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Remarks at Vinell Compound

Secretary Colin L. Powell

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

May 13, 2003

(10:50 a.m. EDT)

SECRETARY POWELL: One again, as we said earlier, we deeply regret the loss of life that has occurred here, our sympathy goes out to the families of those who did lose their lives and to those who were injured. This was a well-planned terrorist attack, obviously. The facility had been cased, as had the others. Very well executed. And it shows the nature of the enemy we're working against. These are people who are determined to try to penetrate facilities like this for the purpose of killing people in their sleep, killing innocent people, killing people who would try to help others.

And notwithstanding what you see here today and the damage you see here today, it will not deter the United States, and I am sure will not deter Saudi Arabia, in our mutual effort to go after this kind of terrorism and roll it up: go after their finances; go after their information systems, their intelligence systems; make sure we take full advantage of our law enforcement assets, both in the United States and Saudi Arabia and around the world.

And this is why the President has said that this has to be the number one priority not only for the United States, but for the civilized world, so that things like this cannot continue to happen. This is criminality, terrorism at its worst, and there is no justification for it in any way, shape, fashion or form.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, have you changed the estimate of the Americans killed? It was ten.

SECRETARY POWELL: You always have changing numbers in a situation like that. Ten was what I heard earlier, but I think I'll leave it now -- it's in that order, maybe a little less, but I'll leave it now to the Ambassador to make the official determination.

QUESTION: And the others?

SECRETARY POWELL: Others were -- it was a large number, but I'm going to leave that to the Saudi Ministry of

Information because I would just be guessing at the number.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, have you any more information to indicate whether or not al-Qaida was responsible for this?

SECRETARY POWELL: I have been in meetings so I have not received any additional information, but it certainly has all the fingerprints of an al-Qaida operation.

QUESTION: What kind of investigation is going on right now? What did you hear from the Saudis?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, I think that's a question you should put to the Saudi authorities who are handling this. And, of course, they're working closely with the U.S. authorities and the U.S. experts that will be brought in in the course of the next 24 hours, but I don't think I want to speculate on the nature of the investigation. Obviously, they are looking at everything.

QUESTION: So there are some coming in? Are they from the FBI or --

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, there will be experts coming in to assist in the investigation.

Thank you.

Released on May 13, 2003



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