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A Proposal for Non-Lethal Force Development By:

John B. Alexander, Ph.D.

Several current situations around the globe point to the urgent need for the United States to be able to apply force in a very controlled manner in order to protect our national interests, national values, or the fundamental interests of others. In many of those cases, nonlethal weapons and units trained to employ them would be more appropriate than established conventional forces.

Somalia is one such case. The major issue was delivery of humanitarian aid to the millions of starving people. Attempts to provide aid through traditional civilian agencies resulted in massive theft by rival gangs and inexcusable attacks perpetrated against relief workers. The situation was further exacerbated by the almost total lack of a political infrastructure within which the humanitarian effort can be supported.

The thefts were conducted by groups armed with antiquated, but dangerous weapons. While they posed a significant threat to relief agencies, they were not of any military consequence to U.S. forces. None-the-less, the proliferation of weaponry constituted a personal danger both to the military and to those being protected. Some loss of life of U.S. military personnel has been experienced in Operation Provide Hope.

This case demonstrated the need to be able to apply force in support of humanitarian missions. In doing so, it is important that lethal force be kept to an absolute minimum. However, it still may be necessary to permanently eliminate specific threats such as heavily armed bandits, though lethal force. The nature of the operation dictates restraint and a focus on conserving life whenever possible. Further, this being a highly publicized operation, how it is perceived by others around the world is important to the successful execution of the operation.

The typical response to these situations, and the one chosen for the Somalia mission, is to send light infantry, either a U.S. Army division and/or an element of Marines. Then an attempt is made to control their actions through establishment of "rules of engagement." These

are well trained combat forces designed for fighting, but not necessarily the best suited for actions requiring great restraint.

Introduction of these forces proved the point. Inappropriate media actions notwithstanding, forces could have been brought into the area in a manner more befitting a relief operation. In this case, forces from other countries were already in place in Somalia and could have provided security for the arrival of the American troops. In fact, U.S. aircraft had brought those troops directly into the airport at Mogadishu.

For circumstances in which such protection might not be provided, other means could be used unilaterally. For instance, selected special operations forces could have been placed into the area under civilian cover and both provided immediate intelligence and, if necessary, neutralized any threat, quietly and efficiently. Larger units could then have been flown directly into the airport or arrived by boats and disembarked without the dramatic fanfare.

Instead, in Somalia the decision was made for a seaborne assault with marines in full combat gear who were greeted by the press and non-hostile onlookers. The young, generally inexperienced troops responded as they had been trained, assuming personal threat and applying for force. As might be expected this needlessly irritated the press, and alienated some of the Somali population. Additionally, they gave credence to the claims this was in reality a military invasion, not a humanitarian effort.

Emphasis on military support for humanitarian efforts, and other low-end-of- conflict missions, may be counter-intuitive to some military personnel. The culture of the post-Vietnam military has strongly emphasized winning battles and not being employed without clear objectives and a national will to defeat the enemy. As national defense policy this makes sense to most military leaders who, based on their Vietnam experiences, vowed never again to become embroiled in a conflict without being afforded the political ability to win and win decisively. However, there are many potential situations that are highly likely, that demand both response and restraint.

Suggested, therefore, is the establishment of a unit which has the primary mission of deploying to areas of tension for the purpose of protecting lives. In addition to humanitarian and peacekeeping/

peace-making missions, or other engagements short of war, the unit must be capable of contributing to conventional force application when necessary.

The national unit I propose would be specially equipped with nonlethal systems. These would be augmented with supporting conventional lethal weapons such as rifles, machine-guns and designators to guide precision munitions should that be required. I do not propose to place troops needlessly in danger. The unit must be capable of defeating any hostile threat they encounter and could be augmented as necessary by conventional units with more firepower.

The unit would probably be a regiment consisting of three geographically oriented battalions. Each element would be configured for rapid deployment and have access to common support elements including intelligence, command & control, traditional special operations forces, psychological operations, and civil affairs. The regiment would most likely be an element of the Special Operations Command and made available to CINCs upon request.

There are several examples of nonlethal systems that might be developed for employment in engagements short of war. Several scenarios call for extraction of U.S. nationals from threatening situations. For this type of mission one category of unique equipment might include combat vehicles that can generate spray foams that have a variety of characteristics such as being very sticky, slippery or rapidly-hardening. These foams could be used to establish and control an evacuation corridor to move rescued individuals to an airfield or seaport. They would be used to isolate areas and prevent snipers from occupying positions that threaten our military personnel. Such systems would offer acceptable alternatives for situations in which snipers are in close proximity to noncombatants. First the entire congregation could be engaged safely then the gunmen isolated and dealt with separately.

In addition to foams, sprays could be dispersed that have a number of effects. They might be foul smelling to urge evacuation of an area or have safe dyes for marking and identification of individuals or groups. Even water cannon might be used.

When and if safe personnel incapacitants become available they can be included. For selected situations in which limited fatalities are

acceptable, dart guns with incapacitating agents might be employed. There is always some risk of unintentional death with such agents.

This unit may have systems that can degrade electrical generation and distribution. These could be used to deny electrical power to designated areas and would allow U.S. forces to control visibility at night. Additionally, these might be used in combination with daytime use of multispectral smoke generators designed to inhibit observation. These smokes could be tailored with "windows" that allow U.S. optical systems to accurately observe the situation, and if necessary, acquire targets.

Another set of weapons in their inventory might include acoustic systems designed to disrupt threat forces or to keep crowds at bay. High acoustic levels make both point and area denial systems feasible. At lower levels, annoying sound might be employed as a distraction to keep the general population from gathering and becoming a potential threat.

There should be a strong tie to psychological operations (psyops) elements. It is conceivable that there would be a psyops element integral to the unit. If not, there should be formal relationships established and interactions with existing psyops units on a continuous basis. The need for employment of psyops in these operations is obvious. From an equipment perspective, they could be provided with new systems that allow them to capture the commercial radio frequencies and broadcast so that only the message we want is available to the threat public.

This unit would either be part of, or have established relations with, currently established special operations forces. Those elements would provide capabilities beyond the scope of the unit described. They might have the ability to incapacitate key threat capabilities before or during the operation. For instance they might infiltrate the country and attack the fuel systems that support key materiel such as the aircraft or armored vehicles.

Some larger operations might require systems that could attack the infrastructure leading to strategic paralysis. For such operations, the unique nonlethal units could play a supporting, but important role.

Optical munitions might be employed in several areas. They could be used to defeat sensors thus reducing the direct threat to our forces.

Another application could be employment to disrupt ongoing activities either force people to vacate an area or assist in capturing specific individuals.

Other, more sensitive capabilities would also be included. These may be covered in classified publications.

Sufficient lethal firepower should be included to easily suppress snipers or prevent small units from attacking or interfering with operations.

Consideration should be given to including a limited number of powered, exoskeletal individual fighting units as envisioned in the Los Alamos PITMAN concept and the advanced version of the Soldier Integrated Protective Ensemble (SIPE). Initially these will be available in limited numbers but could prove invaluable in many of the operations short of war. They would appear to be invincible to some adversaries and could operate safely where troops with conventional body armor would still be at risk.

The task force should include air elements for intelligence gathering, troop maneuvering, evacuation, psychological operations, command and control, and fire support if necessary. The required air support would probably come from conventional units as task forces are formed. However, they should be involved in extensive training prior to actual operations.

Intelligence will be a key factor. These units need advanced intelligence gathering and disseminating capability and should be tied to "all-source" systems. Small UAVs and other remote sensors would be needed to provide real time data to commanders.

Considering the probable employment scenarios, transition of operations and coordination with civil affairs elements should be an integral part of planning. This regiment should not be designed for long-term missions or as occupation forces. Instead they should be capable of employment on short notice to stabilize situations or extract selected personnel. Longer missions should be turned over to units designed for endurance.

In addition to the capabilities described, others would also be developed. The thesis in recommending a designated regiment is

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that it is better to develop and equip a special unit than to have equipment packages that are made available to conventional units as an additional responsibility. The training required to establish proficiency would detract from conventional force readiness, and be insufficient for optimal employment of unique systems.

In summary, the world today promises many potential situations that deserve, or demand, the application of force by the United States. A large number of those situations, while posing threats to our national interests, also require great restraint, thus limiting response options. To increase the options available, it is proposed a unit of regimental size be developed and equipped with special, nonlethal weapons systems in addition to limited conventional weapons.

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