



Hips were the most popular helicopters used in co-operative key 2002, reflecting the history of the majority of the participants in the exercise. This white Mi-8MTB-1, '01' belongs to the Romanian Air Force. MARNEX SAP



Support for the Turkish Air Force deployment of four F-16Cs was provided by a pair of C-130E Hercules and CN.235M-100 95-099. CARLO BRUNNER



Combat search and rescue-configured SA 330B Puma 1375/'AM' of EH1/67 was used by the French special forces during the CSAR exercise.

land operations, some 150 special ops and 50 medical staff were present. In all, some 1,600 troops were involved in the exercise.

New to CO-OPERATIVE KEY 2002 was the introduction of instrument flight rules (IFR) plus night operations for Air Transport (AT), Air Defence (AD), Close Air Support (CAS), Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) and CSAR Escort. In addition, France, as host nation, offered Opposition Forces (OPFOR), greatly improving the training value of the exercise. A field Air Operations Centre was established, as some important changes had been made in the Command and Control structure of the exercise.

Unlike CK'01 (see *Co-Operative Key 2001*, March 2002, p54 - 59), co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or any other non-military organisations proved not to be possible, due to their commitments elsewhere. However, the Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC), in which some 80 participants acted as refugees, continued to play an important role in the exercise, even without a refugee camp being set up.

Participants

The participating fighter force was similar to the previous CK exercise. Bulgaria sent a single

single-seat and a two-seat Su-25, and the Spangdahlem-based 81st FS raised its A-10A contingent to six aircraft. Turkey brought four 182 Filo F-16Cs from Diyarbakir, operating them from St-Dizier's main flightline (in the previous two CK exercises, the Turkish aircraft, like the Greek, had operated from their home bases).

The south-west shelter area at St-Dizier was used by the remaining fighter forces, which consisted mainly of Mirage 2000 variants. Greece sent three Mirage 2000EGs and a single BG, all from 331 Mira at Tanagra.

The French flying units contributing to the PSO Forces were Escadron 1/3 *Navarre* from Nancy (Mirage 2000D), Escadron 1/4 *Dauphiné* from Luxeuil (Mirage 2000N), and Escadron 2/12 *Picardie* from Cambrai (Mirage 2000 RDI). As France also provided aircraft for the OPFOR (opposing force), aircraft from Escadron 2/2 *Côte d'Or* from Dijon (Mirage 2000-5), Escadron 1/5 *Vendée* from Orange (Mirage 2000 RDI), Escadron 1/30 *Alsace* from Colmar (Mirage F1CT) and Mirage F1CRs from Reims were sent in to counter the PSO forces.

Romania sent three air defence Lancers, and two French Jaguars from Escadron 1/7 *Provence* performed in the Tactical Air Reconnaissance (TAR) role. The two planned Slovenian Piliatus

PC-9Ms did not take part.

From two different platforms, a colourful assembly of transport aircraft could be seen operating, among them an attractive line-up of An-26s, including *Curtis* from Bulgaria, Hungary, Lithuania and Slovakia. There was a Transall C160 from Escadron 1/64 *Béarn* and a single CN.235 from Creil-based Escadron 1/62 *Vercors*, and Turkey also sent a smart, camouflaged CN.235. The other transport aircraft were similar to those employed in previous CK exercises.

The north-side dispersal area was given over to helicopters. Large numbers of Mi-8 and Mi-17s gave the impression of a mass *Hip* reunion, and Bulgarian, Macedonian and Slovakian Mi-17s were joined this year by single examples from Latvia, Lithuania and Moldova. Other helicopters included an Italian Air Force AB 212AM, two Slovenian Bell 412s and a couple of Romanian SOCAT upgraded Pumas. The French sent in two dedicated RESCO (CSAR) SA 330B Pumas from Escadron 1/67 *Pyrénées*, while two AS 355N Fennecs from Villacoublay were detached to perform liaison duties. Switzerland sent an AS 532 UL Cougar which had only 58 hours on the clock on arrival - the helicopter is the fourth from last to be delivered to the Swiss. Very few resident Jaguar and Alpha Jets could be seen.

As St-Dizier is a fighter base, helicopter facilities had to be built up from scratch on its north side. Portable cabins were installed to house the heli-ops centre, a briefing room, storage rooms for spare parts and technical equipment for each nation. A field hospital, a CIMIC centre and a transport operations centre were constructed south of the control tower. Here 'casualties' and 'refugees' were processed after being transported in by helicopters and transport aircraft from the various exercise sites.

The French Air Surveillance, Information and Communication Systems Command (CASSIC) was responsible for the detection, surveillance, control and electronic support side of the exercise. Education and Training Command (CEAA) provided warrant (non-commissioned) officers from Rochefort air base for the roles of refugees and wounded. Air Operations and Air Defence Command (CDAOA) reinforced planning and conducting structures and ensured French co-ordination in the preparation and follow-up.

Finally, Ground Security Command (CFCA) was assigned to the defence of the base and all participating units. This command was also assigned the protection of refugees during SAR operations, and secured Damblain airfield so that it could be used for refugee and medical evacuee extraction.

Exercise Concept and Organisation

The overall aim of an exercise such as CO-OPERATIVE KEY 2002 is to allow NATO and its partner nations to practise and refine interoperability in air and land operations in support of Peace Support Operations (PSO), and to assess the capabilities of offered Partner forces. Participants learn and master NATO-standard procedures and its terminology in areas such as communications, logistics, planning and safety.

The main event of the exercise, the Operational Mission Phase (LIVEX) began on September 30 and lasted until October 4. A daily Air Tasking Order was prepared, with both pre-planned and alert taskings. Every day at 09:00 a mass brief informed all the participants of ongoing events,