

# The training path to ISAF

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NRDC - ITA activities for preparing the personnel to join the NATO mission in AFGHANISTAN in February 2009 (ISAF IX/1) dated the second half of 2008.

They were developed planning and executing a wide range of different training events focused to prepare NRDC-ITA personnel after the certification exercise planned in STAVANGER made under the supervision of the NATO Joint Warfare Centre to be ready for ISAF deployment.

We directed our efforts on two different aspects mainly: the individual military preparation of any of our personnel and the collective mission-oriented training to built up the staff framework.

With this clear mission in mind all NRDC-ITA personnel attended a selective and intensive training cycle aimed to prepare them in the best way to achieve successfully the necessary qualification for being appointed to ISAF mission.

Here a quick overview of the related activities developed by NRDC-ITA for achieving its ultimate goal: deploying a fully quali-

fied and trained staff able to perform successfully its mission.

We started with the development of the so called *Individual Military Training*. We nicknamed it IMT and it was based on an extensive period of activities aimed to prepare and qualify every single person in our staff as a combatant, through the development of his/her skills to face effectively the different challenges that modern warfare require.

NRDC-ITA considered the IMT sessions as the corner stones for starting up the preparation to ISAF mission.

Indeed during the months of May and October, two session of IMT were planned and developed using the training facilities available on the CANDELO MASSAZZA area.

Over there about 400 NRDC - ITA personnel of every rank and status conducted an extensive and thought series of training activities. The program was made by such as activities as live-shooting-fire range sessions (enabling them to master the use of side arm, long as well squad weapons), field topography and orienteering lessons aimed to

conduct a hasty survey, or to lead a patrol in an hostile environment; First Aid lectures and practical exercises useful to face basic medical emergency or survive to critical situation.

Some other specific topics as Mine & Improvised Explosive Devices awareness and Chemical Biological Radio and Nuclear defence, were developed to complete the military preparation of NRDC-ITA personnel. Here the teaching techniques used by the instructors were a mix of theoretical briefings about the mentioned matters and practical sessions conducted by each attendee to practise.



Concerning the *Mission-Oriented Training* issues, these were focused on preparing the personnel as a core staff, to achieve successfully a mission, in a quite peculiar geographic-religious-social-politic oriented environment.

To accomplish this task NRDC-ITA TRADOC Division planned and developed a training cycle made by a series of different events and exercises strictly linked together and carried out in a specific sequence of time.

This stated cycle of activities was aimed to lead, step by step, the personnel to understand the environment and the mission, to practise the staff procedures and to be confident in their capacity to fulfil at their best the tasks assigned as a whole staff.

This has been the ultimate goal of the well known *Eagle Focus* exercises series (internally named *EF-1 EF-2* and *EF-3*), which were carried out over the period September-November.

In a nut shell a quick display of the related topics developed by the *Eagle Focus* series.

*EF-1* provided the staff with a lot of information, data, situational synthesis concerning AFGHANISTAN history, geography, as well as social-religious environment; NATO mission criteria, current situation and nowadays threats were also described and comments were made on. As briefers we invited qualified lecturers and scholars from different NATO HQs, Military Schools and Institutes as well as top-civilians-experts.

The same activity, nicknamed *Asian Eagle*, was conducted a couple of weeks after to prepare and update NRDC-ITA personnel not directly tasked for deployment in ISAF mission to make available some trained people to use a replacement or augmentees just in case of.

*EF-2* exercise was aimed to enrich, consolidate and strengthen the staff skills of NRDC - ITA personnel. Activities were carried out to improve functional area management, to review internal-branch procedures and to be acquainted with ISAF way of working the staff routine. Branches and Division started up to be formed as required by ISAF roster, common-ground knowledge and organizational linkages were established.

*EF-3* was carried out as the last stage in our internal approach to become a single cohesive core staff ready to undergo the final evaluation for being considered ready-to-deploy.

The exercise was developed throughout a series of simulated incidents conducted by using the techniques of *vignettes* highlighting possible events ISAF personnel could face during their staff duties and aimed to improve the staff outcomes. The storylines

were developed by referring the experiences and the expertises of so called *subject matters experts*, top ranked Officers and Civilians highly qualified working with International Organizations having had a duty term in AFGHANISTAN recently.

All the time long the development of *Eagle Focus* series of exercises, many others flanking and supporting training activities aimed to refine and /or improve the personnel single or collective skills were accomplished.

To mention the most qualified and important of them it is necessary to quote the *Key Leader Training* attended by Officer ranking OF 5 and above, developed through a mix of briefings and syndicates held in BRUNSSUM and KABUL.

A wide range of different courses, conducted at the NATO Schools or on site, were aimed to improve dramatically the personal background of NRDC-ITA personnel on many field of expertise. To mention the most important just, we have to refer to software management as LOGFAS/LOGREP, ICC, BICES and JOIIS and on minor software as JCHAT, GEOSIT and JWACHT. "Functional Area Software (FASs) development plan".

This activity, conducted in order to prepare ISAF personnel on the functional area software used in HQ ISAF, was carried out by lectures provided by NATO Schools and NC3A instructors.

Indeed also language proficiency was taking in account providing training possibilities for not English native speakers to improve and refine their knowledge.

After the successfully conclusion of the afore-mentioned activities, NRDC-ITA personnel was faced with the last challenge. In December an highly qualified and motivated staff attended, at the NATO Joint Warfare Centre (JWC), the last step in its way- to-ISAF deployment.

This was the *Core Staff Element Training*, purposely designed and aimed to validated the staff through a specific and realistic exercise in which the real condition of AFGHANISTAN operational environment were recreated in a huge mock-up of ISAF HQ.

And the result of this validation check was without any doubts.

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## NRDC-ITA IS MISSION READY

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