



Strategic Weapons Targeting Systems - a new era

The recent delivery of the latest targeting software from DE&S has gained recognition as Strategic Weapons Targeting Systems enters a new era.

The UK's independent nuclear deterrent safeguards our national security. The military capability that underwrites it, notably Trident as operated by the Royal Navy, is possibly the greatest symbol of the unique relationship between Britain and the US.

However, the UK's deterrent policy demands operational independence, which means there are areas where we have to go it alone.

An obvious example is the nuclear payload in the warheads built at AWE. Another is the nuclear firing chain that would relay the Prime Minister's launch instructions to a submarine on deterrent patrol. A third sovereign component is the Targeting Systems that makes it possible for deterrent policy to be translated into military effect.

When it comes to critical MOD processes where there would be zero tolerance of failure, this is one of them.

The nuclear targeting community recently came together to recognise a

transition to the new Strategic Weapon Targeting System known as 'SWTS' and in particular a key version of the Common Planning System known as 'CPS'.

This represents the culmination of eight-years of design, development, production and test effort that comprises over 3.5 million lines of software code and in excess of 300,000 man-hours.

The project has been a team effort between the MOD delivery component in the Strategic Weapons Project Team (SWPT), MOD's contractor for this project (MASS), and CBRN Pol as well as other key users in the nuclear targeting community; the former two components are based at SWPT's UK Software Facility (UKSF). They have all contributed to the success of the system.

The team has faced some considerable challenges during the system's development.

The critical nature of the product, the many stakeholders and physical locations, combined with the scale of the software and programme constraints has made this a very demanding programme. The way the team has overcome the issues has cemented the importance of delivery and emphasized programmatic control.

There has been an incremental delivery of functionality to the user and in September CPS became the operational targeting system.

To mark this significant achievement, both Vice Chief of Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach and ACDS (Nuc CB) Rear Admiral Mark Beverstock thanked the key players from SWPT, MASS and the Nuclear community at an event in MOD Main Building on 21 September.

Rear Admiral Beverstock said that, "SWTS and CPS has delivered improved connectivity to stakeholder locations and substantial improvements, it really is an exceptional system."

"SWTS is a key system, which must support the highest levels of fidelity, security and assurance and SWPT were asked to build it so that it would meet the challenges now and those for the next generation of deterrent targeting support.

"The investment has delivered a modern targeting system the MOD can take forward in support of the Government's requirement for Continuous At Sea Deterrence."

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