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POINT PAPER

Impact of U.S. Army Adoption of 5.56 mm
Second Standard NATO Ammunition

1. SITUATION

U.S. Army policy on employment of new 5.56 mm second standard ammunition as a single caliber for both individual and light support weapons has resulted or will result in following problems:

- a) During past and present gun/ammunition development process User has had to reduce target effectiveness requirement for light support weapon by 40%, i.e. from 1,000m to 600m.
- b) Would preclude employment for next 10-20 years of 7.62 SLAP except in M60/M240 MG's.
- c) PIP M16 A-1 will result in 2-5 year program to product improve and produce new or retrofitted M16 A-1's with 1:7" twist barrel, and strengthened stocks and forearms. Replacement of 1.3 million M16 A-1's in Army inventory would be costly and done over a 3-5 year basis as a minimum. Replacement cost of 1.3 M16 A-1's in U.S. Army inventory is about \$ 360 million (in 1979 \$). Cost of rebarrelling M16 A-1 and adding strengthened stocks and forearms would be at least \$ 85 per rifle - an approximate total of \$ 110.5 million. The result of this 5-10 year program would be to:

- (1) Product improve and ageing system. The M16 has been in the inventory for 17 years - longer than the M-1 Garand.
- (2) Field a system which, by 1985-1987 will be outmoded by the new FRG G-11 Caseless Rifle/ Ammunition System. By 1987 most or all other NATO countries will have adopted and partially fielded the G-11. At that juncture, unless the U.S. joins the NATO government consortium for G-11 development, it will be left alone with a non/NATO standard 24 year-old rifle and a second NATO round which no other nation will use.

2. COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

In the interests of standardization and interoperability the most logical course of action would be to adopt a SAW which is convertible to either of the NATO standard rounds. With this course of action:

- a) The new 5.56 mm second standard NATO round could be employed at squad level.
- b) With a 7.62 mm conversion kit the 7.62 mm SLAP round could be employed at squad level.
- c) The SAW in the 7.62 mm mode could provide interoperability with the light support weapons of all NATO troop units.
- d) M16 A-1 PIP could be deferred or limited in view of the NATO government consortium to develop and produce the G-11