



First Special Response Group Deployed to Tajikistan to Assist in Assessment Project

1SRG and Western Disaster Center team to provide training for FOCUS

MOFFET FIELD, Calif., May 29, 2003 — 1SRG (1st Special Response Group), an all-volunteer, rapid-deployment first response unit returned from conducting an assessment for Focus Humanitarian Assistance (FOCUS) in Tajikistan. The scope of the project included prevention, mitigation, and preparedness but primarily dealt with assessing the current disaster response capabilities.

This project, sponsored by FOCUS, will strengthen the capacity of FOCUS, NGO, and government organizations in Tajikistan to promptly and effectively address various natural disasters and to minimize the impact of future disasters. FOCUS identified 1SRG, the operational component of the Western Disaster Center Institute for Search and Rescue, as a good organization to assist in assessing and developing effective disaster response (DR) and Search and Rescue (SAR) capacity.

“1SRG is fortunate to have the opportunity to work with FOCUS”, said David Kovar, Executive Officer of 1SRG. “Our goal was to develop awareness of Tajikistan’s current SAR capabilities and work with the government and NGO’s to enhance these capabilities in a well coordinated manner”, he added. The 1SRG team was selected based on their skills and extensive operational experience. “We selected WDC/1SRG based on their credentials and expertise in search and rescue”, said Mo Virani, Chairman of FOCUS USA.

In addition to the formal assessment, lessons learned and best practices will be shared with other interested disaster management agencies and FOCUS. 1SRG will use this project to serve as a model for similar initiatives in other areas where they are engaged.

About 1st Special Response Group

1SRG is an all-volunteer, rapid deployment, first response unit, with a primary mission to respond internationally to disaster situations, both natural and man-made, plus traditional search and rescue incidents. 1SRG support, response, and training is available worldwide, upon request of individuals, government agencies or international aid organizations. 1SRG is comprised of volunteers from throughout the United States, Canada, northern Europe and Mexico. More information is available at www.1srg.org

About Western Disaster Center

The WDC has been established to provide increased public safety by improving disaster and emergency management capabilities. This is accomplished through research and the application of advanced computer, information and communication technologies and the development and application of methods for public/private partnering. More information is available at www.westerndisastercenter.org

About FOCUS

FOCUS is an international emergency response agency that provides *mitigation*, relief and support services during and following natural and man-made disasters, primarily in Asia and Africa. FOCUS helps people in need reduce their dependence on humanitarian

aid as it facilitates their transition to sustainable self-reliance. FOCUS is affiliated with the Aga Khan Development Network, a group of institutions working to improve opportunities and living conditions, for people of all faiths and origins, in specific regions of the developing world.

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