



# Policy Study: Non-lethal Technologies



## Analysis of National Security Policy Implications of Non-lethal Weapons

September 19, 1994

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### Agenda

- **Possible Employment of Non-lethal Technologies**
- **Policy Implications of Non-lethal Technology Employment**

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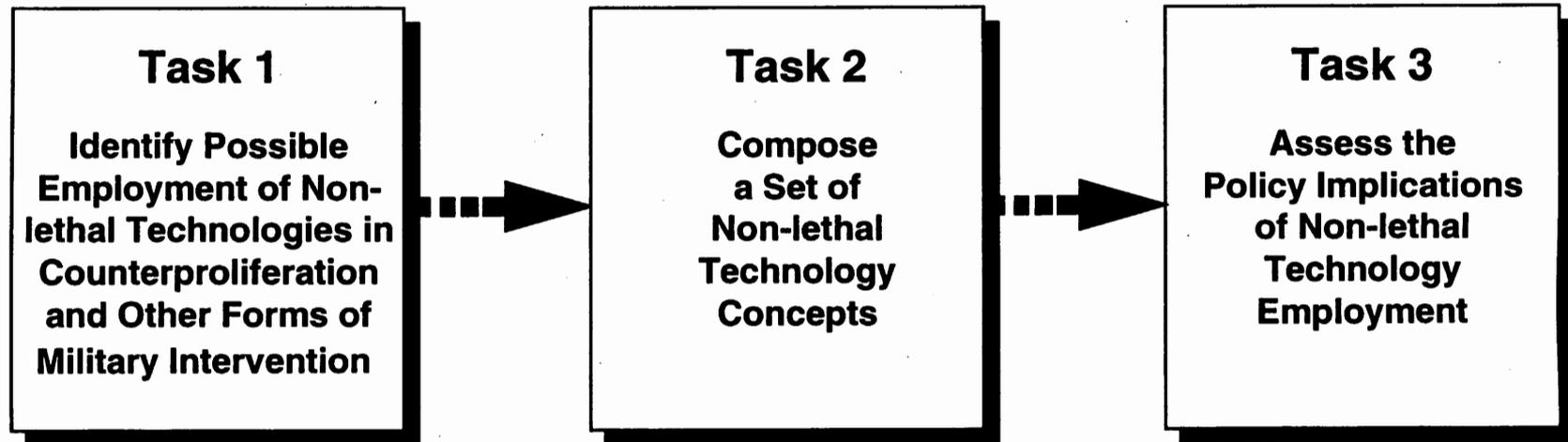
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## Study Flow Chart



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## Possible Employment of Non-lethal Technologies

### Missions

- Low Intensity Conflict
- Special Operations
- Counterproliferation



### Operational Tasks

- Traditional
- Emerging
- Technology-enabled



### Operational Needs for Non-lethal Technologies

**Non-lethal  
Technologies to  
Meet Operational  
Needs**

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## *Possible Employment of Non-lethal Technologies*

### Key Findings

- **Operational Needs for NLWs Exist**
- **“Top 10” Needs for Non-lethal Technologies**
- **Technology-enabled Operational Tasks**

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### ***Possible Employment of Non-lethal Technologies***

### **“Top 10” Needs for Non-lethal Technologies**

- **Disable Personnel**
- **Disable Weaponry**
- **Disable Vehicles, Machinery, and Other Equipment**
- **Disable, Disrupt, or Manipulate C<sup>4</sup>I Systems**
- **Destroy or Disable Facilities/Structures**
- **Influence or Manipulate Enemy Behavior and Decisions**
- **Disable Radar**
- **Mark Personnel for Identification**
- **Erect Barriers to Personnel and Transportation**
- **Disrupt Logistics Systems**

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### *Possible Employment of Non-lethal Technologies*

## **Technology-enabled Operational Tasks**

- **Climate Control Operations**
- **Electronic Deception for Strategic Deployments**
- **Electronic Deception for Tactical Special Operations**
- **Facility Denial**
- **Financial Disruption Operations**
- **Behavior Modification**
- **PSYOP Sky Holograms**
- **Subversive Mimicry**

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### Policy Implications of Non-lethal Technology Employment

- Foreign Policy Implications
- Strategic Implications
- Domestic Implications
- Conclusions

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## *Foreign Policy Implications*

### **Potential Contributions of Non-lethal Technologies to Implementation of Foreign Policy**

- **Military**
  - Enhanced discriminate use of force
  - Early intervention potential
  - More credible deterrence
  - Military support to OOTW
  - Demonstrate unique U.S. military capabilities
  
- **Political**
  - Enhance other instruments of policy (e.g., embargoes)
  - Provide critical, unique support to allies and coalitions
  - Demonstrate effectiveness of limited use of force
  - Support for broad arms control objectives

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## *Foreign Policy Implications*

### **Potential Foreign Policy Constraints on Use of Non-lethal Technologies**

- **Military**
  - **Credibility of traditional deterrence means and methods**
  - **Availability of lethal force, when needed**
  - **Vulnerabilities (own forces to hostile non-lethals and own non-lethal force to hostile lethal force)**
  - **Uncertainty of effects**
  
- **Political**
  - **Ability to deliver what we promise**
  - **International agreements**
  - **Technology transfer and export controls**
  - **Wrong political message**

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## *Foreign Policy Implications*

### **Implications of Non-lethal Force for Foreign Policy**

- **U.S. gains flexibility to define use of force spectrum**
  - In OOTW
  - In regional conflict
- **Multiple thresholds are possible**
- **Broader potential for coercion/persuasion as instruments of foreign policy**
- **Policy challenge is to project force options in an environment of intensifying arms control**
- **Provides for negative and positive security guarantees**
- **Political basis for early/preemptive action will need to be established**

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## *Strategic Implications*

### **Implications of Non-lethal Technologies for Military Operations**

- **Tactical level of war**
  - Relaxation of tight rules of engagement for OOTWs
  - Requirement for new BDA indicators and definition of “defeated targets”
  - Fewer complications caused by collateral effects of lethal force
- **Operational level of war**
  - Ability to act early and continuously, including better opportunities for preemption
  - Ability to “strike” otherwise protected targets and non-traditional targets
  - Requirement for improved intelligence and targeting
- **Strategic level of war**
  - Broadened U.S. freedom of action
  - Counter to negative deterrent of our capabilities
  - Expansion of options across range of future missions

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### *Strategic Implications*

## Critical Strategic Issues in the Use of Non-lethal Technologies

- The mix of lethal and non-lethal force on the battlefield
- Protection of own forces from effects of friendly and adversary NLWs
- Firebreaks
- Casualties
- BDA/"Kill Assessment"
- Security of non-lethal technologies and potential for technology transfer

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### Domestic Implications

- **Public Opinion Regarding NLWs**
- **American Political Culture**
- **Cultural Preconceptions**
- **Media Coverage of NLWs**
- **Influential Interest Groups**
- **Legal and Ethical Considerations**
- **Domestic Impact**

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### *Domestic Implications*

### American Political Culture

- ***Insularity:*** Americans generally exhibit little knowledge of or concern about the rest of the world unless their interests are directly engaged
- ***Ethnocentrism:*** Knowing little about the rest of the world, Americans tend to project their own values and experiences onto other peoples
- ***Moralism:*** Americans tend to feel that their motives are morally superior to those of other nations, and that the U.S. should set an example for others
- ***Purpose:*** Americans resist involvement in foreign conflicts unless their actions can be seen as serving a higher purpose, rather than self-interest; wars thus tend to become moral crusades

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### *Domestic Implications*

### American Political Culture (Cont'd)

- ***Casualties:*** Because wars are moral crusades, Americans can accept high enemy casualties; but they have great difficulty accepting the need for U.S. casualties
- ***Tactics:*** Once involved in war, Americans prefer decisive action; they are uncomfortable with limited warfare and constraints on the use of weapons
- ***Technology:*** Americans like high-tech solutions to political problems, seeing them as evidence of U.S. ingenuity
- ***Charity:*** Americans usually help vanquished adversaries to recover from wars

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## *Domestic Implications*

### Public Opinion Re NLWs

- **Except for firmly-rooted cultural values, mass and elite opinion in the U.S. concerning national security and foreign affairs seems uncertain and impressionable**
- **In the absence of a coherent framework for ordering perceptions, circumstantial factors play a major role in shaping public reaction to specific security challenges**
- **Success in using one type of NLW will tend to elevate the perceived value and visibility of all NLWs; failure in using one type will tend to discredit all types**
- **Therefore, the response of elites and the mass public to NLWs will be heavily influenced by (1) cultural preconceptions and (2) the particular circumstances in which they are first used**

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### *Domestic Implications*

## Cultural Preconceptions

- **Americans will reject NLWs if they appear to be inconsistent with key values, setting a moral example, or minimizing U.S. casualties**
- **Americans will embrace NLWs if they provide a high-tech solution to a pressing problem**
- **Americans will embrace NLWs if they produce decisive results; Americans will resist NLWs if they appear to prolong conflict or impede clear-cut victory**
- **Americans will tend to be unimpressed with the unique suitability of NLWs to particular political challenges, since they are not conversant with the subtleties of foreign politics**

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### *Domestic Implications*

## Media Coverage of NLWs

- **Liberalism of leading journalists and media outlets means perceived ethical and environmental concerns may dominate public discussion of NLWs prior to operational employment**
- **Once employment occurs, discussion will tend to shift to more focused issues such as operational effectiveness and budgetary impact—unless the initial employment is a spectacular failure or success**
- **Television will tend to focus its coverage on visual effects and the feelings of participants, rather than empirical or abstract factual content**
- **Print media will tend to focus upon controversies such as the cost of the weapons and their efficacy on the battlefield**
- **Pejorative labelling, e.g., the “Star Wars” mindset, is very much in evidence**

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### *Domestic Implications*

### **Influential Interest Groups: A Left-wing Critique**

- **NLWs violate international treaties banning chemical and biological warfare**
- **NLWs damage the environment**
- **NLWs make war more likely by reducing its destructive consequences**
- **NLWs are unethical and inhumane (noncombatant injuries, collateral effects, combatant maiming, etc.)**
- **NLWs cost too much and/or don't work**
- **NLWs are part of a military-industrial conspiracy to preserve influence in the post-Cold War world**

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### *Domestic Implications*

#### **Influential Interest Groups: A Right-wing Critique**

- **NLWs reflect a sentimental and naive view of war**
- **NLWs reflect a lack of resolve to defend U.S. interests**
- **NLWs put the lives of U.S. soldiers at risk**
- **NLWs compromise the operational effectiveness of U.S. forces**
- **NLWs do not produce the psychological effects necessary to deter potential aggressors**
- **NLWs do not produce the physical effects necessary to punish actual aggressors**
- **NLWs encourage micromanagement of the military by politicians**
- **NLWs are politically correct but militarily irrelevant**

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## *Domestic Implications*

### **Legal and Ethical Considerations**

- **Technological change introduces legal and ethical questions in many fields of human endeavor**
- **U.S. procedure**
  - All new weapons reviewed for compliance with laws of war and other legal obligations
  - Use of NLWs subject to same legal constraints as lethal force
- **Just War Tradition (right conduct in use of force)**
  - Military necessity
  - Proportionality
  - Discrimination
  - Humanity
- **Some of most difficult questions concerning compliance with the law of armed conflict and general ethical considerations may arise not from the use of NLWs but by election *not* to use them**

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### *Domestic Implications*

## Domestic Impact of NLWs

- **The concept of non-lethality needs to be carefully explained to avoid misunderstandings and unrealistic expectations**
- **Emphasis on lethality leads many observers to think of NLWs in purely anti-personnel terms**
- **The public has little information about NLWs and therefore will tend to respond to them based on (1) cultural and (2) circumstantial considerations**
- **Grouping of diverse systems under a common rubric encourages singular generalized reactions**
- **NLWs seem tailor-made to aggravate tensions in U.S. political culture; they invite both praise and derision**
- **The media will play a key role in shaping public perceptions of NLWs, and journalists are generally excited about the news potential**

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### *Conclusions*

#### **Effective employment of NLWs will:**

- **Offer to policy-makers more options for:**
  - **Early and/or preemptive intervention in conflicts**
  - **Discriminate use of force, especially in OOTW**
  - **Limiting conflict escalation**
- **Require addressing such critical strategic and military issues as:**
  - **Integration of lethal and non-lethal weapons in conflicts**
  - **Vulnerability of friendly forces employing NLWs**
  - **Rules of engagement**
  - **Effective intelligence support and BDA for NLW use**
- **Have to be consistent with American political culture and will require American public support—support shaped by:**
  - **Government leadership**
  - **Key media**
  - **Influential interest groups**
- **Have to comply with the standards of:**
  - **Just War tradition**
  - **International and domestic law**
  - **Ethical norms**

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