Written by **Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.** on January 20, 2010

RAND Corporation Calls for a Domestic Stability Police Force

Given the United States government's response to the natural disaster in Haiti, there is increased interest and scrutiny in the ability of the American military's ability to perform critical police functions in a nation whose infrastructure is destroyed, leaving domestic law enforcement ill-equipped to handle the typical immediate increase in lawlessness (looting, burglary, etc.) that flourishes in the post-cataclysmic chaotic free-for-all.

Since, as headlines in all the major national papers record, a military force that is more equipped for conquering than controlling populations faces seemingly insuperable challenges when acting in a policing capacity, the RAND Corporation has come to the rescue.

The RAND Corporation is the establishment's go-to think tank for the pseudo-scientific justification for both the planned and perfidious expansion of government and the corresponding contraction of liberty. The latest RAND report, prepared at the behest (and on the dime) of the United States Army, is over 200 impenetrable pages long and proclaims loudly the urgent need for a "Stability Police Force (SPF)."

It should shock no one that the RAND Corporation's suggestions include relieving the Army of its police role. The Army's budget is tight (to the point of reportedly sending troops into harm's way outfitted with troop transports that are little more than assembly-line jeeps), the global deployments in furtherance of the spread of American hegemony and empire have stretched thin the available corps of soldiers, and the consistent policy of subsequent presidential administrations is to steadily send surge after surge to the front lines of the "war on terror."

According to the text of the 213-page study, entitled *A Stability Police Force for the United States: Justification and Options for Creating U.S. Capabilities*, an SPF "is a high-end police force that engages in a range of tasks such as crowd and riot control, special weapons and tactics (SWAT), and investigations of organized criminal groups." The authors of the report affirm that they have but one goal: present evidence for why (or why not) an American SPF is necessary. Again, in the immortal words of Watergate-informant "Deep Throat" to Woodward and Bernstein: "Follow the money." In this case, the Army funded the study and the report's conclusions seem foregone.

The RAND Corporation's pedigree and preference renders its findings less than revelatory, as well. The study goes on and on attempting to coat its government-expanding agenda in a patina of urgency, but despite the academic meanderings, the paper ends where you imagine it would, with a plan for the establishment of a new domestic, federal police force to respond to worldwide calamities and conflicts.

On page 15, the paper sets forth the questions to be answered: First, does the United States need a Stability Police Force? Second, if an SPF is necessary, what should it look like (including staffing issues, headquartering issues, and costs)? The answers given to these questions are based on several stated assumptions, including the "optimal" ability of an SPF to perform "high-end policing" duties; the skills and training necessary to performing such functions are only available in the civilian law enforcement world (primarily because of the restrictions imposed on such activity by the Posse Comitatus Act); the establishment of such a corps would be politically challenging, principally due to inter-agency jealousy and their white-knuckled grasp on power; and finally, the host country's domestic authorities have to be on-board with deployment of the force. A cursory perusal of the answers to these questions and dismissal of the assumed opposition is at once alarming and predictable.

Need for an SPF

The report announces that given the global scope of America's active foreign policy, there is indeed a need for some force to both augment the military presence deployed in trouble zones, and to carry out mission-critical assignments for which, says the RAND Corporation, the military police is regrettably ill-trained, because of the lack of real-world experience due to the constraints of the Posse Comitatus Act.

While the Army is adept at crushing organized resistance, they are a blunt object and thus ill-suited for the more delicate and precise project of "establishing basic law and order" and "defeat[ing] or deter[ing] criminal organizations, terrorists, and insurgents." These jobs, the report claims, should be performed by the proposed SPF in order to free up military resources to perform the tasks for which they were designed, trained, and outfitted.

Building an SPF

No coterie of policy wonks is more intimate with the metes and bounds of modern American foreign policy than the RAND Corporation. They are always ready with pen in hand and survey on file to ratify the establishment's never-slaked thirst for exporting their principles and imposing their power at every blip of disorder that appears on their global radar. For this reason, there is little wonder that the authors of this latest study deftly describe the tasks that "logically flow" from the objectives they set out above for the SPF. Crowd control, intelligence collection and analysis, and criminal investigations are a few of the "high-end policing tasks" of which the SPF's playbook would be composed.

Strangely, with the possible exception of criminal investigations, the other tasks seem to sit squarely in the wheelhouse of military police forces. The RAND Corporation goes on for pages describing the years of experience possessed by military forces in the patrolling and policing of foreign cities left in disarray after war or natural disaster. The only weakness identified time and again by the RAND Corporation's analysis of the military police is that body's dearth of "domestic" police activities.

Sizing an SPF

Three case studies are presented by the RAND Corporation to support their recommendation of an SPF of 6,000 police. While this size force would be sufficient for "small" jobs like Cuba, Macedonia, or Cote d'Ivoire, the government would be best served by "a larger force" to handle stability operations in Iran, Pakistan, Nigeria, or Venezuela. Could it be that by enumerating these potential theatres of SPF action the RAND Corporation is tipping readers off to the forthcoming thrust of American interventionist foreign policy?

Deployment Speed

While there are those who would call an SPF unit such as that proposed "occupiers," the authors prefer the softer, gentler moniker “external interveners.” Within 30 days, says the report, a battalion-sized SPF unit should be deployed in order to achieve “positional advantage against current or potential adversaries.” Even the vague and ominous choice of language reveals more of the authors’ vision than perhaps they intended. This gap-filler force is designed not only to re-establish law and order, as claimed early in the report, but to stand on guard ready to face future foes. That sounds less like a traditional police action than a military occupation.

Headquarters in the U.S. Government

After examining and weighing the relative advantages and disadvantages of various possible agency or organization that could quickly and effectively produce an SPF as recommended by the paper, the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) is named the “most likely to successfully field an SPF.” The reason behind the choice of the USMS to provide men and means to the creation of this new occupation force is not that the officers of the USMS are abler or better trained, not that they possess some strain of especially potent skill set perfectly matched to the mission for which they would be deployed, rather the reason the USMS is selected for the service is that the most desirable option is out of reach because the Posse Comitatus Act. “Without relief from this constraint, it [the military police corps] could not take advantage of the opportunities provided … to develop and maintain the needed skills,” the authors claim.

The RAND Corporation informs its client (the United States Army) that while its military police is the deepest pool of potential members of the new force, it lacks training for such a mission during downtime from its deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. The report laments the prohibition against such skill-sharpening activities imposed by the Posse Comitatus Act. The Army option is “logistically superior to it [the USMS option], but the legal difficulties inherent in it are probably too great to overcome,” they reluctantly demur. Probably too difficult?

However, despite rightly recognizing the proscription on military forces performing civilian policing duties on American soil, the report indicates that the most important factor is not the training challenges imposed by the Posse Comitatus Act, but the funding challenges imposed by congressional squabbling sure to precede the allocation of funds sufficient to staff, train, and equip the SPF.

Cost

As with so many similar proposals, this report, funded by the Army, paints its findings as budget-conscious and cost-saving — in the long run. Always in the long run. “An SPF … might pay for itself,” crow the authors. The thriftiness of the creators of a new 6,000-man force is noble and unassailable and so should obviate all opposition.

Yet the bottom line of creating, staffing, equipping, training, and housing of the SPF is about $600 million per annum. This money, says the report, could be taken “from elsewhere in the U.S. government.” In other words, if supporters can’t siphon sufficient funds from an already allocated budget item, then there’s always the tax-raising option. Like its sister studies, the cost of this new force will be strapped firmly and forever on the already bowed backs of the American taxpayer. Lack of money should not deter those determined to field such a force as a shiny new tool of expansionist foreign policy.

A Building Block of Big Government

Basically, says the RAND Corporation, the upsides of this new Stability Police Force outweigh all

downsides, and the gears of its creation should be engaged forthwith. While it is true that the details of the mission indeed indicate that the role would be most logically and effectively played by the military police corps, the pesky proscriptions imposed by the Posse Comitatus Act prevent the peacetime training that would be critical for the mission-ready maintenance of the new global law-enforcement force. Were it possible, somehow, to remove this obstacle, then the SPF could be quickly created, rapidly deployed, and effectively schooled and exercised in the carrying out of its particular police duties.

If the Posse Comitatus Act proves an insuperable impediment, then the U.S. Marshals Service would be called off the bench to accomplish the goals of the American interventionist foreign policy. The officers of the SPF would be tasked with "lead roles in policing, judiciary, and corrections efforts" throughout the world, wherever the military is deployed or wherever "future foes" might adopt resistant postures unhelpful to the unchecked enshrinement of American hegemony.

The report's final paragraph informs the Army that while the "findings do not minimize the role" played by the traditional military, they could always use a hand from a police partner trained to "supplement its [the Army's] activities overseas" and impose the "rule-of-law" on the chaos and disorder so prevalent around the globe, particularly just before the arrival of American troops.