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USPTC, PSOTC, and FINCENT Partner to Instruct Course in Kazakhstan

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Article by Maggie Spivey

Faculty and staff from the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), the Bosnia and Herzegovina Peace Support Operations Training Centre (PSOTC), and the Finnish Defence Forces International Centre (FINCENT)—all designated NATO Partnership for Peace Training and Education Centers—instructed a 5-day UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) course June 20-24 in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

The course is the first phase of training scheduled to fulfill a request by Kazakhstan’s Ministry of Defense to train KAZBRIG, which consists of a brigade headquarters and two infantry battalions, on UN PKO procedures. The course was supported by the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Office of Military cooperation in the Republic of Kazakhstan, and was organized by NPS.

“When we [NPS] were originally asked to provide this course, we saw no reason to reinvent the wheel,” stated Mr. Alan Howard, USPTC Deputy Director. “Our first choice is always to draw from the NPS community, so we reached out to various faculty on campus. We also saw this as the perfect opportunity to partner with the other PTCs.”

“After sending out an email request for participation, the PSOTC and FINCENT responded. The PSOTC took the lead in pulling together the curriculum, making it fit into a week, including all needed models, and sending an instructor, and FINCENT provided an instructor to fill the gaps. As these students are going to be operating in a multinational environment, how better to instruct it then with a multinational team?”

Course participants learned about the UN system, Peace Support Operations (PSO) principals, and differences with NATO doctrine; became familiar with PSO development and guiding documents; and gained increased understanding of the UN Operations strategic concept through a combination of expert-led trainings and syndicate discussions. Participants included 20 selected officers who will be deployed in PSO or who will provide future training for PSO.

“The UN Peacekeeping Operations course is based on a standard curriculum, and there is not a lot of creative energy or content one can add,” stated Howard. “At the end of the week, we introduced the PSOM [Peace Support Operations Model], which allows NPS to take the course to the next level.”

Introducing the PSOM was Dr. Jeff Appleget, Senior Lecturer, and Mr. Paul Roeder, Research Associate, both with the Operations Research Department of the Graduate School of Operational and Information Science.

“The Peace Support Operations Model places peace support operations leaders in a complex, multidimensional peacekeeping operation and allows them to make decisions and experience the spectrum of resulting reactions that occur over a period of several months of simulated time,” said Appleget.

“Further, PSOM has been recently used in Afghanistan to allow ISAF to better understand and coordinate the campaign plan for the upcoming spring and summer campaign,” he added.

According to Howard, “The use of simulation and gaming through PSOM allows us to assess what the participants have learned, predict their behavior, determine how will they operate, and assess weaknesses in the training while enhancing and supplementing it.”

Going forward, the KAZBRIG participants will receive the second phase of training requested by the Kazakhstan Ministry of Defense in the early fall, and it will include a full week of PSOM gaming and feedback.

Posted July 6, 2011

