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Navy Focuses On Countering NBC Terrorism In Next QDR >BY LISA TROSHINSKY.
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The upcoming Navy portion of the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) will examine whether the service needs to expand or improve current plans to protect U.S. forces against nuclear/biological/chemical (NBC) threats. Though the Navy has some counter proliferation (CP) systems in place aboard ships, and plans in the Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP) are to deploy more advanced systems within the next five years, the service is lacking in plans to combat against terrorism NBC threats on the homeland, a Navy official told Navy News.

"The real question will be what is the best way to operate in this environment," he said. "The counter-terrorist approach will play a huge part in the upcoming QDR, since President Clinton announced last May that this is a growing threat and we need to do more."

Current joint plans that extend through 2005 will equip each warfighter with an improved oversuit to protect against NBC threats, and DoD will put detectors and collective protection systems on most ships, as well as develop longer-range systems. But the upcoming threat of concern that hasn't been extensively considered is terrorism, he told Navy News.

The "Asymmetric Warfare Workgroup," one of 10 subgroups working on different issues in preparation for the upcoming QDR, will focus on the terrorism threat on the continental United States, which includes protecting Naval bases and ports.

Current programs are not specifically developed for counter terrorism, he continued. And most bases are not equipped with NBC programs. "The Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP) includes placing equipment on all forward deployed ships and then backfitting bases if warranted."

The upcoming QDR will also include whether the Navy has enough resources to protect against other NBC threats. "Ships won't be backfitted for another five to six years and everyone will get a new protective suit in a few years, but is that enough, fast enough?" he asked.

NBC defense programs have been funded jointly since Congress passed a 1994 law to consolidate CP efforts into the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). Last year, total OSD funding for joint chemical/biological defense programs was about \$550 million, \$600 million this year, and by 2005, spending will total over \$850 million a year, he said. The services then pay for operation and maintenance.

Though ground troops and land-based aircraft may be the most vulnerable to a Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD), since ships are mobile, Naval forces are not immune, especially stationary assets such as the Naval base in Bahrain. Coincidentally, a Pentagon Inspector General report last year said that Navy surface ships are the only sector of the armed forces that are preparing well for an NBC presence (Navy News, Aug. 17, 1998, p. 1). Current Navy contributions to overall NBC efforts include biological and chemical agent point detectors and shipboard collective protection systems. The Navy is also jointly involved in wide-area decontamination developments, and the service created the Chemical and Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF) in 1996 to respond to biological and chemical attacks, both in the United States and overseas. And the Navy also stood up a counter terrorism force protection branch Oct. 1, 1998, to look at counter terrorism force protection at bases.

"Other countries aren't taking on the U.S. military directly, after they saw what we did in Desert Storm. They're figuring out how to defeat the U.S. conventional superiority, and NBC is seen as an alternative. N. Korea has admitted to having a chemical/biological program, and Iraq is developing the capability as well."

Current Programs Today the Navy has: * Interim Biological Agent Detectors (IBAD)-the only current biological system available for any of the services-on 25 ships. IBAD detects, identifies and warns of biological agent presence, provides the Navy with interim biological agent point detection capability, and links to visual and audible alarms located locally and in command spaces. The system takes 20 minutes from detection to identification.

The Navy used these detection systems on all ships in the Gulf during Desert Fox, but never had a positive detection in any situation, the Navy official said. IBAD systems easily can be transferred from one ship to another. IBAD will be replaced by the Joint Biological Point Detection System (JBPDS) (see below under Future Systems).

* Overprotection garments-most warfighters have the current version of the suits-a heavy, bulky, heat stressful garment that when worn more than 20 minutes will give wearers heat exhaustion.

* Selective Emitter Identification System-enhances the capability to track WMD-related shipments at sea by electronically identifying specific ships.

* Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal(EOD)-develops and provides tools to detect, locate and render safe NBC munitions.

Future Programs The Navy plans to get:

* Shipboard Automatic Liquid Agent Detector (SALAD)-a new program currently being deployed which detects liquid chemical agents. It wasn't used in Desert Fox. Some warfighters in the Gulf are now suffering from "Gulf War Syndrome," potentially due from exposure to chemical weapons. SALAD is being developed by OSD. This year the Navy is awarding a Low Rate Initial Production contract for eight SALAD systems.

* Improved Chemical Agent Point Detection System-being developed for the Navy, it will detect agent vapors; gas, as opposed to liquid, chemicals. This system is being installed on ships

this year. It will sample specimens faster, give more accurate detection, and detect more threats. Examples of gas chemicals used in the past are mustard gas in World War I, sarin gas used by the Germans in concentration camps in World War II and in a Tokyo subway by a Japanese terrorist group a couple of years ago.

* Joint Services Lightweight Standoff Chemical Agent Detector-to be put on helicopters that will fly out in front of all other assets for early detection. The systems are scheduled for deployment in late 2005. The new detectors will be able to discern chemical agents as far as three miles away. Remote Sensing Chemical Agent Alarm (RSCAAL), the current system, doesn't have a standoff capability; agents aren't detected until the choppers are actually in the chemical cloud.

Non-standoff capability is not that serious, the Navy official said, since it would take a huge amount of chemicals to affect a battlefield decisively. Also, if the enemy is using these agents to push the opposing force out of a combat area, the enemy will be unable to fight in that area without protection from the same agents it released.

* Collective Protection Equipment (CPE)-will provide ships with a contamination-free environment within specified zone boundaries. In these places, warfighters won't have to wear masks or heavy protection suits. The CPE mission-essential operations and life-sustaining functions-can be performed during and after a CB attack. This system will provide pre-planned product improvements to the current shipboard Collective Protection Systems (CPS)/Selected Area Collection Protection System (SACPS) by decreasing logistics costs, extending filter life, reducing shipboard maintenance requirements, and providing energy- efficient fans.

This year the Navy is initiating a shipboard modification process to backfit CPS on LHD-1 and LSD 41-43 starting in fiscal 2000.

* Longer-range detectors-In the next few years, the services are designing detectors to be installed on Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and will fly them out in front of forces to collect samples, to get a better detection before NBC can get to the troops. "Our biggest problem is that currently we only have individual sensors, which take a long time to get detection," he said.

* Joint Biological Point Detection System (JBPDS)-to come on line starting in 2002/2003. This system will offer real-time identification detection of agents. Currently, getting an identification involves growing it, like a medical culture, and could take a couple of days. "We need quicker IDs, because if we have the vaccine for Anthrax, the logical thing for our enemies to do is develop a mutation of Anthrax, which our current vaccine won't work against," he said. This joint system will be manportable, and also be put on ships and tanks.

* Chemically Protected Deployable Medical System-an air-transportable hospital that will be able to operate in a chemical area, by having air filters in systems. This system is scheduled to be deployable in the 2002 time frame.

Counter Proliferation Basics Counter proliferation efforts are inspired by such multinational treaties as the Biological Weapons Convention, signed in the early 1970s; and the Chemical Weapons Convention, ratified last year. Both the United States and Russia have signed both treaties; United States' concerns come from N. Korea, Iran and Iraq.

DoD divides CP into four categories: * Passive Defense-Improved chemical/biological sensors, vaccines, improved decontamination agents. Detect and get rid of

chemicals that have already reached U.S. forces. (Examples: IBAD and Collective Protection systems, that wash agents off the deck of the ship.)

* Active Defense-Theater Ballistic Missile Defense systems. Shoot down ballistic missiles (that could contain NBC warheads) before they reach U.S. assets. (Examples: Navy Theater Wide (NTW) and Navy Area Defense).

* Counterforce- Find out where the enemy keeps the weapons before the opposition can launch or use them. Use precision weapons to find and take out deeply-buried targets. Counterproliferation Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration (ACTD)-integrates advanced sensors, planning tools, effects predictions, and enhanced conventional weapons. The Navy is participating with the Army and Air Force on this.

* Counter terrorism-Improved technical means to counter NBC terrorism (Example: Navy EOD equipment and tool development for rendering munitions safe). The United Nations is in charge