

REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE DEFENSA



INTERVIEW
Francisco Javier
Fernández, MILREP

ES-OHQ, THE MASTERMIND OF OPERATION ATALANTA



MINISTERIO DE DEFENSA

AID TO UKRAINE

Spain supports the government in Kyiv in coordination with the EU, NATO and the Donor Group



REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE DEFENSA

HABLAMOS de Defensa

35 años de información de calidad

Solidarity and commitment

300 days after the beginning of the Russian invasion, Spain continues to provide military aid to Ukraine, where the population and the army continue to fight to defend their country and the values of coexistence, freedom and democracy shared with the civilised world.

Our support has remained constant throughout more than eight months of war and is reflected in very important areas, such as assistance to those wounded in combat, the training of Ukrainian soldiers and the shipping of weapons, ammunition and equipment. In the latter case, the work carried out by the 483 workers of the General Defence Hospital in Zaragoza, both civilian and military, has rightly earned them the Extraordinary Defence Award 2022, which recognises the medical, psychological and psychiatric assistance provided so far to 32 patients. In addition to this task, Spain regularly provides a variety of support materiel for the legitimate defence of the Ukrainian people and has undertaken training and instruction activities, which will continue this November.

It is worth highlighting Spain's firm determination to continue providing "all the support necessary" in the future, as Defence Minister Margarita Robles conveyed to her Ukrainian counterpart, Oleksii Reznikov, in the videoconference held between both officials on 27 October. During this online meeting, Reznikov expressed his gratitude for Spain's swift reaction to the new needs that are arising.

Moreover, our country continues contributing to the deterrence and defence of NATO's eastern flank, in line with the usual contributions and capabilities offered by Spain as a reliable and responsible ally. In this context, Spain is fulfilling its commitments with regard to Ukraine in coordination with our EU and NATO partners and allies, who are acting unwaveringly in response to the war. As pointed out in an interview in this issue by Lieutenant General Francisco Javier Fernández —Military Representative to NATO and the EU—, "we are a clear example of solidarity and commitment".

RED



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AID TO UKRAINE

DELIVERING EQUIPMENT, TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE TO THE WOUNDED

Spain supports the government in Kyiv in coordination with the European Union, the Atlantic Alliance and the Donor Group

AT the facilities of the Air Deployment Support Squadron (ADSS) at Zaragoza air base, 19 Ukrainian soldiers were trained during the month of October to familiarise themselves with the Aspide anti-aircraft missile system and to be able to operate it autonomously to defend their country. They were the first to come to Spain, but not the last. A second group arrived in November, this time to receive training in health, explosive ordnance disposal and precision marksmanship. The training is part of the EU's support measures for Ukraine in its eight-month war against Russia.

Spain's support to Ukraine also involves sending armament and materiel, mainly field artillery, light and heavy vehicles and point defence missile systems, ammunition of various calibres, fuel, several ambulances and medical supplies, and winter clothing and equipment. The aid

includes medical care for soldiers wounded in the war, centralised at the General Defence Hospital in Zaragoza. This centre has so far received 32 Ukrainians, 18 of whom have already returned to their country, but its doors remain open "to all those we can assist", says its director, medical general Juan Antonio Lara. Our country is, after Poland and Germany, the one that has taken in the most combatants for recovery.

The "exceptional" work carried out with these patients by the hospital's 483 workers —civilian and military, some attached to the Ministry of Defence, others to the Aragonese Health Service— has been recognised with the Extraordinary Defence Award 2022. This prize was presented to the head of the centre by Defence Minister Margarita Robles on 7 October at a ceremony held at the Palace of the Old Captancy in Aragón.

It was attended by five of the injured soldiers who are recovering in hospital after having undergone various operations. They were accompanied by Alina Klochko, president of the Ukrainian Association of Residents in Aragón (AURA) whose interpreters, all volunteers, are being instrumental in assisting these patients, especially during the psychiatry and psychology sessions they are receiving to cope with post-traumatic stress.



Rubén Somonte/MDE

Preparation of the convoy that transported by land the five generators donated by Spain to alleviate the lack of electricity suffered by the Ukrainian population.



Defence Minister receives a gift from the Ukrainian soldiers trained in Zaragoza.

The Defence Minister spoke directly to the wounded soldiers who attended the ceremony to remind them that the award was a tribute “to the men and women of the whole of Ukraine”. “In defending your territorial unity”, she added, “you are giving a lesson in values and courage”.

YOUR WAR IS OUR WAR

Shortly before Robles presented the award to General Lara, the Undersecretary of Defence for Political Affairs (SEGENPOL in Spanish), Admiral Juan F. Martínez Núñez, did not hesitate to remind the wounded soldiers that “your war is our war”. “Because you are the spearhead of our values, you are the spearhead of what we believe in”. The admiral stressed that the war in Ukraine “has highlighted the importance of the culture of defence and awareness. The awareness that nations need an institution to safeguard their defence, their freedom, their values, their life project”.

The SEGENPOL admitted, however, that when there is a war, the armed forces are not enough. “There are militaries in the world that are very powerful but without the support of society, as we are seeing

now, the value of those armed forces is much less”. “So, Ukrainian society has given something to you, and you in turn have given something back to society”, he said to the wounded soldiers”. Some of you have given morale, the spirit of victory, encouragement, and others have given a sense of dignity: we are going to defend what is ours”. “It is a lesson we have all learned”, he added.

After receiving the award, the director of the General Defence Hospital addressed words of thanks not only to the centre’s employees and collaborators, but also to the wounded soldiers “the real protagonists; the Ukrainian heroes who are being treated in our centre or in

29 aircraft, 80 trucks and two ships with a variety of material have been dispatched

any other centres around the world”. He extended his appreciation to the Ukrainian people for “their example of dedication and struggle to preserve the values of a democratic, free and pluralistic society”. After wishing for “an early and successful resolution of the conflict”, General Lara addressed the soldiers in Ukrainian. These brief words ended with the familiar “Slava Ukraini” (Glory to Ukraine). The salute was answered by all in unison, some rising to their feet, with the cry of “Heroian Slava” (Glory to the Heroes).

MILITARY TRAINING

Prior to the presentation of the Extraordinary Defence Award, Margarita Robles met with the Ukrainian soldiers undergoing training at Zaragoza air base. The group of 19 was initially trained in the operation of an Aspide anti-aircraft battery for three weeks, although this was eventually extended by one week. This battery has been donated to the Kyiv government by the Air and Space Force.

The training of the Ukrainian soldiers was divided into two parts. One was aimed at system operators and the other at maintenance personnel (armourers,



General Defence Hospital EXTRAORDINARY DEFENCE AWARD 2022

Medical General Juan Antonio Lara Garrido, Director

“It is essential to help the wounded Ukrainians”

HE has been working at the Orad and Gaijas General Defence Hospital in Zaragoza since 1997 and has run it since February 2020. Shortly after taking office, medical general Juan Antonio Lara was confronted with the pandemic caused by COVID-19. “All the staff worked around the clock”, he recalls, “to deal with the large number of patients who arrived at the centre”. Since May, the hospital has opened its doors to soldiers wounded in the war in Ukraine. “We are happy because, although the workload has increased, it is essential for us to help them. We fully identify with what the Ukrainian people stand for”, he says. The hospital’s important work with these patients has been recognised with the Extraordinary Defence Award 2022. “It is a recognition of all of us who work here, not just military personnel, there are also many civilians”.

—How has the hospital been reorganised to care for these patients?

—We collaborate with the Aragonese Health System, so we have tried to ensure that their arrival has as little impact as possible on the care we provide to the population in Aragón. To this end, we are using more operating theatres than before, and staff going on mission have postponed their deployments. The merit lies in the fact that in each position we have the right person. The workers have gone out of their way to help the injured soldiers.

—What treatment do they need?

—They require a lot of attention, not only from doctors, but also from nurses, assistants and cleaners. Each one of them is equal to about six or seven regular patients. A Social Security patient who breaks his femur is operated on and

goes home for rehabilitation. However, a Ukrainian patient requires the attention of the traumatologist, the rehabilitator and the physiotherapist. The nurse heals his femur, but also the wounds on his arms, his face... It takes much more time. And if the same person has blast injuries, he or she is seen by an ear, nose and throat specialist and an ophthalmologist. Some have been in the hands of the Russians



for one or two months without medical treatment, requiring up to five surgical operations. In addition, many require plastic surgery and all of them undergo psychiatric and psychological treatment.

—Do you feel more comfortable here because it is a military hospital?

—It is good for them to be looked after by military personnel, they feel more understood. We have been on missions in

Afghanistan, Kosovo, Lebanon... and we understand what they are going through.

—What kind of wounds are most common in these war patients?

—They arrive with many pathologies. They are complex patients. One of them, who came in in a very serious state, was operated on for 17 hours. He was fitted with a titanium plate, because he had a sunken cheekbone and had lost his nose, which was reconstructed with rib and ear cartilage. The latest arrivals also have digestive pathologies. One, with a colon resection, is wearing a colostomy bag; another has undergone surgery for a gunshot wound to the abdomen. We have also fitted various prostheses, both external and internal.

—Has the patient profile changed in recent months?

—Yes. There is a difference between the first arrivals and the most recent ones. The former are less traumatised, they have not experienced much of the war and it shows. As in the case of one pilot who is still here. His plane was shot down on the third day of the war, he ejected and sustained a T12 fracture, which, by the way, has mended perfectly. He also broke both ankles (one is fine but the other will remain stiff). The latter are tougher; you talk to them and what they tell you is much harsher. But they all say they want to return.

—They must be very concerned about the situation of their families in Ukraine.

—Yes. A young woman came in who had lost an eye, so we fitted her with a prosthetic one. She also had scars on her face and chest. But none of that was her main concern. A young man, 23 years old, had lost an arm and we fitted him with a prosthesis. However, that was not his main concern either. What really

mattered to them, their top priority, was the family they had left behind in Ukraine. It is only when we manage to bring their families over that they start to worry about their injuries. The fact that their nearest and dearest are here is a great help in their recovery.

—What support does the hospital have to care for these patients?

—The collaboration of the AURA Foundation (Ukrainian Association of Residents in Aragón) has been fundamental. Its interpreters, all volunteers, are available at any time of the day or night. Before we had them, some of the wounded complained that the interpreters we had were speaking to them in Russian.

The foreigner unit of the National Police is also helping a great deal. They come to the hospital to process a temporary refugee protection card for them. The Miguel Servet Hospital, for its part, helps us occasionally with maxillofacial and plastic surgery and ophthalmology. And we also have the support of the Government of Aragón, which pays for food, medicines, prostheses and provides us with the doctors we need.

Nor could we do anything without the Operations Command, the medical units supporting air evacuations and deployments, the Zaragoza Air Base Group and the Air Deployment Support Squadron.

—What is the situation with regard to COVID?

—When the pandemic started, we split the hospital in two, but we are back to normal now. Patients with COVID are in their rooms and seen by the appropriate specialists. What we do have are patients with post-COVID sequelae.

Operating theatres and consulting rooms were closed for months and many patients were waiting for a diagnosis, a colonoscopy, an ophthalmological check-up or a herniated disc operation. We are trying to speed up as much as possible. In ophthalmology, for example, we are giving a complete check-up to all those who were waiting for it, at a rate of 40 patients a day. We work as if we were on mission. Once everyone has been diagnosed, we start to notify the urgent cases. And in surgery, we have found that if four cleaners go into the operating theatre after an operation instead of the usual one cleaner, we gain one operation per theatre per day.



Some of the Ukrainian soldiers receiving healthcare at the General Defence Hospital attended the presentation of the Extraordinary Defence Award 2022.

mechanics and electronics technicians). “The main objective is not that they become experts in the materiel, but that they are able to operate it”, explained Colonel Carlos Forcano, head of the ADSS, the unit responsible for training the Ukrainians.

“Your stay here”, Robles told them, “is a way of showing you our appreciation and admiration. You and all the Ukrainian people have proven that you are brave and heroic”.

The minister assured them that Spain would support them “until Ukraine wins this war completely”. “We are very pleased to be able to help you. Ukraine is setting an example to the world, an example for all citizens and also for the Spanish military”, she added.

Commanding the Ukrainian soldiers in Zaragoza was Major Dimitri Shelekhov, who thanked the Minister and the instructors for all the support to and collaboration with his country, as well as the medical care that his compatriots receive at the General Defence Hospital. Every day, Ukrainian cities are hit by missiles”, he said. Many children and many soldiers are killed and injured. We know that Spain is our ally”, he added, “and so is Europe”.

In addition to the Aspide anti-aircraft battery that the soldiers trained in Zaragoza have been operating, Spain has donated four Hawk missile launchers to Ukraine, as Robles announced at

NATO’s ministerial meeting of 12 and 13 October 2022.

SHIPMENT OF MATERIAL

Up to that date, Spain had sent 29 aircraft, 80 trucks and two ships with a variety of material to Ukraine. A land convoy with eight light vehicles, two ambulances and five tonnes of medical equipment had just left Alcalá de Henares (Madrid) for Poland. And days later, twelve heavy vehicles were shipped by sea from the port of Bilbao to a country near Ukraine.

“These are the priorities that Ukraine has at the moment”, explained Minister Robles during her visit to the Projection Support Group (GAPRO in Spanish) in charge of preparing the convoy’s departure, “and this is what they are asking us for. The war is being very cruel, many people are wounded and they urgently need medical supplies”.

On 19 October, four 400-kilowatt generators and one 150-kilowatt generator were dispatched in response to Ukraine’s request in the light of the latest Russian attacks on electricity infrastructure that have seriously affected the public electricity supply.

With these shipments, Spain acts in coordination with the countries of the Atlantic Alliance, the European Union and the 45-nation Donor Group, and has contributed more than 200 million euros to the European Peace Facility for Ukraine.

AID FOR UKRAINE



Marcos Romero/MDE

At the Defence Ministry, Margarita Robles welcomes Colonel Yulia Tapaciok, in charge of coordinating the training of Ukrainian soldiers in Spain.

TRAINING IN SPAIN

The training tasks that Spain and other European countries had been carrying out bilaterally to instruct Ukrainian military personnel have been integrated into the EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine), launched by the European Council on 15 November 2022. The operation has a non-executive mandate to provide individual, collective and specialised training to up to 15,000 Ukrainian troops.

It will be commanded at the strategic level by the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) in Brussels. There will be a Combined Arms Training Command (CAT-C) at the operational level in Poland and a Special Training Command (ST-C) in Germany. In addition, several Member States will develop training programmes within their territory through training modules. One of these has been set up in Spain. It is the so-called Toledo Training Command (TTC), which has already received its first trainees.

Spain has offered to train up to 2,400 Ukrainian military members per year, 400 every two months. "It is a very important

way of helping Ukraine's legitimate defence", stressed Margarita Robles on 20 November during a visit to the facilities at the Infantry Academy in Toledo.

"We are very grateful to the teachers and instructors. The training is very difficult,

**Spain has offered
to train up to
2,400 Ukrainian
military members
per year**

but the war is even tougher". The Ukrainian commander in charge of the 64 Ukrainian soldiers undergoing training at the TTC expressed her thanks to the minister.

The areas of training will be adapted to Ukraine's requests at any given time. Initially, five areas have been identified: basic

training, combat casualty management, precision marksmanship, actions to counter improvised explosive devices, area demining and handling of 105/14 Howitzers.

The first basic training course started on 14 November and will last four to five weeks. The other training programmes are more specialised and can be held in other locations. This was the case of the 105/14 Towed Howitzer course, which took place at Álvarez de Sotomayor military base in Almería, to instruct 21 Ukrainian soldiers in the handling of a 105/14 battery (six howitzers) that has been delivered to the Ukrainian Army.

Similarly, Spain plans to train the personnel who will be using the six Hawk anti-aircraft launchers donated by Spain to the Kyiv government, so that they can defend themselves against Russian drone attacks on their critical infrastructure.

Five other Ukrainian Armed Force members are following a course at the Joint Cyberspace Command at Retamares military base (Madrid) on the use of a deployable Cyberspace Operations Centre, also donated by Spain.

Elena Tarilonte
Photos: Hélène Gicquel

The force of reason



**Admiral
Juan Francisco
Martínez Núñez**
Undersecretary
of Defence for
Political Affairs

SPAIN'S offer to train Ukrainian military personnel continues as the EU launches its military assistance mission (EUMAM Ukraine). After completing the first course in Zaragoza, where 19 Ukrainians learned how to use the Aspide anti-aircraft missile battery donated by Spain, new training modules have already begun through the Toledo Training Command.

Education and training always sow the seeds of special bonds of comradeship and of shared principles, values and forms of military action. They forge bonds that endure, and this is very important, because it will enable Ukraine, if it so wishes, to continue getting closer to the Euro-Atlantic community.

We also value the trust in Spain that this represents, because let us bear in mind that very necessary or even indispensable military personnel are leaving Ukraine for some time, where they have been fighting for their own freedom, to move to Spain. It is a trust that the Spanish people and their Armed Forces have earned by sending aid and by hosting, healing, protecting and sheltering vulnerable families.

This assistance has been, and will continue to be, extensive and diverse, and reflects the feelings of the Spanish population.

Putting into perspective the contribution of the Ministry of Defence and the criteria we have followed in providing this assistance, we will clearly see how Spain has earned such trust. There have been more than 55 transport, logistic and humanitarian operations, which began shortly after the ill-fated Thursday, 24th February, which marked the beginning of Russian attacks on Ukraine. That same night, the Minister of Defence instructed us to send an initial urgent shipment of humanitarian aid. Transported in two A400M aircraft, 193 cubic metres of aid (medical supplies, NBC and fragment protection equipment and other material) arrived in Ukraine on Sunday 27th. This took place about 24/36 hours before the international logistics hubs even began to work effectively.

In the midst of the confusion, the flood of vehicles with no number plates, and not knowing who to turn to, our attachés in Berlin (Colonel José Carlos de Antonio Alcázar and Master Sergeant Jesús Antonio Martín) travelled and made the initial contacts to ensure that, at the end of the road, these people could get all the help that had been prepared by the Operations Command, the Military Pharmacy Centre, the *Gómez Ulla* military hospital, the Military Emergency Unit (UME), the Inspectorate-General for Defence Health, the Defence

Staff HQ, the Operations Command (MOPS) and the Army, Navy, and Air and Space Force.

This responsiveness is one of the criteria that Spanish assistance has followed. Another characteristic has been solidarity with the victims of the conflict. We have tried to assist them as much as possible. And among the victims, the children of Mariupol—an entire orphanage, which made up the first flight of an A330 aircraft of the Air and Space Force—deserve special attention. These were children undergoing cancer treatment and families who were cared for in different hospitals (we must thank the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Inclusion for their closeness in this intense collaboration throughout eight months) and numerous individuals and families under threat for whom we found a safe and discreet shelter in Spain (and I am also grateful to the media for understanding the need for discretion).

A third principle has been efficiency. Efficiency means adapting that assistance to the conditions on the ground and to the priorities of the moment.

The fourth principle has been to avoid unilateral decisions and to act in coordination with our allies. First, it was NATO, with the meeting promoted by UK Defence Minister Ben Wallace; then, the European Union, with its firmness and its sanctions; and later, the contact group for assistance to Ukraine. Spanish responsiveness has always stood out in this coordination. When a new priority has arisen, we have tried to deal with

it quickly, as in the case of the *Hawk* launchers or the generators sent at Ukraine's request to alleviate the shortage of electric power caused by Russian attacks on infrastructure.

Finally, our country has been true—and sometimes criticised for it—to a principle that was the first to be adopted on the evening of 24th February: the general principle of discretion. We did not want to start a competition between countries, a kind of beauty contest, and we did not want to give Russia any clues either as to what was being sent and when it was being sent.

Two other characteristics of international support are also worth mentioning. One is the sustained intensity of that support, along with prudence. We want Ukraine to regain its dignity and freedom, but the way forward must be not to contribute to the escalation, the extension or the chronification of a conflict in Europe. We want a rules-based Europe that lives in peace: a peace that is not the result of the logic of force but of the force of reason.

**Spanish assistance
has followed criteria
of responsiveness,
solidarity, efficiency,
coordination and
discretion**

UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

EU approves military assistance mission and NATO steps up support for missile and drone defence for Ukrainian Armed Forces



NATO Defence Ministers at the Atlantic Council meeting in Brussels on October 13th.

THE message has been very clear. In the face of intensified attacks on civilians and critical infrastructure and the escalation of the Russian nuclear threat, the international community will not be intimidated. On the contrary, there is growing cohesion and a unanimous decision to increase assistance to Ukraine and to maintain it for as long

as necessary. This was reiterated by the European leaders who approved the new EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine) and by the NATO defence ministers who met in Brussels on 12-13 October 2022 and who, among other things, decided to considerably increase aid to Kyiv in areas such as air defence and drone jammers. In this vein, Secretary

General Jens Stoltenberg welcomed Spain's announcement to send four Hawk missile launchers to Ukraine. It was the EU foreign ministers at an extraordinary meeting in Luxembourg on 17 October (a decision endorsed shortly afterwards at the European Council of heads of state and government on 20-21 October) who gave the green light to the mission –the first of its

kind to be launched by the EU— and, at the same time, increased the European Peace Facility for the purchase of military material and assistance for Ukraine by a further 500 million euros (bringing the total allocated by the EU to 3.1 billion euros).

As the Foreign Ministry communiqué states, “EUMAM Ukraine aims to contribute to improving the military capability of the Ukrainian Armed Forces to effectively conduct military operations, so that the country can defend its territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, effectively exercise its sovereignty and protect the civilian population”. This non-executive mission – which will be launched by mid-November— is initially tasked with training some 15,000 Ukrainian soldiers to the highest professional standards and will last at least two years. “Today we are stepping up our support to Ukraine to defend itself from Russia’s illegal aggression. EUMAM is not just a training mission, but clear proof that the EU will stand by Ukraine for as long as necessary”, explained EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell.

The new mission responds to an express request from the Ukrainian government and the Union’s reiterated willingness—explicitly stated at the summit of Heads of State and Government last June— to remain committed to assisting the Ukrainian people. The training will take place in the Member States (Poland and Germany will host the main training centres with personnel and resources provided by several Member States) and will be based at the EU External Action Service in Brussels. Vice Admiral Hervé Bléjean, Director of the EEAS Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), will be the mission commander. French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna pointed out, in response to Russia’s possible reticence, that “we are not being belligerent, we are merely helping a country that has been attacked to defend itself, to exercise its legitimate right to self-defence, which is enshrined in the United Nations Charter”.

In line with the demands made by the government in Kyiv, EUMAM Ukraine will provide individual, collective and specialised training to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, including its Territorial Defence Forces, will coordinate and synchronise



European Council

Meeting of EU Foreign Ministers held in Luxembourg on October 17th.

activities in this field already undertaken bilaterally by a number of EU countries, as well as other related international partners, and will be open to the participation of third countries. In the case of Spain, some twenty Ukrainian military personnel visited Spain in October to receive training in the use of an Aspide anti-aircraft missile system (donated by Spain to Ukraine). It is planned to extend this training to new specialities such as mine deactivation or paramedicine, which will most probably be integrated into the new EU mission.

The new mission is part of the Union’s multi-faceted response since the invasion of Ukraine began in February, encompassing sanctions, refugee support

and military assistance, both bilaterally by the respective members and jointly by the EU through the European Peace Facility. With regard to sanctions (another batch of sanctions was approved against Russia, bringing the total to eight), the ministers also called for measures against the Iranian regime for allegedly supplying Russia with Sahed-136 suicide drones that have been used by the Russian army in Ukraine since mid-October to attack cities and civilian and energy infrastructure.

NATO DEFENCE MINISTERIAL MEETING

A true reflection of the importance of the decisions was the intense agenda of the NATO Defence Ministerial meeting, the first to be held after the Madrid summit in June, which the heads of state of Sweden and Finland had already attended as guests. “This is a key meeting that once again underlined the seamless unity of all NATO countries, the fact that we are standing by Ukraine, and that what is happening is unacceptable from all points of view”, explained Spanish Defence Minister Margarita Robles. On June 12th there was a meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group and a working

EUMAM Ukraine to train some 15,000 Ukrainian military personnel on European soil

Departure from Rota naval base of large-calibre weapons bound for Ukraine.



MDE

Coordinating international assistance

Defence Minister Margarita Robles visits the main logistics centre in Poland from where military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine is distributed

ONE of the most complex aspects of managing the international response to assist Ukraine is coordinating the community's donations and getting them to those in need. To this end, and with a speed commensurate with the forcefulness of the unanimity against the Russian attack, several logistics distribution centres were set up in the first weeks of the invasion. The most important one is the hub located at Rzeszow air base (Poland), about 100 kilometres from the Ukrainian border, where military personnel of more than 30 nationalities operate. This is where much of the military and humanitarian aid from different countries (managed through the Donors' Conference) and international organisations such as the EU and NATO is received, organised and distributed. Defence Minister Margarita Robles travelled there on October 17th to check on site how the centre operates and to meet with the Spanish military personnel who coordinate national deliveries at the centre. "Thank you all for your cooperation. We are going through difficult times, but we are pulling together. Ukraine must win this unjust and cruel war and I think one of the most crucial things right now is our unity, how our countries are united in working together to fight Putin. Our unity is our strength", said Robles.

The Minister personally greeted a group of Polish officials and employees, as well as military personnel from other countries serving at the airport. Robles

highlighted the essential role carried out by these personnel, "their effort and permanent dedication without which it would not be possible to effectively and safely channel the aid that donor countries send to Ukraine". She also highlighted their efficiency and speed in ensuring that the Spanish aid reached its destination in record time. Margarita Robles also stressed the confidence she had in management controls and processes to verify that the end use of shipments meets Ukraine's real needs.

Up to the date of the visit, the Ministry of Defence had managed more than 30 shipments of armaments and materiel to this hub, which has been a point of entry and exit for military flights, road convoys and multimodal transport of Spanish supplies by sea. The airport of this logistics centre has also been the departure point for more than 600 people, including orphaned children or children undergoing cancer treatment, especially vulnerable family members or those under threat, and military personnel wounded in combat for their hosting in Spain or treatment in the Defence hospitals and health network. To support these transfers, 14 humanitarian flights have been arranged so far. These flight operations are scheduled to intensify in the coming weeks, as the Spanish contribution to the training of Ukrainian military personnel, organized both by bilateral agreements and as part of the EU's new EUMAM mission.

dinner attended by Ukrainian Defence Minister Olesky Reznikov. On June 13th two sessions of the Atlantic Council were held at ministerial level, one focusing on Deterrence and Defence and the other on ongoing missions and operations, which was attended by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell ("in a more unpredictable world, it is important to strengthen and deepen NATO-EU cooperation", reiterated Stoltenberg). In addition, the Nuclear Planning Group met and the ministers decided to maintain NATO's annual nuclear deterrence exercise Steadfast Noon, scheduled long before the start of the conflict in Ukraine. Defence officials reiterated that "the fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear deterrence has always been to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression".

The Russian attacks on Ukraine and, above all, the ways of closing ranks in support of Kyiv and helping a battered population facing a harsh winter were the main issues. "We are at a pivotal moment for our security.

Over the last weeks, we have seen the most serious escalation of the war since the invasion in February. Russia is mobilising tens of thousands of new troops. It is trying to illegally annex new Ukrainian territory and we have seen the indiscriminate attacks against Ukrainian cities, civilians killed, civilian critical infrastructure destroyed, and not least, the attacks on the energy infrastructure that could leave millions of people without power as we approach winter. And, of course, we have also heard the veiled nuclear threats coming from Moscow", said Jens Stoltenberg. Therefore, and insisting again and again that "NATO is not a party to the conflict, but we stand united to provide support to Ukraine so it can uphold its right for sovereignty and self-defence", the Secretary General clearly defined the current priorities: first and foremost, different types of anti-aircraft defence systems are needed: short-, medium- and long-range missiles, ballistic and cruise missiles, as well as drones. "Ukraine is a very big country, we have to help the Ukrainians defend even more cities and more territory against the horrific Russian attacks on civilians", Stoltenberg said.

Spain announces at NATO that it will donate four missile launchers for air defence to Ukraine

The Allies responded forcefully. Spain –as the Secretary General expressly emphasised and acknowledged at the press conference following the Atlantic Council– announced that it would send Ukraine four Hawk missile launchers, a type of medium-range anti-aircraft missile (up to 40 kilometres with a ceiling of 18 km), in addition to its earlier donation of an Aspide anti-aircraft missile battery.

For its part, the United States said it would speed up delivery of an advanced air defence system, and Germany –which has already sent the first of four committed units of its state-of-the-art IRIS-T SLM batteries to Ukraine– said at NATO headquarters that it would send more systems next year. The Netherlands has also committed to deliver new equipment: “We need to show Putin that the more he attacks, the more we will help”, said Dutch Minister Kaja Ollongren.

In addition, as part of NATO’s Comprehensive Assistance Package, the allies agreed to provide Ukraine with hundreds of drone jammers –which, Stoltenberg said, “can help render Russian- and Iranian-made drones ineffective”– along with fuel, winter clothing and medical supplies.

DETERRENCE AND DEFENCE

At the same time, aware that the war may be a long one and that support for Ukraine will not wane, ministers discussed how to replenish arms stocks and enhance new forms of cooperation to ensure future supplies to Ukraine while at the same time maintaining an optimal level of capabilities, both at home and at NATO’s disposal.

“The allies have supported Ukraine with systems, equipment and armament”, Stoltenberg explained at a press conference. “This has been the right thing to do, but we have looked at how to maintain the stockpile and match capabilities to allied Deterrence and Defence demands”.

The ministerial meeting provided an opportunity to discuss how NATO’s Defence Planning Process can assist in this objective and provide industry with a

long-term forecast of requirements, as well as the role that allied agencies should play in facilitating procurement and organising equipment requirements and stockpiling.

“It is very important to continue supplying all materials to Ukraine, and we are therefore requesting each country to call on the industries that are currently supplying materials so that they can speed up production as much as possible and thus facilitate the shipment of material

NATO). Also on the table was the new NATO Force Model and the increased deployment of naval units. In this regard, Stoltenberg pointed out that, to respond to actions such as the Nord Stream pipeline sabotage in Norwegian waters, “NATO has doubled its presence in the Baltic and North Seas and enhanced its surveillance capabilities in all domains for the defence and safeguarding of our critical infrastructure”.



NATO Secretary General greets the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, during the Atlantic Council on October 13th.

to Ukraine”, said Margarita Robles. At the Madrid Summit, the allies agreed on a series of crucial measures to enhance Deterrence and Defence. In addition to the already accomplished increase in Forward Presence battlegroups at brigade level, the 32 defence officials discussed issues such as the future Command and Control concept, technological innovation, and resilience improvements (in this regard, Stoltenberg announced that senior experts on critical infrastructure resilience would meet for the first time this year at

At the end of the meeting, the Spanish Minister reaffirmed that “we must stand together in protecting critical infrastructure”. She also stressed that “cohesion in NATO will become increasingly crucial, so it is vital that allied planning is carried out in a realistic and sustainable manner”, and that it “responds both to the responsibility of maintaining a secure eastern flank and to the security challenges and threats from all directions, in particular those from the South”.

Rosa Ruiz

LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRANCISCO JAVIER FERNÁNDEZ SÁNCHEZ, SPANISH MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE (MILREP) TO THE NATO AND EU MILITARY COMMITTEES

“EUROPE IS MORE UNITED THAN IN ANY PREVIOUS INTERNATIONAL CRISIS”

He highlights that the crisis in Ukraine has demonstrated the strength of European foreign policy and has led to the largest deployment in NATO's history

HE is living through one of the most complex and intense phases of European security. But it is also exciting because of the challenges involved and, above all, because of the relevance of his assignment in Brussels, where he has witnessed the undeniable unity and responsiveness of partners and allies in the face of a threat like the war in Ukraine. He is also witnessing how the two organisations are adapting to new security demands and responding to times in which, in addition to conventional threats, it is important to take into account cyber threats, the militarisation of space and attacks on basic infrastructures. Air and Space Force Lieutenant General Francisco Javier Fernández Sánchez, who took up his post as Spanish military representative to the European Union and NATO just over a year ago, is convinced that the more united and committed to defence the EU countries stand, the stronger NATO will be. An experienced pilot with more than 3,000 flying hours, whose previous position was deputy commander of the Air Force Chief of Staff, he has served, among other assignments, as commander of Morón air base and of the 11th Wing, deputy commander of the Canary Islands Air Command and has taken part in various operations abroad. He

proudly states that Spain's work in both NATO and the EU is “extensive and key” and that we are “a clear example of solidarity and commitment”.

—With the invasion of Ukraine, Europe has faced its greatest threat since the Cold War. How was this perceived in Brussels? Were we prepared?

—The serious situation following the Russian Army's illegal invasion of Ukraine has undoubtedly been a turning point in many areas. Let us bear in mind that we are facing the greatest challenge to our security since the Second World War. And, to answer your question, I have to say emphatically that yes, we were prepared to act, since without the right training it would have been impossible to carry out the many actions performed by both NATO and the EU. However, it is also true that this threat to the security of European soil and to core values of our society —such as the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights— has led to the acceleration of different policies and processes in both organisations.

In the case of the EU, great determination has been shown in the actions carried out in a very complicated scenario; we can say that the Union has acted as a global power. Europe has stood more united than in any previous

international crisis. If the strength of European foreign policy has ever been questioned, the leadership of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr. Josep Borrell, has put an end to any doubts in this regard.

This excellent determination, agility and union of all has also been demonstrated in NATO through the largest deployment of forces in the organisation's history, which has been carried out with absolute precision, both in the decision and execution of the various actions and in the associated public messages. We should bear in mind that NATO is a defence organisation and, therefore, that peace-keeping and preventing the unnecessary escalation of conflicts are overarching goals.

—Does a stronger Europe in defence strengthen NATO?

—The relationship between NATO and the EU is an undeniable fact in view of the large number of commonalities between the two organisations. Proof of this is the fact that of the 30 countries that currently belong to NATO, 21 are EU member states, a number that could soon increase to 23 with the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO. This means that a very large percentage of the EU population also belongs to NATO countries and, accordingly, that the sum of a very high percentage of the



defence budgets of EU member states is also a NATO budget. All this shows that the more united and committed to Defence EU member states stand, the stronger NATO will be.

We need to understand that NATO and the EU must be considered as two actors that seek the security and well-being of our society from different points of view. In other words, in no way should they be seen as competitors or even antagonists, but rather as complementary. Let us remember that Europe has persistently been called upon from the other side of the Atlantic to invest more in defence and to be less dependent on other external supports. The European Union is a global actor that must ensure a high degree of strategic autonomy and has a very high potential for crisis management, based on different kinds of response mechanisms. NATO is key to collective defence and to the use of the military instrument.

—The two organisations in which you represent Spain militarily are undergoing a process of adaptation and transformation. In the case of the European Union, how will the Strategic Compass affect the Military Committee?

—The Strategic Compass has become our roadmap for the EU's

security and defence policy for the next ten years. In the case of the Military Committee, the challenge is to achieve the EU's ambition of developing its instrument of Military Power so that — in coordination with the instruments of Economic, Political and other Powers — it can turn the EU into an independent global actor. We have to take security responsibilities for our own citizens in the Union, but also for the rest of the world.

One of the key challenges of the Strategic Compass, if not the greatest, is the development of the so-called Rapid Deployment Capacity. To this end, the Military Committee directly influences the discussions and configuration of the different initiatives with a technical/military profile already in place or in the

“There has been absolute precision, both in the decision and execution of the actions as well as in the public messages conveyed”

process of being established. Although they are not the only ones, the most important initiatives are those related to capability development (Permanent Structured Cooperation, Coordinated Annual Review on Defence and European Defence Fund), as the opinion of the Military Committee is very relevant in the configuration and evolution of their purely military dimension.

—What role is the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) meant to play in EU missions?

—This initiative was established in June 2017 after the realisation, years ago, that EU military missions lacked significant coordination at the strategic military level. I would like to recall the decisive role played by Spain in the entire creation process, both in the initiative itself and in the different steps that subsequently had to be taken.

The MPCC has undoubtedly made it easier for the Political and Security Committee to assume the political control and strategic direction of EU missions and activities, as well as its coordination with the rest of the Union's civilian structures. However, the EU is a dynamic organisation subject to continuous adaptations and changes to ensure its proper functioning. An

example of this, in connection with the EU's Military Command and Control Structure, is what is currently in the process of being decided: a proposal to separate the Military Staff and the MPCC. A separation that would entail for both bodies the assignment of clearly distinct tasks, as well as the appointment of different directors. As the Strategic Compass states, once it reaches its final operational capability, the MPCC will be the preferred option for the command and control of all EU military operations.

—Is the idea of a European Army feasible?

—Right now, I do not think so, because first there needs to be further European integration in various respects. Nevertheless, this should not be an obstacle to achieving the objectives of the Strategic Compass. NATO does not have its own army either, however NATO countries contribute assets and capabilities in accordance with planning and threat developments. The EU should take the same approach, namely the commitments of member states to contribute forces and capabilities should be determined and adapted to the planning of the different scenarios and to situations of peace, crisis or conflict.

It should also be taken into account that the European link should not weaken the transatlantic link, but rather strengthen it. In other words, while it is a good idea for the EU to have its own dedicated military forces, this should take place in a context of maximum cooperation, collaboration and integration with NATO. If our ultimate goal is to enhance the capabilities of the armed forces of EU countries, we will be making a guaranteed contribution to the strengthening of the security and defence of both organisations.

—How will the new Strategic Concept affect command and force structures in NATO?

—The Strategic Concept adopted in Madrid reflects a new security environment in which the threat level has increased significantly. Although it includes a number of priorities stemming from Russia's war against

Ukraine, it also presents important developments related to both China and the Indo-Pacific. As a result, NATO's military posture has changed from "enhanced presence" to "advanced defence", implying a much more robust pre-deployment of military capabilities along NATO's eastern flank.

The deployment associated with such a transformed military posture obviously entails command and control structures, personnel and equipment at levels of operational readiness not seen since the end of the Cold War. Numerous initiatives are currently under way within NATO related to the changes that are envisaged in the command and force structures.

—How do you rate the importance of space as a fifth domain? How are NATO and the EU preparing to defend cyberspace?

“One of the main challenges of the Strategic Compass is to develop a rapid deployment capacity”

—As a member of the Air and Space Force, I think it is very important. Today, space is a domain that is critical to our way of life and to our operations. Although good progress is being made, there is still a lot of work to be done, both in NATO and the EU, as space capabilities are only within the reach of a few states. There are many processes and plans that will need to be implemented to shape this new domain.

NATO has fully integrated the space and cyber domains into its Deterrence and Defence posture. It no longer talks about joint operations (referring to the land, maritime and air domains), but rather that operations must always be multi-domain; in other words, fully incorporating the cyber and space domains. Such has been this integration that the new Strategic Concept raises

the possible invocation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, given that the existence of malicious cyber activity or hostile operations to, from or within space is considered to be at the level of an armed attack. Likewise, the new Strategic Concept, and particularly as regards Collective Defence, has also considered hybrid warfare at the level of an armed attack, with the consequences that this entails in terms of a possible invocation of Article 5 by the North Atlantic Council.

If we analyse what the EU establishes in the Strategic Compass as far as the space domain is concerned, we can see that the EU is considering the development of new state-of-the-art technology systems to improve its access to space and enhance the protection of its space assets, with defence in space being the priority area and, moreover, the start of this new process. In the cyber field, the Compass also relies on the intensive use of new technologies to achieve the desired degree of advantage.

—And what about other threats like the ones seen in the war in Ukraine, such as disinformation or attacks on critical infrastructure?

—The European Union contemplates these other threats by specifically mentioning them in the Strategic Compass, which shows its readiness to respond firmly to manipulated information. This response can only be envisaged by maintaining full coherence with the Union's internal policies at all times. With regard to Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations, the EU is firmly committed to addressing and countering the manipulation of information and interference by foreign actors.

Similarly, NATO's Strategic Concept also includes such threats as disinformation, attacks on critical infrastructure and the energy crisis. The recent attacks on the Nord Stream pipelines in the Baltic Sea have accelerated the process of dealing with such threats and ensuring security.

—From a military standpoint, what response capability do you envisage in order to collaborate with civilian authorities in refugee crises?

—Although there are numerous examples of military involvement in refugee crises (including, for instance, the recent transport and hosting of Afghan refugees in various NATO and EU countries; or years ago, the transfer and reception by the Spanish Armed Forces of displaced persons and refugees in the Kosovo Serb ghetto of Osojane; or even the support of the Ministry of Defence to other ministries when their capacity to receive immigrants is overwhelmed), we must bear in mind that our mission as service members in this type of crisis is, basically, to deliver support wherever we are required to do so. But other agencies are responsible for responding to and managing such crises.

However, we the military members have contributed in this area on numerous occasions by providing logistic, health, transport, surveillance and protection means as well as humanitarian assistance and aid to displaced persons, etc., in various refugee crises in different parts of the world. But I insist that this has been done without encroaching on the command and management competence assigned to other organisations.

—What role can NATO and the EU play in the stability of the Southern Flank?

—Both organisations can and should play a key role in this important task. In these times in which the world is looking to the East because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Spain, together with other countries of both organisations, underlines the importance of continuing to focus on a 360° defence that monitors and observes in all directions. This is the only possible way to guarantee stability on the southern flank, which is crucial, among other things, to control the terrorist threat.

The objectives set out in the 2021 National Security Strategy are aligned with those of the organisations of which Spain is a member, in particular the United Nations, the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance. These objectives are aimed at protecting and

guaranteeing shared interests with partners and allies. Our Strategy, and therefore our priorities, address Spain's commitments to NATO and to the EU. In these organisations, our threat perception is obviously different from that of our Eastern European allies, with our priorities being more oriented towards the South.

In any case, although Europe and the transatlantic link are priority areas of interest for our security and defence, Spain also looks to other places, such as the Maghreb and the Middle East,

We could say that there are very few countries that can look down on us in terms of the resources we contribute to the Organisation.

As far as the EU is concerned, we are the largest contributor to its military operations and missions. This circumstance and the fact that we are one of the big four within the Union mean that our voice is listened to attentively, as we are also an active country with broad participation in the different matters and initiatives. In short, Spain has always taken a step forward when called



sub-Saharan Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin American countries.

—How would you define Spain's role in both organisations?

—I think that, in both cases, our role is extensive and fundamental. Spain is a clear example of solidarity and commitment. We are considered reliable partners by both organisations, although our specific weight is clearly greater in the EU than in NATO. According to the Alliance itself, Spain's contribution to the capabilities and forces required by NATO for its plans and operations is greater than what is required given its size.

upon to do so. Examples of this are our presence and achievements in different fields and geographical areas, such as the enhanced Forward Presence in Latvia, the air policing missions in the Baltic countries or in Bulgaria and Romania; our commitment to security in Türkiye or to the future of Iraq; maritime security in the Mediterranean and in the Atlantic under NATO's flag, etc.

We must add to all this and not forget the tireless and coordinated work undertaken by Spanish diplomats and military personnel posted in NATO and the EU.

Rosa Ruiz/Photos: EMAD



Atalanta ES-OHQ personnel, at Rota naval base, where 80 military and civilian personnel from various nations work.

[armed forces]

THE MASTERMIND of Operation *Atalanta*

Rota is home to the multinational headquarters of the EU's counter-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden and Somalia

PERSONNEL at the strategic level operational headquarters (ES-OHQ) of EUNAVFOR Somalia Operation *Atalanta*, located at Rota naval base since 2018, work around the clock, constantly scrutinising the screens that monitor the Indian Ocean 7,800 kilometres away. Spain has participated in this EU mission since it began in 2008. Due to *Brexit*, the *Atalanta* OHQ had

to be transferred from Northwood where it was formerly based, so France and Spain made a joint request to the EU for the headquarters to be moved to Rota and for the Maritime Security Centre-Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) to be moved to Brest, France. The EU accepted this proposal through Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/1083, of 30 July 2018. As a result, eight months later, Rota OHQ assumed command of the European Naval Force.

There are currently 99 military members and civilian staff posted at *Atalanta* OHQ from 20 nations (16 EU countries, as well as Colombia, Serbia, Montenegro and South Korea). Eighty are based in Rota while the rest are in MSCHOA Brest and at strategic points in the area of operations, performing liaison and support tasks for the operation. They control everything that goes on in the



Friendly approach to a fishing boat in Somalian waters to prevent illicit activities.



Those in charge of all areas take stock of weekly activities in the Flag Update Decision Brief.

The Headquarters was transferred from Northwood to Spain three years ago due to Brexit



Spain's contribution to the Operation includes a Navy frigate and a P-3 Orion aircraft of the Air and Space Force based in Djibouti.

Since December 2020 the Operation also monitors illegal fishing and the trafficking of drugs, weapons and charcoal

Horn of Africa, where EUNAVFOR is fighting piracy in the Indian Ocean while maintaining the safety of the waters of the Gulf of Aden and Somalia by protecting the vessels of the World Food Programme (WFP), monitoring fishing activities and supporting other EU missions for Somalia.

Proof of its success is that since 2019 there have been no records of any pirate attacks in the Horn

commit on land to evade our control. It is therefore essential to collaborate with the authorities of the countries in the region", says Captain Rafael Torrecillas, OHQ Chief of Staff. "If we were not here, life would probably be much more expensive, because we would be suffering the consequences of the loss of human lives and resources, which would entail a return to the unpunished assault on

finance international terrorist groups such as *Al Shabaab* or *Daesh*".

And the fact is that, although currently all international attention "is on the conflict between Ukraine and Russia", says Captain Torrecillas, "in the global village, this conflict could also affect this part of the world, as China and Russia have significantly developed their commercial interests in Africa in recent years". The increase in the traffic of gas and oil tankers in the region should also be taken into account, as should the fact that the Strait of Ormuz, the Gulf of Aden, the route toward the Suez Canal and the whole of the western Indian Ocean are the areas in which most of the world's narcotics trafficking occurs.

A HOT SPOT

The figures speak for themselves. Operation *Atalanta* has helped deliver almost 3,000 million tonnes of food to different Somali ports, escorted more than 230 WFP vessels and monitored nearly 1,400 ships. It has also carried out eight interventions in which over 21.7 tonnes of narcotics have been seized. To achieve this, the OHQ works non-stop.

In the Joint Operations Centre (JOC) (located on the first floor of the headquarters), all vessels in the area are monitored. Military personnel from different countries are glued to giant screens displaying the map of the Horn of Africa and the boats in transit in the region. "We work together with Brest and the Operation forces deployed in the area", explains Norwegian Lieutenant Commander Edwin Holwerda, Deputy Commander of the JOC. For the military members posted in the operational headquarters, this is an international mission, just as it is for those who are in the area.

Therefore, the Spanish are posted at OHQ for six months, the Dutch for two to four months and the others for six months to one year. They all take up their relevant positions in



Everything that happens in the Horn of Africa is monitored from Rota, in permanent contact with the EU vessels and aircraft patrolling the area.

of Africa. As a matter of fact, since December 2020, when the two-year mandate was extended, the European Union allocated new responsibilities to operation *Atalanta* to confront the various existing threats in the area, namely the surveillance of illicit activities (trafficking of drugs, weapons and people), charcoal trafficking (the proceeds of which are used to finance terrorist groups), and unregulated, unreported or illegal fishing.

"The piracy business has evolved into other crimes that we are fighting, crimes the perpetrators also try to

the commercial maritime traffic that brings us food from other parts of the world", he explains. Also "the UN World Food Programme that we protect would be interrupted, causing famine". In addition, "the subjugation of the civilian population by insurgent groups and the resulting migration of people" would be "a challenge of huge proportions for Europe and the countries in the region".

He also underlines that "many of the illegal activities we are fighting, such as drug trafficking or charcoal smuggling, are ultimately used to



All of the information collected by the assets deployed on the Somalian coast, basically images and data, is managed at the OHQ,

the different sections which include, in addition to the JOC, logistics, operations, plans, intelligence, communications, economic area and strategic communications.

PRIOR CONSULTATION

Those in charge of all areas participate every week in the Flag Update Decision Brief, a meeting chaired by the Operation Commander, Rear Admiral José María Núñez Torrente, or by the Deputy Commander, Italian Rear Admiral (lower half) Paolo Spagnoletta and in which, via video conference, the personnel of MSCHOA and the Force Headquarters (FHQ), whose General Staff is on board the *Atalanta* control vessel, also participate. The aim is to brief on what each area has done in the past week and also for the Operation Commander to give instructions to staff.

Among those in charge is the Operation's legal adviser, Major Rodrigo Lorenzo Ponce de León of the Military Legal Corps. His job is to "advise the Operation Commander, his general staff and our legal adviser deployed in the area of operations", he explains. He also liaises with the legal services of the European Union in Brussels and is adviser for gender and human rights, as well as manager of the Operation's rules of engagement. He

Atalanta has helped deliver almost 3,000 million tonnes of food to Somalian ports

assures that neither is he short of work nor is his job easy, as "each maritime space in which we operate, each force unit we use and each illicit activity subject to intervention has a specific legal regime, giving rise to a multitude of rules".

Also present at the weekly meeting is Major Carlos García Trejo, responsible for monitoring illegal fishing in the area. The assets deployed in the Operation (drones, helicopters, aircraft and frigates) collect information, basically images and data from friendly approaches to the vessels whenever they detect fishing activity, and this information is passed on to the OHQ.

Somalian waters are divided into three areas: up to 12 nautical miles from the coast only local residents can fish; from 12 to 24 miles from the coast only Somalis can fish; and from 24 to 200 miles from the coast fishing is only permitted with a licence. Based on this and other data (such as the fishing method or the species caught), the information sent from the area is crosschecked at the OHQ with the register of the boats fishing there and everything is uploaded into a database that already contains 2,600 sightings of fishing activity, including "over 100 vessels and their names, the locations at which they have been fishing and photographs", says García Trejo.



Frigate *Numancia* escorts the World Food Programme vessel *Falcon* during its passage through the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea.

*The situation
in the Horn of
Africa is stable,
although piracy
has not been
eradicated*

This information is used to produce a quarterly report that is sent to the European Union, "attaching all sightings that could be cases of illegal activity".

UNITS DEPLOYED

Each move made by the units deployed in the zone (currently Italian frigate *Virginio Fasan*, Spanish frigate *Numancia* and *P-3 Orión* aircraft of the Air and Space Force based in Djibouti) is consulted previously with the OHQ. "We communicate seamlessly, on a daily and continuous basis", assures Santiago Martínez, commanding officer of frigate *Numancia*, by videoconference.

Two hundred and twenty-nine people report to him, including the international General Staff who boarded in August. They left Rota in June and are set to return at the end of October. "The deployment is just the tip of the iceberg under which lies a lot of work on training, instruction and enlistment, carried out in the preceding months", stresses the commander.

The situation in the Horn of Africa is "stable, but let us not confuse stability with normality", he warns. "Piracy is still an underlying issue. It has been contained but not eradicated. We cannot fool ourselves just because there are no attacks, because the actors involved in piracy are still there, and have both the capacity and the intent to attack. I am convinced that, were it not for our presence, they would reappear and the attacks would start once more".

Verónica Sánchez Moreno

Photos: Pepe Díaz and ES-OHQ Rota

Rear Admiral José María Núñez Torrente,
Commander of Operation *Atalanta*

"Our presence
is vital for the
security of this
region"

COMMANDER of Operation *Atalanta* since April 2021, born in Ferrol, 58-year-old Rear Admiral José María Núñez Torrente also commands the Spanish High Readiness Forces (Maritime) Headquarters (SPMARFOR). Prior to this he was head of the Fleet's General Staff, leading the Maritime Component Command in national operation *Balmis* and mission *Baluarte* to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. A naval jet pilot certified by the US Navy, he has served both at the helm of *Harrier AV-8S* aircraft and on several vessels of the Spanish Navy. He has also occupied various positions, on land and at sea, including a noteworthy position as director of the Naval Military Academy from 2015 to 2018.

—How has *Atalanta* evolved in recent times?

—The Operation has gone through some significant changes. Since the new mandate commenced in January 2021, our main endeavour has continued to be the fight against piracy and the protection of vessels belonging to the World Food Programme and other vulnerable ships in transit in the western Indian Ocean. However, we have also incorporated new secondary tasks, including the fight against the trafficking of narcotics,

weapons and charcoal, and the control of illegal fishing in the area of operations, thus confronting the new illegal activities into which piracy has diversified. All of these efforts have driven the Operation to become a key maritime security provider in this part of the world, both for countries in the region and for our partners and allies, with whom we share many of our missions. The world keeps changing and so do we. Therefore, if new challenges arise, we are ready to adapt and confront them.

—Have you been affected by Somalia's recent decision not to allow *Atalanta* vessels sail in the 12-mile area of its territorial waters?

—This decision undoubtedly affects operations to a certain extent as it reduces reconnaissance of the maritime environment close to the coast, access to valuable information obtained from interviewing key people on the ground and the support we provide to our sister missions: EUCAP and EUTM-Somalia. Even so, it has become clear that *Atalanta* continues to have the necessary and sufficient tools to continue to perform all its tasks in the area of operations, which stretches from the Red Sea to the Strait of Ormuz in the north and extends southwards to include the Seychelles. To

give you an idea, this is such a vast expanse of ocean that the entire EU could fit in it. It is precisely here that almost all pirate attacks have taken place, where the main drug trafficking routes from Asia operate, and where merchant ships sail between Asia and Europe. Our commitment to maritime security remains intact.

—Is there any change of decision on the horizon that could enable you to access the coast again?

—We are optimistic, especially since the results of the recent Somalian elections, but it is a decision for the newly formed government. In our case, the European External Action Service is in charge of restarting the relevant talks with the competent Somalian authorities. As a sovereign country, the decision they take will be respected. I should also say that, at the present time, our collaboration with the Somalian authorities is very good and we continue to develop joint activities that are beneficial to both parties.

—Where is *Atalanta* heading?

—As long as free international maritime traffic is at risk, as long as piracy remains dormant and the other illegal activities into which it has diversified, such as the trafficking of narcotics or illegal fishing, continue, our presence will be vital to ensure security in the region. *Atalanta* has become an integrated maritime security provider in this area of the Indian Ocean. The European Union has recognised the Operation's work, giving us a fundamental role in the new Coordinated Maritime Presences concept, which is the instrument that will coordinate the EU's maritime diplomacy across the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, *Atalanta* has been asked to play a significant role in the EU's Strategic Compass and the EU strategy for cooperation in the Indian Ocean. The challenges faced by the Operation are exciting and we will be ready to face them with enthusiasm and maximum commitment, as we have done up to now.

—Will Spanish frigates be able to act against drug trafficking?

—The possibility that Spanish vessels could perform activities such as the seizure



and destruction of drugs on the high seas, as French vessels are doing, is being looked into, although this is not easy with the legislation currently in force. In any case, in the event that this were to materialise, it would be a temporary option, as one of the strategic objectives of Operation *Atalanta* is to hand over the suspects and the corresponding evidence to the law, either of one of the countries in the region or of any other country that agrees to bring the guilty parties to justice, and that is what we are working toward.

—What do the other countries that participate in EUNAVFOR contribute?

—Their willingness to build and maintain the joint collaborative endeavour in the

region is constant. Participation, where economic, material and human resources are concerned, is not the same for all countries. Each country contributes in accordance with its national objectives and its capabilities. But whether a country provides several vessels or just one person to Operation *Atalanta*, this does not diminish its commitment in any way.

—Three years have passed since the OHQ was transferred to Spain. What is the European Union's overall evaluation in this regard?

—Very positive. The legacy of British leadership set the bar very high for us, but we were able to read the situation and understand the socio-political changes of the region to adapt accordingly. Proof that this has worked is that the European Union has continued, year after year, to endorse and support the mission.

At the present time we are in the middle of a strategic review of the operation. My view is that there is growing interest in the European Union in the Indo-Pacific and in keeping its most effective and valuable tool in the region, namely EUNAVFOR's Operation *Atalanta*, active. We also enjoy the unfailing support of all the member states, without exception, and I therefore have no doubt that, in January 2023, when the current mandate ends, it will be renewed for another two years.

"I have no doubt that the EU will renew the Operation's mandate for another two years"

Conference “The Army and future challenges 2022”

Decision-making in the digital era. Ethical and legal framework

Major General Antonio Cabrerizo Calatrava

Director of Research, Doctrine, Organisational Structure and Materiel in the Training and Doctrine Command (MADOC)

THE seventh edition of the conference *The Army and future challenges* was held on 18 May 2022 in the auditorium of the Faculty of Health Sciences in Granada under the slogan *Algorithms and Humanism* and was entitled *Decision-making in the digital era. Ethical and legal framework*. Organised by the Training and Doctrine Command (MADOC), it allowed leading figures from various fields to reflect on the implications of incorporating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into military decision-making. Attendance was remarkable, with the participation of researchers and students from the universities of Granada, Córdoba and Jaén.

The conference consisted of an opening lecture and two panels in which people from different fields presented and discussed the potential of AI and the ethical and legal challenges that it poses in terms of decision-making. It was chaired by the Chief of the Army Staff, Army General Amador Enseñat, who pointed to digitalisation as a key factor in the Army's transformation process, recognising that new technologies will have to incorporate AI to maintain deterrence and response capabilities against real and emerging threats to our nation.

In the main conference, Major General José María Millán, Director of the Centre for Information and Communications Systems and Technologies (CESTIC) of the Ministry of Defence, warned of the conflicts of the virtual digital world due to the extension of its power, apparently without limits, conditioning, if not determining, the decisions taken at all levels. Indeed, the armed forces, whose principle of action is based on the application of ethical values to the behaviour of their members, are a reference in terms of how to integrate AI in this process, ensuring that machines do not make the final decisions.

The first panel, moderated by journalist Marisa Rodríguez, editor and presenter of the Spanish television programme “Informe Semanal”, focused on the possibilities provided by AI in terms of decision-making. Professor Francisco Herrera, Director of the Andalusian University Institute in Data Science and Computational Intelligence, explained the evolution, current situation and possibilities of AI. In his view, the main challenges we face in relation to the use of AI are avoiding the “black box” effect (not knowing why a machine produces a result) and managing the vast amount of data (and creating synthetic data when it does not exist) that this technology needs to feed on and learn.

For his part, Joaquín Catalá, head of the Technological Projects Unit of the Directorate General for Armament and Materiel (DGAM) warned of the dangers of incorporating foreign technologies without control, which implies having to unravel the content and modus operandi of the aforementioned “black boxes”. The projects on which the DGAM focuses its efforts are essentially related to decision support systems, big data analytics and predictive maintenance. He pointed out that the most promising application in this respect is image analysis, which is considered essential for interpreting the enormous amount of visual information from a wide variety of sources, the content of which is vital to feed the intelligence cycle.

New technologies must be applied in an ethical, transparent and responsible manner



In his speech, the Director of the Innovation and Laboratory Department of Telefónica Tech, Sergio de los Santos, highlighted the technological areas that must accompany algorithms in order to achieve a truly effective AI. Without high-speed computing and infrastructure related to 5G expansion, AI would be inoperable. Cybersecurity, without which data and systems would be completely vulnerable, is a priority.

According to the Deputy Director General of the National Cryptologic Centre, Luis Jiménez, the impact of digitalisation and AI is leading to a real revolution, similar to that of the industrial revolution. Although we are far from achieving a “super-intelligent” machine with empathy and creativity, automated systems are increasingly present in all areas of society and states. In any case, he concluded that the human aspect of the conflict and the violent nature of the battlefield will persist with or without technology.

The second panel, moderated by journalist Quico Chirino, deputy editor of the newspaper “Ideal”, focused on the ethical and legal challenges posed by AI, particularly in relation to decision-making. The debate was opened by Professor Francisco Muñoz, President of the Social Council of the University of Córdoba, who highlighted the importance of the human factor within the “man-machine” binomial, an aspect already included in the DIDOM/MADOC Trends document of February 2022, given that certain decisions and the responsibility linked to them cannot be left in the hands of AI. In the specific field of the armed forces, the rules of engagement or the prevention of collateral damage have to be kept under human control.

Judge Alfonso Peralta pointed out the challenges posed by European AI legislation in order to prevent potential damage caused by robots or cognitive manipulation, among others. European legislation specifies certain prohibited and high-risk uses, which

require greater control. While it seems indisputable that automated systems provide great benefits to society, they are not without risk, and regulation is therefore unavoidable.

General José Carlos de la Fuente, President of the Military Technology Foresight Section of the Academy of Military Arts and Sciences, focused on the importance of technological evolution for human beings, which is essential for their survival and development. In the application of new technologies due consideration should be given to the ethical principles guiding human behaviour, which leads to the need to understand how algorithms work and, ultimately, for people to retain control over their actions.

The panel was closed by Major General Joao Pedro Boga de Oliveira, Deputy Commander of NATO's Rapid Reaction Corps in Spain, who described the complex nature of today's strategic and operational environment and the growing trend towards the use of AI as a tool to help solve this problem. In this context, systems are increasingly autonomous, in particular areas such as command and control, information and target acquisition, weapon systems and resource management. When it comes to employing new technologies, it will be key to discern between the opportunity for their use and the vulnerabilities they produce, while recognising that AI can save lives, make better and more reasonable decisions, and act faster, further and with greater precision.

The main conclusion of the conference is the Army's aspiration to integrate and apply new technologies in an ethical, transparent and responsible manner. This requires a regulatory and doctrinal framework to ensure compliance with national and international laws and respect for the ethical principles and moral values guiding the members of the armed forces.

REPORT

Nearly 500 Spanish service members are stationed in NATO command structures and entities abroad

SPAIN'S LESSER-KNOWN FACE IN NATO

THE work that the Spanish Armed Forces have been doing in NATO operations for more than 30 years is well known. But perhaps less so is the work of some 500 service members, both officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) as well as soldiers and sailors, in positions of responsibility in the Alliance's various structures. This places Spain among the five most committed allies.

The progressive incorporation of Spanish military personnel into entities of the so-called NATO Command Structure (NCS) began in January 1999, when Spain completed its full integration into NATO's military structure. Currently, these men and women in uniform account for 70 percent of those stationed in entities abroad, either under the umbrella of international organisations, such as NATO, the European Union or Eurocorps, or integrated into the headquarters or commands of other countries, such as the German Operations Command or the US Africa Command.

Specifically, under the NATO flag, there are Spanish personnel in 66 elements and centres based in 15 countries — 14 European countries and the United States—. Of particular relevance within the NCS are the five general officer posts that Spain contributes on a permanent basis and five others on a rotating basis.



Air Force Major Francisco Gallardo with colleagues at the NATO Space Centre in Ramstein, Germany.



SPANISH MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THE COMMAND STRUCTURE

SPAIN joined NATO's integrated military structure on 1 January 1999. From then on, the progressive contribution of Spanish service members to allied units and headquarters began. Currently, nearly 500 are deployed in 15 countries, placing Spain among the five most committed allies.



495 MILITARY PERSONNEL

→ 320 OFFICERS → 136 NCOS → 39 SOLDIERS AND SAILORS

Figures as at 31 July 2022



Main postings

SPANISH personnel can be found in 66 NATO entities and centres in Europe and the US. Most are in Belgium—where, among other elements, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) is located—and in Italy, mainly at the Joint Force Command (JFC) Headquarters in Naples. The latter is one of the most sought-after assignments, along with Norfolk in the United States, home to Allied Command Transformation.

Germany 72 military personnel →44→21→7 In 10 units	Greece 10 military personnel →8→2 In 2 units	Poland 13 military personnel →6→3→4 In 4 units
Belgium 131 military personnel →94→26→11 In 13 units	Hungary 1 military personnel →1 In 1 unit	Portugal 13 military personnel →9→4 In 3 units
Estonia 1 military personnel →1 In 1 unit	Italy 110 military personnel →55→43→12 In 10 units	United Kingdom 40 military personnel →29→11 In 4 units
USA 27 military personnel →25→2 In 4 units	Norway 7 military personnel →5→2 In 1 unit	Romania 2 military personnel →2 In 2 units
France 3 military personnel →2→1 In 2 units	The Netherlands 35 military personnel →20→11→4 In 5 units	Türkiye 30 military personnel →19→10→1 In 4 units

Rafael Navarro / Revista Española de Defensa / Source: EMAD and prepared by author.

BELGIUM AND ITALY

Of the personnel deployed holding Allied posts, the largest group comprises officers, with a total of 320. This is followed by 136 NCOs, and finally 39 soldiers and sailors.

In terms of geographical deployment, the countries with the largest number of Spanish military personnel are Belgium and Italy where, among other elements, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and the Joint Force Command (JFC) Headquarters in Naples, respectively, are located.

LtC. Luis Carlos Ayala, who is the head of the Corporate Procurement and Technical Inspection Branch of the Finance

and Acquisition Management Division, has been posted in SHAPE for two years. As far as his work is concerned, he highlights the similarities between recruitment processes in Spain and those in NATO,

Spain is one of the five countries that contributes the most staff to the organisation

although “being stationed in a strategic headquarters certainly provides a great overview and a new perspective on how to work within an international organisation as important as NATO”.

Another aspect highlighted by the officer is the fact that every Spanish military officer stationed abroad is “the image of Spain”, which “is a privilege, but also entails a great responsibility”. All personnel serving in the international field, regardless of rank or position, are aware of this responsibility. First Corporal Francisco José Alcaraz, assistant in the Staff Support Office of the National Military Representative (NMR) to SACEUR, says that working in SHAPE, and specifically in



A group of Spaniards at the entrance to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), a unit in which 48 Spanish military personnel are stationed.

the NMR office, “is particularly complex, as you have to deal with personnel from most NATO nations because of the office’s liaison and representation role”, but at the same time, he adds, “it offers an unparalleled opportunity for personal and professional development”.

Marine First Corporal Juan Manuel Pacheco, team leader in the International Military Police at JFC Naples HQ, another key entity of NATO’s Command Structure, also stresses the “sensitivity and wisdom” that we must use due to the different cultures and nationalities working at the base. “In my case, if you add the fact that you are communicating in a language that is not your mother tongue to the difficulty of getting security issues understood, the job becomes more complicated”, he says. However, he points out that Spaniards have an advantage when it comes to dealing with the local population, “because of the

Ten general officers

Of the posts in the NATO command structure, Spain contributes five permanent general officer posts and five others on a rotating basis

THE five permanent positions are head of Strategic Enablement at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), currently held by Major General Raimundo Rodríguez Roca; head of Support at the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Headquarters (ARRC HQ), currently held by Brigadier General Víctor Mario Bados Nieto; head of Operations at NATO’s Rapid Deployment Corps Headquarters in Greece (NRDC-GR), held by Brigadier General Juan Francisco Díaz Rodríguez-Valdés; head of Plans at the Headquarters of the Joint Force Command in Naples, held by Rear Admiral Francisco José Asensi Pérez, and also head of Plans at the Headquarters of the Allied Land Command in Izmir (Türkiye), held by General José María Martínez Ferrer.

In terms of rotational posts, the most representative of those currently held by Spain is that of Deputy Commander of the Joint Force Command Headquarters Brunssum (JFCBS HQ), which is held by Lieutenant General Luis Lanchares Dávila. In addition, Major Generals Guillermo Cavo Muñoz and Lucas Manuel Muñoz Bronchales are, respectively, head of Joint Force Development at the Headquarters of the Supreme Allied

Command Transformation Command (HQ SACT) and SACT representative in Europe. Finally, Rear Admirals José Enrique Delgado Roig and Ignacio Céspedes Camacho are, respectively, commanders of the Allied Maritime Command Headquarters Northwood and the NATO Joint Force Command Headquarters Norfolk.

Spain is also interested in maintaining two other general officer positions: the Military Representative to the EU and NATO Military Committees and the National Military Representative to SACEUR, currently held by Lieutenant General Francisco Javier Fernández and Brigadier General Alejandro Chueca, respectively.

Major General José María Juanas is also currently the director of C3 (Consultation, Command & Control) on NATO’s International Military Staff (IMS), a non-quota post, i.e. a temporary position offered by NATO to all Allied countries.

To these posts must be added that of the commander of the Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) that Spain has been hosting in Torrejón de Ardoz (Madrid) since 2011, when a new, smaller and more flexible allied command structure was decided.

similarities between Spanish and Italian". Regarding the image of the Spanish uniformed personnel at the international level, Pacheco claims that they are highly valued. "Our reputation precedes us and they know in advance that we come to work and to give one hundred percent. In fact, one of the first remarks I heard when I joined this posting was: watch out for the Spaniards they're here to work".

Staff Sergeant Estrella Vergara, head of the Logistics and Movement Branch of the 2nd Signal Battalion, also based in Naples, reinforces this perception with another common saying in her unit: "If you want to get it right, or get it done, put a Spaniard in your Branch". For the NCO, this is her first posting abroad and she says it has been "a great challenge" to learn to work in teams made up of different nationalities, with their different peculiarities. "Being a woman, an NCO, head of the branch and in a position of responsibility is sometimes a bit of a shock and very different in some of the cultures I have had to interact with", she adds. However, now that she has just finished her deployment in this Italian city, she says that, professionally, it has been a great learning experience and that, personally, she is taking a new family back with her, as her husband is a French NCO whom she met during her deployment.

PROFESSIONALISM AND INVOLVEMENT

A good example of the professionalism and adaptability that characterises the Spanish military is Air Force Major Francisco Gallardo. In August 2020, he was posted to Ramstein, Germany, to fill a vacancy in the Communication and Information Systems (CIS) office of the Allied Air Command HQ. A few months later, the command decided to send him to the newly created NATO Space Centre. "There were no special requirements, other than availability and willingness to learn, which is quite common in Space posts since, with few exceptions, countries do not have expert staff in this field", the officer explains. He describes his work at the centre as "very rewarding" as it allows him to interact with civilian and



It is a great challenge to work in teams made up of different nationalities, with their different peculiarities

military personnel from different countries, from whom he can learn different ways of tackling a task and, on many occasions, "assess our own processes and way of working".

Army Master Sergeant Javier Amaya also had to show great adaptability and

involvement when he arrived at the NRDC-GR HQ, as he had to carry out several tasks, some of which were very different from those performed in Spain, due to a shortage of staff. Specifically, this NCO is responsible in this entity for the operation of the SDEP (the Greek command and control system), performs duties as assistant to Battle Space Management and serves as the section's IT manager. In all likelihood, it is this capacity for hard work that leads to military personnel in the headquarters being regarded as exemplary in terms of responsibility, commitment and efficiency. "I can safely say that we are considered pillars of this entity", says this master sergeant.

As in Greece, the contribution of the Spanish military is also particularly valued in Romania. Lieutenant Colonel José Crespo, Special Operations Advisor at the Headquarters Multinational Division South-East (HQ MND-SE) in Bucharest, points out that, in a country like Romania, whose accession to NATO is relatively recent, it is expected that other more veteran countries, such as Spain, will be a reference point and contribute personnel with extensive training and experience for the optimal development and operation of the entity, especially at a time of particular tension in the area, as is currently the case.

ACADEMIC SPHERE

The experience and professionalism of the Spanish military is not limited to the Alliance's Operational field, but also extends to the academic sphere. NATO's two main training centres, the NATO Defence College (NDC) in Rome, Italy, and the NATO School Oberammergau (NSO), in Germany, have a Spanish representative among their teaching staff.

Navy Captain Francisco Javier Gamboa, a Spanish senior officer and teacher of the Senior Course at the NDC since July 2021, explains that this academic institution is attended not only by officers and civilians from member countries who will hold relevant positions in NATO's structure, but also by personnel from NATO partner



Captain Gamboa is a lecturer at the NATO Defence College in Rome, one of NATO's premier training centres.

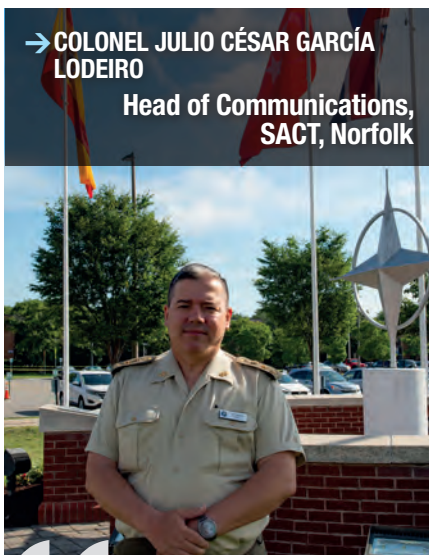
REPORT



Army Master Sergeant Javier Amaya at NRDC-GR HQ, responsible for the Greek command and control system operation unit.

countries. "This variety of nationalities and experience provides a cultural richness and a learning opportunity in terms of international relations and diverse approaches to the challenges of the future that is hardly comparable to that of any other institution", says the officer. In return, teachers are required to have continuous training and leadership skills. In the words of this Navy Captain, "NATO is based on consensus, and this culture permeates many of the decisions that are taken, so you not only have to know, but you also have to know how to convince others".

The NSO representative is Commander Ignacio Román, professor and director of four of the 120 courses taught at the school. This officer notes that his work involves two major challenges. The first is to ensure a smooth, correct, professional and conciliatory relationship with many different actors. The second is to be up to date on many contents and issues in order to be able to teach, advise and give opinions with precision and responsibility. All in all, this commander says his work is "really satisfying and motivating" and adds that the experience is equally beneficial for the families, who have the opportunity to experience the culture of other countries intensely, as well as to improve or learn languages.



In communications, experienced and resourceful professionals are needed to get messages across in a timely and correct manner

In many cases, the decision to apply for a particular vacancy abroad is made not only for the professional growth it can bring, but also for the benefit it can provide for the family, especially to the children. In this regard, military personnel stationed abroad in NATO posts highly value the facilities they find in terms of housing and schooling.

In the case of entities or cities where there is a large presence of NATO personnel, such as Mons or Brunssum, the logistic and administrative issue is often less difficult because there is a stronger and more experienced support structure and Allied countries often rely on the so-called National Support Element (NSE). Conversely, in entities or cities with little Spanish presence or less "multinational culture", such as Bucharest, it is important to have the support of colleagues who have previously been stationed in that particular entity or city.

VACANCY MANAGEMENT

Of course, personnel who are going to take up a vacancy abroad or are already deployed are advised and supported by the Human Resources Office of their respective services or the Defence Staff (EMAD), which is in charge of managing these vacancies.

Major Alfonso Caravaca, head of the Management Area of the Management and Support Branch of the EMAD's Human Resources Office, explains that there are four types of vacancy requisites: those specific to the Army, the Navy, the Air and Space Force, and the so-called "any Service". For example, the vacancies at Northwood (UK) are only for the Navy, while those at Ramstein (Germany) are for the Air and Space Force.

In any case, vacancy requisites must always comply with the EMAD Directive, which stipulates, among other things, that in the allocation of vacancies for the rank of soldier to lieutenant colonel, the priority must be that it is their first international experience. In contrast, for colonel rank vacancies, an interview is a prerequisite, and experience and suitability for the position is assessed.

As for the most sought-after vacancies, Major Caravaca points to two: those in Naples (Italy) and Norfolk (USA), for which there can be up to 100 applicants for a given post.

Colonel Julio César García Lodeiro is one of the service members stationed at Norfolk, specifically as head of Communications at the Headquarters of Supreme Allied Command Transformation (HQ SACT), a highly responsible and demanding position that involves an equally demanding candidate selection process. The colonel's skills and experience in the allied field and in strategic communications posts of national importance tipped the balance in his favour.

"In communications you can't afford to make a mistake, so you need professionals with the expertise and resources to ensure that messages reach audiences in a timely and correct manner. This is especially necessary in a strategic

The most sought-after vacancies are in Naples and Norfolk, for which there can be up to 100 applicants

command that looks toward the future such as ACT, where the communication of its activities requires a great effort to decode the message so that it can be understood by all audiences", explains this colonel, who leads a team of 14 people of different nationalities.

Spain's commitment to the Alliance is visible in the work of all Spanish military officers assigned to NATO command structures and entities, who offer dedication, professionalism, experience and good work, but who, in most cases, also receive better training, new capacities, synergies and cultural richness.

In the words of First Corporal Alcaraz, "it is a highly recommendable experience both personally and professionally and, in our profession, I would say it is even necessary".

Nuria Fernández
Photos: EMAD

Brussels as a challenge, experience and adventure

Lieutenant Colonel (Army)
Juan José Crespo Esbert
International Military Staff at NATO HQ in Brussels

I had always wanted to be stationed abroad. I think it is a professional opportunity but, above all, a personal challenge. For family reasons, I had not been able to apply before, but this year I was able to do so and since August I have been posted to the International Military Staff (IMS) at NATO Headquarters in Brussels.

My first "mission", of course, was to find somewhere to live, and to do this —before assuming my duties— the office of the Spanish Military Representative to NATO provided me with information on various real estate agencies. With

the help on the ground of a colleague who was already in Brussels, we found a home. Now that we've been living here for a few weeks, I think we've got it right.

I would be lying if I said that there were few administrative formalities to complete, but it is also true that with patience and the help of "the old-timers" everything is working out.

About the job, I think I am privileged to be in the IMS, but it also carries a huge responsibility. The IMS is made up of 500 people —civilian and military— organised into various branches whose role is to advise on various matters to the NATO Military Committee where the Alliance's 30 —soon to be 32— member nations sit.

My family has accompanied me in this joint adventure and they have also been helped by many people, both from Spain and other countries. My wife is already involved in activities organised by other women and my daughter, who was studying journalism in Valencia, will continue here in Brussels. This is a 3-year assignment and I hope that my other two daughters will also come and spend some time with us.

At the moment the weather is not bad, although several colleagues have warned us that we will hardly see the sun for several months. We have not yet experienced the dreaded bad weather. As for culture shock, for a family that barely speaks French, we are coping. In the city, people are fluent in English and that helps us a lot in our day-to-day life.

It's too early to take stock, we still have boxes at home to sort through, but I dare say we did the right thing by embarking on this adventure. For me as a serviceman, and for my family as citizens of an increasingly connected world, going to Brussels, to NATO Headquarters, was an opportunity we couldn't miss. In Spain we left behind family, great friends, incredible landscapes, sun that shines like nowhere else, fantastic food... But leaving our comfort zone can teach us many things and give us new opportunities.

When I was stationed in Bétera, in my post as a commander, I spent one school year giving talks to children explaining what NATO is, what its values are and how decisions are made. I can see that process now in the Military Committee meetings. It's a nice feeling that gives meaning to a lot of things.

It is with great enthusiasm that we embark on this professional and family challenge, with the responsibility of somehow representing Spain, and the joy of continuing to walk together, letting life surprise us.

"It is with great enthusiasm that we embark on this professional and family challenge, with the responsibility of somehow representing Spain"

INTERVIEW

LIEUTENANT GENERAL LUIS LANCHARES,
DEPUTY COMMANDER OF JFC BRUNSSUM, THE NETHERLANDS

“OUR JOB IS TO DETER AND DEFEND AGAINST ALL THREATS”

“The invasion of Ukraine has increased the work of Allied headquarters and the need to obtain effective and timely results”

BRUNSSUM is a small city in the south of the Netherlands near the German border. It is a former mining town which, in 1967, became one of NATO's main headquarters, known today as the Allied Joint Force Command Headquarters or JFC Brunssum. Some thirty Spanish military members share the experience of being posted there, one of them, Lieutenant General Luis Lanchares Dávila, in the prominent position of deputy commander. The 62-year-old native of Madrid assumed his new duties in December 2021, just two months before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. “Since then, our workload has increased significantly”, he says, “along with the need to obtain effective and timely results, which requires greater involvement of all members of this headquarters”.

—You are the highest-ranking Spanish military officer at NATO joint headquarters. I gather this is a big responsibility.

—Spanish generals and admirals perform important missions and tasks at the most significant NATO joint headquarters, although it is true that every three years Spain assumes the deputy command of this headquarters with an Army lieutenant general. It is a great responsibility for whoever has the honour of filling the post, given the tasks inherent to the position and the prominence it gives Spain as a nation committed to NATO.

—What role has been assigned to JFC Brunssum?

—It is one of the three NATO operational-level headquarters, together with JFC Naples (Italy) and JFC Norfolk (USA). This headquarters executes plans and supports military operations as part of its tasks to deter and defend against any threats in the potential confrontation domains (land, sea, air, space and cyberspace) to preserve freedom and security, national sovereignty and peace in all NATO member countries.

—The threat now hangs over our Eastern European allies in particular.

—Correct. To this end, and as a key aspect of NATO's deterrence and defence posture, our headquarters plans, coordinates and, if necessary, carries out deterrence activities and the deployment and potential use of multinational forces on the Alliance's eastern flank, where the Spanish Army and Navy have significant capabilities. This is a sign of our commitment to Allies and a permanent reminder that an attack against one NATO member country is an attack against them all, as set out in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

—What is it like working in a multinational headquarters such as this one?

—If I had to sum it up in two words, they would be ‘intense’ and ‘rewarding’. Intense, not just because of the responsibility inherent to the position of deputy commander, but especially because of the period in which I am carrying out my duties.



I joined in December 2021, just two months before Russia invaded Ukraine. And rewarding, both as a privileged observer of the allied nations' commitment to defend our principles, and also thanks to the learning process I go through every day on so many professional and human levels. In addition, of course, because I feel involved in the tasks that contribute to ensuring our nations have the security they need.

— **How has the Alliance's defensive deployment on the eastern flank materialised following the invasion of Ukraine?**

— To face this increased threat, the Alliance has mainly followed two lines of action: on the one hand, in the land domain, increasing the capabilities of the units under NATO command deployed in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland and, on the other hand, deploying new military capabilities, also under NATO command, in Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. This ground deployment is

complemented and reinforced by an increase in air and naval deployments and activities, also focused on the Alliance's eastern flank.

These actions have been carried out through a multitude of planning activities (both within NATO and with the countries involved) and by means of the deployment, training and sustainment of the forces. In the case of JFC Brunssum, due to our geographical location, we are in charge of coordination in the land domain, contributing significantly to the synchronisation of air and maritime activities in our area of responsibility.

Every three years, Spain assumes the deputy command of the JFC with a Spanish Army Lieutenant General

— **What does the new Response Force model approved by Allies at the Madrid summit consist of?**

— This new model has yet to be developed, although the broad outlines have already been more or less defined. Generally speaking, the aim is to have forces with credibility and readiness, permanently present and, if needed, reinforced through successive gradual increases, staggered over time, and oriented towards the necessary area, with which clearly executable plans can be carried out.

To this end, the aim is to reinforce the forces permanently deployed on the eastern flank (currently at battlegroup level), giving them the capability to escalate rapidly to brigade-size units, whenever required, by supplementing them with credible and ready reinforcement units, and the pre-positioning of materiel and equipment, all within a command and control adapted to the mission to be accomplished. In other words, the objective is to be able to provide the right force in the right place at the

INTERVIEW



Lieutenant General Lanchares during a visit to Hungary on 16 May in his role as Deputy Commander of JFC Brunssum.

right time, reinforcing deterrence with a credible defence capability.

—As members, what will Sweden and Finland contribute to the Alliance at operational level?

—We share the same values as Finland and Sweden and often face the same threats, both in the region of the Baltic countries and in areas further north. Both countries have had a close relationship with the Alliance for years and have, for a long time, regularly conducted combined military training and exercises with its nations. They have extremely operational armed forces that work in line with NATO procedures and are therefore highly interoperable with us. The cohesion and operability of the Alliance will thus be strengthened by the membership of these two countries.

—Is interoperability between the forces of the various allied countries greater today?

—Without a doubt. Both in terms of the convergence of the defence interests of each country with those of

the Alliance, as well as in terms of the commonality of working procedures and operational use of units. And, of course, increasingly evident is the interoperability derived from the information and telecommunications systems, on which not only the systems of consultation and exchange of information between political and military levels are based, but also the increasingly decisive military activities relating to intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, as well as those inherent to the command and control of the forces, all of which are essential for unity of purpose and action.

—How are NATO headquarters preparing for new areas such as cyberspace or disinformation?

—In our daily work, we are perfectly aware that, in addition to the traditional domains of conflict (land, sea and air), there are new arrivals, including cyberspace, which have a great influence on the planning and conducting of operations. In all domains, the aim is to create and synchronise the impact on the three

dimensions —physical, virtual and cognitive— that are decisive for the achievement of military objectives.

We are fully aware that Russia routinely engages in multiple activities —including disinformation activities— with a view to achieving results in cyberspace to boost its military and political objectives, demonstrating perfect knowledge of their consequences and succeeding, on occasion, in achieving high-value objectives at a relatively low cost.

Therefore, from the beginning of any potential crisis, during the planning phase of possible responses, all our operations take into account the potential impacts from cyberspace or the field of disinformation that need to be confronted, both from a defensive point of view and from the perspective of being able to use them to our benefit, although bearing in mind at all times the legal framework for the use of these sensitive capabilities.

—How do our Allies view the Spanish Armed Forces?

—On an individual level, undoubtedly, very positively. In this multinational environment, behind the national flag that we all wear on our uniform, which identifies us and is our calling card to those who see us for the first time, are the people. And, without getting carried away with national pride or undermining the prestige of our Allies,

I can confirm that the readiness and experience of our officers, NCOs and soldiers when they arrive in a multinational environment, together with the willingness they show to perform their duties or even the tasks of others in order to help accomplish the mission, place the Spanish military in a prominent position.

It is in the framework of operations and exercises that our units clearly show their level of readiness and effectiveness to our Allies, as demonstrated by our ground forces in Latvia and Türkiye, our air assets in Lithuania and Estonia, and our naval assets in the Baltic and the Mediterranean.

Víctor Hernández
Photos: EMAD and NATO

Eurocorps, 30 years of experience

Unity is strength

Major General Rafael Colomer Martínez del Peral
Deputy Commander of Eurocorps

THE Eurocorps, located in the heart of Europe, takes on greater relevance due to its multinational military capabilities, in the face of the complicated security and defence situation that our continent is experiencing. On 9 September 2022, at the *Aubert de Vincelles* barracks in Strasbourg (France), the Chief of Defence, Admiral General Teodoro López Calderón, representing Spain, co-chaired with the national representatives of the other framework nations (Germany, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Poland) the 30th anniversary of the founding of the European Army Corps Headquarters (better known as Eurocorps), demonstrating not only the efforts of the Spanish Armed Forces to maintain a highly operational unit in the tactical and operational field, but also Spain's firm commitment to the security and defence of Europe and the Euro-Atlantic area.

The origin of this unit stems from reflection on the devastating consequences for Europe of the two world wars of the last century, in which France and Germany played a major role. What had gone wrong? How to prevent it from happening again?

With the latter objective in mind, in 1963, French President Charles de Gaulle and German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer signed the *Elysée Treaty*, the first document to speak cooperation in the field of defence. Later, in 1989, France and Germany created a joint unit, the Franco-German Brigade, composed of units from the armies of the two countries that are deployed on both sides of the Rhine, in Germany as well as France.

As a follow-up to this initiative, which aimed at reconciling the former enemy armies by having them work shoulder to shoulder on a daily basis, in 1992, during the Franco-German summit in La Rochelle, Presidents François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl agreed to establish an Army Corps headquarters in Strasbourg. The choice of Strasbourg was not by chance, as this city, with its history, its present and its future, is undoubtedly a symbol of Europe and of the values that Europeans proclaim, live by and defend in order to live together in democracy and freedom.

Immediately afterwards, other countries were offered participation in the Eurocorps project, with the rapid accession of Belgium in 1993, Spain in 1994, and Luxembourg in 1996. On 25 January

2022, Poland, which had already been participating as a partner nation, joined as a framework nation. Today, in addition to the six framework nations already mentioned, there are five partner nations (Austria, Greece, Türkiye, Romania and Italy), whose contribution, although small in terms of personnel, is highly symbolic. The door to accessions is not closed, nor is it limited to the European continent.

One could certainly say that Eurocorps is a unit much like the other high-readiness headquarters in NATO's force structure. However, there are some features that should be mentioned that give it a personality of its own. The first is multinationality, understood as a reasonably balanced contribution of assets by the framework nations (Spain is the third largest contributor after France and Germany). The second characteristic is its duality, being available to act for the benefit of both NATO (at the disposal of SACEUR as part of the force structure since 1993) and the European Union (Letter of Intent EC-EUMS, 2016).

In short, Eurocorps is a multinational headquarters, with an autonomous rapid deployment capacity, capable of planning and conducting military operations across the whole spectrum of the conflict, from humanitarian missions to high-intensity conflict, using forces and enablers provided by nations, either for the benefit of the European Union, NATO, or whomever the framework nations may decide.

As a demonstration of its duality and operational capability, repeatedly accredited in accordance with NATO's demanding certification criteria, the Eurocorps has participated in the following missions and operations:

NATO

- From May 1998 to January 2000. Deployment to the Balkans, participating in four successive contingents of NATO's Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SFOR).

Eurocorps has proven its operational capability in eight missions and operations



Harael Navarro

- From April to October 2000. Deployment to Serbia, assuming command of a rotation of NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR).

- From August 2004 to February 2005. Deployment to Afghanistan, leading NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

- From January 2012 to January 2013. New deployment in Afghanistan, with Eurocorps personnel participating in various ISAF headquarters.

EUROPEAN UNION

- From July to December 2015. Deployment to Mali, assuming command of a contingent of the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali).

- From July 2016 to January 2018. Eurocorps leads three successive contingents of the European Union Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM CAR).

- First and second half of 2021. It assumes command of two consecutive EUTM-Mali contingents.

- Second half of 2021 and first half of 2022. It leads two consecutive EUTM-CAR contingents.

Eurocorps has also been designated as a deployable headquarters in both the NATO and EU rotation plan:

NATO

- From July 2006 to January 2007. Eurocorps leads the land component

of the NATO Response Force (NRF-7), remaining on permanent standby for any potential deployments over a six-month period.

- From July 2010 to January 2011. It assumes a new six-month alert period as headquarters of the NRF-15 land component.

- In January 2020, it assumes a one-year NATO alert period commanding the NRF-20 land component.

EUROPEAN UNION

- From July 2016 to July 2017. Twelve-month standby period as the headquarters of the land component of two successive rotations of the European Union Battlegroup (EUBG).

Currently, Eurocorps faces two major challenges. From the point of view of its own organisation, and following the mandate of the Common Committee as the highest political-military management meeting, it is in the process of adapting to a new structure that will allow it to be more efficient to face new scenarios and foreseeable conflicts, incorporating new domains, greater resilience, etc. Moreover, it is preparing to operate in 2024 as a Joint Headquarters for a limited, predominantly land-based NATO operation. The next commitment will be to undergo training to perform missions as a EUBG headquarters during 2025.

Meanwhile, Eurocorps remains attentive to the new guidelines that the framework nations may issue as a result of the evolution of NATO forces or the implementation of new security and defence concepts within the EU framework, demonstrating Spain's unequivocal commitment to international stability and security.

[professionals]

Military personnel with diplomatic passports



Government relies on Spanish Verification Unit members to contribute to disarmament and arms control in Europe



“**A**RMS control and verification are more necessary than ever”, argues Colonel Carlos Javier Armada Vázquez, who has been commander of the Spanish Verification Unit (SVU) for the past two months. Established in 1991 and attached to the Spanish Defence Staff, “the SVU is an excellent tool of the Spanish government’s foreign policy. It is the enforcement arm of Spain’s commitment in this field and, together with homonymous units in OSCE countries, has contributed to maintaining stability and peace in Europe over the past 30 years, with the exception of very specific cases such as the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine”.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disappearance of bloc politics, military personnel from the Army, Navy, and Air and Space Force posted to the SVU have been travelling as verifying inspectors (either leading multinational teams or forming part of them individually) across the Old Continent, between the Atlantic and the Urals, within the framework of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). They also go beyond the Cold War borders as far as the former Soviet republics of Central Asia, implementing the content of the Vienna Document on Confidence and Security Building Measures in Europe and flying as observers under the Treaty on Open Skies.

In turn, they work in Spain as escorts for the verification teams of other OSCE countries which, based on reciprocity, visit our country to perform the corresponding inspections and evaluations.

With a diplomatic passport in their uniform pocket — “a privilege granted to us by the treaties themselves”, according to Lieutenant Colonel Luis Antonio Jaraices, commander of the Open Skies Group —, their suitcase always packed, their vaccination card up to date and “24/365” availability, the members of the SVU also deliver support for the inspections carried out in Spain by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). They collaborate in the implementation of the Dayton Accords in maintaining peace and stability in the Balkans, and in the framework of the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Conventional Ammunition (SALW/CA).

“This is a unit in constant movement, with many people deployed abroad, well trained, self-confident, with very clear ideas, a great capacity for decision-making, extensive knowledge of languages (English and Russian), as well as of the content of the treaties and armament and a great deal of experience in the field of international relations, in particular, with the countries of the former Warsaw Pact”, emphasises Colonel Armada.

According to its members, after 31 years in operation, “the SVU is a finely crafted tool”. In this sense, affirms its commander, the unit is capable of acting in the de-escalation of the conflict in Ukraine, if so determined, applying the demilitarisation, disarmament and reintegration measures to be established” and, subsequently, collaborating in the process of creating new treaties or reviewing the current ones. All of which aims to “generate much more stability and avoid similar situations in the near future”, concludes Colonel Armada.

José Luis Expósito
Photos: Pepe Díaz



■ Lieutenant Colonel Luis Antonio Jaraices
Commander of the Open Skies Group

“THE TREATY SHOWS TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST”

HE began working on verification issues related to the Treaty on Open Skies before joining the SVU. “It was twenty-five years ago now”, recalls Lieutenant Colonel Jaraices, who was posted in 1997 as a pilot to the Cartographic and Photographic Centre. “That is where we had the laboratory that developed the aerial images we took”. He acknowledges that this was his first stroke of luck. The second was in 2004, “when, coinciding with my promotion, there was a lack of commanders in the unit and I was obliged to go there”, he says. “This was great for me. I already had the technical experience, and I could now soak up the literature on the treaty and participate in its implementation”.

In his opinion, “the departure of its two main actors, the US and Russia, has left it shaken. However, it is still valid as an example of transparency and trust. Germany and Romania have committed to keeping it in force by providing the modern and advanced sensors needed for observation flights, which have already been certified by the OSCE”.

■ Master Sergeant Francisco J. García Jiménez
Chemical weapons, small arms
and light weapons

“REPRESENTING SPAIN IS A SOURCE OF PRIDE”

“I was recruited by the SVU twelve years ago”, jokes Master Sergeant Jiménez who is a firework-maker, “a speciality that is now extinct”, he explains, and which, nevertheless, allowed him to “light the fuse” to jump from the Artillery and Missile Park to the SVU in 2010, when the unit started to operate within the framework of the Small Arms and Light Weapons Treaty. “They needed a specialist to accomplish a mission in Cyprus after the detonation of several ammunition containers in the port”, he recalls. He then began to collaborate with the unit and continued to do so until 2018, “when there was finally a vacancy and I joined for good”. He is assigned to the Operations Group and works within the OPAQ, accompanying personnel of the Ministry of Industry while the UN inspects Spanish companies working with products potentially used to produce chemical weapons.

“I am proud to represent Spain abroad as part of a multinational team”, also in the framework of the CFE Treaties and the Vienna Document.



*“The work in this unit is
different from any other
in the Armed Forces”*



■ Captain Antonio Martínez de la Peña
Information Group

“WE ARE OPERATING IN AN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT”

ALTHOUGH Captain Martínez de la Peña will also work as an inspector—in fact, last October, he took part in a Vienna Document mission in Serbia—during his first year of work he is focusing on the Information Group. “Here we collect all the data that the Armed Forces must contribute to guarantee compliance with the treaties (units, organisation, location, personnel, vehicles and armament, taking into account the movement of materiel, its decommissioning or destruction) and we exchange this information with what the other countries send us in order to subsequently verify, in a reciprocal manner through inspections, that what has been communicated is true”.

The external outreach of the SVU and, above all, “the international environment in which we operate, in countries with such diverse idiosyncrasies and with whose military personnel one has to be extremely diplomatic, are matters of great interest to me and I applied for the vacancy, while I was still in the 11th Brigade, with fluent English, and also studying Russian”.

■ Second Lieutenant Carlos de Jesús
Subiñas Operations Group. Training

“THE WORLD OF VERIFICATION IS UNKNOWN”

HAVING visited Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Norway... all of Europe and the North Pole, Second Lieutenant de Jesús fits the profile of the soldier assigned to the SVU: traveller, professional and better prepared, “because you need to be focused to assimilate the content of the treaties in the many courses we complete in Spain and abroad”.

“The world of verification is unknown, a drawback for military personnel arriving at the unit”, but this is resolved “by attending a national verification course in the first year, followed by another one at the NATO School in Germany and—as a reinforcement—in other European agencies, all of which is culminated by verification exercises (VERIFEX)”. Second Lieutenant de Jesús is not only involved in designing the curriculum, he is also a teacher, both in Spain and abroad, with 14 years’ experience as a deployed inspector. “We are quite fluent in languages: besides speaking them very well, we also have to know what to say and how to defend our point of view”.



*“The best letter of
introduction of SVU
soldiers is their expertise and
professionalism”*

For the past 25 years, NATO has developed a network of partnerships with non-member states in Europe, the Mediterranean, the Gulf region and elsewhere around the world

NATO PARTNERSHIPS, projecting stability through cooperation

Marine Corps Colonel Juan Martínez-Esparza
Deputy Director of NATO's Cooperative Security Division

THE objective of NATO's Partnerships was defined at the 1990 London Summit, beginning with the establishment of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1991 and, after several processes, finally leading to the launch of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative in January 1994. The focus of this first formal partnership programme was NATO's Euro-Atlantic neighbours and the former Soviet Union. The Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) was launched that same year, and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) for the Gulf countries followed in 2004. At the time, partnership initiatives were geographically structured and oriented towards regional security. However, at the 2010 Lisbon Summit, and in accordance with the then newly approved Strategic Concept, an effort was made to reform and adapt NATO's partnership policies to the new concept. The outcome was endorsed at the 2011 Berlin foreign affairs ministerial meeting and a set of directives was agreed, establishing a more inclusive, flexible, substantive and strategically oriented dialogue and cooperation.

The new policy was aimed at strengthening existing relations, reinforcing consultation mechanisms and facilitating action-based cooperation. This opened up the possibility of deepening and developing closer relations with other partners around the globe. The geographic status linked to regional security of partnership initiatives was no longer exclusive. Although this had already been envisaged, it was at the 2014 Wales Summit that partners began to participate in NATO operations. Two important initiatives were approved to reinforce the Alliance's commitment to so-called Cooperative Security: the Partnership Interoperability Initiative (PII) and the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building (DCB) Initiative.

The first seeks to strengthen NATO's ability to provide security with partners through interoperability, while the second focuses on providing support to those that request it to strengthen their own defence and security institutions. In the same vein, following the Warsaw Summit in 2016, NATO's objectives include contributing to the international community's efforts to project stability and strengthen security outside NATO territory. Shortly thereafter, at the 2018 Brussels Summit, the Allies pledged to strengthen NATO's role in this regard, by helping partners, upon request, to build stronger defence institutions, improve good governance, enhance resilience, support capacity building to provide for their own security, and thus contribute more effectively to the fight against terrorism.

OPEN DOORS

But how does a non-NATO nation become a NATO partner? First of all, there has to be a sovereign, voluntary, unconditional and mutually agreed decision between the Alliance and the nation in question. There is usually a history of interest in allied activities, participation in courses, observation of exercises, and so on. At this stage, the nations (regardless of whether they want to reach a cooperation agreement or not) are referred to as a contact country, although there is no document governing the relationship. Requests to participate in

*Partner agreements enable
NATO to strengthen
international security*

NATO meeting
on 6 and 7 April,
attended by various
partners.



any NATO activities must be approved by the Military Committee and sanctioned by the Atlantic Council on a case-by-case basis.

In this initial dialogue, the Allies and the aspiring partner should explore the mutual benefits of this interaction, the confidence of both in the establishment and outcome of the relationship, and the level of ambition of the third party vis-à-vis NATO. This interaction is consolidated through activities that can be broadly divided into: dialogue and confidence-building measures; capacity building; interoperability; and future accession to the Alliance. Each partner modulates its level of ambition according to the policy document it agrees with NATO. In the most recent initiatives, the various documents that have traditionally governed the relationship between the Alliance and partners are being replaced by an Individual Tailored Partnership Plan (ITPP) that adapts cooperation options and needs to each partner, unifying efforts among all NATO and national decision-makers. The signed document (ITPP) defines, by mutual agreement, the strategic objectives of this cooperation and the intermediate milestones for achieving them, thereby individually aligning each partner's vision with the relationship with the Atlantic Alliance.

The relationship agreed by each party materialises in the implementation of the above-mentioned activities, which in turn influence the three NATO Core Tasks of the current strategic concept: collective defence; crisis management; and cooperative security. Thus, a partner who only wants to implement dialogue and confidence-building measures will develop an ITTP that exclusively concerns cooperative security. But if that country also requires

capacity building support, it can move into the crisis management core task. Another that seeks interoperability with NATO, in addition to dialogue and capacity building, fully engages in crisis management in addition to cooperative security. Even if it participates in the NATO Response Force (NRF) as a whole, it begins to tackle elements of one of the three core tasks, namely deterrence and defence. Partners planning for future NATO membership use a document that covers the full spectrum of activities (dialogue and confidence-building measures; capacity building; interoperability; and future accession to the Alliance) and are fully engaged in all three tasks. The interest and limits of a partner's contribution to each of these tasks is determined in the non-binding ITTP Policy Document, which can be broadened, amended or suspended by the country at any time.

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Currently, 40 nations (Euro-Atlantic, Middle Eastern, North African, Mediterranean, South American and Asia-Pacific countries) have signed a Cooperation Agreement with NATO, although three of them (Russia, Belarus and Afghanistan) have suspended cooperation activities for the time being. The first step — the Political Agreement — is complemented by the signing of a Security Agreement for the protection and sharing of classified information. A list of cooperation activities (validated by mutual agreement) is drawn up annually, based on the strategic objectives and milestones defined as well as on the programmes in which participation has been specified. Also, every year a review and evaluation is performed of the results of the activities, their suitability for the objectives, the capacity of each country to carry them out, and an estimation is made of the need for changes, improvements, new objectives, etc.

With this evaluation, the required and mutually agreed amendments are introduced into the policy document when the time comes for review.

Activities include partners being invited to sessions of the Military Committee and the Atlantic Council in their different formats, providing insight and expertise on numerous issues and, depending on the Security Agreement and their involvement in operations, attending working groups and committees of all kinds: operations, armament, standardisation, air navigation, interoperability platform, and so on.

As we saw earlier, NATO's partnerships were initially geographically based and related to regional security. In addition, as the initial activities were oriented towards the Euro-Atlantic neighbours, they were designed to support efforts to plan and implement internal reforms in the security and defence sectors, as well as to sustain a political dialogue to encourage appropriate advice on these reforms. This was called the Planning and Review Process (PARP), an instrument used for setting the defence-related objectives defined in the political agreement, which was later extended to include finance or foreign affairs ministries, emergency services, border guards, and other security services, always at the express request of the partner. The PARP facilitates the transformation of the security and defence sectors and brings them closer to NATO standards. If the partner applied for Alliance membership, the transition to the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) and its integration into capability planning was much more straightforward and targeted.

Originally, the activities with the partners concerned the training and capacity building of personnel in the different defence and security bodies and units within the Euro-Atlantic area. These activities were assumed by subsequent cooperation frameworks because they provided elements for the transformation and improvement of their institutions. It is important to note that the Alliance does not train military units but provides individual training to personnel in many different areas of expertise. The training of units must be carried out by each nation. When an Allied member state offers forces for rotations of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), the NATO Response Force (NRF), or maritime or air components, they are evaluated by each country's national authority and NATO certifies the units' capacity to operate in an integrated manner in NATO exercises.

Is there a similar tool in Cooperative Security for non-NATO countries? With the participation of partners in NATO-led operations and missions, there is a need to develop an interoperability and certification programme: the Operational Capabilities Concept Evaluation and Feedback Programme (OCC E&F). This is an initiative

that helps transform military forces, as well as improve their ability to contribute to crisis response operations.

It is a voluntary mechanism designed to evaluate military forces and advise them on how to establish NATO standards in the development of national doctrine, acquisition and training. The evaluation is carried out jointly by the partner and NATO. Some partners use the OCC E&F as a strategic tool to transform their armed forces by participating in NATO-led operations, exercises and even providing troops to the NATO Response Force. Others use the OCC E&F to achieve force certification levels allowing them to participate in UN or other international missions and operations.

New transnational threats, the emergence of new military domains (cyber, space, etc.) and of disruptive technologies and transnational threats, require a coordinated approach to security, not only with individual countries but also with international organisations. Thus, in

addition to individual states, NATO maintains relations with the European Union, the United Nations, the OSCE, the African Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross and others. The list is growing and new partners are in the process of negotiating the political agreement for their official designation as such, while others are initiating a dialogue for information sharing and the establishment of confidence building measures.

However, not all partners have the same level of ambition in their relationship with NATO, nor do they have the same interests in belonging to a geographic cooperation framework, nor are their technological or defence and security capabilities homogeneous. While some are recipients, others are providers of cooperation

activities, contributing, within the NATO framework, to partner-to-partner exchanges. Specific issues of interest emerge, which are not shared by all components of a geographical cooperation framework, but are of interest to other components in different geographical frameworks. Currently, several partners maintain activities or areas of cooperation with others outside their geographical framework.

This opens up opportunities for substantial dialogue and specific initiatives in areas such as maritime security, energy security, resilience, and so on. During the recent visit to South Korea of the Chair of the NATO Military Committee, Admiral Rob Bauer, the groundwork was laid for the development of cooperation activities in areas such as emerging risks, arms control and cyber.

Another initiative worthy of mention is the Partnership Staff Post (PSP). This tool —originally limited to former Warsaw Pact countries but now open to all partners— is managed by NATO's International Military Staff and allows partners to nominate military and civilian personnel for positions in NATO structures. At the present time, more

Partners countries can participate in NATO exercises, missions and operations



NATO

than 150 positions in the Military Staff and Command Structure are open to partners. This offers the possibility to develop professional opportunities for growth in an international environment and thus gain experience that is transferred to their countries of origin, while at the same time providing NATO with their insight, knowledge and expertise in the areas of work that they develop.

MOVING FORWARD

In this cursory review of NATO and its partners, the diversity and depth that can be achieved in the relationship with partners through the many different tools in place becomes evident.

Some countries, such as Sweden and Finland, have a special relationship —Modalities for Strengthened Interaction—, which establishes mechanisms for policy consultation, information sharing and coordinated action during crisis situations. Others have a special Security Agreement and, therefore, exchanges of information are of a higher and more restricted classification. There are many and varied cases and, therefore, the needs and requests of each partner must be addressed. But it should not be forgotten that one of the premises of the relationship is “mutual benefit for both parties” by strengthening “consultation mechanisms, thereby facilitating more substance-driven cooperation”.

In short, NATO has been establishing a valuable network of partners for decades that has contributed significantly to NATO operations, exercises, training, capacity building processes, and research and development. On 31 January 2022, a workshop was held with 37 of these partners to develop a more comprehensive approach to face

today's threats. Different views on current security challenges were shared and options for enhanced cooperation were discussed. The agenda included topics such as the growing instability in the era of strategic competition, threats to the rules-based international order, the future of crisis management and the fight against terrorism, how to strengthen resilience, the impact of climate change on security, and new emerging and disruptive technologies. These ideas will be taken into consideration upon the approval of NATO's new Strategic Concept at the 2022 Madrid Summit.

The European Union, Sweden, Finland, Ukraine, Georgia, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea attended the Meeting of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs held on 6-7 April 2022. The war in Ukraine has changed the traditional predisposition of NATO partners and members: Finland will apply for membership soon, with Sweden following close behind. NATO and the four Asia-Pacific partners (Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand) have agreed to enhance political and practical cooperation in specific areas: cyber; new technologies; maritime security; climate change; and resilience. At the meeting, it was agreed to increase support, not only to Ukraine but also to other partners, including Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, to strengthen their resilience. With these and other measures, is the potential way forward and future of NATO Partnerships and cooperative security already being determined? The new strategic concept and the implications of events in Ukraine, the reactions of strategic competitors, as well as the attitude and disposition towards the Alliance of current and potential new partners around the world (Latin America was expressly mentioned at last year's Summit), will bring about substantial changes that need to be analysed and anticipated.

FEINDEF 23 revs up

Secretary of State for Defence
participates in the presentation of
the 3rd International Defence and
Security Exhibition



Hélène Gicquel

The IFEMA exhibition centre will once again host the event, as in previous editions, but with more space this time, 38,000 m².

“WE must assume our rightful place in the European and Atlantic framework. To do so, we must strive to support the national defence industry and FEINDEF is its best showcase, the one we believe should be our gateway to the European and international market”. With these words, the Secretary of State for Defence, María Amparo Valcarce, reiterated the Ministry’s support for the International Defence and Security Exhibition during the presentation ceremony of its third edition, held on 15 October at the Rafael del Pino Auditorium in Madrid. The most important event in this field which, with the support of the

Ministry of Defence, has been bringing companies in the sector together every two years since 2019 to show the world their capabilities and technological innovations, has already been scheduled for 17, 18 and 19 May 2023 at the IFEMA exhibition centre.

Preceded by the speeches of Julián García Vargas (president of the FEINDEF Foundation) and Marc Murtra (chairman of Indra, the main sponsor of the meeting), Valcarce concurred with both of them that next year’s event should encourage Spanish companies in the sector to “take a firm step towards their internationalisation and collaborate more with our partners to ensure synergies and achieve shared

objectives”. “The Fair has improved year after year. It survived the pandemic in 2021 and we now expect it to have the same success as in previous editions, with more visitors, and we hope you will have the opportunity to expand a business that, for us, is an investment in Spanish citizens”, said the Secretary of State for Defence (SEDEF), referring to the presidents of AESMIDE and TEDAE and those of many of the companies that make up the two associations. Besides the business audience, the Director of the National Intelligence Centre and the Secretary of State for Security of the Ministry of the Interior also attended, together with other civilian and military personalities. The defence attachés accredited in Spain were also present, “which bears witness to FEINDEF’s international drive”, Valcarce pointed out.

The next edition is expected to bring together 450 exhibitors in IFEMA halls 8 and 10 —150 more than two years ago— from around twenty countries, in 38,000 square metres, 8,000 more than in the previous event. The organisers expect around 30,000 professional visitors and 100 foreign delegations from 30 countries to attend, again increasing the figures reached in the second edition of the exhibition.

At the institutional level, FEINDEF is mainly supported by the Ministry of Defence and is backed by the Departments of the Interior; Industry, Trade and Tourism; Science and Innovation; Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; Universities; and Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda, as well as by various public entities, including the CDTI (Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology), ICEX (Export and Investment, Spain), INTA (National Institute of Aerospace Technology) and others from the European Union.

The main sponsor of FEINDEF’s third edition is Indra, closely followed by ITP Aero, Palantair, Navantia, Tecnobit and Sarcop, and then by Escribano and Eurovesa, while Expal, Telefónica and Oracle are general partners of the event.

As a novelty in the next edition, García Vargas announced the incorporation of a large start-up space “reserved for emerging companies in

the defence sector to make themselves known to other more consolidated companies and institutions, offering them the chance to showcase their great capacity for imagination, invention and innovation”.

COMMITMENT

“The main strategic lines of the Ministry of Defence are represented at FEINDEF”, Valcarce said, in reference to the presence at the fair of the Army, Navy and Air Force, the Defence Staff HQ (EMAD), the Military Emergency Unit (UME) and the National Institute of Aerospace Technology (INTA), among other organisations, “highlighting the joint approach the Armed Forces take to permanently serve their citizens”. The SEDEF added that the perception of security in Europe is now different. A change brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, giving rise to emergency situations such as forest fires and floods, “but above all”, she added, “by the illegitimate and cruel invasion of Ukraine by Putin’s Russia, a threat to freedom, rights, democracy and international justice”.

In Valcarce’s view, in order to face these new challenges, it is necessary to achieve sufficient sovereignty based on obtaining our own industrial developments, “what we know as strategic sovereignty, which allows us to successfully overcome the difficulties arising from increasingly complex and uncertain scenarios”. In this regard, the Secretary of State once again stressed our country’s commitment to the Europe of Defence and the transatlantic link.

During his speech, the president of the FEINDEF Foundation, Julián García Vargas, said that while the previous edition of the Exhibition, held two years ago and marked by the pandemic, consolidated the event, the next one, in May 2023, will see it grow.

“Europe must be a security provider within the EU, NATO and in relation to our strategic allies”, he said, emphasising the intentions expressed in the same terms by Josep Borrell in the context of the conflict in Ukraine. In García Vargas’ opinion, “this means providing political will, budgets, resources and,



María Amparo Valcarce reiterated the support of the Ministry of Defence for the exhibition, which has participated since its creation in 2019 as a founding sponsor.

above all, a strong industry capable of taking on an essential challenge: reducing the current dispersion of national weapon systems”.

The former Defence Minister also stated that FEINDEF is a meeting point between the public and private sectors, “a great exhibition of collaboration that always works well”, he stressed. He also insisted that Spanish companies are ready to guarantee in the medium term all the needs demanded by the Armed Forces in the following fields: land vehicles; naval; aeronautical; space; logistics; communications; combatant equipment and protection; and materiel maintenance. And he pointed out three keys to achieving this objective: “Continuing with the announced budgetary effort, R&D support for companies and, above all, with their participation in joint projects of the European Union and NATO”. “If we do this”, he added, “we can turn this sector into a key driver of technology, employment and exports, as well as into a guarantee of support for our Armed

Forces and for our national security and sovereignty”. The president of the FEINDEF Foundation recalled that in Spain “we have very competitive and leading companies, capable of participating in European projects and even leading them, as Indra is already doing in an essential programme, the NGWS/FCAS”.

“They are small, medium and large companies, developers of technology with their own products and exporters”, said Marc Murtra, who added that all of them “have worked under a budgetary reality of austerity, with great needs and a very limited supply of resources”. Indra’s chairman welcomed the increase in the defence budget: “It was a responsible and appropriate decision, which is never easy to take and which will have transformational consequences for the industry, forcing us to learn how to work in a more ambitious and coordinated manner. This is what the new times demand”.

“It is time to back Spain and its defence industry. Its companies must be up to the challenge of the new investment cycle, one that is clear, sure and reflected in the general state budgets”, said María Amparo Valcarce in reference to the modernisation programmes of the Armed Forces planned for the coming year, and reminded the representatives of the business sector attending the event that: “Ours is a leadership investment effort, and your task is to enable your companies to assimilate it”.

José Luis Expósito

*FEINDEF will
bring together more
than 400 exhibitors
and will be
visited by 30,000
professionals*



US Navy

Collaboration with the US Navy

Spanish ships join US battlegroups

THE Spanish Navy flagship, amphibious aircraft carrier *Juan Carlos*, amphibious assault ship *Castilla* and frigate *Navarra* spent three days in Mediterranean waters with the US Navy Carrier Strike Group 10, led by aircraft carrier *USS George H. W. Bush*. The collaboration took place in late September during the Spanish naval task force's return voyage to Spain following exercise *Dynamic Mariner/Mavi Balina 2022* in Türkiye. This was not the first deployment with allied aircraft carriers this year for LHD *Juan Carlos I*. In July, the ship took part in an exercise in the Adriatic with *USS Harry S. Truman* and Italian *Cavour*. Another Spanish ship, frigate *Álvaro de Bazán*, was attached

to the task group of aircraft carrier *USS Gerald R. Ford*, the most modern aircraft carrier currently in service anywhere in the world. Delivered to the US Navy five years ago, this ship made its inaugural deployment with a series of joint exercises with ships from allied countries. The *Álvaro de Bazán* (the first of the F-100 class ships) set sail on 14 September 2022 from the dockyard of its home port of Ferrol en route to Norfolk naval base, Virginia. With 222 men and women aboard, the Spanish frigate joined Carrier Strike Group 12 (CSG 12) of the aforementioned US aircraft carrier until 13 November, together with ships from the navies of Germany, the United Kingdom, Denmark, France and Canada.

Reinforcement of Allied air defence

Deployment of an early warning radar in Romania

Since 17 October 2022, the Air and Space Force has been deployed at the military barracks in the Romanian city of Schitu, the Tigru Air Tactical Detachment, which has incorporated an early warning radar to reinforce surveillance of the airspace of NATO's eastern flank. This long-range sensor will remain activated until 31 March



MODE

2023 –a period that may be extended for a further three months to 30 June– and will be operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week by personnel from the Mobile Air Control

Group (GRUMOCA) in collaboration with the Second Air Deployment Support Squadron (SEADA), which is responsible for sustaining the contingent. Spain's contribution to air defence on the eastern flank also includes the deployment of eight F-18 fighters and 130 military personnel from the 15th Wing in Zaragoza to Fetesti air base, in Romania, from 1 December 2022 to 31 March 2023 on air policing and training missions. In addition, six Eurofighters and 130 members of the 11th Wing from Los Llanos, Albacete, conducted the same mission at Bezmer air base in Bulgaria from 14 November to 2 December.

With the Allies in the Mediterranean

Defence Minister visits frigate taking part in Operation Noble Shield

The crew members of frigate *Cristóbal Colón* (F-105) welcomed Defence Minister Margarita Robles on 28 September 2022 during her stay in the port of Souda, on the Greek island of Crete. The ship is part of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) from 1 September to 15 December within Operation Noble Shield, deployed by Allied forces in the Mediterranean Sea as a deterrence measure due to the war in Ukraine.



Itaki Gómez/NIDE

The frigate's commanding officer, Alejandro Ferreiroa, informed the minister that no "tension or irresponsible attitude" had so far been detected from the Russian vessels spotted.

The minister addressed the crew to wish them luck on this mission and to thank them for the "effort and efficiency with which they represent Spain so well during these difficult times and situations". In addition to its patrol tasks and in order to maintain its readiness levels, the frigate has trained with the US Navy and the Greek Navy and Air Force. During the visit, Minister Robles chatted with the crew members (194 men and 30 women) and inquired about aspects of the mission and life aboard the ship.



EMAD

Spanish Verification Unit

SVU takes part in the Vienna Document 2011 Event in Bulgaria

FROM 18 to 21 October 2022, two members of the Spanish Verification Unit (SVU) took part in the Vienna Document 2011 Event held in Bulgaria, attended by 32 representatives from 18 countries of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and a representative of the Conflict Prevention Centre.

The meeting opened with an official welcome from the representative of the Bulgarian Verification Unit.

This was followed by briefings by the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Directorate for Strategic Planning of the Bulgarian Ministry of Defence. In accordance with the programme, a visit was organised from 19 to 22 October at Bezmer air base, with tours of the control tower, flight simulators, a static exhibition of the air assets available at the air base, as well as

the maintenance hangars. On 20 October, a visit was made to the Specialist Training Centre, where the delegation had the opportunity to inspect, in a static exhibition, the main equipment and weapons systems with which the centre's personnel are trained. The firing range and training area also provided an opportunity to observe a live-fire exercise for T-72 battle tanks.

The Vienna Document is a framework for a wide range of control and verification activities aimed at building security and confidence, together with the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). Among the most significant obligations of the Vienna Document are visits to air bases, military facilities, observation of military activities and presentations of new types of armaments and equipment.

Cooperative Resolve 22

Training Exercise for the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force

MEMBERS of the *29th Infantry Regiment Isabel la Católica* (part of the *7th Brigade Galicia*, Pontevedra) took part in Cooperative Resolve 22, a training exercise for units in NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). Under the coordination of the United States Army Europe and Africa (USAREUR-AF), the exercise (of command posts, aided by computers) was conducted from 16 to 30 October 2022 at the Joint Training Centre in Vicenza, Italy. The purpose of the exercise was to maintain training, cooperation and interoperability among ground force units.

The VJTF is a multinational brigade, popularly known as NATO's "spearhead" force. The units comprising the brigade remain with it for three years. During the first year (Stand-up phase), the brigade is trained and formed into a cohesive unit. In the second year (Stand-by phase), the brigade remains on standby, ready to deploy in a scenario of operations. The third year is the Stand-down phase, during which troops are held in reserve and can be called up as reinforcements.

This is the situation of the *1/29 Battalion Zamora*, a battery from the Field Artillery Group and a company-size unit from the Sappers Battalion, all units of the *7th Brigade Galicia*. Currently, the *12th Brigade Guadarrama* provides the core of Spain's contribution to the VJTF-22 land component.



EMAD

Anniversary at the Bétera OHQ

NATO Rapid Deployment Headquarters celebrates its 20th anniversary

NATO's Rapid Deployment Headquarters (HQ NRDC-ESP) celebrated its 20th anniversary on 5 October 2022 with a 20-kilometre march in the vicinity of its base in Bétera, Valencia, followed by a military parade in the presence of military representatives from the twelve countries that are currently part of the HQ.



EMAD

Once the march was completed, homage was paid to those who have given their lives for Spain and NATO with the hoisting of the NATO flag and the twelve flags that make up the General Headquarters.

The ceremony was presided over by the head of the NRDC-ESP, Lieutenant General Fernando García-Vaquero Pradal, and was attended by various civilian and military authorities, including the mayors of towns near the military base.

Since its establishment in 2002, HQ NRDC-ESP has constantly adapted to the needs of an ever-changing environment, reaching the highest level of readiness to fulfil the different missions entrusted to it by both Spain and NATO.



Marco Romero/MDJE

EU Satellite Centre

Official opening of new building in Torrejón

The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, and Defence Minister Margarita Robles, in representation of Prime Minister Sánchez, attended the official opening of the new building for the European Union Satellite Centre located at Torrejón air base, Madrid, on 26 September.

The event coincided with the 30th anniversary of the establishment of this centre. Borrell and Robles were received by the centre's Director, Romanian diplomat Sorin Ducaru, with whom they toured the SATCEN facilities.

"These are the eyes of Europe", said Borrell. "Through this satellite centre, in Europe, from Brussels, in all the capitals, we see what is happening. Before you decide what to do, you have to know what is going on".

"The future will be written in space", which he described as "the new battlefield". The minister, in turn, highlighted that the centre, now configured as an agency

for the common security and defence policy, "is a fundamental milestone in the process through which the European Union has been equipping itself with instruments that guarantee its strategic autonomy".

In the operations room, they were able to see first-hand how the centre supports missions, based mainly on information

from Earth observation satellites. "It is both a diplomatic tool for implementing EU policies, as well as an operational tool for civilian and military actions", added the Director, who indicated that the expansion of the centre will enable the conditions for further expansion of its activities, to the benefit of the EU, its Member States and its citizens.

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO NATO

FEDERICO de Torres Muro is the new Ambassador Permanent Representative of Spain to the North Atlantic Council. Since entering diplomatic service in 1985, he has been ambassador to Ecuador and El Salvador, head of the Technical Cabinet of the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation and of the cabinets of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and of the Secretary General of the Spanish Prime Minister's Office. For the past year, he has been Director General for Foreign and Security Policy. He replaces Miguel Ángel Fernández-Palacios who has been appointed ambassador to the Italian Republic.



CHANGE OF COMMAND IN IRAQ

BRIGADIER General **Ricardo Esteban Cabrejos** is the new commander of the Spanish contingent deployed in Iraq and Chief of Staff of the NATO mission there. The change of command ceremony, held in early August, was presided over by the Chief of the Spanish Joint Defence Staff, Lieutenant General Fernando García González-Valerio, who was accompanied by Spanish Ambassador Reyes Fernández. In his speech as the new head of the Spanish contingent, General Esteban highlighted the great work done by his predecessor, General Carlos María Salgado Romero, and reaffirmed the continuity of Spain's contribution to this mission.





Spanish (foreground) and British blunderbusses of the period; in the background, portraits of the Count of Floridablanca, an anonymous copy after Goya's painting (Prado Museum), and of the Admiral of the Fleet Luis de Córdova, the subject of an analysis exhibited alongside the painting.

[culture]

FROM THE CARIBBEAN TO THE ENGLISH CHANNEL

The Naval Museum commemorates the decisive role played by Spain and its Armada (Navy) in the Independence of the United States



On the left, Charles III; above, the Count of Aranda (bust) and the diplomat Gardoqui (ambassador's suit) and, on the right, US President G. Washington, all of them protagonists in this exhibition.

In the 18th century, three quarters of what is now the USA was Spanish territory



MORE than a hundred exhibits, "104 to be precise", according to the director of the Institute of Naval History (IHCN) and the Naval Museum of Madrid, Vice Admiral Marcial Gamboa, are the warp and woof chosen to narrate the essential role played by the monarchy of King Charles III in the War of Independence of the United States of America. These items are currently displayed in the exhibition entitled From the Caribbean to the English Channel. The Spanish Armada in American Independence.

This is a hugely important episode in Spain's and the world's history that is little known, even to those most concerned, i.e., Spaniards and Americans today.

Prominent men from the then "Thirteen Colonies" travelled to the Old Continent to gather support among the

European courts in their fight against Great Britain.

For example, Benjamin Franklin, who is considered one of the "founding fathers" of the new country, requested in Paris the help of France and Spain to achieve their goals. Both countries, traditional adversaries of the British in the pursuit of hegemony over the seas and lands known until then, responded favourably to such requests.

More than two centuries later, Franklin finds himself in Europe once again in an intaglio print from the National Library of Spain, on display in the Naval Museum of Madrid to recreate history through the aforementioned exhibition, open to the public until 8 February 2023.

This time, the American leader arrives at the invitation of the exhibition curators, art historians with technical responsibilities at the Naval Museum.

One is Berta Gasca, in charge of the Department of Preventive Conservation and Restoration, and Documentation, and the other is Inés Abril, responsible for the Decorative Arts and Historical Memorabilia collections.

INAUGURATION

It is the museum's first major exhibition since its refurbishment and the pandemic, as Vice Admiral Gamboa recalled during his presentation to the media shortly before it was inaugurated by Defence Minister Margarita Robles, who described it as "spectacular".

Robles, like the director of the IHCN, highlighted the links that unite the histories of Spain and the United States. In addition, they both pointed out that the exhibition was an opportunity to learn about or recall such ties.

For her part, the honorary curator, president of the Legacy association,



Re-creation of the Santísima Trinidad, nicknamed the El Escorial of the Seas, Luis de Córdova's flagship during the war –on the European stage– and designed to give visually impaired visitors the chance to better understand the shipbuilding of the era.

dedicated to the dissemination of the Hispanic footprint in North America, assured that “the history of the United States of America is written in capital letters with Ñ for ESPAÑA”.

“More than 300 years of common history”, stressed the director of the Institute of Naval History and Culture in his presentation, in which he emphasised the main objective of the exhibition, from which two other “no less important” purposes emerged.

THE SEA: CENTRAL THEME

“First of all, we want to make known the decisive role played by Spain in the Independence of the Thirteen Colonies of North America and, of course, from our Naval Museum, the role of the Royal Armada (Navy) in a war that to a large extent was fought at sea”.

The second purpose pointed out by Gamboa was to highlight and disseminate the aforementioned past and the ties that unite both nations, “which even today continue to shape the history of both nations and that we intend to continue to strengthen in the future”.

Finally, the third purpose pointed out by the director of the IHCN was the desire that the exhibition would “honour the memory of the people who made the last great maritime victory over Great Britain possible”.

In his speech, Gamboa also highlighted the “rigorousness” of the exhibition, an adjective which was echoed by the museum’s deputy director. The latter, Naval Captain Juan Escrigas, is a historian specialised in Spanish-American relations –specifically those of the end of the following century–, who also took part in the presentation, as did the museum’s technical director, Carmen

*Paintings, maps
and naval
models, almost all
from the period,
are the highlights
of this exhibition*

López Calderón. Before giving the floor to the curators, the Vice Admiral recalled that one of the missions of the IHCN and the museum is to disseminate our naval history: “The history of Spain is written on the decks of the ships of its Royal Armada (Navy), and this episode is a clear example”.

INITIAL LINKS

Berta Gasca, the first to speak, traced this common thread in figures such as Ponce de León, discoverer of Florida (1513), or Hernando de Soto, who did the same with the Mississippi, the large river of the North, in 1541.

“The Spanish had been exploring what is now American soil for more than two centuries when the Thirteen Colonies gained their independence”, she stressed. That is to say, more than 200 years before the birth of the nation and even before the aforementioned request for support was made.

After that triumph over London, most of those lands remained under the Spanish Crown for several more decades given that the viceroyalty of New Spain (Mexico) did not become independent

until 1821. This was 308 years after the aforementioned discovery of La Florida, explained Inés Abril for the *Revista Española de Defensa*.

That time and its corresponding legacy is just one of the dozens of stories that the curators encountered when they started working on this exhibition. A task that, from the outset, they saw as having “great potential”.

As Berta Gasca pointed out, they could not dwell on all of the stories, but nonetheless they wanted to outline the main ones in the exhibition and also in their book-catalogue, highlighted by both curators. In it, they have brought together specialists from different fields to give as global a view as possible and, like the exhibition posters, its chapters are in Spanish and English.

The audio guides are also available in French.

COLLABORATIONS

Most of the 104 exhibits belong to the museum’s own collections. There are also collaborations such as the one with La Carraca naval base (Cádiz), which has loaned a portrait of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, founder of the first American city: San Agustín de La Florida (1565).

Other collaborations include nearly a dozen and a half national military and civilian institutions.

Among the former are the Army Museum and also the General Military Archives of Madrid and the cartographic archives of the Army’s Geographical Centre, although they are not the only ones. The second group includes the Prado Museum, the National Library of Spain, the General Archive of the Indies, the Simancas Archive, the Museum of the Americas and the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts.

The exhibition also displays the suit of Ambassador Gardoqui, another of the exhibition’s namesakes, on loan, among other objects, from descendants of the Spanish diplomat.

The unique selection of works combines paintings, cartography, and naval models, almost all of which are from this period, and is completed with weaponry, engravings and some documents.

As is often the case in these events, the exhibition is a unique snapshot of objects

that are rarely found together and it is difficult for the organisers to pick a favourite item. Gasca and Abril are no exception, but they both highlight, for example, the cartography or the portraits of Mazarredo, due to their artistic quality and the character himself, as he was a leading figure in his time.

However, apart from special predilections, the portrait of the first American president, for instance, stands out for its quality and narrative value.

In addition, the portrait of George Washington (Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando) has a special symbolism.

This was emphasised by the technical director, López Calderón, during the

de Córdoba. The painting was examined in detail by the Spanish Historical Heritage Institute and it was discovered that, among other things, the portrait of the famous sailor was painted during the lifetime of its protagonist.

It has also been concluded that the appearance of the veteran officer in the painting is what he looked like at the time of the war, when he was over seventy years old.

Research has also determined that the portrait was begun while he was still a lieutenant general. Visitors will also be able to learn first-hand about the research and analysis process.

The portrait of Córdoba and his “secrets” can be found halfway through



An “adarga” (hard leather shield) and drawing of a “Cuera soldier” (Army Museum), the name given to those who, from the garrisons, defended the North American frontiers of New Spain.

guided tour of the exhibition: “The document that appears in the painting is the treaty that he signed with Spain in times of Minister Godoy”. “A reflection of the type of relations between the two states”, added Berta Gasca, who also underlined the war effort of the merchants. This is one of those stories that in parallel with the main itinerary has a chapter of its own in the book-catalogue entitled *Spain: The decisive and forgotten economic factor in the American War of Independence*.

PORTRAIT OF CÓRDOVA

Among the exhibition’s must-sees is also the portrait of Admiral of the Fleet Luis

the exhibition, which is organised into four large spaces that begin with the three-hundred-year Spanish presence in the lands of present-day North America.

In this space, several of the above-mentioned pioneers are remembered: Ponce, Soto or Avilés, while a set of artefacts protected by a display case will capture the public’s attention the most: a leather coat of arms accompanied by a drawing of a soldier in a unique uniform.

It is an “adarga”, or hard leather shield, according to the museum’s technical director. This is a defensive element used by Spanish soldiers stationed on the farthest frontiers of the viceroyalty of New Spain, in the garrisons that would



On the left, a portrait of Buenaventura Moreno, who played a leading role in the capture of Menorca and, in the foreground, a re-creation of Spanish ship San Vicente Ferrer. On the right, a model of Gibraltar, including its garrison, from the end of the 17th century, a re-creation from before the British presence.

later inspire the forts so often recreated in American western films.

She underlined that these outposts are part of the Hispanic heritage bequeathed to the US, just like ranches or rodeos.

PROVINCES AND CITIZENS

Regarding this Spanish presence, curators Gamboa and Calderón emphasised the status of the viceroyalties as provinces despite their distance from the centre of the then Spanish empire. They also underlined the fact that all their inhabitants had identical rights, which made miscegenation possible, as reflected in the Painting of the Castes and the Virgin of Guadalupe, an exhibit from the collections of the Museum of the Americas (Madrid). Not far from this exhibit is a portrait of King Charles III, which places the visitor on the threshold of the central theme of the exhibition: the support for American independence. It was during his reign that the conflict occurred and he was the ruler who eventually signed the entry into the war.

However, before delving into the war, the second major section of the exhibition deals with Spanish shipbuilding at that time. The Royal Armada (Navy) had been a priority for the Bourbons ever since their accession to the throne, as it was an essential tool for maintaining and defending their territories.

At that time, in order for the squadrons that were aligned with France –also an ally of the Thirteen Colonies against Great Britain– to reach the highest level of readiness, the Spanish shipbuilders opted for the French system, which is illustrated by, among other objects, a model of French ship El Sol.

In addition, and in line with the Naval Museum's aim of facilitating visits for

people with disabilities and bringing them closer to the history on display, the exhibition uses for the first time an interactive model that helps visitors with reduced vision to get to know the ships of that era. When the exhibition ends next February, this model will go on permanent display. It is inspired by the Santísima Trinidad, nicknamed the El Escorial of the Seas, of which a traditional model is also on display, and is the only item that is not a period exhibit as it was built between 1990 and 2000.

THE BATTLE AT SEA

After seeing the ships that took part in the battle, the visitor arrives at the third large space of the exhibition and its main theme: The Maritime War. By way of introduction, this space recalls the pre-conflict phase: the covert aid to the Thirteen Colonies, the important role of the merchants in it –a role that was to continue throughout the process– and the tireless diplomatic work.

The ministers of Charles III are also represented, with their tendencies more or less in favour of openly entering the conflict until the declaration of war (depicted in the painting that has

travelled from the Provincial Museum of Pontevedra) finally came to fruition.

“The Spanish priorities on entering the conflict were not the American fight, but to seize the opportunity to recover territories lost throughout the 18th century and after the War of the Spanish Succession”, pointed out the curators.

New theatres of war thus opened up, from The Caribbean to the English Channel and in Gibraltar and Menorca, forcing London to spread its resources, reducing its reinforcements for the armies stationed in the Thirteen Colonies. The visitor can now see Córdova, Mazarredo, Barceló, Moreno... and Solano, who became the future “Marquis of Socorro” after arriving to back up the audacious B. Gálvez in the important capture of Pensacola (Florida), from which a flag taken from the British is exhibited.

A NEW HORIZON

In the end, Britain had to recognise the independence of its American colonies (30-11-1782). Spain recovered territories and maintained its dominance on the other side of the Atlantic, achieving almost all the objectives it had set itself when it declared war on London, although it was unable to regain Gibraltar.

George Washington even thanked Charles III in a letter for the help he had received. This support was so vital that without it, “American independence would have been impossible at that time”. Eventually, in its “conquest of the west”, the new state would keep what Spain had created when the far west was Hispanic.

Esther P. Martínez
Photos: Pepe Díaz

*The European
theatre of war
forced London
to spread its
resources across
different fronts*

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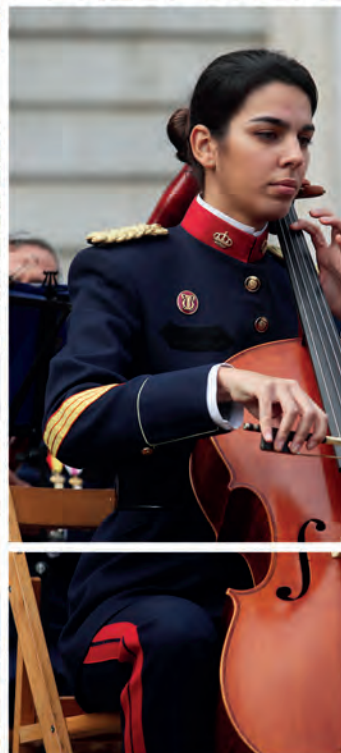
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