Memorandum

To: Republic of Korea Army Special Warfare Command

From: Lindsey S. Sparrock

Date:

Re: Modification of the 707th Special Mission Battalion via the creation of a Foreign Counter-terrorism Coalition

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# Summary:

Confidential

In this memo, I will propose modifications to the current 707th Special Mission Battalion and provide an explanation for the efficacy of this modification. The addition of a foreign counter-terrorism coalition to enhance the 707th Special Mission Battalion the Republic of Korea (ROK) will protect against urban terrorist attacks regardless of the origin of the attacker. This is becoming increasingly necessary as the ROK’s prosperity and global influences make it not only a target for North Korean covert or sleep-cell attacks but also Islamic based terrorist and domestic terrorist. South Korea was once isolated but today enjoys strong tourism and a growing population placing it at risk for terrorist attacks.

**Proposal:**

During the past years it has become increasingly apparent that the ROK needs to work more closely with foreign allies to prevent future terrorist attacks. This is especially pressing as the ROK becomes more westernized and cooperates globally with other nations who currently are experiencing a higher level of risk themselves. There seems to be a shared understanding by the 707th Special Mission Battalion and foreign allies that terrorist threats are increasing and that the risk is even more prevalent in high tourist settings where there are large groups of both foreign and domestic civilians. Therefore, I am proposing that, starting August 1, 2018, we initiate a foreign counter-terrorism coalition that will be created within the existing 707th Special Mission Battalion.

This new position would serve as a Special Forces unit when a large number of foreign civilians are expected such as in the upcoming Winter Olympics, February 3, 2018, which will take place in South Korea. The 707th Special Mission Battalion would be better equipped for such an event as noted when they were formed after the Munich massacre [[1]](#footnote-1)**,** just in time for the 1982 Olympics, which were held in South Korea. The soldiers in this coalition would coordinate with foreign ally groups to better improve efficiency of interacting with civilians of different backgrounds and understanding how to handle various terrorist situations, as well as gain experience, increase relationships and exchanges with international Special Forces communities in order to reach max effectiveness as a counter-terrorism unit.

Additional requirements would include proficiency in at least one other language besides Korean, monthly joint training, and general knowledge of current known domestic and foreign terrorist threats.

**Background:**

As mentioned earlier, the 707th Special Mission Battalion is an existing Special Force unit in the Republic of Korea Army Special Warfare Command that was created shortly after the Munich massacre. The unit is the ROK’s primary counter-terrorist and quick reaction force. The units’ soldiers are tasked with conducting urban counter-terrorist missions [[2]](#footnote-2).

Currently, the 707th Special Mission Battalion trains with foreign allies including the U.S. Army’s Delta Force, British Special Air Service, Russia FSB, Alpha Group, French GIGN, FBI HRT, Hong Kong SDU, and Singapore Police Force STAR, although the relationship between the 707th and foreign allies does not extend any further than that.

**Reasoning:**

Creation of a foreign counter-terrorism coalition would improve interactions with civilians, foreign and domestic, and foreign allies, as well as utilize those interactions to better serve and protect. The importance of such interactions can be observed when looking at the following evidence.

* **Munich Olympics Massacre:** The attack took place during the 1972 Olympics in Munich, West Germany, at which eleven Israeli Olympic team members were taken hostage and eventually killed by the Palestinian terror group Black September [[3]](#footnote-3). The 707th Special Mission Battalion was founded in the aftermath of the Munich Massacre. The Munich Olympics Massacre showed that there was an impending need for a specific unit that would be trained in dealing with terrorist attacks. The foreign counter-terrorism coalition would further allow the protection and potential prevention of such incidences that contain a large number of foreign civilians, or simply domestic civilians of foreign backgrounds.
* **Beslan School Siege:** The siege [[4]](#footnote-4) started on September 1, 2004, lasted three days, involved the capture of over 1,1000 people as hostages, and ended with the death of at least 385 people.During this siege cooperation and coordination among different units and forces were lacking leading to a large number of civilian casualties. This incident serves as an important lesson on the essential nature of a foreign counter-terrorism coalition that would be equipped with the tools to properly handle a hostage incident by terrorist as well as being able to build upon various perspectives to best coordinate a plan of action.
* **Imperial War Museum; Fighting Extremes- from Ebola to ISIS:** At the Imperial War Museum’s exhibit, Fighting Extremes: from Ebola to ISIS [[5]](#footnote-5), the assistance of foreign allies was observed via physical aid, information sharing, and, more relevantly, joint training. Joint training among different nationalities is essential to lasting cooperation and the eventual enhancement of individual countries. By creating a foreign counter-terrorism coalition the soldiers within that unit will be less biased, better trained, and more likely to have positive relations with foreign and domestic civilians.
* **Council on Foreign Relations; Briefing by Amy J. Nelson, Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow:** During her briefing [[6]](#footnote-6) on arms control Mrs. Nelson noted 5 essential variables: risk reduction, uncertainty management, environmental uncertainty, uncertainty about capabilities and intentions, and general information. Although not explicitly related to arms control, a foreign counter-terrorism coalition would be able to assess all 5 variables and use that knowledge to more accurately plan for and respond to terrorist attacks. The unit would have an array of members with different backgrounds who would be able to coordinate under sensitive missions that maintain a wide degree of uncertainty as well as be able to determine risk factors based on their overall knowledge base.
* **ISIS Influence Expanding Toward Foreign and Domestic Civilians:** The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) [[7]](#footnote-7) is a known terrorist organization that has been linked to several terror attacks. As the organization expands so does its influence on civilians, specifically those who are vulnerable to becoming radicalized. There have been several instances of ISIS sympathizers in South Korea participating or assisting in terrorist activity [[8]](#footnote-8). This enhances the risk of an urban terrorist attack occurring, heightening the need for a foreign counter-terrorism coalition.
* **CIMIC COE Presentations:** Under a training procedure given at the Civil Cooperation of Excellence (CCOE)[[9]](#footnote-9), members are able to build better relationships with civilians and other nonmilitary organizations such as relief and aid agencies. Taking away from this the foreign counter-terrorism coalition would be better able to interact and form strong relations with civilians and nonmilitary organizations before, during, and after a potential terrorist attack.
* **Social Psychology; Floor Theory of Radicalization:** When considering the threat of a terrorist attacks it is essential to look at the process of radicalization as noted by the Floor Theory. South Korea has not had any major domestic terrorist attacks in the past and hence more of the focus is rightly directed towards foreign terrorism, such as Islamic based terrorist[[10]](#footnote-10), as well as the ever-present threat that North Korea poses.

**Conclusion:**

Regardless of if an actual terrorist attack does occur, the foreign counter-terrorism coalition would support foreign relations while including an expanded background of different nationalities and points of views. The creation of such a unit would greatly improve the handling of sensitive terrorist attacks in urban settings against a large number of foreign and domestic civilians alike.

1. Jennifer Rosenberg, “Munich Massacre,” *History1900s.about* 21 January 2016, Web, 4 June 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Eric Sof, “707th Special Mission Battalion,” *Special-Ops* 2 June 2013, Web, 4 June 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. T. Shahara Simmons, “The Rise and Fall of the Black September Organization,” 21 May 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Elizabeth Bennett, “Beslan School Siege,” 20 May 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Imperial War Museum: Fighting Extremes- from Ebola to ISIS Exhibit, 22 May 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. J. Amy Nelson, Council on Foreign Relations, 19 May 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Claire Hirschhorn, “The Rise of ISIS,” 21 May 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Agamoni Ghosh, “South Korean-Man arrested on suspicion of working with Isis,” *Ibtimes* 18 November 2015, Web, 4 June 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. CIMIC COE Presentations, 25 May 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. John Power, “On heels of North Korean threat, South Korea now fears Islamic terror,” *Atimes* 21 January 2016, Web, 4 June 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)