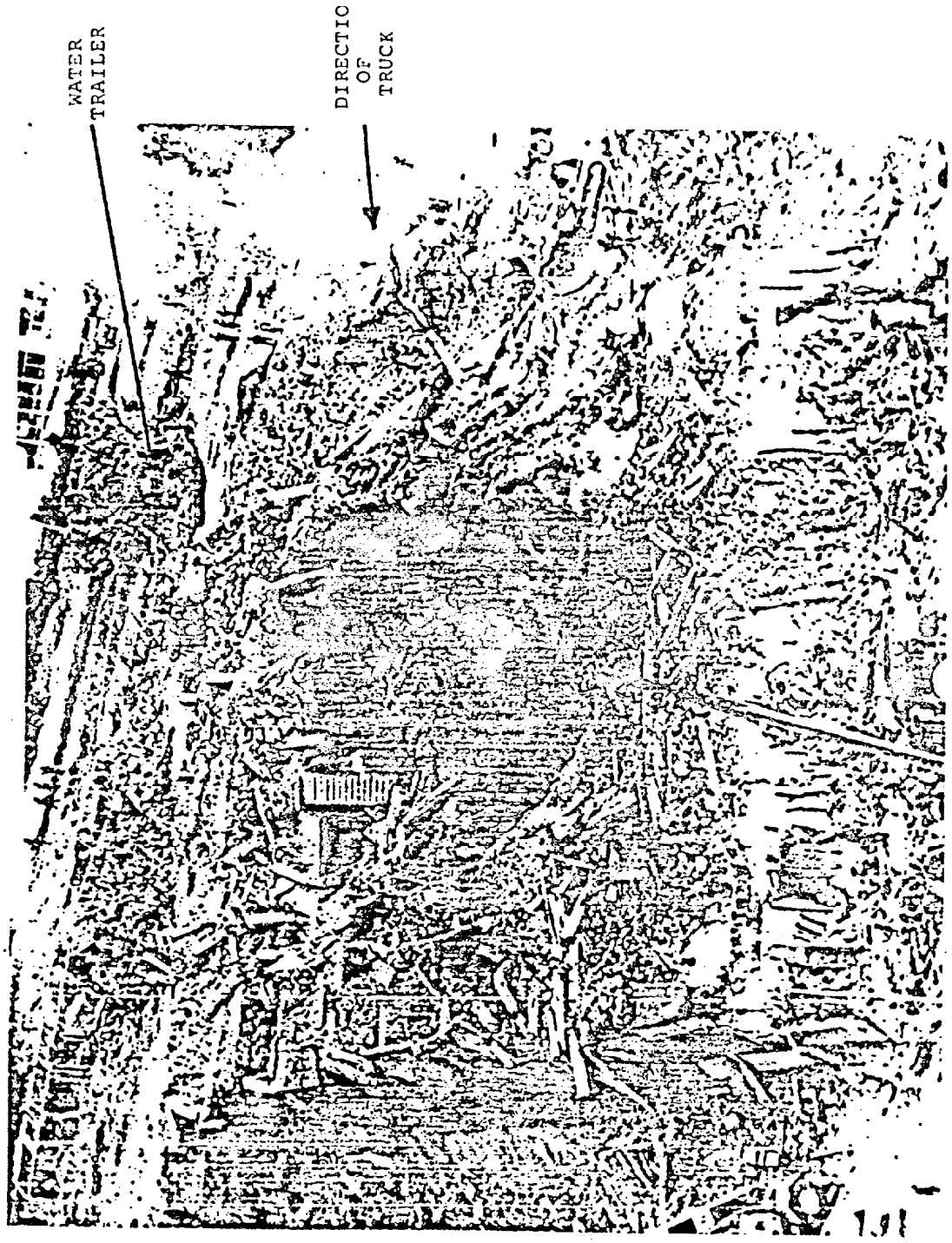
Figure 6-4

the front entrance. He saw the truck breach the entrance (the cab was apparently too tall for the height of entrance archway) and without hesitation, run easily over his guard post and come to a halt near the center of the lobby. As the Sergeant of the Guard continued to run, there was an interval of one to two seconds between the truck's halt and its detonation. He actually saw the detonation which he described as being "more orange than yellow." He was then blown through the air, struck the ground, and was seriously injured. He came to on the roadway on the north-west side of the building's rubble as the debris fell around him.

When the truck exploded (See Figure 6-4), it created an oblong crater measuring 39' by 29' 6" and 8' 8" in depth (See Figure 6-5). The southern edge of the crater was thirteen feet into the lobby. To create such a crater, the explosion penetrated and destroyed the concrete floor which measured 7 inches in thickness and which was reinforced throughout with 1 3/4" diameter iron rods. Because of the structure of the building - it had a large covered courtyard extending from the lobby floor to the roof - the effect of the explosion was greatly intensified. This was caused by the confinement of the explosive force within the building and the resultant convergence of force vectors. This "tamping effect" multiplied the blast effect to the point that the bottom of the building was apparently blown out and the upper portions appeared to have collapsed on top of it. The force of the explosion initially lifted the entire building upward, shearing the base off its upright concrete columns, each of which was 15 feet in circumference and reinforced throughout with 1 3/4" diameter iron rods. The building then imploded upon itself and collapsed toward its weakest point - its sheared undergirding.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) assessment is that the bomb employed a "gas-enhanced" technique to greatly magnify its explosive force which has been estimated at over 12,000 pounds effective yield equivalent of TNT.

The FBI Forensic Laboratory described the bomb as the largest conventional blast ever seen by the explosive experts community. Based upon the FBI analysis of the bomb that destroyed the U.S. Embassy on 18 April 1983, and the FBI preliminary findings on the bomb used on 23 October 1983, the Commission believes that the explosive equivalent of the latter device was of such magnitude that major damage to the BLT Headquarters building and significant casualties would probably have resulted even if the terroist truck had not penetrated the USMNF defensive perimeter but had detonated in the roadway some 330 feet from the building.



CRATER DI NSIONS:
39'L x 29'6"W x 8'8"D

Figure 6-5

II. THE AFTERMATH

A. Principal Findings.

The aftermath of the attack left a scene of severe injury, death and destruction (See Figure 6-6). The dust and debris remained suspended in the air for many minutes after the explosion, creating the effect of a dense fog. There was a distinct odor present, variously described as both sweet and acrid, which one individual remembered as being present after the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in April 1983. The carnage and confusion made it difficult to establish control immediately. The explosion had eliminated the entire BLT Headquarters command structure. The initial actions of individual survivors were in response to their first impression of what had happened.

In his headquarters, the MAU Commander thought the MAU COC had been hit and went downstairs to investigate. The sentries closest to the BLT Headquarters building thought the compound was being subjected to a rocket attack and tried to report by telephone to the Sergeant of the Guard. Some personnel at the MSSG Headquarters area thought an artillery attack was in progress and went to Alert Condition I.

Once it was realized that a catastrophe had occurred, the independent actions of individuals Marines in various stages of shock and isolation began to meld into coordination, teamwork and cooperation. Lebanese civilians in the immediate area, the Lebanese Red Cross, Italian soldiers (engineers) from the Italian MNF, and Lebanese construction crews with heavy equipment converged on the scene and went to work, acting instinctively from their many previous experiences in Beirut.

The MAU Commander assumed operational control of the remaining BLT elements. He determined his priorities to be the rescue/medical evacuation effort and the re-establishment of the fire support coordination function. Because he anticipated the possibility of a follow-on attack, he charged the MAU Operations Officer with coordination of security on the scene. Additionally, an effort was made to preserve as much evidence as possible through photography and preliminary EOD work. Resources continued to arrive on scene and by early afternoon order was re-established. The last survivor extricated from the rubble was found at approximately 1300 that day.

B. Discussion.

Many individuals of the USMNF performed selfless and often heroic acts to assist their fellow Soldiers, Sailors and Marines. The response of the Lebanese citizens and the Italian MNF was superb. An example of this spontaneous outpouring of help was the response of a Lebanese construction company, which arrived with more heavy equipment than could physically be employed at one time and began immediate salvage and rescue efforts. The Italian soldiers assisted by moving the wounded and dead to Lebanese ambulances for evacuation to Lebanese hospitals or to the helicopter landing zones.

The MAU Commander remained concerned with his depleted security posture until he was reinforced with an additional rifle company deployed from the United States several days later. The MAU Commander properly perceived that his command was extremely vulnerable to a follow-on attack during the rescue/salvage operation.

The Commission takes particular note that the monumental demands placed upon the MAU Commander in the immediate aftermath of the attack required virtually superhuman effort. His situation was not enhanced by the large number of important visitors who arrived at his command in the days that followed. Throughout, the MAU Commander carried these burdens with dignity and resolve. In short, he performed admirably in the face of great adversity.

PART SEVEN - POST-ATTACK SECURITY

I. REDEPLOYMENT, DISPERSAL, AND PHYSICAL BARRIERS

A. Principal Findings.

Since the 23 October 1983 bombing of the BLT Headquarters building, numerous security measures and actions have been planned and implemented by the operational chain of command to increase the security of U.S. military forces in Lebanon against recurrence of a catastrophic terrorist attack. USMNF and other U.S. forces have been repositioned and dispersed within the Beirut International Airport area. Many support personnel have been returned to ships offshore. Major construction by U.S. Navy Seabees of perimeter positions, protective bunkers, barriers and obstacles is ongoing. Security procedures in the areas of access control, searches, and response to threat warnings have been examined and improved. Additionally, more responsible ROE, similar to those previously approved for use at the Embassy, have been issued to all personnel.

The enhanced security measures were taken in the face of a steadily growing threat. Intelligence assessment of 1 December 1983 determined that the threat to U.S. personnel and facilities in Lebanon remains extremely high and is increasing. The political, military, cultural and religious environment in and around Beirut is inherently conducive to a broad spectrum of options for states, indigenous factions and extremist groups seeking to thwart U.S. objectives in Lebanon by attacking the USMNF. That environment makes the task of detecting and defending against threats in general, and terrorist attacks in particular, extremely difficult. It therefore becomes increasingly costly for the USMNF to maintain an acceptable level of security for the force while continuing to provide a visible peace-keeping presence in Beirut, to sustain the Government of Lebanon, and to actively support the LAF.

The USMNF has remained essentially static, occupying the same terrain since its insertion into Lebanon in September 1982. The Marines continue to be positioned at the BIA, bounded on the west by the Mediterranean Sea and the heavily traveled coastal road, on the north by the slums of the Shia and Palestinian suburbs of Beirut, and on the east and south by the old Sidon Road and the Druze controlled coastal

mountains (Shuf) that dominate the whole airport area. BIA serves a cosmopolitan city of one million and the daily vehicular traffic to the airport facilities, which are literally interspersed among USMNF positions, is very heavy. Security for the BIA is the responsibility of the LAF who are also present in the area.

BIA is undermined by a labyrinth of tunnels. Prior to the recent Israeli invasion, numerous factions, including the PLO and Syrians, occupied BIA and the BLT Headquarters building. The static nature of the USMNF under the continuous observation of numerous hostile factions and within range of their weapons, results in a constant high threat environment for the USMNF. This threat is exacerbated by the familiarity with, and access to the dominant terrain, and to BIA itself, by hostile factions.

B. Discussion.

Activities to reduce the vulnerability of the USMNF fall into six categories:

- Dispersal of troops
- Construction of protective structures
- Improved security procedures
- Key weapons employment
- Rules of Engagement
- Physical barriers

Dispersal of troops has taken the form of redistribution of activities within the BIA area to present a less concentrated target, and the removal to ships offshore of all personnel whose presence is not considered immediately required to operate the USMNF ashore. The redistribution is proceeding as protected work and living spaces are constructed, but has the disadvantage of placing some troops in structures which are more vulnerable to indirect fire than the concrete buildings which they vacated.

Construction of protective structures, including work spaces, living accommodations and fighting positions, has received attention by utilizing a variety of protective measures. Traditional sandbagging, dirt berms, locally fabricated wooden frames to support sandbags and a dirt covering, and large SeaTrain containers (obtained from the

Government of Lebanon) that are dug in and reinforced to provide modular protected work spaces, have been utilized in this effort. Much of the proposed construction, however, has been hampered by a shortage of material and labor.

Actions taken to improve security procedures include closing two lanes of the main airport road which runs adjacent to the MAU area, thereby creating a buffer zone; restricting vehicular access in the MAU perimeter to U.S. vehicles only; blocking all but essential entrances to the area; excluding non-essential civilians; relocating LAF personnel outside of the perimeter; and employing spot U.S. roadblocks and vehicle searches on the main airport road.

ROE are addressed separately in PART TWO of this report.

An integrated obstacle and barrier plan has been devised to complement the other security measures discussed above.

C. Conclusions.

The Commission concludes that the security measures taken since 23 October 1983 have reduced the vulnerability of the USMNF to catastrophic losses. The Commission concludes, however, that the security measures implemented or planned for implementation for the USMNF as of 30 November 1983, are not adequate to prevent continuing significant attrition of the force.

The Commission recognizes that the current disposition of USMNF forces may, after careful examination, prove to be the best available option. The Commission concludes, however, that a comprehensive set of alternatives should be immediately prepared and presented to the National Security Council.

D. Recommendation.

Recognizing that the Secretary of Defense and the JCS have been actively reassessing the increased vulnerability of the USMNF as the political/military environment in Lebanon has changed, the Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the operational chain of command to continue to develop alternative military options for both accomplishing the mission of the USMNF and reducing the risk to the force.

PART EIGHT - CASUALTY HANDLING

I. (U) INTRODUCTION

At approximately 0622 local Beirut time on 23 October 1983, an explosion of enormous magnitude destroyed the BLT Headquarters building. This catastrophic event resulted in 241 deaths and approximately 112 wounded in action (WIA). The only medical officer ashore was killed and a majority of the hospital corpsmen billeted at the building were either killed or wounded. The battalion aid station was destroyed.

Within minutes of the explosion, the CTF 61/62 Mass Casualty Plan was implemented. The remaining medical assets of the MAU Service Support Group (MSSG) were organized into two triage teams. Additional medical support was mobilized from afloat units and rapidly transported ashore. As wounded were recovered from the rubble they were immediately treated. Many were initially taken to local civilian hospitals or to the Italian military field hospital while U.S. forces were recovering from the first shock and were regrouping.

The majority of the wounded were transported by helicopter to the USS IWO JIMA, an LPH (Amphibious Helicopter Platform) which served as the primary casualty receiving and treatment ship. Necessary resuscitation and surgery were accomplished. After appropriate stabilization, and as air evacuation aircraft arrived, the wounded were transferred to the airport runway area for evacuation to definitive medical care facilities.

Within 30 minutes of the explosion, the British offered the use of the Royal Air Force hospital at Akrotiri, Cyprus. The offer was accepted. The support of the RAF proved to be invaluable. Aeromedical evacuation aircraft of the USAF, USN and RAF were directed to BIA. Casualties were evacuated to Cyprus, Germany and Italy, where there had been virtually a total mobilization of all major medical treatment facilities. Following definitive medical treatment at these overseas facilities, patients were returned to hospitals in the United States as their condition permitted.

II. ON-SCENE MEDICAL CARE

A. Principal Findings.

On-scene medical personnel and resources were both ashore and afloat. Ashore were a General Medical Officer, two Dental Officers, a Medical Preventive Medicine Officer (entomologist), two Dental Technicians and almost 70 Hospital Corpsmen. The explosion killed the Medical Officer and killed or wounded 19 Hospital Corpsmen.

Aboard the ships of the Amphibious Task Force there were, as part of normal ships' and embarked aircraft squadron's complement, seven General Medical Officers (including one Flight Surgeon) and 62 Hospital Corpsmen. In addition, a Surgical Team was embarked aboard the USS IWO JIMA, the principal afloat medical facility. The Surgical Team consisted of a general surgeon, an orthopedic surgeon, an anesthesiologist, a nurse anesthetist, an operating room nurse, a medical administrative officer, and thirteen Hospital Corpsmen. Medical spaces aboard the USS IWO JIMA included two operating rooms.

There were ample medical supplies available both ashore and afloat. Despite the destruction of the battalion aid station, sufficient supplies were initially available in the MSSG Headquarters building, and, prior to 23 October, the USS IWO JIMA had received additional medical supplies ensuring the capability to manage at least one hundred casualties for several days.

Immediately following the explosion, the Mass Casualty Plan was implemented by CTF 61. Before help arrived from the ships, other actions were underway. Marine and Navy personnel turned immediately to rescuing the wounded from the wreckage and giving them first aid. The two Navy dentists and the remaining corpsmen established one triage and casualty receiving station adjacent to the demolished building and another one at the MSSG Headquarters. Ambulances, medical personnel, and volunteers from the Italian contingent of the MNF, and from local Lebanese medical facilities, arrived and evacuated casualties to

their hospitals. These patients were later transferred to U.S. facilities, the last one arriving onboard USS IWO JIMA on 2 November 1983.

By 0640B (local Beirut time), approximately twenty minutes after the explosion, radio communication was established between the MSSG casualty receiving station and the helicopter landing zone at the airport (LZ Brown). By 0800B, all surviving casualties at the MSSG had been triaged, treated, and sent to LZ Brown for medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) to USS IWO JIMA by helicopter. By approximately 0730B, as medical personnel arrived from the ships, another triage and casualty receiving station was established close to the destroyed BLT Headquarters building. Here too, patients received immediate treatment, were triaged, and then moved to LZ Brown for subsequent MEDEVAC to the ship. The first wounded arrived aboard USS IWO JIMA at 0740B, approximately one hour and twenty minutes after the attack, having first been triaged and provided field medical treatment ashore.

The goal of the medical personnel on USS IWO JIMA was to treat, stabilize, and evacuate the casualties as rapidly as possible, in order to be prepared for the arrival of subsequent casualties.

Triage aboard USS IWO JIMA was performed on the hanger deck. Several surgical procedures were required aboard ship, but the main task was to stabilize and prepare the wounded for subsequent aeromedical evacuation. Of the 62 WIA's brought to the USS IWO JIMA on 23 October, one died onboard and the remainder were evacuated to the RAF hospital in Akrotiri, Cyprus, or to U.S. military hospitals in Landstuhl, Frankfurt, and Wiesbaden, Germany and Naples, Italy.

At 1000B, the Red Cross, in conjunction with U.S. military personnel, set up an emergency field treatment unit in a parking lot adjacent to the bombed BLT Headquarters building. This facilitated the remaining casualty care required.

The last survivor was recovered at approximately 1300B, 23 October 1983. The total number of WIA, including those

treated for relatively minor wounds and returned to duty, was approximately 112. Of these, seven subsequently died. The total number of deaths resulting from the bombing attack is 241 as of the date of this report.

On-scene immediate medical care appears to have been appropriate, adequate, and timely.

B. Discussion

The Commission's inquiry confirmed that CTF 61/62 executed a well-understood, and frequently exercised, mass casualty plan. Execution of the plan provided timely response to the mass casualty requirement for on-scene medical care despite the destruction of the battalion aid station and the death of the only doctor ashore.

The immediate aftermath of the massive explosion was, understandably, a scene of disorientation and initial confusion. This sudden, unexpected attack of enormous destruction devastated an entire unit. (It was during this initial period that numerous Lebanese and Italian volunteers arrived on-scene and provided early, needed casualty assistance.) The recovery of the shattered unit was rapid. There was a heroic rescue effort to pull survivors from the rubble and efficient and appropriate field medical treatment was instituted without delay. There were ample assets for the rapid transfer of the wounded from the disaster site to the treatment areas. No delays were encountered in the helicopter transfer of patients to the ship.

The CTF 61/62 Mass Casualty Plan for the MAU ashore placed the BLT medical officer and/or the Leading Chief Petty Officer in charge of triage and medical regulating. When both were killed, there was no longer a well-defined medical command structure ashore. Future medical planning should anticipate such losses. A medical regulating team should be included in the normal CTF 61 medical complement.

C. Conclusion

The Commission concludes that the speed with which the on-scene U.S. military personnel reacted to rescue their comrades trapped in the devastated building and to render medical care was nothing short of heroic. Additionally, the rapid response by Italian and Lebanese medical personnel was invaluable.

III. AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION/CASUALTY DISTRIBUTION

A. Principal Findings.

Standard EUCOM operating procedures were in effect prior to 23 October 1983 to enabling CTF 61/62 to call upon EUCOM medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) aircraft as needed. No medical evacuation aircraft were specifically deployed for full time support to CTF 61/62.

CTF 61 called for aeromedical evacuation support within 15 minutes of the explosion. Fortuitously, the nearest U.S. MEDEVAC aircraft, a USAF C-9, was in Incirlik, Turkey. CTF 61 was given an ETA of 1030B for its arrival in Beirut. The ETA proved inaccurate; the actual time of arrival of the C-9 was 1240B.

The British offer to provide MEDEVAC aircraft was accepted at 1029B, when it became clear that the original ETA for the Incirlik C-9 was in error. A RAF C-130 aircraft arrived at 1310B, thirty minutes after the arrival of the USAF C-9 aircraft from Incirlik.

Two additional MEDEVAC aircraft were used on 23 October 1983: the first, a U.S. Navy C-9 from Sigonella, Italy arrived at BIA at 1340B, while the second, a USAF C-141, arrived at BIA at 1940B.

Aeromedical evacuation of patients out of the Beirut area began at approximately 1230B with the initial helicopter lift of casualties to BIA from USS IWO JIMA. The fixed wing MEDEVAC aircraft departed BIA as follows: The RAF C-130 left at 1421B for Akrotiri; the USAF C-9 left at 1512B for Germany; the USN C-9 left at 1551B for Naples, Italy; and the C-141 left at 2249B for Germany. It is apparent to the Commission that all patients received excellent care by medical personnel enroute.

The early British offer of the RAF hospital at Akrotiri, Cyprus was important. Since CTF 61 medical officers had visited and were familiar with the RAF hospital at Akrotiri,

its use was immediately incorporated into the evacuation plan. Life-saving medical care and support were provided to some of the most seriously wounded by British doctors, medical staff and volunteers.

The initial intention of CTF 61 was to transport the seriously wounded patients to Akrotiri. At some point, however, a decision was instead made to transport many of the seriously wounded to Germany. The Commission has been unable to determine who made this decision.

The evacuation of patients to U.S. military hospitals in Germany and Italy was in accordance with existing procedures, but was deficient in several respects: First, erroneous ETA's (Estimated Time of Arrival) were initially provided to CTF 61 regarding the C-9 MEDEVAC aircraft being dispatched from Incirlik, Turkey; this aircraft arrived two hours later than the initial ETA provided. Logistical considerations (obtaining medical supplies) appear to have been the delaying factor. Second, seriously wounded patients were flown to Germany, a flight of just over four hours, while a competent and closer Royal Air Force facility was available and ready at Akrotiri, Cyprus just one hour away. And, third, the first MEDEVAC aircraft was directed to Rhein-Main air base, rather than Ramstein air base, resulting in additional transport time for the most seriously wounded.

There was no evidence to indicate that any patients were adversely affected from the longer evacuation flights. The Commission is concerned, however, that under other circumstances the outcome could have been less favorable.

Aeromedical evacuation and medical support plans do not recognize or provide for the peculiar and unique situation of CTF 61/62. USCINCEUR's aeromedical evacuation plans and resources are designed for routine, peacetime operations.

There was a lack of adequate numbers of experienced medical planning staff at all levels of the theater chain of command from CTF 61 up through COMSIXTHFLT, CINCUSNAVEUR, and USCINCEUR. In consequence, responsibility for medical

support for the USMNF was diffuse, knowledge of regional medical facilities and potential sources of support was poor, and overall medical planning was inadequate.

B. Discussion.

Naval Warfare Publications, such as The Amphibious Task Force Plan (NWP 22-1) and Operational Medical Dental Support (NWP 6) provide an adequate framework for effective planning of operational medical support. The end result of the process should be a plan addressing such items as a statement of the medical situation; a statement of the evacuation policy (including alternate plans); clear delineation of medical responsibilities throughout the operational and administrative chains of command; and procedures for keeping necessary records and reports of the flow of casualties. Directives from higher echelons should provide the guidance and support to permit effective execution of the plans. Responsibilities for casualty evacuation and medical regulating must be clearly defined, sufficiently detailed for comprehension at all levels, capable of implementation, and regularly exercised.

Inflight medical care for the first 56 patients evacuated from Beirut was uneventful, with the exception of one patient who expired approximately 20 minutes after departure for Germany. This patient died of massive injuries sustained in the explosion and had not been expected to live.

The last MEDEVAC flight of 23 October 1983 departed at 2249B for Germany with 13 wounded. Subsequent MEDEVAC flights on following days moved patients who had been treated in local civilian hospitals to U.S. treatment facilities in Germany.

Distribution of patients among medical facilities in Germany was directed by USAFE personnel at Rhein Main vice the appropriate Joint Medical Regulating Office (JMRO). Procedures used were not in consonance with current directives. There is, however, no evidence that this patient distribution irregularity affected patient care or

outcome.

C. Conclusions.

The Commission found no evidence that any of the wounded died or received improper medical treatment as a result of the evacuation or casualty distribution procedures. Nevertheless, the Commission concludes that the overall medical support planning in the European theater was deficient and that there was an insufficient number of experienced medical planning staff officers in the USCINCEUR chain of command.

The Commission found that the evacuation of the seriously wounded to U.S. hospitals in Germany, a transit of more than four hours, rather than to the British hospital in Akrotiri, Cyprus, a transit of one hour, appears to have increased the risk to those patients. Similarly, the Commission found that the subsequent decision to land the aircraft at Rhein Main rather than Ramstein, Germany, may have increased the risk to the most seriously wounded. In both instances, however, the Commission has no evidence that there was an adverse medical impact on the patients.

D. Recommendations.

The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in coordination with the Services, to review medical plans and staffing of each echelon of the operational and administrative chains of command to ensure appropriate and adequate medical support for the USMNF.

The Commission further recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct USCINCEUR to conduct an investigation of the decisions made regarding the destination of aeromedical evacuation aircraft and the distribution of casualties on 23 October 1983.

IV. DEFINITIVE MEDICAL CARE

A. Principal Findings.

Medical care provided to the wounded by the various treatment facilities was excellent. The disaster plan of the The Princess Mary RAF hospital at Akrotiri, Cyprus was exceptionally effective in concept and execution. The ability to use this facility, under these extreme circumstances, significantly minimized mortality and morbidity.

Mortality and morbidity sustained by casualties could be predicted on the basis of the injuries and does not appear to have been adversely affected by any of the definitive medical care.

B. Discussion

The RAF effort was extraordinary. During the flight on their C-130 to Akrotiri, one patient received intubation and ventilation. The entire base was prepared to facilitate the casualty care. Patients were rapidly triaged and moved by ground ambulances to the hospital where further resuscitation was continued and surgery performed. Approximately 150 people volunteered to donate blood, and 50 units were drawn. There were thirty nurses and two physicians from amongst the spouses of the military personnel who also volunteered their services. Back-up medical personnel and supplies were flown to Cyprus from the U.K. One patient died shortly after arrival at the Akrotiri facility, but his wounds were of such magnitude to preclude survival.

In Europe, patients were transferred either to U.S. Army hospitals in Frankfurt and Landstuhl, the U.S. Navy hospital in Naples or the U.S. Air Force hospital in Wiesbaden. These hospitals had implemented their disaster plans, recalled their entire medical staffs, organized resuscitation teams, discharged ambulatory inpatients to

provide extra beds, prepared additional blood for use and prepared ground and air ambulance capabilities. Their efforts were complete, dedicated and professional. Throughout the night of 23 October, and well into the following day, the performance of the U.S. military medical community in Europe was outstanding.

C. Conclusion

The Commission concludes that the definitive medical care provided the wounded at the various treatment facilities was excellent, and that as of 30 November 1983, there is no evidence of any mortality or morbidity resulting from inappropriate or insufficient medical care.

V. ISRAELI OFFER OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

A. Principal Findings.

The Government of Israel communicated an offer of medical assistance to the United States Government approximately two hours (0830 Israel/Beirut local time) after the bombing attack. The initial offer of assistance was made by telephone from the IDF Chief of External Affairs to the U.S. Defense Attache in Tel Aviv who immediately directed the Duty Officer to report to the Embassy and send a message to CTF 61 informing him of the offer. The offer was general in nature and specifics were not requested because the Duty Officer was not aware of the enormity of the disaster or the nature of the on-scene requirements.

The Israeli offer of assistance was relayed within an hour (0922B) by flash message to CTF 61 stating: "REFERENCE THE ATTACK ON THE BLT HQ AT BIA THIS MORNING. PER TELECOM WITH COL ALTER, CHIEF OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS, IDF, THE GOI OFFERS WHATEVER ASSISTANCE MAY BE DESIRED BY THE USG IN THE EVACUATION/MEDICAL TREATMENT OF CASUALTIES."

CTF 61 saw the message at approximately 1030 to 1045 local time. His message response, after consultation with his medical staff, to the U.S. Defense Attache Office in Tel Aviv at 1145B stated: "OFFER OF ASSISTANCE REFERENCE (A) SINCERELY APPRECIATED. CURRENTLY HAVE AMPLE ASSETS ENROUTE OR ON STATION TO MEET REQUIREMENTS."

Similar Israeli offers were subsequently transmitted by telephone calls involving the Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, USCINCEUR and COMSIXTHFLT.

CTF 61 asked separately for Israeli support in providing 200 body bags for the dead. Israeli authorities in Tel Aviv immediately provided the bags which were forwarded to Beirut by U.S. Navy aircraft.

Although there had been informal government-to-government level discussions in 1981 concerning Israeli medical support for U.S. forces, no agreement existed, and very few in the chain of command were familiar with those discussions or with Israeli military hospital facilities.

B. Discussion.

The Commission found no evidence that any considerations other than a desire to provide immediate, professional care for the wounded influenced the decision not to take advantage of the Israeli offer of medical assistance. The Commission's interview with CTF 61 revealed that his only concern was for the appropriate care and evacuation of the casualties. He did not review the message from Tel Aviv immediately upon receipt because of the large volume of critical traffic requiring his attention. When he did review it (between 1030 and 1045 local time) he had a reasonable estimate of the casualty situation (including the number of wounded requiring further care); of the estimated time of arrival of aeromedical aircraft then enroute; and of the fact that the RAF Hospital at Akrotiri, Cyprus, was prepared to receive the most seriously wounded. Thus, after consultation with the medical staff, CTF 61 felt that adequate capabilities were already available or enroute.

CTF 61 and his medical staff had no direct communications with the Israelis (as they did with the British through the British liaison officer onboard USS IWO JIMA). Further, CTF 61 had no details about the Israeli offer; whether, for example, it included MEDEVAC aircraft, or the nature of available hospital facilities in Israel.

When asked why he did not pursue these questions, CTF 61 replied that there was no need - the facililty at Akrotiri was already mobilized and evacuation to Cyprus had been arranged.

Subsequent offers of assistance to U.S. representatives conveyed by Israel were promptly and properly referred down the chain of command. By this time, however, evacuation was well underway to hospitals in Cyprus, Germany and Italy.

Discussions between a Commission member and senior officials of the IDF confirmed the substance and spirit of the offers. The discussions also revealed, however, that the Israeli authorities were not really aware of the resources CTF 61/62 had available locally or enroute.

C. Conclusion

The Commission found no evidence that any factor other than the desire to provide immediate, professional treatment for the wounded influenced decisions regarding the Israeli offer; all offers of assistance by Israel were promptly and properly referred to the theater and on-scene commanders. At the time the initial Israeli offer was reviewed by CTF 61, it was deemed not necessary because the medical capabilities organic to CTF 61 were operational and functioning adequately, the RAF hospital at Akrotiri was mobilized and ready, and sufficient U.S. and RAF medical evacuation aircraft were enroute.

VI. IDENTIFICATION OF THE DEAD

A. Principal Findings.

Current USCINCEUR instructions direct that the handling of deaths occurring in Lebanon will be the responsibility of United States Air Forces Europe (USAFE). Following the bombing attack on the BLT Headquarters and the resultant mass casualties, HQ USAFE was appointed by USCINCEUR as the executive agent responsible for coordinating the evacuation, identification, and preparation of the human remains.

The decision was made at Headquarters Marine Corps, in coordination with the Naval Medical Command and Army Mortuary Affairs personnel, to use the Frankfurt mortuary facility. Once the estimate of human remains requiring processing was reasonably established, a split operation was established to accomplish initial identification at a temporary facility at Rhein Main Air Base, with completion of the process and final preparation of the remains at the Frankfurt mortuary.

The first 15 remains were returned to the United States on 28 October. The final shipment occurred on 9 November. The total number of remains processed at Frankfurt was 239. Of these, 237 were U.S. military personnel, one was a French soldier, and one is believed to be a Lebanese civilian. Two additional remains were sent on 10 November to the U.S. Army Identification Facility in Hawaii for final identification.

B. Discussion.

The decision to process the remains of the U.S. military personnel in Germany was premised on the fact that the Frankfurt facility is the largest of the U.S. mortuaries in the EUCOM area, and that it is located near a major USAF air terminal (Rhein Main AB). (When that decision was made, it was estimated that the total KIA would be less than 100.)

The one other facility actively considered was Dover Air

Force Base in Delaware, where mass casualties had been processed in the past. It was considered, however, that the slow, detailed identification process required could best be accomplished away from the anguish and inquiries of families and friends. The Commission found no evidence of manipulation of the processing of remains for political or media relations purposes.

When it became apparent that additional support facilities would be required, the split operation utilizing a temporary identification facility at Rhein Main, was a logical and practical solution to the problem of saturation of the Frankfurt facility. The Commission wishes to make special note of the superb and spontaneous offers of support from virtually every quarter. Personnel augmentation was rapidly provided by all the services and included assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Invaluable assistance was provided by approximately 800 volunteers from local commands.

Positive identification of human remains is a slow, detailed, and laborious process. Even so, over 98 percent of the human remains were processed within one week of the bombing. Identification of the dead was accomplished expeditiously and precisely.

Complicating factors in the identification process included the destruction or temporary loss of medical and dental records, and the fact that most of the casualties did not have dog tags on their person. The medical and dental records were stored in the building that was bombed. Duplicate medical and dental records are no longer maintained by the Services, and this complicated and prolonged the identification process. Fingerprint files were not available for all personnel; the FBI team provided critical support to obtain fingerprints.

One set of human remains have been tentatively identified as those of a Lebanese civilian, presumably the custodian who lived in the building.

The respective Services notified and assisted the families involved in a sensitive and timely manner. No noteworthy problems in this area were identified to the Commission.

C. Conclusion

The Commission concludes that the process for identification of the dead following the 23 October catastrophe was conducted very efficiently and professionally, despite the complications caused by the destruction and/or absence of identification data.

D. Recommendation

The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the creation of duplicate medical/dental records, and assure the availability of fingerprint files, for all military personnel. The Commission further recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Service Secretaries to jointly develop improved, state-of-the-art identification tags for all military personnel.

PART NINE - TERRORISM

I. 23 October 1983 - A Terrorist Act

A. Principal Findings.

DOD Directive 2000.12 defines terrorism as "the unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence by a revolutionary organization against individuals or property, with the intention of coercing or intimidating governments or societies, often for political or ideological purposes." The terms are not further defined, but unlawful violence commonly refers to acts considered criminal under local law or acts which violate the Law of Armed Conflict.

The bombing of the BLT Headquarters building was committed by a revolutionary organization within the cognizance of, and with possible support from two neighboring States. The bombing was politically motivated and directed against U.S. policy in Lebanon in the sense that no attempt was made to seize Marine positions or to drive the Marines from the airport.

The BLT Headquarters building provided the greatest concentration of U.S. military forces in Beirut. The lawless environment in Beirut provided ideal cover for collecting intelligence on the target and preparing the attack. The expertise to build a bomb large enough to destroy the BLT Headquarters building existed among terrorist groups in Lebanon, as did the necessary explosives and detonating device. The availability of a suicide driver to deliver the bomb significantly increased the vulnerability of the BLT Headquarters building.

For the terrorists, the attack was an overwhelming success. It achieved complete tactical surprise and resulted in the total destruction of the headquarters, and the deaths of 241 U.S. military personnel.

B. Discussion.

The Commission determined that the 23 October 1983 bombing met the criteria of a terrorist act as defined in DOD Directive 2000.12. While those responsible appear to qualify as a revolutionary organization, the Commission notes that the formal DOD definition of terrorism does not include conduct or participation in such acts by sovereign States. Since at least indirect involvement in this incident by Syria and Iran is indicated, the Commission

believes that the DOD definition should be expanded to include States which use terrorism either directly or through surrogates.

The use of terrorism to send a political or ideological message can best be understood when viewed from the mindset of a terrorist. The strength of that message depends on the psychological impact generated by the attack. This, in turn, largely depends on the nature and breadth of media coverage. The political message in the 23 October 1983 attack was one of opposition to the U.S. military presence in Lebanon. An attack of sufficient magnitude could rekindle political debate over U.S. participation in the MNF and possibly be the catalyst for a change of U.S. policy. There were ample military targets in Beirut that were vulnerable to terrorist attack, but the symbolic nature of the BLT Headquarters building, and the concentration of military personnel within it, made it an ideal terrorist target of choice. The building was extremely well-constructed and located inside a guarded perimeter. This apparent security, however, may have worked to the advantage of the terrorists because the target, in fact, was vulnerable to a very large truck bomb delivered by a suicidal attacker. The first challenge would be to gain access to the USMNF perimeter at the parking lot south of the BLT Headquarters building. Once there, the barbed wire barriers could not prevent a large truck from penetrating the perimeter into the compound. Civilian traffic around the airport aided in reaching the parking lot undetected. From that point on, the terrorists had reasonable confidence of succeeding. First, there would be the symbolic success of penetrating the guarded compound. Second, the bomb carried was of such size that once through the perimeter, it would cause sufficient damage and casualties to have a major psychological impact and receive worldwide media coverage.

From a terrorist perspective, the true genius of this attack is that the objective and the means of attack were beyond the imagination of those responsible for Marine security. As a result, the attack achieved suprise and resulted in massive destruction of the BLT Headquarters building and the deaths of 241 U.S. military personnel. The psychological fallout of the attack on the U.S. has been dramatic. The terrorists sent the U.S. a strong political message.

C. Conclusion.

The Commission concludes that the 23 October 1983 bombing of the BLT Headquarters building was a terrorist act sponsored by sovereign states or organized political entities for the purpose of defeating U.S. objectives in Lebanon.

II. INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

A. Principal Findings.

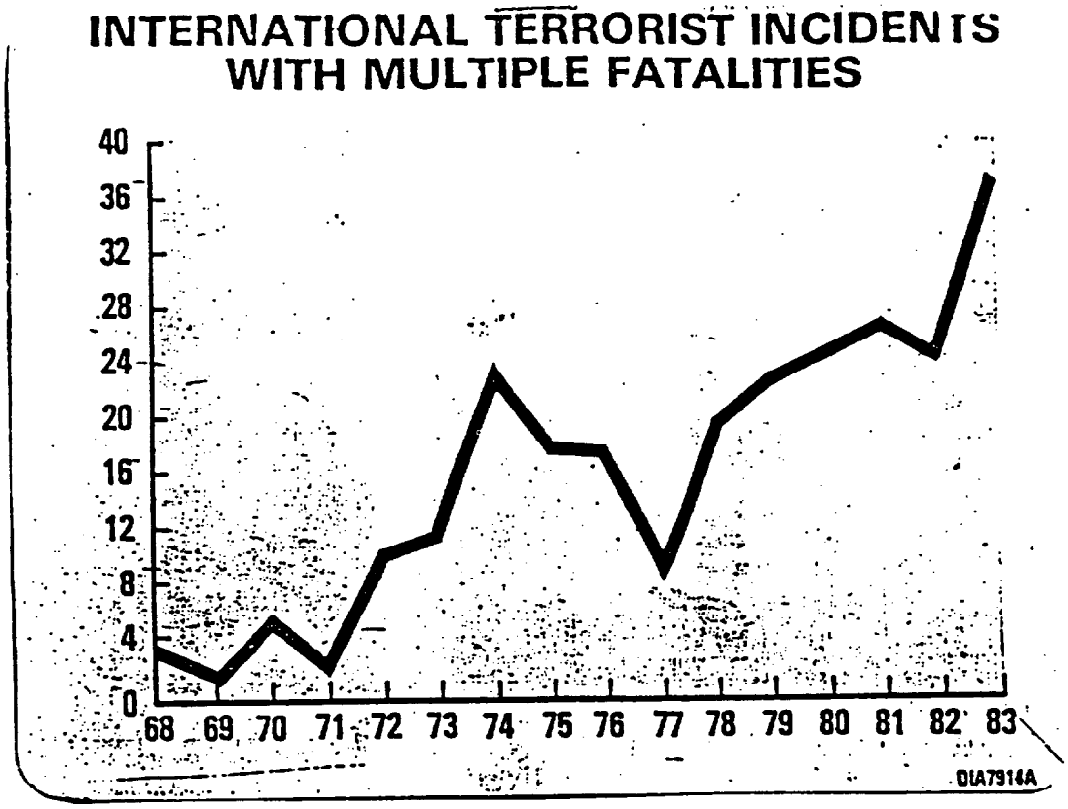
While the figures vary according to collection criteria, overall there has been a three to fourfold increase in the number of world-wide terrorist incidents since 1968. The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) notes that over the past decade, 53 percent of all recorded terrorist incidents were directed against U.S. personnel and facilities. Terrorism against military personnel and facilities is becoming more frequent. According to DIA figures, incidents in which U.S. military personnel or facilities were targeted jumped from 34 in 1980, to 57 in 1981, to 67 in 1982.

In addition, there is a growing lethality of terrorism. According to the Rand Corporation, the number of terrorist incidents involving fatalities has been increasing about 20 percent a year since the early 1970's. Of this number, incidents involving multiple fatalities have risen approximately 60% this year, as compared to a 37% average increase of the previous three years. Through November 1983, there have been 666 fatalities due to terrorism, compared to 221 in 1982 and 374 in 1981. Even excluding the massive carnage of the 23 October 1983 bombing of the BLT Headquarters building in Beirut, terrorism has already killed more people in 1983 than in any other year in recent history (See Figure 9-1).

B. DISCUSSION

Terrorism is deeply rooted in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Mr. Brian Jenkins, a recognized expert on terrorism, calls this area "the cradle" of international terrorism in its contemporary form. He notes that the ideological and doctrinal foundations for campaigns of deliberate terrorism, which exist today in Lebanon, emerged from the post-World War II struggles in Palestine and the early guerrilla campaigns against colonial powers in Cyprus and Algeria.

Certain governments and regional entities which have major interests in the outcome of the struggle in Lebanon, are users of international terrorism as a means of achieving their political ends. Such nationally-sponsored terrorism is increasing significantly, particularly among Middle Eastern countries. The State Department has identified 140 terrorist incidents conducted directly by national


INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST INCIDENTS
WITH MULTIPLE FATALITIES
40
36
32
28
24
20
16
12
8
4
0
68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83
DIA7914A

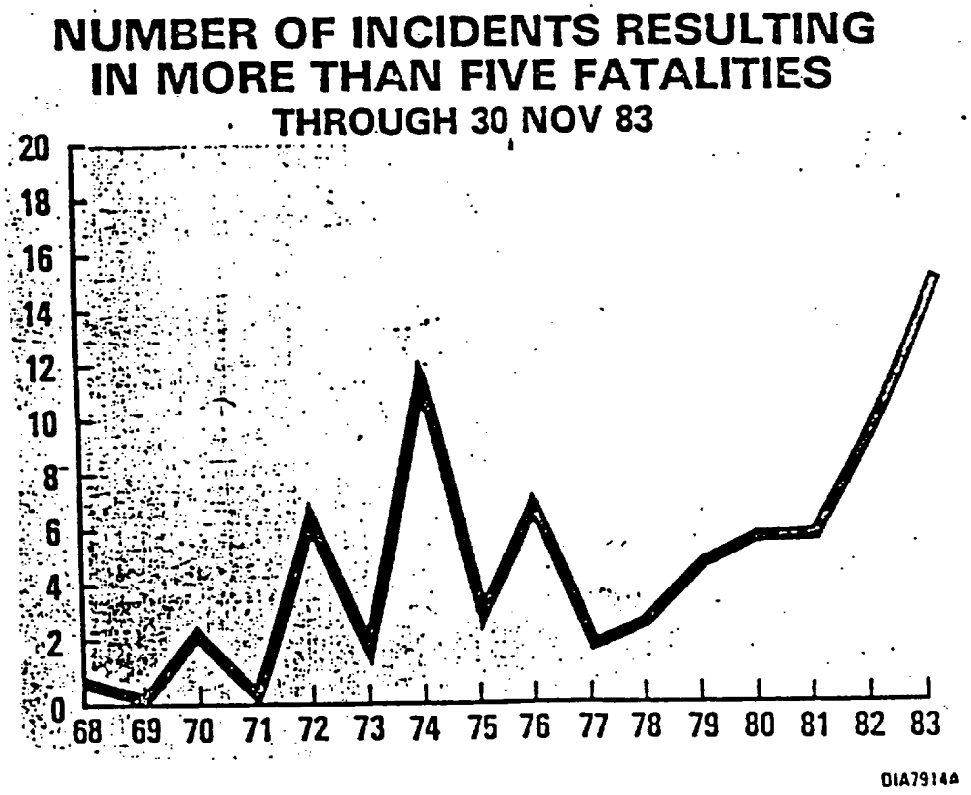

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS RESULTING
IN MORE THAN FIVE FATALITIES
THROUGH 30 NOV 83
20
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83
DIA7914A

Figure 9-1

governments between 1972 and 1982. Of this total, 90 percent occurred in the three year period between 1980-1982. More importantly, 85 percent of the total involved Middle Eastern terrorists. As an integral part of the political/military landscape in the Middle East, international terrorism will continue to threaten U.S. personnel and facilities in this region.

C. Conclusions.

The Commission concludes that international terrorist acts endemic to the Middle East are indicative of an alarming world-wide phenomenon that poses an increasing threat to U.S. personnel and facilities.

III. TERRORISM AS A MODE OF WARFARE

A. Principal Findings.

The political/military situation in Lebanon is dominated by a host of diverse national, subnational and local political entities pursuing their own ends through an expedient but orchestrated process of negotiation and conflict. The spectrum of armed conflict in Lebanon is bounded by individual acts of terrorism on one end and formal conventional operations on the other. Within these boundaries, warfare continues on three levels: conventional warfare, guerrilla warfare and terrorism. As discussed in PART FOUR of this report, the conflict in Lebanon is a struggle among Lebanese factions who have at their disposal regular armies, guerrillas, private militias and an assortment of terrorist groups. The terrorist groups themselves are openly assisted or covertly sponsored by sovereign states, political and religious factions, or even other terrorist groups.

There is little about conflict in Lebanon that reflects the traditional models of war. The distinctions between war and peace are blurred. The use of military force varies from constrained self-defense by the MNF participants, to terrorism by others. Military successes are therefore temporary and hard to measure. Ceasefires have become an inherent part of the process, providing exhausted belligerents with needed respite to regroup, mobilize patron support or switch to a more suitable form of struggle; all of which ensure that the armed struggle will continue in this open-ended fashion.

In Lebanon, violence plays a crucial role in altering an opponent's political situation. Therefore, the solutions are political ones in which the losers are not defeated, but maneuvered into a politically untenable position. Terrorism is crucial to this process because it is not easily deterred by responsive firepower or the threat of escalation. Terrorism, therefore, provides an expedient form of violence capable of pressuring changes in the political situation with minimum risk and cost.

The systematic, carefully orchestrated terrorism which we see in the Middle East represents a new dimension of warfare. These international terrorists, unlike their traditional counterparts, are not seeking to make a random

political statement or to commit the occasional act of intimidation on behalf of some ill-defined long-term vision of the future. For them, terrorism is an integrated part of a strategy in which there are well-defined political and military objectives. For a growing number of states, terrorism has become an alternative means of conducting state business and the terrorists themselves are agents whose association the state can easily deny.

The terrorists in Lebanon and the Middle East are formidable opponents. In general, they are intensely dedicated and professional. They are exceptionally well-trained, well-equipped and well supported. With State sponsorship, these terrorists are less concerned about building a popular base and are less inhibited in committing acts which cause massive destruction or inflict heavy casualties. Armed with operational guidance and intelligence from their sponsor, there are few targets beyond their capability to attack. Consequently, they constitute a potent instrument of State policy and a serious threat to the U.S. presence in Lebanon.

B. Discussion.

The Commission believes that terrorism as a military threat to U.S. military forces is becoming increasingly serious. As a super power with world-wide interests, the United States is the most attractive terrorist target and, indeed, statistics confirm this observation. Terrorism is warfare "on the cheap" and entails few risks. It permits small countries to attack U.S. interests in a manner, which if done openly, would constitute acts of war and justify a direct U.S. military response.

Combating terrorism requires an active policy. A reactive policy only forfeits the initiative to the terrorists. The Commission recognizes that there is no single solution. The terrorist problem must be countered politically and militarily at all levels of government. Political initiatives should be directed at collecting and sharing intelligence on terrorist groups, and promptly challenging the behavior of those states which employ terrorism to their own ends. It makes little sense to learn that a State or its surrogate is conducting a terrorist campaign or planning a terrorist attack and not confront that government with political or military consequences if it continues forward.

U.S. military forces lack an effective capability to respond to terrorist attacks, particularly at the lower ends

of the conflict spectrum. The National Command Authorities should have a wide range of options for reaction. Air strikes or naval gunfire are not always enough. The whole area of military response needs to be addressed to identify a wider range of more flexible options and planning procedures.

State sponsored terrorism poses a serious threat to U.S. policy and the security of U.S. personnel and facilities overseas and thus merits the attention of military planners. The Department of Defense needs to recognize the importance of state sponsored terrorism and must take appropriate measures to deal with it.

C. Conclusion.

The Commission concludes that state sponsored terrorism is an important part of the spectrum of warfare and that adequate response to this increasing threat requires an active national policy which seeks to deter attack or reduce its effectiveness. The Commission further concludes that this policy needs to be supported by political and diplomatic actions and by a wide range of timely military response capabilities.

D. Recommendation.

The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Joint Chiefs of Staff to develop a broad range of appropriate military responses to terrorism for review, along with political and diplomatic actions, by the National Security Council.

IV. MILITARY PREPAREDNESS

A. Principal Findings.

Not only did the terrorist's capability to destroy the BLT Headquarters building exceed the imagination of the MAU and BLT Commanders responsible for the Marine security of the USMNF at BIA, it also suprised the chain of command. From the beginning, the mission statement development and ROE formulation for the USMNF failed to recognize that terrorism is endemic to Lebanon and would constitute a long term threat to the security of the USMNF. The ROE, and supporting instructions, were all written to guide responses to a range of conventional military threats.

Preparatory training for a deploying MAU focuses little on how to deal with terrorism. The only instruction the Commission was able to identify was a one-hour class presented to the infantry battalions by the attached counterintelligence NCO and segments of a command briefing by the U.S. Army 4th Psychological Operations Group. USMC counterintelligence personnel are considered qualified in counterterrorism after attendance at a 5 day Air Force course titled "The Dynamics of International Terrorism". This course provides an excellent overview of terrorism for personnel being assigned to high threat areas, but does not qualify an individual to instruct others regarding terrorism, nor does it provide sufficient insight into the situation in Lebanon to prepare an individual for that environment.

Terrorism expertise did exist at EUCOM Headquarters in the form of the Office of the Special Assistant for Security Matters (OSASM). OSASM had responsibility for the Office of Military Cooperation's (OMC) security in Lebanon. The director of that office understood well the terrorist mind-set. After inspecting and evaluating the 18 April 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy, the SASM concluded in his report that the Embassy bombing was the prelude to a more spectacular attack and that the U.S. military forces present the "most defined and logical target."

Based on that report, USCINCEUR took a number of initiatives to improve the security of the OMC against terrorists. An OMC Lebanon Security Working Group was established under the chairmanship of OSASM, to track the threat on a day-to-day basis and to take appropriate measures to enhance security when the circumstances warranted. Second, a counterintelligence/security

specialist was sent TDY to the OMC to assist the Commander in his anti-terrorism efforts and to keep EUCOM advised of the security situation. Third, a major effort was initiated to reduce the number of OMC personnel billeted in individual buildings. This action was based on the OSASM conclusion that regardless of the security provided by the hotels housing U.S. personnel, determined terrorists of the caliber operating in Lebanon would find a way to penetrate them. OSASM's strategy was to reduce the attractiveness of the target by reducing its political value. Small concentrations of OMC individuals, while vulnerable, would not provide the spectacular results the terrorists were seeking.

The SASM stated that he met with the USMNF Commander and discussed with him the terrorist threat and his plan to disperse OMC personnel. The SASM did not look at the MAU's security, because he considered it improper to ask an operational commander if he could inspect his security. In addition, the SASM did not have a charter to look at MAU security. This changed on 1 November 1983, when DCINCEUR directed that the OMC Lebanon Security Working Group be redesignated the Lebanon Security Working Group and that its charter be expanded to include all U.S. forces in Lebanon.

B. Discussion.

Of great concern to the Commission is the military's lack of preparedness to deal with the threat of State sponsored terrorism. The Commission found two different mindsets in Beirut regarding the nature of the threat and how to counter it. The USMNF units at the airport, behind their guarded perimeter, perceived the terrorist threat as secondary and could not envision a terrorist attack that could penetrate their base and cause massive destruction. The Commission found nothing in the predeployment training provided to the MAU that would assist them to make such an assessment. In the Commission's judgment, the Marines were not sufficiently trained and supported to deal with the terrorist threat that existed on 23 October 1983. At a minimum, the USMNF needed anti-terrorism expertise of the caliber that supported the OMC.

OSASM conducted a responsive anti-terrorist campaign that tried to anticipate changes in the threat and take appropriate measures to counter them. Unfortunately, neither USCINCEUR, the MAU nor OSASM saw the need to coordinate their anti-terrorist efforts, nor did they seem aware that different approaches to security were being pursued by the MAU and by the OMC. Approximately 350

Marines were concentrated in the BLT Headquarters building on the premise that it offered good protection against shelling and other small arms fire, the primary threat. The OMC, however, was dispersing its people on the premise that a large concentration of Americans offered an attractive target which a determined terrorist would find a way to attack. The Commission does not suggest that coordination of the security efforts of the MAU and the OMC would have prevented the disaster of 23 October 1983 because there were many other considerations. It does, however, concur with DCINCEUR's recent decision to expand OSASM's anti-terrorism responsibilities to include all U.S. forces in Lebanon.

Terrorism will continue to be an integral part of conflict in Lebanon and will present difficult challenges to our military forces.

The effective use of military forces in an environment like that in Lebanon needs to be studied and emphasized in our professional military schools. Doctrine, mission development and ROE formulation need to consider the terrorist dimension, particularly as it pertains to the security of U.S. personnel. In the Commission's judgment, organizational support for the USMNF was not sufficiently responsive to the changes in the political/military situation. For missions like this, military organizations have to be tailored to the local environment in a way not required for conventional warfare. If a larger intelligence staff or more area specialists are needed, then the organizations need to quickly provide them. Normal programming and budgeting procedures may not be suitable and could delay necessary responses to the point that mission and security are compromised.

The Commission believes that the responsibility for countering terrorists, or operating in terrorist areas, should not be exclusively assigned to special units. Special units are necessary for certain types of responses, but terrorism is a threat to all U.S. forces and all military personnel assigned overseas can expect to encounter terrorism in some form. Consequently, they need some understanding of the terrorist threat and how to combat it. It is a common practice to send personnel to special survival schools when their duties put them in arctic or jungle environments. The same philosophy should apply for hostile environments like that in Lebanon. Such training currently exists in some services for Central America. A similar effort should be considered for Lebanon.

In its inquiry into terrorism, the Commission concluded

that the most effective defense is an agressive anti-terrorism program supported by good intelligence, strong information awareness programs and good defensive measures. Each element plays a critical role in the overall program and none can stand alone. Responses must be commensurate with the threat and the value of the targets. Not everyone or everthing can be fully protected. The object is not absolute security, but reduced vulnerability for the individuals and facilities, and diminished chances of success for the terrorist.

In the Commission's judgment, too much faith is put in physical defenses. The British heavily fortified their positions in Palestine after World War II but the terrorists continually came up with ingenious methods to penetrate and attack them. The same is true today. Israel, with its excellent intelligence and capability to fight terrorism, still had its security breached and its military headquarters in Tyre bombed.

C. Conclusion.

The Commission concludes that the USMNF was not trained, organized, staffed or supported to deal effectively with the terrorist threat in Lebanon. The Commission further concludes that much needs to be done to prepare U.S. military forces to defend against and counter terrorism.

D. Recommendation.

The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the development of doctrine, planning, organization, force structure, education and training necessary to defend against and counter terrorism.

PART TEN - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All conclusions and recommendations of the Commission from each substantive part of this report are presented below.

1. PART ONE - THE MILITARY MISSION

A. Mission Development and Execution

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that the "presence" mission was not interpreted the same by all levels of the chain of command and that perceptual differences regarding that mission, including the responsibility of the USMNF for the security of Beirut International Airport, should have been recognized and corrected by the chain of command.

B. The Expanding Military Role

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that U.S. decisions as regards Lebanon taken over the past fifteen months have been, to a large degree, characterized by an emphasis on military options and the expansion of the U.S. military role, notwithstanding the fact that the conditions upon which the security of the USMNF were based continued to deteriorate as progress toward a diplomatic solution slowed. The Commission further concludes that these decisions may have been taken without clear recognition that these initial conditions had dramatically changed and that the expansion of our military involvement in Lebanon greatly increased the risk to, and adversely impacted upon the security of, the USMNF. The Commission therefore concludes that there is an urgent need for reassessment of alternative means to achieve U.S. objectives in Lebanon and at the same time reduce the risk to the USMNF.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense continue to urge that the National Security Council undertake a reexamination of alternative means of achieving U.S. objectives in Lebanon, to include a comprehensive assessment of the military security options being developed by the chain of command and a more vigorous

and demanding approach to pursuing diplomatic alternatives.

2. PART TWO - RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (ROE)

A. ROE Implementation

(1) Conclusions:

(a) The Commission concludes that a single set of ROE providing specific guidance for countering the type of vehicular terrorist attacks that destroyed the U.S. Embassy on 18 April 1983 and the BLT Headquarters building on 23 October 1983 had not been provided to, nor implemented by, the Marine Amphibious Unit Commander.

(b) The Commission concludes that the mission statement, the original ROE, and the implementation in May 1983 of dual "Blue Card - White Card" ROE contributed to a mind-set that detracted from the readiness of the USMNF to respond to the terrorist threat which materialized on 23 October 1983.

3. PART THREE - THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

A. Exercise of Command Responsibility by the Chain of Command Prior to 23 October 1983

(1) Conclusions:

(a) The Commission is fully aware that the entire chain of command was heavily involved in the planning for, and support of, the USMNF. The Commission concludes, however, that USCINCEUR, CINCUSNAVEUR, COMSIXTHFLT and CTF 61 did not initiate actions to ensure the security of the USMNF in light of the deteriorating political/military situation in Lebanon. The Commission found a lack of effective command supervision of the USMNF security posture prior to 23 October 1983.

(b) The Commission concludes that the failure of the operational chain of command to correct or amend the defensive posture of the USMNF constituted tacit approval of the security measures and procedures in force at the BLT Headquarters building on 23 October 1983.

(c) The Commission further concludes that although it finds the USCINCEUR operational chain of command at fault, it also finds that there was a series of circumstances beyond the control of these commands that influenced their judgement and their actions relating to the

security of the USMNF.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense take whatever administrative or disciplinary action he deems appropriate, citing the failure of the USCINCEUR operational chain of command to monitor and supervise effectively the security measures and procedures employed by the USMNF on 23 October 1983.

4. PART FOUR - INTELLIGENCE

A. Intelligence Support

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that although the USMNF Commander received a large volume of intelligence warnings concerning potential terrorist threats prior to 23 October 1983, he was not provided with the timely intelligence, tailored to his specific operational needs, that was necessary to defend against the broad spectrum of threats he faced.

(b) The Commission further concludes that the HUMINT support to the USMNF Commander was ineffective, being neither precise nor tailored to his needs. The Commission believes that the paucity of U.S. controlled HUMINT provided to the USMNF Commander is in large part due to policy decisions which have resulted in a U.S. HUMINT capability commensurate with the resources and time that have been spent to acquire it.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense establish an all-source fusion center, which would tailor and focus all-source intelligence support to U.S. military commanders involved in military operations in areas of high threat, conflict or crisis.

(b) The Commission further recommends that the Secretary of Defense take steps to establish a joint CIA/DOD examination of policy and resource alternatives to immediately improve HUMINT support to the USMNF contingent in Lebanon and other areas of potential conflict which would involve U.S. military operating forces.

5. PART FIVE - PRE-ATTACK SECURITY

A. Command Responsibility for the Security of the 24th MAU and BLT 1/8 Prior to 23 October 1983

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The combination of a large volume of specific threat warnings that never materialized and the perceived and real pressure to accomplish a unique and difficult mission contributed significantly to the decisions of the MAU and BLT Commanders regarding the security of their force. Nevertheless, the Commission concludes that the security measures in effect in the MAU compound were neither commensurate with the increasing level of threat confronting the USMNF nor sufficient to preclude catastrophic losses such as those that were suffered on the morning of 23 October 1983. The Commission further concludes that while it may have appeared to be an appropriate response to the indirect fire being received, the decision to billet approximately one quarter of the BLT in a single structure contributed to the catastrophic loss of life.

(b) The Commission concludes that the BLT Commander must take responsibility for the concentration of approximately 350 members of his command in the BLT Headquarters building, thereby providing a lucrative target for attack. Further, the BLT Commander modified prescribed alert procedures, thereby degrading security of the compound.

(c) The Commission also concludes that the MAU Commander shares the responsibility for the catastrophic losses in that he condoned the concentration of personnel in the BLT Headquarters building, concurred in the modification of prescribed alert procedures, and emphasized safety over security in directing that sentries on Posts 4, 5, 6, and 7 would not load their weapons.

(d) The Commission further concludes that although it finds the BLT and MAU Commanders to be at fault, it also finds that there was a series of circumstances beyond their control that influenced their judgement and their actions relating to the security of the USMNF.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense take whatever administrative or

disciplinary action he deems appropriate, citing the failure of the BLT and MAU Commanders to take the security measures necessary to preclude the catastrophic loss of life in the attack on 23 October 1983.

6. PART SEVEN - POST-ATTACK SECURITY

A. Redeployment, Dispersal and Physical Barriers

(1) Conclusions:

(a) The Commission concludes that the security measures taken since 23 October 1983 have reduced the vulnerability of the USMNF to catastrophic losses. The Commission also concludes, however, that the security measures implemented or planned for implementation for the USMNF as of 30 November 1983, were not adequate to prevent continuing significant attrition of the force.

(b) The Commission recognizes that the current disposition of USMNF forces may, after careful examination, prove to be the best available option. The Commission concludes, however, that a comprehensive set of alternatives should be immediately prepared and presented to the National Security Council.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) Recognizing that the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have been actively reassessing the increased vulnerability of the USMNF as the political/military environment in Lebanon has changed, the Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the operational chain of command to continue to develop alternative military options for accomplishing the mission of the USMNF while reducing the risk to the force.

7. PART EIGHT - CASUALTY HANDLING

A. On-Scene Medical Care

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that the speed with which the on-scene U.S. military personnel reacted to rescue their comrades trapped in the devastated building and to render medical care was nothing short of heroic. The rapid response by Italian and Lebanese medical personnel was invaluable.

B. Aeromedical Evacuation/Casualty Distribution

(1) Conclusions:

(a) The Commission found no evidence that any of the wounded died or received improper medical care as a result of the evacuation or casualty distribution procedures. Nevertheless, the Commission concludes that overall medical support planning in the European theater was deficient and that there was an insufficient number of experienced medical planning staff officers in the USCINCEUR chain of command.

(b) The Commission found that the evacuation of the seriously wounded to U.S. hospitals in Germany, a transit of more than four hours, rather than to the British hospital in Akrotiri, Cyprus, a transit of one hour, appears to have increased the risk to those patients. Similarly, the Commission found that the subsequent decision to land the aircraft at Rhein Main rather than Ramstein, Germany, may have increased the risk to the most seriously wounded. In both instances, however, the Commission has no evidence that there was an adverse medical impact on the patients.

(2) Recommendations:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in coordination with the Services, to review medical plans and staffing of each echelon of the operational and administrative chains of command to ensure appropriate and adequate medical support for the USMNF.

(b) The Commission further recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct USCINCEUR to conduct an investigation of the decisions made regarding the destination of aeromedical evacuation aircraft and the distribution of casualties on 23 October 1983.

C. Definitive Medical Care

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that the definitive medical care provided the wounded at the various treatment facilities was excellent, and that as of 30 November 1983, there is no evidence of any mortality or morbidity resulting from inappropriate or insufficient medical care.

D. Israeli Offer of Medical Assistance

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission found no evidence that any factor other than the desire to provide immediate, professional treatment for the wounded influenced decisions regarding the Israeli offer; all offers of assistance by Israel were promptly and properly referred to the theater and on-scene commanders. At the time the inital Israeli offer was reviewed by CTF 61, it was deemed not necessary because the medical capabilities organic to CTF 61 were operational and functioning adequately, the RAF hospital at Akrotiri was mobilized and ready, and sufficient U.S. and RAF medical evacuation aircraft were enroute.

E. Identification of the Dead

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that the process for identification of the dead following the 23 October 1983 catastrophe was conducted very efficiently and professionally, despite the complications caused by the destruction and/or absence of identification data.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the creation of duplicate medical/dental records, and assure the availability of fingerprint files, for all military personnel. The Commission further recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Service Secretaries to develop jointly improved, state-of-the-art identification tags for all military personnel.

8. PART NINE - MILITARY RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

A. A Terrorist Act

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that the 23 October 1983 bombing of the BLT Headquarters building was a terrorist act sponsored by sovereign States or organized political entities for the purpose of defeating U.S. objectives in Lebanon.

B. International Terrorism

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that international terrorist acts endemic to the Middle East are indicative of an alarming world-wide phenomenon that poses an increasing threat to U.S. personnel and facilities.

C. Terrorism as a Mode of Warfare

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that state sponsored terrorism is an important part of the spectrum of warfare and that adequate response to this increasing threat requires an active national policy which seeks to deter attack or reduce its effectiveness. The Commission further concludes that this policy needs to be supported by political and diplomatic actions and by a wide range of timely military response capabilities.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Joint Chiefs of Staff to develop a broad range of appropriate military responses to terrorism for review, along with political and diplomatic actions, by the National Security Council.

D. Military Preparedness

(1) Conclusion:

(a) The Commission concludes that the USMNF was not trained, organized, staffed, or supported to deal effectively with the terrorist threat in Lebanon. The Commission further concludes that much needs to be done to prepare U.S. military forces to defend against and counter terrorism.

(2) Recommendation:

(a) The Commission recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the development of doctrine, planning, organization, force structure, education and training necessary to defend against and counter terrorism.