

massive exodus of refugees to neighbouring countries turns the original civil war into a regional conflict. In order to protect the refugees and the PSO forces, both a demilitarised zone (DMZ) and a no-flying zone (NFZ) have to be established. Peace Support Operations is tasked with conducting Peace Enforcement, Conflict Prevention, Humanitarian Operations and Crisis Management.

Step-by-step approach

This exercise, like all the other NATO/Partnership for Peace exercises, was focused on promoting a better understanding of NATO's doctrine, the procedures applied when carrying out Peace Support and Peace Keeping Operations, and on nations achieving interoperability in preparing and carrying out military operations using each other's knowledge, experience and assets.

In this CO-OPERATIVE KEY exercise, the PSO consisted of combined air and ground operations, involving seven mission types such as Command, Control and Communications (C3) operations, Search and Rescue (SAR), troop deployment and re-deployment, Close Air

it also covered more basic aspects such as flightline procedures. COO gave the different aircraft maintenance crews valuable information as to how NATO conducts its flightline operations, and a chance to learn about standard procedures regarding aspects such as emergency notification, re-fuelling, aircraft scheduling and status reporting, sharing common equipment and using established hand signals for marshalling aircraft.

Several nations exchanged aircraft-servicing familiarisation training during the exercise workshops.

Initial COAC Capability

In order to synchronise the exact time over target (TOT) of all the aerial assets employed, an Air Co-ordination Centre (ACC) was set up, integrating all the specific missions to be executed, the different entry points (routes or airways) and corresponding identifications (callsigns and IFF) assigned.

Depending upon the aircraft type, its configuration and airspeed, plus weather conditions en route, parts of the exercise can be simulated prior to their execution or even



was the 43-strong AIRSOUTH delegation flown in by a US Navy DC-9 on August 31. This group, together with local Romanian forces, prepared for the arrival of the other participants and set up the Air Co-ordination Centre (ACC).

Sunday, September 3 saw the arrival of Romania's (the host nation's) aircraft – four IAR 330 helicopters of the 61st HelAB at Titu and 90thTrAB from Otopeni. An Antonov An-26 and a C-130B Hercules transport aircraft from the same base arrived, followed by three MiG-21 Lancer fighter aircraft from the 86st AB at Fetesti. More aircraft were added as CK2000 progressed.

Most of the other participants arrived on September 4 and 5, when a CASA CN235 brought in the Turkish delegation, along with two observers from Azerbaijan. Later, a C-130 flew in a second group of Turkish personnel. The four Turkish F-16 aircraft flying CAS missions during CK2000 did not operate from Mihail Kogalniceanu but from mainland Turkey, for logistical and economic reasons. Similarly, the three Greek Air Force F-16s operated from Greece.

Another CASA CN235 was used to fly in the Austrian delegation, which joined in with two AB 212 helicopters from Fliegerregiment 1, normally based at Tullin-Langenlebarn, Switzerland, Poland and the USA sent personnel only.

Given its extensive experience in the field of



The Bulgarians sent a large delegation. Their Su-26UBK flew more than 15 close air support missions during the exercise.

Support (CAS), Medical Evacuation (Medevac), Air Transportation and Field operations.

The exercise was put together following a series of planning conferences, four of which were held in Austria and Romania between August 1999 and July 2000. These conferences ranged from three days to two weeks and addressed all the different elements using a step-by-step approach.

The first few days of CO-OPERATIVE KEY were used for familiarisation and theoretical training of personnel in the exercise operations, procedures and limitations. Military experts from different nations led the various workshops with the aim of sharing information and synchronising the working procedures for each field of operation, such as medevac, aircraft servicing or assessment.

Particular attention was given to the importance of establishing a proper connection between the command and control and the action levels, using one language (English) and one terminology. After the workshops came familiarisation flights and static parajumps, activities which increased in complexity during the first week of the exercise, before the CO-OPERATIVE KEY exercise itself was undertaken in the second week.

Creating interoperability – one of the main goals of COO – followed this concept. Rather than being limited to the more obvious areas such as flight operations and communications,

adjusted once in progress. For this, NATO members use the Initial COAC Capability (ICC) system, which was being used in a NATO/PPF exercise for the first time. This system provides information management and decision support to air operations activities during peacetime, exercises and wartime at all levels of command. The most critical Air Command and Control functions, such as Planning and Tasking, Air Task Order (ATO)/ Air Task Message (ATM) generation and complete Current Operations capability are functionally supported.

First arrivals

The first arrival at Mihail Kogalniceanu airbase



The two Hungarian Mi-17s came from the 87HE 'Bakonyi' Regiment at Szentkiralyzabdzia. MARKUS SAFI/MAK