

The Threat by 1LT Jerome J. Ghigliotti, Jr., USAR

Situation

Your Marine expeditionary unit (special operations capable) (MEU(SOC)) is currently embarked aboard three amphibious ships that are part of a larger Navy task force built around two aircraft carriers. Shipistan is a country allied with the United States. The Shipistan military has been largely loyal to the government; however, large portions of the civilian population are in revolt and sympathize with enemies of the United States.

The MEU's mission is to secure nuclear-armed ballistic missiles at Moslemibad and Turbanisgahd. Moslemibad is located at the north end of a long valley and has a civilian population of 10,000; Turbanisgahd is approximately 6 miles to the southeast and has a population of 15,000. The civilian population of the small village to the southwest has been estimated at 5,000. The Navy task force is approximately 145 miles from the valley. Company A is assigned to secure the 21 nuclear-armed, intermediate-range missiles at Moslemibad. These missiles are reportedly targeted against a U.S. ally to the east. Company B is assigned to secure 31 medium- and long-range ballistic missiles targeted against another U.S. ally to the southeast. The missiles are in hardened silos. The Air Force will provide a C-5A to land and extract the warheads using the 13,000-foot runway, 33-13. Company C and Weapons Company are in reserve.

The missile silos are identified as circles within the dashed lines of the installation's fence lines. There are three civilian cities in the area. The three cities include approximately 450 buildings and an estimated population of 3,000 civilians. The warheads weigh approximately 200 to 500 pounds each. As a company commander, you're expected to transport the warheads to the airfield by locally conscripted trucks. Roads connect the installations. The northeast to southwest road is a two-lane road with power lines. The northwest to southeast road is a four-lane highway without power lines. The valley opens to the south, bordered by the Red River to the west and the Green River to the east. Navy demolition teams have been attached to each rifle company. There are sufficient CH-46s (24) to insert two companies simultaneously.

You command Company A. You have been inserted into Moslemibad, north of the missile installation perimeter (Landing Zone Albatross). Once on the ground you are informed that Company B has been effectively eliminated as a fighting force. The C-5A has landed, but the 13,000-foot runway has been rendered unusable; only the 7,800- and 5,000-foot runways remain in operation. The longer of the two is approximately 500 feet too short for a fully loaded C-5A to take off under combat conditions. You are also informed that the CH-46s have been refueled and that battalion wants to know where Company C—which will be under your command—should be inserted. Civilians have overrun both missile installations and are armed with AK-47s, rocket propelled grenades, and car-mounted machineguns; some vehicles may have improvised explosive devices on board. Weapons Company remains in reserve. A squadron (12) of F/A-18s is on call. They are armed with two air-to-surface missiles or could be loaded with two 1,000-pound bombs or eight smaller conventional bombs. They are only 30 minutes out, 45 minutes if they need to be armed with conventional bombs. The CH-46s can make another insertion flight but will not be available for extraction. They are 1 hour out.

Requirement

In 5 minutes decide what your requests to higher headquarters and attack aircraft will be and issue any orders to your company and Company C. Provide your requests, orders to your two rifle companies, an overlay of your scheme of maneuver and fire support plan, and the rationale for your actions.

