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New Age Travellers

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TRACKING CASUALTIES
Europe's high tech triage system

Qinetiq showcases new explosives scanner

Company showcases scanning of 'suspect' at 20 metres in front of UK counter-terrorism minister

A MILLIMETRE-WAVE scanner designed to detect hidden explosives being carried by suicide bombers is being used at several US transport hubs.

A spokesman for UK company Qinetiq, which developed the scanner, said: 'It gives you that vital element of time when you are in the front line so you are able to tell who is a threat and who is not. The scanner is looking for natural body emissions at millimetre wavelengths.'

The scanner was demonstrated in front of Lord West, UK minister of state for security and counter-terrorism, at the recent Home Office Science and Development Branch (HOSDB) exhibition in Farnborough in the UK.

From a distance of 20 metres it detected a 'planted' suspect – a



CHECKPOINT: Qinetiq's scanner adds another element to security

woman wearing a hidden dummy bomb made of simulated explosives loaded with fragmentation.

'This is not a checkpoint technology,' the spokesman said. 'This is about detecting infrastructure. It is not a discriminating technol-

ogy, it is the first line of defence. If the dial on the scanner goes red, it is telling the operator "you need to do something about the person [the scanner has detected] right now".' Development work on the scanner began in 2003. The

company says it has worked closely with HOSDB and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in the US, which has led the deployment of the technology in airports in Chicago, Boston, Providence and New York City.

Lord West said the technology involved in this type of scanner is still being refined. He said: 'Two and a half years ago I was looking at the first prototypes and good progress has been made,' he said, adding that his 'ideal' requirement would be to have a scanner that could detect threats from a distance of 100 metres.'

Qinetiq said HOSDB and the UK Department of Transport had recently finished an evaluation programme of the technology 'with a view to look at procurement options'.

Patrol torch designed to force specification

A EUROPEAN police force has collaborated in the design of a new patrol torch that is safe to use in hazardous areas.

The PL4 'Polizeilampe' was developed in response to specific demands received from the force to increase the safety of police officers on patrol, including those who will be operating in areas where explosive gases might be present.

The force in question conducted field trials of the torch in various hazardous scenarios.

According to manufacturer Permalight (Asia) Co, the first 1,000 PL4s are now in production and will be delivered to the unnamed European force at the end of April.

The force specified a number of design requirements for the torch, including its 'quick light-up' mode which automatically switches it off if dropped so the officer does not become a visible target. To increase disorientation of po-

tentially dangerous suspects, the torch also has a temporary strobe which can be activated by pressing the tail-cap switch. The switch makes no audible sound when pressed to increase the element of surprise. The unit also has a quick-release lanyard to prevent an officer's hand becoming trapped.

A spokesman for Permalight said: 'On patrol, police officers face considerable risks which increase when confronted with critical accidents or incidents involving leaking chemicals and flammable gases, fuel spills and potentially explosive vapours.'

'Such scenarios may involve car and lorry crashes or fuel truck accidents, but also in-

dustrial and residential fires and gas leaks.' To combat this, the flashlights are explosion-proof to the ATEX Gas Zone 2 standard. Equipment used to ensure safe operation in a hazardous area falls within the scope of the ATEX Directive (from the French – 'atmospheres explosibles').

The ATEX Directive combines two European Directives associated with equipment used, and people who work in, potentially explosive atmospheres.

ATEX Zone 2 is defined as a place in which an explosive atmosphere consisting of a mixture with air of flammable substances in the form of gas, vapour or mist is not likely to occur in normal operation but, if it does occur, will persist for a short period only.

The PL4 was exhibited at Milipol Paris 2009 and at the IWA 2010 in Germany in March.



NPIA to market data-sharing system in UK

THE UK's National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) plans to market a data-sharing system which will be used with the Police National Database (PND).

The Code List Management Service (CLMS) was developed to manage data standards by the NPIA, which now wants to hand the system over to a 'partner' organisation to manage and run it as a commercial service.

UK police officers have been using it to send and receive data and view key intelligence.

It is also being used by every UK police force as part of the process of preparing data for sharing through the PND, which will enable police to access and share intelligence held on local systems.