



Regional Command North Pre-Deployment Training

Event Report

Based on TE 09/02 and interviews at
ISAF Regional Command North 24-28 April 2010

Regional Command North Pre-Deployment Training

31 May 2010

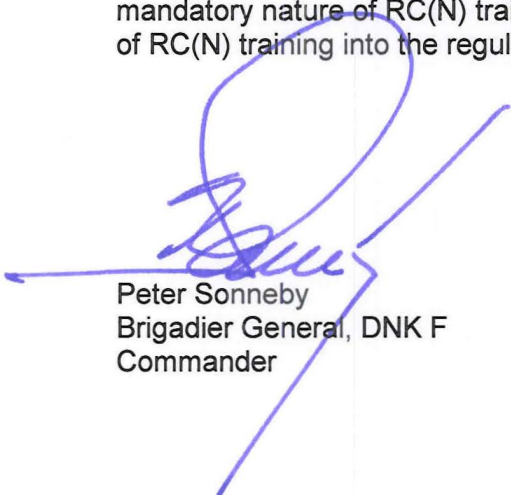
FOREWORD FROM THE COMMANDER

I am pleased to forward this event report to Headquarters (HQ) Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) and other commands and training agencies involved in ISAF training. This report is based on observations and data collected during Regional Command North (RC(N)) Training Event (TE) 09/02 (25 November – 10 December 2009) and subsequent in-theatre interviews in HQ RC(N) in April 2010.

This event report is meant as a timely response from the JALLC to those involved in the planning and execution of the ISAF Pre-Deployment Training (PDT). It will support further training improvement and help in the decision-making process for future TEs provided by NATO Joint Forces Training Centre (JFTC).

The feedback from HQ RC(N) personnel regarding ISAF PDT TE 09/02 at the JFTC was consistently positive. The training audience regards this TE as mandatory for all staff deploying to RC(N) since it supports team building and networking, as well as training staff in relevant processes and procedures. Specifically the Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE) was reported as the most beneficial part of the TE by the training audience.

The key challenges to the success of this training are an overall low level of participation and a lack of availability of current and relevant Subject Matter Experts (SME) to support the TE. Ensuring that the RC(N) lead nation is aware of the advantages of this TE and gives it high enough priority, could help to overcome these challenges. Therefore the JALLC recommends promoting the value and mandatory nature of RC(N) training within the lead nation as well as the inclusion of RC(N) training into the regular national training cycle.



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Commander

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HQ RC(N), COS

JFTC Training/ Division Head

JWC

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- C. JFC Brunssum, Exercise Specification RC(N) Training Event 09/02, June 2009, 1170.21/JBJ7IS/149/09, NATO Restricted Releasable to ISAF.
- D. JFTC, Commander's Summary Report, Regional Command North Training Event [RC(N) TE 09/02], 18 February 2010, JFTC-TNG-10-0119, NATO Unclassified Releasable to ISAF.
- E. JALLC, HQ ISAF Pre-Deployment Training, Event Report, 13 July 2009, JALLC/CG/09/129, NATO Unclassified Releasable to ISAF.
- F. JALLC, ISAF Intelligence Orientation Course (I2OC), 15-19 February 2010, Event Report, 26 March 2010, JALLC/CG/10/072, NATO Unclassified Releasable to ISAF.
- G. COS RC(N)/DCOS RC(N), First Impression Report (FIR) TE 09-02 for RCN, 10 December 2009, JFTC CRC NO 9-0874, NATO Restricted Releasable to ISAF.
- H. JALLC, Implementation of the DJSE by JC Lisbon and CC-Land Heidelberg: As Observed at Exercise STEADFAST JUNCTURE 09, 18 December 2009, JALLCCG/09/260, NATO Unclassified Releasable to PfP.

INTRODUCTION

1. In the Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC) 2010 Programme of Work (Reference A), the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) tasked the JALLC with the following Analysis Requirement (AR): *"Analyse the effectiveness of the revisions to ISAF Pre-Deployment Training (PDT) to address the new ISAF Command Structure"*.
2. In coordination with the main customer, Joint Force Command (JFC) Brunssum, the AR was developed into Analysis Objectives (AOs) and Sub AOs as described in the Analysis Project Order (Reference B). Specifically, AO 5 requires the JALLC to recommend how the ISAF PDT Regional Command (North) (RC(N)) Training Events (TE) can better meet the needs of RC(N). This event report satisfies AO 5, based on observations made during the RC(N) TE 09/02 and data from subsequent in-theatre interviews in Headquarters (HQ) RC(N) divisions and branches. It is intended to provide JFC Brunssum and the Joint Forces Training Centre (JFTC) with recommendations for future RC(N) TEs.

BACKGROUND

3. The JALLC training analysis team has already supported two iterations of RC(N) PDT and recommended immediate improvements during the RC(N) TE 09/01 and TE 09/02. TE 09/01 was conducted in Grafenwöhr at the US Joint Multinational Simulation Centre and observed by the JALLC. Most of the Lessons Identified (LI) in the LI action plan from TE 09/01 were turned into Lessons Learned (LL) by TE 09/02 at JFTC. However, JFC Brunssum perceives a need for the JALLC to collect and analyse data that goes beyond the TEs themselves in order to recommend additional improvements

for future training events.¹ Therefore, in addition to observing the training event, JALLC analysts interview personnel in-theatre to get feedback on how well the TE prepared them for their in-theatre experience.

METHODOLOGY

4. A JALLC Staff Officer, Cdr j.g. Wolff, observed RC(N) TE 09/02, conducted at JFTC during the period 25 November – 10 December 2009. Interviews with deployed personnel took place in HQ RC(N) from 24 – 28 April 2010. COM RC(N) was back-briefed on the main findings on 28 April 2010. The respective Officers of Primary Responsibility (OPR) in JFC Brunssum Exercise and Preparation Branch (EPB) and JFTC were provided with initial findings of the data collection on 13 May 2010.

5. All branches in HQ RC(N) participated in a very constructive way and both personnel who had completed the ISAF PDT and those who had not were made available for interview. In total 35 people were interviewed; each interview took 20-60 minutes. 20 people interviewed had attended the ISAF PDT and 15 had deployed without ISAF PDT.

MAIN OBSERVATIONS

6. Six main observations were developed during the analysis covering the topics of: Levels of participation; Availability of Subject Matter Experts (SME); Appreciation of Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL); Mission Rehearsal Training (MRT) Focus; Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE) Operational Tempo and Integration of Non-Lethal Enablers for Counterinsurgency (COIN).

Levels of Participation

Observation:

7. In total, 81 students participated in the ISAF PDT RC(N) TE 09/02. This is only 56% of required Training Audience (TA).²

Discussion:

8. It is the responsibility of the lead nation, in this case Germany, to ensure that personnel taking posts in RC(N) receive the ISAF PDT. Two reasons were commonly reported regarding why the training had been missed. Firstly staff reported that late deployment notice meant they did not have time for the RC(N) TE and secondly this TE was considered as a low priority among the many (national) PDT requirements the personnel had to meet.

9. Germany pays a fixed price for the course which has capacity to train 144 personnel at a time. By only filling 81 spaces, they are paying almost twice as much per person for the training and missing out on the opportunity to train up to 63 additional personnel.

10. Without exception all interviewed personnel stated that team-building, networking, education of processes and procedures are the most important takeaways from RC(N) TE. Personnel who had missed the TE stated that they particularly missed the team building, networking and systems knowledge (NSWAN) aspects.

1 JFC Brunssum, Exercise Specification RC(N) Training Event 09/02, page 5 (Reference C).

2 81 participants in TE 09/02 of a planned number of 144. JFTC, Commander's Summary Report, RC(N) TE 09/02, page 1 (Reference D).

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11. After starting deployment most personnel who participated in the RC(N) TE needed one to two weeks to feel confident in their RC(N) job. In contrast, those who had not received this ISAF PDT needed two to four weeks to settle into the job. Staff who had not received the training prior to deployment also had to be trained on the job by staff who had received the training.³ This time-consuming task took both sets of staff away from performing their usual functions.

Conclusion:

12. Participation in RC(N) TE is still far from 100%. However the benefits of the RC(N) TE are unquestionable. Personnel who missed the training took around twice as long to settle into their jobs, required time-consuming on the job training and lacked pre-deployment opportunities for team-building and networking.

13. The efficiency of ISAF PDT is undermined by a low rate of participation. This shortfall could most easily be solved by the nations meeting their responsibility to send personnel. The key benefits of full participation would be faster settling of staff into their RC(N) job and increased efficiency of the training for the nation.

Recommendations:

14. Encourage nations to send relevant personnel to ISAF PDT.
 - a. Highlight how the ISAF PDT is essential for team-building, networking, education of processes and procedures in the promotion of the training.
 - b. Remind nations that they can improve cost efficiency of the RC(N) TE by sending more personnel.
 - c. Suggest that nations may wish for their Ministry of Defence, a central operational command, or personnel management office to mandate the participation of selected personnel on ISAF PDT as part of the national training cycle and ensure that lower commands supplying personnel to RC(N) are aware of the mandatory nature of ISAF PDT for the benefit of the mission.

Availability of Subject Matter Experts (SME)

Observation:

15. During ISAF PDT RC(N) TE 09/02 the number of SMEs in some functional areas was not sufficient (e.g. Medical, CJ2, CJ9) and for some areas was non-existent (e.g. CJ4, CJ6).⁴

Discussion:

16. SMEs give the TA current situation awareness and share their recent experience of being in theatre with the TA. This increases the quality of the training provided. Lack of current and relevant SMEs has a negative impact on the training quality.

17. It is difficult for Germany, the lead nation for RC(N), to ensure that sufficient current and relevant SMEs are made available to support the training. Predominantly the shortfall appears to be due to national and RC(N) issues with releasing SMEs from their positions to support the training. Additionally, the constantly changing RC(N) organizational structure makes it difficult to plan which SMEs will be needed. SMEs

3 See also JALLC, HQ ISAF Pre-Deployment Training, Event Report, page 2 (Reference E).

4 Combined Joint (CJ) HQ Sections: CJ2: Intelligence, CJ9: Civil-Military Interaction, CJ4: Logistics/Support, CJ6: Communications and Information Systems.

are also assessed to lose currency four months after their deployment⁵ which further limits their availability.

18. The need for constant adaptation of which SMEs are needed to support the training is particularly obvious in CJ2 and the Intelligence Fusion Centre. In the future, CJ2 needs additional SMEs at the TE to cover the different CJ2 sections (SEWOC, CCIRM/ ISR, Target Cell, Geographic Section, Production and J2X).⁶

19. No problem with currency of SMEs was observed at the RC(N) TE 09/02; however, it is a concern in the upcoming RC(N) TE 10/01 where the Medical SME will have redeployed from theatre in November 2009, seven months before the TE.

Conclusion:

20. Current and relevant SMEs are important for high quality ISAF PDT. SME contribution to RC(N) TE 09/02 was not sufficient. The lead nation needs to overcome national and RC(N) issues with releasing SMEs to support training and keep up with rapidly changing ISAF CE.

Recommendation:

21. Germany as the lead nation for RC(N) should be informed that SME support to RC(N) TEs should be increased in order to avoid degrading the quality of the training provided.

22. NATO should highlight to Germany, the lead nation for RC(N) and RC(N) TEs, the importance of providing current and relevant SME support for high quality training output.

Appreciation of Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL)

Observation:

23. Only the minority of the TA had completed ADL before the TE at JFTC despite it being required by the ISAF PDT exercise specification (EXSPEC).⁷

Discussion:

24. Personnel who completed ADL gave consistently positive feedback and would recommend completion of ADL prior to ISAF PDT to others. They found that ADL provided excellent background information and some are still using it as a reference. ADL, while it is not a substitute for ISAF PDT, also improves the preparation of personnel who do not complete the ISAF PDT. However, the number of personnel completing ADL prior to ISAF PDT and ISAF deployment has not increased this year.

25. The ISAF PDT EXSPEC specifies that personnel should complete ADL prior to attending. However, the confirmation of successful participation in ADL is not part of the in-processing before the TE at JFTC. Additionally, the completion of ADL is not part of the RC(N) Job Descriptions (JD). Therefore, there are no checks to ensure that staff complete ADL as specified in the EXSPEC and nations may not see the necessity of their staff completing the ADL course.

5 See also JALLC, ISAF Intelligence Orientation Course (I2OC), Event Report, page 3 (Reference F).

6 Signals Intelligence/Electronic Warfare Operations Centre (SEWOC), Collection Coordination And Intelligence Requirements Management (CCIRM), Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), J2X: Includes HUMINT and Counter-Intelligence.

7 JFC Brunssum, Exercise Specification RC(N) Training Event 09/02, page 2 (Reference C). JFTC, Commander's Summary Report, RC(N) TE 09/02, page 3 (Reference D).

26. Other challenges of getting personnel to complete ADL are: to tackle a perception of training overload (National Training + ADL + NATO PDT); to spread awareness of the necessity of ADL within the nations; to provide access to a network with enough bandwidth to run ADL; and to give the TA time to complete the ADL during their work in home commands.

27. ACT and JFTC have already started an initiative to provide ADL on the German service network which should improve awareness of ADL within Germany and ease network access to ADL for German military personnel. Since staff are also using ADL as a reference in theatre, and not all staff have completed ADL prior to their deployment, there might also be merit to hosting a version of ADL on the ISAF mission network. However, initiatives of this nature would need to be supported by an effective system to ensure that the ADL hosted on local networks is kept up-to-date.

Conclusion:

28. All interviewed ADL participants considered this online training as very beneficial and mandatory before the ISAF PDT and ISAF deployment. However, there are no official checks to ensure that personnel have completed ADL and this may mean some nations and individuals view ADL as optional rather than mandatory. Additionally lack of awareness and network problems are challenges to be overcome to increase the number of personnel completing ADL. Some initiatives already show promise in this area.

Recommendations:

29. NATO should approach National HQs (i.e. Bundeswehr Operations Command – BwOpsCmd in Germany) to raise awareness of the benefit and mandatory nature of ADL within the national commands so that this message can be passed on to all staff due to deploy to ISAF.

30. JFTC should request ADL certificates during in-processing to prove to the TA that ADL is relevant and required before the TE.

31. The requirement for ADL should be included in the RC(N) JDs to ensure that even personnel who miss ISAF PDT complete ADL prior to deployment.

32. ADL should be installed on national and mission specific networks whenever possible. ISAF mission secret network would be a good candidate. An effective system to ensure ADL hosted on these local networks is kept up-to-date should be set up.

Mission Rehearsal Training (MRT) Focus

Observation:

33. During the MRT there were three panel discussions on three different evenings which were perceived as inappropriate and too long and some briefs contained information irrelevant to RC(N) or which was contradictory or that participants thought would be better addressed practically during the Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE).

Discussion:

34. During the TE and the in-theatre interviews a need was observed for a shorter MRT and an extended MRE because it was perceived that MRT contained some surplus content and MRE provided most benefit for team building, networking, training of processes, procedures and functional systems.

35. A number of opportunities for reducing the MRT were observed during RC(N) TE 09/02. Personnel reported that the evening panel discussions during MRT repeated information and contained irrelevant information, e.g. Time was repeatedly spent

discussing corruption which is not immediately relevant to HQ RC(N) staff and briefings regarding COIN were not always focused on the RC(N) situation. Also, some briefs during MRT contained contradictory opinions (e.g. corruption is an issue versus corruption is not a big issue) and covered topics that the TA felt would be better addressed practically during MRE rather than with a long PowerPoint brief (e.g. the Functional Area Services Training (FAST) related briefs).

36. Additionally, the panel discussions did not offer the best opportunity for the TA to take advantage of the White Cell's cultural and specific RC(N) situation expertise. The TA felt that a better training outcome would result from working with White Cell members in smaller groups during the Functional Area Training (FAT).

Conclusion:

37. The overall training outcome from MRT and MRE could be improved by a more focused and shorter MRT and an extended MRE with more room for training of team building, networking, processes, procedures and functional systems.

38. The MRT focus and length could be improved by reducing the number of panel discussions, deconflicting briefs to ensure relevance, consistency and no duplication and moving some more practical topics to MRE.

39. The White Cell provides more value when personnel have access to them in small groups during FAT rather than during panel discussions.

Recommendations:

40. Reduce the time for MRT and allow more time for MRE.

a. Reduce the number of panel discussions to one which is focussed on the most relevant topics to RC(N). Concentrate the involvement of the White Cell on the FAT part of MRT instead.

b. Compare the MRT briefs before the TE to ensure they are relevant to the situation in RC(N). Focus all briefs on specific situation awareness for RC(N) (especially briefs relating to COIN) and remove briefs that do not meet this need.

c. Teach more practical content from the MRT (e.g. FAST) during the MRE.

Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE) Operational Tempo

Observation:

41. It was observed and reported that the MRE was, "*overloaded with incidents*," meaning that the incidents followed each other too quickly. The operational tempo and associated number of meetings was perceived as too high, especially for sections with fewer personnel.⁸

Discussion:

42. Although time pressure during staff work is part of the training requirement, if the number of incidents and meetings is too high, staff do not have enough time to reflect on their learning or address team building, networking and training of processes, procedures and functional systems. This degrades the training outcome for the TA.

43. In order to deal with the high operational tempo many meetings were required. It was observed during RC(N) TE 09/02 that too many meetings crammed into the training period could hamper the training outcome. For example, some branch heads

8 This is a recurring issue in Exercise training. See COS RC(N), First Impression Report (FIR) TE 09-02 for RCN, page 3 (Reference G) and JALLC Report, Implementation of the DJSE by JC Lisbon and CC-Land Heidelberg (Reference H).

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had to attend many more Joint Operations Planning Groups than would be likely in the actual operation and as a consequence had little time to de-brief the respective teams during the exercise. Thus, the TA did not receive timely feedback and could not improve in a timely manner. Meetings are a necessary part of an exercise but the absence of key personnel due to meetings is seen as conflicting with the training need for guidance and team building.

Conclusion:

44. Although time pressure during staff work is part of the training, the focus should be less on this challenge and more on the training outcome for the individuals. The operational tempo should not hamper the benefit of training. A lower number of incidents would provide more time for debriefs and advice to the TA.

Recommendations:

45. Allow more time between incidents and meetings for de-briefs, advice and team building.

- a. Extend the time for MRE (at the same time reduce the MRT as described above) in order to make it possible to train the same number and variety of incidents and meetings at a lower operational tempo; and/or
- b. Reduce the operational tempo in order to give the TA more time to learn from each incident; and/or
- c. Reconsider the number of meetings and reduce them to a minimum in order to support team building, training outcome and progress during the exercise.

Integration of Non-Lethal Enablers for Counterinsurgency (COIN) OperationsObservation:

46. The level of integration of non-lethal enablers (Medical, CJ4, CJ6, Public Affairs Office, Information Operations (Info Ops), Psychological Operations (PsyOps)) needed during planning and execution of COIN operations such as ISAF, was too low.

Discussion:

47. COIN is the centre of gravity in ISAF. In a briefing, the former Commander RC(N) stressed that integration of Info Ops and PsyOps into planning and execution are essential for this COIN operation (ISAF). Therefore, COIN, and associated concepts such as the population-centric approach and partnering must be a focus for the TE.

48. However, during RC(N) TE 09/02, it was observed that Info Ops and PsyOps were not being integrated into planning and execution. Staff integration and cross-functional teamwork could be enhanced.

Conclusion:

49. During the RC(N) TE, staff integration and cross-functional teamwork are not sufficient to ensure that non-lethal enablers are being integrated into planning and execution as is necessary for a COIN operation like ISAF.

Recommendation:

50. Integration of non-lethal enablers into planning and execution should be trained throughout the RC(N) TE, especially in the MRE, in order to meet the prerequisite for the realisation of COIN in RC(N).

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

51. There was one observation that the JALLC team did not analyse but which is important to note in this report.

Time between Training Event and Deployment

52. The average time between PDT and deployment is three months. This was considered by the TA as maximum. Ideally it was felt that the time between PDT and deployment should not exceed two months: two months would allow additional job specific and personnel preparation while maintaining a short time between PDT and deployment. This topic was considered during the Initial Planning Conference for RC(N) TE 10/01.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

53. Participation: Encourage nations to send relevant personnel to ISAF PDT.
- a. Highlight how the ISAF PDT is essential for team-building, networking, education of processes and procedures in the promotion of the training.
 - b. Remind nations that they can improve cost efficiency of the RC(N) TE by sending more personnel.
 - c. Suggest that nations may wish for their Ministry of Defence, a central operational command, or personnel management office to mandate the participation of selected personnel on ISAF PDT as part of the national training cycle and ensure that lower commands supplying personnel to RC(N) are aware of the mandatory nature of ISAF PDT for the benefit of the mission.
54. SMEs: Germany as the lead nation for RC(N) should be informed that SME support to RC(N) TEs should be increased in order to avoid degrading the quality of the training provided.
55. SMEs: NATO should highlight to Germany, the lead nation for RC(N) and RC(N) TE, the importance of providing current and relevant SME support for high quality training output.
56. ADL: NATO should approach National HQs (i.e. Bundeswehr Operations Command – BwOpsCmd in Germany) to raise awareness of the benefit and mandatory nature of ADL within the national commands so that this message can be passed on to all staff due to deploy to ISAF.
57. ADL: JFTC should request ADL certificates during in-processing to prove to the TA that ADL is relevant and required before the TE.
58. ADL: The requirement for ADL should be included in the RC(N) JDs to ensure that even personnel who miss ISAF PDT complete ADL prior to deployment.
59. ADL: ADL should be installed on national and mission specific networks whenever possible. ISAF mission secret network would be a good candidate. An effective system to ensure ADL hosted on these local networks is kept up-to-date should be set up.
60. MRT: Reduce the time for MRT and allow more time for MRE.
- a. Reduce the number of panel discussions to one which is focussed on the most relevant topics to RC(N). Concentrate the involvement of the White Cell on the FAT part of MRT instead.

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- b. Compare the MRT briefs before the TE to ensure they are relevant to the situation in RC(N). Focus all briefs on specific situation awareness for RC(N) (especially briefs relating to COIN) and remove briefs that do not meet this need.
 - c. Teach more practical content from the MRT (e.g. FAST) during the MRE.
61. MRE: Allow more time between incidents and meetings for de-briefs, advice and team building.
- a. Extend the time for MRE (at the same time reduce the MRT as described above) in order to make it possible to train the same number and variety of incidents and meetings at a lower operational tempo; and/or
 - b. Reduce the operational tempo in order to give the TA more time to learn from each incident; and/or
 - c. Reconsider the number of meetings and reduce them to a minimum in order to support team building, training outcome and progress during the exercise.
62. COIN: Integration of non-lethal enablers into planning and execution should be trained throughout the RC(N) TE, especially in the MRE, in order to meet the prerequisite for the realisation of COIN in RC(N).