

way against Weinberger, or even within his own department. Though Shultz elevated the status and visibility of counterterrorism coordination by appointing as coordinator first L. Paul Bremer and then Robert Oakley, both senior career ambassadors of high standing in the Foreign Service, the department continued to be dominated by regional bureaus for which terrorism was not a first-order concern.

Secretaries of state after Shultz took less personal interest in the problem. Only congressional opposition prevented President Clinton's first secretary of state, Warren Christopher, from merging terrorism into a new bureau that would have also dealt with narcotics and crime. The coordinator under Secretary Madeleine Albright told the Commission that his job was seen as a minor one within the department.<sup>88</sup> Although the description of his status has been disputed, and Secretary Albright strongly supported the August 1998 strikes against Bin Ladin, the role played by the Department of State in counterterrorism was often cautionary before 9/11. This was a reflection of the reality that counterterrorism priorities nested within broader foreign policy aims of the U.S. government.

State Department consular officers around the world, it should not be forgotten, were constantly challenged by the problem of terrorism, for they handled visas for travel to the United States. After it was discovered that Abdel Rahman, the Blind Sheikh, had come and gone almost at will, State initiated significant reforms to its watchlist and visa-processing policies. In 1993, Congress passed legislation allowing State to retain visa-processing fees for border security; those fees were then used by the department to fully automate the terrorist watchlist. By the late 1990s, State had created a worldwide, real-time electronic database of visa, law enforcement, and watchlist information, the core of the post-9/11 border screening systems. Still, as will be seen later, the system had many holes.<sup>89</sup>

### **The Department of Defense**

The Department of Defense is the behemoth among federal agencies. With an annual budget larger than the gross domestic product of Russia, it is an empire. The Defense Department is part civilian, part military. The civilian secretary of defense has ultimate control, under the president. Among the uniformed military, the top official is the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who is supported by a Joint Staff divided into standard military staff compartments—J-2 (intelligence), J-3 (operations), and so on.

Because of the necessary and demanding focus on the differing mission of each service, and their long and proud traditions, the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps have often fought ferociously over roles and missions in war fighting and over budgets and posts of leadership. Two developments diminished this competition.

The first was the passage by Congress in 1986 of the Goldwater-Nichols