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INSIDE VIEW

End Battle Over Nonlethals *Congress Must Heed Call for Needed Weapons*

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The war over nonlethal weapons is culminating in Congress. Despite new missions clearly requiring nonlethal options, development and deployment are delayed by parochial struggles for control over nonlethal weapon systems. For the sake of America's fighters and their missions, it is time for the squabbling to stop.

In the 1996 budget the Senate has authorized \$37.2 million for a funded program office to fill the growing need for tactical nonlethal weapons. Led by Sen. Robert Smith, R-N.H., and Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and supported by Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, R-Kan., the Senate identified the Office of the Secretary of Defense's Office of Munitions, a proven producer of nonlethal systems and the Nonlethal Weapons Program Plan, for this task.

Chris Morris and Janet Morris, of West Hyannisport, Mass., consult on global issues related to nonlethal weapons.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., has asked the House to follow the Senate's position and authorize \$37.2 million for the Office of the Secretary of Defense's Strategic & Tactical Systems' ongoing nonlethal weapon activity, which has proved cheap, quick and effective.

The Office of the Director, Defense, Research & Engineering (DDR&E) has appealed the Senate language directing nonlethal funds to the Strategic & Tactical Systems Office. Meanwhile commanders in chief and operational commanders (European Command, Central Command and Marine Expeditionary Force) need and request nonlethal options for current missions and contingencies.

The Army supports the 1996 Senate authorization language, as do the Marines. On Oct. 2, Gen. Charles Krulak, Marine Corps commandant, wrote to Smith, "Our experience in Somalia with nonlethal weapons offered ample testimony to the tremendous flexibility they offer to warriors on the field of battle. Their use better enables us to respond proportionately and with greater flexibility

to the wide range of threats we can expect to face today and in the future. The Marine Corps strongly supports your efforts to progress the nonlethal technology from development to deployment with our operational forces."

Gingrich underscored the critical need for such technologies more than a year ago. As House Minority Whip Gingrich wrote on June 23, 1994, to Floyd Spence, R-S.C., now chairman of the House National Security Committee, that "Nonlethal and antilethal technologies provide a unique occasion to preserve the defense industrial base, stimulate jobs in high-technology industry and provide needed new options.

"In looking at the development of nonlethal weapons, I have come to learn that there is a shortcoming in our system of bringing new and needed technology to defense and domestic users. There is currently no central place within the United States government with the appropriate charter to develop, prototype and test technologies which offer innovation in capability built on already existing technology. These quasi-developmental or nondevelopmental items are our real peace dividend. We have paid for them with taxpayers' money, but they are being wasted and ignored in favor of long-term research and development programs."

Gingrich asked Spence to support language that would put \$40 million of this

money toward turning this technology into "turn-key" systems that will result in fielded capability."

The House ignored Gingrich and directed those funds to the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) for 1995. ARPA spent the money on studies and pet programs, yielding nothing that could be put in the field.

In February, when Marine Lt. Gen. Anthony Zinni requested nonlethal systems for use by Marine Expeditionary Units in Somalia, the only nonlethal material ARPA could deliver was a handful of studies.

The Pentagon's Office of Munitions and Picatinny Arsenal, N.J., provided nonlethal systems, doing with less than \$150,000 what ARPA couldn't do with \$40 million.

When the Army put out an urgent call in October for nonlethal systems for upcoming Bosnia operations, DDR&E and ARPA once again came up empty. Without intervention, this scenario may be replayed in 1996.

As Gingrich, Dole, Smith and Thurmond have recognized, without adult supervision, nonlethal systems deployment will only be further delayed by parochial interest, whose lifeblood is long-term research and development. It is up to Congress to assure that our soldiers will go into Bosnia and other new missions with the nonlethal tactical systems they need and are asking for.