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REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE DEFENSA

**#ESTE
VIRUS
LO
PARAMOS
UNIDOS**



**ALL UNITED
AGAINST
COVID-19**





REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE DEFENSA

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about defence

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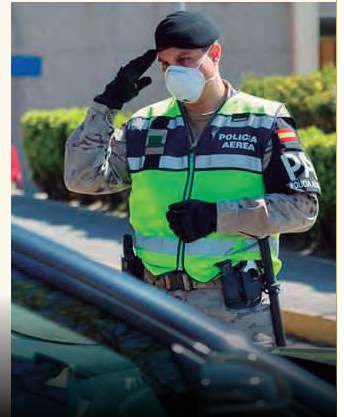
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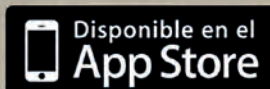




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Lo paramos si no te confías. **Lo paramos** si te mentalizas de que no va a ser fácil. **Lo paramos** cada vez que te lavas las manos. **Lo paramos** cuando te reúnes por videoconferencia. **Lo paramos** si te quedas en casa. **Lo paramos** si viajas solo cuando es imprescindible. **Lo paramos** si evitas lugares concurridos. **Lo paramos** cuando no compartes información falsa. **Lo paramos** si ayudas y haces caso a nuestros profesionales sanitarios. **Lo paramos** cuando confías en que vamos a superar esto.

#ESTE VIRUS LO PARAMOS UNIDOS

**DETENER EL CORONAVIRUS ES RESPONSABILIDAD DE TODOS Y TODAS.
SI TE PROTEGES TÚ, PROTEGES A LOS DEMÁS.**



To all personnel of the Ministry of Defence

Margarita Robles Fernández
Minister of Defence

Madrid, 2 April 2020

Iwould like to express my feelings to you in writing. As Minister of Defence, I never thought I would be writing to you with such deep words of gratitude as I do today, not out of commitment or obligation but because it seems to me an act of justice and encouragement. The situation caused by this major health crisis, as you well know, has given rise to a level of dedication and generosity in you that deserves my express recognition.

I believe you have risen and will continue to rise to the occasion in the face of the difficulties that afflict us. You have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate every day your spirit of service and I am aware that, despite the hardship, you feel the satisfaction of having done your duty. Thank you for your collaboration and for working constantly, without despair, silently, humbly and effectively. Thank you for the excellence you show in the way you live through these difficulties at the service of the common good.

I would particularly like to acknowledge all those women and men who are on the front

line, helping where they are most needed, who go out every day all over Spain to every town, to the health centres, to the nursing homes, to set up field hospitals, transfer the sick, or carry out all types of tasks to support the most needy and vulnerable. The efforts of the Defence Staff (EMAD), the Military Emergencies Unit (UME) and the Inspectorate-General for Defence Health (IGESAN) deserve a special mention, as do so many units of the Army, Navy and Air Force and of this Department.

It is only fair to thank all of the Ministry personnel, civil servants, contract staff, statutory staff, who make everyone's job possible.

Spain is proud to count on this team of women and men, both military and civilian, from the Ministry of Defence.

I would also like to stress the warm welcome accorded to our units wherever they have carried out their work. This strengthens the integration of the Armed Forces with Spanish society, a society they are part of and which they serve.

The Ministry of Defence is using all of its capabilities to collaborate in the management of the health crisis

SPAIN, IN A STATE OF ALARM



"The Government's determination is paramount: to protect the citizens and beat the virus", affirmed Pedro Sánchez.

A state of alarm has been imposed all over Spain to stop the spread of the coronavirus and the country is immersed in a grave health crisis of unforeseeable consequences. Its population of 47 million people are isolated in their homes in an enormous confinement operation. Not only has this measure brought the economy to a standstill but it is also taking a psychological toll on people and their families as the weeks go by. Worldwide, the pandemic has shaken most of humanity: it has hit the economy, changed the daily lives of millions of people, put entire regions into quarantine and rekindled citizens' ancestral fears.

The origin can be found in a minuscule agent: the SARS-CoV-2 virus, identified at

the end of 2019 in a market in Wuhan, a populous city in central China, which is the cause of the COVID-19 or coronavirus disease. From there, the outbreak has spread rapidly throughout the entire world in recent weeks. On March 11th, the World Health Organization (WHO) elevated the public health emergency caused by the virus to the status of a pandemic. At the time of writing, more than 1,200,000 people were infected and 70,000 had died from the pandemic, which is present in more than 200 countries and territories around the world. In Spain—together with Italy, the epicentre of the crisis in Europe—over 135,000 people have been infected and more than 13,000 have lost their lives.

The Armed Forces, who in the days prior to the declaration of the state of

alarm had already suspended all of their exercises and manoeuvres to avoid the movement of troops that could lead to the spread of the disease, are collaborating with all their available capabilities in the fight against the pandemic. With Air General Miguel Ángel Villarroja, Chief of the Defence Staff (JEMAD), as single command, the Armed Forces have collaborated with the Security Forces and Corps in the control and surveillance of public spaces; they have disinfected essential services facilities; reinforced civilian medical capabilities with the mobilization of the military healthcare and pharmacy; helped set up field hospitals and medicalised hotels; airlifted medical supplies and helped distribute them; transferred patients between hospitals



From left to right, the Ministers of the Interior, Health, Defence and Transport, who appeared on March 15th to explain the initial measures to reinforce the state of alarm.

and cared for the homeless; protected critical infrastructures; conducted cyber-defence tasks, etc.

ALARM

On Saturday, March 14th, an extraordinary Council of Ministers approved the Royal Decree declaring a state of alarm throughout the national territory for a period of fifteen days. It was published in the Official State Gazette (BOE) that night and entered into force. Subsequently, a Royal Decree of March 27th extended the state of alarm until midnight on April 11th. This measure is provided for in the Constitution to deal with emergency situations and has only one precedent in our democracy, that of the air traffic controller crisis in 2010.

"For the purposes of the state of alarm", states the first Royal Decree, "the competent authority shall be the Government". It adds that, under the "senior management" of the head of the Executive, four competent authorities are created, "in their respective areas of responsibility": the Minister of Defence, Margarita Robles; the Minister of the Interior, Fernando Grande-Marlaska; the Minister of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda, José Luis Ábalos; and the Minister of Health, Salvador Illa. The latter shall have authority in those areas that do not fall within the competence of any of the aforementioned authorities. This rank entitles the competent authorities to issue any orders, resolutions, provisions and instructions which, in the specific field of their activity, are necessary to ensure health and safety.

The Royal Decree specifies that the delegated competent authorities may request the action of the Armed Forces. It also establishes that the military involved in tasks within the framework of the coronavirus crisis are agents of authority.

In the state of alarm, the movement of citizens is restricted as much as possible; on-site educational activity is suspended at all levels, as is retail commercial activity, except for the purchase of ba-

sic necessities and in other, singular, cases. Also suspended are sports and leisure activities; hotels and restaurants; parades and popular festivals, etc., while museums, archives, libraries, monuments, etc., are closed.

THE CITIZENS TAKE CENTRE STAGE

The Prime Minister made a public appearance on the night of Saturday, March 14th, following an intense seven-hour Council of Ministers—one of the longest in the history of the democracy—which decreed a state of alarm. In an epic speech, with calls for serenity and trust, Pedro Sánchez assured that the Government's determination was "paramount: to protect the Spanish people and beat the virus". "People's health is at the centre of our priorities", he explained, "but at the same time we must attend directly to our families, the workers, the self-employed and businesses".



Three days after the state of alarm was declared, King Felipe VI addressed the country to ask for "unity" and "solidarity".

Sánchez clarified that the State Security Forces and Corps and the regional and local Police Forces are under the direct orders of the Minister of the Interior, on whom the intervention and assistance services in civil protection emergencies also depend. He also added that "at all times and whenever necessary to complete our task efficiently and comply with measures, we will have the action of the Armed Forces at our disposal. The army is already prepared for this". "To the Armed Forces who join this task, already on alert, thank you", he stressed.

The Prime Minister called for unity of action among all authorities. "There are no political colours, no ideologies, no territories," he said. "Our citizens come first". He asked the latter for "responsibility, social discipline and a sense of community." He tried to give them hope, assuring them that the emergency of the virus would pass. "And then", he said, "we will be able to return to the streets and the terraces. We will go back to the routine of our jobs and visit our friends and loved ones again. We will take our children to the park and prepare for the next phase: social and economic recovery and the return to normality".

THE VIRUS THAT BROUGHT A COUNTRY TO A STANDSTILL

It all happened so fast. Even in the first week of March, the coronavirus was something that was happening somewhere else, far away, or to some unlucky people. In Europe it was Italy that was in shock and the measures it took were seen as alien, even exaggerated. No one thought the disease was going to reach Spain. But just one week later on Saturday 14th, when the state of alarm was declared, figures already stood at 6,400 infections and 193 deaths.

There had been a huge jump on the previous Monday 9th, when figures reached 1,200 infections, twice as many as the day before. In the evening, the autonomous communities of Madrid and the Basque Country announced the closure of their primary and secondary schools.

On Thursday 12th, following several days' growth in the number of cases, the alarm was raised about the saturation of hospitals in Madrid and other cities on the virus front line, such as Vitoria. The President of the Community of Madrid, Isabel Díaz Ayuso, and the Mayor of the capital, José Luis Martínez-Almeida, for the first time in Spain, told people: "Don't go out, stay at home". The "Yomequedoencasa" label was already circulating on social networks. That same

House of His Majesty the King



Pool Moncloa/J. M. Cuadrado

The Prime Minister and the four delegated competent authorities during a meeting of the Coronavirus Technical Management Committee.

day, all the autonomous communities suspended classes. By nightfall there were 3,000 cases, up 800 on the previous day at the same time. The crisis had definitely risen to national level, the population had suddenly become aware of the problem and the collapse of the health system was feared.

On the morning of Friday 13th, the streets of Madrid were empty, particularly on the outskirts, although in the centre a few solitary tourists and passers-by could still be seen. It was then that Pedro Sánchez announced he would declare a state of alarm.

REINFORCEMENT MEASURES

In order to launch a set of measures to reinforce the state of alarm, the Prime Minister and the four delegated competent authorities met at Moncloa Palace on Sunday 15th. These measures were aimed at strengthening the National Health System, reducing the supply of public passenger transport services under the jurisdiction of the State —road, rail, air and sea— by 50%, establishing common criteria for all of the Security Forces and Corps and initiating defence actions. On the same day, Margarita Robles chaired a coordination meeting at the Ministry where the actions to be undertaken by the Armed Forces were discussed and the single command was activated.

Pedro Sánchez also announced a 200-billion-euro emergency plan to cushion the impact of the crisis. “This is the greatest economic and social mobilization

of resources in our history”, he said on Tuesday 17th at the press conference following the Council of Ministers. Within this framework, actions will be put into place in four priority areas: supporting families; protecting employment; injecting liquidity into the business fabric; and strengthening scientific research to develop a vaccine against the virus. During this week and the following weeks, measures will be taken to extend protection to the most vulnerable groups.

The state of alarm was also amended in certain aspects: new restrictions were placed on movement and more exceptions were made for shops that could remain open, such as veterinary clinics; the authorities were given the power to suspend any activity that could pose a risk of contagion; and the door was opened for any future amendments by the Ministry of Health. In line with the decisions taken by the European Union, the Government closed the land borders, after Spain had suspended the Schengen Agreement to contain the spread of the virus. The closure

“This virus will make us stronger as a society”, declared King Felipe VI

does not affect goods to avoid production and the supply chain coming to a halt.

The King addressed the country on the night of Wednesday 18th. King Felipe VI called on all Spaniards to show “unity” and “solidarity” and expressed his admiration for the health professionals, “Spain’s vanguard in the fight against this disease”, recalling that, “from streets all over Spain”, “moving and heartfelt, sincere and just applause” could be heard for their work. “This virus will not stop us”, he declared. “On the contrary, it will make us stronger as a society: a society that is more committed, more supportive, more united, standing up to any adversity”.

On Sunday 29th, the Government tightened the general confinement of the population by approving the total restriction of movement, except for workers in essential activities. By then, the figures in Spain had already surpassed 72,000 infections and 5,600 deaths.

In the extraordinary plenary sessions of March 18th and 25th, Parliament, with a half-empty chamber to avoid contagion, gave the green light to the state of alarm and its extension, as well as to the economic and social measures adopted. Pedro Sánchez appeared on Saturday, April 4th to announce the holding of another plenary session to debate a new extension, until midnight on April 26th. In this appearance the Prime Minister sent a hopeful message: “In the next few days”, he said, “the curve will bend and the peak will be left behind; we are close to reaching it”.

Santiago Fernández del Vado



OPERATION

EVERY DAY

THE ARMED FORCES SUPPORT THE POPULATION AND PUBLIC SERVICES

IT'S Saturday, April 4th. At the Retamales base Joint Operations Centre, several military personnel in field uniforms and wearing masks are processing large amounts of data on their computers. In front of them, a large screen shows the distribution throughout Spain of the more than 8,000 military personnel deployed in the fight against the coronavirus. This room is the nerve centre of Operation *Balmis*, named after the military doctor who brought the smallpox vaccine to the territories of the Spanish empire in America and the Philippines at the beginning of the

19th century. "We are at war with an invisible and unconventional enemy", declares Lieutenant General Fernando López del Pozo, commander of the Operations Command, to whom the Chief of Defence Staff has entrusted an unprecedented mission: to coordinate the deployment of the military in hundreds of locations throughout the autonomous communities to support the population and the public services in their efforts to contain the spread of the virus.

Disinfection of critical areas, support for field hospitals, assembly of shelters for the homeless, transport of medical

N BALMIS

IS MONDAY

IC SERVICES IN THEIR EFFORTS TO CONTAIN THE EPIDEMIC



supplies, surveillance of nuclear power plants, etc. Anything that may be required by the delegated competent authorities to guarantee the provision of services and the protection of all, as laid down in the decree declaring the state of alarm in the country on Saturday, March 14th. Defence Minister, Margarita Robles, summed it up the next day in her first appearance before the press: "They will help guarantee the right to health of all citizens. Their deployment will be necessary to assist everywhere".

From 3 p.m. that same Sunday, the Military Emergencies Unit (UME)

was already carrying out preliminary reconnaissance in cities where the risk of contagion could be high. This decision was taken during the coordination meeting held in the morning at the Ministry of Defence to address the measures to be taken by the Armed Forces due to the pandemic, a meeting that was chaired by the Minister and attended by State Secretary of Defence, Ángel Olivares; Chief of the Defence Staff (CHOD), General Miguel Ángel Villarroya; Deputy Secretary of Defence, Alejo de la Torre; Undersecretary of Defence for Political Affairs, Admiral Juan Francisco



MOPS (Operations Command)



Pool Mónica

General López del Pozo (standing), tasked with coordinating the operation by the CHOD (on the right), in a press conference of the members of the Technical Committee.

Martínez Núñez; commander of the Operations Command, General Fernando López Del Pozo; and head of the UME, General Luis Martínez Meijide.

At the meeting, an instruction was issued implementing the Royal Decree on the state of alarm in the field of Defence. It was also agreed to activate a single command in the figure of the CHOD who, through the Operations Command, would integrate the operational, health, logistics and infrastructure capabilities of the UME, the Inspectorate-General for Defence Health (IGESAN) and the Army, Navy and Air Force to make them available to the competent authorities.

In turn, military doctors who were no longer in active service were mobilized and the military pharmacy was instructed to increase the production of hydroalcoholic disinfectant solution and any generic medicine that might be necessary. That same afternoon, the initial planning meeting for Operation *Balmis* was held at the Operations Command headquarters.

Since then, military personnel have been working non-stop all over Spain. Day by day they have increased both their numbers and their missions. As a member of the COVID-19 technical monitoring committee, the CHOD provides a daily update on the work of the Armed Forces. "The Spanish people can rest assured that their Armed Forces, together with the rest of the public authorities, are with them, we will not fail them. But we need everyone to make an effort, together we will win", said General Villarroya in one of his first online press conference speeches from



Disinfection tasks in a nursing home in the Guadarrama mountain range.



Pepe Díaz

The military is doing an important job by being present on the streets and at critical points. In the photo, members of the Parachute Brigade on patrol in Alcorcón.

On-call pharmacy

SINCE the very beginning of the crisis, the Military Pharmaceutical Centre has turned to the manufacture of hydroalcoholic gel for hand disinfection, paracetamol to combat the symptoms of the disease and ribavirin, a broad-spectrum antiviral used against hepatitis C and which could work in the fight against SARS-CoV-2. Its activity increased from March 23rd, when it also began work on a coronavirus-inactivation solution, at the request of the National Biotechnology Centre of the CNIC (National Centre for Cardiovascular Research). This was done to avoid potential material shortages in the National Health System and to guarantee the availability of products whose use had increased significantly, both in the healthcare environment and in private homes.

To meet this challenge, the centre has increased its regular staff of 100 by 25% and workers have been organised into shifts. For the head of the centre, Colonel



IGESAN (Inspectorate General for Defence Health)

The Military Pharmaceutical Centre has increased its production.

Antonio Juberías, the main concern is to avoid contagion. "A laboratory technician is hard to find", he told El País newspaper. In this centre, located in the Madrid town of Colmenar Viejo, production has not stopped for one moment. When this pandemic is over, we will learn exactly how many paracetamol tablets, litres of disinfectant or ribavirin ampoules have been produced at its facilities. "At the present time it is complicated to talk about an exact

manufacturing capacity, I would not venture to give any kind of figure", said Colonel Juberías to COPE radio station. The medicines are made available to the authorities "and they are the ones who determine where they have to be distributed", the colonel explained.

This is not the first time that the Military Pharmaceutical Centre has collaborated in a health crisis. In 2006, during the influenza A epidemic, they encapsulated the H1N1 antivirals.

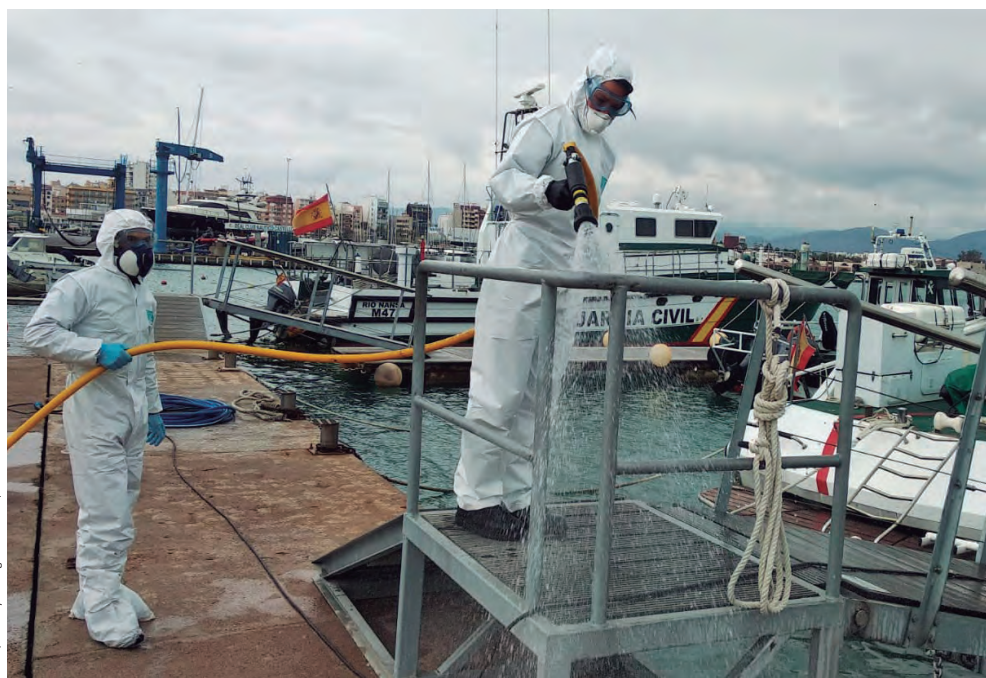
Moncloa Palace (official residence and workplace of the Spanish Prime Minister). "In these times of war or crisis, every day is Monday", he indicated in another speech. "The effort does not stop. Each day of effort results in lives being saved".

Just like every morning since the operation began, military personnel leave their bases after the flag is raised. But while some go out to do their duty on the streets, others continue the work in their units, attending to the tasks of organization, coordination, logistics, health, etc., and also looking for ways to improve procedures in order to be more effective every day in the fight against COVID-19.

DISINFECTION

The cleaning and disinfection of public spaces is one of the tasks assumed by the Armed Forces from the very beginning. In many parts of the country, members of the UME, the Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Defence Regiment nº 1 and the NBC companies of the various Army Brigades have already disinfected more than 4,000 critical infrastructure and essential service facilities. These units have been joined by many others with the same "rapid intervention" capability, such as the Veterinary Services of the Royal Guard or the Army Logistics Academy, for example. The Armed Forces decontaminate hospitals and health

UME (Military Emergencies Unit)



The UME carries out disinfection tasks at seaports, airports and stations every day.

A marine supervises a railway station in Cartagena.



Marcial Guillén/EEF

Three weeks of struggle

MARCH

→ SATURDAY 14TH

- The Council of Ministers decrees a state of alarm to limit the movement of citizens as much as possible.
- The Minister of Defence, the Government's "delegated competent authority", together with the Ministers of Health, the Interior and Transport.

→ SUNDAY 15TH

- The CHOD, at the helm of the single command to coordinate the cooperation of the Armed Forces.
- Initial planning meeting at Operations Command. Operation *Balmis* is launched.
- Two military hospitals are made available and military

healthcare personnel no longer in active service are mobilized.

- The Military Pharmacy increases the production of disinfectant solution, paracetamol and antivirals.

→ MONDAY 16TH

- Land borders are closed and only residents or victims of force majeure will be allowed to enter.
- The Ministry of Defence offers its collaboration to assist the homeless.

→ TUESDAY 17TH

- The UME collaborates in Madrid's suburban rail stations to avoid crowding.
- Military deployment is extended to 28 cities with Army and Marine troops.



The 12th Brigade *Guadarrama* carries out preventive disinfection tasks in several nursing homes in the north of Madrid.

centres, nursing homes and care centres for vulnerable people, airports, ports, train, metro and bus stations, as well as state, regional and municipal authority facilities.

The main effort is focused on hospitals and nursing homes, where the frontline battle against the pandemic is fought. "Every day we travel between 700 and 800 kilometres throughout Aragón and Navarre", says UME Captain Enrique

Bascuas, who commands a company of the 4th Emergency Intervention Battalion (BIEM IV), which is based in Zaragoza and also operates in Catalonia, the Basque Country and La Rioja.

In the rest of the country, these tasks are carried out by the four other BIEMs of the UME, as well as by its Intervention Group in Technological and Environmental Emergencies (GIETMA). These specialists advise and train the

UME and other military units, and reserve the right to act in places where the number of infections is very high, such as in the aforementioned nursing homes, or in the task of transferring patients.

They clean and disinfect waiting rooms and other spaces in hospitals, especially where a person has died from coronavirus, "because the room must be occupied immediately by another patient", says Captain Bascuas.

- Disinfection of traffic control centres.

→ WEDNESDAY 18TH

- The King addresses the country: "We are a society that stands strong in the face of all adversity".
- Extraordinary plenary session of Parliament; all groups express, with slight nuances, their support for the Government.
- A Guardia Civil dies from coronavirus, the first casualty among the State Security Forces.

→ THURSDAY 19TH

- Operation *Balmis* now extends to the 17 autonomous communities, Ceuta and Melilla.
- Military units patrol numerous cities warning citizens of the ban on movement.

- Disinfection in airports, ports, stations, public buildings, hospitals and nursing homes.

→ FRIDAY 20TH

- The military support the Guardia Civil in the surveillance of the Trillo, Almaraz and Cofrentes nuclear power plants.
- The IFEMA emergency shelter for the homeless set up by the Army opens.

→ SATURDAY 21ST

- The UME transfers patients between hospitals to redistribute them according to capacity.
- Military Healthcare intensifies assistance to the elderly in nursing homes.
- The Engineering Command and the Health Brigade advise on the assembly of the provisional hospital at IFEMA.



#ESTE VIRUS LO PARAMOS UNIDOS

Teams of between two and six people work in the nursing homes, always wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): overalls, latex gloves, masks and goggles. "In larger spaces, such as the Delicias train station in Zaragoza, we work with an entire section", explains the UME Captain. In these places every corner is disinfected: platforms, bathrooms, escalators, railings, etc.

In addition, decontamination tasks are carried out in large areas, such as in the pavilions of IFEMA (Madrid's trade fair centre), where a provisional hospital has been installed (see box), and in logistics and supply platforms, such as Mercamadrid or Merca Las Palmas.

NBC DEFENCE

The NBC Defence Regiment nº 1 is also making a major effort in this area. In mid-March, one of the teams from its base in Paterna (Valencia) travelled to Bilbao airport in two NH-90 helicopters of the Army Airmobile Force (FAMET) to disinfect the control tower and various transit areas. Almost at the same time, another team of 21 troops were deployed at Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas airport.

"We have created two light decontamination units, plus one on standby and one more to support evacuation. In total, we have 300 military personnel specialized in detecting pathogenic agents", said head



UME (Military Emergencies Unit)

Snow cannon that the UME has adapted for its disinfectant tanks to facilitate cleaning tasks.

of regiment, Lieutenant Coronel José Luis Munielo. In closed spaces, disinfection is carried out in two stages. This is how Captain Álvaro Michael, who is in charge of one of these light decontamination teams, explains it. "The first stage takes place with the windows closed, using thermal fog generators. Next, the bedding, tablecloths or curtains and other items are disinfected and subsequently removed, leaving the room practically bare. We then proceed to clean the entire surface of the establishment, either with 70% ethyl alcohol or with a 0.01% sodium hypochlorite solution that we prepare using commercial bleach".

Other Army units perform the same tasks throughout the country. "We have returned to wearing white overalls, as happened in the Prestige crisis", recalls

Second Lieutenant Jesús Martínez Noya, at the helm of one of the operational NBC sections of 7th Brigade Galicia. His unit operates in those centres of this autonomous community in which personnel infected with SARS-Cov-2 have been identified. "If there are no coronavirus sufferers", he points out, "other members of the brigade that we are training carry out the work, always under the guidance of a specialist NBC non-commissioned officer".

MILITARY HEALTHCARE

Although less visible, military doctors and nurses are fighting on the front lines. "Up to 2,914 troops are dedicated body and soul to curing the infected patients admitted to the military healthcare network", stressed the CHOD in one of his speeches at the



- Collaboration in the assembly of a shelter for the homeless at the Barcelona Trade Fair.

→ SUNDAY 22ND

- The Armed Forces increase their support in the transport and distribution of medical supplies.
- The King puts the Royal Guard at the disposal of the operation.

→ TUESDAY 24TH

- The Minister of Defence visits the Operations Command, from where Operation Balmis is coordinated.
- Disinfection tasks in critical facilities, health centres and nursing homes are intensified.

→ WEDNESDAY 25TH

- Parliament ratifies the two-week extension of the state of alarm approved by the Government.

→ THURSDAY 26TH

- An Air Force mobile ICU is delivered for the IFEMA field hospital.
- The Army reinforces the Military Central Hospital Gómez Ulla.

→ FRIDAY 27TH

- A psychological care hotline is launched for deployed military personnel.
- The Army begins the transfer of bodies to the morgue of the Madrid Palacio del Hielo (ice skating rink).

→ SATURDAY 28TH

- The Armed Forces have already intervened in 1,083 nursing homes, 200 hospitals and health centres and 16 prisons.

→ SUNDAY 29TH

- The Government decrees the cessation of all non-essential activities for two weeks.
- The UME transfers patients between hospitals and to medicalized hotels in Madrid.



BRISAN (Health Brigade)

The Health Brigade prepares medical oxygen bottles, an essential resource in hospitals.

Preparation of food for the homeless staying at the Barcelona Trade Fair shelter.



Toni Albir/EE

end of March. The importance of their contribution was already noted in the implementing legislation of the state of alarm in the field of Defence. "The resources of the military healthcare network are considered to be of a critical nature", the text states, "and its personnel will be ready to take up their assignments as soon as they are required to do so".

The Ministry of Defence then placed two military hospitals at the disposal of the Ministry of Health, namely the *Gómez Ulla* hospital in Madrid and another military hospital in Zaragoza, as well as the two Health groups with the capacity to set up Role-2 field hospitals (emergency surgery and stabilization).

More than 50 military doctors were temporarily reassigned to join the staff of these hospitals. Military healthcare

personnel no longer in active service were also mobilized to increase health capabilities against COVID-19.

As the days have gone by, space needs have grown in the hospitals. 20 of the 22 floors of the *Gómez Ulla* hospital are dedicated to treating those suffering

from this epidemic. Patients are also being treated in the two ICU wings and in the Post Anaesthesia Resuscitation Unit. In addition, a hundred beds have been installed in the rehabilitation gymnasium in order to increase the capacity to care for those affected. In total, 405 beds and 28 ICUs have been made available for coronavirus patients alone.

Staff was increased on March 26th with nursing assistants and operating theatre assistants from the Health Brigade, as well as personnel from the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Command, acting as hospital porters. Members of the Engineering Command are also providing support in plumbing, electricity, air conditioning, welding and bricklaying tasks.

The *Gómez Ulla* hospital, through the Armed Forces Blood Transfusion Centre

Military doctors and nurses fighting against the coronavirus on the front line

→ MONDAY 30TH

- The Armed Forces begin to monitor the land borders with Portugal and with Morocco, in Melilla.
- An A400M aircraft sent to China to bring back medical supplies arrives at *Torrejón* air base.
- The first death from coronavirus occurs of a military serviceman, a non-commissioned officer in the Air Force.

→ TUESDAY 31ST

- The Navy sends ship *Galicia* to Melilla to reinforce its hospital capacity.

APRIL

→ WEDNESDAY 1ST

- Some of the soldiers posted in Iraq and Afghanistan return home, as training tasks in these missions were brought to a standstill.

→ THURSDAY 2ND

- The Armed Forces begin to monitor the border with France in Girona and Navarre.

→ FRIDAY 3RD

- The King visits the *Balmis* Command Centre and thanks the Armed Forces for their work in the health crisis. "Your contribution is very important in a time of need and national emergency".

→ SATURDAY 4TH

- The Government extends the state of emergency for two more weeks, until April 26th.
- 8,261 troops from the Army, Navy, Air Force, the Military Emergencies Unit and the Royal Guard have already been deployed in more than 900 locations throughout the country. Of these, 3,125 work in support and health care.



Air Force



Pepo Díaz

The Air Force has set up an ICU and the Army has provided support in fitting out the hospital.



Pepo Díaz

Military collaboration at IFEMA

“WE are always prepared to go on international missions, but we would never have imagined that we would be mobilized for a mission in Spain”, said Major (MD) Armando José Munayco on March 26th in pavilion 9 of the *Juan Carlos I* (IFEMA) exhibition grounds. He is the head of the team of nurses and paramedics of the Air Force's Air Medical Deployment Support Unit (UMAAD) which, in just 12 hours, set up six critical patient stations in ICU room 9.03, the first of 49 available in this field hospital. “Here we have practically all the material we use in overseas missions, such as the *Role 2* hospital we assembled in Afghanistan”. Each post has all the electro-medical devices required for an ICU, “the most critical technology at the moment in hospitals”, explains the commander.

The UMAAD has also made available to the ICU transfer stretchers to move patients within pavilion 9, and 30 conventional beds in addition to the 50 beds of Army Health Group nº 1. In addition, a radiology area has been set up with CT scans and portable X-ray equipment.

Like the members of UMAAD, the members of the engineering and paratrooper sapper units that have helped to

set up the IFEMA field hospital are also military personnel who have been trained in operations abroad. “I spent six months in Iraq setting up the Basmayah base, and 30 days in Senegal training officers of its army on the planning and setting up of military camps,” says Captain Alejandro López of Salamanca Engineering Specialties Regiment nº 11. During the week that he worked at IFEMA commanding 14 soldiers from the same unit, they improved the sanitary facilities and set up six containers with showers and chemical toilets in pavilion 5, the first to be activated, with 750 beds. Dr. Javier Marco, director of the IFEMA field hospital, publicly gave thanks for the collaboration, not only of the UMAAD and the engineers, but also of the Army Health Brigade and its Group nº 1 for their advice on medical and logistic aspects in the assembly of the hospital; the sappers of the Paratrooper Brigade, who were involved in the transfer and assembly of many of the 5,500 beds on the premises; and to the UME, which used snow cannons adapted to its vehicles to disinfect the walls and floors of the facilities with sodium hypochlorite.

J.L. Expósito

The Armed Forces have disinfected over 5,000 facilities, half of which are nursing homes

is participating in a clinical trial that aims to obtain “hyperimmune plasma” from donors who have had the disease. This scientific trial, led by the Puerta de Hierro hospital, is based on the premise that the antibodies generated by those who have overcome the coronavirus can be used to cure patients.

In addition, the Navy has sent the amphibious assault ship *Galicia* to Melilla to reinforce the city's hospital capacity. Adapted as a hospital ship, it has eight ICU beds, two operating theatres, a triage room, a laboratory, X-ray equipment and a dental practice. In addition, two ambulances, a medicalized helicopter and a contingent of Marines have been brought on board and the latter have begun to carry out disinfection tasks in the port and other areas.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

Psychological care is another aspect that has been strengthened. Three guides have been prepared, aimed at those involved in the operation, health personnel and military and civilian personnel of the Department, with appropriate recommendations for each of these groups. “They have been distributed to all Defence units and hospitals and their content will be expanded as new situations arise that have to be faced”, explains the head of the psychology unit of the Inspectorate-General for Defence Health, Lieutenant Colonel José Miguel García Real.

In addition, a hotline has been set up for military personnel involved in Operation *Balmis*, 91 422 28 80, which is manned by psychologists and can be called by those who need this type of support, as well as advice on other issues, such as managing their own teams or working with the civilian population.

These professionals are also deployed with on-site forces. “The psychology unit of the UME has been reinforced with 19 psychology officers and, if necessary, the same will be done with those of the Army, Navy and Air Force”, stresses García Real.

They also provide support to nursing homes and other vulnerable groups, and

maintain telephone contact with the staff of these centres. “They are professionals who are under great stress. They have an enormous vocation and feel very concerned about their elders, with whom they live on a daily basis”, says the head of the Psychology unit at IGESAN.

In addition to these measures, the Under-Secretariat of Defence, through the Equality and Social Support Division, makes telephone calls to military personnel and older family members who may be

Príncipe de Asturias University Hospital in Alcalá de Henares, and the Alcorcón Foundation and Getafe hospitals. In Leganés, a sports centre has been fitted out to relieve the emergency department of the *Severo Ochoa* hospital.

The Armed Forces have also reinforced the capacities of hospitals in Albacete, Calatayud, Melilla, Murcia, Reinosa (Cantabria), Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Segovia, Valladolid, as well as the Military Central Hospital *Gómez Ulla* and the



The Military Central Hospital *Gómez Ulla* has reinforced its staff.

in a situation of vulnerability or isolation. Hundreds of calls are made every day, mostly to retired military personnel and widowed spouses over 82 years of age, to check on their condition and attend to their needs.

FIELD HOSPITALS

Operation *Balmis* collaborates with numerous logistics and military transport specialists in the construction and start-up of several field hospitals, which has made it possible to provide new spaces for medical coverage to patients. In Madrid, the facilities of the *Gregorio Marañón*, *La Paz* and *Doce de Octubre* hospitals have been expanded, as have those of the

Zaragoza military hospital. Outside the latter, an area has been set up to carry out drive-through coronavirus detection tests. Military personnel are also working to activate field hospitals in Alicante, Castellón, Sabadell and Valencia.

A team from the UME moved to l'Hospitalet de Llobregat at the end of March to study the possibility of building one of these hospitals at the Barcelona Trade Fair, initially with 300 beds, which could be extended to another 2,000. The project is taking shape, as it did in IFEMA in Madrid, which is equipped to accommodate 5,500 beds and 49 ICU beds (see box). In addition, patient triage modules have been built in León, Oviedo

and Las Palmas. In all of these centres, the Armed Forces have supplied medical equipment and loaned and installed tents, refrigerated containers, showers, chemical toilets, various pieces of furniture such as beds, stretchers, lockers, tables and benches, as well as oxygen tanks and generators.

THE HOMELESS

The operation devotes particular effort to supporting temporary shelters for the homeless. This is the case of IFEMA's Pavilion 14, where a team from the UME, in collaboration with SAMUR Social (Madrid social emergency service)

The operation devotes particular effort to supporting shelters for the homeless

performed a reconnaissance of the facilities and subsequently provided a shower service for 150 people and dining room benches for 50. The unit also disinfects the exhibition grounds every day. Zaragoza Logistic Support 41 (AALOG 41) manages another shelter at the Barcelona Trade Fair, similar to the IFEMA shelter, where the following have been installed: 225 three-sleeper single bunk beds, two cistern containers –one with a capacity for 100 showers–, two refrigerated containers, one kitchen module, 35 sets of table-benches, as well as lockers and cupboards. “Every day we serve breakfast, lunch and dinner to 330



An Army soldier and a local policeman during a patrol on the streets of Murcia.

The Armed Forces with the people

Fernando Martínez Láinez
Journalist and writer



The Royal Guard distributes products from the food bank in the Community of Madrid.

people”, explains corporal Jesús Miguel Otoré, one of the ten cooks and food handlers from AALOG 41 who look after the field kitchen at Barcelona’s Trade Fair.

The Armed Forces also distribute food from various food banks to the most vulnerable. In Madrid, the Royal Guard collects it from the Alcalá de Henares Food Bank and distributes it throughout the Community. Units of the Canary Islands Command do the same in Tenerife; and in Zaragoza, the AALOG 41 soldiers take food to nine nursing homes. The Navy is also collaborating with soup kitchens in Cartagena, Cádiz and San Fernando.

QUARTERMASTER CORPS

Since the beginning of Operation *Balmis*, the Quartermaster Corps Materiel Supply Centre and Depot Park (PCAMI) has been the organization in which all the resources acquired by the Armed Forces or donated by private entities to combat SARS-Cov-2 are concentrated. During the first seven days of operation alone, the PCAMI received over three and a half million masks, 200,000 disposable protective gowns and overalls and 20,000 litres of bleach and other disinfectants. Most of these were purchased by the Procurement Division of the Army Logistics Support Command (MALE). Disposable suits, masks and other products donated by defence companies

and banks also arrive at the Depot. The PCAMI Supply Unit organizes all these resources and distributes them in less than 24 hours following receipt through the MALE Logistics Support Management Centre, an organization that has activated its own resources to reinforce the Army Transport Group that has supplied the Armed Forces with these products since the beginning of the operation.

THE Armed Forces as well as the people protect the population. As it should be. Helping to overcome the biblical plague in a battle against an invisible enemy. Soldiers, mostly anonymous, in a war without front lines or borders.

Heroes who, of course, are not only warriors, but also men and women acting as an underpinning and collective integrating element. With exemplary qualities to help the public, qualities that stem from inner and ethical values rather than from bravery with weapons.

Once again, the Armed Forces took to the deserted and besieged streets, in search of the murderous ghost of the coronavirus, the new beast of the Apocalypse.

An essential bulwark, the infallible support in times of social calamity. Knowing they are there helps us to endure. A guarantee of joint victory at critical times.

“No army is better than its soldiers”, declared American General Patton. The soldier is also a citizen, and the greatest privilege of citizenship is to serve one’s country with (or without) weapons.

The Republican Emilio Castelar used to say that bayonets are good for everything except for sitting on them. And the tragedy of the plague that cuts us to the quick proves him right. Because our Armed Forces do not sit back, they stay on the warpath against the enemy, who or whatever it may be. Today the virus, tomorrow who knows?

“The most beautiful thing there is, after inspiration, is sacrifice”, wrote the French romantic Alfred de Vigny in his book *Servitude and Military Greatness*, “nothing is so worthy of the interest and love of the nation as this self-sacrificing family, which sometimes brings it so much glory”.

Calderón de la Barca, soldier of the Army of Flanders, also wrote in verse: “That in good and bad fortune / the militia is nothing but / a religion of honest men”.

The military is part of the people in one of its indispensable functions, and should there be any doubt that it serves the people, the recent plague has come to confirm this. “What is the military if not the nerve that sends breath and vital energy to the entire body of the nation?”, asked Antonio Maura in 1908.

Although more open and professional than ever before, the Armed Forces continue to call for deep empathy with their homeland and national identity. This is the atmosphere that helps them accomplish their often-uncertain mission with dignity, because heroism does not always come in a blaze of glory.

Sometimes you have to go down into the sewers of the plague to beat the beast. Because fighting spirit cannot be bought and it needs the will to win. Tolkien put it simply: “I do not love the bright sword for its sharpness, nor the arrow for its swiftness, nor the warrior for his glory. I love only that which they defend”.

“If you’re going through hell, keep walking”, said Churchill, another tough old guy. Walk until the tide turns.

And in the end, as the historian-philosopher Spengler put it, and many have repeated, it has always been a platoon of soldiers that has saved civilization.

Keep your spirits up. The Armed Forces are with the people.

And the only easy day was yesterday.

AIRBORNE SUPPORT

The Army also uses FAMET (Army Airmobile Forces) helicopters to transport personnel and material, while aircraft from the Air Force’s Search and Rescue (SAR) units make these types of flights between the Canary and Balearic Islands, Ceuta and Melilla.

Air Force transport aircraft are playing a major role in managing the health



House of His Majesty the King

King Felipe spoke by video conference with the subordinate commands of the mission.

The King, in the command centre

ON April 3rd, King Felipe VI visited the Retamares Base in Pozuelo de Alarcón (Madrid), the body that coordinates all the activities of the Armed Forces in Operation *Balmis*, accompanied by the Minister of Defence and the CHOD.

The commander of the Operations Command (CMOPS), Lieutenant General Fernando López del Pozo, explained the capabilities and human and material resources made available to this operation. In the Joint Operations Management Centre meeting room, King Felipe VI held multiple video conferences with the various commands that are operationally under the command of the CMOPS.

The King took the opportunity to convey “collectively, to all those involved in Operation *Balmis* and to the Armed Forces as a whole”, a message of support and gratitude. “And of pride”, he added, “in the face of what is a very important contribution in a moment of need and national emergency”.

crisis. On March 29th, a *C-130 Hercules* from the 31st Wing landed at Torrejón air base, having flown from the Czech Republic with a cargo of 10,000 items of personal protection equipment delivered by NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre. The next day, an *A400M*, also from the 31st Wing, arrived at Torrejón air base from China after a 33-hour flight and two technical stopovers. In Shanghai it took on board a cargo of 14 tonnes of various medical supplies, such as masks, PPE and rapid tests to diagnose SARS-Cov-2 carriers. On April 3rd, a *C-130* and an *A400M* arrived at Torrejón air base from Hamburg,

where they had been sent to pick up six tonnes of healthcare cargo, including 50 ventilators purchased from the German Federal Ministry of Health.

Previously, an Airbus *A400M* test aircraft landed in Getafe with 650,000 surgical masks. Air Deployment Support Squadron personnel received the shipment and prepared the cargo for delivery to the PCAMI.

TRANSFER OF PATIENTS

At the Cuatro Vientos air base, two Superpuma helicopters and their corresponding crews from the 48th Wing are on permanent alert in case they are

required to transfer coronavirus patients by air. The aircraft have been medicalized by the Aeromedical Evacuation Unit (UMAER).

The UME and other Army units have also assumed the transfer of moderately ill patients between hospitals, medicalized hotels and accommodation centres, in the case of the elderly. The transport of patients is carried out using public transport buses of the Madrid autonomous community because they have ramps that facilitate the access of people in wheelchairs. A team from GIETMA and another from SAMUR are on board, escorted by a UME patrol, which is also in charge of disinfecting the vehicles.

The transport of the dead is another of the missions that the Armed Forces have had to assume in view of the overflow of funeral services. On March 28th, an order was published in the Official State Gazette whereby the Ministry of Health authorises the Army to participate in the transfer of those who have died from coronavirus. In Madrid, where the greatest number of deaths from the epidemic are recorded, the UME and the Army carry out these transfers from various hospitals and nursing homes to the provisional facilities of the *Palacio del Hielo* (ice skating rink), where the coffins remain until the funeral homes can take care of them. In addition, Air Force personnel have installed two containers with a capacity for 20 corpses at the *Gregorio Marañón* Hospital.

SECURITY SUPPORT

From the first week, the military has been fulfilling an important task of being present on the streets and at critical points in support of the State Security Forces. “On the one hand, it is a matter of supporting the main measure against COVID-19, confinement at home to avoid contagion and, on the other hand, to convey a reassuring message to Spanish society, as its Armed Forces are there to protect it”, explains Lieutenant General López del Pozo.

These patrols also cover railway and bus stations, port areas, hospitals and health centres, shopping areas and communication hubs in large



Navy

The ship *Galicia*, in the port of Melilla to provide health support to the city.



Army

Manufacture of masks in the Army's PCAMI workshops.



Army

A soldier from 11th Brigade *Extremadura* at the Almaraz nuclear power plant.



Salvador Sas/ EFE



Ruben Somonte/ MoD

90,000 troops from the Army, Navy, Air Force, UME and the Royal Guard have been deployed throughout Spain



UME (Military Emergencies Unit)

The military are received with displays of affection in nursing homes.

The satisfaction of serving

THE smile for today's work is worth the world to me". Second Lieutenant Jesús Evaristo Martínez Noya finally rests, shortly before nightfall, at home. He has taken a shower and changed his clothes. However, his workday, which began around 7.30 a.m., is not yet over. "I have to do some keyboard work", he says. Filling out the daily "paperwork". Before having dinner, enjoying a little time with his family and going to bed, he has to write a report about the disinfection work carried out today in two nursing homes in Vigo and a shelter for the homeless in Pontevedra and submit it to the command. The technical document does not reflect the feeling of satisfaction that remains at the end of this day, already relieved of tension. "The faces of the people, their expressions of gratitude...", recalls Second Lieutenant Martínez Noya, head of one of the operational teams of the NBC company of 7th Brigade *Galicia* that, since the beginning of Operation *Balmis*, "works on demand", as he himself puts it, in the northwest of Spain trying to "make a tiny contribution to help the country move forward".

Captain Álvaro Michael is also comforted by the fact that his work is highly appreciated by the workers and residents of the nursing homes he

visits. Stationed at NBC Regiment nº 1 in Valencia, the captain and his men work far from home, in nursing homes in Madrid's Guadarrama mountain range. "They see in us people in uniform who come to give them a hand and who remain calm, that reassures them", he says.

Complicated situations such as those found by UME captain Enrique Bascuas, from BIEM IV, in the nursing homes and shelters that his unit tours. "Their workers are pushed to the limit of their possibilities", he says. However, in his opinion, "our presence comforts them and helps them to move forward, with heroic behaviour".

"Being able to help is a source of pride for us," says Captain Rubén Arcos, who is stationed at BRIPAC (Paratrooper Brigade) in charge of a team that carries out disinfection, surveillance and reconnaissance in several locations in Madrid. "In many neighbourhoods people have applauded us", adds Lieutenant Francisco Conde, also from BRIPAC, for whom the presence of the Armed Forces on the streets makes the importance of the pandemic in the country more evident. "No timetables", stresses Second Lieutenant Martínez Noya. "It's what we do. That's what we're here for".

J.L. Expósito

The military protects critical infrastructures in support of the State Security Forces

cities. "We work in full coordination with the State Security Forces", said Parachute Brigade Lieutenant Enrique Conde during a patrol in Alcorcón. The members of the Armed Forces who participate in these support tasks enjoy the status of agents of authority, in accordance with an additional provision of the state of alarm decree. "If we witness an incident, we report it immediately to the security forces, but if it is very serious, we will intervene, as any citizen would", indicates Sergeant Jorge Grijuela, head of one of the platoons, as he distributes his men around the Alcorcón suburban rail station.

On March 21st, military deployment was activated to provide security for the Trillo (Guadalajara), Almaraz (Cáceres) and Cofrentes (Valencia) nuclear power plants, as well as for other energy infrastructures in Mallorca, Ibiza, Cádiz and Fuerteventura. The military thus reinforces the surveillance of these facilities against sabotage and terrorist acts.

Also, since April 3rd, military units have been monitoring land borders with the aim of freeing up State Security Forces personnel for other tasks.

"*Balmis* is the operation with the most military resources at the disposal of the authorities in our recent history", stressed the CHOD in a message of thanks to all military personnel. "Rest assured", added General Villarroya, "that with the sum of all our efforts we will overcome this situation".

José Luis Expósito, Elena Tarilonte and Víctor Hernández

The United Nations deploys a plan of coordination and solidarity and the European Union and NATO activate their response mechanisms

A BATTLE WE ALL MUST FIGHT



UN Secretary-General António Guterres, during an online COVID-19 press conference on April 1st.

NEVER before had the world been paralyzed in unison. Never had one half of its population been confined and its freedom of movement restricted. The consequences of this collective fight may transform the world order as we know it. The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has already caused —according to the data issued by the United Nations on April 1st— more than 50,000 deaths, while there are one million confirmed cases in 204 countries. The virus has made it extremely clear that all people, regardless of ethnicity, gender or ideology, are vulnerable, and we have had to assume the key value of community to save ourselves. “This is a war all humankind must wage; nobody can win it by themselves. If we want to defeat this common, invisible and predatory enemy, we have to do it together. SARS-CoV-2 knows no borders, we must not either”. UN Secretary General, António Guterres, sent a clear message to the world leaders —the G20— in the extraordinary meetings that took place by video conference on March 26th and 27th regarding the COVID-19 crisis. Guterres made a plea for solidarity and especially for pragmatism: “We need a battle plan and we need to start now”.

To this end, the main UN leader presented three critical lines of action: first, and in coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO), to tackle the health emergency; second, to focus on the social and economic impact, and on the economic recovery response, particularly with regard to the most vulnerable; and third, to draw on sustainable development as a solution and start working straight away to lay the foundations for a recovery that will build a sustainable, inclusive and equitable economy under the guidelines of the 2030 Agenda. “We are only as strong as the weakest”, said Guterres.

RESPONSE CAPACITY

The Secretary General has also made a constant and continuous appeal to all of the international organizations to activate their common response mechanisms. On January 28th, 2020 the Croatian Presidency already activated the EU's integrated political crisis response (IPCR) mechanism in “information sharing mode”,



Air Force personnel unload a *Hercules* aircraft carrying 10,000 PPE items donated to Spain by the Czech Republic on March 29th.

and on March 2nd this was intensified to “full activation”, which allows for periodic and specific meetings to agree on specific measures in the fields of health, foreign affairs, economy and civil protection.

In this framework, on March 19th, the Spanish Ministry of Defence — represented by the Undersecretary of Defence for Political Affairs, Admiral Juan Francisco Martínez Núñez— participated in an online meeting with the Defence Ministers of France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, United Kingdom, Sweden and Estonia, held as part of the European Initiative for Strategic Engagement to tackle the contribution of their respective Armed Forces in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The measures adopted by the various Defence Departments were

discussed in order to support each country's efforts, both to contain the virus and mitigate its consequences for their citizens, and experiences following the initial days of the crisis were shared. They also dealt with the measures put in place to guarantee the operational capability of Defence and the continuity of the commitments to peace and stability in the international arena.

The heads of State and Government held two extraordinary European Councils in March by video conference. In the second one, on March 26th, they issued a common statement of actions to intensify the fight against COVID-19 that focused on limiting the spread of the virus; ensuring the supply of medical equipment; promoting research on treatment and vaccines; and supporting employment, companies and the economy. Aware of the vertiginous speed at which the pandemic was spreading and the need to maintain a common line of action, the 27 agreed to call a new extraordinary Council in the first fortnight of April. The Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, urged his partners to take “brave and firm” decisions and reminded them that “the response cannot be national, it has to

Pedro Sánchez:
“We all have to
row in the same
direction”

be European, using all resources. This is the most critical moment for the EU since its foundation and we all have to row in the same direction". In subsequent press conferences, Sánchez insisted that "COVID-19 affects all of us and knows no borders, gender or class", therefore, the EU "must foster a reconstruction plan that strengthens the mechanisms of the European welfare state".

For its part, NATO, as explained by Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the Alliance's Foreign Ministers held by videoconference on April 2nd to study the allied response to SARS-CoV-2, "is deploying all the necessary mechanisms in this common fight against an invisible enemy". Since the outset of the crisis, the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) has been enabling the partners and Allies to help one another in order to respond to requests from the most needy. In this regard, on March 29th, a *C130 Hercules* landed in Torrejón de Ardoz with a cargo of 10,000 personal protective equipment (PPE) items donated by the Czech Republic, while on April 1st an aircraft from the Turkish air force landed in Spain with PPE and disinfectant solutions. Other allies

such as Latvia and Luxemburg have also helped Spain while Japan, a NATO partner, has been able to do so through the EADRCC. Italy has received medical supplies from Turkey and has been provided with ten field hospital intensive care units donated by the U.S. European Command. Also, the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre has allowed field hospitals of one country to care for patients from another (Germany has taken in patients from Italy and France) and medical staff from Albania and Poland have travelled to Italy.

The Atlantic Alliance has also provided its members with two strategic transportation programs overseen by

NATO: the Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC), whereby Allies and their partners jointly own and operate three heavy-lift *Globemaster C-17* aircraft; and the Strategic Airlift International Solution (SALIS) that allows Antonov aircraft to be rented when required (in March, more than 200 tonnes of medical equipment were flown to the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia), and four field hospitals have been provided to Luxembourg. The NATO Centre of Excellence for Military Medicine (NATO MILMED COE) is also strengthening its research on SARS-CoV-19 and

to refugees and their helplessness in the face of COVID-19. Measures are also being taken at the Department of Peace Operations, which is implementing a series of measures both for the protection of its troops and for some missions so that they can extend their mandate and collaborate with local authorities in the fight against the pandemic and in support of the local population, with special focus on the Women, Peace and Security agenda to incentivize the essential role played by women in terms of hygiene and health in the most affected areas.

At the same time, the UN is reviewing the rotations of its foreign mission personnel for the next six months and studying deployments to determine which missions or parts of the mandate of some operations should be suspended in order to facilitate the confinement decreed by the World Health Organization. It has also recommended to the other organizations that carry out missions under the mandate of the Security Council —NATO and the EU— that they do the same with their troops.

Spain has withdrawn almost 200 soldiers from its contingent in Iraq as the COVID-19 crisis "has halted the training tasks they were assigned to", as explained by Spanish

Minister of Defence, Margarita Robles. The Defence Department has also withdrawn part of the 65 Spanish troops in Afghanistan under the NATO *Resolute Support* Mission. In coordination with the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the aircraft used for the repatriation of these contingents were also used to evacuate around 30 European citizens. Specifically, one German and 14 Spanish citizens flew with the military in the aircraft from Iraq; while six German, one Swiss and three French nationals flew in the aircraft from Kabul, Afghanistan, which stopped in Abu Dhabi to pick up eight Spanish tourists who were trapped there.

Rosa Ruiz



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, during an online pre-ministerial press conference from Brussels on April 1st.

monitoring prevention measures in all NATO missions and operations, while the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) is collaborating with private companies for the manufacture of medical equipment.

PROTECT AND ASSIST

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the UN Secretary General has shown his concern for the weakest countries, "no doubt, the most vulnerable to the disease and its consequences". On March 20th, Guterres called for an immediate global ceasefire to help create humanitarian corridors to distribute aid and he also called for special attention to be given

The global crisis triggered by SARS-CoV-2 shows that international organizations, such as the WHO, have a key role to play in responses

PANDEMICS: A GROWING RISK in the 21st century

Mar Hidalgo García

Senior Analyst of the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies

THROUGHOUT the history of humankind, the world has suffered several pandemics costing the lives of millions of people and giving way to changes in societies. It suffices to recall the so-called 1918 Spanish flu, which killed up to 50 million people. However, from the middle of the 20th century to the present time, medicine had reached a stage of victory and control of epidemics thanks to vaccination campaigns, antibiotic treatments, and improvements in hygiene and health infrastructures. But this victory has not lasted long and over the past decades scientists have been warning of a dramatic increase in infectious disease outbreaks, which have tripled since the 1980s.

The World Health Organization (WHO) warned in 2018, almost as a premonition, that the world should be prepared to face a “Disease X” caused by a virus or bacteria that could not only endanger public health but also destabilize the world economy.

The scientific community also estimates that approximately 75 per cent of emerging infectious diseases in humans are zoonotic diseases, that is, those originating in animals —generally non-domestic ones— that at some point are transmitted to humans, as was the case with the avian flu virus, the swine flu virus, SARS-CoV, or the most recent virus —which is jeopardizing the entire world— SARS-CoV-2, originated in Wuhan and also known as COVID-19. While the international community has made progress in improving global health security, COVID-19 has shown that the world is vulnerable to an infectious

disease outbreak as it has the potential to become a pandemic, cause widespread casualties and destabilize the world economy. The new coronavirus has also highlighted that the consequences of a disease outbreak stem not only from the transmissibility, morbidity or mortality of the pathogen but also from the degree of interconnection that the place of origin —in this case China— has with the rest of the world.

Given the scope of COVID-19, it is safe to say that it is a “Disease X” as mentioned by the WHO. The problem is that it might not be the only one, since epidemic outbreaks are natural events that have occurred and will continue to occur in the future, and there are also many factors indicating that we are facing a new era in the occurrence and spread of infectious diseases.

One of these factors will be the massive, rapid, poorly planned, non-inclusive and resource-scarce urban growth taking place in developing countries. Most of this urban population lives in irregular settlements where conditions are ideal for the spread of infectious diseases, in particular, those transmitted by mosquitoes such as malaria, dengue fever and yellow fever.

Conflicts and population movements also contribute to increasing the emergence of infectious diseases. In the case of Syria, there has been a rise in the incidence of polio due to the lack of medical personnel and the failure to comply with the vaccination schedule. In other cases, violence against health workers often leads to the exodus of such staff,



UN/Mark Garten

resulting in so-called “medical deserts”. Populations are also forced to flee conflict areas and dwell in refugee camps where poor hygiene, contaminated water and food shortages foster the spread of infectious diseases such as cholera, measles, Ebola and diphtheria.

Climatic factors, in particular temperature, rainfall and humidity, play a very important role in the transmission of diseases. In some areas, the rise in temperature and humidity will encourage the onset of vector-borne diseases such as malaria or dengue fever. Rodent-borne diseases are also expected to grow as a result of increasing floods and droughts. Moreover, the melting of the poles may trigger the emergence of pathogens that have remained well preserved in permafrost thanks to ideal conditions of temperature, darkness and the lack of oxygen.

The impact of human activities on the ecosystems is destroying the natural habitats of various species. For instance, the destruction of forested areas for agricultural activities is making some rodents move to population centres, thus encouraging the emergence of diseases, as is becoming apparent in West Africa and, in particular, in Nigeria with an increasing number of cases of Lassa fever. Globalization, international mobility and the greater interconnection

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of the planet are all factors contributing to the rapid spread of diseases. Furthermore, and as demonstrated by COVID-19, the greater the interconnection of the country of origin with the rest of the world, the greater the economic and geopolitical consequences of the outbreak.

Antimicrobial resistance also represents a growing threat in a scenario in which there is an increasing number of infectious diseases. Standard treatments are becoming ineffective and infections persist and can be transmitted to other people.

Finally, the development of new technologies is having a very positive impact on the health sector, generating more personalized and less invasive treatments and enabling patients to have easier access to results and reports. However, these same technologies can be dual-use and be utilized by terrorist groups. Some of the technologies having the most revolutionary effect on the health sector are those derived from cyber-attacks, 3D printers, artificial intelligence, the robotics boom or synthetic biology. Of particular concern regarding the latter is the genetic modification of naturally occurring and low-risk pathogens that can increase their virulence or resistance to standard treatments and vaccines.



UN/Evan Schneider

A CHALLENGE THAT CANNOT BE FACED ALONE

The cross-border and transnational nature of pandemics justifies intergovernmental organizations, such as the World Health Organization, having a key role to play in preparedness and response. In addition to the regulatory role of the WHO through the legally binding International Health Regulations (IHR), the functions of this organization are to support Member States develop their national capabilities to respond to pandemics, coordinate Member States for pandemic and seasonal influenza preparedness and response, develop guidelines, and strengthen biosafety and biosecurity.

Among the initiatives implemented by the WHO for the prevention of pandemics, special mention must be made of the One Health concept carried out in coordination with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

This concept provides a systemic approach and considers that the health of humans, animals and plants, as well as the status of ecosystems, are all interconnected. Among the measures promoted by the WHO, also worth mentioning is the *Global Health Security Agenda* (GHSA) established in 2014 to respond to public health threats—whether natural, accidental or intentional—and to global, regional and national security.

A SECURITY CHALLENGE

Famines, wars and epidemics have always been the great enemies of humanity, and the new coronavirus has made sure we do not forget this. However, the consideration that epidemic outbreaks have an influence on security is a relatively recent issue. Since the beginning of the 21st century, considering health as a security issue has become increasingly important at both international and state level. The reasons for this may be found in the concern generated by the emergence of diseases such as SARS, Ebola or

Since the 21st century, health has been considered a security issue at both national and international level

resistant tuberculosis and the risk of bio-terrorist acts. In fact, the UN Security Council has only issued three resolutions regarding infectious diseases, one in 1983 about AIDS and two about the Ebola virus. It was in one of the latter two resolutions that an infectious disease was classified for the first time as a threat to peace and security, in accordance with Article 39 of the Charter of the United Nations.

At national level, security strategies address, to a greater or lesser extent, the security threats engendered by the emergence of pandemics, and are even complemented by specific strategies seeking to strengthen national capacities to prevent, detect, respond and, where appropriate, recover from a health threat.

For instance, in 2018 Britain published a review of its national security strategy entitled *National Security Capability Review*, which includes diseases as a new challenge, placing them at the same level as terrorism or cyber-attacks. A few months later it adopted the first National Biosecurity Strategy: *UK Biological Security Strategy*.

As for the US, the 2017 *National Security Strategy* establishes that biological incidents have the potential to cause catastrophic effects either as a result of a natural outbreak or of a deliberate incident. Ebola, SARS and the anthrax incident are examples of how a biological threat strikes at the country's security, causing casualties, generating economic losses and questioning the credibility of government institutions.

This strategy is complemented by two new ones: the *National Health Security Strategy* (NHSS) for 2019-2022 and the *National Biodefence Strategy*. The latter provides, for the first time, a framework to address biological threats, whether naturally occurring or intentional, from a comprehensive viewpoint and with more effective coordination among the various departments and agencies of the US federal administration.

In Spain, the 2017 *National Security Strategy* considers epidemics and pandemics as a challenge to national security and sets the objective of "adopting preparedness and response plans for both generic and specific health risks, applying the principle of coordination between the Spanish Central Administration and those of the Autonomous Communities as well as with international organizations, such as the WHO or, within the EU, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control". In this regard, the Armed Forces have demonstrated how, using their capabilities, they can support civilian authorities to mitigate the consequences of a pandemic outbreak, as is currently happening with Operation *Balmis* in the fight against coronavirus.

There is no such thing as zero risk for pandemics, and even less so in such a changing world. Globalization has made the world more vulnerable to the social and economic impacts of infectious disease outbreaks. At international level, there will be a need to foster collaboration and cooperation through a pragmatic use of diplomacy and multilateralism. At national level, an effort will be required to prepare and integrate all civilian and military capabilities to face new epidemic outbreaks, whether natural or deliberate. ■



US Army/Thomas Bey



UN/Evan Schneider

[armed forces]

Allies in BÉTERA

NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Spain Headquarters is this year available to the Alliance for use as a joint force command

THE first thing one sees when entering the NATO Headquarters in Bétera is eleven masts with the flags of eleven countries, and in the middle is the banner of the Atlantic Alliance. Military personnel from France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States work there every day. This year, the Czech Republic is also present and, therefore, soon there will be twelve flags.

The pace of this unit has increased in the past months since it obtained the certification to be used as a joint force command. After the evaluation in Menorca last October during exercise *Trident Jackal*, this Headquarters will remain available to the Alliance with this task throughout 2020.

If activated, it could project, direct and exercise command and control over a joint force ranging from 50,000 to 80,000 troops. This is what Bétera has been prepared for. The commander of this joint force is Lieutenant General Fernando García-Vaquero, head of

the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Spain Headquarters (NRDC-ESP). The spectrum of conflicts it could respond to is very wide; however, this General focuses on two NATO flanks: "In Eastern Europe, NATO is facing a scenario of a conventional nature combined with non-classical (hybrid) procedures. In the South, however, the threat is not so conventional, and is based more on terrorist or criminal groups acting from safe havens in the Sahel region and leading to instability in our nations, outside our borders and even in energy transit lines, maritime routes, etc."

*55 of the 300
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VALENCIA AS A MILITARY BASE

This Headquarters is the result of a strategic concept defined by the Alliance in 1999, at a time when it looked as though the old confrontation between blocks would disappear for good.

The new threats made it advisable to have a number of units and means permanently available and, in particular, to have easily deployable high readiness headquarters.

In this regard, the Alliance launched an offer of participation to its member states, and Spain responded with the commitment to establishing one of these headquarters in Bétera (Valencia). In 2002, this unit conducted its first deployment at the Zaragoza training area for its validation, and NATO evaluators were able to verify and certify that it met all the operational requirements demanded by the Atlantic Alliance.

Similarly, Military Base "Jaime I" in Bétera meets the strict conditions and standards set by the Alliance. It is a modern facility, suitable for the troops it houses. In addition to the



Meeting at the command post deployed during exercise *Deployex* last February at the Marines military base (Valencia). Lieutenant General García-Vaquero receives an update on the operational situation. The Chief of Staff and Section Chiefs attend the meeting.



A female soldier raises NATO flag at Bétera military base.

Abril 2020



Personnel from various allied nations talk at the door of the headquarters command building.

Arrival of the VJTF led by Bétera at the port of Szczecin (Poland) for exercise *Brilliant Jump* in 2016.



NRDC-ESP



Command Post Operations Centre deployed during exercise *Trident Jaguar* in Menorca in 2014.

training area and the heliport, another fundamental aspect of this military base is its proximity and access to Manises airport and to the port of Valencia. These two locations are vital for logistic projection, and several military operations have been supported from these premises since the 1990s: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Congo, Lebanon and Pakistan.

More than 55 of the 300 military staff forming part of this headquarters are allied personnel. The highest-ranking military officer is Major-General Nelson Martins Viegas Pires from the Portuguese Army. He is deputy commander of a headquarters that, in his own words, “promotes a series of values among its members that make it cohesive. In addition to being a reference point for the Atlantic Alliance”, he says, “this military base promotes unity among Western nations and is perfectly integrated in Valencia”.

International headquarters have a special appeal. This is the view of French Colonel Philippe Potin, head of the engineering section at Bétera. “Working in a multinational environment is engaging”, assures this officer with previous experience in this type of units. “I have been stationed in the United States, in the Eurocorps, and it is now a privilege to be in Spain, due to the prestige of this unit, and be able to enjoy 350 days of sunshine a year”.

This view is very similar to that of Jens Friedrich, Second Lieutenant

of the German army, assigned to the Personnel section who, in this year of activation of Bétera as a joint force, makes sure that the documents of all the members of the unit are in order before receiving deployment instructions that could arrive at any time. “I had already worked with the Spanish army in Afghanistan, but I have got to know it better in Valencia. It’s a three-year assignment, but I have applied for an extension”, he adds.

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

Since obtaining its certification in 2002, Bétera has participated in two real operations: the first one, at the end of 2005 after the earthquake that devastated the Kashmir region in Pakistan; and the second one, in 2012 in Afghanistan within ISAF Joint Command. Commander Manuel Vicente Pedro Novella, stationed at the unit’s operation centre —“the eyes and ears of the headquarters”, as he

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This headquarters has already participated in two real operations, in Pakistan and Afghanistan

puts it— had the privilege of participating in both missions. “In Pakistan, I commanded the transmission centre that provides telecommunication service to the headquarters. In Afghanistan, I was part of the psychological operations planning team. It is impossible to forget those days, when a serviceman puts into practice everything he has learned in his years of training”.

Two years after the mission in Afghanistan, at the 2014 Wales Summit, and after Russia’s annexation of Crimea, NATO made some changes to its high-readiness forces to make them more agile and yet more powerful, and hence the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force or VJTF was established.

Bétera Headquarters was the first NATO unit to command the VJTF, a force that was certified after a deployment and following an exercise in different locations in Spain, Italy and Portugal in 2015 during exercise *Trident Juncture*.



Soldiers from the Headquarters Battalion during the deployment to the island of Menorca for exercise *Trident Jackal 19*.

In this process, in which the multinational unit has adapted to new missions in new scenarios, it has been crucial to follow the “Lessons Learned” procedure established by NATO doctrine. “Identifying where and how to improve is essential when making decisions during a military operation, especially in a rapid deployment unit like this one”, explains one of the officers assigned to this task, Romanian

commander Ana Maria Tamas. “We can’t leave anything to improvisation”, she adds.

This ability to adapt, and the process of learning lessons, has allowed Bétera to easily reinforce other organizations, such as the OHQ of the European Union Rapid Response Force in 2010, 2017 and 2019.

ESSENTIAL SUPPORT

In order to fulfil its missions within the demanding deadlines set by the Alliance, Bétera has a Headquarters Battalion: “We provide the necessary means and personnel for the deployment and functioning of the HQ during operations”, says Lieutenant Colonel Diego Rosales, head of the battalion. This year, in which this Headquarters is placed at the disposal of NATO, logistic planning is vital. “Everything is in order: the materiel is ready, our people are prepared and the procedures have been rehearsed”.

In addition, this battalion carries out a wide range of support tasks enabling daily work in Bétera: “From providing permanent security to the facilities and escorting authorities, to supplying drivers, health care and the necessary logistic support to organize meetings and conferences”. It is also the fundamental support for the organization and implementation of all the training exercises in which this headquarters participates.

Another key component is the Military Police Battalion, responsible for providing security to the command post “so that the headquarters can carry out its main task: the command and control of the units”, points out its commander, Lieutenant Colonel Iñigo Pérez. It also assumes route control in deployments and has, “among other exclusive capabilities”, a section devoted to police intervention and the protection of authorities. “It’s a unique unit in the whole of the Armed Forces”, points out this lieutenant



Planning actions for the control and conduct of operations are prepared in the regular meetings of the General Staff.



Allies from different nations share offices and premises. Working together in English, a group of military personnel prepare a presentation in the planning section.

colonel in reference to the high level of specialization of its personnel: more than 90 percent have a military police diploma. The battalion is completed with a canine section. One of the most appreciated dogs in this section is Hulk, an explosive detector with experience in three international missions. He will soon retire. “We will miss him and we will always be grateful to him for how he protected us”, said Corporal Simón Tomás Díaz, who has been his guide and will welcome him home as part of his family.

SECURE COMMUNICATIONS

At Bétera’s HQ people live and work in English, but in addition to the language of Shakespeare, there is also a lesser-known, but equally important language: that of transmissions.

The plans and orders that are generated, once the HQ is projected and deployed, must be able to be transmitted rapidly and safely to the military forces of the 29 countries —soon to be 30— comprising the Alliance.

Running a multinational force means that satellites, radios and all the equipment required to give orders— thousands of kilometres away— are interoperable. “Satellite communications enable us to deploy out of the enemy’s reach, and thus maintain our capability to command and

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control operations”, says Major General Jose Antonio Agüero Martinez, Chief of Staff of the Headquarters, who is well aware of the importance of exercising the command of the units in a secure manner. “But security is not just physical”, he warns, “we should also be able to ensure the electronic and cyber security of our command post and of our forces”.

JOINT TASK FORCE IN 2020

Last October, NATO Headquarters in Bétera was deployed to the island of Menorca during exercise *Trident Jackal* to obtain its certification as a Joint Task Force Headquarters.

Over 1,000 soldiers were stationed on the island, including the Headquarters Battalion, the Military Police Battalion and a unit from the Transmission Command, which provided secure telecommunication links. By integrating procedures, personnel and equipment, NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Spain Headquarters showed the Alliance that it can lead a joint military force (with land, sea, air, special operations and cyberspace components) ranging from 50,000 to 80,000 troops.

Throughout this year, it has conducted and will continue conducting exercises to maintain its capabilities intact. Some exercises were carried out in different locations in the



The Military Police Battalion has a canine section. In this photo, one of the dogs of the unit trained to detect explosives.



Bétera led exercise *Trident Juncture* for certification as HQ VJTF in 2015. Zaragoza's military training area.

Valencia province during the month of February, simulating a real-life activation and the subsequent deployment of the joint task force.

In a first phase, an Alert exercise was conducted (*Alertex*, in NATO terminology). Enlisted personnel receive via SMS the order to report to the base after activation. Next, the first headquarters command component —the Operational Liaison and Reconnaissance Team (OLRT) —is deployed to the so-called area of operations. “Within 48 hours this unit establishes physical contact with the authorities of the country where the force will be heading and coordinates on-site all that is necessary for the deployment. Meanwhile, we monitor the deployment operation in real time from the centre of operations”, explains Major Pedro Novella.

After *Alertex*, a Deployment exercise (*Deployex*, in NATO terminology) was conducted, carrying out the actual projection of all other command structures, in different time frames, until the joint task force was fully operational on-site in less than 30 days. Thanks to these activities, and others in various areas, Bétera will manage to maintain its availability throughout 2020.

At this joint level, the exercise is not only physical. “As one moves up through the various levels of command, the weight of the combat progressively shifts from the physical to the cognitive realm”, explains General Agüero. “At this level, information operations turn into a different kind of exercise”, he states. In a globalized world, social networks are yet “another weapon system”, which need to be known in order to fight them, especially in hybrid

wars, where the borders between the real and the virtual could be similar to a “*like*” that can determine whether battles are won or lost.

Bétera has been prepared for this full spectrum of conflicts. NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Spain Headquarters will continue to be ready and operational for the rest of the year.

We are talking about a modern, agile, high-tech and very powerful unit, although for Major Tamas, Bétera's real strength is not just being able to command more than 50,000 soldiers. “The strength of NATO Headquarters”, she says, “is knowing, understanding and believing that the values of freedom and democracy bind all its members and make the world a much safer place. It also makes us a bit better”.

Juanjo Crespo
Photos: Pepe Díaz

The headquarters is prepared to command a joint task force of up to 80,000 troops

SPANISH INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

50 YEARS

watching the world change

Francisco José Dacoba Cerviño

General Director of the IEEE (Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies)

This April marks the 50th anniversary of the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies, established by decree in 1970 as an integral part of what was then the recently established Centre for Higher National Defence Studies (CESEDEN) dating back to 1964. Today, with the perspective given by half a century, it is fair to acknowledge the wisdom of those authorities who were well ahead of their time and foresaw the opportunity for Spanish society and its military to have a meeting forum in the 1960s, the CESEDEN, and almost at the same time include in such Centre an institution devoted to strategic studies and analysis, the IEEE.

From an international standpoint, these 50 years have been intense and decisive. Events have taken place at break-neck speed giving way to a profound reconfiguration of global geopolitical balances. Various factors have contributed both to the changes and to the speed with which they have occurred. Globalization is not by its very nature a peaceful phenomenon. Globalization has blurred borders and narrowed distances, thus increasing the possibility of a confrontation between actors who were once far apart and, as a reaction effect, today there is a powerful trend towards regionalization, fragmentation, nationalism and the exacerbation of ethnic groups. Once the health emergency caused by SARS-CoV-19 is over, States will very likely have protectionist and renationalization reactions in order to protect at least part of the supply lines that are currently too delocalized.

New disruptive technologies provide the necessary tools for changes in our way of

life to occur almost helter-skelter. We, the citizens, feel overwhelmed and States are overcome by a series of facts accomplished they have had no time to comprehend or include in their respective legal frameworks. Electronic commerce, collaborative economy or major technology companies, operating in a transnational ecosystem, evade governmental fiscal control. If it was already proving difficult to enforce internationally accepted legislation in international waters or the air, it will probably be even more complicated to regulate the use of outer space or, worse still, cyberspace. The implications in the security field are obvious. This brief list of determinant factors transforming the current international order is completed by demographic trends, extreme weather events, the spread of pandemics, global trade, social networks, the emergence of new non-state actors, terrorism that recognizes no borders, etc.

In its still short life, the Institute has coexisted with three different international orders; the bipolar world of the Cold War gave way, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, to a brief phase of American hegemony and this, in turn, has now led to a multipolar order, albeit asymmetrical since the capabilities of the major powers, as well as their weaknesses, differ substantially from one another. The speed

of change is compounded by uncertainty. We are aware that the model based on the standards taken on by the international community is openly questioned, that multilateralism is facing a difficult time when confronted with the undeniable thrust of unilateral initiatives, if not widespread nationalism. Slowly but surely, we have witnessed the breakdown of international governance systems in the areas of trade, climate and arms control. The most recent

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Rafael Navarro / Photographic material: Pepe Diaz, NATO, EFE and CHOD.

data on global military expenditure show that a new rearmament race between the old and new powers is taking place. Now that the happy years of the 1990s are already forgotten, Defence budgets are increasing steadily. Outer space, the Arctic Ocean, the East and South China Seas, the various actors in the Middle East or even some relevant countries in Africa are all being militarized.

In the face of these realities, it is hard to imagine the new upcoming system of global governance. As history has shown, it is not too far-fetched to conclude that these 50 years bring us once again closer to the starting point, to a reborn bipolarity, this time where the United States and China are concerned. Fortunately, this bipolarity is not based on the mutual threat of a nuclear holocaust but rather on a reckless rivalry in trade and, undoubtedly and more importantly, in the technological field. If globalization drives us towards international cooperation in these and other aspects, technological and trade frictions bring us face to face with the

possibility of a decoupling within the international community, which is divided and aligned around one of these two new leaders. Last February's Munich Security Conference was held under the significant heading of "Westlessness" of the international order, thus referring to the loss of pre-eminence of the values of liberal democracies, values we wrongly believed to be widely accepted.

CHINA: THE EMERGING POWER

China's leading role stands out in this apparent distribution of powers. After Mao's death, the three presidents prior to the current leader, Xi Jinping, carried out a discreet yet effective transformation process of the old Central Empire to make it evolve from a completely centralized economy, which had left the country in a dilapidated state, to a new system, also ruled with an iron but much more pragmatic fist. "It doesn't matter whether a cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice", said Deng Xiaoping. The priority was to lift hundreds of millions of Chinese out of poverty to steadily

P E R S P E C T I V E

join the ranks of the middle class. In order to achieve this, China became the world's factory and began the mass production of low-quality products, copied from the West, using extensive and unskilled labour. It was in 2012 when, with the arrival of Xi, the government abandoned both discretion and its poor production model. The new target was now to appear as a leading power in trade and technology and, although often overlooked, also in the military field. The initiative commonly known as the New Silk Road is nothing short of an enormous infrastructure investment programme almost all over the world, through which vast amounts of now much more refined Chinese exports circulate, while the country imports the raw materials it requires to feed its voracious productive machinery. In the technological field, the project is called Made in China 2025, and the objective is to lead new disruptive technologies: artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, nanorobotics, blockchain, big data, renewable energies, etc. The 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China will be celebrated in 2049. This is the date chosen to put the finishing touches to these and other strategic projects so that China can assert itself as a world leader in trade and technology. This is also the deadline for restoring the country's territorial integrity, with an eye on Taiwan, which explains the important and sustained budgetary effort the country has been making to modernize its Armed Forces.

USA: THE CHALLENGED POWER

In the face of such a challenge, it is not surprising that the United States described China and Russia in its 2017 National Security Strategy as "revisionist powers that want to shape a world antithetical to U.S. values and interests". The American concern is not recent. Obama's administration already identified the Asia-Pacific region as the world's new centre of gravity.

When setting its priorities in this scenario, the United States gradually reduced its attention and presence in other theatres that had previously been a priority. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union released tensions accumulated over decades. Europe, once a potential Cold War battleground, gave up its prominence in the 1990s to the Middle East region, located on an inexhaustible sea of oil, which was then of utmost importance for maintaining Western industrial machinery. This interest in the Gulf region was reinforced by the War on Terror declared after the attacks of September 11, 2001, which focused on Salafist jihadism, from the Arabian Peninsula to Afghanistan. The weariness of American society with these wars to which there was no end in sight and the energy sufficiency that fracking provides to the United States are two good reasons to turn one's eyes to the thriving Pacific scenario.



The Atlantic Alliance, for its part, has to manage its profound adaptation to this global scenario, so different from the one witnessed more than 70 years ago during the signing of the Washington Treaty. President Macron's diagnosis of "brain death" has spurred efforts to prove that this is not the case, but challenges are enormous. In addition to relations with Russia and China, highly complex scenarios remain active in the Middle East and Afghanistan such as international terrorism, outer space, cyberspace and technological competition. The current strategic concept needs to be reviewed in-depth as much has happened in its ten years of existence.

EUROPE: THE WOULD-BE POWER

Without giving up the transatlantic link, the European project is being questioned from both within and outside. The disagreements with the US administration, Brexit, the different security perceptions between Eastern and Southern countries or its internal cohesion, in clear retreat, outline an uncertain future for the Old Continent. The new European Commission attaches utmost importance to providing the Union with a genuine strategic autonomy; however, this will not be an easy task. This autonomy requires identifying interests shared by all Member States and the strong determination



Rafael Navarro / Photographic material: Pepe Diaz, NATO, EFE and CHOD.

to defend them. And this should take shape in the defence field by boosting industry, trade and new technologies. The dilemma seems obvious; faced with the prospect of becoming irrelevant, Europe can only opt for moving decisively towards greater integration.

Spain, whose influence in Europe should increase after the withdrawal of the United Kingdom, is called upon to play a leading role in the Union. It shares projects, threats and challenges with the other partners. However, at the same time, it has its own interests, special relations with different regions in the world due to its unquestionably unique geographical position, which serves as a bridge between North and South, East and West. Spain is a substantial part of Europe, it has looked toward the Mediterranean for centuries, it has a good neighbourly relationship with Africa and it views America with a spirit of cultural and historical community. This leads us to adopt a global view that is consistent with the parameters of globalization; nothing that happens in the world, regardless of how distant its origin may seem, is

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countries*

alien to us. At the same time, aware of our entity and possibilities as a medium power in the international order, Spain focuses its most immediate attention with a regional perspective, identifying the Maghreb and the Sahel as priority areas of attention. The stability, progress and well-being of these very close societies are of the greatest interest to National Security. On the other hand, although not so close geographically, there are plenty of reasons for promoting the closest relations with our sister countries in America, in the economic, commercial, cultural and, certainly, also in the security and defence fields.

THE FUTURE IS NOT SET IN STONE

Throughout these 50 years, the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies has consistently observed the developments in the international arena and analysed their implications for national security. The change undergone on the global stage, which has materialized in a multiplicity of actors interacting on an increasingly reduced playing field, the world, has exponentially increased the areas of interest, both geographic and thematic, on which an institution of geostrategic analysis, such as the IEEE, should focus. The Euro-Atlantic region, whose unifying element is the Atlantic Alliance; Europe, with special attention to the invariably complex relations with Russia; the geostrategic unity represented by the Maghreb and the Sahel; the Middle East and, of course, Ibero-America, all attract the attention of the Institute's analysts. This does

not mean that regions such as Afghanistan or Asia-Pacific can be neglected. Beyond the geographical scenarios, it becomes paramount to focus on monitoring Salafist terrorism, conflicts in cyberspace, demographic trends - so disparate in different parts of the world -, on new technologies, climate change, epidemics and pandemics, the evolution of megacities, etc.

This brief insight into the 50 years of the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies has revealed a world in constant change to which the IEEE has been a discreet witness. Those who celebrate its first centenary in another fifty years will most probably witness

an evolution of the international order, which today beggars the imagination. We hope this permanent transformation will cast out fears that current economic and technological conflicts will lead to other kinds of confrontations. But, above all, we want democratic societies to celebrate many more decades of earnest cooperation in defence of values such as people's dignity and equality, human rights, progress and freedom. ■

Next Generation Weapon System, NGWS

PILLAR OF THE NEW GENERATION OF EUROPEAN AEROSPACE POWER

General Javier Salto, Lieutenant General Ingo Gerhartz and General Philippe Lavigne

Spanish, German and French Air Force Chiefs of Staff

DURING the final stage of the Cold War, Western nations found themselves in need of developing weapon programmes that would balance the capability acquired by countries on the other side of the Iron Curtain to ensure the defence of their airspace, their territory and their sovereignty. In the case of the Spanish, German and French Air Forces, these programmes materialized in the design and production of the *Eurofighter* (Germany and Spain) and *Rafale* (France) fighter jets, which entered into service in the first decade of this 21st century and have been a success story in the field of fighter jet aviation and the European aerospace industry.

At present, the foreign policy of certain relevant countries once again presents challenges to the security of Europe, with the development of new capabilities that, in case of conflict, would significantly reduce our Armed Forces' freedom of action in the aerospace field and their ability to deter against potential hostile actions.

It is, therefore, essential to look to the future. The scenario in which our Armed Forces will foreseeably operate in the 2040s is complex, as competition between the great powers is expected to increase while the instability generated by conflicts in the so-called "failed states" will be maintained. All of this will occur in a framework that will pose great challenges to the traditional use of our resources and bring us face-to-face with "hybrid" strategies, which are those that combine conventional military means with non-military elements. At the same time, battlefields will become unpredictable and will include both large urban agglomerations and maritime, air and space areas that are not subject to the sovereignty of any State. One of the most important aspects to be taken into consideration will be the difficulty to distinguish elements that are hostile from those that are not. This will require the use of technological developments to have timely access to

duly processed and properly distributed information in order to make the right decision in near-to-real time.

In this panorama of complex scenarios, sophisticated weapon systems and hybrid strategies, the mission of the aerospace forces will be increasingly essential to protect national sovereignty, the integrity of our territory, the security of our citizens and ensure the support of our European and NATO allies.

In order to anticipate the challenges of this uncertain future, the Air Force Chiefs of Staff of Germany (Lieutenant General Ingo Gerhartz), Spain (General Javier Salto) and France (General Philippe Lavigne) signed in June 2019 a Letter of Intent for the development of the so-called Next Generation Weapon System (NGWS), which is meant to be the core of national Future Combat Air Systems (FCAS).

The Defence Ministries of the three nations have already agreed on the High Level Common Operational Requirements Document for the NGWS/FCAS, a system that will also consist of a Next Generation Fighter (NGF) and additional remote platforms. This is the way forward to maintain the superiority of our Air Forces over those of any opponent and be ready to operate interconnected in complex and disputed scenarios.

But, how do we want this new system to be? Should it be more dynamic, more agile, or less detectable than today's most sophisticated systems? Should it develop a concept of connectivity and cooperation with completely new systems? Should it fly faster and higher than our opponents' capabilities or, on the contrary, lower than their systems' detection capabilities? Will we have to exploit all the elements of the electromagnetic, electro-optical and infrared spectrum in order to react faster to threats?



Air Force

The working groups of the three nations are already searching for answers to some of these questions. European air forces need the NGWS to be a multi-mission system, capable of acting in all aspects of air combat and operating both from their airbases and deployment bases, or even from ships. Similarly, it must be able to work in conjunction with the systems currently in service, so that they can integrate their capabilities into the NGWS. The future combat air system will not only provide a new generation platform to replace the *Eurofighter* in Spain and Germany and the *Rafale* in France, but will interact with them and with their future modernized versions, as well as with other major air, land, maritime, space and cyber programmes currently in the development and acquisition process.

The best way to deal with the next generation of aerospace combat capabilities will be by combining manned platforms that will operate in conjunction with a wide variety of unmanned systems and elements. A combat management system assisted by artificial intelligence will help obtain the necessary information to make the decision-making process and implementation of operations faster and more efficient. The information will also be accurately distributed by communications networks, while maintaining the human element in the decision-making process.

As for the milestones that are being reached, after the cooperation treaty signed by Germany and France on January 31, 2019, both nations signed the contract of the first Franco-German conceptual study, which Spain has now joined. In October 2019, a multinational project team with French, German and Spanish experts was established in

*Cooperation
is the best way
to preserve
independence in
key technologies*

Paris to precisely define the requirements of the NGWS and its demonstrators. The first research and technology phase is about to begin, with a view to having the fighter jet demonstrator available on schedule in 2026, thus achieving the common goal of reaching a first operational capability in 2040.

We, the Chiefs of the three Air Forces are paving the way for the success of a system that will actually be born in 20 years. Meetings are being held periodically to ensure compliance with common operational requirements. Within this framework, we have also agreed to help national capability planning processes to converge as much as possible to optimize resources, starting with everything related to connectivity. In this regard, we plan to sign a trilateral document in common agreement on this matter in the next ILA Berlin Air Show in May 2020.

The NGWS/FCAS programme will also enable close cooperation between national industries and their air forces, which is key to ensure the competitiveness of European air power. At a time like the present, our continent should step up efforts to stimulate Europe's integration and strategic vision through multinational collaboration.

We are convinced that this European cooperation is not only a significant contribution to NATO's and the EU's national defence capabilities, but also the best possible way to preserve European independence in key defence technologies, providing our air forces and nations with the best systems to face and overcome future threats in the competitive and complex aerospace domain. ■

Lieutenant General Juan Montenegro, Spanish Military Representative to NATO and European Union Military Committees (MILREP - SP)

“NATO and the EU are two sides of the same coin: OUR SECURITY”

MILREP highlights Spain’s unwavering commitment to both organizations and emphasizes that we are the biggest contributor to EU missions and operations.

JUAN Montenegro is undoubtedly one of the most knowledgeable persons about how NATO and the European Union are responding to the security challenges of the 21st century and the role Spain is playing in both organizations. He is an Army Lieutenant General and has served, among other positions, as advisor to the Chief of Defence Staff during the 2002 Spanish Presidency of the EU Council; as EUROCOPRS HQ Deputy Chief of Staff Operations in Strasbourg; and has commanded the HQ NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Spain (NRDC-ESP) DCOS Operations in Betera (Valencia). From these posts he has participated in some of the most important international exercises in recent years, such as Trident Jaguar 2014, in which Spain certified the first land headquarters capable of planning and conducting joint operations; or *Brilliant Jump* 2016, in which the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) was certified. He has been Spain’s representative to the highest EU and NATO military bodies for the past year, a position from which he affirms that the European Union

should be “a true global actor with strategic autonomy”, although this must be done “in an environment of collaboration, integration and maximum cooperation with the Alliance”.

—What exactly is your mission as Spanish MILREP?

—As Representative of the Defence Chief of Staff to NATO and EU Military Committees, my main responsibility is to look after our national interests in these organizations so as to optimize our Armed Forces’ contribution to the State’s external action. In particular, my job is to report to the Defence Chief of Staff on the matters

dealt with and the decisions adopted in the military committees, in close cooperation with the Permanent Representations in the North Atlantic Council and the European Union Political and Security Committee, in order to present to them Spain’s military perspective and keep abreast of the political stance on all issues regarding security and defence.

We also carry out technical-military studies and projects in the military committees, such as the recently adopted NATO Military Strategy, agreed upon after difficult negotiations and signed by the Defence Chiefs of Staff in May 2019. This is a fundamental document that will guide the development of every new concept as well as the military posture of the Alliance.

—How do NATO and the EU coordinate decisions on a political level and implement such decisions at military level?

—In the case of NATO, the Atlantic Council’s decisions in any of its formats (Prime Ministers, Ministers or Ambassadors Permanent Representatives) are set out in documents whereby tasks and missions are always assigned through the Military Committee to NATO force

“The Mediterranean, Africa and Latin America are strategic priorities for Spain”



Pepe Díaz

Lt Gen Montenegro points out that Europe has “enormous potential for crisis management, offering global solutions”, and that NATO’s greatest asset is “collective defence”.

commanders. The work of NATO’s Military Staff (IMS) is vital here as the Military Committee’s working body.

The process is similar in the European Union, with some differences due to the distinct nature of this organization. In any case, both the political sphere —represented by the Political and Security Committee—, and the military sphere —the EU Military Committee and the Defence Staff—, work together creating synergies between the political and military strategic levels. Both organizations seek complementarity between the political and military fields, with a constant exchange of information in

different areas, such as intelligence, operations, crisis-management exercises or logistics.

—Brussels insists that a stronger Europe leads to a stronger NATO....

—Although both organizations are autonomous, in the case of the EU, 21 of its states are also NATO members. This means that almost 90 per cent of the EU population are also NATO members, or that nearly 80 per cent of the total defence budget of the 27 EU Member States is also a NATO budget, all of which results in the clear idea that the more united the 27 EU partners stand, the stronger NATO will be.

The European Union must be a true global actor and have considerable strategic autonomy. The EU has huge potential for crisis management, offering global solutions thanks to a wide variety of diplomatic, economic and humanitarian assistance mechanisms, as well as for the development of the justice, legal, security and defence sectors. NATO, for its part, may be more suitable for collective defence and the use of the essentially military instrument, without forgetting NATO’s other two primary tasks: cooperative security and crisis management. However, the European link can never replace the transatlantic link. The idea of creating a European army is good, although it must be done in an atmosphere of collaboration, integration and maximum cooperation between NATO and the EU. Increasing the capabilities of the Armed Forces of the European countries undoubtedly reinforces the security and defence of both organizations. The bottom line is that NATO and the EU are two sides of the same coin, and this coin is the security of our societies.

—What is your opinion about Spain’s role in these two organizations?

—We are reliable contributors and partners in both organizations. Obviously, although the scale of our contributions is similar, our specific weight is higher in the EU than in NATO. If we analyse it from the objective viewpoint of order, according to certain studies Spain ranks 20th in the world in terms of the importance of its Armed Forces. We

are the seventh nation in NATO in proportion to the size of our population and economy and, after *Brexit*, the fourth in the European Union.

Moreover, we are consistently the biggest contributor to military operations and missions in the EU, and our soldiers are present in each and every one of them.

This gives us a moral strength that ensures our voice is listened to attentively. We are also one of the most active countries in shaping the initiatives underway in the European Union; for instance, we are one of the countries participating in more projects in Permanent Structured Cooperation.

In NATO, where the United States holds significant weight, we are also important contributors; however, in this case, we are more focused on the operations and deterrence fields. Spain is an example of solidarity and commitment due to our contribution to NATO operations and missions in all scenarios.

—What are Spain's strategic priorities?

—They can only be those expressed in the 2017 National Security Strategy, as well as those included in the Alliance Strategic Concept and the EU Global

Security Strategy of 2016. Europe and the transatlantic link are priority areas of interest for our security and defence, together with the Mediterranean, Africa and Latin America. As is the case with our Strategy, I would stress, in particular, the security, stability and prosperity of our neighbours in the southern Mediterranean and the Maghreb.

More generally, the fight against terrorism and exporting stability and security are also essential to us.

In this regard, and although conceptually the priorities of the National Security Strategy address our commitments to NATO and the EU, I think they put more emphasis on Europe,

since our threat perception is different to that of our allies.

—Today, Europe is experiencing an unprecedented boost to common security and defence. How does this impact the EU Military Committee?

—It is a frenetic activity. Spain is firmly committed to moving further in line with the EU Global Security Strategy, first through the missions and operations of the Common Security and Defence Policy, CSDP, and in the search for synergies with NATO.

The Military Committee is constantly discussing the purely military dimension of all the initiatives resulting from this impetus, especially with regard to the Permanent Structured Cooperation, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, the European Defence Fund and the Military Planning and Conduct Capability.

All of these are very dynamic initiatives, in the process of maturation, and with an important technical-military profile. Therefore, the opinion of the Military Committee is particularly relevant to shape them, bearing in mind that Member States have different sensitivities that should be contemplated.

I think that it is proving particularly helpful in the three initiatives linked to capability development —PESCO, CARD and EDF—, since, in the end, the idea is to ensure our Armed Forces have the necessary military capabilities to conduct their missions, either in the purely national field or within the international organizations to which they belong.

—The Military Planning and Conduct Capability, MPCC, has recently been established and it coordinates non-executive missions. What exactly is it?

—First, I would like to stress that this capability was established by a Council decision in June 2017, based on a Span-

“The Military Committee is proving crucial to shape the EU's defence initiatives”



Lt Gen Montenegro in the cockpit

ish initiative and with our very active participation.

The objective is for Brussels to have a structure capable of carrying out the planning and conduct of non-executive missions, that is, those with an advisory and training role.

This mitigated an important shortfall in EU military missions, which was greatly hindering coordination at military strategic level.

In addition, the establishment of this permanent structure in Brussels has enabled the Political and Security Committee to exercise political control and strategic management of non-executive activities, and to liaise with the rest of EU structures.



of a NATO early warning AWACS aircraft in the German Air Base Geilenkirchen.

— What about the rest of the missions?

—After the review conducted in the second semester of 2018, a roadmap was adopted to give concrete form to the Council's decision according to which the MPCC must be ready, at the end of 2020, to plan and conduct every non-executive mission (its sphere of control is currently limited to five missions) and one executive operation the size of a Battle Group, that is, around 2,500 troops.

Spain intends to continue supporting the implementation of all those milestones involving an increase in the capabilities of the MPCC and enabling it to exercise the command and control of all military operations and missions

in the future, in coordination with the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability for civilian missions.

— NATO is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. How would you describe these years?

—With the Alliance, we have had seven decades of shared security and defence; of challenges to security that have been successfully resolved thanks to the two principles on which the Atlantic Alliance is based: solidarity among its members and the essential transatlantic link.

As His Majesty King Felipe VI recalled in his address to the Atlantic Council on November 21, 2018, the

values and principles defended by the Alliance —freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law— are the same as those defended by our Constitution and are those that guide us towards the future in a peaceful and stable environment, allowing our citizens to fully develop their rights and freedoms.

Spain has always taken a step forward when requested: we are present in the Baltic countries with NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence and Air Policing; we are committed to Afghanistan's stability, to Turkey's security and to Iraq's future; and we sail in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic under the NATO flag. Furthermore, the Alliance is increasingly looking southwards, mostly due to our impetus. Moreover, the air defence of all of Southern Europe is conducted from Torrejón.

And all this is done not only with forces and headquarters, but also thanks to the continued joint effort of soldiers and diplomats who work hard in NATO and the EU for a safer world.

— What about the future of the Alliance?

—I foresee a promising future. The strategic environment has changed significantly over the last 30 years. We have managed to adapt to those changes and I think we will continue doing so in the future. In today's complex geostrategic environment, Europe's security depends on the complementarity between NATO and the European Union and on maintaining the transatlantic link that brings together and binds the two shores of an ocean that Spain has always regarded as a bridge, never a barrier.

It is evident that the Alliance's commitment to the security and defence of the Euro-Atlantic region remains unchanged, including the union among all its members, as well as Spain's commitment to the Alliance.

In this respect, it is important to bear in mind the words of NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, in his closing speech to the United States Congress on April 3, 2019: "It's good to have friends".

Rosa Ruiz

An agency in good shape FOR A STRONG EUROPE OF DEFENCE

Jorge Domecq

Outgoing Chief Executive of the European
Defence Agency (2015-2020)

THE end of a term of office always offers a good opportunity to take stock and reflect on the results achieved and also on the way forward. As I leave office at the end of January in the European Defence Agency (EDA), which I have had the honour and privilege of serving as Chief Executive over the last five years, I would like to summarise my impressions. Although others will be in charge of assessing the achievements of the Agency during my mandate, I hope and trust that these particularly intense years will be later on considered as a turning point for defence cooperation in the European Union and the EDA.

FIT FOR PURPOSE

I am leaving an Agency that despite its young age (15 years), has matured and is in good shape to fulfil its purpose. An Agency that has become an essential actor for the Member States in their efforts to build a more effective and interoperable European defence based on cooperation. An Agency that has consolidated its position as the European centre for multinational capability development. Today, it is the platform where Defence Ministries and Armed Forces can jointly develop the capabilities they need. In 2019, the Agency managed 113 capability and technological research programmes and projects, and over 200 activities related to capability development, technological research and defence industry.

However, that is not all. The EDA has also established itself as the main architect of the defence capability prioritisation system that the EU needs. In 2018, Member States agreed within the Agency on the eleven priorities that should guide capability development in Europe in the coming years.

On the other hand, the EDA is now regarded as an efficient manager of technological research programmes for European defence. And, finally, the Agency is the voice of the Defence Ministries and the communication channel between the military and defence com-

munity and EU policies. In addition to these tasks, the EDA acts in the Union as the guardian of coherence among the various defence cooperation tools that have been defined as a result of the EU Global Strategy. Given its size and budget, I believe that the European Defence Agency currently assumes a series of impressive tasks and responsibilities in a flexible and efficient manner.

A NEW STRATEGY, A NEW AMBITION

However, the end result of its work cannot be taken for granted. As an intergovernmental agency financed and controlled directly by Member States, the EDA can only be as ambitious, productive and useful as the interested parties want it to be. The EU Global Strategy, published in the summer of 2016, was crucial for the acknowledgement of this factor. In this document, the EU Member States and institutions agreed on a new level of ambition for European defence: to make defence cooperation the norm rather than the exception and to set strategic autonomy as a long-term goal. Global Strategy also acknowledged the key role of the EDA in the joint development of defence capabilities, in turn more interoperable, and asked Member States to make maximum use of the Agency.

This new boost for a more collaborative European defence fostered the launching of new defence initiatives in the EU, such as the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF). The common goal of all of the above is to promote defence cooperation through joint planning, prioritisation, development, procurement and the use of military capabilities.

KEY TOOL FOR EU DEFENCE

During all this time, the EDA has made essential contributions to the development of EU defence cooperation tools, and today plays a central role in their implementation and enforcement. It acts as the secretariat of the CARD and PESCO (along with the EU External Action Service – EEAS - and the EU Military Staff), and as the central



Agencia Europea de Defensa

operator for the management of defence activities funded by EU budget. The Agency has also become the guardian of coherence of these initiatives by establishing EU priorities in the field of military capabilities and technological research.

Close cooperation between governments and EU institutions, entities and organisations is also paramount for the correct functioning of these new cooperation tools. So far, the Council, the EU Military Committee, the EEAS, the EU Military Staff, the European Commission and the EDA have all managed to work jointly and in the same direction.

SHARING THE LOAD

Looking ahead, it is vital that Member States continue to have a clear view of the areas on which EDA's work should focus. The Agency's Long Term Review (LTR) carried out in 2017, was crucial in this sense. Thanks to this exercise, the EDA was strengthened as a real planning and prioritisation instrument. It also confirmed the Agency as Europe's natural centre for the development of defence capabilities in a collaborative manner. Finally, the LTR highlighted the role of the EDA as the voice of the military community with regard to EU policies having defence implications.

Such clarity on who does what is essential in the European institutional framework. However, it is even more important since the European Commission decided to establish a Directorate-General for "Defence Industry and Space" in order to manage the European Defence Fund. The Commission's involvement in defence-related issues, together with its financial power through the EDF, will constitute a powerful incentive to launch new multinational capability projects. If these projects respond to real Defence priorities and are well planned and managed, they will be able to improve the

European defence landscape and, simultaneously, strengthen its technological and industrial base.

The utmost attention must be paid to three aspects when promoting EU defence initiatives: first, preventing duplication of work, tools and existing structures. Responsibilities must be defined unambiguously. For instance, defence policy should remain as an intergovernmental responsibility, with national Ministries of Defence at the forefront of its definition. Likewise, the task of prioritising and planning capabilities should also remain the responsibility of Member States, developing cooperation at European level by using the EU's new defence cooperation tools I referred to earlier.

*The EDA is
already at
the heart of
multinational
capability
development.*

Second, the Union's new cooperation tools (CARD, PESCO, EDF) must be used and applied in a coherent and results-oriented manner, paying special attention to the capability development priorities agreed by the European Union in the Capability Development Plan (CDP). The Agency must play a critical role in all this.

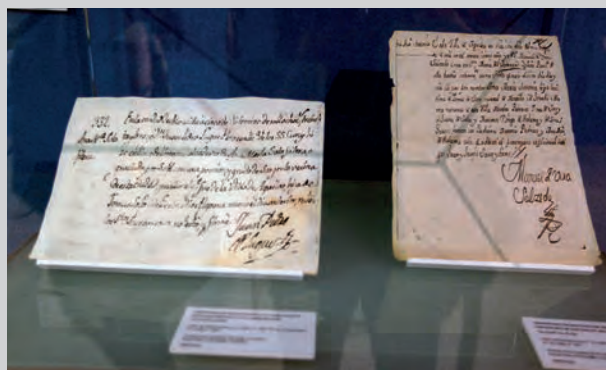
And finally, Member States must genuinely and seriously commit themselves to using these new European tools in the planning of their national defence and in the capability development on which it is based. Otherwise, even the most well-intentioned cooperation efforts will fail to deliver the expected results. This would be a huge missed opportunity affecting the role the European Union wishes to play on the global stage.

Let me conclude on an optimistic note. The Europe of Defence is taking shape. We are on the right track. However, it will still be a long journey. In order to succeed, it will be increasingly necessary to use EDA's technical expertise and proven experience in promoting and facilitating technological cooperation and capability projects. I trust that Member States will be aware of this and use it accordingly. ■



Hélène Gicquel

Above, file photo of the Naval Museum's exhibition on the important role of women in the New World, which brought to light leading figures such as Admiral Barreto.



Hélène Gicquel

Above, documents and portrait - on the left - of Ana María de Soto, the first marine, from the San Fernando Naval Museum, which evokes her figure, as does the Cartagena Naval Museum.



Hélène Gicquel



van der Hamen y León / Kutxa Bilduma Collection



General Military Archives in Madrid

Portrait of Catalina de Erauso, the Ensign Nun, (1625); payment order by Philip II to Catalina de Haro for holding the post of her late husband, Artillery "Mayordomo" in Mahon.

PIONEERING WOMEN in the military

Feisty ladies, who were ahead of their time, participated in military life with strength and courage, thus becoming part of history

Today, it is no surprise to see a servicewoman in a mission abroad or carrying out exercises in a military company. However, what is ordinary today was unthinkable in the past, except for some pioneering women who, by chance or by choice, won a place in history.

Let us start with Castile at war in the 16th century. Battles ended with decimated armies and prisoners who were unable to return to their homes to defend them. As a result, many women decided to take up arms, as in Palencia.

"HEADRESS RIGHT"

It was 1386. John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, tried to take the Iberian Peninsula by taking advantage of its weakness. He landed in Galicia, conquered Corunna, Santiago, and Orense and then marched to the capital of Palencia, which had no male combatants. However, when the women saw the Duke's troops approaching, they defended their walls tooth and nail, and with great efficiency. Such was their resistance that, in 1388, Lancaster signed peace and the Castilian John I rewarded "his" lady warriors with the "headdress right", reserved only for men and quite unusual for women at that time. Such privilege made them "knights of honour" and exempted them from bowing to the king. Today, the red and gold band of their regional costume evokes that courage.

Over the following centuries, more than 10,000 Spanish women crossed the

ocean to reach the New World. They went there to meet their husbands, to get married or in search of adventure or a future, but they all took on male tasks, from sail handling to guard duties on the voyages.

FEMALE EXPEDITION TEAMS AND WOMEN SETTLERS

A few years ago, the Naval Museum in Madrid highlighted this fact in the exhibition "They were not alone. Women in the Conquest and Colonization of America" (RED num. 285), with documents from that time, biographies and images that underlined the importance of women in this process. The catalogue, published by the Defence Ministry, is one of the entries to be found when searching for "women and armies" on the Ministry's Cultural Heritage website and can be consulted at the Ministry's Library-Documentation Centre.

One of those women who crossed the Atlantic was María de Estrada. She stood by Hernán Cortés on the fateful

Night of Sorrows (1520). María's story began in 1509, when she decided to travel with her brother, the conquistador Francisco de Estrada, to Santo Domingo and, while working there in a hospital, she met the conquistador of Mexico.

CONQUEST OF MEXICO

Time would bring them back together. However, before that, María de Estrada participated in the first expedition that tried to conquer Cuba. She was taken prisoner and spent five years in jail. Later, she joined Cortés' expedition to the Aztec empire. She was the only woman.

Diego Muñoz, a chronicler of that time, emphasized that, in battle, "with a sword and a buckler in her hands, she fought courageously with so much fury and courage that she exceeded the efforts of any man". She thus earned the name of "woman soldier".

As for Inés Suárez from Extremadura, she was granted a royal license in 1537 to go to the New World to join her husband. However, upon her arrival, she discovered she had been widowed and received the legacy of some lands in Cuzco.

She then met Pedro de Valdivia, who she joined in the conquest of Chile. From the outset, Inés earned the respect of the men in the expedition, caring for the wounded in combat with great diligence. However, it was defending the city of Santiago de Chile, and in the absence of Valdivia, when she forged the legend of "woman fighter", for which she was awarded a military medal.

*Their actions
earned them royal
privileges and the
recognition of their
male comrades in
combat*

Felipe IV endorsed Catalina de Erauso's rank as an ensign and Carlos IV granted Ana María de Soto the rank of sergeant

The chronicles say that, with imperturbable cold blood, she did not hesitate to behead with her own hands the seven local lords who started the uprising, then throwing their heads to the natives to dissuade them from continuing with the fight. This event was captured in the work of the painter J. Mercedes Ortega (National History Museum in Chile)

ADMIRAL OF THE SOUTH SEA

Another woman who was awarded a military rank as a result of her determination and command was Isabel Barreto, the first admiral of the Spanish Navy, and the only one so far.

She was born in Galicia and, when she was very young, she travelled with her family to the Viceroyalty of Peru. She married Captain-General Álvaro de Mendaña (1586) and with him she embarked on an expedition to colonize the Solomon Islands. They discovered the Marquesas and the Santa Cruz Islands, establishing colonies, etc. Mendaña died of malaria in 1595, granting his wife the status of "Adelantada and Governor", and hence the command of the mission on land and of the fleet.

Isabel did not hesitate to pick up the gauntlet and lead the expedition, becoming captain-general and admiral. Besieged by Indians and diseases, Barreto ordered her men to leave the Solomon Islands and make their way to the Philippines on a difficult journey, in which she managed to impose discipline and order, demonstrating great leadership skills considered extraordinary in those days.

Her portrait, together with documents from these expeditions, are kept in the Naval Museum in Madrid. Among other cultural institutions of the Defence Ministry, the Central Military Library also contains more than one work about this admiral, such as a first edition of Isabel Barreto: *Adelantada* of the Solomon Islands, by Manuel Bosch Barret (1943).

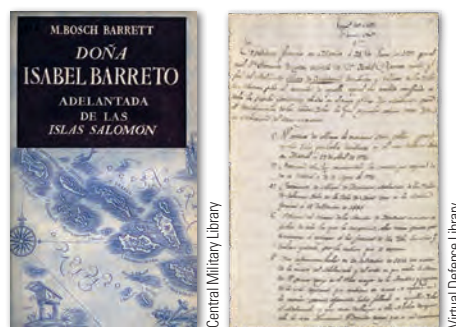
THE ENSIGN NUN

The most extraordinary story of all those documented is, without doubt, that of Catalina de Erauso, the ensign nun.

A pioneering female soldier, she was said to be "violent and quarrelsome", although the truth is that she chose her own destiny, something that was denied to women in those days.

Her story is not linked to that of any man. She did not accompany any of them, nor did she follow them across the ocean. She left alone for America, by her own choice, to leave behind a life she did not like and to start the military career she wanted.

She was born in San Sebastian in 1592 and was taken to a Dominican convent as a child. At the age of 15, she ran away and travelled pretending to be a farmer until she boarded a ship bound for America.



First edition of Bosch's work on Barreto and recognition for the Solomon Islands endeavour.

There she joined the Spanish Army, just like any other man, to participate in the conquest of new territories. Her expertise in handling weapons and her skills in combat enabled her to receive the rank of ensign.

In 1623, as a result of one of her continuous disputes over gambling and women, she killed a man in Peru and was sentenced to death. To avoid being executed, she revealed her true sex and her former status as a novice, which led her back to the convent, in the viceroyalty this time, where she spent several years until she was able to return to Spain.

Her fame travelled faster than she did herself and, upon her arrival, King Philip IV wished to meet her. The monarch not only maintained her rank

but allowed her to continue wearing male attire and gave her the nickname with which she ultimately went down in history. She travelled around Europe and in Rome was granted an audience with Pope Urban VIII, who ratified the grace bestowed upon her by the Spanish sovereign. Finally, she returned to America and settled in Mexico in 1630, where she lived for the last twenty years of her life.

Before her death, she wrote her memoirs, *Story of the Ensign Nun*, which includes some of the above-mentioned references. She was also portrayed by Juan van der Hamen and in Donostia, her hometown, her sculpture adorns the gardens of the Miramar Palace.

COMUNERAS

While looking toward the New World, the War of the *Comuneros* broke out in Castile, which was popularly known as "the Revolt of the *Comuneros*" and shook the region from 1520 to 1522. Although several historians claim that the Castilian nobility rose against Carlos I as they considered that the legitimate queen was Joanna the Mad, who was declared unfit to rule and confined in Tordesillas.

Led by Juan de Padilla, they fought in Toledo, Madrid, Segovia and Valladolid, until they were defeated in Villalar on April 23rd, 1521. Padilla's widow, María López de Mendoza y Pacheco, in mourning but indomitable, assumed command of the uprising, governed the imperial capital and, from the Alcázar (fortress), she led the troops until, nine months later, the city capitulated. She was sentenced to death but managed to flee to Portugal.

She was the most famous *comunera*, perhaps due to what was written about her, and was nicknamed the "lioness of Castile". She inspired a drama by Francisco Villaespesa and a successful film in 1951, starring Amparo Rivelles. The General Military Archive in Madrid stores information about her, as well as about other women-at-arms, such as Catalina de Haro.



Helène Gicquel

This painting of “Queen Isabella the Catholic visiting the Hospital in Toro” is part of the itinerary “From a woman’s perspective” of the Army Museum in Toledo.

*Philip II
awarded
María Pita
the title of
“outstanding
soldier” for
her defence
of Corunna*



José Mercedes Ortega/National History Museum in Chile

Standing, sword held high, Inés Suárez defends the city of Santiago.



Military History Museum in Corunna

Watercolour showing the attack by the British squadron led by Francis Drake on Corunna, which can be seen in the city’s military museum.

Half a century later, off the Galician coast, the Hispanic Monarchy was again under threat: the counter-armada of the English Queen Elizabeth I, led by Drake and Norreys.

It was 1589, and Mayor Fernández de Cámara y Pita, known as María Pita, would go down in history as the heroine who defended Corunna from the British attack. The English killed Gregorio de Rocamunde, her husband, in the middle of the siege of the city walls.

Full of rage, she took hold of the spear of the English banner and killed the ensign who was leading the assault. Shouting “Whoever has honour, follow me!”, she managed to make the attackers withdraw.

Philip II granted her the title of “outstanding soldier” and a pension equivalent to the salary of an ensign plus five escudos a month, also conferring her a permit to export mules from Spain to Portugal.

The Military History Museum in Corunna dedicates one of its galleries to this figure and displays many exhibits, such as her portrait or a diorama recreating the battle.

THE TOBACCONIST SOLDIER

The first Spanish marine was Ana María de Soto, born in Córdoba in 1775. She boarded the frigate Mercedes in 1794 posing as a man, using the name of Antonio María de Soto.

During her military life, she served as a soldier in the 6th Company of the 11th Marine Battalion, participating, among other actions, in the Battle of Cape St Vincent (1797). She was discharged four years later when, during a routine medical examination, it was discovered that she was a woman.

However, to honour her heroic behaviour, Charles IV granted her a daily salary of two billon reals, the rank of sergeant, and she was also authorized to use the colours of the naval battalions and rank insignia of a sergeant on her women’s clothing.

In 1799, she was granted a license to run a tobacconist’s in Montilla, and was thus named the tobacconist soldier. In the Naval Museum in Cartagena, there is an area dedicated to her figure, and the San Fernando Museum preserves original documents from that period and a later portrait of her.



Mayor Fernández de Cámara y Pita, *María Pita*.

Right, picture of the Ruins of Saragossa, reflecting women's participation in the fight against Napoleon. Below, Elizabeth II's uniform.



Army Museum

María Agustín, with hidden ammunition for the "patriots", and Casta Álvarez, bayonet in hand, two more defenders of Saragossa.



Central Military Library



Central Military Library



Central Military Library

Women were very present in the War of Independence (1808-1814)

AGAINST NAPOLEON

The name of Agustina de Aragón, the female artillery gunner, was perhaps the most famous of all the women who joined the fight during the War of Independence (1808-1814) against the Napoleonic Empire. She is one of the many hundreds who remained unknown, but that represents the courage of all those women.

Agustina Raimunda María Zaragoza y Doménech was born in Barcelona in 1786 and moved to Saragossa in 1808 to join her husband, Sergeant Roca.

During the French siege, she took up positions at the Portillo gateway, which was being heavily attacked. She helped with the supplies, encouraging the troops by shouting "come on gunners, the women are here for when you can't go on". She saw the men falling and did not hesitate to run forward among the dead until she reached a cannon that she fired, managing to contain the enemy.

After that, she went to the Provincial Council of Teruel, where she joined the Army and continued fighting against the French until the end of the conflict.

Agustina became a second lieutenant. In the General Military Archives in Segovia, there are valuable documents about "Female artillery gunners" – including information on Francisca Puerta and Luisa Villalba – which are a testimony of the participation of women in missions of force, intelligence and logistics in those years.

SANTA BARBARA COMPANY

Saragossa was not the only city in which women rose against Napoleon. Gerona also had its own heroines. There, they established a series of military units made up only by women and driven by the wives of the officers who were on the front line.

After the storming of San Daniel Hospital, which they helped evacuate, they decided to continue with the task in an organized manner and requested the corresponding authorization from Governor Mariano Álvarez, who announced the creation of a female military unit on June 22nd, 1809.

Recruitment was such a success that four squadrons were formed with the

enlistment of more than 200 women. Each of them had a female commander in charge, who was chosen among them: Lucía Jonama y Fitz-Gerald, Raimunda Nouvilas de Pagès, María Angela Bivern and María Curti.

A RED RIBBON

Under the name of the Santa Barbara Company, they divided Gerona into four sectors, one per squadron. They provided health care and went wherever their assistance was needed. A red ribbon on their left arm showed that they were on duty.

During the attack against Montjuïc Castle (Barcelona), "they had their baptism of fire under a hail of bullets, bombs and grenades", as the historian Javier Santamarta states in his book *Siempre estuvieron ellas* (The women were always there).

In Madrid, on May 2nd, 1808, two women gave their lives, and will always be remembered: Manuela Malasaña, shot in the Artillery Park in Monte León, and Clara del Rey, who fought with her husband and her

Portrait of Manuela Malasaña, heroine of May 2nd, in the exhibition "From a woman's perspective".



Army Museum

What courage!, Plate 7 of Goya's disasters of war pays homage to Agustina de Aragón.



Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando/National



General Military Archives in Segovia



General Military Archives in Avila

Appointment of Agustina de Aragón as second lieutenant. British and Spanish nurses rolling up bandages, from the collection of the Committee for Spanish Aid.

three children, aged 15, 17 and 19, along with the soldiers commanded by Captain Daoíz, Captain Velarde and Lieutenant Ruiz.

FROM MADRID TO HISTORY

Literally, at the foot of the cannon, Sorolla, Manuel Castellano or Leonardo Alenza painted Del Rey to immortalize her. She, her husband and one of their offspring died on the front line; while the eldest joined the third fighter squadron in Sagunto. Together with Manuela Malasaña, she is buried in the church of La Buena Dicha, near Gran Vía (Madrid's main street).

Valencia, Ronda or Bailen were also battlegrounds in which there are references to the courage of women, or where their role as information agents or water carriers was decisive. Pérez Galdós wrote about them in one of his "National Episodes".

The Army Museum in Toledo contains a beautiful portrait of Manuela Malasaña, which is part of the tour "From a woman's perspective" and can be permanently visited.

This itinerary reviews the relationship of women with the military and the Crown over the centuries. There are fourteen paintings, photographs and original objects distributed over several floors of the museum, which is the Castilian-La Mancha fortress.

Among them, the most important exhibits are those related to Queen Elizabeth II and Queen Isabella the Catholic. They offer an idealized vision of the establishment of the first field hospital in which, according to sources from the time, there was much sovereign involvement.

"From a woman's perspective" is a permanent tour in the Army Museum and is displayed in different galleries

The health aspect of the militia and women's contribution therein also have a place of their own on this circuit and the General Military Archives in Avila hold various documents on both matters.

AND IN THE SKIES

The first Spanish woman with a pilot's license (1928) was María Bernaldo de Quirós, although her expeditions were of a civilian nature. Almost a decade later, in 1937, a Turkish aviator, Sabiha Gökçen, was the world's first female fighter pilot. She started to take part in military operations at the Dersim rebellion in June that year.

In Spain, however, our first Air Force pilot, Yolanda Gassó did not join our Armed Forces until 1991, although our pioneer in combat is Rosa María García-Malea.

This article does not include all of them, but it does mention the most important. Women that were pioneers, brave, ahead of their time and relevant figures that history should remember.

Maria Senovilla

“SIN LÍMITES”

A television blockbuster series about the first round-the-world sea voyage, with the participation of the Spanish Ministry of Defence and the Navy

RECOUNTING the tale of a unique feat in history, this million-euro budget production will be shot in the Canary Islands, the Basque Country and the Dominican Republic with film treatment, premieres in Spain, the United States, Latin America and the United Kingdom... and, at the helm, British director Simon West, author of films such as *Con Air* or *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*.

These are some of the pillars of the future fiction TV series *Sin Límites*, which seeks to publicize the first round-the-world sea voyage (1519-1522), an unparalleled accomplishment conducted by the ship *Victoria*, captained by Spanish sailor Juan Sebastian Elcano.

PRESENTATION AT THE NAVAL MUSEUM

This blockbuster, launched by the Spanish Radio and Television Corporation (RTVE) and Amazon Prime Video with the participation of the Spanish Ministry of Defence and the Navy, was presented at Madrid's Naval Museum on February 20th and among its “guests” were God Neptune and Saint Telmo, patron saint of sailors.

The ceremony took place in the courtyard next to the exhibition entitled *We were the first* (RED no. 365), organized on the occasion of this historical feat by the host institution.

Due to its success, the exhibition has been extended twice and can be visited until June, said the Navy Chief of Staff, Admiral Teodoro Lopez Calderon, who hosted the event. The Navy Chief of Staff highlighted the circumnavigation

completed by Elcano, an unexpected and successful ending for the Spice Islands fleet of Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan, which was sponsored by King Charles I to search for a westward route to the Maluku Islands and, as noted by Lopez Calderon, sailed on unknown seas.

PROMOTING HISTORY

The Navy Chief of Staff also described this TV series as a way of bringing this unique adventure, which empirically demonstrated the roundness of the Earth, closer to the audience, particularly to young people.

He emphasized its historical accuracy and indicated that it is part of the collaboration agreement signed in 2018 between the Ministry of Defence and RTVE to carry out different activities commemorating the 500th anniversary of this endeavour.

On behalf of the public channel, its interim administrator, Rosa María Mateo, pointed out the challenge involved in turning this story into an appealing television series, as well as its financing, a chapter that has



The Navy Chief of Staff hosted the presentation of the TV series that took place in the Naval Museum in Madrid.



Elcano accomplished the feat. Image of the exhibition entitled *We were the first*.



opened the door to co-production with Amazon Prime Video.

Ricardo Cabornero, Head of Content at Amazon Prime Video Spain, stressed the dual Hispanic and international nature of the first round-the-world sea voyage and how attractive it is for his firm to collaborate in the broadcasting of this crucial venture.

The shooting of this TV series will begin this winter, between December and January, and will be premiered in 2021. Each of its four episodes will cost around five million euros.

The screenwriter is Patxi Amezcua and the producer is Miguel Menéndez de Zubillaga (*The Endless Trench*), who compared this round-the-world trip with the experience of Matt Damon's character in the movie *Interstellar*. Finally, Simon West described the voyage as “epic” and said that his purpose was to apply all his experience to *Sin Límites* in order to ensure it is “faithful to history, fast-paced, entertaining and action-packed”.

Esther P. Martínez

Photos: Hélène Gicquel

RTVE and Amazon Prime Video have launched this project to be directed by British filmmaker Simon West

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