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research needs for

HOSTAGE SITUATIONS

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Some interesting questions have arisen from a study of hostage situations that I recently conducted. The study surveyed the present state-of-the-art for coping with hostage situations in law enforcement and corrections. The emerging trend in law enforcement is to use the hostage negotiation model developed by the New York City Police Department. This model uses as its basic philosophy the concept of confrontation management, which was first advocated by the US Army Military Police School's *Civil Disturbance Orientation Course*.¹ Corrections, on the other hand, are more likely to resort to the use of force. The reason for the difference in philosophy seems to be that law enforcement is under closer scrutiny by the news media, the courts, and the public than is corrections. However, the courts recently dropped the hands-off policy regarding corrections; this decision may have an effect on the corrections philosophy for using force in hostage situations.

Despite the differences of opinion on the use of force versus restraints, both law enforcement and corrections agreed that there is a need to develop specific hardware to assist the control force.² The hardware most frequently mentioned was an instantaneously, incapacitating drug or gas. Specifications for this agent are as indicated in figure 1.

None of the gasses or drugs now available meet these specifications. Furthermore, no immediate breakthroughs are foreseen in this area.

The lack of a "cure-all" in the field of hardware lends more importance to developing software and to acquiring a better understanding of human motivation and behavior. The increasingly popular negotiation model

Required Specifications.

- Nonlethal. Dose or concentration will not suffocate, kill, or permanently injure.
- Instant incapacitation.
- Undetectable if incapacitation is not instantaneous.
- Mode of delivery available.
- Protective devices available to the control force.

Recommended Specifications.

- Nonpyrotechnic to prevent causing fires.
- Ease of decontamination.

Figure 1

uses understanding human motivation and behavior to determine tactics. Stated simply, this model trades time for the safety of the hostages. The passage of time allows the control force to gain needed intelligence. It also allows the hostage-taker to make a mistake or become exhausted. It has also been determined that the hostage-taker is less likely to harm the hostages with the passage of time.³ The hostage-taker was also affected by this phenomenon. When asked why he didn't kill the hostages, the hostage-taker replied:

"In the beginning, I could have easy... It was the hostages' fault. They did everything I told them to do... They made it hard to kill. They made us go on living together day after day, like goats, in that filth. There was nothing to do but get to know each other."⁴

The phenomenon has also been dubbed "transference" by the New York Police Department, a term that is receiving widespread acceptance.⁵ This phenomenon has occurred in almost every hostage situation that is allowed to continue over a prolonged period of time. An exception to this rule is the case where the hostage-taker is a psychopath as in the hostage incident at the Texas Department of Corrections in Huntsville, Texas, in 1974. A pure psychopath is unable to form close or lasting bonds with anyone. Transference is so universal, however, that commonly adopted policy is to assault in case a hostage is killed. The assumption underlying this switch in tactics is that the hostage-taker is not normal, may be a psychopath, and will kill all the hostages unless the control force uses force. A lone incident in Holland casts doubt on this assumption and leads to a need for further research.

The Holland incident saw the South Moluccan terrorists kill a hostage after negotiations had begun. Instead of assaulting, the Dutch Army continued negotiations. The terrorists subsequently surrendered after a 13-day siege and released 23 other hostages.⁶ Later analysis by the commander of the New York Police Department's Hostage Negotiating Team revealed that the hostage who was killed entered into a negative relationship with his captors while the remaining hostages entered a positive relationship.⁷ This negative relationship has been dubbed


counter-transference. Further research into this area may negate the assumption that once a hostage is killed, force must be used. Since the mission of the control force is to insure the safety of the hostages, continuing negotiations after a killing may still be the best way to achieve maximum success. However, much research is still required in this area.

Another assumption that needs testing is the one made by most correctional institutions. This assumption is: if the inmate hostage-taker is allowed to move his hostages outside the confines of the prison, he is more likely to kill or injure them than if he is kept isolated within the institution. This theory has some support among foreign criminologists.⁸ Foreign police, like American corrections, are more unlikely than American police to allow the hostage-taker to move his hostages. Although keeping the situation static may prove to be the best tactic, it has not yet been field tested.

The last area developed in the study that suggested the need for further research was the increased use of females as hostage negotiators. Dr. David G. Hubbard, author of *The Skyjacker*, points out, "It is dangerous for a man to challenge a male skyjacker; a stewardess can handle him with much less risk."⁹ Similar instances of females defusing crisis situations better than men are becoming more prevalent as more women are allowed front-line employment in law enforcement and corrections. The same trend has developed in Great Britain where the actions of female traffic wardens are much less resented than the actions of their male counterparts. Much of women's success can be attributed to the fact that a woman is much less threatening to a male criminal than is another male. This, however, is not the sole reason. Studies have revealed that women are superior to men in empathy and observation and therefore judgement.¹⁰ In a hostage situation a female inherently has greater ability to determine what will motivate the hostage-taker to surrender himself and his hostages. These studies indicate that the female's superiority is attributed to her greater interest in observing people. This interest in observing people may be dulled by the female's expanded role in today's society, for she is exposed to the same environmental pressures as is a male. Dr.

Freda Adler, author of *Sisters in Crime: The Rise of the New Female Criminal*, estimates that females will only enjoy this superiority for the next five to ten years if the same trend of increased job opportunities continues.¹¹ Even if the use of females as hostage negotiators provides only a temporary advantage, lives may be saved in the interim. This area requires further research because the police departments and departments of corrections surveyed indicated no particular preference for women over men as negotiators.

Much progress has been made in coping with hostage situations since the "Munich Massacre" of 1972. Responding to these crisis situations armed with psychological as well as physical weapons, police have increased their rate of success. Court pressure on corrections may force the adoption of similar procedures. Research into the aforementioned areas may result in a further in-

crease in the success rate. 

Major Needham is currently attending the regular course of the US Army Command and General Staff College.

FOOTNOTES

¹Morgan, J. P., Jr. "Confrontation Management," *The Police Chief*, January, 1971, pp. 20-24.

²Control force refers to either police or correctional officers, with or without augmentation, used to control hostage situations.

³Hassel, Conrad V. "The Hostage Situation: Exploring the Motivation and the Cause," *The Police Chief*, September 1975, p. 58.

⁴Lang, David. "A Reporter at Large: The Bank Drama," *New Yorker*, November 25, 1974, p. 126.

⁵Balton, Michael. "Hostage Negotiations: Alternative to SWAT," *Law Enforcement News*, December 1975-January 1976, p. 2.

⁶"Siege in Holland," *Time*, December 22, 1975, p. 32.

⁷Snyder, Tom. "Interview with Lieutenant Frank Bolz, Commander, New York City Hostage Unit," *The Tomorrow Show*, New York: National Broadcasting Corporation, April 20, 1976.

⁸Middendorff, Wolf, "New Developments in the Taking of Hostages and Kidnapping," *Das Polizeiblatt*, October and November, 1974.

⁹U.S. Congress. House. *Terrorism, Part 1*, 93d Congress, 1st Session, 1974, p. 2957.

¹⁰Smith, Henry Clay. *Sensitivity to People*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966.

¹¹Adler, Freda. "Female Criminality, Action and Reaction," *Eleventh Annual Interagency Workshop*, Huntsville, Texas, June 8, 1976.

He, She, or It?

The US Army Military Police School's Training Literature Division has, in the past year or so, found itself with a problem of sorts: sexist references. "When the military policeman arrives at the scene, *he* should assure that all witnesses report to *him* prior...." Our military police manuals are, as you can imagine, full of such references to the male law enforcer. In the process of changing and revising this official literature, however, the Training Literature Division is continually striving to take female military police into account and purge sexist references from the manuals.

The basic policy involves substituting "Military Police" for "Military Policemen" and

"MP" for "Military Policeman." Where the pronoun "he" appears, "the MP" can usually be substituted. Other suggestions have been made but appear to be too cumbersome; for instance, the suggestion was made that writers follow the lead of political parties in their change from "chairman" to "chairperson." Somehow, though, "policeperson" just didn't have the same ring. Compounding the problem, it seemed that if the writers were expected to refer to "policepersons," then they would also be obligated to refer to "firepersons" and "cowpersons".

There was also a continuing problem of just how far writers must go to cleanse military police law enforcement

literature of sexism. In FM 19-5, discussion would have to be directed to the "personly art of self-defense". It would also be necessary to caution every new MP not to "person-handle prisoners." Even in traffic accident investigation, sexist references would need to be eliminated: "Driver of Vehicle No. 1 lost control when the right front wheel of the vehicle struck a *person*:hole which was missing its *person*-hole cover".

It is the sincere hope of the Training Literature Division that all Military Police personnel recognize the efforts being made to assure that a sexist syndrome does not personify itself in Military Police literature.

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