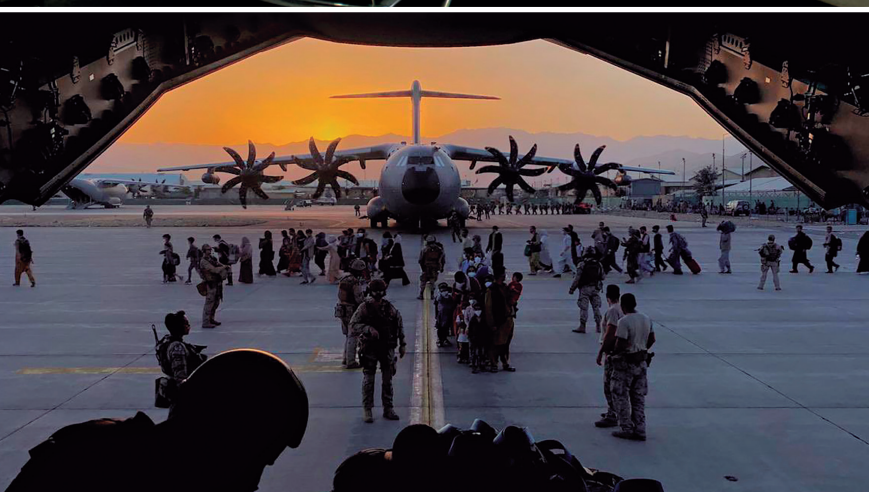


REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE DEFENSA

Spain to host the next NATO Summit in 2022

A CONSOLIDATED AND STRENGTHENED ALLIANCE



EVACUATION FROM AFGHANISTAN

Spanish Armed Forces
rescue 2,450 people and
take in refugees in transit
to other countries



REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE DEFENSA

HABLAMOS de Defensa

30 años de información de calidad

Madrid, host to a decisive summit

JENS Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General, appeared on 14 June alongside Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, at the summit of Heads of State and Government in Brussels, to officially announce that Spain would host the next summit in 2022, coinciding with the 40th anniversary of its accession to the organization.

The decision is a “strong message that we recognise Spain’s important role in our Alliance”, said Stoltenberg. According to Sánchez, “it shows Spain’s commitment to the Alliance and the trust of the Allies”. This is fitting for a country that over the past four decades has established itself as a reliable, active and relevant member of NATO, contributes to almost all of its missions and operations and has increased defence spending.

The achievement of hosting the 2022 summit is even greater when considered that it will not be just another NATO meeting, as it will be the culmination of the organization’s profound transformation process that began in Brussels. As Miguel Fernández-Palacios —Ambassador Permanent Representative of Spain in the North Atlantic Council— writes in this issue: “The Secretary General wants Spain to be proactive in the endeavour of building a new Alliance for new times”.

In Madrid, the Strategic Concept, the roadmap of the world’s leading military alliance for the next decade, will be approved and a new Secretary General will be elected. The leaders present will decide on the strategy to be adopted in the face of China’s military rise and nuclear expansion and Russia’s aggressive policy, the main threats currently looming over Western liberal democracies.

Next year’s summit should continue the line of thought initiated in Brussels, embodied in the 2030 agenda, towards a NATO that is more political, militarily stronger, and more global, capable of meeting the new challenges facing our societies, among which climate change holds a place of great concern.

It should also be noted that the meeting in Madrid will be an excellent opportunity for NATO to focus on the challenges emanating from the South, where instability has direct consequences on the security of all Allies and is of particular importance for Spain, given our geographical proximity.

“It is only fair and deserved that Spain should hold the NATO summit”, said Defence minister, Margarita Robles, at a briefing on Spain’s four decades in the Alliance, held on 2 July at the Retamares base, headquarters of the Operations Command. “The past forty years have been very intense and our Armed Forces have made a huge sacrifice”, highlighted Ms Robles, who expressed her gratitude to the “125,000 Spanish military personnel who have shown their commitment to peace and to the values of NATO” for their contribution.

RED



Managing Editor:

Yolanda Rodríguez Vidales.

Editor in Chief: Víctor Hernández Martínez.

Heads of section. International: Rosa Ruiz

Fernández. **Art Director:** Rafael Navarro.

Opinion: Santiago Fernández del Vado. **Culture:** Esther P. Martínez. **Photography:** Pepe

Díaz. **Sections. National:** Elena Tarilonte.

Armed Forces: José Luis Expósito Montero.

Photography and Archive: Hélène Gicquel

Pasquier and Estela Zubieta. **Layout:** Eduardo

Fernández Salvador. **Featured in this**

edition: Miguel Fernández-Palacios, Nuria

Fernández, Juan José Sánchez Ramos, Juan

Pons, Ana Jiménez and Germán Segura.

Chief Translator: Fuensanta Zaballa Gómez.

Translators: Gráinne Mary Gahan, Paloma

Muñoz de la Morena and Linguaserve Inter-

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Editorial Board: Yolanda Rodríguez Vidales

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FROM BRUSSELS '21 TO MADRID '22



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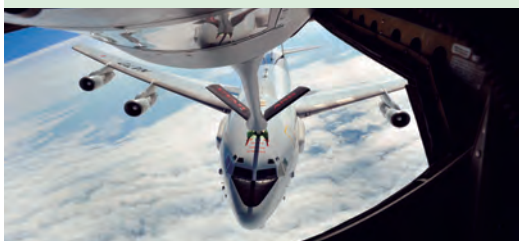
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Miguel Fernández-Palacios M.
Permanent Representative of Spain
to the North Atlantic Council

From Brussels '21 to Madrid '22: Building a new Alliance for a new era

On 14 June 2021, the NATO Summit held at the Organisation's Headquarters in Brussels launched a process of far-reaching reform of the Atlantic Alliance that will culminate at the Madrid Summit in 2022

MORE than a year and a half after the initiative was launched at the NATO Leaders Meeting in London on 4 December 2019, the first concrete action to adapt our Alliance to the new strategic challenges facing the world was taken at the Brussels 2021 Summit. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg presented an 'instruction manual' entitled 'NATO 2030', which aims to build a more politically oriented, more global NATO with stronger military power.

Approved by the Heads of State and Government on 14 June 2021, the NATO 2030 initiative is the product of ongoing reflection on what the future holds for the Organisation and on how to respond to a strategic landscape shaped by all kinds of threats. These threats come from both long-standing and more recent sources: Russia is displaying renewed assertiveness, while China has been the subject of extensive debate and the threat of Jihadist terrorism remains omnipresent. Meanwhile, the use of new disruptive technologies is giving rise to widespread, hybrid cyber threats, obliging us to reinforce our traditional military forces and build more-resilient societies. It will also force us to talk

to each other more. By this, I am referring to political discussion, we must not forget NATO's role as the main platform for dialogue between the two shores of the Atlantic.

The Brussels Summit was hugely important for two other reasons: the presence of the new president of the United States, and the dialogue and consensus-building approach advocated by President Biden at the summit. While he was in Brussels, President Biden re-emphasised the United States' commitment to the Alliance and his government's pledge to uphold the Organisation's founding principles. For Washington, NATO remains the most important platform for the defence and security of the political West and a vital forum for transatlantic

*The Alliance itself view us
as a politically reliable and
militarily responsible Ally*



dialogue. Since he came to power, President Biden has sent some encouraging signals, which have been enthusiastically received at NATO Headquarters: he has expressed his commitment to NATO and emphasised the importance of the Alliance—and of the Allies themselves—in Washington's new foreign and defence policy. The new US president's declarations were widely anticipated because we are all aware that the reforms we are embarking upon would be impossible without active participation, firm commitment and dynamic leadership from the United States.

I would also like to mention the Madrid Summit scheduled for next year, or 'Madrid 22' as it has become known here. The 2022 Madrid Summit offers the most tangible evidence yet of the mutual commitment between NATO and Spain. We have been tasked with organising this summit because the Allies and the Alliance itself view us as a politically reliable and militarily responsible Ally. An Ally that demonstrates its commitment through its actions day after day. Nobody can ignore Spain's presence in almost every NATO activity, mission and operation: Iraq, Turkey, Latvia, Lithuania, the Standing Naval Forces, Operation *Sea Guardian* in the Mediterranean, Romania—until recently—and Afghanistan,

where we spent almost 20 years and paid a high human cost. The quietly professional work of our Armed Forces, who have been deployed under NATO's blue flag for many years now, has made a significant contribution to the diplomatic success we have achieved. I am very grateful to all these men and women.

The Madrid Summit is set to be the most important Allied summit in recent years because of its objectives and its focus on the future of the Alliance. The NATO 2030 decision package will be launched at the summit, alongside a new Strategic Concept, the official document outlining NATO's enduring purpose and nature, as well as its main functions. Of course, the new Allied Strategic Concept will be known as the 'Madrid Strategic Concept'.

Madrid will change the Alliance, and we are expected to deliver in both form and content. As well as coordinating the logistics and protocol for the summit, the Secretary General wants Spain to play a proactive role in building a new Alliance for a new era. There is no doubt in my mind that we will be up to the task, just as we were at the 1997 Madrid Summit and as we have been ever since we joined NATO in May 1982.



Pepé Díaz





Units from Bétera HQ during allied exercises at San Gregorio in 2008. Above, NATO Stabilisation Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and hoisting the Spanish flag at NATO Headquarters in June 1982.

1981



2021

A GENEROUS, SERIOUS AND COMMITTED CONTRIBUTION

The Minister of Defence, the Undersecretary of Defence for Political Affairs (SEGENPOL) and the Chief of Defence (CHOD) analyse Spain's forty years of participation in the Atlantic Alliance

“THESE have been very intense years, with a high cost in human lives on the part of the Armed Forces, in which more than 125,000 Spanish military personnel have served and defended peace and security throughout the world in various allied missions and operations. Moreover, as a member of NATO, Spain has promoted political dialogue and consensus for the sake of global stability and contributed to deterrence and defence for the security of all”. During a briefing held in July at Retamares base (Madrid), also attended by the Undersecretary of Defence for Political Affairs (SEGENPOL), Admiral Juan Francisco Martínez Núñez, and the Chief of Defence, Admiral General Teodoro López Calderón, the Defence Minister wished to express her full acknowledgement and gratitude to those professionals who have made Spain's presence and participation in the Atlantic Alliance possible over the past four decades. With heartfelt thoughts for those who lost their lives over the years, Margarita Robles stressed that Spain has been a “serious, reliable and committed ally, with vital contributions that will continue to be essential in an Alliance that is increasingly looking to the South”. Therefore, she was convinced that it was “more than fair and deserved” for Spain to be chosen to host the 2022 Summit.

SHARED VALUES

The Undersecretary of Defence for Political Affairs began his speech endorsing the crucial role NATO has played and continues to play in safeguarding peace and understanding in Europe and with third countries: “Spain now joins an

1981



2021

exclusive club of democracies and, after our membership, this club begins a new path, an inclusive journey of openness to other countries (...) Spain is helping NATO to transform itself so that, without ceasing to be a force that protects, it can likewise be a bridge to others, by becoming a backbone organisation for partnerships with its neighbours, both with those countries closest to home and also with countries further afield and, of course, with the European Union, its ideal and most natural complement”.

In a chronological and qualitative review, the head of political affairs noted that, in the 1990s, confidence in our country was greatly consolidated thanks to the good work of the Spanish military personnel in UN missions and to successful events such as the Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid and the Barcelona Olympics. “Spain’s membership of the Alliance served as a model; after us, all the subsequent Europeans who accede practically do so following the same

pattern: first they join NATO and then they try to accede to the EU”. In that decade, we began to hold positions of responsibility in the command structure and, at the same time, “Spain began to propose security models that were committed to a more expeditionary Alliance, which would become involved in security wherever it was needed”. The approval in 1994, during the Brussels summit, of the Mediterranean Dialogue initiative, of which Spain was a major driving force, was very significant. “In an almost imperceptible way, the centre of gravity of the Alliance had shifted south”, summarised the SEGENPOL, “and it had done so geographically and conceptually”. In record time for a newcomer, NATO elected a Spaniard, Javier Solana, as Secretary General, completing a brilliant cycle here in Madrid shortly afterwards with the 1997 summit, NATO’s opening summit. The US president described it then by saying that “Spain’s membership of the Alliance had strengthened NATO materially, strategically and morally”.

And we now arrive at the current era, at an Alliance of 30 countries with different interests and approaches, including different views of their own security challenges, and in which new dynamics influencing security have emerged, such as mass migration, economic crises, cyberspace or pandemics. According to the SEGENPOL, due to this reality, Spain’s allied policy is based on several objectives: the first is to strengthen collective defence, the backbone of the Alliance, by tackling the defence of the Eastern flank with solidarity without relinquishing the broad 360-degree approach that also looks to the South. The second is to promote maximum coordination and complementarity with the European Union, while the third is to launch an ambitious capability project that represents an unprecedented technological breakthrough and also helps to promote and protect our industrial base. “In fact”, said Admiral Martínez Núñez, “in a recent review, NATO’s chief planner made a strong and enthusiastic defence

Four decades of commitment

1981

→ **25 February.** In his inaugural speech, Prime Minister Calvo Sotelo proposes Spain’s membership of NATO.

→ **2 December.** The government informs the Alliance of its formal intention to join the Washington Treaty and receives an invitation from the North Atlantic Council to begin the process.

1982

→ **30 May.** Spain becomes the 16th NATO member.

1986

→ **12 March.** Spaniards back membership in a referendum. A participation model is established with six Coordination Agreements.

1992

→ **14 July.** Frigate Baleares marks the beginning of the Navy’s participation in Standing NATO Maritime Groups (SNMG).

1993

→ **15 June.** Operation *Sharp Guard* begins to monitor the maritime





Margarita Robles said during the briefing held in Retamares that “sometimes we don't value what we have, there are military men and women in Spain and far away, working for our security”.

embargo against the former Yugoslavia. It is Spain's first mission in the Alliance and remains in place until 1996.

1994

- **May.** NATO begins air operations in the Balkans. The *Icarus* detachment deploys to the Italian Aviano air base.
- **30 September.** Seville hosts an informal meeting of NATO defence ministers. (It is to do so again in February 2009).

1995

- **5 de diciembre.** Javier Solana, NATO Secretary General.

- **20 December.** The UN transfers the mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina to NATO. Spain will participate in IFOR and SFOR.

1996

- **14 November.** The Congress authorizes Spain to negotiate its accession to the new command structure and offers to locate the future Southwest Sub-Regional Command in Madrid.

1997

- **8 y 9 July.** Madrid, venue of the NATO Summit. Allied enlargement to Eastern Europe is agreed for the first time and a new military structure is approved.



1981



2021

of the coherence of Spain's capability contribution, even in comparison with supposedly more powerful allies with much higher GDPs.

Another major focus of our policy is the strong defence of the values we believe in. "We are committed to human safety and, in this sense, Spain has taken on a very special role so that the Alliance can apply the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and mobilise the gender perspective in operations, promote the fight against sexual violence in armed conflicts and also bolster the UN Safe Schools initiative. We are also pushing for an Alliance that is more active in disarmament, non-proliferation and confidence-building processes as well as being a firmly engaged player in the fight against climate change. "And a NATO", added the SEGENPOL, "that is more committed to partners who are asking for support to develop their capabilities; support to reform their security and defence sector.

CAPABILITIES AND READINESS

The Chief of Defence also wanted to elaborate on Spain's contribution to the Alliance and what it receives in return from an operational point of view. To this end, he explained that NATO evaluates the role of each ally in relation to what he calls the three "Cs" (cash, contributions and capabilities), an analysis of which demonstrates Spain's significant contribution. "Currently", he explained, "Spain's defence spending in absolute terms is the seventh highest of the 30 allies. We also rank seventh in terms of the number of troops in the Armed Forces, as well as in terms of contribution to the Alliance's common budget. As for the number of NATO missions and operations in which it participates, Spain is among the top five".

In terms of capabilities, the Admiral General noted that the Alliance's assessment of Spain's contribution is very positive. To be specific, and in terms of the three Services, the Spanish Army has the Rapid Deployment Headquarters in Bétera

(Valencia), and can also provide combat support means for the deployments of division-sized task forces. As for the Navy, Spain provides the on-board Command and Control capability of the High Readiness Maritime Headquarters, its amphibious vessels with air and naval capabilities and the Marine Brigade, as well as frigates and supply ships. With regard to the Air Force, one of the most relevant aspects is the presence in Spain of the Combined Air Operations Centre Torrejón (CAOC TJ) and its core mission of surveying NATO airspace on the southern flank. The Alliance considers the Spanish Air Force to be well equipped and trained and highlights its expeditionary capabilities. Finally, and also included in the capabilities section, our Armed Forces' participation in 32 of the 86 allied international cooperation projects within the Smart Defence initiative is considered in a very favourable light.

The CHOD recalled that throughout these 40 years, Spain has participated in 21 missions in which more than 125,000 men

1999

- **April-June.** The Spanish Armed Forces contribute to the NATO mission in Albania to help refugees.
- **June.** Spanish participation in NATO's Multinational Force in Kosovo (KFOR) begins, ending in 2009.
- **September.** Spanish forces are deployed in Operation *Allied Harmony* in Macedonia (until December 2003).

2001

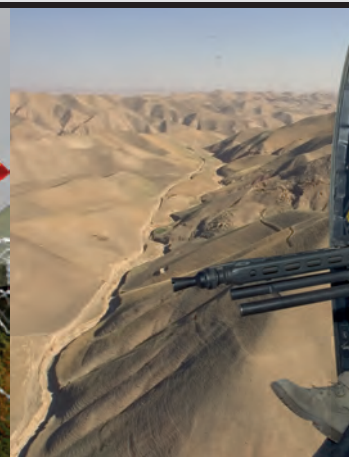
- **11 May.** Spanish General Juan Antonio Martínez Esparza is appointed Assistant Secretary General for Security

Investment, Logistics and Civil Emergency Planning.

- **26 October.** Operation *Active Endeavour* is launched in the Mediterranean (to be replaced by Operation *Sea Guardian* in 2016).

2003

- **13 June.** NATO Response Force (NRF) is established. Spain now has two High Readiness headquarters available: one on land, in Bétera, and one at sea, the ship *Castilla*, in Rota.
- **11 August.** NATO assumes command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, in which Spain participates with ground and air units.



and women of the Spanish Armed Forces have taken part. At the moment, there are almost 1,000 Spanish military personnel deployed under NATO's flag and around 440 Spaniards in different positions of responsibility.

In particular, Spain currently participates in the three Standing NATO Maritime Groups with 323 service members, with the mission of providing a maritime presence with escort and mine countermeasures ships. We participate in NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) with 346 troops and 125 vehicles (the second largest contributor) integrated into the battalion deployed in Latvia. We contribute to the defence of European airspace by keeping means available 24 hours a day, seven days a week in national territory and, in addition, we help cover the rest of European airspace by regularly supplying troops in shifts to the Baltic and Romanian Air Policing. We participate in Operation *Sea Guardian* in



N/DE

The Undersecretary of Defence for Political Affairs explained Spain's role in a NATO that is increasingly looking to the South

the Mediterranean, contributing a frigate, a submarine and an off-shore patrol vessel on a rotating basis. We maintain a *Patriot* unit in Turkey, composed of 149 service members in Operation *Active Fence*, to help in the defence of ballistic missiles coming from Syria. And we also participate in NATO Mission Iraq with 114 troops deployed in Baghdad.

WITH THE ALLIES

Spanish participation in NATO missions began in 1993 in Operation *Sharp Guard* to control the maritime blockade of the Adriatic Sea in the framework of the economic sanctions and arms embargo imposed by the UN against the former Yugoslavia. Spain supplied five frigates, with a total of approximately 1,000 military personnel. Shortly afterwards, the Air Force's *Icarus* detachment was deployed to Aviano air base in Italy. From that detachment, the Air Force took part in numerous actions and operations, the most significant

being Operation *Deny Flight* (between 1993 and 1995); *Deliberate Force* (August to September 1995); and *Allied Force* (between March and June 1999). In those years, some 3,500 service members were part of the *Icarus* detachment.

On the ground, Spanish troops began their participation in the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 under

2005

→ **29 October.** The Alliance deploys its first humanitarian mission to Pakistan, assigned to the NRF, with Bétera in command.

2006

→ **1 August.** Spain begins its participation in the *Baltic Air Policing* mission with a detachment in Lithuania.

2010

→ **June.** The Improvised Explosive Device Centre in Hoyo de Manzanares, a new NATO Centre of Excellence.

→ **20 November.** The Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) for the southern area is established in Torrejón de Ardoz.

2011

→ **March.** Spanish aircraft join Operation *Unified Protector* in Libya.

→ **5 October.** Rota naval base joins the missile defence system.

2014

→ **29 December.** A *Patriot* unit from the Spanish Army joins NATO's Operation *Active Fence* in Turkey.



the umbrella of the United Nations, a mission that was transferred to NATO in 1995. Initially, the aim of the allied operation (IFOR) was to enforce the Dayton peace agreements, but it later became a stabilisation force mission (SFOR). The CHOD recalled that between 1995 and 2004 —the year it was transferred to the European Union— the Spanish Armed Forces deployed around 46,000 uniformed personnel. As regards Kosovo, a NATO-led Multinational Force was deployed in June 1999 to verify the peace process. Spain ended its participation in KFOR in 2009 (23,000 military personnel were involved). Also in the Balkans, Spain took part in missions in Albania and North Macedonia.

Another momentous event took place in the 1990s when Spain began its participation in the Standing NATO Maritime Groups. Since then, it has been involved in two operations: *Ocean Shield* (from 2009 to 2016, to fight piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Western Indian Ocean) and *Unified*



The CHOD described the missions and operations in which 125,000 Spaniards have participated

Protector (from March to October 2011) to enforce the arms embargo and no-fly zone over Libya.

In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Operation *Active Endeavour* was initiated and is, so far, NATO's only collective defence operation under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The Navy was very actively involved between 2001 and 2016, preventing

terrorist groups from transporting weapons of mass destruction across the Mediterranean. In 2016, it was replaced by Operation *Sea Guardian*, to which Spain contributes a frigate, a submarine and a patrol vessel in the assigned periods.

Also in 2001, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was created in order to re-establish Afghanistan's government and ensure security in the country. NATO assumed command of ISAF from August 2003 to 2014, when it was replaced by the NATO-led *Resolute Support* mission.

Over the years, nearly 30,000 men and women in uniform have been deployed to Afghanistan. This was also the time of NATO's first humanitarian mission, Operation *Solidarity Response II*, launched to help the victims of the October 2005 Pakistan earthquake. It was assigned to NATO Response Force (NRF), with Spain in command of the land component through the headquarters in Bétera.

Rosa Ruiz

→ **31 December.** End of ISAF mission and beginning of *Resolute Support*, to provide advice to the Afghan forces.

2015

→ **January.** Spanish troops train Iraqi forces as part of the coalition established during the Wales summit.

2016

→ **July.** Spain leads the first VJTF on land and provides the bulk of the forces.

→ **1 September.** Alejandro Alvargonzález is elected Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy.

2017

→ **June.** Spain deploys forces in Latvia as part of enhanced Forward Presence (eFP).

2018

→ **12 July.** New mission in Iraq to provide advice to the government on security issues.

2021

→ **21 January.** Spanish *Eurofighters* are integrated into the *Enhanced Air Policing* mission in Romania for the first time.



CONTRIBUTION TO MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS IN 2021



STANDING NATO MARITIME GROUPS

Maritime units in crisis situations. Spain contributes ships to SNMG (frigates) and SNMCMG (countermines)

Starts: 1992



SEA GUARDIAN

Maritime Security in the Mediterranean. Spain contributes a frigate, a submarine and a patrol vessel in the assigned periods

Starts: 2016



AIR SURVEILLANCE

Fighter Detachments in the Baltic and Romanian Air Policing Missions

Starts: 2006



SUPPORT TO TURKEY

149-strong Patriot unit reinforces air defence against ballistic missile threats

Starts: 2015



ENHANCED FORWARD PRESENCE

NATO presence in the Baltic States. Spain contributes 346 service members to a multinational battalion in Latvia

Starts: 2017



RESOLUTE SUPPORT

Advice and training of Afghan security forces as a continuation of ISAF mission

2015 – 2021



NATO MISSION IRAK

Advice and training of the Armed Forces. (114 Spaniards in the headquarters and protection force)

Starts: 2019

Rafael Navarro / RED / Sources: Operations Command, NATO and prepared by author.



Photos: Pepe Díaz, Hélène Gicquel, EMAD and Efe

Lieutenant Colonel Bayardo Abós Álvarez-Buiza

“AIR POLICING REINFORCES SECURITY”

Head of the Vilkas Air Force detachment in Lithuania

THREE moments have marked the professional career of Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Bayardo Abós Álvarez-Buiza. “The first was my baptism of fire in the *Allied Force* mission in Kosovo in 1999; the second was my first official display with the *Aguila Patrol* (*Eagle Patrol*) in 2007; and the third was my solo flight in the *Eurofighter* after so many years without piloting a cutting-edge fighter jet”. Born in Badajoz 51 years ago, the current Air Force commander of the 14th fighter wing (Albacete) has more than 5,700 flying hours, a record achieved at the controls of various aircraft models: the F-18, C-101, T-38, F-5 and, currently, the *Eurofighter*, with which he has once again demonstrated the capability of his unit and high readiness of his personnel in a NATO mission. On 1 September, he ended his four-month deployment at Siauliai air base in Lithuania, as head of the *Baltic Air Policing* mission.

— How would you sum up the work carried by your detachment?

—These have been four intense months, with both real alpha-scramble missions and training operations for our pilots and for the NATO teams deployed on the ground in the three Baltic republics. The total amount of flying hours exceeds 750, which is an important milestone in terms of aircraft readiness during these months.

—How many sorties have been carried out and with what purpose?

—We have performed 26 real alert or alpha-scramble missions to identify and intercept Russian fighters that are in violation of the regulations of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which are mandatory for all aircraft in a controlled airspace.

—What procedure is followed when a non-compliant trace is detected?

—NATO’s centralised surveillance systems are responsible for detecting non-compliant aircraft. Once located, the 24-hour duty aircraft receive a scramble order and must be in flight within 15 minutes. This take-off order includes the necessary information for the pilot once in the air, such as the initial course, altitude and speed to be maintained depending on the urgency or not of intercepting the unknown aircraft.

“Our aircraft are fully operational, which is not easy to achieve”

—And once in flight?

—Take-off is always in pairs, i.e. two fighters accompanying each other and providing the necessary mutual support. The lead aircraft strictly follows the orders of the intercept controller, who is responsible for guiding the approach to the unidentified aircraft. As soon as the pilot confirms visual contact with the trace, the controller hands over responsibility to the pilot for the final intercept phase, until the aircraft is close enough for visual ID, and the pilot confirms the type of aircraft, identification number, armament, etc., and takes the necessary photographs.

—One of these alerts occurred last July during a visit of the Spanish and Lithuanian Prime Ministers to the base....

—Yes it did. We were given the order for an alpha-scramble during the press conference, which forced us to interrupt it and quickly vacate the hangar where the briefing was taking place. The Cabinets of the two Prime Ministers had previously been warned of this possibility and this was key to making all the personnel leave the area, including both Prime Ministers, and clearing the way for the planes. The two aircraft were eventually in flight in just nine minutes, below the 15 stipulated by NATO as a maximum time. The professionalism of our personnel was demonstrated, even under these exceptional conditions.



"The Lithuanians know that we are providing them with a very important service for their security".

PAO Vilnius-BAP56

—Why are there so many Russian violations of Baltic airspace?

—The Russians fly from mainland Russia to Kaliningrad, bordering international airspace. They do not violate the airspace of the three Baltic republics, which would be an aggression against NATO airspace. However, they do not meet the requirements established by international regulations, which can basically be summarised in three points: to have filed a flight plan indicating the route and the departure and destination airfields; to carry the IFF transponder that identifies each aircraft; and to be in radio contact with the air traffic controllers at the air traffic control agencies. Failure to comply with these mandatory requirements by any aircraft flying in the area is what triggers an alpha-scramble mission.

—How have the Eurofighters performed?

—Our aircraft have been almost 100 per cent operational in the four months, which is not easy to achieve. Flying more than 750 hours with virtually no incidents or mission aborts, keeping all seven fighters operational, is further proof of their reliability. The excellent work of my maintenance staff as well as the constant logistic support provided from the homeland by the Air Force (MACOM and MALOG) and the Operations Command (MOPS) have been key to achieving these results.

—What would you highlight about the work carried out in the different positions?

—While the pilots' work is the most visible, the work of the maintenance

staff is equally essential to ensure aircraft readiness; the security and logistic personnel for military policing and logistic support; the healthcare staff to ensure the health of all; the secretarial and financial affairs department for the daily operation and quality of life of the staff; the public relations office, to organise events and visits, giving visibility to the mission on social media; the IT and network staff to ensure connectivity with the homeland and NATO's chain of command. In short, each and every member of the contingent has an important role to play, without which it would be impossible to reach these levels of performance and readiness in missions.

—How is the relationship with the Lithuanian Armed Forces and the Lithuanian population?

—The host nation has always treated us impeccably. The Lithuanians know that we are providing them with a very important service for their security and they are the first to appreciate our work. Their support has been unflinching during these four months. Various activities have been organised to integrate the personnel of the Siauliai air base with the Spanish contingent: sports competitions, fraternisation meals (paella), fun runs, joint masses, and so on. On the other hand, donations have been made to orphanages in the city with supplies coming from Spain.

—Are alpha-scramble missions also a common practice in our airspace?

—Yes, they are. The Air Force's constant mission is to secure the skies (air policing) throughout Spanish airspace. For this purpose, we have two bases on the mainland and one in the Canary Islands, on alert 24 hours a day.

—These are missions that go largely unnoticed...

—Yes. It is a service that is not very visible to citizens, but is of great importance nonetheless. A country's security is achieved when it is reinforced in all its areas, spaces or domains: land, sea, air, space and cyberspace. Air policing is key, and this is the mission carried out by the Air Force 24/7.

Victor Hernández

Spain rescues 2,450 people, primarily Afghans who worked for the Spanish Armed Forces, along with their family members, and takes in refugees in transit to other countries

EVACUATION FROM AFGHANISTAN

“**T**HEY have done an exceptional job, saving so many lives. Their work has been heroic and the whole of Spain is very proud of them”. The Defence Minister expressed her gratitude to the Armed Forces at Zaragoza air base, which she visited on 28 August to welcome the Air Force personnel who touched down in the last two A400Ms from Dubai, bringing the evacuation operation in Afghanistan to a close. “They have demonstrated their professionalism and humanity in an extremely complex mission”, stated Margarita Robles, “putting their lives at risk to get as many people on the planes as possible”.

In an operation that pushed its forces to the limit, Spain rescued 2,206 Afghans in ten days, from 18 to 27 August, after the Taliban Islamists seized power. The majority were people who worked for the Spanish Armed Forces and cooperation agencies over the last two decades, along with their family members, 1,677 in total, although there were also 333 former employees from the EU, 131 from the United States, 50 from NATO and 21 from Portugal. One hundred and thirty military personnel were deployed during the operation at Kabul airport —together with around twenty police officers from the embassy’s security corps and diplomatic

staff— and in Dubai, the stopover base of the airlift set up for the evacuation.

Subsequently, on 11 and 12 October, another 244 people arrived at Torrejón air base in two chartered flights from Islamabad (Pakistan) as part of the second phase of the evacuation operation from third countries.

Saving the lives of the maximum number of Afghans who had helped Spain, other countries and international organisations was the objective of this joint operation of the Armed Forces, in which the Air Force played the most significant role. There were seventeen rotations of A400M transport aircraft (Dubai-Kabul-Dubai) and eleven Dubai-Torrejón flights, including ten Air Europa flights chartered by the Ministry of Defence and one A400M flight. Several Army units were also involved, while the Operations Command

worked around the clock, building up its General Staff in response to the changing circumstances in the Afghan capital.

From 19 August onwards, Torrejón air base was also a hub for welcoming and assisting Afghan refugees who had worked for EU institutions in recent years. Once at Torrejón, some refugees who had helped Spain requested political asylum to stay, while others were distributed to third countries. Similarly, Rota and Morón bases took in hundreds of evacuees in transit to the United States, in accordance with the agreement reached between the US and Spain. A few months earlier, in May, Spain had repatriated the twenty-four military service members and two interpreters who were still in Afghanistan as part of NATO’s Operation *Resolute Support*, which succeeded ISAF in 2014. The Afghan deployment, in which around 27,000 men and women took part, was the longest and most costly in terms of lives (102 casualties) of the Spanish Armed Forces. The recent evacuation mission, which ended on 30 August with the departure of the last US troops, is part of *Resolute Support*.

During Spain’s twenty-year presence in Afghanistan, much was done to help the progress and equality of the Afghan people. Spain participated in constructing all kinds of infrastructures (roads, hospitals, schools, airports, etc.), collaborated in countless initiatives for the development

The mission was conducted under the coordination of the Operations Command

Hundreds of Afghans
gather in and around
Kabul airport, trying to
leave the country.



INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS



Ejército del Aire



EMAD

In Dubai, evacuated families receive health and logistic assistance.

Defence Minister welcomes refugee women at Torrejón air base.



Ejército del Aire

The aircraft make full use of their capacity to evacuate as many people as possible.

of the country and trained midwives and teachers to ensure Afghan women's access to health and education. "People have learned the value of freedom and progress has been made in educating women and girls. A seed has been sown in the minds of young Afghans so they know what rights are, what freedom is, and we all have to continue working on that", stated Margarita Robles.

TEN HECTIC DAYS

The announcement of the imminent withdrawal of US troops was followed by the Taliban's rapid advance throughout the territory, facilitated by the passivity of Afghan soldiers and police. In a matter of days, the fundamentalist militia occupied the cities and provinces until they reached Kabul, the capital, on 15 August. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani had already left the country and images of Taliban leaders occupying the presidential palace rooms were broadcast around the world. That



The planes have just one hour to land, load and take off from Kabul airport to Dubai.

same Sunday, embassy staff rushed to the NATO air base near the airport. Local controllers and security personnel had fled and US forces had to take charge of the airspace.

In the early hours of Monday 16 August, the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs issued a joint statement: "Two A400M aircraft of the Armed Forces will leave Spain for Dubai in the next few hours to cover the first phase of the repatriation of Embassy personnel in Kabul, Spaniards who remain in Afghanistan and Afghans who have worked for Spain".

The images from the airport runways showed people trying to get on planes, hanging from the fuselage and landing gear. Kabul now belonged to the Taliban, and thousands of Afghans, fearful of reprisals from the new extremist regime, crowded around the walls of the airfield, which had become their only means of escape.

On Wednesday 18 August at 11.24 am, the first Spanish plane took off from

Dubai for Kabul. Another departed that same morning from Madrid for Dubai. The Dubai-Kabul airlift remained open. One of the planes that took off for Kabul was carrying reinforcements: 110 military personnel. In addition to the crews of the 31st Air Force Wing, based in Zaragoza, personnel from the Air Deployment Support Squadron (EADA), the Air Force

The three A400M aircraft, one of which is a medical aircraft, played a key role in the operation

medical units (UMAER and UMAAD) and the Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) unit of the Army's 1st Information Operations Regiment (ROI No. 1) were also deployed. An Army special operations team would also join the evacuation effort.

Of these personnel, around 50 service members were deployed at Kabul airport to manage the aircraft, support the process of letting evacuees enter the airport and then receive, identify and process them, and reinforce security inside the airport and its entrances.

At Al-Minhad air base in Dubai, the remaining military personnel stayed behind to handle the transfer of the evacuated personnel, providing logistic and medical support. In Madrid, the Operations Command (MOPS) had already been preparing the possible joint operation for several days. An air component command was activated under the MOPS, consisting of 36 members from the Air Combat Command (MACOM), in charge of organising the flights.

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS



Ejército del Aire

The Army's Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) unit is responsible for identifying and processing the Afghan evacuees.

Torrejón air base became the first reception point for the new arrivals and in just 24 hours the Military Emergency Unit (UME) and base personnel had set up a camp for 800 people.

AGAINST THE CLOCK

“Every night, when the A400M aircraft arrived from Dubai in Kabul, they had a window of just one hour to get everyone in, they had to do it against the clock: land, load and leave”, explain mission participants. The first flight arrived in Madrid with 53 refugees in the early hours of Thursday 19 August, after a stopover in Dubai. The aim of the mission was to get as many people out as possible, but it was a highly complex task. Those who had worked for Spain had to be located and asked to come to the vicinity of the airfield. The site was bordered by a sewage-filled canal and the entrances were jammed with thousands of people, including families with children and elderly people. Outside, everything was controlled by the Taliban, who did not hesitate to use force against those who tried to approach; inside, it was only possible to do what US troops allowed.

Entering one by one was very difficult, so some Afghans who had worked for Spain decided to gather in groups; they waved the Spanish flag or red cloths and shouted: “Spain! Spain!” It was the best way for Spanish troops to identify them.

Robles: “It is a military operation for humanitarian purposes and to save lives”



Ejército del Aire

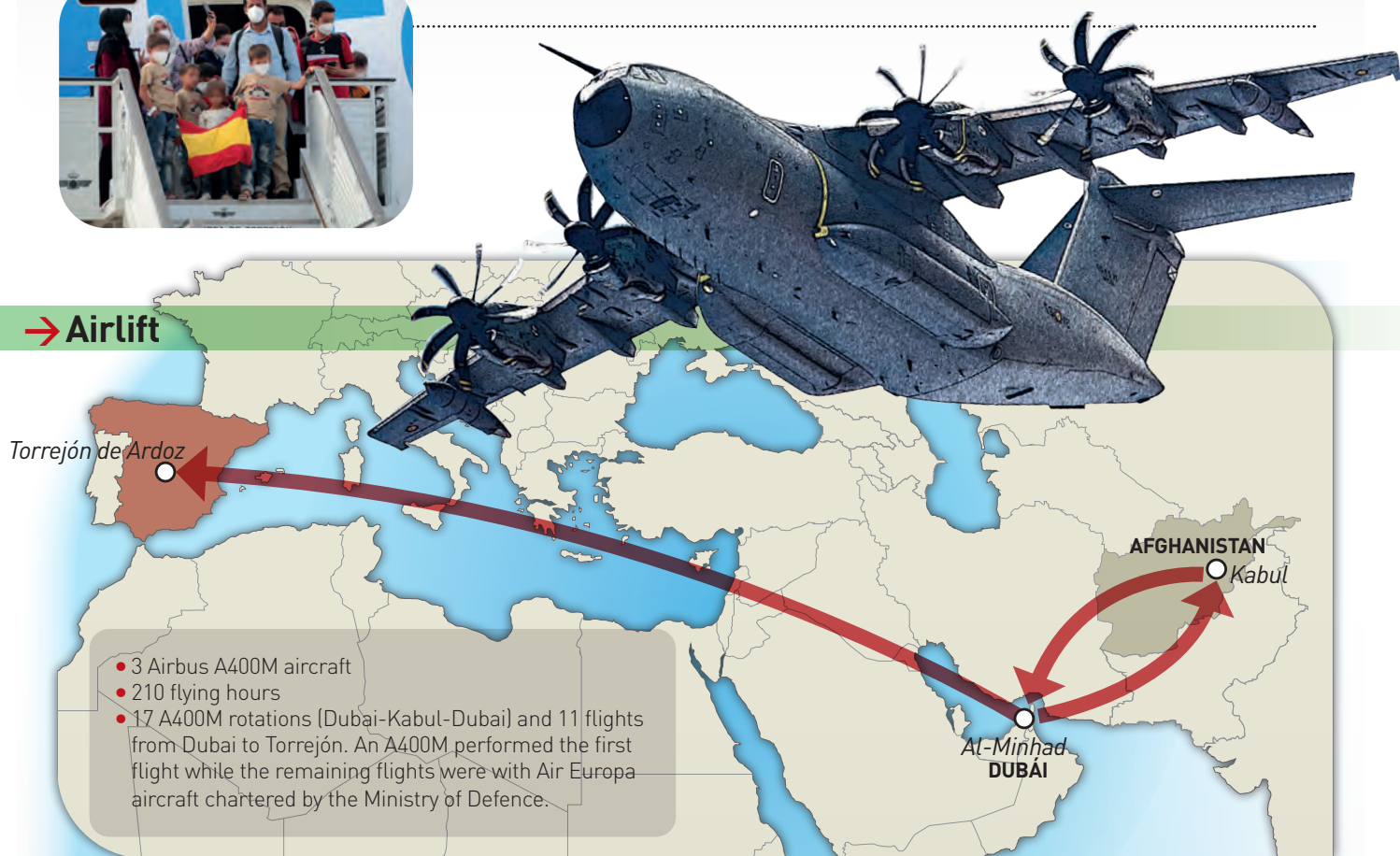
The first 53 refugees arrive in Madrid on an A400M flight in the early hours of 19 August, after a stopover in Dubai. The rest arrive on Air Europa aircraft chartered by the Ministry of Defence.

EVACUATION FROM KABUL

From 14 to 30 August, following the Taliban's return to power, the US and NATO allies managed to get 120,000 refugees out of Afghanistan. Spain evacuated 2,206 people from Kabul airport. Subsequently, on 11 and 12 October, another 244 people arrived at Torrejón air base from Islamabad (Pakistan) as part of the second phase of the evacuation operation from third countries.



→ Airlift



→ Staff deployed in Kabul and Dubai 130 service members

THE Air Force bore most of the load of the joint Armed Forces operation, with personnel from various units, mostly from the 31st Fighter Wing (crews and maintenance personnel), the Air Deployment Support Squadron and medical personnel from the Aeromedical Evacuation Unit and the Air Deployment Support Medical Unit. Troops from the 1st Information

Operations Regiment and a team of Spanish Army Green Berets also joined the deployment. In just 24 hours, UME and Air Force personnel set up a transit camp with a capacity for 800 people at Torrejón air base to temporarily house Afghan refugees arriving in our country. Spain and the US agreed to host up to 4,000 Afghans at the joint-use bases of Morón and Rota.

> Torrejón temporarily accommodates evacuees

Transit camp



Casa de SM el Rey

The King and Defence Minister greet the military personnel in charge of setting up the reception facilities in Torrejón.

THERE was frantic activity at Torrejón de Ardoz air base in Madrid on 17 August. Members of the Military Emergency Unit (UME) and Air Force were racing against the clock to set up a camp to provide shelter for a few hours for Afghan evacuees who were due to arrive shortly. The temporary transit facility, which could accommodate up to 800 people, consisted of 42 multi-purpose accommodation cells, each with a capacity for ten people, 100 double bunk beds installed in the base's sports centre, and eleven containers that could accommodate six people each, men on one side, women and children on the other. A dining room was also set up for 200 people, as well as toilet and shower areas, play areas for younger children and recreation areas for the elderly.

Refugees were expected to spend a maximum of 72 hours in the camp before being transferred to Spanish reception centres or to other countries, although this time was considerably reduced. They were attended to by professionals from the Secretariat of State for Migration and NGOs, including the Red Cross, Accem (Spanish Catholic Association for Immigrants) and CEAR (Spanish Commission for Refugee Aid), who were assisted by interpreters translating from Pashto or Dari into Spanish, thereby facilitating communication with the new arrivals.

"We have a duty to those people who helped Spain", the Defence Minister stated on 22 August during one of her visits to the camp. "These people", added Margarita Robles, "are leaving their country, leaving their lives, leaving with nothing; however their desire for freedom makes it all worthwhile and we are trying to give them human, loving and emotional support".

On the previous day, Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, visited the facilities with Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, Charles Michel, President of the European Council, and Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Ursula von der Leyen thanked Spain for its work in receiving Afghan refugees. "It is", she said, "an example of the European soul" in the face of a situation she described as "a tragedy and a severe blow to the international community".

The Prime Minister also joined His Majesty King Felipe VI during his tour of the facility on 28 August, accompanied by six ministers from the Afghanistan Repatriation Task Force.

King Felipe was briefed on the capabilities and functioning of the camp and spoke to Gabriel Ferrán, the Spanish Ambassador to Afghanistan and his deputy, Paula Sánchez, who had returned from Kabul on the last Spanish flight.

ROTA AND MORÓN

In a telephone conversation held on 23 August, Pedro Sánchez and US President Joe Biden agreed that the bases in Rota (Cádiz) and Morón de la Frontera (Seville) would take in Afghans who had helped the US, up to a maximum of 4,000 people, for two weeks until their final destination was decided. In a White House statement, Biden praised Spain's "leadership" in "mobilising international support" for Afghan women and girls in the face of the Taliban's rise to power.

The first 800 Afghan evacuees arrived at Rota naval air base on 27 August on board two flights.

The fitting-out of both bases was carried out with the collaboration of Spanish military personnel. "Thank you to the men and women of the Ministry

of Defence and the embassy for working closely with the US Armed Forces to care for personnel evacuated from Afghanistan. Our global network of friends and partners is vitally important to this mission", US Secretary of Defense, Lloyd J. Austin, said on his Twitter account.

Elena Tarilonte

**The Military
Emergency Unit and
base personnel set
up the facilities in
just 24 hours**

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

and more than 200 people were injured. The Pentagon confirmed the deaths of thirteen US soldiers, the highest number of casualties suffered by the US military since 2011. Responsibility for the massacre was claimed by the Islamic State of Khorasan, or ISIS-K, the Afghan affiliate of Daesh, which is at odds with the Taliban.

LAST FLIGHTS

By then, almost all countries had already ended their evacuation operations in Afghanistan. On Friday 27 August, Spain ended the mission when the entire operation returned to Madrid. 2,206 persons had been successfully moved out of the country. Not everyone who wanted to leave was able to do so, but as many as possible were evacuated. Some of those who had worked for Spain lived in Herat or Qala-i-Naw, 800 km from the capital.



Air Deployment Support Squadron (EADA) personnel protect a group of refugees at Hamid Karzai airport in Kabul.

These were very difficult journeys, and many were unable to get past Taliban checkpoints and reach Kabul. On the night of 28 August, the Defence Minister welcomed 55 military personnel from the 31st Fighter Wing and the Air Deployment Support Squadron (EADA) at Zaragoza air

base who had travelled from Dubai in the last two A400M. In statements to the press, Margarita Robles thanked them for their “heroic work” in evacuating Afghan citizens “putting their own lives at risk. (...) They come with the satisfaction of a mission accomplished, but many have told me that they return with heavy hearts because they know many people have been left behind”. This was a “very complex” mission, in which they demonstrated “their professionalism and humanity”.

The United States ended its mission in Afghanistan on the night of 30 August, after the last of its aircraft took off from Kabul airport. This marked the end of the operation to bring the troops home and the process of evacuating around 120,000 civilians from Afghan soil.

Víctor Hernández/Santiago Fdez. del Vado

The EU cannot be a passive player

EU defence ministers discuss the situation in Afghanistan and lessons learned for future missions and operations

“**E**UROPE cannot be a passive player, or look the other way, regarding the future of the people of Afghanistan”. Defence Minister Margarita Robles took advantage of the first meeting of EU defence ministers following the latest events in Afghanistan —held on 1 and 2 September in Slovenia, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the Union— and expressed Spain’s position and concern for the situation of the Afghan people to her European counterparts. She insisted that “the hard lessons learned in Afghanistan must be taken into account in all our other missions” and must serve to “mark a before and after in the way the European Union projects security”.

She also reiterated that “stabilisation missions can never end abruptly. The delicate balances they help to create are upset if external actors suddenly disappear”. She also proposed to EU Defence Ministers that “as soon as possible, the necessary actions be resumed to facilitate the departure from Afghanistan of the remaining family members of those Afghan workers who could not be evacuated and of other particularly vulnerable people, especially women and girls, who wish to leave Afghanistan”.

Margarita Robles began her speech by paying “a heartfelt tribute to all the men and women of Spain’s Armed Forces, to the military personnel of other countries, and to those workers who have perished in Afghanistan over the past 20 years”, as

well as to the thirteen US soldiers and the Afghan citizens who lost their lives in the attack on 26 August at Kabul airport. “We must not resign ourselves to the idea that their deaths were in vain”, she stated. The minister stressed that “Spain, like so many other countries, has used all the means at its disposal to try to save and evacuate as many people as possible”, and on this point she highlighted the “enormous effort of the Spanish Armed Forces who, in a risky and extremely difficult rescue mission, managed to evacuate 2,000 people from Afghanistan. We were also a hub for the European Union, NATO and US aid workers. More than 5,000 Afghans have entered the West via Spain”. She also pointed out that “the European Union must encourage the entire international community to speak with a single voice of active vigilance and pressure on the Taliban regime, to limit as much as possible the current internal scenario of terror and fanaticism” and, at the same time, “prevent human rights violations”, with special attention to and protection for women and girls. In the same vein, she said that “we cannot accept that Afghanistan is once again a haven for international terrorism”. The minister concluded her speech by stating that “the lessons learned in Afghanistan, although very hard, must serve to find a better way forward and, as defence ministers, the challenge and the obligation to lead this change is our responsibility”.



FIFTEEN YEARS on mission in Lebanon

The Minister of Defence visits Spanish troops deployed at the Miguel de Cervantes base in Marjayoun

“**S**PAIN’S contribution over these past fifteen years has contributed to ensuring the cessation of hostilities and a safer environment in the south of Lebanon”. That is how the Spanish General Javier Mur Laguna, who commands the East Multinational Brigade, summed up for the Defence Minister the results of the peacekeeping mission that our Armed Forces have been carrying out in the country since 15 September 2006. Margarita Robles travelled to Lebanon in mid July to spend two days with the Spanish troops that are part of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). In a videoconference with Jean-Pierre Lacroix, UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Ms Robles

confirmed that a formal proposal would be submitted to lead the mission next year, while also underlining “Spain’s firm commitment to peace and to the United Nations”. Mr Lacroix stressed that Spain has a very important role to play in this mission and thanked it for “all the good things it contributes to UNIFIL and to all our operations in general”.

The visit commenced at midday on 28 July at Beirut’s *Rafiq Hariri* airport, where Ms Robles received a call from her Lebanese counterpart, Zeina Akar, apologising for not being able to welcome her and conveying her support to Spain. The Minister then travelled to the *Miguel de Cervantes* base in Marjayoun, where most of the Spanish contingent is located.

A RESILIENT COUNTRY

At the base, General Mur briefed the minister on the current situation in Lebanon and the progress of the mission in the past 15 years. While indicating that, although the situation in the country is complex at the present time, he insisted that, if history has taught us anything, it is that “Lebanon is a very resilient country”. He also provided an analysis of the latest incidents on the *Blue Line*, which is patrolled by Spanish troops on foot and in vehicles along 120 kilometres of the country’s southern border. After meeting with the heads of unit of the Spanish Brigade (BRILIB XXXV), Margarita Robles presided over the award of the Grand Cross of Military Merit to the Spanish Ambassador to Lebanon, José María

Minister Robles: “Spain is fully committed to the United Nations and to peace”

Ferré de la Peña, and visited the Tactical Operations Centre (TOC).

In her subsequent speech to the troops, Ms Robles thanked them for “all their dedication and generosity”, and said that the citizens of Lebanon could rest assured that “wherever there is a Spanish soldier, not only the flag of Spain, but also those of humanity and generosity, fly very high”.

10,000 MEN AND WOMEN OF UNIFORM IN 15 YEARS

In September 2006, under United Nations Resolution 1701, which extended and expanded a mission that began in 1978, Spain deployed troops in Lebanon for the first time, with the aim of patrolling the south of the country and preventing clashes between Lebanon and Israel, guaranteeing humanitarian access to the civilian population, and also accompanying and assisting the Lebanese Armed Forces.

There were previously 1,100 military service members in the Spanish contingent, although since 2012 this number has stood at around 600-700. Over 10,000 Spanish servicemen and women have been deployed during this period in Lebanon, 15 of whom have died in the course of the mission.

Personnel from 45 nations around the globe currently participate in UNIFIL, amounting to almost 11,000 *Blue Helmets*. Indonesia is the country that provides the most personnel (1,300), followed by Italy with just over 1,000 troops, the latter also leading Sector West. Sector East, led by Spain, comprises 3,500 troops of nine nationalities, including 600 military service members from the 1st Brigade Aragón, of whom 43 are women. In terms of contribution to the mission, Spain comes third in Europe, and seventh in the world.

SUPPORT TO LEBANESE MILITARY PERSONNEL

On 30 August, the UN Security Council unanimously approved the renewal of UNIFIL's mandate for one year, including a new point of support to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), due to the country's critical economic situation.

Spain had taken part, together with 25 other countries, in a donors' videoconference called on 17 June by France to attend to urgent needs for assistance, leading the Ministry of Defence to order the Operations Command to organise the dispatch of food and medical supplies for the LAF. On 29 June, 22,000 combat rations were shipped.

Subsequently, on 2 September, some 200 tonnes of non-perishable foodstuffs and two containers of medical supplies for the Military Hospital of the Lebanese capital arrived by ship in Beirut port.

The Spanish brigade carries out other activities to promote development in the area. Of note are collaboration programmes such as the *Cervantes* Spanish-language teaching programme; the *Sancho Panza* Spanish cuisine programme; the *Bachiller Carrasco* programme, which supports teaching staff in the field of psychological

assistance; and the *Almazara* programme, which supports olive growers. In addition, there are various quick impact projects, geared toward achieving specific and immediate improvements in the socio-economic infrastructure of the area.

On the second day of her visit to the Spanish troops, the Defence Minister inaugurated one of these projects, aimed at improving firefighting collaboration with civil defence in the province of Nabatiyeh. Ms Robles wished to “extend special and heartfelt gratitude for the hospitality that Lebanon has always shown to the Spanish”, indicating that this cooperation project “is yet another example of the union between our two peoples”.

For his part, the province governor gave thanks for this second donation (the first comprised personal protective equipment against the pandemic) to the province's civil defence centres and also stressed “the good relations between the two countries” and especially “between the inhabitants of the south and the Spanish Brigade soldiers”.

UNIFIL COMMAND

Spain will propose to the United Nations to take over the command of UNIFIL next year. The mandate of the UN Security Council was due to expire on 31 August, but has been extended until December. The selection process to choose the lead country for the mission in Lebanon is scheduled to begin at the end of September. “I believe that Spain deserves to lead the mission, above all because of its firm commitment to the United Nations and to peace”, stressed Margarita Robles, on a leadership that “in principle, would not increase the number of Spanish troops”.

Editorial team

Photos: Rubén Somonte/MDE



Minister Robles inaugurates one of the collaboration projects in Lebanon, geared toward civil defence centres in the Nabatiyeh province.



Troops from the BRILAT I-29 Battalion Zamora in the Romanian training area.

Soldiers with VERY HIGH READINESS

The Army provides 270 military personnel for NATO's biggest exercise programme in Eastern Europe

MILITARY personnel from the 7th Airborne Light Infantry Brigade *Galicia* (known as BRILAT) have been deployed in Romania to participate in various NATO multinational exercises as part of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). From 14 May to 10 June, the Spanish contingent, made up of 270 soldiers, took part in *Noble Jump II/21*, an exercise of activation, projection and deployment of the VJTF units to

the Cincu training area, where they joined up with forces from the United Kingdom, Italy and Romania, as well as from Turkey's 66th Mechanised Brigade, a unit that is the core of the NATO Response Force in 2021. The Spanish soldiers subsequently integrated with the US army in *Saber Guardian 21* exercises.

These activities are part of *Steadfast Defender 21*, NATO's most significant exercise this year, conducted by the Allied Joint Force Command in Naples with the aim of enhancing capabilities

to plan, conduct and execute military operations in NATO member countries.

"I must highlight the efforts of all the personnel involved in the deployment, including the units and headquarters that have supported us in one way or another", said Lieutenant Colonel Ignacio Armada, commanding officer of the I-29 Battalion *Zamora* of the 7th Brigade *Galicia*, a unit that also deployed a field artillery battery and a company of sappers in Cincu. The Spanish contingent was completed



A team of precision marksmen in the Cincu training area. Bottom left: BRILAT vehicles disembark in the Romanian port of Constanta. Bottom right: simulated evacuation of a wounded person, while two VAMTACs equipped with grenade launchers can be seen in the background.



Spanish military personnel joined up with forces from the United States, Italy, the United Kingdom, Romania and Turkey

with 55 service members from the Valladolid 61st Logistics Support Group and a further 15 from the Signal Corps, as well as 85 light and heavy vehicles with different features and armament.

The contingent commander highlights everybody's flexibility when it comes to responding to the incidents flagged by the DIREX (Direction of Exercise): "We have been able to adapt to the constant changes and restrictions imposed, making the best of the situation and taking advantage of all the opportunities for instruction and training".

Due to the situation caused by COVID-19, strict health and safety measures were complied with when performing the activities, both in the preparation and deployment phase and in the activities carried out in Romania. "Right from the start, with the appropriate awareness and organisation of the tasks and duties, we were able to accomplish all missions with minimal impact", says Lieutenant Colonel Armada.

FROM GALICIA TO ROMANIA

The deployment phase commenced on 3 May, with the transport of all the materiel necessary to participate in the exercises from General Morillo base in Figueirido, Pontevedra to the Arenal dock in Vigo Port's stowage area.

The vehicles and a total of 15 containers were shipped on 5 May, arriving 9 days later in the Romanian port of Constanta on the Black Sea coast, from where they travelled by road to the Cincu training area.

Personnel flew from Vigo airport to Sibiu airport in Romania on 14 and 16 May and on 19 May the contingent attained the final operational capability required to commence the exercises.

The force sent to Cincu is part of the Spanish battalion of 800 soldiers that is ready to travel within five to seven days to any allied country, should it prove necessary to defend it from external attack, integrated within the VJTF, a multinational rapid reaction brigade of around 7,000 soldiers, which is part of the NATO Response Force.



Three soldiers from the multinational contingent (Italian, Spanish and Romanian) in Noble





Jump. Below: combat exercise in a village.

*VJTF units
are ready
to travel
within five
to seven
days to any
allied country
under external
attack*



A rifleman from the Battalion Zamora of the 7th Brigade Galicia takes aim with his G-36E, while a VAMTAC ST-5 equipped with a 12.7 mm machine gun can be seen behind him.

2,200 military personnel and 550 vehicles from 12 countries were deployed in Romania



SNMG-2

Transatlantic reinforcement

STEADFAST DEFENDER, NATO's main exercise this year, has brought together more than 9,000 participants from over 20 allied and partner countries from North America and Europe. It has been "the first in a new series of exercises planned to ensure that NATO's land, maritime and air forces are well trained, highly interoperable and able to respond rapidly and effectively to potential threats from any direction", according to US General Tod D. Wolters, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).

One of the objectives was to practise military mobility, moving large numbers of troops, equipment and supplies across the Atlantic and Europe to different training areas, located in Portugal, Germany and Romania. It was also the first major test of NATO's adapted command structure. It involved the participation of two commands, one focused on logistics, in charge of facilitating inter-country deployments in Europe —the Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC), based in Ulm, Germany—, and the other to reinforce the protection of maritime lines of communication in the North Atlantic —the Joint Force Command Norfolk (JFCNF)—, based in Norfolk, USA.

The first part of the exercise focused on the rapid reinforcement of NATO's European allies by US forces. This phase, led by the JFCNF, included an air-naval exercise in which some 20 ships and dozens of aircraft participated with the aim of securing strategic lines of communication in Atlantic waters. The Frigate *Méndez Núñez* (F-104) formed part of the exercise as the flagship of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2), which has been under the command of Rear Admiral Manuel Aguirre Adereguía for the past year. The Spanish frigate performed various firing, anti-submarine warfare and airspace control exercises, making this the first time a Navy vessel has controlled the modern F-35 fighters of the US Marine Corps.

"Defender 21 has been an exceptional opportunity for SNMG1 and SNMG2 to operate in the same task force for the first time this year", Rear Admiral Manuel Aguirre said in a press conference. "Working together and coordinating efforts synergistically", he added, "is a force multiplier and contributes decisively to showcasing NATO's strength and enhancing its deterrence and resolve".

This rapid intervention mechanism came into being at the Wales Summit in 2014. At that meeting, NATO heads of state and government decided to respond to the new security environment created by Russia's invasion of Crimea and the turmoil in the Middle East. Since then, the member countries have taken turns in leading this multinational force. Spain led the first VJTF in 2016 —with the 7th Brigade *Galicia* (BRILAT) as the base unit— and, in subsequent years, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and Poland followed suit.

A total of 2,200 soldiers and 550 vehicles from 12 countries have been deployed in Romania under the command of Turkey, which constitutes the core of the force in 2021. This force is built around Turkey's 66th Mechanised Infantry Brigade and is completed by units from Albania, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States.

DEMONSTRATION OF CAPABILITIES

The Joint Allied Power Demonstration Day (JAPPD), the last major event of Exercise *Noble Jump II/21*, was scheduled to take place on 3 June. The demonstration included a wide range of activities, from reconnaissance to tactical movements and deployments and live-fire exercises using different weapon systems. Among the capabilities deployed were reconnaissance drones; precision marksmen and mortar teams; forces of special operations, explosive ordnance disposal, nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological response; and close air support (CAS) mission specialists tasked with conducting



Spanish soldiers conducted various exercises with other armies to test interoperability and unify procedures.
On the right: members of the 61st Logistics Support Group practise vehicle recovery.

helicopter manoeuvre. "There have been many and varied exercises with other armies aimed at testing interoperability and unifying procedures", sums up Lieutenant Colonel Armada.

The event included the presence of US M1A1 Abrams tanks, Turkish VURANs, Italian Dardo infantry fighting vehicles, Romanian TABC-79s and Spanish Uro VAMTACs, among others. "Our vehicles have responded wonderfully in a very complicated terrain which had become a perpetual quagmire", assures the commander of the Battalion Zamora.

On 6 June, the Distinguished Visitors Day (DVD) was scheduled to take place at the Cincu training area. The multinational contingent displayed its interoperability in a defensive exercise and a static exhibition of vehicles, equipment and materiel was held by the participating countries. On behalf of Spain, the day was attended by the commander of the Operations Command (CMOPS), Lieutenant General Francisco Braco, who thanked the Spanish troops for the work carried out in conjunction with the other allied forces.

Upon termination of Exercise *Noble Jump II/21*, the units of the VJTF Brigade joined Exercise *Saber Guardian 21*, as part of the Multinational Division Southeast (MND-SE) together with troops from the United States army. Once again, the Spanish contingent displayed its capabilities. "After the planning phase, a 72-hour operation was performed involving a forward passage of lines", said Lieutenant Colonel Armada. "Subsequently, in a stabilisation operation, the battlegroup Zamora planned and led a cordon and search operation in a wooded area, in which we were joined by a British

reconnaissance company and a Turkish mechanised company, as well as brigade artillery".

At the same time, personnel from BRILAT general headquarters travelled to the German base of Grafenwoehr to join the Italian Army's Acqui Division and participate in the coordination team of the *Defender Europe 21* exercises.

VJTF 2022

While the 7th Brigade *Galicía* was training with the allies in Romania, in Spain the 12th Brigade *Guadarrama* "was right in the middle of a hit and run exercise, the unit's main training activity before becoming part of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force in January next year.

In the exercise, carried out at the San Gregorio national training centre, the Brigade's troops assigned to the VJTF-22 were assessed. In addition, about one hundred armoured and mechanised vehicles and around 80 wheeled vehicles of the Brigade trained at *El Goloso* base in Madrid in order to be reviewed by a NATO team and obtain certification for the next VJTF.

Víctor Hernández

Photos: NATO and Army



A Spanish soldier and a member of the Romanian contingent converse during training.



E-3A AWACS aircraft during a refuelling manoeuvre.

Spain in the AWACS UNIT

NATO's exclusive Airborne Early Warning (AEW) club includes 36 Spanish Air Force personnel

A total of 36 Spanish Air Force officers and NCOs contribute their experience and professionalism every day to the NATO Airborne Early Warning Control Force (NAEW&C), known as the "AWACS Unit".

The NAEW&C Force is NATO's operational unit par excellence, created to provide immediate multinational surveillance, early warning and air control capability to support Alliance

objectives. It consists of a Headquarters, a Mission Systems Engineering Centre (MSEC) and two Components: the multinational E-3A, located at Geilenkirchen air base in Germany, and the British component with a new fleet of E-7 *Wedgetail* that will operate from the RAF base in Lossiemouth, Scotland, as of 2024. It also has four forward bases in Greece, Italy, Norway and Turkey.

Of the 36 posts occupied by Spanish personnel, three are at HQ, two in the

National Support Unit (NSU) and 31 in Component E-3A. Since joining the programme in January 1999, Spain has risen through the ranks and currently commands a division at HQ and two component squadrons.

In addition to being the senior officer of the Spanish personnel assigned to the force, Colonel Antonio José Azuaga is head of the Operations, Plans and CIS Division at HQ, responsible for ensuring the maintenance of the unit's operational



Staff sergeants Juan Simarro and Miguel Carrero (left) provide administrative support from the NSU (National Support Unit). Major Juan Diego Narbona (right) is the Tactical Director of the E-3A AWACS.

capability by developing, promulgating and applying operational, flight training and CIS (Communications and Information Systems) policies, regulations and standards.

“It is a tough and demanding assignment, with high visibility and influence, which obliges you to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and conduct and to enhance your sense of responsibility given the importance and implications of the decisions and actions you take but, in return, it offers a great opportunity to represent Spain in this position and contribute to the mission of the unit, which makes me very proud”, says the colonel.

He assures that participating in this unit of the Alliance awards Spain a place in the exclusive AEW (Airborne Early Warning) club. “The present and future development of the programme is constantly changing and the decisions in which our country is involved are crucial to the viability and future of this critical NATO capability”, he explains.

Colonel Azuaga also highlights the “enriching and rewarding” experience of working in a mixed environment, in contact with people of 19 nationalities,

civilian and military, men and women, with different mentalities and methods, and where teamwork is common practice.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

This diversity is precisely the main focus of the work of Major Abel Habas, head of the Manpower, Military Personnel and Training Department of the Human Resources Division at HQ. “With a team of just five people, we manage the needs of around 1,400 NAEW members in these three areas”, says Major Habas, adding that the challenge is met “with great commitment, dedication, leadership, loyalty and frank and close communication”.



Second Lieutenant Adolfo Baños and Staff Sergeant Francisco Juárez carry out maintenance work on the E3A.

Another very important post held by a Spaniard is that of Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Sánchez Bas, commanding officer of Flight Squadron 2, in charge of providing trained and combat-ready crews to carry out the missions assigned to them.

This officer explains that the usual complexity of this job has been compounded this past year by the challenge of maintaining the squadron's level of operability despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which has changed the way air operations are conducted and complicated aircrew management processes. Despite this, he affirms that work has continued at 100 per cent and that the key to success has been “the training and discipline behind a team of people of different nationalities who bring a variety and richness that is difficult to match”.

For flight squadron personnel, this training begins before deployment to Geilenkirchen air base. In the case of Lieutenant Colonel Sánchez Bas, in addition to having a military transport pilot's certificate and more than 2,000 flying hours in multi-engine aircraft, he was required to pass a land survival and water rescue course. Once in Germany, training continues with an



Modernisation of the E-3A fleet

THE E-3A AWACS is a militarised development of the *Boeing 707-320B*. This command, surveillance and control platform can cover an area of 312,000 km², meaning that two of these aircraft with overlapping orbits would cover the entire Iberian Peninsula. It can detect low-flying targets at a distance of 400 km and at 520 km if flying at medium altitude.

Originally designed as an elevated radar platform, the aircraft has evolved steadily over the past 30 years to cope with geopolitical changes, new NATO missions and new operational requirements, becoming an essential element for air battle management.

Since the Initial Acquisition Programme (1978-1988), a number of upgrading and modernisation programmes have been carried out with the collective commitment and funding of the 17 nations participating in the NAEW&C Force programme.

The latest of these upgrade programmes is the so-called FLEP (Final Life Extension Programme), which envisages the modernisation of the platform to extend its service until 2035. The awarded contract was signed by the NAPMA Agency and Boeing in November 2019, with a commitment that the programme will be completed by the end of 2026.

"FLEP is a comprehensive programme that not only addresses modernisations and improvements to the air platform, but also includes the adaptation of flight and mission simulators, the development of new ground support systems and the creation of new development systems, including a System

Integration Laboratory and a Software Development Environment", explains Colonel Azuaga, head of the Operations, Plans and CIS Division at NAEW&C Force Headquarters.

With regard to the airborne platform, improving capabilities and meeting minimum military requirements means addressing upgrades to its voice and data link communications systems, improvements to broadband networks beyond line of sight, and upgrades to the hardware and software infrastructure of mission computers, while addressing current and emerging issues of hardware and software obsolescence and spare parts availability.

In the area of Data Links, the programme envisages upgrading or replacing JTIDS (Joint Tactical Information Distribution System) terminals with new Link-16 terminals with more advanced functionalities.

On the communications side, new cryptographic devices will be integrated to maintain the capability to exchange voice and data with command and control units at operational and tactical level, such as the Composite Air Operation Centres, as well as with air, land and naval platforms. The aircraft will also be fitted with more robust and disturbance-resistant communications equipment to ensure communications in complex electromagnetic environments.

As for passive detection, ESM (Electronic Support Measures) system hardware will be modernised, with a complete overhaul to address obsolescence.

aircraft-specific training course lasting about six months, updated every year with a theoretical test, a simulator test and a flight test. A refresher course in shooting, explosives identification, NBCR (nuclear, biological, chemical and radioactive) warfare, firefighting, survival equipment and cabin resource management must also be taken annually.

A complete and intense training plan that Major Juan Diego Narbona, the Squadron's Operations officer and Tactical Director, also had to undergo. According to this officer, the reward is having the opportunity to participate in major NATO exercises, as well as to routinely conduct real missions and take part in operations such as *Inherent Resolve* or *Sea Guardian*, which provide experience that is "very difficult to obtain in other postings".

CIS SQUADRON

Another squadron under Spanish command is the Communications and Information Systems (CIS) squadron, led by Lieutenant Colonel Lino Iglesias. The peculiarity of this unit is that it serves as a cross-cutting support service to all entities located at the Geilenkirchen base, i.e., not only to NAEW but also to the National Support Units (NSUs), external entities such as NSPA (NATO Support and Procurement Agency) or NAPMA (NAEW&C Programme Agency), and even other units that Germany, as host nation, maintains at the base to provide common services.

"It is not a typical NATO unit, both in terms of the CIS means it employs and the many and varied relationships it has with external actors", explains the lieutenant colonel. "The environment in which it operates is very demanding and dynamic in order to provide solutions that meet operational needs, and it requires a very high technical level, so staff need a permanent plan to update their knowledge", he adds.

This past year, the Squadron has also had to deal with a new scenario imposed by the pandemic, which required providing solutions to allow remote working with minimal impact on productivity and to compensate

The aircraft has evolved steadily over the past 30 years

Spain has risen to positions of prominence and currently commands a division at HQ

for the inability to attend meetings, working groups and training courses.

This complexity affects Staff Sergeant Héctor Rodríguez, who performs various tasks within the squadron. As a staff assistant, he is responsible for coordinating and assisting in the planning and execution of all matters related to CIS personnel and material to be deployed in operations and exercises. He is also UDM (Unit Deployment Coordinator), travel clerk (in charge of documentation required for deployment) and equipment custodian. However, he points out that working in such an international and diverse environment means that he can “learn a lot, not only on a professional level, with the use of different procedures and resources, but also on a personal level, because of the possibility of interacting with colleagues from other cultures and different ways of thinking and living”.

TRAINING

The Spanish Armed Forces are also well represented in the Aircrew Training Squadron. Major Joaquín Fernández is one of the instructor pilots of the Pilot and Flight Mechanic Training Section. He is responsible for the in-flight phase of training, coordinates the simulator schedule and follows up on training plans. In his work, he highlights the attitude of the students who are always receptive to continue learning and improving. “The fundamental quality that identifies us is motivation; without it, no matter how many skills you have, it is impossible to achieve the excellent performance that is present in all our operations”, he says.

Master Sergeant David Sánchez and Staff Sergeant Ignacio Martínez, Air Surveillance Operator Instructor and Evaluator, respectively, also belong to the same unit. According to the master sergeant, the biggest challenge of his job is knowing how to connect with the students due to

the diversity of cultures, backgrounds and experiences, but which, without a doubt, pays off because “you put your experience at the disposal of the unit and you receive a great deal of gratitude from the operators who are leaving the Squadron”. The staff sergeant adds that, for a non-commissioned officer in the Command and Control speciality, this posting is “probably the most rewarding one you can have”.

When it comes to assessing the experience of being assigned to such a post, Staff Sergeant Simarro also uses the word “rewarding”. “The wide variety of tasks requires continuous learning of new procedures and working methods”, he says.

Regarding how personnel from other NAEW Force countries assess Spanish military personnel, Colonel Azuaga states that Spanish personnel “have a series of values that make them highly valued as



Two intercept controllers —Captain Felipe Gonzalo and a Polish military officer— establish radio contact with the aircraft under their control.

NATIONAL SUPPORT UNIT

All of these Spanish military personnel receive administrative support from the National Support Unit (NSU): NATO forms, official communications, secondments, leave of absence, medical leave, language exam applications, etc. Everything passes through the hands of staff sergeants Juan Francisco Simarro and Miguel Carrero. However, the unit not only provides services to personnel assigned to the NAEW&C Force, but also to all Spanish military personnel assigned to NATO units in Germany that report to the Defence Staff, a total of ten units.

a whole; their discipline, responsibility, respect and professionalism are hallmarks of the Spanish contribution”.

A good example of this recognition is the latest annual evaluation report carried out by the international chain of command, in which 75 percent of Spanish military personnel assigned to the NAEW&C were rated as “outstanding” and the other 25 percent as “very good”. In addition, many of them have received rewards and commendations not only from the unit, but even from SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander Europe).

Nuria Fernández/Photos: NAEW&C

First European Union Congress on Military Health Services

GD Juan José Sánchez Ramos
Inspector-General for Defence Health

FROM 6 to 8 October, the Centre for National Defence Studies (CESEDEN) hosted the First European Union Congress on Military Health Services, inaugurated by the Undersecretary of Defence, Amparo Valcarce.

The health crisis that our societies have suffered in recent months has once again demonstrated the value of the Armed Forces in supporting the civilian population in any emergency situation. As part of this contribution, the Military Health Services of the European Union nations have proven to be an effective instrument in supporting the actions taken by states in these situations.

Lessons can also be learned in crises to allow for future improvements. A reflection on what has happened in a type of crisis that knows no borders is all the more useful when there is greater collaboration and a shared vision across the European Union. Therefore, under the motto *Ubi concordia, ibi victoria* (Where there is unity, there is victory), the EU Congress on Military Health Services came into being with the aim of serving as an example of the importance of this synergy.

The Foreign Affairs and Defence Council held in November 2020 prompted the initiative to organise this Congress to discuss, reflect and share views on military health issues related to crisis response.

The Spanish Ministry of Defence strongly promoted this initiative, convinced of the timeliness and wisdom of its objectives and, therefore, offered to host the Congress. The response from EU nations and agencies has been excellent. A number of nations were represented by delegations headed by the inspectors general for defence health or relevant personnel from their organisations. Likewise, the European Union Military Staff (EUMS) and the European Medical Command (EMC) —a project created some

years ago under the umbrella of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)— participated with keynote lectures of great interest to the attendees.

The organisers proposed a series of aspects for discussion related to the support offered by the Armed Forces in the current situation and, thanks to the contributions of the attending nations and organisations, the Congress addressed issues that benefit from a common approach. These issues were structured in three scientific panel discussions: the role of EU Military Health services in support of civilian authorities during the pandemic; the operational challenges that states of uncertainty such as the current crisis pose to medical support; and the importance of strategic health stockpiles and the planning and implementation of preventive measures at European level, including vaccination plans.

The Congress was also a good opportunity to highlight the importance of cooperation with civilian organisations and between military health services at European level, as well as to exchange scientific information and enhance mutual knowledge.

Although most of the speeches and debates were held in person, the technical resources deployed by the CESEDEN meant that speakers and attendees who were unable to travel to Madrid due to the epidemic were able to participate freely via the Internet channel set up for this purpose by the organisation.

***Increased cooperation
between EU military
health services is crucial***

The health crisis has once again demonstrated the value of the Armed Forces in emergency situations



Pepe Díaz

The scientific programme was complemented on 6 October by a visit to Torrejón air base, during which the delegations saw in situ some of the military capabilities for supporting civilian authorities during a health crisis. They also attended a drill that covered medical evacuation options under biosecurity conditions, carried out by different units of the Air Force and the Military Emergency Unit (UME).

CONCLUSIONS

The Congress has yielded interesting conclusions, shared by the European Union member states. Among them is the consideration that the threat of pandemics and epidemics is a well-analysed factor in various national security strategies. In reality, the only uncertainty regarding the cyclical emergence of health crises is their exact timing, an uncertainty that cannot therefore justify being unprepared in the future, unless one is willing to accept the dire consequences. Preparing for the next crisis should thus be seen as already underway, drawing on lessons learned from managing the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is also understood that, the more coordinated the implementation, the more effective preparation will be. It is therefore important to increase cooperation between EU military health services, reflecting this in our structure and

organisation, and to improve concurrent planning with all the authorities being supported.

Another reflection is that, although the links between health and security are well known, in this crisis they have become evident in reality, highlighting the importance of the Armed Forces being in a position to support other authorities, and ultimately the civilian population, in these emergencies. The Armed Forces represent a reserve that can guarantee an immediate response and can contribute to building strategic reserves for pandemics. This readiness is very much appreciated by European society.

It is also noted that, alongside the effort invested in the specific response to the crisis, the European Armed Forces have been able to implement measures that have enabled outbreaks to be controlled in their own forces, thus minimising the impact of the pandemic on operations in order to continue to ensure security and stability.

Once the conclusions had been drawn up, the Inspector General for Defence Health, Major General Juan José Sánchez Ramos, closed the Congress on 8 October with the wish that this first edition could be followed by other future editions in different European locations, until it was consolidated as one of the main meeting forums for European Union Military Health Services.

OSCE representatives visit Zaragoza

The event is framed within the Vienna Document 2011

THE event, which was attended by 29 representatives from 17 countries of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, a representative from the latter, and the military attachés of Morocco and Tunisia, commenced on the afternoon of October 4th in the Palacio de la Antigua Capitanía General in Zaragoza. The welcome address was delivered by Pedro Aróstegui, deputy director for Non-proliferation and Disarmament of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, rear admiral Saturnino Suanes Fernández de Cañete, Head of the Joint Staff's Strategy Division, who briefed the attendees on the Spanish Armed Forces, and colonel Francisco Lanza Mollá, Head of the Spanish Verification Unit, who presented the agenda and logistical details of the event.

On October 5th, a visit to Zaragoza Air Force base took place, where the delegates were briefed on the Air Force's organisation and missions, the functioning of the air base and its units, namely the 15th Wing, the 31st Wing, the Deployment Support Medical Unit, the School of Defence and Support Security Techniques, and the Air Deployment Support Squadron.

The delegates had the opportunity to tour the base's facilities and see several static displays of various sets of equipment and materiel. They were able to observe first-hand the characteristics of the aircraft of the 15th and 31st Wing, the EF-18 fighter and the A400M transport aircraft, respectively. They also visited the flight simulators, maintenance workshops and hangars, and were able to talk to the personnel in charge of these facilities. Upon conclusion, the delegates expressed their satisfaction with the visit, which more than fulfilled the stipulations of the Vienna Document 2011.

The 4th Armoured Regiment *Pavia*, located at *San Jorge* base, was visited by the OSCE delegates on October 6th. After being briefed on the Spanish Army and on the Regiment itself, they toured the living and working areas of the base, and observed several static displays of the Regiment's materiel: *Leopard* 2E tank; cavalry scout vehicle (VEC); *Pizarro* combat vehicle; *Centauro* cavalry reconnaissance and combat vehicle; ground scout and reconnaissance vehicle (VERT); and *Spike* anti-tank missile.

Afterwards, the attendees visited the *Leopard* 2E simulators at the training centre (CENAD) and were transferred to the *San Gregorio* training area, where a tactical demonstration took place involving dual laser precision marksmen, battle tanks and other unit vehicles. After the exercise, the delegates had the chance to talk to participating personnel, returning to the Regiment's facilities for a final briefing. As

was the case in their visit to the air base, the OSCE delegates expressed their satisfaction with the visit to 4th Regiment *Pavia*.

The Vienna Document 2011 requires OSCE's Participating States to organise a visit to an air base and a military facility every five years and, where appropriate, to showcase weapon systems that have recently entered service with their armed forces. During this event, the delegates had the opportunity to learn about the operational organisation and the different weapon systems of the units visited, as well as to tour their facilities and interact with personnel. The Spanish Verification Unit was responsible for organising this event, made possible thanks to the cooperation of the units involved, which provided an excellent overview of our Armed Forces.



EMAD

The delegates had the opportunity to tour the base's facilities and see several static displays

Operation Sea Guardian

Submarine *Tramontana* returns home after 35 days at sea

After a demanding deployment in the Mediterranean Sea, submarine *Tramontana* has concluded its participation in direct support of NATO's Operation Sea Guardian and arrived at its home port of Cartagena.

The 68 crew members can proudly claim to have successfully accomplished their mission and to have achieved the established goals. The first stage of the voyage included a stopover in the Italian port of Augusta for logistical reasons and rest, after which the submarine resumed the assigned mission for 23 consecutive days at sea.

Spending so many days inside a submarine is just another example of the professionalism, training and sacrifice of the Spanish submariners. The harsh living conditions and the effort involved in spending weeks underwater show the merit of the people on board who make it possible.

The participation of the *Tramontana* in this operation has contributed to increasing control of the maritime environment and countering terrorism in Mediterranean waters. To this end, the submarine's main quality, its stealth, has been exploited, which has allowed it to carry out surveillance tasks and maintain a high level of performance throughout the entire patrol period.

Submarine *Tramontana* has been in service for more than 35 years and counting, successfully accomplishing all missions entrusted to it. Taking part in this mission shows the commitment of the Submarine Service, the Navy and Spain to all NATO allies.



Armada

European Maritime Force

Spain takes command at Rota base

ON the morning of 22 September, in a ceremony aboard the *Juan Carlos I*, Fleet Admiral Eugenio Díaz del Río took over command of the European Maritime Force (EUROMARFOR) from Vice-Admiral Xavier Baudouard of the French Navy. The ceremony was presided over by Navy Chief of Staff (AJEMA), Admiral Antonio Martorell, in the presence of the other three countries of the multinational force: France, Italy and Portugal.

EUROMARFOR is a non-standing, multinational military force with naval, air and amphibious capabilities. It was created in 1995 by four partner nations to undertake the missions defined in the Petersberg Declaration. Although primarily deployed under the auspices of the European Union, it can also be deployed in NATO operations and under the mandate of other international organisations. "Today, more than 25 years later,

EUROMARFOR is still a mature and useful tool at the disposal of our nations", said Fleet Admiral Díaz del Río. He added that this force can play an "important role" in cooperation with the countries of the southern



Armada

Mediterranean and West Africa, "an area whose strategic importance for Europe is growing steadily". In this regard, the Navy Chief of Staff indicated that the possibility of activating the force "in an exercise to take place in the Gulf of Guinea" was being explored.

New Military Representative in Brussels

LIEUTENANT General Francisco Javier Fernández Sánchez, Spain's new military representative to NATO and European Union Military Committees took up his new post in Brussels on 1 September. Lieutenant General Francisco Javier Fernández Sánchez was Deputy Chief of Staff of the Air Force. He is a fighter pilot with more than 3,000 flying hours and, among other posts, he was in command of Morón air base and the 11th Wing, and was Deputy Chief of the Canary Islands Air Command.



OVERVIEW



Sgt. Christopher Stewart/US Army

BRILAT in Turkey

Participation in artillery exercise *Dynamic Front*

SOME 80 service members from the 7th Airborne Light Infantry Brigade *Galicía* (known as BRILAT) took part in NATO exercise *Dynamic Front 2021* for artillery units from 5 to 20 September. Held at the Acikir training area in the Turkish town of Polatli, near Ankara, it involved the

armies of the United States, Italy, Turkey and Spain, along with other NATO partner countries. Led by the US Army Europe and Africa Headquarters (USAREUR-AF), the aim of this exercise is to improve the integration and interoperability of all long-range fire support command and control systems.

Vessel *Vigía* returns home

Four months in the Gulf of Guinea

Offshore patrol vessel *Vigía* has completed its maritime safety task within the framework of its African deployment in the waters of the Gulf of Guinea to tackle growing challenges in a highly strategic area of interest for Spain. This mission was carried out as part of the Maritime Operational Command under the operational control of the Operations Command (MOPS). During the 123 days of deployment, the *Vigía* sailed 15,370 nautical miles, called at several ports—in Cape Verde, Ghana, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Angola, Senegal and Mauritania—,

visited and assisted 31 national fishing boats, rescued a fishing vessel adrift at sea in Angola, participated in exercises with vessels from the French, Italian, US and Nigerian navies, and carried out joint patrols with vessels from Senegal and Mauritania.

The ship's main task in this deployment was to conduct maritime safety tasks and to carry out military cooperation activities

(MCA) and cooperative security activities (CSA) with the countries on the West African coast. Illegal activities in this area are placing major international maritime transit routes, as well as fishing grounds where the Spanish fishing community operates, at risk. These activities have contributed to achieving a better knowledge of the maritime capabilities of the countries in the region.



Armada

Air combat over the ocean

Exercise Ocean Sky 2021 in the Canary Islands

In the second half of October, the Canary Islands were the setting for the largest international exercise organised annually by the Spanish Air Force and one of the most important in Europe in the field of air defence. Led by the Air Combat Command (MACOM), *Ocean Sky 2021* involved fighter and strike units with *Eurofighter* and F-18 aircraft, along with F-16C *Viper* fighters from the Greek Air Force, who were invited to participate in the exercise on this occasion.

In total, more than 600 military personnel gathered for two weeks at Gando air base (Gran Canaria) to carry out 27 flight missions in more than 500 sorties. The purpose of

the exercise was to train the capabilities of the Command and Control Centre of the Air Combat Command in an aerial superiority campaign in order to enhance the level of air-to-air combat readiness of all the units involved. In addition to fighter and refuelling units, a NATO E3 *Sentry* (AWACS) took part in support of the Command and Control System, which remained permanently activated. The TLP, NATO's advanced pilot training programme based at Los Llanos air base (Albacete), was also involved and

provided referees to check that the exercise achieved its objectives.

This edition of *Ocean Sky* was coordinated with a parallel exercise for specialised in-flight refuelling aircraft. Led by the European Transport Command, A330 MRTT and KC-767 tanker aircraft from Italy, France, Germany and NATO's MMF programme were deployed to Lanzarote's military airfield, which was the main venue for EART 2021 (European Air Refuelling Training). Spain participated with an A400M transport aircraft.



Santos Cabezas de Diego

Joint training in Lebanon

Spanish contingent trains with Lebanese military personnel

SPANISH military personnel deployed in Lebanon (BRILIB) participated, along with other countries of the Multinational Brigade Sector East, such as India, Indonesia and Nepal, in a joint training exercise with Lebanese Army units. Taking into account the diverse origin of the units, it was necessary to carry out joint instruction and training phases in order to share and unify tactics, techniques and procedures.

This joint training was carried out in different phases: COVID-19 disinfection of personnel and facilities; first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR); urban combat tactics; crowd and riot control; basic detection and identification of mines and explosive devices; specific training for Patrol Leaders; mobile check points; and tactical planning of operations at company-size level.

To this end, each of these phases was led by one of the units of the Multinational Brigade Sector East. In this regard,



EMAD

the Light Protected Task Group, as well as the cynological (K9), explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), medical personnel (ROLE1) and Guardia Civil teams, were involved in the organisation and provision of some of them. Throughout the training, personnel from the 7th Brigade and the 5th Regiment of the Lebanese Army were also present.

Many of the operational activities conducted by UNIFIL units are carried out jointly with Lebanese Army units, giving rise to the need for a community of doctrine, achieved through this type of activity in which criteria for action are unified and techniques and procedures are shared.



Secretary of State for Defence Esperanza Casteleiro and Julián García Vargas, President of the FEINDEF Foundation, at the opening ceremony. Below, displays from INTA (the *Pilum* space launcher), the Navy (model of the *F-110* frigate) and the Army (Castor Sapper Combat Vehicle prototype).





FEINDEF 21 welcomes more than 20,000 professionals and has twice as many visitors as its first edition

International Defence and Security Exhibition

THE International Defence and Security Exhibition (FEINDEF) has established itself as the most important in this sector in Spain and one of the most prominent in Europe. More than 20,000 professionals visited its second edition at the Madrid's international trade fair centre (IFEMA), which from 3 to 5 November became a forum for the exchange of scientific and technological knowledge between defence and security companies, and Spanish and international public and private institutions. The event included forums and conferences, product presentations, agreement signings and an extensive display of Spanish technology, which were open to the 75 official delegations from 32 countries and representatives from various international organisations.

Covering an area of 31,000 m², FEINDEF 21 welcomed more than 300 exhibitors, twice as many as in 2019. There were stands of the Ministries of Defence, the Interior, Industry, Trade and Tourism; the Army and the Navy; other bodies belonging to or attached to the Department, various public institutions; leading companies in this sector, numerous SMEs and foreign trade agency offices of several nations.

The Exhibition showcased a leading industry with a turnover of more than 5,900 million euros a year that represents more than 200,000 direct qualified jobs and

exports 71 percent of its manufactured goods, projecting the strong capabilities of the defence industry and the image of Spain abroad.

SUPPORT FROM THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

"We want to make a significant commitment to Spanish industry, which means progress, RDI technology, modernity for the Armed Forces and creating jobs", emphasised Defence Minister Margarita Robles when visiting the Exhibition on the first day. She also stated that her Department aims to "promote our industry internationally".

Robles stopped at numerous stands during her tour of the exhibition area, including the stand of this year's guest country, the United States. The Defence Minister had an up-close view of the 8x8 Dragon Wheeled Combat Vehicle (WCVs) and inspected the project of the logistics base in Cordoba at the Army stand; the F-110 frigate and S-80 submarine at the Navy stand; and the Predator drones and Space Surveillance Operations Centre

(COVE) at the Air Force stand. She also visited the stands of the Future European Fighter (NGWS-FCAS); Navantia, the main sponsor of FEINDEF 21; Airbus, Expal, Indra, ITP Aero and Iveco; and Bulnes Engineering (Extremadura), where she expressed her support for SMEs, ending her visit at the Ministry of Defence stand.

The visit was preceded by the exhibition's opening ceremony, which was attended by Esperanza Casteleiro, Secretary of State for Defence (SEDEF); Julián García Vargas, President of the FEINDEF Foundation; and Jed Royal, the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency Director. Three video messages were also screened, in which Minister of Industry, Reyes Maroto, Minister of Foreign Affairs, José Manuel Albares, and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, wished FEINDEF 21 every success.

In her speech, Esperanza Casteleiro highlighted the fact that FEINDEF 21 is a "benchmark exhibition, an international showcase of Spain's defence and the capabilities of the companies in terms of technology, development and innovation". "The fact that it brings together the Spanish government, European organisations and representatives from numerous countries reflects a commitment by our authorities and companies to seriously address the future", noted the President of the FEINDEF Foundation, which represented the TEDAE

**The exhibition
promoted
our industry
internationally**



Visitors to the Ministry of Defence stand were provided with information on various programmes at different desks.

and AESMIDE associations and organises the exhibition with the support of the Ministry. In turn, Jed Royal highlighted the “strength” of the relationship between the United States and Spain.

ACTIVITIES

The opening ceremony and visit were followed by the address given by Admiral General Teodoro Esteban López Calderón, Chief of Defence Staff, who presented the main aspects of the Operating Environment 2035 prospective study. “We need a military characterised by its agility, ability to anticipate threats and take advantage of opportunities”, the Chief of Defence stated.

Forums, conferences and round tables were held during the three days of the exhibition, enabling Spanish and international experts to discuss European cooperation in the security and defence field, innovation, civilian applications of military technological developments,

employment, the demographic challenge, sustainability, healthcare, cybersecurity, space, etc.

The second day focused on the International Women’s Forum, as a follow-up to FEINDEF 19, which highlighted women’s presence in overseas operations and in the industrial sector. FEINDEF also held the 2nd edition of the Defence and Security innovation Brokerage (DSiB) “FEINDEF Foundation Innovation Awards” to encourage an exchange of ideas.

**FEINDEF 21
welcomed
more than 300
exhibitors, twice as
many as in 2019**

Agreements signed included the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed on 3 November at FEINDEF 21 by Ricardo Domínguez, Chairman of Navantia, and Giuseppe Giordo, General Manager of the Naval Vessels Division of Italian shipyard Fincantieri, to promote their collaboration with European defence. Escribano and Elbit Systems-Land also signed a contract to collaborate on various developments and solutions in the defence market.

EXHIBITION AREA

Visitors to the Ministry of Defence stand were offered information on various programmes at different desks; the new Defence Technology and Information Strategy (ETID 2020); the functions of the Deputy Directorate General for Programmes; the Deputy Directorate General for Inspection, Regulations and Defence Industrial Strategy; the Centre for Information and Communication Technologies and Systems

(CESTIC); the ISDEFE technical service, etc. The desks were also a meeting point for military personnel and human resources managers from companies interested in the training and experience of professionals who are finishing their commitment to the Armed Forces and are looking for work in civilian life. The Ministry's publications and cultural heritage were given their own space to disseminate their information tools, Virtual Library, databases and journals. The current telemedicine system was presented, including scheduled connections at set times for health information-sharing with Madrid's Military Central Hospital Gómez Ulla. This meant that visitors were able to see the 3D printing of anatomical replicas of fractures and surgical material, an R&D project that is being developed together with this hospital.

One of the most visited stands at the exhibition was that of the Future Combat Air System, coordinated in Spain by Indra with the participation of other Spanish companies such as Airbus, GMV, ITP Aero, Sener Aerospace and Tecnobit- Oesia Group. In turn, Spanish company Eurovesa presented its new High Tactical Mobility Vehicle (VAMTAC) ambulance, an armoured vehicle resistant to ballistic impacts and mines that provides electromedical and immobilisation services and features equipment for diagnosing and treating the wounded.

At its stand, the Spanish Army also displayed a Urovesa VAMTAC command post and the ground control station of the Atlantic Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS), a drone used by the Field Artillery Command. Spanish company Einsa's special operations light vehicles *Neton* (VLOE) also attracted the attention of visitors to the exhibition because 24 of these models are scheduled to enter into service later this year in the Army's Special Operations Command (MOE). In addition to the VAMTAC and VLOE, the Army deployed Thales' Battlefield Management System (BMS) portable station and Teler D's unmanned ground vehicle. These state-of-the-art equipment and systems

are being evaluated by the Experimental Brigade as part of the Force 35 concept, the development of which aims to make these combat units the benchmark for operational ground forces in the next decade. A further highlight of the Army's stand was the technological project of the logistics base in Córdoba.

The Navy used different multimedia information panels to provide extensive information on the international projects in which it participates. For example, in the framework of the EU PESCO: the 4E (Essential Elements of European Escorts), presented last year, which aims to design and develop common elements for future European escorts; the European Patrol Corvette (EPC), a corvette or light frigate-type vessel of which the Navy intends to procure six units; and the Upgrade of Maritime



Margarita Robles stopped at numerous stands, including the United States stand, which was the guest country at this second edition of the international exhibition.

Surveillance, for improving maritime surveillance, already integrated into the COVAM in Cartagena.

Navantia is participating in the EU 4E and EPC projects. The flagship programmes at its stand were the F-110 frigate, the S-80 submarine, the *Meteoro*-class offshore patrol vessel (BAM-IS), the unmanned surface vehicle (USV) and the Navantis training simulator.

AEROSPACE SYSTEMS

The Spanish Air Force participated in FEINDEF with models of its Condor and Raven Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), as well as the MQ-9A *Predator* B. The latter operates at Talavera la

Real air base (Badajoz), which is also home to the European Fighter School and its F-5M fighters, and whose virtual simulator gave many FEINDEF visitors the chance to "fly" the aircraft. Next to the training system was the cockpit display of the F-18 fighter aircraft manufactured by Tecnobit and Indra's S3TSR space surveillance and tracking radar, whose operational control was taken over by the Spanish Air Force at Morón air base (Seville) at the beginning of this year. Extensive information on COVE was also available at the stand.

The *Pilum* project, a space launcher for nanosatellites and microsatellites that can be launched from F-18 fighters, was just one element of the equipment and systems that INTA showed at the exhibition.

The latter also displayed the shelter that houses the ground control station of the *Milano* system, the remotely piloted aircraft whose flight presentation was held at the Rozas Airborne Research Centre (Lugo) at the end of September. In the field of space, INTA presented the MIRI Telescope Simulator (MTS), an optical measurement system used to check and verify the Mid-Infrared Instrument used in the James Webb Space Telescope, a NASA scientific project that aims to study the formation and evolution of galaxies, among other objectives.

The Military Emergency Unit participated in FEINDEF and was represented by the Technological and Environmental Emergency Intervention Group, which currently has a team deployed on the island of La Palma, and therefore displayed a lava stone from the Cumbre Vieja volcano.

Among the systems it brought to IFEMA's Hall 10 were a medium multi-purpose intervention vehicle that operates in different configurations, such as a firefighting platform, loader, snow plough or water and sludge pumping machine, as well as the NBC reconnaissance Telerob Telex Pro with sampling capability; and chemical detectors and proximity suits used in the *Balmis* operation.

Santiago F. del Vado and José Luis Expósito
Photos: Pepe Díaz and Hélène Gicquel



Artistic view of the sixth-generation fighter developed by Germany, France and Spain.

FUTURE EUROPEAN FIGHTER cleared for take-off

The Next Generation Weapon System departs on a new
journey up to 2027

The arrangement signed on 30 August covers phases 1B and 2 and will be implemented over the next six years

EUROPE'S biggest defence project has just passed another major milestone. The so-called Next Generation Weapon System or NGWS/FCAS has begun its final journey on the RDI track, with all the signs of being unstoppable if it succeeds in defining the technologies that will be key to making it a reality.

The new step forward was taken in Paris on the evening of 30 August, when Germany, France and Spain signed the third Implementing Arrangement (IA3), the ultimate goal of which is the full development of a Combat Air System containing a multi-purpose interceptor fighter, with ground-attack capability, unmanned aircraft and a combat cloud.

In short, a comprehensive air dominance system based on a sixth-generation aircraft that is balanced and well suited for all air combat missions.

The official ceremony was attended by Defence Ministers Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer and Florence Parly, together with the Spanish Secretary of State for Defence, Esperanza Casteleiro, who with their signatures gave institutional support to the responsibilities of the industry and ratified the governance foundations for the technology development and capability-building phases of the project.

The arrangement signed at the Hôtel de Brienne in Paris, the official residence of French Defence Ministers, is the starting gun for a long-distance race to sequentially tackle phases 1B and 2 of the Next Generation Weapon System (NGWS) between 2021 and 2027, which is part of the Future Combat Air System or FCAS.

This is a highly significant arrangement, as it is a kind of revisable framework contract that facilitates the continuity of the tri-national project until 2027. However, it includes a caveat that empowers the Ministries of Defence of partner nations to review in 2023 the readiness of the technological

milestones achieved in stage 1B, which is now underway.

This right has been included in view of the high degree of uncertainty involved in some technologies that are being researched. Some are still at an early stage of readiness —TRL 1, 2, 3— and need to reach TRL 6 or 7 before prototypes are available, although this might not always be possible. Therefore, their viability must be confirmed or ruled out in

political and industrial significance that the ministerial teams were accompanied by their respective Air Force Chiefs of Staff and the executives of the companies involved. The Ministry of Defence considers the NGWS/FCAS a “state project” and, as such, “essential” for the future capabilities of the Armed Forces, the technological development of the defence sector and the Spanish industrial fabric. It also understands that it will result in the creation of



Defence Ministers Kramp-Karrenbauer and Parly, together with Secretary of State for Defence Esperanza Casteleiro, at the signing of the arrangement in Paris.

order to move on to phase 2 without having to modify the financial ceiling, which is expected to be slightly over seven billion euros for phases 1B and 2.

This temporary review clause is the formula chosen to move away from the contractual model used so far, which consisted of a succession of contracts that had to be validated each time by the political and/or legislative bodies of each of the nations and, therefore, resulted in delays.

A LEAP INTO THE 6TH GENERATION

The importance of the arrangement reached at the end of August is of such

highly skilled jobs, becoming a driving force for the national productive sector.

On the Spanish side, Esperanza Casteleiro travelled to Paris, together with the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Javier Salto; the Director General for Armament and Materiel, Admiral Santiago Ramón González Gómez; Indra's Executive Director, responsible for Defence, Security and Transport Management, and national industrial coordinator, Ignacio Mataix; the executive vice-president of Airbus Spain, Francisco J. Sánchez-Segura; the interim president of the Satnus consortium, Luis Furnells; and the

The project is essential for our Armed Forces and for the technological and industrial development of the defence sector

CEO of ITP Aero, Carlos Alzola. The objective of the European project is to achieve a Combat Air System based on an innovative and unique sixth-generation fighter, integrated with the so-called remote carriers and connected through a combat cloud, which by 2040 will enable the German, French and Spanish Air Forces to make a major technological leap forward to face the threats that may arise up to 2080 or even beyond.

The work undertaken by the prime contractors and national coordinators

and Spanish Eurofighter. It is not a question of developing an aircraft that is a single upgraded version of both fighters. "We don't want a fifth or fifth-plus-generation aircraft", stresses Navy Captain José Luis Nieto, one of the most experienced officers in the programme.

"We are seeking a sixth-generation aircraft with 2030 technologies. Therefore, we should reach mid-2027 with technology demonstrators already in flight". But not only that. The project also aims to preserve and

PRESERVING SOVEREIGNTY

The simultaneous development of a new fighter platform, a revolutionary engine, a wide variety of drones of different sizes, a specific combat cloud and a wide variety of new technologies still in their infancy represent an investment of such magnitude that it is unaffordable for any single European nation.

The industry put forward its proposal in July 2020 and each nation analysed the content from its national perspective. The three defence ministries began to negotiate technical and commercial aspects, ironed out their divergent positions where discrepancies arose, and finally reached a balanced distribution of the different work packages and competences of their national industries.

The seven technological pillars on which the project has been structured are technically and commercially complex, in particular with regard to the compact, high-powered engine intended for the sixth-generation fighter. The initial option envisaged is to develop what would be the first variable cycle propulsion plant, which would achieve maximum efficiency in subsonic, transonic and supersonic flights.

The development of the engine is a considerable technological challenge, but its benefits would likely result in the design of larger and more efficient engines for civil aviation. The team responsible is the EUMET consortium made up of the French company Safran Aircraft Engines, the German company MTU Aero Engines and the Spanish company ITP Aero. However, the sustainment and maintenance of the life-cycle and its certification will be national.

For the French aeronautics industry, NGWS/FCAS is a project that has been described as "existential". Military aircraft manufacturer Dassault Aviation has not developed a new fighter since the *Rafale*, which dates back to the 1980s. And engine manufacturer Safran has not made a



Ejército del Aire

The French, German and Spanish Chiefs of Staff sign the new version of the operational requirements document for the implementation of the project.

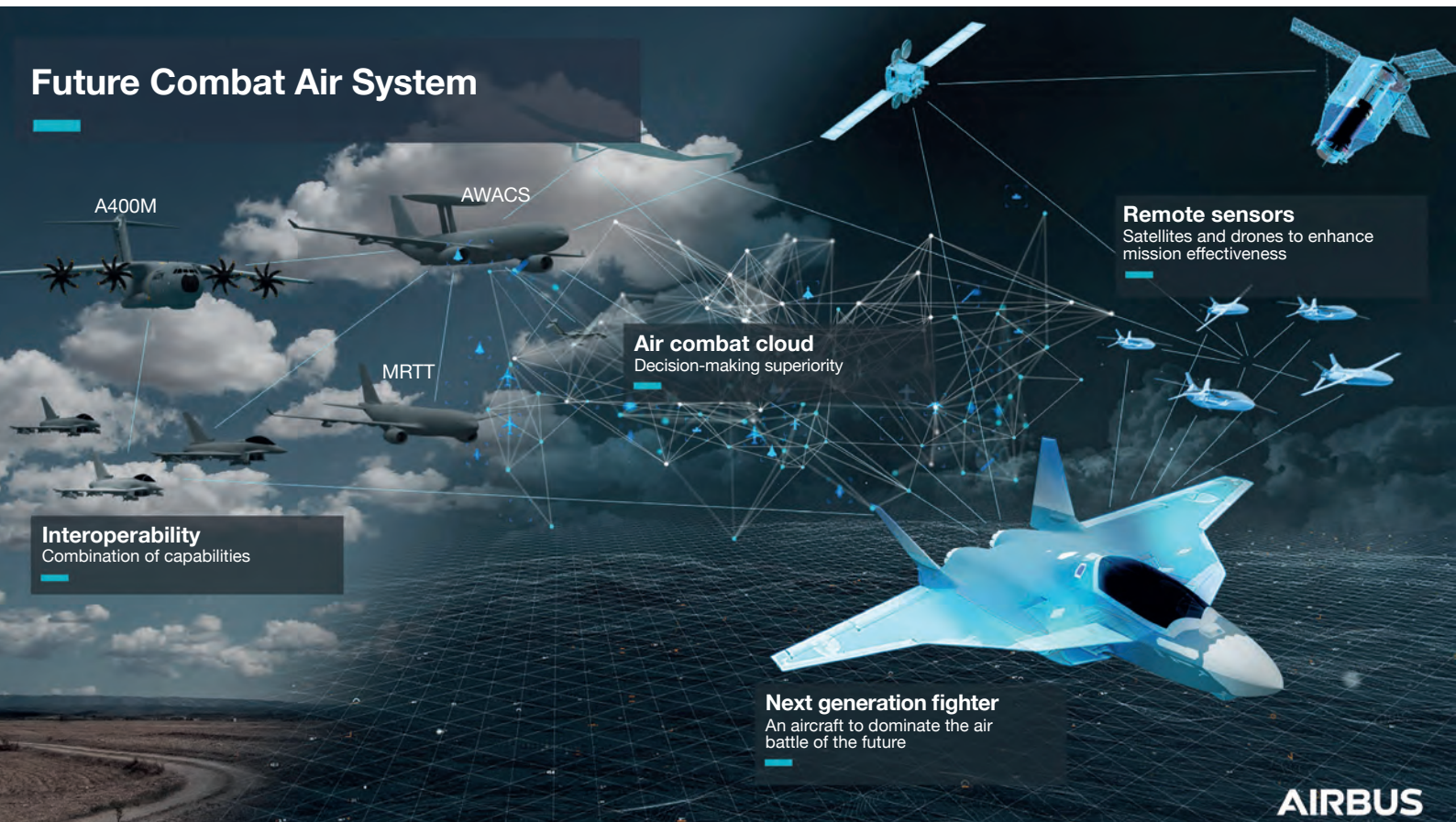
of the three countries involved in the project seeks to develop the industrial technology plans that should deliver the two Next Generation Fighter (NGF) demonstrators, as well as a demonstrator of each kind of remote carrier, one or two elements of the engine, low observability technologies, the combat cloud and sensor management and integration. All of the above should help to validate the key technologies of the future NGWS, which is expected to be ready by 2027.

The three partner nations are not just looking for new aircraft to replace the French *Rafale* and the German

strengthen the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base, while contributing to achieving the old continent's oft-repeated strategic autonomy.

The NGWS/FCAS implementation arrangement 3 (IA3) signed in Paris underwent a long process of negotiation. The talks were not even stopped by COVID-19 restrictions. The last face-to-face meeting of the NGWS Steering Committee took place in March 2020. However, work on the programme continued via secure online channels and video-conferencing on at least 15 occasions.

Future Combat Air System



AIRBUS

THE system of systems defined by the proposed future European combat air system is made up of what can be represented by three concentric circles. In the centre is the manned fighter, known as the NGF —Next Generation Fighter— capable of conducting air interception and defence missions.

The system expands with the autonomous and unmanned remote operators (drones) and the combat cloud, designed to act as decoys, saturate enemy defences, conduct electronic warfare missions, designate targets or even attack heavily defended

targets. All of the foregoing, together with the NGF, make up the NGWS (Next Generation Weapon System), the system that the three nations are developing in cooperation. The FCAS (Future Combat Air System) is the culmination of the system of systems. It is the result of adding existing national capabilities (*Rafale* fighters or *Eurofighters*) to the NGWS, in addition to strategic projection and air-to-air refuelling aircraft, command systems, satellites and other naval and ground platforms. Each FCAS will be nation-specific, but they will all be interoperable with each other.

complete engine since the M88, the powerplant of the *Rafale*. In principle, the technology demonstrator will test the M88.

A major new challenge is the combat cloud, the ultimate goal of which is to speed up decision-making and implementation to achieve tactical superiority in the air.

Given that the electromagnetic environment will be full of interference, the robustness of data links and satellite communications become crucial, as do location, navigation, advanced warning, time synchronisation, and surveillance.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Another very important feature is the extensive use of artificial intelligence. This will become a virtual assistant to help pilots in their decision-making and will classify and prioritise sensor information, avoid saturation, reduce combat stress and, of course, automatically generate mission plans.

All engineering processes are currently in the definition phase, while an initial assessment of design, development, production and life-cycle costs is now being carried out, and work is underway on initial sustainment and training models.

The aim is to develop a combat system with a single and equal configuration for all three nations, capable of interconnecting and interoperating all systems. However, each partner nation has maintained its sovereignty as far as the NGWS/FCAS operation and sustainment is concerned.

For instance, each Air Force will be able to repair, modify and certify the sensor parameters of its aircraft. As a further example, each Air Force will be able to include new weapons or equipment of its own, although the aircraft will basically be the same for all three nations.

Juan Pons

Time for EUROPEAN DEFENCE

Lessons learned in Afghanistan prompt EU institutions to consider the need to increase the Union's strategic autonomy

STRATEGIC reality is moving at a dizzying pace and Europe does not want to be left behind. It knows that it can —and must— take its rightful place in the world, taking the lead in safeguarding the rights and values it shares. The events of last August in Afghanistan have triggered the need to encourage the Union's own military response capability. The start of the European political year has therefore been marked by events in Asia and the lessons learned. The analysis was initiated at the informal meeting of defence ministers on 1 and 2 September in Slovenia, after which the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, had already pointed out the advisability of creating a rapid response force of some 5,000 troops capable of guaranteeing stability in our neighbourhood and coordinating operations such as the evacuation of foreign nationals and Afghans from Kabul airport. "I hope that the discussion we have started on the capabilities to be included in

the Strategic Compass has created sufficient understanding to mobilise the will of member states. What is clear to almost everyone is that we need to improve our ability to act when and where necessary. There is no alternative". Borrell summed up by saying that to be able to act autonomously and not depend on the choices made by others, even if such others are friends and allies, we must develop our own capabilities.

This aspiration was simultaneously reinforced in an article by the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, published on 2 September in the Council's newsletter, in which he stated that "the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan forces us to accelerate honest thinking about European defence" and that "the EU and its Member States must carry greater weight in the world to defend our interests and values and to protect our citizens. This strategic autonomy, whose defence and security component must be developed, is a complement to our alliances. A stronger Europe will make our alliances, and therefore

our allies, stronger too". A few days later, this analysis was consolidated at the opening sessions of the European Parliament in Strasbourg during which the Commission presented its plans for the coming months. On 14 September, the MEPs and the Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy discussed Europe's humanitarian response and capacity for action in Afghanistan.

The following day, the President of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen, presented her report on the State of the Union 2021 in which she reviewed the previous twelve months —marked by COVID-19— and submitted plans for the immediate future. In addition to digitalisation and climate transition, the German politician stressed that the EU needs to relaunch its own common defence in order to guarantee its strategic autonomy and act on its own. In this regard, Von der Leyen, together with French President Emmanuel Macron, announced an extraordinary summit of the heads of state and government of the 27 member states in order to relaunch



The President of the Commission presents the State of the Union report to the Parliament.

the Europe of Defence. The meeting will take place in the first half of 2022 —under French EU presidency— and after submitting the final document that will govern the Union's new security doctrine, the Strategic Compass, on 16 November. It will set out the threats, objectives and policy guidelines for the development of European defence and security through four key areas: crisis management; capability development; partnerships with third parties; and resilience. "It is time for Europe to step up to the next level", said the President of the Commission.

POLITICAL WILL

Von der Leyen wanted to send the following strong message of optimism and confidence in the European project: Europe needs a soul, an ideal, and the political will to serve this ideal. And Europe has brought those words to life in the last twelve months. In the biggest global health crisis for a century, we chose to work together so that every part of Europe had the same access to a life-saving vaccine. In the deepest global economic crisis for

decades, we chose to stick together. As one Europe. And we can be proud of it. More than 70 per cent of adults in the EU are fully vaccinated. We were the only ones to share half of our vaccine production with the rest of the world. Perhaps most importantly, she said, what has been achieved reaffirms who we are and who we will continue to be in the future. An attitude that is and will be the key to reclaiming Europe's role in the world.

Von der Leyen emphasised that «this economic and climate leadership reflects a wider shift in the international order in which the Old

*Borrell
recommended
creating a
European rapid
response force*

Continent will strengthen its capacity to act and, therefore, will promote the Europe of Defence". "Europe can —and clearly should— be able and willing to do more on its own", she stressed, and argued this was necessary in three broad categories: first, to provide stability in our neighbourhood and across different regions; second, to respond immediately to the rapidly evolving threats we face —from hybrid or cyber-attacks to the growing arms race in space —; and third, to be a unique security provider, present in missions where NATO or the UN are not, but where the EU should be. On the ground, our soldiers work side-by-side with police officers, lawyers and doctors, with humanitarian workers and human rights defenders, with teachers and engineers. Ms Von der Leyen said actions could be combined in military, civilian, and development aid spheres.

During her speech, however, the President of the Commission stressed several times that partnership and cooperation with international organisations (especially NATO) will remain a key element of European security: "The solution cannot be to

The President of the Commission demanded political will to make further progress on the Europe of Defence

cooperate less, but to cooperate more". She also reiterated Europe's strong commitment to multilateralism and the export of stability: "In a more contested world, protecting your interests is not only about defending yourself. It is about forging strong and reliable partnerships. This is not a luxury – it is essential for our future stability, security and prosperity".

With the clear intention of exchanging opinions, calling for reflection and defusing sensitivities, in her 2021 State of the Union address, Von der Leyen demanded from the 27 the political will required to make this Europe of Defence a reality, something that is already provided for in the Treaty on European Union and which, without doubt, has taken great strides in recent years with measures such as Permanent Structured Cooperation, the European Defence Fund and the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, but which needs a new impetus. "We have to establish a joint decision-making mechanism that puts an end to the principle of unanimity that has so far prevented any operational political decisions". This is intended to overcome the reluctance of some countries, in particular the Visegrád Group, and to allow those that do want to do so, including the so-called big four (Germany, Spain, France and Italy), to make further progress. "In the last weeks, there have been many discussions on expeditionary forces. On what type and how many we need: battlegroups or EU entry forces. This is no doubt part of the debate, and I believe it will be part of the solution. However, the more fundamental issue is why this has not worked in the past. You can have the most advanced forces in the world, but if you are never prepared to use them, of what use are they? What has held us back until now is not just a shortfall of capacity, it is the lack of political will". She proposed three measures to which we must commit in order to improve

our capacity to act: the first is to lay the foundations for collective decision-making by improving intelligence cooperation and sharing common information and knowledge of the reality around us, for which the EU will consider creating its own Joint Situational Awareness Centre to merge all the different pieces of information. And to be better prepared, to be fully informed and to be able to decide. The second is to improve interoperability "this is why we are already investing in common European platforms, from fighter jets, to drones and cyber (...). But we have to keep thinking of new ways to use all possible synergies. One example could be to consider waiving VAT when buying defence equipment developed and produced in Europe". The third is to develop a European cyber defence policy.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Afghanistan and the short-term European response also featured



Josep Borrell during the debate on the EU's role in Afghanistan.

prominently in the European Parliament's debate on 14 October in Strasbourg and at the EU Council on 20-21 October in preparation for the summit of heads of state and government. The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy came to Strasbourg to explain and discuss the conclusions of the informal meetings of defence and foreign affairs ministers held in parallel in Slovakia earlier in October. Josep Borrell reported that the ministers had agreed that our first obligation is to protect those at risk after the Taliban came to power and, at the same time, to analyse what has happened and reflect on the lessons learned in order to avoid a similar situation.

In addition, Borrell demanded once more before the MEPs the need to create an intervention force because, as he said, sometimes things get ugly, to put it mildly, and even if it is only because of its dissuasive nature, a military capability has to include any actors who want to call themselves geopolitical ones. As for contacts with the new Afghan authorities, he explained that the evacuation of numerous people at risk "must continue for which it will be necessary to speak, discuss, and agree when possible". However, he insisted that the level of contacts will always be based on certain conditions and that it is necessary to assess the strength of this new relationship based on certain criteria, among which the following are of note: the respect for human rights, particularly those of women, and the degree of inclusiveness and representativeness of the government born after the fundamentalists took power.

In the ensuing debate, the call not to abandon the Afghan people was virtually unanimous. Spanish Socialist MEP Iratxe García Pérez said it is important to look at how we can help stabilise the country and protect the rights of its people. "We have established a centre in Madrid to support those

Fred Marvaux/Parlamento Europeo

who worked with us in Afghanistan and their families and relations and we need to do much more". To this end, García Pérez proposed establishing a proper humanitarian corridor supported by the External Action Service so that the thousands of people who are still in Afghanistan under threat can flee the country. This same idea was shared by German MEP Michael Gahler of the European People's Party, who said we must ensure that all those in the eye of the Taliban —be they activists, women's rights advocates, teachers, civil servants, or journalists— can come to us". In his reply, Borrell explained that he had already been commissioned by the 27 to coordinate these evacuations and to organize the setting up of a European office in Kabul in order to negotiate humanitarian assistance. On 13 September, at the UN Donor Conference —where the UN put the number of internally displaced people at 3.5 million and the percentage of Afghans living in poverty at just over 72— Europe agreed to donate 200 million euros in humanitarian aid in 2021.

For its part, the EU Council on 20-21 September adopted conclusions on Afghanistan in which, in addition to reiterating the commitment to peace, stability and the Afghan people, it recognised that the situation in the country is a major challenge for the entire international community and stressed the need for close coordination in cooperation with international partners, in particular the UN. The communiqué reiterated the particular concern for the situation of women and girls and indicated that "a minimal EU presence on the ground in Kabul, dependent on the security situation, would facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and monitoring of the humanitarian situation, and could also coordinate and support the safe, secure and orderly departure of all foreign nationals and Afghans who wish to leave the country". The text also reported that, as a matter of high priority, the EU will initiate a regional platform with Afghanistan's immediate neighbours to help prevent the negative spill-over effects in the region.

Rosa Ruiz



Meeting of the Defence Minister with a delegation from the EU Security and Defence Committee at the Ministry's headquarters on 22 September.

The European Parliament recognises Spain's work in Kabul

THE DEFENCE MINISTER RECEIVES A DELEGATION FROM THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SECURITY AND DEFENCE TO ANALYSE EU MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS

"SPAIN is firmly committed to the Europe of Defence, because it is the Europe of freedom, values and democracy". Defence Minister, Margarita Robles, wished to express our country's unwavering commitment to advancing in the construction of European security at a time of decisions and reflection. This was stated during a visit to Spain on 22 September by a delegation of MEPs from the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence, led by its chair from France, Nathalie Loiseau.

The minister agreed with the chair of the subcommittee that Europe must have greater leadership in the defence field, in addition to collaboration with NATO. Both politicians agreed that the EU has to play a major defence role in the world: "Our position is clear", she said, "we want a Europe of defence that leads on values and works together with NATO".

At the meeting, Robles discussed with the delegation some of the main current debates falling within their competence, such as lessons to be learned from Afghanistan, and thanked the members of the Commission for "the gesture of recognition of the great work of the Spanish Armed Forces" in the recent evacuation of Kabul. "We have absolutely exemplary Armed Forces and this recognition by the European Parliament is very important and positive for Spain, and I would like to express my special thanks", said Robles at the press conference following the meeting. In the last days of August, Spain deployed a rescue mission to Kabul that succeeded in evacuating more than 2,000 people from the country (see page 26).

During the meeting with the subcommittee members, the ongoing missions and operations within the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy were also analysed, in particular the mission in Mali, where Spain is working in support of France within the EUTM-Mali mission. "The Sahel is of great concern to us, it is a difficult and complicated situation and it is clear that neither Spain nor the EU can look the other way", said Margarita Robles, adding that work is being done to apply in Mali the lessons learned from the events in Afghanistan. In addition to the ministry's headquarters, the MEPs visited the EU Satellite Centre (SatCen), and the European reception centre for Afghans, both located at Torrejón air base (Madrid).

**ROBLES REITERATED
OUR COUNTRY'S STRONG
COMMITMENT TO
ADVANCING IN BUILDING
A EUROPEAN DEFENCE
AND ANALYSING LESSONS
LEARNED**

[international]

NO TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE as a weapon of war

Political, military, academic and civilian figures analyse how to move forward together in the fight against sexual violence in armed conflict



The Minister of Defence, Margarita Robles; the rector of the UNED, Ricardo Mairal; and the President of the Women for Africa Foundation, María Teresa Fernández de la Vega at the opening of the seminar on 21 June.

THE term conflict-related sexual violence includes rape, sexual slavery, forced sterilisation, forced marriage, prostitution, pregnancy, forced abortion and any other sexual violence committed against men, women, boys and girls in the context of conflict. The need to listen to survivors, raise awareness, prevent and combat this type of violence by countries and international associations is the main objective of the international conference “One more step towards Sexual Disarmament in Armed Conflict”. The meeting was jointly organised on 21 June by Spanish Women in International Security, the Women for Africa Foundation and the Instituto Universitario General Gutiérrez Mellado (IUGM) within the framework of the United Nations Women, Peace and Security Agenda. The voices of committed activists and direct witnesses of conflict zones suffering from this drama were heard throughout the conference alongside political, military and academic leaders. In general, it became clear that, despite legal and legislative developments, impunity continues to be the general rule, violence is increasingly used as a weapon of war and that we must stand firm in the fight against this scourge. A task in which the Women, Peace and Security Agenda plays a fundamental role and which has demonstrated that the role of women in peace missions is essential, both with the participation of military women in operations and with the integration of local leaders in peacekeeping and peace-building processes.

The opening ceremony was attended by the President of the Women for Africa Foundation, María Teresa Fernández de la Vega; the Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, Arancha González Laya; the Rector of the UNED, Ricardo Mairal Usón; and the Minister of Defence, Margarita Robles. Fernández de la Vega pointed out the importance of focusing on women and justice. Focusing on



Pepe Díaz

Robles recalled the importance of international missions to raise awareness and prevent this violence.

women, as key agents of change in the battle against and prevention of this scourge, and as survivors who work with local organisations on litigation strategies and are responsible for providing assistance, ascertaining and reporting assaults. Focusing on justice —understood as redress—, providing the courts with the means to prosecute and try these crimes, which mostly go unpunished.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs referred to how the global pandemic caused by COVID-19 and protection measures involved, including lockdown and restrictions on movement, have further increased the lack of protection and vulnerability of women and girls in

“We cannot stand aside and not see this reality”, said the Defence Minister

conflict zones. González Laya highlighted the importance of the progress of national and international regulatory frameworks, the work of institutions such as the International Criminal Court and the significance of sexual violence being considered a crime against humanity. The minister ended her speech by recalling that the Women, Peace and Security Agenda was promoted by Spain in the United Nations and that putting an end to this situation of impunity is a priority for this government’s “feminist foreign policy”.

The rector of the UNED expressed his gratitude for his university having been chosen as the venue to give a voice to the testimonies of survivors and people who work in institutions to combat these international crimes, as joint collaboration in these projects is key to building a better future.

ON THE GROUND

The Defence Minister began her speech by recalling Spain’s firm commitment to working for peace and security around the world, where there are currently 2,500 Spanish military men and women deployed in international operations and missions. Robles pointed out that there are currently 25 wars being waged —with roughly 80 million refugees— in which women and children continue to be used as instruments of war and sexual exploitation, stressing that “this is a reality to which we cannot remain insensitive, neither as a society, nor in the political and academic spheres”.

With respect to the situation in Afghanistan, where after 20 years Spain has withdrawn all its troops, the minister recalled that, after so many years of work, the UN and NATO cannot allow this area to fall into oblivion. In the case of Mali, Robles insisted that, in order to achieve a genuine democratic transition process, it must be the local forces themselves who internalise and assimilate that they are responsible for ensuring peace and



The activists underscored the importance of integrating women as a fundamental part of peace processes.

the necessary tools to achieve gender equality and strengthening their empowerment.

Ambassador Miguel Fernández-Palacios highlighted Spain's important commitment to the development policies of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and stated that this agenda has become part of the DNA of the Atlantic organisation itself.

The conference also featured the testimony of activists involved in the fight against sexual exploitation in armed conflict, such as the doctor and founder of the Somali Women's Studies Centre, Shukria Dini; the founder and chairperson of Karama MENA (Middle East and North Africa) countries, Hibaaq Osman; and the founder and chairperson of Nuba Women's Education and Development Association (NuWEDA) and member of Karama Sudan, Kamilia Ibrahim. María Angustias Caracuel, president of ADESyD and director of Spanish Women in International Security (SWIIS), acted as moderator. They all agreed on the need to enforce legislation and put an end to the impunity of perpetrators, as well as on the importance of not re-victimising survivors and the need to integrate them as a fundamental part of peace processes.

PREVENT AND COMBAT

This was followed by a round table discussion with the former Chief of Staff of the Senegalese Armed Forces, General Birame Diop; the Director of the Women, Peace and Security Programme of the Women for Africa Foundation and Professor of International Public Law at the Carlos III University of Madrid, Alicia Cebada; and the Costa Rican Ambassador to Spain, Ana Helena Chacón.

General Birame Diop highlighted the need to create the necessary conditions within the defence and security of a country to include women in the same conditions as men. With regard to this point, Diop said that working with women in operations is a safeguard, as it is evident that the more servicewomen are involved in a mission, the lower the risk of

the protection of the most vulnerable, and this will therefore only be possible through the training of local forces and the real participation of women in the leadership of conflict resolution and peace processes.

The Defence Minister ended her speech by looking ahead to the NATO summit to be held in Madrid in 2022, where she expects a further commitment of NATO member states to effectively implement UN Resolution 1325.

The next part of the meeting focused on the Atlantic Alliance's policy on sexual violence in armed conflict, with the participation of the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security and Unit for Human Security of the Atlantic Alliance, Clare Hutchinson; and the Ambassador Permanent Representative of Spain in the Atlantic Council (NATO), Miguel Fernández-Palacios.

Hutchinson began by stating that "when talking about sexual violence, one needs to talk about the resilience of women and their bravery and courage to get up every day and fight". She further explained that conflict-related sexual violence is a weapon increasingly used to threaten international peace and security against vulnerable populations around the world.

Clare Hutchinson recognised that failure to respond to these crimes not only harms victims and survivors, but also hinders redress and peace and perpetuates conflict for generations to come. "Because when there are no opportunities for women, when there is no education for girls, when there is no justice for abuse, when protection mechanisms are not working, when there is impunity for those that perpetrate violence and when there is no equality, then there is sexual violence".

The Special Representative wished to emphasise that NATO has acknowledged that sexual violence in conflict is not only a violation of human rights, it is also a challenge to security and to the core values of democracy and freedom, which is why it is essential to work with affected communities and women, providing them with

*Sexual violence
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against women
and girls around
the world*

abuse and sex-based violence by men. Birame Diop ended his presentation by focusing on the need to include the gender perspective in national and global documents and strategies, the drafting of which requires the essential involvement of women.

For her part, Alicia Cebada revealed that in the UN Secretary-General's annual report on sexual violence in armed conflict, the list of countries committing this crime has remained unchanged for the past five years, which highlights the difficulty of eradicating and resolving this problem. Cebada was positive about the progress in the field of sanctions against perpetrators as it helps to give visibility to this type of crime.

The Costa Rican Ambassador to Spain pointed out that sexual violence in armed conflicts and the rape of women and girls have been a constant in the history of conflicts and stated that it is "a cheap weapon of war but extremely effective in psychological and social terms both at individual and collective level". The ambassador pointed out the common mistake of reducing conflict violence to soldier casualties without taking into account other individuals, such as women, girls and boys.

The testimonies of women activists came from the founder and director of the Syrian Women's Forum for Peace and member of Karama Syria, Mouna Ghanem; the director and founder of the Women Empowerment Organization and member of Karama Iraq, Suzan Aref; the general coordinator of Women Transforming the World, Paula Barrios; and, finally, the Grandmother of Sepur Zarco and Jalok U Collective Guatemala, Demecia Yat.

Before the closing ceremony, some military representatives addressed the audience, including Lieutenant Colonel Juan José Lucero, head of the Permanent Secretariat of the Military Observatory for Equality; Lieutenant Colonel Silvia Gil, head of the Civil Guard Headquarters in Teruel; and the advisor to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and for Latin America and the Caribbean, Koussay Boulaich. Lieutenant Colonel Lucero stated that in some armed conflicts it is more dangerous to be a woman than to be a

soldier and focused his speech on how these women and girls suffering sexual violence have to endure stigmatisation and rejection by their own families even after the conflict is over, resulting in a humiliated population and a traumatised society. In order to avoid this, Lucero advocated a policy of prevention and reparation of sexual violence in armed conflicts by training and raising the awareness of the personnel that work and make decisions in conflict areas, as well as increasing women's involvement in peace processes.

Lieutenant Colonel Silvia Gil then assessed the positive consequences

there are mixed forces, troops usually behave in a less authoritarian manner than when they are all-male and, in this regard, the greater the presence of women, the lower the perception of incidents involving firearms and violence.

Admiral Juan Francisco Martínez Núñez, Undersecretary of Defence for Political Affairs (SEGENPOL), was in charge of closing the ceremony, as his department collaborates with this conference as part of the "Women's Dialogues on Defence" initiative. The SEGENPOL stressed that, despite all efforts, sexual violence still exists and is not unanimously condemned by



NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for WPS, Clare Hutchinson, with Spain's Ambassador in the Alliance, Miguel Fernández-Palacios.

of having women deployed in peace missions. She first referred to the closeness of service women to the civilian population and women in the area, which makes it easier to obtain information and helps survivors to report the aggressions they have suffered. Gil wished to underline the human and professional value that the presence of service women has on local women, as the work of this personnel in making decisions and implementing projects can encourage other women to join their own police and military forces.

She also highlighted that the United Nations experience shows that, when

certain countries, which he described as shameful. Martínez Núñez explained that the purpose of using sexual violence as a weapon is to exacerbate the conflict forever, something he witnessed first-hand in peacekeeping operations during the Balkan crisis, where it was evident that women were being used as objects and spoils of war. Before the closing ceremony, Martínez Núñez also emphasized the importance of introducing equal education for girls and boys in conflict areas and countries affected by instability, as a first step towards the future elimination of sexual violence.

Ana Jiménez Herreros

LEPANTO, 1571: the naval battle that marked an era

7 October marked the 450th anniversary of the epic battle that halted the Ottoman advance in the Mediterranean



Room in the Naval Museum in Madrid where the battle and its leader Juan de Austria are remembered. Virgin of the Rosary (16th century) which has been related to the carving the admiral gave to the brotherhood of Puerto de Santa María (Cádiz) and may have taken on his galley to Lepanto (Naval Museum of San Fernando).

IN the first decades of the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire and the Spanish Crown gradually consolidated their power in the Mediterranean and soon clashed openly in the old sea.

The Ottoman Turks, based in what was once Byzantium/Constantinople (now Istanbul), stood in the way of the Venetian routes to the East and advanced their fleets menacingly towards its western boundary, which they significantly called the “Spanish Sea”.

Meanwhile, the Spanish Monarchy had taken up strategic positions in North Africa to confront the Berber threat —experts in corsair warfare — and was fighting against France to preserve its hegemony in Italy, a real bulwark against the power of the Sublime Porte, as the government of Istanbul was known.

Occupation of the island of Rhodes (Greece) in 1522 and successive sieges of Vienna (Austria) in 1529 and 1532 highlighted Turkish aggressiveness

in the time of the mythical Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. It was precisely the failure at the walls of the Austrian capital that redirected Suleiman's efforts towards the Mediterranean, while Paris, Madrid's bitter enemy, gave refuge to Berber corsair activity in its southern ports.

To stop the Ottoman advance, Spain, Venice and the Papacy formed a first Holy League in 1538. However, its navy was defeated at Preveza (Greece) that same year.



Museo Naval de Madrid/BYD

Large canvas depicting the Holy League victory in the waters of the Gulf of Patras, “revealed” by an angel to Pope Pius V.

John of Austria led the victory of the Holy League, made up of the Papacy, Venice and Spain



Recreation of the combat, G. Battista de Cavalleri, 1572.



Ottoman and Christian artefacts.

The Christians lost control of the eastern Mediterranean with the exception of the island of Cyprus: the Venetians reached an agreement with the Turks to safeguard their trade and Charles I decided to focus on defending his possessions in the western Mediterranean. This strategy of containment prevented confrontation at sea against a far superior Turkish navy. However, it did not prevent the loss of a number of North African bases, such as Tripoli (1551) and Bugia (1555).

CHANGE IN THE SPANISH THRONE

This trend did not change during the first years of Philip II's reign. Other failures followed, more than one, as a result of the haste with which matters were approached, as occurred in the disaster of Los Gelves (1560), Tunisia.

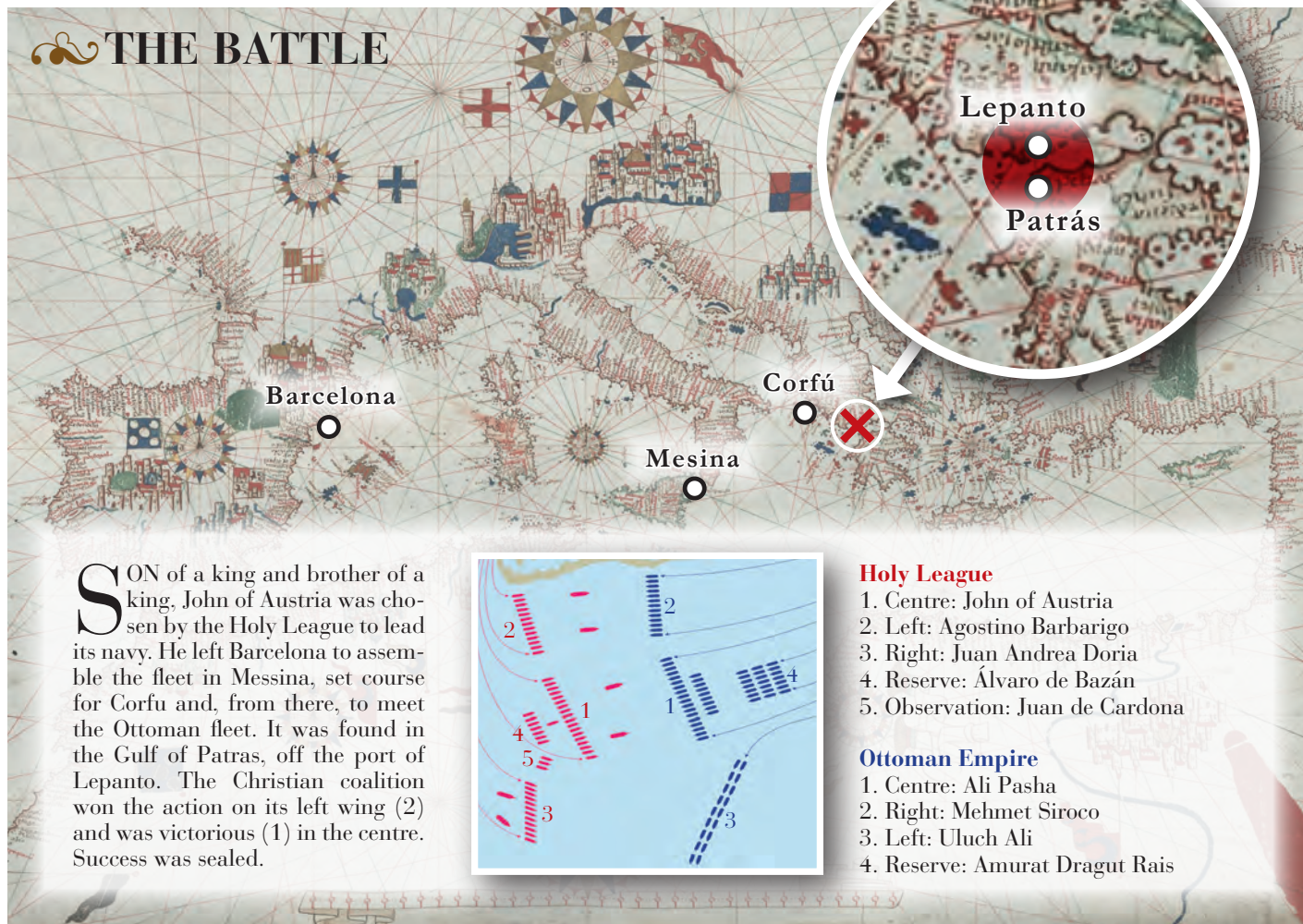
At that time, the Ottomans set their sights on Malta, the main site for Christian corsairs in the Mediterranean, and which they besieged in 1565.

The tenacious defence by the local garrison—in which the Spaniards played

an important role—frustrated the siege and this unexpected victory marked a turning point in the confrontation against the Turks.

Malta was the start of a period of increased Spanish activity, although before going on the offensive, the Moorish rebellion in the Alpujarras in Granada (1568-1571) had to be quelled.

Meanwhile, Calabrian renegade Uluch Ali (Uchali), Bey of Algiers, seized the opportunity to wrest Tunis from the Spaniards (1569), which had



SON of a king and brother of a king, John of Austria was chosen by the Holy League to lead its navy. He left Barcelona to assemble the fleet in Messina, set course for Corfu and, from there, to meet the Ottoman fleet. It was found in the Gulf of Patras, off the port of Lepanto. The Christian coalition won the action on its left wing (2) and was victorious (1) in the centre. Success was sealed.

been conquered three decades earlier during the reign of Charles I.

Sultan Selim II, Suleiman's son, maintained his father's aggressive policy by launching his forces against Cyprus, which he seized in 1570.

The failure to rescue the island, a Venetian possession, reactivated the Holy League between Spain, Venice and the Papal States, and the agreement was signed on 25 May 1571, with the Spanish monarchy pledging to pay half the war expenses.

Prince John of Austria was appointed general-in-chief of the coalition and assembled his fleet in the port of Messina (Italy) to search for the Ottoman fleet in Greek waters.

The Christian navy consisted of some 300 ships —two thirds of them galleys — and more than 80,000 men, of whom



Tray commemorating the conquest of Tunis (Charles I), 20th century reproduction.

20,000 were infantrymen, 8,000 of them Spaniards; and the Turkish fleet they encountered was under the command of Ali Pasha, who had assembled as many ships as the League and still outnumbered it in men.

COMBAT

The great naval battle took place on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, 7 October 1571, in the Gulf of Patras —off the port of Naupacto— also known as Lepanto.

The Venetian galleases, in the vanguard of the Christian formation, wreaked havoc with their powerful artillery and disorganised the Turkish line before their right wing moved forward to try to envelop the Christian left, close to the coast. Meanwhile, in the centre, John of Austria and Ali Pasha sought each other, as if the fate of the battle were to be

decided by their encounter. Upon collision, a tightly locked together ring of ships formed around the flag ships to fuel the confused hand-to-hand fight, where infantry from both sides contested the decks with repeated assaults.

A DECISIVE BAZÁN

The providential arrival of the experienced and outstanding Spanish admiral Álvaro de Bazán with reinforcements tipped the balance in favour of the Christians, who killed Ali Pasha, causing his galleys, as well as those of the Turkish right wing, to surrender. Only the left flank, led by the experienced Uchali, managed to achieve some success when they broke through the gap between the Christian centre and right, the result of Juan Andrea Doria's risky manoeuvre. But with the Christian centre victorious, the prompt assistance of Juan de Cardona and Bazán led the renegade leader to flee. He had to abandon his prisoners and would continue to pose a threat from his base in Algiers.

The fight was over. On the Ottoman side, almost 200 ships were lost and, between the dead and those taken prisoners, there were nearly 30,000 casualties, while the Christian forces lost a dozen galleys and some 8,000 men (2,000 Spanish), although they freed 12,000 galley slaves. The League's victory did not yield the expected strategic results, but it put the brakes on Turkey's expansionary dynamic in the Mediterranean. Mistrust and differences within the Christian alliance led to its disintegration from 1573 onwards: Venice concluded a truce with the Sublime Porte in exchange for trade privileges, and Spain briefly recovered Bizerte, Tunis and La Goleta, which returned



Model of the John of Austria's Royal galley.

More than 80,000 men fought under the Holy League flag; the Ottoman force even exceeded that number



Banner of the Holy League that took part in Lepanto during its "visit" to the Naval Museum of Madrid in 2017.

to Ottoman control the following year.

At the time, Philip II had to deal with a rebellion in Flanders, a religious war in France and the enmity of his former sister-in-law Elizabeth I of England, a champion of the Protestant cause, as well as the untenable situation of the Spanish treasury —it went bankrupt in 1576— to meet such costly challenges, which led to the suspension of hostilities with Istanbul in 1578.

The Turks, also exhausted, had not been able to fully recover from the Lepanto fiasco and were happy to retain control over the eastern Mediterranean, shifting their focus to their land borders in Persia and Hungary. The truce put an end to major naval operations in the

Roman *Mare Nostrum*, but left the door open to corsair warfare, which continued on a large scale from the 1580s onwards.

REDEEMED BY VICTORY

This Spanish-Ottoman confrontation has perhaps been downplayed by historiography in comparison with the Spanish monarchy's great ventures in Europe and America. However, contemporaries perceived it with apocalyptic overtones, as they were gripped by the terror of the descent of the Turk every spring. The great victory of Lepanto brought hope, proof that the Eastern Empire could be contained if there was concord among the Christian princes: history would provide the occasion to prove it in the future sieges of Vienna (17th and 18th centuries). Without the support of Europe as a whole, the Austrian capital would have succumbed to the power of the Sublime Porte.

Germán Segura García
Photos: Hélène Gicquel

Brigadier General Carlos Salgado Romero,
Chief of Staff of NATO Mission Iraq

“IRAQIS ARE GRATEFUL FOR SPAIN’S WORK”

General Salgado claims that our military personnel “enjoy great prestige” among multinational and local forces

HE is well acquainted with the international scenarios in which the Spanish Army has been involved in the past 30 years. He served in Bosnia-Herzegovina under UN mandate and was head of operations for the Spanish task force in Kosovo. In Afghanistan, he led an advisory team to an Afghan infantry battalion and completed several reconnaissance missions in Lebanon. For the past three years, General Carlos Salgado has lived in Gloucester (United Kingdom), headquarters to the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC), where he has been the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistic Support. “I was discharged on 15 July and the following day I was appointed personal advisor to the head of the Ground Force in Seville, my adopted homeland”, a post to which this native of Madrid has been linked since 2007 and from where he has prepared himself intensively to face the greatest

challenge of his professional career. On 18 August, he assumed direct command of the headquarters of NATO Mission Iraq, a position he combines with that of commander of the Spanish contingent deployed there. He says that one of his major challenges will be to expand the mission over the next year. “Also”, he adds, “to prepare the ground so that, if Spain decides to put itself forward to command the mission in May 2023, we will be ready to do so”.

—There are two international operations going on in Iraq, a NATO mission and a US-led Coalition mission. How do they differ?

—There is a clear difference. While both are currently tasked with advising and training Iraq to defeat Daesh, the main target audience of NATO’s mission is at ministerial level and at the Iraqi Armed and Security Forces in their organisational chain for the generation and preparation of their

units. However, the Coalition focuses its advice and training on Iraqi units engaged and deployed in operations, mainly by providing them with information on targets and supplying them with military equipment such as fighting vehicles, telecommunications equipment, night vision devices and spare parts for Western equipment. While the Coalition, in particular the US, has so far supported Iraqi units with combat units, there is currently a commitment from the US government to the Iraqi government to withdraw its combat units by the end of the year.

It is important to emphasize that, in accordance with the military principle of “economy of means”, logistic support is centralised as far as possible, so that both NATO and Coalition elements use the same bases, and the same logistic units ensure the sustainment of both chains.

—You are the commander of the Spanish military personnel in Iraq.



EWAD

What contingent do we currently have deployed?

— In fact, the contingent I command also includes Kuwait. Spain is one of the countries that contributes the most soldiers —approximately 300— to both the Coalition and the NATO missions, and it has done so in a decisive manner since the beginning of Operation Support to Iraq in 2014. As for the Coalition, in addition to a group of officers in Baghdad, forming part of the HQ, and advisors at Iraqi defence and security institutions, we provide a helicopter unit with three Cougars that is deployed at Al Asad airbase, and special operations units in Baghdad and to the north, in a detachment near Erbil.

With respect to NATO's mission, we provide personnel to the Headquarters and advisors, both at ministerial level and to the units and schools of the Iraqi Armed and Security Forces, as well as an entire Force Protection company in Baghdad.

—How do you find our military personnel?

—They are doing very well. Their morale is very high and, moreover, I have seen that they all enjoy great prestige among international and Iraqi forces. Living conditions, while varying between detachments, are generally good, albeit austere. What I have to admit is that force protection measures to prevent attacks are very effective, so although attacks are fairly frequent, they have so far always been identified in time and neutralised. Our families

can be at ease in Spain and also proud of their loved ones stationed in this area. I am very proud and excited to command this group of brave Spaniards in these distant lands.

—How has the pandemic affected the mission?

—When COVID-19 spread globally in March 2020, all activities came to a halt as a result of the pandemic. Naturally, all but strictly necessary activities were cancelled around the world and, of course, identical measures were taken in the theatres of operation where international forces are deployed.

Currently, in Iraq, in line with the favourable evolution of the health crisis, virtually all personnel in the two missions have received the double dose vaccination and, although there are slight outbreaks from time to time, symptoms are very mild. For example, I myself got COVID as soon as I arrived, but within a week I had fully recovered.

“Iraq continues to move towards normalcy in terms of security”, says General Salgado

Overall, we can say that it has no impact on the mission; the key is clearly double vaccination.

—Spain has trained more than 70,000 Iraqi soldiers in Basmayah. What are the results of this training?

—Indeed. Spain has made a great effort since October 2014, when the Spanish Parliament authorised our participation in the international Coalition to defeat *Daesh* in Iraq. In January 2015, the first 30 Spanish soldiers arrived in Baghdad to hoist our flag at the Basmayah training centre, thus officially inaugurating the *Gran Capitán* base. And, since March of that same year, our service members have been training Iraqi Army Brigades and Police Forces in the tasks necessary to conduct counter-insurgency operations in order to defeat *Daesh* and restore stability in this country.

For almost four years, our soldiers have trained twenty army brigades and ten federal police brigades and, after their time in Basmayah, they were deployed to the different Iraqi provinces to successfully carry out counter-terrorism missions, while guaranteeing the security of the population and consolidating, day by day, a security situation that allows Iraq to continue moving towards normalcy in terms of security.

This is why one often finds Spanish flags displayed in Iraqi units all over the country together with souvenirs of the operations carried out. They display them with gratitude and pride in recognition of the work of our soldiers. But it was not only combat units that were trained at Basmayah, also personnel undergoing advanced training courses at the Army Armor School or the EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) School, training numerous command staff and soldiers in the fight against explosive devices that have caused so many casualties, both military and civilian, in this country.

The reality is that today, with the Basmayah training centre closed, the Iraqi Armed Forces are asking to be trained again the same way as before, both in units and in schools. And this is precisely one of the activities that this NATO mission is trying to push forward once more.

—It has been four years since Iraq proclaimed its military victory over Daesh. What is the situation now?

—*Daesh* is very weakened, I would say dormant, although it still fights against the Iraqi army and police, especially in the Anbar region in the eastern part of the country, as well as in other areas such as Saladyn, Diyala and Ninewa.

As for *Daesh's* relationship with other similar groups with influence in the region, such as the *Taliban*, I do not know how this will affect the situation in Afghanistan in the long term as, although both are ethnic Sunnis, they do not seem to be allies for the time being. But what might happen in the future is unknown, because what is clear is that the two groups are enemies of Iran and its Shiite allies. In this regard, pro-Iranian Shiite militias pose another threat to Iraq.



Left, General Salgado took over command of the headquarters of NMI on 18 August.

They are part of the Ministry of Defence in theory, but not at all sympathetic to the foreign forces operating in Iraq, especially those of the Coalition.

I think the key is the elections on 10 October. If turnout is low, some political factions may delegitimise them, and if the result is contrary to what the most extremist groups prefer, there might be a period of instability, making it difficult to form a government that could provide stable continuity to the current one.

—How do you deal with terrorist strongholds that continue to carry out attacks?

—The Coalition has highly effective target acquisition systems. The intelligence obtained is passed on to the Iraqi Armed Forces to destroy

these *Daesh* terrorist cells, all with the strong operational advisory support of the Coalition. As I said earlier, NATO's mission is more oriented towards advising and training the organisational structure, but this also contributes to making units more combat-ready.

—US combat troops will withdraw from Iraq by the end of the year. Could insurgents try to regain power, as was the case in Afghanistan?

—I don't think so. The Iraqi armed and security forces are nothing like the Afghan ones; the Iraqis are much more reliable and prepared. Moreover, from a political point of view, Iraq is a great country and there is a sense of nationhood. In the case of Afghanistan —and I say this from experience— they are a series of multi-ethnic tribes with no sense of nationhood; in short, a non-country in a failed state.

—So, do you think the Iraqi army is in a position to maintain security?

—It is fair to say that this is something they have already demonstrated with facts. In the aftermath of the proclamation of *Daesh* in 2014, and after several Iraqi provinces fell under their control, the Iraqi army prevented the fall of Baghdad and subsequently recaptured the main cities under *Daesh* control, such as Fallujah and Mosul.

As I mentioned earlier, the Iraqi army is not the Afghan army, which was unable to prevent the *Taliban* from taking over the capital, Kabul. The main difference lies in morale, which in the military sphere we call the "will to win". This is simply the firm determination of the command and troops to prevail over the adversary in any situation, however unfavourable it may be, which implies faith in victory and an unsurpassable activity in the execution of tasks, as well as a strong identification with patriotic ideals. It is this will to win that makes the Iraqi army what it has been in previous decades in this region of the world, that made it defend Baghdad from the threat of *Daesh*, and that has allowed it to regain the main cities. Because no matter how well equipped and trained an army may be, if there is no will to win, it will never achieve victory.

Victor Hernández

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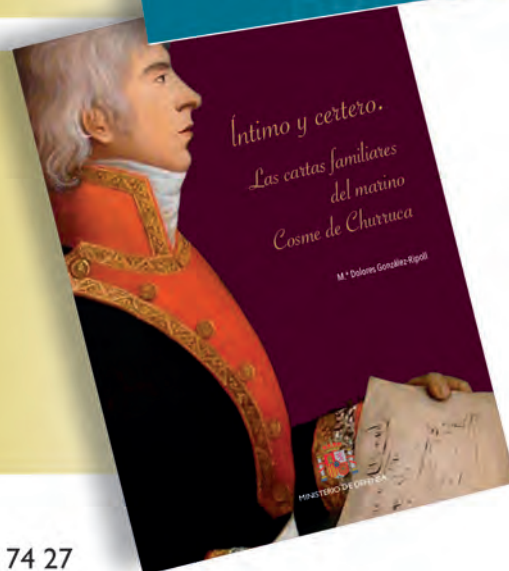
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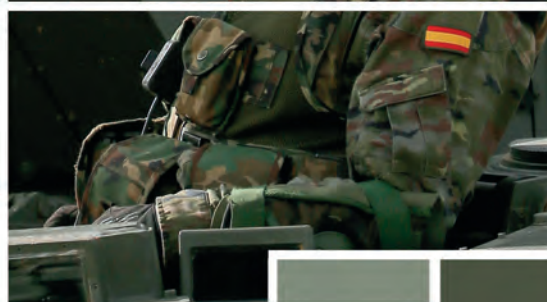
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www.reclutamiento.defensa.gob.es



SUBDIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE RECLUTAMIENTO Y DESARROLLO PROFESIONAL
DE PERSONAL MILITAR Y RESERVISTAS DE ESPECIAL DISPONIBILIDAD



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MINISTERIO
DE DEFENSA

SUBSECRETARÍA DE DEFENSA
SECRETARÍA GENERAL TÉCNICA

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DE PUBLICACIONES
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