

Company works to improve defence infrastructure

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ON THE night before June 6, 1944, General Dwight D. Eisenhower composed a solemn and inspiring statement that was delivered as a letter the next day into the hands of every soldier, sailor and airman set to embark on Operation Overlord, the invasion of German-occupied Europe.

Eisenhower, the supreme commander of Allied Expeditionary Forces in World War II, reminded the men that the eyes of the world are upon them and that their opponents would fight savagely.

Within a month, 1.1 million troops, 200,000 vehicles and 750,000 tonnes of stores were landed.

Coordinating the efforts of a force this large over a vast area would be no easy feat even in peacetime, let alone war.

German general and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz famously noted that it is a constant challenge for the commanders to form a picture of the battlefield from a very large (or very small) amount of diverse data. Von Clausewitz called this the "fog of war".

This is due to a large number of possibilities, from incomplete or inaccurate intelligence about the enemy's strength and intent, features of the battlefield, and incomplete knowledge of their own forces' capability and whereabouts.

It is the goal of every modern military's technological efforts to reduce the fog of war through the implementation of something called command and control (C2).

Although even the most advanced armed forces still fall victim to the fog of war, System Consultancy Services Sdn Bhd (SCS) executive chairman Datuk Khalilur Rahman Ebrahim is seeking ways to ensure the Malaysian armed forces have the best systems in place to deal with the hazard.

"While you are asleep, our men and women in uniform continue to monitor the strategic areas of the nation, deciding what to do, taking into consideration the assets, friends and foes the military have in the operational theater," he told *Metrobiz*.

Khalilur Rahman, who is an electrical and electronics engineer by training, was part of the team that founded Sapura Consulting Sdn Bhd in 1993, a subsidiary of Sapura

Counting on command and control



Holdings.

As the chief executive officer of Sapura Consulting, he was tasked to serve as a consultant to the Defence Ministry, which had procured a command and control system from a British defence contractor.

Sapura Consulting bought out the remaining shares held by Sapura Holdings and renamed the company SCS in 1994.

"We helped to mitigate the issues that arose between the ministry with the contractor. The system was delivered in 1996 and when the warranty period expired in 1997, we tendered for the maintenance project and subsequently to modernise the system," Khalilur Rahman said, adding that being a matter of national security, the system was best maintained by a local company.

The defence and security equipments integrator won the bid for the RM25mil contract and they've maintained the system ever since.

When the Y2K or millennium bug became an issue in 2000, he said they rewrote the whole code for the system to make it Y2K compliant, fully departing from the British system implemented earlier.

"We also expanded the system from the existing 20 military installations done earlier to over 70 sites today," he said.

This includes providing military command and control (C2) systems that encompass command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems, information management systems, electronic warfare (EW), information warfare (IW), encryption, maintenance and service support for the installations.

Khalilur Rahman said the company, which currently occupies five shop offices covering 40,000 sq ft of floor space in Wangsa Maju, Kuala Lumpur, had grown from its humble beginnings of eight employees to 500 today, in tandem with the projects they are working on.

Apart from the software, they liaise with various vendors to provide the necessary hardware that ranges from hardened laptops, various sizes of display screens to the servers,



1 The company also does work on unmanned aerial vehicles.

2 Khalilur Rahman says the company is seeking ways to ensure that Malaysia's armed forces have the best systems in place.

3 An SCS engineer working on electronic components at their centre in Wangsa Maju.

4 SCS employees simulating the proposed Rakan Cop 2 C4ISR system for the Royal Malaysian Police.

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