

ABSTRACT

PROBLEMATICS OF INTEGRATING NEW USE OF FORCE OPTIONS INTO ROUTINE POLICING

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Non-lethality is a far wider concept than only the question of whether the target person dies. There are three counterparts in a police incident: the bystander, the police officer and the target person. It is the duty of the police officer to protect them all from unjustified danger and injury.

Any means of force, especially a firearm and ammunition must meet certain technical non-lethality criteria to ensure that its use has only the intended effect. Protection must also be timely. If the first patrol on scene is unable to act, lives may be lost.

A special well-designed single purpose weapon has no doubt its place in law enforcement and security. Simple reasons, however, like an officer's ability to carry additional equipment combined with response time requirements may often make it impossible to adopt special equipment for general patrol use. On the other hand routine patrols encounter most of the incidents requiring immediate action.

A firearm is often placed into the category of lethal force. This interpretation is far from correct and can lead into serious consequences. A firearm is at best a multi-purpose launcher capable of covering nearly the entire use of force continuum. Being able to use a single weapon for several levels of force can yield significant benefits both in safety, efficiency and money. The Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian police forces have launched a project in order to introduce a multi-purpose weapon platform, the Nordic Police Tactical Launcher. It is an attempt to give a single police patrol more self sufficiency in handling the multitude of incidents it encounters.

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