



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program



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### TRANSCOM Exercises Assess Non-Lethal Capability Gaps

By Jennifer Bowen

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*Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point security forces park their vessel next to a boat carrying mock protesters to tell them to leave the restricted waters during Point Defender 2009's entry control point and perimeter infiltration exercise.*

*JNLWP photo by Michael Fincher*

U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) is making efforts to incorporate non-lethal capabilities into its operations. As one of its main responsibilities, the command provides transportation, sustainment and distribution support to the nation's warfighters. With the counter-piracy operations the United States is currently conducting in the Gulf of Aden and the Somali Basin, TRANSCOM is looking to increase its non-lethal weapons capabilities.

The Department of Defense defines non-lethal weapons as "weapons, devices and munitions that are explicitly designed and primarily employed to incapacitate targeted personnel or materiel immediately, while minimizing

fatalities, permanent injury to personnel and undesired damage to property in the target area or environment. Non-lethal weapons are intended to have reversible effects on personnel and materiel." Non-lethal weapons provide warfighters with escalation-of-force options when lethal force is not the best first response. These capabilities assist warfighters in discerning intent, delaying and deterring individuals, and discriminating targets in a variety of missions ranging from full-scale combat to humanitarian relief – all while minimizing casualties and collateral damage.

Conducting a capability-gap assessment is a critical first step to incorporating a new non-lethal capability into a command's operations. The assessment allows military leadership to see where, if at all, a capability could meet an operational need. The military often conducts these capability-gap assessments during annual training exercises.

The Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC), a TRANSCOM component command, conducts two such annual training exercises at its military ocean terminals in Sunny Point, N.C., and Concord, Calif. The exercises provide a venue for military personnel to validate each installation's anti-terrorism and security policies and procedures. Federal, state and local emergency services participate to ensure all entities coordinate the protection of two of the nation's strategic ports. This year, the command considered the role of non-lethal weapons for the first time.

TRANSCOM held Point Defender 2009 July 21-31 in Sunny Point and Coyote Shield 2009 August 12-22 in Concord. The exercises included mock protest demonstrations and entry control point and perimeter infiltration exercises, with mock adversaries entering from both land and water. During the exercises, TRANSCOM Non-Lethal Weapons Combatant Command Liaison Officer Michael Fincher conducted a capability-gap assessment to see where non-lethal weapons might fit into SDDC and TRANSCOM military operations. The Department of Defense's Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program sponsors Fincher's liaison activities with the command.

"Our commander is an advocate for the use of non-lethal weapon technologies, especially in counter-piracy operations," said Fincher.



*Mock protesters attempt to enter the Military Ocean Terminal during Point Defender 2009's entry control point and perimeter infiltration exercise. At this year's exercise, TRANSCOM considered the role of non-lethal weapons for the first time.  
JNLWP photo by Michael Fincher*

According to Fincher, preliminary results suggest that including a variety of non-lethal weapons into the command's military operations could increase TRANSCOM's operational capabilities. Fincher will formalize the results of the capability-gap assessment and submit a report to TRANSCOM and the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program (JNLWP). The report will include non-lethal weapons counter-materiel and counter-personnel recommendations.

"I anticipate that the report will recommend non-lethal weapons that provide visual and sound hailing and warning, riot and crowd control, and vehicle and vessel stopping effects," said Fincher.

Fincher expects to submit the final capability-gap assessment report in September.

For more information on non-lethal weapons, visit the JNLWP website at <https://www.jnlwp.com>.