Extent

151 folders, approximately 11,009 pages

Summary

This collection consists of records related to the terrorist bombing of the Al-Khobar Towers housing complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia on June 25, 1996. These records include correspondence, memoranda, emails, press materials, and reports regarding the attack and its aftermath. The collection also contains an unclassified copy of the September 1996 Downing Commission Report to the President and Congress on the Protection of U.S. Forces Deployed Abroad.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in FOIA 2006-0648-F are a selective body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related materials. On June 25, 1996, an explosive-packed sewage truck detonated near building #131 of the Al-Khobar Towers residential complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. The Air Force had been using the complex to house troops deployed to the kingdom as part of its mission enforcing United Nations Security Council resolutions in southern Iraq. The explosion killed 19 American soldiers and wounded 372 men and women. This was the second terrorist attack against American troops in Saudi Arabian during the Clinton Administration; on November 13, 1995 another car bomb exploded at the office of the Office of the Program Manager, Saudi Arabian National Guard in Riyadh, and killed 5 Americans. In response to the bombing, Clinton Administration officials took immediate action to improve antiterrorist protection of U.S. forces stationed abroad. American troops in Dhahran quickly relocated to the more secure Prince Sultan Air Base in Al-Kharj. Secretary of Defense William Perry appointed retired U.S. Army General Wayne Downing to head a team tasked with assessing the security of American forces in the Middle East. The report, published on September 16, 1996, noted there had been evidence of a terrorist threat at the

Khobar Towers complex prior to June 1996 and that the force protection measures that had been implemented there were not adequate. The Downing report held the commanding officer in Dhahran, Brigadier General Terry Schwalier, partially responsible for the protection failures. Consequently, he did not receive his promotion to rank of major general, effectively ending his military career. The Air Force Board for the Correction of Military Records eventually reinstated Schwalier with his promotion in 2007. General Ronald Fogelman, the Air Force Chief of Staff, retired a little over a year after the Khobar bombing. Immediately following the attack, the FBI, under the leadership of Director Louis J. Freeh, began an investigation into the bombing in cooperation with the Saudi Arabian government. In 1997, Canadian law enforcement apprehended Hani Al-Sayegh, a Saudi Arabian citizen with Iranian connections, on suspicion of involvement in the Khobar bombing and deported him to the United States. The Justice Department then determined that there was not enough evidence to warrant prosecution and deported Al-Sayegh to Saudi Arabia in October 1999. The FBI's investigation continued through the end of President Clinton's second term, with suspicion falling on both Usama bin Ladin and on the Iranian government. On June 21, 2001, the Justice Department indicted 13 members of Hezbollah Al-Hijaz, a terrorist group operating in Saudi Arabia. The indictment included Hani Al-Sayegh as part of this group as well as an additional, unnamed member of Lebanese Hizballah. Material responsive to this FOIA may be found in the White House Office of Records Management Subject File. Subject code IV097 contains a July 1997 scheduling proposal for a Presidential briefing from Secretary of Defense William Cohen on matters related to the Khobar Towers investigation. Correspondence between the President and Gary and Frances Heiser, parents of bombing victim Master Sergant Meichael Heiser is located in subject code ND007-01. This correspondence includes drafts of a letter from the President, materials from the Heisers regarding Michael's life and funeral, and an unclassified version of the Downing Assessment Task Force's report on force protection. The White House Staff and Office files of the National Security Council also contain a variety of records pertaining to the Khobar towers bombing and the ensuing investigation. In the Defense Policy Office, Director Steven Andreasen's files contain unclassified portions of the Downing report, as well as press clippings and findings related to its findings, particularly regarding the role of command failures in the incident. Also in this office, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director Robert Bell's papers include emails, reports, memos, and press guidance on the Khobar bombing, its victims, and its impact on force protection. In the Staff

Director’s Office, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Nancy Soderberg’s file contains a list of participants in a July 1996 meeting on Saudi Facility Security. In the Transnational Threats office, another copy of the unclassified version of the Downing report may be found in the files of Special Assistant to the President and National Coordinator Richard Clarke. Also in this office, the files of Senior Director Steven Simon, including the one shared with Director Daniel Benjamin, contain guidance and other materials on the Khobar bombing and on suspect Hani Al-Sayegh, faxes containing threats from the Islamic Movement for Change to major news outlets, briefing materials regarding the Antiterrorism Task Force, and unclassified portions of the Downing report. The Automated Records Management System (ARMS) Emails contain copies of Air Force News Service summaries that mention the Khobar bombing, as well as a transcript for a May 13,1997 Senate Committee on Appropriations hearing on counter terrorism. Many additional records responsive to FOIA 2006-0648-F are located in the NSC Cables, Emails, and Records Management Systems (RMS). The NSC Cables, dating from June 1996 through December 2000, contain State Department messages regarding the bombing, logistical materials for the Downing Assessment Task Force, messages concerning the welfare of non-military American citizens in Saudi Arabia following the bombing, and annual terrorism reports for middle eastern countries in which the Khobar Towers bombing and subsequent investigation was a factor. Furthermore, many of the cables contain condolence statements from foreign heads of state and other officials and responses to those messages from the President, Vice President, or Secretary of State. Electronic correspondence related to the Khobar Towers bombing from June 1996 through January 2001 between National Security Council staff on topics is located in the NSC Emails. These primarily include reactions and other discussions between NSC staffers related to the attack, public statements and guidance on the bombing and the investigation, memos regarding the Downing Assessment Task Force and actions taken since the bombing, materials regarding Congressional interest in the bombing, fact sheets on the administration’s policies on terrorism and Saudi Arabia, and discussions of interaction with victims’ families. Lastly, the NSC Records Management System holds additional material responsive to the FOIA. These include memos regarding logistical support from various agencies for the Downing Assessment Task Force, correspondence between the President and the uncle of one of the victims, a scheduling proposal and memo for a meeting between the President and Secretary of Defense Cohen in July 1997, and a memo to National Security Advisor Samuel Berger regarding a late 1997 event for families of

the victims at the FBI Academy. Many of the records related to this FOIA case are closed for national security reasons.

Record Type

Textual

System of Arrangement

Records that are responsive to this FOIA request were found in these collection areas – Clinton Presidential Records: WHORM Subject Files, Clinton Presidential Records: WHORM Subject Files CF, Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files, Clinton Presidential Records: Automated Records Management System (Email), and Clinton Presidential Records: NSC Cables, Emails, and Records Management System. The White House Office of Records Management (WHORM) contains a variety of series created to organize and track documents and correspondence. The WHORM Subject file was compiled by the White House Office of Records Management and is a series of categories designated by a letter/number combination. Staff and Office files were maintained at the folder level by staff members within their individual offices and document all levels of administration activity. WHORM files are processed at the document level; whereas, Staff and Office files are processed at the folder level, that is, individual documents are not selected and removed from a folder for processing. While this method maintains folder integrity, it frequently results in the incidental processing of documents that are not wholly responsive to the subject area. The Automated Records Management System (ARMS) is a database that contains email records of the executive office of the President. This system maintained unclassified Presidential email. The ARMS dataset is comprised of 6 sub-series of email records called “Buckets.” The buckets include NPR, OPD, POTUS, WHO, CEA, and Default. ARMS emails are arranged chronologically by creation date.

Access

Collection is open to all researchers. Access to Clinton Presidential Records is governed by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) (44 USC 2201) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 USC 552 as amended) and therefore records may be restricted in whole or in part in accordance with legal exemptions.

Copyright

Documents in this collection that were prepared by officials of the United States government as part of their official duties are in the public domain. Researchers are advised to consult the copyright law of the United States (17 USC, 101) which governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Provenance

Official records of William Jefferson Clinton’s presidency are housed at the Clinton Presidential Library and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under the provisions of the Presidential Records Act (PRA).

Subject Headings

Terrorism

Organization Names

Saudi Arabia--Dhahran

Topical Subjects

Dhahran Military Housing Facility Bombing (Dhahran, Saudi Arabia : 1996)

Processed by

Staff Archivist, 2010. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.

Last Modified Date

2012-09-26

Container List

The following is a list of documents and folders processed in response to FOIA 2006-0648-F:
Box 1
Clinton Presidential Records: WHORM: Subject File
Category Case Number
IV097 Case Number: 233990 [Khobar Towers] [OA/ID 15027]
ND007-01 Case Number: 202249 [1] [OA/ID 14068]
ND007-01 Case Number: 202249 [2] [OA/ID 14068]
ND007-01 Case Number: 202249 [3] [OA/ID 14068]
Clinton Presidential Records: WHORM: Subject File CF
Category Case Number
CO146 Case Number: 406346 [CF 1682]
Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files
National Security Council
Defense Policy – Andreasen
Khobar Towers, October – December 1996 [Saudi Arabia] [1] [OA/ID 3826]
Khobar Towers, October – December 1996 [Saudi Arabia] [2] [OA/ID 3826]
Khobar Towers, October – December 1996 [Saudi Arabia] [3] [OA/ID 3826]
Defense Policy – Bell
Saudi Bombing, July – September 1996 [Khobar] [1] [OA/ID 1864]
Saudi Bombing, July – September 1996 [Khobar] [2] [OA/ID 1864]
Khobar Towers, July – Sepetember 1997 [OA/ID 3587]
Staff Director – Soderberg
Saudi Arabia – Al Khobar Bombing, July 1996 [OA/ID 1408]

Box 2
TNT – Clarke
Terror/Khobar [1] [OA/ID 3784]
Terror/Khobar [2] [OA/ID 3784]
TNT – Cressey
Khobar [Saudi Arabia] [OA/ID 3932]
TNT – Simon
Freeh – Khobar [FBI, Saudi Arabia] [OA/ID 2239]
Khobar Towers [Saudi Arabia] [1] [OA/ID 2240]
Khobar Towers [Saudi Arabia] [2] [OA/ID 2240]
Khobar – Syria [OA/ID 2240]
Saudi [Arabia] – Khobar/Iran [OA/ID 2245]
Saudi [Arabia] – Khobar/Non-Iran [1] [OA/ID 2245]
Saudi [Arabia] – Khobar/Non-Iran [2] [OA/ID 2245]
Box 3
TNT – Simon/Benjamin
Khobar [Saudia Arabia] [OA/ID 3928]
Clinton Presidential Records: Automated Records Management System (Email)
WHO [OA/ID 500000]
[Khobar Towers]
[06/27/1996 – 07/15/1996]
NSC [OA/ID 1200000]
[Khobar Towers]
[08/22/1996 – 03/18/1997]
[05/16/1997 – 10/17/2000]
Clinton Presidential Records: NSC Cables, Emails, and Records Management System
NSC Cables
Jan 1995 – Dec 1996
[Khobar]
[06/13/1996 – 06/26/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
[06/26/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
[06/27/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
[06/28/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
[06/29/1996 – 06/30/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
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[07/01/1996 – 07/02/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
[07/03/1996 – 07/04/1996] [OA/ID 510000]

[07/05/1996 – 07/07/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
[07/08/1996 – 07/10/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
[07/11/1996 – 07/16/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
[07/17/1996 – 07/22/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
[07/23/1996 – 07/24/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
[07/25/1996 – 07/28/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
Box 5
[07/29/1996 – 07/31/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
[08/01/1996 – 08/06/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
[08/07/1996 – 08/09/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
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[12/11/1996 – 12/23/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
[12/24/1996 – 12/31/1996] [OA/ID 510000]
[01/04/1997 – 01/31/1997] [OA/ID 520000]
[02/03/1997 – 02/23/1997] [OA/ID 520000]
[02/24/1997 – 02/28/1997] [OA/ID 520000]
[03/03/1997 – 03/31/1997] [OA/ID 520000]
[04/01/1997 – 04/08/1997] [OA/ID 520000]
[04/10/1997 – 04/30/1997] [OA/ID 520000]
Box 7
Clinton Presidential Records: NSC Cables, Emails, and Records Management System (continued)
NSC Cables
Jan 1997 – Dec 1998
[Khobar]
[05/01/1997 – 05/08/1997] [OA/ID 520000]
[05/09/1997 – 05/29/1997] [OA/ID 520000]
[06/05/1997 – 06/30/1997] [OA/ID 520000]
[07/08/1997 – 07/29/1997] [OA/ID 520000]
[08/01/1997 – 09/13/1997] [OA/ID 520000]

[10/02/1997 – 12/10/1997] [OA/ID 520000]
[01/12/1998 – 05/29/1998] [OA/ID 520000]
[06/02/1998 – 12/30/1998] [OA/ID 520000]
Box 8
Jan 1999 – Dec 2000
[Khobar]
[02/12/1999 – 09/17/1999] [OA/ID 530000]
[10/05/1999 – 10/12/1999] [OA/ID 530000]
[10/13/1999 – 10/26/1999] [OA/ID 530000]
[11/02/1999 – 02/21/2000] [OA/ID 530000]
[03/22/2000 – 05/31/2000] [OA/ID 530000]
[06/01/2000 – 11/09/2000] [OA/ID 530000]
[12/01/2000 – 12/18/2000] [OA/ID 530000]
NSC Emails
MSMail – Record (Sept 94 – Sept 97)
[Khobar]
[06/25/1996 – 06/30/1996] [OA/ID 590000]
[07/01/1996 – 07/09/1996] [OA/ID 590000]
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[07/10/1996 – 07/19/1996] [OA/ID 590000]
[07/20/1996 – 07/31/1996] [OA/ID 590000]
[08/01/1996 – 08/02/1996] [OA/ID 590000]
[08/03/1996 – 08/05/1996] [OA/ID 590000]
[08/06/1996 – 08/14/1996] [OA/ID 590000]
[08/15/1996 – 08/19/1996] [OA/ID 590000]
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[09/01/1996 – 09/11/1996] [OA/ID 590000]
[09/12/1996 – 09/20/1996] [OA/ID 590000]
[09/20/1996 – 09/30/1996] [OA/ID 590000]
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[12/13/1996 – 12/31/1996] [OA/ID 590000]

Box 11
[01/07/1997 – 02/14/1997] [OA/ID 590000]
Clinton Presidential Records: NSC Cables, Emails, and Records Management System (continued)
NSC Emails
MSMail – Record (Sept 94 – Sept 97)
[Khobar]
[02/17/1997 – 02/28/1997] [OA/ID 590000]
[03/04/1997 – 03/07/1997] [OA/ID 590000]
[03/10/1997 – 03/31/1997] [OA/ID 590000]
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[05/01/1997 – 05/16/1997] [OA/ID 590000]
[05/16/1997 – 05/26/1997] [OA/ID 590000]
MSMail – Non-Record (Sept 94 – Sept 97)
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Exchange – Record (Sept 97 – Jan 01)
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[11/10/2000] [OA/ID 620000]
[11/16/2000] [OA/ID 620000]
Box 15
Clinton Presidential Records: NSC Cables, Emails, and Records Management System (continued)
NSC Emails
Exchange – Record (Sept 97 – Jan 01)
[Khobar]
[11/16/2000 – 01/11/2001] [OA/ID 620000]
Exchange – Non-Record (Mar 97 – Jan 01)
[Khobar]
[05/27/1997 – 07/25/1997] [OA/ID 630000]
[07/28/1997 – 12/23/1997] [OA/ID 630000]
[01/05/1998 – 06/27/1998] [OA/ID 630000]
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9604541 [OA/ID 1110]
9604749 [OA/ID 1111]
9605158 [OA/ID 1114]
9704499 [OA/ID 1628]
9705198 [OA/ID 1633]
9705763 [OA/ID 1637]
9708342 [OA/ID 1658]
0001071 [OA/ID 4077]
0001656 [OA/ID 4081]