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Abstract
Terrorist naval mines/underwater improvised explosive devices (M/UWIEDs) are a threat to U.S. maritime ports, and could cause economic damage, panic, and mass casualties. The purpose of this case study was to examine this threat and propose reforms that improve port security management. The study aligned with the mission area analysis objective of identifying and assessing potential terrorist threats in order to preempt and prevent attacks. Von Bertalanffy's general systems theory was the framework for research questions, which focused on improvements in port security management to mitigate the threat of terrorist M/UWIEDs. Data collection included a document content analysis of open source/nonclassified crime reports, government threat assessments, and legislation; physical artifacts (port infrastructure) information; policy papers; maps, satellite imagery, and navigational charts; peer-reviewed academic literature; and direct observation of 2 California-based maritime ports and an inspection of their physical artifacts. Data were organized by general themes; coded axially and selectively; and analyzed by phrases, topics, and words associated with minelaying, mine countermeasures, and port security. Key findings were that, since 9/11, overall port security has improved, although there has been little progress in countering the threat presented by M/UWIEDs. Further, vulnerabilities exist that terrorists who seek to commit an M/UWIED attack or campaign could misuse. The findings from this study contribute to positive social change by providing data to key stakeholders responsible for counterterrorism, mine warfare, and port security, thereby contributing to overall U.S. homeland security.

potential explosives, such as IEDs (improvised explosive devices) in ports, harbours and coastal waterways for maritime traffic. Customer • US CTTSO (Combating Terrorism. Technical Support Office). Sea Wasp, a waterborne security system specially designed to deal with the modern threat of waterborne IEDs in harbour areas. Multi shot mine neutralization system. "Underwater improvised explosive devices are a credible threat," said Rear Adm. John Christenson, vice commander of the Naval Mine and Anti-Submarine Warfare Command. "We consider it an unlikely event, but if it did happen, it would have huge consequences that would be very expensive and difficult to recover from," he told an industry audience at a recent conference. From the Coast Guard’s perspective, maritime improvised explosive devices are the number-one terrorist threat, said Ken McDaniel, deputy division chief of the office of counterterrorism and defense operations’ maritime counterterrorism division. "We already know that they’ve tried to use it with success in various forms," he told the conference. According to the team, underwater explosive devices pose a significant threat because they are cheap, easy to obtain, and are difficult to prevent and respond to. Lt. Bobby Rowden, the SEA-14 project manager, outlined the need for an effective, joint operational strategy to address the high-impact threats to the country’s waterways. While several national policy documents have been established, such as the National Strategy for Maritime Security, these strategies have not been translated into clear roles at the tactical and operational level, Rowden said. Lt. The students also noted the importance of establishing national objectives that include a list of priority ports and response and recovery timelines.