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Rheinmetall retrofit programmes give land systems added punch and greater protection

Mechanized forces consisting of main battle tanks and infantry fighting vehicles continue to form the steel core of modern high-mobility warfare, combining hard-hitting firepower with outstanding operational flexibility.

Two combat vehicles that have proven indispensable in recent decades are the Leopard main battle tank and the Marder infantry fighting vehicle. They formed the backbone of NATO's mobile defence strategy in the Cold War. Confounding the sceptics, numerous Leopard 2 user nations have successfully deployed the tank well beyond the borders of Europe, for example in Afghanistan. Moreover, the Germany's tried-and-tested Marder continues to give the Bundeswehr the edge in the Hindu Kush, combining high mobility, massive firepower and superb protection.

With the Leopard 2 and Marder likely to remain in military inventories for at least another twenty years, investing in mission-oriented performance upgrades makes good sense. New technologies for enhancing the survivability, lethality, C4I capabilities and reconnaissance and vision systems can significantly improve the vehicle's overall combat performance. Sustainment, especially for operations in hot climates, can be substantially enhanced as well.

Owing to its expertise as a systems integrator, Rheinmetall is able to modify legacy systems to make them more than a match for current challenges and threats. A prime example of this is the company's MBT Revolution.

On view at FIDAE 2012 are some of Rheinmetall's high-tech solutions for upgrade programmes. One of the most trusted names in the global defence industry, the company is showcasing an infantry fighting vehicle with modernized force protection elements for countering new battlefield threats.

The system on show features add-on armour, a spall liner and anti-mine seats decoupled from the floor of the vehicle, designed and retrofitted by Rheinmetall Chempro. These features provide the crew with reliable protection from RPG attacks, APFDS-T rounds, antitank guided missiles with a tandem shaped charge, and landmines. All of these components can be quickly retrofitted into existing systems without impairing the vehicle's mobility.

This protection system also includes Rheinmetall's unique new 360° smoke/obscurant system, ROSY, which stands for "Rapid Obscuring System" and offers excellent protection from TV-, EO-, IR-, IIR-, LASER- and SACLOS-guided weapons. Unlike conventional smoke/obscurant systems, ROSY not only produces

an instantaneous, large-scale, multispectral interruption of the line of sight in just 0.6 seconds, but also generates a dynamic screen of smoke/obscurant that provides a moving vehicle with sustained protection from multiple attacks.

About Rheinmetall

As Europe's largest supplier of systems and equipment for ground forces, Rheinmetall offers a full range of tactical vehicles as well as a unique portfolio of C4I, fire control and reconnaissance systems, weapons and ammunition, and force protection technologies. The Group's core competencies also encompass service and maintenance as well as a wide spectrum of simulation and training systems, including highly advanced major combat training centres.

Deriving from a single source, these capabilities are crucial to the success of upgrade programmes, assuring optimum interplay of the respective components. Rheinmetall maintains an extensive network of international partnerships.

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