Opportunities in Army Network Operations

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Related Categories: Department of Defense, Joint Information Environment (JIE), Cloud Computing, Army, Cybersecurity, Contract Opportunities, IT Services

Just before the Christmas holiday I posted **a short piece** explaining how network engineering efforts in the Army are leading the way to the Defense Department's new Joint information Environment (JIE). In this post I'll elaborate on some of the points I made earlier, especially concerning the Army's focus on network operations.

The December post noted that the Army has expressed an interest in acquiring a number of capabilities that it may host in its new Core Data Centers once those centers are in place. Upon reflection I realize now that I got ahead of myself. There is a lot of ground for the Army to cover before it can turn its attention to acquiring the capabilities I mentioned in the earlier post. This is particularly the case as far as network operations (NetOps) are concerned.

Infrastructure Enhancements

Presently the Project Manager Installation Information Infrastructure Communications and Capabilities (PM I3CS) remains focused on upgrading the network and communications hardware required by the Army to increase bandwidth and network interoperability across the Service's bases, posts, camps, and stations (B/P/C/S). This effort includes:

- Upgrading core routers capable of supporting speeds of up to 100 GB per second.
- Reducing Non-classified Internet Protocol Router Network (NIPRNet) entry and exit points from 435 in the continental U.S. to *fewer than 20* points globally.
- Deploying upgraded Application Delivery Network/End User Building (ADN/EUB) switches.

These efforts, presumably being carried out largely via orders issued under the Infrastructure Modernization (IMOD) IDIQ contract, are scheduled for completion in the CONUS by the end of fiscal 2014. Work will then shift to overseas locations for fiscal 2015-2016. Simultaneously the Army is working to consolidate data centers into a handful of Core Data Centers. The anticipated result of these efforts is to have built by fiscal 2017 a more highly integrated and interoperable network infrastructure capable of delivering enterprise services.

Network Operations Capabilities

This is where a series of network operations capabilities fit in that I errantly referred to as "enterprise services" back in December. According to Army documents, some of these capabilities may be procured "as-a-Service." Whether these "services" will be hosted in the Army's CDC's or in commercial data centers remains to be seen. The capabilities currently on the Army's radar to be delivered as managed network operations services are as follows:

- IP Network Management System (NetMan)
- Network Intrusion Prevention System (NIPS)
- Wireless Intrusion Prevention System (WIPS)
- Firewall Element Management
- Proxy Management
- Router Element Management
- Switch Element Management
- Virtual Private Network (VPN) Management
- Virtualization Management System (VMS)
- Network Access Control (NAC)
- Identity Management System
- Directory Services Management

Procurement

Given the Army's anticipated schedule for completing its network infrastructure upgrades (i.e., the end of FY 2014), I assume we may see procurement activity related to these capabilities beginning this fiscal year. Where the opportunities will appear remains a mystery. Some may be competed openly while others may be procured via contract vehicles like PD CHESS' IT Enterprise Solutions 2 – Services (ITES-2S). However they are procured, look for them to appear sooner rather than later.