

# CBRN News

## PRODUCT WATCH

### Stop Press – Breaking news

The UK's largest CBRN capital procurement, the Scene Assessment System (see *CBRNE World Autumn 2009*) has been cancelled. On 23 December the Home Office put out a letter stating that, due to a shift in landscape – both economic and operational – they will not be tendering for a “technology-based solution”. This would seem to mean that either the threat analysis and requirement that was devised for the project was wrong – in which case the project team is to blame – or that the money has gone, in which case big government is to blame. We will try and provide more light on this in the future (and the consistent deterioration in UK CBRN defence capability) but what is apparent is a hat-trick of CBRN procurement fumbles. First was EH20 (see *CBRNE World Summer 2008*), then Quick Don (*CBRNE World Winter 2007*) and now Scene Assessment System. While there will be the usual shuffle about responsibility, what it does mean is that industry continues to take a pounding from the Home Office CBRN procurement process, and the impact this has on the bottom line will mean they will be more shy next time around, which will make it less likely they will be equipping police, fire and ambulance crews with the best equipment.

### Sispat news

Sispat, the Singapore/Asian landmark event, presented a clutch of new releases. NBC Sys, for example, released a new respirator (or, to be exact, a technology demonstrator of their successor to ARFA the Sirano), the KDTB field biological kit using French, rather than US, assays, and their quad-based decon and detection solution, Meerkat. Bruker Daltonics also released a new PCR detector – M-BL – that it is calling a mobile bio laboratory. Suitcase sized, it does both sample prep and identification, currently aimed at the public health market (specifically e.coli, salmonella, H1N1 and H5N1) but further agents are in the pipeline. Smiths Detection was also showing a (so far) unnamed

mobile GC/MS; backpack-mounted, it is clearly their competitor to Inficon's market share.

### DSEI news

In what has been a busy year for Bruker, with a major presence at DSEI, where they clearly had the largest CBRN stand at the event – and a new product launch. Their µRaid is a clear challenge to the dominance of Smith's LCD product. While larger, and with an ionizing source, Bruker claim it is able to provide greater identification and better thresholds. Whether the market wants a product between LCD and RAID-M/ACADA will have to be seen, but what it will do is muddy the water considerably...

### Quoth the Raven – sarin!

Smiths Detection, meanwhile, has its eyes set on loftier heights as they work on UAV chemical detection. Working with ECBC and AeroVironment, manufacturer of the Raven UAV, they will contend with other companies in this field (such as Environics) to allow airborne early warning of chemical threats. Smiths was able, in a successful test at Dugway, to detect and identify a chemical plume using a cylindrical version of their LCD technology.

Smiths also announced it had an exclusive agreement to distribute GenPrime's PrimeAlert system. Prime Alert is a biodetector that uses DNA fluorescence and antibody-based lateral flow technology. Previously marketed by Scott Health and Safety, it will be interesting to see whether they have more success. Smiths also announced that it has been awarded multiple contracts for the expansion of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) chemical detection programme – PROTECT. This programme has been running for five years in DC, New York and Boston, and this expansion will see an upgrade of detectors and software.

### Looks like we have something new!

GE Energy announced that it has been awarded a patent for their eVent active film laminate, which may herald the long-awaited dawn of semi-permeable membranes. The solution has sent a buzz around various procurement and scientific agencies

keen to get their hands on the expanded polytetrafluoroethylene membrane, with an oleophobic treatment and continuous treatment. GE reckons the combination of treatment and coating provides unique functionality. Another false dawn? We will have to wait and see...

### Dib dib dib...

Recon Robotics has also introduced its throwable robot for the SWAT and military markets. Looking like a jogging dumbbell, weighing 1.3 lbs, the Recon Scout XT is able to go over most terrain at speed with the operator using only a single joystick, and can feed video back up to 100ft indoors and 300ft outdoors. The XT is simpler, more rugged and lightweight than their existing Scout robot. While the XT is black, their new Scout Rescue is bright yellow and is to be used in search and rescue in confined and dangerous environments.

### Defender of the faith

Thermo Fisher Scientific announced its ARIS (Advanced Radioisotope Identification System) system had been field tested by police in Washington DC. ARIS fits inside anything bigger than a golf cart (damn those radiological golfers!) and is claimed to be three times lighter than similar systems. A police official stated it was a “strong defender” of the public's health and safety.

### Lord of the concrete jungle

Lion apparel announced that their two-piece CBRN ensemble, MIG23, had been tested and recommended by the US National Tactical Officers Association (NTOA). MIG23 is certified to NFPA 1994, Class 3, 2007 edition, uses tried and tested Gore Champak fabric and was awarded 4.04 out of 5 by the NTOA. Further information will be found at [www.ntoa.org/mtp/public](http://www.ntoa.org/mtp/public). Of equal importance was Lion clinching the FDNY order with their MT94 CBRN ensemble. New York is the largest fire brigade in the US and chose the MT94 to give them greater versatility than their previous Level A suits.

### New UK trade association

The UK has streamlined its various homeland security and defence trade

associations into one boy: the ADS – aerospace, defence and security. NBC UK, which was part of the DMA – Defence Manufacturers' Association – will join other companies from the police and aerospace industry in lobbying the British government. Steve Phipson, Smiths Detection stalwart, will head up the Security side.

#### Keeping the boom out

Nabco announced that the seven Total Containment Vessels that the USMC CBIRF unit possess have accompanied the unit wherever they have travelled. Nabco is rolling out units to Marine forces in North and South Carolina, Maryland and California. Nabco also announced that they have upgraded three TCVs for the Danish MoD to allow them to counter CBR threats too.

#### Avon in the holzone

Avon Protection announced that training company Hotzone Solutions has evaluated and chosen the ST53 (which also received NIOSH Title 42, Part 84, approval) as its respirator of choice. This will mean that the ST53 will be worn during demonstrations in its live agent training environment. Meanwhile, the FM12 was chosen to be part of the Quick Don ensemble – which means that they retain their hold on the UK civil market. Avon also announced the opening of a new service centre in Malaysia to repair and support the Malaysian product lines.

#### Opening the doors

Saint-Gobain came up with a neat idea for local hazmat crews in their New Hampshire home by opening the company's production facility up as a training ground. While it meant that the local Merrimack Fire Rescue had to don Saint-Gobain's OneSuit Gard protective ensembles, it did mean that they got to play with a leaking drum of toxic materials in full level A protection. Thankfully, if there had been a suit leak, the chances of surviving the "toxic" sweetened lemonade in the barrel was high! Saint-Gobain has also launched its new YouTube channel: check it out on [www.youtube.com/SaintGobainONESuit](http://www.youtube.com/SaintGobainONESuit).

#### Qiagen gain additional licences

Qiagen, manufacturer of PCR detectors such as the Rotor Gene, announced it has acquired additional PCR licences from Roche and Idaho Technology/ The licences are for thermal cycler and PCR methods and will also cover high

resolution melting curve analysis – the coming thing in PCR.

#### It's an emergency!

Idaho Technology itself got approval from the US Food and Drug Administration for its JBAIDS systems to be used in the identification of H1N1. The Emergency Use Authorisation comes via the CBMS-JPEO for military units deployed in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

#### Airport ident

Mirion announced that they have installed aspectrometric radiological portal at Vienna Airport, Austria. The SPIR IDENT portal has already controlled over one million passengers, and has identified thousands of real time innocent alarms.

#### Like lightning!

Utilis announced its fastest ever decon system. The containerised system can be set up in minutes and has independent access to water, heating, lighting and waste water containment.

#### Northrop's new UK facility

Northrop Grumman officially opened its new UK manufacturing facility for UGVs. The site will work on Wheelbarrow and Cutlass – the UK's next-generation UGV – and the site was opened by Lieutenant General Gary Coward, Chief of Materiel (Land).

#### #371

Behind that rather arbitrary number is a rather big achievement for a CBRN company, as ICx was chosen as one of Deloitte Touche's Fast 500 companies, and came in at number 37 – the only CBRN company to do so. Deloitte announced that ICx had had a 5,518 per cent growth over the past five years – a period that saw them grow from a revenue of US\$3m dollars to \$171m! While not quite as stratospheric as ReachLocal, the #1 company which had a 146,050 per cent increase in the same period, it does confirm their position as a company to watch. Part of this increase has been a \$3.6 million contract with PFPA for their Griffin and ChemSense range of instruments. The GC/MS and MS/MS contract will last 12 months and, interestingly, is via the PEO for Simulation, Training and Instrumentation.

#### Decon station

Cristanini announced it has started an "important co-operation" with the Danish procurement agency for a

deployable decon field station. This military system will join the civilian variant already in service with the Danish Department of Homeland Security. Cristanini also said the tests they had run on decontaminating a C130J allowed them to announce that each 'J' required 20kg of BX40, and that it took two hours to do a complete decontamination.

## THREAT WATCH

#### "He who defends everything, defends nothing"

Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the alleged bomber of a Detroit plane, will put another nail into the coffin of easy air travel and spell millions of pounds/dollars/euros in improvements in airport security equipment. After attempting to ignite explosives stored in his pants (no sniggering at the back) he managed to set his leg on fire, was over-powered and arrested. This latest breach of airport security has caused a massive amount of security soul searching in the US and a further ratcheting up of security measures and their attendant delays. As well as increased security at the airport, the US has recommended all passengers remain seated for the last hour of the flight and have no access to hand luggage, or have anything on their lap, for that period. Soon it will only be terrorists who will be prepared to put up with all the delays involved in flying to the US.

#### Royal protection

The UK's Royal Society published a new report – Making the UK Safer: detecting and decontaminating chemical and biological agents – with recommendations to protect the UK against CBRN threats. Copies of the review are available here: <http://royalsociety.org/Making-the-UK-safer-a-five-year-review/>

#### Always the inside man

A leak of a radioactive substance into drinking water in Bangalore, in India, is likely due to a disgruntled employee, local police announced. According to the BBC, officials announced that an employee mixed the radioactive substance tritium with cooler water meant for staff. Fifty-five needed treatment but all returned to duty.

It has been a busy quarter for news – fuller news, with more Threat Watch, is available on the website: [www.cbrnworld.com](http://www.cbrnworld.com)