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By **DAVID HAMBLING**

Oct. 11, 2008—

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The contract for the pain ray trucks is "expected to be awarded by year's end," Aviation Week notes. "A year after the contract is signed, the combination vehicle/weapons will start be fielded at the rate of one per month."

It's been a very long time coming. As we've previously reported, there have been calls to deploy the Active Denial System in Iraq going back to 2004. But it's always been delayed for legal, political, and public relations reasons. Anything that might be condemned as torture is political dynamite. Interestingly, the version being bought is not the full-size "Version 2," but a containerized system known as Silent Guardian, which Raytheon have been trying to sell for some time. They describe Silent Guardian as "roughly 1/3 the size and power of the other Active Denial Systems," and quote it's range as "greater than 250 meters." The larger system has a range somewhere in excess of 700 meters.

Silent Guardian weighs a shade over 10,000 pounds all up, and will be mounted on an "armored ruggedized HEMTT [Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck]."

The announcement arrives on the same day as a new report from less-lethal weapons expert Dr. Jürgen Altmann that analyzes the physics of several directed energy weapons, including Active Denial, the Advanced Tactical Laser (used as a non-lethal weapon), the Pulsed Energy Projectile (a.k.a. "Maximum Pain" laser) and the Long Range Acoustic Device (a.k.a. "Acoustic Blaster").

Dr. Altmann describes the Active Denial beam in some detail, noting that it will not be completely uniform; anyone unlucky enough to be caught in the center will experience more heating than someone at the edge. And perhaps more significant is his thorough analysis of the heating it produces -- and the cumulative effect if the target does not have the chance to cool down between exposures. In U.S. military tests, a fifteen-second delay between exposures was strictly observed; this may not happen when the ADS is used for real.

"As a consequence, the ADS provides the technical possibility to produce burns of second and third degree. Because the beam of diameter 2 m and above is wider than human size, such burns would occur over considerable parts of the body, up to 50% of its surface. Second- and third-degree burns covering more than 20% of the body surface are potentially life-threatening due to toxic tissue-decay products and increased sensitivity to infection and require intensive care in a specialized unit. Without a technical device that reliably prevents re-triggering on the same target subject, the ADS has a potential to produce permanent injury or death."

This potential hazard need not be a show-stopper -- existing less-lethals, such as plastic bullets and tear gas, can also be fatal under some circumstances (and I'm not even going to get into the argument about Tasers).

Dr. Altmann notes that "the present analysis has not found convincing arguments that the ADS would be immoral or illegal in each foreseeable circumstance," and that acceptance will depend very much on how it is used. If the ADS prevents small boats from approaching a U.S. vessel without harming anyone, then it will be seen as a humane option. If it is used to clear protesters out of the way it may be seen differently.

Meanwhile, the National Institute of Justice is still has a reported interest in a "hand-held, probably rifle-sized, short range weapon that could be effective at tens of feet for law enforcement officials." That's just one of the likely domestic applications of Active Denial technology which are likely to follow if the Army's experiment with ADS is successful. A lot of people will be watching this one very closely.

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[89 comments](#)

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An operational version of the Active Denial System is shown. It is an invisible, counter personnel, directed-energy weapon.
(U.S. Air Force)

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ronhwaters 10:09 PM

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Posted by:

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Admin Link: 94

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Posted by:

Viscor 4:00 PM Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 93

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Posted by:

wuggyman 12:53 PM Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 92

This is a magnificent invention. I say we line the US - Mex border with these ADS devices, pointing south, of course. Turn them ON, and leave them on indefinitely. Advise the Mex gov't to post warning signs. This would be a great start in stopping illegals from invading the USA.

Posted by:

TemplePB 11:56 AM Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 91

The USA, once the leader for freedom and democracy, has become what it once despised. Torture has been "validated" by the government; now these legal torture devices will be used against civilians in the street. SHAME ON THE USA!

Posted by:

skyskatr 8:35 AM Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 90

Buck Rogers in the 21st century.

Posted by:

123 Carroll 8:20 AM Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 89

non-lethal? LOL did you even read the report? "a new report details how the SUPPOSEDLY non-lethal blaster could be turned into a flesh-frying killer. " I would rather get shot than die a horrible painful death due to infections from 3rd degree burns...people should actually read the article.

Posted by:

SlickCheney 5:11 AM Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 88

Didn't any of you watch the 60 Minutes episode about this device? It's harmless unless you continue to advance toward its source. It can be set to a range (let's say 100 yards) and once someone steps into it, they feel pain. If they take a step back, the pain stops. Get it? People who are anti-war should applaud the use of such devices because they are non-lethal. This sort of thing saves lives on both sides and helps to reduce potentially hostile or violent situations.

Posted by:

jrBUUCK 3:04 AM Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 87

i got one of these at home, except in a smaller scale. They call it a 'microwave oven'.

Posted by:

SlickCheney 1:50 AM Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 86

Think Bush isn't ready for his marshal law...

Posted by:

Sport2069 12:10 AM Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 85

Think Bush is not ready for his marshal law...

Posted by:

Sport2069 12:09 AM Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 84

Pretty simple: don't riot, and there will be no need for the ADS. Mess with the troops or cops, and you will be in pain.

Posted by:

kelly30708 Oct-12 Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 83

Sounds like the perfect thing for ships going through Somalian waters. They should re-market it as Pirate-B-Gone

Posted by:

Vitis01 Oct-12 Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 82

Sounds like the perfect tool for cruise ships going through Somalian waters. They should re-market it as Pirate-B-Gone!

Posted by:

Vitis01 Oct-12 Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 81

...and for another 50 million, for a limited time we will send you our latest model for 3 easy payments of 25 million. You can heat up those annoying governments and cities from 1000s of miles away. They wont know what hit them or from whom. Their population will dwindle to nothing in the years to come. No destruction. The enemy will become extinct: no gas, no bullets, no bombs, no messy biowarfare. Its the latest in technology. All your allies will want one.

Posted by:

beyetmi Oct-12 Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 80

They could use these on the border between the US and Mexico.

Posted by:

AZPaulC Oct-12 Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 79

The military could save a lot of money by building some "Palin Ray" trucks instead, broadcasting high intensity sound clips of Palin's irritating voice and inane statements at the enemy instead of microwaves!

Posted by:

buk422x Oct-12 Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 78

Well, Center of Self 7. Maybe you'd like to show us all your big brain and bring us into the fold of the delusionally enlightened? Arrogant #####.

Posted by:

mrbubbleintrouble Oct-12 Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 77

once again, here they are...the creme de la creme of the intellectual world are here to enlighten...

Posted by:

Center Of Thought 7 Oct-12 Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 76

Hell, we can't even trust cops with tasers and now we want the ability to microwave crowds like so much Jiffy-pop! If our leaders are doing such a bad job that they have to come up with weapons like this to protect against rioting maybe the propblem isn't with the people. Let's turn the weapon around and use it on the most deserving.

Posted by:

mrbubbleintrouble Oct-12 Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 75

@ Schrencken The high microwaves are NON-IONIZING RADIATION which cause their own scope of damage to living tissue through exposure. As a beam, they cause tissue damage and through long terms exposure (such as what we are bathing in a sea of in the US with all the RF unregulatedcompared with other nations), non-ionizing radiation is proven to cause

cancer and autoimmune diseases. In fact, it is now recommended that children under 16 do not use a cell phone. And that is a much lower microwave frequency, as you pointed out. The real issue is that this is neurologically based purely pain inflicting weapon. THAT is the real problem. Pain weapons (aka torture devices) are internationally banned by all civilized nations, the US having once been one of. Just by calling a weapon whose only functions are the cause intolerable pain and have the potential to burn someone to death from the inside out a "non-lethal weapon" doesn't make it any more palatable to those with intelligence and standards of a civilized society. If a country such as Iran was to be introducing this weapon, we'd hear endless condemnation of it. But when the US introduces it, it's touted as wonderful. This weaponry is demonic and should be opposed by every citizen of every rational nation.

Posted by:

Intelligent Civilian Oct-12 Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 73

The military performs controlled tests that keep test subjects within the specified parameters. (Unless they are lab-rats. They they watch them smoke.) Once determining that the expense justifies the cost, the government declares this....(what would you call it?) deterrent....crowd control....ultimate weapon....(no, not that) ...um, "Something The Good Guys Use to Fight the Bad Guys"...whatever it is, EFFECTIVE, then it is implemented by the government for use against it's own people.My question.....what happens when it's used by men who throw "specified parameters" to the wind? Is that even possible? At this very moment Sarah Palin is being questioned about the abuse of her power, and this when she is subjected to such scrutiny. What about ordinary, everyday law-enforcement guys, who think they can fly under the radar? Why does the government assume that they can trust the everyday man, when they don't even trust each other?

Posted by:

Just2Cents Oct-11 Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 72

It's interesting how much fear is born out of scientific ignorance; regardless of one's political leanings it should be agreed upon that the US is falling behind when it comes to scientific (and mathematical) education. A typical microwave oven (and, coincidentally, your cordless phones and cell phones!) operates at a frequency of 2.4 gigahertz. That wavelength is excellent for penetrating and heating organic matter (cooking food) and also a good frequency for communications. The ADS operates at 95Ghz, a much higher frequency that behaves more like infrared light than lower frequency radio waves (even though they are still considered to be radio waves, they are at the very high end of that part of the spectrum, right below IR light). It is also NOT ionizing radiation (that which damages living tissue at the cellular level, leading to cell mutations and cancer), such as the UV radiation that people are stupid enough to pay to lay in a tanning bed and soak up! That said, like any other "non-lethal" weapon, there certainly could be circumstances where people could be injured or killed. Someone could get trampled to death by a crowd trying to avoid the beam. Someone could get burned if they are unable to flee or somehow trapped. Then again, how many people have died after being Tasered? The effects of electricity on the human body are well known but often unpredictable. People have even died from being exposed to pepper spray. Basically this boils down to scientific ignorance and a fear of new technology.

Posted by:

Schrecken Licht Oct-11 Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 71

Just more money down the #####. Call it the Democracy Enhancement Stabilization System, and fund it for 20 years. Didn't occur to someone to use treds? A few bullets and this thing

becomes immobile. But anyway, what's the point of this? If the masses are so massed to use it, then I think there are other problems of a much larger nature. Can't these defense people think of something that will help people? Yet, they want to "humanely" (or non-lethally) disperse the crowds? To where? The next protest? When all you have is a hammer, everything (and everyone) looks like a nail. Inverse thinking.

Posted by:

Scott Harmon Oct-11 Mark As Violation

Admin Link: 70

It really is sick don't you think? That we have banks failing everywhere, people losing jobs and homes and our govt finds new ways to demean us--oh and the rest of the world too--another Bushism in progress....

Posted by:

thomfing Oct-11 Mark As Violation