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Editor's Note: Demonstrations of SURC™ and Symphony™ are scheduled today and tomorrow at AUVSI's Unmanned Systems North America 2008 in San Diego, Calif.

QinetiQ North America Announces New Universal Controller Software and Open Standard Software Development Kit for Military Robotics

J AUS-compliant solutions give the warfighter control of more robots and expand choices for new payloads, accessories and software

SAN DIEGO, CA: 10 June 2008 —QinetiQ North America today announced that the Applied Perception subsidiary of its Technology Solutions Group has developed two robotics software products designed to make the field of military robotics more open and available to both industry and government: SURC™ (Soldier Universal Robot Controller), new software that allows operators to control multiple unmanned vehicles from a single control station; and Symphony™, an open standards software development kit for third-party developers. Both SURC and Symphony are designed to bring the military's Joint Architecture for Unmanned Systems (JAUS) to a broader spectrum of unmanned robotics platforms by making it easier to develop, integrate and control software and capabilities that conform to JAUS and other component architectures and standards.

JAUS is mandated for use by all programs in the Joint Ground Robotics Enterprise (JGRE). It defines messages and component behaviors that are independent of technology, computer hardware, operator use and vehicle platforms.

"JAUS is a critical component in the field of military robotics, and we recognized the need for both government and industry to have better access to JAUS-compliant solutions," said Dr. William Ribich, President of the Technology Solutions Group. "We expect that SURC and Symphony will not just make operators more effective and improve the deployability of third-party solutions; these new solutions will help make JAUS even more successful."

SURC: One Warfighter Controls a Squad of Robots

SURC allows operators to simultaneously task, monitor and tele-operate multiple, heterogeneous, unmanned vehicles from a single control station. This effectively ends the 1:1 ratio of operators to robots in the field, freeing each operator to spend more time concentrating on overall mission requirements and less time focusing on individual system activities. The warfighter needs less training in remembering control details of each and every platform and carries much less gear while controlling more robots.

"SURC represents a key step forward in military robotics," said Dr. Ribich. "We're not just making it easier to comply with JAUS standards; we're making it possible for the military to change the way it deploys and controls robots on the battlefield."

SURC has a modular architecture and can be used on a wide variety of hardware, including unmanned vehicles on land, sea and in the air. SURC's capabilities include:

- Seamless integration between operators and multiple unmanned assets;
- Automatic discovery of available unmanned assets in the network, and their capabilities;
- Command and control using MIL-STD symbology and mission creation lexicon; and
- User-replaceable software modules to add tactical, planning, user interface and control capabilities.

SURC was designed to work in various environments, including JAUS, STANAG-4586 and other proprietary protocols. SURC is already used to control QinetiQ North America's line of unmanned vehicles and is now available for purchase.

Symphony: Structured Interoperability Gives Industry and Government Assured Deployability

Symphony is a software development kit for third-party developers. It uses open standards to accelerate new capability integration onto unmanned vehicles by ensuring compliance with government expectations and enabling structured interoperability with fielded equipment, such as the TALON® family of robots. Developers using Symphony will be able to concentrate on creating new robotics capabilities, instead of spending precious time writing integration software, and government customers will have a broader selection of developers with the assurance that new add-ons and technologies will operate on deployed unmanned systems.

"We heard our customers, particularly the U.S. military, asking for more choices and faster access to unmanned robotics technologies," said Dr. Ribich. "We developed Symphony to eliminate technology stovepipes, create choice and facilitate access by providing structured openness in robotic platforms, along with the needed deployment support that many smaller companies just don't have."

Symphony provides standardized access to platforms and payloads with inherent deployment support, giving the warfighter and the acquisition office more choices for sensors, cameras, weapons and other add-ons for unmanned robots. The Symphony framework offers:

- A software architecture definition and component framework, supported by tools and documentation;
- Debug, analysis and simulation tools to reduce release cycle time and post-release defect count; and
- System- and component-level configuration management.

"There is no shortage of qualified companies and experts working on new robotics technologies that will change combat forever; the trick is getting those new solutions to the warfighter," said Dr. Ribich. "Symphony is that last, critical piece of the open robotics puzzle that allows industry to develop what the customer needs and get it into the field faster than ever."

Beta testing for Symphony has already begun with leading commercial and government unmanned vehicle solution providers, including Autonomous Solutions, Applied Systems Intelligence, and several U.S. government labs. QinetiQ North America expects to announce additional key partners from industry, government and academia in the coming months, and the company plans to release Symphony Version 1.0 to third-party developers later this year.

The family of TALON robots includes a range of sizes and functionalities in unmanned ground systems. Dragon Runner™, TALON, MAARS™ and TAGS-CX address the military's need for standoff protection from the enemy as well as counter-IED capability.

About QinetiQ North America

QinetiQ North America provides world-class technology and responsive solutions to U.S. government customers. With more than 5,500 engineers, scientists and professionals working in partnership with customers, QinetiQ North America develops innovative technology solutions to meet the challenges of national defense, homeland security and information access. QinetiQ North America is part of QinetiQ Group plc, one of the world's leading defense and security technology companies. For more information, please visit www.QinetiQ-NA.com.



About QinetiQ North America's Technology Solutions Group

QinetiQ North America's Technology Solutions Group includes the businesses of Foster-Miller, Inc. and its subsidiaries Planning Systems Incorporated (PSI), Automatika and Applied Perception plus the research and development activities of Apogen Technologies, Inc. It is a technology and product development business with an international reputation for delivering innovative products and systems that perform under the most demanding conditions.

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