



Voják 21 programme moves ahead

The Army of the Czech Republic's (ACR) Voják 21 is now working toward a Request For Proposals in the coming months, for an initial 900 systems

Currently, research and development for the functional demonstrator for the Czech Republic's Voják 21 (V21) or Soldier 21 programme is being undertaken by local firm VOP-026. The company is providing demonstrators to support definition and testing of the requirement.

Vaclav Hlousek, Investment Manager for V21 at the Ministry of Defence, Czech Republic responsible for the programme explained, "They are supporting the Czech MoD. They have commitments and actions that they are providing directly to the MoD. The MOD sponsored the technology demonstration study however [VOP-026] can then use the results for their own purposes."

When the research stage finishes, the programme, Hlousek explained, would move to a competitive phase with two options. Hlousek said, "We can buy something else [than the VOP-026 development], there is no problem. There are two options; first a tender following our normal procedures. Secondly we have a direct line. If we have some missions abroad they can be bought directly in a very short period."

In the context of a standard procurement phase, he expects the Request for Proposals to be issued as early as the second half of 2009. Final numbers have not yet been decided but he believes that there will be a commitment to acquire roughly 900 systems, sufficient for two to three battalions up to 2014-15. A requirement for reduced capability systems, expected to be without the C4I system also exists. After this date, plans are being discussed for an improved capability – possibly a second generation system, taking numbers to over 3000.

VOP 026

"Our approach fully complies with the conclusion of the NATO LCG which defined the soldier as a system with the following facilities: ISTAR, C4I, lethality combat sustainability and mobility" explained Libor Marcik, Head of Special Reconnaissance at VOP-026 and responsible

for future soldier activities at the company. He cautioned however, "We can't just have one of these capabilities; it must be a well balanced combination of these capabilities. However, the decisive capability is the C4I/STAR capability."

VOP-026 began work on the V21 programme in 2004, the only company to be funded by the MoD. From then until 2007, a single functional demonstrator was developed under work designated as 'Vojbud'. After successful completion, follow on work under the 'Sesedák' project was pursued from 2007-8, designed to produce six infantry systems and a single command unit, collectively entitled 'Modular Combat System of V21' or MBK21. Work also included integration with vehicles, the system using a single BAE Systems Haggglunds BvS10 all terrain vehicle with remote weapon system for the purposes of trials.

Marcik said, "The outcome of this project are seven dismantled troop systems, including the interface system. From a hardware point of view all the systems are the same, the differences are in software. Those differences are defined by the Army."

A parallel project in support of V21, known as 'Vhledávání' beginning in 2007 and continuing on into 2009, was also embarked upon. Marcik said, "What we want to use from this project [for V21] is the physical monitoring of troops: temperature, pulse, hydration and dehydration etc."

The MBK21's C4I subsystems consists of two radios; the Dicom PRR20 on all soldiers and the RF20 VHF hand radio equipping the squad commander. A central computer hub, mounted on the left breast is used which is operated via either a weapon mounted, four button system or a simple hand held 'grip solution' solution with integrated display, that can be pressed to the eye for viewing. In addition, the system demonstrator also uses a helmet mounted OLED SVGA display and a Low Light TV camera fixed to the right side of the helmet. Power and GPS/INS are also routed through the central computer. ■



Initially roughly 900 V21 systems will be required © AJB