



A Macedonian Mi-17 leaves the Babadag training area after successfully inserting USAFE and USMC troops, who secured the LZ. More ground troops and medical teams will be flown in to prepare for a mass evacuation.

Peace Support Operations, the USA played a major role in the CK00 ground operations. To emphasise the learning experience for its own troops as well, it sent 13 USMC members of B-Comp, 4th Recon. Battalion from Billings, Montana, both active duty personnel and reservists. A major role in the ground operations was taken by a Sembach AB, Germany-based USAFE special operations unit, very similar to an AFSOC/Combat Control Team (CCT), which normally performs a wide variety of tasks during crisis situations in Europe and Africa. Its members were able to share some of their skills in setting up operations, command and control communications, and the insertion of troops.

One of the larger PFP delegations came from Bulgaria, which sent two Mil Mi-17s, a Bell 206 Jet Ranger and two Su-25 Frogfoot fighter-bombers. Its 55-strong contingent of military personnel was flown in by a Sofia-based Antonov An-26. This type of aircraft was also used to fly in the Hungarians in support of their two Mi-17s.

Of particular interest, two PFP partners sending their aircraft were the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), with two of its four Mil Mi-17s, and the Republic of Moldova, with an Antonov An-72. France and Greece both sent a C-130 Hercules. Slovenia and Slovakia both sent a LET L410UVP, and used a Bell 412EP and Mi-17 respectively for helicopter operations.

### Opening ceremony

At the opening ceremony held in one of the large hangars on the airbase on Wednesday, September 8, the delegations were addressed by Division General Mircea Chelaru, the chief of Romanian General Staff; and by Air Division General Gheorghe Bucse, the chief of Romanian Air Force Staff. Romania's aim in joining the ranks of NATO was clearly underlined in the speeches. The two co-directors of the exercise,

Brigadier General de la Vega and Brigadier General Oancea attended the ceremony.

In his speech, Brigadier General de la Vega praised the excellent arrangements for the exercise which had been made by the Romanian military authorities. "Romania proved its very special abilities," he said. "Minali Kogalniceanu Air Force Base looks like a NATO air base and the logistics and scheduling are perfect." Those who knew the base were aware of just how much hard work and effort had been put in by the Romanians.

### Live Air Exercise

The actual flying missions of CO-OPERATIVE KEY were carried out over three days. Prior to the start of the operations, the first to take off had been the NAEW&CF E-3A AWACS, establishing the necessary link with the Air Co-ordination Centre: it was the first time that an E-3A had directed Air Command and Control operations over Romania, and many participants had never been under AWACS control before.

Aerial reconnaissance missions were then flown to monitor rebel positions which could threaten operations. Alternate SAR missions

### CO-OPERATIVE KEY - EVOLUTION

	1995	1997	1998	2000
	Romania	Slovakia	Turkey	Romania
Mission Types	1	4	6	7
Nations	12	11	15	15
Aircraft	8	32	46	59
Personnel	328	433	670	650
Bases	1	2	3	1
Sorties	123	274	350	7

were flown by the Bulgarian, Hungarian, Macedonian and Slovak Mi-17s or Romanian Pumas to locate the refugee areas. One of the helicopter teams was always available on quick reaction alert (QRA) to be called in if needed, the task being shared in rotation.

Once the refugee areas had been clearly identified, two IAR 330 Pumas inserted forward teams to secure the landing zone (LZ). Meanwhile, close air support (CAS) aircraft, such as the Bulgarian Sukhoi Su-25s or the Romanian MiG-21 Lancer As took off in pairs to suppress rebel positions, supported by Turkish and Greek F-16s which flew in from their home bases.

The French, Romanian and Greek C-130 Hercules dropped a multi-national paratrooper



Major Scott G Fosdal (left), seen here co-ordinating with one of the Romanian Puma pilots, headed the Bravo Comp, 4th Recon. Batt of the USMC from Billings, Montana, which played a major role in the CK 00 ground operations.