

REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE DEFENSA



35th ANNIVERSARY
Women in the Spanish
Armed Forces

**Spain hosts first military exercise
of the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity**

RAPID RESPONSE FORCE





REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE DEFENSA

HABLAMOS de Defensa

35 años de información de calidad

A rapid response for global stability

EXERCISE MILEX 23 has achieved excellent results that will be crucial to advance the Europe of Defence. The EU's first force deployment on the ground has taken place in this exercise, led and hosted by Spain. This exercise is a milestone due to its characteristics and because it will contribute to achieving the full operability of the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC) by 2025.

Lessons learned from MILEX 23 will be used to improve concepts, identify gaps and enhance operational procedures. The exercise also demonstrated the high degree of commitment of European nations to shape a large force and the validity of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) as an operations headquarters.

In addition to exercise MILEX 23 in the province of Cádiz, Spain also organised the meeting of the Chiefs of Defence of the EU Member States in Seville —the first outside Brussels—. Thus Spain is playing a crucial role in promoting the Strategic Compass, the EU-27's defence roadmap, of which the Rapid Deployment Capacity is one of the pillars.

The RDC seeks to provide a rapid response to conflicts and crises arising outside EU borders. This force, with a maximum of 5,000 troops backed up by support capabilities, stems from the recognition that the EU must be ready to act when necessary to protect its citizens and contribute to global stability. It must, therefore, have the means and the will to work with other countries and collectively confront any threat that may appear on the horizon before it reaches EU territory. This is why joint exercises like MILEX 23 are useful to improve the readiness and interoperability of Member States' troops.

In these difficult times for peace and security, with serious crises and threats, special efforts must be made to strengthen Europe's common defence. This will also benefit our country, because the more solid the EU is, the more opportunities it will present for Spain's development, well-being, and future.

RED



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AB 212 helicopter from the 3rd Navy Squadron drops divers into the waters off Rota.



rifles, prepare for action during the LIVEX



RAPID DEPLOYMENT CAPACITY PUT TO THE TEST IN SPAIN

Spain leads MILEX 23, the EU's first force deployment, and hosts a Military Committee meeting

SPAIN, while continuing to assume the responsibilities of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, has recently played a leading role in two important initiatives to advance the Europe of Defence. On the one hand, the province of Cádiz hosted MILEX 23 — crisis management military exercise—, which is the EU's first live force deployment exercise; and, on the other, it hosted a working meeting of the Chiefs of Defence of the EU Member States in Seville.

MILEX 23 comprised two interlinked parts. The first, from 18 September to 6 October 2023, consisted of a command post exercise testing the military planning process at the strategic and operational level. The second part was LIVEX, from 16 to 22 October, in which the force, made up of 31 units and 2,900 personnel from

19 EU countries, deployed to a simulated theatre of operations and carried out the operational plan developed during the planning phase.

"Today, the first-ever joint European Union military exercise is being carried out", said Josep Borrell, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, on board the amphibious assault ship *Juan Carlos I* on 17 October. Accompanied by General Robert Brieger —the Chairman of the EU Military Committee— and by Admiral General Teodoro López Calderón —the Spanish Chief of Defence—, they all witnessed the amphibious landing, with air support, on a beach at Rota Naval Base, which marked the beginning of LIVEX.

According to Borrell, this live exercise "enhances the readiness and

Soldiers and vehicles reach the beach by landing craft (in the background, French amphibious assault ship *Tonnerre*). In the other picture, Spanish marines during the exercise.



interoperability of our Member States' troops" and "helps to build a common strategic culture on defence". The High Representative stressed that LIVEX was "very important" to advance towards the creation of the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (EU RDC) agreed in the Strategic Compass, which should reach its full operational capability by 2025. This exercise was a crucial test of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), which acted as an Operations Headquarters for the exercise from Brussels.

SCENARIO

MILEX 23 has simulated an EU deployment under the UN umbrella in response to a request for assistance from a fictitious non-European country called Seglia. This country has to deal with a rapidly deteriorating security situation caused by

a violent extremist group, as well as by piracy at sea, cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure and a strong disinformation campaign. The EU responds to the request by operating in a scenario where it trains its land, sea, air, space and cyber capabilities.

"This exercise is a milestone for the European Union and it is a source of pride for Spain and its Armed Forces to have organised it", stressed the Minister of Defence, Margarita Robles, in a videoconference on 20 October with Rear Admiral Gonzalo Villar, Commander of the Expeditionary Task Group *Dédalo 23*, who was on board the *Juan Carlos I*.

Led by Rear Admiral Villar and his international staff, the force was made up of an amphibious task group, the bulk of which was the *Dédalo* group, consisting of the *Juan Carlos I* —commanded by Captain Ricardo Gómez— on which the





CECLANT

A force for the European Union

EXERCISE MILEX 23 is a step towards accomplishing one of the main goals defined in the Strategic Compass: for Europe to be a more robust and more capable security provider within and beyond its borders. In other words, to protect its citizens and contribute to international peace. To this end, Europe will develop a Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC) with a force of up to 5,000 troops, backed up by support capabilities (transport, intelligence, communications, special operations, medical care and evacuation units), assigned exclusively to this force, but which may be used by each country for national service in the event of an emergency. The RDC, which should be fully operational by 2025, will make it possible to prevent or address crises effectively and protect the citizens and values of the European Union throughout the world. Thus, among other missions, it will focus on rescue and evacuation operations, the entry and initial phase of stabilisation operations and the temporary reinforcement of other missions. It could also be used as a reserve force to secure an exit if necessary.

The RDC will be a modular force, made up of modified battlegroups and additional forces combined with units and capabilities from different Member States to cover all domains. In other words, instead of a single force, the RDC will draw from different components (land, sea and air), and include strategic capabilities —such as airlift— depending on the theatre and needs. Joint exercises will be performed regularly in compliance with NATO standards to increase readiness and interoperability. These exercises will be planned and directed by the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) and scheduled by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The planned schedule includes reaching a concrete agreement on all possible scenarios for the deployment of the RDC by the end of 2023, and a second exercise in Germany in 2024, before reaching full operational capability in 2025.

To speed up its implementation, EU leaders are committed to using more flexible and agile decision-making arrangements, in particular by exploring the potential of Article 44 of the Union Treaty, which allows “coalitions of the willing” to conduct missions and operations on behalf of the Union. A recent European Parliament report suggests that the force should have a permanent operational headquarters to ensure rapid and effective deployments. In their report, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) also demanded that the costs of the RDC be covered by the EU budget, in particular the funds of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The costs of joint exercises, ammunition and exercise-related expenses should be covered by the larger European Peace Facility.

The design of this new instrument clearly falls within the new strategic context and in the firm conviction that Europe must enhance its security and defence and guarantee its strategic autonomy. The RDC was presented in March 2022 as the cornerstone of one of the four pillars of the Strategic Compass and endorsed by the European Parliament on 21 April. The objective of providing the Union with the capacity to “Act” thus includes, in addition to the creation of the RDC, the possibility of deploying a civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission of 200 fully equipped experts within 30 days.

The RDC will have up to 5,000 troops, backed up by support capabilities

Rosa Ruiz



High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell talks to General Robert Brieger in Seville, in the presence of the Spanish CHOD, Admiral General Teodoro López Calderón.

well and all the participants are satisfied”, Rear Admiral Villar informed Robles by videoconference. The commander of the *Dédalo* also noted that the exercise “has demonstrated that the EU planning system works” and it has highlighted “the commitment of the countries, which have shown their willingness to send a significant number of personnel to shape a large force”.

The EU Military Staff’s Concepts and Capabilities Directorate has spent nearly fourteen months meticulously planning and preparing for MILEX 23. It will be followed by MILEX 24, which is already scheduled for the second half of next year and will be led by Germany.

MILITARY COMMITTEE

On 17 October 2023, Borrell and Robles presided over the inaugural ceremony of the meeting of the Chiefs of Defence of the EU Member States in Seville’s Plaza de España. On parade were the Army’s 74th Air Defence Artillery Regiment; a unit of the Spanish Marine Corps; troops from the Tablada Air Barracks Task Force and the Mobile Air Control Group (GRUMOCA) of the Spanish Air and Space Force; and a military band of the Spanish Army.

military staff was embarked; amphibious assault ship *Castilla*; frigate *Numancia*; the 1st Marine Landing Battalion; *Harrier* fighter jets; and helicopters from the Aircraft Flotilla. Units from France (amphibious assault ship *Tonnerre* with a company-size task group), Italy (a platoon from the *San Marco* Marine Brigade), Malta (a medical team) and Portugal (frigate *Francisco de Almeida* and a rifle platoon) joined them. This force, under General José María Sanz, Commander of the Spanish Marine Brigade, was the first to arrive on the scene.

In order to accomplish the assigned mission, this group was complemented by ground forces, such as a battlegroup from the Brigade *Canarias*, a platoon of Austrian marines, a French sappers company, Romanian and Hungarian explosive ordnance disposal teams and a Hungarian tactical air control party. In addition, there were air assets, including fighter jets, drones, transport aircraft, helicopters, etc. There were also Irish and Spanish special operations teams and advance force teams, with French minehunter *Croix du Sud*.

In addition to leading the entire force, Spain, which contributed 1,200 troops, commanded the different naval groups,

landing forces, land battalions, special operations units and the air force.

Simulated operations were conducted at Rota naval base facilities and on the beach of the Sierra del Retén training range in Barbate (Spain). “The exercise went very



Seville’s Plaza de España was the venue for the opening ceremony of the meeting of EU Chiefs of Defence, chaired by Josep Borrell and Margarita Robles.

Usually held in Brussels, these meetings take place every six months; however, on this occasion, and for the first time, they were held outside Belgium. The meeting was held in the Army's headquarters in Seville, coinciding with the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU.

"In the process of shaping European defence, the chiefs of defence have a great responsibility", the Defence Minister told them. "You are essential for strengthening the force generation for EU missions and operations, one of the most visible tools of our external action", added Robles, who also considered them "decisive" in the development of the Rapid Deployment Capacity, as well as in its command, control and secure communications.

In the four working sessions, chaired by General Robert Brieger, the Chiefs of Defence discussed support for Ukraine in the war against Russia; the future of missions in Africa —notably the mission in the Sahel and its continuation—; the development of the EU RDC; and the update of the EU Capability Development Plan.

During those sessions, they also discussed the Strategic Compass and the short- and medium-term initiatives that had to be carried out for its implementation in 2025. Following the meeting, the Chiefs of Defence and the permanent military representatives to the EU proceeded to the province of Cádiz, where they attended the LIVEX phase of MILEX 23 on 19 October.

Santiago F. del Vado

Photos: EMAD and Guillermo Álvarez/TEAR

EU Chiefs of Defence discussed the war in Ukraine and the missions in the Sahel



Itzaki Gómez/AMDE

Under the leadership of the Operations Command, Army and Navy units collaborated to ensure the security of the European summits held in Granada.

OPERATION CORAZA

Spanish Armed Forces protect the two European summits in Granada

UNDER the name of Operation Coraza, the Operations Command (MOPS) was in charge of ensuring airspace security during the European Political Community Summit and that of the European Council Summit, both held in Granada on 5 and 6 October 2023 under the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Defence Minister Margarita Robles visited Retamares military base in Pozuelo de Alarcón (Madrid) on 13 October to express her gratitude to the Operations Command for its "great silent work, which is absolutely essential for the security of our citizens". During her visit, Lieutenant General Francisco Braco, the MOPS Commander, stated that the integration of land, sea, air, and cyberspace capabilities, working in coordination with the state security forces, is the key to this type of operation.

In particular, Robles commended the deployment carried out to neutralise "the

great threat of drones to global security", as well as the efforts made in cyberspace surveillance, after confirming that pro-Russian groups had increased their attacks on local government websites during the Granada summit.

The Air and Space Force participated with four Eurofighters and two F-18 fighters, an A400M and two helicopters, as well as two teams to detect unmanned aerial systems and various units of the Airborne Surveillance and Control System, including a NATO AWACS early warning aircraft.

The Army deployed an air defence unit from the 71st Air-defence Artillery regiment, while the Navy activated frigate *Almirante Juan de Borbón* near Alborán Island.

"Cyberspace is a very sensitive domain that can affect the coexistence and operability of daily life, and the armed forces are making a very important effort to prevent this threat", pointed out Minister Robles.



STRONG SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE AND CONCERN FOR THE SAHEL

European Union defence ministers meet in Toledo to analyse current security scenarios

THE Spanish Presidency of the European Union is tackling major challenges, but security and defence is undoubtedly one of the greatest for this six-month period. The war in Ukraine, the extremely complex situation on the African continent, in particular in the Sahel, and the steps to be taken to implement the Strategic Compass were the main topics of the informal meeting of defence ministers held in Toledo on 30 August 2023 (a complementary meeting of foreign affairs ministers was held the following day). The former Arms Factory, today the campus of the University of Castilla-La Mancha, hosted the two meetings chaired by the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell. The discussions between ministers at both meetings reached a level of detail and clarity unmatched in previous ministerial meetings to advance potential EU action. This was largely due to the flexibility of the debate (which followed the *Gymnich*

format whereby no official decisions are made), urged by the serious events in Niger and Gabon and the complex situation on the Ukrainian frontline.

Speaking at a joint press conference with acting Spanish Minister Margarita Robles after the defence meeting, Josep Borrell explained that the ministers had "reaffirmed the European Union's unwavering support for Ukraine in its defence against military aggression" and discussed the next steps to achieve "long-term and solid, sustainable military support". For her part, and on behalf of her counterparts, Margarita Robles expressed her "total and absolute" solidarity with Borrell in the face of the threats and insults from the Kremlin authorities, considering them to be "insults to the democratic values and principles shared by all Europeans". The two leaders also stressed that after analysing the current situation with concern, the EU defence ministers had decided to maintain their strong commitment to the Economic

Community of West African States (ECOWAS), respecting the principle of "African solutions to African problems".

SOLIDARITY WITH UKRAINE

The first part of the meeting was devoted to reviewing the situation in Ukraine and outlining the steps to be taken. In this regard, Borrell announced that, in order to ensure the sustainability of the assistance to Kyiv, the EU is considering creating a Ukrainian assistance fund of up to 5 billion euros every year for the 2024-2027 period, which would be integrated into the European Peace Facility. An agreement is expected to be reached before the end of this year. The EU's foreign policy leader added that, in the short term and as regards the delivery of ammunition, "over the summer, the European defence industry has been negotiating to supply Ukraine with the ammunition it needs", and pointed out that "Ukraine needs long-term and solid, sustainable military support, which will be essential for the counter-offensive".



Meeting of European Union defence ministers in Toledo on 30 August.

At the meeting, the ministers also assessed the state of play of the Military Assistance Mission to Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine), which, in the words of the High Representative, “is proving to be particularly satisfactory”. Borrell explained that a total of 25,000 Ukrainian soldiers have already been trained, which means that the objective of training 30,000 soldiers by the end of the year will be reached before the end of October. The ministers therefore analysed the possibility of raising the objective of the missions to 40,000 Ukrainian soldiers trained in the coming months.

Once again Europe demonstrated its unanimous support for the Ukrainian people and their armed forces. The meeting’s location in Toledo was symbolic, since its Infantry Academy trains 80 percent of the more than 3,000 Ukrainian soldiers to be trained in Spain by the end of the year.

This was recalled by Minister Robles at the welcome dinner held on 29

September, following a cultural visit by the heads of delegation to Toledo’s centre, which included a concert in the cathedral. The defence ministers thus concluded their first working day in Spain, which had begun that same day in Madrid with the meeting of the board of directors of the European Union Satellite Centre at Torrejón air base, chaired by Josep Borrell.

Spain reiterated its commitment to medical assistance, both through the reception of new wounded soldiers and amputees to be treated in Spanish military

Ministers highlighted the success of the Ukraine training mission

hospitals, and by sending surgical and medical material to support the recently donated *Role 2+* deployable field hospital. Robles also announced that Spain is considering contributing, in collaboration with other partners, to Ukraine’s future cyber-defence capabilities. The acting Spanish Minister reaffirmed Spain’s unwavering commitment to “continue supporting Ukraine and the values it represents” and thanked her counterparts for “the Europeans’ joint commitment to guarantee peace”.

The second working session, which addressed the global repercussions of Russia’s aggression in Ukraine, was attended by UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean Pierre Lacroix and NATO’s Assistant Secretary-General for Defence Policy and Planning Angus Lapsley.

The Ministers assessed the possible security guarantees that the EU can provide to Ukraine to deter further Russian aggressions in the future. Robles was

Discussing the challenges and opportunities of the Strategic Compass

The seminar was held on the margins of the EU Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers' meetings

THE Europe of Defence has a clear roadmap and is making steady progress. During the meetings with their counterparts in Toledo, the acting Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, José Manuel Albares, and the acting Minister of Defence, Margarita Robles, inaugurated the seminar “Implementing the Strategic Compass: challenges and opportunities” at the Toledo Conference Centre, in which they discussed the progress made in the European Union’s security and defence policy.

In his speech, Minister Albares stressed the importance of the EU becoming “a global actor providing security to its citizens” in a context such as the current one, marked by the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the instability in West Africa, among other challenges, which he defined as “decisive for Europe”. The Foreign Affairs Minister highlighted the adaptation of the Strategic Compass, which has enabled, for example, the development of a Rapid Deployment Capacity, whose first real exercise will take place during the Spanish Presidency of the European Union; the growing importance of security and defence partnerships; and the cooperation between the EU, the UN, NATO and regional organisations such as the African Union.

In his speech, he also noted that security is “a cherished asset that cannot be taken for granted and requires capabilities that back the political will of governments”. He added: “In a geopolitical scenario where state and non-state actors are attempting to undermine the rules-based international order, it is all the more necessary for the EU to act as a global actor that ensures the security of its citizens. This is one of the reasons why we are all supporting Ukraine with unprecedented and unwavering unity on a military, economic and humanitarian level”.

For her part, Margarita Robles stressed in her speech that Spain, like the rest of the EU, is “firmly committed to the defence industry” at a time when the war in Ukraine has “highlighted our vulnerabilities”. As for the Europe of Defence, Robles said: “If there is one essential and fundamental thing on which we must all agree very strongly, it is that we must guarantee open strategic autonomy and firmly support the European defence industrial base”. She also stressed that furthering the development of the Strategic Compass involves the re-industrialisation of the European Union and to guarantee that

open strategic autonomy. “We are living in complicated and difficult times, but it is precisely in these times that we can see the stature of the institutions. The countries and the people can be truly satisfied with our European Union”, added Margarita Robles, who paid tribute to the Spanish and European armed forces that take part in international missions and “contribute to strengthening peace”.

Afterwards, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, took part in the discussion on the international events affecting the implementation of the Strategy for the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy and the Strategic Compass, with special emphasis on the war in Ukraine and the current geopolitical competition. Defying criticism that it was a case of too little too late, Mr. Borrell emphasised the “political will and resources” deployed by the EU to help Ukraine. This confirms the good functioning of the bloc of 27 states, which must unanimously agree on a “non-military but very important” operation.

The European Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry Breton, underlined the important role of the European defence industry before introducing the two panels around which the seminar was organised. The first one, dedicated to the implementation of the Strategic Compass in

three of its components: defence, security and partnerships, addressed the need to rethink the relationship between the EU and NATO. The Portuguese Foreign Affairs Minister, João Gomes Cravinho, and the Dutch Defence Minister, Kajsa Ollongren, participated in this panel along with representatives of several think tanks.

The second panel, dedicated to the European defence industry, brought together leading players from the European Defence Agency and industry. Moderated by Félix Arteaga, senior researcher at the Royal Elcano Institute, they discussed the state of play and expectations of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB). This seminar was an opportunity to showcase Spain’s commitment to promoting peace and security in Europe and to highlight our country’s support for a technologically advanced, supportive and internationally committed defence technological and industrial base, especially in Europe. The Secretary of State for Defence, María Amparo Valcarce, and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Global Affairs, Ángeles Moreno, closed the meeting.



Marco Romero/MDE

Margarita Robles and Josep Borrell at the Toledo Conference Centre during the Strategic Compass analysis seminar.

convinced that the time had come for the European defence industry to play a greater role in providing long-term support to Ukraine. “We must ensure that the substantial financial packages we approve not only help Ukraine, but also contribute to job creation by boosting the European defence industry”. In this respect, Margarita Robles pointed out that the initiatives underway are already advancing at a steady pace, but they will have to be sustainable over time and not be detrimental to the EU’s action in other neighbouring geographical areas. “Unfortunately, the war in Ukraine provides the framework for the moment we are living through in Europe, but it is also a worrying moment because of the difficult situation in the South, in Africa and in the Sahel”, said the Minister, recalling the 360-degree vocation of the European Peace Facility, a financial instrument that the EU-27 intend to increase substantially.

At the working luncheon following the second meeting, the ministers discussed with concern the security situation in Africa, especially after the events in Niger (a coup toppled the democratically elected government of Mohamed Bazoum on 26 July) and more recently in Gabon (another military rebellion at the end of August), as well as the future of the European Union’s military missions in that region and in the Balkans.

Margarita Robles reiterated Spain’s firm and well-known stance: “Despite the growing difficulties, we must persevere in our efforts, demonstrating Europe’s commitment to security in the region, listening to the Africans to understand their real needs and not leaving any loopholes that can be exploited by hostile actors”. In Mali, a neighbouring country to Niger, Spain is leading the EUTM-Mali mission for the fourth time since 2013 and has deployed the largest contingent to support the Malian armed forces to maintain peace and security in the country and contribute to the stabilisation of the region.

Finally, the ministers briefly reviewed progress in the implementation of the Strategic Compass, in particular with regard to the development of the Union’s Rapid Deployment Capacity (EU RDC). Recent events, such as the evacuation of European citizens from crisis areas, have reiterated the need for such capacity, to



Police forces loyal to the rebels patrol the streets of Niamey, Niger’s capital, after the coup on 26 July.

which Spain will contribute by organising its first real exercise on our territory in October.

BILATERAL MEETINGS

During the working sessions in Toledo, and in her role as host, Margarita Robles had the opportunity to hold bilateral meetings with the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations and with the Romanian Minister of Defence, Angel Tilvar.

In her meeting with Lacroix, the Minister highlighted the valuable contribution of the Spanish Armed Forces to the objectives of the United Nations, not only through our unwavering commitment to the missions in Lebanon and Colombia, but also through other kind of contributions. Among others, she highlighted the online course, in Spanish, to train as a Gender Advisor in Operations, for which more than

3,300 students from 23 countries have already enrolled.

Robles thanked the United Nations for its support to the head of the Mission and Force Commander in Lebanon, Spanish Lieutenant-General Aroldo Lázaro, for tackling the complex political, economic and humanitarian situation in the region, as well as for extending his mandate as head of UNIFIL for a third year. “Spain is firmly committed to continuing this mission,” said Robles (the day after the meeting, the United Nations voted at its headquarters in New York and decided to extend and maintain the mandate of the peacekeeping mission in Lebanon).

During her meeting with the Romanian Defence Minister, the two ministers discussed the objectives of the Spanish Presidency of the European Union with regards to security and defence, the missions in Africa and Spain’s contribution to the security of NATO’s eastern flank and the Black Sea. The Minister thanked Romania in particular for its contribution to the EUTM mission in the Central African Republic. She also told Minister Tilvar that Spain was determined to continue its military presence in Romania — currently with an air surveillance radar— as part of the contingent deployed by NATO in the eastern flank, adapting it in accordance with needs.

Spain reiterated its commitment to the Sahel and its stabilisation efforts

Rosa Ruiz

The Spanish Ministry of Defence celebrated the anniversary of women joining the Armed Forces, where 15,807 women currently make up 13.1% of all troops

WOMEN IN THE SPANISH ARMED FORCES

35 years of history



ON 10 October 2023, marking the 35th anniversary of women enlisting in the Spanish Armed Forces, the Ministry of Defence honoured those trailblazing women and focused on the future generations. The event was held at the Museum of Royal Collections in Madrid, and was presided over by Defence Minister Margarita Robles. In front of a packed assembly hall, representatives of the European Union, NATO and Canada discussed the critical role played by women in peacekeeping and conflict resolution. In addition, a group of Spanish women in uniform discussed their professional experience, the influence of the military on their personal lives and their future expectations within the Armed Forces, where 15,807 women make up 13.1% of all troops.

The Defence Minister's first words were to evoke the Afghan women and girls "who face a dramatic situation in which they are not even allowed to attend school", those living in Ukraine, and girls in some African countries "who are forced to marry at the age of twelve, become the second or third wife of a man much older than them, and who receive no medical care at all".

Robles reiterated Spain's resolve to ensure compliance with United Nations Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. "We firmly believe that peace can be guaranteed in a much more secure way if women are incorporated into political decision-making positions in conflict areas and form part of the Armed Forces", she stated.

The minister made special reference to the first women who joined the military, thanking them for the step they took at the time "when even many of their families were not sure about it". She also appealed to the younger generations. "I want you to know how important it is to serve your country, because life is all about commitment, generosity and values". "We will persist in our efforts to carry out the role that the United Nations has wanted us women to play in all areas", she declared. "I am saying this with full conviction and knowledge. There will be no world peace or security if there aren't



The Minister and the Undersecretary of Defence, together with the participants in the roundtable "Military women. Source of inspiration for new generations".

more women in key political positions and in the armed forces".

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Three international representatives —Wendy Drukier, Canadian Ambassador to Spain and Andorra; Stella Ronner-Grubacic, Ambassador for Gender and Diversity at the European External Action Service; and Irene Fellin, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security— discussed the role of women in peacekeeping and conflict resolution.

One of the pillars of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda approved by the UN Security Council is precisely to give women greater access to leadership roles in conflicts. "The other is to prevent and combat sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations", explained Major General José Ramón Velón Ororbía, the moderator and Director General for Personnel of the Ministry of Defence.

The Canadian Ambassador to Spain reiterated the need to participate in the

"There will be no peace if there aren't more women in key political positions and in the armed forces", Robles said

Agenda "because conflicts affect women and men, boys and girls differently, and therefore each group provides different insights into their prevention and resolution". She argued that "there is a greater chance that an agreement will be reached and that it will be lasting when groups of women are able to influence peace negotiations".

The Elsie Initiative, one of the measures introduced by Canada in 2017, seeks to develop and test a series of innovative approaches to overcome barriers and increase women's meaningful participation in peacekeeping operations. The ambassador also explained other initiatives launched by her country.

These include the global awareness campaign Peace by Her, which aims to protect and pay tribute to women peacebuilders and ensure that the perpetrators of sexual assault in armed conflict are held accountable from the standpoint of the survivors. Convinced that women's participation has a tangible impact on the effectiveness of the armed forces, the ambassador emphasized that her country, with 16.5% of women serving in the military, wishes to increase that number to 25% by 2026.

Stella Ronner-Grubacic, for her part, devoted part of her presentation to explaining why there are still few women in the armed forces in Europe, only 7% of all soldiers. "It is crucial to maintain women in the armed forces, not only to comply with the principles of equality, but also because it is the evolution of today's modern militaries". Among other measures to achieve this, she pointed out the need to break down the barriers that limit their recruitment; to have gender leaders creating an atmosphere of equality; and for men to make the same effort as women to bring about this equality.

NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, Irene Fellin, also emphasized the importance of having more women in organisations such as NATO. "Since the environment is highly masculinized, we need to win these spaces for women in order to achieve real equality among leaders", she stated. Fellin added that "ensuring a future of equality is very important and that's why I often take young people to visit NATO to show them what we do and get their feedback. This way we bring together the

> **STELLA RONNER-GRUBACIC.**
AMBASSADOR FOR GENDER AND DIVERSITY AT
THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE

“Real equality is still far from being achieved”

“UNFORTUNATELY, only 7 percent of European soldiers are women”. Stella Ronner-Grubacic made this statement at the event in Madrid as she pondered what they could do better to achieve real gender equality between men and women. “If we keep going in the current direction, we will be losing qualified and motivated women along the way”, she added. Convinced that this situation is not going to change by itself, she pointed out that change must be led from the top, with women in the highest positions; the recruitment system must be modified, eliminating the barriers that restrict women’s participation in the Armed Forces in order to achieve “more diverse teams”; and men “must be our allies and make the same effort as us to attain this equality”.

The ambassador stressed that this is a critical issue for all EU countries. “We struggle to spread the values of equality between men and women throughout the world. Even so, we are aware that real equality is far from being achieved, both inside and outside the military world”. According to a research study, she went on, “if we keep acting the way we have done so far, it will take 286 years to achieve gender equality”.



political sphere, the military sphere, and the different generations”.

INSPIRE YOUNG WOMEN

At the event, four soldiers from the Army, the Air and Space Force, the Navy, and the Common Corps, together with two female students, —one from the Army’s Military Academy and the other from the 1st Troop Training Centre—, participated in a roundtable discussion moderated by Judge Advocate General Begoña Aramendía, head of the Army’s Advisory Office.

They agreed that regulatory changes, such as the Ministry of Defence’s work-life balance policy, have facilitated the recruitment and retention of women. They also made it clear that their professional vocation is a way of life rather than just a job.

With 27 years of military experience, army lieutenant colonel Elena Carretero, commander of the 12th Sapper Battalion, was the most senior member and stated that the armed forces have

evolved hand in hand with our society. “They have made me the woman I am today, and they have shown me that I am capable of achieving anything I want to in life”.

Nurse Captain Amanda García Oliva emphasised that the Armed Forces have given her far more than she had anticipated when she enlisted and have allowed her to serve in countries to which few people travel and in circumstances in which few people have the chance to work in their profession.



María Teresa Gordillo, Patricia Ortega, Begoña Aramendía and Loreto Gutiérrez, the four female generals of the Spanish Armed Forces.

“I hope that my experience can be used to achieve a modern military and, if our example helps raise the percentage of women in the armed forces, even better”.

Throughout her 26 years in the Armed Forces, chief petty officer Dolores Martínez Garrido, who is currently assigned to the Aircraft Flotilla, has toured extensively around the world while serving on board different ships. She still recalls her early years, when she could only go on certain ships because most of them had no accommodation for women. “Now you can choose any unit. We have improved both personally and professionally”. She acknowledges that spending so much time away from home forges close family bonds among colleagues. Of all her missions, she particularly remembers Atalanta, in 2009, with ESPS Méndez Núñez. “We had to rescue fishing boat Alakrana, which had been hijacked by Somali pirates. I am very proud of what we did, as we were there to defend the right to be free and to be able to be at peace anywhere in the world”.

Spain's share of women in the military, at 13.1%, is average compared to other NATO countries

First Corporal Soledad Agea Cuadrado is posted in the Air Deployment Support Squadron (ADSS). She still remembers her surprise when she joined the Air and Space Force 25 years ago. "There were hardly any women. In fact, I was one of the first female manual opening parachutists". Since then, "many obstacles have been overcome, boundaries that had nothing to do with our training or preparation". The military "has made me grow as a person". However, she believes that this shouldn't just remain a dream. "You think you can aim higher and accomplish more and then your desire to excel grows".

Two students also took part in the roundtable: lady ensign cadet Alba Villarubia Pérez of the Army's Military Academy and student private María del Mar Vidal de Loño of the 1st Troop Training Centre. They both agreed that the military is a way of life, "not only when we wear our uniforms, but 24 hours a day", Villarubia pointed out. They also agreed that there is no gender distinction in the Armed Forces. For this reason, they encouraged the younger audience members —both men and women— to join an organisation where it is crucial to work as a team, "get training, and put in a lot of effort to overcome any obstacles that may arise".

"If you are wondering whether to join or not, just do it", the student private pointed out. Because, fortunately, leaving the military is a simple process if you decide you don't like it. And whether you stay or go, it's an experience that will make you grow as a person and will provide you with a new family. Everything you learn here can be applied to your civilian life because you learn to know what your boundaries are.

Undersecretary of Defence Adoración Mateos closed this commemorative ceremony by saying that "women joining the armed forces is a success story that has been possible thanks to all the players involved".



> ARMY LIEUTENANT COLONEL ELENA CARRETERO BRAVO COMMANDER OF THE 12TH SAPPER BATTALION

“The Armed Forces have made me the woman I am today”

“IN these 35 years, the Armed Forces have evolved hand in hand with our society”, stated Lieutenant Colonel Carretero. She joined the Army 27 years ago and says that this institution has “made me the woman I am today. It compels you to step outside of your comfort zone and gives you the opportunity to experience a variety of situations in which you can put into practice all the concepts taught at the Academy, often in difficult conditions. It makes you realise that you are capable of achieving everything you want”. Among these values, she emphasised austerity, ability to make sacrifices, camaraderie and commitment.

Her participation in international operations in Kosovo, Iraq and Lebanon has made her appreciate the value of these missions for global security. “Wherever we go, we earn the affection of the people because we accomplish the military mission entrusted to us, but we do it in close contact with them. As a soldier, it makes you feel very proud of yourself because you sense that you are contributing to the security and peace so sought after by the men and women in uniform”. Although she acknowledges that missions are not easy at times, “we always want to deploy again with our colleagues, even if we miss our families. Because we have a mission to accomplish. You always want to go back and that's because it's a great experience”.

She highlighted the role of those trailblazing women and of “all those who have followed their example”. She also underscored the role of their male comrades, “who have known how to evolve in the same direction” as the Armed Forces; and that of the Ministry of Defence, “which has laid the foundations for this integration process to become a reality by approving all the necessary regulations to achieve equal participation of women in the Armed Forces”.

Throughout the two-hour event, several videos featuring military women from all branches and ranks described what they do in their jobs. Among them were the director of the Division of Equality and Social Support for Personnel, Colonel María Rosario Herrera Abián; Lieutenant Colonel María Dolores Muñoz Pérez; First Corporal Lorena Sanchís; and



The representatives of NATO, the EU and Canada discussed the role of women in peacekeeping and conflict resolution.

Brigadier General Loreto Hurtado. Other women also explained their responsibilities from the various missions abroad in which they are posted, such as Lieutenant Elena Gutiérrez (Estonia), Lieutenant Elena de Castellví (Gulf of Guinea), and Sergeant Verónica Marcos (Latvia).

“Events like these are necessary to give visibility to women in the Armed Forces”, said Judge Advocate General Begoña Aramendía. She stressed that “this year is a source of pride for all military personnel, but especially for military women, since the Princess of Asturias has started her military training at the Army’s Military Academy”. She talked about the developments of the Armed Forces, but also of what has remained unchanged “and what should not change”. “I mean loyalty, discipline, camaraderie, dedication, self-sacrifice and spirit of service. In other words, the virtues that are inherent in the military, whether male or female. And it is the mission of all of us, men and women, to ensure that they remain unchanged”.

Elena Tarilonte
Photos: Pepe Díaz



> **NURSE CAPTAIN AMANDA GARCÍA OLIVA**
POSTED IN THE LOGISTICS GROUP OF THE ARMY AIR CORPS (FAMET)

“Being a soldier is a way of life”

“**B** EING a soldier is not a job, it’s a way of life. “Our life is what it is because of the Armed Forces”, explains nurse captain Amanda García Oliva. She maintains that the military has given her far more than she had expected when she enlisted “because I was unaware at the time of the limits this profession pushes you to”.

She says that above all it has taught her to think of society as a whole. “We are there when a situation gets really complicated. At that moment, it’s not a question of having to go to work, you just want to go to work. When things get bad, you want to be there”.

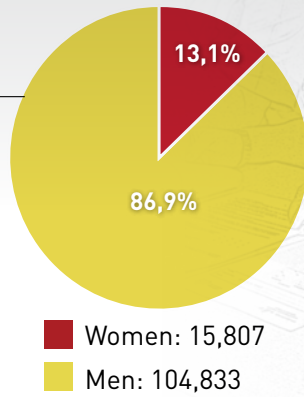
This nurse captain has participated in numerous missions abroad. “It’s the best thing about my profession. It has allowed me to be in places and in conditions that very few people get to know”, she says proudly. “Being there with my colleagues when we’re really needed drives me to constantly surpass myself”.

She particularly remembers the Kabul evacuation in which she participated in 2021. “It marked a before and after in my career. We had to implement what we were trained for. This is possible because we have rehearsed it many times at home”.

Personnel in the Armed Forces

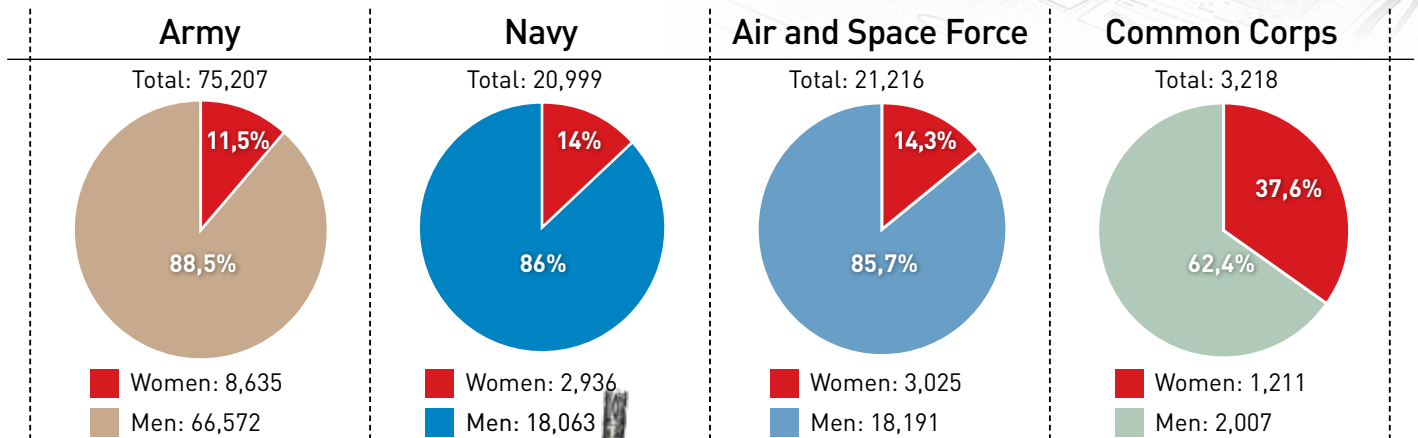
(Data as of 1 October 2023)

Total: 120,640

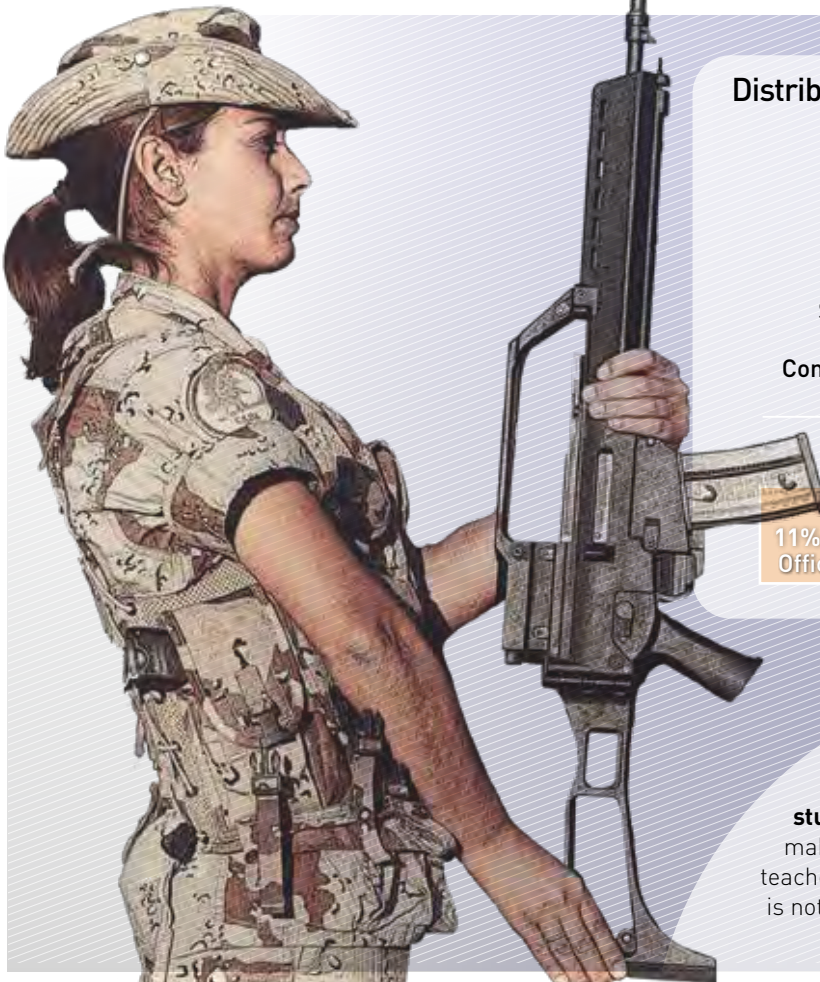


A MODEL OF INTEGRATION

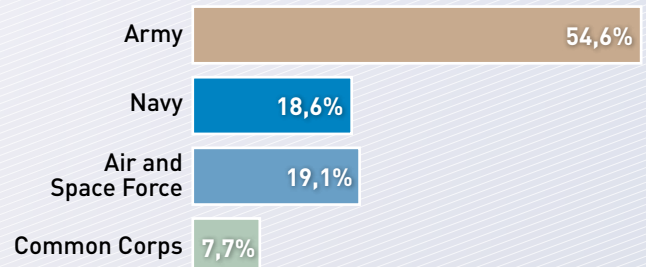
SINCE joining in 1988, women have become a key pillar in the modernisation and professionalisation of the Spanish Armed Forces. Today, they can hold any post, including the most operational ones, and have access to all ranks and corps.



Highest ranks attained: General (4), Colonel/Captain (51)



Distribution of female military soldiers by Branches



Distribution by rank



Training centres

There are currently **1,284 female students** enrolled in the various training centres, making up **15%** of the student body, and **89 female teachers**, or **7%** of the total. The Military Medical Corps is notable for having equal representation of male and female students.

**COLONEL MARÍA ROSARIO HERRERA ABIÁN,
HEAD OF THE MILITARY PERSONNEL SOCIAL SUPPORT AND EQUALITY DIVISION**

“WOMEN HAVE IMPROVED OUR ARMED FORCES”

She emphasises that “significant changes have occurred naturally” and values the close relationship with the service members that comes with supporting social policies

SHE can “very well” recall the day she enlisted in the military in 1992 —“overjoyed” to complete her military training period in the three Academies— and the day in 1993 when she got her first posting, in the Army’s Legal Advisory Office. “There were very few women and we saw it as an adventure”, recalls María Rosario Herrera Abián, an auditor colonel in the Judge Advocate Corps born in El Aaiún, Sahara, in 1967. Three decades later, she is in charge of the division that coordinates the gender equality policy of the Ministry of Defence.

María Rosario Herrera, the daughter of a medical colonel and with a PhD in law, oversees a division that is also in charge of providing social support for staff. She finds this to be “a very gratifying role because it allows us to be very close to the struggles and situations faced by our soldiers and see the results of our work”.

—How did you experience the process in which women joined the armed forces?

—I have witnessed with satisfaction that a great deal of change has come about in a natural way. In the early years, we focused on the realization of a right that had at last been achieved, by entering an institution that had hitherto only been open to men. It was an effort both for them and for us. We witnessed the change of mentality, the adaptation of infrastructures, the new needs...; afterwards, the situation began to normalise and consolidate. We have gone

from discussing the exercise of a right to valuing the success of our integration. In my opinion, women have improved our Armed Forces, and the combination of their skills and expertise has helped to make them more efficient, modern, operational and highly-regarded by our society.

—With only 13% of soldiers being female, the percentage of women in the military is still lower than in other professions. Have we reached a sociological ceiling?

—Although there has been a slight increase in the number of women, it is true that this trend has slowed down recently. However, compared to soldiers and sailors, there has been a noticeable increase in the officer and non-commissioned officer rank groups, indicating that women are opting for positions of greater responsibility.

—What can we do to encourage young women’s interest in the military profession?

“We need to raise the visibility of the military profession to reach out to young women”

—Young people are attracted to professions that have a combination of commitment, values, self-improvement, teamwork, spirit of service... and the military profession has all these ingredients. It is very appealing, but it is still largely unknown to young women. We need to find more ways to give it visibility and reach out to them. The key is to convey the real and personal experience of our service members, to excite them about the work they do, thus giving credibility to the fascinating work they accomplish. While it is true that we visit high schools, colleges, education fairs, and other places, we still need to think of new ways to get this information to young women.

—The military removed its height restriction this year, which was 160 cm for males and 155 cm for women. Has one of the glass ceilings preventing women from joining the armed forces been broken?

—We are aware that women have been the primary advocates for the removal of this barrier, but it is an equality measure that benefits both men and women, and aims to draw talent and skills. It is therefore in the best interests of the Armed Forces’ effectiveness.

—In what ways do the Defence Ministry’s gender equality policies affect the military?

—These policies focus on equal opportunities between men and women,



and on the application of the principle of merit and capacity. As a result, gender mainstreaming has been incorporated into the Military Career Law, and is present in all of its implementing regulations, particularly those pertaining to access, training, promotions, postings, and administrative situations.

In addition, we have a stable institution, the Military Observatory for Equality between Men and Women, which with its support body, the Permanent Secretariat for Equality, ensures effective compliance with these policies and the eradication of any type of discrimination that may occur. Among the activities we've carried out, I want to draw attention to the fact that we've trained on equality and provided

advice on gender issues in operations, where the Ministry of Defence is a leader in the EU.

—Has progress been made in terms of good work-life balance and co-responsibility?

—Very much so. All the regulations approved in the General State Administration are immediately incorporated into the military sphere so that members of the Armed Forces, both men and women, enjoy the same rights as other public employees. Furthermore, specific measures have been adopted that take into account the idiosyncrasies of the military profession (watches, exercises, operations abroad, etc.), so that military

members can balance work and personal and family life.

—Are units sufficiently aware of these measures?

—We, in the division, make sure that this is the case. The Observatory receives daily enquiries from unit commanders and military personnel in general, whom we provide advice. We have received more than 1,000 this year. During the last plenary session of the Observatory, we discussed the suitability of promoting this information further among personnel posts and commanders who must apply them. This drove the division, through the Permanent Secretariat for Equality, to organise specific workshops on co-responsibility and work-life balance in April and May, with the participation of more than 800 service members. The plan is to repeat them annually to make it easier to implement this policy.

—Is it difficult to reach a balance between family life and the units' readiness?

—Yes, because the legitimate exercise of our rights to a good work-life balance must not undermine the accomplishment of the missions entrusted to the armed forces. It is a difficult task for unit commanders since they have to ensure the exercise of these rights, but at the same time fulfil the objectives and tasks of their units. Many of the concerns raised in the Observatory are related to this issue. We analyse specific cases and provide guidance to unit commanders on how to strike the best balance between the operational requirements at any given time and leaves, shortened work hours, flexible work schedules, etc.

—The presence of women in peacekeeping operations is said to be an added value.

—Of course it is. Our international missions have been more successful due to the involvement of military women. Given the cultural and religious implications of the local populations where peacekeeping operations take place, access to women and children —who comprise over half of the population— requires the presence of military women. This access is essential, as it facilitates strip searches and healthcare and allows us to know their needs and

INTERVIEW

gather information that will help us provide an adequate comprehensive response. In addition, the presence and performance of our service women in conflict zones encourages local women to stand up for their rights and take an active role in the recovery of their country.

—Spain supports the UN Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Do you think the gender perspective helps in conflict resolution?

—This is an objective fact. Women make up half of the population and their direct and full participation in peace processes is essential for consolidating

is now required for every unit to have an expert on this protocol available to assist everybody.

—And what measures are taken against harassment at work?

—In the same line as with sexual harassment, the Ministry's stance is one of zero tolerance, full protection of the victims and prevention of these behaviours. To this end, the Protocol on Professional Harassment in the Armed Forces was published in May 2021, which provides guidelines for the prompt detection of these behaviours. In order to guarantee a suitable working environment that prevents

pensions; manages compensations derived from accidents in operations abroad, etc.

—You are also in charge of the Support Unit for the Wounded and the Families of the Wounded and Fallen in action. How are they cared for?

—We coordinate personalised and continuous support for the victims and their families together with the units. They receive psychological assistance from the outset, as well as information and assistance in completing the necessary administrative procedures (pensions, insurance, aid, etc.), all of which we provide throughout this dreadful period of time with support and affection.

—Are specific measures taken to protect people with disabilities?

—Yes. We have had the Armed Forces' Disability Assistance Office since 2016. This unit is responsible for providing advice and support to military personnel with disabilities and promotes the principles of equality and non-discrimination of people with disabilities in the Ministry of Defence. To this end, numerous courses are organised, such as the conferences held, with the collaboration of CERMI, in the Military Emergency Unit, to ensure that its members are appropriately trained in the rescue of individuals with disabilities. Also noteworthy is the promotion of specially adapted sports for disabled service members, creating personalised routes that have stimulated the creation of an inclusive sports committee within the High Military Sports Council.

—Your other vocation was teaching. Do you still teach?

—No, not any more. For 27 years —from 1994 to 2021—, I taught Procedural Law at the Faculty of Law of the Complutense University of Madrid, but I had to give it up when I was assigned to this division. This posting requires us to be available by phone all the time, see if there is someone in need of our support, respond to a situation that has to be handled, etc. I think all those who work here are particularly sensitive and enjoy their work. I don't rule out going back to university in the future because I really enjoy teaching. I am now dedicated to managing, another challenge that I also love.

Santiago F. del Vado/ Photos: Pepe Díaz



peace. Studies indicate that there is a significant increase in the probability of peace agreements being more durable when such participation occurs.

—The Sexual Harassment Protocol was strengthened more than three years ago. Are personnel in command posts and the rest of the staff more aware these days?

—Yes. Numerous workshops, information and dissemination campaigns on this protocol are regularly held in the units by the Harassment Protection Services. In addition, since Instruction 66/2019, this kind of training has been promoted as a prevention tool. In this regard, unit commanders are required to receive this type of training and make sure that their staff members are constantly aware of these behaviours. Additionally, it

harassment situations from occurring, this division promotes awareness-raising and information days for units.

—Does this division manage other issues related to social policy?

—Yes. We carry out a wide range of activities. For instance, the division oversees the management of our 29 nursery schools; directs the social action policy of the Ministry's military personnel, which is managed by each of the three service branches; is responsible for the annual call for aid, primarily focused on the education and training of the children of our military personnel; ensures the correct management of the Ministry's collective life and accident insurances; provides the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration with the necessary documents for the recognition of our personnel's



MUSEO DEL EJÉRCITO



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

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

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

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

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FIGHTER INSTRUCTORS

At the Infantry School in Toledo, 141 Spanish military members are teaching basic, IED and demining training modules to Ukrainian soldiers

THEY are all “volunteers and very professional”. This is how the commanding officer of the Combat Training Unit, Lieutenant Colonel Jonás Sánchez Merino, describes the 141 instructors who are at the Infantry Academy in Toledo providing basic, IED and demining training to 251 Ukrainian soldiers as part of the European Union Military Assistance Mission to Ukraine (EUMAM-UA). “We have attempted to bring in experts who are as experienced as possible because, in addition to possessing the knowledge, you also need to know how to impart it, and that is achieved through experience-based self-confidence”, he adds.

The Spanish instructors participating in this mission run from Burgos by the Toledo Training Coordination Centre teach their Ukrainian trainees everything they need to know to develop their skills on the front line. “Eighty percent of those who arrived at the beginning had already been in combat and many of them in my unit wondered what they could teach them. But after four days, that uncertainty vanished because they lacked tactical training despite having been sent to battle. They were border guards who had only performed patrols, guard duties, and surveillance”.

A selection had to be made because there were numerous volunteers to serve as instructors. “Within each unit, everyone knows one another. And I don’t choose who stays or leaves; instead, I give the company commander the authority to choose the troops with the best skills, discipline, commitment to duty, and technical and tactical expertise to serve as instructors”. Once selected, they all undergo a training period of about five weeks. “During that time”, explains the head of the Combat Training Unit, “we have modified our annual training programme in order to accommodate that specialised training for the tasks we had to perform here”. This lieutenant colonel points out that what drives these volunteers the most is “feeling useful in instructing those who have to improve their military training to fight for the freedom of their people”.

There is a close relationship between instructors and students. “When they arrive, we pick them up at the airport and bring them to this School. Here, all the instructors are waiting for them, even if they come at three o’clock in the morning”. According to Lieutenant Colonel Sánchez

Merino, “we want to demonstrate from the very beginning our respect for these people who have left their families behind and who are going through such a trying situation”.

Because language is “a limiting factor”, the instructors acknowledge that their work would be impossible without the assistance of interpreters. In Toledo, there are 30 of them, most of them women, who are gradually gaining experience and learning technical vocabulary. “Additionally, the instructors communicate with gestures, and have learned basic vocabulary so that they can say things like “ammunition”, “cease fire”, and “semiautomatic fire”, he adds.

The soldiers who are currently stationed in Toledo are the second rotation of EUMAM-UA and are mainly made up of personnel from the 1st Brigade *Aragón*, in particular from the Tank Infantry Battalion *Flandes* of the 4th Regiment *Pavia*. Ukraine receives training assistance based on its needs and is not only carried out at the Infantry School in Toledo, where, in addition to the three modules currently being taught, combat health care is regularly imparted and the marksmanship module may be activated. Overall, more than 400 Ukrainian soldiers are being trained in units throughout the country. At the time of going to press, the Spanish Marine Brigade’s basic training course was being conducted in San Fernando (Cádiz), while a course in geodesy was being held in Madrid, and combat courses were being carried out in urbanised areas in Viator (Almería). A military parachuting course in wind tunnels and numerous specialised courses for military security forces will be provided in response to current Ukrainian needs.

“We still don’t know when this mission will end. The EU’s initial commitment is for two years, but it depends on how the conflict develops”, says Lieutenant Colonel Sánchez Merino. But, everything seems to indicate that it will last longer. So far, around 2,000 Ukrainians have been trained in our country in different skills. Forecasts suggest that, in the end, there will be around 4,000 troops, which doubles the number initially offered by Spain. The total number of troops from all the nations taking part in this operation is approaching 80,000.

Elena Tarilonte
Photos: H el ene Gicquel



■ **Second Lieutenant Miguel Ángel Ibáñez Espinosa. 12th Pontonier and Engineering Specialities Regiment**

“WE HAVE TO TAKE IT STEP BY STEP”

A house has been struck by a shell. It has no fuse, but it could have been tampered with and has to be removed. Second Lieutenant Ibáñez controls the entire operation carried out by the group of Ukrainian soldiers in the IED module. Before starting the exercise, the group receives theoretical lessons. “At the beginning, we argue a lot because they want to know everything right away”, he says. “Then they realise that we have to take it step by step, that we can’t hand them a book before they have mastered the alphabet”.

Since the start of the courses, “we have made changes in response to the conflict’s development and the information they themselves give us, which is extremely valuable”. For instance, they have changed the gear they use for practice. “It’s no use teaching them to work with equipment they don’t have, so we do it with things they can buy in any shop, such as ropes, spring catches and pulleys”, says this second lieutenant with 30 years of experience as an NCO and who now trains Ukrainian personnel so that when they return to their country “they can teach more people what we are teaching them now”.

■ **Sergeant Andreas Saileanu Larion. 1st Engineer Regiment**

“THEY ALL KNOW ABOUT LANDMINES”

WE are alerted that there is a threat of mines in a conflict-ravaged village. “Since we never know exactly where they are, we must reconnoitre the entire area, starting from outside the village, working our way into the houses and, if necessary, secure the threat”, explains Sergeant Larion, a demining module instructor. “We don’t teach them how to deactivate them —that’s a higher level— but we do teach them how to get rid of them safely by throwing the mine from a distance or detonating it with explosives”.

The presence of landmines in their country “has become one of the main concerns” for the Ukrainians. “They all know about mines, even if they have never been close to one in their lives”, he adds. When they arrive in Toledo, the instructors provide them with theoretical training on the procedures they use and plan a series of exercises that are intended to be as realistic as possible based on what they might encounter when they return to their country. “In the end, we give them constructive feedback on what they can improve or what we would do differently”, concludes this 26-year-old sergeant, who says he is “doing very well” in his unit, the 1st Engineer Regiment.



“The presence of landmines is one of the main concerns for the Ukrainians”



“The Ukrainians go to war and depend on my training to fight well and survive”

■ **Staff Sergeant Daniel Villareal Villén.**
4th Armoured Regiment *Pavia*

“TRAINING IS A HUGE RESPONSIBILITY”

In a pavilion at the Infantry School, a group of Ukrainians learn how to make a first aid kit while another group practise using rifles. Several instructors from the basic training module, including Staff Sergeant Villareal Villén, are standing next to them. “We teach them the basics for combat. We only have five weeks to do this, which is a very tight timeframe, but Ukraine needs them as soon as possible”.

This first sergeant maintains that the instructors and the Ukrainians have a very good relationship. “But we need to look after our mental health and remember that when they leave, they go into battle. We have to set limits and remember why we are teaching them”.

This non-commissioned officer from the 4th Regiment *Pavia* had prior experience working as an instructor. “I served in the 1st Troop Training Centre (CEFOT) a year ago, and I loved teaching, but this is more important. After being trained, the Spanish troops join a unit where they continue their training, while the Ukrainians go to war and depend on my training to fight well and survive. It’s a huge responsibility”.

■ **Lance Corporal Pablo Andía Zambrana.**
4th Armoured Regiment *Pavia*

“WE TRY TO PROVIDE THEM WITH THE BEST TRAINING”

THE Infantry Academy in Toledo is not all about training exercises. As part of the basic training module, the Ukrainians also attend theory classes on psychology and drones, among others. One of their instructors is Lance Corporal Andía, who accompanies them throughout the day, both in the classrooms and in the training area. “All the instructors have previously acquired the knowledge that we are passing on to them”, he says, “and we try to give them the best training to ensure that when they return to their country they will be able to apply what they have learned”. The relationship is a close one: “We try to encourage them so that they don’t lose heart” because, although they come with the intention of learning, they are worried about the situation in their country. When Lance Corporal Andía was given the chance to take part in this mission, he jumped at it without thinking it twice. “It’s an entirely different operation, on national territory, with Ukrainian personnel caught up in a very high-profile conflict”. Additionally, it has allowed him to thoroughly familiarise himself with the facilities of the Infantry School, which is “where I want to go in the short to medium term to become a non-commissioned officer and continue my military career”.





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

Tackling the challenge of climate change

The Ministry of Defence disseminates the essential aspects of its strategy in the face of a global challenge





ON 20 July 2023, the Spanish Minister of Defence signed the “Ministry of Defence’s Strategy on the Challenge of Climate Change”. This document provides the Department with a global approach to a challenge that, due to its causes and effects, needs to be faced from a cross-cutting and multidisciplinary perspective. It also outlines and sets the way forward for the different contributions that the Spanish Ministry of Defence can make in the fight against climate change: reducing emissions to help prevent it; adapting to conditions dominated by progressive climate change; and managing its most harmful effects.

The document, drafted within the working group on climate change chaired by the Undersecretary of Defence for Political Affairs (SEGENPOL), is fully in line with Law 7/2021 of 20 May on Climate Change and Energy Transition. It also complies with the request of the European Union’s Strategic Compass that Member States approve their relevant climate strategies in the field of defence by the end of 2023. In this regard, and within the framework of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the

European Union, instead of the virtual event initially planned, a face-to-face conference will be held in Brussels at the end of November to present the strategy and discuss this global challenge with European partners.

As for the content of the document, Minister Robles describes climate change in her presentation as “one of the greatest environmental threats humanity has ever faced”. A danger that, in the minister’s words, “is even greater due to the nature of its progress, slow but inexorable”, and whose implications we have not been fully aware of “until its effects have begun to show themselves in all their drama”.

In addition, Robles emphasises that “the fight against climate change and its consequences will only be effective if a truly global effort can be made” because “unity in the face of a threat tends to bring out the best in human nature and can allow us to obtain an ultimately positive result from what, without this unity, would undoubtedly be a catastrophe”.

As for the Ministry’s action, Defence cannot remain “oblivious to a phenomenon that so directly affects our security. Our men and women in

The strategy calls for intensifying anticipation and cooperation to respond to this challenge



uniform have already demonstrated their generosity and spirit of service by assisting citizens in emergency situations brought on by climate change. However, we must carefully plan our efforts to make the most of the resources at our disposal while safeguarding the mission of the armed forces”.

This is the aim of the “MoD’s Strategy on the Challenge of Climate Change”, which starts with the following statement: “Climate change is a factor that increases and multiplies the risks and threats to international security, stability and peace”.

The document acknowledges that climate change will have an impact on how the armed forces operate and the means they need to fulfil their missions. It begins by identifying a number of phenomena and classifying their potential consequences in order to determine how and in what areas this factor may influence Defence. These include the increased frequency with which the armed forces will employ their capabilities both at home and abroad, and the need to adapt means, military structures and even aspects related to training, doctrine, planning and conducting of operations.

The document provides for the simultaneous implementation of two types of measures: on the one hand, adaptation measures, to continue operating effectively in scenarios greatly affected by climate change; on the other,

mitigation measures, to slow down the most negative effects as much as possible. The latter is a collective effort, to which the Ministry of Defence contributes in line with national policies, in coordination with other ministries, and in agreement with the international organisations of which Spain is a member, specifically, the United Nations, the European Union and NATO.

As a result, the strategy outlines the framework for the Ministry of Defence as a whole, and the Armed Forces in particular, to orient their activity taking into account the adaptation to climate change, by protecting their capabilities, operability, and resilience to continue fulfilling their missions effectively and contributing, as far as possible, to mitigating the consequences of climate challenge.

The principles and courses of action that are to guide the MoD in matters of climate change are established with this dual purpose of adapting and contributing, but always under a fundamental premise: that the measures adopted do not jeopardise the fulfilment of the missions entrusted to the Armed Forces.

The strategy calls for intensifying anticipation and cooperation in the field of the day-to-day life, performance and preparation of the force, as well as in the field of military

The climate crisis increases and multiplies the risks and threats to security, stability and peace



The contribution of all military members is essential to slow down the effects of climate change

operations. In the former, data collection and analysis will be promoted to gradually establish indicators for tracking activities and objectives; efforts will be made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve waste management, paying special attention to the protection of the ecosystems on the MoD's land and facilities and promoting the analysis, development and implementation of new technologies while replacing the obsolete ones; vulnerabilities will be identified and preventive actions will be taken in infrastructures in order to anticipate possible negative consequences and facilitate adaptation to climate variations; finally, greater environmental awareness will be promoted with instruction, skills and training measures, as well as external and internal communication plans to recognise the importance and impact of climate change on the armed forces.

The other field, the execution of missions and operations, is the most demanding since it is increasingly usual to work in unfavourable weather conditions and because more environmentally harmful actions cannot be avoided. It is crucial to adjust doctrine, planning and operational procedures to account for potential future scenarios that are highly degraded by the consequences of climate change. Additionally, men and women are affected by the consequences of climate change in different ways. Therefore, it is crucial to incorporate a gender perspective into policies and actions that address

the impact of climate change on conflicts and humanitarian emergencies.

People come first. We must not only assist those most in need by promoting human security but also protect our own personnel deployed in operations from the effects of climate. To avoid the impact of unfavourable weather conditions exacerbating the harsh and demanding conditions inherent to military operations, health and logistical needs will need to be properly assessed.

Due to its level of specialisation, the Military Emergency Unit is the MoD's primary instrument for managing emergency situations and one of the most important of the State's civil defence structure. A clear priority is to adapt and preserve its operational capability to assist civilian authorities in the event of disasters or emergencies caused by climate change.

In short, the contribution of all military members is essential to slow down the effects of climate change. The release of this strategy, in the words of the Minister of Defence, is "an important step in the titanic task of facing an existential challenge", and she hopes that it will help "understand, and embark safely and firmly on the path that will lead us to neutralise the most adverse consequences of climate change, while at the same time, we fulfil the mission of guaranteeing National Defence".



MOROCCO EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

A UME team assisted in the search and rescue of survivors for eleven days

“**E**xhausted” but “happy” to have contributed to alleviating the suffering of the Moroccan people.

These are the sentiments upon returning home of the 56 members of the Military Emergency Unit (UME) who travelled to Morocco to help in the rescue efforts following the massive earthquake that devastated the Al Hawz region in the early hours of 8 September 2023, leaving more than 2,900 dead and 5,600 injured.

In the afternoon of 20 September, the UME troops landed at Zaragoza airbase, from where they had set out eleven days earlier on deployment to the southwest of Marrakech. On landing, Major Enrique Bascuas, the commander of the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team, acknowledged that, although they had

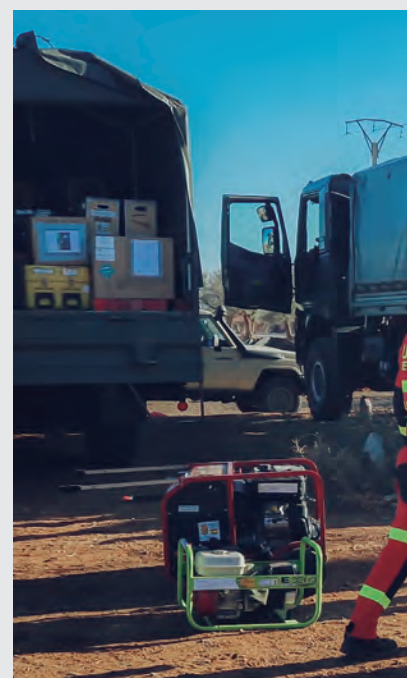
never given up hope of finding people alive, the fragile structure of the buildings —often made of adobe— had prevented collapses from creating spaces in the rubble where people could have survived while waiting for the rescue teams.

“Nevertheless, we strove to provide the authorities with as much assistance as possible to locate the bodies, because it was also crucial for them to get the remains of their dead”. A “delicate and sad” task, but one that was appreciated by both the civilian population and the authorities, “who showed us their gratitude at all times”. The Spanish team also offered medical assistance, even taking the injured to hospitals.

The UME “always intervenes in extreme situations and assumes risks”, said acting Minister of Defence Margarita Robles, when she visited the 4th Emergency Intervention



The UME





(Military Emergency Unit) team deployed in Morocco search for people in one of the earthquake-affected towns close to Marrakech.



INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS



Marco Romero/IME

Margarita Robles, in Zaragoza, Spain, thanks the UME military team for their help in the rescue efforts following the earthquake in Morocco.

Battalion (BIEM IV) in Zaragoza on 2 October 2023 to express her gratitude for the intervention of its personnel in Morocco. "I only have words of appreciation and gratitude. Whenever there is a tragedy, the UME is always there, and I want to thank you for your efforts, for always keeping the Spanish flag flying high, and for the humanity you infuse into everything you do". The Minister stressed that the fact that there may have been no survivors "does not in any way diminish what you have done, which is to help civilians in a situation of great risk". The King of Morocco, Mohammed VI, also thanked the UME in a letter. "I was personally moved, as were all the Moroccan people, by the active and effective participation of your rescue team, alongside your Moroccan brothers who, side by side, devoted all their efforts and resources to the search and rescue operations following the devastating earthquake". In a statement, Mohamed VI said he was "proud and grateful" for the UME's "generous participation", which "embodies the depth of the solid and fraternal bonds of effective solidarity that unite the Spanish and Moroccan peoples".

SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM

The powerful 6.8-magnitude earthquake in the North African country caused damage and collapsed buildings in nine prefectures

**The UME was
the first to arrive
in Morocco with
a team of 56**

around the city of Marrakech. It was felt in several neighbouring countries, including Mauritania, Portugal and parts of southern Spain. The earthquake was followed by more than 30 aftershocks, ranging in magnitude from 3.4 to 5.1. After Morocco accepted Spain's offer, the UME sent a search and rescue team of 46 soldiers from the BIEM IV and a coordination team of ten people from the General Headquarters (UMEDAT) to the area, along with four dogs from the canine team and various equipment and technical means such as geophones, telescopic cameras and ground-penetrating radars. They also carried tools for cutting and perforating very hard structures, such as reinforced concrete, and means for detecting possible toxic or explosive substances.

These specialists had already worked in earthquakes in Haiti, Lorca (Spain), Nepal, Ecuador, Mexico, and most recently in Turkey in February this year, where they found six people alive under the rubble.

The UME team departed from Zaragoza airbase in the early afternoon of 10 September in an A400M aircraft of the Spanish Air and Space Force. As the first international group to arrive at Marrakech airport, the UME troops were responsible for organising the Reception and Departure Centre (RDC) until the UNDAC team was established. The RDC's role was to receive USAR teams entering the disaster area,



A "delicate and sad" task, but one that was appreciated by both the civilian population and the authorities, "who showed us their gratitude at all times", said Major Enrique Bascuas.



Members of the Spanish team search for people trapped in the rubble in a village affected by the earthquake in the south of Marrakech.

coordinate them in support of the local authorities, and provide them with the necessary instructions and situational updates for their deployment.

USAR teams from the UK, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates joined the rescue effort, as did other Spanish troops from the Civil Guard, the Catalan Fire Brigade, the Madrid Regional Emergency Response Team (ERICAM) and the Granada Fire Brigade. From the town of Azmimir, where the base of operations was set up, teams moved out to search for people in various locations in the region, including Imi N'Tala, Ait Hmid, Talat N'Yaaqoub and the Anougal area. In total, the UME carried out fifteen search and rescue operations, sometimes working in mixed teams with



The UME sent geophones, telescopic cameras and ground-penetrating radars.

the British. "Our mission is to find and rescue survivors. That's our greatest motivation. We never lose hope. That's what we're here for and our greatest wish is to find survivors and rescue them", said Brigadier Alberto Vázquez upon his arrival in the area. "Time is against us, but we must keep in mind that on previous occasions, such as the earthquake in Turkey, we managed to rescue people who had been trapped for many more days", he added. Reaching the most remote villages was also difficult because the roads were completely destroyed and there was heavy traffic on the highways, which made it difficult for cars to pass.

Victor Hernández

Photos: Alberto Vázquez/UME

EMBRACING CHANGE, A SENSE OF URGENCY (Part 1)



General Philippe Lavigne
Supreme Allied Commander Transformation

AT the dawn of an ever-evolving geopolitical era, NATO, the world's most powerful political and military alliance, faces a new reality. This article examines the issues facing NATO and suggests ways to modernize and adapt the Alliance to meet current and future security challenges. From the need to rethink defense strategy and capability development to expanding cooperation with new partners, this analysis highlights the steps needed to strengthen NATO's edge in a digital world. With a focus on innovation, agility, and multi-domain capabilities, it aims to chart a solid path for NATO's transformation to ensure its relevance and resilience in the decades ahead.

NAVIGATING THE NEW REALITY

In the fast evolving global security environment, NATO faces a number of complex situations that have reshaped the dynamics of international relations. The emergence of new global challenges has contributed to an uncertain and diverse security landscape.

Over the past 20 years, the rapid development of space, cyberspace, artificial intelligence and autonomous weapon systems has opened up new avenues for state and non-state actors to project power and wage unconventional warfare. The threat of cyber-attacks, disinformation campaigns and the weaponization

of emerging technologies has increased the importance of cybersecurity and raised concerns about the vulnerability of critical infrastructure and the resilience of our societies. These dynamics have intensified competition for influence, resources and strategic advantage, leading to heightened tensions and rivalries. Russia, terrorist groups, and wider challenges such as China or Iran, could take multiple strategic paths over the next 20 years.

In the midst of these challenges, Russia's brutal aggression in Ukraine on 24 February 2022 was a wake-up call. With this sudden return of war on European soil, countries have realized that a comprehensive, proactive and cooperative approach to global security is now essential.

NATO faces a number of complex situations that have reshaped the dynamics of international relations



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Fortunately, NATO Allies are ahead of the game. At the Madrid Summit, they agreed a fundamental shift in our deterrence and defense, with new propositions of plans to dedicate specific forces to defend any or all Allies, higher readiness, more stocks and more pre-positioned equipment. The refocusing of our posture on collective defense begins at the operational level, with regional plans, and continues throughout the capability process: new force model, force structure requirements, C2, infrastructure... constantly updated in the light of lessons learned and, in particular, the Ukrainian ones.

Nearly 75 years after its founding, NATO is more relevant than ever. At Norfolk, the role of Supreme Allied Command Transformation is to ensure that NATO maintains its edge. And a big part of that is being best equipped to deal with what I call the new reality.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE NEW REALITY? MORE, FASTER, EVERYWHERE

The basic nature of warfare and its principles —clash of wills, force, friction, the fog of war, and centers of gravity— have held true for centuries. And as General Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, explains, the nature of war is unlikely to change; but its character continues to evolve, and so must the Alliance's

approach to warfare. The “new reality” is a highly dynamic strategic environment that we need to understand every moment and whose immediate trends we can deduce in order to confront them with our own strategic vision.

In warfare, I define this “new reality” as an unprecedented level of speed, intensity, and agility that is changing the nature of conflict and threatening traditional notions of security. It is characterized by three words: more, faster, and everywhere.

“More” refers to the proliferation and abundance of advanced technologies that are reshaping the global security landscape, as well as the exponential growth of data fueled by the digital revolution. “More” can also be applied to conventional military capabilities, as Russia's war in Ukraine challenges the ability of our production models to support high-intensity attrition and consumption. The term “more” also refers to the confirmed return of hard power as a credible and viable option for an expansionist Russia. In response, the Allies must have strong military capabilities that provide effective deterrence and defense.

A credible, modernized nuclear deterrence remains the cornerstone of the Alliance's security strategy, not only to deter



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aggression but also to underpin the Alliance's unwavering resolve to preserve peace and stability and to defend its members and their shared values.

For us, confronting more hard power also means having more conventional capabilities, while maintaining an intelligent balance between offense and defense. It also means being able to play the full range of available options, combining them in a mix of hard and soft power, and managing the dynamics of escalation.

The second term, "faster", emphasizes the speed at which actions and reactions occur in this new reality. Hypersonic weapons, for example, pose significant challenges to existing defense systems, reducing response times and compressing decision windows. The emergence of quantum computing offers unprecedented processing power, potentially enabling adversaries to break encryption, compromise secure networks and disrupt critical infrastructure.

The third word, "everywhere", reflects the expanding reach and impact of these new technologies, and the boundless and simultaneous consequences of the induced threats, in the wake of the deliberations on "hybrid warfare" that had led up to the Wales Summit in 2014. The traditional domains of land, sea, and air are

converging and expanding into space, a new arena for competition and even confrontation. Furthermore, conflict zones are no longer confined to physical battlefields; they are extending into the information and cyber domains, where state-sponsored hacking, ransomware attacks, and disinformation campaigns can have far-reaching consequences. The interconnectedness of global systems, including transportation, energy, and communications networks, increases the potential for cascading effects and disruptions on a global scale.

So, what NATO can do to face the new reality? For sure, the combination of more advanced technologies, faster capabilities and ubiquitous reach require innovative approaches to security. In addition, for our democracies, those of NATO and its partners, there is the added challenge of addressing the ethical implications of emerging technologies and developing robust common decision-making mechanisms that can keep pace with the ever-increasing agility of potential adversaries, who don't play by the same rules...

Ultimately, this complex set of needs and capabilities must be condensed into a tool for managing escalation and de-escalation dynamics at the service of the political leadership, so that it is able to manage the level of tension using all the levers at its disposal.

The "new reality" is changing the nature of conflict and threatening traditional notions of security

NATO Allied Forces must become stronger and more agile, ready and mobile, and more interoperable

**TARGET: MULTI-DOMAIN
SELECTED WEAPON: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION
RESILIENCE SHIELD: ACTIVATED**

In response to the evolving global security challenges characterized by the new reality of speed, intensity and agility, NATO has recognized the need to adapt and maintain its edge by heading towards a Multi-Domain Operations-enabled Alliance. This approach will enable NATO to effectively address multiple threats across the five operational domains of land, sea, air, space and cyberspace, while synchronizing the military instrument of power (MloP) with others. In short, NATO Allied Forces must become stronger and more agile, ready and mobile, and more interoperable. Today's conflicts and threats transcend traditional boundaries and require a multi-dimensional response. The introduction of Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) will give NATO greater credibility in deterring and defending. By integrating capabilities, information and decision-making across domains and environments, NATO can project a more comprehensive and robust posture to shape and contest. MDO will enable NATO to synchronize its efforts and exploit synergies between activities, with more agile and effective decision-making that presents political leaders with response options capable of creating dilemmas for adversaries.

To complete this multi-domain approach, it is important that NATO constantly learns from what is happening. In Ukraine, for example, we have been impressed by the resilience that the men and women, both civilian and military, are demonstrating on a daily basis. Likewise, NATO recognizes the importance of building resilience, to anticipate, absorb, resist, adapt and recover from shocks and disruptions. First, the Alliance must enhance its collective resilience by strengthening the resilience of its individual members. This includes protecting critical infrastructure, improving cyber security, and fostering societal cohesion and preparedness. Then, we need to consolidate the Alliance's resilience by deepening NATO's cooperation with members and partners organizations, industry

and academia. Tomorrow, NATO will have to strive for anti-fragility, not only withstand adversity, but also embrace change and thrive in an uncertain environment. We must turn challenges into opportunities; we must become an Alliance that uses them as catalysts for growth and adaptation.

WARFIGHTING CAPSTONE CONCEPT

Layered resilience is one of NATO's five Warfare Development Imperatives, along with Cognitive Superiority, Influence and Power Projection, Cross-Domain Command, and Integrated Multi-Domain Defense. These imperatives serve as the strategic pillars that guide NATO's transformation efforts. They are set out in the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept, a strategic document endorsed by Allies at the highest level of political leadership in 2021. Layered resilience describes the role that armed forces can play in each layer (military, civilian, civil and military) of resilience. Cognitive Superiority emphasizes the need for NATO to thoroughly understand the operating environment, including adversaries' intentions to target the human

brain and "hack" our perceptions, and to deny them to do so. Influence and Power Projection involves positively shaping the operating environment while creating dilemmas for adversaries. Cross-Domain Command enables NATO commanders to integrate capabilities across domains quickly and effectively, ensuring efficient decision-making and synchronized operations. And Integrated Multi-Domain Defense emphasizes the protection of NATO's integrity and freedom of action. By integrating defense capabilities and strategies across all domains, NATO aims to deter and defeat potential threats to its member nations, ensuring the Alliance's ability to maintain security and respond decisively.

Taken together, these five Warfare Development Imperatives provide a comprehensive framework for NATO to enhance its capabilities, adapt to emerging challenges and ensure the security and resilience of its member states in the context of the new reality.



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OVERVIEW

Exercise *Estrella Austral*

Special operations in Chile



EWAD

THE combined and joint exercise *Estrella Austral 2023*, which took place in early August in Chile, offered the various participating forces the opportunity to improve the interoperability of their special operations units. The exercise took place in scenarios with different climates and terrain, from the desert of northern Chile and its mountainous area in the Antofagasta area, through the Pacific coast, in Quintero, to the southern region of Punta Arenas. In Antofagasta, both the Joint Special Operations Command (MCOE) and the Parachute Sapper Squadron climbed Cerro Vicuña Mackenna (3,114 metres) and conducted several exercises, including urban combat, firing, mobility, and advanced life support assistance, as well as Joint Terminal

Attack Controller exercises. In the town of Rancagua, the Joint Special Operations Command (MCOE) was integrated into the Joint Combined Special Operations Component Command, where it provided advice in the area of intelligence and targeting. The exercise included, among other scenarios, the rescue of a kidnapped individual; the neutralisation of paramilitary groups' capacity to supply ammunition, weapons and food; and the transmission of security messages to the civilian population in areas where these groups were active. In Valparaíso, along with the Chilean Navy, the Spanish Navy's Special Naval Warfare Force (FGNE) team, played an active role in assaulting a ship that contained a substantial cache of paramilitary weapons, used for the exchange of oil.

CHOD in Colombia

Adm. López Calderón attends the South American Defence Conference

Colombia hosted the South American Defence Conference 2023 (SOUTHDEC). The event, held in Cartagena from 22 to 24 August 2023, brought together eleven chiefs of staff of South American armed forces. Other senior European military officials were also present, invited as observers, including the Spanish Chief of Defence Staff (CHOD),



EWAD

Admiral General Teodoro López Calderón (pictured, with General Helder Fernán Giraldo Bonilla, Commander of the Colombian Armed Forces). SOUTHDEC is an annual regional security forum hosted by the United States

Southern Command that aims to strengthen partnerships, examine challenges, share lessons learned and enhance cooperation on security and defence issues. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, the United States and Uruguay participated in the conference, while Canada, France, the Netherlands, Spain and the Inter-American Defence Board attended as observers. This executive-level discussion forum addressed issues related to the evolution of the regional threat environment in South America and the protection of critical infrastructures in the cyber domain. They also analysed the role of the military in combating climate change and defending the environment.

Command posts

NATO Exercise *Valiant Lynx*

NATO's Rapid Deployable Corps Headquarters in Bétera, Spain, has hosted Exercise *Valiant Lynx 2023*, the largest exercise this year for HQ NRDC-SP. For two weeks in October, 450 service members from this HQ, its support units as well as those from NATO countries were able to test a command post concept with new procedures and use state-of-the-art technology to adapt to the new challenges.

The most significant novelties have been the installation of a modular command post with adapted internal procedures and the use of a new command and control tool.



EMAD

In the course of *Valiant Lynx*, hundreds of incidents based on a fictitious scenario were simulated in order to force decision-making. Although conducted at various locations, the core of the exercise was at *General Almirante* military base in Marines. With this type of exercise, HQ NRDC-SP wishes to be at the forefront of the new procedures and a reference in NATO's Force Structure.

A number of military authorities, both Spanish and from other NATO countries, came to Bétera to see first-hand how the exercise was being conducted and executed.

Among them was the Chief of Defence Staff, Teodoro López Calderón, who attended the closing day.



EMAD

European Union cyber commanders

Meeting in Madrid within the framework of the Spanish presidency

THE EU Cyber Commanders Conference –CyberCo– held in Madrid from 25 to 27 October 2023 resulted in a number of agreements on key issues that will serve to lay the foundations for cooperation based on mutual trust, willingness and common interest.

The meeting, within the Spanish Presidency of the EU, was led by the Commander of the Joint Cyberspace Command, Major General Rafael García Hernández, and inaugurated by the Chief of Defence Staff, Admiral General Teodoro López Calderón. He underscored that these meetings are essential to establish elements of coordination common to all the allies.

He also pointed out that cyberspace is the fifth domain in the planning of any military operation and even in the national security scheme, which affects all levels, from the strategic to the tactical, including the operational level. "We are not fighting traditional combatants", he added, "the defence spectrum is expanding to include multiple domains, such as the protection against the different kinds of cyber-attacks that may

occur. In addition, we are influenced and under constant threat due to the disinformation and massive spread of fake news by our rivals".

The main decision agreed during the meeting was to outline and design a classified system for information exchange and to come up with a roadmap and concept that precisely defines CyberCo's responsibilities within the European Union.

For this purpose, it is essential to take into account the points of view and experiences of allied countries such as France, Germany, Italy, Belgium and Poland, as well as the important know-how provided by the European Defence Agency and the European Union Military Staff.

Coinciding with the Conference, for the first time this year, the EU Cyber Commanders met with the Ibero-American Cyber Defence Forum, which are two organisations in which Spain is present and serves as a liaison between the two. The meeting was an opportunity to join forces and pool resources and practical cooperation capabilities.

Assistance to Slovenia

Chinook helicopter helps in severe floods

In response to Slovenia's request for assistance from NATO and the European Union following the torrential rains and extensive flooding that hit two-thirds of the country in mid-August, Spain provided support by sending a *CH-47 Foxtrot Chinook* helicopter from the Spanish Army's Airmobile Forces (FAMET). It was the first time that the most modern version of this helicopter operated on missions abroad.

In less than 24 hours, a 20-strong crew, including pilots and mechanics, was deployed to Ljubljana along with the helicopter.

During the deployment, the service members assisted in various tasks, including building containment dikes to protect the population from potential floods, providing food and drinking water, and transporting building materials, tools and agricultural machinery to isolated areas (pictured).

After a week of work, the team returned to their base in Colmenar Viejo (Madrid), where they were bid farewell by the local population with numerous expressions of affection and gratitude.



FAMET

Aid to Greece

Means for extinguishing large fires

In mid-September 2023, the 23 members of the 43rd Air Force Group, with two aircraft, along with the nine members of the Military Emergency Unit (UME) that joined the EU Civil Protection Mechanism –RescEU–, returned to Spain to extinguish the huge fire that was devastating Greece.

The mission of the 43rd Group was undertaken by the 'Salamanca' and 'Santiago de Compostela' detachments, each of which sent one aircraft and two full crews, plus ground support personnel. By the time this unit had finished its work, it had completed 62 firefighting flying

hours and 130 water discharges, with some 800,000 litres.

The extinguishing work lasted until 7 September due to the enormous extent of the fire, which, with 90,000 hectares

burned, is considered to be the largest fire on record in the EU. The Spanish Armed Forces also helped this summer in extinguishing several fires in Portugal and Tunisia.



EMAD



BRILAT

BRILAT in Slovakia

Spain contributes 450 soldiers and 150 vehicles to NATO exercise *Strong Cohesion 2023*

Around 450 service members, mostly from the 7th Airborne Light Infantry Brigade *Galicía* (BRILAT VII) and some 150 vehicles –both combat and logistical support vehicles– travelled to Slovakia to take part in NATO exercise *Strong Cohesion 23-II*, which was held at Lest training area throughout November. In addition to Spain, soldiers from the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia and Germany also participated.

The objective of this exercise was to implement the logistical deployment/withdrawal capability of a contingent, as well as to unify and standardise techniques, tactics and procedures with the other participating countries. Likewise, interoperability tests were carried out regarding command and control systems and mutual knowledge with these allied countries.

“We want to contribute effectively to the Alliance’s new deterrence concept. The mission entrusted to us is to train in force projection, develop interoperability, train at brigade level and withdraw”, explained BRILAT commander, Brigadier General Alfonso Pardo de Santayana. The force projection was carried out until 6 November, and the withdrawal between 16 and 30 November.



CNSO France

World Military Rugby Championship

Spain participates for the first time

FRANCE organised the 4th edition of this Military Championship (IDRC) in which for the first time Spain was able to measure itself against the top rugby teams in the world. The military team that was to represent Spain in the international competition assembled at the Military Mountain and Special Operations School (EMMOE) in Jaca (Spain). They departed from there to the military facilities of the French Army’s Information and Communication Systems Command (COMSIC) located in Cesson-Sévigné, near Rennes, which became the Spanish team’s operating base. On 16 August 2023 in Pontivy, formerly Napoleonville, the championship opened with the participation of twelve countries: Australia, Fiji, France, Georgia,

Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Tonga, the United Kingdom and Uzbekistan.

In the end, France emerged victorious with the world trophy after having defeated two-time champions Fiji, while Spain secured a commendable 11th position. A modest but hard-fought result, and difficult to surpass given the high level of the teams participating in this prestigious international event.

The chief general of the COMSIC, in his farewell speech, emphasised the chivalry of the Spaniards and encouraged them to feel proud for having set the bar so high.

In particular, the players were praised for their defensive tenacity against very strong teams and their constant fighting spirit.

The coup epidemic in the Sahel

Colonel Carlos Latorre Darde

Division for Security and Defence Coordination and Studies (DICOES)

“Where leadership is coveted and contested there can be no good governance and discord will prevail”

Plato

THE military coup d'état in Gabon is another of this century's numerous overthrows on the African continent. Specifically, from 2011 to 2019, there was less than one coup per year. However, from the beginning of 2020 until today, the number has risen to eight, six of which have resulted in a change of political regime. The Sahel region bears the brunt of this statistic. Guinea-Conakry, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Sudan form a ring of states, stretching from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, which are currently governed by military juntas.

However, it cannot be concluded that the continent is going through the most violent stage in its history. There are no open conflicts between states, nor is there a current crisis that can be compared to, say, the Rwandan genocide or the two Congo wars (the second of which was called the “African World War”), which were caused by border demarcation disputes during the decolonization processes (a common factor in many conflicts in Africa).

These coup movements certainly impact our strategic neighbourhood in the South, and they underscore how immature and underdeveloped democratic governance structures are in some countries. Moreover, they reveal how little resilience

these societies have to threats resulting from climate change (migration, hunger, drought, etc.), the economy (energy, sustainable development, financing, etc.), health (infant mortality, endemic diseases, pandemics, etc.) and security (terrorism, ethnic strife, inter-community violence, rivalry in the exploitation of natural resources, etc.).

DEVELOPMENT AID

Sub-Saharan Africa and, in particular, the Sahel, are acquiring greater geopolitical relevance on the international stage and also in Spain's foreign policy. Spain is a security provider and its model focuses on building confidence in its environment. It is centred on the Africa III Plan (2019), whose objectives are to promote peace and security, sustainable development, institutional strengthening and regulated mobility, by efficiently mobilising resources from Spanish society and partner countries, in an attempt to create a synergy of efforts.

The Plan involved a change in perspective: from considering the region as just a beneficiary of development aid to treating it as an equal. In fact, the Plan assesses the immense potential presented by its geographical size, abundance of natural resources, vast areas of arable land, young population, spectacular population growth and presence of critical minerals for the green transition.

Spain is also aligned with the European Union's policies in the region. Within the general framework of relations between the EU and Africa (Cotonou Agreements and the Joint Africa-EU Strategy), a regional strategy has been established with the Sahel region, which focuses on four main lines: development; good governance



Assane Ouattara/EFE

and internal conflict resolution; political and diplomatic security and the rule of law; and the fight against violent extremism.

The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) collaborates with this strategy by developing structures under the Strategic Compass and by using the European Peace Facility. The Council, for instance, adopted an assistance measure under the European Peace Facility worth €11.75 million to support the Beninese Armed Forces. The measure will, in particular, focus on supporting Operation *Mirador* deployed in the northern parts of Benin since 2022.

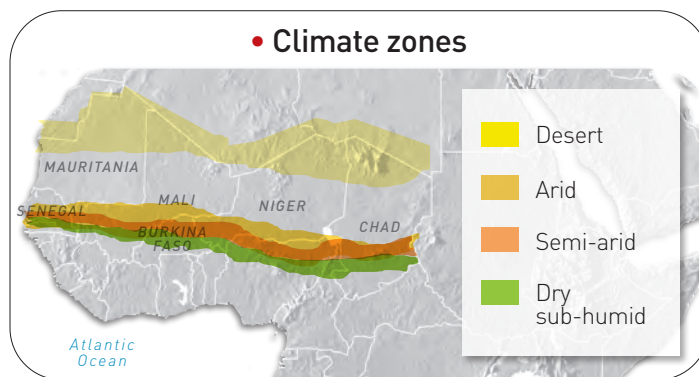
Between 2021 and 2027, the EU *Global Gateway* investment scheme, in partnership with the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, will mobilise up to €150 billion for Africa. Between 2022 and 2024, the Peace Facility will provide €600 million to support the African Union (AU), as well as an additional €20 million for the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) deployed in the Lake Chad region for its fight against the jihadist organisation Boko Haram. Other initiatives on the ground are centred on international

missions aimed at reforming the security sector (governance, internal security, defence, justice system, prison system, etc.) and training and equipping military units (EUTM missions). The Sahel is therefore a priority area for all of these measures.

Despite this security and development aid, there is a growing international disaffection of the African governments with the so-called first world. Africans believe that the West did not provide enough assistance to Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that the West's steadfast support for Ukraine is a far cry from the scant support provided to African states in crisis.

MORE TERRORISM, LESS DEMOCRACY

The fall of the Libyan regime in 2011 brought about a change in the dynamics of terrorist groups in the region by giving them quick access to heavy weaponry and the capacity to transport it into conflict areas through the porous borders of the Sahel. This lucrative trade has played a crucial role in increasing violence and social unrest in the region, fuelling conflict, inter-communal disputes and terrorism. The proliferation of illicit arms trafficking has strengthened armed regional actors,



Raïael Navarro/Fuente: ONU

ANALYSIS



Frederic Spicchi/EEF

which has seriously impacted the security in the area. In addition, traffickers share routes with those used by other illegal smugglers of goods and with internal migratory movements.

As a result, according to the *Global Terrorism Index* (GTI), the Sahel has become the global epicentre of jihadist terrorism. For the third year in a row, it is the region with the worst results in the world. With 2,270 attacks and 8,305 casualties in 2022, this geographical area accounts for one in three fatalities. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 72% of attacks and 75% of casualties; these numbers have increased from 58% and 47%, respectively, compared to the previous year. Mali and Burkina Faso, with 40% of all the attacks, were the two countries most hit by the terrorism of the territorial branches of Daesh and Al-Qaeda, followed by the Lake Chad basin, where the Boko Haram group and organisations linked to Daesh operate.

The other critical aspect to bear in mind is the level of consolidation of their democratic structures. According to the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), Libya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Benin have the worst levels of deterioration of their systems, with Mauritania and The Gambia showing slight positive trends.

In general, with the exception of Mauritania, most Sahel states fail in terms of security and the rule of law; however, aid foundations are making progress in opening up chances for economic development (except Mali).

This climate of rising terrorist activity and the deterioration of the democratic structures is the perfect breeding ground for especially violent demonstrations and social uprisings against governments, as they are ill-equipped to meet the security needs and future expectations of the population, in particular, the younger generations. This often prompts groups in the armed forces to react by taking up arms and supplanting political power with the promise of creating a secure environment, effectively combating terrorism and facilitating the welfare of the population.

Concern about growing insecurity in Africa is also reflected in NATO's Strategic Concept, adopted in Madrid in 2022. It states that conflict and instability in Africa directly affect the security of allies and partners. NATO's southern neighbourhood faces interconnected security, demographic, economic and political challenges, which are aggravated by the impact of climate change, fragile institutions, health emergencies and food insecurity. This environment favours the proliferation of non-state armed groups, terrorism, the instrumentalisation of migration, etc., and facilitates the destabilising interference of new strategic competitors.

Each of the successful coups in the Sahel has a different typology and motivation. Their consolidation over time has come about through social acceptance, which they all have as a common denominator. The population's disengagement from their rulers is evident. Over time, military juntas have become more and more entrenched due

to a combination of factors such as demands for sovereignty (the mere act of displaying French anti-colonialist sentiment unites a significant part of the population of countries with a similar past) and weariness towards democratic regimes with serious shortcomings that have failed to deliver even the most basic services. Additionally, the potential sanctions imposed by the African Union or the creation of mechanisms to intervene militarily in the country do not seem to deter coup movements either.

African government officials are not entirely to blame. Their governments do what they can and often do not have the necessary tools at their disposal. In the words of Meles Zenawi, former prime minister of Ethiopia, “governing a country in Africa is like running in front of an avalanche” because, on the one hand, the people demand jobs, security, education, healthcare, etc., but on the other, there are no financial mechanisms available to meet these needs. Even in natural resource-rich countries, the exploitation systems only provide benefits to a minority, as they are usually based on concessions to multinationals, misappropriation and the establishment of business networks in tax havens, which often result in outright plunder.

OTHER INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

In geopolitics, the absence of one actor provokes the incorporation of another. Russia and China have a significant presence in Africa and are actively working to expand their sphere of influence by using various strategies. The paradox arises when the African Union's motto, “African solutions for African countries”, which rigorously applies to colonial powers and, by extension, to all Western actors, is not applied in the same way to other groups. African states are offered solutions by China –on security and defence aspects– and Russia –in trade relations and natural resource exploitation–. However, in reality, these solutions often result in interference in military operations or unpayable debt traps that weaken the sovereignty and autonomy of African governments.

Particularly significant is the growing influence of the Russian *Wagner* group in the Sahel, which has negotiated agreements with Mali, the Central African Republic, Libya and others. Quite revealing in this regard are the remarks made by Russian foreign minister Sergey

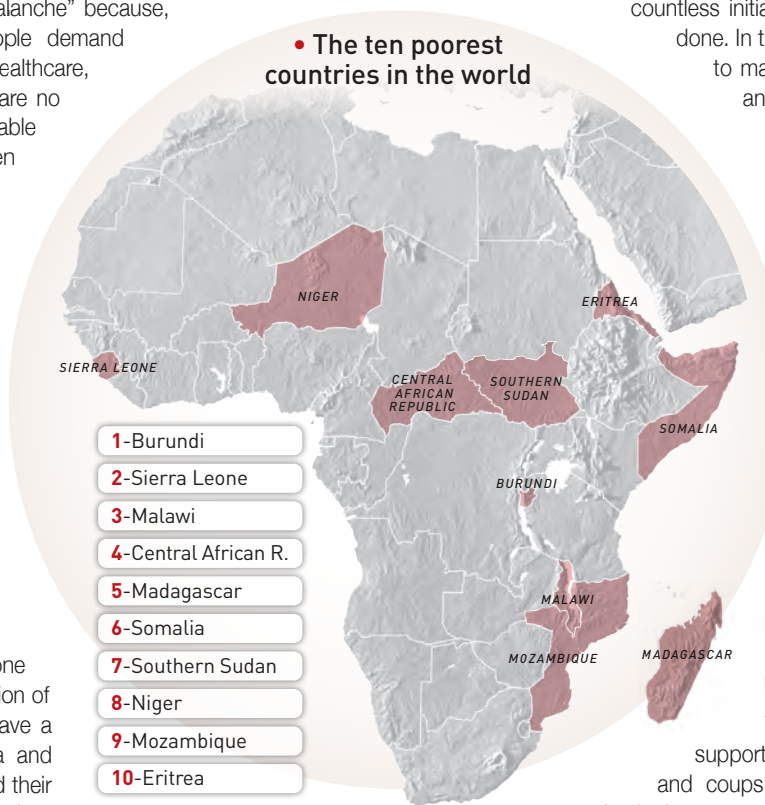
Lavrov a few days after the group's rebellion and in relation to the Ukrainian war last June, stating that this ‘incident’ would not affect Russia's commitment to the African countries.

CONCLUSIONS

International organisations such as the EU, NATO and the AU are deeply concerned about the future of the African continent and are actively working to alleviate the deteriorating situation, something in which their member states are also very much involved. A testament to this is the great amount of multilateral and bilateral activities that are carried out with African countries. What happens in Africa, and especially in the Sahel, is not alien to us and has a very direct impact on a globalised and interdependent world. There are countless initiatives, but much remains to be done. In this regard, the main challenge is to make the African continent a safe and developed place, where the population enjoys acceptable standards of freedom and well-being, and reasonable expectations for the future.

The international community will have to take short-term action to alleviate the population's human suffering, while in the medium and long term, they will need to establish democratic structures that will give them the authority and financial instruments to develop policies that will allow them to address the various crises they have to face. This will also prevent social support for demonstrations, revolts and coups d'état that further destabilise institutions.

Spain, with troops deployed in Mali, remains committed and expectant, waiting for a strategic opportunity that will at least allow for dialogue. The empathy of our soldiers with the local population, their respect for a different culture, the promotion of human security and our own experience in operations abroad will help us in this effort. Regarding the stability of governance in the Sahel countries, it remains to be seen whether the current wave of coups is only a temporary epidemic that will spread across countries, or whether, on the contrary, another global rivalry between autocratic and democratic systems of government is about to begin. In the short term, the former are more expeditious and decisive when dealing with one-dimensional problems, while in the long term, the latter are more resilient and effective when dealing with multidisciplinary problems.



Rafael Navarro/Fuente: FMI

A GUIDE TO BOOST INDUSTRY

The new Strategy allows for the prioritisation of capabilities and the definition of the industrial structure of defence programmes



THE Spanish Ministry of Defence has published the new Defence Industrial Strategy (DIS 2023), which fully updates the previous one of 2015. As quoted by the acting Secretary of State for Defence (SEDEF), María Amparo Valcarce, in its presentation, “this document is a reference guide for the industrial sector that provides criteria and guidelines to prioritise strategic capabilities and define the industrial structure of defence programmes”.

The SEDEF also stressed that the Strategy “helps to project Spain’s image abroad in the field of defence and provides institutional support to companies that play an important role in revitalising the industrial fabric and its strategic autonomy and contributing to the Europe of Defence”.

DIS2023, which can be freely downloaded through the website publicaciones.defensa.gob.es, has a time horizon of eight years (2023-30), in line with the future Industrial Policy Strategy for Spain 2030, the EU Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-27) and the spending commitment reached with NATO for 2029.

Along with Valcarce’s presentation, the Strategy includes an introduction by the Director General for Armament and Materiel, Admiral Aniceto Rosique, who recalls that since 2015 we have lived through the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of an “exponential, global” technological race driven by digital and other emerging and disruptive technologies, the supply chain crisis, the war in Ukraine, etc. Additionally,

overlapping with the traditional land, sea, and air domains, new battlefields have rapidly emerged, such as cyber, outer space and cognitive, requiring military capabilities that enable the armed forces to operate across multiple dimensions.

In order to respond to these changes in the global security landscape, Spain has begun a gradual increase in defence investment. The 2023 budget has been increased by 26%, opening a new investment cycle with the objective of reaching 2% of GDP by 2029, thus fulfilling the commitment made to NATO. Against this backdrop, the new Strategy seeks to “maximise the return on investment, positioning Spanish companies in the European defence market and its major programmes, which will constitute the sector’s main business in the coming years, and boost the industrial and technological fabric”. According to the publication, all this “will lead to greater job creation and promote territorial cohesion”.

DIS 2023 is permeated by values and commitments to sustainability (both in the development of the defence technological and industrial fabric and in economic growth), social commitment, transparency in actions and collaboration between institutions and the private sector.

A HIGHLY REGULATED, CONTROLLED SECTOR

DIS 2023 states that the defence industry is closely related to the concept of national sovereignty because of its direct relationship with the Ministry of Defence and the Armed

Forces, who are on many occasions, the sole customer. “A very demanding customer”, the document points out, “that defines product specifications, finances the product life cycle from its definition, and regulates the market in which the industrial sector operates”. As a result, it is a highly regulated, controlled sector, with high barriers to entry. It is subject to administrative procedures for operational approval, product certifications and the certification of materials and processes.

In addition, the defence sector covers a wide and very diverse range of products, many of them are delivered through programmes with long development and delivery timelines and a large number of highly complex technical requirements. These projects are subject to high risks and contingencies in a highly competitive environment.

In Spain, there are some 400 companies in the defence sector creating 36,000 jobs. Eighty percent of their turnover comes from exports. In the distribution by subsectors, 65% of sales correspond to the aeronautical industry, 13% to the naval industry, 10% to the land industry and the remaining 12% to other subsectors. There are three industrial corridors: the Northern Corridor, located on the Cantabrian coast and extending as far as Zaragoza, with 167 company facilities; the Central-Mediterranean Corridor, with 394; and the Southern Corridor, with 124.

Defence spending by EU countries is the third highest globally, behind only the

400 companies in the sector create 36,000 direct jobs

Increasing strategic autonomy, contributing to the Europe of Defence and strengthening the industrial base, are the principles of the document

US and China. “However”, the Strategy notes, “largely due to the fragmentation of investment efforts among Member States, the EU as a whole is technologically dependent in certain areas and continues to rely on third party suppliers for the provision of critical technologies, mainly the US and, to a lesser extent, Israel. This fragmentation also results in the production of numerous different weapon systems, which is understood to lead to an inefficient distribution of resources at aggregated European level”.

The structure of the national Defence Technological and Industrial Base (DTIB) is pyramidal. Although its base is very broad, it has a small number of large companies that act as main contractors and exert a consolidating pull on the rest of the sector. As for the supply chain, it consists of more than 2,000 smaller companies, which supply sub-systems or components to prime contractors. The European DTIB faces a non-homogeneous situation and is mainly concentrated in Germany, Spain, France, Italy, the UK and Sweden.

The Strategy emphasises that over the last 30 years, thanks to an active industrial policy under the Ministry of Defence, the national DTIB has reduced its dependence on third parties and developed its own capabilities in design, production and maintenance. National companies have managed to capitalise on investments by the Ministry of Defence since the launch of the first major programmes in the 1990s, in terms of their own products and capabilities. Improved competitiveness translates into increased international presence and leadership of European consortia, both in complete weapon systems and in specialised product niches.

Despite this, the DIS 2023 notes that the size of Spain’s DTIB remains far behind that of its main competitors and partners. “Aside from the large influential companies”, it warns, the

national industry is fragmented and, in many cases, focuses on certain niche industrial capabilities. Thus, in some cases, the capabilities of firms overlap and duplicate each other, and in others, they complement each other. This fragmentation is a barrier to growth and competitiveness that must be overcome”. The Structure claims that the sector, which

is characterised by the high qualification of its professionals, faces other challenges such as the need to safeguard defence supply chains or the availability of human capital. In this regard, it is necessary to attract and retain talent, and improve the quality of jobs.

OBJECTIVES

DIS 2023 is based on three principles: increase strategic autonomy in the defence industry, contribute to the Europe of Defence and consolidate a “competitive and sustainable” Spanish DTIB.

In order to ensure an effective implementation of the Structure, ten strategic pillars have been identified: strategic defence industrial capabilities; armament and materiel procurement programmes; transversal capacity building programmes; consortia and strategic alliances; territorial cohesion and distribution; new technologies and the digital challenge; talent attraction and defence culture; inter-ministerial coordination; international cooperation and external support; and industrial knowledge management and dialogue with the industry.

These pillars include 33 actions for their implementation. In addition, a DIS 2023 implementation guide will be prepared, which will define the goals to be achieved and establish indicators to measure the degree to which the objectives are fulfilled.

The following essential capabilities for defence have been identified: cyber defence, encryption and cryptography, tactical communications, counter-unmanned vehicle system (c-uvs), electronic warfare, guided munitions and missiles, combat cloud, airborne platforms, naval platforms, land platforms, sensors, simulators, anti-missile systems, combat/mission systems, command and control systems, navigation and control systems, propulsion systems, satellite observation and communication systems, and unmanned vehicles.

Santiago F. del Vado





Portrait of Félix de Azara (1805), oil on canvas from the Goya Museum collection. Ibercaja Foundation, Zaragoza.



Biblioteca Central Militar

“Black tamandua [anteater], a variety of ordinary tamandua“, included in *Voyages around South America* (Calpe Publishing House, 1923), and *Reduced map of the province of Paraguay*, “drawn up over several years and completed in 1793”, explained Azara, the author of both works.



Archivo General Militar de Madrid/Biblioteca Virtual de Defensa

BRIGADIER FÉLIX DE AZARA

The enlightened man and tenacious wandering engineer who turned out to be a natural history pioneer

IN the second half of the 18th century, during the reign of Charles III, the Spanish monarchy reached its maximum territorial extension in America and improved the efficiency of its governance there. However, the border in certain areas was still undecided, as was the case of the boundaries with Portugal in Brazil.

The Spanish government sent a commission to accurately define those borders, and among those appointed was a man named Félix de Azara, who proved to be an outstanding officer and, in his own words, lived twenty years “at the ends of the Earth, forgotten by his friends, without books, travelling continuously through deserts or immense and frightful forests, almost without any

company except for the birds of the air and wild animals”. This is his exciting story.

Félix de Azara was born on 18 May 1742 in Barbuñales, a village in Somontano de Barbastro, Huesca (Spain).

He was the sixth child of a noble family from Aragón with seven children, many of whom held prominent positions

Mitre, president of Argentina (1862-68), highlighted the work and scientific nature of Azara's explorations

in the society of the time. At the age of 15, he began to study Law at the University of Huesca, where he finished his studies in 1761, before deciding to devote his life to the military.

He applied to the recently created Artillery School, but the maximum age for students was fifteen and thus, in 1764, he joined the Infantry Regiment in Galicia as a cadet.

The following year, Félix went to the Barcelona Military Academy, an educational centre where officers who did not belong to the Artillery Corps studied mathematics and engineering. Due to his exceptional performance in his entrance exam, his first two years of study were validated, and he only had to complete his last two years.

Thus, in 1767, he was promoted to second lieutenant in the Engineer Corps and was posted to Catalonia, where he worked in the city of Barcelona and in the San Ferran Castle in Figueres.

After serving in Gerona, Madrid and Mallorca, he was appointed professor at the Barcelona Military Academy in 1774. However, in the summer of 1775, he was forced to resign from this position in order to participate in the campaign in Algiers.

BAPTISM OF FIRE

As part of the first landing wave on the North African beach, Azara was hit by a bullet that went through his body from chest to back, and was presumed dead.

But his time had not yet come. After a seaman managed to extract the bullet with a knife, Azara was evacuated to the mainland. He lost part of one of his ribs and the wound took years to heal.

Due to his achievements in the campaign, he was promoted to the rank of engineer lieutenant and soon after, at the beginning of 1776, to captain with the title of Extraordinary Engineer. That same year, with other enlightened Aragonese, he took part in the founding of the Royal Aragonese Economic Society of Friends of the Country.

At that time, a new Spanish-Portuguese conflict broke out in the

so-called “Banda Oriental”, east of the Uruguay River, in the viceroyalty of La Plata.

The long-standing border dispute was settled with the Treaty of San Ildefonso (1777), which was ratified the following year at El Pardo (Madrid).

Following its signing, the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies agreed to demarcate by consensus the border between the two powers in South

America and to settle the issue for good. As a result of these agreements, the Spanish government sent a delegation to this region, together with the Portuguese party, to carry out the topographic and cartographic tasks required to establish a borderline that would stretch over 7,000 kilometres from Rio Grande — the southernmost province of present-day Brazil— to the Madeira river or the Madre de Dios, a tributary of the Amazon River.

CRUCIAL ASSIGNMENT

Azara, who had been promoted to lieutenant colonel and was posted in San Sebastián, was ordered in early 1781 to travel to Lisbon and report to the Spanish ambassador. There, he was instructed to travel with other officers to America on a Portuguese vessel, as Spain had been at war with the United Kingdom for the past two years.

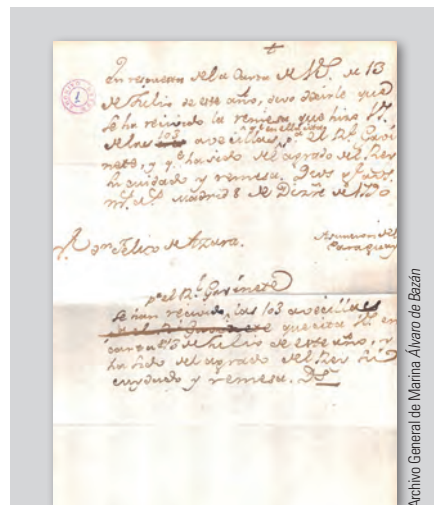
While on the high seas, he was informed of his appointment as commander, since the other commissioned officers were naval officers.

After stopping in Rio de Janeiro, they arrived in Montevideo in May 1781, where the viceroy of Río de la Plata, Juan José Vértiz, briefed them on the purpose of their mission, which was none other than to demarcate the border with Portugal in those lands.

It soon became clear that Lisbon was going to prolong the operation indefinitely. Portugal had no intention of establishing boundaries that had been repeatedly and abusively overstepped, often with the complicity or indifference of the local Spanish authorities, who did not always give their resolute support to the royal mandate.

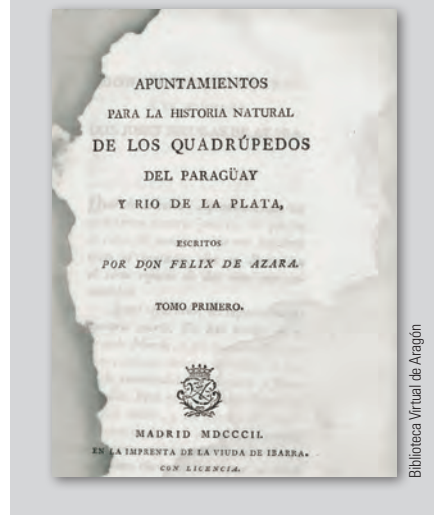
However, this Aragonese officer, tenacious in the fulfilment of his mission, set out to “draw up the exact map of those regions, because this was my profession and I had the necessary instruments”.

Thus began his two-decade voyage through a sparsely populated and inhospitable territory, much of it abandoned by the Jesuits after being expelled from Spain in 1767.

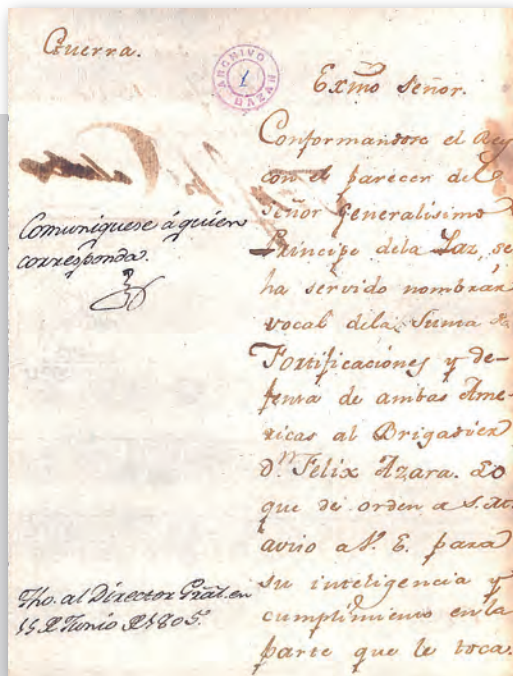


Archivo General de Maritim Álvaro de Bazán

Azara asks (and is answered) about the shipment of “103 small birds to the Royal Cabinet”. His first work, on the quadrupeds of Paraguay and the Rio de la Plata, translated into Spanish in 1802.

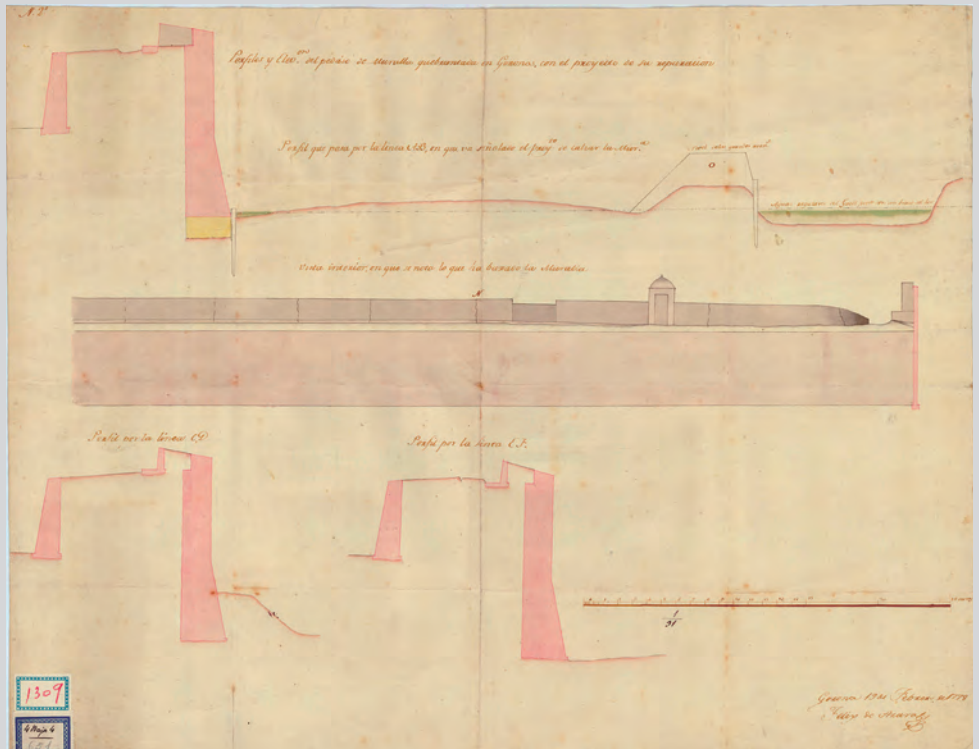


Biblioteca Virtual de Aragón



Archivo General de Marina Álvaro de Bazán

Azara had already excelled as a student at the Barcelona Military Academy and, before being commissioned to delimit the borders with Portugal, he worked, for example, on the walls of Gerona (right). Furthermore, despite being retired, Godoy appointed him member of the Board of Fortifications and Defence of the two Americas in 1805 (above).



Archivo General Militar de Madrid/Biblioteca Virtual de Defensa

It was precisely thanks to the observations of the Jesuits that the first maps of those regions had been made, but now it was a question of drawing up a more detailed and scientifically based cartography.

Azara was sent to Asunción to work in the basin of the Paraná and Paraguay rivers, from the province of the Guaraní missions to the Brazilian Mato Grosso.

Given the passivity of Portugal and without neglecting his mission, he took time out to observe nature and study the history and human geography of those lands. His interest in these subjects grew during his stay in South America and helped him become a renowned naturalist and anthropologist.

EXPEDITION LEADER

He was sent to Buenos Aires in 1784, where he was assigned to lead a force that was to go deep into the territory of the Pampas Indians and extend the border to the present-day southern Argentine

coast. Upon completion of this mission, the viceroy allowed him to visit the lower Paraná basin, including the cities of Santa Fe and Rosario. While continuing his cartographic task and naturalistic observations, Azara was promoted to captain (1789) and, two years later, again in Asunción, to engineer colonel.

In 1793, his map delimiting the eastern border of Paraguay was approved by the Spanish government. However, even though he was the chief commissioner for

the demarcation of boundaries in South America, he was not allowed to continue studying the archives in Asunción, where access to the property deeds was essential to delimit the disputed areas. In their attempt to protect the landowners' interests, both the intendant, Joaquín de Alós, and the viceroy, Nicolás de Arredondo, obstructed Azara's job so as to conceal the mismanagement and even their complicity with the Portuguese. It was then, in 1794, that Azara unsuccessfully requested to be removed from his post, a request that also met with refusal three years later.

His work as a naturalist and anthropologist was recognised by the scientists of his time

RETURN TO WAR

He was preparing an expedition to the Cordoba and Salta regions, at the foot of the Andes, when war broke out against London once more. Fearing that Portugal would join the conflict, Viceroy Pedro Melo, with whom Azara had become friends, ordered him to lead the forces that were to defend the Banda



TABLA DE COMERCIO DEL RIO DE LA PLATA.

ENTRADA DE				SALIDA PARA			
MERCADERIAS				MERCADERIAS			
Por cuenta de las oficinas de Aduanas de Buenos Aires				Por cuenta de las oficinas de Aduanas de Buenos Aires			
De Chile	100,000	100,000	100,000	De Chile	100,000	100,000	100,000
De España	50,000	50,000	50,000	De España	50,000	50,000	50,000
De Portugal	20,000	20,000	20,000	De Portugal	20,000	20,000	20,000
De Francia	10,000	10,000	10,000	De Francia	10,000	10,000	10,000
De Inglaterra	30,000	30,000	30,000	De Inglaterra	30,000	30,000	30,000
De otros países	10,000	10,000	10,000	De otros países	10,000	10,000	10,000
Total	220,000	220,000	220,000	Total	220,000	220,000	220,000

NOTA.

En el presente cuadro se expresan los valores de las mercancías que entran y salen de las aduanas de Buenos Aires, sin contar con las que se consumen en el interior del país.

“Rhea or lesser rhea”, points out Azara in his *Voyages around South America* (Calpe Publishing House, 1923); above, Buenos Aires (1789-94), by F. Brambilla; below, Asunción (1869), the engineer’s base cities in many of his explorations, and the *Table of Trade of the Río de la Plata*, an example of his exhaustive work and included in his posthumous book *Description and history of Paraguay and the Río de la Plata* (1847).

Oriental. There, he rendered one of his last services in America. In that region, he managed to settle Spanish colonists who had arrived in Patagonia two decades earlier and were still living at the expense of the public treasury. When he was finally allowed to return to Spain in 1801, he focused on publishing the natural history of the South American regions he had explored, cataloguing 450 birds and 57 quadruples.

The following year, he was promoted to brigadier and was allowed to visit Paris, where his brother, José Nicolás, was the Spanish ambassador to Napoleon. He was well received by the scientific society in Paris, who witnessed the dissemination of his natural history work, but the death of his brother in 1804 forced him to return home, where he was awarded retirement. Even so, Charles IV’s minister, Manuel Godoy, nominated him member of the Board of

Fortifications and Defence of the two Americas. The War of Independence and his status as a patriot triggered Napoleon’s troops to plunder his property in his native Barbuñales, where he passed away from pneumonia in October 1821 at the age of 79. Since then, his mortal remains have rested in Huesca’s cathedral, as revealed by a 2023 investigation sponsored by the government of Aragon.

EXAMPLE OF AN ENLIGHTENED MILITARY MAN

Félix de Azara showed outstanding engineering leadership while working to delineate the Spanish border in South America. During his twenty-year wanderings through wild and desert territory, he demonstrated a wide range of technical resources and personal skills, “despairing of ever being able to escape this sad loneliness and the

company of animals”. However, his fame came from his work as a naturalist and anthropologist, typical of the restless soul of an enlightened man whose only zeal was for the truth.

His descriptions, both of nature and of the human groups he visited, earned him the recognition of the scientists of his time.

A few decades after his death, General Bartolomé Mitre —President of Argentina from 1862 to 1868— was still expressing his gratitude to Azara for having been the first to give a scientific basis to the geography of the region and for dealing with its early history.

This is what this Aragonese officer did, fulfilling his duties and —as he later admitted— “silently facing the costs, the hardships, the dangers, the obstacles, and even the persecutions that the envy of others made me endure”.

Germán Segura García

AZARA'S EXPLORATIONS

FÉLIX de Azara departed from Buenos Aires for Asunción (Paraguay) on 2 January 1784 with the mission of fixing the border between Spain and Portugal. It took him just over a month. He ascended more or less parallel to the Paraguay River along the left bank as far as Santa Fe, where he crossed the river to continue on to the cities of Corrientes and Asunción, from where he explored a good part of Paraguayan territory.



ASUNCIÓN (1784/1795)

He organised nine explorations: to Villarrica; the mountain range near Asunción; the missions and beyond the Uruguay River; the Pilcomayo River; San Estanislao and San Joaquín; Carapeguá and Quyyndy; Curuguaty; the Laguna Ibera; and sailed from Corpus to Corrientes through the Paraná River.

BUENOS AIRES (1796)

He made two expeditions to the southern border of the province of Buenos Aires (La Pampa), to strengthen Spain's foothold in the area and advance southwards. In the first one, he explored the Salado River from Melincué to Chascamús. In the second, he also visited other places, such as Navarro and Monte.

BANDA ORIENTAL (1800)

He was commissioned to found the Villa de Batoví, Azara's last mission in America. To do so, he gave orders to build the new town (San Gabriel de Batoví), which was strategically located near the confluence of the Ibicuí and Santa María rivers, an area of conflict with Portugal.

EL LEGADO ESPAÑOL. *We the Spanish people* (1513-1821)



From left to right, the manager of Spain's National Library (BNE), E. Collell; the Defence Chief of Staff, T. López Calderón; the author, E. García; the deputy director for Publications and Cultural Heritage (MDE), M. García, and the technical director of the BNE, J. L. Bueren. Above, an image evoking 18th century explorations.

Dpto. Publicaciones/BNE

THIRD title resulting from the collaboration between The Legacy, an association that disseminates the Hispanic footprint in the United States and promotes ties between the two countries, and the Sub-directorate General for Publications and Cultural Heritage of the Spanish Ministry of Defence, the publisher of “Legado español. We the Spanish people (1513-1821)”, presented on 14 September 2023 at Spain’s National Library (BNE).

This bilingual book, published in English and Spanish, builds on the success of the touring exhibition of the same name inaugurated by The Legacy and the Ministry of Defence in 2022.

Former US ambassador to Madrid J. Costos writes the foreword, in which he stresses “the importance of Spain’s contribution to the birth of our great nation”. Examples of the support for independence appear in different chapters of the book, which begins with the arrival of the Spaniards in the 16th century.

The author and founder of The Legacy, Eva García, summarizes 500 years in twelve

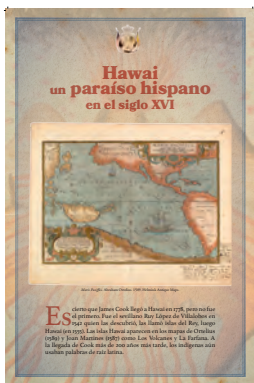
chapters that are completed with different appendices. In its postscript, she points out that when Spain’s Royal Academy of History (1738) was established it already had the aim of cultivating history according to the facts and “cleansing Spain’s history of fables that tarnish it”.

In this spirit, from the very first chapter, The Battle of Perceptions, the book points out the need to “focus on telling the story of our deeds” and “putting an end to the grievances of the black legend”.

Isabella I of Castile, who banned slavery in 1500, is the main character of the next section. The vicerealty, the empire’s administrative model, and the status of all its citizens as subjects are also highlighted in this part of the book.

After epic achievements and their protagonists, García returns to the inclusive spirit of Hispanic expansion through US historian Lummi: “Spanish legislation concerning the Indians everywhere was incomparably [...] more systematic and more humane than that of Great Britain, the colonies and the United States combined”.

Eva García advocates “focusing on telling the story of our deeds” and “putting an end to the grievances of the black legend”



In the 16th century, Hawaii was already a “Hispanic paradise”.

CASTO MÉNDEZ NÚÑEZ 1824-1869

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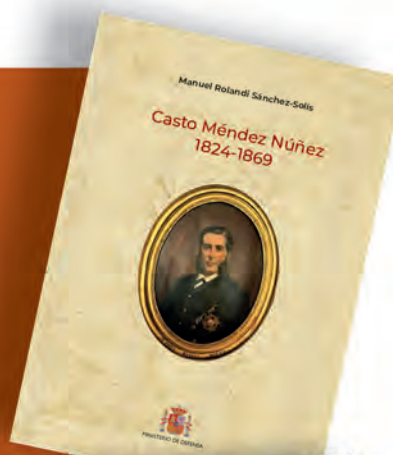
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