

Information Operations Seminar ACTIVE EAGLE 2008

by LTC Jean-Pierre Relave

Introduction

As the French officer within the INFO OPS Branch and in order to give more visibility to the importance of INFO OPS, I would like to explain the main features of the recent multi national INFO OPS seminar, ACTIVE EAGLE, and to highlight what was achieved. Exercise Active Eagle 2008 was conducted at the HQ NRDC-ITA in Solbiate Olona (30km from Milan), from 6-8 May 2008. This was the first INFO OPS seminar conducted since INFO OPS became a Branch in June 2006. The seminar, the brainchild of Col Matteo PALMIERI (ITA-A), the ACOS INFO OPS, was a significant step towards establishing a more effective and capable branch.

The following members of the HQ NRDC-ITA INFO OPS branch were involved in the training:

- LTC (ITA-A) Corrado CARLINI SO1 INFO OPS
- LTC Massimo PACIOTTI SO1 PSYOPS
- LTC Vittorio GUERRIERO SO2 IO PLANS
- MAJ Antonio TARTAGLIONE SO2 OPS & PLANS
- CPT Massimo DI PIETRO SO2 PSYOPS
- CPT Ettore PONTIROLI SO2 EW
- WO1 Giuseppe de FINIS Chief Clerk
- LTC Jean-Pierre RELAVE SO2 IO Analysis.

Aim

The aim of the Seminar was two-fold:

- to provide familiarity with the HQ NRDC-ITA Information Operation Branch procedures in support of NRDC-ITA mission;
- to foster knowledge and appreciation for the differences in organization, equipment, and capabilities of participants, especially within the multinational dimension.

Personnel

The first challenge for the Branch was to ensure that all the GRF (L) HQ and subordinate formations were represented at the seminar in order to ensure that the collective expertise was shared amongst the target audience. Once a date was established the seminar had representatives ranking from OF6 to OF3 from: RRC FR, EUROCORPS, 1st GE/NL Corps, ARRC, NRDC SP, MNC NE, NDC GR and EUROFOR. The Italian Forces were well represented with personnel from: 1st Defence Force Command (DFC), 1st DIV. FRIULI Brigade, Post Conflict Ops Study Centre, Artillery Brigade, Air Defence Artillery (ADA) Brigade, 28th PSYOPS Regiment, and 33rd EW Regiment

Scope

The Chief of Staff of the NRDC-ITA, Major General Antonio Satta opened the seminar and welcomed the attendees. He reminded the audience of the importance of INFO OPS and its significant role in any type of military operations, particularly in CRO and post conflict operations. He highlighted the close links between INFO OPS and the Effects Based Approach to Operations (EBAO), since by their very nature, both are "Effects oriented".

The morning of the first day was focused on presentations delivered by the NRDC-ITA personnel covering EBAO in



the HQ and INFO OPS procedures. After lunch, each GRF (L) HQ delivered a briefing covering their structures and procedures. This allowed for discussion on how best to achieve commonality and conformity across NATO.

The Bn Cmdr of the 28th ITA PSYOPS Regiment delivered a "technical" briefing detailing how they support the conduct of INFO OPS in any Area of Operations (AOO). He highlighted the organization and capabilities and finally emphasized requirements and limitations of the PSYOPS unit.

After a social evening on the Monday, the attendees were broken down into four syndicates in order role-play INFO OPS scenarios and to look at some case studies from the Contemporary Operating Environment (COE). The main goal was to compare the different approaches, in order to ascertain the different working practises of each INFO OPS branches represented. A number of interesting solutions were presented and a very profitable discussion was had. On conclusion of the scenario and presentations, COL PALMIERI made a short review of the seminar work highlighting a number of pertinent points including:

- Non-lethal targeting.
- Secondary effects.
- IO/ influence cell location within the HQ.
- IO terminology and ways of doing business.

Finally he made a proposal to the GRF (L) HQs that a seminar of this type should be held annually in order to discuss ongoing INFO OPS issues. INFO OPS is a small community but growing in importance.

NRDC-ITA DCOS CS BG BUCCI closed the activity thanking the attendees for their participation in the Seminar.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the INFO OPS Seminar was an opportunity for all units and HQs to present their own working procedures and share best practice with other Info Ops personnel.

As the French officer of the Branch, ACTIVE EAGLE 08 was my first INFO OPS seminar and I was impressed with pragmatism and success of this activity. The INFO OPS Seminar favoured multi-nationality and set the conditions for the development of a common understanding regarding INFO OPS issues. The seminar was a success both in terms of attendance and organisation.

