

# MC 069: Into the Breach

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G.I. JOE #69

Into the Breach

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Summary: An AWE Striker carrying Hawk, Psyche-Out and Roadblock drives through the streets of Sierra Gordo's capital, where mobs of citizens are rioting and throwing rocks and garbage at them. They reach the American embassy, which is being emptied by looters. The Joes discuss that they backed the wrong side of the civil war. Cobra was backing the nation's provisional government while the United States was backing the counter-revolution. Now, General Villavaca has started his own side of the war, gaining the support of the Sierra Gordan Army and the corporation called the North American Banana Monopoly. They drive up the stairs and through the front door. On their way up to fetch U.S. Ambassador Winthrop, Roadblock sees a looter about to set the American flag on fire with a lighter. His heavy machine gun in hand, Roadblock asks the man to "kindly desist in your actions and leave the premises". The man spits in his face, then moves to light the flag. He stops when Roadblock takes the safety off his weapon and points it at the man, and asks him again to stop, adding a threat. The man tells him he's crazy since other looters are stealing IBM typewriters. "Nobody every died for a typewriter," Roadblock says. He stares down the man until he puts his lighter out and walks away. Hawk asks if it was a bluff, and Roadblock says "you got to call, if you want to see the cards". Psyche-Out decides never to play poker with Roadblock. They are interrupted by the voice of Ambassador Winthrop from the balcony above. He says that Roadblock's actions are typical of the cowboy behavior the Sierra Gordans expect from Americans, "...and you wonder why the hate us so." Hawk disagrees: "That's funny. I thought it was because of generations of exploitation by American monopolies and our continued support of one right-wing dictatorship after another..." Winthrop says Hawk should know it's more complicated than that. The Joes proceed to the document room which they were ordered to "sanitize" before leaving with Winthrop.

In another part of Sierra Gordo, General Villavaca and the North American Banana Monopoly's Chip Goodfellow fly in a helicopter high above a Cobra Terror-Drome being attacked by Villavaca's forces. The helicopter is piloted by Destro and his Sergeant Major. Destro is demonstrating his assault helicopter's capabilities to the men. Villavaca asks him to make a missile run at the Terror-Drome. Inside the launch base, Zarana, Thrasher and Monkeywrench are in charge but decide to make their escape and leave behind the Vipers defending the base. Zarana scans the helicopter and discovers its TOW missile racks. She launches the Firebat jet to provide a distraction for their escape. Despite his passengers' worrying, Destro evades the Firebat's fire and fires four missiles at the Terror-Drome. The Dreadnoks' Thunder Machine bursts out from the 'Drome just as the missiles hit their mark and blow up the base. With some amazing flying skill, Destro blows the Firebat out of the sky. Destro suggests they return to Rio Lindo -- Sierra Gordo's capital -- since his sources report Winthrop is about to leave with documents that will prove embarrassing to the NABM.

Back at the embassy, Winthrop is stuffing papers into his briefcase while Roadblock sets charges to blow up the entire document room, though Hawk thinks he's using too much explosives. Psyche-Out looks outside and sees Villavaca's troops have surrounded the embassy. Outside Villavaca and Goodfellow wait ready to attack until the AWE Striker slowly comes out, now carrying the Joes, two Marines and Winthrop. They all have their hands up, and Goodfellow spots Winthrop's briefcase. "He's got the report with him!" Before he can say another word, the entire embassy explodes and the Joes make a break for it and head for the airport.

At the airport, the Joe C-130 transport plane sits on the runway. A group of Sierra Gordan refugees -- supporters of the provisional government -- have arrived and beg Wild Bill, Crazylegs and Maverick to take them out of the country or they will be thrown in prison. Crazylegs isn't sure what to do: "We got women and kids here! We can't just leave them." Wild Bill says he doesn't like it, but their mission is to extract the ambassador and his files. Down the runway, the Thunder Machine pulls onto the runway and heads for the cargo plane, nearly running over the refugees. Zarana tells Wild Bill to start the engines, but he won't budge until Hawk gets back. As they spot the AWE Striker in the distance with Villavaca's men right behind, Zarana grabs the nearest refugee and says to load all the refugees on the plane as their hostages and threatens to shoot them one by one. Crazylegs says she's bluffing. "She don't know how, Crazylegs," Wild Bill says. In the AWE Striker, Roadblock is happy to see the C-130's engines are starting up, but is shocked when it starts rolling down the runway. At gunpoint, Wild Bill is forced to take off just over the AWE Striker. Villavaca's tanks fire on the plane, tearing through one of its engines. Suddenly, Villavaca's vehicles are fired upon from the hills. It's the counter-

revolutionaries, and Villavaca orders his men's retreat. The head of the counter-revolutionaries tells Hawk he'll lead them through the jungle to a friendly airfield, and adds that it was a good thing Hawk sent them that radio message. Hawk is confused: "What radio message?"

Villavaca and Goodfellow ride back to Rio Lindo and Goodfellow tells the General that he'd better find the Joes and the ambassador. Villavaca says they may need more sophisticated weapons, and Goodfellow is willing to invest in Destro's "new technologies".

In a nearby hotel, Destro introduces his guard's new uniforms to the Sergeant Major. Their new uniforms and his own are to symbolize their new beginnings. The Sergeant Major reports that he radioed the counter-revolutionaries and everything went according to plan. "Good," Destro says. "We shall do Cobra one better in the international arms market. We shall create a situation and a market and sell weapons to both sides!"

Over the mountains, smoke is pouring from the C-130's damaged engine. "Cut the fuel pumps," Wild Bill shouts. "We're going down hard!!"

TO BE CONTINUED

Review: "Into the Breach" is a good start to a good three-part story, that is if you don't mind Cobra playing a supporting role and a story with a bit of politics in it. This story feels more like an issue of Special Missions, but it leaves a nice break between last storyline and the coming Cobra civil war. The plot is more firmly set in a the real world than many other Joe stories. True, Sierra Gordo doesn't exist, but the political situation there isn't pure fantasy. Sierra Gordo is probably seen more than any other fictional nation in the series, and it usually serves to satirically poke fun of the instability of Central America and America's involvement there.

Especially in the 1980s, U.S. officials often took sides in civil wars in third world countries, often with embarrassing results. The NABM's exploitation of the nation's resources is fairly realistic as well. The peoples' hatred toward America is surprisingly displayed, and one could argue that Roadblock's "cowboy" actions are making them hate America more, as Winthrop says. You also have to wonder if Roadblock really would have killed the man about to burn the flag. Winthrop's character is the usual Larry Hama politician, full of arrogance and contempt for the military. For a comic based on toys made for kids, G.I. Joe is surprisingly critical of authority.

Destro makes his dramatic return to the series, now firmly in charge of his company and wearing his new Iron Grenadiers uniform. It's interesting that the helicopter he's selling is very generic and not Hasbro's latest toy. Destro is now stealing Cobra's ideas, making money by helping along the chaos in Sierra Gordo.

All this "realism" doesn't overtake the story, though, as there's also lots of action. Destro's fight with the Firebat is exciting, as is the Joes' escape from the embassy. In the latter scene, a sense of humor is obvious when the sound effect for the explosion is "KA-BLOOEY!" Zarana's plane hijacking sends the two groups of Joes into separate plots, which continue in the next two issues. This storyline is actually a nice break from the Joe vs. Cobra story, and if readers aren't happy about that, the biggest Joe vs. Cobra storyline in a some time begins three issues later.

This issue marks the debut of artist Tony Salmons, one of the best of the Joe artists who returns many times in the series. His version of Chip Goodfellow seems to be a caricature of actor Jack Nicholson. The resemblance is even closer in the next issue (by another artist).

First Appearances:

- G.I. Joe team: Crazylegs
- Cobra: Iron Grenadier (uniform worn by Destro's "Sergeant Major")
- Other groups: North American Banana Monopoly

Reprinted in:

- The Transformers (UK) #282-285 (August 11th - September 1st, 1990). A Marvel UK series that began reprinting Action Force stories after the end of that series. These issues reprint this story in four parts, alongside original stories. All references to "G.I. Joe" were changed to "Action Force".
- Classic G.I. JOE: Volume 7 (February 2010). A trade paperback collection from IDW Publishing. Includes issues #61-70.