

# Trouble in Barass

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## Situation

The battalion you command is part of a Marine expeditionary brigade (MEB) spearheading the United Nations operation in Barass, a Third World country torn apart by civil war. The aim of the operation is to bolster the democratically elected president by preventing insurgents from taking over the country.

The MEB mission of checking the rebel advance on the capital Cucaracha has been achieved by a show of force. A stalemate has occurred and negotiations are ongoing between the insurgents and the democratically elected government. Your interim mission is to disarm all militias in your area of operations (AO) and provide humanitarian aid to the civilian population. The militias are believed to have withdrawn northward

out of your AO. Rules of engagement allow you to use deadly force in self-defense and if met with noncompliance when disarming militias. A minimum of force is to be used.

It is 1800 and the sun is setting. Its rays won't be seen again until tomorrow at 0600. The battalion is located 30 kilometers (km) north of Cucaracha. Charlie Company has been detached to guard the U.S. Embassy in the capital. Riots have broken out in Cucaracha, and operations to evacuate foreign nationals are pending. Yesterday morning 12 men from Alpha Company were taken hostage while distributing food to locals 20km west of your position. The perpetrators belong to a group called the "Nasty Boys." Fueled by alcohol and drugs, they are known to have raped, plundered, murdered, and mutilated their

way across Barass. Through an intermediary the MEB has been able to get in touch with the group. Demands for the release of the hostages seem unclear and have ranged from cases of beer, weapons, and cell phones to a HMMWV. Intelligence has revealed that the hostages are held in the village of Liessa. Two scout/sniper patrols are on the site and have reported that the hostages are held in building X guarded by eight soldiers manning four sangars (stone breastwork, lookout post) around the house. A platoon-sized unit has been observed in building Y. At least two more platoons are believed to be billeted somewhere in Liessa. A company is billeted in Fubar, a nearby village. Heavy machineguns are located north of Fubar. In both villages civilians roam the streets. The shallow and fast-flowing Kotori River runs westward through mangrove swamps.

Your immediate superior fills you in. "We have it from reliable sources that the hostages are to be transferred to an unknown location tomorrow evening. Between your present location and Liessa we believe there are between six to eight potentially hostile company-sized militias armed with small arms. We have no antiterrorist unit available to support you. You must rescue your Marines before they are moved. Four CH-53s, two AH-1W Super Cobras, and one CH-46 will support your operation."

## Requirement

In a time limit of 20 minutes develop your intent, plan, and tasks to subordinate units. Provide a fragmentary order, overlay of your scheme of maneuver, fire support plan, and the rationale for your actions. Submit your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #03-3, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, fax 703-630-9147, or e-mail <gazette@mca-marines.org>.

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