



affect command level, since many of the Air Forces South staff were American.

On the second day of the workshops, it was decided to go ahead as planned but without American participation. Workshops were held on specific areas of the exercise, such as logistics, helicopter operations, land operations, medevac, assessment procedures, air transport, close air support, recon and air defence. Meanwhile, the three US Navy MH-53Es had been grouped with the A-10s in a heavily-guarded shelter area and everything indicated that the Americans were ready to leave.

The content of the close air support (CAS) and recon workshops focussed mainly on flight procedures, safety procedures and emergency procedures, along with NATO standards and the sharing of information on aspects such as local air base procedures and frequencies. In a later session, the participating CAS and recon units introduced themselves to their counterparts through a short presentation, following which the specific capabilities and equipment of their aircraft were exchanged.

Next day, the US Navy helicopters left, while at exercise command level everything was done to re-schedule events without the American involvement. As may be imagined, it was a huge task to re-organise in just a few days a project which had taken the best part of a year to set up.

On Thursday, the flying part of the exercise began with familiarisation and training sorties, while on Sunday it became clear that the remaining US aircraft and personnel would be able to participate fully. This meant, of course, that the plans had to be adapted yet again, resulting in some extensive late-night working to get everything ready in time. When the first day of the LIVEX kicked off, the programme was once again running and the A-10s were flying their CAS missions, attacking the opposing forces defending the former MiG-21 air base at Uzunhovo.

Scenario

As the fictional scenario had been purposely designed to address specific training objectives, the participating aircrew were given a framework for the training missions they would be tasked to fly during the

exercise. The aircraft employed reflected typical mission areas covered in order to accomplish a future PSO. They included air assets for deployment/redeployment, command and control, air defence (AD), tactical recon, search and rescue (SAR), CAS, forward air control (FAC), air drop (both cargo and troops) and aeromedical evacuation.

The scenario for CO-OPERATIVE KEY 2001 revolved around the former Federland territories of Brownlandia and Graylandia, now in conflict over the scarce natural resources of the former Federland. Fighting – which had produced a stream of refugees – had spilled over into the neighbouring republic of Blueandia, a PIP nation. NATO and its PIP partners have been requested to enter the area to restore and enforce the peace between the two republics. A UN and PSO aircraft has been requested to bring emergency aid supplies into Graylandia.

Forward-deployed PSO aircraft are operating from two bases – Graf Ignatievo and Krumovo in Blueandia. At the start of the exercise (STARTEX) a cease-fire between the two ethnic factions has been negotiated by the Office of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) but tactical recon flights conducted over Graylandia showed heavy clashes. Regardless of a cease-fire, it appears that Brownlandian forces are trying to occupy the main cities of Graylandia, resulting in even more refugees seeking safety. A Demilitarisation Zone (DZ) and a No Fly Zone (NFZ) have been established to protect PSO Forces and refugees en route to Blueandia.

Since only the scenario for the start of the exercise was released and other developments were kept secret until they came into effect on the ground, a true 'free-play' exercise environment was created – the participants had to react and work out solutions as needed.

A deployed E-3A Airborne Early Warning & Control System (AWACS) controlled the air assets employed and was vital for maintaining and enforcing the No-Fly Zone established over the Area of Operations (AOR).

With airborne down-looking radar patrolling continuously, the AWACS provided the commanders with live pictures by downlinking the obtained Recognised Air Picture (RAP) to the unique Dutch Deployable Electronic Counter Measures Communication System Prototype Terminal (DEPT). Installed in a truck-mounted military air-transportable shelter, the DEPT provided the capability to

exchange aircraft track data with the NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force (NAEW&CF) command while tactically deployed in the field. DEPT interfaces with military and civil ATC radar, supports operational missions and displays, records and repairs digital track data and distributes data over encrypted Wide Area Network (WAN) and SATCOM links. Normally DEPT interacts with Western Europe's massive air defence system, the NATO Air Defence Ground Environment (NADGE) network.

At the start of the day, Swedish Viggens flew out in pairs to conduct reconnaissance missions over the AOR, escorted by Bulgarian MiG-21bis *Fishbed-N's* for air cover and suppression of ground targets. Following the initial gathering of intelligence, a single Bulgarian Su-22-M4 *Fitter* with a KKR (Konteynery Kompleks Razvedki, podded reconnaissance complex) pod covered by either Turkish or Greek F-16Cs flew into the AOR to gather further information and help the commanders adjust their plans and assess their effectiveness. This collection of information continued throughout the whole exercise. Meanwhile, pairs of Bulgarian MiG-29 *Fulcrums* swept the AOR and the No-Fly Zone under the guidance of MAGIC (call sign of the AWACS) to ensure that these areas were still safe for further operations.

Once the commanders determined that ground troops had to be inserted, transport aircraft including Romanian and French C-130s, were sent out over the AOR, dropping paratroopers to secure the drop zone and start to enforce the peace, as well as helping refugees to evacuate the area of conflict. Prior to this, US special forces were already on the ground, including the 123 Special Tactics Squadron, Kentucky ANG and the USMC B-Company, the 4th Reconnaissance Battalion from Billings, Montana, which played a major role in the previous year's CK '00 ground operations. Normally tasked with para-rescue, combat control, and air traffic control (including CAS), the ANG contingent set up a casualty collection point.

Before the ground troops had established their positions, CAS was called in to help suppress and eliminate enemy forces. American A-10As and Bulgarian Su-25K *Frogfoots* provided CAS during the exercise, while Bulgarian Mi-24 *Hind* gunships flew over the targets in support of the transport or medevac helicopters. As soon as the area was



Besides the Mi-24 Hinds the Bulgarians also provided several Krumovo-based Mi-8 and Mi-17 Hips (403 being one of the latter) of the 24 VAB for medevac and air transportation tasks. MARKUS SAP/MAS