The series of terrorist attacks in 2001, which included 9/11 and Amerithrax, were of a notably different type to former attacks that relied mostly on monolithically-direct, conventional force. As the host of 2002 FIFA World Cup, the Republic of Korea had to consequently check its own nationwide readiness against those unexpected types of offensive actions.

Chemical, biological and radiological protection were matters of particular concern, and there was a great need for a professional agency that could co-ordinate the protection-readiness for all forces in an emergency, as well as manage a CBR consequence management system effectively. As a result, the Armed Forces CBR Defense Command was activated in February, 2002. Since then it has been carrying out its mission of counter-CBR terrorism operations, joint Army, Navy and Air Force CBR operations and consequence management - all by integrating available assets from civil, government and military sources.

Maintaining Readiness Against CBR Terrorism

The Command possesses a professional counter-CBR terrorism unit that can be committed to any location and at any time. The unit undergoes frequent, high-intensity training such as airlift and helicopter rappel to ensure their operations run flawlessly, especially in downtown areas. Any CBR weapons used in an attack are collected immediately to be sent to a number of civil research institutes, including the Command’s lab, thereby improving the credibility of verification and analysis activities. The results of the research are used as the basis on which to form a consensus on mitigating potential attacks. The Command is also currently maintaining a ‘combined readiness’ posture against...
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CBR terrorism in co-ordination with other agencies, whilst putting its utmost efforts into responding to possible terrorist attacks by actively participating in protection training on key national facilities, such as the subway and nuclear power plants.

Support for CBR Consequence Management
North Korea is consistently building up its unconventional warfare capability by amassing thousands of tons of chemical munitions and large quantities of biological weapons. As such, the Command is making sure that CBR protection operations against those unconventional threats will be available for execution at the right time.

To achieve our goal, the Command has been improving the CBR consequence management system by ensuring efficiency of the execution plan through various exercises and training, based on possible actualities. The Command has also co-hosted tactical discussions and workshops with related units and organisations, which in turn would be consistently improved upon.

Verification and Analysis of CBR Weapons / R&D of Equipment and Stockpiles
The Command is fulfilling its mission of verifying and analysing the weapons used in CBR terrorism along with R&D for protection equipment and stockpiles.

With regard to verification and analysis capability, the Command has not only been improving its in-depth analysis capability by acquiring professionals who have Masters and Ph.D degrees in relevant areas, but also actively engaging with outstanding...
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organisations, both domestic and international, through thesis presentation and education. Cross-examination training with related institutes has increased the level of reliability of the Command’s research. The lab has applied for its proficiency test to be nominated as the OPCW-approved official lab since 2011, and is expecting a favorable result by the end of this year. Several areas, including toxic material and soil analysis, have already been approved by OPCW and the Command has maintained its attention on the related capability, thereby increasing the reliability of the test result.

Along with improving the researchers’ capability, the Command has searched for drawbacks and areas for further improvement in the forefront line of counter-CBR attacks. We manage the development project on the selected subjects through a systemic approach.

The Command cooperates with related agencies and companies on the course of development from the initial phase of research and development. During the process, it provides support for various research and tests. In addition, performance tests on CBR equipment, stockpiles and facilities have been carried out on a regular basis, increasing the level of reliability. Also, the Command supports soil contamination analysis on military installations to prevent pollution, as well as research on purification processes for contaminated soil.

Supports for Educational Training for all Services and Civilians

The Command has predominantly focussed on educational training and CBR education for civilians, in an effort to improve the CBR protection readiness for civil, government and military entities, as well as all services including the ROK Army, Navy and Air Force.

Based on the realistic assumption that there would be unimaginable consequences in the case of a CBR terrorism attack or accident in heavily populated areas or industrial facilities, the Command has carried out combined workshops with both the Ministry of Environment and the Center for Disease Control to establish a civil, government and military integrated response system. Government officials, firemen, policemen and civil defense officials have been provided CBR education and training that recognises the importance of CBR protection and improves the early-response capability. In addition, the Command provides the Army, Navy and Air Force with joint-CBR, doctrinal research, which enables protection operations to be tailored for each service, whilst also paying attention to joint-operability through joint training.

Flagship Role in Developing CBR-related Policy and Combat Capability

The Command actively utilises its ample experience and the results of its research from the initial phases of the policy-making process, thereby contributing to the improvement of nationwide, CBR response readiness. To better achieve this goal, the Command provides its skills to each service and related agency through data collection, research and analysis, seminars and symposiums.

To reinforce its own combat capability, the Command has set in place and executed the Integrated Development Plan, whilst actively presenting its own point of view in the initial requirement submission phase – with the purpose of developing combat capability for all services. In addition, the Command has put its efforts into recognising and accounting for the shortfalls in the current capability through joint CBR weaponry seminars to better prepare for future warfare.

Collection, Analysis and Production of CBR-Related Technical Information

The Command has accumulated CBR-related technical information around the world by co-ordinating with a number of intelligence institutes, agencies and mass media. Based on the collected information, the Command carries out in-depth analysis and information exchange which in turn is distributed to related units and organisations for improving their counter-CBR planning and combat capability. The Command is also increasing the level of national CBR protection by actively responding to requests for information from each institute through research, verification and training.

Contributing to Improving the Chemical Protection Capability of the International Community

Since 2005, the Command has provided yearly chemical protection education for Asian member states of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). In the program, the Command provides various scientific and technical information, including protection measures and stockpiles in accordance with the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The fact that South Korea has carried out education that has been hosted mainly by European countries for the first time among a number of Asian countries, shows that OPCW has approved the superiority of the nation’s CBR protection techniques.

Roughly 20 countries have been participating in the education process, and they were able to improve CBR response capability by doing so. Also, the process has presented a good opportunity for CWC member-states to facilitate exchange and co-operation, thereby contributing to the advancement of the international community’s CBR protection capability overall.

Closing Remarks

Despite its relatively short history of 10 years, ROK CBRDC has successfully integrated the elite CBR agents from the Army, Navy and Air Force to become the finest and most specialised CBR unit in the nation. Although the Command is in charge of the most dangerous mission in the most dangerous place, the Armed Forces CBRDC will continue to step forward with a strong sense of responsibility and mission with regard to realising perfect CBR protection readiness.