

**WHAT REGIONAL STRATEGIES WILL BE USED
BY LAW ENFORCEMENT FOR HANDLING SWAT SITUATIONS
IN VENTURA COUNTY BY THE YEAR 2005?**

JOURNAL ARTICLE

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COMMAND COLLEGE CLASS XXI
PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

JANUARY 1996

21-0426

This Command College Independent Study Project is a FUTURES study of a particular emerging issue in law enforcement. Its purpose is NOT to predict the future, but rather to project a number of possible scenarios for strategic planning consideration.

Defining the future differs from analyzing the past because the future has not yet happened. In this project, useful alternatives have been formulated systematically so that the planner can respond to a range of possible future environments.

Managing the future means influencing the future -- creating it, constraining it, adapting to it. A futures study points the way.

The views and conclusions expressed in the Command College project are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

Ventura County, California, is but one of the regions in the State that is in the process of re-examining its law enforcement services. Ventura County is a mid-size county with approximately 700,000 residents. Its close proximity to Los Angeles County presents it with many of the same law enforcement problems endemic to its southerly partner. Residents enjoy a tremendous selection of lifestyles, from mountain and beach resorts to desert and metropolitan style communities.

It is also home to ten incorporated cities, five of which have their own police departments. The remaining five, and all unincorporated areas, are policed by the Ventura County Sheriff's Department. Each police department and the Sheriff's Department, operates several specialized units, including homicide, narcotics, gang intervention, and Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) units. Each agency has also participated in joint narcotics and gang-related task forces.

The rapid increase in high-risk situations involving SWAT Teams throughout Ventura County highlight newspaper headlines frequently. Even in the most efficient and organized police organizations, occasions constantly arise requiring special operational planning and execution.¹ While high profile cases broadcast the need for SWAT teams, daily violent encounters account for the majority of the activity. In a 1993 article in the California Peace Officers Association Journal, it was suggested that:

"Justification for [SWAT] teams is found in the daily encounters that occur in this country between law enforcement personnel and suspects fleeing from crime, mentally disturbed individuals, and those involved in domestic violence. Routine incidents such as these account for far more gun battles and loss of innocent lives than the most newsworthy conflicts between police and organized groups".²

The increase in SWAT situations seems to show no sign of abating. Data compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) indicates a 50% increase of their Special Weapons Unit in the last five years, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) has shown a 47% increase since 1985, San Francisco Police Department a 40% increase since 1985, and the New York Police Department a 62% increase. These increases indicate the growing need for Special Response Teams, not only with Barricaded/Hostage situations, but the near 100% increase in search warrant services that these same agencies have experienced since 1985. Consider some of these forecasts of the future:

- Violent crimes are projected to increase during the next five years.
- The increased violence of criminal gangs will increase interdiction activities by SWAT teams.
- The Three Strikes law will place more repeat offenders in a situation of "I have nothing to lose" increasing the number of high risk situations.
- Increased education and involvement by political leaders will require a more consistent approach and resolution to critical incidents.
- Financial constraints will encourage increased use of joint powers agreements in a variety of areas. These agreements will help to mitigate the increasing costs of equipment, new technology, training, and litigation.

This article summarizes the results of an 18-month research project which addressed the specific issue of:

What regional strategies will be used by Law Enforcement in handling SWAT situations in Ventura County by the year 2005?

While examining this primary issue, the authors also focused on three sub-issues:

- **Technology - How will technology affect SWAT situations?**
- **Politics - Will the dynamics of local government allow a regional approach to SWAT incidents?**
- **Training - What effect will a regional approach have on SWAT training?**

BACKGROUND

The issue statement is built upon the premise that Ventura County lends itself toward a likely future solution. The agencies throughout the County have a long history of working together to solve problems. A forecast to the year 2005 seems reasonable, given the past working relationships and the geographic composition of the County. Thus, several roadblocks to implementation have already been cleared.

As the authors research has indicated, budget constraints, increased demands for service, and an ever increasing incidence of high-risk situations mark the pathway to the future. The path law enforcement chooses is of paramount importance and finding that path will be the key to success.

Evidenced by the operation in Waco, Texas, and based upon the conclusions of the interagency working group that studied this incident, the SWAT mission is ill-defined and the overall operational goal is lost in rhetoric and media hype. Simple, straight forward *definitions* are required to maintain the requisite focus and operational goals.

What is SWAT? The Los Angeles Police Department defined the concept of SWAT in the late sixties as a specialized group of officers, with special training and equipment, formed to handle tactical situations beyond the scope of normal police

activity. Even the Los Angeles Times, in April of 1994, described SWAT Teams as "a unit whose officers routinely perform some of the most arduous and challenging duties faced by law enforcement anywhere".

Secondly, what exactly is a high risk situation? A high risk SWAT situation is certainly a term that is over used but is rarely completely explained or defined. For purposes of this study, "high risk" is defined as any situation where the suspect(s) has or is believed to have committed a criminal act; and is armed or there is a reasonable likelihood that the suspect(s) is armed; and there is a potential threat to the lives and safety of citizens and/or police personnel.³

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Undeniably, the role of Special Weapons and Tactics Teams throughout the United States and the world has become an accepted part of the law enforcement arsenal, and has continued to grow in stature and respect. When forecasting which path is best for handling future high-risk incidents, it is important to review what history has to offer.

The use of a group of specially trained individuals to handle high risk incidents is not a new phenomenon. The Chinese author, Wu Ch'i 430-381 B.C., wrote:

"They selected and summoned worthy men of talent, in order to prepare themselves for any contingency."

Civil unrest in the United States during the late sixties and the rise in terrorism throughout Europe in the early seventies forced law enforcement to seriously assess their capabilities in handling high-risk situations. Most European countries only began

to consider the use of specially trained SWAT or anti-terrorist teams in 1972 and 1973 when the face of terrorism had already engulfed the old world. Local police came face to face with their own inability to cope with these well-armed and well-trained terrorist groups. Unfortunately, Europe needed the slaughter at the Olympics in Munich to prove that the average police officer, conventional police tactics, and standard equipment were insufficient to meet the challenge.⁴

Prior to 1966, few, if any law enforcement agencies had SWAT teams to handle high risk situations. In August of 1966, an incident occurred in Austin, Texas, that not unlike the attack in Munich, would push law enforcement to assess their capabilities in handling high-risk situations. After killing his mother and wife, Charles Whitman, a twenty-five year old former Marine climbed to the top of the University of Texas administration building and went on a shooting spree. During the ensuing ninety-six minutes of terror, Whitman killed fifteen people and wounded thirty-one others, some from as far as two blocks away. In addition to this incident, the 60's were a time of civil disorder resulting in the need for law enforcement to control unusual situations.

More recently, the multi-agency debacle at Waco, Texas, on February 28, 1993, has reinforced the point that the law enforcement agency of the future must continuously assess their capabilities, albeit in a far greater scope and range of possibilities. That fifty-one day stand-off culminated in the death of seventy-eight people.⁵ The associated financial costs were tremendous, well beyond the resources of a single local agency. Weekly costs for the operation in Waco were estimated at over \$1.3 million per week.⁶

To successfully resolve SWAT situations, police administrators must have proper tactical options available at their disposal. One of those tactical options is based on the concept of regionalization. Regionalization is not a new concept and certainly has been the topic of past study. Several prior Command College studies have thoroughly reviewed this issue and found that regionalization is a viable law enforcement concept. Traditionally, local police departments have guarded against attempts to consolidate or form multi-agency teams. According to William P. Horgan of the Massachusetts State Police:

The strong desire of early American communities to run their own affairs, the difficulties of travel and the lack of communications all tended to reinforce the emphasis on local control. Early settlers in America were too busy subdividing a continent to give much thought to what would be required to run a successful police operation.⁷

Consolidation may contribute to better trained personnel and an increase in efficiency. California State University, Long Beach Professor John Kenny, stated in a journal article:

Consolidation of small and medium sized agencies presents an opportunity for innovation, that may alter the structure of police departments and thus improve the quality of delivery of police services.⁸

A future file scan has revealed that in the past eighteen months in Ventura County, there have been four highly-publicized joint agency operations, in which over 150 law enforcement officers from six police agencies arrested over twenty murder suspects from three notorious gang related shootings. Ventura County Sheriff Larry Carpenter said,

*"What you're seeing is the wave of the future, police agencies working together to solve major cases, in this case SWAT teams joining forces to handle a very dangerous job."*⁹

The Ventura County Sheriff's Department currently provides several forms of regional law enforcement services, including the crime lab, the training academy, air services operations, bomb squad, and county jail facilities. In 1982, the County created a Court Services Division by combining the Sheriff's Court Services Division with the County Marshal's Court Services Division. This consolidation effort saved several million dollars by eliminating the duplication of court services.

The municipal budget constraints created by the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 and the 1990's economic recession continue to erode municipal revenues. Downturns in sales tax revenue, property taxes, and resource transfers continue to send shock waves through city halls. Local newspaper articles describing the economic plight of various Ventura County cities have become weekly events. Several cities have undertaken unprecedented reviews of law enforcement expenses.

Law enforcement budgets as a percentage of the general fund vary greatly throughout Ventura County cities with their own police departments and those that contract with the Sheriff's Department. Expenditures alone, however, should not be the sole determining factor when discussing a consolidated or regional approach. Service needs throughout the County and the desire for efficiency should remain paramount.

While decreasing budgets and increased standards make it difficult for small and medium sized agencies to stay in the business of high risk management, violent crime

statistics in this country indicate that the need to manage incidents involving persons is increasing.

"Violence now rivals academics as the top concern of U. S. public schools, with shootings, stabbings, and other serious assaults increasing in number and spreading from urban districts to suburbs and small towns."

National League of Cities

"The survey was released just two weeks after the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta reported homicide rates among young men, 15-19, had tripled between 1985 and 1991, surpassing the rates for men older than 25. The increase was attributed to recruitment of teens into drug markets and the gangs that run them, and a more frequent use of guns instead of fists to settle disputes." ¹⁰

When answering charges raised during litigation in response to a SWAT incident, small to medium sized law enforcement agencies are finding themselves judged against the standards set by larger agencies.¹¹ The multi-jurisdictional SWAT team is one strategy for small and medium sized police agencies where the need exists, but where manpower and/or budget constraints prohibit a single agency from accepting the full responsibility.¹²

FUTURES STUDY

As part of this project the authors conducted a future study. The futures study examined possible trends ("a series of events by which change is measured over time) and events ("a single, discrete, one-time occurrence which could have an impact on an issue") which might have an impact on the issues at hand. Those trends and events were then evaluated and applied to create future scenarios which assist in forming a strategic plan. The authors utilized a futures forecasting panel to develop significant trends and events which were felt to have an impact on the issues under research.

Panel members were chosen based on their expertise and background in relation to the issues. The selected trends and events were further evaluated using a “cross impact analysis” and supplemented with a survey of eighty-eight law enforcement agencies from around the State.

The following are the most critical 15 trends and 14 events which were developed by the futures forecasting panel and the authors:

Trends:

1. **The number of joint powers agreements to address high-risk issues**
-basic contractual/legal agreements between cities and counties regarding unified approaches to high risk incidents.
2. **Level of polarization of ethnic groups**
-selective placement during the urban planning process thus polarizing ethnic groups
3. **Level of funding to cities and counties**
-A look at the effects of statewide propositions, i.e., proposition 172-the public safety initiative, on cities and counties
4. **Level of violence over next ten years**
-the number of violent crimes from 1995-2005
5. **Focus on gang interdiction by SWAT**
-the number of search/arrest warrants executed on gang-related crimes
6. **Cost of tactical technology drives need for regionalization**
-the increasing cost of high-tech equipment and the ability to keep pace
7. **Level of population in the county**
-the number of people in the county from 1995-2005
8. **Number of critical incidents due to Three Strikes law**(mandatory sentencing law for third violent offense)
-number of three-strikes offenders requiring SWAT response due to reluctance to serve a life prison sentence

9. **Number of deaths in SWAT incidents due to new technology**
-with an increase in the use of technology, will more deaths occur in SWAT incidents
10. **The degree of education of political and law enforcement leaders as to staff/command duties**
-will the political leaders and command staff realize/accept their responsibilities during high risk situations.
11. **Number of SWAT incidents**
-the number and severity of SWAT incidents
12. **Level of civil unrest**
-the current furor over affirmative action and Proposition 187(anti-immigration initiative) type cases and the effect on civil unrest
13. **Level of specialized training**
-the training of involved parties on the capabilities and limitations of SWAT units
14. **Level of scrutiny on the use of force**
-the scrutiny demonstrated by involved parties - DA, Media, Department Staff
15. **Effect of litigation on SWAT incidents**
-effect of civil litigation on SWAT teams

Events:

1. **The Next "OJ" (Simpson) case results in a SWAT shooting**
- Will there be another "celebrity" case where a high profile subject is eventually shot by a SWAT team.
2. **Expanded crime bill results in federal control (regulation)**
- Programs and regulations for federal/governmental control are getting tougher. Federal government grants will increase federal control.
3. **Russian Mafia (Para-military group) takes over a financial institution.**
-The threat of a para-military takeover of a public and/or private institution is becoming greater as these groups have access to better training.
4. **Balanced budget amendments pass (funding)**
-Consequences of funding are that the federal government cuts state assistance;

the state cuts county and city assistance, thus law enforcement agencies suffer.

5. **Special Operations/Regional training site developed**
-The Sheriff's Department already provides a regional training center, however, this deals with the development of a SWAT-only regional training center.
6. **County adopts liberal policy for carrying a concealed weapon permits**
-The recent trend toward liberalizing concealed weapons laws - i.e., Texas and Florida.
7. **Sheriff absorbs smaller agencies**
-The Sheriff's Department absorbs or takes over smaller county police agencies
8. **Police commission impaneled to review all SWAT operations**
-A new commission empaneled to review/critique all SWAT operations
9. **Privatization of SWAT teams**
-The concept of a private security company, with a large amount of money, could contract for SWAT services
10. **POST mandates basic and advanced SWAT curriculum**
-A statewide agency develops guidelines, such as the current Emergency Medical System(EMS) guidelines, for all SWAT teams
11. **Law prohibits use of lethal force**
-A new state law that outlaws the use of lethal force
12. **Mandated reporting of SWAT operations to the State and/or Federal government**
-The mandated reporting of all SWAT incidents to a state agency, much like the reporting of all pursuits.
13. **Violent incident involving mass transit**
-A high profile, violent incident on some type of mass transit (bus, train, plane) system.
14. **Media capability to monitor live SWAT event with instant feedback from the viewing audience**
-Media capabilities are increasing so that they can cover more SWAT operations, and with advent of new technology there could be direct viewer feedback during a SWAT incident.

A series of personal interviews were conducted with professionals who had related expertise in regard to the issues. The events and trends listed above were entered into a "Sigma scenario generator" which selected certain trends and events to be used in writing this scenario. As a result of the steps mentioned above, three scenarios were developed. One scenario depicted a situation unchanged from today, a second provided insight into a situation worse than the present, while the third depicted a normative or "better than today" environment.

The future scenario which follows describes the future in a nonfictional narrative, written as if the forecasted trends and events had occurred.

NORMATIVE SCENARIO- better than extension of the past

"Commander Wayt, we are extremely pleased to have you with us today. Your record of accomplishment is unmatched. Your Regional Special Operations Team is a model for other agencies and your input is greatly appreciated," Senator Wilson intoned, as the cameras flashed and the kleig lights burned this memory into the recesses of Jack's brain. He knew this would be a special moment; he didn't realize how special.

Jack was tense, but it was that tenseness that comes from confidence, like a coiled rattler on the Utah desert; Jack was ready, but then again, he was always ready. Through foresight and planning, he was able to lead, something that was unfortunately lacking throughout law enforcement circles.

"It's funny," Jack thought, "how good can come from bad. How did I get here?" Jack pondered, "how did I come to be in Washington, D.C. before the Senate Select Committee on Law Enforcement (SSCLE)?" The SSCLE was actually a brainchild of Jack's also; he had tried to form a federal committee after Waco, but no one wanted to confront that disaster. The events of 1999 led to this committee. The crime bill of 1999, a much better version than its 1995 predecessor (**E-2**) mandated a Senate committee to address the issue of military technology use in civilian law enforcement fields. The 2005 version had expanded its mandate somewhat, but it was one of the few things that the federal government had actually done right.

"Commander Wayt, in your estimation, was the train incident of November 1995 the catalyst? Or was there some other event that changed the complexion of Special Operations Teams throughout the country?"

"What a question," Jack thought, "these guys know what they're talking about." The train incident, it all sounds so sterile now. Jack would never forget those headlines the next day, LA Times, November 16, 1995 . . . WILD RIDE TO DEATH . . . "a bit sensational, but that about summed it up." Four DSA gang members hijacked a train in San Diego and led forty or fifty agencies on a ride never seen before in California, or since (E-13). When it finally ended in Ventura County, four were dead, 15 injured, and four officers had permanently debilitating injuries. It was the soul-searching that occurred later that led to the original regional team in Southern California. "Those people should still be working," Jack thought, as he pondered the magnitude of what was being proposed here in Washington this autumn day in 2005.

That event certainly put Ventura County on the map. What with an ever-increasing population (T-7), a steady uphill climb in the violent crime rate (T-4), a nearly twofold increase in SWAT incidents (T-11), and a budget that did not nearly keep pace with any of these (T-3), Jack broke new ground and changed the look of SWAT teams in California and the country.

Jack was very proud of several of his accomplishments over the last ten years, the greatest, however, was the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) he had forged with the United States Military Readiness Command (USMRC) about five years ago. If ever was there a magic solution to law enforcement budget concerns, this was it. In the JPA and the Senate Committee, Jack had brought together a powerful consortium of stakeholders that changed law enforcement response to critical incidents.

"Yes, Senator, that rather famous incident did point out several areas of deficiency in law enforcement's response to tactical situations," Jack answered, as he shuffled through his notes that lay spread across the top of the oak table. "It's funny", Jack thought, "but I feel like Ollie North sitting here, albeit in a friendlier context. We live in a zero sum environment, Senator, anyone who proposes spending money on new things has to find money to take from the old things first. And that can be a rather contentious process."

Jack was proud of that answer, but even prouder of the fact he had done just that. The near passage of SB 2345 in 2001 had been a cold slap in the face. One vote and there would have been a law prohibiting lethal force. If it hadn't been for the JPA with USMRC, law enforcement would not have had an answer, but they did. Non-lethal technology was not new, in fact, it had been used for several years. But non-lethal technology had become something far more sophisticated than firing a sandbag from a shotgun. From the esoteric to the mundane, the Pentagon brains had thought of everything, and with the help of the spies in Langley, what we didn't have, we stole. From sniper-assisted positioning systems that pinpoint the exact location of gunfire and return fire automatically, to the remote viewing apparatus that "sees" through obstructions, law enforcement had come a long way.

"In March 1996," Jack explained, "NBC News started the trend, and we learned a lot from that experience. The live, interactive display of the train incident and the subsequent live portrayal of the incident in Los Angeles, the "real-time" media demonstrations have definitely changed the way we do business." (E-14) "After NBC

and the other networks made "Live SWAT" a household name, we knew it wouldn't be long before the local Police Commission, that had originally been established to get the community involved in our Community Problem Oriented Policing Program, would edge closer to the oversight commission that we have now. We saw the first demonstration in May 1996 of that capability, with immediate command and control oversight, when we encountered the terrorist cell at the Rockwell Plant in Eastern Ventura County." (E-3)

The words now stuck in Commander Wayt's throat, because the consolidation of agencies, first in eastern Ventura County and then throughout the remainder of the County, never really set well with him, or any other manager throughout the County. Although he did have to admit that it now made sense and the regional approach to specific problems, whether it was gang monitoring, probation, corrections, or Special Operations, was a very effective tool. (E-7)

"Senator, the trend toward Joint Power Agreements first struck us as a good idea in August 1996 (T-1), when we formulated the basic agreement for Tactical response throughout Southern California. The real benefit of that agreement was the JPA with USMRC a few years later. The downward budget cycle and the push to do more for less (T-3) led to the consolidation with the Sheriff's Department, or should I say the transfer of responsibility (E-7)".

It wasn't surprising then, especially to professional command officers like Jack, that the Department of Defense and the Justice Department signed the "memo of understanding" under which the Pentagon shared "dual-use" nonlethal technology with domestic law enforcement agencies a few years later. It was truly Jack's crowning achievement in an already brilliant career. It was this "dual-use" technology that prompted the POST statewide mandates for SWAT reporting, wherein the POST SWAT Review Panel monitored the use of this sophisticated technology and reviewed the ST-34 forms submitted by agencies when reporting SWAT incidents. (E-12)

"Who could forget May 1999, Senator, I certainly don't," Jack dryly stated, yet the palpable tension in the room could be sliced with a knife. The room grew quiet and the senators leaned ever so slightly forward in their chairs. Jack took a deep breath and looked directly at them. Everyone knew what happened six years ago; no one had ever discussed in an open forum before. Jack then proceeded to explain what had been dubbed "the shot heard round the world."

The final shot had splintered an otherwise deadly calm. The birds on the telephone wire had rocketed upward and time seemed to stand still. Lieutenant Jack Wayt had played this game of high-tech chess to perfection. Each and every gambit tried by the rogue warriors of Delta Company was met by Lt. Wayt's illustrious band of Regional Special Operators. He had trained them, picked them, and equipped them, and on this dull grey day in May 1999, they had come through. From the combustion-inhibiting chemical that had derailed their escape plans, to the foam gun that had neutralized their flanking movement, Lt. Wayt had used every piece of technology and training that the Special Operations Group, USMRC had supplied some one year earlier. The carbon fiber 37mm had even worked, after several disastrous practice

sessions. The entire electrical system at Rockwell Industries in Thousand Oaks had been shut down. "That complete loss of electrical power was comparable to a bomb strike," screamed the Los Angeles Times the next day; little did they know that it also shut down the electrical circuits in the 20-megaton fission bomb that had been rigged to explode in a mere thirty minutes. The final shot was the ultimate in sophistication however. Using thermal imaging and the "see-through" capability of a National Reconnaissance Office KH-11, perched a mere 155 nautical miles above Thousand Oaks, California, Lt. Wayt was able to pinpoint the location of Colonel Michael North and neutralize him, with one small piece of metal that had been developed at Los Alamos, New Mexico, the year before. From 5000 yards, the shot ended the drama and forever placed Lt. Wayt and his band of warriors on the map (E-1).

There were hushed whispers in the audience and, as if at the conclusion of a Tom Clancy novel, the listeners were spellbound. "Senator," Jack's voice crackled through the room like lightening on a Southern June day. "As a result of that incident, and through the prescience of this August group, we formulated the crime bill of 1999 (E-2). This was a classic area where technology was outstripping ethics and philosophy. That crime bill established guidelines and rules of operation. Without it, there would have been chaos." Jack sat back for a moment and just took it all in, everyone in the room was hanging now on his every word.

"What about that controversial concealed weapons law that was enacted in October 2000, Commander, what effect did that have on special operations?" the Senator from New Jersey smirked slightly, as he had sought the implementation of that law with gusto. Commander Wayt very calmly stated; "There is a subset of Congress and consenting intelligent Americans that does not want to hand a U.S. Administration a ticket to adventure that's totally unconstrained. Although many saw the enactment of the Concealed Weapons Law of 2002 as a slide toward disaster, there were a few sane minds that attached certain conditions, many of which came from this panel." Their eyes locked and a knowing glance darted across each of their faces. The development of the Auditory Disruption Device (ADD) by the researchers at Los Alamos would not have occurred without the foresight and guidance from the United States Seal Team Six, which had first used the device in the conflict in Colombia in 2001. The effectiveness of the ADD has never been disputed and was used by the Senator from New Jersey in preventing a car-jacking in January of this year. Jack smiled as the esteemed Senator patted himself on the back (E-6).

As is usually the case, these hearings seemed to drone on forever. At one point, Jack found himself holding a piece of paper and explaining the California POST reporting requirements for Special Operational Activity that he had developed in October 2002 (E-10). What was unique with this particular "form" was that it wasn't actually a form at all, but a complete virtual reality simulator where regional teams throughout the country could "see" the actual event as it progressed, with comments and critique interjected throughout.

"No, Senator, February 2003 was not a bright moment, but a defining one. Although we had mass demonstrations and civil unrest, the political will of the people

and the elected officials was tested. And, as we have come to see, a balanced budget amendment (E-4) was actually a blessing in disguise. It forced all of us to regionalize and consolidate; thus the Southern California Regional Special Operations Training Center (E-5) operated jointly by POST and USMRC. Those bases didn't stay closed for long, Senator."

As Jack was making a final summation of his position, a hushed silence enveloped the hearing room. What did I say, Jack thought to himself, and he slowly began to swivel in his chair. The back of the chair was so high, however, that he couldn't see what was going on behind him. Jack instinctively began to stand and pivot in the direction of the commotion. The single voice then announced, "ALL RISE . . . Ladies and Gentleman, the President of the United States."

Surrounded by a phalanx of Secret Service agents, the small bubble moved slowly forward, only to part as it reached Commander Jack Wayt. The President stepped forward, held an out-stretched hand and said: "Commander Wayt, it is truly a pleasure and an honor to bestow upon you the Presidential Medal of Honor for your service and dedication to the people of this Country." With that, the room erupted in applause. Jack could only smile.

STRATEGIC PLAN

After developing a "most desirable" future scenario, the authors developed a strategic plan to lead Ventura County towards the desired future. A macro-mission statement was developed for the Ventura County Regional Tactical Operations Unit.

It is the mission of the Ventura County Tactical Operations Unit to provide professional, tactical solutions to high-risk situations, using the minimal amount of force necessary.

The twenty five alternatives were evaluated using a given set of criteria. The criteria included both long and short term feasibility, long and short term desirability, increased efficiency, stakeholder support, and the cost versus benefit of each. The group then selected the three final strategies from the list.

Strategy "A"

Create a multi-agency tactical review committee to provide research and development of tactical technology, develop training standards, and establish a

County-wide tactical information network. The committee would consist of representatives of all agencies with a SWAT team and selected private citizens.

Strategy "B"

Establish a County-wide task force to explore the possibilities of a regional approach to SWAT issues. This strategy charges the task force with reviewing current policy and procedure, equipment, and the political ramifications of a regionalized approach.

Strategy "C"

Implement a single, County-wide tactical team to respond to and handle SWAT situations in all jurisdictions. Implement an oversight committee to develop policies, procedures, and standards for use by this single unit.

Strategy "C" was the strategy preferred by the group. The consensus was that the long-term outlook points to increased demand for SWAT teams, while diminishing resources makes successfully meeting that demand difficult at best. A partnership between all of the SWAT teams in the County was an effective and efficient method to meet this demand and continue to deliver the highest quality service to the public. The fact that it calls for some specific actions that will generate interdepartmental cooperation will go far to gain public support and trust, had appeal to the group. This strategy would allow for the expanded use of modern "tools" to better handle high-risk situations.

In addition to the formation of a single team, an oversight committee would be developed to implement policies, procedures, and standards for use by this unit. This strategy calls specifically for the implementation of a full-time SWAT unit to respond to high-risk situations in all County jurisdictions. It focuses on the joint partnerships between County agencies and those interrelated government bureaus from both

County and city jurisdictions.

This strategy implies the accomplishment of several objectives. These include the identification of appropriate staffing, i.e., how the unit will be staffed, who will staff it, what financial responsibilities will be borne by what agencies, what weapons will be used, what tactics will be employed and who will be in charge. A structure to ensure responsiveness to the needs of the customers and accomplishment of the mission needs to be identified and adopted. Additionally, funding sources need to be identified for capital outlays. Steps will also need to be taken to gain political entity approval, staff and employee orientation to the proposal, and development of a proposal to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.

TRANSITION MANAGEMENT

The transition state, where temporary tasks and resources are in action, is different from the present and future environment. The transition management structure is designed to specifically address the responsibilities and activities of the transition period. The most desirable structure, and the most successful, is one that creates the least degree of tension within the existing systems and the greatest opportunity to develop the new system.

Initially, there are critical mass players that must be brought to a position of commitment so that the strategy can be enacted with minimal resistance. A new position, that of Ventura County Regionalized Tactical Unit Commander (TUC), will be designated as the lead player in the effort to implement the preferred strategy. This person must be enthusiastic about the proposal, and must have the credibility and

standing within his own agency, as well as other County agencies, making this person a natural selection for this role. Initially, the TUC must sell this project to each of the Chiefs of Police in the County, especially those with their own tactical units. A special effort will then be required to sell the County Sheriff on the program. The TUC will then have to encourage each of the Chiefs and the County Sheriff to gain the support and approval of the respective City Managers and County CAO. The importance of this step cannot be overstated. Once this is accomplished, support from the staffs of each of the affected agencies will fall into place.

The preferred strategy specifically calls for the establishment of an "oversight committee". This will be the basic "structure" used to accomplish the goals of the strategy. Once the Chiefs and Managers are educated and supportive of taking the required steps to proceed, the next step will be to determine the specific staffing needs of the oversight committee. The oversight committee will perform the management function, led by the TUC, during the transition period. It is essential that there be representation from the various users of the new unit, including tactical team members, city and county officials, legal representatives, County Chiefs and Sheriff's representatives and the consideration of adding "expert" participants from outside the County.

Initially, the TUC will be an active member on the committee, with his influence and behind the scenes participation essential. The TUC will continue to play an active role in the oversight committee throughout the entire process. There would need to be clear lines of communication between the members of the committee and the TUC. If

the TUC is able to persuade the County Sheriff to become an advocate of the strategy, he would be an excellent choice for a seat or eventual chairmanship of the committee. The Sheriff has the political skill and experience in handling major projects and he has a very good relationship with the others in the critical mass. The other members of the committee would be selected to form a team capable of representing the various interests of the critical mass. It will be the role of the Chiefs of Police to involve and to provide the vision formulated by the TUC for acquiring the needed support from the County Sheriff.

Within the oversight committee, there may be other "sub-structures" utilized. For example, it may become evident as work progresses that input is desirable from a panel of tactical experts from the National Tactical Officers' Association, the United States Military, or from some other selected law enforcement tactical group. In that instance, it might be decided to use a "diagonal-slice" technique to gather representatives from the various levels of the organization or community to offer advice or consultation to the oversight committee on a particular issue. Or, as the oversight committee progresses in its work, it may be important to establish a "users group" of line-level tactical officers to represent the viewpoint of the "worker." It is also likely that technology "experts" will need to be brought in to consult with the oversight committee. This will be particularly critical in identifying emerging technologies and planning for their inclusion in the overall tactical policy. It might be important to form a sub-committee to address issues of policy, procedure, and use of force. These sub-committees could involve people from a variety of fields and disciplines. The point is

that the structure selected is not exclusive of other methods or styles.

Clearly, the prospect of state-of-the-art tactical response poses tremendous potential benefit for County law enforcement. The challenge will be to demonstrate how this strategy can benefit the operations of all involved in a collaborative effort with other County agencies.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

During the course of conducting this study, the authors had the opportunity to interact first with a group of experts as an element of the futures forecasting panel and then with a number of experts during personal interviews. As a result of this interaction, several policy topics were developed. Several similar topics are merged together as "policy considerations" and are provided to serve as a basis for further discussion and evaluation.

- 1) Establish written, succinct command and control policies and procedures. These policies need to be addressed prior to the implementation of any proposal and agreed upon in advance. The failure to accomplish this task will lead to abysmal failure.
- 2) From the executive level, a clear, concise policy regarding liability issues must be addressed. The perils involved in any tactical situation, especially one in which high technology becomes the main player, must clearly establish liability and responsibility.
- 3) A mission statement - the dangers of a fragmented, unfocused response and direction can only lead to disaster. Political will changes rapidly and will do so in the future. Politicalization of any team will lead to mismanagement and inappropriate application of resources.
- 4) Local government agencies must move toward full integration of tactical response teams. Giving up control and relinquishing some authority will be required and perhaps the major step.

- 5) Appropriate selection and deployment criteria will be crucial to the effective use of any tactical response team. Difference of opinion, after formulation, will lead to infighting and divergent goals.
- 6) Funding commitments will be crucial. Appropriate safeguards and funding sources must be established and closely monitored.
- 7) Proper implementation and use of technology. The influx of new technologies will be overwhelming and, without proper guidance and selection criteria, these technologies will merely become another "lost" tool in the law enforcement arsenal.
- 8) Law enforcement managers must shed their parochial concerns and address the betterment of a regional area, thus freeing the resources necessary to accomplish this task.

CONCLUSIONS

This research project has further convinced the authors of the value of regionalized problem solving for the myriad of problems confronting metropolitan and rural America. Public/private/civic partnerships are a key strategy in dealing with these problems and taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the new global economy. The emerging concept of "regional communities" is quickly taking hold. Regional communities are geographic areas under independent units of government that share cultural, social, and economic ties. Groups such as the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) provide opportunities for public/private/civic partnerships to network through national conferences, an Internet electronic bulletin board, and a quarterly journal.

This regionalization/consolidation movement in the United States is converging with a technology revolution that has the potential to alter the basic ways that high risk

and SWAT situations are handled by Law Enforcement in Ventura County as well as throughout the country. The formulation of multi-use tactical units on a regional basis makes it possible to handle a variety of high-risk applications with substantial budget savings and a minimum effect on staffing. This, coupled with the boom in technology related military dual-use items and communication equipment, will alter law enforcement's approach over the next ten years.

The rapid development of technology and enhanced communication capability will help tactical units identify and track the ever-more sophisticated suspects. This is especially important in a service delivery system dependent on accurate information and in an ever-increasing mobile environment.

Especially significant are the developments in less-than-lethal technology and communication tools. As was determined by the research, the significant increase in litigation with regard to tactical situations makes it absolutely crucial that this emerging technology be incorporated into every tactical approach. Concerns about how this technology will be used and the related command and control issues could prevent implementation of these new technologies. It will be the challenge of police managers to address these issues so that the beneficial effects can be realized.

The strategic plan of this study calls for the establishment of an oversight committee in order to implement a regionalized tactical unit in Ventura County. The plan calls for a cooperative, joint effort between the local law enforcement agencies, the County Sheriff, and city/county government officials in order to enhance the response to high risk and SWAT situations in the County. This, coupled with the use of advanced technology and regionalized training, moves local agencies toward a more

advanced and sophisticated approach to the ever-increasing issue of violence in our society.

It is clear that municipal and county governments will need to be fiscally conservative in the foreseeable future. Southern California and Ventura County in particular are still in an economic recovery, and even with improved economic conditions it is likely that government expenditures will be closely monitored. While new technologies can be incorporated into very effective systems, the price tag for this capital outlay can be prohibitive.

The technological options available only begin to be illustrated by the following incident:

"The police officer slowly, cautiously approaches the entrance to the besieged apartment. After getting his bearings, he charges through an already opened front door. Scanning the living room, he makes his way to the back bedroom, into which he knows murder suspect Craig Smith has retreated after five long hours of a stand-off. Opening the bedroom's closet door, he finds the suspect burrowed under a pile of laundry. Without fear or hesitation, he plunges his arm into the pile of clothes, exposing Smith. As the bewildered suspect tries to grab the clothing back, the officer fires his weapon, blasting a shotgun out of Smith's hand and disorienting him long enough for more officers to rush in and wrestle him into handcuffs. The tense ordeal is over. As an ambulance is called to take the wounded man to the hospital, and as police, the press, and frightened tenants scurry about, the arresting officer moves unceremoniously out of the building and up a ramp into his custom made berth in the back of a van marked "Hazardous Materials Unit."¹³

The "police officer" in this case is not one person but two human operators and a rather crude 480-pound robot. The scenario is not from "Star Trek" but from Prince George's County, Maryland. In addition to robotics, developments in non-lethal weaponry and computerization continuously unfold. The NCIC 2000 project will spell out specifications for laptop computers with peripheral devices such as mobile cameras

and fingerprint scanners to mention just a couple.

A SWAT team will be able to make entry into a building as if they had been there many times. The PolyShop project developed by the Army's Simulation and Instrumentation Command is ground-breaking work that will produce a networked virtual CAD environment. A modeler sits at a desk and builds a world that can be populated as needed, in a 3D environment on the screen in front of him. The desktop is produced in virtual reality with the modeler wearing chordic input gloves. This means that the interface is completely intuitive allowing the modeler to simply reach out and grasp objects, moving, stretching, and twisting them as they would be in the real world.

The regional and/or multi-agency approach for tools such as those mentioned above spreads the cost over a broader base, resulting in a more feasible alternative. Non-traditional resources include technological exchange with the military. An excellent example of this exchange is the California Counter-Drug Procurement Program, wherein the State of California acts as a broker for military supplies at a greatly reduced cost. It will be essential that law enforcement managers use these creative and innovative methods in seeking out funding sources for new approaches.

The strategic plan of this study calls for the evaluation and formulation of a full-time regional tactical unit. In conjunction with the current efforts by local agencies in that area, this "new" team would have the ability to address the concerns raised during this study. The political issues of command and control, the technology issues of cost and application, and the training issues of expertise and effort can all be addressed from this vantage point, as opposed to the current single agency efforts.

The evaluation of the strategic issues raised in this study calls for a multi-

disciplinary look at a variety of related facets. The basic criteria must include cost, maintenance of technology, training, effectiveness, practicality, and command and control. The formulation of basic policies and procedures cannot be overstated. Input from the private sector cannot be overlooked.

Finally, the overarching question still remains - is there a political will to do what the writers have proposed? - and if there is, is this approach the best way to do it? Is this approach cost-effective and is there a benefit to the local agencies? While the researchers have explored a variety of areas throughout this paper and have examined other areas of the country where this approach has been effective, it remains to be seen whether the issues raised in this study can be adequately answered and whether this cooperative approach is feasible. Devising regional approaches to urban and rural problems is often technically and financially complex, as well as politically difficult. The fact that the issues at hand are high risk SWAT situations only exacerbates that complexity. In order to advance such approaches, local and regional policy officials and professionals must have highly-developed leadership skills and abilities to communicate, negotiate, and build partnerships across and among a broad array of interest groups and diverse communities. It will be important for police managers to examine these areas of common concern and in conjunction with the California Peace Officers' Standards and Training Commission, determine appropriate responses to this vital law enforcement area.

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