



MEDIA RELEASE

Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program



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NATO Honors Non-Lethal Weapons Study

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A study on the effectiveness of non-lethal weapons recently received a prestigious NATO award.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) Research and Technology Organization (RTO) selected the System Analysis and Studies-060 (SAS-060) study on non-lethal weapons effectiveness as a recipient of the RTO 2008 Scientific Achievement Award. U.S. Marine Corps Colonel Kirk Hymes, Director of the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate (JNLWD), based in Quantico, Virginia, chaired the study. The JNLWD administers the U.S. Department of Defense's Non-Lethal Weapons Program.

Non-lethal weapons provide warfighters with a range of capabilities across the full spectrum of threats and crises. These devices can range from simple, commercially available items such as bean-bag rounds, pepper spray and entangling devices to high-tech directed-energy systems that provide non-lethal effects at greater distances. Non-lethal weapons help protect our troops while minimizing fatalities and damage to property.

In 1999, NATO identified non-lethal weapons as a critical need to meet the demands of future military operations. However, NATO understood that before commanders would feel comfortable employing non-lethal weapons, they needed to understand their effectiveness. So NATO commissioned two studies. The first developed a methodology for assessing the effectiveness of non-lethal weapons. The second, referred to as SAS-060, tested, verified and extended that methodology.

The U.S. served as the lead nation for the SAS-060 study, with Col. Hymes as the chairman of the international task group that conducted the study. John Nelson, Senior International Defense Analyst for the JNLWD, served as the task group's vice chairman. The SAS-060 Task Group also included 11 other NATO member nations: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

NATO selected the study for the prestigious award for its "exceptional effort in significant RTO activities, excellence and originality in the scientific and technical content therein, as well as outstanding results in terms of military benefit," according to the award notification letter.

Col. Hymes and Nelson accepted the award on behalf of the SAS-060 Task Group during a formal awards ceremony and dinner this fall in Bucharest, Romania. Jacques Bongrand, chairman of NATO's Research and Technology Board, presented the award.

Bongrand told Col. Hymes, "I am extremely pleased that your team has been chosen for this honor and, on behalf of all Board members, extend to you and your team my warmest congratulations."



Col. Kirk Hymes (center) and John Nelson (left) accept the 2008 Scientific Achievement Award from Jacques Bongrand, chairman of NATO's Research and Technology Board, at an awards ceremony in Bucharest, Romania.

Photo courtesy of NATO