

Chaos at Intercon Hotel

by Capt Timothy E. Barrick

Situation

You are a Marine rifle platoon commander in a multinational force conducting peacemaking operations in a war-torn Third World country. At 0600 on a rainy morning, you set out with your platoon on a dismounted patrol through your battalion's sector of the nation's capital. You have a machinegun squad (two M240Gs), two SMAW teams, and an antiarmor squad (four Dragons) attached. Additionally, each of your fire teams is carrying two AT4s. At 0630, you hear the following report to battalion from a light armored reconnaissance patrol farther to your north:

"Thunder 3, this is Rat 1, observing 3 T-72s and about 30 to 40 dismounts moving south on Sunset Boulevard. Uniforms and markings belong to Faction X."

At 0635, you hear gunfire to the north and the following over the radio:

"Thunder 3, this is Rat 1, contact! Tanks are firing on my pos! I have one vehicle destroyed and at least four men down! I'm disen- -"

The radio transmission abruptly ends. At 0640, you receive the following frag order:

"U.S. forces have been engaged. Faction X designated as hostile. Weapons free versus Faction X. Enemy tank-infantry team moving south on Sunset Blvd. Move your platoon to vicinity Intercon Hotel and establish a hasty defense in order to prevent enemy penetration south of Sixth St. You have no air or arty in support, but you have priority on 81s. You are advised utmost caution to minimize/prevent civilian casualties."

As you ponder the ambiguity of the last sentence of your frag order, you quickly maneuver your platoon north. As you near the Intercon Hotel, the scene before you is one of chaos. People are fleeing the streets. Several shout, "Tanks!" as they run by and point north up Sunset Blvd. You put your platoon sergeant and 3d Squad into building L (see map)

and 2d Squad into M while you move with 1st Squad into the bottom floor of the Intercon. As you enter, you see about 20 foreigners and locals in the lobby. They are all very excited and anxious. At least two are obviously reporters, and their cameramen are positioned in anticipation of the tanks rolling by on Sunset Blvd.

You switch frequencies on your radio to talk to the scout team you know to be positioned in the hotel. The team reports:

"We're on the 6th floor facing north. There are three T-72s and at least two platoons of infantry moving south on Sunset. The lead tank and infantry have just passed Third Street. The tanks are moving at a crawl, allowing the infantry to clear the way in front of them."

As you put down the radio, you feel about 30 pairs of eyes, both Marine and civilian, staring at you in expectation of your orders. What do you do now, Lieutenant?

Requirement

In a time limit of 2 minutes, decide what orders/reports you will issue, then provide a sketch of your actions and the rationale behind them. Submit your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #99-9, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134 or fax it to 703-630-9147. Solutions may also be submitted by e-mail. See our web site at <www.mca-marines.org/gazette/gaz.html> for instructions.



For more detailed information on the structure of Marine Corps units, Marine Corps equipment, and symbols used in TDG sketches, see MCG, Oct94, pp. 53-56 and the modification reported in Jan95, p. 5.

