

CROO exercise SE-Romania



force made up of Austrians, Bulgarians, French, Moldavians, Romanians and the USMC to provide security in the refugee area. Medical teams with supplies were flown in to tend the wounded and prepare them for evacuation by air.

Once a security perimeter was established, Romanian Medevac IAR 330s, accompanied by Hungarian and Slovakian Mi-17s in air transport configurations picked up the refugees and flew them to a secure landing strip. There the Bulgarian An-26, Moldavian An-72, and Slovenian L410 (in the second run, this changed to the French, Greek and Romanian C-130s) took over the evacuees and flew them out of the crisis area. Meanwhile, a second CAS strike wave kept the enemy rebel forces at bay. After the evacuation, an impressive tenship helicopter formation consisting of two Macedonian, two Bulgarian and two Hungarian Mi-17s, led by four Romanian IAR 330 Pumas, moved in to extract all the paratroopers and the on-scene commander. This marked the ending of this PSO mission.

Over the three days, the composition of the helicopter and air transport teams was changed, in order to give every crew the chance of gaining experience in different roles.

Assessment

The main new element of this NATO/PIP exercise was the formal introduction of assessment. Although this had already been used in a simpler form during CO-OPERATIVE BEAR '99, at Kraków-Balice in Poland, countries taking part had expressed a wish to see a system which could give a means of measuring



The Austrian delegation included some 30 military personnel. Two of their AB 212 helicopters, from HflReg 1/L at Tulln Langenlebarn, performed SAR, Air Transport and Medevac missions.

Romanian MIG-21 Lancer-B, and a Bulgarian Su-25UBK; the back seat provided a place for the assessors to monitor CAS missions from close quarters.

All the information collected will be evaluated, and a report compiled by one of the senior exercise officers. Recommendations will then be made to all participating countries individually.

‘Not just a talking shop’

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As the fourth principle, he stated that the exercises should above all be practical. ‘They must be more than a talking shop. They must prepare all participants to work together when it counts and where it counts – on the ground, managing crises.’

Exercises such as CO-OPERATIVE KEY 2000 more than fit this purpose. The good working atmosphere between all participants, along with the openness about sharing information on procedures and systems; the creation of trust and solid relationships between countries; and the eagerness to perform in co-operation, as witnessed by the authors during their visit, show that NATO and its partner countries are committed to working together to realise these principles. Bulgaria is to host CO-OPERATIVE KEY 2001, and the progress made to date, combined with the aim among all the participating countries to continuously increase the complexity of the exercises, makes it almost certain that the CO-OPERATIVE KEY series will remain one of the most important in Europe.

Although their countries did not take part, observers from Israel and Tunisia, both partners with NATO in Mediterranean Dialogue, were present at CO-OPERATIVE KEY 2000. Looking to the future, one might imagine that given NATO's initiatives of aiming to consolidate stability through dialogue and co-operation, a similar series with the added participation of countries such as Egypt or Morocco may well become a reality.

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An IAR 330 returns to base after completing a SAR mission at the Babadag Range some 50 miles (80km) north of Mihail Kogalniceanu air base. For these missions, the IAR 330s were equipped with external winches.