

By Ltc W. SPRAYBERRY, SO1 TARGETING

Starting the ISAF training

International Security Assistance Force – Afghanistan; readying itself for the assumption of ISAF VIII duties is the number one priority of NRDC-Italy. To meet that priority the Headquarters has undertaken a very ambitious series of exercises to prepare itself. This preparation began many months ago, in early October 2004, with the formation of the Exercise Development Team (EDT). The EDT is a small discrete staff group with the mission of planning and coordinating the conduct of these preparatory exercises under the guidance of MG Roger Lane, Deputy Commander of NRDC-Italy and the Officer Conducting the Exercises (OCE).

The first of these preparatory exercises was EAGLE FOCUS I, conducted from the 25th to the 28th of January 2005 right here in Solbiate Olona. The aim of this portion of the training was to provide the strategic and operational

level context in which ISAF operates, in order to set the scene and the foundation from which to expand subsequent training. This was accomplished with a series of briefings on a wide variety of subjects associated with the overall mission in Afghanistan. We had the pleasure to host many visitors who provided a great deal of expertise during this week.



Our programme of guest speakers started with Mr. Daniele Riggio, NATO Information Officer and Former Political Advisor to the NATO Senior Civilian Representative to Afghanistan. He provided very insightful presentations on the Political Perspective in the area and on functions that stretch from the Strategic to the Operational level of the ISAF mission. These presentations were the perfect lead into the next group of briefings provided by LTC Gaylord Thomas, JFC Brunssum J5, and LTC Mark Wenham, Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Director for ISAF VI. They facilitated discussions on functions from the Operational through Tactical level, including the Operational Roadmap and, PRTs and their role in expansion of the ISAF mission. This was followed by an intriguing presentation on the Threat to the Mission by Mr. Horacio Ureta, Chief of Political-Military



Getting on board



Affairs for the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. We then had a very informative day of presentations and, question and answer sessions revolving around four of the five pillars of Security Sector Reform. They included: Mrs. Lesley Pallett, Head of the United Kingdoms Department of Drugs and International Crime who discussed Counter Narcotics; Minister Anna Della Croce Di Dojola, Italian Special Envoy for Afghanistan of the Minister of Foreign Affairs who provided information on Judicial Reform; MAJ Ralph McCullough, Strategic Planner for Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan J5 who spoke about Training the Afghan National Army; Dr Monika Schmitt-Vockenhausen, Head of the Department of International Police Affairs in the German Ministry of the Interior who related information on Training the Afghan Police Force. The following morning MAJ Doyle Gillis, CFC-A J3, and MAJ Rich Carney JFC-Brunssum addressed us on the relationship between CFC-A and ISAF, and CIMIC operations. Our programme for EAGLE FOCUS I ended with Lt. General Gotz Gliemeroth, former ISAF Commander, who provided us with the benefit of his experience in the Afghan Theatre of Operations. EAGLE FOCUS I provided a solid foundation of information on Afghanistan and ISAF, which the Headquarters can build on to ensure success for ISAF VIII. EAGLE FOCUS I was soon followed by EAGLE FOCUS II from the 7th to the 11th of February, again here in Solbiate

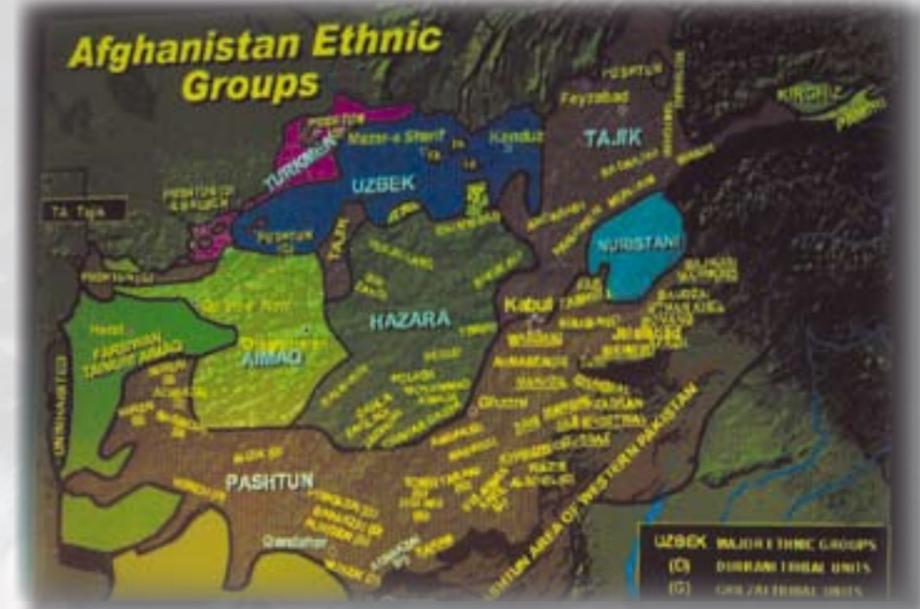


Olona. The aim of this portion of the training was to ensure that individuals understand the environment in which they will collaborate and operate with other branches and divisions in order to provide appropriate command support.

Syndicate work was chosen as the vehicle for training. The staff was separated into four distinct groups. Each group contained a wide variety of expertise from across the staff. Each group and was then asked to tackle a series of demanding topics involving key and contemporary issues related to the ISAF mission. During the week each group was provided a topic and a list of questions to be answered on that topic. This was followed, in each case, by an intense period of study, research and collaboration within the group to answer the questions. Then all groups returned to present their findings to the Command Group. This method of training not only presented an excellent opportunity for the members of the Headquarters to become more familiar with Afghanistan and the ISAF mission but it also fostered an environment in which the staff realized how to better work together across all disciplines to achieve solutions. During the training period the staff took on such issues as NATO's PRT expansion policy, ISAF assistance to G8 SSR in the Disarmament Demobilization and Re-integration process, ISAF assistance to United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in the achievement

of its mission, Kabul International Airport threats and expansion, ISAF assistance to the Government of Afghanistan (GOA) in establishing and maintaining SSR, Reception Staging and Onward Movement issues, and Time Critical intra-divisional issues. The training week concluded with a review of the lessons learned. EAGLE FOCUS II continued to solidify and build upon the knowledge gained in the previous exercise.

The first series of preparatory training exercises ended with exercise EAGLE FOCUS III. This exercise was also conducted in Solbiate Olona in the newly constructed "Rock-drill Theatre" from the 21st to 24th of February. The aim of EAGLE FOCUS III was to analyze key contemporary issues affecting the ISAF mission. This training was accomplished through a series of presentations and vignettes followed by open discussion on several dynamic topics including: RSOM & Movement, Stage 3 expansion, Air Operations, Interoperability with CFC-A, Clearance of Fires and Parliamentary Elections - ISAF support during elections. Another goal of the training was to continue to build on the previous exercises and to continue to build cohesion and teamwork within the Headquarters. The use of the Rock-drill Theatre had an additional benefit with its large maps of the Area of Operations (both Afghanistan and a separate map of Kabul) in that it allowed many members of the command to become familiar with what will be their home for several months in the near future.



Overall the EAGLE FOCUS series of exercises was a success; however, we all know the training is not over. There are still many opportunities for Individual Training to come so that we can hone our individual skills making certain we survive to accomplish the mission. In the near future we have EAGLE ACTION. This will be a MEL / MIL driven Command Post Exercise conducted in early May allowing us a chance to practice as a Headquarters and build on the training we have had. This will be closely linked to the Mission Rehearsal Training (MRT) conducted in Stavanger Norway in mid to late June as JFC-Brunssum certifies us for the mission. We are only as good as our training and we only get from the training what we put into it.

