

Pentagon blamed for death of 19 soldiers in Saudi bombing

■ The Defense Department will now review the actions of Air Force personnel.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON — A failure by the Pentagon and key field commanders to focus on terrorism contributed to the death toll of the bombing in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 U.S. airmen in June, according to a task force report released Monday.

In response, Defense Secretary William Perry ordered a review of whether any Air Force personnel should be court-martialed. President Bill Clinton praised the report as "unvarnished, blunt, straightforward."

"We intend to do everything we can" to protect troops in the field, Clinton said. "We're going to aggressively implement the ... report."

House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., campaigning in his home state, accused

the Clinton administration of being "consistently weak in its approach to protect Americans from terrorism."

A focus of Perry's review is expected to be Air Force Brig. Gen. Terry J. "Terry" Schwalier, commander of the 4404th Wing and the officer responsible for the security of the roughly 2,000 servicemen living at Khobar Towers in Dhahran, site of the bombing. "Khobar Towers was identified to Gen. Schwalier as one of the three highest priority soft targets in the region," the report notes.

But Schwalier seems not to have made terrorism a top priority, the report said, contending that he "never raised to his superiors force protection matters that were beyond his capability to correct."

An end-of-tour memo written by Schwalier the day before the June 25 bombing does not even mention the terrorist threat as a focus of his tenure.

Perry was not specifically criticized by the task force, which was commissioned by the Pentagon and headed by retired Army Special Forces Gen. Wayne Down-

ing. However, the Downing report cites as its first finding the Pentagon's failure to issue orders on protecting forces housed in buildings.

"I am concerned that insufficient attention is being given to anti-terrorism measures and force protection," Downing wrote in a memo to Perry accompanying the task force report.

With thousands of Army troops packing bags for possible deployment to Kuwait, Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the military is taking steps to coordinate its response to terrorism. Still, the four-star general admitted to being caught off guard. "All of us have been surprised by the size and sophistication and the destructiveness of this attack."

In the June attack, terrorists parked a fuel trailer truck just outside the shallow perimeter of the apartment complex, 85 feet away from one of the eight-story buildings. The blast demolished one side of the building, killing 19 and wounding hundreds.

Voters face choice on highway bonds

■ The \$950 million bond will help speed up current construction projects.

BY SARA DEMANIGOLD
STAFF WRITER

Approximately 70 percent to 75 percent of highway fatalities occur on two-lane highways.

That's why the N.C. Partnership for Roads and Schools wants N.C. voters to approve a \$950 million road bond at the polls Nov. 5. "There's a very real, and sometimes dangerous, strain on our roads," said partnership Co-chairwoman Margaret Klutz, the mayor of Salisbury and a member of the N.C. Board of Transportation. "For no other reason than reducing highway deaths and injuries, we need to pass the highway bonds and accelerate construction."

The N.C. Partnership for Roads and Schools published studies that support the bond. Traffic is up 50 percent in the last 10 years. North Carolina's major urban highways are now the fifth most congested in the area. The number of highway deaths has increased since 1989.

Klutz said acceleration of highway construction will save the state \$93 million. If approved, the money from the bonds will help speed up current projects on roads in the state, said Steve Meehan, a spokesman for the N.C. Partnership for Schools and Roads.

"The road bond funds will not go to any new roads but to the existing road projects that are identified for improvement," Meehan said. "The bonds are specifically for expanding two-lane rural highways into four lanes."

The requested \$950 million will be divided among secondary roads, intrastate roads and urban loops. The funds will be used to speed up completion of road

projects already planned in every North Carolina county. Projects include paving 1,200 miles of secondary roads and completing major sections of seven urban loops in an earlier span of time.

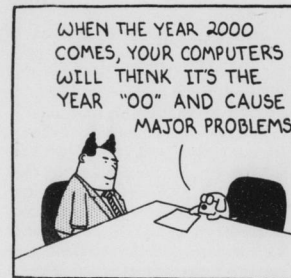
The N.C. Partnership for Schools and Roads said the road bonds will not increase taxes. Funds will be paid out of existing Highway Trust Funds. Every county will receive funding.

Not everyone supports spending \$950 million on roads.

The No Highway Bonds Committee, a grassroots organization, plans to launch a campaign against the bond, said Nat Mund, UNC School of Law alumna and campaign coordinator of the No Highway Bonds Committee.

"The committee feels that the bond is economically wasteful and is potentially environmentally damaging," Mund said. The committee will provide more information about the organization's effort today following a press conference.

Dilbert



IN THE NEWS

Top stories from the state, nation and world

Chemical leak from truck closes eastbound I-40

RALEIGH — Authorities closed a section of the interstate highway circling Raleigh on Monday after a tanker truck began leaking sodium hydroxide.

The Highway Patrol forced vehicles to exit the Raleigh beltline at Gorman Street onto Tryon Road, to U.S. 70 and then back onto Interstate 40 eastbound.

Sodium hydroxide is a corrosive chemical that is dangerous if inhaled or comes into contact with skin, said Renee Hoffman, spokeswoman for the state Department of Crime Control and Public Safety.

Mother Teresa in hospital after falling out of her bed

CALCUTTA, India — Ten days after leaving the hospital, Mother Teresa was readmitted Monday after falling from her bed.

The nun — who has come to symbolize compassion for the needy — had bruises on her face and an irregular heartbeat after the fall, doctors said. Her injuries were not life-threatening, they added.

"She was admitted for observation and investigation," said Dr. S.K. Sen, director of Calcutta's Woodlands Nursing Home.

Mother Teresa was rushed to the hospital by ambulance, then taken to the intensive coronary care unit. She underwent a CT scan, which will allow doctors to determine whether she suffered any brain injury.

Mother Teresa was fully conscious Monday, eating normally and speaking to the doctors, said Dr. Asim Bardhan, her personal physician.

Doctors did not say when she might be released.

Whitewater attorneys call for prostitute's diaries

NEW YORK — Whitewater prosecutors have subpoenaed the explosive diaries of the prostitute who detailed her relationship with former Clinton political adviser Dick Morris, the New York Post reported today.

Independent counsel Kenneth Starr issued the subpoena a week ago, a source told the newspaper. Sherry Rowlands hasn't turned over her diaries but plans to comply, the newspaper said.

Starr was interested in Rowlands' claim that Morris told her that first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton was behind the White House's improper gathering of hundreds of FBI files on top Republicans, the Post said.

In Rowlands' diary, as excerpted by the Star supermarket tabloid last week, Rowlands said Morris told her Mrs. Clinton ordered the FBI files in 1993. "She's a paranoid lady — she did it," the diary reportedly stated, quoting Morris.

Morris denied the allegation last week, saying he told her that "everyone thinks" that Mrs. Clinton did it.

Starr also may be interested in Rowlands' claims that Morris had divulged some Whitewater damage-control strategy to her, such as his advice to Clinton that he distance himself from the first lady in case she was indicted.

Memorial service for slain rapper held Monday

NEW YORK — To many, Tupac Shakur was a figure of violence who became a victim of the gangsta culture he glorified. To others, he was a promising talent who wound up a casualty of a society that destroys black youth.

On Sunday the slain 25-year-old rapper was mourned at his boyhood church.

"Who will weep for Tupac Shakur?" the Rev. Herbert Daughtry asked at a memorial service at The House of the Lord Pentecostal Church in Brooklyn. "I will weep for Tupac. I will weep for all our youth."

Shakur was hit by four bullets Sept. 7

as he rode in a car driven by the head of his record label, Death Row Records chief Marion "Suge" Knight. He died of his wounds Friday.

So far, police say Knight and Shakur's entourage of bodyguards have failed to provide any suspects in the shooting.

States encouraged to use kids in sting operations

WASHINGTON — In a little publicized provision, President Bill Clinton's crackdown on youth smoking encourages states to use minors in sting operations to detect illegal tobacco sales — or risk losing federal aid.

The government said its new rule did generate a healthy dose of responses from citizens about the physical and psychological safety of undercover children and their ability to understand legal issues like entrapment.

But it says examples around the country — including an Illinois town where stings using junior high school students have had a dramatic impact — show that such problems can be solved with proper adult supervision.

"We took into consideration the impact on youth in any of these sting operations," said Mark Weber, spokesman for the Department of Health and Human Services agency that implemented the rule.

The rule was issued in January by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, which distributes \$1.2 billion a year in drug treatment and prevention funds.

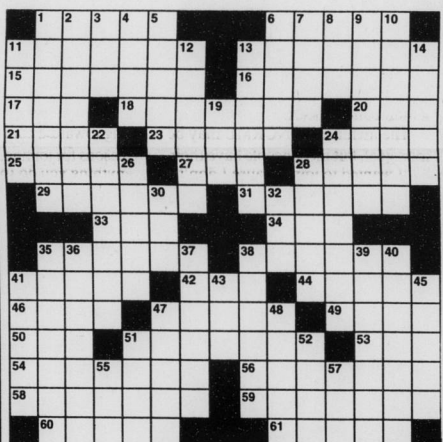
It mandates that all states have mandatory inspection programs by next year to catch businesses that illegally sell tobacco to children. The rule leaves it to the states to determine how to catch illegal sales, but strongly urges the use of undercover stings with children at least two to three years younger than the 18-year-old legal smoking age.

The tobacco industry's trade group says it supports crackdowns on illegal sales but has reservations about using minors. "Any time you use kids essentially to break the law, it does send a mixed message," said Walker Merryman, vice president of the Tobacco Institute.

FROM WIRE REPORTS

THE Daily Crossword by Eugene Puffenberger

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