

For Immediate Release
Veterans For Peace: www.veteransforpeace.org

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CONTACT: Michael McPhearson, 314-303-8874
Elliott Adams, 518-441-2697

VETERANS GROUP OPPOSES COMBAT BRIGADE'S PERMANENT U.S. ASSIGNMENT

**"It is a sad day for America when government prepares to protect
itself by using the military on its own citizens."**

A national veterans' organization sent a letter to the House and Senate leadership Monday, October 6 expressing "grave concern" that an active duty combat brigade has been permanently assigned to a post on U.S. soil.

Citing a little-noticed article posted September 30 on the Army Times website, Veterans For Peace said the Pentagon's unprecedented move assigned the 3rd Infantry Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team to NorthCom, a joint command established in 2002, for a 12-month assignment.

The Army Times article stated the brigade may be called upon to help with "civil unrest and crowd control."

"Just who are these unruly crowds and dangerous individuals this unit will be using its 'nonlethal' weapons on...American citizens?" asked Michael McPhearson, VFP Executive Director. "After the overwhelming display of police force I witnessed at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, this news is extremely disturbing. It is a sad day for America when our government is preparing to protect itself by using the military on its own citizens."

McPhearson added, "Make no doubt about it, these so-called 'non-lethal' weapons will kill and injure people when used on crowds." Here are just a few examples of what is available.

- Raytheon Corp.'s Active Denial System, designed for crowd control in combat zones, uses an energy beam to induce an intolerable heating sensation, like a hot iron placed on the skin. It is effective in excess of 400 meters, beyond the range of small arms.. Company officials have been advised they could expand the market by selling a smaller, tripod-mounted version for police forces.
- The FN 303, from FN Herstal Corp., fires a .68 caliber plastic shell filled with Oleoresin Capsicum (red pepper) with "inflammatory properties that force the eyes to shut, while causing an intense stinging sensation to the skin, throat, and nose. The result is total incapacitation lasting for up to 45 minutes." Range, 50 meters.

- M5 Modular Crowd Control Munition “is similar in operation to a claymore mine, but it delivers...a strong, non-penetrating blow to the body with multiple sub-munitions (600 rubber balls).” Range, 30 meters.
- Long Range Acoustic Device can emit sound “50 times greater than the human threshold for pain” at close range, causing permanent hearing damage. Range, 500 meters.

VFP President, Elliott Adams, concluded, “We consider this very dangerous. Policing citizens must be left to the police. Once we begin to bring soldiers into the picture the dynamic changes. The troops in Iraq found themselves between a rock and a hard place trying to police Baghdad. They did not have the skills to do police work. They know how to use overwhelming force as opposed to adequate force. We must also ask how this mission infringes on Posse Comitatus and the Insurrection Acts that limit the powers of the federal government to use the military for law enforcement. VFP will further investigate this and join with others to ensure the powers of the federal government are kept within appropriate limits.”

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Founded in 1985, Veterans For Peace is a national organization of men and women veterans of all eras and duty stations spanning the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, Gulf and current Iraq wars as well as other conflicts cold or hot. It has chapters in nearly every state in the union and is headquartered in St. Louis, MO. Our collective experience tells us wars are easy to start and hard to stop and that those hurt are often the innocent. Thus, other means of problem solving are necessary. Veterans For Peace is an official Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) represented at the U.N.