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6 U.S. PREPARATION FOR FUTURE LOW-LEVEL CONFLICT,

Report of a Discussion, October 19-20, 1976  
at The Rand Corporation, Washington, D.C.

10 Prepared by Brian Jenkins, George Tanham,  
Eleanor Wainstein, Gerald Sullivan

11 Jul 1977

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PREFACE

Responding to a concern that the most likely threat to U.S. security in the decade ahead may not be nuclear or conventional war between the superpowers, but the proliferation of crises and conflicts on a smaller scale and at a lower level of intensity, The Rand Corporation, at the suggestion of Donald Cotter, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Atomic Energy, hosted an exploratory discussion of the possible implications of such a threat for U.S. security planning and action. The discussion, held in the Rand Washington office October 19-20, 1976, was moderated by George K. Tanham, Vice President of The Rand Corporation. The participants were selected to ensure a range of expertise on U.S. defense and international affairs. The group, kept small enough to promote unstructured, easy discussion, took a preliminary cut at the types of threats foreseen, the U.S. forces available and needed, institutional incentives and disincentives, type of national organization required, public attitudes, and legal implications.

The types of crises and conflicts under discussion ranged from incidents of terrorism that conceivably could require the employment of military forces to something less than either the Vietnam war or a conventional NATO confrontation. Section I outlines why low-level conflict has become a matter of concern throughout the world. A paper by Brian Jenkins of Rand on the growing diffusion of power in the world today and the consequent likelihood of U.S. involvement in low-level conflict provided the point of departure of the discussion. The main points to emerge from the discussion of the U.S. capability to cope with these crises and conflict situations are summarized in Section II, based on notes provided by Gerald Sullivan of the Center for Strategic and International Studies and by Eleanor Wainstein of Rand. Section III suggests some subjects for further discussion and consideration as possible subsequent courses of action by the U.S. Government.

The two days of intense discussion provided some new ideas on what U.S. planners should begin to think about. Where consensus evolved, it has been noted. To avoid losing individual points, however, no

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attempt was made to synthesize the discussion. Thus, the views expressed in this paper should not be attributed to individual participants in the discussion, to the organizations for which they work, nor to The Rand Corporation.

The following participated in the discussion:

Mr. Harry Almond, Jr., Office of the General Counsel, DoD (International Affairs)

Dr. Joseph V. Braddock, Braddock, Dunn & MacDonald

The Honorable Donald R. Cotter, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Atomic Energy)

Mr. James E. Goodby, Deputy Director, Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, Department of State

Mr. Peter H. Haas, Deputy Director for Science/Technology, Defense Nuclear Agency

Major General Fred Haynes, USMC, DCS/S for RD&S

Mr. Brian Jenkins, The Rand Corporation

Mr. Paul Jureidini, Abbott Associates

Ambassador Robert W. Komer, The Rand Corporation

Dr. Walter Laqueur, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University

Mr. Andrew Marshall, Director, Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense

Dr. Donald S. Marshall, Special Assistant (Policy) to the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Atomic Energy)

Major General E. C. Meyer, Assistant DCS for Operations & Plans, Headquarters United States Army

Mr. James Poor, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs)

Mr. Gerald Sullivan, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University

Dr. George K. Tanham, The Rand Corporation

Mrs. Eleanor S. Wainstein, The Rand Corporation

Ambassador Seymour Weiss

Mr. Robert A. Young, Director, Cybernetic Technology, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

Brigadier General Samuel G. Cockerham, USA, Deputy Director, J-4 (Logistics), Joint Chiefs of Staff

## I. THE GROWING CONCERN OVER LOW-LEVEL CONFLICT

The principal security concerns of the United States Government today are, first, the U.S.-USSR strategic nuclear balance and, second, the NATO-Warsaw Pact balance. Intense debate continues on Soviet strategic capabilities and intentions, while efforts are being made to provide NATO with adequate conventional defense capabilities. These two areas of defense hold the attention of our leaders, but a third security concern for the United States, and one equally deserving of attention, is the expected proliferation of local crises and conflicts throughout the world.

Louis Halle suggested in *Foreign Affairs* several years ago that wars as we have experienced them are probably a thing of the past. Future confrontations involving the use of force, he thought, would be sporadic and possibly clandestine and would take the form of guerilla wars, conflicts short of open warfare, civil wars inviting interventions, military interference by powers in their spheres of influence, skirmishes, and frequent and continued disorders.\* Samuel Huntington predicted in 1968 that, noninterventionist sentiment notwithstanding, several sorts of crises in which the United States was not directly involved initially might well generate pressure for U.S. intervention; for example, the breakdown of authoritarian regimes, communal wars, peasant revolutions, and anti-American assaults.\*\*

Another type of low-level conflict--one that has become increasingly troublesome in recent years and has directly involved the United States in a number of confrontations--is international terrorism. Small groups of people throughout the world have committed acts of outright violence or have threatened violence to hostages to gain recognition and benefits for their group or their cause. Individual nations and nations acting together have been forced to acquiesce to terrorist demands, as well as

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\* Louis J. Halle, "Does War Have a Future?", *Foreign Affairs*, October 1973, p. 34.

\*\* Samuel Huntington, *No More Vietnams?*, Richard Pfeffer (ed.), published for the Adlai Stevenson Institute of International Affairs by Harper and Row.

to expend sizeable resources and time to protect themselves against terrorist attack. Many believe that international terrorism will continue to be prominent among future low-level crises and conflicts.

Low-level conflict, including international terrorism, may well be the kind of conflict that will increasingly confront the United States; the outcomes of such conflicts may directly affect American national facilities and interests, such as sources of raw materials and the sea lanes for transporting them. The outcome of such conflicts may also affect the perceived strength of the United States.

Brian Jenkins set the theme of the discussion with the following statement:

A diffusion of power is taking place in the world today. Ethnicity vies with nationality as a basis for legitimate political authority. The planet continues to be subdivided, a process reflected, in part, by the growing United Nations membership: At the UN's creation in 1945, there were 51 members; by 1960 there were 82; there are now 145 members (15 or 20 nations are not members). If this trend continues at the current rate of three new nations a year, by 1990 the inhabited portion of the planet will be subdivided into more than 200 independent political communities; it would not be surprising to see 300 by the year 2000. The majority will be mini-states, economically dependent upon external subsidies, in some sense vulnerable to external pressures, but at the same time capable of using force against nations that (in theory) are more powerful than themselves.

The threats and incidents that have in the past decade come to be labeled "international terrorism" are likely to persist. Although the use of terrorist tactics has not thus far resulted in the achievement of the long-range goals of the dissident groups that use them, terrorism has brought these groups widespread publicity; it has also compelled governments to pay attention to them and often to grant them concessions. These tactical successes will be seen as sufficient to preclude the abandonment of terrorist force as a means of expression and a mode of conflict. Nations or groups unable or unwilling to mount challenges on the battlefield may adopt the tactics of the terrorist, or form alliances within such groups, as a mode of surrogate warfare against their opponents.

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Power, defined in its most primitive state as the power to disrupt or destroy, is descending to smaller and smaller groups. Because of the availability of portable advanced weaponry, the presence of nuclear weapons and nuclear material, and society's increasing dependence on complex and vulnerable technology, the capacity for destruction, once held only by armies, can now be wielded by just a few men. Small groups dedicated to violence can achieve disproportionately large effects in the world.

What might be the implications of this future for the U.S. armed forces? We can develop some idea if, for a moment, we deliberately forget our World War II and Korean experiences. Assume that our military history was composed exclusively of such conflicts as Santo Domingo in 1965, Ulster since 1969, Montevideo from 1967 to 1972, Buenos Aires since 1969, Angola in 1974 and 1975, Cyprus in 1974, Lebanon since 1975, and Saigon (not Vietnam, but *Saigon*) in 1975.

The implications are that the United States needs a surgical strike force--a widely deployed or rapidly deployable, highly trained, light infantry force to operate in small teams or in larger units using precision tactics and precision weapons (to minimize collateral damage). Furthermore, we must note that while almost all of the conflicts cited took place in the Third World, many of them took place in urban environments. This means the force must have a capability for urban operations.

On the preventive side, the United States needs to devote increasing attention to the physical security of its personnel, facilities, and weapons, as well as to improve the reporting and analysis of information on possible threats. However, because the United States for the most part will be *reacting* to threats or incidents, in some cases with military force, there is a need for a response capability.

The recognition that these types of crises and conflicts will persist and will have to be dealt with brings with it the concern that the United States may not possess a response capability now and may not be creating one for the future. The purpose of the discussion at Rand was to consider how the United States could prepare itself to act effectively and responsibly in dealing with the lower levels of conflict expected over the next decade. A secondary purpose was to form a more precise idea of what the needs are and of what obstacles stand in the way of attaining a response capability, so that planners will not be unprepared when U.S. security priorities are being balanced and decided.



## II. SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION ON FUTURE LOW-LEVEL CONFLICT

The participants generally accepted the thesis that the global diffusion of political authority and power is likely to bring about low-level conflicts and crisis that may involve the United States. Most participants further agreed that future crises and conflicts are likely to resemble those of the recent past. There was disagreement, however, over whether the different types discussed should be treated as a single area of conflict. Some believed that the differences are sufficient to warrant separate attention; for example, it was argued that international terrorism is a problem for the Department of State and should not be lumped together with crises that may involve more immediately the use of military forces. There was also some disagreement over whether international terrorism would increase or decrease. Most participants believed, however, that terrorist incidents are clearly a threat that may require responses in the future, that they could become more frequent, and that they certainly would become more serious if terrorists acquired antiaircraft missiles, nuclear materials or weapons, or other modern technology. It was also pointed out that there is a great deal of difference among rescue operations, operations to protect U.S. facilities, and the insertion of forces for rapid assistance to an ally as well as civil wars and especially urban fighting. Each of these types of operations would require a differing force and command and control structure and to resort to any of these operations would depend on the political climate. The principal concern, however, was not to identify which of these conflicts and crises posed the most immediate or serious threat; rather, it was to discuss how and in what ways the United States could give more serious attention to preparing for such possibilities.

The issues and problems involved in planning, mobilizing resources, and maintaining a readiness and willingness to act in any or all of these types of crises are indeed formidable. It was the consensus of the group that open discussion of these problems, leading

to wider awareness, will help the country recognize and prepare to face such crises. The principal issues identified in the discussion, along with relevant proposals and comments, are summarized below.

#### ORGANIZATION

At the present time no single organization is entrusted with directing the U.S. response to the entire range of threats identified above as low-level conflicts. Rather, a number of agencies, both civilian and military, are charged with dealing with various types of crises.

The working group of the Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism (the Committee was established in September 1972 and met only once) is responsible for coordinating U.S. policy in response to international hijackings, diplomatic kidnappings, and other acts of terrorism involving the United States. The group, composed of representatives of the member organizations of the Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism and of other federal agencies, meets biweekly under the Chairmanship of the Department of State representative. During a terrorist incident with international consequences, a special task force is formed to deal with the crisis. The role of the working group and the task force is to coordinate and advise; neither has command authority in the military sense.

In the United States the Federal Bureau of Investigation is responsible for combatting terrorism. The military may assist the FBI with equipment, training, and specialists, but participates in operations only in emergencies, at the request of the FBI. This mission should, it was agreed, remain with the FBI.

The responsibility for responding to serious crises short of war is not clearly defined, but was until 1976 generally under the cognizance of Washington Special Action Group (WSAG). The WSAG was set up by President Nixon in April 1969 to be called into action by the President in a crisis situation. Chaired by the Secretary of State, its members included the Deputy Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Director of Central Intelligence, and the Assistant to the President for National

Security Affairs. Two main drawbacks hampered the WSAG's operation. First, because it was called upon only after a crisis had developed, its members had little chance to plan and weigh alternative solutions and second, it had no direct communications with the actual operations in the field. However, nothing has been formed to replace even the WSAG.

There seemed to be consensus that two levels of organization were needed though the missions and makeup of each were sometimes blurred. However there emerged general though not unanimous agreement that a small permanent, separate, high level organization was needed to deal with mini-crisis and mini-conflicts. This small group would, between emergencies, develop expertise in the field, help formulate policies, and work with the military and other agencies in developing special capabilities for mini-crisis and low level conflict. It would include representatives from key government agencies and would probably be enlarged as needed when crises arose. There were several variations on the idea but all ideas required more study.

It was emphasized that the problems of creating a separate organization to deal with low-level conflicts should not be minimized. Because its mission might conflict with the aims of other government groups, the organization would have to have top-level support. Support openly given, a clearly stated mandate to operate in that area, and suitable career incentives should attract a competent staff. Such an organization would provide decisionmakers an option not now available to them and would maximize existing skills and efforts in one definable command.

There was general support for a joint military command to deal with low-level contingencies. Some attendees felt REDCOM (Readiness Command) could do this and it is preparing for some now while others felt a joint command in Washington would be more appropriate. Like the national level organization it might be small and augmented as required during a crisis or conflict. Its mission would be to identify and promote needed capabilities within Services, plan for possible contingencies, and by its mere existence serve as a deterrent. It should help organize, train, equip, exercise and test elements of existing combat forces for special types of operations



mentioned above. Not all agreed that this joint command should be given operational control over designated forces in crisis situations but it should reside somewhere.

#### FORCE CAPABILITY

The United States has no single military unit possessing all the requisite skills to conduct the appropriate operations in low-level conflicts. However, highly trained, highly skilled elite units are to be found in our armed forces.

The Army has Special Forces, ranger battalions, one airborne division, and one air assault division. Special Forces units are trained to carry out quick-response covert operations and guerrilla warfare in isolated areas or against lightly defended targets. These units contain operations, intelligence, weapons, communications, engineering, and medical specialists who are also qualified to parachute and (some) to scuba. Many have foreign-language training. Ranger battalions are a conventional force capable of conducting raids, ambushes, and attacks, by helicopter, parachute, foot, or amphibious methods. They have recently been receiving training in operating in built-up areas and in rescuing hostages. The airborne and air assault divisions are conventional warfare forces capable of rapid deployment to any part of the world.

Air Force Special Operations squadrons are equipped with sophisticated aircraft capable of clandestine penetration of air space, all-weather aerial delivery of men and supplies, all-weather reconnaissance, electronic warfare and countermeasures, and supporting firepower. Also available are command, control, and communications aircraft suitable for a wide variety of missions.

The Navy's SEAL teams, consisting of scuba and surface swimming experts, are capable of conducting unconventional warfare operations, demolition raids, intelligence collection, and reconnaissance. Coastal and river squadrons, a conventional force, can provide gunfire, communications, and logistical support to SEAL teams and protection to U.S. facilities and personnel near shorelines.



Fleet Marine forces, presently deployed around the world, are capable of mounting across- and over-the-beach operations to evacuate U.S. nationals, protecting U.S. facilities, and presenting a show of force, as well as conducting conventional warfare operations. In the Mediterranean, Caribbean, and Pacific, the Marine Corps has afloat battalions that are trained in many of the techniques needed for surgical strikes. Large helicopters and vertical-and-short-takeoff-and-landing aircraft are available to assist in such operations along with highly trained light reconnaissance units. The Marines have normally been given the mission of rescuing and evacuating U.S. nationals, including the Saigon evacuation and the *Mayaguez* operation.

The existence of these forces, however, does not necessarily equate with the needed capability. These forces are available and equipped, but not trained adequately for urban operations, for counterterrorist operations, (such as for hostages rescue, recovery of stolen nuclear weapons or clandestinely fabricated weapons of mass destruction, regaining or seizing control of sensitive facilities, etc.). The logistics and control aspects remain unplanned. Although Readiness Command (REDCOM) is prepared for certain contingencies, no responsible joint command or commands exist for the entire spectrum of low-level conflict, and there is no formulation of the needed tasks nor testing to determine shortfalls. Command and staff schools ignore such operations, and thus many doctrinal and perceptual areas remain unexplored.\* Much of the existing doctrine and instruction on internal defense and development (counterinsurgency) is irrelevant. In sum, although the inherent potential is there, the discussion made clear that the actual capability is clearly deficient for a variety of reasons, not the least being top level attention.

The obstacles to development and maintenance of a true military capability for dealing with the lower levels of crisis and conflict

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\*This deficiency has been noted in a recent paper by Colonel Donald B. Vought of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, "Speak Stickly and Carry a Big Soft: The U.S. Army Prepares for Future Low Intensity Conflict," prepared for International Studies Association Conference, October 28-30, 1976, Ohio State University.

were seen to be many and to involve difficult institutional problems. Special units and unique requirements have been short-lived in the U.S. military system, and have not remained viable. The career incentives have been negative; little attention is given to "irregular" warfare in service schools, and the budgets and numbers of men allotted to it tend to be small and therefore not readily visible. A counter-concern expressed by some was that we are not yet prepared for a major conflict with the Soviets and so cannot afford to dilute the strength we have in an attempt to create special force capabilities.

A classic argument for special versus general purpose forces does exist, but it was suggested that this argument should not be allowed to detract from the main issue at hand. Whether forces for low-level conflict are to be special units, or part of existing units, means must be found to develop and practice the necessary skills. In addition, several participants pointed out that the capabilities needed to deal with lower-level crises and conflicts--such as the capability for urban combat, the capability to work closely with allied units, and the training in nonmilitary aspects of crises--would be highly beneficial when crossfed into the operations of general purpose forces. The schools, such as command and staff schools, were seen as a key to the development of a viable capability.

The advantages of deployed forces such as the Fleet Marine forces afloat were stressed. Rapid reaction and movement during the buildup of a crisis could place one or more of these 1000-man forces near the scene when needed. This ability to react rapidly, plus the Marines' inherent need to consider some problems on a day-to-day basis, would enforce relevant capabilities. Difficulties of air transport and assembly of forces on the combat end argue in favor of forward deployment. Furthermore, worldwide deployment is likely to act as a deterrent to crises and conflicts. In sum, the Marines afloat were seen as representative of the needed type of capability, which could be augmented by the forward deployment of additional forces designed for lower-level crises and conflicts. The uniqueness of the USMC in this role was recognized as a point for serious study.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

The participants considered the present U.S. practices for dealing with lower-level crises and conflicts to be inadequate, and planning nearly nonexistent. Although crises invariably turn out to be quite different from any imagined scenarios, the exercise of designing such scenarios teaches participants to consider the range of possibilities. The group responsible for dealing with low-level conflict should, among other things, provide a structure to develop contingency plans, identify ranges of options, and try to involve senior officials in gaming and simulations of crisis situations. In this way, the decisionmakers could assess the risks under likely conditions of uncertainty. The discussion group recommended the use of case studies of past and present low-level conflict--for example, the Entebbe rescue and the *Mayaguez* incident--as part of the planning exercises, as well as on-the-spot observations in Beirut and Belfast.

A capability is needed for identifying the range of options, gaming outcomes, assessing outside perceptions, working with allies, and targeting relevant intelligence; but the perennial obstacle to such planning and contingency activity has been that senior people are not available or do not take the efforts seriously. Senior officials tend to deal with crises only when they occur. The consensus of participants was that the gaming of specific scenarios and hypothetical situations must be undertaken to provide a first-hand approach to problems.

Flexible response requires that force packages be designed to be flexible, so that people can be attached from existing units, and special people can be appointed for the crisis or conflict. All planning must recognize that the task will not be left to the Services to run but will be controlled by political leaders, with strong political constraints imposed on the operations. Because political problems underlie the handling of low-level crisis, important decisions will be made by the highest officials in the country. Those involved in the crisis situations must be sensitive to the political aspects of the problems during the early stages of involvement in order to make judgments on the extent of U.S. interest in the matter, on the direction in which it is headed, and at what point to involve top-level officials.



### COMMAND, CONTROL, AND COMMUNICATIONS

It was generally agreed that command, control, and communications would be a major problem in such crises. Obvious examples of arrangements that must be worked out in advance are communications between the national authority in Washington and those in command of the action, and the latitude of authority to be given commanders on the scene in the conduct of military operations that must, for political reasons, be tightly controlled from Washington.

It was suggested that the crisis team should take a lesson from newsgathering agencies, which now have worldwide communications giving them rapid access to local events surpassing that of the intelligence community, and have the discipline of a deadline to provide full-coverage news programs. Thus they logically provide a model for the desired operations intelligence.

### TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

The participants agreed that new technology and equipment should not be developed specifically for low-level conflicts until we have a clear idea of what the requirements will be, although it was recognized that such conflicts will undoubtedly differ from conventional combat and may therefore require special equipment. Future operations abroad--for example, the rescue of U.S. citizens, the protection of U.S. facilities, or rapid assistance to friendly governments--may have to be conducted largely in built-up areas. The fighting in Hue, Saigon, and more recently, in Beirut has made us realize that we are poorly equipped for urban warfare and that specialized weapons and training for this kind of mission must be included in U.S. force planning.

The primary requirements of new weapons and equipment are mobility and ease of assembly. Materiel must be readily transportable to the area of conflict, then quickly mountable and moveable once there. Also needed are aircraft with sea capability, long-range helicopters, and standard aircraft to introduce airborne units or rangers. There may even be a role for airborne warning and control systems (AWACS). Advanced conventional weapons, already in development, should be adapted



for small-scale conflict. The participants emphasized that the only way these possibilities could be realized would be to have field units and developers pursue developments jointly, with emphasis on learning by experimentation and exercises.

### INTELLIGENCE

The participants agreed that adequate intelligence collection, analysis, and availability are crucial for effective handling of low-level crisis operations but are most complicated and difficult tasks; and that current capabilities are both inadequate and unlikely to be improved until a new approach to this type of intelligence is adopted. The Entebbe rescue was cited as an example of a successful military action that depended heavily on operations intelligence, and one meriting study for lessons to be learned.

No solution to the intelligence problem was identified and the participants could only stress its importance. It was suggested however that intelligence support for this spectrum of crisis and conflict should not be solely a military responsibility. Military intelligence is not oriented toward providing the kind of information required for localized operations characterized by rapid entry, complex friend-foe relationships, and urban areas. Yet the military intelligence organization possesses significant resources for collection and analysis and is naturally involved when military forces are engaged; thus, a mix of intelligence community involvement is likely to prevail.

Apart from the need for operations intelligence, the participants cited the need for long-range analysis, study, and prediction; in that connection there was criticism of intelligence dealing with low-level conflict for concentrating on daily current-intelligence briefing at the expense of thorough study. It was pointed out that we also need a capability for the identification of patterns and potential threats.

An explanation was offered for the shortcomings in both operations intelligence and long-term analysis relevant to this lower-level spectrum: the restrictions imposed by new legislation on what is and what

is not legitimate intelligence gathering. It was alleged that these restrictions inhibit collection of the kind of intelligence needed. In reply it was argued that the legislation has been an excuse to cover the inadequacies of the intelligence staffs. Only when the top policymakers become aware of the need for such intelligence and demand it will the intelligence community provide it.

Questions remained regarding (a) the adequacy of the present intelligence net to detect and analyze low-level conflicts worldwide, (b) the need for new capabilities, (c) the tasking of existing capabilities, and (d) the choice of agency or agencies to be given the primary responsibility for this mission.

#### PUBLIC ATTITUDES

Public attitudes, in part reflected by Congress, will, of course, play an important role in what the U.S. government will do or will not do with regard to the development of U.S. military forces for use in "less-than-war" situations, and especially with regard to possible deployments of such forces. There exists at the present time a strong revulsion against military involvement in any situation in which the security of the United States is not directly and manifestly threatened--an understandable reaction to our involvement in Indochina. Such sentiments precluded even indirect U.S. involvement in Angola in 1975, and there is a reluctance to engage in any military operation that smacks of twentieth century "gunboating."

In the future the range of decisionmaking options in low-level conflicts will depend to a large extent on what the Congress and the public will support, and their support is contingent on three things. First, the time factor: Attitudes change over time. The Korean war produced a revulsion against such involvement, but less than a dozen years later the United States was again committed to military operations on the Asian mainland. The reaction following our operations in Vietnam was even greater. But public opinion is dynamic and may be expected to support at least some types of involvement in the future. Second, the nature of the involvement: A rescue operation would find far more support than military intervention

in, say, Angola. And third, the chances of success: Nothing succeeds like success. The public and politicians alike applauded the recapture of the *Mayaguez* (despite the casualties and mistakes that became apparent later on) and the rescue at Entebbe. Therefore in view of possible changes in public attitudes and the likelihood of serious overseas crisis in the future, it seems wise to make some preparation for future low level contingencies.

#### ALLIED RELATIONSHIPS

The worldwide nature of the threat in question puts a premium on our relationships with our allies and their capabilities. The British have a well-honed military strike force, the Royal Marine Commandos and the Special Air Service, capable of surgical operations at home and abroad. They are exercised periodically, maintain direct communications with the ministry level, and parts of the force are always on alert. The West Germans have a similar counterterrorist force prepared for military strikes, with command lines direct to the ministry level. The Israeli force demonstrated its effectiveness at Entebbe. These special forces serve as a deterrent and may provide an added capability for us in the event of a common interest in an incident.

We currently exchange information and expertise with these friendly powers. More intensive liaison with the Israelis, British, and West Germans was recommended in order to borrow from their experience; however, all recognized the need to address the subject of allies for broader purposes as well. These crises and conflicts involve close association with allies (and sometimes with potential opponents) in creating prior safeguards and restrictions, prearranging cooperation in operations, furnishing equipment and training support beforehand, arranging for bases and overflights in advance, and eventually conducting operations. It was emphasized, therefore, that besides worrying about our own organizational problems, we ought to spend equal time thinking about the possibility of rapidly forming an allied "strike force" (in the manner of the Congo action in the early 1960s). A major motivation for doing so would be to present a united front and to prevent the Third World from focusing on the United States as the



sole interventionist force; after all, many low-level conflicts will probably threaten our allies as well as ourselves. Coordination of this force might be as formidable a challenge as the problems of coalition war, but such cooperation should prove extremely useful.\*

Several participants pointed out that local forces involved would consist mainly of militia or police forces and that U.S. military and advisory aid would be inadequate and inappropriate in counterterrorist or guerrilla warfare. However, the problem with helping many of the nations that have internal difficulties is that the U.S. government would have to deal formally with the local government in power; and when that government is regarded as brutal and inhuman, the dilemma for U.S. action is not easily resolved.

#### SOVIET INVOLVEMENT

Soviet political support, military equipment, training, and perhaps even forces are expected to be factors in many of these crises and conflicts--obviously so in areas where the Soviets control combatant groups. Yet the participants saw ambiguity in the record of Soviet attitudes toward low-level conflicts. Soviet officials seem to share U.S. concerns about the proliferation of nuclear weapons among the Third World nations; they also seem to share, to some extent, the U.S. desire to control dissident and unruly factions throughout the world--factions that conceivably could ignite a major conflict. On the other hand, the Soviets would not hesitate to risk inaction if it served their ends. When persuaded, however, that disruption will work to their advantage in the long run, they often are willing to take action.

It was noted that the Soviet have greatly expanded their sealift capabilities, as they have their Aeroflot route system, to the point where they can now support limited operations throughout the world, most notably in Africa. Furthermore, their ongoing large-scale production of equipment provides them with an ample source of supply;

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\* See R. W. Komer, *Needed: Preparation for Coalition War*, The Rand Corporation, P-5707, August 1976.



and their worldwide stockpiling makes it readily available to combat areas both directly and through friendly intermediate countries. In sum, the participants agreed that whatever U.S. responses are considered, the scenarios must assume rapid Soviet assistance to their allies and friends, or at least strong diplomatic maneuvers, including threat of economic or military action.

#### ARMS CONTROL

Preventing small groups of militants from obtaining weapons has both practical and political aspects. There are great technical difficulties in exercising control over both domestic stocks, and those the United States furnishes or sells to other nations. Other Western nations and the USSR are also major developers, producers, and suppliers of modern weapons. A further problem is that our desire to curb proliferation may conflict with other political objectives--for example, the continued sale of arms to the Middle East, the freedom of Western European countries to compete for the arms market, or the sometimes cross-purposes of the United States and the USSR in promoting international order. The potential for serious trouble accompanies many sales, however, and all participants recommended that the United States review its policies and work toward a convention on the transfer of arms.

#### THE NUCLEAR PROBLEM

A number of aspects of preventing access to nuclear weapons by individuals or groups is being worked on at present, but important questions remain. Many policymakers both in this country and abroad know little of the technical aspects of weapons control. Conference participants questioned whether or not we should share this information with allies and with potential adversaries.

On the international level, the problem of access to nuclear weapons poses a serious threat to stability. How should the United States react to a Third World state that threatens us with a nuclear bomb? Would decisive U.S. counteraction gain public support at home and abroad? Would the failure to act encourage blackmail of the United States in the future? Could the United Nations arbitrate or call a halt to action? What should be done if a nuclear explosion of undetermined origin occurred somewhere in the world? These and many other questions are worth consideration both domestically and abroad, with allies and adversaries.

#### THE LEGAL AND MORAL ASPECTS OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The United States has traditionally sought in principle to act according to the law, international as well as national. Many of the nations of Europe share this background. There is ample *legal authority*, under international law and in the United Nations Charter, for a state to act to protect lives. That legal authority is *humanitarian intervention*, a recognized legal institution founded on certain inherent individual rights--the right to life, to liberty, and to own property. Humanitarian intervention was the legal authority for the rescue at Entebbe.

The following *legal procedures* are available to states that seek to invoke the right of humanitarian intervention: (1) There is a general power and competence in all states to undertake intervention jointly or singly under the United Nations Charter. (2) There is a right to act when the principal UN organs--the Security Council and the General Assembly--fail to act. (3) There is a right to establish the means through regional organizations.

The *legal standard* for determining when and how the right of humanitarian intervention is to be exercised is the standard of reasonableness. The legal limitations are: (1) The humanitarian intervention must be for a specific limited purpose. (2) The duration of the measure and mission must be strictly limited to what is required. (3) The measures

must be limited, as in the rule of proportionality that characterizes our law of war. There is an interlocking of law and force; response should be within the limits of the first action. (4) There must be no other recourse--no other reasonable and sound means to accomplish the task.

THE LEGAL AND MORAL ASPECTS OF CUBAN MANAGEMENT

The United States has traditionally sought to participate in and according to the law, international as well as national. Many of the nations of Europe share this background. There is a wide variety of views under international law and in the United Nations Charter, for a state to act to protect itself. The legal authority is international law. The recognized legal jurisdiction is based on certain inherent individual rights--the right to life, to liberty, and to own property. International intervention was the legal authority for the reason that the following legal procedure was available to states that seek to enforce the right of humanitarian intervention: (1) There is a general power and competence to all states to conduct the intervention totally or partly under the United Nations Charter. (2) There is a right to act when the principal UN organ--the Security Council and the General Assembly--fail to act. (3) There is a right to establish the means through regional organizations. The legal standard for determining when and how the right of humanitarian intervention is to be exercised is the standard of reasonableness. The legal limitations are: (1) The humanitarian intervention must be for a specific limited purpose. (2) The duration of the measure and attention must be strictly limited to what is required. (3) The measures



#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

In the course of the discussion a number of recommendations for further action on the part of the U.S. Government were stated and others implied. *The general recommendation that emerged forcefully was that the United States take positive steps to develop a capability to respond to low-level conflicts and crises.* The following courses of action were suggested to attain this capability; some constitute specific tasks to be undertaken in stated areas, while others propose exploration of alternative courses of action.

1. The President should designate a permanent, senior organization in Washington whose responsibility would be to organize, plan for, and direct U.S. responses to the spectrum of low-level conflict and crises.

2. Members of Congress should be consulted and kept informed of steps taken toward developing and maintaining the United States capability in this field.

3. Contingency planning, identification of a range of options, and simulation of such crises should be the occupation of all who might be involved, especially the top-level officials in Washington.

4. The services should be directed to experiment with unit structures and with equipment for command and control, for transporting men and material, and for executing urban combat, extraction of citizens and a surgical strike. Those who might be involved, from the top-level command in Washington to the troops in the field, should periodically test this capability in simulations and exercises.

5. Service academies and staff schools should be directed to emphasize the analysis and simulation of low-level conflicts in their course work, using past and present case studies as background.

6. Friendly governments should be consulted to further coordination of action and to tap their expertise. Specific efforts should be made to examine the capabilities developed by the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, and Israel.

7. The intelligence community should be directed to place greater emphasis on intelligence needs of low-level conflict.

8. Continue review of Soviet developments and policies toward projection of their interests from the viewpoint of the threat posed to western interests as well as the difficulties these may pose in the event of allied or U.S. intervention.

9. The consequences of further dissemination of sophisticated weapons to less-developed nations should be examined more closely, with the intent of preventing future proliferation.

10. In the nuclear field, the United States should continue to work at the international level for further safeguards and security for nuclear weapons and materials. The United States should not only prepare for an emergency involving nuclear threats but also prepare procedures to be followed in the event a weapon is exploded or material exposed.

11. The United States should pursue development of a common framework of international law appropriate for the spectrum of low-level conflict, while concurrently establishing whenever possible specific agreements with other nations on such issues as hijacking, extradition, and law of the sea.

Lastly, it was recommended that this set of problems and actions again be addressed in one or a series of future conferences in the interest of furthering awareness and continuity on this subject. The subject is considered to be of sufficient importance to U.S. security to warrant much more attention and exposure.