



Lithuanian Air Force Antonov An-26 '05' (blue) at St Dizier (above), wearing its new coat of overall grey paint, supported MI-BMTV-1 '21' (white) (below).



four-and-a-half minutes from touchdown, the G222, with full power applied to its engines, performed a short high-angle take-off, leaving the hostile environment with all available speed.

Unclassified CSAR tactics and procedures were practised and employed in CK'02, as were more regular SAR operations. It is important to understand the difference between the two: CSAR is the detection, location, identification and rescue of downed aircrew in hostile territory in crisis and wartime and, when appropriate, of isolated military personnel in distress who are equipped and trained to receive CSAR support throughout a theatre of operations. Search and Rescue (SAR) is the use of aircraft, surface craft, submarines, specialised rescue teams and equipment to search for and rescue personnel in distress on land and at sea. Attention was paid to the general characteristics and particular constraints of each operation. CSAR missions are often overlooked, though on this occasion they were given proper emphasis, as CSAR is a requirement whenever NATO aircraft fly into hostile airspace during Crisis Response Operations or enforcing no-fly zones. In future, unit commanders are to include CSAR planning as part of all operations planning.

Eight CSAR missions were planned for the exercise and all were successfully flown as 'fragg'd' (ie, as they appeared on the ATO). They included (for the first time) NVG operations flown as part of a PIP exercise. French CSAR crews served as NATO mentor for night operations to the PIP nations of Slovenia and Switzerland, both of which had already developed excellent national NVG programmes.

Of critical importance to this year's CSAR programme were the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) instructors from

France, Sweden and the US, led by Major Tor Cavalli, commander of the Swedish SERE school. They were responsible for setting up the situations in the field for the crews to encounter on missions. Without their participation, the active SAR and CSAR training elements of the exercise would have been impossible.

The culmination of the CK'02 CSAR missions was an unprecedented coalition task force named 'Combat Search and Rescue Task Force 6', which flew on October 3. This was a classic downed-fighter scenario - in this case, a Mirage 2000 with two injured survivors (one Swedish SERE instructor and one American special ops pilot acting as the pilot and navigator) - and was led by two French RESCO Pumas. Two Romanian SOCAT gunships served as armed helicopter rescue escort (rescort), while a Swiss Cougar served as a transload surgical aircraft. Planning Mission Lead and Rescort was provided by four US Air Force A-10s (SANDY ONE to FOUR), and a US Air Force

AC-130H gunship provided the initial on-scene commander. A French E-3F AWACS served as Airborne Mission Co-ordinator and the vital link to the CAOC and PRCC. On board the helicopters, Special Operations Forces from France and Slovenia provided security, and the medical team was from the United States. The event itself became a form of aerial ballet and - with classic fighter pilot understatement - the usually critical post-mission debriefing to the CSAR crews from SANDY ONE (the Mission Flight Commander) deemed the mission was carried out "As Briefed". No higher praise could be bestowed.

CK's Future

Next year's CO-OPERATIVE KEY will once again be hosted by Bulgaria, while for the following year, 2004, the organisation of the series is to be handed over to NATO's AIRNORTH command. Many questions about the future of these PIP exercises remain unanswered. Will assessment be re-introduced, and if so, in what way? CK'00 in Romania saw the introduction of some steps to measure the performances of the participating forces.

CK'01 saw the introduction of formal assessment and gave the host nation and other countries the opportunity of being assessed on request. Although it was never intended as such, many PIP countries perceived assessment to be a test for NATO membership. Perhaps now some new PIP nations will show interest in joining the programme. However, will such countries have the resources and capabilities to reach the goal desired by most PIP nations - that of becoming NATO members?

One thing which is certain is that the exercise was seen by many countries as a method of canvassing for acceptance into NATO and involvement was thus important to them. After joining, will their extensive contributions to the PIP programme be continued or will resources then be spent on force restructuring and maintaining NATO's standards? Perhaps PIP should remain as originally intended - to create understanding and trust among former adversaries.



Jaguar A A138 taxis out for another sortie. Some French units not directly involved in CK02 used the exercise as a training opportunity by acting as aggressors. MARNEK S&P

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