

REVISTA ^{ESPAÑOLA} DE DEFENSA

DETERRENCE AND DEFENCE

ANALYSIS
Towards a new
NATO Strategic Concept



MINISTERIO DE DEFENSA



SPAIN LEADS UNIFIL

Major General Aroldo Lázaro, new head of the United Nations Interim Force mission in Lebanon



REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE DEFENSA

HABLAMOS de Defensa

35 años de información de calidad

The precious asset of peace

UKRAINE'S armed forces and citizens, Europe, and the vast majority of humanity are waging a struggle to live together in peace. They are defending the values of freedom, equality, plurality, democracy and the rule of law, which are the only possible path to peace in the world. First the threat, and then the brutal invasion of Ukraine, a free and sovereign country, is an attack on these values and an assault on the essence of the UN Charter.

The EU and NATO worked hard for a negotiated, diplomatic solution before the invasion of Ukraine, but it was not to be.

Putin's aggression is without precedent since World War II, absolutely unacceptable, and a flagrant violation of international law. An aggression that has been unanimously rejected by all NATO and EU countries and, in addition, has led to condemnation by more than 140 countries at the United Nations and strong political, commercial and financial sanctions.

In coordination with its partners and allies, Spain is assuming its collective commitments in relation to Ukraine. It is regularly sending support material for the legitimate defence of the Ukrainian people and continues to contribute to deterrence and defence on NATO's eastern flank, as part of the usual contributions and capabilities offered by Spain as a reliable and responsible ally. In addition, Spanish citizens are doing their utmost to help alleviate the humanitarian emergency caused by the war in Ukraine.

Spain has also just taken on an important responsibility in the Middle East: Major General Aroldo Lázaro Sáenz has been put in charge of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), comprising 10,300 Blue Helmets and 800 civilians of 46 nationalities.

In this region, punished for many years by war, Spain's Armed Forces have been continually present for more than fifteen years, with 27,500 military personnel deployed in 36 contingents. Together with Blue Helmets from other countries, they have helped to ensure that fighting along the *Blue Line*, a virtual separation between Lebanon and Israel, does not lead to serious conflict. "There is already a generation that has grown up in a situation of calm", notes General Lázaro Sáenz in an interview on this issue.

Peace is a global necessity in a world where no conflicts can now be called regional, because their effects overflow and reach other shores. It is "that precious asset for which we must all work", as the defence minister, Margarita Robles, wrote in the guest book at UNIFIL headquarters in Naquora, and Spanish soldiers are working in various parts of the world to defend it.

RED



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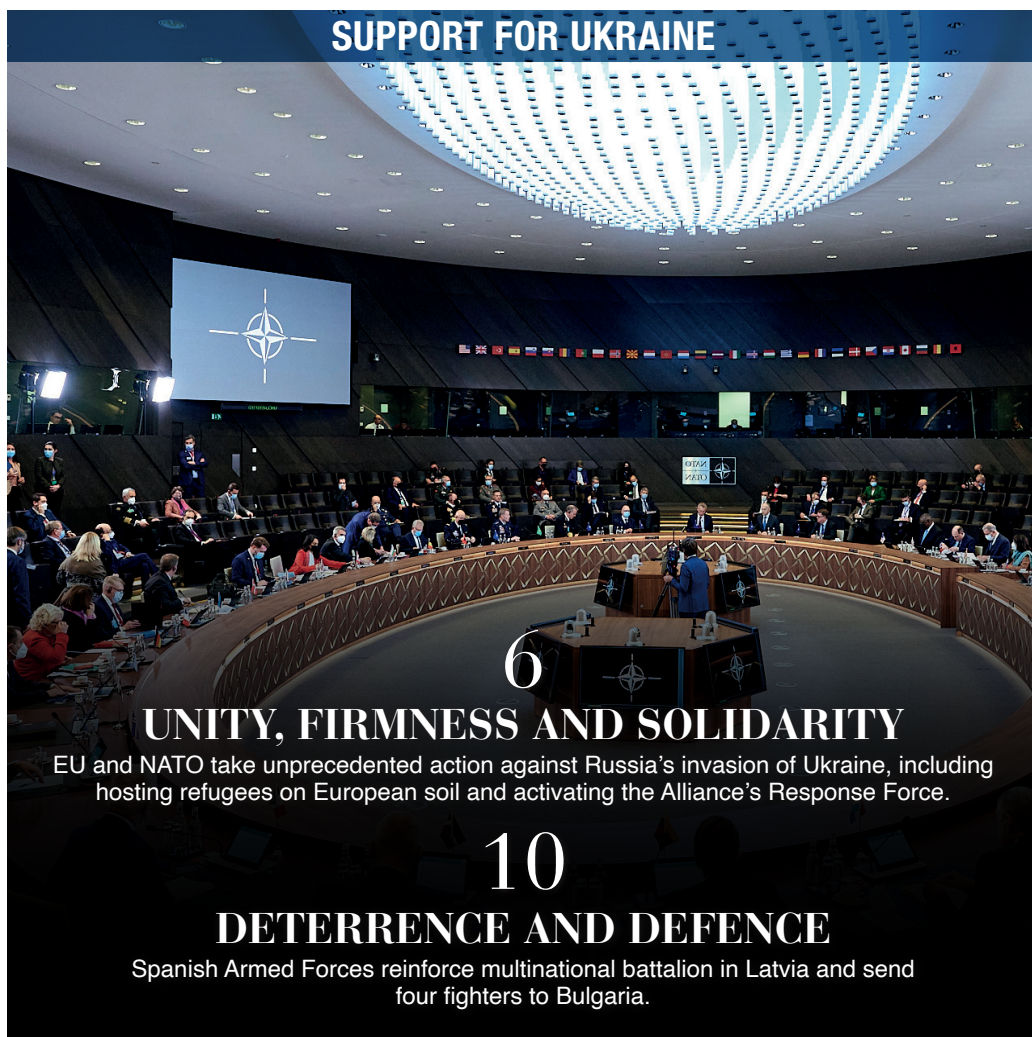
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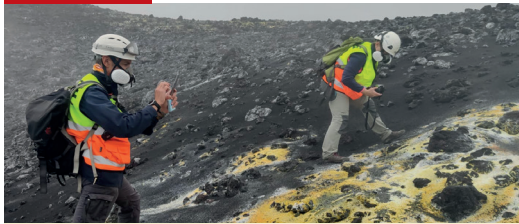
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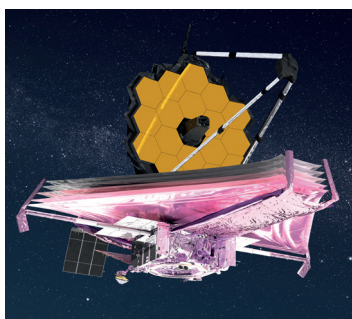
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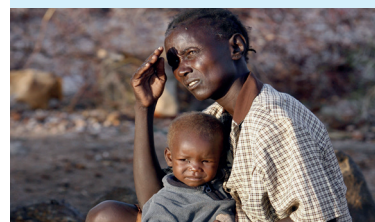
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Charles Michel, Jens Stoltenberg and Ursula von der Leyen at NATO Headquarters on the evening of 24 February.

UNITY, FIRMNESS AND SOLIDARITY

EU and NATO take unprecedented action against Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including hosting refugees on European soil and activating the Alliance's Response Force

“HISTORIC decisions in a historic situation”. With these words, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen perfectly sums up the unprecedented reaction of a Europe that is more united than ever in the face of Russia's barbarism. Just hours after Russian troops began their invasion of Ukraine in the early hours of 24 February, the EU and NATO formed a single, strong block to show their revulsion at the invasion of Ukraine and their unreserved

support for the Ukrainian people, international law and the security and stability of Europe. The response has been swift, unanimous, forceful and unrelenting: meetings of heads of state and government, ministers from different areas, and heads of European and Atlantic institutions with decision-making and implementation capacity have followed unfalteringly, one after another. In just a few days, historic measures have been put in place, including unprecedented sanctions against Russia —shortly thereafter extended to Belarus—,

the reinforcement of allied defensive and deterrent military deployment on the Alliance's eastern flank, the authorisation of arms funding for Ukraine through the European Peace Facility, and the implementation of humanitarian aid for refugees never before undertaken on European soil. In a clear demonstration of unity and strength of response, the leaders of the Atlantic Alliance, Jens Stoltenberg, the European Council, Charles Michel, and the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, met at NATO headquarters

on 24 February, just hours after Russia's "brutal, unprovoked and sustained attack on Ukraine", and held a joint press conference. A dismayed but firm Stoltenberg —flanked by von der Leyen and Michel— said that "Russia is attempting to turn back the clock by force. To re-establish a sphere of influence. And to undermine the global rules that have kept Europe safe for decades. We have all made tireless efforts to engage Russia in diplomacy. But Moscow has refused dialogue, and chosen aggression. NATO and the EU stand with the brave people of Ukraine. We support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity [...] There must be no misunderstanding or miscalculation by Russia. NATO will do whatever it takes to protect and defend all Allies".

From New York, the United Nations, which is undoubtedly limited when it comes to issuing a resolution due to Russia's veto in the Security Council, also chose to show its absolute condemnation of the attack and its unwavering defence of international law on 24 February. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the Russian military offensive was incompatible with the principles of the UN Charter, indicating that his priority at that time was the protection of civilians: "We are committed to staying and delivering, to support people in Ukraine in their time of need". By 2 March the invasion of Ukraine had already generated one million refugees (the vast majority women and children) and UNHCR estimates put the number of people who will be forced to flee their homes in the coming weeks at over five million.

EUROPEAN SECURITY

At the same time and in coordination with the rest of the international organisations (there have been several emergency meetings of the UN, NATO, the G7 and the Council of Europe with the common purpose of defending international law), the European Union activated a hectic agenda. And a resolute one at that. On 24 February, following an extraordinary in-person European Council meeting, the heads of state and government of the 27 made it very clear, unequivocally, that the Union would activate all mechanisms at its disposal for peace and security in Europe and help the people of Ukraine. To this end, they initiated several simultaneous and complementary

lines of action. They approved the largest package of sanctions against a country in the history of the EU —measures taken in several rounds and also implemented by countries such as the United States, Japan and even Switzerland— and decided to sanction the permission to land, take off or fly over their territories of any aircraft operated by Russian airlines and also those registered in Russia or belonging to a Russian natural or legal person.

Hours later, in two extraordinary virtual meetings, the foreign and defence ministers —the former on 27 February and the latter on 28 February— took an unprecedented decision and agreed to release 450 million euros from the EU

money will come from the European Peace Facility, a new instrument that was created last year. It has an overall budget of €5 billion for the period 2021-2027 and, until now, has been used primarily to fund training and capacity building missions deployed by the EU. Precisely in order to direct and coordinate the purchase of arms requested by the Ukrainian government of Volodymyr Zelensky, the EU created a specific unit in Brussels for this purpose. At almost the same time, the European Commission decided to mobilise the EU Satellite Centre (SatCen) in Madrid to provide intelligence services to Kyiv.

On 27 February, the European Commission took another historic decision



A mother and child flee on a refugee train from Lviv station in Ukraine to Poland on 1 March.

Borja Sánchez Trillo/ EFE

budget to fund the delivery of arms to Ukraine so that it can defend itself against Russia's attack. In addition, Brussels will allocate another 50 million euros for non-lethal equipment for the Ukrainian army, such as fuel, military helmets and bullet-proof vests. In total, 500 million euros in military assistance to Kyiv. Deliveries will be made through border countries, Poland in particular.

As the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, explained: "Putin's war is not only against Ukraine. We need to understand the gravity of the situation for Europeans and global security". The

at an emergency meeting in which it activated a previously unused directive allowing an unlimited number of people fleeing a disaster to enter European territory. The measure allows not only for the entry of thousands of Ukrainians, but also for them to stay in Europe for at least one year, and this period is renewable if necessary.

At the same time, and since the beginning of the war, the Union has deployed all its mechanisms to try to alleviate the suffering of the Ukrainian people. "Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the humanitarian needs are expected to be disastrous. Armed violence

is causing widespread human suffering, civilian casualties, damage to infrastructures and large-scale displacement”, Borrell said.

The EU has therefore been supporting displaced persons and coordinating the delivery of material assistance to Ukraine through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, with offers from more than 20 Member States (Spain among them), which include eight million essential medical care items and civil protection support.

In an emotional and symbolic gesture, the European Parliament also wished

DEFENSIVE REINFORCEMENT

NATO's agenda did not lag behind. In an emergency statement issued just hours after the invasion, the Atlantic Council announced that “NATO will continue to take all necessary measures to ensure the security and defence of all Allies”. In the same vein, the heads of state and government who met online on the afternoon of 25 February—a meeting to which Josep Borrell was invited, as were the representatives of Sweden and Finland—issued a clear statement: “We call on Russia

invoked when an ally feels threatened, the communiqué states: “we will continue to take all measures and decisions required to ensure the security and defence of all Allies. We have deployed defensive land and air forces in the eastern part of the Alliance and maritime assets across the NATO area. We have activated NATO's defence plans to prepare ourselves to respond to a range of contingencies and to secure Alliance territory, including by drawing on our response forces. We are now making significant additional defensive deployments of forces to the eastern part of the Alliance. We will make all deployments necessary to ensure strong and credible deterrence and defence across the Alliance, now and in the future [...] Our commitment to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty is iron-clad. We stand united to protect and defend all Allies. Freedom will always win out over oppression”.

The next day, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General Tod Wolters, activated the Alliance's Gradual Response Plans. “This is a prudent and defensive step to protect and shield allied nations during this crisis”, Stoltenberg told a press conference, while confirming that this allows for the deployment of the Response Force, “if necessary”. These plans, he said, cover NATO's eastern flank and give military commanders “more authority” to move and deploy forces in response to the situation in Eastern Europe.

The NATO Response Force (NRF), always available at the Alliance's disposal, consists of up to 40,000 troops with the capacity to deploy to any scenario within five days and for up to 30 days. Just over a month ago, the United States announced that it was putting 8,500 troops on standby to support a possible activation of this NATO rapid reaction force in the event of Russian aggression. Its structure includes the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), created in 2014, following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, to enhance the NRF with a forward unit of thousands of troops who, supported by air, naval and special operations forces, can be deployed on an emergency basis to deal with military crises. The leadership of the VJTF rotates annually among the Allies. France is at the helm of the High Readiness Forces for 2022 and 3,500 troops from a Franco-German



Sergey Dolzhenko/JEE

A Ukrainian soldier patrols a street in Kyiv amid damage caused by Russian missile shelling of the capital on 25 February.

to show its support for Ukraine and, at an extraordinary meeting on 1 March, unanimously adopted a resolution, recording its unwavering support for Ukraine and the efforts to bring the country closer to the Union. Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelensky, gave a speech to the European Parliament in which he once again called on Europe “not to abandon us” and reiterated his firm commitment to democracy and the rule of law. After several minutes of applause, all MEPs, without exception, rose to their feet and called on the EU institutions to work towards granting the country candidate status for EU membership. Any such procedure must be in line with Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union and based on merit.

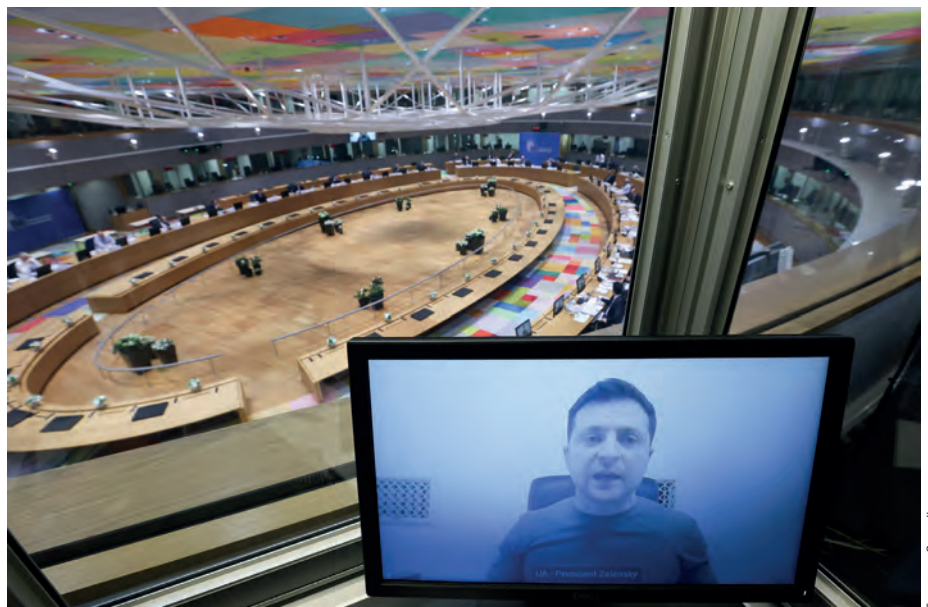
to immediately cease its military assault, to withdraw all its forces from Ukraine and to turn back from the path of aggression it has chosen. This long-planned attack on Ukraine, an independent, peaceful and democratic country, is brutal and wholly unprovoked and unjustified. We deplore the tragic loss of life, enormous human suffering and destruction caused by Russia's actions. Peace on the European continent has been fundamentally shattered. The world will hold Russia, as well as Belarus, accountable for their actions”. At the same time, and after explaining that, following the request of some Allies (in particular the three Baltic countries and Slovakia), there had been consultations under Article 4 of the Washington Treaty, which is

brigade will function as the main core of the force this year. As Stoltenberg stressed, they would be activated as a deterrent to prevent an escalation of the crisis as a sign of commitment to the defence of all members of the organisation. In any case, the Secretary General has limited the actions to NATO territory, recalling that the military organisation has no troops in Ukraine and “no plans to deploy them”. In a complex balance of toughness, wisdom and responsibility, Stoltenberg also indicated that despite everything —Russia even threatened to use nuclear weapons and openly told Sweden and Finland to “abide by the consequences” if they decided to apply for NATO membership— they were keeping the door open to dialogue and called again for Moscow to withdraw its troops from Ukraine.

At the same time, the Alliance’s long-standing military reinforcement of its eastern flank as part of its shared security and deterrence missions has increased. Specifically, in addition to the current deployment —Stoltenberg pointed out: “We have over 100 jets on high alert. And there are more than 120 Allied ships at sea, from the High North to the Mediterranean”— the NATO Military Committee, which met urgently on Monday 28 February by videoconference, agreed to accelerate plans to reinforce NATO’s deployment in allied countries bordering Russia. The four multinational enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) battlegroups, created in 2016 in Poland, and the three Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), in response to Russia’s annexation of Crimea, will be joined by four additional battlegroups in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. In addition, existing contingents are being enlarged (battalions are becoming reinforced brigades) and will be able to withstand an initial surprise attack by Russian troops until reinforcements arrive. Within this same concept of allied solidarity, NATO also maintains enhanced Air Policing (eAP) missions in the three Baltic States and in the Black Sea (Romania and Bulgaria).

DIALOGUE AND DETERRENCE

The invasion of Ukraine was, unfortunately, a war foretold. And attempts to prevent it did not cease right until the moment it happened. Just a week before the attack, Ukraine was high on the agenda of the



During the extraordinary European Council of heads of state and government on 24 February, leaders connected with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to show their support.

meeting of NATO Ministers of Defence which took place in Brussels on 16-17 February. Joint responsiveness and shared security were already the keys to an Alliance that has reasserted itself in the face of a threat to Europe’s security, unprecedented since the end of the Cold War. The ministers’ statement sought to confirm, once again, that the Alliance will always keep the door open and encourage negotiation.

In the same vein and without leaving any room for doubt, the statement signed by the ministers stresses that: “Russia’s actions pose a serious threat to Euro-Atlantic security [...] Our measures are and remain preventive, proportionate and non-escalatory”. Moreover, the official text adopted after the Atlantic Defence Council indicated that: “NATO and Allies continue to pursue diplomacy and dialogue with Russia

on Euro-Atlantic security issues, including at the highest levels [...] We have expressed our readiness to engage in a Renewed European Security Dialogue in the OSCE”.

At the post-Council press conference, Stoltenberg again recalled that NATO is a defensive alliance and not a threat to anyone: “And we have been clear for years and months that we are ready to sit down, and also listen to Russian security concerns, and to address issues like, for instance, arms control. If they are concerned about missiles and offensive weapons, the best way to deal with that is to sit down and engage in good faith in talks about how can we limit, reduce number of missiles. But that has to be balanced and verifiable. We have been able to do that before. It is possible to make agreements with Russia, not least on arms control”.

On the second day, the ministers met with their counterparts from Ukraine and Georgia and reiterated the Alliance’s strong political and practical support to these two countries to enhance their defence capabilities, especially with regard to cybersecurity and intelligence. According to the Secretary General: “Allies confirmed that NATO’s door remains open; any decision on NATO membership is for NATO Allies and aspirant countries to take; nobody else”.

Rosa Ruiz

**NATO has
reinforced its
Eastern Flank
and activated its
Response Force**

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

Spanish Armed Forces reinforce battalion in Latvia and send four fighters to Bulgaria

NATO DETERRENCE AND DEFENCE

SPAIN is fully committed to the response plans approved by all member states of NATO and the European Union following the invasion of Ukraine. “Unity is our best weapon of deterrence”, stressed Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, highlighting that Spain assumes its collective commitments together with its allies. Since 11 February, four *Eurofighters* and 130 military personnel have been stationed in Bulgaria to defend its airspace, while three ships are part of the permanent allied fleets in the eastern Mediterranean.

In addition, the Spanish Armed Forces have reinforced the contingent deployed in Latvia with another 150 soldiers in the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) mission. The new troops have joined the tasks being carried out by the almost 350 men and women deployed at Adazi base, mostly from the 10th Brigade *Guzmán el Bueno* (Córdoba), the 11th Logistic Support Group (Madrid) and the 21st Signal Regiment (Valencia), among other units.

The additional capabilities provided by Spain are a field artillery unit, an engineer unit (sappers and support) and logistic support

elements. These capabilities are in addition to those deployed in the operation since 2017: a mechanised company equipped with six *Leopard 2E* battle tanks and 15 *Pizarro* infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs), among other assets and vehicles. The eFP mission aims to maintain deterrence in the face of any aggression against our Baltic allies through a deployment of a defensive nature. It was formed in 2016 following the annexation of Crimea and has four multinational battlegroups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, led by the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and the United States, respectively.

AIR POLICING

The *Strela* air detachment remains deployed in Bulgaria until the end of March. The Defence Minister, Margarita Robles, travelled to Graf Ignatievo air base on 21 February to visit the Spanish contingent and learn first-hand about its work in the enhanced Air Policing (eAP) mission.

Ms Robles met with the then Bulgarian Defence Minister Stefan Yanev at the base. “Bulgaria has heartily thanked us for participating in this mission, which

highlights Spain’s commitment to the institutions, to the European Union and to NATO, based on responsibility, firmness and respect for the territorial integrity, in this case, of Ukraine”, the minister said at the end of the meeting.

The aircraft and most of the detachment’s personnel came from the 14th Wing of Los Llanos air base (Albacete). Alongside the pilots, mechanics and armourers, security personnel from the Second Air Deployment Support Squadron (SEADA) also served. The detachment began operations on 17 February, following certification of its operational capability by the Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) in Torrejón de Ardoz, Madrid, which is responsible for the surveillance and control of NATO airspace in the southern European region.

From that date onwards, Spanish fighter aircraft flew alongside Bulgarian *MIG-29As* to jointly secure the airspace.

SCRAMBLE ALERT

During the Defence Minister’s visit, two Spanish *Eurofighters* were ordered to take off due to an Alpha Scramble alert,



The Defence minister visited Spanish soldiers on an air policing mission in Bulgaria.

after traces of Russian military aircraft without a flight plan were detected in the Black Sea. It was the second such alert since the arrival of the Spanish contingent. The head of the *Strela* detachment, Lieutenant Colonel Jesús Manuel Salazar, explained that these operations are not usually dangerous. "We are very used to conducting air policing missions. The geopolitical situation in this area is different and we are aware of that, but it does not affect the way we work", he said.

Ms Robles toured the facilities of the base and the different areas of the Spanish detachment, including the flight equipment room. The Minister was accompanied by the Spanish Ambassador to Bulgaria, Alejandro Polanco; the Chief of Defence, Admiral General Teodoro López Calderón; his Bulgarian counterpart, Admiral Emil Eftimov; the Secretary of State for Defence, Esperanza Casteleiro, and the Commander of the Operations Command, Lieutenant General Francisco Braco. Ms Robles thanked the members of the detachment, took an interest in their families and stressed that "wherever there is a Spanish soldier, things work".

The Air Force first joined the allied air policing mission in 2006 and since 2015 has participated annually and continuously. So far, there have been eight deployments in Estonia and Lithuania, most recently from May to September last year with Eurofighter aircraft at Siauliai base in Lithuania. A new detachment is expected to join this base in the coming weeks for a period of four months.

The current deployment in Bulgaria is the second deployment by Spain as part of the measures to reinforce the airspace of allied countries in the south east, agreed in 2016. The first took place in February and March last year in Romania, where

**NATO's Battlegroup
contingent in
Latvia to be
increased to 500
troops**

a contingent equipped with Eurofighter aircraft from the 11th Wing operated.

NAVAL FORCES

In the same framework of international commitments for the benefit of deterrence and defence of NATO countries, three Spanish vessels have been integrated into the permanent fleets patrolling the eastern Mediterranean alongside ships from other allied countries. The deployment of frigate *Blas de Lezo*, offshore patrol vessel (BAM) *Meteoro* and minesweeper *Sella* is part of the Navy's regular contribution to these naval forces. The frigate has joined Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2), which in this rotation is led by the Italian Navy. It left its base in Ferrol on 22 January with 220 personnel, including 190 crew members, a marine operations security team and an air unit with an *SH-60B* helicopter.

For its part, offshore patrol vessel (BAM) *Meteoro* sailed from Las Palmas (Gran Canaria) arsenal on 17 January to command Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 2 (SNMCMG2), which is primarily engaged in explosive

With the troops in Latvia

Pedro Sánchez visits Spanish contingent and reiterates Spain's full commitment to NATO



Borja Puga de la Bellas/Pool Moncloa

On 8 March, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez travelled to Adazi military base in Latvia to visit NATO troops, including Spanish troops, who are part of the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) mission, the multinational force that the Atlantic Alliance deployed in 2017 in the Baltic countries as a deterrent force against the Russian threat.

Prime Minister Sánchez was accompanied by Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary General of NATO; Arturs Krišjānis Kariņš, Prime Minister of Latvia; and Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, the country that leads the battlegroup, with Spain as the second largest contributor. The trip demonstrated transatlantic commitment and unity in the face of the Russian government's unjustified aggression against Ukraine, as well as the support of all the Allies for the Baltic States.

"Our unity is our strength", stressed Pedro Sánchez, thanking Canada for "the excellent collaboration and teamwork spirit" shown in leading the Adazi mission, made up of troops from ten countries.

"Our main commitment is to peace. NATO is a defensive alliance and all our actions so far should be understood as deterrence efforts to avoid confrontation". Spain, the Prime Minister added, is "fully

committed" to supporting the work of the Alliance to reinforce the eastern flank and "ready" to respond to any calls from the allies.

The eFP mission was approved at the 2016 Warsaw Summit in response to the request of the Baltic States and Poland for a permanent NATO presence on their territory. It consists of four multinational battalions —deployed in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland— comprising more than 5,000 soldiers from 20 countries. Spain contributes the second largest contingent to the eFP battalion in Latvia, led by Canada. The Spanish troops are the second largest battalion contingent in Latvia, with 350 soldiers and additional reinforcements of 157 now beginning to arrive. The contingent has six tanks and armoured vehicles.

During the meeting with the troops, Prime Minister Sánchez expressed "with pride" the gratitude felt for "the dedication, solidarity and generosity of our soldiers. With your dedication and professionalism, you are contributing to a safer world for all".

Pedro Sánchez reaffirmed Spain's unconditional support for Ukraine and the defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. He also reiterated Spain's firm commitment of solidarity

with the Ukrainian people in the current circumstances of the humanitarian crisis that the war is causing, with more than two million refugees to date. "Spain", he said, "will rise to the challenge and provide international protection to as many refugees as possible".

Spain had already delivered the first of its shipments of several tonnes of humanitarian aid to Ukraine, as well as materiel. "And we will continue to do so", Sánchez stressed. "We will stand with the Ukrainian government and people to resist Putin's unjustified attack. Because what is happening in Ukraine is an act of aggression not only against Europe's security, but also against what Europe stands for: democracy, multilateralism and freedom".

BILATERAL MEETINGS

Alongside the visit to the military base, President Sánchez held bilateral meetings with Secretary General Stoltenberg and Prime Ministers Trudeau and Kariņš, with whom he later appeared at a press conference.

Jens Stoltenberg thanked Spain for its contribution to the forces of the Atlantic Alliance, stressing that Spain "is leading by example, deploying additional troops, ships and aircraft to strengthen our defensive position in Europe". This leadership is especially valuable in the current crisis in Ukraine and just when Spain will soon be hosting the NATO Summit in Madrid, next June, at which the organisation's new Strategic Concept will be adopted.

Spain's contribution to strengthening allied deterrence on its eastern flank was also highlighted by Arturs Kariņš, who expressed his gratitude, "especially at this time", for the role played by Spanish troops "in the security of Latvia", a country of which Pedro Sánchez said that, "despite the geographical distance, there is a feeling of brotherhood".

For his part, Justin Trudeau highlighted "the excellent collaboration" between Spanish and Canadian troops in the Adazi battlegroup, underlining "the importance of the presence" of Spanish soldiers in reinforcing security in the area.

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

ordnance disposal operations, for the next six months. The *Meteoro* will lead this allied naval group, which also includes minesweeper *Sella*, until June.

The Standing NATO Maritime Groups currently remain at high readiness in case NATO decides to activate the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) and employ it in a scenario related to the Ukraine crisis.

VISIT TO THE SPANISH SHIPS

The Defence Minister travelled to the island of Crete on 18 March to visit Marathi naval base in Souda Bay, where three Spanish navy units are located. Ms Robles pointed out that the situation in the Mediterranean is calm, that the context of deterrence in which the Spanish vessels are operating is one of "operational stress" and noted that they will not be going to the Black Sea.

"There is great confidence, great professionalism and the message that must be conveyed is one of calm and pride in the excellent work they are doing", said the Minister at the end of her visit to the three ships.

The Minister, accompanied by the State Secretary for Defence, Esperanza Casteleiro, and the commander of the Operations Command, Lieutenant General Francisco Braco, was received on her arrival at Chania International Airport by the Spanish Ambassador to Greece, Carles María Casajuana, and by the



Margarita Robles travelled to Crete to visit the Spanish vessels that are part of the Standing NATO Maritime Groups in the Mediterranean.

military attaché in Greece, Captain Juan Escrigas. During the visit, Ms Robles met with Captain Javier Núñez de Prado, who has been at the helm of SNMCMG2 for a year, and with CDR Luis Carreras-Presa, commanding officer of frigate *Blas de Lezo*.

On the *Meteoro*, she visited the infirmary, the bridge and the Combat Information Centre (CIC), where she had the opportunity to talk to members of the crew. In the guest book, the Minister wrote: "The Navy and the men and women of this

crew are writing a heroic page in a difficult chapter of our recent history. With you, we feel safer and more secure".

HEROIC WORK

On board the *Sella*, Ms Robles inspected the *Pluto Plus* unmanned underwater vehicle used to detect objects on the seabed, and then addressed the crews of the two vessels from the flight deck of the *Meteoro*, personally conveying her pride and gratitude to them and their families for what they do.

"In the future, you will be able to look back with pride and satisfaction on having served Spain and NATO, and above all, having contributed to making the world a much safer place", she stressed.

Finally, she shared a few minutes with the crew of the *Blas de Lezo*, considered one of the most capable and advanced anti-aircraft frigates in the world, to congratulate them on the "tremendous and heroic work they are doing at a very difficult time, not only because of the international scenario, but also because of the COVID situation and the operational stress".

"You are working for a just cause, for a better world, and your being here is a sign of security and reassurance", she emphasised. "Hopefully this senseless war will end soon, but you can be sure that by being here, under NATO's flag, you have a very special part to play", she remarked.

Victor Hernández



Rubén Somonte/MDE

Two A400M aircraft left Torrejón on 27 February for Poland with 20,000 kilos of protective equipment and medical supplies for Ukraine.

Defence Minister attends the swearing-in ceremony of General Aroldo Lázaro as head of UNIFIL

SPAIN LEADS UN MISSION IN LEBANON

THE handover ceremony of the United Nations Interim Force mission in Lebanon (UNIFIL) took place at Naqura headquarters on 28 February. It is the second time a Spaniard has been chosen to lead the UN peacekeeping mission that monitors the cessation of hostilities between Lebanon and Israel. Major General Aroldo Lázaro succeeds Italian General Stefano del Col, who had led the international operation since August 2018.

"This trust that the United Nations Security Council has placed in the Spanish Army, and therefore in Spain, is the best demonstration of our commitment to peace", said Defence Minister Margarita Robles during her trip to Lebanon to attend the handover to the new commander of the Blue Helmets. UNIFIL is the United Nations instrument to secure peace in the Middle East, facilitate humanitarian aid access to the civilian population and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons. To this end, it supports the capabilities and modernisation of the Lebanese Armed Forces and their work south of the Litani River on the border with Israel.

The mission comprises a contingent of 10,300 military personnel and some

800 civilians. Upon receiving the UN flag, the new head of UNIFIL thanked his predecessor. "I will follow your steps", he said, in order to maintain stability in the area and the authority of the Lebanese government. "The main thing in the roadmap", added General Lázaro, "is to continue to maintain what we are told in the UN mandate: to monitor the cessation of hostilities and try to maintain that scenario of calm, peace and stability in order to try to support that happy ending, which is the permanent cessation of the conflict and to reach these agreements at the diplomatic and political level".

In turn, outgoing General del Col expressed his gratitude to all those present and, "above all", to those he considered "friends and dear members of the peacekeeping forces".

During her visit to the Naqura headquarters, Minister Robles spoke with part of the contingent, whom she congratulated "wholeheartedly" for the work they are doing. "I am extremely proud, but it's not just me, it's all Spaniards", the minister underscored. She also signed the Book of Honour at the General Headquarters, and pointed out that "peace is a precious good that we must all work

for. Today is a great day for Spain". The ceremony was attended by representatives of the Lebanese government, including the Minister of National Defence, Maurice Sleem, and the Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces, General Joseph Aoun. As part of the Spanish delegation, Robles was accompanied by the Secretary of State for Defence, Esperanza Casteleiro; the Chief of Staff of the Army, Amador Enseñat, and the Commander of the Operations Command, Francisco Braco. Members of the diplomatic corps, municipal authorities, religious leaders and colleagues of the peacekeeping forces also attended the ceremony.

CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE

Operation *Libre Hidalgo* is the oldest operation in which our Armed Forces have participated internationally. The first Spanish Blue Helmets arrived in that area in 2006 to verify the cessation of the armed confrontation between the Israeli Army and the Lebanese *Hezbollah* guerrillas.

A conflict that lasted 33 days, until 14 August 2021, when Security Council Resolution 1701 entered into force. In addition to establishing a ceasefire, the United Nations decided to increase the



Ricardo Pérez/IDE

General Aroldo Lázaro (right) receives the UN flag from his predecessor, Italian General Stefano del Col.

number of UNIFIL Blue Helmets from 2,000 to 15,000. This UN peacekeeping operation has been deployed in this conflict zone of the Middle East since 1978.

On 15 September 2006, a thousand Spanish troops from a Marine Corps Expeditionary Force disembarked on Lebanon's Tyre beach aboard ship *Castilla*. This was Spain's rapid response to the UN's request, a decision that was backed by virtually the entire Parliament, with only two abstentions, at its session on 7 September 2006.

After the first two months, the mission was taken over by an Army contingent. Since then, its missions have focused on monitoring that both sides respect the *Blue Line*, a virtual 121-kilometre separation between the two countries established by the UN. UNIFIL soldiers also support the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces in the south of the country as well as their operations involving the return of displaced persons, and are working with the government and the Army to establish an illicit-weapons-free zone between the *Blue Line* and the Litani River. To this end, UNIFIL also has a maritime task force (MTF) that assists the Lebanese Navy in

resuming control over its territorial waters and intercepting the unauthorized entry of illegal arms and goods. Between May 2008 and March 2009, the Spanish Navy formed part of this MTF with an offshore patrol vessel.

In these nearly 16 years, a total of 27,500 Spanish military members have served in Lebanon as part of 36 successive contingents. However, not all of them have come back. Fifteen of them died of natural causes, accidents or terrorist attacks, such as the one against

a patrol on 24 June 2007, in which six soldiers from the Parachute Brigade lost their lives. Subsequently, on 28 January 2015, Corporal Francisco Javier Soria was killed after an observation tower was hit by an explosive device.

Forty-six nations from across the globe currently participate in UNIFIL. Indonesia is the largest contributor with more than 1,200 Blue Helmets, followed by Italy, which leads Sector West. Spain contributes 620 troops, twelve of them members of the Civil Guard. The majority, 606, are stationed at the *Miguel de Cervantes* military base in Marjayoun, where the Spanish-led Sector East headquarters is located, and another 14 are at Naqura headquarters.

The current contingent, called BRILIB XXXVI, is mainly organised on the basis of the 16th Brigade *Canarias*. They arrived in the area on 4 December 2021 and will remain in the mission until May 2022. Brigadier General Ramón Armada is the commander of this brigade and also leads Sector East, where almost 3,500 troops of various nationalities are deployed.

The Spanish military conduct vehicle and foot patrols (more than 220,000 in these 15 years) on a daily basis, establish checkpoints and permanently monitor the

**Minister Robles:
“Today the UN
recognises the
contribution
Spain and its
Armed Forces
make to peace”**

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

situation along the *Blue Line* from different observation posts. These activities are carried out unilaterally or in close cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces. Furthermore, a joint training plan is being developed with the Lebanese military to enable them to acquire the necessary capabilities and take on the tasks set out in UN Resolution 1701: commanding patrols, planning operations, precision firing, developing civilian-military cooperation activities, first aid and handling casualties in combat, crowd control (riot control) or escorting and protecting authorities, among other activities.

On 30 August 2021, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 2591 renewing UNIFIL's mandate for one year and including further support for the Lebanese Armed Forces, severely affected by the country's critical economic situation and aggravated by the pandemic and the disaster caused by the huge explosion in Beirut's port on 4 August 2020, which left more than 200 people dead and 6,000 injured.

In order to meet their most urgent needs, Spain has organised the shipment of food and medical supplies, mainly food rations, non-perishable food and medical supplies to the Military Hospital in the Lebanese capital.

Furthermore, Lebanese military personnel are being trained in disinfection



Ricardo Pérez/MDA

The Defence Minister, together with General Lázaro and other authorities, at the UNIFIL handover ceremony at Naquora headquarters.

procedures against COVID-19, based on Spain's experience on national territory during Operation *Balmis*.

COOPERATION PROJECTS

The military members of the Spanish contingent in closest contact with the population are the civilian-military cooperation teams (CIMIC). In order to help, they meet with the civilian and religious authorities in their area of

responsibility to learn about their needs and implement various Quick Impact Projects, aimed at delivering concrete and immediate improvements in infrastructure, education or humanitarian assistance. In these almost 16 years, 689 projects of this kind have been carried out.

Some of them have been consolidated over the years and are periodically resumed by successive contingents. Of particular note are the *Cervantes* programme for learning Spanish, which covers more than ten localities and has taught 7,286 students; the *Sancho Panza* programme for the dissemination of Spanish cuisine; the *Bachiller Carrasco* programme to support teaching staff in the field of psychological assistance; the *Rocinante* programme to assist livestock farmers, in collaboration with various Spanish veterinary faculties; and the *Almazara* programme to support farmers in olive growing. Through the *Galatea* programme, emergency assistance is also provided to civilian defence centres in southern Lebanon.

Health care is also delivered to the population. In these years, more than 26,000 civilians have been treated by the contingent's medical staff. Moreover, Spanish military engineers have deactivated a total of 4,424 mines and explosive devices scattered throughout Lebanese territory during the 2006 war.

Victor Hernández



Pepe Díaz

The *Cervantes* programme for learning Spanish has taught 7,286 students in schools in ten different localities in southern Lebanon.

UNIFIL

(UN Interim Force in Lebanon)



THE mission was expanded in 2006 to ensure peace on the Lebanese-Israeli border, facilitate humanitarian access to the civilian population and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons. Blue Helmets support the capabilities and modernisation of the Lebanese Armed Forces and verify compliance with Security Council Resolution 1701, establishing the cessation of hostilities. To this end, they maintain 55 positions throughout the 1,000 km² area of operations, bordered by the Litani River to the north and the *Blue Line* to the south.

→ **10.300 BLUE HELMETS** / → **800 CIVILIANS** / → **46 COUNTRIES**
→ **13.500 INTERVENTIONS PER MONTH**



• DEMINING

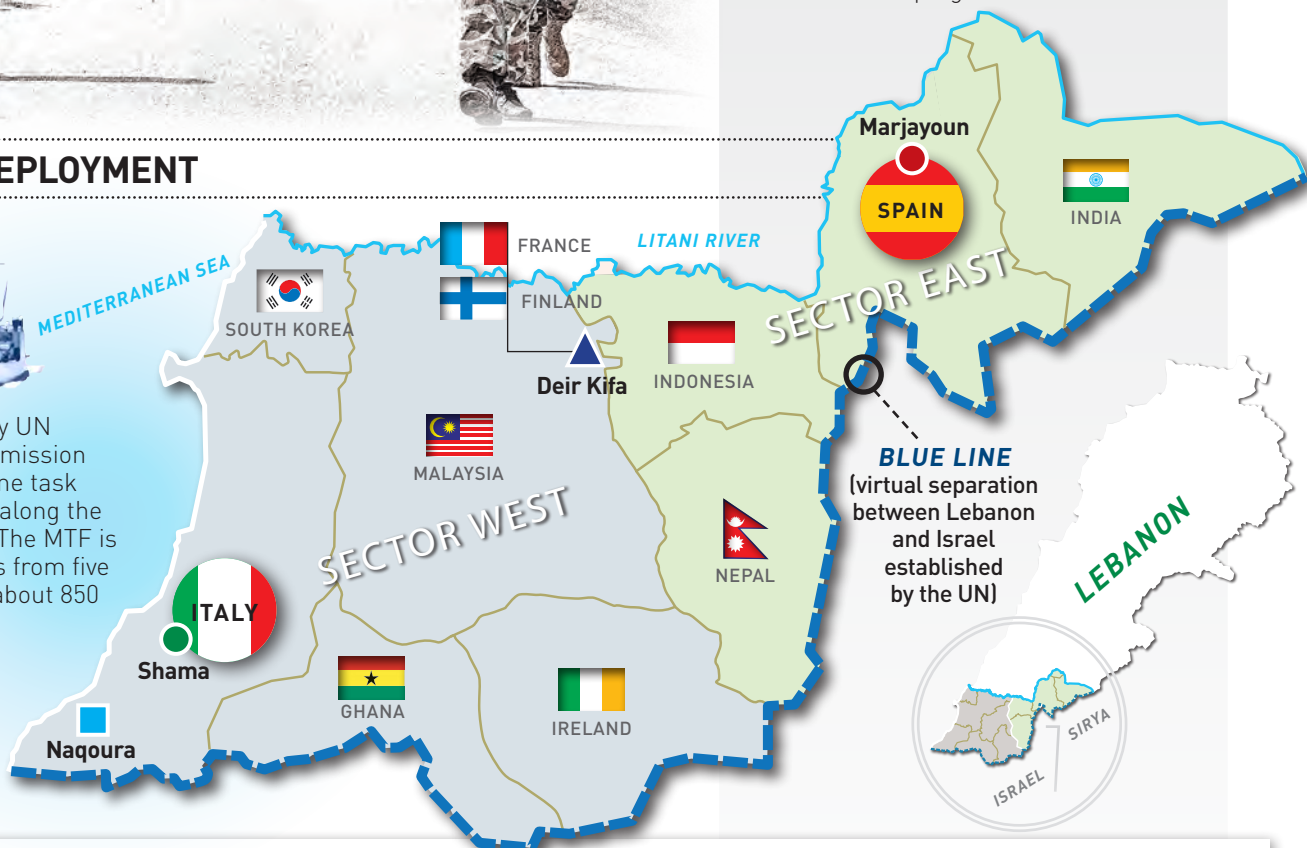
- Since 2006, **142,300 m2** of land have been cleared on the *Blue Line*.
- **33,000** explosive devices and **6,700** mines have been



UNIFIL DEPLOYMENT



It is the only UN peacekeeping mission with a maritime task force patrolling along the Lebanese coast. The MTF is made up of ships from five countries with about 850 troops.



SPAIN'S 15 YEARS IN LEBANON

SINCE the inception of the mission, the Spanish Armed Forces have participated through Operation *Libre Hidalgo*, with around 620 military members. Spain leads Sector East, made up of some 3,500 troops from eight countries. Its headquarters is the *Miguel de Cervantes* military base in Marjayoun.

→ **27.500** Troops deployed

→ **36** Contingents

→ **15** Soldiers have died

• CIVILIAN-MILITARY COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

- **689** quick impact projects.
- Health care for **26,280** civilians.
- **7,286** students learn Spanish (Cervantes programme).

■ UNIFIL Head Quarters

● Multinational Brigade West HQ

● Multinational Brigade East HQ

▲ Rapid Reaction Force

Flags represent the countries leading the battalions in each sector

MAJOR GENERAL AROLDÓ LÁZARO, COMMANDER OF UNIFIL

“A WHOLE GENERATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON HAS GROWN UP IN A SITUATION OF CALM”

The new head of the UN mission hopes the cessation of hostilities will be upheld, the first step towards a future lasting peace

“IT is a privilege to represent Spain in its commitment to the UN and to international peace and security”, says Major General Aroldo Lázaro, after taking the helm as Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) made up of 10,300 Blue Helmets and 800 civilians from 46 countries. Although the situation has often been described as a “tense and fragile quiet”, this military officer born in Sidi Ifni (Morocco) in 1962 praises the fact that this mission has managed “to maintain a situation of calm for more than fifteen years, without major conflicts or confrontations between the Lebanese and Israelis”, and hopes that this will continue to be the case under his mandate.

Of the three previous occasions on which he was in Lebanon, the last in 2016-17 as Commander of Sector East and of the multinational brigade led by Spain, General Lázaro remembers, above all, “the character of its people and the warm welcome accorded to the Spanish military by the different religious, ethnic and social groups, due to our humane attitude and the

neutrality and impartiality that we display”. Also assigned to three missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina (under UN, NATO and EU flags), as well as to the headquarters of the European Rapid Operational Force (EUROFOR, Florence), the NATO High Readiness Land Force (Bétera, Valencia) and, as commander, to the Mechanised Brigade *Guzmán el Bueno* (Córdoba), he assures that “it is going to be a great experience that will allow me to get to know different cultures and gain an insight into the expertise and diverse working procedures, which will help me grow as a soldier and as a person”.

—How are you approaching the command of this mission?

“Respect for local culture and customs and an impartial approach are crucial”

—With pride and, at the same time, with great responsibility, because of the trust bestowed upon me, first by the Minister of Defence, on behalf of the government, in appointing me as our country’s candidate, and then by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in choosing me for this position.

—How have you prepared for this responsibility?

—The selection process to be appointed commander of UNIFIL has required extensive and thorough preparation. I have been guided, advised and supported by the structure of the General Secretariat for Defence Policy, both in terms of the activities related to the acquisition of knowledge and skills on national and international aspects of security and defence, and in conducting interviews and making presentations at the UN Department of Peace Operations.

—What is your main objective?

—To continue with the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006) and the fulfilment of the new mandate of



INTERVIEW

Resolution 2591 (2021) in order to maintain stability in southern Lebanon, by guaranteeing respect for the *Blue Line*, facilitating the extension of the Lebanese Government's influence and providing support to its Armed Forces in the area. The aim is to create the necessary conditions for a permanent agreement between the parties involved to achieve a cessation of hostilities and a lasting peace.

—What is the current security situation in UNIFIL's area of operations?

—Relatively quiet. The situation is fragile, as evidenced by several past incidents. The rapid escalation of hostile actions by the opposing parties may occur at any time. And that is UNIFIL's responsibility. It has to monitor the cessation of hostilities and implement liaison and mediation measures to prevent any incident from escalating into a confrontation.

—In your opinion, how has the situation evolved in your different tours of duty?

—It has improved over the years. Since 2006, the situation of general calm has enabled a favourable evolution of the economic development and living conditions of the population. The Lebanese Armed Forces have also increased their presence and activities in the area, thereby extending the government's action and improving stability. The country is currently going through a severe economic, political and social crisis which, exacerbated by Beirut's port explosion in August 2020, has a direct negative impact on the population and its Armed Forces.

—How have this event and the COVID-19 pandemic affected the mission?

—Both factors have deeply affected the reality of the country. UNIFIL has adapted to these challenges in order to continue providing the necessary conditions of peace and stability in its area of operations. In the aftermath of the explosion, UNIFIL helped with personnel and material resources in clearing and reopening the port, and involved engineer units in the task.

With regard to the pandemic, the Force has provided protective equipment and carried out disinfection tasks in communities in southern Lebanon.

—What are the consequences of the war in Syria?

—The most significant has been the large influx of refugees into the south. Lebanon is estimated to have received around 1.5 million people from Syria. A large number of them remain on Lebanese soil in precarious conditions, housed in refugee camps.

—What assistance is UNIFIL providing to the Lebanese Army in the current economic crisis?

—At the request of the UN Security Council and for a period of six months, UNIFIL is providing various forms of support to the Lebanese Armed Forces to help them maintain their operability and continue with their joint activities. The aim is to support the capabilities of the security and defence pillar to ensure the sovereignty and provision of services of the Lebanese Government in the area. These special and temporary measures take the form of logistic support, mainly in terms of food, fuel and medicines. In addition, regular donations of equipment, off-road vehicles, buses, trucks and trailers continue to be provided on a regular basis.

Spain has contributed by sending food, medicines and medical supplies to ease the critical situation experienced by the members of the Lebanese Army.

—What are the necessary steps to attain lasting stability in the area?

—We need to continue to pursue the measures set out in Security Council Resolution 1701 and subsequent resolutions. In this field of action, it is essential to ensure that both sides respect the *Blue Line*, avoiding incidents, and to continue supporting the Lebanese government to guarantee its sovereignty and governmental action south of the Litani River, mainly through its Armed Forces. Achieving these general premises would provide the necessary conditions for an agreement between the parties and a lasting peace, which is already the task



"UNIFIL is helping to keep the Lebanese Armed Forces operational in the current economic crisis in Lebanon", says General Lázaro.

in hand for the Israeli and Lebanese diplomatic and political spheres. This would mean that UNIFIL has accomplished its mission.

—How would you describe the fact that there are still incidents on the *Blue Line*?

—The *Blue Line* is not a border officially recognised by the two countries, but a demarcation line established by the UN in 2000 to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces. Any unauthorised land or air crossing is a violation of Resolution 1701.

Although both sides agreed to fully respect the *Blue Line*, there are several areas where the two countries still have their reservations about its delineation. This is where most incidents take place, and also where UNIFIL is stepping up its activity to prevent the situation from deteriorating. Lebanon and Israel accepted UNIFIL as the sole custodian of the *Blue Line* and the final arbitrator on violations of the *Line*. UNIFIL has several



mechanisms in place to ensure permanent liaison with both parties. The commander has direct communication with senior Lebanese and Israeli military commanders; regular meetings, such as the Tripartite Forum, are held between representatives of the Force and the parties. In addition, UNIFIL has liaison teams deployed on both sides of the *Blue Line*, who conduct patrols to assess the situation and rapidly respond to incidents that may occur, always in coordination with Lebanon and Israel.

—Is there still a risk of an escalation of tension?

—If not properly controlled and managed, one-off incidents can lead to an escalation of tension between the parties. The continued presence of UNIFIL personnel, vehicle and foot patrols, interposition between the parties along the *Blue Line*, as well as liaison, mediation and negotiation mechanisms are key assets to reinforce security and prevent or reduce such escalation.

—How is the presence of the Blue Helmets perceived by the local population?

—In general in a very positive way, as they have ensured the longest period, more than fifteen years, without a major armed conflict in southern Lebanon. This has allowed a whole generation to grow up in a situation of calm. The support of the civilian society is crucial to the fulfilment of UNIFIL's mandate, and gaining their acceptance and trust requires respect for local culture and customs as well as an impartial approach.

—What are the most significant activities in support of the population?

—Although UNIFIL is not a humanitarian aid or development mission, since its inception it has had a close and continuous relationship with the local population, aimed at ensuring the stability of the communities living in southern Lebanon. The activities of the various contingents deployed include medical, dental and veterinary support;

assistance for agricultural projects; maintenance of land communication routes, especially in winter; language and computer courses, etc. UNIFIL and the participating countries also implement projects known as quick impact projects, to meet the most urgent basic needs of the population. In Sector East, the Spanish contingent undertakes specific cooperation programmes to teach Spanish and train people for emergency situations, and facilitates the support of staff from various Spanish universities to carry out projects related to agriculture and veterinary assistance.

—What is UNIFIL's role in the field of demining?

—The aim is to facilitate the visible marking of the *Blue Line* and to guarantee the safety and security of patrols, in order to reduce the risk posed by the presence of mines and explosive devices in southern Lebanon. Activities are conducted in the area of operations, primarily by Cambodian and Chinese engineer units, in coordination with the Lebanese Mine Action Centre (LMAC) and with the support of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). UNMAS, in collaboration with UNIFIL, raises the awareness of the population about the risks in the area.

—UNIFIL is the only UN mission with a maritime component. How is this task working to prevent arms smuggling?

—The Maritime Task Force (MTF) consists of five ships and one helicopter, belonging to several nations. It supports the Lebanese Navy in controlling its territorial waters, securing its maritime borders and ports and preventing the unauthorized entry of arms or related materiel. It complements this support with air surveillance activities over Lebanese land and maritime territory, as well as maritime search and rescue. Another role of the MTF is to help increase the country's naval operational capabilities by training navy personnel and units, conducting exercises and providing technical support.

Santiago F. del Vado
Photos: Hélène Gicquel

Mission Baluarte

The Armed Forces continue
to collaborate with Regional
Governments in the fight against
COVID-19

VACCINES: LIFE INSURANCE

AT the health centre in Sepúlveda (Segovia), it is time to vaccinate those born in 1977, 1978 and 1979. It is not yet 4 p.m., the time scheduled for vaccination to begin, but some of the town's citizens are already waiting for their turn. Felix and Eloisa are among the first. "We didn't know we were going to be attended to by military personnel", says Felix, with his hand on his arm, pressing where he has just got the shot. "Thank goodness they are helping us", adds Eloisa. This is her second experience with members of the Armed Forces since the pandemic began. "We had COVID a year ago and the follow-up was conducted by our soldiers. They called us every day to ask us how we were doing, helped us with our appointments and were always looking out for us", says Felix.

It is the end of January. A group of soldiers and medical personnel from the Artillery Academy in Segovia have travelled to







> **NURSE CAPTAIN MARÍA DEL CARMEN DE LOS REYES**

“Once the word spreads that we are here, more people come”

At the head of the mobile vaccination team at the Artillery Academy in Segovia, Nurse Captain María del Carmen de los Reyes prepares the doses for the people attending the health centres. “When word gets out that the Armed Forces are here, then more people show up”. In fact, they have sometimes run out of vaccines. “We arrive with about 180 doses and we usually end up with only 30 or 40. But almost none of them are wasted; the vials contain six doses and we only discard those that are open. If they are closed, they go back into the fridge. Once thawed, they will last for a month”.

Before vaccinating anyone, the nurse captain makes sure it is OK to do so. Therefore, she checks that all the information provided by the person to be vaccinated is correct. To do this, she uses a system that collects the population’s COVID-19 data: if they have been vaccinated recently, if they have received all the shots, etc. “The system records everything”. A few days ago, a young man, who thought he had tested positive, came to be vaccinated. “He had undergone a diagnostic test but still did not know the result. I sent him to the emergency room of the health centre. There they informed him that he had, indeed, tested positive and could not be vaccinated, and they reminded him of the preventive and healthcare measures he had to follow”.

The Defence Ministry has provided 150 mobile vaccination teams with a total of 1,000 soldiers to the regional governments

Sepúlveda as part of one of the 150 Mobile Vaccination Teams (MVTs) that the Ministry of Defence placed at the disposal of the regional governments and Ceuta and Melilla at the beginning of the year. They are part of the one thousand soldiers who strive to take the vaccine to every corner of Spain in which their help is requested.

These teams are part of the operation *Mission Baluarte*, launched in October 2020 and reinforced at the end of December 2021 due to the increase in positive cases of the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2. In addition to these teams, the Defence Ministry increased the number of contact tracers —up to 1,500— who collaborate in the follow-up of those who test positive. This task is carried out by the Epidemiological Monitoring Units (EMUs), which are generally located in military bases and barracks. Since *Mission Baluarte* began, contact tracers have followed 6.7 million infected people and their close contacts; they have administered more than 350,000 vaccines and performed 1,500 disinfections.

The Ministry has also offered its two military hospitals in Madrid and Zaragoza to promote vaccination among the civilian population. But *Mission Baluarte* goes beyond this: the Military Emergency Unit (UME) disinfects facilities wherever its presence is requested; the Army provides health services with modular and large tents, benches, tables and support staff; and the Joint Cyberspace Command monitors the computer systems of the aforementioned military hospitals to prevent attacks.

VACCINATION TEAMS

So far, thirteen regional governments have requested mobile vaccination teams (MVTs) from the Defence Ministry (all except Madrid, Catalonia, Navarre and the Basque Country), as well as Ceuta and Melilla. As we closed this edition, the Valencian Community had the largest number of MVTs (15), followed by Andalusia (14). Castilla y León had eleven, the Balearic Islands nine, while Castilla-La Mancha and the Canary Islands had six each.

A complete MVT is made up of a driver, two nurse officers, a medical officer and the administrative or IT staff who record the cases. They are sometimes accompanied by an ambulance in case those vaccinated have an adverse reaction or need to be

taken to hospital, taking into account that among those who come to be vaccinated there may be elderly people or patients with previous illnesses.

The aforementioned team from the Artillery Academy —consisting of the nurse captain— is vaccinating all over the province of Segovia. “We go out to the villages because that is where we are most needed”, explains nurse captain María del Carmen de los Reyes.

Each day they visit a different location, sometimes two on the same day. They arrive with about 200 vials. “However, we don’t really know how many people will show up”, says María. She points out that many are surprised to see them, but that everyone thanks them for the work they are doing. Like Beatriz and her sister Cristina. “I am very proud to have been vaccinated by our soldiers. And I have told them so”, says Beatriz. In Sepúlveda, the newly vaccinated are also grateful for the speed of the vaccination. “For the second jab, we had to go to another village and there were a lot of people there. We had to



The Operations Command coordinates *Mission Baluarte*, although the specific daily support is agreed upon between the Component Commands and the Health Departments of the regional governments



Pepe Díaz

> PRIVATE SAMUEL ÁLVAREZ. CONTACT TRACER

“The population is much better informed”

PRIVATE Samuel Álvarez knows exactly what a contact tracer must do. This is the second time he has taken part in *Mission Baluarte* and he affirms that the situations he has encountered on the other end of the phone have changed. “Now people are much more informed about COVID, more relaxed and, since I was called again in December for active duty, I have only come across two cases that were hospitalised. However, a year ago, we encountered many serious cases, some of whom, sadly, lost their lives”.

Stationed at the 48th Wing, he is part of the epidemiological monitoring section located at Cuatro Vientos air base, which follows up on positive cases in the provinces of Zamora and Ávila. “Many of the people we call are farmers and they ask us if they can leave their homes to look after their animals”, he says. In these cases, we let them know that they can get a safe-conduct at the nearest Guardia Civil station authorised to do this. Others are really upset about some measures: “they tell us that they don’t understand the protocols and try to get answers from us that we can’t give”, he says. “Every call we make is completely different” and “we have very little time to talk to those affected, especially in the sixth wave, because of the amount of infections”. Despite this, he argues, “we treat everyone as they deserve. Some need more time and we give it to them”.

Mission Baluarte

wait for two hours. Today it was really quick”, they point out.

Although the population is now much better informed about the protocols they have to follow with COVID-19, some of them use their appointment to ask questions. How to download their COVID certificate, if they can already receive another dose or if they can be vaccinated after having been in contact with a person who has tested positive, are some of the questions they ask the MVTs. Service members also ask them a few questions before administering the dose, and check that their personal records are correct.

ACT OF RESPONSIBILITY

Defence Minister Margarita Robles visited some of the places where the Armed Forces are deployed. In all of them, she stressed the importance of vaccination, which she described as “life insurance” and “an act of responsibility”. “Our experience in military hospitals is that the people who have died were unvaccinated or had previous pathologies”, she said in Pontevedra.

Data indicate the effectiveness of coronavirus vaccines. In the sixth wave, mainly due to the Omicron variant that multiplied infections, vaccination has proven to be especially effective in protecting those who become infected from severe illness, immunised people being five times



Ricardo Pérez/MDE



EPIDEMIOLOGICAL MONITORING UNITS (EMU)

Army, Navy and Air Force contact tracers reinforce the mechanisms used by the regional governments for monitoring and controlling active outbreaks.

→ **1.500** CONTACT TRACERS

→ **8.000** CALLS PER DAY

→ **6,7 millions** CONTACTS

(Data at 2/2/2022)

less likely to be admitted to hospital than unvaccinated people and having less chance of dying from the virus.

Minister Robles also visited the Corral de Calatrava health centre in Ciudad Real, accompanied by the Minister of Health, Carolina Darias, who highlighted the “collaboration, involvement and commitment of our Armed Forces” in administering vaccines, a job “that is saving lives”. She added that this is why, “Spain is an international benchmark in vaccination, thanks to the exemplary attitude of its citizens”. Margarita Robles also visited the military hospital in Zaragoza. There, she insisted once more on the importance of the vaccine. “I think that anyone who does not get vaccinated shows no solidarity whatsoever; you have to get vaccinated for yourself and for others”. The minister added that “sometimes there is a debate about rights and freedom. Obviously, people have the right not to get vaccinated but, in a democratic country, we must be responsible and show solidarity. The best form of democracy is to think of others’ rights and not just your own”.

MORE CONTACT TRACERS

Since the onset of *Mission Baluarte*, the military have not ceased to trace infected people and their close contacts. The increase in the number



MDE



MOBILE VACCINATION TEAMS (MVT)

Thirteen regional governments have requested the Armed Forces to assist them in the immunisation of their citizens.

→ **150** TEAMS AVAILABLE

→ **1.000** MILITARY MEMBERS

→ **Over 350.000** VACCINES ADMINISTERED



In addition, the Ministry of Defence has placed the military hospitals in Madrid and Zaragoza at the disposal of the regional governments.

Rafael Navarro / Revista Española de Defensa. Source: Operations Command.

of positive cases in the sixth wave of the pandemic led regional governments to request greater collaboration from the Armed Forces, reaching a total of 1,500 men and women.

There are currently military contact tracers in all the regional governments, except for the Basque Country and Catalonia. One of these epidemiological monitoring squads is located at Cuatro Vientos air base, Madrid, from where they contact people who test positive in Zamora and Ávila. There are 33 military members involved in this task: a nurse, two chief officers, three section leaders and 27 contact tracers who work from nine to nine in morning, afternoon and weekend shifts. "We have managed to make 2,000 follow-up calls a day", says Captain Daniel Gómez. And he adds that, in general, the people they call are very polite. "They feel calm when they hear from us; they know that someone is looking out for them", he says. All contact tracers have been trained in communication, legal advice and psychology. "Many volunteers have come forward for contact tracing because it is always comforting to help the civilian population. It is a very rewarding mission", concludes the captain.

Currently, nearly 11,000 members of the Armed Forces are trained and available in case the regional governments need their collaboration in this task. The same is true for the 1,000 military personnel who make up the 150 mobile vaccination teams organized by the Defence Ministry to work hand in hand with civilian healthcare workers in the best interest of the people. Together they face the challenge of speeding up the inoculation of vaccines to curb this pandemic.

Elena Tarilonte

Photos: Hélène Gicquel

The population appreciates the work of the Armed Forces on vaccinations, contact identification and contact tracing

Readiness and availability in difficult times

> **Major General Juan José Sánchez Ramos**
Inspector General for Defence Health

SINCE the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the Armed Forces' contribution in support of society has not ceased. First, through Operation *Balmis* and, shortly afterwards, as a result of the second wave of cases and infections, with Operation *Mission Baluarte*.

Following the agreement reached at the Conference of Presidents on 22 December, in light of the high transmissibility of the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 and the proven effectiveness of the vaccine, as well as its usefulness in reducing hospitalisations and deaths, the health authorities considered it appropriate to accelerate the pace of vaccination in all age groups with the booster shot. In this context, the Health Ministry asked the Defence Ministry to support the National Vaccination Plan in those regional governments and cities requesting it.

The support provided is further proof of the readiness and availability of the Armed Forces and their Military Health Service to help out in whatever the population may need in difficult times and to strengthen the Spanish health system in the current pandemic. For their part, the Spanish people have demonstrated a great sense of responsibility, responding once again with massive attendance at vaccination centres to get their booster shots.

In order to deliver such support, the Ministry of Defence reinforced the capabilities of *Mission Baluarte* by providing 150 Mobile Vaccination Teams (MVTs), with a total of around 1,000 military members. MVTs are made up of personnel from the Army, Navy, Air Force and the Military Emergency Unit. In addition, the Inspectorate General

for Defence Health has offered the Defence hospitals in Madrid and Zaragoza as regional vaccination centres to support those regional governments.

These teams consist of medical staff from the Military Medical Corps and support personnel, who are carefully selected and trained to fulfil the tasks entrusted to them under the COVID-19 vaccination plan approved by the Interterritorial Council of the National Healthcare System.

For the transfer of equipment and personnel, these MVTs are provided with suitable vehicles, as well as equipment for the preservation of the vaccines, from the time they are picked up at the supply point designated by the regional government to the time they reach the vaccination point. Provision is also made for the necessary administrative management facilitating the transfer of data to the National Immunization Registry.

If the vaccination point is not managed by a physician or does not have an Advanced Life Support Team, the MVT will have to work in coordination with the corresponding services of the regional government in order to have both.

Thirteen regional governments as well as Ceuta and Melilla requested the reinforcement of their vaccination plans with MVTs in their vaccination points (healthcare centres, retirement homes, home care, educational centres, etc.) to deal with daily appointments. Regional governments along with Ceuta and Melilla devise both the organisational strategy for appointments and the geographical location of the vaccination points. The number of doses delivered by these teams in early February 2022 already exceeded 250,000.

NATIONAL

The Armed Forces have been integrated into the emergency unit to assist those affected by the eruption of the volcano in La Palma

85 DAYS OF FIRE AND ASH

THE Cumbre Vieja volcano in La Palma fell silent on 13 December 2021, at 10.21 p.m. Eighty-five days had elapsed since the beginning of its seismic activity on 19 September 2021 at 4.15 p.m. The eruption gave rise to the evacuation of 7,000 people; the destruction of 2,988 facilities and homes; the damage of 370 hectares of crops; a trail of 1,219 hectares of lava flows; the discharge of 200 million cubic metres of volcanic material, spewed out by six craters; 9,090 earthquakes; and 73.8 kilometres of buried roads. "It's all over", Julio Pérez, the Councillor in charge of the Special Plan for Civil Protection and Emergency Response to Volcanic Risks in the Canary Islands (PEVOLCA), announced officially some days later, on 25 December, having complied with the preventive deadline proposed by the Scientific Committee. Throughout those four months, more than 1,500 service members worked under the auspices of the PEVOLCA, mostly from the Military Emergency Unit (UME), but also from the Army, Navy and Air Force, who toiled relentlessly, even after the volcano's activity ceased, alongside personnel from various civilian agencies, law enforcement agents and more than 500 scientists. "It all started

in summer and ended almost in winter. It has been a volcanic autumn", Pérez told the media on Christmas Day.

MILITARY EMERGENCY UNIT (UME)

After the four-month deployment in La Palma, the UME was demobilized on 18 January 2022, one month after the end of the volcano's seismic activity. The unit arrived on the island and joined the PEVOLCA just 26 minutes after the eruption began. Around 1,336 of its members participated in the emergency plan. They were distributed in different shifts and came from practically all the units that make

up the UME: its headquarters, the five Intervention battalions, the Signal battalion and the Specialized Unit for Technological and Environmental Emergencies (GIETMA). Throughout the 121-day mission, the UME maintained a contingent of some 240 troops and more than 70 assets at all times, such as fire engines, water tankers and light vehicles, including the VELIRE reconnaissance vehicle, prepared for the detection, identification and sampling of chemical agents. The work of the men and women of the UME focused on tasks as diverse as monitoring the progress of the lava flows, thanks, in particular, to reconnaissance flights and the photographs taken from their RPAS *Phantom 2* and *4*. They also provided psychological support and helped in the evacuation of the victims and their subsequent return home, including the removal of their belongings. Dozens of families were able to return to their homes in the municipalities of El Paso, Los Llanos de Aridane and Tazacorte once the volcano's seismic activity had ceased and the absence of toxic gases in the atmosphere had been confirmed. The Army also took part in these tasks, through the Command of the Canary Islands, with personnel from the 49th Infantry Regiment *Tenerife* and the 93rd Field Artillery Regiment of the 16th Brigade *Canarias*.

**More than 1,500
service members
participated in
the crisis, most of
them deployed on
the ground**



El Ejército de Tierra

A member of the Infantry Regiment *Tenerife* removes ash from the roof of a house.



Armada

Civilians aboard an LCM 1E landing craft coming from Tazacorte disembark in Puerto Naos.



UME

Measuring gas levels and sulphur accumulation on the slope of the Cumbre Vieja volcano.



UME

Personnel from the UME help move the belongings of a family able to return home after four months.



The *El Fuerte* military barracks served as a temporary shelter for those affected by the volcano during the first few days of the crisis.



Specialists from the GIETMA and the Geological and Mining Institute inspect the entrance, buried under lava, of a residential complex.

The specialists of the GIETMA atmosphere control team, together with staff from the Spanish Geological and Mining Institute, supported by teams from the Army's 1st NBC Defence Regiment, were in charge of measuring the levels of sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide emanating from the volcano's craters, as well as the levels of hydrochloric acid produced by the contact of the lava with the seawater. Before concluding their deployment in La Palma, the UME shared information with the Emergency Directorate on the functioning of the toxic gas measuring beacons they had used and the state of the infrastructures and communication routes that were damaged in their area.

As in their efforts to evacuate and get people back to their homes, personnel from both the Infantry regiment *Tenerife* and the 93rd Field Artillery regiment also worked side by side, organised by platoons, with the members of the UME removing volcanic ash, in particular from the roofs and walls of facilities and their access points. In this regard, the Councillor for Works of the Los Llanos de Aridane town council, Francisco

Leal, publicly recognized on 11 January that "the speed" with which more than 10,000 tonnes of ash had been removed in the area of Las Manchas in just a month and a half, was thanks to "the collaboration of the UME and the Army".

EL FUERTE MILITARY BARRACKS

Since the onset of the emergency, the Army set up 700 beds in dormitories and common areas in the Projection Support Unit *El Fuerte* and, in case of a mass evacuation —which never took place— members of the Logistic Group of the Brigade *Canarias* set up a 300-bed deployable camp on the esplanade of the military barracks. In conjunction with the Red Cross and the Canary Islands Health Service, 680 evacuees were registered and underwent PCR tests in this barracks. At the same time, the staff at *El Fuerte*, reinforced by personnel from other units, also reporting to this Sub-Inspection and coming from different parts of the archipelago, assisted the victims who were temporarily staying at the facility while waiting to be rehoused in the homes of relatives or friends, hotels or hospitals, reaching peaks of up

to 250 people. The unit also provided accommodation and support to over 200 military members, mostly from the UME, who participated in the operation, as well as to some members of civilian agencies. Thus, during the crisis, the Projection Support Unit provided accommodation for more than 25,000 people in its facilities, including evacuees, members of the Armed Forces and aid workers.

Currently, at the request of La Palma town hall and the subsequent authorisation of the Ministry of Defence, *El Fuerte* is being used as a temporary base to accommodate the fleet of civilian vehicles which, in stages, began to arrive on the island by ship in mid-January to join the ash removal crews dedicated in particular to the recovery of communication routes.

NAVY

Following the eruption, and given the urgent need to supply water to the area affected by the lava flow, the Government Delegation in the Canary Islands requested support from the Ministry of Defence to transport material to La Palma. The Navy prepared the offshore



UME

patrol vessel *Tornado* and on 11 October 2021 carried the necessary material to install two desalination plants and guarantee irrigation, as the lava flow had destroyed the pipelines intended for this purpose.

That same day, the hydrographic ship *Malaspina* carried two ocean bottom seismometers (OBS) to be deployed in the vicinity of the island, thereby complementing the seismic stations deployed on land. Subsequently, the offshore patrol vessel *Relámpago* set sail to deploy ten more seismometers.

The data obtained enabled the subsequent study of the eruption, improving the location of the earthquakes. In the second half of this year, the Navy plans to send a new ship to carry out a hydrographic survey of the eruption area.

Since land communication routes were blocked by lava flows, the town hall of La Palma also requested support from the Ministry of Defence to transfer farmers by sea from the port of Tazacorte to the banana plantations. The Navy, therefore, sent the *Tornado* with a reconnaissance team to study the conditions of the coast

and the seabed. After confirming that Puerto Naos beach was viable for landing, the amphibious ship *Castilla* went to the area with four LCM-1E landing crafts, which remained on the island until 9 February.

Over 3,000 farmers managed to reach the plantations aboard the boats, for which three daily round trips were established. "Every morning, between 80 and 90 people boarded the boats, never more than 100, as required by COVID protocol, to keep safe physical distances on board", explained Lieutenant Elena Villar, who was in command of the detachment.

The Armed Forces have supported the population by land, sea and air

OBSERVATION AND AIR OPERATIONS

From the start of the seismic activity, the Centre for Aerospace Observation Systems (CESAEROB) prepared a weekly monitoring report for the Military Emergency Unit, based on the radar images obtained by the Spanish *Paz* satellite, which facilitated keeping track of the evolution of the lava flows at all times. The document also included a specific study of the possible directions in which the lava flows could move based on the analysis of surface topography. The CESAEROB reports functionally to the Armed Forces Intelligence Centre (CIFAS) and, organically, to the Air Force. Air operations were also crucial in the emergency in La Palma. Personnel and assets were transported aboard *Airbus A400M*, *CN-235* or *C-212*, both from the mainland and from the Canary Islands. Sometimes, these flights were not without difficulties, due to suspended ash and lava, as Defence Minister Margarita Robles recalled during her visit to the 46th Wing on 3 January to thank its members for their work throughout the eruption of the volcano.

This unit also performed other tasks, such as the transfer of some thirty children from the Aridane valley to Gran Canaria in the first weeks of the emergency in order to take them away for some time from the tragedy they and their families were experiencing. Besides visiting the facilities at Gando air base, schoolchildren took part in putting together a solidarity calendar for the benefit of the victims of Cumbre Vieja.

In addition, at the beginning of the crisis, the Air Force deployed three *Canadair CL-215* seaplanes from the 43rd Group in response to the risk of forest fires. Two of these aircraft immediately returned to the mainland and a third remained on the island for a longer period of time but was never used. Scientists assure that the Cumbre Vieja volcano is "dormant" and that the emergency persists, now at level 2, due to the risks associated with gas and ash concentrations. "The eruption of a volcano was an unlikely emergency, but we had a contingency plan in place", said Commander Ángel Luis Fernández, operations commander of the UME in La Palma at the end of last year, referring to the fact that this was the first time the unit had participated in such a crisis. The rest of the Armed Forces who came to help the island's population had never experienced a situation like this one either.

José Luis Expósito

Madrid NATO Summit

Towards a more pragmatic and decisive Strategic Concept

Dr María Angustias Caracuel Raya

Technical Cabinet of the Secretariat of Defence for Political Affairs (SEGENPOL)

ADAPTING to the future is an ongoing challenge that requires an open mind and a broad view on the trends that inspire the decisions and actions of any structure. And NATO, as an international organisation of sovereign democratic states, is not immune to this dynamic. After 73 years of history, with 30 member states and 40 partners, NATO is in the midst of a reflection process that should lead to the adoption of a new Strategic Concept in Madrid next June, thus paving the way for its actions in both its political and military dimensions. This will be a historic milestone, coinciding with the drafting of the EU's Strategic Compass and, in the case of Spain, with the 40th anniversary of our NATO membership and the 25th anniversary of the 1997 Madrid Summit. The geostrategic landscape has changed a great deal since then. The philosopher Isaiah Berlin said that "to understand is to perceive patterns" and every structure has patterns that allow us to analyse experiences and combine them with the skills developed since its inception in order to set new objectives. Indeed, the flexibility shown by the Atlantic Alliance since the signing of the Washington Treaty on 4 April 1949 has enabled it to overcome the demands of an ever-changing strategic environment based on common values, such as democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, which are still the source of its strength.

This has been manifested in the various NATO Summits of Heads of State and Government and in the successive NATO Strategic Concepts, from the classified documents issued during the Cold War to those published when it ended, agreed in Rome (1991), Washington (1999) and Lisbon (2010), the latter currently in effect. Each and every one of them has reflected the parameters of allied strategy and its adaptation to the different strategic challenges, enabling significant internal divisions among allies to be

overcome thanks to the unique consultation mechanism that NATO represents.

Several key factors explain the importance of the current moment of reflection with a view to adopting a new Strategic Concept in Madrid. The volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous and unpredictable nature of today's strategic environment increasingly requires a common will and effort to overcome a whole range of challenges, risks and security threats —not necessarily of a military nature— with ever more demanding human and material capabilities and resources. This has been evidenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and other traditional and new challenges, triggered primarily by the strategic competition between major powers, in particular in areas where their strategic interests converge. All the more so when the main ally, the US, has presented its Global Posture Review, placing the Indo-Pacific region as the primary focus of attention. This affects not only international security but also the Atlantic Alliance as a whole. Strengthening its unity and cohesion with a more global vision is crucial to anchor its political and military position in the present and future international system.

FROM LISBON TO MADRID

The main strength of NATO's Strategic Concepts is the clear and rigorous definition of the common aspirations of the allies to meet those goals together, bearing in mind their common interests, security risks, threats, theatres of action and key missions or

NATO must strengthen its political dimension by fostering cohesion and solidarity

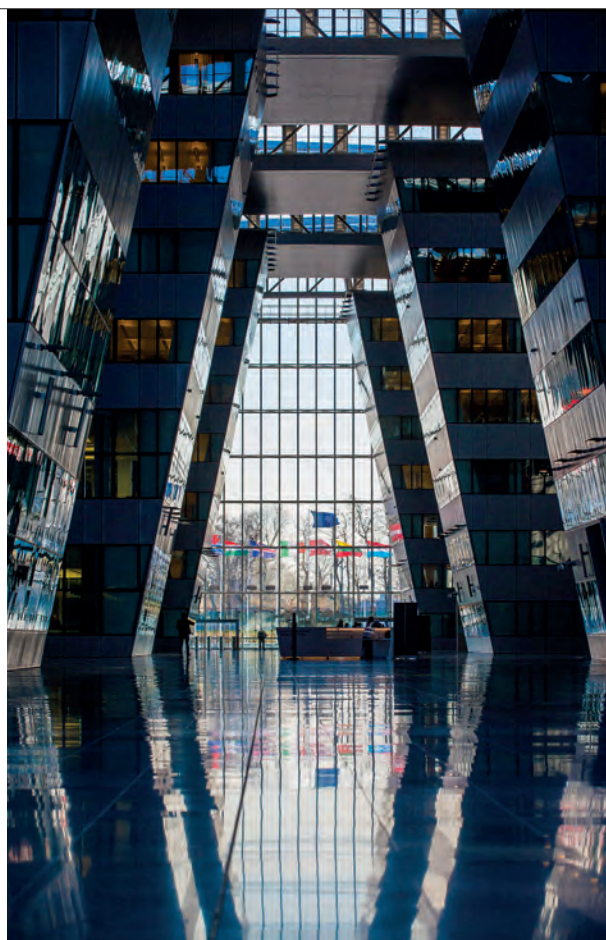
tasks in order to address them. This political document has changed its approach over the past decades, giving rise to new initiatives in response to the demands identified, while respecting the purposes and principles of the UN Charter as set out in the Washington Treaty and the motto that embodies its philosophy: *Animus in Consulendo Liber* - free spirit to decide.

The Lisbon Strategic Concept, officially called Active Engagement Modern Defence, expanded the Alliance's tasks well beyond collective defence —represented in article 5— in order to include crisis management across the whole spectrum of conflict and cooperative security, through new partnerships with “relevant countries and other international organisations”.

At the time, the Euro-Atlantic area was perceived to be more peaceful and to pose a low-level traditional conventional threat. Likewise, the Lisbon Concept expanded NATO's theatre of action to deter and defend against any threats to the security of its populations, even at strategic distances, as the allied mission in Afghanistan has done for the past twenty years.

Today, the situation is quite different from that of the past decade. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the emergence of the self-proclaimed *Islamic State* in the Middle East had a clear impact on NATO's strategy. On the one hand, it involved the return to new deterrence and defence measures with forward presences on allied territory and, on the other, the Alliance's contribution to the fight against terrorism, first by supporting and then by joining the US-led Global Coalition against *Daesh*.

However, while the Alliance does not recognise any country as an adversary in the Lisbon Strategic Concept (paragraph 16), tensions and concerns among Allies have increased due to Russia's revisionist tendencies, China's geostrategic and economic rise, and the military relations between the two. The current crisis in and around Ukraine and other factors related to the arms control regime, the modernisation of the conventional



NATO

and nuclear arsenal with new hypersonic missile systems, the interest of both powers in cyberspace and the development of their space careers, can only confirm this.

In this context, actions by hostile agents that are difficult to attribute, whether of state or non-state origin, in the so-called “grey zone”, without even crossing the threshold of an armed aggression, lead to uncertainty and confusion in the country concerned, both in its institutions and population. Thus, in addition to the traditional physical spaces —land, sea and air— we need to pay more attention to new operational domains, such as cyberspace, outer space and maritime space. These are global commons that have a direct bearing on the security and well-being of citizens. Furthermore, the cognitive domain is also acquiring a more prominent

role, especially when it comes to maliciously influencing society's perception of reality through disinformation or manipulation, hence the importance of strategic communication in understanding and shaping the information environment.

This scenario comes hand in hand with a technological revolution resulting from the development of artificial intelligence, the internet of things and the use of disruptive and emerging technologies, as well as from the deterioration of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime, and the persistence of armed conflicts and instability in regional areas of special interest to Spain, such as the Middle East, the Mediterranean and the Sahel. In addition, other challenges of a transnational nature persist, such as terrorism, illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons, cybersecurity, maritime and energy security, mass irregular migration, human and drug trafficking, money laundering, the effects of climate change and, in the last two years, a global health crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, which continues to have an impact at the political, economic and social level.

In light of these important developments, NATO leaders, meeting in London in December 2019, agreed to initiate a reflection process within the Alliance to adapt its roles and tools

to the challenges and threats of the 21st century. Thus, the NATO Secretary General appointed a group of ten experts, whose final report “NATO 2030: United for a New Era”, presented in November 2020, involved the participation of numerous institutions, young people, and representatives of civil society and the private sector. It includes 138 recommendations, which inspired the discussions leading up to the adoption of the NATO 2030 Agenda at the 2021 Brussels Summit, where it was announced that Madrid would host the next Summit of Heads of State and Government in June 2022 and that the new Strategic Concept would be adopted.

NEW PRIORITIES

The fact that NATO has been carrying out tasks well beyond those initially conceived in the Washington Treaty, evolving from a defensive alliance to a security provider outside the North Atlantic area (article 6), shows its flexibility, while also raising the need to adjust its priorities to the new demands of the strategic scenario described above.

What was global has now become local and vice versa, reviving concepts such as human security, which is now an integral part of national security as we, the people, realise that our well-being depends on what happens in other parts of the world, which requires greater international engagement to address global challenges that impact our way of life.

NATO is thus taking a new step forward and the allies must agree on the new challenges and threats it will face and, therefore, determine the security and defence tasks and how they should be carried out and with what means. Thus far, the Atlantic acquis and the new trends currently taking shape allow us to gain an initial insight into Madrid's new Strategic Concept.

First, NATO must strengthen its political dimension by fostering cohesion and solidarity among its members based on the principle of indivisible security. A renewed commitment to political consultations (article 4) on all issues regarding its security and coordination among allies is essential to link NATO's unity to the necessary consensus within the North Atlantic Council, thus preventing any potential adversary from taking advantage of division with regard to any individual threat perception. In this regard, coherence must be ensured between the instruments of civilian-military power at its disposal, of both its allies and partners willing and able to support the Alliance in the defence of their shared interests and objectives.

Second, NATO must strengthen its military toolbox by deterring and defending against any potential attack on its territory. While the Lisbon Strategic Concept eliminated any reference to the “armed” nature of the aggression and extended the preservation of peace and security to the Euro-Atlantic area, the Madrid Concept must be more explicit in its commitment to protect NATO territory, forces and populations from the full range of threats to its security with a 360-degree functional and geographic approach in all domains and at all stages (peace, crisis or conflict).

On the other hand, a more integrated defence, with deterrent capabilities —conventional, nuclear, cyber and missile defence— ready to be deployed at any time and place, requires a flexible, agile and modern command and force structure, guaranteeing technological advantage and military superiority at all times.

NATO must cooperate with more partners and engage more stakeholders in promoting peace and security

Third, NATO must adapt its resources to the needs required and advance in the commitments made at the 2014 Wales Summit. Traditionally, the principle of “costs lie where they fall”, based on the allies' voluntary contributions, has been a disincentive for them to participate in NATO missions. The possible extension of the common funding of the military budget could favour more equitable burden-sharing to contribute to the costs associated with the deployment of personnel, forces, capabilities and

training devoted to the defence of the allies. This would contribute to a more balanced metric of allied contributions to the three Cs: Cash, Capabilities and Commitments.

Fourth, NATO operations, missions and activities should focus on prevention, management and response to crises, both within and beyond its borders, supporting civilian authorities in emergencies when so required —as has been shown by the pandemic— and promoting human security, local ownership, a comprehensive approach and regional engagement in conflict resolution.

Against this backdrop, NATO's mission in Afghanistan does not imply the Alliance's disengagement from this country's security situation. It is in the interest of all of us that this country does not once again turn into a sanctuary for terrorists and, therefore, NATO will continue working in this line. Likewise, missions in Iraq and within the framework of the Global Coalition against Daesh, as well as NATO's actions to reinforce its various flanks, from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, will continue to be on the Alliance's agenda.

Fifth, NATO can cooperate with more partners and engage more stakeholders in promoting peace and security. Building peaceful and friendly international relations, as envisaged in article 2 of the Washington Treaty, is of utmost importance here. As the 2021 Brussels Summit Communiqué (paragraph 6.e) points out, a more global approach in defence of a rules-based international order can enable the establishment of new relationships with other relevant interlocutors beyond the Euro-Atlantic area, including Africa, Asia or Latin America, on a case-by-case basis and with each new partner deciding on its own level of interaction with the Alliance.

Beyond its relations with the UN, the work of the EU's *Strategic Compass* deserves special mention and, in particular, the future NATO-EU declaration to advance a strategic partnership that was born twenty years ago. Not surprisingly, their approaches to security and defence must be consistent and complementary, and at all times avoid duplication of efforts in the new areas of cooperation they decide upon together. Even more so when European strategic autonomy reaches its full potential, primarily in missions and operations in which NATO —and the United States— are not involved.

The current moment of reflection should also be used as an opportunity for NATO to be perceived by its citizens as an organisation that is open and responsive to their concerns, as this would improve its image in the eyes of national public opinion. In this regard, campaigns such as *#NATOEngages* or *#ProtectTheFuture*, promoted by the Public Diplomacy Division, can serve as a bridge for governments, national parliaments, think tanks and associations to help foster greater public awareness and trust in this institution, which protects and defends the security of one billion people. Although there is no institutional link between NATO and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, its work is crucial to help build new consensus among democracies and bring NATO policies closer to the people. The Atlantic Treaty Association and other like-minded civil society organisations can, by collaborating as a network, turn the bottom-up approach to Euro-Atlantic security culture and beyond into a reality.

Finally, other cross-cutting issues, such as resilience, strategic communication, the impact of climate change on

security and the gender perspectives must be integrated into the future Madrid Strategic Concept, since they affect NATO's three core tasks under the existing Strategic Concept. These are national responsibilities and, at the same time, collective commitments, based on article 3 of the Washington Treaty.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

The Madrid Strategic Concept will therefore be decisive in redesigning the NATO of the future, as a key player in a hyper-nodal world of the new digital era, more open and participatory regarding the contribution of new stakeholders. This is in line with the appeal launched by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in the report entitled "Our Common Agenda", presented to the United Nations General Assembly on 10 September 2021. In his opinion, alliances and partnerships can contribute a great

deal at the regional and global level in promoting peace and security by collaborating with other stakeholders such as regional organisations, civil society, young people, international financial organisations, the private sector and academia.

Preserving NATO's essence as a collective defence organisation, the very backbone of the Alliance, can and must be complemented by working towards a more interconnected multilateralism, based

on respect for human rights and the desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments, as stated in the preamble of the Washington Treaty.

We might be going through the worst period since the end of the Cold War, but the lessons of history invite us to continue with what works: the transatlantic link, which has enabled to preserve peace and stability in allied territory for more than seven decades. And, above all, to continue working to accommodate the positions of the allies and their partners on broader security issues as a community of shared values and interests, always open to the participation of new members.

The Madrid Summit will most definitely show that the Atlantic Alliance no longer sees the world through a single prism, but through a multifaceted lens open to the complexity and variety of the new international reality. Thus, as in Isaiah Berlin's famous metaphor, it has gone from being a hedgehog to contemplating the world as a fox.



Lieutenant General Fernando García-Vaquero, Chief
Commander of the Headquarters in Bétera

“AN ARMY’S GREATEST STRENGTH IS ITS PEOPLE”

The commander of the HQ NRDC-ESP stresses the importance of emerging technologies to face new challenges, but points out that “the essential element is human capital”

AT the end of last year, the Headquarters of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Spain (HQ NRDC-ESP) conducted exercise *Steadfast Leda 2021*, which certified it to lead up to 120,000 troops in high-intensity combat, or as a Warfighting Corps in NATO terminology.

At the head of this multinational unit is Lieutenant General Fernando García-Vaquero (Madrid, 1961). “During the exercise”, he says, “the evaluators saw that we were ready and we are now in a standby period for a year, meaning that if there is a crisis in which NATO needs to use these capabilities, our headquarters will be the one to take the lead”.

With vast experience in mountain, field and anti-aircraft artillery assignments, García-Vaquero also served as a commander in the Legion and was posted twice to Bosnia-Herzegovina and once to Afghanistan. In 2014, he arrived in Valencia to

serve in successive posts at NATO headquarters until he became chief commander two years ago when he was promoted to lieutenant general. Today, he leads an advance unit capable of responding to a wide range of challenges, including hybrid warfare and issues arising from space and cyber domains.

—General, what does the new Warfighting Corps concept entail?

—The idea is that an Army Corps headquarters like ours can take on a larger command than it usually does, going from 50,000 troops to being able to lead up to 120,000 men and women in a high-intensity operation.

The Warfighting Corps HQ synchronises and coordinates units operating across the battlefield in what we call the Four Fights: Deep, Close, Rear and Narrative, in order to achieve the objectives of the operational design.

The novelty of this concept is the presence of emerging and disruptive

technologies, the increased range and lethality of weapon systems, and the relevance of increasingly sophisticated activities, such as the use of cyberspace, the surge in information/disinformation activities and the trend towards a largely urbanised world, all in an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment.

—Do high-intensity operations involve major changes in the way of thinking and acting?

—Yes, they do. First, in their conception, as the battlefield is no longer limited to the traditional land, sea and air domains. We now also have to add the cyberspace and cognitive domains.

As a result, the necessary convergence of all these activities would require the implementation of new procedures to carry out operations that we call multi-domain operations. If we fight in the future with procedures from the past, even



Lieutenant General
García-Vaquero at Araca
base, where Bétera
headquarters was
deployed for exercise
Steadfast Leda 21.

INTERVIEW

with today's conflicts in mind, we are doomed to complete failure.

—What role would this headquarters take on in a potential NATO operation?

—If the HQ NRDC-ESP were to act as a Warfighting Corps, it would lead a multinational force —with contributions from the various member states— in a high-intensity military operation, which in NATO terms is called a NATO Article 5 operation.

This article establishes that an attack against one Member State shall be considered an attack against all Allies, and may lead to the use of force. It has so far been invoked only once, in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

—How many military members are assigned and which are the most common nationalities?

—As it is a Spanish headquarters, most of the personnel are Spanish nationals, currently accounting for 80 percent of personnel, while the remaining 20 percent are from the eleven allied nations participating in the headquarters (Germany, the United States, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Romania and Turkey). The largest contributors are the United States, Italy and Greece, although this contribution may vary slightly from year to year. It is also important to underline that, in the event of a real operation, personnel numbers would be adjusted upwards or downwards in accordance with the characteristics of each mission.

I should stress that we would like to be more multinational. Besides, the foreign personnel stationed in Bétera and their families are very well adjusted to Spain and, in particular, to Valencia.

—How do they prepare for the diversity of missions assigned to them?

—With a very demanding preparation programme which, in the case of exercise *Steadfast Leda 21*, took

more than a year in rather complicated conditions, due to the fluctuating presence of COVID-19.

During this preparation period, seminars were held and exercises carried out, concepts were analysed and procedures developed, many of them novel, including activities in what is known as the “grey zone”. All this was done in collaboration with NATO certification bodies such as the NATO Land Command Headquarters (LANDCOM) located in Izmir, Turkey; the NATO Joint Force Training Centre (JFTC) located in Bydgoszcz, Poland; another HQ NRDC that preceded us in this role, the British Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) and the various participating units: Division *Castillejos* (Spain), 1st Infantry Division (USA), 12th Mechanised Division (Poland), Division *Tridentina* (Italy)), as well

“The foreign personnel stationed in Bétera and their families are very well adjusted to Spain and, in particular, to Valencia”

as a Portuguese Brigade, a Greek Brigade, the 18th Military Police Brigade (USA), and Spanish Army Corps Troops.

In short, it has been a very intense year of preparation, which has led to the certification of this HQ and we are now entering the standby period.

—This HQ is designed for conventional combat, with large troop deployments. Will it be capable of conducting more limited operations in a hybrid warfare environment?

—If we prepare for the most extreme and complex case scenario, the Warfighting Corps, we can take on a minor and less intense operation without major issues. As for hybrid actions, they can occur across the entire spectrum of conflict, including in

the aforementioned grey zone, where armed conflict does not yet officially exist. NATO is also developing this concept and the HQ NRDC-ESP has been studying it for some time and is leading the work.

—How relevant will artificial intelligence be to operations?

—The appearance of emerging and disruptive technologies calls for the digital transformation of various processes, not only of permanent headquarters, but also of forces deployed in operations. In the case of artificial intelligence, the main goal is to implement it in the decision-making process, reducing response times by managing and analysing all available information. This requires the convergence of technologies such as artificial intelligence, the use of 5G, big data and machine learning, among others.

The use of artificial intelligence depends on the massive availability of data, big data. This is complex at the most tactical levels of military operations, due to the difficulty of processing and transmitting, which in turn requires the implementation of edge computing technology. The progressive implementation of 5G and “tactical 5G” will facilitate access to this big data and the use of artificial intelligence.

—What about cyberspace?

—Cyberspace has been part of our planning for some time now and will become increasingly important. Having consolidated the protection of our own information systems, we are now integrating defensive and offensive actions in this domain of operations —always bearing in mind national and international law— synchronised with our other actions “in the physical world”. To this end, in exercise *Steadfast Leda 21*, we have experimented with national cyberspace situational awareness tools, with the support of the Joint Cyberspace Command.

NATO, with the support of its member states, is seeking to enhance



The commander of HQ NRDC-ESP addresses the troops of his headquarters at the start of Exercise *Steadfast Leda 21* in mid-November.

assertive actions to succeed in this field. Integrating cyberspace and space domains into the tactical manoeuvre is a challenge in which NATO is currently involved.

The essential idea I would like to point out is that, whatever the use of new technologies and cyberspace might be, it should, in my opinion, be decided upon by humans and not by machines.

— How important will information or propaganda warfare be in future conflicts?

—I think it is going to play an increasingly important role because these new technologies are easily accessible. What is called fake news is already here. Many of the current, and probably future, operations are taking place in the so-called grey zone, and have evolved from being based on the exercise to being centred on behaviour, feelings and attitudes. In other words, instead of focusing on the enemy or the terrain, they focus on people and their emotions. The actions that can be undertaken aim to create a climate of disinformation and confusion that will destabilise and weaken the adversary, often influencing public opinion.

— How can these threats, which mainly act at the cognitive level, be addressed?

—All communication efforts need to be managed from the highest level and applied at all levels of the operations. It is therefore essential to consider the information environment in the planning and execution of military operations, since planning communication aspects and information activities irrespective of the operational planning could lead to a gap between words and deeds. At the same time, the need to maintain credibility, aligning messages and actions, and to convey truthful, accurate and timely information to society, promoting favourable perceptions, as well as to integrate lethal and non-lethal activities in an effective manner, will remain significant challenges in future conflicts.

—Is the gender perspective taken into account in planning and in this type of exercise?

—Yes, of course. From the beginning of planning to the analysis of goal achievement in operations and exercises, the gender perspective is always present as it should be.

In order to ensure this, we have a gender advisor who is in direct and continuous contact with me, as well as a network of focal points in every section of the mission, serving as a transmission belt throughout the chain of command, from senior commands to subordinates, for all related information.

—After the withdrawal from Afghanistan, European leaders have again raised the possibility of building up European military forces. What can Bétera contribute?

—The HRF(L)HQ (High Readiness Force Land Headquarters), in its capacity as an international headquarters (HQ NRDC-ESP), is at the disposal of the Atlantic Alliance but, if necessary, also of the European Union, depending on the needs that may arise and the decision of the Spanish Government.

Therefore, participating in operations as a member of either the European Union or NATO does not entail changes in our command structures or functional capabilities. For all practical purposes, to change from a NATO to an EU mode of operation does not involve a considerable effort.

—You are simultaneously in charge of the two top-level headquarters, one national and one international. How do you feel about this experience?

—I honestly have to say that it is a real privilege for me to be at the helm of this headquarters and of a truly outstanding group of national and multinational professionals. The truth is that we work as a single and synergistic headquarters located in two different places, Valencia and Bétera, but as a single team, a team of people I believe in and trust.

However, there is a difference: working on a daily basis in a multinational environment brings many advantages, such as open-

mindedness, different ways of facing and solving problems, and so on, and very few disadvantages. In the end, the most important thing is that we all act as soldiers, as comrades in arms. All these experiences, ways of working, etc., revert to the national domain, in particular to our Army. Therefore, I would describe this experience as unique and highly fruitful, both personally and professionally.

—What do you expect from the implementation of Force 2035 and the new “Mission Oriented Organization”?

—Force 2035 is a transformation project affecting the entire Army, including this headquarters, both

domains in the battle rhythm of the Warfighting Corps. In any case, to meet all these challenges there is one thing that is essential and most important: human capital. An Army's greatest strength is its people. In fact, this is one of my priorities. Without motivated and trained personnel, everything else is useless. And here I can proudly say that the human capital of the HRF(L)HQ, both nationally and internationally, is outstanding.

—How has the pandemic affected your daily life?

—The operability of this headquarters has not been affected at all, quite the contrary. That is what we are here



Lieutenant General García-Vaquero accompanies General Enseñat (Army Chief of Staff) and General Cloutier (LANDCOM) during the exercise.

nationally and multinationally. As I said earlier, our NATO membership allows us to keep abreast of new concepts and procedures, as for instance all the issues deriving from the implementation of the NATO 2030 agenda.

Of all those new ideas, I would like to highlight, among others, the practical implementation of digital platforms for audience analysis in cognitive information handling; the use at Warfighting Corps level of the Joint Air to Ground Integration Cell (JAGIC), which enables us to manage the airspace under the direction and supervision of our Air Force colleagues; or the integration of the space and cyberspace

for, to be useful, and even more so on this occasion, when the people who were suffering were Spanish citizens. From the very beginning, and thanks to the excellent relations we have with the civilian authorities and the law enforcement agents of the Community of Valencia, the HRF(L)HQ has been fully involved in operations *Balmis* and *Baluarte*, in support of the corresponding Land Component Command, as facilitators and also as implementers with our own capabilities. We have tried to help alleviate suffering and save lives, all together and at the same time, without hesitation.

Víctor Hernández/Photos: HQ NRDC-ESP



MUSEO DEL EJÉRCITO



El Museo del Ejército está instalado en dos edificios, el histórico Alcázar y el de nueva planta, unidos por los restos hallados en las excavaciones arqueológicas realizadas para la ampliación.

El Alcázar está destinado a la Exposición Permanente, albergando en el nuevo edificio las dependencias administrativas, las salas de Exposiciones Temporales, el auditorio, el archivo, la biblioteca, los talleres de restauración y almacenes, entre otras.

En más de 8.000 m² se distribuye la Exposición Permanente, con 8 salas de discurso histórico y 13 salas temáticas.

2.100 m² de restos arqueológicos que representan las épocas romana, árabe, medieval (Trastámara) y Carlos V.

HORARIO DE VISITAS

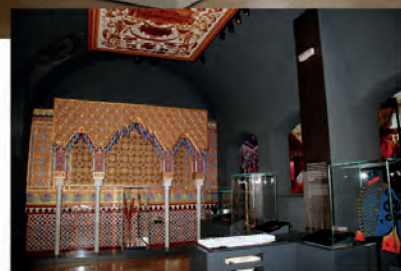
Abierto todos los días de 10.00 a 17.00 horas. Permanecerá cerrado todos los lunes (festivos incluidos), y los días 1 y 6 de enero, 1 de mayo, 24, 25 y 31 de diciembre

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Spanish troops in Iraq and Turkey

CHOD acknowledges the work of the military personnel deployed

CHIEF of Defence Staff, Admiral Teodoro López Calderón, has paid a visit to the contingents deployed in Iraq and Turkey. On 12 February, the CHOD began his visit at the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Centre (BDSC), where he was given a presentation on the missions and capabilities of operation *Support to Iraq*, led by General Carlos Salgado.



EMAD

The following day, Admiral López Calderón travelled to Al Asad AFB to witness first hand the work of Task Force *Toro*, the Spanish helicopter unit deployed in Iraq in support of Operation *Inherent Resolve* and NATO *Mission Iraq* (NMI).

During his stay in that country, the CHOD met the Iraqi Defence Minister and held meetings with his Iraqi counterpart, Lieutenant General Abdul Amir Rashid Yarallah Yusef Al Kalam, and the head of the Counter Terrorism Service (CTS), General Adb al-Wahab Abd al-Zahrán Zabun al-Saidi. He was also welcomed at *Union III* base by the Deputy Commander

of Joint Operations Command Iraq (JOC-I), Lieutenant General Abdulameer Kamil Abdullah Al Shemiry, NMI's Deputy Commander, General Donal Bevis, and Commander of Joint Task Force Operation *Inherent Resolve* (JTFOIR), General John W. Brennan.

During the second stage of his trip in Turkey, the CHOD visited Incirlik AFB, where he toured the compound of the Spanish contingent within operation *Support to Turkey*.

Admiral López Calderón witnessed first hand how the mission is conducted and how the resources are distributed to guarantee the defence of the city of Adana's airspace. After the visit, the CHOD addressed the Spanish troops to acknowledge their hard work and effort, which contribute to increasing Spain's prestige in the Alliance.

He also highlighted the important maintenance work carried out to ensure the proper status of systems and hardware, which allows a mission that has been ongoing for seven years now to be continued.

Operation Atalanta

Hand over/take over ceremony of Spanish frigates *Victoria* and *Canarias*

The hand over/take over (HOTO) ceremony was conducted on board Spanish frigates *Canarias* and *Victoria*, the former as *Atalanta's* new flagship, while personnel from the headquarters led by Portuguese Commodore Joao Paulo Silva Pereira also attended, as part of the 39th rotation.

The HOTO ceremony was held on the morning of 15 February, with the crews of both frigates lined up on their respective flight

decks. Commodore Joao Paulo Silva Pereira gave a farewell speech to frigate *Victoria's* crew. Following this, Commander Rafael Samaniego Martín de Francisco of frigate *Canarias* was presented with the EU flag by Commander Rafael Mira Calvo of frigate *Victoria*.

Afterwards, Commodore Pereira boarded frigate *Canarias*, *Atalanta's* new flagship, where he addressed the crew, conveying his guidelines for the development of the mission. This marked the end of the HOTO ceremony, in which all protocols against the COVID-19 pandemic were observed to maintain a safety bubble throughout the time that both ships were docked.

Frigate *Canarias* set sail to the area of operations on 16 February, while frigate *Victoria* left for Rota Naval Base that same day.



EMAD

Atalanta's main tasks are to prevent and deter piracy; protect vulnerable maritime traffic, especially World Food Programme vessels; and cooperate with other international organisations and missions to help Somalia acquire capabilities that promote a secure environment, enabling its social and economic development.

EU mission in RCA

A new Spanish contingent in Bangui

On 16 February, *Camp Moana* headquarters of the European Union Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA), hosted the Transfer of Authority (TOA) ceremony between EUTM RCA XII contingent, whose Chief of Staff was Colonel Francisco Javier Álvarez Roy, and EUTM RCA XIII contingent, whose Chief of Staff will be Colonel Alberto Gude Menéndez.

Other positions of responsibility were also handed over, including the heads of the intelligence and plans/training sections. In total, eight Spanish service members are deployed in the country.

The European Union Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM-RCA), a non-executive EU operation, was launched on 16 July 2016 for a period of 2 years at the request of the government of the Central African Republic, with the mission of providing advice at both strategic and operational levels, for the reconstruction of the Central African Armed Forces and cooperation with the structures of the Ministry of Defence to carry out their military training and education. EUTM RCA is currently in its third mandate, which will end on 19 September 2022. Essentially, the objectives are to implement changes in the field of defence, in close collaboration with other international organisations such as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the European Union Delegation (EUEL) and the EU Advisory Mission (EUAM), and is mainly focused on three areas or pillars: strategic advice, operational training, and education.



EMAD

Allied cyber defence

Joint Cyberspace Command in NATO exercise

FROM 29 November to 3 December, the Joint Cyberspace Command (MCCE) took part in *NATO Cyber Coalition 21*, NATO's main collective cyber-defence exercise and one of the largest in the world, both in terms of the number of countries and individuals involved and its objectives.

The Cyber Coalition, which has been held annually since 2008, brings together a cyber coalition of Allies, NATO partners and NATO agencies to strengthen the Alliance's ability to deter, defend against and counter threats in and through cyberspace.

It is run by the Estonian Cyber Security Training and Exercise Centre, or Cyber Range 14, which supports allies and partners from NATO's Cyber Security Centre of Excellence.

In Spain, under the leadership of the MCCE Commander and coordinated by its General Staff and

the various headquarters, some 50 people participated in the exercise, not only from the MCCE's Cyberspace Task Force, but also from teams of the Army and Navy, the Guardia Civil and the National Police Force.



EMAD

Members of these organisations, the Ministry of Defence, the Directorate General for Defence Policy, the Security Technology Centre of the Ministry of the Interior, the Prosecutor's Office for Cybercrime and the Military Legal Corps attended as observers.

Brunssum HQ

Lieutenant General Luis Lanchares, appointed Deputy Commander

LIEUTENANT General Luis Lanchares Dávila assumed the post of Deputy Commander of the Allied Joint Force Command Headquarters in Brunssum, the Netherlands, on 3 December. He did so at a ceremony presided over by General Jörg Vollmer, Headquarters Commander, and attended by the Spanish Ambassador to NATO, Miguel Ángel Fernández-Palacios, and the Chief of the Spanish Joint Defence Staff, Lieutenant General Fernando García González-Valerio. 61-year-old Lanchares, who is from Madrid, took over from Lieutenant General Stuart R. Skeates in this post, which rotates between the United Kingdom and Spain. Brunssum is one of three operational-level headquarters in NATO's command structure and is responsible for NATO security in northern Europe. It reports directly to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium, where Luis Lanchares was previously stationed as Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Enabling.



OVERVIEW



OR-8 Stephane Druoba

Dynamic Manta Exercise

The Spanish Navy trains with Allies in anti-submarine warfare

FRIGATE *Álvaro de Bazán* took part in the *Dynamic Manta* multinational exercises in the Mediterranean under the command of the Italian Navy. These annual NATO exercises began on 21 February and continued

for two weeks. The primary objective is to provide participants with complex warfare training to improve their interoperability and proficiency in anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare disciplines.

Deflecting asteroids

DART-Hera, the first defensive space mission in history

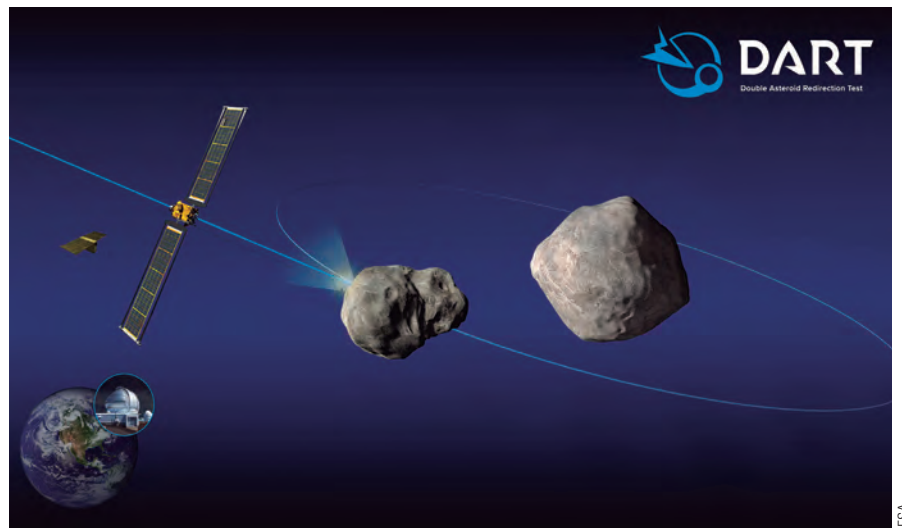
THE Centre for Astrobiology (CSIC-INTA) is participating in the first ever defensive space mission, DART-Hera, a joint NASA and ESA operation. Its goal is to send two spacecraft (DART and Hera) to a binary asteroid system known as Didymos 65803, impacting it and changing its orbital period in order to study how to avoid future collisions with asteroids.

The first spacecraft, from NASA, was launched on 24 November and will impact

the smallest component of the binary system in late September 2022.

The second, from ESA, will arrive in 2024 to perform an in-depth analysis of Dimorphos, measuring its physical

properties, its orbit and the consequences of DART's impact. Experiments for the preparation of these missions are carried out in the Centre for Astrobiology (CAB) Impact Laboratory.



ESA

Poland joins Eurocorps

CHOD attends accession ceremony

The Chief of Defence Staff, Admiral General Teodoro López Calderón, attended the ceremony of Poland's accession as the sixth Eurocorps Framework Nation on 27 January. The event took place at Aubert de Vincelles barracks in Strasbourg and was chaired by the Commanding General of Eurocorps, Lieutenant General Peter



EWAD

Devogelar. Also present were the Polish Defence Minister and the Chiefs of Defence Staff of Germany, Belgium, France and Luxembourg. Lieutenant

General Devogelar stressed that this accession "will lead to an increase in contributions and a strengthening of Eurocorps".

Poland became a partner nation in 2002 and contributes 60 military personnel, a number that will grow to 120 after becoming a Framework Nation.

Eurocorps was created in 1992 by Spain, France, Germany and Luxembourg as a military capability at the service of both the European Union and NATO. Since then, it has participated in European Union missions in Mali and the Central African Republic, and in NATO's command and headquarters in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan.



Gazeta Aeronautica/José Luis Leray

Aerial excellence

Courses conclude in Zaragoza and Albacete

THE first European Tactical Airlift Advanced Training Course of the year (ETAP-C 22-1) ended on 17 February. Conducted at Zaragoza air base, it focused on night flights and involved seven aircraft of six nationalities and some 160 people, including crew members, mechanics, instructors and support and coordination personnel.

Subsequently, on 4 March, the Tactical Leadership Programme (TLP) came to an end at Albacete air base, where 560 soldiers of different nationalities trained for three weeks, 37 of whom graduated from this flight course – 30 pilots, four intelligence officers and three air traffic controllers.

ETAP, organised by the European Airlift Centre in coordination with the Spanish Air Force, consists of 20 hours of theoretical instruction and seven flight missions including, among others, parachute drops of personnel and cargo; tactical flights in the presence of surface-to-air and air-to-air threats; low-level flights; assault landings infiltrating or extracting personnel; tactical approach and landing manoeuvres; combat landings and loading-unloading operations with engines running. It was joined by two *C-130 Hercules* from Poland and Norway; an Italian *C-27J Spartan*; a Spanish *C-295* and *A400M*, as well as two *A400M*s from Germany and France.



Rubén Galindo

[armed forces]

Aerial combat LEADERS

Airmen from ten different countries graduate from the last TLP course in 2021 at Albacete Air Base

An Italian Air Force *Eurofighter* in the TLP. On the right, pilots of different nationalities prepare for a sortie and one of the Marine Corps *F-35Bs* aboard HMS *Queen Elisabeth*.



USAF



US Marine Corps

THE Tactical Leadership Programme (TLP) course, held at Albacete Air Base since 2009, evolves every year to adapt to the continuous technological developments, employment and doctrine of combat aircraft. Thus, the last course held in 2021 incorporated new features such as the presence of fifth-generation *F-35B Lightning II* fighters, a British *A330 MRTT* air-to-air refuelling aircraft, and new helicopter models for Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) training.

As in the previous course, crews used the new MACE flight simulator, enabling them to train not only in the virtual environment, but also to interact with real aircraft through complex communication protocols. "As indicated by the 'L' in its initials,

what we are basically looking for in the TLP is to create and forge leaders in the combat aircraft field", says the head of this military organisation, Air Force Colonel José Carlos Presa. With this objective in mind, the last Flying Course (FC) in 2021, held from 15 November to 3 December, was completed with nearly 700 flying hours and around 350 take-offs. The flying missions consisted of Combined Air Operations (COMAO), which brought fighter aircrafts face-to-face with an enemy (Red Air), also generated from the TLP.

During the two-week course, the facilities at Albacete air base hosted around 40 combat aircraft of various generations and capabilities, such as the *Eurofighter* and the *AV-8B+ Harrier II* of the Italian Air Force and Navy, respectively. *Mirage 2000D* (ground

attack) and *2000-5F* (fighter) aircraft arrived in La Mancha from France, while the German Luftwaffe deployed its veteran *Panavia Tornados* and *Eurofighter* aircraft. In addition, Spain and Greece participated with their *EF-18Ms* and *F-16Cs*, respectively.

In terms of personnel, approximately 1,000 people took part in this course, 47 of whom earned the highly sought-after graduate qualification and patch of the TLP flying course (36 pilots, six intelligence officers and five air traffic controllers).

Currently, the TLP organization is made up of ten NATO countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and the United States, although other nations also participate by booking a place on the course. "The presence of Air Forces from non-TLP nations, such



Eurofighters and F-35 aircraft interoperate with other fighters such as the Mirage, Tornado, EF-18, F-16C and AV-8B Harrier.

as Finland, Hungary, Norway, Poland and Turkey, several of which are in the process of joining the programme, is quite common”, says Colonel José Carlos Presa.

The great novelty of this last course of the year was the coordinated participation of *F-35B* fighter-bombers of the United States Marines and the British Royal Air Force (RAF). Their presence in Spain was due to the arrival on our shores of the British aircraft carrier *HMS Queen Elizabeth* which, in its final stage of a seven-month long deployment, crossed the Mediterranean on its way to the Strait of Gibraltar, carrying 18 of these aircraft on board.

Ten of them, from the Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 211 of the United States Marine Corps — known as the Wake Island Avengers, in memory of the heroic feat carried out by the Marines on that Pacific island during the Second World War— departed from the aircraft carrier for good and, on 24 November, flew from the southern Balearic Islands to Rota aeronaval base (Cádiz), from where four of

these *F-35Bs* took part in the TLP flying mission on 30 November.

At the same time, on 29 November, the RAF had already sent the aforementioned *A330-200 MRTT* tanker aircraft to Torrejón air base (Madrid). It was tasked with supporting the exercise over the next two days, orbiting for hours over an unpopulated area south of Cuenca to refuel some of the participating aircraft, as was the case with the *F-35Bs*.

ADAPTATION OF FACILITIES

At the press conference, Colonel José Carlos Presa explained the

five strategic lines of action the TLP is currently considering. “The first is integrating fifth-generation aircraft, then streamlining both the use of multinational Air Forces and simulation in order to adapt to new and changing threats and, finally, enhancing the COMAOs to ensure their effectiveness when participating in land and naval battle scenarios”.

He also explained that Albacete air base is already evolving to achieve the first of these strategic lines. He therefore set 2023 as the date when the *F-35s* will be able to fully operate from the facilities in La Mancha.

“Before COVID-19, the USAF conducted an inspection and saw the progress made in this field. However, it also indicated some lines of improvement, which were unfortunately delayed due to the pandemic”.

Colonel Presa explained some of the modifications underway: “This year we are fine-tuning what we define as farms, which are basically fibreglass-reinforced facilities that enable *F-35* detachments to reduce the



One of the new NH90 helicopters of the 48th Wing and a Sikorsky SH60F of the Navy's Aircraft Flotilla.

Javier Sánchez

high logistic footprint they need to operate". The head of the programme pointed out that there will be more of these facilities in the coming years, "as the number of nations participating in the TLP with this aircraft model increases".

As regards support aircraft, the last course of the year included, as in previous TLP editions, the participation of NATO command and control aircraft, in particular its Airborne Warning & Control System (AWACS). An extra Electronic Warfare (EW) capability, in particular jamming, was also provided by a Gates Learjet 35 aircraft of the German company GFD.

The Spanish Army's anti-aircraft systems, namely the NASAMS and the *Mistral*, as well as the Luftwaffe's *Roland*, were also used. Another novel aspect was the presence of the new helicopters recently acquired by the Spanish Armed Forces.

Thus, on 29 and 30 November, an *NH90* from the 48th Air Force Wing and a *Sikorsky SH60F* from the 5th Squadron of the Navy's Aircraft Flotilla travelled to Albacete and took part in the two sorties that included CSAR missions.

The *NH90* has just replaced the veteran *AS332B Super Puma* and is in the process of achieving the capabilities of personnel rescue and special air operations.

In the same vein, the Navy's 5th Squadron has replaced its *SH-3D Sea King* helicopters in this task with the aforementioned *SH60F*, also North American, and which, like the *NH90*, embarked special operations personnel to rescue "shot down" crews, specifically from the Parachute Sapper Squadron (EZAPAC).

It is also important to highlight, in the CSAR field, the participation of two Belgian instructors specialised in survival, evasion, resistance and escape (SERE), as well as a team of Italian Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTAC), who illuminated the targets to be shot down by COMAO fighter-bombers with their "smart" weapons.

Julio Maíz Sanz



Rubén Galindo

The Luftwaffe deploys its veteran *Panavia Tornados*. Below, a NATO E3 Sentry early warning aircraft on the runways of Albacete air base.



TLP

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

An opportunity for a vital and urgent dialogue

Major General Antonio Esteban López

Defence Affairs Coordinator. Chair of the Structured Dialogue (OSCE)

The distinction between past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion.

Albert Einstein

DESPITE the extreme gravity of the situation in Ukraine, we begin with this quote from the father of the theory of relativity, for in two lines it sums up our objectives and thematic thread. We will thus explore some fundamental aspects related to the past, present and future of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), but only as a basis for justifying and subscribing to a stubborn and persistent enthusiasm for encouraging anything that can contribute to peace, stability and progress.

INTRODUCTION

We must recognise that, in the first 20 years of the 21st century, Europe has not exactly been a sea of tranquillity: two decades of tense calm with significant antagonisms and disagreements, both in terms of number and entity. Incidents in countries such as Georgia, Estonia and Ukraine led to a climate of growing tension and mistrust between NATO countries and the Russian Federation, a strained and dangerous situation that, with an unbridled pre-war discourse, revived past episodes of the Cold War. Indeed, the tipping point of this phase has now been reached. The entry of Russian troops into Ukraine on 24 February has opened a very serious wound that, if not closed with extreme urgency, will have unpredictable and dire consequences. The OSCE was born with the aim of preventing the

Cold War from escalating into armed conflict. The opponents back then —with all due reservations and considerable nuances— are still the same today and, if years ago, the miracle was achieved, why not try again? To conclude this introduction, we would like to recall the words of Defence Minister Margarita Robles at the opening of the Military Expert Workshop (OSCE) held in Vienna last June: "I will speak to you of a future that we must face with renewed energy. We build on the core principles and agreements in the Organization, but we must also incorporate lessons learned to improve our communication, overcome prejudices and misgivings, and move forward on the path of cooperation, which alone will lead to peace and prosperity".

THE PAST

After World War II, Europe was divided into two antagonistic blocs, to the west the free-market democracies allied in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and to the east the self-styled dictatorships of the proletariat and their Warsaw Pact (WP). In an atmosphere of extreme mistrust, with continuous friction and sporadic quasi-warlike demonstrations, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) came into being. This forum, which became the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 1995, was born as a tool for dialogue and

The OSCE was established with the aim of promoting détente and building confidence in Europe



negotiation to reduce tension between the then ideological (capitalism vs. communism) and military (NATO vs. WP) adversaries. In other words, in an apparent contradiction, to cool down the “Cold War”. Although the CSCE started its activities in 1973, its best-known meeting took place in Helsinki two years later, in 1975. The sessions held in the Finnish capital concluded with the Helsinki Final Act, a document setting out the principles that are the essence and *raison d’être* of the Organization.

Against this background, the OSCE facilitated the conclusion of several treaties that agreed on a number of measures, procedures and lines of action that were to contribute to de-escalating tension and building confidence. Three agreements constituted the pillars of the security and cooperation architecture in Europe: the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), the Treaty on Open Skies (OST) and the Vienna Document (VD). However, these pillars deteriorated and are currently not at their best.

Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Signed on 19 November 1990 (effective 9 November 1992), the treaty established—in certain geographical areas— limits on the deployment of certain weapon systems grouped into five categories: battle tanks, armoured vehicles, artillery pieces, fighter aircraft and attack helicopters. The CFE, one of the flagships of arms control, was becoming less effective for reasons of both form and substance. In terms of form, in 2007 Russia reacted to the deployment of the missile defence shield by suspending implementation of the CFE. In terms of substance, Europe has undergone major changes since the 1990s; the blocs are not what they used to

be and neither are their areas of influence. And if the geopolitical situation has changed, the weapon systems have changed even more, making the original five categories patently obsolete at the present time. Thus, some modern weapon developments, such as increasingly common and decisive drones, are not expressly included in the treaty; all unmanned (autonomous or remote control) platforms (land, sea and air) are in a kind of nebulous and uncontrolled limbo.

Treaty on Open Skies. Signed on 24 March 1992 (effective 2 January 2002), the treaty allows for negotiations on the exchange of reconnaissance flights to verify the deployment of certain military capabilities. This treaty is not currently in good health either. In this case it was the United States that, on 25 May 2020, took the initiative by formalising its withdrawal. Russia would take the same decision on 17 June 2021. In short, we have started 2022 without the two main players...

Vienna Document. The document was signed on 17 November 1990 and its purpose was to establish confidence-building measures through the control of military activities, the exchange of information on combat capabilities and the obligation to accept verification inspections. The VD underwent several timely modifications (1992, 1994 and 1999) until a decision was taken in 2010 to establish a protocol providing for its regular updating (every five years, unless for justified reasons it is necessary to do so within a shorter period of time). The following year, 2011, saw the first and only update so far. Most countries insist on calling for modernisation of the document. However, Russia has been blocking such a possibility with equal or greater tenacity.

THE PRESENT

The arrival of a terrible and unexpected problem, COVID-19, further complicated a bleak situation, and health precautions and priorities meant that a number of other issues had to be put on hold. Looking forward to a long-awaited return to normality, Spain has been trying to promote activities that will allow a return to the path of negotiation and understanding. In recent times, this effort has focused on the Structured Dialogue (chaired by our country in 2020 and 2021). Although the Structured Dialogue may be little known in some cases, it is the most important forum for dialogue on conventional arms control (CAC) and the promotion of confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) in Europe, and its main task is to develop an environment conducive to European security dialogue.

In June, the Spanish Chair of the Structured Dialogue pushed for the reactivation of the forum by holding two meetings. On 10 and 11 June the Military Expert Workshop (MEW) brought together members of the Armed Forces to discuss matters within their competence, while on 17 and 18 June the Informal Working Group (IWG) brought together representatives of the respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

We refer once again to the speech given by the Defence Minister at the opening of the MEW, transcribing some of her words, precisely because they summarise the most immediate objectives and urgent actions to be taken. "The OSCE must reactivate all pending initiatives by resuming the activities that constitute its *raison d'être* [...] The original objectives of the OSCE, to build confidence and dialogue in the interests of stability, remain and will remain as necessary today as they were when they were first established".

The minister's message addressed the need to overcome a state of inertia whereby successive misunderstandings and a lack of dialogue were leading to a situation of growing mistrust and permanent tension. The sessions addressed a range of issues with the aim of restarting talks to restore Europe's badly deteriorated security and cooperation framework. On defence matters, the following issues were discussed: cooperation and transparency in times of global crisis, and prevention of incidents at sea. At this point, it is necessary to analyse—at least briefly—three important events that took place in June 2021 and which, as seen below, have a direct connection to and a very significant influence on the development of events. We are referring to the most recent NATO summit, the meeting between US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin, and the EU summit.

NATO Summit (Brussels, 14 June). As on previous occasions, Russia figured prominently and awkwardly in the debates. Leaders

of the Atlantic Alliance were once again very concerned about relations that have been going from bad to worse for years. The final communiqué is proof of this in terms of both the quantity and quality of references to Russia. The references are continuous (in the summit's final communiqué, the word "Russia" appears 61 times while "terrorism" appears only 18 times) and very worrying. For example, the first of them expressly states that "Russia's aggressive actions constitute a threat to Euro-Atlantic security" while another recognises that "we have suspended all practical civilian and military cooperation with Russia, while remaining open to political dialogue". That said, it is worth noting that the next NATO summit will be held in Spain this year. We will not dwell on the subject, as it would require a longer article, but we do want to and should make two reflections: the first is that the occasion could be an excellent opportunity to try to redirect a bleak situation, and the second is that the challenge is enormous as, after what has happened in Ukraine, the obstacles to a possible *détente* appear insurmountable.

Spain chaired the Structured Dialogue in 2020 and 2021

Biden-Putin Bilateral Meeting (Geneva, 16 June). Two days after the NATO summit, this long-awaited meeting took place. Although both leaders described the meeting as "constructive" and "positive", the reality is that it was a mere and insipid formality. It is true that some progress was announced in terms of trying to reduce tension (dialogue on nuclear weapons and cybersecurity) and the normalisation of relations, both at the diplomatic level (reinstatement of ambassadors and possible exchange of prisoners) and

at the personal level (recalling that both presidents had exchanged harsh accusations and disparaging remarks).

However, it is no less true that on the most important issues, confrontation persisted with positions on which the distances could be measured in light years. Among the most entrenched issues are human rights (with special reference to the situation of imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny), but above all Ukraine, where positions have not changed one iota, especially regarding Crimea (Washington will never recognise it as part of the Russian Federation and Moscow has no intention of considering any change in its current status) and Donbas (a region for which the Russian president, as has just been shown, had his own plans).

EU Summit (Brussels, 24 June). Just before this meeting, Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron had hinted at the possibility of the EU maintaining its own, somewhat more flexible policy towards Moscow. "We must seek direct contact with the Russian president. "It is not enough for Biden to talk to him, the European Union must also create formats for talks", the then German Chancellor Angela Merkel argued in a speech to the Bundestag

before travelling to Brussels. “European stability requires a very demanding dialogue with Putin”, Macron conceded just a week after the last NATO summit.

However, at the Brussels meeting, the Franco-German proposal to resume meetings with Russia at the highest level was not well received and was met with strong opposition from some countries.

Returning to the OSCE, before the end of 2021, a new MEW/IWG meeting was held in Vienna from 21 to 22 October. The topics under discussion had a common denominator: reducing tension through dialogue and confidence-building measures. In the field of military cooperation and at the proposal of the Spanish Chair, the following matters were discussed: use of new technologies in observation and verification missions; threat perception derived from strategies, doctrines and policies; and “academic initiative: learning for understanding”.

However, that October, ill winds from Ukraine forebode a storm and the climate for the meeting seemed unpleasant and unsuitable for negotiation. On this occasion, the palpable increase in tension originated in Black Sea waters with an incident involving the British destroyer HMS Defender on 23 June (precisely the day before the EU summit).

The ship had left Odessa (Ukraine) for Batumi (Georgia). While sailing near Crimea, Russian authorities considered it to be invading their territorial waters and ordered their naval forces to track and expel the vessel. The situation was resolved with several warning shots fired from the Russian coastguard and from a fighter aircraft that was sent to the area. Although the incident did not escalate, it had a major media impact and enormous symbolic importance: it was the first time since 1919 that Russian forces had opened fire on a British naval vessel.

If the second half of 2021 was particularly tense and intense, the first months of 2022 are unparalleled. From the first days of the year, tensions mounted, the traditional reproaches and accusations were accompanied by unusual troop movements and media activity (an intentional mixture of information and disinformation) which, far from cooling tempers, seemed to normalise the early and forced occurrence of the armed conflict.

The latter issue was highly dangerous as both sides increasingly coincided in their perceptions: Western public opinion began to take for granted that Russia would invade Ukraine while Russians were led to believe that Kiev would provoke some incident (probably in Crimean waters or in Donbas) in order to —with Western support— regain control of these territories. The fact is that each side accused the other with equal vehemence.

On many occasions, it could even be perceived that certain media on both sides of the Russian border conveyed a certain and irresponsible optimism in their reporting regarding an “inevitable” but quick military solution. The bad news is that the outlook is not at all bright and, if things continue to get more complicated, Europe will face dire consequences in the short term, and even more dire consequences in the long term if, as could happen, the Ukrainian

conflict escalates out of control. Colonel Calvo Albero expressed himself along these lines in an article published in *Global Strategy* at the end of January, when he stated the following: “It has been a long time since Europe has experienced periods of seemingly pre-war tension like the current one [...] The problem is that, as the tension escalates, the very person who fuels it becomes a prisoner of his own actions”.

THE FUTURE

Although the bridges, whether they are called

NATO-Russia Councils or bilateral meetings between high-level leaders, remain nominally open, their deterioration is such that, as far as détente is concerned, it is not foreseeable that these battered structures will be able to withstand the transit of heavy loads.

For this reason, it seems that there is no choice but to explore alternative avenues where mistrust is not so indelibly inscribed. There are two organizations that could, in principle, act as a support to bring about a return to peaceful negotiations: the EU and the OSCE.

The EU could be an option, but it is a complicated one, given that it is a community of states with a strong political-economic purpose. It was not conceived as a negotiating forum for crisis or conflict resolution. Moreover, relations would be somewhat complex given that neither the US nor Russia belong to the EU and the vast majority of EU countries are NATO members.



The Spanish Chair moderates the Structured Dialogue meetings held in Vienna in June 2021.

For its part, the OSCE brings together a total of 57 participating states spread over three continents (North America, Europe and Asia). While it is true that a large number of its participating states belong to NATO, it is also true that many others do not and, more importantly, the United States and Russia have been part of the Organization since its inception. The OSCE, by birth and nature, is a particularly suitable space for discussion and negotiation.

For all these reasons, this option could have a long way to go. After all, this forum —first as a Conference and then as an Organization— was created precisely for the purpose of de-escalating tensions between blocs in order to avoid military confrontation.

However, we must recognise that the road ahead is more difficult than ever. The distances seem insurmountable and the antagonisms irreconcilable, but precisely for this reason it is time to redouble efforts, and attempt to leave the battlefield and enter the negotiation front to try to find a peaceful resolution to a conflict that is beginning to take on uncontrolled dimensions and gloomy expectations.

A STUBBORN ILLUSION

This is and must be, now and forever, the major premise: despite difficulties, setbacks and disappointments, we must maintain a stubborn and persistent enthusiasm to continue working towards stability that is in the interests of all. In its initial phase, the OSCE fulfilled its objectives by promoting détente between blocs and preventing the Cold War from escalating into open warfare. The treaties (CFE, OST and VD) promoted arms control and confidence-building measures with remarkable results.

After the signing of these agreements, there was a period (the last decade of the 20th century) when summits of Heads of State and Government were held with some frequency: Paris (1990), Helsinki (1992), Budapest (1994), Lisbon (1996), Istanbul (1999). At these high-level meetings, negotiations on the content, interpretation and implementation of the treaties were discussed and pushed forward. However, only one summit has been held so far in the 21st century: Astana (2010). Now with an armed conflict on European soil, dialogue is vital and urgent. The situation is extremely serious and therefore any option to help stop the bloodshed must

be considered. It may be time to put our faith back in the OSCE to engage in constructive dialogue to provide emergency support for a European security framework under threat of ruin.

The situation, the chronology and certain voices point to the fact that it would be logical, possible and necessary to start thinking about holding a summit at the highest level (recalling that the last one took place in 2010). The year 2025 is already beginning to be discussed, an option that seems more than plausible for reasons of necessity and opportunity.

As regards the need, we believe that this is clear and should not give rise to major doubts. In addition, it should be borne in mind that the current situation would require major concessions and, in some cases, adopting “disruptive” measures that would lead to a “radical overhaul” of security structures. Agreements and commitments

should therefore be ratified at the highest level. As far as timing is concerned, 2025 seems appropriate; it coincides with the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the OSCE Chairmanship for that year belongs —not by chance— to Finland. While it is true that the date may seem a little far away, it is also true that some time is needed to calm the mood. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that a summit requires preparatory work that is as important, if not



Ukrainian refugees in the village of Medyka (Polish border) after the Russian invasion.

UNHCR/Chris Melzer

more important, than the meeting itself. Almost before we start, we encounter the first problem. It turns out that at the Ministerial Council in Stockholm from 2 to 3 December it was announced that Finland would take over the OSCE Chairmanship in 2025. However, the 2024 Chairmanship (the period during which much of the preparatory work is to be undertaken) is still up in the air. Estonia had submitted its candidacy, but at the aforementioned Council last December, Russia and Belarus did not accept the proposal.

Now, after the occupation of Ukraine, the Baltic option seems more impossible than ever. This stumbling block, or opportunity depending on how you look at it, is the first issue to resolve. The truth is that, in the very likely event that the veto is maintained, the Chairmanship should be assumed by another country with a more conciliatory profile, further away from the Russian border and more removed from the frictions there.

Africa and Europe

A JOINT VISION

The European Union and the African Union agree on a renewed partnership

THE Sixth European Union African Union Summit achieved its priority objective consolidating a neighbourhood model based on respect, mutual understanding and trust, and strengthening collaboration and joint work on both sides of the Mediterranean. Held in Brussels on 17-18 February and co-chaired by the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, and the current Chairperson of the African Union and President of Senegal, Macky Sall, the Summit ended with the Brussels Declaration, a joint document that reflects the interest in strengthening cooperation between the two continents and promoting a joint vision for 2030.

Among other aspects, the leaders attending the Summit expressed in the Declaration their commitment to foster “renewed and enhanced cooperation for peace and security” through three priority areas: support for adequate training, capacity building and equipment; strengthening and scaling up autonomous peace operations of African defence and security forces, including through EU missions and assistance measures; and support for law enforcement capacity building.

Both Unions recognise the need to work together in the face of common challenges, such as the spread of terrorism, irregular migration mafias or the weakness of certain countries. Therefore, the now reaffirmed partnership —based on the promotion of common priorities, shared values and international law— offers a joint vision that aims at “solidarity, security, peace and sustainable and sustained economic development and

prosperity for our citizens and for our future generations, bringing together our people, regions and organisations”. To this end, Europe offered an investment package of EUR 150 billion until 2027 and the donation of 450 million vaccine doses to Africa.

Together with leaders from Mauritania and Ghana, the Spanish Prime Minister co-chaired the roundtable on Peace, Security and Governance. “A very important and sensitive issue for both Europe and Africa, in which both regions have a lot at stake”, explained Pedro Sánchez. During the discussions, leaders from both sides of the Mediterranean agreed to continue



Heads of State and Government of the European Union and the African Union during the Brussels Summit on 17 February.

working together, because security in Africa is also security in Europe, and vice versa. “Peace and security are prerequisites for development, for prosperity, for any project for the future”, the Spanish Prime Minister insisted. In this regard, the Heads of State and Government agreed to strengthen cooperation in the fight against terrorism and in maritime security, with a special focus on conflicts. Regarding Mali, the urgency of a “quick return to democracy and constitutional order” was highlighted. European countries reiterated their willingness to continue their support on the ground through missions and

operations in the framework of the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy. Spain is currently the largest contributor of forces through the EUTM Mali mission, in which it has been present since 2013.

SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

The Document signed in Brussels recognises the importance of cooperation in recent years, always based on the principle that Africans themselves should be able to solve their own security problems, and reaffirms the validity of EU training missions and Europe’s collaboration in the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the AU-EU Memorandum of Understanding on Peace, Security and Governance (developed after the previous Summit held in 2017 in Côte d’Ivoire). Europe currently has five military missions and operations deployed in Africa (in Mali, the Central African Republic, Mozambique, Somalia and the Indian Ocean) as well as six civilian ones, also in Mali, Niger, the Central African Republic, Libya, the Eastern Mediterranean and Somalia.

Although it was not part of the official communiqué, the complex situation in the Sahel and, in particular, in Mali, was very much present in the Summit’s dialogues and analysis. A few days before the meeting —on 11 February— 15 European countries and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, participated in a videoconference to analyse the future of European operations in this African

country after last summer’s coup d’état and the growing instability in the area. Ministers stressed the importance of international missions in the Sahel, and Spanish Defence Minister Margarita Robles, highlighted the achievements of EUTM Mali and advocated the need to “preserve our important objectives of advancing towards democratic governance in Mali, strengthening its structures and capacities as an indispensable element for improving security in the country and the fight against terrorism in the entire region”.

Rosa Ruiz

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JACINTO CHOZAS, CHIEF COMMANDER OF THE *MARFIL* DETACHMENT

“OUR CONTRIBUTION IS SIGNIFICANT AND STEADY”

Lt Col Chozas points out that the *C-295s* have proven reliable to land on unprepared fields and in adverse situations

“**S**PAIN’S contribution to operation *Barkhane* is particularly important, accounting for 30 percent of all the flights conducted”, says Lieutenant Colonel Jacinto Chozas (Tarragona, 52), chief commander of the Spanish Air Force *Marfil* Detachment in Senegal. “Some nations”, he explains, “apply restrictive criteria and grant the use of their assets only in certain time windows or in an intermittent manner. However, in our case, the *C-295s* are transferred to the operation commander and can be used as two more assets. It is a stable contribution that has been permanent since the onset of the mission”.

Lieutenant Colonel Chozas, assigned to the Satellite Systems and Cyber Defence Headquarters of the Directorate General for Armament and Materiel (DGAM) and with broad experience as a transport pilot on missions abroad, affirms that “air transportation is key to reaching remote or poorly communicated areas, avoiding in many areas the dangerous security situations of land routes”.

—To which countries do you fly?

—Our aircraft operate in a large area of Central and West Africa, including not only Senegal but countries such as Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea Conakry, etc., known for their stability and low level of terrorist threat. However, we also fly to an area where this threat is higher and where

the French forces of *Barkhane* mainly concentrate their activity. This area is defined as the “three-border triangle”, which includes territories in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

—What do these flights carry?

—The personnel and cargo required for the operations, including dangerous goods requiring special conditions for their transportation. However, our mission has certain restrictions: flights are not allowed to carry special-operations forces, nor can they be used to drop cargo by parachute or transfer prisoners.

—Do you think the *C-295* is the right aircraft for this mission?

—Its features make it particularly well suited to operate in this type of missions. It is a medium-sized transport aircraft with a lower carrying capacity than its bigger sisters, such as the *C-130 Hercules* used by France and the United States, or the *A400M*. Despite this, the *C-295* stands out for its reliability, its versatility and its capability to land in unprepared fields —the most common situation in many missions carried out in the area of operations—, or to operate in adverse conditions.

—What are the peculiarities of flying in the Sahel?

—Both in the area the French call the “Sahelo-Saharan strip” and in sub-Saharan Africa where we operate,

temperatures are very high which, apart from the effects on the crew, lowers the performance of the aircraft. Unprepared fields are affected by the winds and effects of heavy storms in the wet season, which frequently damage landing surfaces and, therefore, must be constantly checked. Heavy storms also cause frequent changes in flight routes or even cancellations, requiring the use of anti-icing systems on the aircraft, since freezing is quite common at high altitudes for much of the year.

Under these conditions, it is essential for crews to be vaccinated against diseases that do not usually occur in Spain, such as cholera and yellow fever. Another common disease is malaria, prevented by all the personnel stationed by taking the appropriate medication on a daily basis. And another factor, although of less importance, is the presence of insects causing bites and reactions.

—How many flights do you conduct?

—It depends on the operational requirements of the forces we support. Nevertheless, it is quite common to fly in long-duration missions, resulting in crews having to spend four or five days away from our base. Other kinds of flights with a smaller sphere of action may be conducted in just one day or with one or two overnight stays and, in that case, between two and three missions are carried out per week. More important than the number of flights is that crews are ready to



Pepe Díaz

operate any day of the week, 365 days a year.

—Marfil has moved to other premises. What are the advantages of the new facilities?

—The detachment moved to its current location in September 2020, as the “Escale Aéronautique des Éléments Français” (the French Air Force Support detachment) in Senegal moved from *Senghor* airport, located in the centre of Dakar, to the new *Blaise Diagne* international airport, 70 kilometres away from the capital.

The new location provides more working space and the capacity to operate separately from the French forces, except for tasks such as fire-

fighting, external security, and so on. This location has enabled the construction of a modular building, which includes the main areas of activity. It has also facilitated the construction of its own hangar, something it did not have at the previous location and which is used for maintenance work, thus avoiding the extreme weather conditions and heavy rainfall of the wet season that runs from July to October.

—What are the living conditions of contingent members?

—They vary depending on whether they are air or ground crew. The former fly over a very wide area of operations and, as I said before, they

often have to spend the night away from our base. Sometimes missions last five or six days and crews have to be accommodated under very tough conditions, sharing field living quarters, in tents or containers fitted out for that purpose. The entire contingent stays in a hotel chosen to meet security and communication requirements with *Blaise Diagne* airport, where we are stationed.

—What is the multinational atmosphere like at the base?

—Very positive, as it falls within the spirit of collaboration and provision of the necessary support. In the new base, there is a close relationship between the Spanish contingent and the French forces, even though their work is quite autonomous. Our work is facilitated by the presence of French liaison officers dedicated to operation *Barkhane*, whose task is to serve as a link between the Spanish detachment and the rest of the French units deployed in the theatre of operations.

In that same spirit of collaboration, there is a figure called the “convoyeur”, who serves as another crew member and whose goal is to facilitate communication and solve any issues that may arise during the execution of flights in bases that are sometimes very far from the detachment, and where the only support received comes from the French forces.

—How is the detachment organised?

—The 35th Wing provides air crews and aircraft maintenance personnel. The Air Deployment Support Squadron (EADA) contributes security or force protection capabilities both on the ground and in flight missions and delivers support for loading and unloading aircraft. The Mobile Air Control Group ensures the continuity of communications and the operation of information services. The rest come from Air Force units and personnel assigned from the Ministry of Defence. The tasks performed are extremely varied such as healthcare —with a basic level hospital for *Role 1* operations—, administrative and financial management, intelligence, facilities maintenance, etc.

Santiago Fernández del Vado



[industry and technology]

NEW CHINOOK for Spain's Army Airmobile Force

A complete overhaul of the transport helicopter will keep it
in service until almost the middle of the century



The fuselage in the cabin section has been reinforced with corrosion protection treatment.

A mechanic checks the maintenance panel, where hydraulic pressures and temperatures, among other data, are monitored.



THE first brand new *CH-47F* (Foxtrot) *Chinook* helicopter has been added to the aircraft inventory of the Spanish Army Airmobile Force (FAMET). The official reception ceremony took place on 28 January at *Colonel Maté* base in Colmenar Viejo, about 30 kilometres north of Madrid. In attendance were the Spanish Defence Minister, Margarita Robles, and the new US Ambassador to Spain, Julissa Reynoso.

The recently appointed Director General for Armament and Materiel, Vice Admiral Aniceto Rosique, signed the document that officially transferred ownership of the new aircraft to the Helicopter Depot & Maintenance Centre (PCMHEL) of the Army's Lo-

gistic Support Command, represented at the ceremony by its chief commander, Lieutenant General Fernando García y García de las Hijas.

The delivery to the FAMET of the first refurbished *CH-47* marks the end of an initial process that began on 7 August 2018. That was the date on which the Spanish Council of Ministers authorised the modernisation of the entire *Chinook* fleet for an initial multiannual expenditure ceiling of €820 million, which could rise to €1,054.9 million with additional contracts.

At the same time, a process has been launched that is expected to culminate in the second half of 2024, with the delivery of the last of the 17 aircraft that will make up the *CH-47F* fleet.

One after another, they will roll off the Boeing Rotorcraft Systems assembly line in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. With their new capabilities, these helicopters will form an even more powerful air branch of the Army.

Since 1973, the *CH-47* has been the Army's main workhorse for transporting troops and cargo by air. The upgrade of the twin-engine heavy-lift helicopter to the Foxtrot configuration has been one of the FAMET's priorities. Its refurbishment has been carried out to meet the standard that is being used in the US Army, six other NATO countries (Canada, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey and the United Kingdom) and a dozen other nations around the world, facilitating interoperability in overseas operations with



The on-board equipment is digital and the two pilots have five screens that provide them with the data and information necessary to control the flight.

allies or friendly nations that also have *Chinooks*.

UNTIL MID CENTURY

The head of the modernisation programme at the Directorate General for Armament and Material (DGAM) is Colonel Santiago Álvarez Herrero. As a helicopter pilot with around 1,500 flying hours, most of them in the *CH-47D* (Delta), and a helicopter maintenance officer, he has in-depth knowledge of the tactical performance and the inner mechanical workings of the aircraft. In his opinion, the Fox-trot version is “a great technological leap forward for the FAMET, which will gain enhanced capabilities”. With regard to the extended operational life that the renovation entails, Colonel Álvarez Herrero considers that the helicopters will remain in service “until beyond 2040 and, quite possibly, even 2050”.

The modernisation process is expected to take about 24 months. This period includes the manufacture of the chassis, the assembly of the on-board equipment and the *Honeywell T55-GA-714A* engines with a digital control system and dynamic components being sent from Spain — blades, transmissions and rotor heads — as well as

the disassembly of the aircraft and its preparation for transport by sea to Spain.

After leaving the factory, being flight tested and accepted by the US Army on behalf of the DGAM through the FMS cooperation system, the first refurbished Fox-trot was disassembled, prepared for transport and embarked in Baltimore, from where it departed in early November on a ship contracted by DSV, the logistics operator of the Ministry of Defence. It arrived in Santander on 28 November and, the following day, left by road in a special convoy for the main FAMET base, where it was assembled and put back into flight, a process which, with the corresponding checks, took several weeks.

TECHNOLOGY MADE IN SPAIN

Colonel Álvarez Herrero points out that the fleet overhaul involves introducing technologies that make it the same as that of the United States “except in several critical arrays in which it differentiates substantially”, namely the rotor brake, the FRIES (Fast Rope Insertion & Extraction System), the *PR4G* communications equipment and, especially, the electronic warfare system.

All four are “unique FAMET demands” but, while the first two are installed on the Boeing production line, the other two will be integrated on board once the aircraft are in Spain, which will bring them up to the standard already in place in Spain’s *NH90* tactical transport and *Tiger* attack helicopter fleet. At the US factory, the helicopters are being prepared to accommodate the national equipment that will be installed at the main base in Colmenar Viejo, “work which, for the fleet as a whole, will continue throughout 2025”, indicates the programme head.

The most advanced of all this equipment is the electronic warfare system, which formed the basis of a €35 million contract awarded to the Spanish company Indra. This contract is for the development, production and installation of a system that should “detect and counter threats to ensure the *CH-47F*’s survivability in combat missions and high-risk situations”.

Indra’s electronic defence system has already been fitted on *NH-90* and *Tiger* aircraft. It consists of the *ALR-400FD* radar alerter, the InWarner laser and anti-missile warning sensor and the *InShield* countermeasures system, which uses chaff and flare dispensers to protect the aircraft during take-off, landing and low-altitude flights. *InShield* also uses laser beams that scramble the infrared guidance system of in-flight missiles to divert them.

The radio communications component is another Spanish improvement to be incorporated. It includes satellite links and an advanced Thales *PR4G* radio in UHF and frequency hopping mode, equipped with NATO’s *SA-TURN* anti-jamming mode.

OPERATING FROM SHIPS

The fast-rope insertion & extraction system (FRIES) is a method to rapidly deploy troops on the ground from a hovering helicopter. It consists of a rope equipped with a safety system that allows soldiers to drop from the rear ramp of the aircraft.

The rotor brake located on the combination transmission is installed on all Spanish *Chinooks* to enable them to operate on ships. The reason for this

Fleet renewal will be completed in the second half of 2024 when the last of the 17 CH-47Fs is delivered

is that, once the engines have stopped, the high inertia of the 15-metre-long blades causes them to continue rotating for a long time, which limits movement on board ships.

Indra also took on the upgrading of the simulation system implemented at the Spanish Army's Aviation Academy (ACAVIET) in Colmenar Viejo. This is a full motion system with a fixed trainer and a set of computer-based lessons (CBITS) to train pilots and mechanics of the Delta version. It is now being adapted to the Foxtrot model as a result of a €30-million contract signed in January 2021. In this way, the FAMET reduces actual flying hours by 30%.

A third contract that has not yet been formalised, but which the Spanish technology company is expected to take on from the beginning of 2023, consists of equipping the Chinooks with an Automated Mission Planning System (AMPS), which will involve adapting what has already been developed for the NH-90 and Tiger.

DELIVERY IN THREE YEARS

It is expected that the fleet renewal process will be completed by the end

of 2024. By that time, the Boeing Helicopters factory will have finished manufacturing the 17 aircraft and flight tested them, while the US Army will have received them in the US on behalf of the DGAM.

The helicopters will then be transported to Spain and handed over to the Spanish Army. At the end of this transition, the FAMET will have 17 CH47Fs and four CH-47Ds in operation and ready to be deployed on missions until the final Delta quartet is gradually withdrawn from service.

"The plan is for four more Foxtrots to arrive this year, another seven in 2023 and the final five in 2024, the last of them flying in Spain by August of that year", Colonel Álvarez Herrero states.

However, it is possible that the delivery schedule could be delayed due to any COVID-19 restrictions that might continue, Boeing staff may be impacted, cargo container availability problems could persist, and shipping lines could see freight rates constrained.

The CH-47F is a modular construction aircraft with a front cabin, cargo cabin, rear fuselage and rear pylon, where the rear rotor is attached. It

features numerous structural improvements and is largely manufactured with composite materials and reinforced with corrosion protection treatment, giving it a useful life of around 10,000 flying hours, resulting in less effort and reduced sustainment costs.

Its on-board equipment is fully digital and its two pilots have five colour displays that provide them with the data and information necessary for flight control and mission accomplishment.

Navigation aids include inertial GPS, radio navigation system (VOR), precise landing assistance (ILS), a flight data recorder and a Digital Advanced Flight Control System (DAFCS) that provides essential assistance to the crew in controlling the helicopter in all flight conditions.

It is equipped as standard with Collins Aerospace's Common Avionics Architecture System (CAAS), which integrates communication, navigation and mission subsystems through its flexible Flight2™ system. It also incorporates the Improved Vibration Control System (IVCS).

Juan Pons
Photos: Pepe Díaz

A sexagenarian on the front line

THE Chinook is the US Army's primary heavy-lift helicopter. Its design dates back to 1957 and its maiden flight took place in 1961. Throughout its operational life, it has proven its reliability and capabilities in every theatre in which the US Armed Forces have fought, from Vietnam to Afghanistan.

The Spanish Army began using it in 1973. All Spanish Chinooks are assigned to the 5th Transport Helicopter Battalion (BHELTRA V) at the main FAMET base in Colmenar Viejo (Madrid). The aircraft can accommodate 33 seated and secured passengers, 24 stretchers



or up to 10 tonnes of cargo. With a cruising speed of 140 knots (252 km/h) and a range of 630 kilometres without refuelling, it can take off from its Madrid base and reach any point on the Iberian Peninsula.

Spain sent three CH-47Ds to the mission in Afghanistan (pictured here at the Herat base). Subsequently, three more aircraft were sent to Iraq, where for two and a half years, until

January 2021, they flew a total of more than 2,100 hours and carried tens of thousands of soldiers and over 1,000 tonnes of cargo for the international coalition against Daesh.

The CSIC-INTA Astrobiology Centre is working on two of the telescope's four instruments

Spain on board the James Webb telescope

Marianna Annunziatella

Astrophysicist and CAB (CSIC-INTA) researcher

It is a universally accepted truth that, since time began, humans have always been in search of answers to the questions defining their very existence. What are the origins of the universe? How did life begin on Earth? Are we alone in the universe? In the early 1990s, astrophysicists around the world witnessed one of the cornerstones of astronomical research: the launch of the Hubble Space Telescope. Since then, *Hubble* has been able to capture fantastic images of the distant universe, in regions of space previously thought to be empty.

Human beings are always pushing their boundaries. As soon as Hubble began to operate properly, scientists set to work on a new project, an instrument that could look further and try to discover the origin of the universe as we know it. And so began the plans for the *James Webb* Space Telescope (JWST). The telescope took nearly thirty years to design and build and cost almost ten billion dollars.

Finally, Christmas Day 2021 arrived. At 13:20 CET, after several postponements, millions of people followed the live broadcast of the launch of the telescope from the spaceport in French Guiana aboard an *Ariane 5* rocket of the European Space Agency (ESA). The whole world let out a sigh of relief when everything went perfectly.

Webb can be considered the most powerful space observatory ever built. NASA, ESA and the Canadian Space Agency have collaborated on this project. The primary mirror is composed of 18 hexagonal segments, each with a diameter of 1.32 metres. Each of these segments has a microscopic gold coating on top to reflect up to 98% of all light in the infrared spectrum, the wavelength that the JWST will observe. The overall diameter of the primary mirror is 6.5 metres, and it is so large that it was folded to fit inside the rocket during the launch phase. The colour and shape of the JWST segments give

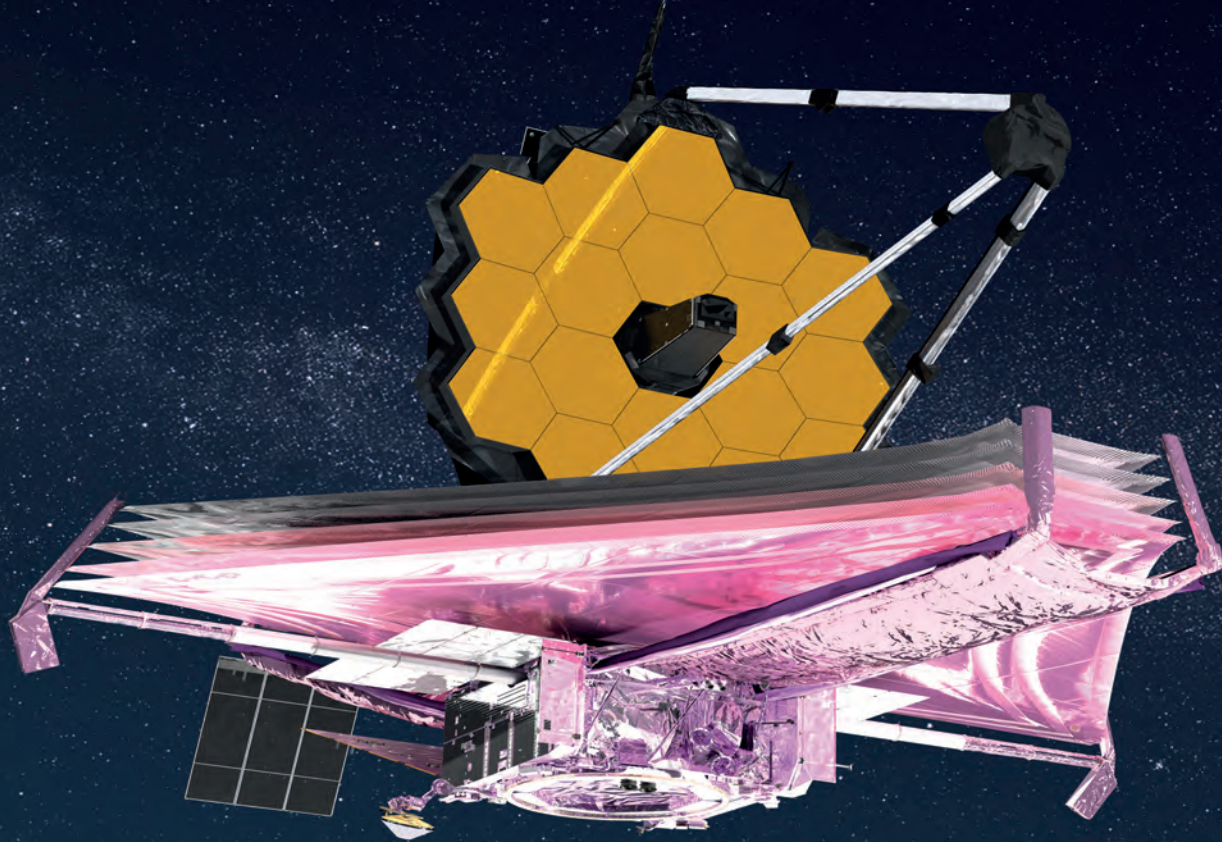
the telescope a honeycomb appearance. A sunshield protects the telescope and all its instruments from the sun's rays. The sunshield is made up of five layers of a lightweight material called kapton. Each layer is coated with aluminium and the two layers closest to the sun are also coated with doped silicon. This sunshield cools the telescope and keeps it at a constant temperature. The sun-facing side of the telescope can reach a temperature of 85°C, while the opposite side, where the instruments are located, can descend to a temperature of -233°C. These temperatures mean that the infrared signal emitted by the telescope will not interfere with the faint signals from the objects to be studied.

Webb travelled for a month to reach its final destination on 24 January. This destination, known as the L2 Lagrange point, is 1.5 million kilometres away from the Earth, in the opposite direction to the sun. During its mission, which will last longer than the ten years originally planned, it will address four key themes in modern astronomy.

→ PLANETARY SYSTEMS AND THE ORIGIN OF LIFE

Ever since they first looked up to the sky, humans have wondered if they were alone in the universe. The first step in answering this question is to find out whether there are any planets with Earth-like conditions that could support life as we know it. In the last ten years, astronomers have discovered thousands of planets orbiting other

*One month after its launch,
the telescope is now in its
final orbit*



stars in our galaxy (exoplanets). The JWST will study the atmosphere of many exoplanets for traces of substances such as water, oxygen, carbon dioxide and other complex organic molecules.

→ THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE STARS

How are stars born and how do they die? How does their death impact the environment around them? *Webb* will try to answer these questions by investigating how clouds of gas and dust collapse and form stars, transform into giant planets or even become brown dwarfs. *Webb* will be able to investigate the early life stages of a star. At the same time, the telescope will investigate the final life stages of massive stars.

→ THE EARLY UNIVERSE

What did the early universe look like? When were the first galaxies formed? Thanks to its infrared observation capability, *Webb* will observe the first galaxies that emerged shortly after the *Big Bang*. Using the telescope's data, it will be possible to investigate the formation and growth of supermassive black holes and how they influenced the formation and evolution of the early universe.

→ THE EVOLUTION OF GALAXIES

The universe as we know it is full of galaxies, objects made up of billions of stars of different shapes and sizes. With *Webb*, the oldest galaxies can be observed. By comparing them with the nearest objects, we will be able to obtain some clues about how they were formed and how they evolved.

The JWST observatory has four instruments mounted on a science module just behind the primary mirror. The Near Infrared Camera (NIRCam) is primarily designed for imaging studies and the detection of faint objects. The Near Infrared Spectrograph (NIRSpec) is

the first multi-object spectrograph for a space telescope. It will be able to capture the spectra of more than a hundred galaxies at a time. The Mid-Infrared Instrument (MIRI) will be essential in studying the oldest and most distant galaxies. The last instrument is the Near Infrared Imager and Slitless Spectrograph (NIRISS), which enables spectra of all objects in a wide field of vision to be obtained.

NIRSpec was built by ESA with Airbus Defence and Space as the prime contractor. ESA also commissioned Spanish companies such as CASA, CRISA (now part of the Airbus group) and Iberespacio to develop components such as the control electronics, the cryogenic cabling system and the optical system cover. Spanish researchers from the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) and the Astrobiology Centre (CAB, CSIC-INTA) in Madrid, were involved in the development of the NIRSpec instrument during all its phases.

MIRI was built 50/50 between NASA and ESA. The company Lidax, with a group of engineers from the Space Optics Department of the Spanish National Institute for Aerospace Technology (INTA), developed the MIRI Telescope Simulator (MTS). This is an optical instrument that was designed to simulate the JWST signal in deep space conditions. It was used in all calibration tests carried out before the final delivery of the instrument to NASA in 2012.

The CAB was one of the Spanish centres most involved in the JWST. In addition to having collaborated on the construction of two of the instruments (NIRSpec and MIRI), its scientists, both permanent and contract staff, are leading and participating in many projects that will produce data in the next two years. We do not yet know what exciting discoveries the JWST will bring. For the moment, we have no choice but to wait six months to see the first impressive images.

Global warming is a clear instability factor and adverse phenomena are a challenge to national security

Climate change and security

Mar Hidalgo García

Senior Analyst of the IEEE (Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies)

CLIMATE change is currently considered the greatest challenge facing humanity due to its impact on the environment, the economy, and national and international security. It is also a source of pressure in the current trends of globalisation, demographics, geopolitical tensions and the increasing use of natural resources.

Ever since 2007, when the then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon connected the origin of the conflict in Darfur with climate change, the link between this event and the generation of conflicts has become increasingly evident, especially in the poorest, most fragile countries and those most vulnerable to climate change. However, this relationship, far from being direct, is conditioned by numerous factors, such as the political, economic and social context of the regions affected by the phenomena related to global warming.

Climate change is a global phenomenon and no region is immune to its effects. In fragile regions, the relationship between climate change and security is very complex, especially when other factors coexist, such as the unsustainable use of natural resources or weak governance. Climate change has therefore been considered a risk multiplier.

For instance, it is estimated that in 2025 between 80 and 100 million more people are likely to suffer from water stress due to temperature rise and reduced river flows and groundwater recharge. This situation could contribute to situations of food insecurity and poverty that may increase the vulnerability of populations and cause humanitarian crises, population displacement, conflicts, increased ethnic tensions or recruitment by terrorist groups, as is the case of the Sahel.

Situations of confrontation over resources, such as water and land, can arise when populations lose their livelihood and are forced

to move. This is the case of the conflicts between the nomads and farmers in the Lake Chad region, compounded by the presence of Islamist groups in the region.

NATIONAL SECURITY

From a national security approach, climate change also poses major challenges as a result of more frequent and severe adverse weather events, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, prolonged droughts or rising sea levels. These direct impacts, which we are already suffering today, will adversely affect the ecosystems of countries and their critical infrastructures, including military facilities.

Scientific evidence shows that the number of natural disasters has doubled worldwide, and has even tripled in the Middle East and North Africa. The most extreme case occurs in the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), at risk of disappearing throughout this century due to rising sea levels, resulting in statelessness among their inhabitants. Southeast Asia will also be severely affected by flooding. In the specific case of Bangladesh, one fifth of its national territory could disappear by the middle of the 21st century due to flooding.

GEOPOLITICAL RISKS

A novel aspect that is currently being included in climate change risk assessment documents by the Defence Departments of some countries, such as the UK and the US, is a new type of security risk arising from global warming: geopolitical risks.

As early as 2007, the UN linked the origin of the conflict in Darfur to extreme weather

Such risks do not refer to the physical impact of climate change, but to the reconfiguration of the global order we are immersed in as a result of the decarbonisation of economies. On the one hand, traditional oil-exporting countries will have to make a transition towards new low-carbon economic models which, if not carried out properly, can generate geopolitical tensions. On the other hand, the electrification of mobility and the green and digital transition will be associated with an increase in demand for some minerals, such as rare earth or lithium, for which the International Energy Agency estimates a 90 per cent increase. This demand pull for these minerals is already disrupting production and supply chains and, therefore, trade relations between the great powers. The lack of cooperation in the exploitation of shared resources sensitive to climate change, such as water, can also pose risks to international security. Especially in transboundary basins where the hydro-hegemon carries out unilateral actions, as could be the case of China in rivers originating in the Himalayan system, where climate change is leading to a reduction in the mass of glaciers and a decrease in the availability of water reserves.

The Arctic is another focus of potential geopolitical conflict related to climate change. In this region, the temperature is rising twice as fast as in the rest of the planet, causing almost 40 per cent of its surface to melt. This melting has given rise to the establishment of new trade routes and the exploitation of natural resources, mainly gas and minerals. As a result, the Arctic may become a source of conflict in the coming years, as there are multiple and divergent interests in the area, not only from neighbouring countries but also from more distant powers such as China.

THE UN AND NATO

The UN Security Council clearly recognizes the complexity resulting from the need to address climate change from a security perspective, in numerous scenarios and dealing with the specific vulnerabilities of countries. Thus far, member states have been unable to adopt



Stephen Morrison/ EFE

a resolution explicitly stating the impact of climate change on the emergence of conflicts. This issue has been the subject of numerous debates in the Council, but the end result has always been a veto by Russia and China. These countries are against adopting a resolution on this matter because they consider that there are already other bodies within the UN that specifically deal with climate change.

However, these discrepancies have not prevented the adoption of certain resolutions that have considered climate change a contributing factor to the worsening of several conflicts, such as in the Lake Chad Basin, Somalia, Mali, Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Iraq and Cyprus. The most recent two resolutions (2561 and 2587, respectively) are the first cases in which the Council has recognised the

effects of climate change in non-African contexts.

From a defence standpoint, climate change is also altering the operational and tactical scenario with important implications for Defence and the Armed Forces, as evidenced by the increased involvement of the Military Emergency Unit (UME) in countering natural phenomena.

NATO is also increasingly interested in dealing with the security implications of climate change and the consequences for the Armed Forces of the various countries. For NATO, it is essential to face the new operational and tactical scenario in which the Armed Forces will be used as a result of the impact of climate change and the mitigation policies implemented.

Another major step in this process is the decarbonisation of defence. With its Action Plan approved in June 2021, NATO aims to approach climate change by assessing its impact on the strategic environment, adapting its capabilities and mitigating and disseminating its effects to contribute to the global response to climate change.



Pepe Díaz

At international level, Defence Departments are pursuing cooperative initiatives to address the complex impact of climate change on the operational and tactical scenario of the Armed Forces. In this regard, attention should also be drawn to the Climate Change and the Armed Forces Initiative launched on 12 November 2021 at the proposal of France. This initiative, signed by twenty-five countries, including Spain, aims to promote collaboration in four areas: risk anticipation, adaptation, mitigation and cooperation.

ADAPTATION AS A STABILITY FACTOR

Having established the need to consider the challenge of climate change from the security and defence perspective —either as a potential generating factor of conflicts or its impact on the new operational and tactical scenarios requiring the use of the Armed Forces— it is advisable to advance in the development of one of the most effective and most neglected measures in recent years, namely the adaptation to climate change. And this was precisely one of the most important conclusions of the COP26 Climate Change Summit held last November in Glasgow: the need to finance adaptation as an

essential part of climate change-related policies and to put it at the same level as mitigation.

This is a novel approach which, from a security and defence perspective, opens up important avenues for stabilising regions particularly vulnerable to climate change and which, for structural reasons, are prone to conflict. Adaptation thus emerges as a lever to bring peace and stability to our immediate surroundings, such as the Sahel, helping to consolidate all the efforts made in military stabilisation missions.

But, in order for the resources offered for adaptation to achieve the desired results, it is essential that the governments of those countries —generally fragile and vulnerable— be aware of the problems related to the weakness of their populations. Only this way will they be able to deal effectively with the social, economic and environmental consequences of climate change. This is the only way to break the dangerous and dramatic vicious circle between environmental degradation and conflict.

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