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Subject: LOSS OF AN MU90 LIGHTWEIGHT EXERCISE TORPEDO IN THE NAVY'S
WESTERN AUSTRALIA EXERCISE AREA - FRIDAY 19 NOV 2010 UPDATE

Comment:
Action Area DNMC

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HOT ISSUE BRIEF (Friday 19 Nov 2010 Update)

ISSUE: LOSS OF AN MU90 LIGHTWEIGHT EXERCISE TORPEDO IN THE NAVY'S WESTERN AUSTRALIA EXERCISE AREA

SENSITIVITY: Medium. JP2070 Replacement Lightweight Torpedo Project is being managed as a Project of Concern by the Defence Materiel Organisation.

KEY ISSUES:

- Preparations to recover the MU90 exercise torpedo lost in the Western Australia Exercise Area on Thursday 18 Nov 2010 are proceeding.
- MV Seahorse Standard will embark a Navy clearance diving team and sail for the exercise area on the evening of 19 Nov 2010. MV Shark is being equipped with a side scan sonar to assist with the locating of the torpedo which is about 20 nautical miles off the coast.
- The on-board torpedo pinger was confirmed as operating by MV Seahorse Standard prior to it departing the exercise area on 18 Nov 2010. While the general area of the torpedo is known, the pinger will greatly facilitate accurate location of the torpedo.
- A further progress update will be released on Monday 29 Nov 2010.

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BACKGROUND:

Joint Project 2070 is acquiring the MU90 light weight anti-submarine torpedo to replace the aging Mk46 for Navy.

The project is in the test and evaluation stage and the firing of an exercise torpedo was conducted as part of the acceptance test process. The torpedo was to be recovered and refurbished as part of the certification process for a mobile post exercise facility.

The approximate area of the torpedo is known and additional sonar buoys will be laid in that area to locate the pinger on the torpedo.

A side scan sonar will then be used to aid in the final location of the torpedo to ensure the most accurate information prior to recovery by divers.

Clearance Diving Team 4 based at HMAS STIRLING is embarking on Motor Vessel Seahorse Standard and will dive and recover the torpedo to the surface.

MV Seahorse Standard will then recover the torpedo and conduct preventive maintenance on the torpedo.

The MU90 will then be transported to HMAS STIRLING where it will be moved to the Post Exercise Facility (Mobile) for stabilisation, disassembly and data extraction.

The JP2070 project has recently been audited by the Australian National Audit Office which was critical of Defence's management of the project. Many of the issues raised in the audit have been addressed.

JP2070 is being managed by DMO as a Project of Concern.

TALKING POINTS

- **An MU90 lightweight exercise torpedo was lost on Thursday 18 November 2010 after being fired from HMAS WARRAMUNGA in the Navy's exercise area in Western Australia.**
- **The approximate location of the torpedo is known and a pinger has been activated on the torpedo which will aid in its recovery. A side scan sonar will be used to pinpoint the final location on the seabed.**
- **The torpedo is in water shallow enough to allow Navy divers to recover it once it is located.**
- **When recovered, the torpedo will be returned to the Torpedo Maintenance Facility at HMAS STIRLING for disassembly and data extraction.**
- **The torpedo is an exercise torpedo and does not have a warhead. The torpedo poses no danger to the public or the environment.**

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