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NDIA Speaker/Panel Questions – RADM Nowakowski

The MH-60S will eventually be employed from within an ESG/CSG to conduct MCM from LCS. Is N75/CMWC involved in the N42 analysis that may outsource MH-60S airframes? (Outsource helos won't do AMCM)

Reply provide by OPNAV N752: The N42 analysis is being undertaken to examine long term cost savings and potential efficiencies. N75 is the MCM mission sponsor. N78 owns the airframes and Helo CONOPS. N78 and CNAF are considering implications to warfare areas impacted by commercial helicopter. N75 will provide warfare area impact of recommendations ICW N78 review of the analysis.

How realistic is it to plan to use dedicated MCM forces for Sea Based protection considering:

- time to deploy dedicated forces to sea base
- decommissioning of MHCs, and maybe MCMs

Dedicated MCM forces will remain an important element for MCM operations in support of Sea Based protection for the foreseeable future.

- Dedicated MCM assets, as part of the FDNF (Forward Deployed Naval Force), are based in key forward areas to perform theater missions and reduce response times. These FDNF Dedicated MCM forces include SMCM, AMCM and UCM elements. These FDNF MCM forces will provide the initial MCM support to sea-based operations until LCS and associated MIW Mission Modules are available in sufficient numbers. Additional dedicated MCM assets form a "Surge" force which can be rapidly deployed from CONUS or other theaters in support of sea based operations in a given AOR.

- OPLANs and CONPLANs will be adjusted as necessary as MHCs are decommissioned. There are NO current plans to decommission MCM class ships prior to reaching the end of their active service life.

RDML Hicks says (due to time) he won't operate a Sea Base where mines can be found.

It is part of fundamental Mine Warfare Doctrine to establish operating areas (all operating areas, not just the Sea Bases) outside the Mine Threat Area (MTA) whenever possible. However, there are several key geographic regions of the world where the mine-able waters extend for considerable distances from shore. In these areas, establishing the Sea Base outside the MTA would mean placing the Sea Base a considerable distance from the intended OPAREA.

Capt Wilkins says (until we get advanced connectors) we must use parts for offload/on load.

Seems like a smart enemy might foil all our plans by placing a few mines surrounding ports.

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Doesn't sound much like Maritime Dominance.
Request your thoughts.

Protective Minefields placed around key ports and facilities have been a feature of Naval Mine Warfare from the inception of the naval mine. History is replete with the use of mines in this role; a few relevant examples include Confederate Navy use of mines to protect southern ports during the US Civil War, North Korean mining of Wonson Harbor approaches during the Korean War, and US mining of Haiphong Harbor during the Viet Nam war. Unless all supplies will be airlifted into forces on land, lanes for JLOTS or q-routes into ports will have to be cleared of mines to allow surface traffic transit for re-supply.

LCS is almost completely reliant on offboard sensors (UUVs, USVs, etc) to support MCM efforts. However, most "real" world scenarios (e.g. Korea, Taiwan, Central AG) are in diverse environments (high currents, high burial turbidity) where these offboard sensors will be rendered "ineffective".

Have we soldout our dedicated "persistent" MCM force to a untested LCS "concept" that will be unable to perform in these operational environments?

COMINWARCOM is committed to ensuring new OMCM systems can perform in projected operating environments before existing MCM systems are removed from the inventory. For this reason, we are supporting a FLEX for the MH-53E helicopter to extend its service life and we are also pushing to ensure LCS and associated MIW Mission Modules are fully evaluated before a decision is made on replacing/retiring the MCM 1 class ships (decision due in 2012).

The CNO has set up several task forces: TF EXCEL for education & training, TFSIM for simulation & modeling, and TF ASW for antisubmarine warfare. Given that the undersea battlespace is a key challenge to protection of the Sea Base, why not expand TF ASW focused on subs, to TF USW, focused on the totality of the undersea threats rather than today's stove-pipe approach?

CMWC is actively supporting several initiatives linking MIW to other aspects of USW. We are supporting a Sea Trial project aimed at collaborative ASW/MIW C2, we are collaborating on mutual environmental data collection and dissemination and we are collaborating on CONOPS development with the submarine community. We are also actively involved in the development of concepts for undersea surveillance and detection systems for both ASW and MIW.

We understand with your help, the CNO has approved implementing six SWO Specialties to include Mine Warfare and ASW. Could you outline this new SWO career program and how it will help Mine Warfare.

This new SWO specialization career path program offers an exciting win-win opportunity for surface warfare officers and the navy. It's a win for the officers,

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because they will be able to specialize in areas in which they have an increased interest and passion. The officer will gain experience and develop management and leadership skills that will serve the navy well. It's also a win for the Navy, because we will train and maintain a cadre of trained officers that have multiple tours in a specialty area already assigned to SWOs, and help us keep talented SWOs in the Navy who might otherwise choose to leave the service. Details of the program are contained in NAVADMIN 220/04 which is available via the website: www.bupers.navy.mil. An article about this new SWO program, including an interview with the flag sponsor of the program, RADM Mike Lefefer, was printed in the Navy News on 30 September 2004.

The notional MCM CONOPS described
Clear Sea Base OA then;
Clear routes to "beach"

Doesn't seem to fit the stated timelines.
How far from being able to support those timelines (10-30-30 a BN ashore in 8-10 hrs of darkness) are we?

When (how) will we be able to support these time lines?

I am not sure what the "notional" MCM CONOPS is. The OPNAV N752 Future CONOPS is targeted at the far term (beyond 2015) and is based capabilities of projected systems. The ability of current and near term MCM systems to support specific timelines is a question of capacity (i.e. how much area to be cleared, how many mines in the field and how many MCM systems are available). There are numerous CLASSIFIED analysis efforts which depict times required to clear specified areas for amphibious movement ashore for various situations.

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