

# REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE DEFENSA



MINISTERIO DE DEFENSA

## UNITED AGAINST GLOBAL THREATS







REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE DEFENSA

# HABLAMOS de Defensa

35 años de información de calidad

## A historic summit

**N**ATO's Madrid Summit achieved historic results that will shape the future of the organisation. From it, the Alliance has re-emerged as the fundamental pillar of our collective defence and security in a new era defined by strategic competition and the growing challenge of emerging powers to the rules-based international order.

In the Spanish capital, coinciding with our 40th anniversary of NATO membership, the Summit gave the green light to the new Strategic Concept; reinforced the 360° perception of an organisation that has more troops and is better equipped; confirmed the need to increase defence investment and created an Innovation Fund to seek cutting-edge technological solutions; approved the accession of Sweden and Finland, a sign of the organisation's value in defending peace and security; and reiterated support for Ukraine after more than four months of invasion by Russia. An unjustifiable aggression that has underlined the need to stand together and confront the capacity of Putin's Russia to destroy peace in Europe, and tackle the global energy and food threat.

The Madrid Strategic Concept states that Russia is “the most direct and significant threat” to transatlantic security —which is why the Heads of State and Government at the Summit reinforced the deterrence and defence capabilities and increased military presence on the eastern flank— and that China poses a “systemic challenge”. And for Spain it is important that the document includes a significant mention of the South, and in particular of the Sahel, one of our greatest concerns due to its instability and the risks derived from it in terms of irregular flows of migrants, terrorism and the food and energy crisis.

Leaders discussed the relationship with the European Union, which the Strategic Concept considers an “indispensable” NATO partner. This unity was reflected during the Euro-Atlantic dinner at the Prado Museum, where all Allies and EU members highlighted the synergies arising from the complementarity between the two organisations.

The meeting, which has been an organisational and security success, strengthens our foreign policy and has once again projected Spain's image as a country committed to international peace. It is to be hoped that the renewal of NATO launched in Madrid will bear fruit in the next decade, because Europe's stability, which is essential to protect our societies and our way of life, depends on it to a large extent.

**RED**





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# MADRID, THE HEART OF A NEW NATO

A historic Summit gives the green light to the 2022 Strategic Concept, strengthens a 360° organisation with more and better equipped troops, approves the accession of Sweden and Finland and reiterates its support for Ukraine



Family photo at the IFEMA exhibition centre (Madrid) after the North Atlantic Council meeting on 29 June, attended by the Heads of State and Government of the 30 NATO member states.





SUMMIT - SOMMET  
**MADRID**  
29-30 VI 2022







The President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy participated as a guest at the North Atlantic Council meeting in Madrid on 29 June.

**E**XPECTATIONS were high, huge perhaps. And they have not disappointed. The Atlantic Alliance, more united and forceful than ever, said loud and clear at the 29-30 June Summit in Madrid that it is and will continue to be the best pillar on which to guarantee the security of its members, strengthen global stability and preserve shared values based on law, peace and human rights. It will not close the door to those who wish to share these values, nor will it fail to deepen cooperation with its partners. Alongside the Heads of State and Government of the 30 member states, thirteen other invited delegations were present at the meetings held at the IFEMA exhibition centre: those of Sweden and Finland, whose application for membership was endorsed during the Summit and

who will become the next allies; those of Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea (present for the first time at a NATO meeting), as well as Georgia, the non-allied EU countries and the president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who spoke

**The new  
Strategic Concept  
explicitly  
mentions the  
Sahel as an  
area of interest**

via video-conference. All of them have sent out an undeniable message of solidity and firmness from the Spanish capital. But also of maturity and self-criticism in the face of past mistakes: the perception of stability that came with the end of the Cold War has given way to a much more complex, crude and insecure reality. "The Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace", the Strategic Concept states.

There have been many activities and a very intense agenda, but after 48 hours of discussions, bilateral meetings, negotiations and a common spirit of action, NATO has given the green light to far-reaching changes of a territorial, operational, conceptual and, in short, strategic positioning in the world. Immediately, the eastern flank will be reinforced (the current deployment of the



## Allied commitment to defence investment

eight battlegroups of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) will change from its current composition of around 900 troops to a brigade-size formation of 3,000 soldiers each) and a new model of Response Force will be created, which will allow the deployment of 300,000 military personnel (compared to the current 40,000) and introduces the concept of troops assigned to the defence of a specific territory. In the medium term, the new Strategic Concept sets out a roadmap for adapting NATO to the challenges of the 21st century over the next ten years and creates an Innovation Fund to promote the Alliance's technological supremacy. This is backed up by confirmation of the increased investment needed for our collective defence.

### 360 DEGREES

The renewal of objectives that NATO sets itself every decade or so —the previous Strategic Concept was adopted in Lisbon in 2010— to renew itself and adapt to the ever-changing strategic reality had been set for June 2022 in Madrid (this year also marks our 40th anniversary of NATO membership) but Russia's invasion of Ukraine brought a brutal war to European soil, shattering security for all and forcing a paradigm shift. What was agreed in Spain's capital is not only an update of NATO's principles and operations, but also a historic transformation and reinforcement of the Alliance's *raison d'être*. The new Strategic Concept notes that the Russian Federation is and will remain the main threat to our security and the People's Republic of China a "systemic challenge", but now allied defence is approached with a 360-degree approach and dispels doubts about the geographic projection of their mutual defence clause. "While NATO is a defensive Alliance", states the Summit's final communiqué, "no one should doubt our strength and determination to defend every inch of Allied territory, to preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all Allies, and to prevail against any aggressor". This new wording transcends the traditional geographical limit set by the Washington Treaty in the so-called North Atlantic area and, for the first time, offers clear security coverage to areas such as Ceuta, Melilla or Hawaii.

Also for the first time, and largely in response to a request from the Spanish

At the 2014 Wales Summit, Heads of State and Government endorsed the Defence Investment Pledge (DIP) to reverse the trend of declining allied defence spending. The DIP reflected the willingness of nations to move towards the goal of achieving a level of defence spending equal to 2% of GDP, of which 20% would be spent on major equipment and R&D. But the DIP went beyond mere financial investment, and also included commitments by Allies to develop the military capabilities required by the Alliance, as well as to contribute in a balanced way to NATO missions, operations and activities. These are the so-called "three Cs": Cash (defence investment); Capabilities (meeting NATO's capability objectives); and Contributions (Alliance operations and missions).

Since the adoption of the DIP, political pressure for compliance has been ever present on the Alliance's agenda, recalling that the challenges that led Heads of State and Government to agree to the DIP commitment have not disappeared. As a result, since 2014, Allies' defence budgets have grown steadily and, by 2024, half of the countries that make up the North Atlantic Alliance are expected to reach the 2% target. Another positive development is that, in terms of investment in major equipment procurement, 27 of the 30 partners will reach the recommended level by 2024.

As the Allies reach the 2% benchmark, ever more nations are stressing the importance of going beyond this and continuing to increase defence investment. NATO's own International Secretariat has recently stated that the 2% figure should not be the goal but rather the minimum.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has prompted many allies to accelerate their defence investment plans, especially those countries that have not yet reached the 2% target.

### CAPABILITIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

As noted above, the DIP also includes a commitment by Allies to develop new capabilities to meet Alliance needs, as well as equal participation in NATO missions and operations. In relation to Capabilities, most

Allies fulfil their commitments by accepting those assigned to them in the NATO planning process. Looking ahead, there is an ongoing debate in the Alliance about the need to add new capabilities to the NATO portfolio in areas such as cyber defence, space systems and emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs).

As for Contributions, which has always been Spain's strong point and the weak spot for other Allies, the current conflict in Ukraine is showing that when there is political will on the part of governments, as there is in the current case, it is very easy to cover the Alliance's military needs.

### SPAIN'S BALANCING ACT

Spain has always admitted that its commitment to invest in defence is good for the Alliance (Spain's latest plan, presented in December 2021, envisages reaching 1.12% defence investment in 2023 and 1.24% in 2024), and recognises the importance of conveying a coherent and unified message, reflecting the achievements of the Allies, to the general public. At the Summit, the Spanish prime minister committed to reaching 2% by 2029. Moreover, Spain has always advocated maintaining a genuine balance between the "three Cs", highlighting the value of contributing to operations as a true reflection of solidarity among Allies. In this sense, Spain considers that financial investment is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve the real objectives, which are the development of military capabilities and the military contribution to missions and operations.

In the Alliance, there are cases of countries, such as Spain, which may not have reached the 2% target but have very high figures in their capability and operational commitments, while there are also cases where the opposite is true and high financial investment has not resulted in the best interest of the Alliance as a whole. Spain's participation in missions and operations is considered exemplary, in absolute and relative terms (in relation to the size of its Armed Forces), which has allowed our country to underline its status as a reliable partner, supportive and committed to allied security.



## Human security and the Women, Peace and Security agenda

**I**n a scenario of growing instability following several economic crises, the COVID-19 pandemic, terrorist attacks, the hasty exit from Afghanistan and, above all, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, NATO is going through a historic moment of profound transformation to adapt to new times.

To have a future, NATO must respond to public demands by integrating topical issues such as climate change, human security and gender into its operations, missions and activities. This integration, in addition to improving society's perception of NATO, will enhance the effectiveness of the Alliance in carrying out its three core tasks: deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security.

There is no longer any doubt that conflicts have a tremendous and disastrous impact on the civilian population, especially those that take place in and around cities, causing the destruction of important infrastructure necessary for people's well-being and security, such as hospitals, schools, power plants, water or fuel deposits, communication lines, etc. The population has become the target of the actors involved, be they terrorist groups or criminal organisations, causing death, ethnic cleansing, rape, fear, poverty and despair. This also leads to massive flows of refugees and displaced persons, turning the conflict into a humanitarian crisis, often transnational, as we can see with the humanitarian, energy and food crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. International organisations, such as the UN, the European Union, the OSCE and NATO, play a leading role in these scenarios.

NATO's new Strategic Concept addresses the concerns and priorities of all partners and their citizens, enhancing the relevance of human security and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, which entails a change of mindset in the organisation's culture.

### **WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA**

Launched in 2000 following a unanimously approved Security Council resolution, this agenda is a global political framework that

supports gender equality and is also an enabling element in the management and resolution of armed conflicts. Gender, understood as the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female in a particular historical, social and geographical context, is not a problem in itself, but is clearly part of the solution. NATO therefore adopted its first policy on Women, Peace and Security in 2007.

Since then, NATO has aimed to promote gender equality both within the organisation and in its operations, recognising that both are conducive to improving allied effectiveness.

### **HUMAN SECURITY**

The UN defined human security in 2012 as "an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people". The North Atlantic Alliance applies this term to five of its cross-cutting agendas: protection of civilians, children and armed conflicts, protection of cultural property, human trafficking, and combating conflict-related sexual violence; although it touches on numerous other issues.

In NATO's policies, the WPS agenda and human security are closely intertwined, and the Alliance must therefore promote both simultaneously. Among the measures it has been implementing are increasing the participation of women in the organisation and the societies where it operates; continuing to strengthen efforts in their education and training; protecting human rights and empowering women and children in the area of operations; and promoting a change of mentality, both corporate and in the cultures of the people where it carries out its military activities.

In conclusion, human security and the WPS Agenda, as well as climate change, will be drivers of the NATO of the future. These elements will improve the operational effectiveness of activities, missions and operations, making the North Atlantic Alliance a model organisation in the protection of universal rights and values.

government, the recently approved Alliance roadmap makes several references to threats from the South. The Strategic Concept specifically cites the Middle East, North Africa and, above all, the Sahel as regions of "strategic interest to the Alliance" and notes that their security, political, economic and demographic problems are compounded by climate change, fragile institutions, health emergencies and food insecurity. "Fertile ground", it warns, for the proliferation of terrorist organisations with the coercive interference of "strategic competitors", referring to actors such as the Russian mercenary group Wagner in Mali. The Alliance also warns that the "permanent" instability in these regions may increase "irregular migration and human trafficking". At their meeting on 30 June—which focused on threats from the South—the allies approved a package of support for Mauritania's defence capabilities, agreed to strengthen their assistance to Tunisia and endorsed their partnership with Jordan in the fight against terrorism.

Every part of the script went according to plan and the leaders did not hesitate to show enthusiasm for a success that belongs to everyone. After thanking Spain for organising the meeting, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said that "after this historic Summit, NATO is even stronger and more agile to respond to a more dangerous world: the decisions we have taken have strengthened our deterrence and defence, enhanced our resilience, confirmed support for Ukraine in the short and long term, and boosted cooperation with partners. We have ensured that our Alliance, Europe and North America together, is transformed". The Spanish Prime Minister and host, Pedro Sánchez,

**NATO  
Response Force  
increases  
its deployment  
capacity to over  
300,000 troops**



was also very satisfied: “We have defined the work until 2030. Europe’s specific weight has also been strengthened. It has been a Summit of democracies that want to send an unequivocal message in defence of democracy. The objectives have been met”. The harmony and satisfaction for the duty accomplished was evident in the statements of all the leaders. “The world has changed a lot and NATO is changing too, it has been transformed”, said US President Joe Biden, underscoring another point that has been repeated in all foreign ministries: “Russia thought it could break NATO, but now it finds a united and expanding Alliance”. France’s Emmanuel Macron highlighted: “Supporting Ukraine is a necessity for us as well”.

#### DEFENSIVE REINFORCEMENT

The focus, the means and the allies change. The Alliance has undertaken, in Stoltenberg’s words, “the biggest overhaul



NATO

The Alliance will strengthen its deterrence and defence with more troops, better assets, more intensive training and interoperability exercises to improve its response capability.

## SPAIN AND THE US RENEW THEIR STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP

THE NATO Summit was an opportunity to reassert allied bonds and clearly define the values and principles on which each country bases its foreign policy. The day before the official start of the North Atlantic Council meeting, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez received the President of the United States Joe Biden at Moncloa palace, the US president’s first official visit to our country.

The meeting of the two leaders conveyed the excellent bilateral relationship between Spain and the United States, which are allies, strategic partners and friends, with a common will to preserve and promote the values of freedom, democracy, human rights, gender equality and the rule of law. In this context, the two leaders agreed on a new Joint Declaration (the previous one dates back to 2001) that updates and further strengthens the strategic relationship between the two countries.

Pedro Sánchez said he was “particularly pleased” with the new Declaration, in which Spain and the US pledged to deepen their already close cooperation on security and defence, while reaffirming their commitment



Fernando Calvo/Pool Moncloa

to safeguarding the rules-based international order in the face of the violation of international law and the attack on shared values that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has entailed.

With Europe’s security at stake, all Allies —including Spain— have responded decisively by strengthening the eastern flank, while also recognising the threats from the southern flank and the need, in the words of Pedro Sánchez, “for the Alliance to have a 360-degree approach”. For his part, Joe Biden described Spain as an “indispensable partner” in NATO.

In this context, the two leaders discussed the United States’ interest in increasing its military presence at Rota naval base in order to strengthen the NATO’s collective defence. The US president formally announced his country’s intention to increase the number of Arleigh Burke-class destroyers currently based in Cádiz, Spain, from four to six as part of NATO’s missile defence shield. No timetable has yet been set. Once the political decision has been taken, the US will make a detailed proposal, which will be studied by Spain’s Council of Ministers before going to Parliament for approval.





Roman Pilipey/EFE

A Ukrainian woman hugs her daughter during a ceremony in Kyiv on 21 June honouring the victims of the Russian invasion.

of our deterrence and defence force since the Cold War by expanding the troops assigned to the Allied Rapid Response Force from the current 40,000 to more than 300,000”.

With full operational capability in 2023, the new force will be able to deploy wherever it is needed within a maximum of 15 days and operate in all areas: land, sea, air and cyberspace. There will be forces pre-assigned to specific locations that will remain in their place of origin but will train frequently in the locations where they would deploy within 72 hours. That is, certain countries take responsibility for leading the defence of another country if necessary (already since 24 February 2022, Germany has increased its troops in Lithuania, the UK in Estonia, Canada in Latvia, while France has taken charge of the new battlegroup in Romania). In addition, along with manpower, the new Response Force will have equipment and weaponry pre-positioned.

## CONDEMNATION OF RUSSIA’S USE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

As part of the Summit’s activities, a roundtable discussion was held with all Alliance foreign and defence ministers and the NATO Secretary General’s Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, Irene Fellin from Italy. Spanish Defence Minister Margarita Robles stressed at a press conference — together with the German foreign minister, Annalena Barbock, and Fellin herself (pictured)— the “absolute importance” of all allied countries maintaining “zero tolerance against any type of aggression, but even more so against the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war”. The Defence Minister, who clearly welcomed the incorporation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda into the new Strategic Concept, condemned “the scenes we are currently witnessing in Ukraine, where women and girls are being raped and abused, [it] is something that neither NATO nor the international community as a whole can remain indifferent to, and Spain will always condemn these cases of violence and aggression”. Robles and the German minister pledged to work to ensure that Russian President Vladimir Putin would be punished for these “war



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crimes” and be brought before the International Criminal Court and that “these sexual assaults are punished as they should be”.

With regard to the WPS Agenda, Margarita Robles reiterated that Spain actively supports NATO’s commitment to the implementation of gender equality policies in its operations and is committed to increasing the number of women in the armed forces. “It is important that we continue to emphasise the centrality of this Agen-

da and the message of hope that our servicewomen bring to those countries where they operate in disadvantaged regions”, because “they serve as an inspiration to local women and convince their political leaders to consider the potential they have been ignoring”.

For her part, NATO’s Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, Irene Fellin, stressed that this has been a historic and transformative summit also in terms of the women’s peace and security agenda, because “it is no longer about what we do, but about who we are, and the core values we stand for: freedom, human rights and democracy”.



## Climate change and security

The new force model —which implies enhanced availability of the units and shorter reaction times— will mean a much more demanding and costly level of readiness and equipment. In other words, a larger military budget. In this regard, the new Strategic Concept includes a commitment to provide the resources, infrastructure, capabilities and troops to meet the goals set and to ensure that national defence spending and pooled funds are commensurate with the challenges NATO faces. Therefore, during the Atlantic Council, leaders reaffirmed the commitment made in 2014 to spend at least 2 percent of Gross Domestic Product on defence. Pedro Sánchez confirmed that the Spanish government intends to increase the defence budget by 2029 to reach this objective. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson also announced that his country would reach 2.5 percent. The UK is one of the nine allied countries (along with Greece, the United States, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Croatia and Slovakia) to reach the 2 percent target, with Romania just shy of it.

Stoltenberg explained that of the remainder, “19 allies have concrete plans to achieve this. And five others have commitments and plans to deliver. The 2 percent is increasingly seen as a step, not a ceiling”. The Secretary General added that the Allies also decided to increase common funding. One of the countries whose change has been most evident is Germany, which after the invasion of Ukraine announced a historic shift in its defence investment policy. A survey conducted by the Alliance in all NATO member countries a month before the Summit states that after the invasion of Ukraine, 60 percent of citizens believe their country is safer with NATO

**Survey shows  
that the invasion  
of Ukraine  
has changed  
perceptions of  
security**

**A**T the NATO Summit in Brussels (June 2021), NATO Heads of State and Government agreed to develop an Action Plan for Climate Change and Security. The objective of the plan is to assess the impact of climate change on assets, facilities, missions and operations, while implementing adaptation measures and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The new Strategic Concept reflects NATO's renewed ambition in the climate field, where it aims to become the world's leading organisation in understanding the impact of climate change on defence and security. The Alliance also aims to mitigate the negative effects of climate change on its military capabilities and to operate in environments severely affected by climate change. Finally, it wants to become a model organisation in complying with the Paris Agreement on climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, without reducing its operability or downgrading its deterrence and defence posture.

Allies have provided NATO with information on their current and future actions in the four areas of the NATO Climate Change and Security Agenda –awareness, adaptation, mitigation and outreach– so that these data can be included in the new action plan.

### AWARENESS

Allied armed forces are developing common (replicable) methodologies to assess the climate change vulnerability of selected military bases. They are also considering the expansion of civil-military research, through data collection on oceanic and other climate change impacts, performance assessment of road embankments and waterway crossings built on permafrost, geospatial services, the impact of climate hazards on hardware lifetime and observation/communication technologies.

### ADAPTATION

The Allies select their base locations according to the climate. In addition, many of them integrate climate change into their infrastructure planning and resource management.

Allied armed forces are preparing for changes in mission profiles or military tasks in

the face of an expected increase in humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations. In addition, they are adapting to changing operating conditions, thereby altering their operational planning and training programmes.

### MITIGATION

To improve the energy efficiency of infrastructure, the Allied armed forces implement monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. In terms of improving resource management, they have started to adjust flight planning to reduce fuel consumption and aircraft emissions. In addition, they have begun to procure sustainable/green military equipment and capabilities, with approaches focusing on the overall life span of the equipment, and “Clean Procurement”, for the acquisition of building materials with lower embodied carbon emissions.

### OUTREACH

Numerous partner countries are members of international forums related to climate change, such as the Group of Friends on Climate Security and the UN Climate and Security Mechanism, the OSCE-affiliated project on Strengthening Responses to Security Risks from Climate Change in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia, the Friends of Climate and Oceans initiative, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In addition, some partners are participating in climate-related outreach initiatives, such as the so-called Northern Group, and have established contacts with academia to jointly address research projects on climate and security as part of cooperating towards development.

In conclusion, it is worth recognising the growing importance of climate change in NATO's plans, reflected in the Secretary General's latest report and as part of the NATO 2030 Agenda and the Strategic Concept that came out of the Madrid Summit. On these grounds, the Alliance is taking initial steps to adapt to the effects of climate change, both in terms of military operations and in terms of its harmful consequences for stability and human security.



## Sweden's and Finland's accession to NATO

SWEDEN and Finland had always synchronised their approach to NATO on the basis of their policy of military non-alignment, so it was not surprising that their application for membership would be made in parallel. Both have been actively cooperating with NATO in peace- and security-related military operations and missions since 1994, when they joined the Partnership for Peace programme. The two countries were also part of the Enhanced Opportunity Partners initiative. Their level of cooperation and collaboration with NATO in recent years has made them, for many allies, *de facto* rather than actual members. This has resulted in their regular inclusion in national and multilateral exercises and interoperability initiatives.

### RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

However, Russia's aggression against Ukraine has altered the existing balance in Europe. For the Swedish and Finnish governments as well as their public, there has been a change in how the threat from Russia is now perceived. In this context, the Swedish and Finnish governments have found parliamentary support and, above all, popular support to apply for accelerated Alliance membership. Politically, the fact that Sweden and Finland share the Alliance's values in full and are both members of the EU provides the best basis for a rapid and successful accession.

However, although both nations are already well integrated into most European multilateral bodies and structures, it is likely that their accession will have a much more significant impact on the Alliance than other recent enlargements, such as that of Montenegro (2017) or North Macedonia (2019). Not surprisingly, despite their traditional policy of non-integration into any military bloc, these countries possess remarkable military capabilities, as well as a high degree of interoperability with the armed forces of the other Allies. Moreover, their high levels of economic development would ensure their contribution to NATO's funding and investments.

### STRENGTHENING SECURITY

For these two reasons, Sweden and Finland will almost immediately become net security contributors, which is inherently a positive

factor and will help strengthen the security aspects of the North Atlantic Alliance.

On the other hand, in terms of their contribution to stability, their accession introduces strategic considerations of the highest order for the entire Euro-Atlantic region, comparable to those arising from the massive enlargement of 2004. In particular, three of them stand out:

First, the vast majority of the Baltic Sea coastline is held by NATO members, as a result of having gained the entire northern shore. Only the territories of the Russian Federation in the regions of St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad are excluded.

Second, the existence of a 1,300-kilometre land border between Finland and the Russian Federation doubles the North Atlantic Alliance's previous common land border with the latter.

And third, NATO's weight in the Arctic increases considerably, with seven of the eight Arctic Council members (Russia remains the only non-NATO member on that council).

On the other hand, in the context of NATO's internal decision-making process, the accession of these two countries suggests a readjustment of strategic priorities in the long term, increasing the specific weight of the northern nations, especially those of the Baltic and Arctic region, in a broad sense.

### EURO-ATLANTIC STABILITY

Finally, the outcome of the NATO Summit in Madrid and, in particular, the approval of the Alliance's new Strategic Concept, as well as how the evolution of the conflict in Ukraine, will determine the influence that NATO's current enlargement process may have on the future of the Euro-Atlantic region.

Taking into account all these factors and the potential advantages and disadvantages outlined above, the Alliance emerging from Sweden's and Finland's accession is clearly strengthened, demonstrating its vitality and its ability to attract new members.

With the green light given to their membership in Madrid, it also confirms that the organisation continues to be the best guarantee of security and stability for the Euro-Atlantic area.



membership and, with respect to the budget, 78 percent support maintaining it and 40 percent support increasing it. A perception that has risen by eleven points following Russia's attack.

While NATO's Response Force can be deployed wherever it is needed, it is clear that, in principle, reinforcements will focus on the current deployment in the east, from Estonia to Bulgaria. Also, and immediately, it has already been decided to increase the battlegroups of the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) to brigades. "This increase will be made in some countries. This does not apply to all of them. There are different needs for different countries", the Secretary General said. Already from the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the four battlegroups that were established for the defence of allied territory after the invasion of Crimea in 2014 (they started operating in 2017) in Poland and the three Baltic countries were reinforced and four more were established in Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Slovakia. Spain has 506 men and women deployed in Latvia's eFP, which since June has included an air defence unit. In addition to ground units (there are currently 40,000 troops under direct NATO command on the Eastern Flank), 130 Allied aircraft are on high alert and 140 naval vessels are deployed in the area. During the Madrid Summit, Joe Biden announced that the current US presence on European soil (which stands at 100,000 troops) will be augmented with a permanent brigade headquarters in Poland, a rotating brigade of some 3,000 troops in Romania, two new squadrons of F-35 aircraft in the UK, a reinforcement of the rotating air force in the Baltic and an increase in anti-aircraft defences in Italy and Germany, as well

**The new Strategic Concept identifies Russia as the main threat and China as a "systemic challenge"**



as an interest in increasing its military presence at Rota naval base.

In other words, NATO has once again demonstrated its shared responsibility with the countries of the East (confirming this spirit, the Madrid communiqué announces that the next summit will take place in 2023 in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania), and also its solidarity and support for Ukraine. “We will continue and further step up political and practical support to our close partner Ukraine as it continues to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity against Russian aggression”, reads the Summit’s final communiqué. “Ukraine can count on us”, Stoltenberg responded to President Zelenskyy’s plea for more support after acknowledging that his country’s future depends on allied help and recalling that “this is not just a war against Ukraine, but to decide the future of the world order”. In particular, in Madrid, NATO has decided to strengthen its support with a comprehensive assistance package for Ukraine that includes secure communications, fuel, medical and protective supplies, mine and NBC defence equipment, as well as hundreds of portable anti-drone systems. Stoltenberg explained: “we will help Ukraine for the longer term, to transition from Soviet-era equipment to modern NATO equipment, boost its training in the use of weapons to meet NATO standards and thus improve interoperability with NATO, and further strengthen its security and defence institutions. All this demonstrates that we are committed to Ukraine’s future and that our commitment is unwavering”.

### NEW WORLD ORDER

King Felipe VI —who hosted a gala dinner at the Royal Palace on the eve of the Summit— summed it up very clearly in his speech to the allied leaders: “We must stand united in the face of a more uncertain, more complex and more dangerous world” where old and new threats merge, adding that “strategic optimism has given way to strategic realism”. Indeed, in the complex and ever-changing security field, current events have a bad habit of quickly rendering concepts obsolete. Therefore, during the Brussels Summit in 2021, Heads of State and Government gave Jens Stoltenberg a mandate to initiate a process



Spanish units in in Latvia's enhanced Forward Presence. Below, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg presents the new Strategic Concept to the press.





Oleg Petrasnyuk/EFE

The invasion of Ukraine —armoured vehicles destroyed on the outskirts of Kyiv, pictured— has seen the return of a brutal, conventional war to European soil.

of analysis and reflection on the state of the security environment and outline how those challenges could be addressed. In other words, to prepare the cornerstone that would define the future of the Alliance in the coming decade. The present had to be well defined, but also, and above all, the future.

The endorsement of the new Strategic Concept —the fourth since the end of the Cold War— responds to a new world order that is taking shape around two poles: the West, led by the Alliance itself and the European Union, whose paradigm is democracy and the institutional and regulatory fabric that underpins the rules-based international order; and another, represented by Russia and China, both autocratic regimes. The Strategic Concept states in its preface, “Our vision is clear: we

want to live in a world where sovereignty, territorial integrity, human rights and international law are respected and where each country can choose its own path, free from aggression, coercion or subversion. We work with all those who share these

**NATO wants to  
be the paradigm  
for a rules-based,  
human  
rights-based  
international order**

goals. We stand together, as Allies, to defend our freedom and contribute to a more peaceful world”. Also in the points presenting the very essence of the Alliance, the preface states “the cross-cutting importance of investing in technological innovation and integrating climate change, human security and the Women, Peace and Security agenda across all our core tasks”.

#### **THREATS AND RESPONSES**

In detailing our strategic environment, the document does not place Russia on the same footing as China at all. While with regard to Moscow, it states “the Russian Federation is the most significant and direct threat to Allies’ security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area”, where China is concerned it says



## NATO's history and future

that “the PRC’s malicious hybrid and cyber operations and its confrontational rhetoric and disinformation target allies and harm Alliance security”. However, at the same time, there are many other threats to respond to. The world remains at risk from international terrorism, which “in all its forms and manifestations, is the most direct asymmetric threat to the security of our citizens and to international peace and prosperity”, and emerging threats such as cyber, space, hybrid and asymmetric threats, disinformation and the malicious use of new technologies.

The document also introduces risk factors, including climate change, energy dependence and the use of economic coercion. For the first time, the Alliance warns that “a single or cumulative set of malicious cyber activities” could reach the level to be considered an armed attack for the purposes of mutual defence (Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty). It also argues that the coercive use of political, economic, energy or information tactics could be equated to military aggression. In contrast, NATO maintains its nuclear doctrine intact, which regards nuclear weapons as the supreme guarantee of security but reiterates that “the fundamental purpose of NATO’s nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression. As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance”.

In a new reality check, deterrence and defence are once again at the forefront of Alliance core tasks. The Strategic Concept includes it as one of its three pillars —along with crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security— but it says: “We underscore the need to significantly strengthen our deterrence and defence as the backbone of our commitment to defend each other”. To this end, the allied roadmap indicates: “We will continue to enhance the collective readiness, responsiveness, deployability, integration and interoperability of our forces” for multi-domain warfare by ensuring a robust, resilient and integrated command structure and by strengthening and modernising NATO’s force structure.

As part of NATO’s clear commitment to peace, the Alliance emphasises arms control and disarmament as the foundation of deterrence and defence.

**A**FTER the Second World War, the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty (Washington, 1949) gave birth to the most successful collective defence alliance in history, which celebrated its 73rd anniversary this year. Until 2014, when the annexation of Crimea fundamentally altered European security arrangements, NATO’s history could be divided into three periods:

- **The Cold War (1949-1989).** In this 40-year period, the Alliance’s primary mission was to defend Western Europe from Soviet expansion. Allied collective defence hinged on Article 5 of the founding Treaty, which dictates that an attack on one member is an attack on all other members. The scenario was predictable and full of symmetries between the two opposing blocs; the enemy was known, as were its strategic tools which included nuclear weapons.

- **Between 1989 and 2001.** At the 1990 London Summit, NATO staged its shift towards cooperation, which later opened the way to central and eastern European integration. NATO’s evolution gave rise to two new core tasks: Crisis Management and Cooperative Security, which gained ground on a contested Collective Defence. These were the years of the Balkan crises, which enabled NATO to undertake its first crisis management operations.

- **NATO’s fight against global terrorism (2001-2014).** The Alliance, which invoked Article 5 on Collective Defence for the first time after the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers (2001), turned towards action at strategic distances, developing its expeditionary capabilities to contribute to the international community’s fight against terrorism, as well as to crisis management outside the Alliance’s area of responsibility (Afghanistan, Iraq).

NATO’s approach, which was consolidated in the Strategic Concept (2010) at Lisbon, became obsolete just four years later with Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea. This crisis prompted a timid process of adaptation in the North Atlantic Alliance, which has accepted the need to revitalise its traditional defence dimension, but without altering the fundamental blueprints in force. After a few years of uncertainty and a certain paralysis, coinciding with the Trump presidency, NATO Heads of State and Government became

convinced in 2019 that the Alliance’s future lay not in a facelift, but in a profound transformation.

After a two-year period of reflection, at the Brussels Summit in 2021 the Allies agreed on an agenda for renewal, called NATO 2030, the cornerstone of which would be the development of a new Strategic Concept that was finally approved at the Madrid Summit.

### THE MADRID TRANSFORMATION

The NATO that emerged from the Madrid Summit retains Russia and terrorist groups as its two main threats, while at the same time redoubles its capabilities to operate in the new operational domains of outer space and cyberspace.

This revitalised NATO is also paying increasing attention to China, the emerging power in the age of globalisation, with which we must come to terms, but which can challenge the rules-based international order by using all its instruments of power (military, diplomatic, economic and communication) acting directly or through proxies (state or non-state actors).

The foundations have been laid to develop a versatile NATO, designed to operate in 360-degree, hybrid tool-affected environments. Moreover —and here the American and British perspective, mainly concerned with China, has been fundamental— there has been a commitment to a NATO with a global approach, oriented towards technological competition and superiority in non-conventional domains (cyberspace and outer space).

The new NATO is a mixture of all of the above and responds to societal demands in areas such as the protection of democratic values, human security, gender and the impact of climate change.

NATO has seized the opportunity in Madrid to re-emerge as the fundamental pillar of our collective defence and security in a new era marked by strategic competition and the growing challenge of emerging powers to the rules-based international order. Europe’s stability and security, with all that this entails for our well-being and that of future generations, depends to a large extent on the success of NATO’s renewal.



Special mention is also given to maritime security, digital transformation, cyberspace (“maintaining secure use of and unfettered access to space and cyberspace are key to effective deterrence and defence”), and resilience (“we will work towards identifying and mitigating strategic vulnerabilities and dependencies, including with respect to our critical infrastructure, supply chains and health systems”).

On digital transformation, the document states, among other things, that they will adapt the command structure for the information age, promote innovation and, in partnership with the private sector, “increase our investments in emerging and disruptive technologies to retain our interoperability and military edge”.

Precisely for this purpose, during the Madrid Summit the leaders and ministers of 22 of the allied countries (including Spain) signed into existence a NATO Innovation Fund, the world’s first

The presidents of the European Council and Commission —Charles Michel and Ursula von der Leyen— led the EU delegation invited to the Madrid Summit.

## ORGANISATIONAL AND SECURITY SUCCESS

FROM an organisational point of view, the NATO meeting in Madrid was “perfect, impeccable and excellent”, as acknowledged by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. The summit, with around 5,000 guests, took place in a 54,000 m<sup>2</sup> space set up at the IFEMA exhibition centre to accommodate the meetings of around 2,000 members of the 40 delegations. A 14,000 m<sup>2</sup> international press centre, open 24 hours a day, was erected next to the Atlantic Council chamber, where between 1,200 and 1,500 journalists from all over the world worked.

To guarantee the protection of the Heads of State and Government and their attendants, the largest security operation in Spain’s recent history was deployed in the capital, with more than 35,000 civilian, police and military personnel. The Ministry of the Interior named it Operation *Eirene* after the Greek goddess of peace and required the deployment of 6,500 national police officers, 2,400 civil guards and 1,000 municipal officers, as well as personnel from Madrid’s fire brigade and civil defence services.



El Ejército del Aire y del Espacio

At Torrejón air base, a facility was set up to ensure the smooth arrival and departure, not only of the planes, but also of the motorcades of delegations, some with up to 80 cars. In addition, the Ministry of Defence launched Operation *Dome*, led by the Aerospace Operational Command (under the Operations Command). This operation activated *F-18* fighter jets from the 12th and 15th Wings and *Eurofighters* from the 14th Wing, an *A-400M* airlifter from the 31st Wing, a reinforced drone response team from

the Air Deployment Support Squadron (EADA), a network of visual observers from the Mobile Air Control Group (GRUMOCA) in Seville, *NH-90 Lobo* helicopters from the 48th Wing, armed and with precision marksmen from the Paratrooper Squadron; a *Predator B* RPAS from the 23rd Wing; and a unit from the Army’s Anti-Aircraft Artillery Command. The operation also involved a NATO early warning aircraft (AWACS) operating under tactical control from the Alliance’s Combined Air Operations Centre at Torrejón (CAOC-T), where the command post of the Spanish airspace surveillance and control system was installed during the event.



multi-sovereign venture capital fund. “With a 15-year timeframe, the NATO Innovation Fund will help bring to life those nascent technologies that have the power to transform our security in the decades to come, strengthening the Alliance’s innovation ecosystem and bolstering the security of our one billion citizens”, explained Jens Stoltenberg at the signing ceremony.

### EXPORTING STABILITY

Crisis prevention and management, the second pillar of the Strategic Concept, ensures the Alliance’s commitment to “deploy and sustain military and civilian crisis management, stabilisation and counter-terrorism operations, including at strategic distance”. In this area, and recognising the lessons learned in Afghanistan, the allies insist that they will improve their readiness, their military and civilian capabilities and civil-military planning.

They also underline the crucial work of partners on the ground and once again confirm their commitment to conflict prevention and affirm: “We will enhance support for our partners, including to help build their capacity to counter terrorism and address shared security challenges”. The Strategic Concept also specifically points out that human security, “including the protection of civilians and civilian harm mitigation is central to our approach to crisis prevention and management”.

The third major pillar, a hallmark of the Alliance, is cooperative security. “NATO’s enlargement has been a historic success”, the Strategic Concept stresses, recalling that “it has strengthened our Alliance, ensured the security of millions of European citizens and contributed to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area”. It boldly states: “Our door remains open” to any European country which is able to assume the conditions of membership”.

The document also stresses the importance of partners, especially the European Union, to which it devotes an entire paragraph: “The European Union is a unique and essential partner



Helmut Fohringer/EFE

NATO notes that security problems in the Sahel —famine victims in Niger pictured— are exacerbated by political instability and climate change.

## The Strategic Concept reiterates that the European Union is a primary and essential partner of the Alliance

for NATO. NATO Allies and EU members share the same values”, the text states, adding: “On the basis of our long-standing cooperation, we will enhance the NATO-EU strategic partnership, strengthen political consultations and increase cooperation on issues of common interest, such as military mobility, resilience, the impact of climate change on security, emerging and disruptive technologies, human security, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, as well as countering cyber and hybrid threats and addressing the systemic challenges posed by the PRC to Euro-Atlantic security”.

To consolidate an established relationship on both sides (European Council President Charles Michel and Commission President Ursula von der Leyen were invited to the Summit), the new Strategic Concept adopted at the Madrid Summit confirms that “NATO recognises the value of a stronger and more capable European defence that contributes positively to transatlantic and global security and is complementary to and interoperable with NATO”.

**Rosa Ruiz**



NATO

The new Strategic Concept sees cybersecurity and technological innovation as key to NATO’s security and military advantage.

## ANALYSIS

# The future of the Alliance starts with “M” for Madrid



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

A few weeks have passed since the end of the Madrid Summit, but echoes of the recognition of Spain's hosting of a Summit described by all Allies —starting with President Biden and the Secretary General himself— as “historic”, are still reverberating in the corridors of NATO's headquarters. And those who describe it in this way are right, because beyond what the Summit has meant for Spain in terms of international image, including seriousness, commitment and organisational capacity, the Madrid Summit was a milestone for the future of the organisation. From now on, there will be a “pre-Madrid” NATO and a “post-Madrid” NATO. This is because in Madrid we approved a new Strategic Concept which, more importantly, now bears the name of Spain's capital city. We reinforced our Deterrence and Defence Posture; we redefined the Alliance's common funding to cope with the investments derived from the implementation of the package of decisions associated with the NATO 2030 Initiative; we invited Sweden and Finland to join the Alliance; we opened up definitively to our Indo-Pacific partners; the European Union confirmed itself as NATO's indispensable partner; and we opted for the coordination of initiatives in the field of innovation, aware that strategic primacy is based on technological superiority.

However, the Madrid Summit obviously took place in the midst of a global landscape marked by Russia's unjustified and brutal aggression towards Ukraine. This event, which has stretched the

strategic balances achieved since the fall of the Berlin Wall to unexpected limits, marked not only the Madrid meeting but also the future of the Alliance.

When Spain was appointed by the Heads of State and Government to host the 2022 Summit on 14 June 2021, we envisaged the organisation of an event that should prepare the Alliance for the next decade. We and other Allies visualised a Summit focused on endorsing the NATO 2030 Initiative package to achieve a more politically coordinated, militarily stronger, and globally more strategic NATO. We were preparing to organise a key Summit for the future of the Alliance, but we could not have foreseen that the invasion of Ukraine would turn our Summit into an event of the utmost importance for the Alliance's present and future.

NATO is sometimes a slow-moving machine, but that has certainly not been the case on this occasion. It took only 125 days for the Alliance to reinvent itself, because that is the time that had elapsed from the beginning of the invasion to the Madrid Summit.

***Today, NATO is stronger and  
more cohesive in defending  
what unites us***





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In 125 days we adopted a new Strategic Concept that identifies Russia as “the most significant and direct threat”; in 125 days we modified our Deterrence and Defence Posture to adapt it to the new strategic reality by strengthening our military presence on the Eastern flank of the Alliance; in 125 days we consolidated Allied attention on the NATO strategic direction South; in 125 days we reached agreement on the resources we need as an Alliance to meet the new challenges before us —and which, make no mistake, do not only come from Moscow—; in 125 days we agreed on China as a “systemic challenge”; in 125 days we took a giant step towards fulfilling the Wales Commitment —the famous 2 percent—; and in 125 days we opened the door to the Allied club to Finland and Sweden. In short, in 125 days we acted and made decisions at the speed of relevance, as we like to say at this headquarters. Today, NATO is stronger and more cohesive, both of which are indispensable conditions for defending what unites us, namely the values enshrined in the preamble to the Washington Treaty: those of democracy, individual liberties and the rule of law.

At this point I would like to make some comments on what the main deliverables of the Madrid Summit are:

- **A Strategic Concept for a new strategic environment.**

The Heads of State and Government approved the new Strategic Concept, the “Madrid Strategic Concept”, on 29 June. It is the main post-Washington Treaty allied document, basically providing

a strategic diagnosis and prescribing the means and instruments necessary to ensure that our values are not threatened. It is clear that the strategic environment defined by the Concept adopted at the 2010 Summit bears little resemblance to the current one. The invasion of Ukraine and the proclamation of the Islamic caliphate — both of which occurred in 2014— jolted the strategic environment, the consequences of which we are still feeling. The current war in Ukraine has affected the strategic reality to such an extent that the Madrid Concept could not and has not been indifferent to it. The new Concept emphasises the complexity, instability and growing number of threats and challenges facing the Euro-Atlantic area, and Russia is an essential part of this new strategic equation. As we have seen, the Concept identifies Russia as “the most significant and direct threat” and China as a “systemic challenge”, although the door is kept open to possibilities for future cooperation. Another major novelty of the new Concept is its significant development of a whole series of challenges such as cyber, hybrid, space, climate change and security, new technologies, resilience, development of the human security and the Women, Peace and Security agendas. The structure of the three core tasks has also been reworked, establishing a fundamental objective, collective defence, underpinned by three core tasks: deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security. Although the complementary nature of all three tasks is emphasised, the first one, unsurprisingly, gains more prominence due to the war in Ukraine. The south also features strongly in the Concept, such

## ANALYSIS

that it could be said that, from Madrid onwards, the NATO strategic direction South and a 360° approach to security will begin to distinguish itself in the allied DNA.

- **Closer to Ukraine.** The Alliance and the Allies are committed to continuing their support for Ukraine. The Political Declaration adopted by Allied leaders includes unconditional political support for Ukraine's cause, with the agreed Comprehensive Assistance Package identifying short-, medium- and long-term non-lethal military assistance, improving Ukraine's cyber defence and resilience, and preparing for post-conflict recovery. For their part, the Allies, in their national capacity, will continue to support the Kiev authorities through the Ukraine Consultative Working Group.

- **Strengthening the Deterrence and Defence Posture.** Adaptations of the so-called Deterrence and Defence Posture are common currency in the Alliance. But this time we have gone a step further: not simply "adapting" but, forced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, "redefining" the Posture. Indeed, the war of aggression against Ukraine has precipitated a rethink of NATO's Deterrence and Defence Posture, with a view to substantially strengthening our military presence on the Eastern flank. Since 24 February, NATO has considerably reinforced its presence on the Allied Eastern flank, but from now on —and with the blessing of Allied leaders— our combat units there will no longer be based on a battlegroup-size force but on brigade-size combat teams, whenever deemed appropriate by the military authorities, in line with the current threat analysis. More NATO in the East in the face of a growing threat. More strength and more forces: that and nothing else is the reinforcement envisaged in the Posture agreed by the leaders.

- **The new common funding.** There can be no doubt that a NATO that is more active in each of the areas identified by the NATO 2030 Initiative —enhanced consultation and coordination among Allies; strengthened deterrence and defence; resilience; technological edge; rules-based international order; partner capacity building; climate change and security; and Strategic Concept— requires all Allies to make a greater contribution to the Alliance's common coffers. Clearly, there is no commitment without financial support and since Madrid —and we should be pleased about this— the necessary commitment and financial support has been forthcoming. This is good news.

- **Two new Allies for new strategic times:** The agreement to give the green light for the accession of Finland and Sweden was undoubtedly one of the Summit's major achievements. NATO leaves Madrid stronger than ever. Two advanced democracies fully identified with the values enshrined in the Washington Treaty have walked through the door of the Allied Club. Moreover, both Finland and



Sweden are security providers, and the interoperability of their forces is well established. They are great partners and will be great Allies.

- **Only technological superiority guarantees strategic primacy.** We in the Alliance are well aware of this, demonstrated by the signing of the Innovation Fund by a very large number of Allied leaders. At the Brussels Summit in 2021, Heads of State and Government endorsed the NATO 2030 agenda that sets a higher level of ambition in certain areas, including preserving the Alliance's technological edge. To this end, it was decided to establish the NATO Innovation Fund and the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA). The Fund and DIANA are two separate but interconnected initiatives that will help foster new civilian-military dual-use technologies to meet the Alliance's security and defence challenges. The DIANA initiative aims to accelerate the deployment of new and emerging solutions to address transatlantic security and defence challenges by connecting the academic/scientific communities and the private sector/industry to drive the development and adoption of technologies that address military needs. For its part, the voluntary Innovation Fund aims to invest 1 billion euros over the next 15 years in start-ups developing cutting-edge





NATO

technology solutions that also address security and defence challenges by leveraging their commercial innovation potential.

• **NATO and the EU, closer than ever.** The war in Ukraine has highlighted the extent to which NATO and the EU complement each other. And the Euro-Atlantic dinner held at the Prado Museum provided an image of unity that has not gone unnoticed by anyone. Both Allies and non-allied EU member states —Sweden, Finland, Cyprus, Malta, Ireland and Austria— have highly valued Spain's initiative and diplomatic efforts to bring this project to fruition. This meeting, which was also attended by the NATO Secretary General, the President of the Council and the President of the Commission, was a landmark both in terms of its format — bringing together Allies and non-allied EU member states for the first time— and in terms of the powerful message of

*The Madrid Summit, described as historic, was a milestone for the future of the organisation*

transatlantic unity it conveyed. A message of unity that is particularly valuable in the current circumstances. Holding the event in Spain is a recognition of our strong commitment to the idea of complementarity between the EU and NATO. This is no small recognition.

• **The NATO strategic direction South.** The Madrid Summit will be remembered as the Summit that looked south. And it looked south despite the war in Ukraine. It was a success for our diplomacy that the Summit agenda included a session of allied Heads of State and Government dedicated to the South and a working dinner of foreign ministers on the same theme. The South was more present than ever, and this is particularly meritorious insofar as the strategic agenda is, we must remember, set by the war in Ukraine.

• **Do not forget China.** Many of the challenges that test the resilience of our societies are global in nature —hybrid threats, disruptive emerging technologies, cyber and space threats, the impact of climate change on security— and require a coordinated response among those who share a similar world view. China does not share our vision and therefore features in the Strategic Concept as representing a “global challenge” for the Alliance. However, the allies remain open to constructive engagement with China on issues of common interest ranging from combating climate change to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

• **And, above all, allied unity.** One of the results, perhaps the most significant, of all the outcomes of the Madrid Summit is undoubtedly that of the Allies' seamless unity. A united, cohesive and strong Alliance in exceptional circumstances. Unity in firm support for a Ukraine at war in the face of Russian aggression; unity in the need to be in a position to deter and defend itself against Russia if necessary; unity in the face of other possible threats in the 360°; unity in facing the challenge of China as a global actor; and unity, in short, in the conviction that the Alliance must be in a position in the future to guarantee peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area.

All this suggests that the Madrid Summit was a game-changer for the Alliance. As Allies we should be proud of what was achieved in Madrid, but as Spaniards we should be no less proud. Our capacity to organise has been matched by our capacity to negotiate. We wanted a successful Summit for the Alliance and a successful one for Spain. I sincerely believe that, together, we have achieved both. No one in this headquarters is in any doubt that the Alliance of the 21st century took shape in Madrid and thus the future of the Alliance starts with “M” for Madrid.

[ anniversary ]

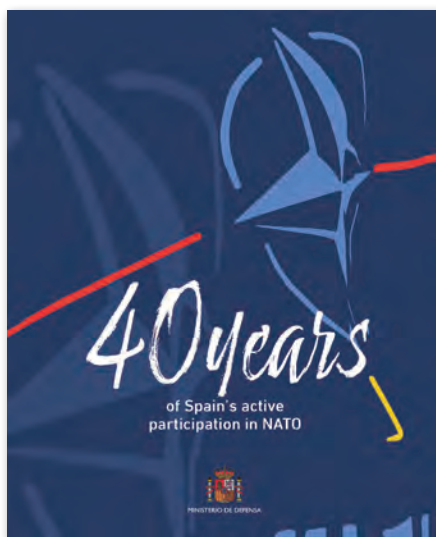
# A STORY OF SUCCESS AND COMMITMENT

The presentation of the book *40 years of Spain's active participation in NATO* was part of the events leading up to NATO's Madrid Summit

**O**N 30 May 1982, Spain became the sixteenth member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Since then, 125,000 men and women of the Spanish Armed Forces have taken part in NATO operations and, "as they always do, have given their all to defend Spain and our country's commitment to the Atlantic Alliance". Thus spoke Defence Minister Margarita Robles on 2 June at the presentation of the book *40 years of Spain's active participation in NATO*, as part of the events leading up to NATO's Summit held in Madrid on 29 and 30 June 2022.

With a foreword by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, the book gathers the views of Spanish senior defence officials and outlines the different phases of Spain's participation in NATO operations over the past four decades.

During her presentation at the headquarters of the Spanish Defence Staff in Madrid, Robles said that launching this book was "mandatory" in such an important year for Spain, because apart from commemorating the 40th anniversary of its accession, "it is the year in which all NATO members wanted to highlight the



importance of Spain's participation in the Alliance by choosing Madrid as the venue for the Summit".

## INCALCULABLE VALUE

The Chief of Defence Staff (CHOD), Admiral General Teodoro López Calderón, who opened the presentation ceremony, highlighted that for the Spanish Armed Forces NATO membership has meant "a great advance" in technical and tactical

interoperability and access to doctrine and combined participation with other countries in exercises and real operations, "an invaluable asset" that has transformed the Spanish Armed Forces, enabling them to keep pace with the times.

López Calderón recalled that the journey has not been "free of suffering", as 119 soldiers and civilians have lost their lives in the 22 operations abroad in which our country has taken part under the command of the Alliance.

At the presentation of the book, the MOPS Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Brigadier General Francisco Vidal, said that "in its pages you will find the work and dedication of our Armed Forces placed at the disposal of NATO, and Spanish society, over the past 40 years". Read them with affection, because they tell the story of more than 125,000 soldiers in the service of Spain". Today, our country is among the top five NATO countries in the provision of assets and capabilities, and the seventh largest NATO ally in terms of troop contributions.

Both the CHOD and the Minister defended the current validity of the Atlantic Alliance, highlighting the relevance of the upcoming Madrid Summit, which





The Minister of Defence presides over the presentation of the book, together with the CHOD (right) and the MOPS.

will culminate a profound transformation process and at which the new Strategic Concept will be adopted, defining NATO's nature and purpose for the next ten years.

"An organisation like NATO is needed today more than ever. It can be said clearly and unequivocally that it has a clear objective, which is the defence of global peace, of our communities of values, of our freedom and of our security", the Defence Minister said. Robles added that Madrid was preparing "with real enthusiasm" for a summit that will also be special in that it will deal with the applications submitted by Finland and Sweden to join NATO, and will be attended by the leaders of Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea.

At a key moment on the international scene, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the minister said that Spain does not want to lose track of what is happening in the southern flank, in Africa and, more specifically, in the Sahel region.

#### THE EARLY YEARS

The Alliance came into being with the signing of the Washington Treaty in 1949, in which twelve nations on both sides of the Atlantic pledged to defend each other, in solidarity, should one of them suffer an

aggression. A period of reflection followed Spain's general elections of 28 October 1982, culminating in a referendum on 12 March 1986, in which 52.54 percent of the population voted in favour of NATO membership.

Its accession materialised in a special and atypical way. It initially remained outside the military structure and its relations were marked by six Coordination Agreements. In the 1990s, confidence in Spain was consolidated thanks to the good work of our Armed Forces in United Nations peace missions (Central America, Africa, the Balkans) and events such as the

*More than  
125,000 Spanish  
military  
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missions*

Barcelona Olympic Games and the Madrid Peace Conference on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which brought our country to the forefront of international attention.

Spain's influence in NATO gradually increased and our military personnel began to have decision-making responsibilities. In the debate of ideas, our country proposed changing from a static, defensive organisation to a more agile, expeditionary one, and helped to shift the Alliance's attention southwards. Of incredible significance was the approval in 1994, during the Istanbul summit, of the Mediterranean Dialogue initiative, of which Spain was a major advocate.

In 1995, at the end of the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which NATO had intervened in support of the UN, the Alliance elected a Spaniard, Javier Solana, as Secretary General. The successful cycle was completed with the 1997 Madrid Summit, which gave the green light to NATO's new orientation, whose attention was no longer concentrated exclusively in one direction, but spread across the entire arc of the European environment.

Although Spain did not join the military structure, our troops were increasingly present in NATO exercises and

## *Spain is among the top five NATO countries in the provision of assets and capabilities*

manoeuvres. The obvious consequence was that the Spanish model of military participation established through Coordination Agreements had been more than achieved. Full membership in the military structure appeared to be the most logical solution and was implemented on 1 January 1999, involving the establishment of a Permanent Military Representative and the right to participate in allied military decision-making processes.

Twenty-three years later, Spain holds four general officer positions on a

reinforcing industrial and technological excellence and meeting the needs of populations in conflict areas.

### **MISSIONS**

Spain has participated in 22 allied operations around the world, involving more than 125,000 men and women, who have served and defended international peace and security. Currently, some 1,300 Spanish military personnel are deployed under the NATO flag. Thus, 506 Army personnel and 125 vehicles are part of

missions during these four decades. One of them is *Sharp Guard*, which controlled the maritime blockade of the Adriatic between 1993 and 1996, within the framework of the economic sanctions and arms embargo imposed by the UN in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Spain simultaneously contributed five frigates, a logistical support vessel, a submarine and a maritime patrol aircraft, with a total of 1,000 troops.

Shortly afterwards, the Air Force's Icarus detachment was deployed to Aviano air base (Italy), from where it took



From left to right, a Spanish armoured vehicle in Bosnia and Herzegovina; a group of Allied military personnel at the entrance to Bétera headquarters; a frigate forming

permanent basis and five on a rotating basis. Some 450 of our country's military personnel hold positions of responsibility in NATO's various structures, making us one of the five most committed allies. We ranked eighth in financial contribution, fifth in the provision of assets and capabilities and seventh in troop contributions to missions.

In today's NATO of 30 nations with different interests and perceptions, in which new dynamics have emerged that affect security —mass migrations, economic crises, cyberspace, pandemics, climate change, etc—, Spain's contribution focuses on four axes: strengthening collective defence, promoting maximum cooperation with the European Union,

operation *enhanced Forward Presence* (eFP) in Latvia, which will be augmented by the deployment of an anti-aircraft missile battery and 100 troops.

From Lithuania, eight *F-18* Air Force fighters control the security of Baltic airspace; in Turkey, a 149-strong *Patriot* unit defends the population in Adana against ballistic missile threats; 114 members of our Armed Forces support NATO mission *Iraq* (NMI); Navy units in NATO standing maritime groups provide a maritime presence with escort vessels and minehunters; and naval and air assets are involved in Operation *Sea Guardian*, a maritime security and counter-terrorism operation in the Mediterranean. The book also covers participation in other allied

part in operations *Deny Flight*, *Deliberate Force* and *Allied Force* between 1993 and 1999. In those years, some 3,500 military personnel were part of Icarus.

On the ground, our troops began their involvement in the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 wearing the blue beret of the United Nations, only to replace it on 15 December 1995 with the new beret that placed them at the service of NATO. Initially, the allied operation IFOR (Implementation Force) aimed at enforcing the Dayton peace accords; however, in December 1996, it shifted to the SFOR (Stabilisation Force) mission. Some 46,000 military personnel participated in the operation between 1995 and 2004, when it was transferred to the EU. Spain



also took part in Kosovo, where a NATO-led Multinational Force was deployed in 1999 to verify the peace process. Ten years later, our country ended its presence in KFOR, in which it deployed 23,000 soldiers. In the Balkans, Spain was also involved in the *Alpha-Romeo* mission in Albania (1999) and *Essential Harvest* in the Republic of Macedonia, now North Macedonia.

Following the 9/11 attacks in the United States, Operation *Active Endeavour* is so far NATO's only collective defence operation under Article 5 of its Treaty. Spain collaborated regularly in the operation between 2001 and 2016 by providing naval units, shore-based facilities and civilian means to monitor maritime traffic.

2021. Over the past two decades, nearly 30,000 Spanish military personnel were deployed to Afghanistan, where 102 lost their lives. In addition, Spain evacuated more than 2,400 Afghan nationals and became the EU's main centre of operations and a key partner of the United States in the reception of refugees from Afghanistan.

### STRUCTURES AND CAPABILITIES

Within the Command Structure, our country hosted the Joint Southwest Sub-regional Headquarters in Retamares (Madrid), later transformed into the Land Component Command. Currently, there is a Combined Air Operations Centre at Torrejón (CAOC-TJ). Within the Force

support assets for division-size deployments, and the Civil Guard can provide gendarmerie-type force capabilities. In the naval sphere, in addition to the on-board command and control capability (SPMARFOR), the Navy provides amphibious ships with naval air capability, the Marine Infantry Brigade, frigates, logistical supply ships, submarines and minehunters. In the aerospace field, the Air Force participates in NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defence System with its radar systems and alert aircraft, and provides the Alliance with airlift capabilities, air-to-air refuelling aircraft, medical evacuation resources and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets.

Some of these capabilities are made available to the Alliance for integration into



part of NATO's standing maritime forces; a refugee camp in Albania; and an Air Force detachment on an air policing mission in Lithuania.

*Solidarity Response II*, the first humanitarian mission in NATO's history, launched to assist victims of the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, also involved our participation. It was assigned to the NATO Response Force 5 (NRF 5) and Spain led the land component through Bétera HQ.

Spain was also involved in *Ocean Shield*, to fight piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Western Indian Ocean, from 2009 to 2016; and *Unified Protector*, to enforce the arms embargo and the no-fly zone over Libya in 2011.

In Afghanistan, NATO took command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in 2003, which was replaced in 2014 by *Resolute Support*, ending in

Structure, we contribute the Spanish Navy High Readiness Maritime Headquarters (SPMARFOR), in Rota (Cadiz), and NATO's Raid Deployment Corps Headquarters (HQ NRDC-ESP), in Bétera (Valencia). We also contribute to this Structure through the Eurocorps Headquarters, which is offered to NATO. Likewise, the Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices Centre of Excellence (C-IED CoE), in Hoyo de Manzanares (Madrid), and the Tactical Leadership Programme (TLP), at Albacete air base, are also located in our territory.

Spain also offers the Alliance important capabilities. On the ground, it is one of the few countries that can support allied Army Corps-size deployments, thanks to the HQ NRDC-ESP. In addition, the Army can provide combat

the Response Force to be used almost immediately in case of need. At the spearhead of this force, Spain assumed leadership of the first Very High Readiness Joint Force (VJTF), providing the bulk of the troops. Our Armed Forces also participate in 32 of the 86 Smart Defence international cooperation projects and lead one of them on instruction and training for ballistic missile defence.

"Spain", the book notes, "contributes a great deal to the Alliance" and "also receives a lot from NATO and our allies". It is argued that it "not only benefits from collective defence through the commitment and solidarity of our allies, but also gains advantages in training, readiness, capabilities, synergies, etc."

**Santiago F. del Vado**

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## INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

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Defence Minister visits Spanish contingents  
in Latvia and Lithuania

# COMMITMENT TO PEACE IN EUROPE

**D**EFENCE Minister Margarita Robles visited the Spanish contingents that by land and air contribute to deterrence on the Alliance's eastern flank. On 28 April, she travelled to Adazi military base in Latvia, where 506 military personnel are participating in NATO's operation enhanced Forward Presence (eFP). On 23 May, the minister travelled to Lithuania to express her gratitude to the 140 Air Force personnel who are reinforcing air security in the Baltic republics.

"I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your effort, your work, and for setting Spain's bar sky-high". In these complicated and difficult times, we are telling the world that Spain is committed to peace and that it is not going to leave Ukraine or its citizens alone", the minister said in her address to the Spanish contingent in Latvia.

Robles was received at Riga airport by the Spanish Ambassador to the Republic of Latvia, Susana Cámara. She then travelled to the municipality of Adazi, in the southwest of the country, where she was welcomed by the commander of the Latvian base and brigade, Colonel Sendris Gaugers, as well as by the commander of the eFP Battle Group, Lieutenant Colonel John Richel, and the commander of the Spanish contingent,



The Minister of Defence travelled to Lithuania to express her gratitude to the 140 Air Force personnel who are reinforcing air security in the Baltic republics.





One of the six self-propelled *M-109* howitzers recently added to the contingent passes over a *Dornier* bridge assembled by the Engineer platoon.

Lieutenant Colonel Fernando Fuentesal. She then attended a briefing on the operation. The Latvian Battle Group is led by Canada, with Spain being the second largest contributor to the operation. Forces from Albania, the Czech Republic, Italy, Montenegro, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia are also part of this multinational group.

The head of the Spanish contingent discussed with the minister the latest developments in the mission, which in recent months has been provided with new artillery and engineering capabilities. "In this contingent, we continue to conduct scheduled training and instruction exercises. There is some tension with the war in Ukraine, but it is an incentive for our forces to train even harder", said Lieutenant Colonel Fuentesal, who has been in charge of the Spanish troops since January. During the

tour, Robles greeted the members of the contingent, thanking them for their generosity and for being an example "both professionally and personally".

Shortly afterwards, at the base's training area, the minister attended an artillery firing exercise and watched *Pizarro* and *Leopard* vehicles drive over a *Dornier* bridge, which was assembled in three

hours by ten troops from the Engineer platoon.

Spain joined the mission five years ago with 350 troops. The government decided last March to reinforce the deployment with around 150 additional military personnel. The move is part of the response plans adopted by all NATO member states to preserve peace and security in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "I want to emphasise the unity of all countries and make it clear to Putin that he is not going to win this terrible and cruel war in Ukraine", the minister said on her visit to the troops.

As a demonstration of its commitment to NATO, at the end of June Spain deployed an air defence unit, comprising a NASAMS Battery, to Lielvarde air base. To this end, 85 additional soldiers from the 73rd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment were

## 506 Spanish military personnel are taking part in NATO's defensive mission



LIEUTENANT COLONEL FERNANDO FUENTESAL,  
COMMANDER OF THE SPANISH CONTINGENT IN LATVIA

# “There is now a greater awareness of the importance of our mission”

**S**INCE last January, Lieutenant Colonel Fernando Fuentesal García has been in charge of the Spanish contingent in the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) mission. Born in Casablanca (Morocco), aged 47, he is the commander of the 1st-10 Tank Infantry Battalion Málaga, of the 10th Brigade *Guzmán el Bueno*, based in Córdoba, the unit from which most of the Spanish soldiers contributing to the Allies' deterrence and defence in northwest Europe come from.

**—The invasion of Ukraine has given greater significance to NATO's presence on the eastern flank. How are you experiencing this situation?**

—As something completely normal, both at the base and in the country, with no disruption to the activities scheduled at the beginning of the operation or to the normal functioning of the institutions. That said, in the first weeks of the invasion there was a certain uneasiness among the contingent's personnel, mainly conveyed by the families in Spain, because the media portrayed a picture of our situation that was far removed from the reality of our day-to-day life.

At present, we continue to monitor developments in Ukraine but as an additional task of the operation. What has undoubtedly been associated with this situation is a greater awareness of the importance of our mission; deterrence has been capitalised and NATO's presence in the Baltic states has become more important than in the operation's five-year history.

**—What do the new capabilities delivered by Spain bring to the table?**

—They have significantly increased the combat capability of the multinational battle group in a number of ways. On the one hand, and bearing in mind that the nature of the mission is one of deterrence and defence, the capacity to organise the terrain, to prepare defensive positions, has been considerably increased with the deployment of the Engineer support platoon and the machines it provides: in addition to heavy machinery, it includes a Dornier forefront support bridge.

On the other hand, the fire support now available to the battle group is similar to what a brigade-size unit would have. We have received a Canadian towed Field Artillery battery and a Spanish battery of six 155mm self-propelled howitzers. It is the most capable and versatile of all, and the only one on tracked vehicles. The Spanish battery is also the only one in the mission certified in digital Command and Control capability, with ASCA means. In addition, we now have the ability to

**“Reinforcements have increased the battle group's combat capability”**

implement counter-battery fire with the target acquisition provided by the *Arthur* radar and its associated command and control means, a capability not previously available to the Battle Group.

**—Is there enough room for everyone at Adazi military base?**

—At present, the base is almost at the limit of its capacity to accommodate personnel and assets, although all new arrivals have been accommodated in facilities, some fixed and some semi-permanent. The base is constantly evolving. There is an infrastructure plan for the short and medium term, to expand the current facilities to accommodate many more assets and personnel. Training areas are also becoming a source of concern given the increase in units at the base, not only from the eFP BG, but also from US units deployed here and the Danish battle group that will deploy in May in the vicinity, within the training area.

The newly deployed Spanish personnel are housed in Canadian tents that are perfectly equipped for long-term living. It has been possible to accommodate wheeled vehicles in existing hangars, and temporary solutions are being sought for tracked vehicles, pending an increase in the space available in fixed facilities.

**—What have been the highlights of your activities in recent weeks?**

—The most relevant exercise we have carried out was *Chrystal Arrow*, in which the Battle Group was certified as having FOC (Full Operational Capability). It highlighted the performance of our mechanised company-size task group, which is the most powerful and versatile mechanised unit in the battle group, and this has been clearly demonstrated. In addition, it is worth mentioning the fire integration exercises in which the JTAC (Joint Terminal Attack Controller) took part along with the Spanish *F-18s* of the Baltic Air Policing operation. Not forgetting the first firing exercise conducted by the Field Artillery battery with its pieces, which was attended by the Minister of Defence.

**—The winter has been harsh in Latvia. How has the cold weather affected you?**

—The vast majority of our personnel belong to the 10th Brigade *Guzmán el Bueno*, which is based in Córdoba, but their ability to adapt and their previous training has meant that the extreme weather we have had to work in has not





affected the mission at all. Undoubtedly, one of the most important skills acquired during this operation and that we return to our units is learning how to fight in this environment, both at the individual and crew level, and how to maintain operational means in extreme cold conditions.

**—What is it like to live with the troops of the host nation and with other contingents?**

—Perhaps the word that best defines it is that it is an “enriching” experience, in every sense of the word. The Battle Group of which Spain is a member is the

most multinational of all, which makes it even more difficult but, at the same time, it is the one that best highlights one of NATO’s main strengths: the need for collaboration and integration among allies.

The relationship between different nations is very good. Every day you learn to value and respect cultural differences, to work in a multinational environment and in another language. And in many cases, many complexes disappear when we realise the excellent resources we have at our disposal and, above all, how capable and resolute Spanish soldiers are.

transferred to Latvia, along with assets, providing an intermediate range for the protection of key points and enabling integration into NATO’s air and missile defence system.

## DETERRENT PRESENCE

The enhanced Forward Presence mission aims to deter any aggression against allied countries in the Baltic area through a defensive deployment. It was launched at the 2016 Warsaw Summit following Russia’s invasion of Crimea and activated in 2017 with the deployment of four Battle Groups (battalion-size, armoured and mechanised units) to four military bases in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. In total, a force of 4,000 soldiers from 24 countries, led respectively by the UK, Canada, Germany and the US. All of this takes place within the framework of a multinational brigade, under the command of a multinational division, which coordinates the training of the participating countries.

In response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine that began last February, the Allies have sent additional ships, aircraft and troops to NATO territory in eastern and southeastern Europe, further strengthening NATO’s deterrence and defence posture. This includes thousands of troops for the eFP Battle Groups, fighter aircraft to support air surveillance missions, reinforced naval forces in the Baltic and the Mediterranean, as well as an enhanced readiness of the troops assigned to the NATO Response Force. “Our commitment to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty is unwavering. We will protect and defend every inch of NATO territory. Credible deterrence prevents conflict and preserves peace”, Alliance Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in early March during a visit to the Estonian Battle Group at Tapa military base.

At the extraordinary summit in Brussels on 24 March, the allies also agreed to expand the eFP mission and establish four additional battle groups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. This will bring the total number of battle groups to eight, stretching along NATO’s eastern flank from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south.

## FIVE YEARS IN LATVIA

Spain joined the mission in June 2017 with the arrival of its first troops at Adazi base, some 120 kilometres from the Russian border. In these five years, Spain’s contribution has consisted of a mechanised



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# INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

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Spanish contingent personnel displaying materiel for schools in Priekuli.

Soldiers of the Engineer platoon assemble a Dornier bridge in the training area.

## Robles: “We tell the world that Spain will not leave Ukraine alone”

company-size task group, a sapper unit and a logistic support unit. The main assets provided are six *Leopard 2E* battle tanks and some 15 *Pizarro* infantry fighting vehicles, as well as other mechanised assets such as the *M-113* armoured personnel carrier, heavy mortars, sapper fighting vehicles and *Spike* anti-tank missiles. The presence of the Spanish *Leopards* is highly valued by the members of the multinational battle group and by the local authorities, something that the Minister of Defence had the opportunity to witness first-hand during her visit to Adazi.

The combat capability of units across the company-size task group also benefits from the contribution of a Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) team and a *Raven* unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV).

Following the invasion of Ukraine, Spain decided to reinforce the contingent with 150 more soldiers, who joined the mission in April. The additional capabilities sent are a Field



A self-propelled *M-109* howitzer during a training exercise with the rest of the contingent deployed at the Adazi base in Latvia.

Artillery Unit, an Engineer Unit (Sappers and Support) and logistic support elements.

The new assets sent to northeastern Europe include six *M-109* self-propelled howitzers equipped with a 155 mm calibre gun. The *M-109* further increases the detachment's firepower due to the mobility provided by the tracks and its long-range strike capability: it has a maximum range of 18 km with conventional ammunition and 30 km for extended-range ammunition.

In addition to self-propelled howitzers, the Army has sent to the Baltic country an *Arthur* target detection radar from the 63rd

Field Artillery Regiment, based in Ferral del Bernesga (León). This system has a range of 20 to 40 kilometres, an accuracy of ten to thirty metres (depending on the number of active radars), the ability to discriminate the type of projectile flying, and high mobility and agility of calculation. Installed on a truck and weighing around 4,000 kilos, the *Arthur* radar can detect one hundred projectiles per minute and follow up to eight trajectories at a time. The system tracks them in flight and locates the impact point, the type of projectile and the source of fire, transmitting the position to the artillery.





## DETERRENCE AND DEFENCE ON THE EASTERN FLANK

IN response to Russia's attack on Ukraine, the Atlantic Alliance has deployed elements of its Response Force (NRF) to Eastern Europe and increased its land, sea and air defence presence, under direct NATO command and with the support of Allied national forces.

→ 40,000 TROOPS / → 130 FIGHTERS ON HIGH ALERT / → 140 ALLIED SHIPS AT SEA



### ENHANCED FORWARD PRESENCE (EFP)

THE allies have reinforced the four multinational battle groups that were established in 2017 in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland and have agreed to establish four more battle groups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. Spanish troops are the second largest contingent in the Latvian battle group, which is led by Canada.



### AIR POLICING

#### • Baltic States

- Eight F-18s (at Siauliai, Lithuania)
- Five JAS-39 Gripens (at Siauliai, Lithuania)
- Four Mirage F5s (at Amari, Estonia)
- Four F-16 Fighting Falcons (at Amari, Estonia)

#### • Rumania

- Six Eurofighters (at Constanta)

#### • Bulgaria

- Four F-35s (in Maritsa)

Rafael Navarro / Revista Española de Defensa (RED) / Source: NATO and RED

### AIR DEFENCE

Since 1 April, eight F-18 fighter jets and 140 troops from the 12th Wing (based at Torrejón air base) have been assigned to the Baltic Air Policing mission, an operation to which NATO member states contribute on a rotational basis and which ensures Allied collective defence within the airspace of the Baltic republics. On 23 May, Defence Minister Margarita Robles visited the detachment at Siauliai air base (Lithuania) and praised its "crucial work" in achieving peace in "difficult times". In the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, aircraft deployed in the Baltics

have taken on other tasks, such as border surveillance and training with other NATO forces deployed on the eastern flank.

"It is a source of pride to know that our Armed Forces are always working for peace with efficiency, training and readiness", said the minister in a speech to the members of the detachment, while expressing her hope that "this war will soon be over". "NATO and Spain, as a serious and committed ally, owe you and will always owe you an enormous debt of gratitude. Congratulations on making Spain an international presence", added Robles, who travelled to Lithuania

accompanied by the Chief of Defence Staff (CHOD), Admiral General Teodoro López Calderón.

On her arrival at Siauliai air base, the minister, who was also accompanied by the Spanish ambassador to the Baltic country, José María Robles, was received by the Chief of the Defence of the Republic of Lithuania, Lieutenant General Valdemaras Rupsys; the Deputy Minister of National Defence, Zilvinas Tomkus; and the acting head of the air base, Lieutenant Colonel Eligijus Ruksnaitis. The Defence Minister then went to the Spanish contingent's facilities, where she attended

# “WE SEEK TO SAFEGUARD NATO AIRSPACE”

He stresses that “security is the main premise” in air policing missions

**M**ORE than 3,000 kilometres away from Spain, 140 military personnel and eight *F-18* aircraft have reached the halfway point of their deployment in Lithuania this June. “It is a peacetime defensive mission aimed at preserving the integrity of NATO airspace while contributing to the deterrence against any threat within NATO’s borders”.

This is how the head of the *Vilkas* detachment, Lieutenant Colonel David Soto Martínez, explains it. He is from Cartagena, Spain, aged 44, and has more than 2,000 flying hours, mainly in *F-18*s, as an instructor and test pilot.

## —How important is the Baltic air policing mission to NATO as a whole?

—We must start from the premise that preserving the integrity of NATO airspace is a collective defence task. The Alliance, therefore, established agreements with those nations that lack the capabilities to ensure the necessary air security standards.

As you know, the Baltic countries are among these nations. With that in mind, it is clear that the importance of this mission is paramount. NATO air policing ensures the integrity of Allied airspace and protects NATO nations by keeping aircraft on alert 24/7 within SACEUR’s area of responsibility.

The alpha scrambles performed by air policing are caused by military and civilian aircraft that do not follow international flight rules and approach NATO airspace. We aim to safeguard NATO airspace.

## —How has this mission changed since the invasion of Ukraine?

—In essence, it has not changed. It remains a peacetime mission in which NATO nations voluntarily provide defensive air capabilities, which the Baltic states cannot provide with their own means.

To put emphasis on one aspect, now more than ever, the aim is to carry out an impeccable mission, prioritising security in operations and without making any mistakes that could be misinterpreted by third countries and could lead to an undesired escalation of tension.

## —¿How is the Spanish contingent organised?

—There are currently 140 military personnel, 130 on a permanent basis and ten who deployed there temporarily to reinforce the contingent for aircraft maintenance tasks. A small, intermediate relief of some detachment members is envisaged, mainly pilots, controllers and medical personnel, maintaining the majority of personnel throughout the deployment.

We are set up as a TAD (tactical air detachment); we operate as a small unit with all the necessary capabilities to operate autonomously.

The composition is typical of a contingent of this type: a command support staff, an air force section, a materiel section (the largest), a CIS section, a force support and protection section, a *Role 1* medical team, a team of interception controllers and Link operators.

The entire TAD is operating from Siauliai, except for the controllers and Link operators, who are deployed at the CRC Karmelava, in the city of Kaunas.

## —How many sorties and flying hours do aircraft fly each week?

—The reality is that there is no fixed number of flights per week. The TAD provides QRA (quick reaction alert) fighters with a permanent readiness status, so we are ready 24/7 to take off in less than 15 minutes whenever the order is given from the Combined Air Operations Centre at Uedem, which is our tactical command from NATO.

In addition, surveillance activities are carried out over both the Baltic countries and Poland, providing an immediate response to any unforeseen event. Finally, we also participate in integration and interoperability missions with other countries in the context of NATO-organised exercises. All in all, the effort made in terms of sorties and flying hours is great. For instance, during the first two months of the mission, more than 220 sorties were flown, exceeding 400 flying hours.

## —What type of incidents are most common?

—Most occur when an aircraft, for some reason, does not comply with internationally established flight rules and cannot be identified by air traffic control systems. This might occur as a result of not having a flight plan, not being in radio contact with the control agencies or not coding the assigned transponder.

To date, as far as our detachment is concerned, such events have taken place mainly with Russian Federation aircraft flying over international waters whose airspace is NATO’s responsibility.

## —How do fighters act to intercept and identify an unknown aircraft?

—If I had to choose one word, I would say “safely”, which is the main premise we have when we carry out our mission. Our fighters certainly intercept and identify in accordance with ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) standards.

Whenever circumstances permit, the approach is made from the left and at the same altitude, so that the commander of the intercepted aircraft can see us. In addition, a photo is taken of the intercepted aircraft, which is then sent for analysis through the established channels.

## —What is it like to live with other forces deployed at Siauliai base?

—The relationship with the other nations present at the base is excellent. Closer with Lithuania, which as host nation provides us with the necessary facilities and airfield services to enable us to carry





Hélène Gicquel

out our mission. We also have very good relations with our colleagues from the Czech Republic, who are present at the base as a support nation for the air policing mission with their JAS-39 Gripen. We regularly conduct training and interoperability missions with them in the NATO environment.

**—Do you interact with the local Lithuanian population?**

—Yes. In two ways. Firstly, in the area of influence, as we receive visits from groups of various kinds: schools,

associations, etcetera. Through these visits, we raise awareness of the detachment's work and our commitment to other Alliance members in general, and with the Baltic states in particular.

Secondly, in the area of civil-military cooperation (CIMIC). We have already donated material from Spanish companies to a local orphanage that takes in 40 children with varying degrees of disability. Through these CIMIC actions we project a very positive image of the Spanish Armed Forces and the TAD at the local and national level.

the raising of the flag and a ceremony to pay tribute to the fallen, in commemoration of Spain's Armed Forces Day, to be held on 28 May.

The Tactical Air Detachment *Vilkas* (meaning wolf in Lithuanian) is composed of troops from the 12th Wing, although it is made up of fifteen different units, under the operational control of the Operations Command (MOPS). Six of the Spanish fighters are on loan under Alliance control and the other two remain under national control to ensure mission accomplishment.

The CHOD added his thanks to those of the minister for the detachment's work, which he defined as "a prestige for our Armed Forces that helps in all the high-level relations in the sphere of the Atlantic Alliance".

### AIRCRAFT IDENTIFICATION

On 1 April, Tactical Air Detachment *Vilkas* aircraft entered Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) service, which provides air policing with fighter aircraft with a 15-minute reaction and take-off time. The *Vilkas* aircraft are capable of intercepting unidentified or hostile aircraft in the Alliance's eastern airspace.

The contingent is composed of a command support staff, and an Air Force section, a materiel section (the largest), a CIS section, a force support and protection section, a *Role 1* medical team, a team of interception controllers and Link operators. All operate from Siauliai, with the exception of the controllers and Link operators, who are deployed at the CRC Karmelava (Baltic Control and Reporting Centre), in the city of Kaunas.

Since their entry into service, the Spanish fighters have flown 220 sorties and a total of 400 flying hours. The Defence Minister attended a briefing by the head of the detachment, Lieutenant Colonel David Soto Martínez, who explained that their mission "is only the tip of the iceberg of a complex air defence system in which we are fully integrated".

Robles then visited one of the alarm hangars from which the *F-18s* of the 12th Wing take off, if necessary. There, she was able to see first-hand how the QRA service works and talked to one of the pilots who explained the aircraft and their flight characteristics. Later, she also met with flight crew, maintenance personnel and mechanics, who explained the work they do. Allied airspace

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## INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

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The NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission conducts several alert scrambles to meet aircraft flying in international airspace over the Baltic Sea not complying with international aviation rules.

in northeastern Europe is a regular route for Russian aircraft. Traffic in this area is constant as Lithuania shares a border with Belarus and the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad. Most of them fly identified and meet international criteria. However, when they fail to do so — if they fly unidentified, without a flight plan and with their transponders switched off— NATO fighters are tasked with intercepting them and deterring them from entering their airspace. The Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) at Uedem (Germany), which

is in charge of controlling the airspace in this area, is responsible for this alert.

At the time of the Defence Minister's visit, the Air Force had already conducted a dozen real interception missions. All of them involved between one and four Russian aircraft, as Lieutenant Colonel David Soto told Europa Press. When Spanish fighters intercept Russian flights, many of them respond in a friendly manner, explained the detachment commander. Others, however, engage in provocative but never aggressive

manoeuvres, he said. As a result of the measures taken on NATO's eastern flank in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the detachment has taken on other missions, such as border surveillance patrols in the Baltic states and so-called eVA (enhanced Vigilance Activity) missions to reinforce surveillance in certain areas.

Also, in connection with the Ukraine crisis, the Alliance has decided to reinforce integration and training, both among the different types of fighters deployed on the

**The *Vilkas* detachment has 140 military personnel and eight F-18 aircraft deployed**



eastern flank and by increasing the number of flights to be integrated with land and naval component command assets.

Alongside the Spanish aircraft, four JAS 39 Gripen aircraft from the Czech Republic Air Force are providing the same service at Siauliai air base as a support nation for the mission. They also conduct joint exercises with the air forces of France (four Mirage F5s) and Belgium (four F-16 Fighting Falcons), which are deployed at Amari air base in Estonia.

Before ending the visit, the minister held a meeting with the Deputy Minister of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania, Zilvinas Tomkus, who expressed his gratitude for the continued presence of Spanish troops in the area. "Your soldiers' presence in Lithuania is very important to us". I thank you for being here and for the fact that your soldiers are protecting the security in our region", said the Lithuanian Deputy Minister.



The fighters of the 12th Wing are kept in a state of readiness in the alarm hangars, from where they take off if necessary, with a readiness status of fifteen minutes.

### EIGHT SPANISH PARTICIPATIONS

The accession of the Baltic states to NATO in 2004 extended allied airspace to northeastern Europe bordering Russia. The Alliance, in keeping with its commitment to solidarity and with the goal of having air defence capability throughout its territory, decided to establish the Baltic Air Policing (BAP) mission to make up for the lack of a combat air force in the new members, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Following the Russian invasion of the Crimean peninsula, the Alliance implemented a number of deterrence and response measures in 2014, including the integration of all NATO air defence systems, which involved integrating the BAP detachments into the plan, and reinforcing the southern area (Romania and Bulgaria). Since 2006, Spain has participated eight times in this mission and has acted as lead country in four of them. The F-18s of the current

detachment will end their service on 1 August 2022, when they will be replaced by Hungarian aircraft.

From 22 August to 12 September 2022, four Spanish Armed Forces Eurofighters are scheduled to deploy in Estonia to support the German air detachment that will deploy in that country and to carry out German and Spanish Eurofighter interoperability activities.

### DECORATION OF THE 14TH WING

This will be Spain's third contribution to a NATO air policing mission this year, following the current one in Lithuania and the one in Bulgaria from 11 to 31 March, in this case with four Eurofighters and 130 military personnel from the 14th Wing. The unit was decorated on 29 April by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Rumen Radev, at a ceremony held at Torrejón air base. Radev welcomed the "successful cooperation" of the two countries and the "incredible professionalism" of the members of the Spanish Air Force. "Your deployment has been a tremendous success; however, the most important thing in any mission is the people. I wanted to express my gratitude to the pilots, technicians and staff of the 14th Wing for their commitment, proven professionalism and leadership", Radev stressed.

**Victor Hernández**  
**Photos: EMAD**



The soldiers of the Villkas detachment come from various Air Force units. They joined the mission on 1 April and will remain in Lithuania until 31 July 2022.





Students from an agricultural school in the Almazara programme, taught by professors from Spanish universities. Below, collaboration of the Military Emergency Unit (UME) in the Galatea programme.



[ international missions ]

# Back to school IN LEBANON

After a pause of more than a year due to the pandemic, the Spanish contingent in UNIFIL is resuming civil-military cooperation programmes in support of the population





Through the *Cervantes* programme, military personnel teach Spanish language and culture to the Lebanese population.

**D**URING more than fifteen years of deployment in southern Lebanon as part of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the Spanish Armed Forces have promoted and developed various civil-military cooperation programmes (CIMIC) in their area of responsibility, which have been very well received by the local population and have contributed greatly to the development of the area.

In 2020, the pandemic caused by COVID-19 brought these activities to a halt at a time when they were more necessary than ever due to the critical situation in the country. Thanks to the determination and efforts of the

Spanish military and collaborating institutions, most of these programmes have been resumed in recent months.

Undoubtedly, the best known and most important is the *Cervantes* programme –the result of a cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Defence and the *Cervantes* Institute– aimed at teaching Spanish language and culture to students in schools located in the area of responsibility of the Spanish-led Eastern Brigade, to personnel from town councils, parishes and civic centres, and also to military personnel from other armed forces deployed in the area. Since its launch in 2007 more than 7,300 children and adults have participated in the programme, which has been a great

success among the population because, according to the students, it is not only very useful for improving interaction with the Spanish military personnel but is also an advantage when looking for work outside Lebanon, as Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world.

The contingent currently deployed in the country, the 36th Brigade *Libano* (BRILIB), has managed to set up eight classes in two schools in Marjayoun and one in Kleyaa. In addition, five classes are held in the different detachments, attended by Serbian, Indonesian, Indian and Brazilian soldiers, who mainly value the teaching material and the involvement, preparation and patience of the teachers. The teaching





The aim of the *Sancho Panza* programme is to support technical hotel and catering schools with Spanish cookery classes for their students. Below, a civil guard of the contingent gives a talk on road safety to Lebanese youth.



*In over fifteen years on mission in Lebanon, the Spanish Armed Forces have managed nearly 700 civil-military cooperation projects*



staff is made up of twelve Spanish military personnel who, prior to their deployment, completed a training course in Spain given by the Cervantes Institute. One of them is Captain Rodrigo Medrano, a Plans officer, who decided to participate in the programme on the recommendation of his predecessor in the post. "It's a good opportunity to develop my teaching skills, and teaching aspects of our culture makes us appreciate what we have at home even more", she says.

### **SANCHO PANZA PROGRAMME**

Another programme set up in Lebanon to disseminate Spanish culture, in this case gastronomy, is known as the *Sancho Panza*, initiated in 2009 with the aim of supporting technical hotel and catering schools in the area with Spanish cookery classes for their students.

The teachers are also Spanish military personnel trained by the Catering and Tourism School of Zaragoza, where they learn to prepare traditional dishes such as Spanish tortilla (potato omelette), paella or gazpacho, tapas such as boquerones en vinagre (fresh anchovies in vinegar) and desserts such as rice pudding or tarta de Santiago (almond cake). During their training, they also learn about the gastronomic customs and the main products of each region of Spain and receive advice on how to adapt some of the recipes to local products.

In Lebanese schools, the classes taught by Spanish teachers are highly regarded by both teachers and students and allow the contingent to get closer to local youth.

### **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Also in the field of education is the *Bachiller Carrasco* programme, an initiative of the operation's psychology staff to support teachers in centres for children with special needs. The programme was made official by the 32nd BRILIB in February 2020 with the name of the character who managed to deliver Don Quixote from his madness. After a long break due to the pandemic, it has been taken up again by Captain Iago Quintairos, psychologist of the 36th BRILIB.

"During this time, conditions in the centres have worsened significantly and now more than ever they need all the help they can get", says the officer. He adds that it is a very rewarding experience for him, as it allows him to work with local psychology and pedagogy professionals and, above all, to learn from them how to value willpower, tenacity and collaboration. "Their vocation leads them to try to get the most out of our knowledge so as not to miss out on anything, and what they are asking for the most are the developments in know-how and pedagogical techniques that we may

better quality of the oils they produce in the various mills in the area.

Professor José Casanova, from the University of Zaragoza, has participated in the programme since 2018 and explains that he has noticed an evolution since his first visit. "At the beginning, older people, who love their olive trees but who practice subsistence olive growing that is under-optimised due to a lack of resources and training, were the ones that attended", he says. However, thanks to the support and advice of Spanish professionals, some mills have been improving the quality of their produce and have won several awards.



As part of the *Bachiller Carrasco* programme, a military psychologist counsels teachers at a centre for children with special needs.

have in Spain but that they fear they are lacking due to insufficient time and resources", explains the captain.

### **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

In terms of programmes to support local development, one of the most welcomed by the population is the *Almazara*, which is the result of collaboration with Spanish agricultural engineering faculties. Once a year, teachers from these centres travel to Lebanon for a few days to provide support and advice to local farmers so that they can achieve higher yields and

Professor Casanova stresses that the last visit, at the beginning of 2020, also served to achieve an objective pursued by the professors, namely to reach out to young people, as the activities were carried out with students from two agricultural schools in the area. "This was very important, because we believe that the future of olive growing in the area is in their hands", he says. When asked what he values most about the experience, the professor responds by describing an image that has stayed with him: "A group of twenty people surrounding the colleagues from the



A military member of the Spanish contingent gives Spanish classes to students at a school in southern Lebanon.

University of Extremadura, some speaking in Arabic, others in Spanish, an interpreter who can't keep up, but all understanding each other because they are talking about olive trees and there are no barriers".

Another programme to support local development is the *Rocinante*, developed in collaboration with the Spanish Veterinary Faculties and aimed at advising local livestock farmers on good animal care practices and, with the support of veterinarians from the Indian and Spanish contingents, providing treatment to animals that require it.

The last edition, before the pandemic, also included the participation of students from the Lebanese University of Beirut, which was very well received and had a great impact.

The 36th BRILIB is making the necessary arrangements to resume the programme as soon as this becomes feasible. However, in the meantime, in order to continue as far as possible with the support, the veterinarian of the Spanish contingent regularly visits the farms in the area to treat the animals in need.

In addition to the programmes developed by the contingent's military personnel, there are two others, the

*Duque de Ahumada* and the *Galatea*, carried out, respectively, by Civil Guard personnel deployed in the area and by members of the Military Emergency Unit (UME).

#### ROAD SAFETY

The *Duque de Ahumada* programme consists of a series of talks on road safety, social media safety and drug addiction aimed at young people aged between 14 and 18. Civil guard Lucía Pellicer, a member of the Military Police Unit of the 36th Brigade and a specialist in investigation of road accidents, participates in the programme for the first time, contributing her experience and knowledge. She particularly values the possibility of interacting

with the young people, as "they are very participative and feel comfortable both in raising their doubts and in answering the questions they are asked".

The *Galatea* programme is aimed at supporting Lebanese Civil Defence Centres in forest fire fighting, mountain rescue and extrication. It received its name in January 2020 as a further allusion to Miguel de Cervantes, as *Galatea* was the only work by the writer that was saved from the fire in which both Don Quixote's niece and mistress burnt all of his books.

#### MANAGEMENT IN THE AREA

All these programmes are managed in the area by the CIMIC unit of Sector East, whose mission, according to Captain Diego Fernández Olmo, head of the unit, is to support UNIFIL's mandate through actions aimed at "providing support to the local population, helping the Lebanese government to exercise its authority in its territory and promoting the acceptance of UN troops in the region".

In addition to the programmes, the unit is in charge of managing the CIMIC projects, which focus on sustaining and enhancing basic infrastructures, medical support and

*The projects have a significant impact on the civilian population in the area*



the collection and delivery of donations made by Spanish institutions and companies to distribute among the population with fewer resources. These activities require a significant amount of preparation work for staff in Spain, involving training courses and meetings with different entities and authorities.

In order to carry out its work, the CIMIC unit works closely with the personnel of the Civil Affairs Section of the mission, as well as with the Lebanese Armed Forces. "It's a great team effort with personnel from all corners of the world, an experience that is certainly both exciting and rewarding", says Captain Fernández.

In Spain, civil-military cooperation activities are monitored by the Influence Section of the Operations Command, which is part of the General Defence Staff.

According to Lieutenant Colonel José Manuel Manau, head of the section's CIMIC unit, the Operations Command basically performs four functions. The first is to serve as a civil-military liaison with personnel deployed in the area of operations. The second relates to programmes. In this case, the section's staff is responsible for preparing drafts of the cooperation agreements with the



The *Galatea* programme is aimed at supporting Lebanese Civil Defence centres in forest fire fighting, mountain rescue and extrication.

different institutions and, once signed, designs an annual planning of these agreements and gets in touch, on the one hand, with the civilian personnel involved and, on the other, with the operation's military personnel to adjust the programmes in detail, based mainly on the experience acquired in previous years. At the end of the activity, the final report is analysed to identify

improvements to be made in the next collaboration.

### QUICK IMPACT PROJECTS

The third function is the management of the Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). These projects consist of actions that, thanks to their quick implementation and low economic investment, have a major impact on the mission through the benefits they bring to the local population.

Finally, the unit is responsible for the management of donations. "The Armed Forces cannot accept donations, nor can they assume ownership of materials that one person or institution provides free of charge to another; therefore, what is actually done is to transport and deliver these materials to the beneficiary persons or organisations", explains Lieutenant Colonel Manau.

This activity, as in the case of the QIPs, has a significant impact on the civilian population in the area and, consequently, on mission accomplishment. Over the fifteen years of deployment in Lebanon, the Spanish Armed Forces have managed and implemented nearly 700 of these projects.

Nuria Fernández de la Fuente  
Photos: EMAD



The Spanish contingent's veterinarian regularly visits farms in the area to treat animals in need.

In a clear deterioration of security in the region, the EU training mission seems the best way to prevent the further spread of jihadism and international interference

# Mali and the growing instability in the Sahel

Lieutenant Colonel Juan Javier Pérez Martín  
Division for Security and Defence Coordination and Studies

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*"There is no security without development and no development without security"*

Kofi Annan

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**O**N 17 February this year, French President Emmanuel Macron announced that he would withdraw all French troops from Mali. After a deployment in the country of almost ten years, the French-led campaign against *Al-Qaeda* and *Daesh* jihadists in the Sahel has been unable to achieve all the desired objectives. French operations have eliminated several jihadist leaders and worn down the various groups operating in the Sahel, but the terrorists have extended their reach from northern Mali to central Mali and parts of Niger, Burkina Faso and even the countries along the Gulf of Guinea.

Mali has also suffered two coups d'état in the past year, leading to a serious deterioration in diplomatic relations between Paris and the military junta currently in power. This is partly because Mali's new military leaders had agreed in mid-2021 to deploy Russian private military contractors from the *Wagner* group to help fight the jihadists. Popular discontent towards the deployment of French troops has also grown, apparently fuelled by the military junta itself. Macron's decision leaves the country, and the Sahel, in a complex security situation at a very delicate moment in its political transition. The collapse of relations between Bamako and Paris, as well as the new direction being taken by the Junta, also affects the EU mission in the country, which has a very significant Spanish presence. It would also be necessary to reassess what the French

exit from Mali — although not from the Sahel — could mean for other forces such as the UN force in Mali (MINUSMA) or the G5 Sahel regional force, as the military junta intends to expel the latter from the country. Furthermore, the nature of the EU's future presence in the region will have to be examined in a very expeditious manner. The question is whether Germany would be willing to take on a greater leadership role on the ground, though not in the context of the current EU military training mission (EUTM Mali), in which it has already announced a significant force reduction.

### POLITICAL INSTABILITY

The past year has seen a succession of coups d'état in several African nations: Chad, Guinea-Conakry, Burkina Faso and Sudan. Mali has not been immune to this trend and has suffered two in less than a year. The Malian military junta refused to hold the elections scheduled for this past February, which were to restore civilian power and set an alternative five-year transition timetable. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which considered this situation unacceptable as it would only aggravate the insecurity and political crisis in the country, imposed new sanctions against Mali. The EU, for its part, supported these measures and, on 4 February 2022, sanctioned five members of the government (including the transitional prime minister, Choguel

*In the past year there have been coups d'état in several countries in the region*





Nic Botma/ EFE

Maïga) for “actions that obstruct and undermine the successful completion of the political transition” in the country. Political instability in recent years, the spread of jihadist terrorism due to the Malian state’s failure to control the territory, and ethnic clashes, make Mali a fertile ground for the proliferation of terrorism and illicit trafficking of all kinds.

EUTM Mali’s ongoing effort —with Spain at the forefront— to improve the capabilities and training of the Malian Armed Forces seems, for the moment, the best way to prevent the further spread of jihadist terrorism and interference in the region by anti-Western powers such as Russia and China. In this regard, the deterioration of relations between the Malian and French governments in recent months, the uncertain political situation in the country and the growing presence of Russian military contractors are factors that may make it difficult to maintain cooperation with Bamako.

There have been repeated disagreements with Europe in recent months. Denmark recently withdrew a hundred soldiers from *Takuba* Task Force. Germany, which has more than 300 troops in EUTM Mali and 1,000 in MINUSMA, has already announced that it will leave the EU training mission, and has declared the presence of the *Wagner* group in the country “unacceptable”. For his part, French President Emmanuel Macron announced the withdrawal of French troops from Mali, but without abandoning the fight against terrorism in the Sahel, which will be carried out from more committed countries in the region.

The situation was further aggravated upon the arrival in the country of Russian military “instructors” from the aforementioned

*Wagner* group, which called into question Bamako’s commitment to EUTM. The Malian government argues that the end of Operation *Barkhane* would justify the agreement with the group —also present in Ukraine, Libya, Sudan, Mozambique and the Central African Republic— to ensure security. The military junta strongly denies that it is a Russian deployment, despite statements to the contrary by the commander of the US AFRICOM (Africa command), and claims that they are only army instructors. Meanwhile, anti-French sentiment is growing throughout the region, while a rapprochement with the Russian government is taking place.

### PRECARIOUS SECURITY SITUATION

Mali is a country of vast geographical size —almost two and a half times the size of Spain— and a key strategic location in the Sahel. The region is currently affected by a complex combination of instability factors. The significant deterioration of security in the region, especially in its western half, is coupled with unfavourable climatic conditions that are increasing the country’s desertification and, therefore, aggravating water resource problems for sustaining crops and livestock. This in turn increases food insecurity and contributes to a higher level of internal insecurity. This instability has very negative direct consequences for states of unquestionable importance for Spain’s security and interests, such as Algeria, Mauritania and Senegal.

In the particular case of Mali, since the outbreak of the Ukrainian war, its consequences and side effects have reverberated in the country. Rising food and energy prices, supply disruptions and inflationary pressures have created additional challenges in the path to the post-pandemic economic recovery that the entire African





continent has painstakingly embarked on. The impact of higher commodity prices will vary, most directly affecting countries that are net food importers with few natural resources to offset the shock, as is the case of Mali. The indirect effects could easily extend to other areas of strategic interest to our country, such as the Gulf of Guinea or the Mediterranean area.

Demographic pressure, the effects of climate change and the state's limited capacity to provide assistance and security to its population have favoured the emergence of violent radical movements, which combine different versions of Salafist jihadism, networks of smugglers and traffickers of drugs, arms and people, as well as tribal militias that emerge in response to the state's inability to provide security for certain communities. Of particular concern is the growing presence of jihadist groups in the border areas between Mali and Mauritania, and in the tri-border area of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (*Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin*, JNIM), which are aligned to *Al-Qaeda*, and the *Islamic State in the Greater Sahara* (ISGS), an affiliate of *Daesh*, are at odds with each other, exploit inter-communal conflicts to obtain resources and expand their sphere of action, and carry out attacks against the local population and local and international forces. These movements continue to grow in the face of the lack of expectations of young people, who see them as a form of subsistence and recognition. Mali itself is a

paradigmatic example of all the problems afflicting the Sahel, featuring the traditional ethnic and religious divide between North and South, the traditional rivalry between pastoralist and farming communities, and weak state structures.

The risk of the country descending into chaos is no greater than for some of its neighbours, notably Burkina Faso and, to a lesser extent, Niger. However, Mali's geographic location would make such a potential collapse more consequential for Spain's security interests. Mali could become a base for terrorist and criminal groups, whose activities could easily spill over into Algeria, which has already been suffering the consequences of Islamist terrorism for decades. The same can be said of Mauritania, which also suffers from sporadic incidents along its porous borders with Mali. There is no doubt that such incidents would increase if the government in Bamako were to reduce control over its borders due to incapacity.

***Drought and  
resource  
shortages are  
leading to  
famine, which  
increases  
insecurity***

While Mali has a long tradition of forming armed groups, especially among the Tuaregs, self-defence militias are a relatively new phenomenon. The militias so far known in Mali were involved in the defence of the central regions of the country, adjacent to the territory claimed by the Tuaregs. These militias have been demobilised as the threat has passed and integrated into peace agreements, as they are usually formed for short periods of time, normally on an ad-hoc basis among local youth in the villages, to



deal with the imminent threat. As the threat is prolonged over time, they organise themselves, settling in the most remote cities.

### EUROPEAN AND SPANISH MILITARY ASSISTANCE

Against this backdrop, the assistance provided by the European Union to Mali, through financial support and missions conducted in this country under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the military training mission EUTM Mali and the civilian mission EUCAP Mali, have been and will continue to be essential to strengthen the Malian state's security capabilities and to achieve an acceptable level of security in a large part of the country. The situation has deteriorated recently not only because of the increased activities of jihadist terrorist groups, but also because of the increasingly evident consequences of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and the political instability that has led to worrying military interventionism.

These difficulties make it advisable to maintain European cooperation and presence, to which the Bamako government has no objection, despite its current poor relations with France. The continuation of missions would keep the country in the sphere of European influence, further enhance the effectiveness of its security forces and counter the growing presence of Russian mercenaries.

Several problems converge in this situation. The most obvious is the growing presence of jihadist armed groups in the region, but the root causes of conflict have more to do with overpopulation, the effects of climate change on traditional economic activities, inter-ethnic strife and the weakness of local governments in territorial

control. The opportunism of the jihadists and foreign powers is reaping short-term benefits from this chaotic situation, in which they are strengthened by their superior organisation and equipment.

Spain has three fundamental objectives in the Sahel: to contribute to the stabilisation effort in the region; to help prevent the rise of criminal groups that stimulate irregular immigration; and to promote—in terms of development— areas of shared prosperity within democratic frameworks and respect for human rights. Economic development and job creation are undoubtedly a prerequisite for the improvement of the situation.

The continued effort by international forces is vital to prevent the control of the Sahel by terrorists. As part of this effort, it is particularly important to improve the effectiveness and capabilities of the Malian armed forces, so that they take responsibility for this task themselves. They will also need to change their organisation and mentality in order, on the one hand, to defend themselves against the terrorist threat and, on the other, to promote a democratic culture that avoids military interventionism in politics.

It is worth bearing in mind that the geopolitical vacuum left by the West in the Sahel would be immediately filled by China and Russia. China would do so as an investor—through calculated debt diplomacy— while Russia would seek to expand its influence in the region. The continued presence of EUTM Mali undoubtedly contributes to stabilising the region and maintaining hope for an early solution, especially after the withdrawal of French troops and the more than likely expulsion of the G5 Sahel force.



Eskinder Debebe/ONU



One of the Leopard 2E tanks of battlegroup León deployed in Norway.



# Training in EXTREME COLD

A Spanish battlegroup has participated in exercises *Brilliant Jump* and *Cold Response* in Norway

NATO has put into practice its ability to respond rapidly to a crisis situation anywhere in the world. It has done so with one of its major exercises of the year —*Brilliant Jump 22*— in which land, naval and air forces from across the Alliance were projected from their home bases to Norway. The High North was also the scene for exercise *Cold Response 22*, in which the participating armed forces are trained in an extremely cold environment, testing the readiness

of units and the endurance of vehicles and materiel in this setting.

## **BRILLIANT JUMP**

Under the leadership of the Allied Joint Force Command (JFC) Brunssum, the Netherlands, *Brilliant Jump 22* has demonstrated the readiness and mobility of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), the spearhead of the NATO Response Force (NRF), and has also enhanced the interoperability of allied and partner nations. Approximately 2,500 troops were involved on the ground,

mainly from four countries (France, Italy, Poland and Spain). These forces were supported by various air assets as well as a dozen warships with some 750 seamen operating off the Norwegian coast. Spain's participation materialised through the 12th Brigade *Guadarrama*. The bulk of the contingent consisted of the 1st-61 Tank Infantry Battalion *León*, the 1st-31 Mechanised Infantry Battalion *Covadonga*, Field Artillery Group, Sappers Battalion, Headquarters Battalion and Logistics Group. In total, some 250 military personnel, together





Arrival of Spanish vehicles at the Norwegian port of Fredrikstad. Below, a medicalised medium wheeled armoured carrier.



Battlegroup León

Rapid Reaction Corps France

with a dozen *Leopard 2E* battle tanks, six *Pizarro* armoured vehicles and various support vehicles.

The main objective of the exercise was the deployment in record time, by road, rail, air and sea, of a military force capable of being operational in a matter of hours. The Spanish materiel was transported to Scandinavia aboard a ship that left the port of Santander on 11 March 2022 for the Norwegian port of Fredrikstad, while the transfer of personnel was completed by air to Oslo airport, and from there by road to the final destination, the military

camp in Rena. The projection process was supported by the Centre of Logistical Support to Operations (CALOG-OP).

Battlegroup León was trained for this deployment last January with a cold weather certification exercise in Covaleda (Soria), where temperatures were as low as -8 degrees Celsius. In addition, a number of multinational meetings were held in Norway, France and Spain. "It was a demanding and new phase for us, given that it was our first time in the NATO framework, but it was very enriching", says Lieutenant Colonel

José Luis Ramírez Perete, head of the Spanish contingent.

This officer also highlights the preparatory activities carried out with the Franco-German Brigade, the unit into which the battlegroup was to be integrated upon its arrival in Norway, "in particular to improve interoperability in the field of communications". The vehicles and materiel were also winterised or prepared—for example, by adding additives to the fuels—to adapt them to the extreme cold conditions expected during the exercises. After two weeks of intense





Spanish soldiers being trained with the Norwegian Army to adapt to combat in snowy and icy conditions.

training, Brilliant Jump concluded on 17 March. In a press release, Commander JFC Brunssum, General Jörg Vollmer, praised the participating nations “for demonstrating their ability to deploy quickly, at only days’ notice, to deter hostile acts wherever and whenever necessary, especially in the harsh conditions of the Arctic”.

### COLD RESPONSE

This year, exercise *Brilliant Jump* became the starting point for the biannual Norwegian-led exercise *Cold Response* 22, which took place from 14 March to 1 April. It is a defensive exercise, aimed at improving the readiness of forces in difficult weather conditions. Up to 30,000 troops from some 27 countries, including non-NATO partner countries Finland and Sweden, took part. Of these, 14,000 were ground forces, 8,000 were sailors and marines (embarked on fifty ships), while the remaining 8,000 were air forces, with

200 aircraft stationed at various bases on Norwegian territory.

Planned two years in advance, this exercise was announced more than eight months ago, well before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Norway invited all member countries of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to send observers to the exercise, in accordance with the Vienna Document, which obliges all host nations to notify the OSCE of major military exercises.

Unlike on previous occasions, Russia and Belarus declined the proposal. Finally, 31 observers from 17 countries and two organisations were in Norway to review the exercise.

The manoeuvres, which lasted until early April, took place over vast swathes of southeastern, central and northern Norway, including above the Arctic Circle, and were conducted in a controlled environment, albeit with civilian population centres and infrastructure.

“This limited the exercise somewhat, but it added realism, as future wars can take place in this type of environment”, says the commander of battlegroup León.

The land combat phase took place mainly in the province of Nordland. The participating troops were divided into a Force North and a Force South and conducted offensive, defensive and delaying operations. During this phase, four US soldiers were killed when the *MV-22B Osprey* aircraft in which they were participating in the exercise



Norwegian troops disembark from a US Marine Sikorsky CG-53E helicopter.

Philip Linder / Forsvaret



crashed. The aircraft disappeared from radars on the evening of 18 March, while facing adverse weather conditions en route to Bodø, where it was due to land.

On 21 March, two amphibious landings marked the end of the troop deployment phase, and combat operations began the following morning. NATO's Secretary General met with the troops taking part in the exercise on 25 October. Jens Stoltenberg said the High North is "a region of strategic importance", and stressed that NATO's presence in the area was "not meant to provoke conflict, but to prevent conflict and preserve peace".

Since its arrival, battlegroup León has carried out various activities, including static and dynamic exhibitions of materiel, assets and tactical actions for civilian and military authorities together with the other units of the Franco-German Brigade. During the first days in Rena, shooting and tactical exercises with live-fire were conducted jointly with French and Polish platoons. The Norwegian military also provided training courses on off-road driving on snow and ice, Norwegian-specific extreme cold tent and bivouac setup, as



Amille Dyré Waag/Forssvar

A Norwegian platoon advances during a *Cold Response* tactical exercise.

well as training and vehicle maintenance in these harsh conditions.

At this stage, the Army reached a historic milestone: thirteen battle tanks performed a live-fire exercise using CL3143 APFSDS-T type ammunition. "This is the first time we have used this armour-piercing ammunition, due to the special conditions required in terms of safety and distances, which no training area in Spain offers", explains Lieutenant Colonel Ramírez.

In addition to verifying the high performance of these projectiles (93 percent efficiency at 2,500 metres), valuable data were obtained that will

be used as a reference for the rest of the Army's *Leopard* battle tanks. In the last phase of *Cold Response 22*, the Franco-German Brigade conducted a defensive exercise involving the Norwegian Army's famous Mechanised Battalion *Telemark* as the presumed enemy and as arbiters of the tactical exercise to control the outcome of the combats. In Lieutenant Colonel Ramírez's view, the exercises have been "very positive in terms of improving NATO integration and interoperability". The Spanish units, he adds, "have demonstrated their adaptability, versatility and polyvalence".

**Víctor Hernández**



Battlegroup León

Spanish Pizarro Infantry Fighting Vehicles in the vicinity of the Rena military camp.





# LONG-DISTANCE jumpers

Parachutists from the Armed Forces, the National Police and five allied countries train in exercise *Lone Paratrooper* over León, Spain





A Portuguese technician hands a compatriot one of the two oxygen cylinders he will need to breathe while dropping at high altitude with an open parachute.

**U**NDER cover of night, after diving out of a C-295 transport aircraft at 18,000 feet (7,500 metres) and immediately opening the canopy of their *Phantom* parachutes, nine members of the 6th Parachute Brigade (BRIPAC) *Almogávares* fly together south-west towards hostile territory. They descend slowly, in a staggered manner, invisible to enemy radars and even to each other.

For 20 minutes, they travel a glide path of almost 30 kilometres downwind at speeds of between 80 and 30 knots (150 and 55 km/hour) during the flight and less than 20 at landing, when the reunited unit reaches the impact point marked on the ground.

First the heaviest element falls, the binomial, the two soldiers who have jumped in tandem, and then, one after the other, the rest of the legionary parachutists: infantry and communications personnel, marksmen, sappers, artillerymen, etc. Maintaining absolute discretion, they urgently fold and pack their parachutes in the dark, virtually blind, and rush to Staff Sergeant Segovia's position to receive orders and begin the intelligence mission. "We were very disciplined", says the Forward

Reconnaissance Patrol leader, after successfully completing the night jump in HAHO mode, which stands for "high altitude-high opening". The test was conducted over the Air Force NCO Academy *Virgen del Camino* in León at the end of May 2022, in the middle of exercise *Lone Paratrooper*. Led by the BRIPAC, it is the most significant annual joint combined parachute infiltration training phase in Europe. "We followed the correct track, each of us maintained our position at altitude during the descent and made the same turn on the landing, to the left, to avoid the obstacles on the ground. Just as we had planned beforehand, in a very meticulous manner", explains Staff Sergeant Segovia, with the parachute already on his chest in the vicinity of the academy's hangars and workshops.

*Around 180  
military  
personnel carried  
out a total of  
1,282 jumps*

With that same thoroughness in the preparation for the jump and in an attempt to achieve almost surgical precision in their jumps, around 180 military personnel were trained from: the BRIPAC, the Army's Special Operations Command (MOE), the Air Force Parachute Squadron, the Navy's Special Naval Warfare Force, the Special Operations Group of the National Police and the armed forces of Argentina, the United States, Ireland, the Netherlands and Portugal.

The paratroopers, organised in small units, carried out a total of 1,282 night and day jumps at high altitude over two weeks, with or without manually released oxygen, individually or in tandem, with a pilot and boxes full of material weighing up to 100 kilos or, instead of loads, passengers without parachute training, for example, doctors, nurses, interpreters, etc., or dogs, such as Snoopy, a sapper dog specialised in explosives ordnance disposal from the BRIPAC, or Lucas, a German Shepherd Green Beret from the MOE.

#### DISCRETION

Hours after the patrol's jump under the command of Staff Sergeant Segovia, now in daylight, Major



Pedro Rolán, head of operations of the 6th Parachute Brigade *Almogávares* and of this exercise, remains attentive to the landing of a MOE patrol and, alternately, raises his eyes to the sky to follow the descent of a Dutch patrol.

"The tactical purpose of this type of training is always the same: to covertly infiltrate enemy territory with a long-range patrol using HALO-HAHO procedures. The officer uses the acronyms High Altitude-Low Opening and High Altitude-High Opening to refer to jumps made at altitudes between 24,000 and 18,000 feet by opening the parachute at low altitude, in the first case, or at very high altitude, immediately after leaving the aircraft, in the second case. "The use of both modes allows us to drop personnel at the same altitude as commercial airlines, out of range of the opposing force's sensors", Commander Rolán points out in the parachute drop zone set up next to the Academy's runways. From there, the aircraft participating

in the exercise took off and landed in different waves: a C-295, a C-212 *Aviocar* and an *Airbus A400M* from the Spanish Air Force, an *EC-135 P2+* helicopter from the National Police and a C-130 from the Netherlands.

HALO procedures are used "when the tactical situation permits. That is, when the enemy lacks detection and air defence systems", Rolán explains. However, it is not uncommon to encounter opposition during these infiltration operations. This is why the latest editions of *Lone Paratrooper* have mainly focused on HAHO jumps, both at night and during the day, with a maximum ceiling of 24,000 feet.

#### MULTINATIONAL DIMENSION

The development of these exercises is divided into two phases, each lasting one week. The first is national and the second multinational. Here, foreign delegations were trained in jumps above and below 18,000 feet with and without oxygen, respectively. For Allied military

Members of the BRIPAC descend staggered and together over the drop zone set up at the Air Force NCO Academy.

*Oxygen is the basic element of these exercises, as it is necessary for jumping from 18,000 feet*



## *BRIPAC leads the most significant joint combined parachute infiltration exercise in Europe*

personnel, training in Spain is a unique opportunity. An objective", says Major Rolán, "that is very difficult to achieve in their countries due to weather conditions, which are not conducive to this type of training, and the saturation of airspace".

"León's sky is wide and very open", specifies Captain Fernando Valencia, commander of the Forward Reconnaissance Company (CRAV) of the BRIPAC, which includes Staff Sergeant Segovia's patrol. He refers to the dimensions (ceiling of 30,000 feet and 25,000 miles in length), and the scarce commercial air traffic over the vertical of the Air Force NCO Academy. "Thanks to this, we have been able to fly up to 42 kilometres", he says with satisfaction inside the C-295 as it is about to take off.

Moments later, as the flight begins, the captain and the members of his team are connected to one of the 23 pure oxygen "mouths" distributed in the aircraft cockpit through which they breathe, making up for its progressive absence as the aircraft ascends until it reaches the operational ceiling for the HALO-HAHO jumps.

This oxygen intake allows them to eliminate nitrogen from their blood before jumping out of the plane, thus avoiding hypobaric hypoxia during the descent —headaches, drowsiness, fainting, etc.— caused by low pressure or decompression illness such as pulmonary embolism.

The "denitrogenation" of the jumpers during the flight and the prior check on the ground, before boarding, of their oxygen equipment —helmet, mask, cylinders, etc.— are carried out under the supervision of the jump leader and the oxygen and physiological training technicians. They are the black monkeys, so called because of their black flying overalls, which identifies them inside the aircraft and in the boarding and landing areas as members of the BRIPAC Paratroop Dropping Company.

This unit is technically responsible for all the jumps performed by the

Army's soldiers, not only from the 6th *Almogávares*, but also from the MOE and the Military School of Mountain and Special Operations. Its members work behind the scenes at the BRIPAC facilities in Paracuellos del Jarama or in the hangars of the air bases during their deployments. Their task is to repair, check and maintain oxygen equipment and systems and to fold parachutes for automatic opening droppings, as well as all reserve or emergency parachutes.

of fighting and survival gear contained in the bulky rucksack that buffets around under their legs. "The practice of this type of military parachuting requires a lot of technique, effort and preparation", says Captain Valencia before taking off aboard the C-295. Inside the aircraft, you can feel the tension before a jump at an altitude of 8,000 metres. Sitting down, about to start taking pure oxygen, the BRIPAC officer is aware that any physiological problem during the flight or descent by any of the members of a



A Special Operations patrol in the boarding area, moments before getting on a Dutch C-130 during the exercise *Lone Paratrooper*.

### **FORWARD ECHELON**

In the HAHO mode, at such a high altitude, the members of these small units jump masked, without a gram of nitrogen in their blood, still breathing pure oxygen —the oxygen denied to them by the atmosphere at that altitude— now connected to the two cylinders attached to their chests. Protected by a goretex suit and gloves, they can withstand temperatures down to minus 20 degrees Celsius, which prevents the ambient humidity from cooling their bodies, but avoids an increase in their weight. The water that soaks them when going through the clouds weighs them down and adds to the more than 40 kilos

patrol would force the mission of these reduced operational teams to be aborted. They are the forward echelon in support of the subsequent airmobile or heliborne projection of the bulk of the force. "We need to have eyes on the target ahead of time in the conflict zone, in advance and covertly, so that we can subsequently deploy contingents to execute visible military operations around the world", stresses Major Rolán as he watches the departure of the C-295 transport aircraft with 18 paratroopers on board ready to dive into the air at high altitude and fall for many kilometres into hostile territory.

José Luis Expósito  
Photos: Pepe Díaz

The European Council gives the green light to the document that includes an ambitious action plan to strengthen the EU security and defence policy

# A Strategic Compass for a common course

Lieutenant-Colonel Vicente Gabriel Díaz de Villegas

Advisor, Private Office of the Undersecretary of Defence for Political Affairs (SEGENPOL)

**S**INCE Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, presented the European Union Global Strategy in June 2016, many of the security stereotypes regarded by European citizens as unchangeable have been shattered. This document represented an important first step towards a shared security vision at a time when it was felt that the European project was being challenged and the very existence of the Union was in question. With its adoption, partners demonstrated their commitment to upholding a world order based on norms and values that include respect for and promotion of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, all of which are built around legal arrangements and institutions capable of monitoring and implementing these commitments.

In July 2020, Member States advocated for strengthening their commitment to security and defence in a clear and decisive manner. In this way, facing the reality of a scenario of growing competition, fraught by complex threats and challenges to the European security order, they decided to develop a "Strategic Compass for Security and Defence" which, based on a shared assessment of the threats and challenges in our environment, would foster a common strategic culture, promote the capacity to defend European interests and those of its citizens and encourage the will to act together, assuming the Union's responsibilities as a

major player on the world geopolitical stage. The document also lays the groundwork for implementing the process of determining military capabilities and contributing to the coherence of the capacity building instruments currently in use, proposing scenarios that should serve as a basis for forward planning. On 24 March 2022, at a summit meeting in Brussels, the leaders of EU Member States adopted the Strategic Compass.

### WAR IN EUROPE

The Strategic Compass aims to respond to the EU's ambition to be a global actor in security matters and its duration is limited, after the mandatory five-yearly reviews, to at least the next decade. However, for the first time in more than fifty years, an invasion has taken place on European soil and alarm bells have been ringing in every corner of the Old Continent. War has returned to Europe and, unlike a few months ago,

*The document lays the groundwork for implementing military capabilities and coherence in their development*





Brussels perceives that the security of the Union itself and its citizens is under serious threat.

EU partners and institutions have been put to the test and have acted swiftly and decisively, abandoning business as usual and marking a turning point that seems to push the EU to forget its long-standing differences. The severity of the bombings and their terrible consequences have had a deep impact on the hearts of European citizens and the speech of EU High Representative Josep Borrell corroborated the

unanimous reaction of Member States: “for years, Europeans have been debating how the EU can be made more robust and security-conscious and we have now arguably gone further down that path in the past week than we did in the previous decade”.

It has been shown that decision-making processes can be streamlined at critical moments and Brussels has intervened in the short term with the tools at its disposal, including sanctions and restrictions with increasing impact,



declarations of political solidarity and renewed attention to the defence of the Union's territory. On 28 February, the European Council, in an unprecedented resolution, approved 450 million euros to support Ukraine with offensive military materiel and another 50 million euros for fuel and protective equipment. This initial contribution was increased by an additional 500 million euros on 23 March, bringing the total amount of assistance measures under the European Peace Facility (EPF) to 1 billion euros. This new scenario has transformed good intentions into decisions that are reflected, among others, in the adoption of the Strategic Compass, which aims to detail how the EU and its Member States plan to address their security. In addition, the conflict on the EU border has been an important spur to a rapprochement between Eastern and Western partners. Poland's generosity in welcoming Ukrainian refugees and the reaction of Western countries in defence of the Eastern flank is an example of the convergence of positions in two areas that, in the past, caused friction between European partners.

### REACTIONS FROM OUR EUROPEAN PARTNERS

In view of the seriousness of the situation, the partners have also acted nationally. On Sunday, 27 February 2022, Germany, the EU's largest economy, announced an unprecedented shift in its defence policy. At an extraordinary session of the Bundestag, Chancellor Olaf Scholz promised a "special fund" with a one-off sum of 100 billion euros to modernise and strengthen its Armed Forces, adding that Germany would increase its defence expenditure to over 2 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP). Berlin's announcement would make Germany the world's third-largest defence spender behind the US and China.

Italy, another EU military power, has also pledged to increase its military spending to 2 percent. The shock caused by the Russian invasion has also had relevant consequences at the political level, as in the case of Denmark. On 7 March, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said that the main parliamentary parties had agreed that a referendum on whether to participate in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) should be held on 1 June, almost 30 years after the Danes opted out.

Finland and Sweden, two traditionally non-aligned countries, have also supplied arms to help Ukraine's armed forces resist the Russian invasion. Sweden has announced a plan to increase its defence investment in the coming years.

### A MORE UNITED EUROPE

While the Strategic Compass has a global vocation and a certain durability over time, its latest draft was revised in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, at a time when a sense of unity among Member States has been forged in a way



never seen before. Brussels should seize this opportunity to move towards a more ambitious defence commitment, with a marked increase in resilience, cyber capabilities, countering disinformation and strengthening the transatlantic link.

In the four key work strands set out in the document —the partners' capacity to act in the face of threats or periods of crisis (Act), strengthening resilience (Secure), boosting defence investment (Invest) and reinforcing strategic alliances (Partner)— we see reflections of the situation in Ukraine, but also of other very important scenarios for the Union, such as Africa and the Indian Ocean, which we cannot and should not forget.

With regard to the Act work strand, the reinforcement of operations and missions within the framework of the





European Council

Common Security Policy will be accompanied by a more agile and flexible decision-making process supported by greater financial solidarity. The rapid deployment capability to act in non-permissive scenarios will be supported by a robust command and control structure, taking advantage of a substantial improvement in military mobility and testing its readiness through exercises.

As far as the Secure work strand is concerned, the hybrid challenge continues to grow and its vectors are increasing. Moscow is continuing to use energy as a lever, with Kiev as its first victim. Today, reducing our dependence on energy imports from authoritarian and aggressive powers is an urgent strategic imperative, and it is here that North Africa plays a decisive role. The hybrid toolbox, cyber security policy and

space strategy for security and defence should enable us to improve our ability to anticipate threats and enhance our resilience. The Ukrainian people's demonstration of resilience is a real lesson for European security. The Union must fight the narrative battle and be acutely aware that strengthening European territory also means tackling Russia's aggressive disinformation networks and going after the Kremlin's ecosystem of finance and influence-peddling. The Indian Ocean is one of the areas of interest where the security of common spaces has a direct impact on the economy and welfare of European citizens. In this sense, the results obtained by Operation Atalanta are a model for action.

The Invest work strand has also been strengthened by the war, which has shown that Europe must be able to reduce its technological and industrial dependencies and increase defence investment and innovation (Defence Innovation Hub) for greater autonomy of action. To this end, Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF) are the main tools for the development of strategic enablers.

Finally, with regard to strategic alliances (Partner), the return of war to European territory has served to highlight the urgent need to further deepen our security cooperation with our most immediate partners. Through partnerships, the European Union will achieve its level of ambition as a strategic global player. In particular, the partnership with Ukraine has been reinforced with political, financial, humanitarian and logistical support. In the defence field, the donation and financing of armament has set in motion a process that has required drawing up a list of materiel and equipment that, in a coordinated and needs-based manner, Member States are willing to provide, and a series of hubs to facilitate the mobility of military supplies in support of the Ukrainian people.

Africa is another key example of the importance of strategic partnerships. Through numerous initiatives, programmes and, in the military field, the "three-pillar" approach of EUTM missions (advice, training and mentoring), the EU contributes to the stability of North and Central Africa, essential for the security of Europe, which must act as a reliable strategic partner in a region in need of references. If we leave that gap, others will fill it.

The military invasion of Ukraine has also demonstrated that the EU's strategic partnership with NATO is essential to Euro-Atlantic security. Brussels is fully committed to further enhancing this key partnership to foster the transatlantic link.

The Strategic Compass addresses the security implications of the war unleashed by Moscow, but also, within its projection as a global strategic actor, the impact that other world actors have on Europe and its citizens.

## Official visit to the United States

### Margarita Robles and Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin meet at the Pentagon

**T**HE NATO Summit in Madrid, the situation in Ukraine and the strength of the transatlantic and bilateral relationship were the main themes of a trip framed within the relations between two allied and friendly countries. In response to an invitation from her US counterpart, Lloyd Austin, Defence Minister Margarita Robles travelled to the US capital on 19 May 2022 to hold a meeting at the Pentagon in an intense day that also included a visit to Arlington National Cemetery, where she took part in a floral tribute at the tomb of the unknown soldier, and a working luncheon with the US Secretary of the Navy, Carlos del Toro.

The Defence Minister highlighted the “strong historical and cultural ties” between the two nations, which “are reaffirmed in these challenging times and confirm, more than ever, the need to continue working together”.

An idea that Lloyd Austin was also keen to emphasise: “We are meeting today at a pivotal moment in European history when democratic values and the rules-based international order are under attack”. He stressed that Spain has long been a steadfast ally of the United States “and together we’re going to continue to support the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian people in the face of Russia’s unprovoked and indefensible invasion”.

The two defence officials also stressed the strong ties and values that unite the two countries, which are the basis of the Defence Cooperation Agreement between Spain and the United States and of our NATO membership.



Iraki Gómez/MIDE

## Mine warfare

### Multinational exercise ESP MINEX-22

In the waters of the Balearic archipelago, 14 surface ships, a Navy helicopter and more than 700 troops from nine different countries and organisations took part in the multinational mine warfare exercise ESP MINEX-22 held from 25 April to 6 May, 2022.

The naval force, formed by the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group (SNMCMG-2) in the Mediterranean and the European Maritime Force



Armada

(EUROMARFOR), was led by Captain Francisco Javier Ruiz y Ruiz de Cortazar, Commander of the Spanish Navy’s Mine Countermeasures Force, who was embarked with his deployable staff aboard the offshore patrol vessel *Furor*.

Of the 14 ships that participated in ESP MINEX-22, nine were Spanish and two were from the French Navy. The remaining three belong to Germany, Italy and Greece.

Also present at the exercise were specialised mine warfare diving units, with Unmanned Underwater Vehicle (UUV) operation teams from Belgium and the United States.



## King Felipe VI at Bétera HQ

The unit is staffed by allied personnel from eleven countries

On 25 May 2022, King Felipe VI visited the High Readiness Force Land Headquarters, HRF(L)HQ, at the *Jaime I* base in Bétera (Valencia). Once Military Honours were paid and after the welcome greeting from the military authorities and command staff, he attended a presentation on the organisation and operation of the HRF(L)HQ.

Its main task is to be ready to be used as a command structure in designated operations and it is staffed by allied personnel from eleven countries. This means that it has the capacity to conduct a NATO-led or NATO-sponsored military operation of up to 80,000 military personnel (up to five divisions) anywhere in the world, with complete autonomy and at short notice. It also materialises Spain's commitment to NATO through NATO's Rapid Deployment Corps Headquarters - Spain (HQ NRDC-ESP). After his visit, Felipe VI saw the resources of the Information Operations Regiment No. 1, whose main function is to establish and maintain liaison between military units deployed on peacekeeping missions and the civilian population in the area of operations, as well as to carry out a civil-military cooperation assessment (CIMIC) of the assigned area. This Regiment has extensive experience, having participated in areas in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Mali and Senegal. One of its last interventions was during the evacuation of Kabul at the end of August 2021.



ENAD

## Atlantic Council Ambassadors in Spain

Attendance at the events marking the 40th anniversary of Spain's accession to the Alliance



Rubén Somonte/MDE

THE ambassadors of the North Atlantic Council (NAC), accompanied by the chairman of NATO's Military Committee, Admiral Rob Bauer, attended a meeting on 30 May 2022 at the Operations Command at Retamares base in Madrid, chaired by the Minister of Defence, to discuss the current participation of the Spanish Armed Forces in NATO missions and activities. The meeting was part of the events marking the 40th anniversary of Spain's accession to the Alliance.

Margarita Robles reiterated that Spain is "fully committed to NATO", an organisation that "is much more than a military alliance, it is a community of values". During the visit, which was also attended by the MOPS Commander, Lieutenant General Francisco Braco, and Spain's Permanent Representative Miguel Ángel Fernández Palacios, the Minister and the NAC ambassadors attended a briefing by the Deputy Chief of Operations, General Francisco Javier Vidal who highlighted Spain's contribution to NATO missions.

A videoconference was held with the commanders of several Spanish NATO missions: the support mission to Iraq; the *Baltic Air Policing* mission in Lithuania; *enhanced Forward Presence* (eFP) in Latvia; the frigate *Blas de Lezo* and the offshore patrol vessel *Meteoro*, which participate, respectively, in the Standing Maritime and Mine Countermeasures Groups; the frigate *Reina Sofía*, part of Operation *Sea Guardian*, and the ship *Juan Carlos I*. During the videoconference, General Carlos María Salgado Romero, head of the contingent in Iraq, announced that Spain aspires to lead the mission in 2023.

The day before, the ambassadors and the chairman of the Military Committee visited NATO's Combined Air Operations Centre in Torrejón (CAOC-TJ), where its commander, Lieutenant General Fernando de la Cruz, presented the centre's capabilities for the performance of its mission in the assigned area, from the Azores to the Black Sea.

## OVERVIEW



EWAD

### The “Tigers” fly in Greece Forty aircraft from eleven NATO countries

**M**ORE than 40 aircraft from thirteen different squadrons from eleven NATO countries took part in the NATO *Tiger Meet* at Araxos air base, Greece, in May. Among them, six F-18s from the 15th Wing and 80 members of the Spanish Air Force. According to Colonel Petros Sarris, the base commander and exercise director, each year, Alliance squadrons under the Tiger emblem come together for the exercise, which enables them to “train as they fight”. These exercises allow for

the improvement of air tactics by exchanging experiences “in a spirit of comradeship and solidarity”, he added. For his part, the Chief of the Hellenic National Defence General Staff, General Konstantinos Floros, noted that the way to overcome the many complex threats facing NATO is through close cooperation among allies. He also emphasised that the Tiger Meet is “an excellent opportunity to increase readiness and hone combat skills in a multinational joint force environment”.

### Confrontation in cyberspace

#### 32 countries participate in exercise *Locked Shield*

More than 2,000 participants from 32 countries divided into 24 groups made up the blue team responsible for defending the computer systems of a nation under attack by a group of hackers. It was exercise *Locked Shield*, held from 20 to 23 April 2022, in which the Joint Cyberspace Command (MCCE) coordinated the Spanish team made up of civilian and military personnel and complemented by representatives of the Brazilian Cyber Defence Command.



EWAD

*Locked Shield* is considered one of the world’s leading cyber-defence exercises and is organised annually by the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) in Tallinn, Estonia. Its aim is to train cyber rapid reaction

teams in response to cyber incidents. It is a competition where the mission of the blue team is to understand and assess the situation, maintain the availability, confidentiality and integrity of services in simulated networks that have suffered cyber-attacks. The exercise included forensic, legal, media and strategic communication challenges.

Spain has been participating in these exercises since 2010 and in this edition it contributed personnel from the Army, the Navy, the National Police and the Civil Guard, in addition to the civilian component, made up of technicians from the National Cybersecurity Institute, the National Cryptologic Centre, technology companies such as Telefónica, Siemens and Indra, and personnel from the world of academia.



## UN peacekeeping operations

### Meeting with UN Under-Secretary-General Jean Pierre Lacroix

Defence Minister Margarita Robles, and the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean Pierre Lacroix, held a meeting on 31 May at the Ministry of Defence in which they highlighted Spain's commitment to the missions in Lebanon and Colombia and reviewed the difficulties arising from the situation in both scenarios.

UNIFIL blue helmets secure peace on the Lebanese-Israeli border, facilitating humanitarian access to the civilian population, and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons. As for the mission, which has been led since 28 February by Spanish General Aroldo Lázaro, the minister highlighted "the boost to be given to the Tripartite Mechanism, an essential tool for maintaining peace and stability, since it is the only format in which the representatives of Lebanon and Israel participate jointly, under the chairmanship of the Head of UNIFIL".

Robles and Lacroix also discussed the worrying situation in parts of the Sahel. The Defence Minister stressed that "attention to the Sahel is especially important at the present time", and Mali "is the nerve centre of an area in which it is necessary to adopt a constructive position of mutual collaboration". Finally, in view of the situation caused by the war in Ukraine, the two discussed the need for the United Nations to maintain the current momentum for humanitarian aid, assume greater responsibility and promote verification and peace missions as soon as a cessation of hostilities is achieved.



Marco Romero/MDA

## World Military Triathlon Championship



CSDM

**S**PAIN won the Challenge Trophy at the 23rd World Military Triathlon Championship, which is awarded to the best delegation of the entire championship by adding the results obtained in the Elite and Veterans categories. The event, held in Águilas (Murcia) from 8 to 11 June 2022, was attended by 210 athletes from twenty countries.

For the first time, mixed relays were included, as part of the Olympic programme, as well as an inclusive triathlon event with teams composed of Spanish paratriathletes, participants from different countries and members of the International Military Sports Council and the Spanish Military Sports Council.

In addition, the Spanish delegation won gold medals in the senior mixed team category; silver in the senior relay team; silver and bronze in the senior women's individual; bronze in the senior men's individual; and bronze in the elite women's team.

### ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Air Force Captain Eduardo Carrillo, a transport aircraft pilot, is the current Aeronautical Pentathlon World Champion and, as of 1 April 2022, the International Military Sports Council (IMSC) Military Athlete of the Year. This captain beat ten other candidates in the voting, all of whom are world champions in their respective disciplines, a prerequisite for the title. "The real value of this title for me is not the award itself, but the feeling that, in some way, I am a torch bearer for Spanish military sport on a worldwide scale, as well as the affection and support I have received over the past few weeks", says this military officer.

Sport "allows me to have a long-term goal to train and fight for, to be part of a team that works together, to live experiences and feel unique emotions and to grow as a person". Eduardo Carrillo received his award on 7 May 2022 during the IMSC General Assembly and Congress held in Lima, Peru.



Crown of cameos, on loan from Toledo's Cathedral to the Alfonso X exhibition. It is the only one surviving from a medieval Hispanic king.



Prototype in plaster of the *Wise King*, by the Toledo artist E. Duque (19th century), for a monument in Madrid. that was never built.



Astrolabes (left, Naval Museum collection), basic tools for navigation, which Alfonso X worked on with great success. Model of a medieval siege weapon (right), known as a fundibulum or stone machine, is one of the exhibits from the Army Museum.

# ALFONSO X, a man ahead of his time

The Ministry of Defence joins the celebration of the eighth centenary of the birth of the *Wise King*

**T**HE Infante (crown prince) Don Alfonso of Spain, nicknamed the Saint, was born on 23 November 1221 in Toledo, not far from the current Alcázar, home of today's Army Museum. He was the son of Ferdinand III of Castile and Leon and the German Princess Beatrice of Swabia, whose family ties made him a contender for the title of "Germanic Emperor". He was even

elected to become Germanic Emperor on 1 April 1257, but he was not the only elected candidate and, in 1273, he ended up losing the bid for the prized crown, explains Julio Valdeón in the Royal Academy of History's electronic biographical dictionary.

In any case, three years before the frustrated imperial dream began, this prince from Toledo had already inherited his father's throne (1252) and, eventually, earned the title of "the Wise".

Due to his legacy, Alfonso X is one of those sovereigns that has left behind a deep mark with important milestones that have been highlighted, since November 2021, on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of his birth. A commemoration in which the Ministry of Defence is participating with different activities, among others, collaborating in the tribute exhibition open until last June in the Museum of Santa Cruz de Toledo





Chasuble of Archbishop Don Sancho (left), with the coat of arms of Castile, Aragon and the imperial black eagles belonging to the family of Alfonso X's mother, who must have given the rich fabric to his brother-in-law, and a 13th-century Spanish sword and spurs of Ferdinand III, Royal Armoury, Madrid.



([exposicionalfonsox.com](http://exposicionalfonsox.com)), a few steps away from the current convent of Santa Fe, where the prince was born.

Alfonso X the Wise was a "precursor king" and this was underlined in the exhibition. Many of the legal and even economic measures he promoted remained in force well into modern times. But his name still resounds in literature and science, especially in astronomy and its application to nautical science.

He was born at the time of the Reconquest, two and a half decades after the heavy Christian defeat, especially Castilian, at the Battle of Alarcos (1195), and just ten years after the decisive success at Navas de Tolosa (1212). He was therefore also a warrior king, although this facet is less known.

As an infant, he served in the armies of his father, Ferdinand III. "In 1243, he conquered the city of Murcia", says the curator of the exhibition, Ricardo Izquierdo, professor of Medieval History at the University of Castilla-La Mancha, who adds: "He always felt very attached to that land after that".

In reality, the connection was mutual, as it was one of the two territories that remained loyal to Alfonso when his son Don Sancho claimed the throne from him. According to the "Carta de Hermandad" (Charter of Brotherhood) displayed in the exhibition, he managed to gain the support of 65 Castilian councils.

#### HIS LINKS WITH SEVILLE

Seville did not abandon him either. He took refuge in that city and died there

on 4 April 1284. In fact, the symbol of Seville "NO-DO" (they did not leave me) is related to this reception.

Alfonso X's bond with the city was born during its reconquest, in which he had participated with his father in 1248 and after having also fought in the taking of Jaén (1246). Moreover, years later, Seville was the venue for his proclamation as king. "He considered Seville as the last great conquest with his father", say the exhibition guides.

Perhaps it is also the cradle of the important role played in the development of the Castilian Navy. Alfonso experienced first-hand the vital role played by the Navy, led by Ramón de Bonifaz, in seizing what is now the Andalusian capital, where the Wise ordered the construction of shipyards, which became "the largest in Europe".

*From literature, to navigation and law, the Wise King's legacy still shines today*





*King Alfonso the Wise and the Books of Knowledge of Astronomy, a collection from the Prado Museum restored for the exhibition and which is expected to become part of the Army Museum's collection on loan.*



Books play a key role in the legacy of the Toledo-born king and deal with a wide range of subjects.



Charter of Brotherhood of the majority of the councils of Castile in favour of Don Sancho.

As a sovereign, “he completed the conquest of the south-western part of Andalusia”, explains Izquierdo. “Among other places”, he adds, “he conquered Jerez de la Frontera in 1260, as well as Niebla (Huelva) and Cádiz in 1262”.

After promising to continue the fight beyond the Strait of Gibraltar to the gates of the capital of Cádiz, he led several successful campaigns in North Africa, but without leaving stable garrisons.

In addition to the port facilities in Seville, he created ports in Palos (Huelva) and Cádiz, which would later

become essential in the relations with the Spanish monarchy’s non-European territories. “Indispensable in the discovery of America, for example”, the exhibition staff reminds us.

#### IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

As in the war, before becoming monarch and the Wise, he was already interested in ancient texts written in Arabic, and even had some of them translated, including the Lapidaries, on the study of the properties of gems (stones). In this well-known scholarly facet of his, his name was also linked

to the Toledo School of Translators, “which created a flow of knowledge that crossed Europe from north to south, advancing the Renaissance”.

Intellectuals came to what is now the capital of Castile-La Mancha in search of knowledge, and among these works of reference were some written by the King himself, such as his tables for navigation, a nautical manual in which he included astronomical notes throughout a whole decade. The result was to last for centuries.

**Esther P. Martínez**  
Photos: Hélène Gicquel



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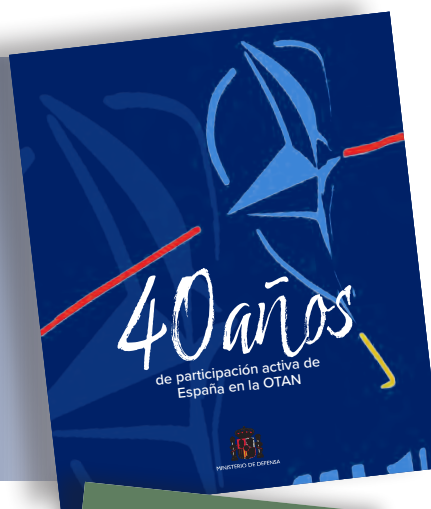
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