



# LESSONS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

BY KEVIN REEVE

**The recent unrest in South Africa is just one of the many items curiously absent from U.S. news coverage on most days.**

**H**aving spent many years studying what happens in cities when a disruptive event occurs, I have taken great interest in what is happening in Durban and the surrounding areas presently.

South Africa is still dominated by tribal politics. Police recently arrested the former president for corruption. The former president is Zulu. This was followed by an immediate violent response from the area's Zulu population. Large numbers of Zulu people began attacking and looting stores and malls, cleaning them out and burning them.

Like many mob actions, the fury grew into a storm and before long all the stores in the area were looted and destroyed. Rioters then turned their attention to the distribution hubs where food and medicine were warehoused to be shipped from. Like Aesop's cautionary classic *The Goose That Laid the Golden Egg*, the rioters destroyed the very infrastructure they need to stay alive.

The government eventually sent security forces to quell the violence, but it was too late for the businesses in the area. The Zulus attacked the Indian and white owned neighborhoods who, in turn, formed self-protection groups and defended their neighborhoods by force. The urgent validity of America's Second Amendment for emergencies was reaffirmed and the criticality of private gun ownership was again demonstrated as desperate South African families were forced to defend themselves. The so-called "militias" emerged after exhausted and disbursed police were overwhelmed and bypassed by looters. With resources expended, police became mere witnesses to the criminal attacks. Self-defense groups endeavored to protect neighborhoods and save lives until the South Africa Defence Force (military) arrived.


Once the city was depleted of resources, the looters turned their attention to the surrounding communities and looted and burned all of

their businesses as well. The result was what is sometimes called a "food desert", where people have to be able to travel long distances to obtain basic needs. The post offices, distribution points for welfare money and other resources, were also looted and destroyed.

Some wonder if this could ever happen in the United States. It already has. In 1992, the Rodney King riots in Los Angeles included: widespread rioting, looting, and burning of stores, many owned by Korean Americans. When order was eventually restored, many businesses were not reopened. Community infrastructure had been destroyed and locals had to make long journeys, often on buses to meet basic needs. They experienced life in a "food desert".

Racial strife and class warfare themes are reported to have been key components of South Africa's contemporary strife that resulted in targeting Indian and white owned businesses not unlike the targeting of Koreans in South





**The problems in South Africa will continue because there is a large population competing for what are now very limited resources.**

Central and Compton Los Angeles decades earlier. Existing friction points combined with the deliberate actions of opportunists fueled racial animosity to ever higher levels until the only thing needed to create a disaster that would ultimately bring suffering to all was a single incident.

Is the situation in major U.S. cities at all similar? Racial animosity, tribal alliances and escalating opportunists with both short- and long-term goals are clearly evident.

## FORECASTING

I believe that every city in the United States with a population over 250,000 is at risk. A look at a race distribution map of Los Angeles shows that the city is still largely segregated. You have predominately white areas, black areas, Hispanic areas and Asian areas. Racial divides are not the only factor, but they are a large one, and Los Angeles bears a lot of similarity to other major cities.

I believe that the larger the city, the more likely violence will erupt. The precipitating event is generally a perception of injustice from one or more ethnic groups. The shooting of a black man by a white police officer, the verdict in the Rodney King trial, and the accounts of the death of George Floyd have all triggered violence, looting and burning. Some cities, such as Portland, are in a perpetual state

of violence with little official effort to restore peace and security. In fact, official actions curiously appear to incentivize lawlessness in some cities.

## BE PREPARED

Like a good Boy Scout, be prepared. Here are some suggestions:

**Suggestion one:** Have a safe haven identified and coordinated that you can go to if things break down. This could be as simple as communicating mutual assistance plans with distant family members or friends to welcome them in your home and vice versa if needed. Multiple options in multiple locations is best, but be prepared to hold up your end of any agreements.

**Suggestion two:** Do an area study. Identify where violence has occurred in the past. Identify areas with high crime rates. Identify where different ideological and demographic boundaries exist in your community as best as able. For example, competent soldiers deployed to Iraq closely studied where they would pass from a Sunni neighborhood to a Shiite one and made a point of learning which tribes and factions were represented in which homes for self-preservation purposes.

Identify routes that avoid those areas where you will stand out. For example, if I want to go from my home in Santa Monica out to Pomona

(east), I would probably not go due east as it will take me through a neighborhood where being able to blend in would not be possible. If I were black, that might be the preferred route. I can, however, blend in going northeast to Pasadena and out the 210 corridor to Pomona. An area study helps me understand possible danger and safe zones in my area with specificity.

**Suggestion three:** Try out the routes using the military acronym PACE, which stands for Primary route, Alternate route, Contingency route and finally, Emergency route. This allows you to continue if unforeseen events make the primary route non-viable. As you test your routes, look for chokepoints, construction zones or any other problem that might hinder your movement and consider the pros and cons of traveling by car, on foot, by bicycle, by boat or even by light aircraft as fits your situation, resources and abilities.

**Suggestion four:** Have an evacuation bag packed and ready to go. We did an urban evac class for a family and they took our advice to heart and had totes in the garage with the supplies they would want to evacuate with. Less than three months later a wildfire caused their neighborhood to be evacuated. They were the first ones out.

**Suggestion five:** Have a plan to defend your family. If you think you can defend your-



self against rioters or in any significant conflict with pepper spray or a stun gun, let me know how that works out. In a failure of civility, there is no substitute for firearms. A handgun is concealable and maneuverable in a car. A rifle is less concealable, but can offer longer range and often offer greater magazine capacity. There is no reason not to legally and safely keep a rifle in your home for contingencies. Marine Colonel Jeff Cooper reportedly said that the only reason to have a pistol is to have a tool you can use to fight your way to a rifle. His perspective is worth considering. Some people have qualms about gun ownership. I recommend spending some time watching Active Self Protection, a YouTube channel that breaks down violent interactions in robberies, home invasions, and other violent encounters. Spoiler alert: A good guy with a gun is the only effective and realistic defense against a bad guy with a gun.

**Suggestion six:** Do not reveal your preparations. People will do bad things when their kids have not eaten in several days. Do not make yourself a visible target.

**Suggestion seven:** Have a vehicle that is road worthy. I usually refill my gas tank when it gets to 1/2 a tank. Make sure you do preventive and scheduled maintenance on the vehicle. Nothing is less convenient than a breakdown in the middle of civil unrest.

**Suggestion eight:** Build rapport. Give everyone you encounter reason to trust and respect you. Be a good neighbor and be able to form teams and alliances quickly and skillfully. Consider this groundwork to be preventive medicine, good manners, and practice of an often overlooked critical skill.

Also consider this: insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan received differing levels of assistance from locals partly dependent on which unit they were targeting. Units that treated locals poorly were IEDed frequently. Units that treated locals with genuine respect sometimes faced fewer IEDs and at least one unit that both projected military competence and real rapport building experienced a situation where locals detonated known IEDs emplaced by insurgents to prevent bloodshed and to avoid getting caught up in follow on counter actions. Within some American neighborhoods police officers are individually known. The competent can be distinguished from the incompetent and those who use bullying behavior can be distinguished from those who are even handed.

Skills are the critical and often overlooked

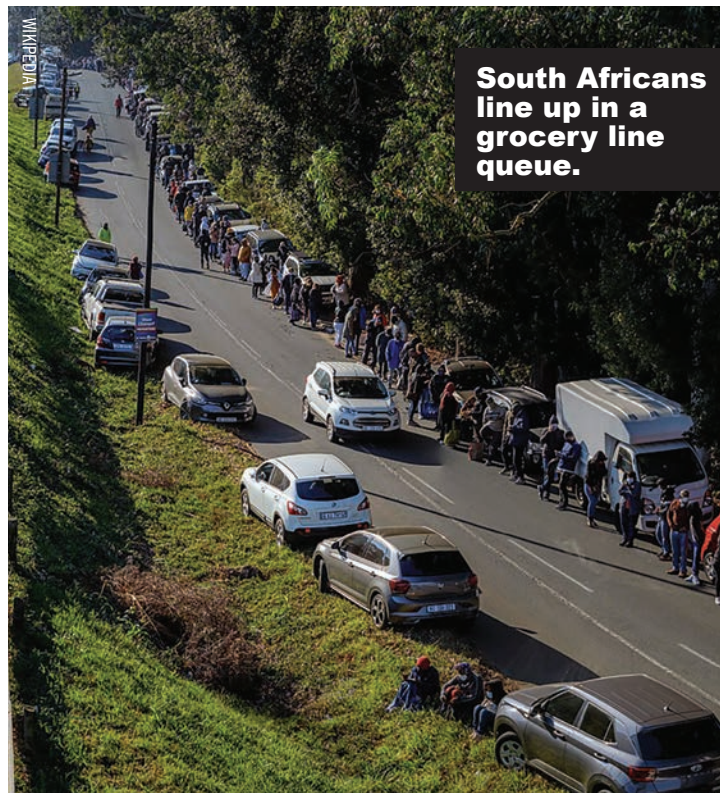
component to safely employing useful tools, including firearms. It is important to have already been trained through the unconscious incompetence phase, the conscious incompetence phase, the conscious competence phase and into the unconscious competence phase of your critical skills before they are tested in an emergency.

One of the lessons of the South African violence is that many people (to include the police) did not have enough ammo on hand for the prolonged violence. I recommend a minimum of 1,000 rounds per gun.

Pay attention to the news, but also search the internet and other sources for up-to-date information. American news sources are ever-increasingly choosing not to reveal certain information and are consistently “spinning” information counter-factually on certain subjects. Track the movement of the mobs and bail out ahead of their arrival. When you think it is getting spicy, implement your evacuation plan. Too early is an inconvenience. Too late can be lethal.

The problems in South Africa will continue because there is a large population competing for what are now very limited resources (just like the problem outlined in *The Goose That Laid the Golden Egg*), and opportunists practicing political warfare in support of a power grab routinely fan the flames of strife on all sides.

Whoever controls the food, controls the population. Store some extra food for when stores are cleaned out. This happens in hours not weeks when they are unreplenished. Have a little extra prescription medicine, bottled water and the means to purify water. If you live in an apartment, you are obviously limited as to what you can store, but anything is better than nothing. Have several cans of soup, chili, tuna, etc. Avoid frozen or refrigerated food for an emergency. It is ironic that in an attempt to seize power, the most subversive things you can do is be capable of producing your own food and water and be sufficiently



physically fit that you require no medications.

Finally, do not live your life in fear. Being prepared means taking precautionary action, then enjoying your life knowing that contingencies are covered as best as able. General Patton called a plan “a wish in a party dress”. You plan so that you have something to adjust to the ever-changing situation rather than starting from zero.

Hopefully you will never face a raid on your home by a mob like so many in South Africa have faced in recent weeks. And hopefully your town will not be steamrolled in a matter of hours by insurgents like thousands of American citizens and Afghans predictably faced in Kabul. However, I have spent a lot of time studying the decline of societies. For me, it is not *if* violence, upheaval or disaster will happen, it is *when* and in what form? Brace for impact. ✓

## BIO

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# TACTICS AND PREPAREDNESS

## TRANSITION -TO THE- SIG SAUER M17 -AND- M18

BY BRENDAN SOUDER

**I have transitioned from the Beretta M9 to a series of Glock pistols and now I am honing my skills with the new Sig.**

**S**ince Sig Sauer won the military service pistol contract in 2017 to produce the M17 and M18, many soldiers are transitioning to this gun. Citizens who like to be proficient with the most common firearms will have to do the same.

The bottom line, up front is that new firearms are not too difficult to learn if you

already have an excellent working knowledge of marksmanship and gun handling skills. The most difficult part is the mental game to get over your biases and your pre-existing preferences. The most common obstacle to growth is the thought of "this is what I've always done". At RPGi we can get a shooter to a high level of pistol performance in 600 rounds or less if

they show up with the right equipment, ammunition, a positive attitude and about six hours.

Some shooters forget what made them proficient with their original gun. You see, pistol shooting is challenging because if your fundamentals are slightly off, then it punishes your overall performance (especially accuracy). We find that guys at the

SKILLS AND SURVIVAL FOR ALL SITUATIONS