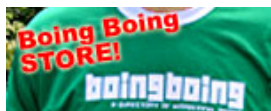




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Thursday, September 2, 2004

RNC-NYC: reported presence of long-range acoustic device (LRAD) at protests

BoingBoing reader Kevin Slavin says,

"Things are getting a little heavy about 10 blocks from here -- police are reported (widely) to have shown up at a large demonstration manning an LRAD. What's an LRAD? Long-range acoustic device. Military non-lethal technology being tested in Baghdad and Fallujah, and it looks like, right now: NYC.

First two links off Google: [one](#), [two](#).

This is heavy and damaging stuff, that leaves no marks when used on humans. Latest text reports say it's been turned on, pointing west, volume low. You can hear live coverage from Union Square by calling 212 400 7458, option 4.

Update: As he walks towards the protest site in question, Slavin text-messages BoingBoing from his mobile phone:

"Here are updates via indymedia now-- they are discussing the LRAD -- it's a lot of people saying it, but I still can't confirm."

[Ed. note: following is an abridged excerpt of the first-person accounts now being posted on the indymedia site, shown in reverse chronological order.]



08:20 PM: There is an additional small contingent of protesters rallying at 34th and 7th. Large # of police. The group is planning to march to the ANSWER rally.

08:13 PM: There is a carnival atmosphere in Union Sq. Lots of art for sale, and a great presence by Iraq Vets. against the war. Several thousand at least. Caller feels that the police presence is heavy but par for the course in NYC at this point.

08:01 PM: The Protest Warriors are being put in their own pen. It is expected that the two pens will scream at each other for a while.

07:51 PM Officer has powered on the LRAD (sound weapon) device, pointing it west. volume is at minimum. It has not been deployed yet.

07:41 PM: Police have penned the south side of Union Sq. 07:30 PM: 1500 people now in Union Sq. Large police presence but fairly chill so far. Bike police on all corners. As it gets dark the crowd seems to be getting more excited and larger, still festive atmosphere.

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07:12 PM: There are 100-200 people at 29th St. and 8th Ave in the ANSWER pen. There are several hundred people in Union Sq. Reports of law enforcement with semi-automatic weapons at 34th St. and 7th Ave.

06:42 PM:Receiving reports that an LRAD (sound weapon) is present at north side of Union Square.

[Link](#) to update transcript from indymedia, and [Link](#) to a related page on their website with background on the device -- said to weigh only 45 pounds, and shown in the AP file photo here.

Snip from Brian Braiker's July 12 *Newsweek* article ([Link](#)):

In February the Marines signed a \$1.1 million contract for the devices; the I Marine Expeditionary Force took them to Fallujah and the Navy's Fifth Fleet has them in the Persian Gulf. (McSweeney didn't know if they'd been used.) Miami, Los Angeles, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and the Department of Homeland Security are considering purchases. With protestors coming to New York and Boston for the conventions, might we see the first domestic use this summer? Gruenler hints: "All I can say is there are cities you would recognize."

And, this from an August 30 AP story from Ellen Simon ([Link](#)):

Earlier this month, the New York Police Department showed off a machine called the Long Range Acoustic Device, developed for the military and capable of blasting at an earsplitting 150 decibels -- as loud as a firecracker, a jet engine taking off or artillery fire at 500 feet, according to the Noise Center at the League for the Hard of Hearing. The NYPD said it would use the machine to direct crowds to safety if there's a terrorist attack or remind protesters where they're allowed to march. Police said they wouldn't use the earsplitting screeching noise feature at the convention. "It's only to communicate in large crowds," Inspector Thomas Graham of the police department's crowd control unit said.



Update 2: Image from indymedia said to be snapshot from site of protest taking place right now; the LRAD device is shown mounted atop police car. [Link](#) to full-size image shown in thumbnail at left. [Link](#) to more snapshots of LRAD device from other protest events during the RNC. See also wikipedia entry for

background ([Link](#)), and this August 25 CBS report on NYPD's plans to use LRAD at RNC: [Link](#)

BoingBoing reader Charles ODonovan says, "I just noticed that the name of the guy who invented the LRAD device deployed at the RNC was also mentioned on BoingBoing back in March with one of his other inventions: [Link](#)."

posted by Xenii Jardin at 05:17:21 PM [permalink](#) | [Other blogs' comments](#)



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