



PIBS: Slovakia tests SMP modules

After recent trials, Slovakia's SMP programme is assessing lessons before the acquisition of the first 500 production systems

The Slovak Republic's Prokročily Individualny Bojový System (PIBS) or Advanced Individual Combat System, started in 2004 with its Concept Development and Experimentation Phase. The system has recently completed trials begun in 2007, using a ten-man prototype Experimental



PIBS plans to acquire an initial 500 systems © AJB

Squad in live fire trials using systems integrated by the designated prime contractor, Slovak firm Magic Trading Company.

Colonel Ing. Josef Briestensky, PIBS Programme Manager for the Slovakian Army said that the test had gone well, with further work on the programme planned. This will be under the Design and Development Phase which will continue until 2011-12. He explained that the initial requirement was to acquire, "About 500 systems. We will start to buy the system in 2013 and finish the system acquisition in 2017." He said that initially the systems will be for, "some form of special forces, not everyone." PIBS is also known as Slovak Force Goal EL 0895.

The trials system power and communications was based around a package supplied by Thales based around the SOLAR 400E radio, audio ancillaries and two secondary cells located on each soldier's back. These also work with hand held Personal Digital Assistant and C2 software. Stefan Faix, Technical Manager at Magic explained that the the C4I software is a domestically developed system. "We used our own software for several reasons. First is language, second is customer requirement. It's Windows XP but we developed our national software."

PIBS' power requirement is to operate all sub-systems for a minimum of twelve hours, typically around 24 hours. The system weight requirement for all subsystems is to be no more than 24Kg, calculated at 30 percent of the average soldier's weight, while combat load would be expected to be down to a more agile 16Kg, down to 20 percent of the average weight.

The C4I systems were integrated within a Tactical Electronic Vest. Ultimately, PIBS will adopt a new

pixellated camouflage system which must be both water and fire resistant.

The combat load must include emergency rations, Camelbak type hydration system and survival systems including medical pack and CBRN protection, detection and treatment kit – all sufficient for a two day period.

The weapon system used in the 2007 trials brought in two new weapons, the Heckler and Koch G36, with the AG36 40mm grenade launcher and the MG4 Light Machine Gun, both 5.56mm weapons. In addition the trials also included work on an upgraded version of the current vz.58 assault rifle.

The programme is considering larger calibres than 5.56mm, with the minimum requirement for the weapon to penetrate TBO 4 CZ – a legacy Czech standard, a little above the NIJ IIIA standard.

The system is also required to host a sight with capabilities in all weathers out to 300-400m and with a marking capability out to 600-1000m. Overall, the weapon system requirement has a maximum weight of 5Kg.

For the trials, Ing Pavel Simon, Head of Development Laboratory at Magic said that the integrated ballistic protection solution was worn by the Experimental Squad under the tactical vest. The vest provided protection levels of up to TBO 2 CZ but upgradeable to TBO 7 CZ and sourced from Slovak firm PABN.

The helmet subsystem has a requirement for protection up to TBO 2 CZ, as well as providing eye and face protection against laser beams and is required to offer typical growth to HMD and NVG. Another requirement is for it to be able to act as a host for a 360 degree laser radio detection system. The programme requirements are to mount an image integration system on the helmet. ■